

Migrants' Children Aged 15 – 17 Position Themselves in Circles of Belonging

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Abstract

Israel belongs to the group of countries known as “migration countries”, and is the destination of international migration particularly from the neighboring continents for which Israel is a developed country with prospects for work and livelihood. These work migrants play an important role in the Israeli economy; however their presence also creates a social complexity connected with the character and multicultural balance of the local society. The aim of this study is to describe how migrants' children aged 15 -17 born in Israel from migrant worker parents and who study in both non-formal and formal educational institutions position themselves in circles of belonging different from their personal circle to the social one: Home, neighborhood, school, and Israeli society. The point of departure of this study was not only absorption and integration but the nature of the interrelations between migrant children and their living environment. An analysis of the research findings reveals that the migrant children are part of a multicultural and multilingual mosaic in the heterogeneous Israeli society who position themselves clearly and directly as happy and love their circles of belonging: their home, neighborhood, school and Israeli society. We found a difference in positioning among the three circles of belonging: the informal, home, neighborhood and society and formal one - the school. The migrant children position themselves as loving the three informal circles of belonging and just half of them position themselves as loving school. Perhaps this difference indicates that there is a difference between interactions at school and informal environment interaction. It is advisable to check the characteristics of the informal environment interaction and learn from it.

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Keywords

children, migration, society, positioning, language

First submission: December 2015; Revised: March/June 2016, Accepted: June 2016

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“You can’t be special or different since we’re all different, so there’s no discrimination; no racism there is less than any school that I know because everyone is different. Nobody thinks that they are better than the others, we each come from a different country each with a language of their own.”
(T. 16 years old, Tel Aviv)

Introduction: Migration

Israel is among a group of societies in the world known as “migration countries” and is the destination of international migration for both Diaspora Jews and work migrants, especially from the neighboring countries for whom it is a developed country with good prospects for work. Their presence however, creates a social complexity stemming from the character and multicultural balance of the local society (De La Pergolla, 2012).

The term migration denotes, according to its definition transition and changing of the physical, social and cultural environment of a person or group of people known as migrants. Although the theory of cultural shock does not apply to all migrants, migration may represent not only a change of geographic abode, leaving the country of birth to another country but also an intercultural transfer characterized by drastic changes in the lives of migrants moving from country to country such as adaptation to new social and cultural systems, dealing with employment problems and with emotional and psychological aspects arising from their transfer and so on. Regarding the Israeli society, the fact that most migrants come from Africa and Asia causes them dialectical tensions and difficulties arising from differences between culture and education in the country of origin and the norms of culture and education in Israel. The intercultural encounter between veteran inhabitants¹ with migrants usually involves significant political ramifications for the establishment, has educational, cultural, occupational, political implications for society as a whole and even has psychological and mental effects on the migrants themselves (Hayim, 2013: 174 – 175).

Mass migration as a modern phenomenon began towards the end of the nineteenth century and continued throughout the twentieth century. The last decades of that century saw the migration of around 140 million work migrants in the world and this trend continues and grows. Special characteristics led some scholars to refer to it as transnational migration (Pries, 1999; Kemp & Reichman, 2008). This theory sees migration as containing a number of indexes: demographic, political, economic, cultural and familial in addition to transferring from one country to another. According to this approach the migrants preserve their connections between their country of origin (Source society) and their new country (Destination society). On the other hand, this approach does not disregard the macro aspect of political, economic, familial and other structures within which migrant communities conduct their lives.

The new developments in technology communication and transport have enabled this preservation of contacts between past and present communities. Transnationalism redefines the interrelations between geographical and cultural spaces and decreases the need to assimilate and

¹The veteran inhabitants are people born in Israel and who have the Israeli nationality.

become rooted in the new place. (Ben-Rafael & Sternberg, 2009; Lev- Ari, 2009; Ravhon & Lev-Ari, 2011).

Work Migration

Work migration is a multidimensional complex phenomenon. It took on new meanings and significance with the development of global capitalistic economies based on international flow of capital, goods and work force (Kemp & Raijman, 2003).

A most powerful motivation for work migration is the great gap in wages and social benefits existing between developed and less developed countries. From this approach, poorly as well as well-educated people from poorer countries generally manage to find in developed economies unskilled temporary manual jobs without professional specialization or training and with no proficiency in the local language (Amir & Gotlib, 2005). In this framework, the work migrants earn very low wages in terms of the country they migrated to but these wages are nevertheless significantly higher than those customary in their country of origin. From another approach, work migrants who moved to access high level jobs with high wages; however, the latter form a smaller group than the former.

Work Migration in Israel

At the beginning of the nineties Israel's borders opened up for work migrants who are outside the normative accepted perception of Jewish immigration, and gradually hundreds of thousands of foreign workers began arriving to Israel. They came mostly from Europe (mainly from Romania), Asia (mainly from Thailand, China, and The Philippines), Africa (mainly from Sudan and Eritrea) South America (mainly from Argentina). Some of them held visas whereas others had no visas or permits and ever since then hundreds of thousands of people the majority of whom constitute a significant workforce employed in construction, nursing and domestic help (Bar-Zuri, 1999; De La Pergolla, 2012). This massive increase in the number of work migrants in Israel created a transformation especially in the large cities where migrants were seen everywhere: in the central streets, recreation sites and educational facilities. After a few years the presence of work migrants became part of the local scenery especially in the large cities. They established joint communities lacking legal status. Their central stronghold nowadays is the area of the central bus depot in Tel Aviv transforming it from an area with numerous shoe stores into a cosmopolitan enclave where the offices of most Israeli organizations for the welfare of the migrants may also be found (Schnell, 2007).

