

Weddings in the Town Square: Young Russian Israelis Protest the Religious Control of Marriage in Tel-Aviv

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The article discusses alternative wedding ceremonies staged in urban spaces as a statement of protest among immigrant couples that cannot marry in rabbinical courts, because they are not recognized as Jews. These public weddings are organized and sponsored by the *Fishka* association of young Israeli adults of Russian origin. Our field-work at *Fishka* included participant observation of its various events during 2013–2014, as well as in-depth interviews with the key informants, promotional materials, and video recordings of their public wedding ceremonies held in the streets of Tel-Aviv in 2009–2011. Embedded in the social history of the city and framed in the concepts of urban diversity and the politics of belonging, our ethnographic data juxtapose “Russian” street weddings with other public festivals sponsored by *Fishka* and other protest actions by minority groups. Alternative, civil weddings emerge as a form of active and critical citizenship among young Russian immigrants, seeking solidarity of other Israelis in the joint effort to reform the status quo and enable civil alternatives to Orthodox marriage. The active political stance and cultural activism of *Fishka* members challenge native Israelis’ monopoly on communal public space; young immigrants are thus carving a place for themselves in the iconic sites of the city’s public cultural sphere.

INTRODUCTION

The heroes of this article are members of the 1.5 generation of Russian-Jewish immigrants who moved to Israel during the 1990s and today are young adults between the ages of 25 and 40. Due to the size of the ex-Soviet immigrant wave (forming 20% of the Jewish population), Israel is particularly interesting for the study of these 1.5ers who now comprise a “critical mass” among its young citizens. Sharing common experiences and narratives, young Israelis of Russian origin apparently feel the need to connect and express their specific forms of activism and creativity. This article casts light on one civic association that reflects their drive to assert their common (hybrid) identity—a club and community center called *Fishka* in Tel-Aviv. Our empirical analysis is informed by several theoretical perspectives: the politics of belonging in the urban space (Berg and Sigona 2013; Yuval-Davis 2011), performance studies (Eyerman 2006), cultural theory of

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alternative lifestyles, street protests, and urban festivals (Firat and Kuryel 2010; Giorgi et al. 2011; Hetherington 1998; Melucci 1996). The article will present and discuss the aesthetic and festival forms of public protest events organized by the young immigrants in Tel-Aviv, their spatial and temporal dimensions, their specific locations and meanings, and their role as a vehicle of social recognition and visibility of Russian-Israeli subculture in Israel's most fashionable and trend-setting city. We will explore two main questions: How do the children of immigrants make claims to iconic public space in their new society? How are social performances deployed to make those claims visible and legitimate?

THEORETICAL FRAMING

URBAN DIVERSITY AND PERFORMANCE OF BELONGING

The presence of immigrants and ethnic minorities is evident in every major metropolitan area; they became an integral part of the social landscape also beyond the traditional gateway cities like New York, London, or Melbourne. Urban sociologists have produced multiple local studies about, for instance, Pakistani immigrants in Manchester (Werbner 1996), young Turkish immigrants in Berlin (Soysal 2002), Russian immigrants in Haifa (Fialkova and Yelenevskaya 2011), and generally about diverse immigrant groups in Europe (Martiniello 2014) that examine the specific forms of their participation in these cities' public spaces. A key question often posed in this context is "how diversity, in its various dimensions, is experienced locally, and what new forms of local belonging emerge in contexts where places are closely connected to so many non-proximate 'elsewheres,' either through migration, trade links or other ways" (Berg and Sigona 2013:5). Yuval-Davis (2011:10) examined the urban diversity and inter-cultural encounters as "specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging to particular collectivity/ies which are themselves constructed in these projects in very specific ways and in very specific boundaries." These boundaries are often spatial and relate to concrete locality.

Researchers pointed to the importance of the cultural sphere in the period of dramatic global transformations spearheaded by economic and humanitarian migrations currently occurring around the world. They examined the relevance of popular art forms, such as music, cinema, theater, dance, literature, urban festivals, and street shows in diverse post-migration urban settings (Delhaye and Van de Ven 2014; Martiniello 2014; Salzbrunn 2014; Sievers 2014). The idea is that the cultural sphere and specifically street-level arts can help to build bridges, facilitate the encounters among different populations sharing the same urban space, and reinforce the immigrants' belonging to the new place. In other words, arts, culture, and rituals can become a means of communication and dialogue between different individuals or groups sharing the city or its neighborhood, facilitating integration and social cohesion (Martiniello 2014; Vanderwaeren 2014). Moving from the margins to the center, migrants sustainably influence mainstream artistic culture and the public sphere; however, this cultural power does not necessarily lead to profound political changes. For example, Salzbrunn (2014) wrote about the participation of immigrants in the frame of Cologne carnival in Germany. According to her, this leads to a blurring of boundaries, whereby mainstream popular culture becomes more and more influenced by multicultural elements. This festive event offers migrants different ways to express themselves on a local, global, and trans-local level. Delhaye and Van de Ven (2014)

underscore public recognition of cultural pluralism in the Netherlands, analyzing the practices of two Amsterdam-based cultural institutions: *Paradiso* and *De Meervaart*. They witnessed artists of various ethnic backgrounds performing before diverse audiences: cabaret performers of Turkish descent attracted an audience composed of native Dutch and people with a migrant background; a Caribbean stand-up comedian gained an overwhelmingly black crowd while a Moroccan stand-up comedian performed in front of mostly white fans; a mixed-ethnic dance company attracted a similarly mixed public. Sievers (2014) found that despite the minimal funding invested in the cultural activities of immigrants and their descendants, the visibility of artists of immigrant origin has increased in Vienna over the last decade. These new artists have explicitly criticized Viennese cultural life for excluding immigrants and their descendants, both as artists and as audiences. Often their works envisage cultural change by including multicultural teams of artists and re-writing traditional Austrian culture to include the voices of immigrants and their descendants.

Following this line of research, our article examines public events initiated by young Russian immigrants in Tel-Aviv as performative acts of belonging and as localized forms of ethnic diversity that are likely to become a means of intercultural dialogue. Urban ethnographers are increasingly interested in the spatial dimensions of the politics of difference, showing how belonging and diversity relate to social and spatial practices of inclusion and exclusion. The public events examined below illustrate how young Russian Israelis negotiate their unique place in the complex social mosaic of Tel-Aviv. We assume that young Russian immigrants aspire to belong to the urban Israeli landscape (or rather its specific Tel-Aviv brand), to become independent and active agents within it, thus creating and sustaining their visibility (Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport 2010).

