ONE

Introduction

The Challenge of Labor Migration Policies

International labor migration is one of the distinctive characteristics of globalization. The blessings of globalization are disseminating an advanced infrastructure, technological modernization, and patterns of consumption, together with social ideas and standards, also accompanied by economic gaps and income disparities created between the global north and the global south (ILO 2004a, 2004b). Universal patterns of labor migration and vast opportunities for migrants are responses to these and others outcomes of globalization, especially the increasing trade liberalization. Roughly, this translates to job loss and less secure work arrangements in the global south, together with a growing need for cheap labor to replace local workers who shy away from menial low-paid jobs in the global north (Castles 2004a; Hollifield 2004; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). The flow of migrant workers is therefore steadily increasing. In 2000, the International Labor Office (ILO) estimated that there were about 86 million economically active migrants the world over seeking to improve their life chances in times of heightened global instability and international security concerns (ILO 2004b).

Moreover, various ethnic, racial, and citizenship dilemmas stem from the presence and residence of southern labor migrants and their multicultural societies in northern states. Among the ensuing problems we can count racial tensions, economic and social competition, difficulties in social integration and absorption of minority populations, and a spate of cultural, evaluative, and identity issues (see, e.g., Favell 2001; Triandafyllidou 2002). Ethnic riots in France in November 2005 present a vivid testimony to the "social time bomb," its imminent explosion and its threat to the social and economic fabric of Western societies. The riots instigated by youth mainly from North African migrant communities spread across urban France and brought with them human casualties and substantial damages to property. The government, under an emergency law, sent thousands of policemen to

confront the youth and had to physically engage the protesters and impose curfews to contain the violence.

The reasons behind the riots are many and complex, however, their essence is immediately associated with France's legacy of blunt discrimination against minority communities in terms of employment opportunities, pay, housing (immigrants communities are based in the urban peripheral suburbs, *les banlieues*), health and education, and the stigmatization, stereotyping, and prejudice of immigrants in every aspect of the social and economic realm. President Chirac has illustrated such discrimination in the labor market by addressing the "problem of the CVs that finish up in the wastepaper basket because of the name or the address of the candidate."[1] It seems that poverty and despair combine and call disfranchised youth to the streets. The misery associated with deadlock in opportunities, and the failure of the state and society to integrate immigrants, is the common plight of labor migrant communities in Europe, the United States, Asia, and the Middle East. Labor migration has marked the dark side of globalization; societies and nations become xenophobic and racist, living by the rule of "us and them," guided by principles of cruel capitalism that may be described metaphorically as a "binary mirror": my wealth is your poverty, my dignity is your humiliation, my rights are your disenfranchisement.

Globalization also has shaped the nature of the south-north migratory process. For example, the sustained transnational linkages developed between immigrants' communities and their countries of origin have acted as levers for economic activity, either through remittances or entrepreneurship, and toward the creation of social and political opportunities (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Portes et al. 2002; Vertovec 2004; Waldinger 2004; Zhou 2004). The characteristics of settlement arrangements in the receiving countries, reflected in structural factors such as home-country dependence on emigration remittances, family strategies, and migrant networks, constitute additional aspects of the lives of active social actors whose movements and settlement dynamics have become self-sustaining social processes (Massey 2004; Massey et al. 2002; Portes and DeWind 2004).

The presence of migrant labor in nations around the globe has come to challenge international organizations, national governments, and local agendas. According to the ILO report *Towards a Fair Deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy* (ILO 2004b), the need has emerged for better governance, embodied in a multilateral framework for management of the cross-border movement of workers. Associated with this issue is a recognition of the fundamental right of each country to determine who should pass across its borders, a right to be balanced with the need to direct migration in a way that protects workers' economic well-being and norms of social justice.

However, an examination of labor migration policies in the global north has shown that by and large, the enlightened, tolerant, and culturally open

approach to labor migration advocated by international organizations such as the ILO and many liberal democratic governments has not lived up to their proponents' high expectations (Castles 2004a, 2004b). Examples ranging from Australia's postwar policy to Germany's "guest worker" recruitment from 1955 to 1973 and "Operation Gatekeeper," adopted by the Clinton administration in 1994, all demonstrate that failed migration policies are not necessarily linked to "evil" policies or weak political systems. In fact, failures often become evident only after many years. The key challenges of contemporary international migration policies encompass issues ranging from an inadequate grasp of the transnational logic of migration, its dynamics and consequences (e.g., prolonged residence of illegal migrants and the fate of the second generation), and north-south cooperation, to the necessity of considering the role of conflicting interests, hidden agendas, and nonmigration policies shaping migration processes (Castles 2004a, 2004b; Hollifield 2004; Portes and DeWind 2004). In both the north and the south, declared policy objectives toward migrant workers can be quite misleading. Often they are driven by an unwillingness to admit to past policy failures, as well as the need to maintain legitimacy and alleviate domestic pressures stemming from scarcity or the promotion of migration as a source of remittances (Castles 2004a, Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003; Zolberg 1999).

