



Introduction

April 2008, graduation party of a business-entrepreneurship course in Haifa. After some speeches and handing out the certificates, while women were enjoying the refreshments, each graduate was asked to say a few words about her business. Rachel Rosen, who had asked to be the last one, used the opportunity to perform a short standup piece that she had written for the occasion. Rachel was a certified medical masseur and self-employed for more than fifteen years. Although like many of the others she had to supplement her income through work as a shop assistant because her business was not economically sustainable, her profile was somewhat atypical in that she had more cultural and social capital than most other participants. A never-married mother of one in her late forties, she had a university education, her father was a white-collar professional, and her social circle included many friends with higher education. “My name is Rachel and I’m a love-and-energy entrepreneur,” she opened, talking in a very soft voice. “I sell capsules that will make you fill out with love and help you give love. You should try one of them, because love is really necessary for your economic success. . . .” She continued like that for a few more minutes, then said, “You’d never guess what happened to me last week when I went down to the desert to meditate. I opened one of my love capsules, sat down and did some breathing. All of a sudden I heard a weird sound, like thunder. Before I knew what was going on, a huge sack came down from the sky and landed right in my lap. And guess what, it was full of money! Just like that, all that money came tumbling down on me. . . .” As I was standing in the audience, listening with a big grin to what I thought was a really witty parody, I got a nudge from one of the other graduates. “Why is Rachel talking in this odd voice and using her hands like that?” This woman, it suddenly hit me, didn’t get it. “She’s doing standup,” I said, “It’s a joke.” “Ah,” she said, then turned around and passed the explanation on to the women on her other side. “It’s a joke. . . .” I could see the nods from the corner of my eye.¹

This book tells the story of economic empowerment projects for low-income women in Israel and dwells on the manifold paradoxes that they engender. I

portray the institutional context, called “social economy,” in which such projects are operated, and describe how the women at the receiving end accommodate the new expectation that they should become economically independent with existing cultural scripts of feminine propriety. As the opening anecdote conveys, the projects are saturated with a New Age lingo of love and money, itself the upshot of emotional capitalism, which collapses together work, care, entitlement, and the very notion of self, in an ever-expanding imaginary shopping mall where “everything,” from moral value to utility value to personhood, is marketable.

On a broader level, this is a book about neoliberalism and its localization in a particular cultural context. The Israeli social economy field features collaborations between business tycoons, social services professionals, state functionaries, grassroots activists, and women from disempowered backgrounds, who together create a discourse full of contradictions. On the one hand, economic empowerment projects are replete with talk about individual self-sufficiency and open opportunities; they urge low-income women to abandon the position of needy, passive recipients of public support and see themselves, instead, as agents of change and the key to their own failure or success. On the other hand, many actors in the field are long-time social-change activists who are deeply committed to feminism and minority rights. Hence, involvement in social economy projects typically entails a complex and somewhat inner contradictory process of gender and ethnic consciousness-raising alongside a depoliticizing approach to economic disadvantage. As noted, this odd-mixture of ideas and perspectives is typically packaged in a hyperemotional language of love, care, and self-fulfillment; it is also inadvertently entrapped in the neoliberal belief that the market is an obvious regulator of morality and identity. All this makes social economy a distinct arena of neoliberal cultural production. In exploring it, I dwell on the fallacies—the fact that most of the women do not become less poor as a result of their enrollment in the projects or that the flow of capital into the field does nothing to mitigate the polarized structure of social inequalities—as well as the unintended consequences—the subtle but meaningful benefits that the women draw from the projects, or the infiltration of a language of universal care and solidarity into the core of a capitalist-patriarchal-nationalist order.

I use two main analytical concepts: economic citizenship and gender contracts. The first connotes the idea that civil entitlement should be somehow conditioned on individual economic productivity. The second represents a generic cultural script regarding the appropriate balance between care and cash work in normative femininity and masculinity. These are two generic cultural schemas that bind together morality, belonging, gender, and economic productivity. Arguably, they are too crude for a satisfactory grounded analysis, as their practical implications differ vastly across and even within cultural settings. At

the same time, their analytical value lies precisely in their generality. The ethnography looks at the local adaptations of these general schemas. I explore how they travel globally and how they adapt to specific subsettings within a single political entity: How does the idea of measuring civil entitlement by individual economic productivity make sense in a locale dominated by collective, ethno-national sentiments? And what specific tokens does it assume for Jews and for Palestinians? How does the preoccupation with the economic productivity of women, and minority women at that, fit in with a cultural atmosphere of enduring racist and patriarchal attitudes? And how does the idea that normative women should work for cash and even become economically independent adapt across social classes, national collectivities, and gender regimes?

Thematic Concerns

Community Economic Development

For several decades now, but mainly in the past twenty-odd years, approaches to reduce poverty in postindustrial countries have come strongly to focus on local communities. At the background are several historical processes: social movements, such as the civil rights and the feminist movements that fostered community-based agency already in the 1960s and 1970s; global processes of economic restructuring, which generated substantial pressures to reduce government bureaucracies and privatize welfare; and neoliberal beliefs in the market's capacity to self-regulate and achieve optimal results in all spheres of human activity, including the handling of poverty and social inequalities. The incorporation of these processes into contemporary schemes of community economic development (CED) has meant, among other things, moderating the old socialist conviction that capitalist profit accumulation is the prime generator of class inequalities and social injustice. Gradually, the view that the main engine of economic growth is not labor and direct production but profits made in the business and financial sectors has become common wisdom beyond the circles of hard-core capitalists. Growing numbers of actors in progressive grassroots and academic circles have shifted their efforts from struggles to limit and regulate such profits by supporting strong state interventions and unionized work to becoming partners in programs to channel them directly from corporations "back to the community." Usually the streaming of funds has also entailed inculcation of the *ethos* of profit making, thus opening the door wide to the involvement of corporations in poverty reduction schemes, not just as financial benefactors but as ethical and cultural leaders.

As mentioned, and as will be shown ethnographically in Chapter 1, the cross-sectorial collaborations of businesses, government, and civil society or-

ganizations, which occur as part of CED schemes, have complex social effects. They tend to tame and some say coopt radical worldviews, but encounters on the ground yield refreshing interchanges among actors from very different social locations. These encounters facilitate the mainstreaming of critical and feminist outlooks, and legitimize minority claims for inclusion, by reframing arguments for women's and minorities' rights as "diversity" rather than as political radicalism. But at the same time they propagate neoliberal tenets, primarily that individual self-fulfillment is the key to social and economic success, into grassroots milieus that have traditionally focused on structural violence and political oppression.

