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Model Others, Identity and Globalization: tentative theoretical observations from a case study of parliamentary discourse in Israel

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ABSTRACT: The novel concept of Model Others – i.e. Others framed not as disparaged and degraded in relation to the national Self, but as peers potentially superior to it – is introduced to enrich our understanding of national identity. In this paper I explore its potential significance as an endogenous factor that impacts globalization. From a constructivist perspective, one would expect that ascribing high (or low) legitimacy to Model Others would create a discursive climate conducive (or resistant) to policy diffusion and globalization. To explore this proposition, I conducted a computerized search coupled with manual, in-context coding of a large corpus of transcripts from meetings of Knesset (Parliament of Israel) Constitution and Economics committees, in which 7,626 references to Model Others over the *longue durée* from 1950 to 2012 were identified and analyzed. Findings that show an increasingly frequent and positive appeal to Model Others in Knesset discourse from the mid-1970s mark a clear shift in Israeli identity. The nature and timing of this change suggest that internal social and cultural developments within Israel were at play, causing Europe, the US, and “the West” in general to be elevated as models by which to critically evaluate the national self, particularly for its deficient civility. I propose that these endogenous changes in national identity are a context that should be viewed as a catalyst for, rather than mere byproduct of, the rapid globalization that swept across Israel from the 1990s. This underscores the theoretical utility of Model Others as a concept that sensitizes research to yet under-studied but important social processes.

Key Words: national identity, otherness, globalization, neo-institutionalism, discourse analysis

In this paper an analysis of references to what I call Model Others (MOs) in the discourse of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) suggests that in Israel, globalization was preceded and actually catalyzed by identity change. I introduce the novel concept of Model Others, explain its use in my empirical study of Knesset discourse and briefly discuss the relation between MOs and globalization against the social and cultural background pertinent to the Israeli case. Rather than globalization impacting national identity, my findings suggest that national identity as expressed in MO discourse is an endogenous factor that can significantly impact globalization.

Model Others (MOs) and National Identity

The binary categories of us and them or Self and Other are inherent in all orders of identity. Contrasting ‘us’ and ‘them’ establishes difference between groups and simultaneously makes generalizations that imply sameness, hence identity, within each group (Tajfel 1969).¹ Whether for sweeping distinctions between East (colonized) and West (colonizers) (Said 1978; Bhabha 2004), or for national identity (Akzin 1964, 35-44; Gellner 1965, 167-71; Smith 1991, 75; Hobsbawm 1992; Kedourie 1993, 44-55; Triandafyllidou 1998; Nigbur and Cinnirella 2007; Petersoo 2007), ethnicity (Barth 1969), gender (Zinn, Messner and Hondagneu-Soletto 2005), class (Bourdieu 1984, 466-470) or even an individual’s sense of selfhood (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934; Jarymowicz 1998; Corcoran, Crusius and Mussweiler 2011), scholars agree that distinction from others is crucial for the construction and maintenance of identity (Tajfel and Turner 1986; McCrone 1998, 36; Hall 2000; Jenkins 2000; Abdelal et al. 2006, 698-699; Hoggett 2009, 25-42).

Yet a question remains: how does this Self/Other binary operate? Analytically, Self and Other may be arranged horizontally, in value-free, neutral terms as mere difference, so that groups are “different, but equal.” They may also be formulated in vertical, hierarchical terms, with one group framed as better or lesser than the other, in what may be called a downward or upward comparison (Merton and Kitt 1950, 48; Suls and Wheeler 2000; White 2012). Scholarship on identity, as historian Erich Gruen recently observes and laments in his book “Rethinking the Other in Antiquity,” has clearly been biased towards the hierarchical “we are better than they” scheme, where Self-aggrandizement and denigration of Other are taken for granted. In his words:

... self-fashioning through disparagement of alien societies has been a staple of academic discourse for more than three decades. A collective self-image, so it is commonly asserted, demands ... a contrast with the perceptions and representations of other peoples... Denigration of the ‘Other’ seems essential to shape the inner portrait, the marginalization that defines the center, the reverse mirror that distorts the reflection of the opposite and enhances that of the holder. ‘Othering’ has even taken on a verbal form, a discouraging form of linguistic pollution (Gruen 2011, 1).

Several converging reasons may explain this theoretical leaning. These include the straightforwardness of the idea that the Self seeks to advance its own positive self-image (Tajfel and Turner 1986, 16; Billing 1995, 67; Nigbur

and Cinnirella 2007, 674); an orientation of social science research towards conflict and power (e.g. Hjerm 1998; Gifford and Hauswedell 2010, 3);² and, with regard to ethnic and particularly national identity, a tendency to focus on the aggressive aspects of these identities because of the violence they too often occasion (e.g. Hobsbawm 1992, 91; Triandafyllidou 1998; Kunovich 2009).

And yet a reading (occasionally a close reading) of scholarship reveals that positive, inspiring Others have played a dominant and clearly visible role in identity construction. Thus positively portrayed Others appear to be a striking feature of modern national reform movements. In *perestroika*'s agenda of reform, "Russia was not held to be morally superior to Europe; rather, it was seen as its potential equal and in certain respects its contemporary inferior" (Neumann 1999, 164). The nationalist backlash in post-Soviet Russia in reaction to *perestroika* and the tensions in Russia between Westernizers and nationalists can probably be traced back to the project of Westernization and the resentment it later spurred in the reforms of Peter the Great and later Catherine the Great, where "the West was eagerly accepted as an absolute and incontestable model, the only standard of behavior" (Greenfeld 1992, 223). Similar processes, beginning with Atatürk's project of Westernization, may apply to Turkey as well (Ahmad 1993). In discussing Greeks, Romans and Jews in antiquity, Gruen describes "the powerful ancient penchant (largely unnoticed in modern works) of buying into other cultures to augment one's own" (2011, 5). The present research shows that in modern-day Israel, too, the appeal to Western models is a deep-seated and enduring feature of public discourse, and by extension of Israeli culture and identity.

