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ABSTRACT *In this paper we examine the role of the Israeli kibbutz experience as an agent of informal education in cross-cultural settings, acting as a transformative agent of ethnic identity. The study presents, through comparative longitudinal analysis, the changes in Jewish identity and values of young North American Jews between their arrival in Israel and the conclusion of the kibbutz programme, as well as after they have returned to their home country. The analysis utilises data gathered from 238 Oren Kibbutz Institute alumni who participated in the programme between 1990–94 in six kibbutzim. The transformative role of the Israeli kibbutz experience contributes independently and cumulatively to the formative role of home background, Jewish schooling and previous visits to Israel.*

Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of the Oren Israeli kibbutz experience on the Jewish ethnic identity of young Jews visiting Israel from North America and Canada. The paper analyses the changing nature of American Jewish ethnicity as an integral part of the changing ethnicity and culture of modern American society. In this context we focus on the role of Israel as both central to the identification of young adult North American Jews and, in particular, the Israeli kibbutz as an agency of socialisation of their ethnic identity. An examination is made of the relationship between the kibbutz experience and indices of Jewish identification and continuity. The impact of the Israeli kibbutz experience is reflected in the changes in Jewish values of young diaspora Jews between their arrival in Israel and the conclusion of the kibbutz programme, as well as in the degree to which that change is maintained after they have returned to their home country.

Ethnicity and North American Jews

The existence and ongoing nature of ethnic groups has been studied from both

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macro and micro approaches. Mittelberg and Waters (1992) outlined these two approaches used to define ethnic identification and examine the point at which they converge to create a definition of ethnic identity.

The typology of ethnogenesis proposed here includes the dimensions of race, religion, shared history and origins, language, nationality and class. The social perceptions which are crucial to the determination of that ethnicity are how subjects see and define themselves in the country of origin, how the host country views them, and how subjects see themselves in Israel. Ethnic identity can be placed along a continuum according to (1) the degree of influence of ethnic identity on individual behaviour; and (2) the extent to which the individual can actually choose an ethnic identity.

At one end of this continuum are "unhyphenated whites". This group, descended primarily from early Northern and Western European immigrants to the United States, especially those from England, no longer claim a particular shared history and origin. They do not think of themselves as a category but define themselves as American on surveys and censuses. A second type is defined by a symbolic ethnic identity, identifying with a particular history, origin and nationality, e.g. Polish Jews in Israel or Irish Americans in the United States. A third type is the ethnic group which maintains the boundaries of the group to a great extent, including in its ethnic identity more than simply symbolic elements. For example, ethnic identity might determine marriage norms or organisational membership (e.g. American Jews who join Jewish organisations).

A fourth, more intrusive, type we call an immigrant group. This identity is still both salient and intrusive in terms of national loyalty, everyday life and feeling apart from the host society. Such groups are likely to feel a greater degree of separation from the host society, and usually live in separate neighbourhoods.

The final group we label "minority", its members being separated from the rest of society by physical and cultural characteristics. Minority groups are the least involved in society and generally suffer, or claim to suffer, from discrimination; and they also have the least amount of ethnic choice at their disposal (Mittelberg & Waters, 1992).

The Role of Israel in the Ethnicity of North American Jews

Waxman (1981) accepts literally Gans' (1979) theoretical definition of symbolic ethnicity, as that which identifies later-generation whites who share a common history, origin and nationality and who chose freely to express their ethnic identity. Indeed, Waxman cites sociologists of the 1960s who projected a"...trend of accelerated cultural and to a lesser degree, structural assimilation...[which] would lead to what Gordon refers to as 'Identificational Assimilation', the loss of identification with the ethnic group" (Waxman 1981, p. 83). However, in 1981 Waxman challenged this prognosis for American Jewry by arguing that American Jews were then undergoing an ethnic revitalisation of intrinsic Jewish cultural patterns, as evidenced in Jewish school attendance, increased ritual practices and a pro-Israel stance

(Waxman, 1981, p. 84) Indeed "Most American Jews define the survival and well-being of Israel as a *sine qua non* for the survival of Jewry" (Waxman, 1981, p. 79). Ten years later, Cohen (1991) indicated that the apparent erosion in attachment to Israel of younger generation American Jews had indeed been arrested. Whereas, in 1989, 34 per cent of those under 40 years expressed a high attachment to Israel, by 1991, after the Gulf war, this rate rose to 47 per cent. In addition, in the same period, the gap between old and young narrowed rather than widened, largely as a result of a considerable increase in the degree of attachment of younger adults and stability in attachment of older adults (Cohen, 1991, p. 38).

