

VISIONS OF ISRAEL EDUCATION

The Place of Israel in United States Jewish Supplementary Schools

by

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ABSTRACT

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The existence of Israel is essential for the survival of the Jewish people. The two share a unique relationship that goes back a long time. Israel is the only Jewish homeland in the world and has always been a part of Jewish studies and was integrated into Jewish schools programs. In recent years there has been a shift in Israel education in order to strengthen future generations' relationship with the Jewish State. The following research examines the place of Israel, not only within the United States Jewish supplementary schools but, also by illuminating a new focus relating to a broader spectrum of International and national education. At the center of this essay are a few lines of inquiry: why do we teach about Israel? What are the goals for teaching Israel? How should Israel be integrated into the school curriculum? And in what ways can Israel education strengthen students' national and global identity? The methodology used in this paper is twofold: content and space analysis, as well as survey and interviews. In this section I first examine textbooks teaching about Israel including in-depth research with principals and teachers. I continue with a physical space analysis of where students gain in-depth Israel education showing the informal aspect of school environment and its affect on the students' learning experience. In the last few decades, Israel education has shifted significantly and is facing some challenges. Among them are the need for curriculum prioritizing, working within limited time

frame, and cultivating expert teachers. I make a few recommendations for educators on how to revisit teaching about Israel in the United States Jewish supplementary system with the goal of strengthening the students' identity as Jews. In addition, these recommendations will contribute to strengthening young Jewish students' identities as national and global citizens.

Keywords: Curriculum development, history textbooks, Israel, Israel education, Jewish education, Diaspora, supplementary schools, Zionism

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PREFACE

Beautiful, inspiring, controversial, miraculous, intriguing...

Picture this, a place along the coast line of the Mediterranean Sea which these are just few of the adjectives to describe it. Imagine green mountains in the north, blooming desert in the south, and plum trees in the east. Imagine lively cities and varied population, languages, aromas, and ethnic cuisine, old architecture merged with new, a pilgrimage and tourist destination. Imagine heated political debates among elders in the parks in the daytime and young people enjoying vibrant night life in the cultural districts. Imagine high-tech and innovative factories alongside artist colonies and wineries. Imagine climbing the highest cliffs today and studying mysticism tomorrow. Imagine a memorable and spiritual experience, Just imagine...

This snapshot portrays my personal description of modern Israel. Those who are familiar with the country might agree with this picture, while others may alter it based on their personal experience. For those who are not familiar with modern Israel, the passage makes Israel sound like an appealing and desirable destination for a vacation while for some it will sound surprising and unexpected. What is it about Israel that fascinates Jews and non-Jews alike? What is in this place that makes it controversial and important at the same time?

Israel plays a central role for many throughout the world. It is a religious center for Christians, Muslims and Jews and a spiritual place for people who wish to trace history. Jesus

birthplace is Bethlehem and it is said that he walked on water at the Sea of Galilee. Hebron is where Muslims believe Muhammad alighted on his night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and Haifa is a center to the Baha'i religion, where one of their main shrines is located. These are just a few of the places in Israel that have a great meaning to various religious groups. Israel is also the only Jewish State in the world and the homeland for the Jewish nation. Israel, according to its Declaration of Independence, is defined as Jewish which means many of the state laws reflect Jewish laws and values. For example, the state follows the Jewish calendar, and the day of rest, the Shabbats, is Friday evening to Saturday evening. Israel acknowledges that the state is the homeland for all Jews and based on the Law of Return from 1950. Every person who has at least one Jewish grandparent is considered Jewish and has the right to move to Israel and to be granted citizenship (Law of Return, 1950). The concept of Jewish homeland is also part of the idea of Jewish Peoplehood, meaning that Jewish people regardless of their location are tied together and share unity and the feeling of belonging.

Today, more than ever, as a result of changing relationships between world Jewry and the State of Israel, which has resulted in declining economic, political, and cultural support, learning about Israel intensifies the connection for Jewish students to their homeland. In addition, it serves as a reminder to the Jewish community that Israel is a vital element in strengthening the roots of a meaningful Jewish identity.