Despite such counter-examples, the theoretical bias of conceptualizing Others as degraded and despised has remained dominant in studies of national identity. Only recently, a handful of attempts to theorize Others who are held up as an inspiration and model for the national Self have begun to broaden the agenda (Triandafyllidou 2001, 2002; Petersoo 2007; Esparza 2010). Of these, the most systematic, formal attempt is the work of Anna Triandafyllidou, who originated the concept of *threatening* Significant Others on which "politicians and researchers tend to concentrate" (2001, 38) and later introduced the concept of *inspiring* Significant Others. For Triandafyllidou, what groups find inspiring about Significant Others is their path to national independence and building of a national identity (Triandafyllidou 2001, 38). As an inspiring Significant Other, she cites early twentieth-century Serbia: "[the Serbs'] achievement of national independence provided the example to be followed by Croats and other southern Slavs" (2001, 49). Her primary concern is with how the success of one national movement threatens or inspires another national movement in periods of flux and turbulence.

Triandafyllidou's framework begins to adjust the theoretical bias, but it focuses narrowly on overt nationalism and "national grandeur" in the context of largely deliberate episodes of nation building and identity construction. A more nuanced and elaborated concept of national identity is suggested by Michael Billig's (1995) assertion that national identity is constructed by referencing the Other in mundane contexts, in banal yet significant and routine instances. As Billig demonstrates cogently, national sentiment in Western nation-states does not erupt out of nowhere, but is deeply embedded in the mundane, "banal" routines of social life, including everyday discursive habits that inform national identity. However, Billig (following Tajfel) assumes that "nations will produce flattering stereotypes of themselves, and demeaning stereotypes of those other nations, with which they compare themselves" (1995, 67) and that "in worshipping themselves, nationalists disparage other nations" (ibid, 79), while Triandafyllidou usefully points to the possibility of the inverse, whereby the Other serves to inspire and calls for emulation.

Drawing on both Billig's notion of "banal nationalism" embedded in mundane discourse and on a modified version of Triandafyllidou's "inspiring" Significant Others, I have proposed the concept of "Model Others" (Troen 2015). An "Other" is termed "Model" if the national Self perceives it as a peer, potentially or actually superior to itself in a particular context of comparison.

In the proposed framework, references to MOs are not restricted to instances of explicit nation building or episodes of "hot" nationalism. They appear routinely in mundane discourse where the ongoing construction of national identity as in Billig's "banal nationalism" (1995) takes place. Methodologically, this means shifting the emphasis from the "usual suspects" to the "unusual suspects" (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2011) – i.e. from formal, festive or official acts of identity construction and debates overtly addressing Self-Others relations (e.g. in official addresses, political essays, or discourses concerning war or immigration) to largely inadvertent, habitual identity statements that feature in everyday discourse, on virtually any issue under the sun.

A few examples will help explain what these habitual identity MO statements look like in the routine Knesset discourse that I have analyzed. To begin with, MOs are always referenced in a *context that is comparative, whether comparison is implicit or explicit*. Moreover, the reference may be descriptive, like a *mirror* held up to the Self, or prescriptive, suggesting the *model* should be followed. When a comparison with the Other is used descriptively as a mirror, it helps define who we ARE. A useful example is the way MK Gilead Erdan (Likud), chairman of the Knesset Economics committee, referred to America – in contradistinction to Israel – in a 2008 meeting on organic produce regulations:

It may be that American mentality is a bit different from Israeli mentality. It may be that over there, a distributor of organic produce knows that if his produce is found not to be organic, he will likely spend many years in jail. Here I doubt even an investigation would take place (Economics 25.2.2008 [#504])

This reference is clearly comparative and Erdan uses “American mentality” as a mirror to evaluate and criticize the “mentality” of the Israeli Self that is lawless in contrast with law-abiding and law-enforcing America.

When used *prescriptively as a Model*, comparison with the Other serves a rhetorical purpose and bolsters the argument about what the Self should DO to be aligned with a Model Other. This prescriptive intent is evident in a remark by Etti Bendler, legal counsel to the Knesset Economics Committee, during the course of a 2012 meeting on the compensation of airline passengers. Bendler responded to objections voiced by the head of ELAL’s legal division by referring to a superior model:

Unfortunately my knowledge of aviation [legislation] is not comparable to yours; all I can do to support my position on this issue is to invoke a higher authority, namely the European directive that defines a plane ticket more or less as we have done (Economics 19.3.2012 [#793])

Bendler invokes Europe as the model for the Israeli legislation. Citing it as “a higher authority” she aims to quell criticism and legitimize the formula the committee is advancing. This reference is prescriptive because Bendler implies and builds upon the largely agreed upon premise that what is done in Europe can (and, in this case, should) be done in Israel too.

Comparisons may be simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive, models and mirrors. This mix is exemplified in a 1975 statement by MK Yoseph Tamir (Likud):

That since the Yom Kippur War, Germany was able to reduce [its energy consumption] by 10% while we reduced nothing, means that we are not a serious nation in this respect, we are unruly and disorganized. The Economics Committee must give consideration to this phenomenon... (Economics 14.1.1975 [#64])

His statement can be read as both descriptive and prescriptive. Tamir frames Germany as the standard of comparison and measure for how ‘we’ function. The first part of his statement is primarily descriptive: We ARE behind Germany in reducing consumption and we ARE unruly and disorganized. Its prescriptive implications are articulated immediately afterward as Tamir lays out what ‘we’ (as a society and specifically the Committee) must DO in order to become more like the Germans in terms of energy consumption, and, one supposes, also in terms of order and discipline.