Some Israeli sociologists describe the belonging aspirations of Russian immigrants as active, varied, and full of contradictions; they are founded on a nonbinary epistemology, breaking the dichotomy, dominant in the earlier Israeli immigration literature, between their assimilation and segregation (Lerner 2011; Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport 2008, 2012; Roberman 2007). The term “belonging by criticism” coined by Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport (2012) describes the dual process experienced by these immigrants: Belonging doesn’t imply their unconditional adoption of the local ethos whereas criticism doesn’t mean its rejection. Instead, they exhibit attempts at active participation and empowerment, thus enacting the dual mechanism of belonging and diversity.

PERFORMING PROTEST IN THE CULTURAL PUBLIC SPHERE

Performance studies are at the epicenter of today’s cultural anthropology and certain strands of sociological analysis. Their emergence is linked, among others, to the names of Victor Turner (1988), Richard Schechner (1988), and Jeffrey Alexander (2006), who contributed to the novel analytical framework of social performance theory. Turner defined performance as a practical mode of behavior, an approach to lived experience expressed in various forms—as a play, a sport, an aesthetic trend, a ritual, a theater play, and other genres of experience. Cultural performance is a dynamic and reflexive process, a complex sequence of symbolic acts. Thus, public rituals could function as performative acts of resistance.

The theoretical anchors for this article include performance and cultural theory of alternative lifestyles, counterculture and street protests, new social movements and cultural activism (Eyerman 2006; Hetherington 1998; Melucci 1996; St John 2015). These researchers have shown that nowadays most street actions or open-air events include colorful elements, carnival touches, have a strong expressive character, and manage to attract attention by challenging the existing order. A universal characteristic of contemporary activist practices is the attempt to create gateways to a more libertarian society (Firat and Kuryel 2010).

We explore public weddings organized by *Fishka* participants as a kind of urban festival (Giorgi et al. 2011). According to Boissevain (1992), the upsurge in prevalence of various festivals and street events in European cities reflects the recent influx of immigrants and growing ethnic diversity, as well as secularization and democratization of urban culture. One common feature of contemporary manifestations of group pride or protest is that they tend to be creative, colorful, joyful, and *carnivalesque*. Researchers use the term *carnival* to label these oppositional events at which flamboyant costumes, dance, puppets, and folk music bands can be seen (Firat and Kuryel 2010). *Protestival* is the additional term used to emphasize the carnivalesque character of the contemporary activism, which evolved since the early 1960s and experienced an explosive resurgence from the late 1990s (St John 2015). These events constitute a creative response to the traditional forms of protest with steer marches, speeches, and placards. These new *protestivals* make a unique contribution to the cultural public sphere, which is a place where private citizens come together to debate issues of public and national significance. The *cultural public sphere* of late modernity operates through various channels and circuits of mass-popular culture and entertainment, facilitated by mediated aesthetic and emotional reflections on how we live and imagine the good life. It refers to the articulation of politics, both public and personal, through affective, aesthetic, and emotional modes of communication (McGuigan 2011).

Beck (1997) argued that in late modernity the truly political content disappears from the political system and reappears in the alternative action fields and various social sites that were previously considered un-political, such as technology, medicine, law, workplaces and organizations, supermarkets, streets, and other settings of everyday life. Citizens dissatisfied with their government performance can search for new political channels of influence and choose to act in what Beck defined as “sub-politics”: a non-institutional form of politics, outside and beyond the representative political institutions of nation-state, enacted anywhere citizens seek to fill the political vacuum and take responsibility for their life (Ben-Porat, 2013:21). We suggest including the contemporary urban forms of protest, such as festivals, cultural activism, and counterculture, as another expression of “sub-politics” in the cultural public sphere.

In our previous study, we explored the public holidays and festivals organized by *Fishkers* as manifestations of both their belonging to and difference from the “mainstream” Israeli urban life (Prashizky and Remennick forthcoming). Expanding this framework, we will now examine the public weddings in Tel-Aviv sponsored by *Fishka* as a new form of performative protest held by these immigrants as an expression of their “sub-politics.” In some ways, *Fishka*’s weddings project resembles other urban festivals organized by young immigrants, for example by the second generation Turks in Berlin, whose street rap performances and graffiti contests during the 1990s were largely driven by an anti-discrimination and inclusion agenda (Soysal 2002). However, as members of the Jewish

majority, Russian Israelis feel more entitled for active Israeli citizenship than do German Turks, children of labor migrants. Although Russian Israelis present themselves mainly as culture brokers, their claim on visibility and respect can also be read as an expression of identity politics.

OUR FIELD-WORK AT *FISHKA*

We focused on a nonprofit cultural association of young Russian Israelis called *Fishka*, meaning in Russian a game token also symbolizing luck (see www.fishka.org.il). *Fishka* appeared in Tel-Aviv about 8 years ago, first as an art-cinema club, then as a framework for the (secular) study of Jewish heritage, and since 2010 as a full-fledged NGO with a multifaceted agenda. It is supported by a mix of public and private donors, one of which is the Genesis Philanthropy Group. *Fishka's* projects include community volunteering (e.g. visiting Russian-speaking elders in local senior homes), novel forms of celebrating Jewish and Russian holidays, and a range of interest-based classes and groups—Russian drama troupe, tango class, Hebrew-Russian literary translation group, etc. In 2010–2013 *Fishka* rented a building in South Tel-Aviv's Eilat St. near the sea shore. The neighborhood is rather poor and rundown, dominated by small trade shops and warehouses but with the signs of nascent gentrification. The club's premises featured a hall for events and dances with the walls lined by bookshelves containing hundreds of Russian books—classic and modern fiction, history, biography, Jewish Studies, etc. The premises' design with multiple elements of the local, Middle Eastern flavor merged with the spirit of its Ottoman-period building and the adjacent mixed Arab-Jewish neighborhood of Jaffa. In May 2013 *Fishka* had to abandon its house because of rental problems, and since then it has been looking for a new permanent home, while holding its club activities at various city venues.