In the following thesis, I will examine Israel education in Jewish supplementary schools in the United States from different angles. First, I will look at Israel education from the traditional perspective of being an imperative part of Jewish education. Second, I will look at Israel education as it relates to international education as well as to national identity. This thesis is divided into five parts. Part one, "International Education," sets the overarching tone for the

paper and prepares the framework as to why and how Israel education is important for Jewish children. It begins with the theoretical idea of global citizenship in addition to one's own national identity. My aim is to show how the two complement each other. Part two goes into more depth regarding the education of the Jewish child and delves into a conversation about Jewish education in general focusing on Jewish education in the United States and Jewish supplementary school in particular. The guiding principle of this piece is the basic question revolving around what a Jew should study and why. Part three begins by describing what Israel education is and diagnoses the current trends in Israel education over the past few decades. What I have attempt to describe here, and as shown in the following figure 1, are three circles, one within the other, where part of the circle stands independently and part of the circle overlaps and touches the others. I then offer my vision of Israel education as an integral component of Jewish life and how it is essential to Judaism and for the individual's personal and national identity, regardless of one's affiliation or political opinion. As there is more than one way to be a Jew, there is more than one way to engage with Israel. It is my goal to offer an alternative approach to Israel education one that includes multi-dimensional Israel engagement. This goal is based on five years of field work including endless hours spent with students of all ages, their parents, teachers, principals, community members, and lay leaders in Jewish and non-Jewish institutions.

After outlining the three major themes - international education, Jewish education, and Israel education - part four features two case studies which examine Israel education from two lenses: looking at Israel educational textbooks focusing on how Israel is portrayed in the books used in Jewish supplementary schools, and looking at space; in particular the Israel Room at a local synagogue school. These case studies are examples of how content and physical space can be used beyond their immediate purpose. Finally, in the fifth part, I seek to tie the previous

chapters together and to offer my conclusion in the hope of triggering readers to engage in a conversation. I suggest topics for further research and leave a few questions open.

In ‘Visions of Israel Education’, my overall goal has been to describe the place of Israel in American Jewish supplementary schools from more than the immediate connection to Jewish education. My goal has been to illuminate a new focus by relating Israel to a broader spectrum of international and national education. I wish to share with the reader the attention that Israel has been getting for generations as part of Jewish education, and at the same time to open new channels of ways to think about Israel education in schools. It is my hope that this essay will encourage, guide and inspire leaders, educators, parents, and others to continue teaching about Israel with passion, dedication, and purpose.

I am indebted to many people that, without their help, this thesis would not have come to completion. Dr. Tzipy Gur offered me the opportunity to come to the United States to serve as the Israel Educational Emissary. She opened the door for me, and helped me along my journey toward becoming an Israel educator. My colleagues and friends and the Agency for Jewish Learning were the tailwind behind, believing in me and my way. Dr. Naomi Zigmond, that without her none of this could have happened. For the past two years I have worked under Dr. Zigmond who generously offered me a scholarship to continue my academic journey. My advisor Dr. Maureen K. Porter, who, with wisdom and patience guided me, shared her experience, and lifted me up when I needed a push and all with kindness, a smile, and good sense of humor. To my committee and readers along the way: Dr. John Myers, Dr. Noreen Garman, Dr. Frayda Cohen, and Dr. Rachel Kranson. To my colleagues and friends who read and re-read my drafts many times and with tolerance and patience offer their comments, editing skills, and reviews.

On a personal note, I wish to dedicated this thesis to all the children, parents, teachers and principals who allowed me become part of their life and teach them about my homeland. I am humbled and honored by their confidence in me. I have learned so much from each and every one of them.

Finally, this milestone and achievement could not have happened without the devoted help and support of my family and friends. They have shared a vision and love for Israel and who have always been a support with their words of wisdom and encouragement.

Efrat Avramovich

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In September 2007 I arrived in the United States for the first time in my life. My final destination was Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where I was sent by the Jewish Agency for Israel to serve as the Israel Educational Emissary for the Jewish community. My role was to teach people of all ages about my homeland, Israel. Early in the process, I decided I wanted it to be a mutual, engaging learning process. I wished for myself to learn about the Jewish community in the Diaspora and to deepen my Jewish education by learning about Jewish life outside of the Jewish State, and for my audience to engage in a conversation about life in Modern Israel. This experience changed my life from corner to corner with one particular memory that is still very vivid in my mind five years later.

Upon my arrival I set my schedule as the visiting Israel specialist rotating between twelve Jewish supplementary schools. During my first visit to Tree of Life Congregation, I was requested by the school principal to work with the fifth grade since Modern Israel was part of their yearly curriculum. At the end of the session, after the children and I already knew each other, David, a student in the class came up to me and asked me if I would like him to play Ha'Tikva, Israel national anthem, for me. My reply was, of course!! David played, and my eyes started to glaze in tears. This was the first time I reacted that way listening to my country's national anthem and at that moment, little embarrassed with my reaction, I knew something had changed. I realize my love story with my country does not belong only to me, it belong to the

entire Jewish nation regardless of location, affiliation, or practice, For most Jews, when Israel is mentioned, something inside them reacts because the connection to Israel is deeper than a destination they have visited on a family vacation, but rather a part of who they are as a Jew. David and I are not different in our love of Israel. Jewish people all around the world seek to learn and engage in Israel learning and it is a special bond they have with their homeland. Having said that, I could not help but wonder why? Why are Jewish people drawn to Israel and what is it about the land that so meaningful to them?