MOs and Globalization

The concept of MOs has the potential to sensitize research to the role played by national identity in a variety of phenomena, including relations between nation states and inter-societal stratification of immigrant groups within the state (e.g. Khazoom 2008). In this paper, I limit my focus to the question of globalization and, more specifically, the diffusion of public policy across national borders – an increasingly common phenomenon in recent decades that has been attracting much scholarly interest (e.g. Meyer et al. 1997; Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Levi-Faur 2005; Lee and Strang 2006; Dobbin, Simmons and Garrett 2007; Simmons, Dobbin and Garrett 2008; Gilardi 2010). Globalization is a “broad and elastic concept” whose definition eludes scholarly consensus (Boli and Lechner 2009, 321). It may be summed up as advances in transportation and communication technologies that lead to an increasingly interconnected international arena that in turn facilitates greater mobility of capital, institutions and ideas around the globe. The diffusion of public policy is thus one facet of globalization. Scholarship on national identity and globalization tends to take globalization as the independent variable and question how this exogenous force challenges and changes national identities (e.g. Guillén 2001, 253-4; Kennedy and Danks 2001; Tomlinson 2003; Sasaki 2004). My aim is not to refute this valid approach. Rather, I propose to complement it with the often-overlooked inverse, whereby national identity is an endogenous factor that conditions globalization processes.

Dobbin and associates identify four distinct theories that address the global diffusion of policy: social construction, learning, coercion, and competition. While competition and coercion theorists trace policy diffusion to changing incentives, constructivist and learning approaches are both concerned with ideas, “although constructivists point to theory and rhetoric as the source of new ideas and learning theorists point to rational, observational deduction” (Dobbin, Simmons and Garrett 2007, 450). It is from the constructivist neo-institutional perspective that I suggest identity, through MO discourse and rhetoric, impacts globalization.

The need to attain institutional legitimacy leads to diffusion, and legitimacy in turn requires persuasive rhetoric (Sillince and Suddaby 2008; Suddaby 2010). I suggest that national identity is a central factor that renders MO rhetoric compelling. To be sure, in an age of globalization no country and society can remain indifferent to and unaffected by what is happening in the global community (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000, 6). Yet depending on whether we are examining India or China, Iran or Poland, Germany or Brazil, Italy or Israel, the nation’s MOs will be defined differently and, more importantly, will have a different ‘legitimizing power.’ From a constructivist perspective, then, a rhetoric that ascribes high (or low) legitimacy to a certain set of MOs would be expected to create a discursive climate conducive (or resistant) to policy diffusion from those countries. In other words, we may postulate that aspects of the national identity which are expressed through MO discourse are an endogenous factor that conditions the diffusion of policy across national borders.

Exploring this proposition empirically is admittedly complicated: just as identity and MO discourse may condition globalization, so too globalization may alter MO discourse and identity. Untangling the two scenarios is not straightforward, since there is likely an ongoing dialectic “feedback” process in which cause becomes effect and back again, making strong causal claims untenable. However, when a cause can be identified as occurring prior to its effect, then a causal relationship may be inferred. Thus an identifiable intensification of rhetoric concerning MOs prior to an increase in policy diffusion would suggest that changes in identity contribute to policy diffusion, rather than the other way around. My findings from a study of 62 years of Knesset (Parliament of Israel) discourse suggest that this is indeed the case in Israel. But before I present these findings, a few words are in order concerning the two variables under consideration: Israeli identity and the Others that inform it, and Israel’s globalization.

Israeli Identity

Scholarship has focused on two Others that define Israeli identity, and both have been conceived as disparaged, threatening and antithetical to the national self. The inter-relatedness of Israeli and Arab/Palestinian identities and the possibilities for conflict resolution and reconciliation have been the subject of several studies in social psychology and conflict resolution (e.g. Bilu 1994; Kelman 1999; Bar-On 2006, 164-165; Bar-Tal and Solomon 2006; Oren 2010). Sociological studies, too, have dealt with the impact of the Israeli-Arab conflict on Israeli identity, with attention to the role of Palestinian Arabs as Others against whom Israeli identity is constituted (e.g. Kook 1996; Peled-Elhanan 2008; Oron 2010). In this vein, Uri Ram even suggests that against the backdrop of the conflict, “being Jewish in Israel [has] a novel meaning of being a ‘non-Arab’” (Ram 2000, 410).

Palestinian Arabs are not the only or even the most important Others through whom Israelis have defined themselves. Diaspora Jews constitute a significant disparaged Other contrasted with the new Israeli Jew (Shapira 1995; Zerubavel 1995; Almog 2000, 76-82; Ram 2000, 407-409; Kimmerling 2001; Porat 2006; Bar-On 2008; Conforti 2011). While Diaspora Jews were seen as weak, parasites, uncivil, lacking roots and dignity, the new Jew was to be strong and healthy, laboring and self-sufficient, civil, deeply rooted in the homeland and dignified. In her study of Zionist discourse before 1948, Porat concludes that the Palestinian Arabs are relatively absent from this discourse, while “the real Other decisive for Zionism were diasporic Jews and everything they represented” (Porat 2006, 47).

Israeli identity has also been shaped by the desire to “normalize” Jewish society by molding it in the image of a modern, secular and liberal European society. The idea of “normalization” is the inheritance of the Jewish *Haskalah* (Enlightenment) movement and a central tenet of Zionist discourse since its inception (Hertzberg 1959, 21-22; Rubinstein 2000; Reinhartz and Shavit 2010; Mautner 2011, 11-30). Indeed, the aforementioned negation of traditional *galut* (Exilic or Diaspora) Jewry is the correlate of the desire to create a new Jewish person and society according to the template of the modern, enlightened, liberal West. Studies of Zionism and later Israel’s “project of Westernization” have concentrated on how a hegemonic ideal of Westernness affected the dynamics between different ethnic segments within Israeli society (e.g. Khazoom 2003, 2008; Hirsch 2009), but this line of research has not dealt with how Israeliness writ large is framed through a process of comparing the Israeli Self to Model Others. A rare example of research concerned with this kind of identity construction is Sela-Sheffy’s study (2006) of the way popular Israeli discourse portrays the Israeli person disparagingly compared to a venerated European Other. But this is a lone exception. To date, research has not systematically probed how Israelis speak and think about “the West,” nor have changes in these perceptions over time been investigated. These questions are addressed in the present study.