These general characteristics of community economic development are to be found in the Israeli social economy as well, albeit with specific implications that are discussed at length in Chapter 1. Three themes in particular inform the ideological bridging in Israeli social economy: the national division between the dominant Jewish majority and the subordinate Palestinian minority, the intra-Jewish cleavage between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and the contradictory singling out of women as problem subjects and agents of change. Economic empowerment initiatives throughout the country, with their mission of reaching out to groups on the margins, operate precisely where the tensions surrounding ethnicity, nationality, and gender are the greatest: at their intersection with the lower-class and social periphery. These projects bring together, in pragmatic day-to-day operations, lower-class women from any number of subgroups: old-time Mizrahim, more recent Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union or Ethiopia, Palestinian-Israelis of various religions and lifestyles, and ultra-Orthodox Jewish women. They likewise assemble social activists from these different groups together with professionals, scholars, state officials, and donors.

In more than one respect, the encounters created in the field are very untraditional, and therefore challenge their participants to address issues that are difficult to talk about. The long-lasting discrimination against Mizrahim, which official discourses tend to downplay by treating it as a thing of the past, or the subordination of the Palestinian citizens, which Jewish Israelis generally prefer to overlook in the name of national security, are made acutely present in the projects. To accommodate these and related tensions, a certain semantic labor attempts to depoliticize them without denying them. Notable expressions here, which I analyze in some detail, are the familiar Israeli trope of "the social," which indicates that a certain topic is not political and therefore presumably less explosive than it may appear; or the English term "diversity," which is used interchangeably with "multiculturalism" to urge tolerance for the claims of Palestinian Israelis. The overwhelming focus on women, lastly, has the oxymoronic effect of bringing feminist jargon to the heart of main-

stream debates while reinforcing the stigmatization of women as needy subjects who lack the natural instinct for self-sustainability.

Another important preoccupation of CED projects, besides economic justice and social solidarity, is to reinforce democratic culture. The idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR), now a widespread subindustry in the field worldwide, encourages businesses to integrate social and environmental concerns into their activities by volunteering resources, skills, and workers' time to community projects. As detailed in Chapter 5, this common practice, which is rationalized as a win-win situation—the well-being of businesses is seen as co-dependent on that of society—is increasingly also articulated in terms of good citizenship. Adding an overtly moral tone to the familiar emphasis on economic optimization, CSR discourses preach social involvement, active responsibility, and some restraint on rampant profit making as corporations' contribution to a sustainable democratic culture.

The democratic claims of CED platforms are fraught with contradictions, as is the field throughout. One source of incongruity is the neoliberal embedment of these claims. Under neoliberalism, writes Ahiwa Ong (2006), the elements that we think of as blending to create citizenship—rights, entitlements, territoriality, a nation—become disarticulated and rearticulated. In Israel, where civic privileges are drawn primarily according to ethno-national belonging, the recent neoliberal focus on the perceived economic productivity of individuals (the idea of economic citizenship) entails a significant shift in orientation. Not diminishing the importance of collective affiliation, this idea nevertheless expands and reorients the definition of worthy citizens to include subjects who have been outside the traditional consensus. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the complex implications of this most recent addition to the discourses of Israeli citizenship, with particular attention to their effects on women at the outer edges of a polarizing political economy. Emphatically, the focus on economic citizenship that emerges in the field is pragmatic before it is ideological. It evolves through practice, although eventually it does acquire a moral wrap as well. Accordingly, the discussion of economic citizenship in Chapter 5 draws on the four preceding ethnographic chapters that provide the situated context of its evolution: Chapter 1 on the field of social economy, and chapters 2 through 4 on the women who enroll in the projects. The vulnerabilities and the agency of these women, and of those who seek to empower them, provide a lens to view the pragmatic significance of economic citizenship.

Intersectionality

Throughout this study I am guided by the perspective of intersectionality. By now widely accepted among feminist scholars (e.g., McCall 2005; Yuval-Davis

2006; Davis 2008; Walby, Armstrong, and Strid 2012), this perspective refers to the intersections of gender and other mechanisms of distinction and domination, primarily class, ethnicity, race, and heteronormativity. This theoretical approach to the study of inequalities sees patriarchy as a power structure in dynamic interaction with other power structures, which are historically and culturally contingent. Like many components of feminist scholarship, the contemporary focus on intersections begins in feminist *political practice*, which is grounded in the real-life experiences and the struggles for justice of minority women. As the black lesbian activists of the Combahee River Collective put it in their famous 1979 statement, “The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives” (Combahee River Collective 1983, 272).

Also in the background of intersectionality is a long-standing debate between Marxist and radical feminists on the order of analytical priority between patriarchy and capitalism: is gender akin to class? Do men as a group dominate women as a group? Are wives and husbands distinct classes? Is the domestic mode of production analytically and substantially distinct from the capitalist mode of production? How should we conceptualize the relation of capitalism to patriarchy—are they two autonomous, if interconnected systems? Are they entirely fused? Or are they initially distinct? And what is the role of the state in the perpetuation of women’s subjugation? Is the state capitalist *and* patriarchal? Or is it only the former?²² The introduction of intersectionality, which was suggested in the late 1980s (e.g., Crenshaw 1989) and which became increasingly popular in the following decade or two, marked a development in this discourse. It complicated the gender/class debate by highlighting much more the component of race (later also ethnicity and sexuality), thus pushing it beyond the either/or binary. It also challenged scholars writing about the multiple oppressions of minority women to move beyond a simple additive approach (see Yuval-Davis 2006). To refer to gender, class, ethnicity, race, and sexuality as intersecting means not only that women are oppressed three or four times more harshly if they are also of minority background, lower class, or lesbians: it means also that as social analysts we are challenged to tease out the *effects of the interaction* among various mechanisms of exclusion and domination. While poor Palestinian Israeli women are most likely vulnerable in many more ways than middle-class, educated, Jewish-Ashkenazi Israeli women, the effects of the multiple intersections are ultimately qualitative, not quantitative. Sometimes they may actually imply a complex of disadvantages and prerogatives.

