

Immigration to Israel Ideology vs. Reality

Research over the past decade on migration in many countries has indicated "push-pull" factors in migration patterns. The areas to which migrants move are considered more attractive areas. Anderson (1955) found that the relative number of migrants to a given area from several other locations would vary directly with the "force of attraction" of the receiving area. Stinner and DeJong (1969) in a study of southern Negro migration found that the dominant explanation of migration lies in the "pull" of economic opportunities in the northern and western parts of the United States. Kirschenbaum and Comay (1972) attempted to find the components of attraction of development towns in Israel and found that the employment situation and social and economic welfare of the town assume primary significance in determining the attractiveness of

the towns. Thomas (1972), in an international study on migration, found that developed countries have a large net inflow of migrants while developing countries have a large net outflow of migrants. Sly (1972) also found that migrants move because they have higher aspirations for upward mobility. Alperovich, Bergsman and Ehrmann (1977) found, through an econometric model of migration in a study of metropolitan areas in the United States, that, in migration, the role of economic pull is stronger than economic push.

Immigration to Israel

At the time of the establishment of Israel (15 May 1948) the Jewish population was about 649,600. Up to the end of 1951 689,739 Jews immigrated to Israel. The total number of Jews immigrating to Israel between 1948-1980 was 1,695,104.

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Table 1
Immigration to Israel 1948-1980
by Continent of Birth

Year	Total	Percent of Europe-America	Total Asia-Africa
1948	101,819	85.6	14.4
1949	239,576	52.7	47.3
1950	170,215	50.5	49.5
1951	175,129	29.2	70.8
1952	24,369	29.7	70.3
1953	11,326	28.3	71.7
1954	18,370	13.8	86.2
1955	37,478	8.9	91.3
1956	56,234	14.0	86.0
1957	71,224	58.0	42.0
1958	27,082	55.3	44.7
1959	23,895	66.3	33.7
1960	24,510	70.5	29.5
1961	47,638	52.9	47.1
1962	61,328	22.6	77.4
1963	64,364	31.8	68.2

Central Bureau of Statistics
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1964	54,716	58.4	41.6
1965	30,736	53.6	46.4
1966	15,730	57.7	42.3
1967	14,327	38.2	61.8
1968	20,544	31.6	68.4
1969	37,804	56.0	44.0
1970	36,750	62.8	37.2
1971	41,930	75.4	24.6
1972	55,888	86.4	13.6
1973	54,886	89.5	10.5
1974	31,981	90.0	10.0
1975	20,028	87.6	12.4
1976	19,754	86.2	13.8
1977	21,429	84.9	15.1
1978	26,394	87.0	13.0
1979	37,222	74.7	25.3
1980	20,428	75.4	24.6

Bachi notes that immigration to Israel can be explained by various "pull" factors. The establishment of the State of Israel was followed by the abolition of all limitations on Jewish immigration. The Law of Return (1950), which granted to every Jew the right to immigrate to Israel, and the Law of Citizenship (1952), which enabled every Jew to become a citizen as soon as he sets foot on Israeli soil, encouraged immigration.

The renewal of the Jewish State had a very strong ideological impact on wide sectors of Diaspora Jewry (Bachi, 1974). After 1967, an increased feeling of security about Israel's future brought about an increase of immigration from Western Europe and North America.

Bachi also notes various push factors from Diaspora countries to Israel. These included, Arab-national movements which created a sense of insecurity for Jews in various middle east countries and displaced persons in Europe who were unwilling to live under communist regimes. These Jews therefore came to Israel where there was free entrance (Bachi, 1974). Social, political, and economic difficulties in South American countries increased immigration of Jews from that area (Pergola, 1977).

Introducing the well-known economic factor in migration, Bachi mentions that immigration decreased in Israel from 1973 onwards probably as a result of the effect of economic and political difficulties

in Israel and that an increasing proportion of Russian Jewish emigrants preferred to leave Russia for other countries (Bachi, 1974).

On the other hand, a study of the motivations of returning emigrants to Israel found that the patriotic-social category was more important as a factor of remigration than the economic-occupational sphere (Toren, 1976).

We propose to analyze the push-pull factors of migration to Israel. Our hypothesis is that as a result of the unique experience of immigration to Israel which has been reported to be based on ideological religious factors (pull) and on the non-physical security of Jews (push) in the Diaspora there should be little or no relationship between immigration rates to Israel and economic security variables. This hypothesis is a null-hypothesis to the prevalent findings of migration pull factors as noted in the literature. The results of our study may add valuable data to policy makers in the Israel Ministry of Immigrant Absorption who are responsible for encouraging immigration to Israel.

Methodology

Three economic indicators were identified: — 1. Gross National Product per capita (GNP). 2. Private Consumption Expenditure per capita (PCE). 3. Daily Average Unemployed (DAU).

Data was collected for the three economic indicators on the basis of the Percent Quantity change of each economic indicator from year to year for a 30 year period (1951-1980). The Percent Quantity Change of the number of immigrants to Israel from year to year for the same period of time was also collected (Central

Bureau of Statistics, 1981). A Pearson zero-order correlation matrix was made, first relating the economic indicators to each other, and then the Percent Quantity Change of each economic indicator to the Percent Quantity Change of the immigrant to Israel.