It is clear why my country is very important to me; my mother was born there and my father chose to move there; I speak the language; I am immersed in the culture; and I fulfill my responsibilities while my country is giving back to me in more than one way. However, it was also clear to me that in order to teach about Israel, I had to get to know the community and to take their approach toward Israel under consideration. I wanted them to connect to Israel as much as I do, and to embrace it as part of their own identity because it will enhance their personal and global identity by providing augmented set of skills.

This thought led me to inquire and learn about the Diaspora-Israel relationship and eventually to write this thesis. A number of tenets guided me when I began my research: 1) Israel education is an integral part of Jewish studies in general, and also incorporated into the Jewish supplementary schools system, 2) within the supplementary schools, the subject of Israel has been taught as part of topics such as Jewish holidays and Jewish prayers in some cases, and as a separate subject in others which created different levels of knowledge and connection, 3) Israel is mostly being taught in the historical/mythical manner leaving modern Israel pushed aside as a result of lack of knowledge/consensus/time/expert teachers, 4) if taught by inquiry and critical thinking, Israel education can enhance national identity and global citizenship, and lastly 5)

unfortunately, although those who are exposed to Israel education want to continue to learn and connect with their homeland, teaching about Israel has become less of a priority in the supplementary school system due to time constraints and in some cases philosophy of what makes a complete Jewish identity.

Because of my position as the Israel Emissary, I had an easy access to rabbis, scholars, lay leaders, educators, and other members of the community and they all unanimously recommended starting at the roots. I realize that for better understanding I should go back to history and Jewish text and that is what I did.

1.1 THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND THEIR BOND WITH ISRAEL

“Now the Lord said unto Abraham: ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from the kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto the land I will show thee’”
~ Genesis 12:1

The relationship between the Jewish people and *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel) dates back thousands of years ago to the story of Abraham. In Genesis, God commands Abraham to leave his country and go the land that he will show him, where he will “*make thee a great nation*” (Genesis 12:2). It is in this defining moment of the promise from God to Abraham that Israel has become a central place for the new nation. It represents the homeland, the holy land, the place where Jewish people are reunited with their God. It is because of the special covenant that the Jews (outside of Jerusalem) are always praying toward the East, which symbolizes Jerusalem.

The story of Abraham represents a three-way relationship between God, *Am Yisrael* (the people of Israel) and the *Eretz Yisrael* (land of Israel). In the story, Israel embodies the essence

of its beginning and the place where the covenant between God and His people would be fulfilled (Troy, 2006: 55-56). The land of Israel is central to Judaism. Many of the Jewish laws were written in relation to the land. Some laws can only be performed there and apply only to the land. Such laws mainly discuss agricultural restrictions and include observing *Shmita* (the seventh year-the sabbatical year) and Temple services related to sacrifices (Dorff, Rosett, & Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1988).

Following the story of Abraham, Israel remains a major part of the Jewish peoples' ultimate goal; to fulfill the covenant between God and Abraham. The journey to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was not easy. It has been thousands of years of fighting, advocating, asking and pleading for recognition, facing rejections, struggling with internal conflicts and disagreements but mostly longing and hoping for Israel and the return to the homeland.

Years of exile passed, and Jews learned to keep their faith in the center; practicing Jewish law and customs, sustaining Jewish homes, remembering the historical narrative and passing it on, all for the sake of keeping the burning flame alive (Troy, 2006: 63-69).