A third inspiration of intersectionality, which is directly connected to the first mentioned above (the experiences and struggles of minority women), is the politics of identity. The calls from the margins of the feminist movement, which eventually reached the center and changed the way we now look at gender in academia too, were fueled by a quest for inclusion of women who had been active in all the major social-change projects, but felt that their own press-

ing concerns continued to be overlooked even within these radical settings. In the United States these, among others, were the civil rights, the Black Panther, and the feminist movements; in Israel the struggles for Mizrahi and the Palestinian rights, and again the feminist movement. These women therefore wished to find and articulate their unique voices and make them the central energetic source of their activism. To cite the statement of the Combahee River Collective again, “This focusing upon our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics. We believe that the most profound and potentially most radical politics comes directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else’s oppression” (Combahee River Collective 1983, 275). Identity politics has changed and evolved since the 1980s. In some important respects it has come under attack, at least by younger members of the feminist movement who are preoccupied with the right to individual self-expression and resent being “locked in a box” as it were, even in the cause of naming hidden oppressions (Sa’ar and Gooldin 2009). But the focus on the intersections of multiple oppressions still remains highly relevant to feminist analysis.

The heterogeneity of the women who participate in the Israeli social economy projects is a distinct characteristic of this field. Chapter 2 presents an elaborate description of women’s vulnerabilities, which shows up their diverse backgrounds. I dedicate specific sections to the situation of Palestinian, ultra-Orthodox, and new immigrant women, and of single mothers. These titles, of course, do not exhaust all the relevant social locations, and in fact more locations—Mizrahi Jews, Bedouins, Christians, non-Jewish new immigrants, or middle-aged women—are introduced through the ethnographic examples and the discussion of welfare and workforce conditions. The interactions of ethnicity, national affiliation, class, or family status evince significant distinctions among these subgroups, in access to state subsidies, in chances of upward mobility, in internalized sense of belonging or disregard, or in fact in whether women who are objectively poor actually feel poor. They also show how the polarizing effects of economic liberalization and the restructuring of the job market are ultimately correlated with majority/minority status, and how female gender works to the disadvantage of the latter.

Before closing the theme of complex inequalities I note two social identities that are not included in this book. One is sexuality. During fieldwork I encountered participants with lesbian, bisexual, or otherwise queer identities, but the topic did not arise as “an issue” in local discourse; after some deliberation I too decided not to pursue it, because of the complexity of the analysis already. The second topic is noncitizen status. As I explain at some length in Chapter 1, the presence of migrant workers, refugees, and commuters from the Palestine Authority is an important catalyst in the progressive polarization of the Israeli workforce, with direct implications for women in peripheral groups. My decision not to include these people in the analysis stems from

their not being the regular target groups of local social economy projects, with minor exceptions.

Empowerment as Enchantment

Of the various terms that circulate in the Israeli field of social economy, as in CED more generally, *empowerment* is probably the most emblematic of the type of cultural production that occurs in it—hybrid, and at once co-opting radical ideas and opening spaces for them within the mainstream. As I show ethnographically in Chapter 3, empowerment, which is used concurrently in social economy and in several interfacing fields, operates as a lingua franca that facilitates communication across seemingly incompatible ideological settings. Used simultaneously in radical, liberal, and conservative circles, empowerment seems to mean different or even contradictory things, a quality that makes it liable to strategic interpretations by actors aiming to make the most of their opportunities and resources.

Much has been written about the failure of empowerment schemes to achieve tangible economic results for women in poverty; much has also been written about the irony of channeling development funds to educate women instead of improving infrastructure, or about the cynical upshot of using “empowerment” to attach poor women to multinational financial corporations. The present ethnography lends support to this criticism but also complicates it. Careful analysis of the ways women respond to and appropriate the empowerment language that they encounter in the workshops rules out any one-dimensional conclusion. It shows instead that despite the very partial economic results that the projects yield—often no significant ones at all, women express high levels of satisfaction with their participation. The workshops, it appears, give them some valuable cultural capital and opportunities for self-growth, intellectual engagement, social networking, and leisure activity. In particular, they provide a protected setting in which to experiment with cultural performances of self, which have become hugely popular, but also increasingly pertinent for a variety of workforce environments.

Participants appear very comfortable with the emotional discourse offered in the empowerment workshops. Inspired by the style of the group-discussion moderators, who encourage reflexivity and emotional self-exploration, they incline heavily to a vocabulary of love, care, and giving when talking about their work experiences and aspirations. At the same time, many—particularly among the Jewish participants—tend to avoid talking about the practicalities of earning money or about discordances related to work. In Chapter 4, in attempting to analyze this disproportionate emphasis on the affectionate aspects of work and a certain disregard for its practical and aggressive aspects, I integrate two lines of scholarly literature: feminist writings about the gender

contract—the cultural expectation that women should prioritize unpaid care work without withdrawing from the waged workforce altogether, and the anthropology and sociology of emotions. The analysis, not surprisingly perhaps, allows potentially conflicting interpretations. In some important respects the women's discourse sounds self-defeating: the overt goal of the workshops is to help them increase their income; their culture accords general importance to their labor force participation, even as secondary breadwinners; and they themselves are eager to be gainfully employed. So in a sense, their inclination to talk about their work as a form of emotional altruism implicitly above material calculations reinforces the prevalent argument that empowerment schemes deceive women into believing that if only they learned to talk and walk middle class—like wives who are supported and therefore work primarily for fun, not as an economic imperative—they would actually become middle class. However, from a careful reading of the women's discourse during the workshops I also suggest that their enthusiastic immersion in emotional talk has an intrinsic value that cannot be dismissed merely because it is uncritical or nonpractical. The discourse, I argue, gives the workshop participants a ready opportunity to practice a popular cultural style that is symbolically beyond their reach. It also charges them with affective energy and a sense of togetherness, offering some relief from their tiresome and mostly lonely daily struggles.

Numerous scholars to date have addressed the spectacular expansion of the psychotherapeutic domain since the middle of the twentieth century, and its infiltration into practically every aspect of social and cultural life. Philip Rieff (1966), already in the 1960s, linked it to the demise of the tyranny of the primary group. He commented that as people became increasingly crowded together in cities they learned to live more distantly from one another by maintaining strategically varied and numerous contacts. This move away from the cloying warmth of family and a small, face-to-face community meant a gradual reversal of the orientation of the self. Whereas in the former way of life the self was directed outward to communal purposes in which alone it could be realized and satisfied, it now had to redirect inward, yet without becoming lost in anomy. Psychotherapy offered just the right language and institutional setting for this.