De La Pergolla (2012) claims that one of the major problems among work migrants concerns marriage, bearing of children and the acquisition of permanent legal status for their children who were born in Israel in the absence of which they face the threat of deportation from the country.

The objective of this article is to describe how children aged 15 -17 born in Israel from migrant worker parents and who study in both non-formal and formal educational institutions position themselves in circles of belonging different from their personal circle to the social one: Home, neighborhood, school and Israeli society. Indeed, from interviews conducted with volunteers in non-formal education came out a picture of poor, complex, hostile and challenging living reality for migrant's children. This reality caused us to be interested in children's lives, and to examine

how they position themselves in circles of belonging different from their personal circle to the social one.

Our study focuses on 18 youths aged 15 – 17 who come from migrant families and who constitute the senior level of the formal and non-formal educational framework in South Tel Aviv. In this article we chose to focus on these youths because we observed that they serve as role models for younger children. In addition, those teenagers will soon leave the formal education system and will have to integrate independently the Israeli society.

We first present our analytic framework, then the data collection, and our findings.

1. Discourse analysis and positioning

Discourse analysis is an area of research rooted in the discipline of traditional linguistics; it focuses on the use of language in a given social context in order to identify and describe interpersonal communication phenomena and social processes, namely: discourse depends on the social reality in which it occurs. Thus discourse analysis reflects activities, significance and systems outside the sphere of the discourse itself (Sarel, 2006; Schiffrin, 1994). Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary branch overlapping with various areas of research such as: sociology, philosophy and anthropology emphasizing interrelations between language and society (Kupferberg, 2010).

Positioning is a dynamic concept of social science: sociology and social psychology, designed to convert the static concept "role" in to a dynamic alternative that allows change and development. Positioning refers to an inter-personal dimension defined as the way in which discourse participants position themselves in relation to others. (Davies and Harre`, 1990; Langenhove and Harre`, 1999). The term refers to the interpersonal dimension and is configured so that all the narrators in the discourse place themselves in relation to others.

The approach adopted for the study of positioning stresses the connection between the two terms positioning and role. The speaker positions himself or the addressee in a relevant role at a given point of discourse (Weizman, 2008, 2012). This approach is based on Goffman’s perception (1974) according to which every person fulfills a number of roles in his daily interactions and dealings with the social world surrounding him, in contacts with his family members or with others in his immediate vicinity etc. The speaker in a discourse has two roles: a social role for example, son, father, politician or physician and a discursive one for example, a person asking replying or explaining. In accordance with these roles the speaker positions himself and the other discourse participants as having either obligations or privileges as part of their roles. Positioning is always reciprocal and relative: a positions b. and in this way also positions himself relatively to b (Weizman, 2012).

Following Hepburn and Wiggins (2007), the study focuses on spoken discourse analysis and examines through language how migrants children aged 15 – 17 position themselves and present feelings, thoughts and modes of coping in the Israeli society. Through their discourse, children share their experiences in different settings, and this allow to shed light on these. Language

resources are means for positioning belonging in the area of syntax morphology and semantics such as the use of figurative language, verbal and syntactical repetitions, the use of rhetorical questions and of connotation laden words etc. (Segal, 2008).

2. Data Collection and Context Description

The children conduct their daily routines within the following circles: They wake up at home, go to school, at the end of their school day get to their neighborhood non-formal educational activity: either youth center or Scouts movement and return back to their homes in the evening.

The distinction between formal education and non-formal education in the Israeli society is related to the voluntary principle. In other words, participation in non-formal education frameworks is not committed to the children, so they decide whether to join it and always have the possibility to leave it when they wish to do so. In contrast participation in formal education is compulsory for all children in Israel in from the age of three.

The first three circles relate to the way the children position themselves in the physical locations where their daily routines take place. The fourth circle "Israeli society" relates to the way they position themselves vis a vis culture, traditions, norms of conduct and interaction with Israeli youngsters of their age in the absorbing society. The point of departure of this study was not only absorption and integration but the nature of the interrelations between migrant children and their living environment.

The volunteers in the non-formal educational practices held activities to introduce children to the characteristics of the absorbing society's culture while at the same time preserving the culture and traditions of the country of origin, all this in order to reduce their sense of estrangement and alienation and to strengthen their integration. The volunteers have sometimes to face the antagonism of the neighboring Israeli population who refuse to cooperate and to accept the presence of migrants and their children in the neighborhood. They also have to contend with the difficulties caused by quarrelling members of the group, with expressions of racism and cursing among the various groups of children in the educational practice and in addition with a fear of an encounter with Israeli children; migrant's children claim being treated as foreign, different and strange:

"As to the matter of stigmas, people always talk about migrants and forget that they are humans" (Y., volunteer);

"The neighbors oppose the children, [...] curse them [...] I teach them not to react, to turn around and walk away" (D., Scouts group leader).