In contrast, other scholars of Jewish identity are less optimistic. Woocher (1994) reports an attenuation of Jewish identity among Jews in America today. In his view, while most American Jews are in no way ashamed of their Jewish ethnicity, the salience or importance attributed to their Jewishness has declined significantly. As a result, Judaism moves to the periphery of self-identification, no longer providing significance or meaning to daily life, thus asserting itself only at particular moments in biography such as rites of passage, or when the possibility of marrying a non-Jew arises.

The Cross-Cultural Study of Jewish Identity

Simon Herman has, over the last 35 years, produced a wealth of research material on Jewish identity in general, and in particular that of diaspora Jews visiting Israel (Herman & Schild, 1960a, 1960b, 1961; Herman, 1970, 1977, 1980). Throughout this period his theoretical formulation of Jewish identity has been remarkably stable.

For Herman, Jewish identity is taken to mean"...either (1) the pattern of attributes of the ethnic group as seen by its members... or (2) the reflection in the individual of these attributes; i.e. how the individual sees himself by virtue of his membership of the ethnic group" (Herman, 1980, p. 14). That is, he distinguishes between "identification" as the internalisation from "group identity". Jewish identity is understood here as an ethnic identity or a subidentity. An individual's subidentities have relative weights according to the degree to which they overlap, are consonant with each other and occupy a central place in the life space of the individual, as well as their relative salience, valence and potency (Herman, 1980, pp. 26–27). "Salience", which relates to perceptual prominence, is a "short term phenomenon" derived from the proximity of the actor to a non-Jewish group or context, while "valence" relates to the degree the actor is close to the centre of a Jewish group. Finally, "potency", which reflects the intensity with which the identity is held, is a function of valence and salience together.

Travel to Israel—findings from previous studies

Herman's research reports a number of findings that are particularly relevant here. First, American Jews visiting Israel underwent a change in their salience hierarchy. Now no longer close to non-Jews, as well as being in a society with a higher degree of overlap between ethnic and national identity, it was found that, for some, Jewish

identity even receded; for the majority it was their American identity that acquired salience and prominence. On the other hand, on return to America, the salience of their Jewish identity again became more marked.

Secondly, changing salience was a function of the time-perspective of the guests. Thus, those respondents who positively valued the goal of settling into the kibbutz were in "a higher state of tension" (Herman, 1970, p.82) with the kibbutz experience, as it was linked to their future projects. Other visitors were less concerned about the "temporary" time-bound discomforts of kibbutz life, which were regarded as irrelevant to their future. Indeed, Herman reports that responses towards the experience followed a U-curve, with satisfaction dropping from an original high, to a low in the middle of the experience, being restored towards the end (Herman, 1970, p. 84).

Finally, Herman reports that the salience of respondents' Jewish identity is heightened once again on their return home to the United States; there is a general restoration of the Israeli's image, coupled with some more subtle changes in their Jewish identity and a higher disposition to migration to Israel.

Hochstein (1986) presented to the Jewish Agency Jewish Education Committee a summary report on Educational Programmes in Israel, the first ever comprehensive database of Israel programmes, which established that in 1985 there were 400 Israeli educational programmes with 41,500 participants. These participants divided into three main categories: 19,000 participants in informal programmes and study; 15,000 participants in formal educational Yeshiva, high school and universities; and 7500 participants in work or other volunteer programmes. Sixty per cent of participants were aged 18–30 years.

Cohen (1986) estimated that US Jewry is divided roughly into three groups: one-third who have been to Israel, one-third who have never been but have wanted to do so, and one-third who have neither been nor wanted to go. North American Jews who have visited Israel are generally religious observers and share common characteristics, such as a strong Zionist commitment, formal Jewish education and a high degree of communal affiliation. The third who have never been to Israel but would like to visit have weaker affiliating links with the Jewish community; they may belong to a Jewish institution, but are not particularly active within it. Most have had some form of part-time Jewish education and their religious affiliation is equally divided among Conservative or Reform Judaism, and being "just Jewish". This group does, however, have the benefit of a social network of family and friends who have visited Israel and can therefore provide information and enhance motivation. Those who have little or no interest in visiting Israel are characterised by a lack of involvement in Jewish life. This segment of the population is identified as having no formal Jewish education, little or no communal affiliation, and a low rate of ritual observance. Indeed, as Cohen put it, "the heavily involved are already being effectively recruited to Israel programs" (Cohen, 1986, p. 11).

