



Julia Bernstein

*Transnational Contested Identities and
Food Practices of Russian-Speaking
Jewish Migrants in Israel and Germany*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Food for Thought

Julia Bernstein is a lecturer at the Institute for comparative educational studies and social sciences of Cologne University.

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*I would like to dedicate this book to my beloved grandfather,
Max Segal*

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	11
1 Migration collages: Studying Russian-speaking Jews in Israel and Germany	15
1.1 Migration and socio-cultural affiliations.....	15
1.2 The research approach	17
1.3 Research questions	20
1.4 Research methods	22
1.5 Comparative view of the two populations.....	33
1.6 General characteristics of the investigated groups.....	34
1.7 Transporting Jewish identity from the SU	39
1.8 Overview of the book.....	41
2 Transnationalism and capitalism: Migrants from the former Soviet Union and their experiences in Germany and Israel.....	45
2.1 The Soviet kind of capitalism: Soviet <i>spirituality</i> vs. Western <i>materialism</i>	50
2.2 Post-Soviet capitalism on food commodities	56
2.3 “Arrival on a new planet”	67
2.4 Reviving Soviet knowledge about the social reality of life in the capitalist system.....	80
2.5 “The Russia we had always dreamed of”—some conclusions.....	89

3	“Chocolates without history are meaningless”: Pre- and post-migration consumption.....	95
3.1	Soviet “hunting and gathering”	98
3.2	The classic Soviet recipe book: <i>On the Tasty and Healthy Food Book</i>	107
3.3	Social skills of post-migration consumption.....	114
3.4	Alternative ways of procurement and free consumption.....	123
3.5	Contested procurement.....	141
4	Russian food stores in Israel and Germany: Images of imaginary home, homeland, and identity consolidation.....	142
4.1	Visibility of Russian food stores in Israel and Germany.....	146
4.2	Image of the hostess in the Russian food stores.....	150
4.3	Longing for the REAL home via food.....	153
4.4	Commercial promotion of nostalgia.....	164
4.5	Images of the Soviet paradise	172
4.6	Image of Soviet proletarian food or the <i>imaginary proletarian home</i>	178
4.7	Images of the Soviet empire and the Soviet political iconography of food post-emigration.....	184
4.8	Nationalized Russia in food products and <i>gastronomic Slavophilism</i> of ex-citizens abroad.....	200
4.9	Meanings of Russian food stores in Israel and Germany	211
5	Russian food stores in Israel and Germany: Different national symbolic participations and <i>virtual transnational enclave</i>	219
5.1	Special national key symbols crossing borders and manifestations of identity: The symbolic meaning of <i>pork</i> and <i>caviar</i> in different national contexts	222
5.2	Pork.....	226
5.3	Caviar	248
5.4	Mixed national identities in Russian food stores in Israel and Germany.....	256
5.5	Reconsidering the immigrant enterprise: From traditional, closed ethnic business toward a <i>virtual transnational enclave</i>	268

6	Transjewish affiliation: The construction of ethnicity by Russian-speaking Jews in Israel and Germany	273
6.1	The “ethnicity” and ethnization processes of Russian-speaking Jews	275
6.2	Component One: <i>Innate ethnicity</i> and <i>visible Otherness</i> and its fate abroad	278
6.3	Component Two: <i>Significant Others</i> in the SU and abroad	293
6.4	Component Three: Suspect loyalty: Soviet Jewish Otherness through affiliation with Israel	313
6.5	Component Four: Affiliation with Soviet Russian cultural elite	315
6.6	Conclusion	319
6.7	Triple Trans-Jewish affiliation	321
7.	Winners once a year? Making sense of WWII and the Holocaust as part of a transnational biographic experience	328
7.1	Celebration of <i>Den’ Pobedy</i> Victory Day	329
7.2	Conflicting meanings of May 8 th and 9 th	332
7.3	Soviet victors’ narrative and the theme of the Holocaust in the SU	335
7.4	Transnational praxis of the everyday knowledge after migration to Germany	347
7.5	Proud of the Soviet victory, offended by the Soviet state or marginalized winners	354
7.6	Challenging the victory narrative and <i>burdensome identities</i>	357
7.7	The Outsider perspective	362
7.8	Principally Others: Media discourse about the topic	364
7.9	Shifting of the collective “we:” Media presentation of Germans and settled Jews as the symbolical “we” compared to “Russians”	366
7.10	“Without us Israel would not have come into existence. We won the war and put an end to the Holocaust...”	368
7.11	Comparative conclusions of different modifications of the original narratives in Israel and Germany	369

8	“Will you prepare gefillte fish for Christmas?” Paradoxes of living in simultaneously contested <i>social worlds</i>	373
8.1	Reconsidering identities, reproducing stereotypes, coping with hierarchies.....	374
8.2	Alienation, home, and homeland: “Why not Israel?” Self-positioning of Russian-speaking Jews in Germany and Israel ...	389
8.3	Conclusion	408
8.4	Contributions of this research	410
8.5	Further development	413
	Bibliography	415
	Index	436

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1 Migration collages: Studying Russian-speaking Jews in Israel and Germany

The study focuses on migrants who are involved, by necessity, in reconstructing their cultural perceptions as well as finding and confirming their place in a new reality. The comparative investigation presented here was conducted in two different contexts—Germany and Israel—among Jewish immigrants who came from the former Soviet Union (SU) after the initiation of *Perestroika*. The study's principal aim is to examine the multiple affiliations of immigrants that were shaped and modified in these two different cultural and social contexts. This analysis highlights and illuminates the cosmological perceptions and self-definitions of migrants transported from the SU along with their own meaningful experiences and interpretation of key concepts and symbols (Golden 2002; Stonequist 1935, 1937). Undertaken as a project in cultural anthropology, this study aspires to highlight the sites of conjunction and contradictions between, on the one hand, the ideas and perceptions that evolved while living in the SU; and, on the other hand, the expectations of receiving societies, normative thinking, and everyday knowledge of dominant host society.

1.1 Migration and socio-cultural affiliations

One of the basic, central premises of the study is that the perceptions as well as the physical conditions of the individual are dynamic and subject to change. Therefore, identities of individual and collective affiliations also undergo changes. As, for example, in the foods selected and prepared by immigrants on their dining table. Hence, we will find that these food products symbolize being—Russian, Jewish, Israeli, German, educated, European and/or that they signal transnational practices of belonging to a certain social stratum.

In investigating the migrant experience, I assume that people do not *bear* or transport with them a self-contained completed culture, but rather there is fluid nature to cultural affiliations as they select and employ cultural elements that are integrated through involvement in special situations, states, or conditions of their existence (Bloch 1963; Boyarin 1994; Gudeman and Rivera 1990; Kalekin-Fishman 2000; Welz 1996, 1997, 1998). Hence, I assume that culture is created through dynamic dialogues as well as permanent changes and modifications, rather than being limited to preserving of stable habits and practices. Therefore, based on these assumptions, this study sought to understand how different affiliations of migrants—be they cultural Russian, European, ex-Soviet, Jewish and different Others—are constructed, modified, co-exist, and presented/performed in particular situations in response to needs within specific situations. Bodnar (1985) referred to this process of identity redefinition as *transplantation*.

Accordingly, analyses advanced in this study do not perceive participants through insulated categories, such as Jewish, Soviet, Russian or German, but rather as “doing being Jewish” (Inowlocki 2000, 175) or doing being—ex-Soviet, Russian, Israeli, or German—through their dynamic practices and everyday interactions. The findings demonstrate that multiple identities co-exist and often contradict one another in various ways: Interviewees speak Russian and act according to Russian cultural practices, but are offended if referred to as Russians; or, they consume pork and simultaneously feel themselves to be Jews, accept support by the social welfare system but perform elitist cultural *habitus*, invest significant energies and time over three days to prepare meals for a birthday celebration, but claim that food “has actually no meaning for spiritual life.” In addition, participants in both contexts articulated affiliation with different collective and “imaginary communities” (Anderson 1991), often expressed through linguistic forms of “we” and “they.” These uses were created, changed in situ, presented, confirmed, and performed in various manners. For example, self-referential terms *nashi*¹ and *svoi* [lit. ours, ourselves, our own,² Rus. approximated meaning as “people of our kind” or those who

1 See Caldwell (2005) for analyses of the centrality of the concept “nashi” and its instrumentalization in Russian advertisements.