Fishka can be described as a grassroots association (Smith 2000), i.e., a locally based (also in terms of member residence and/or workplaces), rather autonomous, volunteer-run, nonprofit group. All of its leaders and most patrons belong to the 1.5 immigrant generation and espouse bilingual and/or bicultural values. One of its key organizational features is civic engagement, i.e., manifestations of civic responsibility and reaching out to other segments of Israeli society. As we will show, *Fishka's* public activities, including street events, emphasize its members' belonging to Tel-Aviv urban space and their claim for active citizenship. A notable feature of *Fishka* is that both its founders and most project leaders are women—who were also more outspoken and cooperative as informants (hence the predominance of female voices quoted below).

Our field-work with *Fishka's* staff, project leaders, and patrons included participant observation of its various events and activities during 2013–2014, as well as 23 in-depth interviews with the key informants (conducted in Hebrew or Russian) and video recordings of their public events. The street weddings described in this article actually took place earlier, during 2009–2011. Initially, we were attracted to *Fishka* as an institutional expression of biculturalism and evolving identities among young Russian Israelis (Prashizky and Remennick 2015, forthcoming). Only after collecting the bulk of our ethnographic materials did we realize the significance of the weddings project—that surfaced time and again in the stories told by *Fishka's* leaders and regular members who construed these street events as a form of political protest. Several *Fishkers* who recently got married mentioned this older project as an inspiration for

their own alternative wedding ceremonies. Tracing these narratives back, we retrieved the videos of all three weddings, as well as their promotional materials, and interviewed the organizers and the wedded couples to learn more about these happenings. Thus, for this article we drew mainly on the subset of all interviews (ten altogether) that were relevant for the wedding events. We use actual names of our interviewees because of the public nature of the described events with a wide online and press coverage at the time. Before describing our findings, a brief introduction on the Russian Israelis of the 1.5 immigrant generation is due.

YOUNG ISRAELIS WITH RUSSIAN ROOTS

The 1.5 generation usually embraces adolescents and young adults who moved to the receiving country in their formative years (roughly between the ages of 9–10 to 18–19), usually with their families. Linguistically and socially, the 1.5ers are located at the crossroads between their home and host cultures: Some of them opt for expedient assimilation, others (the majority) emerge as competent bilingual/bicultural individuals, and yet others may fall in the cracks between the two cultures, living in a chronic limbo (Remennick 2003; Steinbach 2001; Waldinger 2005). Many young immigrants have lived through mixed scenarios, seeking rapid inclusion and rejecting their home culture at the outset, but later (typically by their early 20s) discovering the attractive sides of their origin culture and getting back into the fold (Remennick 2003, 2012).

Most young adults of Russian origin resettled in Israel over the last 25 years due to their parents' decision to emigrate from the deteriorating post-Soviet states. Due to the soaring costs of living in Central Israel, many immigrant families had settled in the outlying towns with poor educational resources and occupational opportunities. Most youths had a difficult time learning Hebrew, adapting to Israeli schools and local peer culture. Many were raised by single mothers, reflecting high divorce rates among ex-Soviets before and after migration. Their parents were often of little help and guidance during this painful transition, immersed in their own problems, socially disoriented, and working long hours (Remennick 2012). The studies among young Russian immigrants during the 1990s have signaled multiple problems of inclusion: uneven performance at school, high truancy and drop-out rates, low motivation for the military service, and troubles with the law (Fishman and Mesch 2005; Mirsky 1997). By the early 2000s, most young "Russians" have outgrown these "pains of adjustment," learned to navigate Israeli institutions, and play by the local rules. Reflecting the forces of social stratification and variable economic mobility of their parents, the 1.5ers with a Russian accent are found today in every social stratum (Remennick 2011). The majority of those raised in the families of ex-Soviet intelligentsia followed their parents' "ethnic script" of social mobility via higher education, and by the time of our research found themselves in the ranks of the Israeli creative or professional class (Lerner et al. 2007; Rapoport and Lomsky-Feder 2002).

The story of Russian 1.5ers in Israel is rather unique due to the size of this community and the existence of a thriving Russian subculture. It can be argued that such a "critical mass" of same-origin migrants in a small country, where their language and culture have gradually gained higher acceptance and social status, may by itself lead to socio-cultural retention. Most Israeli Russian 1.5ers are bicultural (or intercultural); typically, they are breaking their own distinct pathway between the home and host cultures, augmented by

the new transnational opportunities (Horowitz 2001; Remennick 2013). As a result, a new hybrid cultural bubble has emerged in Israel, typified by a hyphenated identity (Russian-Israeli), lifestyle (rock bands, clubs and fusion musical genres), and a mixed lingo called *HebRush* (Remennick 2003; Niznik 2011).

RUSSIAN IMMIGRANTS AND ORTHODOX MARRIAGE IN ISRAEL

As part of the recent wave of post-Soviet immigration, about 330,000 non-Jews came to Israel as spouses of Jews or partly Jewish offspring of ethnically mixed families (Cohen and Susser 2009). An on-going controversy surrounds the host of social issues stemming from the definition of Judaism as the state religion and pertaining to the statuses and rights of non-Jewish residents, particularly in marriage, family reunification, and burial. An inherent conflict between civil and religious (Halachic) definitions of Jewish identity caused a paradox situation, whereby thousands of immigrants have been granted citizenship by the Law of Return, but at the same time are denied some basic civil rights, because the religious establishment does not recognize them as Jews (e.g., if their father, not mother, was Jewish or when proofs of Jewishness are deemed insufficient). Israel stands alone among Western nations, not allowing civil marriage and having personal status regulated exclusively by religious law (Ben-Porat 2013; Triger 2012). Until recently, only two partners from the same state-recognized religion (Jews, Muslims and Christians) could legally marry, each in their own religious framework. In 2010, the new law was passed, allowing two non-Jews (and other Israelis without religious affiliation) to marry in the civil court, solving only part of the problem—because most couples consist of a Jew and non-Jew or partial Jew (Fogiel-Bijaoui 2013). If one of the spouses is Jewish and the other is not, they have to be buried in different cemeteries, often located far apart.