The migrant youngsters' direct reports shed light on their conceptions and experiences concerning themselves, their neighborhoods and Israeli society.

Our study is a qualitative one combining quantitative data as well. The mix methods allow for triangulation of data thus aiding in the validation of data, the reinforcement of the interpretation and in contributing to the authenticity and validity of the research. It has a phenomenological character studying phenomena in specific contexts and environments. The use of this high quality research method enables to reveal how people derive meaning from their experiences (Smith,

Flower & Larkin, 2009). This method enables first hand collecting of data and a meticulous and precise testing of the participants’ understanding of the of the phenomenon they are involved in (Langdrige, 2007; Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2009). This research methodology involves first hand reports of experiences and also takes into account the researches influence on the data, their collection and their analysis. This study is situated in the functional paradigm which supposes linkage between language and context and studies the uses of language in a given social context (Schiffrin, 1994).

The research data were collected by means of two methods: the first quantitative – questionnaires of utterances composed in line with the four circles of belonging: Israeli society, the school, the neighborhood and the home. The questionnaires contain twenty- five utterances each classified according to Leikert’s scale from “agree very much” to “do not agree” as well as open ended questions. The students were also asked to relate to each of the utterances. The second – qualitative method - semi structured, in depth interviews conducted with each of the children, the structured part was intended to collect biographical information such as their living conditions, and environment, their daily schedules and the way in which they position themselves in various circles of belonging. In the second part of the interview the children told of a good experience and a less pleasant one they underwent. Each of the researchers separately analyzed the interviews and the personal experiences of the children both categorically and thematically and identified the linguistic means of positioning. A joint debate to establish reliability followed. We have chosen to focus in this study on a specific small and unique population of migrant children studying in various educational settings in Southern Tel Aviv. This case study helps to shed light on the experiences of these children.

The formal framework is the multicultural, multilingual "Bialik Rogozin" school whose teachers constitute a central anchor in the lives of their students, enabling them to develop their personal potential and providing them with opportunities to acquire education and life qualifications.

The non-formal frameworks in South Tel Aviv are the "Kadima Youth Center" and the "Eitan" group of the Scouts movement.¹ Those two function with the help of young volunteers as part of their "Service Year".² Their purpose is to prevent the neglect and deterioration of the migrant children as a result of loitering, dropping out of school and spending much time without adult supervision. From the children's point of view, these non-formal frameworks participate to create a loving and protecting living environment providing them with food, assistance with their studies, various leisure activities as well as personal and emotional support. It should be added that most of South Tel Aviv residents are migrants, and therefore the living environment is perceived by children as safe and loving, contrarily to other neighborhoods where they feel alien and different, and are exposed to expressions of hostility and racism. Therefore they often prefer the safe and familiar environment:

¹ These two frameworks are considered as non-formal educational practices, because the children choose to voluntarily reach them. Parents pay a nominal amount of money and at any moment they can leave.

² Service Year is a year in which high school graduates prior to their enlistment in the IDF volunteer for social, community, educational activities. These activities are carried out in various frameworks emphasizing educational activities in socially disenfranchised and weaker suburban areas.

"Out of the neighborhood the children frighten a lot because they look different, they are foreigners, they have a sense of fear and talk about it aloud" (A., volunteer in Youth Center).

According to the young volunteers in the non-formal framework the number of participants in the older age group is declining since they are more independent and spend time outside their neighborhood as well. It is therefore important to have them remain active in their groups thus empowering them to have a positive effect on the younger generation to take part in decision making and to potentially be able to lead the migrant community in Israel and bring about changes:

"This year we had really great meetings of fun and camaraderie and we were successful in convincing the senior members to return to the group. We enable the children to be guidance counselors. This really helps them develop. One of them is a counselor in my group and he steers forty children who listen to him and follow him [...] we need to empower them, develop group leaders from among them so that they are able to act independently and we will only accompany them. They are a strong group" (Y., 18, counselor at the youth center).

We are well aware of the fact that our study deals with a specific and small population. In spite of their small number it is important to us to describe this group, its uniqueness and its specific contexts and to point out the youngsters' viewpoints in their social and local context in South Tel Aviv at the time they belong to the senior level.

The limited size of our sample does not exclude the fact that in a broader social context there may be groups with similar characteristics, thus our findings may explain wider social phenomena than our research does. The important insights arising from our study may be projected to other populations of youngsters from migrant families both in Israel and in other parts of the world.

The uniqueness of our study lies not only in the context of the living environment of South Tel Aviv, not only the population of youths from migrant families but also the specific period of time in which it was conducted, since social realities change as time passes. We did not find studies conducted in the past five years relating to populations of 15-17 year olds from migrant families.

3. Analysis of findings

3.1. The first circle – the home

The concept of "home" in this article refers to the physical residence, family composition of migrant children and the connection with parents and other family members.

Family make up

The data from the interviews indicate that all the migrant youths interviewed bore first names, customary in their countries of origin, given to them by their parents. They all reside on a permanent basis in the area of the bus depot in the south of Tel Aviv in two to three room apartments. The average age of their parents is forty five and their occupation was either nursing

or domestic help. Only three cases where the fathers were employed also as electricians, a cook or as a driver for a moving company were found.