Israel’s globalization

In order to examine who came first - globalization or MO discourse - one would first have to establish when globalization begins. Certainly scholars differ on this point, with Wallerstein’s World-System theory dating globalization as far back as the sixteenth century, Robertson’s Cultural theory proposing the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, a third set of theorists suggesting the post -WWII years, and a sub-set of these pushing globalization’s beginning even later to the rise of neoliberalism in the late 1970s and 1980s (Guillén 2001, 237).

It is this last periodization that fits the scholarship of Israel, since several studies have identified the 1990s as the beginning of Israel’s globalization and “Americanization” (Azaryahu 2000; Rebhun and Waxman 2000; Shafir and Peled 2002; Ram 2008). In perhaps the most comprehensive study which is titled “The Globalization of Israel,” Uri Ram (2008) surveys economic, political, social and cultural changes in Israeli society, all of which, he suggests, result from globalization, which he conceives in historical-materialistic terms. It is worth reviewing his argument in some detail. According to Ram, it was in the 1990s that globalization affected Israel. He asserts that “the economic forefront of the globalization of Israel is a postindustrial revolution that has taken place in it since the 1990s” (Ram 2008, 30). Later he states that “[the class of ‘new bourgeoisie’] became independent and potent from the 1980s and 1990s onward,” even as the “bourgeois revolution,” which according to Ram transformed Israel’s social structure into a full-fledged capitalist structure, “occurred in Israel in the 1990s” (Ram 2008, 44). Likewise, Ram contends that privatization “is the new operating code of Israeli society since the 1990s... The new code is expressed across the economic, social, political, and cultural board” (Ram 2008, 64). He goes on to state that “on top of the postindustrial and the bourgeoisie revolutions, a consumerist revolution has also taken place in Israel since the 1990s...” as

expressed for example in growing levels of travel abroad, frequency of international phone calls, viewing of American TV programs, and increased shopping in American style malls (Ram 2008, 65-72). Pointing to the Americanization of Israeli politics, Ram similarly contends that “the 1990s signaled a third phase in the transformation of political culture in Israel” (Ram 2008, 153). Finally, in Ram’s analysis, as a result of all these economic, social, cultural and political changes, Israeli identity is bifurcated into a civic (globalized, universalistic, ‘McWorld’) strand and an ethnic (“tribal”, particularistic, reactionist ‘Jihad’) strand, which he considers “the major schism in Israeli political culture since the 1990s” (Ram 2008, 231).

I want to address these theories of Israeli identity and globalization by posing two main questions: what changes in MO discourse in Israel are observed over the *longue durée*, and what might these tell us about transformations in Israeli identity? And is globalization an exogenous force that changed identity as reflected in local MO discourse, or, on the contrary, is there evidence that identity is an endogenous force that conditioned the advent of globalization?

Data and Methods

To explore changes in MO discourse I analyzed a textual corpus comprised of a large sample of protocols (verbatim transcripts) of meetings conducted by the Constitution Committee and the Economics Committee of the Knesset (Parliament of Israel) in the 62 years between 1950 and 2012.³ I sampled all meetings taking place during the first quarter (i.e. January to March) on alternate years, 1950, 1952, 1954 and so on, until 2012.⁴ Thus I compiled 32 three-month sub-samples spanning 62 years, with at least one sampling for each of Israel’s first 18 Knesset assemblies.⁵ In all, the corpus includes 2,154 documents, tens of thousands of pages and over 16 million words, equivalent by a conservative estimate to at least 3/16, about 18%, of all discourse generated by the committees during this time.⁶

I used the OCR capabilities of Atlas.ti software to scan the corpus and identify all instances where 26 select search terms were mentioned, and then manually read these references in context to eliminate false positive and irrelevant references from the analysis (approximately half of the references were eliminated in this way). In addition, I coded for the tone of the references – in each and every relevant case I noted whether the Other was being referenced positively, negatively or neutrally.

The 26 search terms selected included ten Western countries, eight non-Western countries, and eight general terms by which comparisons are made (see detailed list in Table 1). Western countries are relevant given Zionism’s European roots and the “intense commitments to Westernization as a form of self-improvement” in Israel (Khazzoom 2003, 482). Non-Western countries broaden the scope of the investigation, putting the notion of Israel’s strong West-orientation to the test. They include major countries worldwide that Israelis may wish to view as models because they are strong and powerful (Russia and China); because of ideological proximity (the USSR and the Israeli left in the 1950s); because they are emblematic examples of economic success (Japan and Korea from the 1960s); or because they are places from which a great many Israelis or their parents emigrated (Morocco, Russia, Poland, Iraq).

Most of my analysis will focus on eight general terms ostensibly used to compare ‘us Israelis’ and ‘them in the West.’ These include the quintessentially Israeli phrase “*medinot metuqqanot*”, loosely translated as civil, organized and law-abiding nations, along with other similarly vague yet inherently positive and West-oriented terms like ‘developed’, ‘Western’ and ‘enlightened’ nations. These terms are particularly useful to address the question at hand because while the global diffusion of policy necessitates reference to the particular countries from which policies are being borrowed, it does not in itself require these vague yet rhetorically charged terms.

Findings

Using all 26 search terms I identified and analyzed a total of 7,626 references to MOs over the *longue durée* from 1950 to 2012, a period spanning the first eighteen Knesset assemblies. These results are summarized in table 1 below. Over the entire period the West is consistently referenced far more than “the Rest,” i.e. the non-Western world, whether democratic or non-democratic. Interestingly, this general lack of interest extends to Morocco, Russia, Poland and Iraq – the countries of origin of a great many Israelis, including MKs and policy makers. Russia/the USSR is mentioned only rarely, and, despite Israel’s well-established socialist and even communist parties with historically strong affinity to the USSR, is very seldom pointed to positively as a model. Moreover, “the Rest” are almost never invoked as positive models notwithstanding relative proximity (Russia is closer to Israel than the USA, Iraq is closer than Sweden, South Korea is closer than Australia), size and power (Russia and China), or economic growth and development (as with South Korea and Japan). Thus, notwithstanding military or economic power, geographical proximity, biographical connection, regime type or even declared ideological affinity, discussants at the Constitution and Economic Committees appear to identify with the West and endow it with a prestige that is not extended to “the Rest.” While Huntington (1996) does not align Israel with any particular civilization, our data reveal that at least in their own eyes, when it comes to law and the economy, Israelis are or would like to be akin to the West.