2 Whereas only objects can be literally possessed in languages such as Hebrew, German, or English, in Russian the linguistic construction “nash or svoi person” and “nashi or svoi people” [lit. “my person” meaning “person of my kind,” and “our people” meaning “people of our kind”] is constructed with the same word of possession and can have a symbolic meaning of common belonging, as in this case.

represent a unified “us”] were involved in a very dynamic and fluid process of *doing being nashi* that could be called *nashi-zation*. The meanings evolving in this process are presented throughout different chapters of this work.

Thus, the numerous examples of empirical evidence presented throughout this monograph demonstrate different uses and modified meanings of key cultural symbols in the Russian language.

1.2 The research approach

The theoretical background integrated throughout these discussions involves two principal domains: First, sociological and anthropological literatures in the area of “migration research.” Particular emphasis is placed on research involved in developing the transnational theoretical perspective, in general, and involvement of groups investigated, in particular. Second, domains within the sociology and anthropology of food that study the importance of food in persons’ lives and the establishment of collective cultural, social, national affiliations, and hierarchies of power. In particular, the study focused on the literature that analyzes migrants’ food consumption and food entrepreneurship in different countries as compared with patterns constructed by the groups investigated in this research.

Migration and material culture research continue to be treated with disdain by scholars. Indeed, Jackson and Holbrook observed that in the case of consumption there is a “patronizing view of apparently undifferentiated members of an anonymous mass society” (Jackson and Holbrook 1995, 1913). Similarly, I found in my review of the migration literature that migrants are often presented as a passive marginal group—deprived of a voice, of any understanding of events in the new society, and of their own opinions and rights. According to this view, all migrants’ transported resources represent deficits rather than contributions to the receiving-host society. Therefore, the assumption seems to be that these transported views are “frozen,” permanently; that is, kept from learning and adaptation (Morawska 2003; Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1997).

In contrast, the basic assumption underlying the investigation reported here is that consumption and migration processes³ are acts of personal and collective agency. Accordingly, migrants are perceived as “knowledgeable consumers” (Jackson and Holbrook 1995) and knowledgeable, responsible, and mature agents who are sensitized through migration experiences as they confront and cope with different *social worlds*, make decisions that affect their lives, and change their social and local environment (Bodnar 1985; Kivisto 1990). Hence, migrants as the subject of this study are not viewed as persons who need to be reshaped, resocialized, and treated like children (Golden 1996, 2002), nor are they considered to be socially incompetent or immature (and consequently unauthorized) members of society.

Given the intent to investigate everyday practices of Russian-speaking Jews, as well as, their patterns of consumption/procurement in the Russian food stores in Israel and Germany, the transnational theoretical perspective initiated by the American anthropologists Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1997) and developed since by many different researchers was selected as potentially very applicable to this study (e.g., Appadurai 1991; Gold 2001; Hannerz 1998; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Levitt and Sorensen 2004; Morawska 2004; Olwig and Sorensen 2002; Pessar and Mahler 2001; Pries 1997; Römhild 2002; Vertovec 2004). The primary rationale underlying this decision is that this approach to migration does not assume it is an exceptional or static state, but rather a continuous, dynamic process to be investigated in terms of how social actors participate in multiple social environments. Furthermore, migration processes and the establishing of enclaves need to be examined in light of the dynamics of globalization in which the physical barriers between societies have become porous due to the media and modern means of transport. In this new reality, immigrants have continuous access to information about their society of origin and so refresh, renew, and modify old models and practices.

This approach stands in contrast to previously dominant “host society-centered” (Morawska 2003) theoretical models of adaptation and assimilation based on envisioning societal space as a “closed container” (Schroer 2004) within a definitive closed territory and border. Rather, in the approach adopted in this study, the theoretical constructs of *transmigration* and

³ *Migration process*, as used in this monograph, refers to the years spent in preparing for emigration, the act of emigration, the transition into the new society that may take place over many years.

transnationalism were deemed to be especially appropriate and fruitful for this investigation, because they help to develop of a new perspective on immigrants' lifestyles. Furthermore, this pair of concepts has the potential to shift the analytical focus of research from viewing the "place of origin" and the "place of destination" as "binary opposites" (Levi-Strauss 1970) to understanding the moves involved in sustaining cross-border livelihoods (Olgwig and Sorensen 2002, as cited by Levitt and Sorensen 2004, 2). According to this perspective, migrants are involved in managing a transnational social field composed of multistranded social relations in different countries. This is what Levitt and Sorensen defined as "a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationship through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed" (Levitt and Sorensen 2004, 3).

The creation and modification of constructed identities of immigrants in transnational space, without closed national borders, fits the currently observable situation. Immigrants living in Israel or Germany have access to live Russian TV broadcasts transmitted from the former Soviet Union [44 channels in Israel and 19 in Germany] and different world channels translated into Russian in the receiving society.⁴ These media outlets enable them to engage in a variety of activities: follow news from their society of origin; read Russian newspapers⁵ and books regularly; enjoy broadcasts of performances by visiting Russian theatre companies and musical groups; purchase "their" groceries in Russian shops; fly to their society of origin for holidays; and invite friends and relatives from former Soviet republics (or those who have already emigrated elsewhere) to visit them in Israel or Germany. One can even observe [especially in Germany] the development of organized material support for relatives and friends who remained in the state of origin (e.g., monetary payments as well as packages containing clothing, food, electronic equipment, kitchen appliances, and toys).

Finally, in looking beyond this study, the findings from the fieldwork in Israel and Germany reported in this monograph are consistent with the trend in contemporary anthropological and sociological research to investi-

4 Media in Israel consist of: (a) six Israeli channels broadcasting with translated Russian subtitles, one Russian Israeli channel; (b) approximately 22 channels transmitted from the CIS in Russian; and (c) approximately 15 channels from different other countries translated into Russian (or with subtitles).

5 As of 2005, there were nearly 100 newspapers and magazines published in the Russian language in Israel (Yelenewskaya 2005, 267).

gate transnational actions, activities, and phenomena in a particular society (or more in comparative research) as a case study for engaging in holistic macro-analysis in the future (e.g., Appadurai 1991; Guarnizo 2003; Guarnizo et al. 2003; Portes et al. 2002; Smith 2003). Furthermore, in terms of my own interests, I intend to report on, to demonstrate, and to analyze the domains of the participants' transnational praxis as initial insights into the nature of their contradictory and dynamic involvement and as causes of conflicts between different narratives and personal affiliations.

1.3 Research questions

General questions

1. How do migrants create, re-define, and perform their affiliations in their everyday lives and transnational practices through food consumption (e.g. in selection of food products and sharing of meals around the dining room table)? Do these affiliations differ in the two contexts (Israel and Germany) and, if so, how can we explain these differences?
2. How do immigrants in Germany and Israel construct the image of *home* or fill the vacant sense of *homeland* in their everyday lives, transnational practices, and food consumption? Are there any differences between the two contexts in this regard and, if so, how can they be explained?
3. In this study immigrants are involved in a transition from a socialist society to two different capitalistic societies. What are the meanings, significance, and consequences of this transition for them? Are there any differences between experiences in the two receiving societies and, if so, how can they be explained?
4. What do Jewish, ex-Soviet, Russian, European, Israeli, and German affiliations mean for participants in both contexts? How are these affiliations performed?
5. How do people interact in a situation in which different bodies of knowledge, different political narratives, and different constructions of social worlds, usually taken for granted, meet, and clash in the inner phenomenological domain as well as in the transnational biographic experiences of migrants? What happens, when through migration and intercultural interactions the same events are remembered, understood,

and interpreted in completely different manners not only by different groups in the CIS, Israel, and Germany, but also by different Jewish groups in these countries? How do migrants cope with the situation, when there is pressure to demonstrate loyalty to narratives that contradict one another in many significant ways?