The authority granted to the rabbinate over marriage and divorce was part of the so-called Status Quo reflecting the historic agreement between the secular government and the orthodox religious parties in the beginning of the State. Ex-Soviet immigrants became a major factor undermining the Status Quo, because they created a new reality in which a large number of Israeli citizens not recognized as Jews could not marry in Israel (Ben-Porat 2013). The monopoly of Orthodox rabbinic marriage has been further challenged by the recent trends among some native Israelis to avoid traditional wedding rituals and conduct their own nonorthodox, custom-designed weddings. These trends among young Israelis with secular identity reflect growing consumerism and novel lifestyles, the value of self-expression, and opposition to the monopoly of religious authority (Triger 2012). Nonreligious Israelis who marry outside the auspices of State Rabbinate reject the state's Orthodox religious establishment more than they reject Jewish religion or tradition as such (Tabory and Shalev Lev-Tzur 2009). Indeed, most of such alternative weddings are characterized by the strong connection to Jewish orthodox rituals and include most of the traditional components with some alterations and innovations (Prashizky 2014).

The barrier to marriage is very relevant for the young Russian Israelis of 1.5 generation, among them the members of *Fishka*. Among *Fishka* participants, there are both Jews and persons who identify as Jews but are not recognized as such by Halachic Orthodox definition (mostly children of Jewish father and non-Jewish mother). Significant numbers of them cannot get married in Israel and are forced to marry abroad (since the state recognizes foreign marital certificates) or to cohabit without marriage. The most

popular places for civil weddings abroad between young Russian Israelis are Cyprus, Prague, and cities in Italy, due to their lenient legislation that allows fast registration and attractive honeymoon opportunities in tourist-oriented venues. According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, in the year 2000, almost 10% of newly married Israelis got married by civil marriage abroad. Among them, 42% are couples of immigrants from the FSU, which is six times higher than their share among newly married Israeli Jewish couples (Dobrin 2006). Upon civil registration abroad, most such couples have an alternative quasi-religious ceremony, with a reform rabbi, local celebrity, or family member officiating, indicating their wish for belonging (and certain conformity) with Israeli Jewish traditions (Prashizky 2014).

The uniqueness of the project "Weddings in the Town Square" is in its demonstrative, active protest appealing to broad urban audiences and taking place in central and fashionable locations of Tel-Aviv. By contrast, native Israelis who choose the alternative path typically have a quiet private, indoor event not involving an officiating state rabbi. They are usually not interested in declaring their political protest; as one Israeli-born, secular groom told one of us in an interview, "our wedding is a private event, not a demonstration" (Prashizky 2013:48). Earlier precedents of public protest against Orthodox monopoly for Jewish weddings were organized by the *New Family* association, a NGO that provides legal and logistic aid to Israelis interested in civil union registration (also for same-sex couples). In 2002, it conducted a wedding ceremony for two Russian immigrants to call attention to the problem of their lack of common marital rights. Yet the weddings performed by *Fishka* leaders stepped up the caliber and visibility of this protest and added a special urban-festival quality to these street events.

FISHKA IN TEL-AVIV'S URBAN LANDSCAPE

Fishka is located in Tel-Aviv, the second most populous city in Israel and the hub of its largest metropolitan area. It is known as the city "that never sleeps" or a "non-stop metropolis." It is the first modern Jewish urban space and Hebrew-speaking city in Palestine founded by the Zionist settlers from the Russian Empire in the early 1900s and later receiving waves of Jewish refugees before and after two world wars. It is the most multicultural city in Israel: In addition to native and immigrant Jewish residents and Arabs from Jaffa, most labor migrants from Africa, the Philippines, and Eastern Europe have also settled there.

In the local Israeli lore, Tel-Aviv is often likened to Paris of the 1930s or New York and London of the 1980s. In July 2003, UNESCO announced the listing of "the white city of Tel-Aviv" as a world heritage site because of its dominant Bauhaus architecture (introduced by German Jewish immigrants in the 1930s). The "white city" brand invested Tel-Aviv with the prestige of a prominent cultural center on the global scale (Azaryahu 2012). The young and fashionable crowd (including multiple tourists) appreciates Tel-Aviv for its stylish cafes, elegant seaside promenade, music and art festivals, and thriving night life.

Most *Fishka* participants had moved to Tel-Aviv from Jerusalem and Israel's peripheral towns after finishing their education, in search of professional and personal advancement in the big city. Although most of their parents arrived in Israel with higher education, the majority experienced occupational and social downgrading upon migration (Remennick

2007). Tel-Aviv with its thriving cultural life and denser labor market is construed by these youngsters as the only attractive place to live in Israel in order to make something of their lives. Despite soaring housing costs in this metropolis, *Fishka* patrons live in rented apartments in central Tel-Aviv or in suburban Gush-Dan towns. *Fishka* association became the setting of the symbolic encounter between the values and practices of the previous generations of Russian intellectuals and artists and their current reincarnation, as young migrants in Israel. The “ethnic script” of Russian Jewish intelligentsia (Lerner et al. 2007; Remennick 2007) includes urban lifestyle; higher education (most are professionals in the high-tech industry, medicine, education, and a range of creative areas—journalism, design, theater, etc.); broad cultural literacy (including history and philosophy); and the love for Russian and European high culture with concomitant attempts at artistic self-expression.

Along with their move to Israel’s cultural center, they are experiencing rapid bourgeoisification and integration into urban consumer society. Their lifestyle and leisure habits evolve accordingly and include meeting with friends in popular city cafes (Rozovsky and Almog 2011), visits to art exhibitions, theater and cinema, organization of and participation in urban cultural festivals. Thus, outdoor street events with multicultural flavor become part and parcel of the new middle-class lifestyle to which our informants aspire to belong.

A couple of successful Tel-Aviv fashion designers (*Frau Blau* brand) are among the club’s participants and patrons, who also supply the stage costumes and clothes for project leaders, concert anchors, etc. Altogether these manifestations make a claim at these young immigrants’ special place in the ranks of Tel-Aviv bohemia, their stake in the creation of the city’s high culture, and at least parity (if not superiority) with other young creators who are native Israelis (Prashizky and Remennick 2015). This elitist attitude is also supported by *Fishka*’s donor—the Genesis Foundation for Russian Jewry (the quote below belongs to Sana Britavsky, head of its Tel-Aviv branch).

This initiative [*Fishka*] looked unique from the outset, that’s why we decided to support it. It attracted young and trendy Tel-Aviv crowd that was interested in its Jewish and Russian roots. Not the ardent Zionist kind that you find in Jerusalem but a bohemian kind, professional, confident and well-adjusted in Israel. These were not the people crushed by immigration and looking for a shoulder to cry on. Most had received their degrees from good universities and started promising careers. . . . Even if they hadn’t made it in Israel yet and worked as janitors or guards, they aspired to become film directors and artists and found here the outlet for their creativity. From the outset, *Fishka*’s leaders kept certain standards that resulted in self-selection: The rogue folks interested in loud music and a glass of beer dropped out quickly. . .