An examination of the extended family data found that thirteen migrant children positioned themselves directly as living alone with their parents, without relatives and five positioned themselves as living in close proximity to their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. The reasons are varied, according to the stories of migrant children:

“My siblings are not here. My mother had them there. I have a stepsister from the same father not from the same mother, they are all in Sierra Leone [...]. Here, in Israel we have a child that we have adopted after his mother died. He has no father; he is at the youth center.” (N. fifteen years old);

“My sisters were born here and went back with my father [...] My whole family is there and here only friends. There is no family, just me and my mother.” (Z. 15 years old).

Characteristics of children of migrant families are different from most Israeli families (Israeli citizens), because mostly some family members (like parents, siblings, cousins) were forced to return to their country of origin or to another country. The result is that these children do not live like normative Israeli families (mother, father and children) and sense an absence of extended family members.

Language

The dominant language among the migrant families from Africa and the Philippines is English as national language and among the families from South America Spanish as national language. In eight families it was reported that the second spoken language was that of the country of origin: Swahili, Madingo, Kirau Philippine, Tarangile and in other eight of the families it was reported that Hebrew is an additional language spoken mainly for parents:

“my mother is twenty years in Israel and doesn’t know Hebrew (H. 16 years old); “We speak English, Hebrew so so, because my mother doesn’t understand so much”. (Y. 15 years old);

“Mother doesn’t speak Hebrew well, when I speak to her it helps her to learn.” (K. 16 years old).

In their communication with their parents the children prefer to speak in the language of origin. On the basis of Tannenbaum’s (2003: 44) claims that a situation in which a child acquires the new language while at the same time preserving their mother tongue is an ideal situation reflecting the existence of a close and secure relationship between parents and child¹, our results suggest that the surveyed migrant’s children maintain a positive, coherent and close knit atmosphere in the family, they maintain the traditions, beliefs and cultural values of their cultures of origin.

¹ Namely, a child feels sufficiently secure to acquire the new language while at the same time feels a need to preserve the language of the parents mainly as mode of communicating with them.

Furthermore, the fact that fifteen of the migrant children were positioning themselves directly as communicating with parents in their original language or in Hebrew for personal needs, family, social and institutional issues. Tannenbaum (2003: 41) argues that the young generation acquires the new language easily resulting in them becoming guides, interpreters and representatives of their parents in their dealings with Israeli authorities.

Contacts at home

In this article, the term "home" refers to the physical residence, family composition and the relationship between children and parents and other family members.

The migrant's children who were positioning themselves directly as holding positive interactions with parents and friends, as loving their home, are not ashamed of it, see it as meeting place, arrive there after school, rest there, watch television, eat and invite their friends there.

The interviews contain five personal stories connected with the first setting –the home, and deal with maintaining family unity and acceptance of parental authority. The first three stories told of family unity during a family trip to the country of origin. The children emphasized that they were looking forward to meeting the members of the extended family and were happy to meet most of them. The family visit to their relatives in the country of origin left a positive and powerful impression on them, and they reported having had moving and pleasant experiences. The sense of family unity was associated not only with happy occasions of family trips but also in events connected with sadness and painfulness resulting from the opposition of the state authorities.

(A) "I visited abroad with the whole family. In Ecuador [...] we were a month and a half during summer vacation. I finally saw that part of the family; we went on trips to all kinds of towns and visited a lot of families, first time for all of us. We all went. [...] Last year when my cousins were supposed to come here they didn't get in in the end. Arrived in the airport in Israel but they were turned back, my father and aunts. [...] there was a court in Jerusalem, and at the end they did not return them. It was sad; I remember that there was an evening that we all stayed together all night. They came a family, two cousins and grandmother" (M. 16 years old)

(B) "The fact that I met my grandmother in Ivory Coast before she died. We didn't talk so much because I didn't know her, and then a day after I came back then she died. I felt it was good that I met her. When I met her she was sick [...] she was on the bed all the time. [...] in the Ivory Coast I played with children all kinds of games, and it was great also when I saw my big sister. It was great to see my family. I haven't seen my family a long time, most of the time I played with them. I remember only that we played. It felt great, because it's fun to know new people that know my family." (A. 15 years old)

(C) "My mother and father fought, I was approximately three years old. I didn't know what to say to him because he was drunk. When we visited for the first time my family I was with my mother. I saw only my brothers and my grandmother and my aunt, not my father. We were there a month. I didn't want to go back because it was great to play with my brothers. We went to the mall." (S. 16 years old)

(D) "My birthday - but at the end it was a bad ending, until my mother upset me. She wasted my money on a refrigerator and washing machine. I got a thousand and something money from everybody as a gift. I wanted to keep the money for something that I'll want, shoes, clothes, but my mother wasted my money on a refrigerator and

washing machine. I was furious, upset. I said to her: "why did you waste my money? This is my money". She said that she will buy me what I want, so I bought, but I don't remember what it was." (Y. 15 years old).