Today, Israel's place in the lives of Diaspora Jews, and United States Jewry in particular, is different. History has changed and so has U.S peoples' attitudes toward Israel. The founding of the State of Israel was a defining moment for many as a symbol for freedom, achievement, security and returning home. However, for many young Jews in the United States the concept of Israel is not that clear anymore. Many of them feel apathetic and disconnected from Israel. Being a Jew in the United States presents them with many options for a successful and secure life. As their relationship with their country evolves, so does their relationship, or lack thereof, with Israel (Grant and Kopelowitz, 2012: 18-19; Horowitz, 2012: 2)

Israel education in general, and particularly since the beginning of the new millennium, is in response to the challenges described above. With Israel being a strong, confident, developed country, we should not take its existence for granted. It is important to forge and sustain a relationship between the individual person and Israel, as it is still a part of Jewish life. Without Israel, Jewish life will lose an important component that has been an immense part of its identity. The quote, “*My Heart in the East, and I in the West, as far in the West as west can be!*” written by Rabbi Yehudah Ha’Levi in the Midvale ages (Scheindlin, 2008: 169) exemplifies the poet’s yearning to the land of Israel and this feeling is still shared among many Jews today. It is reflective of the relationship between Jewish people all over the world and their homeland. The purpose for teaching about Israel ought to be as a reminder that Israel is a part of how the Jewish people think about themselves as Jews. Israel should be an integral part of their personal and collective identity. The following section details the key elements of traditional education in relation to Israel education.

1.2 THE GOALS OF TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

In taking a glance at the past, we learn about our roots and heritage. It is a way for people to learn about themselves and to set the foundations for building the future. The broad goal of the Jewish supplementary school is to help continue the existence of the Jews as an identifiable group. Additionally, the aim of the school is to provide a meaningful way to identify people as Jews by providing opportunities to engage with others like themselves. Another goal is to be able to understand other groups that are different than them, but share the common ground of having religion as a component in their identity (Ackerman, 1969: 26-27). According to Michael

Omolewa (2007) who studies traditional African education, the goal of traditional education is “to produce a complete individual, a lifelong learner who is cultured, respectful, integrated, sensitive and responsive to the needs of the family and neighbors” (p. 596). I agree with this definition since traditional education, as well as education about tradition, is important to foster young people’s identity and sense of pride and understanding of their past.

Omolewa described a number of methods used in African traditional education: learning through language, learning through music and dancing, learning through oral stories and myths, through culture, religion, the elders, specialist, and learning through specific names (Omolewa, 2007). The greatest accomplishments of these methods come not at the ‘learning through’ level, but rather ‘learning of all of the above’ modes that the author suggests. In addition, I have chosen Omolewa’s framework for traditional education, since I argue that this method can be apply to other cultures, sub-groups and indigenous groups as a way to help, maintain and strengthen future generations’ motivations to learn and keep their heritage alive.

I integrate these modes of education into the educational experience of the students can have a lasting impact on young Jewish students who learn about their faith. Chang and Jacob (2008) and Brock-Utne (2007) claim that the loss of a language is a key element for weakening the individual identity. Language acquisition is very important and is essential to the cultural foundations of society. In that sense, language produces culture and culture contributes to the creation of a language (Brock-Utne, 2007; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Chang and Jacob, 2008). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, also talks about linguistic determinism and the idea that language shape the way in which people think, behave, and view the world around them. In short, both Sapir and Whorf stated that language, thought, and culture all influence one another, and that language not

only reflect a culture, but in fact shapes culture and therefore the way people think (Ahearn, 2012).

The Hebrew language is more than a linguistic skill; it is the written language of the Torah, the body of Jewish texts, therefore, making it possible to be able to communicate in the language of one's ancestors. It is also the spoken language in Israel and a way to better understand the culture of contemporary Israel. The Hebrew language is a unifying force that has a cultural impact and addresses values. According to Rivka Dori (1992) it is not by accident that we call Hebrew Schools, "Hebrew" schools (p. 261). In the past, Hebrew was used almost exclusively in the synagogues and in studying the holy texts and the expectation from Jewish schools was to continue teaching *T'fila*, the body of Jewish prayers, in its original language it was written. But soon after its revival by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda in the nineteenth century, Modern Hebrew became the official language of the Jewish community in Palestine and, later on, of the State of Israel. This brought an additional consideration of conversational Hebrew.