Later, she mused:

In fact, *Fishka* is a post-migration phenomenon; its patrons are very much the locals now . . . they remind me of the 2nd and 3rd generation of the White Russian immigration in Paris. Already French, but of a special kind, they cherished their Russian roots, sang Russian songs and dined in Russian restaurants. . . . Now this ‘ethnic’ tweak became fashionable also in Israel, so it attracts young Sabras of a certain kind who like hanging out with Russian 1.5ers. . . . Thus Tel-Aviv slowly recovers its historic Russian roots— most of its founding creative class had come from Russia and

built the city from scratch . . . this lingering imprint helps young Russian Israelis feel at home here.

Sana's words evoke two elitist associations: one with the noble White Russian émigrés in Paris who never severed their ties with the Russian culture, and the other with the Russian Jewish founders of Tel-Aviv in pre-state Palestine—the iconic figures like poets C.N. Bialik and A. Penn, *Habima* actress H. Rovina, the reformer of modern Hebrew E. Ben-Yehuda, and many others, whose names carry multiple Tel-Aviv streets. She notes with pride that, thanks to *Fishka* and other similar groups, Russian-ness came into vogue among some of Tel-Aviv's natives, helping redress the lingering stereotypes of the immigrants and bridge the gaps to the Israeli Jewish mainstream.

Several projects at *Fishka* aim at building intercultural bridges by introducing contemporary Hebrew culture to the 1.5ers. One of them is called *Chronicus*, and includes readings of Hebrew writers and poets, meeting Hebrew stage and film directors, etc., as well as field trips to culturally important sites in Tel-Aviv and beyond. *Chronicus's* leader is Nadia Greenberg (33), one of the key figures at *Fishka*, who came to Israel 22 years ago from Moscow, graduated from a theatre school, and works as teacher and stage director. She shared her thoughts on intercultural learning.

Most *Fishka* guys speak fluent Hebrew and feel Israeli, but they are not always familiar with contemporary Israeli culture and its evolution over the 20th century. *Chronicus* seeks to fill in the gaps of their knowledge and help them feel more connected to Israel. . . . We started from the trips to several important museums and memorial homes (e.g., of H.N. Bialik), and proceeded to learning urban history and architecture in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem. . . . Our field trips in Tel-Aviv made a deep impression on the *Fishka* guys. The stories of young Russian-Jewish pioneers who had built the city in the 1910–1920s remind them of their own journey almost 100 years later: Back then, as now, *the city scene is in flux and we can contribute our fair share to its current history and cultural scene*. . . . These pioneers also felt being in the gap between the two cultures and slowly learned to fill it with the new content. This historical parallel makes you feel more relevant in this place on the map. . . . *You realize your own entitlement for it and your role in creating its current history*. Tel-Aviv's young intellectuals of the 1920s were also new to Palestine and had to invent themselves and the town from scratch. We can follow in the same path— *to do new things that are interesting and inspiring for us, and nobody can tell us, this city isn't yours, you don't belong here*. . . . We do belong and we want to inhabit Tel-Aviv in the ways that suit our own cultural and mental tastes . . . [authors' emphasis]

The historic image of Tel-Aviv as the first Hebrew city is dominant in the stories of Sana and Nadia, who compare *Fishka* participants to the first Tel-Aviv residents in the early 20th century. This symbolic meaning may be the most prestigious one because it invokes the mythical beginnings of the Jewish settlement in Palestine. Tel-Aviv's growth as a Jewish urban center was inseparable from the creation of a vernacular Hebrew literature, fine arts, and photography by Jewish practitioners. This aspect of cultural life in Tel-Aviv is relevant to the current cultural activities of *Fishka* participants and is actively extended and reinterpreted by them. Nadia's reflections underscore the role of *Fishka* in the fortification of young immigrants' feelings of belonging to this country and city, their stake in and entitlement to a fair part in its on-going creation. The parallel between the earlier

waves of *Aliya* from Russia and today's Russian 1.5ers helps cement the intergenerational ties and a common vision of Israel's history and its culture as a complex tapestry with a significant Russian thread running across it. They claim their unique place as creators of Israeli locally embedded cultural capital drawing on the Russian language and traditions. So they adopt, use, and reinterpret symbolic and mythical meanings of Tel-Aviv as a cultural center, the "White city," and a thriving metropolis, all of which are shared by native Israelis (Azaryahu 2007, 2012).

Other leaders of creative projects at *Fishka* also stressed that Tel-Aviv attracted them as a cosmopolitan, secular, and culturally diverse city where everyone is different and therefore can be what they want. That's why a group like *Fishka* could only emerge in this city, where like-minded young adults of Russian origin got together to build novel venues for their bicultural creativity. Due to Tel-Aviv's multicultural *modus vivendi*, Russian Israelis could legitimately claim their own place in the diverse urban landscape and see their unique contribution accepted and appreciated by the natives and other immigrants alike.

Tel-Aviv is also the main hub of social protests and street rallies in Israel. It is famous for its annual Gay Pride parade and other LGBT community events often supported by the Tel-Aviv-Jaffa municipality. In the summer of 2011, tents mushroomed along Rothschild Boulevard, becoming the first site of the movement protesting against rising living costs that later on spread to other cities. Rabin Square adjacent to the Town Hall (re-named so after 1995 Yizhak Rabin's assassination) has been the focal point for various political demonstrations, including recent protests of labor migrants and asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea demanding basic social rights.

TU B'AV FESTIVALS AND TOWN SQUARE WEDDINGS

Tu B'Av indicates the 15th day of the Hebrew month Av (occurring in July–August), traditionally celebrated since Biblical times as a day of love and affection. In modern Israel, it is celebrated as a sort of Jewish Valentine's Day. One of the projects initiated by *Fishka* was "Town Square Weddings, aka *Tu B'Av* Festivals"—public weddings for Russian immigrant couples in central locations of Tel-Aviv during three years, 2009 to 2011. Choosing one couple a year, *Fishka* organized public celebrations for them while also covering all the wedding costs, including the couple's garments designed by *Frau Blau*. The first wedding for Olga and Niko was held in August 2009 in Dizengoff square, Tel-Aviv's iconic public spot.