Nikolas Rose (1990), in his exploration of the formation of modern governmentality, pointed out the role of the psychological sciences in producing knowledge about human subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and in shaping the self as a private entity, which is perpetually engaged in self-regulation. Similarly, Philip Cushman (1995) in his cultural history of psychotherapy in the United States traced the manifold ways in which the ideology of self-contained individualism or the valuing of inner feelings operate as technologies of self. Despite its explicit claim to objectivity, he argued, psychotherapy was inevi-

tably involved in the exercise of power and in reproducing the existing social order.

Arlie R. Hochschild (1983) looked at the commodification of emotions in the workforce, as job descriptions require employees to exercise emotions in selective and highly controlled ways; she likewise looked at the commercialization of intimate lives, for example, in the self-help book industry, and the recasting of therapeutic language in a spirit of instrumental consumption (Hochschild 2003). Following Hochschild's groundbreaking work, a substantial body of studies now documents the growing demands on employees' emotional labor across a whole range of service professions: preparing and serving food; responding at call centers, rape-crisis and trauma hotlines, or sex lines; working in the global care chain that sends people from poor countries to nurse and serve others in rich countries, and many more.

In many cultures, including in Israel, emotions and economic activity are imagined as separate and even hostile spheres, so their merger assumes a form of symbolic defilement. But in practice, as Viviana Zelizer shows for the United States, this intersection is essential for the maintenance of social relations: "money cohabits regularly with intimacy, and even sustains it" (2005: 28). Along similar lines, but with greater focus on the working of capitalism as a system, Eva Illouz (2007) looks at how the integration of psychotherapeutic narratives into the market creates commodified forms of selfhood. A wide variety of talk shows, self-help books, well-being workshops, meditation and purification retreats, dating websites, co-counseling circles, and related opportunities for self-modification flood the marketplace, drawing people to reinvent themselves through a supply of ever-cheaper and more accessible tools. Intriguingly, this method works by appearing to lift people above material consumption, which is deemed necessary for a truly authentic engagement. This consumption is commonly imagined as antithetic to the more traditional kind, where material goods are flaunted as status symbols. Ostensibly independent of economic means, it draws on emotional competence, namely, the capacity to talk reflexively about the self and about relationships. Yet as Illouz (1997, 2007) shows, it is as entangled as before in the capitalist class system, where taste, style, and cultural competence replace material commodities that have become too common.

Last but not least, the enormous popularity of therapeutic narratives feeds on a deep-seated quest for authenticity dating back to the early phases of modernity and continues unabated through the present late modernity. Charles Lindholm (2008, 2013) traces the yearning for authenticity to the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who believed it was necessary to demand absolute honesty from the world and from himself by indulging his own inner emotional demands regardless of the opinions of others. Attired in different garb according to period and cultural context, the quest for authenticity has propa-

gated into more and more spheres of cultural production. It is found in music, the arts, or culinary fashions; in the evaluation of work and leisure alike by the degree to which they allow connection to the inner self; in the pursuit of self-realization in adventure sports; and of course in romantic relationships. In Israel too, as Tamar Katriel (2004) shows, the quest for authentic dialogue has characterized Hebrew ways of speaking since the early decades of the twentieth century, although it has also undergone significant changes in style and focus over time. Ironically, as Lindholm (2008) notes, the more people intensify their search for authenticity in “the marketplace of the soul” and engage in an intricate dialectics of authenticity and imitation, the more it becomes *commodified* and *standardized*.

Paradoxes, in fact, abound in this mutual entanglement of psychotherapy and consumer capitalism. For example, handing over emotional life from relatives to experts and professionals—psychologists, life-coaches, talk show hosts, authors of advice books—entails an inner-contradictory outcome of emotional flooding and overall cooling (Hochschild 2003). While people are encouraged to talk and dissect their emotions to their minutest components, perhaps to the accompaniment of dramatic effects such as tears, moans, or shouts, the ultimate purpose is to attain better control and purposeful management of these emotions. Another paradox is that emotional discourses that focus on relationships (how to bring them about, manage them, and optimize their benefits) prosper precisely when traditional support institutions, primarily the family, become looser and less important. Third, as already mentioned, splicing authenticity and the culture of mass consumption produces a poignant irony. People are *trained* to be authentic by means of neatly packaged consumer products that inundate them from all directions: as bonuses that come with the job, in courses that prepare them to find a job, or in settings that offer to help them get away from the job. A fourth and last example in this partial list of paradoxes is when service workers who do emotional labor because they are obliged to—because emotions have become a job requirement in itself—use this acquired skill to exercise agency and alter their state of estrangement (Hochschild 2011).

This last point brings us back to the protagonists of the present ethnography, the low-income women in economic empowerment workshops who endorse the idea that work done out of love is the most authentic and therefore also a wise economic strategy. To continue the conflicting interpretations presented earlier of this prevalent attitude among women, and without making light of the problematic of women reinforcing the stigma of their work as falling outside the sphere of economic productivity, I will argue that the tendency of low-income women to talk about work through a terminology of love should *also* be read as a form of enchantment. True, the affective charge that it exerts is not unilaterally positive—in fact it is deeply ambivalent. Nor does

it by any means operate as a radicalizing force. Yet it has a clearly charismatic effect of generating commitment, emotional satisfaction, and a sense of inner transformation.

Ethnography of Neoliberalism

According to David Harvey (2005: 2), “Neoliberalism is a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.” The main role of the state is to facilitate the conditions for profitable capital accumulation by private property owners, businesses, multinational corporations, and financial markets. Neoliberalism was conceived in the US academic elite and gradually consolidated during the 1970s as a new economic orthodoxy in the governments of the United States and Britain. It then spread globally to governments worldwide, which were persuaded or coerced to restructure their economic policies to adapt to the new political-economic hegemony. Concurrently, it has also entered popular imagination as a general ethos of human well-being, that is, calculations of efficacy and optimization are the best core criteria for profit making, but also for ethics and morality more broadly. A market-driven perspective has infiltrated, for example, politics, affecting questions of civic belonging and entitlement; or the home, where it has been increasingly influential in shaping ideas and practices of commitment, attachment, or intimacy.

This book focuses on the latter aspect of neoliberalism and how it translates into real-life practices. I explore the incorporation of the ethos of self-entrepreneurship into Israeli society and how local strategies of making a living and making meaningful lives become dominated by the logic of the market. As many have argued, convincingly to my mind, in its translation into context-bound images and action scenarios, neoliberalism becomes a technology of subjectivity that “grounds the imperatives of modern government upon the self-activating capacities of free human beings, citizens, subjects” (Ong 2006: 13; see also Rose 1990). The entanglement of subjectivity and government occurs through the engulfing of human subjects in myriad suggestions for self-betterment: health regimes, body designs, skills acquisition classes, business entrepreneurial ventures, and other techniques of self-engineering and capital accumulation (Ong 2006; Greenhouse 2010). Almost without exception, these products are wrapped in the scientific dress of expert psychological knowledge.