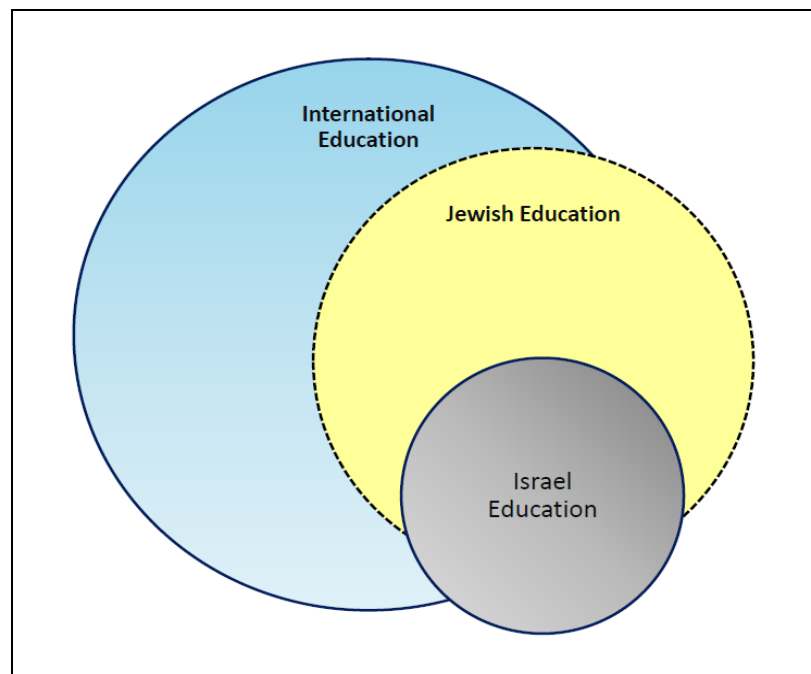
Besides language acquisition, there are other methods that can foster motivation to engage in Israel studies. One such example is learning about and honoring historical narratives and figures, such as the biblical figure Jacob and the story of how his name changed to Israel. The name literally contains two words *Yisrae-El*: wrestle (*Yisra*) with God (*El*). After Jacob wrestles with the angel in Genesis 32:28, Jacob receives God's blessing which changes his name from Jacob to Yisra-El (Elazar, 1998: 147-148). Jacob's transformation represents more than just the actual story. As it is further explained in the glossary section, the name change to Israel holds a deep meaning of the relationship between Jacob and God and a major shift between God and his people.

The collective memory also includes myths, heroes, places, and so on. All of these, when put together, provide a bigger picture to help forge self and collective identity. Nowadays, when we learn about many cultures in Africa, South and Central America, and other places that are under the strains of globalization, and even losing substantial part of their cultural roots, it is important to offer opportunities for young people to learn about their history and to be able to pass it on to future generations. In conclusion, one should not look far to find the goals of traditional education, and as mentioned previously, I argue that going back to the roots of the Jewish faith will help in the process of defining the goals. One traditional book (the *Mishna*) contains a section called *Pirkei Avot* or the Ethics of the Fathers. In Chapter five of this section, it is written “*Know from where you came and where you are going and before whom you are destined to give account and reckoning*” (Ethics of the Fathers 3:1 In Melamed & Altabé, 2007:53). This quote is often used in various educational settings. It teaches that in order to fully learn, individuals must first reflect on their past and know their heritage and then plan for the future. This quote emphasizes connecting with the past in order to help a person plan for the future and learn in the present.

It is essential to Israel education to create an instinctive feeling of being a member of a larger group of Jewish people. Hence, it is important for Jews to understand the past. Therefore, Israel becomes a central learning focus in the world of Jewish education (in the United States and throughout the world) because Israel connects Jews not only to each other but also to their past. In addition, once history and present come together, a new global Jewish conversation can begin to define goals for the future.

2.0 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Figure 1 – Venn diagram: Intersecting fields of applications



As the world's economics, politics, and cultures change, so does the role of education. Today, education is shifting more towards multiculturalism and diversity and, in doing, so not only has the theory of education changed, but also the programmatic aspects of education have shifted as well. As a result of this shift we see more and more programs focusing on global and international education. The question of the role of international education in the school system and whether it promotes national identity and/or whether it breaks down cultural barriers, is being questioned in relation to Israel education as it exist within Jewish schools. Figure 1, on

page 9, illustrates my theoretical model of three circles of education; International and national education as the overarching goal. Follow by Jewish education and Israel education. Each circle stand independently, but at the same time, the three are intertwined and share some commonalities. This model guides me throughout this paper and the three circles should be taken under consideration as a way to promote the goals of Israel education: to forge a relationship between the individual person and Israel so that is become part of their Jewish identity; to create Israel education programs that are based on inquiry, active engagement and learner-centered according to the students appropriate development stage; and to emphasize Israel education as a way to promote global awareness and international understanding.

Many have argued that international education as a field of study began in the late 1960's (Butts, 1971; Heater, 2002; Sylvester 2008). However, the idea of international education began long before, even if the name 'International Education' was not officially coined until the 1960's. Since Columbus discovered America, in 1492, and later, during colonial times, international education already existed but was not defined as one. The colonists imported new social skills, cultural activities, and educational models, which they used to educate colonists and natives on each other way of life. This encounter between the different cultural groups inevitably laid the foundations for modernization. Eventually, globalization created a need for a new set of theories and paradigms related to international education and global awareness (Spring, 2004; Sylvester, 2008).