(E) "I wanted to go to a modeling agency my parents did not let me, because I wanted to be and they did not allow. I was furious, angry, mad a whole week I didn't speak to my mom. That's a lot. Many told me that it's fitting for me to be, so I wanted to try. My mother said that it's with swimsuits and she doesn't want me to be like this. Only about swimsuits she said, that in our culture it's not good to be like this. I didn't speak about it at all to my father." (G, 15 years old).

The stories are dynamic, the children used in their descriptions and many active verbs of motion and action: we left, visited, played, went, met, the use of dynamic verbs creates an atmosphere of an active vacation filled with varied pleasant experiences. The use of the first person plural creates a feeling of unity and cooperation. In order to emphasize the pleasant experiences in the country of origin the children used in many situations the words "great fun" (*Keif* in Hebrew). The repetition of certain words whether jointly or separately has a role in the discourse and interaction between speakers.

Norrick (1987) presents a model for the classification of the various repetitions in a discourse. One of them is repetition connected with understanding to assure the addressee's accurate comprehension. In the above stories, spoken narrative discourse, we find repetitions of the word *Keif* (fun) the object of this repetition is to describe the pleasant feeling of the addressors in the course of their visits and to expose their personal voice following the family visits.

Three of the stories contain a structure aimed to contrast between life in Israel, its local culture and personal needs with life and culture in the country of origin. In the first story (A) the contrast is expressed through the family's wish to unite and meet with the family and the political restrictions preventing the family's entry. On the one hand my cousins were supposed to come to Israel, came to the airport in Israel.

On the other hand did not enter, did not go through and were deported.

In the fourth story (D) the contrast is hinted in the differences of the child's needs versus those of his mother. The boy like others of his age wants to enjoy the money he has received as a birthday gift and to spend it on himself whereas his mother chooses to use the money for household needs:

On the one hand – the child: something that I will want: shoes, clothes.
On the other hand – the mother: wasted my money on a refrigerator.

In the fifth story (E) we found a contradiction between the girl's wishes to model stemming most probably from exposure to advertisements on the media featuring children and youngsters, and the mother's position representing a traditional outlook preserving cultural values and norms customary in her country of origin:

On the one hand – the girl: I wanted to go to a modeling agency.
On the other hand the mother: In our culture it's not good to be like this.

The fact that the children chose a personal story to present events contrasting different wishes indicates that they live in a state of conflict that is realized in events vis a vis the state, their parents and in respect to the local culture.

The children position themselves as living in a conflict between self-fulfillment and living in a foreign country in another culture.

3.2. The second setting – the neighborhood

The neighborhood concept in this research includes two non – formal closely located and neighboring entities: the "Shapira" Youth Center and the "Eitan" group of the Scouts Movement. Their school "Bialik Rogozin" Campus which is about a 15 minute walk away from the neighborhood where they live is not considered to be part of the neighborhood.

The children arrive to the youth center at the end of their school day, receive food, emotional support and various educational enrichment activities counseled by pre military service volunteers. The "Eitan" Scouts group is a multicultural group consisting of Israeli (born in Israel) children, migrant children, new immigrants, refugees and others.

Bram, Lomsky-Feder and Ginzborg (Bram, 2010, Lomsky-Feder et al., 2010) dealt with the issue of immigrants' visibility, meaning the way in which the receiving society recognizes the existence of migrants and accepts their identity. According to them, "visibility agents" are civil servants and social workers working with migrants and can promote their recognition and acceptance within the receiving society. According to this definition the youth center and Scouts' group staffs are "agents of visibility" that form and define the migrant children's social field of vision and they endeavor to advance their visibility within the Israeli society.

Attitude towards the neighborhood

From the data concerning the second setting – the neighborhood, we learn that migrant children position themselves as having a positive attitude towards the neighborhood: loving their neighborhood, feeling that they belong to their neighborhood, are active in it and create their friendships in it.

Twelve children position themselves directly as participating in neighborhood activities: meet with friends, participate in sports, study for tests, are active in enrichment classes and group activities and conduct personal conversations with young volunteers. Moreover, the migrant children position themselves as free to choose whether or not to participate the activities:

"we only sit and talk" [...] "On the field those who are up for it play all the others just watch." (T. 16 years old); "I don't participate in afternoon activities." (W. 16 years old).

Furthermore, the interviews indicate that in the youth center the migrant children position themselves as receiving ethical and moral guidance, assistance and personal treatment from their young volunteers:

"I'm here with D. (young volunteer) twice a week: [...] I do my homework here." (L. 15 years old);

"I wish they'd listen more [...] more personal conversations." (G. 15 years old);

"In one case a volunteer made a child realize his musical tendencies: I met the volunteer three years ago and thanks to her I know how to play music." (Z. 17 years old).

The question: would you want to meet Israeli friends (born in Israel) in the neighborhood was answered affirmatively by half of the children and negatively by half. This finding indicates that half of the migrant children position themselves as different from the general Israeli society, and maybe that they don't believe that they can be seen by the Israeli children in the neighborhood or that they are not interested in being seen.