6. How do patterns of interpretation and remembrance change during the migration process? What new meanings of the past appear in the new environments with their local discourse contexts?
7. How do the different contexts of Israel and Germany impact on individual coping strategies? How do they shape historical memories and affect the process of collective identity construction?

Special questions with reference to investigating Russian food stores

1. What products do Russian food stores offer? What different kinds of food appear on the dining room table in the two contexts?
2. What images are desired and why? Are images different in Russian food stores in Germany and in Israel and, if so, how can this be explained? How and according to what criteria is special food chosen?
3. What memories of taste, smell, outward appearance, and content of products consumed are articulated in everyday practices of participants in the new contexts?
4. What, if any, modifications are observable in food products available in Russian food stores in Israel and Germany? How do key symbols of different national cuisines and foods meet and co-exist within the framework of Russian food stores in both contexts?
5. How do social skills of consumption change after migration to either of the two contexts?
6. How can we conceptualize Russian food stores?
7. What role and significance does the Russian food store play in creating a personal identity among the immigrants? What roles and meanings do cultural and economic enclaves play in Israel and Germany in recent years, for both groups? Are their differences in the two contexts and, if so, how can they be explained?

1.4 Research methods

This comparative study applied qualitative methods of polyfocal or *mobile ethnographic* research (Marcus 1995). In doing so it compared two different domains: First, the *physical places* in which Russian speakers live and act in a certain area of two chosen cities in Israel and Germany; and, second, *imaginary transnational spaces* as they are created modified and performed in migrants' everyday praxis—both verbal and non-verbal (through material culture)—in both contexts. Whereas physical places remain fixed, their conceptualization as *imaginary transnational spaces* is constantly changing. Given the de-territorialized nature of affiliations and cultural processes (i.e. mobile research subject), comparisons between two fieldworks are considered to be “moving targets” (Welz 1998). In this process, different transnational spaces are created simultaneously and interact with one another. Thus, on the one hand, the complex societal contexts of Israel and Germany have physical localities and, on the other hand, they are cross-bordered imaginary transnational networks involved in dynamic de-territorialized cultural processes. Hence, we are dealing with a complex subject composed of dynamic, multi-sited or polyfocal fieldwork settings in Israel and Germany inter-connected and developing through pendulum-like dynamic processes swinging between them (Marcus 1995).

Given this understanding of the complexity of the phenomena under study, I determined that the most appropriate methodologies for collecting materials were extended periods of participant observation and open narrative interviews. Accordingly, I conducted long-term participant observation in Russian food stores⁶ that also included multiple, open narrative interviews with clerks and owners of shops selling Russian food products, in both locations. In addition, I visited the homes of the participants in Israel and in Germany over a two year period. The methodologies employed during these visits in the field consisted of participant observations and multiple, open narrative interviews (n.b., most of the interactions took place within the close circle of research participants as well as with salespersons and owners of shops selling Russian food products in both locations).

⁶ Several additional observations were conducted at the end of the fieldwork in Russian food stores in other cities in Israel and Germany, in order to assess if the same tendencies exist there.

The Israel case study benefitted in significant ways from materials and findings developed from previous research undertaken by this researcher between 1998—2000 on food consumption and the creation of identity among immigrants from the USSR (Bernstein 2000). This research served as the basis for the present set of investigations. Three short periods of fieldwork in 2006, 2007, and 2008 enriched and validated these materials and findings. Fieldwork in the German context, conducted in parallel periods between 2002 and 2004 substantiated earlier findings. The Israeli case study was conducted in 2006—2008. The researcher and participants had extensive and intensive contact in both contexts.

Three additional frameworks for data-gathering proved to be informative in the German context. First, I participated in and observed the activities of the Jewish community in Germany that plays an active role in the lives of the Jewish immigrants. Second, I conducted regular participant observations in different centers and churches where several participants received free food rations. Third, I visited official agencies with participants on a regular basis and observed their interactions with public servants. Indeed, I served as their translator [from Russian to German] on a number of occasions and in doing so helped to meet a need that many participants had in communicating with representatives of official organizations. This way, I tried to reduce the inequality of relations between participants who generously shared information about their lives with me and researcher who makes use of this information for the research but had a relatively limited number of opportunities to compensate contributors for their time and efforts.

In addition, I collected, catalogued, and categorized numerous artifacts of the packaging of food products sold in the Russian food stores over the last ten years in Israel and the last six years in Germany. Indeed, many of these exemplars were actually given to me by participants in both contexts who concluded that this was my own unusual hobby. The assembled collection consists of thousands of artifacts organized in four thick binders, representing a multitude of images and product affiliations. This collection proved to be very rich, interesting, and useful in two ways: First, the artifacts provided relevant topics for discussion during the observations and interviews. In particular, tendencies and cultural messages on the packaging were discussed with participants in both settings. This enabled me to understand the participants' perceptions of these products and especially the contradictory, often politically-laden messages found on the packaging.

Second, the collection was a rich resource for conducting the content analyses.

While this extensive collection proved to be very useful and insightful, I concluded that it was necessary to go beyond a semiotic analysis that involves decoding of these visual materials in order to discover their implied different cultural meanings (Barthes 1957, 1964). My rationale in extending the analysis was that it would assist me to understand the dynamics and multiple layers of meanings observable in the field. Indeed, the inclusion of extended periods of participant observation sessions and the interviews proved to be very important components of this study. Thus, collectively, these visual materials as well as the participant observations of food practices developed into a rich resource that complemented the verbal articulations of participants in both contexts.

Framing/bracketing researcher involvement

Due diligence requires that the author reveals that the phenomena investigated were and remain closely related to her own autobiography. I was born in the Ukraine and experienced life in the Soviet system prior to as well as during the Perestroika period. Following emigration to Israel at the age of 18, I lived and studied there for eleven years before coming to Germany, where I have been living for the last six years while undertaking graduate studies. Consequently, all three physical spaces (SU, Israel, and Germany) are very familiar and I drew upon my personal experiences and understandings as additional resources in this research project.

I believe that our socialisation, personality and biography also play an important role in the *work alliance* with interview partners as well as regarding the quality of information we receive during the fieldwork. During the research I was able to develop a kind of *inner compass*, which helped me to position myself optimally in the work alliance, in order to remain as loyal as possible to the research object.

More specifically, my multi-sited background was utilized in a number of distinct ways. First, as documented in the monograph, I am well aware that I was perceived to be a person who had undergone similar emigration experiences and, presumably, shared a common knowledge of different Soviet-Russian symbols, norms, and customs.

Because of my socialisation in the SU my interview partners assumed that I shared the same common knowledge with them, which also contrib-

uted to my *inner compass* as my interview partners felt that their experiences were understood—which seems to me a very important communication basis in the migration situation, when reactions and self-evident thinking categories of migrants are often perceived as incomprehensive, strange or even absurd to the outsider and many migrants have a feeling of being perceived inadequately related to their expectations.