As noted, across the entire corpus there are 7,626 results and nearly 16 million words. This means that the corpus-wide reference density, that is, the number of references per 100,000 words, is 48.3 (references per 100K words). But references are not evenly spaced over time. Rather, I found that during the first seven Knesset assemblies

– i.e. from 1950 to 1974 – the reference density for both committees was relatively low, with overall levels below 30. From the Eighth Knesset on, reference density is substantially higher, ranging anywhere from 42 to 70.

Table 1: Results by search terms and type of reference

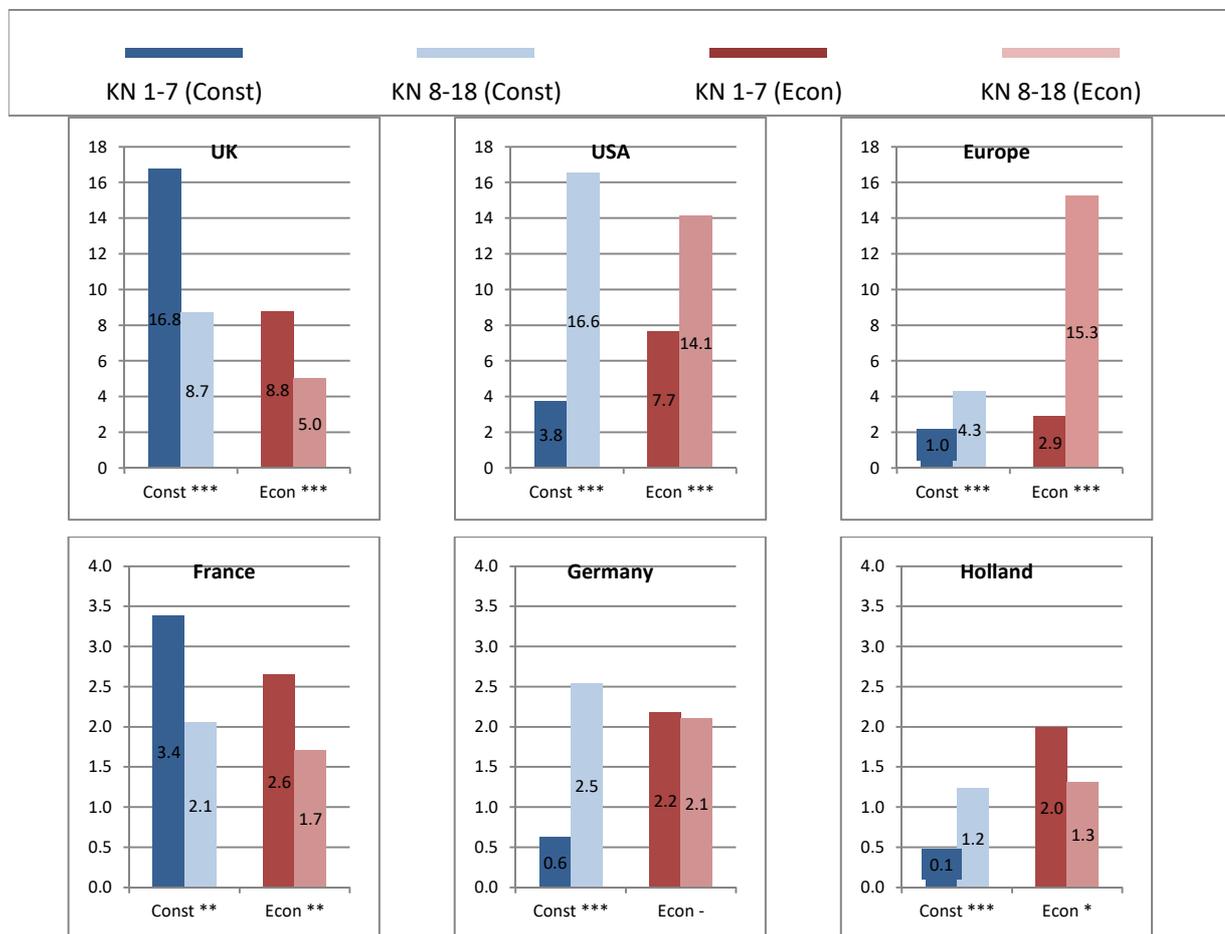
	TOTAL (100%)	Comparative (49.3%)				Other (excluded) (50.7%)			
		Total (100%)	POS (48.7%)	NTRL (43.2%)	NEG (8.2%)	Total (100%)	IRLVNT (84.8%)	FP (15.2%)	
TOTAL	15,462	7,626	3,711	3,293	622	7,836	6,647	1,189	
Western Countries	Australia	205	136	55	80	1	69	69	0
	Continental	51	47	8	33	6	4	4	0
	Europe	2,597	1,350	637	630	83	1,247	1,173	74
	France	773	319	152	148	19	454	319	135
	Germany	846	353	130	197	26	493	481	12
	Holland	318	199	95	96	8	119	117	2
	Italy	285	102	31	51	20	183	179	4
	Sweden	155	124	59	56	9	31	26	5
	UK	2,482	1,202	519	570	113	1,280	985	295
	USA	4,347	2,262	1,009	1,014	239	2,085	1,972	113
Non-Western Countries	Argentina	47	7	3	1	3	40	40	0
	China	373	27	7	13	7	346	174	172
	Iraq	51	3	0	0	3	48	44	4
	Japan	194	57	26	30	1	137	118	19
	Korea	56	5	2	3	0	51	50	1
	Morocco	49	1	0	1	0	48	46	2
	Poland	102	16	9	6	1	86	76	10
	Russia	746	53	8	20	25	693	446	247
General Search Terms	Advanced	60	55	37	14	4	5	4	1
	Developed	154	101	61	36	4	53	53	0
	Enlightened	68	63	52	9	2	5	5	0
	Liberal	14	11	7	4	0	3	2	1
	<i>Metuqqanot</i>	102	94	87	7	0	8	8	0
	Modern	41	23	13	9	1	18	17	1
	Western	218	195	131	59	5	23	23	0
	Worldwide	1,128	821	573	206	42	307	216	91