International education is comprised of a number of key ideas. The first component is education for citizenship. This can be divided into two main concepts: national citizenship and cosmopolitan citizenship or world citizenship. National citizenship involves citizens whose loyalty is to their nation-state within the geographical territories where their national identity is

being formed. National citizenship also entails a sense of belonging to the country or nation. The feeling of belonging can link to one's place of birth, a shared history, or identifying with the language, religion, and/or symbols. National citizenship is an unwritten contract between the citizens and the state, granting individuals civic rights while at the same time placing obligations and responsibilities on the individuals in regards to their country (Heater, 2002; Spring, 2004). People associate national citizenship with the nation-state. However, this connection may also reach beyond the nation-state. Many Diaspora Jews feel connected to Israel and see it as part of their national citizenship. It is no different than Polish, Italian, or Irish who are of one descent but are also American citizens. The feeling of belonging comes from the shared history, the language, values, etc. This relationship between nationalism, national citizenship, and Diaspora Jews I will be revisited when discussing Zionism and Jewish nationalism.

In most nation-states, the government is in charge and controls the education. Through the socialization process children learn to connect and support their country. National values and heroes are integrated into the curriculum in explicit and implicit ways. Through this process young people develop their national identity and can place themselves in comparison to others (Frey & Whitehead, 2009: 270-272; Spring, 2004: 1-10). In addition, through national institutions such as the army, heritage sites, libraries, and others, people develop a sense of patriotism. In that way, the nation-state and its institutions serve as the glue connecting citizens.

In contrast to national citizenship, there is cosmopolitan citizenship. This kind of citizenship acknowledges that people hold a national identity but wish to develop this national identity while being active and aware global citizens. Cosmopolitan citizenship includes several key characteristics: respect towards others regardless of race, ethnicity, color or gender; promotion of social justice and working towards peace; and a focus on human rights issues and

collaboration on national and international levels regarding social, political and economic issues. (Olser & Starkey, 2003; Reimers, 2008). Many of these characteristics are already central to institutions today. I argue that, in this era of technology, we are all connected and should promote these values to our students regardless of one's religious affiliation or background in order to achieve social justice, respect towards others, and peace.

It may seem as if the two types of citizenships practice opposite beliefs and therefore create different relationships between citizens and the nation-state. According to Heater (2002) the concept of world citizenship may affect the term 'citizenship' in its classical meaning and also in the life of the individual (p. 4). Becoming a global citizen adds another layer to one's national identity. In other words, the individual does not live in a vacuum of his/her nation-state. Instead, we are all participants in a global community and committed to a larger spectrum of issues important to all world citizens such as the environment, social justice, human rights, and more. With the expansion of national identity to global citizenship also come new responsibilities, in addition to rights and opportunities for partnerships and collaborations.

For example, many American Jews feel a strong sense of pride and support their nation-state. They are part of the democratic process, as they freely vote in elections. They enjoy other rights while expected to follow the nation-state obligations. At the same time, there are groups among American Jews who, in addition to their support for the United States, feel connected to Israel and make Israel part of their national and international identity. For some, the feeling of belonging is with the historical land of Israel. And for others, it is towards the modern State of Israel. This special bond with Israel does not replace their loyalty to their country. However, it is in fact quite the opposite. Individuals often become more involved in local institutions and

agencies in order to show their support of Israel and to make an impact by influencing the decision making processes.

However, this feeling of belonging does not apply to all American Jews. As I argued before, part of the Jewish community feels connected to Israel through the practice of Jewish life but in regard to the modern State of Israel they feel apathetic. Recent research shows that there is a growing population, mostly among young American Jews, who feel distant from Israel. Much of the Israel education concerns are due to this declining attachment and even alienation (American Jewish committee, 2011; Cohen and Kelman, 2007; Grant and Kopelowitz, 2012).

And while educators are concerned about this growing number of young American Jews who feel distant from Israel, the fact that they are considering their relationship to Israel at all indicates that Israel still plays an important role in their Jewish identity. In other words, even if these young American Jews do not feel a part of Israeli culture and citizens, at least they are considering that relationship in the first place.

Even further, these two phenomena (strong connection vs. alienations), do not contradict each other. Actually, these two relationships with Israel complement each other because both groups acknowledge Israel and accept Israel as part of their heritage. However, regardless of their relationship to Israel, the consideration of Israel as part of their Jewish identity does not affect their loyalty towards their country.