Second, my reflections on relevant categories for analysis undoubtedly involved my own perspectives as well as insights. A part of my *inner compass* as researcher was my own experience when coping with different bodies of knowledge through multiple migration (first to Israel and then to Germany) as well as through my socialisation in the Israeli and in the German academic world. This contributed to my reflection on multiple pressures of dominant discourses towards migrants and expectations towards their “integration” and, secondly, on emotional reactions of my interview partners to such delicate topics as the Holocaust, being Jewish or conceiving capitalism. I presume that similar socialisation and common affiliations assumed by participants played an especially important role in trying to discuss such traumatic topics as their experience with anti-Semitism or painful biographical aspects of their Jewish identity and coping with the Holocaust history. Aside from continuous reflection and bracketing of the nature of my own involvement in the research, I was also an active participant in the academic discourse in migration research in Israel and Germany. The latter participation enabled me to attain a certain degree of distance from the subject of my study. Indeed, self-dialogue and these reflections were extremely helpful in enabling me to deal with the very difficult task of reflecting on such questions as: What does it mean to be Jewish? What is it like to live in a capitalist society? What is the nature of reflection on the nature and meaning of the Soviet winners’ narrative for Jews? Moreover, I discovered that the challenge of writing this monograph, in a foreign language, has had the advantage of enabling me to reflect on habitual concepts and to gain greater precision in their use.

An additional aspect of the *inner compass* refers to the sensibility for the used linguistic categories in Russian as well as to the formulation of investigated topics in a sensitive way which enabled me to create a positive atmosphere and to avoid potentially unpleasant questions (such as “Why did you emigrate to Germany and not to Israel?”). This was helpful in finding a way to build trust and to develop rapport between me and my interview partners.

All interviews were conducted in the Russian language, my mother tongue, and later transcribed by myself. The use of Russian was crucial for the success achieved in the fieldwork, as it enabled participants to articulate their thoughts and feelings in ways they chose to be appropriate as educated intellectuals who have great difficulty expressing themselves at the same level in either Hebrew or German. Moreover, on a number of occasions during the fieldwork, nuances or brief remarks were made that later, during analysis of the transcripts, emerged as very important and influenced directions adopted in the analysis. Such remarks might not have been heard or understood in a foreign language, as they require a certain social experience in the SU and cultural knowledge. More precisely, I wish to note that I had to invest great efforts in both fieldwork settings to speak in the form of Russian spoken by the Soviet intelligentsia to which participants belonged and according to which many participants perceived and measured speaking partners.

In order to preserve the authenticity of the study, I have attempted to remain as faithful as possible in all translations and descriptions to the original Russian meaning and context. In this spirit, original Russian words are retained and reproduced in numerous places throughout the monograph; for example, product names and key symbols of the participants' social reality are preserved in their original form followed by translation into English that appears in brackets along with citation of the original language—Russian, Hebrew or German. Hopefully, this will enable the reader to gain some insight into the “social worlds” of the subjects of this research (Schütze 2002).

Recommendations from personal contacts and acquaintances in both field settings as well as from participants themselves were the primary resources for introductions and gaining access (entry) to participants. Entry obtained through personal contacts assisted me to arrange the initial meetings and contributed to the feeling of informal communication, which I believe helped participants to feel open and willing to share their views. However, even when I was presented by informants in the German fieldwork setting in Russian, language itself was not always sufficient for achieving acceptance. Many participants were suspicious of the fact that I came from Israel, thinking, perhaps, that I might be judgmental about their decision to emigrate to Germany or, even, would try to convince them to

re-immigrate to Israel.⁷ Furthermore, while most participants wanted to remain in contact with me and were very curious about life in Israel, they tried continually to reveal only the best sides of their life in Germany.

Indeed, fear of judgment and the perception of me as representative of the State of Israel were especially evident in one insightful case. This occurred at the very beginning of the fieldwork when I was interviewing a number of persons living in one house. Immediately upon my entrance into the house, even before I was introduced by the informant and without any prompting from me, Fira, whom I had never met, stated the following:

[Speaking aloud in a slow, pathetic tone] “Well, *we did make a mistake!* [meaning: when we came to Germany].”

Her husband, followed: “But we are proud of *you!*” [meaning: me, as person who made the *right* choice to emigrate and to live in Israel].

While this is an extreme example, this first sentence of our meeting is representative of the fear and mistrust I sensed in some migrants upon meeting me, initially, as a researcher. On the other hand, such a perception can also be seen as indicative of pre-existing ideas and *imaginary relationships* (or inner dialogue) between personal migration stories and ideas about what should be shared with different Others (i.e. Germans, local Jews in Germany, Israelis, Russian-speaking Israelis). Interpretations of these perceptions are discussed in the final chapter of this manuscript. Yet, after three-four months of meeting, participants started to open up, exhibit trust, and see in me as more than someone categorized under one certain category (e.g., as Israeli or researcher).

In this regard, it was interesting to follow how most participants created their own version of why I resided in Germany and the nature of my work. One of the most certain signs of having established rapport and gaining acceptance by participants—not only as a researcher but on a personal level with all of my family members—was a new question that replaced previous self-justifications when I was asked on numerous occasions: “So, have you decided to remain in Germany?” Through developing mutual respect and a sensitive researcher and participant “work alliance,” our discussions became informal friendships and productive dialogues

⁷ At least two families thought that I was an agent of the Sochnut (The Jewish Agency) or the Mosad (Israeli Secret Service) charged with learning about the life of ex-Soviet Jews in Germany.

during which we discussed different aspects of life in Germany (Inowlocki and Bernstein 2006, Resch and Steinert 2003).

In general, I was amazed by the openness and intensity of the cooperation I received throughout the entire period of fieldwork in both contexts. Participants expressed their willingness, even desire, to speak for as long and in as detailed a manner as possible about different aspects of their new lives. One indicator of such interest, indeed commitment, was the atmosphere within which our meetings were conducted. On nearly every occasion, our discussions took place around a richly laid-out dining table, always followed by dessert, even if the interview was prolonged and lasted from three and half to five hours. A second indicator was that people gave me clean wrapping papers of food products and Russian food stores advertisements. They also informed me about different Russian forums and activities in the city, invited me to celebrations of their birthdays, presented me to other participants, recommended literature in Russian that might be applicable to this research project, even if not scientific in nature.

In my opinion, one of reasons for the participants' interest and active involvement in this project was the fact that these are highly educated people who are not employed in jobs for which they were trained or which challenge them intellectually. Hence, they lack a sense of professional and social fulfillment in the new society. Moreover, because of language difficulties and rare informal contacts with members of the dominant resident groups in both contexts, many seemed to be motivated by a sense that it was very important that the *outside world* [i.e., non-Russian speakers] understand their *real educated status*, cultural capital, views, thoughts, and problems they were confronting in the new society. That is, above all, there seems to be a need for them to be recognized and understood by persons in their new environment.

The topics discussed in this research touch upon some of the most strongly felt needs of persons involved in the migration process (e.g., Schiffauer 2003). This was especially true in the German case study, as many interview partners, women in particular, often were in tears when recalling special situations encountered upon arrival and in the transition to living in a new land. Further, in retrospective reflection, they seemed to consider these past events as quite different from their current situation. This affirmed the false nature of claims made about the "irreversible nature of historic times" when "the past can be modified by the present" (Moses 1989, 39 quoting Boyarin 1994, 11). Moreover, many descriptions and

reflections shared about experiences were closely linked to their ideas about new positioning and desire for future scenarios. As Breckner stated: "The construction of a biography functions as a way out of past experiences in order to find direction for the present and future" (Breckner 2000, 92).

Of course, an evolving work alliance can involve very sensitive questions and unresolved problems, especially when the researcher receives especially rich and sensitive empirical data. Two such issues involve the nature of the participants' authority in the research and *ownership* of thoughts shared with the researcher. One insightful situation in which the work alliance with a participant was negotiated involved potentially contested ownership of material shared. This occurred at the very beginning of the fieldwork in Germany in 2002 when near the beginning of the first meeting with Sergei he stated:

Sergei: "I can also interview you."