These phenomena have proven to be the driving forces behind policy formulation and implementation and often have invoked heated public debate over the need, viability, rights, and regulations associated with migrants' movements. Due to its complexity, labor migration inherently draws diverse stakeholders to become involved, leading policy makers to defend sometimes conflicting economic, social, and cultural interests and Israel's national identity. Furthermore, the legacy of democracy and civil society, mainly its association with human rights issues, has spurred the creation of social movements and groups actively pursuing a Western-style neoliberal agenda. Intervention in policy making by these groups has tended to blur the process, a fact that frequently contributes to the creation of an unbridgeable gap between intent and outcome (Castles 2004b; Portes and DeWind 2004). These actions also have constricted governments' ability to implement tough control policies (Hollifield 2004).

The interplay of competing social and economic forces in the receiving and sending countries (Faist 2000b, 2004) constitutes the global labor migration project. This project entails the development of a migration "industry" that generates substantial economic gains for many, at the same time encouraging settlement and the "pull" of families,[2] kith and kin. These relations are guarded by social and economic interests that hold substantial stakes in perpetuating the labor migration industry (Castles 2004a). Does this imply that regulatory policies are doomed to fail in their goal of curtailing illegal labor migration? Can regulatory policies aimed at controlling labor migration while

promoting normative employment practices (e.g., appropriate and fair recruitment and labor contracting, protection of migrant workers' human and labor rights) take into account ethnic and citizenship issues?

This book has the following three aims: first, to argue that the impact of migrant workers' entry to Israel goes beyond the labor market (it affects several communities in Israel, challenging Israel's self-image of a state of refuge), second, to show how the entry of migrant workers forced Israel to implement discriminatory employment policies; and third, to show how migrant workers have influenced the debate on national identity.

I explore these issues by a journey through regulatory policies and their consequences—the dilemmas of national identity and citizenship, but also their solutions. I follow the harsh realities stemming from policies that attempt to reconcile diverse stakeholders and that, even if unintentionally, derail policy, subvert its aims, and sometimes harm the workers themselves. This book, therefore, analyzes policy making and those governance practices that, contingent as they are upon contradictions and constraints, remain embedded in an ideological stance. Its position reflects the stand suggested by Adrian Favell (1998):

> Immigration, and the citizenship questions it invites, is a political issue that can, if it unsettles any of the other social, class, or regional divisions that characterize these societies, rapidly throw into doubt much broader assumptions about the bases of social and political integration in a nation: its moral and cultural identity, in short. This suggests why mainstream politicians have often been preoccupied with finding constructive political solutions to the problems immigration raises; and secondly, why responses to this issue are so revealing of the essential contrasts in the general "political culture" or "national identity" of distinct western nation-states. (22)

This book thus examines the trajectory of labor migration policies through a review of the origin and evolution of policy practices within a seamless web of cultural and ethnic threads. That web has transformed labor migration from an essentially economic issue—specifically as one solution to labor shortages—into a major political concern and ideological test. Various Israeli governments have been unable to monitor or manage the entries and exits of foreign workers through comprehensive and coordinated policies. Policies have been formulated in ad hoc and reactive ways that have not upheld a consistent or rational plan for protecting (or restricting) noncitizens to work and reside in Israel. The resulting emergence of a large population of undocumented (and therefore illegal) residents in Israel has been blamed for bringing overcrowding, crime, and degeneration to certain communities. Municipal leaders report that because foreign workers are officially unaccounted for, local institutions must meet the demands

of increasingly large populations with little support from the central government, which has not allocated funds and resources to serve individuals who are not citizens.