Osler and Starkey (2003) summarize the relationship between the two types of citizenship: “educated cosmopolitan citizens will be confident in their own identities and will work to achieve peace, human rights and democracy within the local community and at the global level” (p. 246). For many American Jews, the idea of *Tikkun Olam*, which means repairing the world, is a guiding principle. When responding to modern challenges, such as

poverty and hunger, the idea of *Tikkun Olam* is an important part of the Jewish communal framework and benefit Jews and non-Jews alike. Later in this thesis, this topic will be discussed again as one of the guiding principles of the *CHAI* (life) curriculum designed by the Union for Reform Judaism.

The second component of international education is education for the sake of international understanding. Tarc, (2009) in his book *Global Dreams, Enduring Tensions*, includes a number of elements of education for international understanding: the notion that knowledge leads to understanding, appreciation and understanding of other cultures, and the development of the student's intellectual potential (p. 17). Tarc also examines the development of the International Baccalaureate program and the tension it raises between national and international identities. He divides the tensions into three levels: first is citizenship tension. Parents, for example, express their concern with the program. On the one hand they want their children to stay connected and loyal to their home countries. On the other hand, learning about other nations might result in a conflict between the two. However, this tension is actually very much imagined as global understanding does not necessarily promote or lead to disloyalty to their own nation-state. The second tension Tarc describes is the curricular tension. The international curriculum does not always match the national requirements of some institutions and may interfere with student opportunities to enroll in higher education. The last tension is the operational tension. At the center of this tension is the access to the International Baccalaureate program and the definitions of few main concepts such as better world and world peace. The program, since its inception, wrestles with the public criticism view the program as elitist. The International Baccalaureate Organization tries to handle these tensions throughout the years but they still exist and are yet to be solved (Tarc, 2009: 23-40).

In relation to Israel education, this second component of international education (education for the sake of international understanding) is central to a full understanding of Israel history, statehood and present day. For many in the United States, Israel is only a country at war seen on TV. However, with knowledge about Israel, people throughout the world can gain a true understanding of Israel. This is even more relevant to Jewish students in the United States Jewish supplementary schools. For these students who attend public school during the day, their education in their Jewish supplementary school is their main connection to Israel education. It is only in this setting and through this learned understanding that younger American Jews can begin to gain better knowledge about Israel which will eventually lead to a global understanding of Israel as a country and homeland.

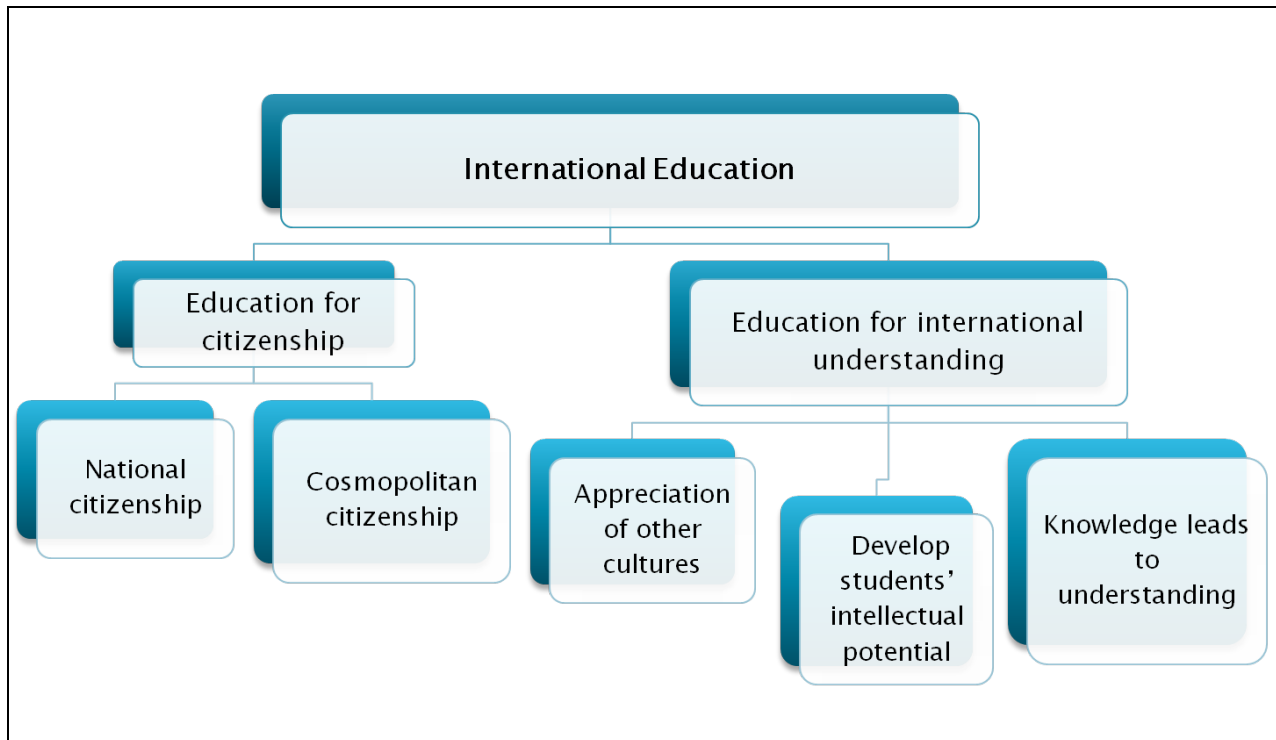
In addition to Tarc, Butts (1971) also refer to the study of foreign societies in order to provide students with accurate information about “the other”. He views this as an element of international education. He is also suggesting that students and teachers should have the opportunity to study in an educational institute outside of their country for a better understanding of social and political differences. And lastly, he argues that wealthier countries should assist poorer countries in health, economy, education and welfare (pp. 164-171).