JB: "Sure, why not [pause]."

Sergei: "I will tell you everything, in detail, and you can then hire me as your assistant in the university [this could be] something technical. [After all,] I need a job."

JB:(confused): "You know I don't have any position myself at the university, but [smiling] as soon as I become a professor I will appoint you immediately as a professor, too (Sergei's laugh seems to be indicative that he understands the absurdity of my sentence, then we both laugh)."

JB: (seriously): "Is working a problem here?"

Sergei: "Actually I don't know German very well, but you know it really is THE problem [the interview begins]."

Sergei presented himself as an educated person and hinted at the onset that he was unwilling to function in a hierarchical relationship between researcher and investigated person. My reaction to this well-known problem in social research was a spontaneous attempt to dismantle the tension and to reveal that I did not intend to establish or function through such a relationship.

My *inner compass* helped me to understand that to a certain degree I and my interview partners pursue a similar goal, i. e. to describe social reality and ways of self-definition and self-positioning of participants loyal to their own concepts and thinking categories as my contribution to the academic concepts and theories developed before. Conscious of the "valuable gift"

of information received from the participants as researchers, I attempted to preserve, respect, give voice to, if not empower their views and contributions to this study by setting them in the foreground of this entire research report. I do this by means of numerous and extensive citations of the participants' views. Additionally, during the course of this research, I sought to advance a holistic approach that, among other things, did not detach, for example, personal collective affiliations through the food consumption from the participants' other life experiences living in Germany or in Israel, nor from experiences in their former life.

Generally, I acted throughout the fieldwork through what Bertaux referred to as "the saturation process" (Bertaux 1981, 186-189): wherein the content of stories, behaviors, and activities repeated themselves to the point of researcher anticipation and repeated confirmation of responses. Thus, it was this saturation process that defined the temporal parameters of the research.

Selecting the research population

The following characteristics of the population studied required special consideration in selecting interviewees: The large number of migrants who emigrated to Israel and to Germany; the variegated structure of immigration (a factor noted by immigrants themselves); and varied demographics, such as: age, education, family composition, cultural perceptions, and original place of residence. Therefore, it was necessary to define and to apply uniform criteria in selection of participants from such a varied population. This process started in Israel and was then applied in Germany in the following manner:

Israel

In order to solicit the study's research population, I began my search in my immediate surroundings - among relatives, friends, and acquaintances. As a result, data-gathering was conducted among a group of immigrants from the Ukraine and Russia who lived in Haifa at the time of the investigations were conducted. Haifa is a city that absorbed a large proportion of the immigration from the CIS over the past decade. In fact, among Israel's three largest cities—Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem, Haifa has become the

symbol of the latest wave of immigration and is presented as a Russian city in the Russian language press.

The research population selected consisted of 30 families, comprised of 55 persons,⁸ all of whom were 48-65 years of age or older, though most were above 50 years of age.⁹ This allows us to associate them with one generation and to assume that they share common memories. Their children were between 15-38 years of age at the time of the study. For the most part, most of the research population knew one another in their locations of origin or became acquainted in Israel through participation in institutions such as the Ulpan [Hebrew language school].

All the participants in this case study had earned a higher education degree in the fields of technology or humanities. Most of the interviewees were not employed in their original profession, made their living in jobs that do not require extensive education, and, consequently, were overqualified for these jobs. For instance, an engineer and former specialist in thermomechanics, formerly employed in the SU in a heat engineering factory (employing 500 employees), assembles batteries in a company developing a new kind of electric motor to be used in environmentally friendly automobiles; a construction engineer is employed as a liaison in a nursing home for the elderly; and, a mathematician works as a typesetter in a printing shop.

The population studied in Israel arrived between 1990 and 1995. During this period, there was a disintegration of the larger states of the SU and development of a new constituency, the CIS, which bears the entire economic, social, and cultural burden of the former SU.

There are three social circles among the Israeli research population, each of which shared and preserved similar characteristics. While friendly relationships existed between members, I do not claim this to be a consolidated network. Accordingly, the research study undertook an independent investigation of each social circle as a separate case study.

⁸ There were 26 couples and three unmarried women.

⁹ One of the spouses was a little bit older or younger than this age in several cases.

Germany

The town of Standstadt¹⁰ in North Rhine/Westphalia selected for this project absorbed many immigrants from the CIS over the past decade. The entire Jewish community of Standstadt numbers almost 2000 members and it is an active Jewish community. One important reason for the choice of this city is that nearly all of the Jews in Standstadt are from the former Soviet Union, except for a few German families who converted to Judaism. This stands in contrast to other cities, such as Berlin or Frankfurt, where there are Jews from a variety of backgrounds and longevity in the location.

One very active resident facilitated my entry into the Standstadt community. We met during the fieldwork in Israel when she came to visit relatives and friends. Access to her network of friends and acquaintances in Germany facilitated greatly my entry into the field—the first, perhaps most important, as well as difficult stage in anthropological fieldwork. Introductions by this well-connected informant to potential participants established a good basis for development of the necessary condition for qualitative research—attaining mutual trust and rapport with participants. Through information obtained through a few key persons, I was able to complete preliminary work over a two-month period (prior to coming to Germany for an extended stay) during which time I conducted initial observations in the community and participated in several social meetings in the homes of informants where I endeavored to meet other participants.

In order to establish some resemblance between the two groups, I decided to choose participants in Germany according to the same criteria applied in Israel, noted above. Therefore, I selected 30 families, consisting of 57 individuals¹¹ within the 46-65 year old age group, who had earned a higher education in the technology or humanities fields. All interviewees emigrated from large cities of Russia and the Ukraine over the last ten years. It is important to remember that whereas in Israel the large immigration wave arrived in 1990-95, emigration to Germany began in 1995.

10 A fictitious name for the city in Germany has been created for ethical reasons.

11 There were three single women in addition to 27 couples.

1.5 Comparative view of the two populations

The following comparison of the characteristics of these two populations is ground in the professional literature that served as the basis for this comparative study:

- 1) Jewish affiliation was the main criterion applied by both receiving societies for decisions made to accept immigrants and for their gaining immigrant status. Yet, when living in their original setting, Jews from the SU saw themselves first and foremost as part of a specific social class (the intelligentsia) and only after that as Jews (Oswald and Voronkov 2000, 343). Yet, ironically, while immigrants in both contexts sought to actively preserve the Soviet-Russian cultural habitus, for the most part they were perceived by the resident population of the host-receiving society and presented in the media first and foremost as “Russians,” not as Jews (Becker and Körber 2001; Elias and Bernstein 2007; Golden 1996; Oswald and Voronkov 2000).
- 2) An assumed moral basis was present for the immigration of Jews to Germany and to Israel. In Israel, according to the Zionist ideology that underpins the Jewish state, immigrants are defined to be persons returning to their national ancestral homeland (Golden 1996, 2). In Germany, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, claims are made for the historical obligation to rebuild the German Jewish community (Shutze and Rapoport 2000, 351).
- 3) While Russian-speaking Jews were granted formal legal “invitations” in both cases to immigrate, in practice they reported feeling unwanted, in both cases (Golden 1996; Oswald and Voronkov 2000).
- 4) The main reason given by immigrants for emigration from the former SU was, in both instances, the perception that the economic and social structures in their land of origin were crumbling (Lewin-Epstein, Roi, and Ritterband 1997; Oswald and Voronkov 2000, 338-9).
- 5) In both cases, immigrants moved from a socialist or post-socialist society to a society proclaiming to be capitalistic, pluralistic, democratic, and multi-cultural. And, in both cases, immigrants’ standard of living rose considerably; they were exposed to new phenomenon—abundance; and were able to express themselves in a new way in a dynamic culture of material consumption.
- 6) Most of the participants (of the age-group studied) in both contexts were highly qualified but no longer employed in their original profession trade or profession, and their income was low in comparison with resident

populations with similar background (Carmon 1996; Cohen and Kogan 2005; Oswald and Voronkov 2000; Parkes 2000). In both cases, immigrants from the CIS of the age group investigated reported experiencing a certain degree of “social marginalization” and felt unable to realize their professional potential (Oswald and Voronkov 2000). Finally, after 15 years of residence, in both contexts, most immigrants still experienced language difficulties.