The Kibbutz Experience and Jewish Education

What is the educational nature of the "Israel experience" in general and that of the

kibbutz experience in particular? Contemporary Jewish education has as its aims education for Jewish identity and education for Jewish identification (Shkedi, 1994a). In the early days of American Jewish education, the task of Jewish education was largely the responsibility of the supplementary school. In the past decade we have witnessed significant changes in American Jewish educational frameworks. Among the manifestations of change have been the search for, and development of, additional and alternative educational methodologies, with the central emphasis on informal education. Visiting Israel and the Israel experience are considered among the preferred options in this category (Shkedi, 1994a). Half the young people visiting Israel stay on a kibbutz or at least visit once (Cohen, 1986).

There is a consensus among lay leaders and community and education professionals that the visit to Israel has significant potential as a resource for Jewish education (Hochstein, 1986; Mittelberg, 1988; Mittelberg & Lev-Ari, 1991, 1994). The kibbutz symbolises the central values of the founding generations of Israeli society and incorporates Jewish values into the everyday life style of the community. This Jewish approach to daily life is manifest through celebration of the Jewish calendar, including festivals based on the agricultural cycle of the year, life cycle events and traditional Jewish holidays, as well as through the emphasis on social equality and the collective community. Therefore, the encounter with the kibbutz social community is often perceived as an encounter with part of the essential past of Israeli society (Shkedi, 1994b).

Furthermore Israeli society, and kibbutz in particular, as functioning Jewish communities, provide a highly effective "plausibility structure" for the transmission of Jewish values and hence the enhancement of Jewish identity. "Plausibility structure", a term coined by Berger (1967; Berger & Luckman, 1967), can be defined as the surrounding social processes which greatly influence, both consciously and subconsciously, the way individuals think, feel and act (Woocher, 1994, p. 7). Thus, although Woocher concedes that Israel can strengthen the salience of Jewish identity, he reflects that unless one chooses to emigrate to Israel, the real challenge lies in maintaining this strengthened Jewish identity upon returning home where Jewish plausability structures are weak. What is required, in his view, is the prior existence of a real Jewish community for Jewish education to be effective. He laments the absence of such a community in North America, calling for the creation of a "living Jewish community in which what is being taught and learned is already visible and valued" (Woocher, 1994, p. 25). While Woocher acknowledges the impact of informal educational experiences such as day schools, summer camps, youth group programmes and trips to Israel, he argues that this impact often declines fairly rapidly once the individual is removed from the supportive social environment created (Woocher, 1994, p. 26). At least one part of this claim made by Woocher will be challenged here; namely, the rapid dissipation of the long-term impact of the Israel kibbutz experience after the participants have returned home to their country of origin.

The Israeli Kibbutz Experience

The Kibbutz inhabitants make up only three per cent of the total Jewish population

in Israel (about four million). The kibbutz, as a unique form of intentional collective egalitarian community, sees education as one of its distinctive features, and has set up special institutions for this purpose. Some see the kibbutz as a milieu (Jewish or Israeli) which is a protest against the rabbinic tradition. Others see in the kibbutz an authentic expression of the essence of contemporary Judaism (Shkedi, 1994b).

Diaspora Jewish visitors respond variously to kibbutz life, ranging from those who argue that it is not a Jewish life at all to those who claim that the kibbutz is the most religious Jewish secular community they have ever encountered. The results of ongoing research conducted on the Oren Institutes (Mittelberg & Lev-Ari, 1991, 1994) show that young people enrol in Israel experience programmes with high expectations for Jewish actualisation, but in reality encounter a gap between what they expect and what they experience. On the other hand, the data show that their perception of the centrality of the Israeli in their ethnic identities intensified in the wake of a stay in a kibbutz and in Israel.