The widely reported "crisis" of the "population explosion" of illegal aliens in Israel might thus be presented as the outcome of a series of institutional and administrative failures. The shortcomings of labor migration policies, which I elaborate on later, are due in large part to the Israeli government's inability to establish basic conditions to enable the entry and employment of noncitizens, reflecting the nation's inability to acknowledge without embarrassment the now-unfashionable exclusionary stance of Zionism, which established the nation as a refuge for Jews in the aftermath of the Holocaust and British colonization. Rivalry among Jews and non-Jews shaped Israeli notions of citizenship to be inextricably tied to hard-won and fiercely defended rights to entry into the territory, as well as rights to jobs, themselves associated with the capacity to settle and remain in the region.

Israel: Its Major Dilemmas and Recent Labor Migration

Critical understanding of the Israeli government's continued failure to regulate the entry and activities of foreign workers requires an in-depth exploration of the influences of two sets of policy constructs, namely, those governing citizenship and those regulating issues of employment. Israel was formed as an ethnic state to serve, first and foremost, its majority population of Jews, as it fended off competing claims of its territories from regional rivals. It initially did not attract large groups of immigrants other than Jews. Then, following the Six Day War (1967), Palestinians were incorporated into Israeli businesses and industries as low-wage workers who held a national identity at odds with Israeli national identity but also were tied to the region.

Following Palestinian uprisings, foreign workers were recruited to replace the Palestinians to fill local needs for cheap labor in a variety of industries, offering Israelis the comfort that these outsiders would not pose territorial claims or political burdens the way the Palestinians had. Israelis did not foresee the long-term stays of any of the foreign workers, assuming that they would provide a convenient source of cheap labor for predetermined, controllable and, above all, *temporary* periods of time.

On May 14, 1948, the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel decreed that: "The state of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for [an] ingathering of the exiles." This statement ensured that every immigrant to Israel who met the criteria associated with being Jewish would be granted citizenship immediately upon entry. The Law of Return, adopted by the Knesset (Israel's parliament) on July 5, 1950, confirmed that: "[E]very Jew has the right to immigrate to Israel." In 1970, an amendment to the law

extended rights of Israeli citizenship to all non-Jews of Jewish ancestry and to non-Jews married to Jews, upon their immigration to Israel.[3]

Desire for the return of the Jewish Diaspora to the homeland has been fundamental to both the formation and continuation of Israel's existence as a nation and refuge for the Jews. Yet no concrete definition of *Jewishness* has ever enjoyed full agreement, with controversy surrounding various implications for the citizenry that the state claims as the reason for its existence.[4] Israel required mass immigration of Diaspora Jews in order to construct a national heritage and living culture shared by all Israelis. This goal found expression in the revival and transformation of sacred Hebrew into a language that could function in a modern world, in addition to the unification of religious ritual and practice that had become diversified consequent to the dispersion of Jews throughout the world.[5]

Together with the Jewishness of the people that Israel shelters, Yaar-Yuchtman and Shavit (2001) have identified a series of fundamental elements that characterizes the Israeli state. National identity is driven by the rivalry between the Israelis and the Palestinians (that is, Arabs who are Israeli citizens as well as those residing in what were called the "Occupied Territories"): anyone claiming a Palestinian national identity carries an identity directly at odds with Israel's national identity and must therefore be excluded from membership in the Israeli collective. Furthermore, the initial cultural hegemony following the establishment of the state has been replaced by competition between groups over social, cultural, political, and economic stakes in an increasingly factious society. Israel has been widely described as an "ethnic democracy" (Smooha 2000), a democratic regime in which civil rights are awarded to all citizens, but with preferential status and privileges granted to members of the preferred majority group.

An inherent contradiction thus exists between its two governance principles: representative democracy with universal civil and political rights, on the one hand, and structural subordination of the minority, on the other. In turn, the majority is able to influence the state to promote its own interests, whereas the minority sees its interests as compromised or neglected. Considerable debate continues over the outcome of such governance, which exhibits the main themes that follow.

Israeli society as characterized by a dominant local culture. The ideal sought by the original Zionist vision was the creation of a common culture unifying all Jews who immigrated to Israel. The dominant culture was to penetrate Jewish identity by a revived Hebrew language and secular, universalistic norms and ethical codes, originating in "enlightened" modern socialist theory, which guided its emerging political and sociocultural structures (Ben-Rafael 1998; Yaar-Yuchtman and Shavit 2001). This vision, referred to variously as "the ingathering of the exiles" or the "cultural melting pot," represents the basis of

all policies aimed at fostering or sustaining a unified national identity through the application of hegemonic mechanisms (Eisenstadt 1966; Horowitz and Lissak 1977, 1989; Kimmerling 2001, 2004).