The couple met online via one of the Russian Jewish websites and they have lived together for the last year. Olga immigrated to Israel from Ukraine in 1995 with her Jewish mother. A secretary in a Tel-Aviv law firm, she is able to prove that she is Jewish and would be entitled to marry in an Orthodox wedding. Niko immigrated from Moscow to Israel alone in 1995. He served in the Israeli army and currently works as a computer technician. Although both his parents are Jewish, he cannot prove it because their original birth certificates have been lost and no living witness testimonies are available. Thus the couple is not entitled to marry in an Orthodox ceremony [from <http://www.fishka.org.il/tubeav2009>].

The second ceremony took place in July 2010 in the square near Tel-Aviv Cinemathèque, a modern complex with cinema halls and art exhibitions in the lobby that often

hosts local and international film festivals. The wedding couple was Julia and Stas; she is an actress and he is a high-tech worker. They have a little daughter Emili. Both are Hachalic Jews from Ukraine. They could get married in the rabbinical court, but rejected the religious ceremony and the hypocrisy involved, given they already have a child together.

The third wedding was celebrated in August 2011 in *Gan Ha'hashmal* in Southern Tel-Aviv, a trendy park plaza with fashion boutiques, coffee shops, and clubs. The wedding couple was Inna and Pavel, both so-called "seven-eighths" (7/8) Jewish, that is, all their grandparents were Jewish except one maternal grandmother. They also have a little daughter Noa. Pavel was born in Moscow, Inna in St. Petersburg. Previously he worked in a high-tech firm and she was a journalist, but today they are working together on a new online project.

All three wedding locations are central cultural, social, and commercial venues in Tel-Aviv. Their deliberate choice symbolized the know-how on what is "cool" in the city, asserted the urban lifestyle of *Fishka* participants, and highlighted the performative aspects of identity and protest by young Russian immigrants living in Tel-Aviv. All the events got formal permits from Tel-Aviv municipality and police. All the couples identified themselves as Jews and intended to have a Jewish wedding ceremony. This is the example of press release about Inna and Pavel's wedding in 2011 that carries a clear political message (see our italics in the bottom):

Tu B'Av Festival - Gan Ha'hashmal, an Israeli Wedding Party.

The ceremony will be held in Tel-Aviv's Gan Ha'hashmal. . . . Everybody is welcome to join the bride and groom on the happiest day of their life, dance to live music by "The Apples" band, take part in workshops and learning sessions on love and marriage in Israel, enjoy art and fashion exhibits, and celebrate well into the night at the Levontin club.

Inna Zyskind and Pavel Kogan have lived together for three years and have 8-month-old daughter Noa. Pavel was born in Moscow, Inna in St. Petersburg. . . . The circumstances that led the couple to this public wedding are rather compelling—Inna and Pavel are amongst approximately 300,000 Israelis nicknamed "psuley hitun" (unmarriageable)—they are not eligible for legal (religious) marriage in Israel despite paying taxes, serving in the IDF, and living their life in the land of our forefathers. "In Moscow, I could not advance my career as a journalist because of the 'glass ceiling' for the Jews," says Inna. "All my life I knew I was Jewish, until I came to Israel." Inna and Pavel are both so-called "seven-eighths" (7/8) Jewish, that is, all their grandparents are Jewish, except one maternal grandmother. "The state suggests that I convert but why— if I'm Jewish?" wonders Inna. In the State of Israel, the Orthodox rabbinate has a monopoly over Jewish marriage. . . . *Therefore, the marriage ceremony of Inna and Pavel will not be recognized in the Jewish state. . . . In order to gain legal recognition as a married couple by the Ministry of the Interior, Inna and Pavel will need to marry in a civil ceremony abroad. The aim of our festival is to raise public awareness to marriage alternatives and strengthen the sense of their cultural legitimacy and validity. . .* [from the event site: <http://www.fishka.org.il/tubeav2011/>]

In all three cases, the weddings were advertised in local press and on the radio; the couples also released video clips in which they and their kids introduced themselves and told their story, explaining their decision to marry in a public venue. Many internet

articles in Russian, English, and Hebrew, blog comments, photos, and YouTube videos were posted following the weddings, stirring an active public discussion in the virtual space. This modus operandi can be seen as a sort of synergy between political and media activism. Below we present some interview quotes from *Fishka's* leaders (all of them women) who reflected on the problem of marriage in Israel and the idea behind the project.

Helen, 33, a high-tech industry worker, is a mother of two little sons cohabiting with their father because he is not recognized as a Jew, so no rabbi would marry them. Helen, who immigrated from Kishinev in 1990 and later became one of *Fishka's* founders, described feelings of humiliation that she personally experienced because of her inability to be legally married to a man of her choice in Israel. In protest, she decided not to marry at all, while insisting on her right to be wedded in her own country, not abroad:

Denis and I cannot get married because his father is Jewish but his mother isn't. For both of us this is very unfair. Denis is very devoted to Israel: he made Aliya alone during high school and then served in Golani [an elite combat unit of the IDF]; now he does his reserve duty every year. His reserve army unit is like his family... he volunteered for the 2nd Lebanon war despite not being drafted... there was even a TV story about it... Why is he good enough to risk his life for Israel but not eligible to marry here?

She continued:

This drives me mad...our young men are treated like everyone else until the moment they want to start a family—and then this harsh realization dawns on them... The problem with burials is even worse, we witnessed cases when fallen soldiers with Russian mothers were denied a military grave next to their Jewish pals... We live together as a family without getting married and it doesn't bother us too much, but we are still waiting for the day when the law changes and we can get married in Israel.

Helen framed her criticism in the republican citizenship discourse often used in connection to the FSU immigrants, who serve their adopted country in the army, work and pay taxes but are not recognized as Jews and are hence prevented from marriage. Russian immigrants are giving to Israel on par with its native citizens but do not receive their fair share or rights in exchange. A similar tenet of unfairness merging on outrage is often put forward regarding non-Jewish soldiers who fell in battle for Israel but won't be buried in a Jewish cemetery (Ben-Porat 2013). In this context, Helen explained the idea of their public weddings project:

This is terrible when such a large group of young people committed to Israel is treated like second-class citizens. In important personal matters—be it a wedding or a burial—we are given no choice and have to comply with ridiculous religious rules. Of course people find private solutions to this collective problem, but they feel humiliated... Israel is losing these talented young people who are willing to contribute so much to its wellbeing—as professionals, as soldiers, as law-abiding citizens. If they feel unwanted here, they will go abroad rather than organize for political struggle to change Israeli realities... When mass media discuss emigration of young Israelis with Russian roots, they typically mention economic problems and

security issues, but in fact their lack of belonging is as important, and this is a great potential loss for the country.