The children belonging to the former half position themselves as capable of meeting Israeli friends their age. We would like to point out that those migrant children who indicated their wishes to be in contact with Israelis are those who got help from the young volunteers, the "agents of visibility", and engaged in activities outside their immediate neighborhood: volunteering to firefighting, membership in a sports club, studying in a school outside the neighborhood or participating musical ensemble:

"The Israeli friends, I know them from the young volunteers. Their small brothers are my age so I met them. They came here so we met." (G. 15 years old);

"I have Israeli friends because I volunteer at the fire station." (H. 16 years old);

"At Lady Davies school they all accept me, I am happy there. I was pleasantly surprised. They broke all the stigmas about the ones from the North (of Tel Aviv)." (T. 16 year old).

Neighborhood Friends

Fourteen of the migrant children position themselves as having many friends from school, from the youth center and from the scout movement, as loving their social environment and as loving hanging out with friends:

"Every day after school coming here at seven o'clock until ten and a half and go home. We meet at the Scouts, especially in the neighborhood." (M, 15 years old);

"Meet at school, in youth center, mostly we meet here and at school." (N, 15 years old).

Four of the migrant children position themselves as not having any friends in the neighborhood. We will indicate that they live far from the youth center: "I don't have anyone from my neighborhood. My friends are from the youth center." (K, 15 years old).

The personal interviews reveal that all the migrant children position themselves as receiving sympathetic attitudes:

"When my father was sick [...] the neighbors came to help. They cared for us to see if everything was all right. They called for an ambulance. My mother didn't know that you pay for an ambulance [...] I felt they cared about us [...] It felt good that the neighbors

helped me. My mother returned in the evening. They then expressed concern but did not help physically". (L. 15 years old).

L. positions herself as part of her from neighborhood. L.'s story indicates that the neighbors' help in times of distress was not taken for granted, and it may have even pleasantly surprised her and given her a feeling that they are not invisible to their neighbors who relate to them and consider them as important enough to support them and help them cope.

Moreover, the migrant children position themselves directly as those to whom support and encouragement from young volunteers and friends are important.

"Sea to sea on the Scouts trip, this was a very hard trip and everyone encouraged the other [...] the young volunteers support and encourage, showing that they care about us caring about each other." (G. 15 years old);

"last year they took us from the after school care facility to the "Adventure Park" [...] that was the day I enjoyed most with my friends. It was a good day for me I felt happy with my friends. We had fun together." (Y. 15 years old).

In their personal stories the migrant children position indirectly their friends, the young youth center volunteers as giving them important support and emotional encouragement and care. The children's selection of words from the semantic field of "care and support": 'they care about us', 'they support and encourage us', 'because of them I know' proves that migrant children need to feel that someone cares about them that those around them understand their emotional, social and physical needs, and attempt to assist, support and encourage.

3.3. The Third Setting – the School

The "Bialik Rogozin Campus" school is located in the southern part of Tel Aviv and includes: a primary division, an elementary division, and a secondary education division. Its student body is multicultural: children of veteran Israelis, Israeli Arab children, children of new immigrants, migrant children and more.

School Atmosphere

Nine of the migrant children position themselves as loving school, having fun there and enjoying affirmative attitude and the rest position themselves as enjoy it less:

"I have fun. Our class is small. Each has a style of their own. This year we are united we had a meal together." (N. fifteen years old);

"Class I don't like, I feel all alone in that class, it's boring there. I am there (Bialik Rogozin Campus) since second grade and it's boring, the place is too closed." (S. 16 years old).

The migrant children position themselves as aware that from first up to twelfth grade they study in a different organizational structure and different social fabric than a state learning environment which is divided according to age groups thus generating natural heterogeneity. They learn of

their otherness through their contacts with various local Israeli factors, their young volunteers, trips with the Scouts, non – formal education meetings.

Children’s Attitude

Sixteen of the migrant children position themselves as feeling that school provides them with a protected and accepting environment in which they are liked by their friends:

"I love the break time because I am with my friends." (Y. 15 years old);

"my friends make me feel fun. I like talking to them." (B. 16 years old);

"we are good friends, if someone hits you, they will help you. If you don’t have lunch they will give you." (L. 15 years old).

The migrant children position their friends at school indirectly as those who are there for them in case of trouble: fighting, didn’t do homework, didn’t bring lunch.

Teachers’ Attitude

Thirteen of the migrant children position themselves as being loved by their teachers:

"my homeroom teacher Y. since she cares. She likes to listen, if you need help you can turn to her and she’ll always help you." (M. 16 years old);

"the teacher thinks that I am very smart that you will do well in your studies, she always says that but I don’t know if she really means it. I feel that I’ll succeed because I want it." (G. 15 years old);

"I liked her because in those days I was problematic, I changed because of her, she helped me change." (T. 15 years old);

"T. he is the teacher I have most fun with." (T. 16 years old.).

As migrant’s children describe their relationship with their teachers they position themselves directly as getting personal attention from them. They position their teachers externally and indirectly as a dominant factor that fosters learning. They supervise, deter and constitute a bridge to future success and knowledge. Teachers are seen by the children as responsible for their failure or success. Those of them who form personal contacts with their students, who give them the feeling that they care and who promote their belief in themselves and in their ability to realize their personal and scholastic potential are the generators of changes leading to success. On the other hand teachers who are indifferent, less involved and insensitive to the children diminish their motivation for success:

"If I would study with him I would not flunk, I would understand him. Now I study with an annoying teacher, she is my homeroom teacher. I asked her to help me but she didn’t listen to me." (G. 16 years old); "The sports teacher he is nice to me. He helps me in everything. I have an anger issue so he helped me. He taught me how to control it like breathing. I do it." (W. 16 years old).