Israel as an idiosyncratic multicultural state. This image refers to the idiosyncratic nature of the sociopolitical hegemony observed during Israel's formative years. Contradictions and inconsistencies that crossed the dominant ideologies and social structures would eventually challenge and then erode the legitimacy of Israel's political institutions. For example, the state's unequal treatment of Jews and Arabs has been perceived as consistent for those who see Israel as a "Jewish state" free from any responsibility to uphold the principles of a state serving "all its citizens" (Shafir and Peled 2002). The multiculturalism of Israeli society is thought to have led to an ad hoc mixture of paradoxical compromises, accompanied by institutional arrangements under continued assault by different competing groups (Mountner, Sagi, and Shamir 1998).

Israel as a sectarian society. This refers to the view of Israel as a state dominated by sectarian divisions, the most severe of which is between its Jewish majority and Arab minority (Yaar-Yuchtman and Shavit 2001). Flaws in the hegemonic Jewish identity are blamed as the root causes of social and structural inequalities. Additional rifts within the Jewish majority community are said to be hierarchical and demarcated along ideological lines, socioeconomic status, political agency, religious and ethnic identity, and length of residence. For example, Mizrachim (Jews of Oriental descent) are unfavorably distinguished from Ashkenazim (Jews of European descent), while newcomers (including the Russians and Ethiopians) are discriminated against by Israelis belonging to the country's long-established previous waves of immigrants.

At the heart of all three perspectives is the undeniable reality of Israel's internal diversity, the state's efforts to unify a multiplicity of constituents and the complexities of group divisions.

The aforementioned factors should be stressed when explaining the country's exclusionary policies against non-Israeli and non-Jewish "others," such as labor migrants. Conflicts with non-Jews inside and outside its borders have galvanized Israel's national identity as one of a nation defying the odds against survival as a religious and an ethnic minority, outnumbered by its Arab rivals in the region. In the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War, Israeli government policies regarding annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip had two main purposes: to expand and strengthen Jewish settlement in the new territories, and to integrate Palestinian workers into the Israeli labor market in order to emphasize Israel's military domination and contain Palestinian threats (Peled 1992). Palestinians were subjugated into replacing Arab and Jewish workers in low-wage and menial jobs in construction, agriculture, and other service sectors. By capitalizing on its military success, Israeli society

profitably exploited, for the first time, one distinct type of foreign labor—cheap and drawn from a labor force lacking Israeli citizenship.

Despite the considerable economic gains derived from the employment of Palestinian workers, Israelis were always ambivalent about the presence of Palestinians in their midst. Though comprising a sizable population—roughly 8 percent—of the entire Israeli labor force throughout the 1980s (CBS 1990), most Palestinians working in Israel made efforts to be as inconspicuous as possible by day and returned to their homes in the Occupied Territories each night. Although most Israelis outwardly accepted and justified the exploitation of Palestinian workers in Israel, many others felt anxious in recognition of the latent tensions that were mounting under this arrangement.

The situation reached a crisis point during the 1990s in response to the confluence of separate developments. During that period, the Israeli economy was experiencing the effects of a changing global economy. The Israeli-Arab peace process had accelerated Israel's integration into the world economy by opening world markets for Israeli goods and encouraging heavy foreign investment. Furthermore, the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Empire stimulated a huge wave of immigration to Israel from the former Soviet Union; in the brief space between 1990 and 1993, approximately 700,000 new immigrants arrived. Established absorption practices—government responsibility for the integration of new immigrants and the provision of their basic material needs—led to massive public spending on housing and services. As a result, the Israeli economy experienced unprecedented growth. At the same time, however, growing Palestinian dissatisfaction with the peace process fueled extremist sentiments. With the outbreak of the first intifada (the Palestinian uprising) in the Occupied Territories in 1987, waves of violence shook Israel. Suicide bombings and terrorist attacks resounded in the streets of its cities. Reactions included border closings, which prevented Palestinian workers from reaching their places of employment in Israel for extended periods of time. As Israeli industries faced collapse due to the sudden and acute labor shortages, the Israeli government promptly responded by permitting the import of foreign workers to replace Palestinian workers unable to cross the border. The percentage of Palestinians comprising the Israeli labor force subsequently dropped from 8 percent in the 1990s to less than 1 percent by 2000, as the share of foreign workers in Israel's labor force rose from less than 1 percent to 12 percent during that same period (CBS 2001).[6]

Booming industries built on cheap Palestinian labor—notably construction and agriculture—quickly found themselves threatened by labor shortages. A similar pattern was observed in service industries, where rapid growth was fueled by rising demand from increasingly affluent Israelis. Local workers, however, were unwilling to replace absent Palestinians in the vacated low-paying jobs, and employers were unwilling to raise wages sufficiently to lure them (Kundor 1997).