Later she added:

Most of us at *Fishka* experienced this either in person or via family and friends but we hate to discuss it. The same goes for *giyur* (conversion to Jewishness)—if most young people cannot comply with the Orthodox procedures, let them be, but open some alternative channels so we can feel as equal citizens. . . . That's why we came up with this project of public city weddings, trying to bring this out in the open and turn their pain into joy. . . . It wasn't a protest demonstration as such but rather a way to legitimize alternative ways to get married in Israel and to set an example that other couples who can't or won't marry in the rabbinical court could follow. *It was a clear, and rather political, statement on our part: if the Orthodox establishment rejects you, we will help you—and the alternative we offer is actually more attractive!* You can have a colorful public wedding in the most remarkable places of the city, with municipal officials and local celebrities to greet you as a couple. Our goal was to empower these young Russian Israelis, to show them that they can have a beautiful wedding also when they aren't recognized as Jews. If there are many public events like this, they will eventually have some impact on public opinion and people will demand to change current rules. Until now, Russian *Olim* [newcomers] preferred to solve their problems quietly and not to challenge the authorities by loud protests, but this may change in the future—at least I hope it will. This is also our attempt to demonstrate our power as a collective and our belonging to the Jewish majority, to assert our entitlement to marry as citizens. . . .

Another explanation of the idea behind the weddings project was stated by Sveta, 35, who immigrated to Israel from Minsk in 1991 and now works as director of human resources in a financial company. Sveta had participated as an organizer in all three public weddings and was recently interviewed for this study. She was recently married herself in a civil procedure in Prague, followed by an “alternative” wedding in Tel-Aviv conducted by one of *Fishka* staffers.

Town Square weddings organized by *Fishka* were a kind of a manifesto, but a quiet one, without crying out loud mottos and holding placards. We preferred to put together a happening, a street celebration in which every passer-by could partake and enjoy. . . . We wanted to show everyone that there is an alternative, and beautiful, way to marry. . . . *Let me stress it again— it wasn't a protest rally, although you can't deny there was a protest motive present— but of a different kind, a constructive and positive protest that points to an alternative. . . . It is more common here to block roads, stop traffic and yell loud mottos, but we chose another way to show our resentment. I am sure it made many people think about the issues with Orthodox marriage in Israel and consider the need for a change. . . .*

Sveta seconds Helen's assertion that Russian Israelis hate to turn personal into political and never express their protest in loud and disruptive forms common in Israel. At the same time, they can no longer keep silent in the face of humiliating practices of the Orthodox establishment excluding many Russian immigrants as non-kosher Jews or gentiles. They use *Fishka* as a platform to stage their “constructive” protest in the form of alternative civil weddings for those who cannot legally marry in Israel. Many couples are

unaware that in the case of divorce they will still have to apply to rabbinical courts that have full jurisdiction over divorce for all Israeli Jews, including those who married civilly abroad or had an alternative (nonorthodox) wedding in Israel (Triger 2012).

A CASE STUDY: JULIA AND STAS

We will now zoom in on the wedding of Julia and Stas, the second of the three, which took place at the stairs and plaza of Tel-Aviv Cinematheque in July 2010. A red carpet was rolled out over the stairs. Clowns, dancers in colorful costumes, and women dressed in extravagant *Frau Blau* brand garments, with multicolor feathers and periwigs on their heads, entertained the crowd. The wedded couple's garments were designed in the Sixties style. The wedded couple arrived at the site on motorbikes decorated with colorful balloons and accompanied by Elvis Presley songs. The ceremony was performed under the hupa (a canopy fixed on four poles) according to the Jewish tradition. Yet, contrary to the Orthodox wedding led by men, the ceremony was egalitarian and *kidushin* (blessing) was performed by both groom and bride. A personalized form of *ketubah* (traditional marital contract) was written as a testimony of mutual commitment rather than a legal "wife purchase" agreement. Instead of an orthodox rabbi, the wedding was conducted by Moti Zeira of *Midrashet Oranim* in north Israel, one of the leaders of the Jewish renewal movement and an expert on alternative Jewish rituals. The traditional Seven Blessings to the newly wed couple were replaced by the new, alternative texts and orations. The Seven Blessings recited at orthodox weddings usually follow a uniform pattern in all prayer books with the words of praise and gratitude to God. In this alternative wedding, the following public figures delivered the blessings: (1) Orli Vilnai, a popular Israeli TV journalist, (2) Eran Baruch, Tel-Aviv Secular Yeshiva head, (3) Helen Bushmenny, the co-founder of *Fishka*, (4) Asaf Zamir, a deputy mayor of Tel-Aviv-Yafo, (5) Jay Shofet from the New Israel Fund, (6) Lucy Dubinchik, an Israeli actress and Russian immigrant, and (7) Moti Zeira, who sang the traditional version of the Seventh Blessing along with all the participants.

All these people—the journalist, the media celebrity, the actress, NGO leaders, and Tel-Aviv municipal officials—support the freedom of choice in marriage; they were carefully chosen to enhance the public impact of this issue. Some of their blessings carried a clear political message, exemplified by J. Shofet from New Israel Fund: "*We came here tonight not only to celebrate this truly exciting wedding; we joined Havaya, Fishka and other Jewish pluralistic organizations to demand a change in state-religion connection— as Jewish people living in our own state. Mazal Tov! Mabruk! Gor'ko!*" Or the blessing by M. Zamir from Tel-Aviv municipality, who said: "*Tel-Aviv is the only city in Israel where everyone can live according to their beliefs and customs. Unfortunately it is still not like that in other Israeli cities.*" Again, belonging to Tel-Aviv was mentioned as very central to this event.

Thus, this wedding followed the traditional script but filled it with a new personalized content, which is typical of most alternative weddings in Israel (Prashizky 2014). The uniqueness of the three weddings staged by *Fishka* was in their public and political character, as well as their cultural symbols and festival style. *Fishka* weddings merged various cultural elements, including flamboyant dress design, live music, and street shows with clowns and balloons. The political statement embedded in their alternative wedding included equal roles for women and noninvolvement of the Orthodox Rabbinate. It was a

Jewish and Israeli but a secular wedding, a performance of an altered, egalitarian version of the patriarchal ceremony.