The Israeli kibbutz has been engaged for 50 years in the absorption of visitors, volunteers and new immigrants, in the kibbutz Ulpan programme. A kibbutz Ulpan is a place where participants can learn the Hebrew language. The interaction between Ulpan students and kibbutz society occurs in various areas: in the work-place, in the classroom and during leisure time (Mittelberg, 1988). The "kibbutz experience" includes studying in a kibbutz Ulpan (usually five months of Hebrew learning), work on kibbutzim, interaction with kibbutz members during work hours as well as leisure time, and the educational activities that are part of those kibbutz programmes which are studied here. At the end of the kibbutz Ulpan period (usually five months), the Ulpan participant has learned the language and become acquainted with the new society.

The Educational Enrichment Programme

Project Oren was established and continues to operate on the basis of a premise that the kibbutz setting could provide an attractive educational resource for enhancing the Jewish identity of diaspora Jewish youth. Project Oren provides college-level informal educational learning programmes in Israel, offering enrichment activities in addition to the standard Hebrew language Ulpan programme. The educational enrichment programme includes a core curriculum common to all Oren Institutes (kibbutz society, Jewish identity, Jewish history and holidays) while, in addition, each Institute focuses on a particular subject, such as: (1) archaeology and Jewish history, which offers an in-depth examination of the full spectrum of Jewish history from ancient Biblical to modern times; (2) contemporary Israel, which offers a close investigation of social and political aspects of modern Israel; (3) Jewish art; and (4) Jewish roots in a religious kibbutz.

Data and Methodology

The researchers studied a sample of 238 Oren kibbutz programme alumni who

participated in six kibbutz Oren Ulpanim for five months during 1990–94. Closed Likert-type questionnaires were administered at three time-points:

1. Upon arrival on the kibbutz (Time 1).
2. After five months, at the conclusion of the Oren kibbutz programme (Time 2).
3. One to four years after the kibbutz experience, in the participants' home countries in North America (Time 3).

The alumni comprised 40 per cent males and 60 per cent females, median age of 24 years. This gender bias is common to all college-age, Israel experience programmes. In terms of the Jewish background of the Oren alumni, 43 per cent had little or no Jewish education prior to their Oren kibbutz experience, while 57 per cent had a greater amount of Jewish education. Almost half of the Oren alumni (46%) had never been to Israel before participating in the Oren programme, while for 54 per cent the Oren programme represented a return visit to Israel.

Results

The Current Jewish Ethnic Identity of Oren Alumni

How different is the ethnic identity of Oren alumni from their age peers in North America? A perspective on this question can be gained by comparison between our alumni and a control group subsample of 18–29-year-old North American non-participants in our programme. This comparative analysis utilises the data gathered in the Council of Jewish Federation's 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) which has been analysed by the authors for this paper. The sampling procedure employed by NJPS has been discussed extensively in the literature (Kosmin *et al.*, 1991, pp. 30–39; Goldstein & Kosmin, 1992). Following a complicated screening process, 2441 intensive interviews were conducted with Jewish respondents who constituted a representative national sample of Jewish households. (For a detailed presentation of the complex system employed to sample and define Jews in the NJPS study, see Goldstein 1992.)

For the sake of valid comparison, the analysis in this study is not based on this entire sample (referred to from hereon as the "extended" Jewish population), but is restricted to the "core" Jewish population, ($n = 2061$). This core includes all those respondents who were born Jewish and reported their current religion as Jewish; respondents who identify as Jewish when asked but report no current religion; and people who are currently Jewish but were born gentile. It does *not* include respondents who were born or raised Jewish but converted out, or those who have Jewish parentage but were raised in another religion. There was a total of 380 respondents from the NJPS sample, representing 16 per cent of the total sample. How then do Oren alumni compare with their age peers on different measures of Jewish ethnicity?

Jewish Religious Practice

Today, 40 per cent of Oren alumni attend synagogue several times a year, while

another third attend more than once a month. By comparison, among NJPS 18–29-year-olds, 23 per cent do not attend synagogue at all, 32 per cent attend on high holidays or several times a year only, 17 per cent attend more than once a month.

Among Oren alumni, 90 per cent attend a Seder during Passover, whereas 82 per cent of the NJPS survey claimed that they attend a Seder; 34 per cent of Oren alumni light candles on Friday night compared with 30 per cent NJPS survey participants who light Shabat candles; 32 per cent of Oren alumni buy Kosher meat for the home compared with 20 per cent of the NJPS sample.

Jewish social and ethnic ties.