In 2001, according to official estimates, there were more than a quarter of a million foreign workers in Israel. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) (2003) reported that the rate of non-Israelis employed in the Israeli economy reached a record high estimated between 12 percent and 15 percent of the labor force.[7] These are among the highest percentages of foreign workers in the developed world, second only to Switzerland (Ben-David 2002:13). Between 1994 and 1999, the percentage of foreign workers within the total labor force was approximately three times greater in Israel than in Belgium, England, France, Germany, or Holland, even though each of these countries saw a doubling in the percentage of foreign workers in their respective labor pools during this five-year span (Ben-David 2002). The foreign worker population in Israel currently includes large numbers of Chinese, Romanian, and Turkish workers in construction, Thais in agriculture, and Filipinos in caregiving. Workers from Bolivia, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, Jordan, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, the Ukraine, and Uruguay are also employed in a variety of other industries.

According to the CBS (2003), almost 60 percent of all foreign workers in Israel are illegal residents. These are workers who entered Israel with a tourist visa or stayed in the country after their work permits had expired. Others gained entry with legal work permits and subsequently took jobs with firms other than those sponsoring their original entry. Many illegal workers, as well as their families, live under constant fear of deportation. They do not want to be forcibly sent home; they seek only economic opportunities or perhaps temporary shelter from the more intense insecurity found elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the presence of *zarim*—the Hebrew term for foreigners or strangers—is keenly felt by Israelis and has received considerable attention in the media.[8] Most Israelis encounter foreign workers in their daily lives. They populate entire quarters of Tel Aviv, caring for Israeli children and their grandparents while their own children attend Israeli schools. Foreign workers help build houses and then clean them. Nonetheless, while many Israelis have grown dependent on the labor of foreign workers, the apparently uncontrolled growth in their numbers is thought to have contributed to expanded illegal activities and to the steadily rising pressure felt in the limited public infrastructure. For these reasons, the presence of foreign workers has been repeatedly referred to as a "ticking social time bomb" by the Israeli press.[9]

The phenomenon of foreign workers within Israel's borders is likewise an indication of Israel's recent affluence, especially when considering the country's origins as a refuge for immigrants seeking shelter and social heritage within new beginnings in their historical homeland. Criticism has been directed at the government for failing to encourage the industrial modernization that feeds on skilled labor, and charges have been made that many obsolete industrial practices have been sustained through the importation of cheap labor. Other critics have blamed private industries, primarily building

contractors, who have refused to improve working conditions or raise wages while ruthlessly pressuring the government to permit the import of additional foreign workers (Eckstein 2000; Amir 2002).

During the intifada, the government blamed Israel's generous social welfare system for contributing to unemployment. Described by politicians as too liberal and too tolerant with respect to the criteria for awarding unemployment allowances and other benefits that comprised labor's security net, the system seemingly encouraged chronic unemployment by providing extensive income support benefits. These benefits, so argued the government, nurtured a "mentality of idleness," whereby unemployed workers preferred to receive benefits than to seek low-status, menial jobs. After a short period of dislocation, the new Russian immigrants, who initially filled the job gaps, rapidly adopted the employment patterns and aspirations of other Israelis.

During this accelerated growth, Israel's economy was therefore forced to cope with the reluctance of its own workers to fill needed jobs, on the one hand, and violent separation from the Palestinians (its traditional source of cheap labor), on the other. The hunger for labor led to the appearance of workers from numerous foreign countries on the Israeli scene. The Israeli government was clearly unprepared for the influx. While the number of foreign workers rose dramatically and rapidly, only piecemeal attempts were made to put into place appropriate mechanisms to monitor and control immigration flows and placement. Government agencies mandated to manage immigration and address the needs of foreign workers were inefficiently organized and woefully understaffed. For example, in 1995, the Ministry of Labor established a labor law enforcement unit. Out of a total of fifty inspectors, only thirteen were assigned to monitor the flow of foreign workers and to investigate illegal activities.