After the ceremony, there was a concert of Israeli rock band Boom Pam from Tel-Aviv, which plays a mixture of Mediterranean, Balkan, rock, and surf music. On the improvised stage, the artists took turns entertaining the crowd with loud and rhythmic music. The dances to the sounds of the band continued through the night, while the Cinematheque screened Israeli and foreign films about weddings. At the adjacent plaza, various Jewish renewal institutions advertised their activities; a round-table discussion was held on the topic of pluralistic Jewish weddings. Other weddings organized by *Fishka* included a street circus show and a workshop presenting liturgical poetry by Mizrahi (Eastern) Jews—a symbolic gesture of an intercultural dialogue.

Thus, the content and performative style of these public festivals offers a venue for self-expression for these young immigrant urbanites. In the brief history of *Fishka*, the town square weddings represent a peak in their public visibility and an expression of political protest against extant marital laws which they view as injustice. These events also make a symbolic claim on the local belonging and manifest these young immigrants' drive for building their unique niche in multicultural Tel-Aviv. Such methods of confronting the ruling regimes or established local elites by the newcomers entail cultural activism, creativity, and imagination, notions usually associated with members of the creative social and professional classes (Firat and Kuryel 2010).

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Focusing on a group of young Russian immigrants living in Tel-Aviv, this ethnographic study examines their quest for active belonging to the host society and their collective protest action aimed at the status quo with (religious-only) marriage. Their association *Fishka*, which was initially founded as an in-group social and cultural venue for the Russian 1.5 generation (Prashizky and Remennick 2015), has gradually expanded its mission to embrace active outreach efforts that would place this immigrant cohort on the local and national map, making it visible and appreciated by other Israelis. The young immigrants manifested great creativity in designing the tools—performative and artistic—for expanding their public visibility. The organizers and participants of Town Square Weddings pick and merge various cultural elements as signs of their collective belonging, including popular music, media, fashion, cinema, and some carnival features, such as street shows with clowns, circuses, and balloons.

These open weddings have to be viewed in the context of other public events and festivals recently organized by *Fishka* as demonstrations (or even celebrations) of both their belonging to and difference from the “mainstream” Israeli urban life. These include, for example, International Women’s Day Parade, Passover Seder, *Mimouna* celebrations, and Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony described in detail elsewhere (Prashizky and Remennick forthcoming). The expression of young immigrants’ identities, that represent equal shares of belonging and criticism/protest, is achieved through event performances near iconic urban sites, such as Dizengoff square, Tel-Aviv Cinematheque, and *Gan Ha’hashmal*.

During the last two decades, political parties representing ex-Soviet immigrants in Israel (in coalition with other liberal parties) have made promises to resolve the problem of marriage for couples not recognized as Jews, but in practice little has changed. Since

2010, civil courts register so-called spousal covenants (*brit-hazugiut*) between Israelis without religious affiliation, but only a few dozen couples a year have used this venue so far. This is because most couples consist of a Jew and a non-Jew (by Halacha), and for them no civil venue for marriage exists (Fogiel-Bijaoui 2013). It can be concluded that the political struggle for civil marriage has failed so far (Triger 2012), thus passing the torch to the sub-political settings such as young immigrants' civic associations. As a collective, Russian Israelis usually avoid head-on political confrontation or loud public protests against their discrimination by religious bodies, looking instead for personal and practical solutions like civil marriage abroad or cohabitation. Still influenced by Soviet political legacies, Russian immigrants imported to Israel a more passive and skeptical civic ethos; they typically express a lower drive for active citizenship than veteran Ashkenazi Jews (Lerner 2011). However, the perception of local laws and practices as immutable is more typical of older ex-Soviets, while their children may be more willing to fight for reforms (Philippov and Knafelman 2011). They adopt the republican discourse on citizenship and construe their entitlement for all civil *rights* because they fill all their civic *duties* towards their adopted country as soldiers, workers, and tax-payers.

Fishka's active resistance against the status quo in state-religion domain reflects its members' demographic features (young adults of marital age, many of whom are of mixed Russian-Jewish origin), but also the cultural capital they are endowed with. *Fishka* can be seen as the setting of the symbolic encounter between the values and practices of the old and new generations of Russian intelligentsia (Prashizky and Remennick 2015). Most *Fishka* participants are professionals in the high-tech industry, medicine, education, and a range of creative areas—journalism, design, theater, etc. They combine their love for Russian and European high culture with attempts at artistic self-expression. At the same time, these young Russian Israelis are emerging as “critical citizens” dissatisfied with sectarian Israeli marital laws and seeking to reform them in the more egalitarian and inclusive direction. The expansion of “critical citizenship” is characteristic of contemporary post-industrial societies; it reflects popular distrust of traditional government institutions that are unable to solve many social and economic problems (Norris 1999). Their criticism is manifested as a cultural performance and calls for participation and solidarity by other middle-class Israeli Jews.

The culturally refined and festival character of the Russian weddings project, which combines political message with performance and entertainment, has the potential of attracting street crowds and feelings of solidarity. Further proof of this welcome is the patronage and sponsorship of their public events by Tel-Aviv municipality, including the presence of the deputy mayor at their more visible events. Its additional goal is reaffirming critical and active citizenship of young Russian 1.5ers, now full-fledged Tel-Aviv residents, which is a new and still uncommon behavior among ex-Soviet immigrants (Ben-Porat 2013). The active political stance and cultural activism of *Fishka* members challenge native Israelis' monopoly on communal public space; young immigrants are thus carving a place for themselves in the iconic sites of the city's public cultural sphere. The example of the initial town weddings described above inspired dozens of similar public events in the following years among young Russian Israelis and other residents who are not eligible for the Orthodox ceremony.

The comparative studies among young immigrant adults and their civic associations are an important emerging stream of migration research, as well as political and urban sociology. We believe that our findings contribute to current theoretical debates on the

performance of belonging; they illuminate the cultural, expressive, spatial, and temporal dimensions of urban diversity (Berg and Sigona 2013; Fortier 1999). This study provides context and texture to one specific urban site of multicultural interactions that facilitate new, unexpected social coalitions and fortify immigrants' sense of ownership and belonging to their adopted country.

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