Results

Economic Indicators

Gross national product and private consumption expenditure, two economic indicators, were correlated with one another (+0.58). Both economic growth indicators were negatively correlated with daily average unemployed.

Table 2
*Pearson Correlation Matrix
Scores for 3 Economic Indicators*

	PQC GNP	PQC PCE	PQC DAU
Percent Quantity Change GNP	x	+0.58 (P= .001)	-0.44 (= .007)
Percent Quantity Change PCE		x	-0.53 (P= .001)
Percent Quantity Change Average Daily Unemployed			x

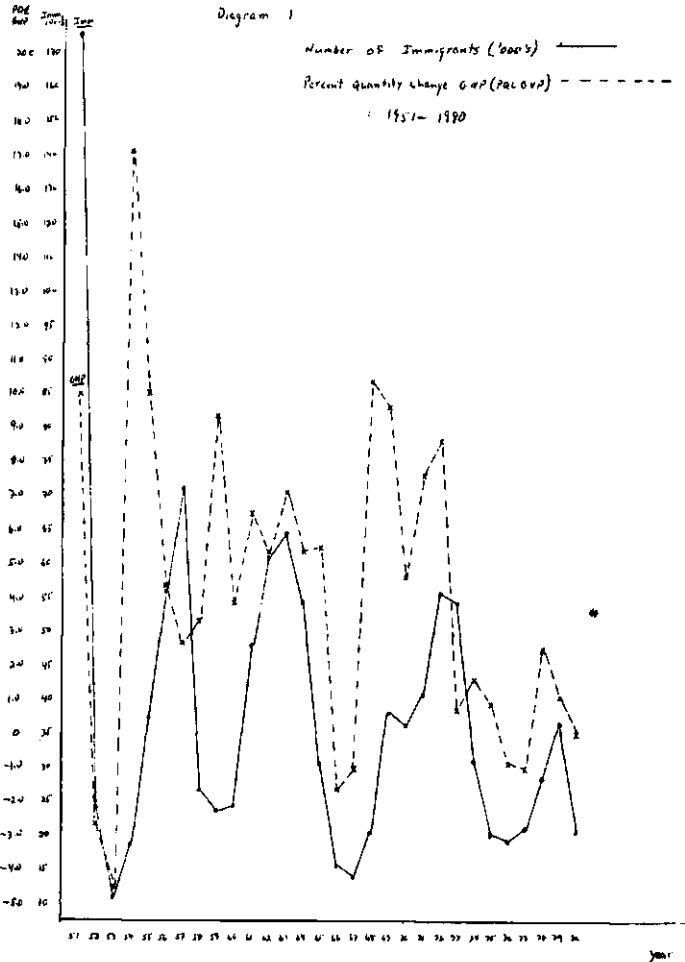
Relation Between Economic Indicators and Immigration

There was a significant positive correlation between the Percent Quantity Change (PQC) of immigration and the two economic growth indicators and a negative

correlation between PQC of immigration and Daily Average Unemployed. The Pearson between PQC GNP, and PQC immigration was +0.61 and between PQC, PCE and PQC immigration +0.59. These findings indicate that during years in which there is economic growth in Israel, there is also an increase in immigration and, in those years in which there is economic decline as indicated by the economic indicators, there is corresponding decrease in immigration.

Table 3
Pearson Correlation Matrix
Scores Between the Percent
Quantity Change of 3 Economic
Indicators and the Percent
Quantity Change of Immigration
 PQC 3 Economic Indicators

	GNP	PCE	Daily Average Unemployed
PQC Immigration	+0.61 (.001)	+0.59 (.001)	-0.39 (.016)



Analysis

Our data supports the prevalent findings in studies of migration pull factors, which show a close correspondence between economic growth and immigration rate. Our data does not support our hypotheses that there should be little or no relationship between immigration to Israel and economic variables as a result of the 'unique' experience of immigration to Israel, which is supposed to be a result of ideological-religious factors. Our data indicates that in spite of the ideological-religious aura given to immigration to Israel and the haven of physical security given to the Jews of the Diaspora, the rate of change of immigration to Israel is directly related to the economic climate in the country. Bachi had given some indication of this possibility in his discussion on Russian Jewish migrants after 1973 who did not come to Israel (Bachi, 1974).

Our results, therefore, place the Israeli immigration experience within the more traditional framework of the international migration experience. Nonetheless, ideological-religious factors and the physical security of Jews can be viewed as an important factor in Israeli immigration. These causes could be considered a con-

stant regarding immigration of Jews to Israel, while economic factors in the country could be seen as a variable in determining the rate of change in the number of immigrants who come to Israel in respective years. The determining of the relative weight of the ideological-religious-physical constant to the economic variable may be an important criterion in the evaluation of the policy of offering incentives to immigrants.

Summary

A Pearson Zero-Order correlation matrix was made relating three economic indicators (two economic growth indicators and an unemployment indicator to immigration to Israel. A positive relationship was found between the economic growth indicators and immigration while an inverse relationship was found between the unemployment indicator and immigration. Immigration to Israel may be made up of two factors an ideological-religious, physical security constant which is an important factor bringing Jews to Israel and an economic factor which may determine the rate of change of the immigration rate.

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