7) In both cases, immigrants participate in developing and thus influence the Russian-speaking enclave. Such participation includes intensive and ongoing interaction, via transnational networks, with compatriots, relatives, and friends in the CIS, Israel, Germany, or USA.

1.6 General characteristics of the investigated groups

More than 1,700,000 Jews emigrated from the SU since 1989 (Remennick 2006, 69). Today, this group represents “the single most educated community on the global migration map” (ibid., 71). Israel accepted an influx of immigrants that has significantly increased its population. Today, out of five million Jewish Israelis, one million speak Russian (c- 20 percent of the Jewish population of the state). Most of the newcomers completed an academic education, are of employable age (48-65), and are not employed in their original professional field (Cohan and Kogan 2005; Levin Epstein 1997; Lissak 1996; Ritterband 1997). They tend to live in large cities where, due to financial constraints, they reside in the less attractive areas of cities; for example, the Hadar neighborhood in Haifa where most of the participants in this study lived (Carmon 1996; Levin Epstein 1997; Lissak 1996; Ritterband 1997).

Germany has accepted about 200,000 Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants to date and more than one million ethnic Germans from the former SU (Cohen and Kogan 2005; Schoeps 2001). The total number of Jews represents 0.25 per cent of the entire population of Germany today, which numbers about 80 million persons. However, of the number of Jews who arrived, only c-50 percent became members of Jewish community.¹² Today

12 Matrilineal Jewish affiliation was deemed necessary for acceptance in the Jewish community. Thus, the father's Jewish affiliation was sufficient to acquire the status of Kontin-

there are approximately 108,000 Russian-speaking Jewish community members and they are a majority of the members of the Jewish community in Germany.

Previous research found that immigrants left the Russian Federation for a number of negative reasons, including limitations on civil liberties, discrimination and anti-Semitism, concern over the children's and the family's future due to increasing uncertainty accompanying the disintegration of the SU, and socio-economic difficulties (Levin- Epstein, Roi and Ritterband 1997; Rivkina 1996, 162). Other reasons that participants mentioned include the growing number of relatives in Israel and impressions after having visited there, as well as the reaction to the "open door" policy adopted as part of the Perestroika process (Gitelman 1997, 32).

Russian-speaking cultural enclaves thrive in Israeli and German societies for a variety of reasons: the size of the Russian-speaking population; the arrival of Russian tourists—including artists, actors, poets, and musicians; accessibility of Russian broadcasts (Russian cable channels) and newspapers; and the understanding exhibited by Israeli as well as German society and their authorities of the immigrants' need to have their own means of cultural expression. All of this reflects the engagement, indeed struggle, both within the community-enclave as well as with the receiving society to formulate the immigrants' unique identity (Lissak 1996).

As we shall see throughout this research report, the foods displayed on immigrants' dining tables reflect these processes. Enclaves involve interaction with fellow immigrant neighbors, including strong evidence of a high degree of self-sufficiency achieved in provision of different kinds of services and businesses that serve this particular ethnic group (Gold 1997, 261—284). In fact, these cultural enclaves include every kind of institution necessary for individual and community life.

The main circumstances that influenced the character of the settlement process of the last immigration wave to Israel and Germany can be summarized as follows:

First, the *Perestroika* process, the opening of the borders, and technological developments made it possible for Jewish immigrants to remain in contact, post-migration, with their social connections and networks in their land of origin. This is a strikingly different situation from the fate of immigrants in the 1970s and even with the 1989-1991 wave, when people emi-

gentflüchtlinge for many immigrants, but not for acceptance by the German Jewish community.

grated “forever” without knowing, if they would ever see their friends and relatives again. In contrast, late in the first half of the 1990s and even more so after 1995, intensive efforts were invested by migrants to maintain the stability of social networks so that they could remain in contact with people who remained in the CIS as well as to keep up with current events in the CIS through the media. In addition, a significant decrease in travel costs and increase in post-migration standard of living made it possible for immigrants to visit, often frequently, as well as to manage properties they owned in their country of origin.

The second factor that assisted the settlement process was the legitimization of the multicultural character of the society and lifestyles that emerged in the latter portion of the 20th century worldwide as well as in the host societies. This facilitated the emergence, rapid establishment, and growth of minority groups’ infrastructures in the public sphere, such as ethnic enclaves.

Third, as noted by Portes, Haller and Guarnizo (2001), the role of transport technology and electronic communications made the exposure to “near-instantaneous” normative economic, cultural, and political exchanges possible and facilitated as well an intense level of contacts when distances are not great and can be easily, cheaply, and rapidly bridged. Some of the exemplars of how these developments integrated into migrants’ lives include translations of advertising, inexpensive telephone services, rapid import of goods from the CIS, and even participation in CIS elections – as evident from lines of migrants waiting at Russian consulates in Israel and Germany.

Finally, one should also take into consideration the *negative* motive that drove some forms of transnational immigrant entrepreneurship. The limited if not non-existent opportunities for immigrants to be employed in their original professions in the local market also influenced the mobilization of all their available social and cultural resources as an economic success strategy. To a certain degree, these seem to be creative and “worthy” alternatives for migrants’ experience that assisted them resist being disqualified or humiliated, which they experienced all too frequently (Kaplan 2000; Razin and Schlinberg 2001).

All these factors enabled the establishment, steady evolution, and success of economic and cultural enclaves, in general, and immigrants’ food enterprises, in particular. These efforts were reinforced by Russian-speaking immigrants who emigrated during the 1970s and 1980s who, too,

(for the first time since their arrival) joined, participated in enclave activities, and in doing so strengthened the enclave, in general.

As a new phenomenon, we should note the scale and meaning of the Russian-speaking communities and enclaves in Israel and Germany. In the case of Israel, Russian-speakers now make up 20 percent of the Jewish-Israeli population. Common terms of reference used in the media—*Russim* [Russians, Heb.] or “Russian Ghetto”—might seem to be unusual in a country that has an official policy of unification and integration of Diaspora communities into (the myth of) the Israeli “melting pot.” That is, presentation via retention of diaspora-ethnic affiliation is so unusual as to suggest that the Russian-speaking migrant enclave in Israel is presented as Other, perhaps because they are perceived to be a demographic and axiological threat to collective Jewish identity (Elias and Bernstein 2007). This may be due to the fact that Russian-speaking Jews in Israel continue to practice non-kosher food practices and cultivate Russian culture. In doing so, they “break” with the expectation that they will integrate through certain prescribed terms of modification to be the “right” type of Israeli Jew (Golden 2002). Indeed, concerns are frequently expressed about the fact that Russian is heard everywhere and pork is eaten by Russians, a behaviour that penetrates and threatens to destroy the society built by Israel’s pioneering generation.

Numerous and very interesting studies were conducted in Israel about this community since the last wave of immigration from the SU/CIS (e.g., Al-Haj and Leshem 2000; Elias 2005 2008; Elias and Lemish 2008, 2008a; Fialkova and Yelenevskaya 2003; Gitelman 1997; Horowitz 1998; Lerner 2003; Lissak and Leshem 1995; Lomsky and Rapoport 2000; Markowitz 1998; Mittelberg and Borshevsky 2004; Rapoport, Lomsky-Feder and Heider 2006; Yelenevskaya and Fialkova 2005, Zilberg 2002). These innovative and sensitive investigations have produced important insights into this group as well as exposed contradictions and conflicts between cultural perceptions and political narratives of different groups within Israeli society and Russian-speakers (Erdreich, Lerner and Rapoport 2005; Golden 1996, 2001, 2001a, 2002; Lerner, Rapoport and Lomsky-Feder 2007; Roberman 2007; Yelenevskaya and Fialkova 2004; Yelenevskaya 2005).