Techniques of subjectivity travel globally, yet their incorporation into particular locales entails important adaptations (see, e.g., Greenhouse 2010; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001a). In the case of Israel, the neoliberal emphasis

on economic efficacy, individual self-sufficiency, and optimizing financial opportunities appears counterintuitive to local discourses of belonging, which are articulated primarily in ethnic, national, and religious terms. Still, the ethnography shows that these ideas do strike a chord and do become absorbed into local renditions of entitlement and inclusion. I analyze concrete encounters in the field for the dialectical effects of this process. The book therefore documents how neoliberal ideas adjust when they travel globally, while local ideas of belonging and entitlement too adapt to the new, catchy focus on individual self-sufficiency, and to the growing prominence of the logic of the market where the dominant logic has been one of blood bonds and essential differences.

The Research—Multiple Sites, Multiple Methodologies, Multiple Positions

The book is based on a series of five studies conducted over ten years, from 2002 to 2012. Three of them were ethnographic. They included participant observations, in-depth interviews, and many informal conversations with people I met repeatedly over extended periods of time. The other two consisted primarily of preset or semistructured interviews. As explained in the outline of each of the projects below, throughout this research my position shifted several times. I initially came upon the topic of studying women's economic empowerment through my direct involvement, as a feminist activist, in the initial stages of Economic Empowerment for Women, the organization that later became the first site of my research. As explained shortly in the description of the different research projects that comprise this book, my involvement was informed by a constant tension between potentially conflicting subject positions: as a grassroots activist I had longstanding friendships and an ideological affinity with some of the key actors in the field. These friends expected me to contribute my time and my skills to document their efforts and to lend academic validation to their discourse, which was quite innovative in the beginning; in late-1990s Israel, talk of a feminist bank or even the very idea of economic empowerment were almost esoteric outside the small circles of radical feminists. As a university professor I was in a convenient position to raise research funds from the same bodies that supported the field projects. These bodies, however, expected from me "objective," pragmatic recommendations, which stood in diametric opposition to the expectations of my friends in the field. To complicate things further, from my own professional perspective, I was actually uncomfortable with both the position of the ideologically committed, action-oriented researcher and that of the detached evaluator. As an anthropologist, my main intellectual motivation was to flesh out the paradoxes of social economy, to explore the mysterious ways in which the neoliber-

eral logic managed to creep into the vision of social change activists, and to understand—without judgment—how the women at the receiving end were making their involvement in the projects meaningful in terms that typically evaded both the activists who wanted to politicize them and the professionals who aimed to discipline them.

Economic Empowerment for Women— Training Women in Microentrepreneurship

Economic Empowerment for Women (EEW) was established in Haifa in 1997 by a group of feminist activists from the Haifa Feminist Center *Isha le Isha* (Hebrew, “woman to woman”), and was registered as an independent organization in 2000.³ Its mission is to bring about economic change for women in Israel through a multilevel approach that includes assisting in small business development, broadening public policy, and developing need-specific programs for diverse populations, with a focus on women from the disadvantaged sectors of society. EEW’s main program, *A Business of One’s Own*, is a year-long empowerment and entrepreneurial training course. It runs several such courses yearly throughout Israel, in Hebrew and in Arabic. Other projects include a Business Incubator for course graduates, Savings for the Future to foster and promote asset development strategies, Creative Marketing via Technology for Arab women, and lobbying for policy change. During the first decade of its operation EEW also collaborated with the Koret Israel Economic Development Fund in a microcredit loan fund, in which partnership it is no longer active. To date it reports having served over 4,000 women and played an active role in the establishment and growth of over 1,700 small businesses among graduates and loan recipients. As I explain in detail in Chapter 1, EEW, like most civil society organizations in the field, works in close collaboration with a diverse array of agencies, including government and municipal agencies, members of the business community, and civil society groups.

In 2002 I was commissioned by the National Insurance Institute (NII), the major state agency in charge of welfare benefits, to do evaluation research of *A Business of One’s Own*, following NII’s entry into this project as a donor and strategic partner. As part of this study I carried out six months of participant observation in an Arabic-speaking economic empowerment course in Haifa, followed by another six months of less intense observations at the escort meetings for the graduates who opened businesses. For the three and a half years of the study, I also participated in periodic meetings of the projects’ steering committee, attended events that EEW held for its employees and volunteers, and collected relevant articles published in the local press. Throughout this period, I kept a systematic record of my observations, informal conversations, and reflections.

Besides my direct participant observations, the Microentrepreneurship Study escorted, over the course of three and a half years, fifteen groups, each averaging twenty participants. Fifty-one percent of them were Arabic speakers, the rest predominantly Hebrew speakers. Groups were located in different parts of Israel and covered a wide diversity of linguistic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Jewish participants included Mizrahi and Ashkenazi; secular, observant, and ultra-Orthodox women; Hebrew speakers; and recent immigrants. Palestinian participants included women living in cities, villages, and semiurbanized communities. They were mostly Muslims, but there were also Christian women and one group of Bedouins. The members of these groups answered two rounds of structured questionnaires (239 in the first round and 195 in the second), administered to them by research assistants upon their enrollment in the project and again a year later after they completed the course and the business escort period. Fifty-eight of them also gave us open-ended, face-to-face life-history interviews, of which I conducted five (in Arabic) and several research assistants conducted the rest. All the in-depth interviews were recorded and transcribed. Five of them, in Russian, were also translated into Hebrew. Lastly, I conducted four focus groups with participants and graduates of the courses, and fourteen semistructured interviews with EEW staff members and freelancers, and with some of their local partners in the Haifa-based course.

After the official completion of the study and the submission of my report to the NII (Sa'ar 2007c), I decided to expand my research to the field of social economy more generally. I was also eager to break away from the position of evaluator, with which I was very uncomfortable. I now aimed at a more open-ended exploration of the structural dynamics of the field, asking comparative and theoretical questions rather than being bound by issues of "success" and "failure," which I had regarded all along as *discursive* preoccupations integral to the field. Thanks to financial support from the Israel Science Foundation (ISF) I was able to move to this more open-ended phase of the study a year after I completed the first one. In 2007 I returned to EEW to conduct a second round of participant observations in an economic empowerment course. This time it was in Hebrew, and again took place in my home town of Haifa. The funding from the ISF also allowed me to conduct research with two other organizations, al-Tufula and Mahut Center, which are described in the following sections, and to hold more interviews with professionals and functionaries in the field.

