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ABSTRACT

Title	Do emigrants return to their country of origin in times of international crisis? The Israeli experience
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Session	Measuring migration at times of the pandemic

In times of international crisis:

Do emigrants return to their country of origin?

Do immigrants postpone the date of immigration?

There is an opinion that in times of crisis citizens living in foreign countries tend to return to their country of origin and those who plan to immigrate tend to postpone their decision. The recent pandemic offers an opportunity to research those assumptions.

In order to examine this in the Israeli case study, the population was divided into two main categories:

The first category is Israeli citizens - emigrants and immigrants. The second category is foreign citizens in Israel - foreign workers with work permits, foreign students, temporary residents, clerics and others.

The source of data and research

Anyone who crosses the Israeli border is registered in the Border Control System (BCS) and these records are also updated in the Israeli Population Register (IPR) for those holding an Israeli passport (or Cumulative Register of Foreigners (CRF) for those holding a foreign passport.)

The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics established a stock of people who are listed as Israelis in the IPR, but live outside of Israel, based on the results and methodology of the 2008 Census of Population and Housing.

The study focuses on those who were defined as emigrants at the end of 2019 and crossed the border into Israel in March-August 2020. Looking into this population by age, marital status and length of stay abroad can be enlightening.

Immigration to Israel is mostly returning Jews from around the world who can call it their home. Every Jew can enter Israel as an immigrant or as a tourist and obtain citizenship in Israel. In recent years, the share of tourists who became immigrants represents 13-20 percent of total immigrants. In 2020 this share is larger, probably because of the closed borders. This study explores the characteristics of these immigrants.

The data found in CRF is characterized by entry visa type, visa expiration date, date of entry to Israel, citizenship and demographic data.

Regarding the foreign population, the focus will be all the foreigners present in Israel on April 2019 (with a valid visa as of today). Analysis will be performed separately for each population group - students, clerics and others. The main focus will be how many in each group left Israel between March and August 2020.