With a government reticent to regulate the market for foreign labor, employers and employment agencies found themselves well positioned to assume self-interested control over the import and placement of foreign workers. In the process, the legal and administrative framework for the management of foreign labor was effectively privatized in the form of an organized monopoly whose members comprised a close-knit clique of local employment agencies and employers. These both conspired with overseas agents to profitably extract mediation fees from workers desiring employment in Israel. They were further able to construct and control a black market for work permits, in which access to foreign workers was traded.

Numerous studies (see, e.g., Bartram 1998; Nathanson and Achdut 1999; Rosenhek 2000) have documented the sociopolitical and economic impacts of the presence of so many foreign workers in Israel. Various others (see, e.g., Peled and Shafir 1987; Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1993; Shafir and Peled 2002) have suggested that the structural characteristics and ethnic

inequalities marking the presence of foreign workers are symptomatic of Israel's subordination of Israeli Arabs in the labor market, itself rooted in the ethnic tensions embedded in the structure of Israel's labor market (Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein 1987). Hence, the position of foreigners workers in Israel cannot be fully understood in isolation from the prior complex relationships maintained between local ethnic groups.

This mosaic of the social, economic, political, and cultural forces that informed the arrival, en masse, of foreign workers to Israel, is the subject of this book. It will be pieced together with the help of individual stories. My aim is to draw on empirical and historical details to construct the book's central argument, specifically that the entry of foreign workers has not only transformed the Israeli labor market but altered the character of several Israeli communities, and in so doing posed a fundamental challenge to the very identity of Israel as a refuge for the Jewish people.

For these reasons, this study of Israel's labor market pays special attention to the emergence of the sizable population of non-Jewish immigrants, an event that has inspired new ways of thinking about *klita*—immigrant "absorption" or "assimilation." Until recently, klita was a matter discussed only with reference to the Jews dispersed throughout foreign lands who returned to the Homeland, prepared to adopt an Israeli identity. The Law of Return was instituted to encourage this process as long as the subjects were Jews; it neglected to address the appropriate Israeli response to non-Jews from abroad who might want to become residents of the state. Israel's policies regarding foreign workers also will be critically discussed in this book in connection to the recurring debate over Israel's national identity.

Participating in the debate are groups eager to safeguard citizenship as a right strictly reserved for Jews—though as previously mentioned, Jewishness has yet to be decisively defined. Overshadowing the Isreali national identity debate is the rivalry between Israelis and the Palestinians (including both those who are Israeli citizens and those belonging to the Occupied Territories). Anyone with a Palestinian national identity has an identity directly at odds with an Israeli national identity and must therefore be excluded from membership within Israel. Such a stance also spurs concerns about Palestinian population growth rates, which are surpassing Israeli growth rates, as Israel is likely to be jeopardized if those who desire a Palestinian state in the region outnumber those who remain loyal to an Israeli state (Yaar-Yuchtman and Shavit 2001). Challenging this stance are others who believe that as a historically persecuted people, Jews have the moral obligation to abstain from the persecution of others and must therefore extend citizenship rights to all of its residents, Palestinians as well as foreign workers.[10] Aspects of these questions are explored in their relation to the Zionist ideals that inspired Israel's founding and that have historically been constrained by more practical political, economic, and cultural issues.

A Note on the Objectives of This Book

This book chronicles the history of foreign workers in Israel, accompanied by representative ethnographic accounts that depict, firsthand, the experiences of foreign workers from various countries who have found employment in Israel. In doing so, it does not ignore the negative social and political sentiments that have awakened problems impinging on local equations of identity, class conflict, and inequality (Sanders 2002). It also evaluates the responses of policy stakeholders to initial government policy, and the consequences of the interactions between policy stakeholders and government. It shows how this interdependence has distorted policy aims without, however, undermining the basic institutional framework. In such an environment, the outcome of policy evolution deepens bifurcation between government and the various institutional and private stakeholders. For example, how is responsibility split between the contractor and the temporary employment agency within the employment system? In such a structure, governmental attempts to enforce its regulations and policies inherently contradict employers' interests, hence, it is ignored.

The other influence on policy is spillage, the movement between the legal and illegal labor markets. Government's recognition of the problem of slippage brought about one major policy revision: the attempt to reduce the number of migrant labor workers through regulation and deportation. This solution nonetheless focused on the weakest link in the chain—the workers themselves—instead of on the employers, those directly responsible for policy distortions.