In North America, one to four years after the kibbutz experience, about half of Oren alumni claimed that of the people they consider as their closest friends, most are Jews. Only 15 per cent wrote that they have few or no Jewish friends. Of NJPS Jewish youth, 22 per cent claimed that most of their closest friends are Jewish, while 29 per cent said that none or few of their closest friends are Jewish.

Since Oren, more than half of the participants have seriously considered taking adult Jewish education courses (56%), studying in Israel (64%), going to Israel again for a few months as volunteers (62%) and working professionally for the Jewish community (54%).

Ties with Israel.

After their return to North America, 73 per cent of Oren alumni claimed that they were very emotionally attached to Israel and often talked about Israel to their friends and relatives. Their response contrasted with that of NJPS respondents, 29 per cent of whom claimed that they were very emotionally attached to Israel. While two-thirds of alumni had not been back to Israel since Oren, 24 per cent had returned to Israel at least once, in the short time since they had been in Israel on the Oren Kibbutz Institute programme.

Ethnic affiliation.

The respondents were asked in three separate questions whether they agreed or disagreed that Jews are a national group, a cultural group, an ethnic group or a religious group. Most of the Oren alumni (91%) think that being a Jew in America or Canada means being a member of a cultural group, 81 per cent as being a member of an ethnic group, 79 per cent a religious group and only 40 per cent think that being a Jew means being a member of a national group. By comparison, NJPS age peers claimed that being a Jew in North America means a cultural group (83%); an ethnic group (68%;) a religious group (61%); and a national group (48%).

Overall, it can be seen that while they have many elements in common, the most striking differences between Oren alumni and their NJPS peers are in the following areas: Oren alumni give higher scores on the degree to which they see

being Jewish as an ethnic or religious group—indeed, 73 per cent of alumni report attending synagogue frequently compared to 49 per cent of their peers; 73 per cent of Oren alumni report a high emotional attachment to Israel as compared to 29 per cent of their peers; 50 per cent of Oren alumni report that their closest friends are Jews as compared to 22 per cent of their NJPS peers. The inference is that this difference may be associated with visiting Israel. Indeed, no causal conclusions can be drawn from these comparative data, yet they serve to illustrate the difference between the subjects of this study and their peers in North America. It is, however, the multiple classification analysis that follows which can reliably examine the weight of a visit to Israel and more specifically, that of the educational programme in the kibbutz setting, in explaining the variance on post-visit measures of Jewish identity and ethnicity in the subjects of this study.

The Kibbutz Experience

As we noted before (see also Mittelberg, 1988; Mittelberg & Lev-Ari, 1991, 1994), the kibbutz experience is composed of the Oren participant's kibbutz work, social interaction with kibbutz members and other participants and the kibbutz Ulpan educational activities.

Our analysis of the kibbutz experience demonstrates that about half of Oren alumni were satisfied or very satisfied with the educational activities in the kibbutz Ulpan programme. Most alumni (60%) worked in the service branches on the kibbutz (dining room, laundry and gardening). Less than one-third worked in agriculture or industry. The participants' sense of contribution to the kibbutz through work was not very intensive.

The interaction between Oren alumni and kibbutz members occurred mainly during work; 60 per cent had a close or very close relationship with kibbutz members at work. After work, the interaction was intensive only for one-third of the participants. Almost all the respondents (96%) were adopted by kibbutz families and visited them often. Most Oren alumni (89%) claimed at the conclusion of the Ulpan that they considered the Ulpan experience to be enjoyable or very enjoyable.

Most of the Oren alumni (88%) said that they would definitely recommend visiting kibbutz to their friends. The rates of programme recommendation in the third stage follow-up study were even higher than the rates reported by the same Ulpan students at the conclusion of the Ulpan (69%).

The longitudinal impact of the kibbutz experience. The most important part of our research, and the original contribution of this paper, deals with the issue of the influence of the Oren kibbutz educational programme sustained change in Jewish identity and pro-Israeli attitudes of young tourists from North America; *t*-tests for paired samples were used in order to examine the longitudinal impact of the kibbutz experience on the alumni's Jewish identity and pro-Israeli attitudes. Table I shows the change in measures of ethnic identification among Oren alumni over time: from

TABLE I. *t*-Test for paired sample: means (1 = low; 5 = high) of Jewish identity and pro-Israeli attitudes