The schoolteacher is a key figure for educated life and success for the children. They turn to them for help not only in solving problems connected to their studies, but also to cope with problems in other areas of life. The personal component of the teacher's character is therefore very dominant to the migrant children. When describing their teachers they naively paint an optimal figure capable of teaching, being a friend, laughing, helping, understanding and promoting success in life.

"When I was in the sixth grade [...] I received a certificate of excellence. This made me realize that the teachers notice me I felt warmth in my heart when you know that there are those teachers who pay attention to you." (D. 15 years old);

"Yesterday the teacher gave marks and I got a 100 in biology. It felt great, lots of fun." (J, 15 years old);

"first time I felt confident about myself on a test [...] the teacher helped me at the study center, gave me stuff to think about." (N. 15 years old).

The stories indicate the use of a "cause and effect" logical structure. The "Cause" describes what the teachers did: "paid attention" "told me" "helped me" "didn't give up" "teaches good", resulting in successful school work, namely the children's success is the result of the teachers' actions the children understand that the teacher's personality and their success are connected.

It is important to note that in the children's stories they position their parents externally and indirectly as people to whom academic success is important, but who can't help:

"I was upset that one day I simply got a bad test. My teacher said, do a makeup exam my mother didn't even know about it." (T. 16 years old);

"They also help me there with my homework and at home they don't because they don't know Hebrew." (A. 15 years old);

"I now want to show them that I can. I don't want to let my parents down. I want to show my parents that I will succeed the second semester". (N. 15 years old).

3.4. The fourth setting Israeli Society

Most of the migrant children (14 out of 18) position themselves as loving life in Israel. This finding reinforces the positive positioning expressed by the children in their various settings of belonging: home, neighborhood and school. We have also found that about a half of the children position themselves as wishing to resemble Israelis and want to become part of Israeli society in the future.

Berry (1997) notes that migrants relations with the local population in the target country can have different forms: assimilation, integration or minor differ. According Ravhon & Lev-Ari (2011) an assimilation process occurs when migrants agree to give up past traditions and accept customary norms and patterns in the target country. Rogni (2012) points out that many migrants are not assimilated into the local population even after many years.

All the migrant children position themselves as part of Israeli society and as knowing when the State of Israel was established, as familiar with Israeli music, as taking trips in Israel and as very familiar with Israeli holidays:

"I am familiar with these holidays but I don't celebrate them. At home we celebrate Christian holidays in school there is reference to Jewish holidays too, to those of the Muslims and to the Christian ones also".(M. 16 years old);

"at school we celebrate Christmas, Easter and in church also." (J, 15 years old);

"On "Rosh Hashanah" [the Jewish holiday] the whole family gets together party food and music, we celebrate Muslim holidays, all the holidays."(G. 15 years old).

An examination of the fourth circle of belonging – Israeli society found that fourteen of the migrant children position themselves as loving the life in Israel. Half of the migrant children position themselves as wishing to resemble Israelis and want to become part of Israeli society in the future. All of them are familiar with the symbols of the state and its cultural characteristics. Furthermore, half of the migrant children position the Israelis indirectly as open and tolerant towards them.

Conclusions

An analysis of the research findings reveals that the migrant children are part of a multicultural and multilingual mosaic in the heterogeneous Israeli society who position themselves clearly and directly as happy and love their circles of belonging: their home, neighborhood, school and Israeli society.

The people working in the circles of belonging of the migrant children: young volunteers in youth center and scout, school teachers, neighbors in the neighborhood, their friends and other volunteers, consider it very important to cultivate the physical environment in where children live, and to improve their emotional well-being and to improve their academic achievements and success.

We found a difference in positioning among the three circles of belonging: the informal, home, neighborhood and society and formal one - the school. The migrant children position themselves as loving the three informal circles of belonging and just half of them position themselves as loving school. Perhaps this difference indicates that there is a difference between interactions at school and informal environment interaction. It is advisable to check the characteristics of the informal environment interaction and learn from it.

The home is the personal circle in which the children position themselves as loving their home and their families. In addition, the migrant children position themselves as filling the function of mediating and being in charge of interacting with the Israeli establishment on behalf of their non-Hebrew speaking parents and as living in a conflict between their personal needs and the local culture, and between life in their country and culture of origin as represented by their parents.

The neighborhood is a non-formal circle in which all the migrant children position themselves as loving their neighborhood as receiving recognition and visibility from the people in the neighborhood and from the young volunteers at the youth center and at the Scouts. This interaction enables them to topple the boundaries of youth center and neighborhood, to achieve visibility and recognition from local Israelis and to express positive outlooks towards them.

The school is the formal setting where just half of the migrant children position themselves as loving school. These findings indicate that the children study in a school that accords to their visibility a central role and aims at turning their negative visibility into a positive one. We believe that multicultural, pluralistic, humanistic approach curricula should be promoted by the national education system. These curricula may enhance the positive visibility of the migrant children and contribute to strengthening their self-confidence and self-image.