Aggregating the data in blocks (assemblies One to Seven; assemblies Eight to Eighteen) clarifies that reference density of all categories increased from the first to second block, but to variable degrees. The search category with the least increase is Non-Western Countries. Due to the small number of references in this category and the relatively modest increase (from 0.9 to 1.1), the change is not statistically significant. On the other hand, a highly significant ($p < 0.001$) increase is found both in references to Western Countries (from 28.1 to 48.3) and General Terms (from 2.9 to 9.6).

Leading the increase in references to Western countries are the USA and Europe ($p < 0.001$): the USA clearly dominates the Constitution Committee but is on par with and even slightly below Europe in the Economics committee. At the same time, references to Germany and Holland increase in the Constitution committee but not in the Economics committee (Holland even drops in this committee); references to the UK and France decrease in both committees (reflecting very high rates, particularly for the UK, in the early period rather than low rates in the second period). These findings suggest that on economic issues, the EU - Israel's largest trading partner – through its regulatory frameworks has become an essential MO whose importance eclipses not just that of the USA but also that of its own

member states, several of which are referenced less frequently in later years. On the other hand, individual member states retain and even increase their importance as MOs for constitutional issues, on which they have greater autonomy.

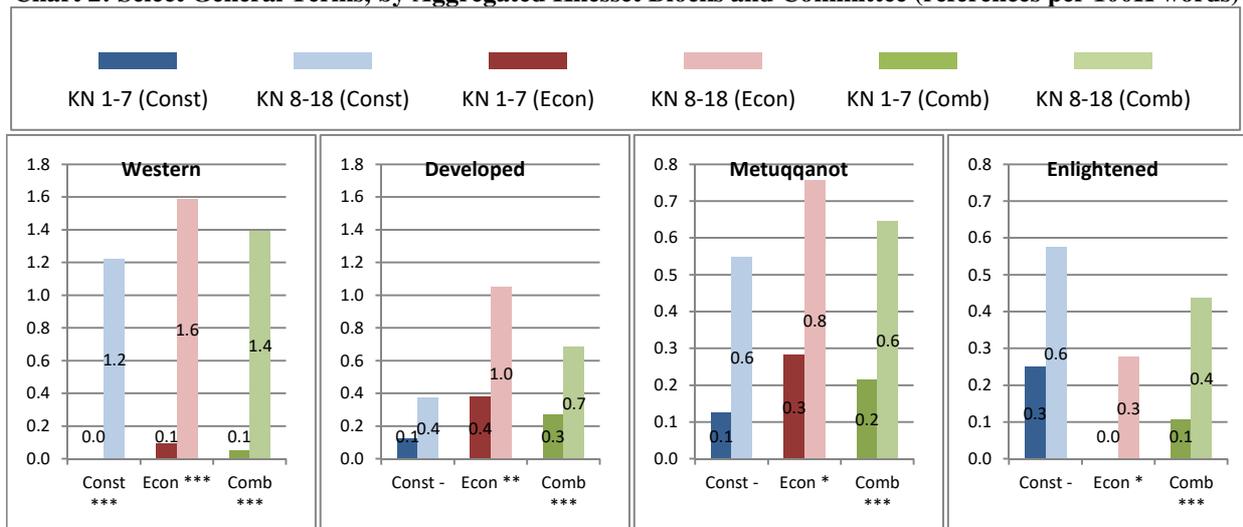
Chart 1: Main Western Countries, by Aggregated Blocks and Committee (References per 100K words)