Question	Time 1	Time2	Time 3	2-tail problem	N*
1. *The importance of being Jewish*					
(a)	3.67	NA	4.15	0.000	211
(b)	NA	3.92	4.14	0.007	109
2. *Attitudes towards intermarriage*					
(a)	2.72	NA	2.80	NS	244
(b)	NA	2.80	2.79	NS	103
3. *Sense of connection to the Jewish people (fate and future bound up with the Jewish people)*					
(a)	3.52	NA	3.98	0.000	216
(b)	NA	3.90	3.92	NS	154
4. *Israel as a national, cultural and religious centre for the Jewish people*					
(a)	4.19	NA	4.37	0.016	218
(b)	NA	4.30	4.38	NS	157
5. *Israel as a source of pride*					
(a)	3.77	NA	3.96	0.028	216
(b)	NA	3.96	3.91	NS	154

(a) Comparison between Time 1 and Time 3.
(b) Comparison between Time 2 and Time 3.
* The differences in the Oren alumni's number (N) between several stages is a result of the response rates at each stage.
NA: not applicable; NS: not significant.

the beginning of the kibbutz experience, at the conclusion of the kibbutz Ulpan and finally upon return to their home countries.

For each question asked, two comparisons are presented:

(a) Comparison between feelings and attitudes at the beginning of the kibbutz Ulpan (Time 1) with stage three, after returning to their home countries; and
(b) The participants' attitudes at the conclusion of the Ulpan (Time 2) and after their return home (Time 3).

The kibbutz experience reinforces and strengthens the components of Jewish identity examined here (Table I: 1a,b; 3a,b) and this level of identity remains high after the participants' return to their home countries. It should be noted that the high rates of Jewish identity at the conclusion of the Ulpan can be only slightly higher because of the artificial "ceiling effect" of closed questionnaires which do not allow responses beyond the upper limit of the closed scale. Table I: 2a,b and IIa,b show that attitudes to intermarriage remain stable over the years and are not altered by the kibbutz experience. It should be noted that the alumni with stronger pro-Israel attitudes and Jewish identity were more opposed to intermarriage. Pro-Israeli attitudes and feelings were reinforced by the experience in Israel as shown by the attitudes of students on return home

compared with their attitudes at the beginning of the kibbutz experience (Table I: 4a,b; 5a,b).

At the end of the kibbutz period participants had stronger pro-Israeli attitudes than at the outset, and their attitudes remained stable among the participants in their home countries.

Jewish background or the kibbutz experience—competing explanations. In order to examine the longitudinal impact on Oren alumni's Jewish identity, two alternative explanations were tested:

1. The Oren alumni's Jewish education and visiting Israel *before* the kibbutz experience and its correlation with Jewish identity both at the conclusion of the Ulpan (Time 2) and after returning to their home countries (Time 3).
2. The impact of the kibbutz experience itself (for example: satisfaction with educational activities, social interaction with kibbutz members during and after work) on Jewish identity among Oren alumni at Time 2 and Time 3.

In order to determine the relative weight of all the different factors discussed here: (1) prior visit to Israel; (2) prior Jewish schooling; (3) the kibbutz experience—namely (a) social interaction with kibbutz members during and after work and (b) satisfaction from educational activities—multiple classification analysis was performed [1]. In Table II to V, the *dependent variable* has a range from zero to one, the grand mean of the variable is cited at the top of the table.

Longitudinal change in importance of being Jewish. Oren alumni were asked the question "To what extent does being Jewish play an important part in your life?" In Herman's terms this refers to the centrality of being Jewish in respondents' lives. The importance of being Jewish at the conclusion of the Ulpan is explained mainly by background in Jewish schooling (Table II). This means that having a stronger Jewish background, participating in successful educational activities on the programme and interaction with kibbutz members all contribute to the increased centrality of Judaism among alumni at the conclusion of the Ulpan. Altogether, these factors explain 23 per cent of the variance of the importance of being Jewish at Time 2.

Following their return to their home countries, alumni feel that being Jewish plays an important part in their lives, but the effect of the background variables of Jewish education and having visited Israel before participating in the Oren programme on this measure are relatively weaker. In other words, in the comparison between Time 2 and Time 3, the role of the background variables carries less weight than the educational activities and social interaction in the kibbutz (Table III).