Atida—Training Palestinian Women to Be Employees

The al-Tufula (Arabic, "childhood") center was established in Nazareth in 1989 by a group of Palestinian women citizens of Israel.⁴ Since its establishment the center has been working in two main fields: early childhood care and devel-

opment, and women's empowerment. Working toward a vision of society in which all members have equal opportunities to exercise their full capacities, al-Tufula's focus on women and children in early childhood stems from the belief that these two fields are in particular need of nurturing and support. The center runs an early childhood daycare service. It sponsors the translation into Arabic of quality children's books and the publication of original books for and about children and women. It has a library that also sells books. It runs regular programs for early childhood educators and programs for youth. It holds conferences and recreational events for women and for families with small children. It performs advocacy and networking, mostly in collaboration with other grassroots organizations. And it runs community volunteers' projects.

In 2010 I was invited to research two of al-Tufula's projects. One, called Atida, was an economic empowerment project conducted collaboratively by four organizations and a large philanthropic foundation, which also acted as a strategic partner. Here I was invited to be an evaluator by the representative of the donor organization. While the project did not belong to al-Tufula alone, this body managed the actual activity: the classes and workshops, the bulk of the administration, and most of the meetings of the partners. It was also the direct employer of three of the five employees hired to work in the project. By the end of a three-year pilot, the partnership of the four organizations that ran Atida dissolved and the project in its new phase became fully absorbed by al-Tufula. My involvement was during the second year.

Atida⁵ aimed to help integrate Palestinian-Israeli women with twelve years of schooling or above into the waged workforce in gainful jobs that matched with their skills and capacities. Its operative targets were to

- introduce a working model for partnership among expert organizations
- introduce a working model for working with women, based on acknowledgment of their capacities, and escort them through the training and job placement to help them keep their jobs and obtain all their rights
- be an address for any Arab woman in search of a job
- change the attitudes of Israeli employers to make them more open to employ Arab women.
- develop and disseminate unique, culturally sensitive knowledge and tools by integrating formal and practical expertise, in order to promote the employment of Arab women.

In practice, Atida compiled a database of women job seekers in the Nazareth area and a parallel database of potential employers. It offered intense two-month courses in skill enhancement (primarily Hebrew language, computer, and Internet skills) and general empowerment, intended to nurture among

the participants a sense of entitlement to work for wages. It accompanied its graduates through the job search and during their early stages on the job. A planned component that did not mature during the pilot period was to work directly with both Arab and Jewish employers to encourage them to absorb Arab women into their ranks.

The two main tools used in this research (see Sa'ar 2011) were semistructured interviews with sixteen of the participants and with all twelve professionals employed in the project, as well as observations during selected sessions of the course. Research assistant Noor Falah conducted all the interviews with the participants and most of the observations; occasionally I substituted her. Both of us together held the interviews with the professionals. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Sawa—Community Empowerment of Women in a Bedouin Village in Galilee

Between 2003 and 2011 al-Tufula conducted a community empowerment project with women in several Bedouin villages in Galilee that had been unrecognized for decades and therefore suffered extreme deprivation of the bare basics of infrastructure and social services. Until the mid-1990s these villages had no sewer systems, running water, electricity, or roads; no public transportation, telephone lines, or proper building permits; no schools or medical clinics (Kanaaneh et al. 1995). These extreme conditions started to improve after the villages gained state recognition, although by 2010 they were still highly deficient (Hossein 2012). Al-Tufula started working with women in six villages, at first in collaboration with other grassroots organizations and afterwards on its own, inspiring holistic, community-oriented feminist empowerment. It was determined to break away from the common tendency to focus on the needs of the women, who are on the very edge of the social periphery and indeed face tremendous objective difficulties, and instead engage them from the start as capable and knowledgeable agents.

For nearly a decade al-Tufula representatives paid regular visits to the villages, dedicating the first two years to reaching out and building trust among the women; later, groups of village activists met weekly or biweekly to discuss their vision, share their experiences, create a language of capacities, and define projects that they wanted to promote in their villages. With certain differences in intensity and success, each different group managed to obtain a room to meet in—a striking achievement considering that in the initial stages none of the villages had a public facility that could be used for that purpose. They opened small libraries for children where they ran extracurricular activities, wrote histories of the villages from the perspective of their womenfolk, organized activities for women, and lobbied and petitioned the regional coun-

cil for improved public services and facilities. In one village the women even managed to seat a regular representative on the village committee, which was unprecedented in this all-men's institution. Over the decade of al-Tufula's involvement, some groups were active more or less continuously, while others operated for a while, then stopped for various reasons. For one thing, many women became employed and therefore had less time to attend group meetings. For another, many were deterred by their relatives' and neighbors' resentment. Although the activities focused by and large on consensual topics such as education and health, they still provoked hostility, as people suspected that the women might become too radical and undermine men's authority. Toward the end of al-Tufula's involvement only one village—Hseiniyye—still had an active group. In the others the groups had ceased to operate although individual members remained socially involved.

In 2010 the director of al-Tufula invited me to document the project in the recently recognized villages in the Galilee, as a form of participatory feminist action research. Nisreen Mazzawi, an anthropology master's student who had been the first coordinator of that project, joined me in conducting a six-month study in Hseiniyye. This consisted of interviews and participant observation at the weekly meetings of the women's project, called Sawa (Arabic, "equal" or "alike"). For the first two months Nisreen and I attended the group meetings together and compiled our field notes into a joint diary. Thereafter Nisreen went to most meetings on her own; from time to time I accompanied her, and I read and commented on her weekly reports. Nisreen also collected the life histories of twelve of the group's core members; I interviewed another member and the four employees from al-Tufula, who had worked in the project over the years. All these interviews were recorded and transcribed. A first publication from this study (Sa'ar 2012) appeared in a book edited by Johayna Hossein, the then coordinator of the project, which detailed the story of the villages and the story of the project.