* P<0.05; ** p<0.025; *** p<0.001; - change not significant

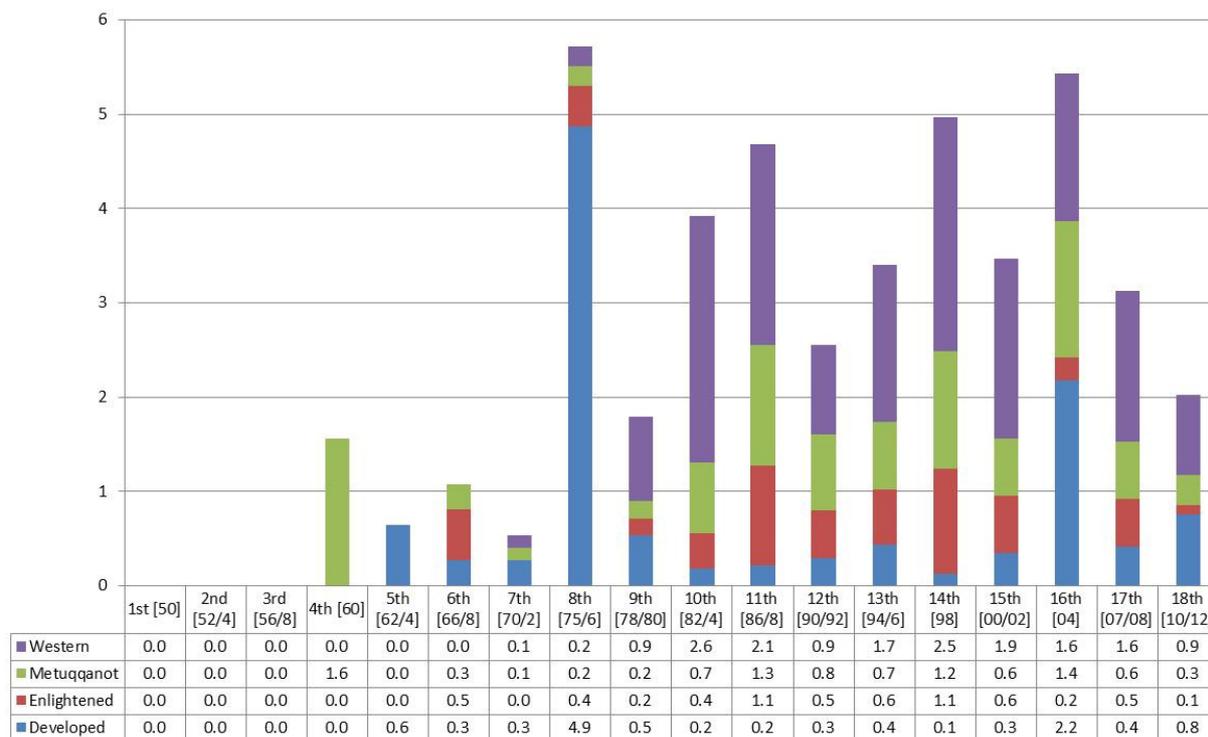
Particularly stunning however is the increase in references to the General Terms, which are more than three times as likely to be mentioned in the second block than in the first. These terms are always more frequently referenced in the second period, regardless of the committee. The robust and statistically significant increase (p<0.001) in references of four of these terms is presented in Chart 2. Further examination of the appearance of these terms in the discourse in Chart 3 reveals that the term “*metuqqano*” (civil, law-abiding) first appears in the Fourth Knesset (1960, Economics Committee), and then again in the Sixth and all subsequent assemblies; “developed” appears continually from the Fifth assembly (1962); “enlightened” first appears in the Sixth Knesset (1966), and then again in the Eighth (1975) and in all subsequent assemblies; and “western” is used for the first time in the Seventh assembly (1970), and is then continually referenced throughout. The first time all four search terms appear together is the Eighth Knesset assembly in 1975, which is the last Labor-dominated assembly, and they are all used continuously and in all subsequent assemblies. These findings point to the Eighth Knesset assembly as a watershed, in which a new type of comparative discourse emerges – a novel, inherently positive, vague but rhetorically charged vocabulary used to refer to the countries Israel seeks to emulate.

Chart 2: Select General Terms, by Aggregated Knesset Blocks and Committee (references per 100K words)



* p<0.05; ** p<0.025; *** p<0.001; - change not significant

Chart 3: Select General Terms 1st to 18th Knesset (references per 100K words)



Discussion and Conclusion

Israel's pro-western orientation is clearly supported by the data. This reflects the Zionist aspiration to "normalize" the Jews by creating a new Jew and Jewish polity molded in the shape of its liberal Western counterpart. In the 62 years studied, countries belonging to the liberal, democratic, enlightened "West" served as models far more frequently than their non-Western counterparts. And yet, the intensity with which these Western MOs are referenced changes from 1975, during the last Labor-dominated Knesset. This intensification is not only visible in the frequency of references to western MOs, but indeed in the emergence of a new vocabulary to refer to these nations.

Can globalization explain why this new vocabulary emerges at this time? The data suggest this explanation is inadequate. As we have seen, it is generally thought that globalization affected Israel in the 1990s (Ram 2008). But these general terms surfaced in the discourse more than a decade prior to this. Furthermore, whereas globalization might explain the proliferation of references to actual countries or jurisdictions, it cannot account for the proliferation of the *value-laden, rhetorically charged* vocabulary associated with "enlightened nations" and other variations of this term. Moreover, the data show that concomitantly, reference to several European countries actually *decreased*. For all

these reasons, globalization cannot explain the unequivocal and particularly strong increase in the presence of general terms like “enlightened” in the discourse.

If globalization cannot account for the emergence of this new vocabulary, what can? Why wasn't this vocabulary in use in the first two decades, and why did it appear when it did?

One likely factor is that in the aftermath of the Holocaust, the appeal of Europe and the West as bearers of civility was significantly reduced. References to Germany in the Constitution Committee were very infrequent in the early years, but in recent years they are much more common. This suggests that with the change of generations and in tandem with Europe's economic, political and, above all, *moral* rehabilitation, it became possible to refer to Germany, and perhaps continental Europe generally, as “enlightened” and worthy of emulation.

Moreover, the new discourse that emerges in the 1970s reflects internal changes within Israeli culture and society. During the first two decades of statehood Israel was facing immense social challenges but generally enjoyed a sense of accomplishment and confidence that “we are on the right track.” In the 1970s, this confident utopianism shifts to what I call a “frustrated” utopianism when goals seem obstructed and unrealizable. The new vague vocabulary increasingly used to compare Israel unfavorably with Model Others is part of this wide cultural turn and change in how Israelis think about themselves and their country.

Why this cultural shift happened when it did is a socio-historical question beyond the scope of this paper.⁷ Yet we can note a number of factors associated with this change:

- Deepening political cleavages between left and right, and cleavages between secular and religious Jews following the capture of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 and their subsequent settlement;
- Rampant disillusionment with the political leadership and army following the trauma of the 1973 Yom Kippur war;
- Loss of power by Labor Zionists and erstwhile elites with the political upheaval of 1977;
- Generational changes particularly in the Labor party.