Israeli society – Most of the youngsters from the migrant families (14 out of 18) positioned themselves as loving their life in Israel and as being familiar with Israeli culture while a half of them expressed their wish to go on living in Israel as permanent residents. We found a difference in positioning between the three non-formal circles of belonging – the home, the neighborhood and Israeli society as a whole and the school which is a formal educational setting for the migrants. The majority of the migrant youths positioned themselves as loving the non-formal settings very much but only a half of them positioned themselves as loving school, the formal educational setting, possibly indicating a need to reexamine the various interactions at school and peer learning versus activities carried out in the counterpart non-formal settings such as youth center and Scouts. The migrant youngsters have nevertheless indirectly positioned the people in the various circles of belonging, including in the school, the young volunteers at the youth center, Scouts counselors, school teachers, their neighbors and friends as those caring for them and for their physical surroundings, as those who are concerned with their scholastic success and with their wellbeing.

These findings surprised us because this portrayal of reality in south Tel Aviv runs counter to that presented in the media, in the interviews we have conducted¹ and in various other studies of migration focusing on political, cultural and economic aspects of the adult labor migrant community.

Wurgaft (2006: 146) in her book describes the realities of life among the migrant as rife with distress persecution and injustice. In one of its chapters titled "Children as Hostages" she recounts that whenever the Tel Aviv Municipality or the Messilah organization personnel wanted to draw the attention of public figures to the work migrants' plight they would take them on a tour at make-shift nurseries operating in private apartments in southern Tel Aviv. The sight of the toddlers huddled in tiny apartments filled with baby food and diaper odors would always leave a bad impression.

Furthermore, a study conducted by the Knesset's Research and Information Center on the conditions of children of asylum seekers and work migrants (Nathan, 2010: 6), found that the

¹ We have conducted interviews with Hagay Herzl, the head of Year of Service and Seminars Sector of the Defence Ministry, with Eyal Glass, General Manager of "Kadima" youth centers network, with Yael Ben Moshe, Pedagogical Manager of "Kadima" Youth centers and with the young volunteers at the youth centers.

absorption of migrant children in the school system in regard with compliance with its rules was fraught with difficulties. Many were truant with their parents' consent, they were often dressed in clothes unfit for the weather, had difficulties with their studies, caused behavior problems or came to school without the proper equipment. Government agencies such as the education department find it difficult to communicate with the parents and assist the families since parents are not able to speak Hebrew.

The young volunteer counselors report that the migrant youths feel a sense of alienation and foreignness: "they teach me what profound racism is [...] They know that they are strangers and they feel it every day of their lives (A. a young volunteer at the youth center, 2015); "There's a lot of racism and they experience it very intensely [...] they are different, so it will be very difficult for them, they look different, speak different and sometimes behave different" (N, a young volunteer in the Scouts movement, 2015).

These reports are full of negative descriptions of a poor, complex violent environment whose residents are subject to hostility and racism and who are constantly threatened with deportation. Contrary to those impressions the migrant's children interviewed for our study spoke of their positive experiences and reported a supportive, nurturing, protective and caring environment.

In our opinion one of the causes for the dramatic gap between the reality depicted in studies and the media and that described by the migrant kids is the age of the subjects. In the studies described above the focus was on adults who emigrated from their countries of origin to Israel and were forced to face hardships of assimilation, earning a living, legal position etc. in a hostile environment. Conversely our research examined Israeli born youths aged 15-17 of work migrant parentage who were not faced with uprooting migration or absorption problems. They are familiar with Israeli reality and culture, live in a supportive environment and express their wishes to integrate in it.

An additional factor we think, is the political changes concerning work migrants and their children that took place in the country. In 2008 Kemp and Reichmann published their book 'Workers and foreigners' in which they examined the political process of the regularization reform concerning the status of children of migrant workers. In it they claim that in 2006 there was a shift in government policies and the then Prime Minister Olmert declared that "Israel will lose its moral image if it shirks its responsibility towards weak populations, including migrant workers 'children living and growing up in our midst, who love our country and want to be a part of it".

This policy gives the youths an opportunity to become a part of Israeli society as independent adult citizens. Currently they are given the opportunity to enlist in the IDF, to be part of the Year of Service program and to volunteer to various other educational projects. It is perhaps the knowledge that conditions have changed and that they now may be able to integrate into Israeli society that gives them hope and enables them to see their life in the South Tel Aviv in a positive light.

It could also be that participating in the formal and non-formal educational opportunities in Tel Aviv which gives these youngsters the proper conditions for personal growth, for acquisition of education and for social and cultural development led them to regard their lives as promising and avoid descriptions of racism discrimination poverty and distress.

An additional factor to consider is the possibility that they wanted to placate and satisfy us as researchers namely, they said what they thought we would want to hear and not the whole truth.

The significant gap described may testify to the complexity of these children's lives. On the one hand the youngsters try to lead "normal lives" devoid of racism, discrimination and hardship in an environment that protects them from early in the morning till late in the evening surrounding and enveloping them with teachers, volunteers, activities, meals, and various social events giving them physical and emotional support and on the other hand there exists a reality of a neglected physical environment with an ever possible risk of deportation hanging over their heads.

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