Longitudinal change in "sense of connection to the Jewish people". At all three stages Oren participants were asked, "To what extent do you feel that your fate and future is bound up with the fate and future of the Jewish people?". At the conclusion of the

TABLE II. Importance of being Jewish at the conclusion of the Ulpan (time 2) by Jewish education prior to the Oren programme; visiting Israel prior to the Oren programme; educational activities; relationship between Ulpanists and kibbutz members; during work; and frequency of visits to kibbutz family

Variable + category	*n*	Eta	Beta
Jewish education index			
1. No Jewish education	26		
2. Sunday school only	19		
3. Afternoon school only	27		
4. Day school	32		
		0.33	0.31
Educational activities			
1. Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	19		
2. Mixed feelings	37		
3. Quite satisfied or very satisfied	48		
		0.26	0.24
Visit to Israel			
1. Never visited	42		
2. Visited	62		
		0.27	0.10
Relationship between kibbutz members and Ulpanists during work hours			
1. No relationship or distant relationship	10		
2. Not so close	32		
3. Close or very close	62		
		0.21	0.13
Frequency of visits to kibbutz family			
1. Rarely or never	27		
2. Once a week	52		
3. A few times a week or every afternoon	25		
		0.13	0.12
Multiple R squared			0.233
Multiple R			0.482

Grand mean: 0.78.

programme, 10 per cent of the variance of the sense of connection to the Jewish people is explained by both previous Jewish schooling and the kibbutz experience. These feelings, however strong, are influenced mainly by both previous Jewish

TABLE III. Importance of being Jewish after returning to home country (time 3) by Jewish education prior to the Oren programme; visiting Israel prior to the Oren programme; educational activities; relationship between Ulpanists and kibbutz members; during work; and frequency of visits to kibbutz family

Variable + category	*n*	Eta	Beta
Jewish education index			
1. No Jewish education	28		
2. Sunday school only	21		
3. Afternoon school only	37		
4. Day school	35		
		0.12	0.09
Educational activities			
1. Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	20		
2. Mixed feelings	44		
3. Quite satisfied or very satisfied	57		
		0.22	0.19
Visit to Israel			
1. Never visited	46		
2. Visited	75		
		0.13	0.08
Relationship between kibbutz members and Ulpanists during work hours			
1. No relationship or distant relationship	11		
2. Not so close	37		
3. Close or very close	73		
		0.17	0.12
Frequency of visits to kibbutz family			
1. Rarely or never	30		
2. Once a week	56		
3. A few times a week or every afternoon	35		
		0.00	0.03
Multiple R squared			0.084
Multiple R			0.290

Grand mean: 0.83.

education and the prior visit to Israel. The kibbutz experience is less effective here (Table IV).

On return to their home countries, the total explanation of variance is smaller

TABLE IV. Sense of connection to the Jewish people (fate and future is bound up with the Jewish people (time 2) by Jewish education prior to the Oren programme; visiting Israel prior to the Oren programme; educational activities; relationship between Ulpanists and kibbutz members; during work; and frequency of visits to kibbutz family

Variable + category	*n*	Eta	Beta
Jewish education index			
1. No Jewish education	30		
2. Sunday school only	19		
3. Afternoon school only	38		
4. Day school	34		
		0.24	0.17
Educational activities			
1. Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	20		
2. Mixed feelings	44		
3. Quite satisfied or very satisfied	57		
		0.11	0.08
Visit to Israel			
1. Never visited	46		
2. Visited	75		
		0.24	0.15
Relationship between kibbutz members and Ulpanists during work hours			
1. No relationship or distant relationship	11		
2. Not so close	37		
3. Close or very close	73		
		0.11	0.07
Frequency of visits to kibbutz family			
1. Rarely or never	29		
2. Once a week	55		
3. A few times a week or every afternoon	37		
		0.13	0.06
Multiple R squared			0.101
Multiple R			0.318

Grand mean: 0.79.

(5%) but the relative weight of kibbutz experience variables is higher than at the end of the stay, at Time 2 (Table V).