All these factors combined in the 1970s to profoundly affect Israel's culture and shake the foundations of its identity. The emergence of “frustrated” utopianism is strikingly evident in a new kind of self-deprecating and subversive humor that flourished at this time: a new generation of satiric playwrights engaged in a “biting attack on values and basic ideological concepts” (Alexander 1998,169). To them, “the key word defining the cause for this [satirical] attack is ‘disappointment’... at the way things turned out; bitterness at the realization of the [Zionist] vision. The analysis of ‘[a] dream and an awakening’ is the central theme in [these authors’ works]” (ibid). Debunking of national myths with sarcastic and grotesque portrayals of government figures in the satirical TV revue *Nikui Rosh* (“head cleaning”) was “another new, previously unknown practice” (Shapira 2012, 349; see also Shifman 2008). Likewise, the comic review “Lul” that was aired in the early 1970s poked fun at what until then were sacred, not-to-be-ridiculed components of the Zionist ethos, such as immigration absorption, as well as the pretense of becoming a “light unto the nations” (Shifman 2008). In popular culture, the 1970s gave rise to jokes that challenged previously sanctified national myths (Zerubavel 1995, 167-177).

The image of the Sabra – the venerated first generation native-born Israeli, the paradigmatic new-Jew that Zionism strove to create – is also debunked at this time. Almog writes of a “trend to secularize Zionist ethos and myths” (2000, 17), noting that

Criticism of Sabra literature and the myth it represented intensified in the mid-1970s after the trauma of the Yom Kippur War, when the role of the Sabra as a social model was weakened and his aura dimmed. The Israeli intelligentsia began to see the Sabra in less heroic light that brought out his human failings and even presented him as a pathetic and ridiculous figure” (Almog 2000, 16).

Thus scholars from different disciplines have pointed to the 1970s as a transformative period in Israeli culture: Zionist myths were debunked; heroes were ridiculed; leaders were scathingly criticized; ideological paths were mocked; and even as the country became better established economically and militarily, the success of the entire Zionist project, with its lofty, transcendent, collectivist utopian aspirations, was increasingly called into question. For all its acknowledged successes, Israel was coming to be seen and to see itself as a failure due to “the gap between aspirations and actual achievements... the result of the inevitable gap between the ideological drive with its utopian overtones, and the imperfect and incomplete reality” (Horowitz and Lissak 1989, 250). It is this changing cultural context that finds expression in the new MO vocabulary: the increased use of the inherently positive, rhetorically charged terms “*metuqqanot*,” “enlightened”, “Western” bespeaks a latent, nagging cultural anxiety lest the Israeli person and society fail to finally shed engrained diasporic characteristics and become truly civil and Western as envisioned by all strands of the Zionist movement.

In conclusion, introducing MOs sensitizes research to understudied aspects and effects of national identity. In the case of Israel, the emergence of a new, value-laden vocabulary by which to critically assess Israel in relation to the West can be explained in terms of the cultural legacies and internal dialectics of Zionism. The timing of changes in Israel's MO discourse around the Eighth Knesset suggests that these are not a response to globalizing forces. Rather, endogenous identity concerns set the stage for, and perhaps catalyzed, the rapid globalization that was to transform Israel a decade later.

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¹ Self and Other mostly refer to two distinct contemporaneous groups, but they may refer to “historical” others as well, including current and previous ‘versions’ of the self. In this way, “the Germany and Japan of the 1930s and 1940s have become the Other against which the modern, liberal, internationally engaged German and Japanese Self defines itself” (Katzenstein 2005, 86).

² Stuart Hall’s observation of 20 years ago is telling: “There is no moment now, in American cultural studies, where we are not able, extensively and without end, to theorize power—politics, race, class and gender, subjugation, domination, exclusion, marginality, otherness, etc. There is hardly anything in cultural studies which isn’t so theorized” (Hall 1996, 273). This does not mean that paradigms that investigate culture through the prism of power-relations have become hegemonic within sociology, though their influence is apparent. Rather it seems that scholars operating within this paradigm have tended to find the concept of Other especially appealing, and effectively appropriated and harnessed it to their agenda. A prime example of the ideologically motivated theorizing of “otherness” in terms of power relations and domination and its inherent bias is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), an interdisciplinary approach that “studies the way social power *abuse, dominance and inequality* are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van-Dijk 2003, 352; see also: Bayley 2004, 28; Davies 2010, 2). Thus it has frequently been applied to investigate the construction of identity generally and of national identity in particular (e.g. Van Dijk 1997; Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl and Liebhart 1999; De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak 1999; Hernández 2008; Dolón and Todolí 2008). Here, too, attention is focused on the Self’s exclusively negative view and use of Others.

³ These committees were selected because they represent different domains of Knesset work that relate to globalization: the wave of liberal constitutionalism that “washed over much of the globe” (Simmons, Dobbin and Garrett 2008, 1) was expected to leave its impression on discussions of the Constitution Committee; the contemporaneous spread of “[f]ree market oriented economic reforms” (ibid.) was expected to find its expression in the Economics Committee. Findings from the corpus are generalizable, and may be viewed as representative of the discourse of the Knesset, the Israeli public sphere and even Israeli discourse at large, because like any parliament in a liberal democracy, the Knesset includes representatives of the different factions of Israeli society as determined by public elections. Furthermore, the work of the Knesset is open to various sectors of society that routinely participate in committee meetings (apart from MKs and government officials also representatives from the business and industrial sectors, workers’ unions, academic experts, NGOs and action groups). Thus, we can expect the discursive choices made by this diverse group of committee-meeting discussants to reflect a widely shared understanding of what constitutes legitimate discourse and effective rhetoric that is not confined to the Knesset.

⁴ Two exceptions apply: because the Knesset was not in regular session as a result of elections, I moved the 1974 sampling up a year to 1975, and that of 2006 I moved up to 2007.

⁵ The First, Fourth, Fourteenth, Sixteenth Knesset assemblies were sampled once; each of the remaining 14 Knesset assemblies was sampled twice.

⁶ 3/16 is a conservative estimate because it is based on the assumption that the Knesset is in session eight months every year, but in election years sessions may be considerably shorter.

⁷ For a discussion of fundamental changes taking place in Israel at this time, see: Horowitz and Lissak 1989; Dowty 1998; Kimmerling 2001; Shafir and Peled 2002.