Mahut Center—Training Jewish Women to Be Employees

Mahut Center was established in Haifa in 2005 as a nonprofit women's organization. It had actually started a year earlier as a project of the Haifa coalition of women's organizations that aimed to help victims of domestic violence become economically independent. After it became an independent organization, Mahut expanded its mission to improving the economic situation of low-income and marginalized women in the Israeli employment market, and to fostering a just and secure employment market, in which women might enjoy their right to a respectable livelihood free of discrimination and harm.⁶ Mahut carried out four main activities. First, it offered job-placement services to individual Jewish and Arab women, escorting them over extended periods of time and

offering diverse types of support. After an initial in-depth interview so that Mahut's operatives could grasp the complexity of the women's situation, they would teach them how to search and apply for jobs, write a CV, and manage an interview. The operatives would keep in touch with women even after they became employed, since often the job did not last and women had to start all over again (I discuss the discontinuous employment pattern at length in Chapter 2). The support mostly took the form of personal and/or group conversations. When possible, Mahut also referred its clients to other organizations for vocational training, and in at least one case even initiated such a course.

The second activity was knowledge production. Over the years of its operation, Mahut initiated four research projects: *Women in a War Economy* (documenting the crisis of women in the periphery during the 2006 war with Hizbulla), *Women in a Precarious Workforce* (on the gendered aspects of non-standard jobs), *Managers in Chains* (on low-level store managers), and *Women between Age and Employment* (on ageism at the workforce). The publication of each final report was accompanied by a conference, to which Mahut invited high-profile policy makers. Each report was the basis for subsequent advocacy work. Besides the research reports Mahut published several position papers on issues pertaining to women's employment.

Mahut's third line was working directly with employers, challenging them to be more active in employing women, alerting them to the concept of abusive employment, and attempting to engage them in changing this norm. And lastly, like many of its sister organizations, Mahut dedicated many of its resources to cross-sectorial networking, another characteristic activity of the social economy field, on which I elaborate in the next chapter.

Mahut is represented in this study through a set of sixteen semistructured interviews with low-income Jewish women who were its clients. The interviews were conducted by Ya'ara Buksbaum, who was an employee of Mahut and the author (in partnership) of at least two of its reports. During her years with Mahut Ya'ara was also a master's student in sociology, and wrote her thesis under my supervision on the employment of low-income Jewish women. I sponsored part of her research with my ISF grant, and in return she shared with me the content of the interviews. I interviewed the founder and director of Mahut, who also participated in a focus group I held in 2009. She was one of several leading actors in the field who became close friends of mine, and subsequently key informants. Mahut Center closed down in December 2013 due to difficulties in securing continuous financial support.

Interviews with Activists and NGO Workers

In 2010–2011 I participated in a research group sponsored by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, titled “NGO-ization of Civil Spaces: Transformation of

Welfare and Women’s Organizations in Civil Society.” As part of this project, Nitza Berkovitch, Adriana Kemp, and I conducted a survey of organizations that work in economic empowerment, with particular focus on microentrepreneurship and microfinance. Senior representatives of thirty organizations participated in the survey. Research assistant Liraz Sapir interviewed them by phone using a structured questionnaire. Thirteen of these organizations worked only with Arab women, eleven worked only with Jewish women, five worked with both, and one targeted African asylum seekers. Sixteen of the organizations did business training, while the remaining fourteen ran general job training, skills enhancement, and job placement, or employed women in nonprofit projects that they started especially for that purpose. The survey, whose primary goal was to explore the institutional structure of the field, focused on cross-sectorial partnerships, funding, organizational structures, and self-measurement of efficiency and success.

Alongside these concentrated and focused interviews, I also used my share of the Van Leer grant to enlarge the sample of face-to-face interviews with actors in the field, at the level of project directors, group moderators, professionals and officials in the civil society, business, philanthropy, and government sectors. Several research assistants held face-to-face semistructured interviews with Arabic- and Hebrew-speaking actors from different parts of the country. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. These interviews were added to those I had conducted at earlier stages, bringing them to a total of 42 (17 Jews and 25 Palestinians, 7 men and 35 women).

Two Notes on Language Use

Explaining the Referential Value of Some of the Terms Used in the Book

Because I am a non-English speaker writing in English, describing a non-English-speaking setting, I realize that some of the vocabulary that I use in this book carries a specific referential value that may not be self-evident to native English readers. Four expressions in particular—“feminist,” “radical activists,” “global,” and “low-income women”—which recur throughout the book, may merit explanation. “Feminist” appears in a variety of meanings. Besides scholarly or theoretical uses, which are accompanied by references to the relevant literatures, when I use the word “feminist” as part of the ethnography, I refer to grassroots activism against multiple forms of women’s oppression and patriarchal injustice. In the context at hand, people involved in such activism—“activists”—are usually also involved in the pro-peace/antioccupation camp, hence they are perceived and see themselves as “radical.” This word usually implies an antiestablishment stance, which in Israel commonly means non-Zionist or anti-Zionist, as well as support for an independent Palestinian state and for the

right of the Arab citizens to self-identify as a *national* minority. In the case of feminists more specifically, “radical” means perceiving gender, ethnic, national, sexual, and class oppressions as mutually informing and inextricably entwined, and attempting to make the connections in all the protest and struggle activities.

Two other common expressions that I use regularly in the book, and which are less specifically *Israeli*, are “global” and “low-income women.” By “global” I mean ideas, practices, and connections that extend beyond the political and symbolic borders of the state, and which are relevant in multiple cultural settings simultaneously. “Low-income” serves to describe the class situation of the women who are the addresses or clients of social economy projects. As is often the case with class terminology, this term is somewhat vague. As shown throughout the book, the implications of family income levels on people’s quality of life, opportunities, and overall well-being are much too complex to be captured in a single term. Rather, “low-income women” is a minimalist expression that represents the official criterion for being included in the projects; I use thicker ethnographic descriptions to relate the complex realities of these women’s lives.

Disguising the Identity of Research Participants

Throughout this book the three organizations that I researched extensively are given their real names—the Microentrepreneurship Study, the Bedouin Village Study, and Atida (both operated by the same organization)—and so are the Mahut Center Study and the Van Leer Research Group Survey. Also appearing under their real names are the various research assistants and colleagues with whom I collaborated. The identities of the different participants whom I met through the interviews and observations are disguised. My choice of pseudonyms was guided by the principle of concealing individuals’ identities but keeping the ethnic or national markers of their names when such existed. In Israel, Jews and Palestinians can readily discern Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, and Arab names. Palestinians can usually also tell Christian, Muslim, and Bedouin names. Yet many Jewish names are Hebraized in ways that make their original ethnic identities untraceable. I, for example, only became Sa’ar at the age of twenty, when our family decided to Hebraize our original surname Sir-covich. In contrast to this Eastern European name, Sa’ar is distinctly Hebrew (it means “storm”) and ethnically neutral. So Jewish surnames in Israel may or may not be ethnically marked. First names on the other hand are mostly *un*-marked, except for those of people who immigrated to Israel as adults and kept their original names; this is characteristic of people who are now old or who arrived over the past twenty years, when the trend of Hebraizing names began to subside.⁷ In choosing pseudonyms I have tried to keep these identifying/ blurring markers as close as possible to the original.