To sum up: for Oren alumni the kibbutz experience, mainly through the

TABLE V. Sense of connection to the Jewish people (fate and future is bound up with the Jewish people (time 3) by Jewish education prior to the Oren programme; visiting Israel prior to the Oren programme; educational activities; relationship between Ulpanists and kibbutz members; during work; and frequency of visits to kibbutz family

Variable + category	*n*	Eta	Beta
Jewish education index			
1. No Jewish education	29		
2. Sunday school only	21		
3. Afternoon school only	36		
4. Day school	35		
		0.14	0.12
Educational activities			
1. Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	20		
2. Mixed feelings	43		
3. Quite satisfied or very satisfied	58		
		0.15	0.12
Visit to Israel			
1. Never visited	47		
2. Visited	74		
		0.10	0.04
Relationship between kibbutz members and Ulpanists during work hours			
1. No relationship or distant relationship	11		
2. Not so close	38		
3. Close or very close	72		
		0.13	0.11
Frequency of visits to kibbutz family			
1. Rarely or never	30		
2. Once a week	55		
3. A few times a week or every afternoon	36		
		0.04	0.04
Multiple R squared			0.054
Multiple R			0.232

Grand mean: 0.78.

educational activities and guest–host social interactions, has an independent impact on Jewish ethnic identity that persists several years after the cross-cultural experience itself. The kibbutz educational experience makes an independent contribution in

addition to prior Jewish schooling and a visit to Israel that may have preceded the Oren kibbutz experience.

Comments gathered from Project Oren alumni in North America on their third stage questionnaire illuminate the potential impact of a qualitative Israel experience. To give just a few examples: a 24-year-old man who participated in the Oren programme in the Fall of 1992 wrote:

> The Oren program and my subsequent stay in Israel had a tremendous impact on my life. As a Jew with very little to no Jewish background/education growing up and very little knowledge about Israel, my eyes were opened by my stay in Israel. I feel as though a whole new world was uncovered and an entirely new sense of consciousness was raised.

A second participant, from Spring 1993, wrote: "Being in Israel for six months made me even more attached to my Judaism. I deeply believe that giving any young Jew the chance to spend time in Israel would deepen their commitment to Judaism." Finally, an alumna from the Fall of 1994 wrote, "Never have I felt so identified with my Judaism and my history...I took this program very seriously and it changed the course of my life."

Conclusions

In this paper we have examined the role of informal education in cross-cultural settings acting as a transformative agent of ethnic identity, understood here as the desire and commitment to be a part of the shared history, tradition, culture and language of the Jewish people. This transformative role has contributed independently and cumulatively to the formative role of home background, Jewish schooling and previous visits to Israel.

The effects of life in a kibbutz community in Israel, where Jewish values are transparently part of the calendar, custom and language of everyday life, are experienced in the encounter between guests and hosts. This experience, together with the thematic based educational enrichment programme serves to generate a focused enhancement of Jewish ethnic identity. What is more, this enhancement can be seen to persist beyond the termination of the experience itself, remaining with the participants on their return to their home communities. The implication of these findings is that the cross-cultural encounter that takes place within the Kibbutz Institutes for Jewish Experience has the potential to enhance the identity and broaden the horizons of those who have taken part. By extension, it speaks to the value of cross-cultural encounters generally in informal education in contributing to the personal growth of young people everywhere.

The cross-cultural encounter that takes in the kibbutz between Israeli Jews and Jews from the diaspora serves to broaden the horizons among the participants, thereby raising the salience of their values and self-identity as Jews. It is not only the salience of being Jewish that is raised, but also its valence. For alumni, being Jewish becomes a central part of their lives in terms of the degree of ritual practice, density of ethnic social ties and the intensity of their connection with modern Israel. While

the Israeli kibbutz can never be the Jewish community that is apparently absent in North America, it does serve as a modern Jewish community relevant to the life and identity of the participants who pass through it. Finally, the experience itself often also serves to engender a bond of community and understanding across cultural and ethnic boundaries.

Choosing to visit Israel, which then involves re-identification with Israel as part of an American Jewish ethnicity, reflects the option of ethnic choice that modern American multicultural society makes available. While the content of this choice is particularised for American Jews, its form is shared by most ethnic groups in America.

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NOTE

[1] This requires some preliminary classification. The multiple classification analysis (MCA) that follows (Tables II–V) utilizes several measures of association. First, a correlation ratio, the *eta* statistic, is associated with the set of unadjusted category effects for each factor in the MCA table; the square of *eta* indicates the proportion of variance explained by a given factor (all categories considered). *Beta* is a statistic associated with the adjusted category effects for each factor. More specifically, *beta* is a standardised regression coefficient in the sense used in multiple regression. Finally, the Multiple R appears at the bottom of the MCA table. Just as in multiple regression, this R can be squared to indicate the variance in the dependent variable "accounted for" or explained by all independent factors and covariants.

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