To date no cultural anthropological studies have been undertaken that focus on the lived experiences of *being Jewish* in the SU as compared with post-migration transformations after the emigration to Israel. Moreover, there are few anthropological works that reveal the fluid, changing, and

contradictory nature of the personal-collective affiliations of the investigated group by means of the authentic voices of participants (*ibid.*). This also serves to complement macro—and all too often frozen theoretical categories, such as—integration, assimilation, enculturation, and adaptation. Furthermore, none of the qualitative studies known to the author have verified and illuminated the problematic nature of the theoretical approaches applied in the sense of their capacity to explain different aspects of Russian speakers' life in Israel and Germany through “thick description” and findings about participants' own worldviews. And, when such analyses have been applied in studies of the investigated group,¹³ in general, none have revealed the contradictions involved in transnational action.

In Germany, Russian-speaking Jews are assigned “Kontingent-flüchtlinge” status [contingent refugees, Ger].¹⁴ Accordingly, they are granted permission to live in Germany due to moral obligations encumbered following the Holocaust and other WWII-related events (Gilman 1995; Joppke 1998; Shutze and Rapoport 2000). The expectation is that the immigrants will become part of German society in order to contribute to the rejuvenation, enrichment, and reinforcement of local Jewish minority communities (Dietz 2003; Schütze and Rapoport 2000).

As in Israel, the Russian enclave in Germany raised serious concerns among the resident Jewish German community. This is because local Jewish residents define themselves in predominately-religious terms and cannot accept the non-kosher Russian food practices of Russian-speaking immigrants or treat mixed couples as recognized members of this community. Yet, the Russian-speaking population is now the majority of persons associated with the Jewish community in Germany. In some German cities (such as Potsdam, Mönchengladbach or Wuppertal) there are Jewish communities comprised entirely of Russian speakers. It remains to be seen how the resident and Russian-speaking sectors of the German Jewish community will negotiate and reconcile differences in their perceptions of the cultural, religious, historical, and ethnic Jewishness.

No ethnographic studies had been published about the “lived Jewish culture” of Jewish communities in Germany prior to 2005 (Hegner 2008, 13). However, since the beginning of the 1990's numerous studies had

13 This was the case primarily in regard to Russian-speakers in Germany, but not in Israel.

14 Paragraph 16 of the Basic Law, known as “Kontingentflüchtlingengesetz” states: “The politically persecuted enjoy the right of asylum” (Parkes 2000, 301).

been conducted about Russian-speaking Jews in Germany that highlight diverse and interesting aspects about their life in the new society (e.g., Bade and Troen 1993; Becker and Körber 2001; Cohen and Kogan 2005; Doomernik 1997; Grüber and Rüßler 2000; Kessler 1996; Oswald and Voronkov 2000; Schoeps, Jasper and Vogt 1996, 1999; Schütze 2000; Schütze and Rapoport 2000). Yet, among these publications, there are very few qualitative studies that provide “thick descriptions” (Geertz 1973) or ethnographic analyses and insights into “doing being Jewish” (Inowlocki 2000) by different of social actors, namely ex-Soviet Jews as compared to so-called residential Jews (e.g., Becker 2001; Darieva 2003, 2004; Elias 2004; Yelenevskaya 2005). Both these groups have differing perceptions of their Jewishness, embody different *social worlds*, as well as, continue to be influenced by socialization to and life in two significantly different historical contexts; namely, the SU with a long history of prohibitions on the practice of Jewish religion, culture, and traditions, and Germany with its history as the perpetrators of WWII and the Holocaust. Thus, in order to understand what often appear to be conflicts as well as questions and reflections on the nature of mutually stressful, seemingly unbridgeable cultural differences (between newcomers and resident Jews), it is especially important to understand what it means for Russian-speaking Jews in Germany to be Jewish. Prior to doing so, in the remainder of this monograph, the following is a brief summary of the elements that composed the Soviet Jews’ pre-emigration identity as seen both by Jews and dominant groups in the SU.

1.7 Transporting Jewish identity from the SU

There is a common impression, mistaken in my view, that Jews from the CIS lack any sense of Jewish identity, cultivate exclusively Russian culture, and instrumentalized their Jewishness in order to emigrate for economic reasons to Israel or Germany. Gitelman who studied this group’s Jewish identity claimed that it, like any other kind of identity, is neither universal nor permanent, rather it has a changing nature (Gitelman 1995, 35). He and other researchers are convinced that Jews in the SU identified themselves as Jews in a singular and specific manner (Chervyakov, Gitelman and Shapiro 1997; Gitelman 1997; Lewin-Epstein, Roi, and Ritterband

1997; Rivkina Shapiro Chervyakov 1996). Deprived of its cultural and religious content, “being Jewish was something they were constantly reminded by their neighbors and co-workers and the authorities; it was not necessarily a consequence of their own choosing” (Lewin-Epstein, Roi, and Ritterband 1997, 12).

According to Gitelman’s survey of immigrants from the last wave of immigration, some three-fourths of the immigrants reported that they had felt at home in the SU all or almost all of their lives (Gitelman 1995, 26). Although they were classified in the SU as “domestic foreigners” (Levinson 1997, 12; Slezkine 2005), Gilman (1995, 19) suggested that this status was similar to the classification assigned Jews in Germany as “integrierte Fremdkörper” [integrated foreign bodies, Ger.], when Jews were perceived to be members of the SU “intelligentsia.” Indeed, despite different forms of discrimination, Jews were overrepresented in almost all spheres of cultural life in the SU/CIS (Slezkine 2005). Indeed, according to an interview published in the magazine *Humanite*, Michael Gorbachov claimed the following:

“While Jews account for 0.69 percent of the USSR population, they were represented in its political and cultural life on a scale of at least 10—20 percent” (Weinerman 1997, 215).

In this regard, one may claim that the vacuum left by cultural or religious Jewishness was filled with the claim of *cultural Russianness*, as discussed in Chapter Six. A survey conducted among Russians that included the question—what is Jewish identity?—produced the following conclusions: Most Russians do not see Jews as being particularly different from themselves in regard to language or other cultural aspects, but maintain that Jews differ in their interpretation of norms and general values. Jews are perceived to be persons who possess talent, are educated, cultured (in reference to Russian education and culture), avoid physical work, and are above average in economic status (Levinson 1997, 223). According to these common perceptions, being Jewish can be easily reduced to the familiar, rigid stereotype of *clever and rich Jews*.

By means of comparison, very few ethnographic or qualitative studies have investigated the Jews’ own perceptions and responses to complex questions about what it meant to be Jewish in the SU, as well as, post-emigration transformations of such perceptions (Gitelman 1996; Gold 1996; Hegner 2008; Slezkine 2005; Sternshis 2006). Thus, in implementing multiple interviews as a research methodology, one of the goals of this study

was to understand what Jewishness meant for concrete social actors, the participants in this study, and how their sense/understanding of Jewishness has been transformed after emigration to Israel and Germany?

1.8 Overview of the book

Chapter Two deals with one of the main topics of this research project, namely, the participants' responses to the transition from a socialist society, with its deficit food supply system, to two capitalistic societies characterized by, for our purposes, abundant, stable, accessible food supply systems. It is true that as citizens of a formerly closed society, the Soviet Union, Jewish migrants were not very well acquainted with the characteristics of Western abundance, consumer culture, and mass consumption that seem to be "the dominant context, through which people in modern societies relate to the material world" (Miller 1984, 4). This chapter presents analyses of their everyday consumption practices within the Russian-speaking milieu, and in particular procurement/consumption conducted in Russian food stores. This is especially the case with migrants in Germany who actively relate to "life in the capitalist world," experiment with its components, and presumably, undergo behavioral changes after living in the socialistic system.