Arguments

The Israeli field of social economy, like community economic development more generally, is a meeting place where actors from diverse subject positions come together in an effort to mitigate the rapacious effects of capitalism, yet without attempting to replace it altogether. These cross-sectorial partnerships yield a hybrid discourse on economic justice, social solidarity, and civic inclusion. I use the concept of economic citizenship to examine how these ideas form in a particular setting, at a particular moment in time. The notion that economic self-sufficiency is central to the fulfillment of civic entitlement originates in diverse—and very distinct—discursive fields. It means different things when spoken by grassroots feminist activists, who demand recognition of women's invisible economic contribution and claim the right of low-income women to be gainfully employed; by business philanthropists who promote corporate responsibility; by developers who aim to maximize the social capital of the poor; or by conservative politicians who opt to measure civic entitlement by the perceived fiscal productivity of individuals. On the ground, however, the notion of economic citizenship allows genuine dialogues that bridge these seemingly vast ideological distances. Besides travelling across social sectors, the idea of economic citizenship also travels across cultures. In the particular example of Israel, its localization entails an accommodation of seemingly incompatible emphases on the rights and duties of individuals to earn money, and on collective belonging and making a heroic contribution to the nation. Yet while it may sound idiosyncratic to local ears, the idea of economic citizenship begins to make sense as actors go hands-on into concrete economic empowerment projects. So it happens that alongside—not instead of—the loud narratives of essential differences and ethnonational exclusion emerge narratives of inclusion that appear to open up unfamiliar spaces for diversity. As members of the mainstream sectors of society make active attempts to reach out to those who until recently were seen merely as welfare subjects, if not outright hostile elements—passive, needy, abject—they refashion them as “self-entrepreneurs,” hence active partners in the resurrection of a stronger civil society.

The grounded experiences of these newly admitted partners—low-income women of diverse ethnic, national, and linguistic backgrounds—reveal the role of gender in the adoption of the idea of economic citizenship. The ethnography shows that in handling the pressures to increase their income and become self-supportive, women are guided by the cultural schema of the gender contract, which expects them to participate in the workforce and earn money, but still keep domestic care work as their first priority and not become primary breadwinners. Of course the schema varies among different groups of low-income women, according to the particular gender regimes that dominate their lives. It depends on whether the organization of women's work is primar-

ily domestic centered or public centered, on whether the available substitutes that allow them to seek out a paid job are primarily state based or market based, or on the implications for their lives of gender-specific legislation (issues of personal status, taxation, or employment contracts). In all the existing versions gender, as a structural and symbolic mechanism of distinction and domination, affects the degree to which women can actually respond to the discourse of economic self-sufficiency.

Lastly, analysis of the actual language that actors in the field use to make practical sense of economic citizenship shows the embedment of this idea in consumer capitalism. The ways participants talk about acquiring productive skills (learning to earn more money) are inextricably bound up with consumption practices. More specifically, they are drenched in the lingo of emotional capitalism. Here again the gender contract emerges as a constitutive framework, particularly in the tendency of participants in economic empowerment projects to make extensive use of a terminology of love when talking about work and about the task of becoming economically independent. The ethnography explores the manifold contradictions of this discourse: its apparently self-defeating effects for women whose care work is devalued to begin with; its seemingly unsophisticated ring as compared with emotional narratives of more successful economic actors; or the glaring disproportion of effusive love-care terminology as against deliberate avoidance of mentioning self-interest or commercial worth. At the same time, I point out the qualities of this discourse, which cannot be reduced to its “utility value.” By using a terminology of love and care to talk about work, low-income women engage in an energetic recharging that makes them feel less alone in their daily struggles, gives them emotional relief and a sense of inherent worth, and allows them to experiment with middle-class cultural style, a not insignificant asset in and of itself. On a more theoretical level, in their persistent invocations of care in a discursive environment replete with tropes of success, individuality, and self-interest, the women are not simply being silly. Rather, the somewhat uncanny ring of their love-work talk brings the discourse of economic citizenship to bear on an aspect of attachment, in the universalistic, humane sense of the obligation to give personal support and to contain vulnerabilities, an aspect that it mostly tends to eclipse. As such, it therefore presents, if not in so many words, the visceral and awkward aspects of civil participation that the abstract, legalistic articulations of economic citizenship generally leave untouched.

Notes

1. For readers' convenience, I use a different font to distinguish the ethnographic sections from the main analytical text.
2. For a comprehensive review of this literature see Walby 1990.

3. Economic Empowerment for Women, accessed September 2013, <http://www.women.sown.org.il/en/template/?mainCatId=2&catId=34>.
4. Al-Tufula Center, the Nazareth Nursery Institute, accessed September 2013, <http://www.altufula.org/media-eng/>.
5. “Atida, Your Gate to the Workforce,” accessed September 2013, <http://atida.altufula.org/articles.aspx?catid=1&id=1>.
6. Mahut Center, Information and Training for Women, accessed September 2013, <http://www.mahutcenter.org/index.php?tlng=english>. See also <http://mahutcenter-hebrew.blogspot.co.il/>.
7. For several decades, Hebraizing names in Israel was common practice. It emanated from the Jewish exile complex, which led Israeli Jews of certain generations to attempt to reinvent themselves as the antithesis to their exilic ancestors. For many Ashkenazim, the motivation would have been primarily to disguise the marker that identified them with the generation of the Holocaust; for many Mizrahim, it would have been to disguise the marker that identified them as Arabs. In the early years of Israeli statehood, the absorbing authorities pressured or coerced new immigrants to change their first names too. Otherwise, new immigrants commonly chose—and continue to choose—modern Hebrew names for their newborn offspring, and young immigrants chose to change their own first and/or last names. In my family the initiative to Hebraize our surname was mine and my brother’s, both of us Israeli-born. In recent years this trend has been subsiding, and sometimes even reversed as some people tend to resurrect their original non-Hebrew surnames.