In Israel, policy outcomes are influenced by the degree of marginality of the relevant population, a situation induced by policy failures, even if unintentionally so. The current policy framework has aggravated the already-difficult conditions of foreign workers and has destined them to fall between the gaps subdividing the institutional framework. In addition, the fragmentation of governmental institutions has resulted from the complexity of joint action on the interministerial and interagency levels. Ministries' and agencies' authority and responsibility to deal with the foreign workers remain ethnocentric in perspective and protective of their own sphere of influence and mandate. The strict bureaucratic division of labor has aggravated inefficiency, with institutional interfaces ignored in an act of self-preservation.

This book also addresses questions related to the failures inherent in the migration policies plaguing other national democracies (Castles 2004a, 2004b). These include the dynamics of policy making and institutional functioning. How did policy emerge from the sociopolitical realities of national and ethnic identity? Which processes, practices, and factors have diverted policy from its original intent? How did such diversions influence both legal and unauthorized migration? These issues are viewed from polar

perspectives, from that of the policy process and that of the labor migrants. By giving voice to both, this book presents a unified conceptual framework for the critical assessment of labor migration as a distinct social phenomenon created by globalization.

Organization of This Book

Chapter 2 reviews the context of labor migration in a comparative perspective, followed by the theoretical context of the questions raised by the book. I construct a conceptual framework that synthesizes the research on Israel's labor migrants and the respective government policies as a prelude to the formulation of my own theoretical approach. I first present two lines of argument to explain labor migration policies and their implications. These arguments will serve as guides to the book's theoretical approach, which views policy formation and implementation, with their consequences for the life and work of labor migrants, as corollaries of a deterministic national identity. From this perspective, Israel's rigid definition of its national identity as well as its citizenship criteria construct the conceptual environment for determining the effectiveness of the respective policies. Chapter 3 reviews the evolution and consequences of Israeli public policies. In this chapter I analyze two sets of governmental policies, namely, (1) policies related to the legal entry of labor migrants and (2) practices that stem from the policy, mainly the binding system of labor migrants. The chapter illustrates how each set of policies and practices lacks authoritative leadership and administrative capacity and is corrupted by undue influence from private employers and employment agencies. How these policies combine to exacerbate problems also is critically discussed. Chapter 4 reviews the dynamics of employer-worker interactions, and while analyzing the employment practices, it presents an ethnographic narrative that illustrates how employers articulate exploitation.

Later chapters expose the mechanism of exploitation institutionalized in the labor market and its impact on those who employed them. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 document and analyze the life and work of foreign workers in Israel. Personalized accounts of the experiences of individual foreign workers are interwoven to illustrate the everyday realities of their work and lives. The three industrial sectors that employ the largest numbers of foreign workers, and the largest ethnic groups represented in these industries, are included, specifically: (1) Filipino caregivers, (2) Thai agricultural workers, and (3) Romanian construction workers. The processes by which workers are recruited, positioned to take up particular posts, and managed as employees are detailed. The common ways in which foreign workers' wages, accommodations, and other welfare provisions are provided or neglected by various employers also are described. In addition, I present the personal and

professional forms of support that workers find within their respective ethnic community networks.

Altogether the chapters present various facets of diverse cross-cultural interactions and negotiations between foreign workers and their Israeli employers, which are influenced by particular work demands and environments.

Subsequent chapters then deal with more specific questions such as illegal immigrants, urban policies toward migrant workers and their families, the role of social stakeholders, and the consequences of migration on Israeli society. Chapter 8 describes Israel's illegal labor migrants, focusing on the lives and work of those in Tel Aviv, where the largest community of illegal immigrants in Israel (an estimated 80,000 in 2002) resides. The various processes by which workers enter into Israel and become illegal residents also are presented. I describe as well some of the ways in which illegal workers are served by and rely upon ethnic community networks within Israel. This is followed by an analysis of the absurd circumstances by which children born in Israel to non-Israeli parents may be statusless and denied rights to legally reside in any nation. Chapter 9 investigates the policies and practices that expel illegal labor migrants from Israel through deportations.

Finally, chapters 10 and 11 include a reevaluation of the influences of Israeli policy institutions and the national realm on labor migrants. It is argued there that Israel has evolved into a nation established as a refuge for Jews, with exceptionally liberal policies for welcoming Jewish immigrants, in stark contrast to regulations for keeping out non-Jews. The chapter critiques such citizenship principles on the basis of the denial of rights to foreign workers and their families in Israel today.