Participants' adjustment to life in a consumption-centered society is the focus of Chapter Three. The analysis begins with a reconstruction of Soviet consumption patterns as *living memories* on the basis of the participants' retrospective views of their past ways of living in the SU. This discussion is grounded in relevant research literature and includes documentation of the different ways participants responded to the question: How were consumption ideas, patterns, and skills acquired by immigrants in the SU adjusted and modified in their post-migration surroundings in Israel and Germany? Serving as a basis for discussions in Chapters Four and Five, this chapter highlights dreams of material prosperity transported by the migrants from the SU. Finally, this chapter analyses how Soviet terminology, developed during periods of economic shortages in the SU, is reactivated and instrumentalized in the new contexts.

Chapter Four presents analyses of the participants' perceptions of multiple and sometimes contested use of images in marketing food products

found in Russian food stores in both contexts. Special attention is devoted to the analysis of food product images that mediate multiple narratives, cultural and social affiliations, *imaginary home* and *homeland's scenarios* in real praxis, and their “place-making practices” (Ray 2004, 5). This discussion relates to such concepts as *home* and *homelands*, *proletarian food*, *food as a Soviet communist paradise*, *food as powerful political icon of the Soviet empire* and, in the Israeli case, food consumption as embodying a new political icon of Jewish Zionist *homeland*. New and borrowed food images of the *contemporary nationalized Russian homeland* are presented and contradictions with Jewish history and affiliation analyzed. The chapter concludes with discussion of the multiple meanings of Russian food stores.

Based on the previous chapter's discussion of multiple imageries within Russian food stores in Israel and Germany, Chapter Five analyzes Russian food stores as a contradictory transnational framework. This analysis will demonstrate how different national narratives co-exist within this framework and often struggle for their role, place, and significance in regard to notions of the collective identities of migrants in Israel and Germany. The key symbols of pork and caviar consumption are focused on as special national foods as they cross borders and manifest identities in different societal contexts. The rapid growth of a broad range of non-kosher food stores is discussed in terms of their contribution to the struggle of the ethnic Russian-speaking Jewish transnational enclave. This struggle involves attempts to gain recognition for pork as a legitimate practice of the Jewish national collective. This analysis will demonstrate how changes in political participation influence local hierarchies of power in relation to food habits of resident populations. Finally, the generalized labeling reference to “Russian” is deconstructed into the different components of Russian food stores within the transnational framework. This enables us to proceed to a critical discussion of two theoretical concepts—*transnational entrepreneurship* and *ethnic entrepreneurial niches* as a part of an enclave; and proposal of an alternative concept—*virtual transnational enclave*—that seems to be most appropriate for the phenomena investigated here, and beyond.

Chapter Six examines the different contents of Soviet Jewishness as transported, reconstructed, and performed by the participants. Four central elements applied in construction of Jewishness transported and developed in the new context are identified and analyzed. First, Soviet ideas of *innate Jewishness* and *visible Otherness*; including their construction and contradiction in comparison with local Israeli and German ideas about ethnicity that the

migrants confronted post-migration. Second, the construction and stigmatization of *significant Jewish Otherness* or *engraved Jewish identity* that utilize different anti-Semitic strategies and complimentary coping strategies developed by Jews while living in the SU and after migration to Israel and Germany. Third, the *emotional attachment to the State of Israel* of Russian-speaking Jewish identity, which functioned as an exclusion mechanism during the participants' lives in the SU, assumed different dimensions and directions following migration to Germany. The final component of Russian-speaking Jewishness—the paradoxical ways of *being Jewish* through affiliation with the Soviet Russian cultural elite—was transformed following migration to Israel and Germany. The summary discussion of these four components, as they developed in two different contexts—in Israel and Germany—focuses on the concept of *triple trans-Jewish affiliation* as lived by Russian-speaking Jews in the two receiving contexts.

Chapter Seven deals with the meaning of WWII and the Holocaust in everyday life as well as the transnational practices of Russian-speaking Jews living in Germany. This discussion examines the co-existence, integration, and contradictions between three contested narratives involved in construction of the collective and personal identities of ex-Soviet Jews living primarily in Germany, as compared to those in Israel: The Soviet victory narrative, the Holocaust narrative, and the German narrative about the country's Nazi past. The analyses presented in this chapter compare the contextualization, re-actualization, and amendment of the perception of the Holocaust and WWII by Russian-speaking Jews in Germany with that constructed by Jews in Israel. The goal in this chapter is to demonstrate how participants interact in a situation in which different bodies of knowledge, different official versions of remembrance of the past events, different political narratives, and different constructions of social worlds, usually taken for granted, meet and clash in the inner phenomenological domain as well as in the transnational biographic experiences of migrants.

Chapter Eight, the final chapter of the monograph, presents and discusses the multiple contradictions as well as paradoxes of the simultaneously existent and contested *social worlds* in which Russian-speaking Jews live in both new contexts. The analysis identifies and discusses the following ways of self-positioning and individual strategies of coping with paradoxes: First, multiple affiliations and images that had a supportive function in developing the individual's positive sense of belonging in the SU that evolved into a contested and painful terrain post-migration. Second, mi-

grants' perceptions of the dominant normative thinking and hierarchical structures learned in both contexts; for example, conflicts between what they are expected to learn from host residents about life and the *right* forms of agency in the new society and the humiliations of being perceived by host-residents as *semi-adults* in contrast to their self-perception as educated people who are mature social agents. Particular situations and different coping strategies applied by the migrants in Israel and Germany illuminate the existential challenges faced in their daily lives. The third topic discussed is the especially delicate issue of the emigration of Russian-speaking Jews to Germany, the land of the Holocaust, rather than to Israel. The affiliation with participants in Israel, too, is analyzed on the basis of the participants' views, as articulated in the interviews. And, finally, the chapter concludes with a proposal of the contributions of the research as well as potential directions for further development of the research in the future.

2 Transnationalism and capitalism: Migrants from the former Soviet Union and their experiences in Germany and Israel

This chapter explores the participants' perceptions and cultural constructions of *capitalism* or the *capitalistic West* after their emigration to Germany and to Israel. Not only is their migration accompanied by significant transformations in all spheres of the migrants' everyday life, it offered them a unique opportunity to reflect on knowledge as well as behavioral schemes and values normally taken for granted and to act on the basis of these reflections. The special circumstances of the population investigated are that this is a case of emigration across the previously tightly closed borders of the Iron Curtain from what Markowitz (1991, 638) referred to as a "total system" to capitalist societies characterized by abundance and consumption-oriented cultures.

As former citizens of a closed society, the SU, participants lacked experience in the actual realities of living everyday amidst Western abundance, in a consumer culture, and with mass consumption. According to Miller this "is now the dominant context through which people in modern societies relate to the material world" (Appadurai 1996; Miller 1987, 4). Thus, emigration to a Western society led this group to encounter an absolutely new phenomenon and required that they develop strategies to cope with it on a permanent basis.

Moreover, throughout their life in the SU, they were exposed to the powerful Soviet political machine's propagandizing about life in the West. Thus, migrants were socialized to view the Western society through negative deconstructions in which the West was the symbol, *par excellence*, of evil social regimes and the wrong way of life. The "decaying capitalist West," as it was called in the Soviet media, was permanently juxtaposed to such frequent appellations as the "positive," "right," "humane," "just," "equal," "spiritual Soviet socialist system." For example, a poster purchased by a participant in a Russian bookstore in Israel is a reprint of a 1948 poster