As a result of many goals of international education, students learn to become more tolerant and open minded, and express better understanding toward other societies. In the process of acquiring skills for global understanding and citizenship, the students stay loyal to their nation-state while developing global awareness. We see this, for example, among work immigrants or scholars who feel they are ambassadors of their country and are viewed as the experts on their own country’s political, economic, and national decisions. This can be difficult

to balance while also remaining open minded and practicing good citizenship towards their host countries.

In conclusion, Israel education is central to a full well-rounded Jewish education for United States Jews because not only does it provide a better understanding of the child's Jewish history, but also it provides a strong and relevant example of International Education both through the dichotomy of national verses cosmopolitan citizens and as education simply for the sake of international understanding.

Figure 2 – International education: hierarchy table



2.1 ZIONISM – JEWISH NATIONALISM

In 1978, on Israel's 30th anniversary, a special addition of Theodor Herzl's *A Jewish State: an Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question* was published in Israel with a prologue by then Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Begin's prologue opened with a question; can a book change a nation's destiny? His answer was a strong "yes". Begin shared his profound admiration to Herzl's vision of the State of Israel. The essence of Herzl's short book, he continues, is hidden in its title. Already in the title, Herzl draws a plan; an attempt suggesting a realistic solution for the Jewish question. The answer should be in a form of a state; a place where Jews can live freely and independently and make their own decisions. Begin concludes with humble gratitude to a great man that in retrospect changed the future of the Jewish nation eternally (Herzl, 1917).

The Zionist movement was founded at the end of the nineteenth century as a response to the situation of European Jewry and the rise of anti-Semitism in the continent. Deeply influenced by the 1894-1895 Dreyfus Trial, in which a French officer of Jewish decent named Captain Alfred Dreyfus was falsely convicted of spying (Hazony, 2000: 95-97). Theodor Herzl, then a young journalist, believed that there was no way for Jews to be safe and integrated into anti-Semitic European society. He called for a Jewish state – preferably in the historical land of Israel. In June 1895, he wrote *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), an immensely popular work, suggesting a solution for the "Jewish question". In this book Herzl called for the establishment of a Jewish state that would be open to all Jews. As a follow up to his idea, in 1897, Herzl called together Jewish representatives from all over the world for the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland.

During the congress, Herzl made a public announcement “*At Basel I founded the Jewish State. If I said it today (1897), it would be greeted by laughter; but in five years, perhaps certainly in fifty years, everyone will see it*” (Hazony, 2000: 123). This congress marked the beginning of the Zionist movement as a political force in the historical story of the Jewish people. The movement played a major role in reviving the Jewish hope for a homeland and the aspiration to return to Zion and to the Promised Land of Israel. Strong willed, the movements’ members, under the leadership of its founder Herzl, began advocating for the idea of the Jewish state and called for world support. This eventually led to the 1917’s Balfour Declaration signed between Lord Arthur James Balfour, United Kingdom’s Foreign Secretary and the leadership of the Zionist movement. The Declaration promised the Jews a homeland and states “*His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object*” (Stein, 1961). Political Zionism, in essence, is defined as Jewish nationalism (Gorni, 1994; Troy, 2006). The movement began in the process of state-building and myth-making; they found institutions, they chose symbols, they wrote poetry and an anthem, created the mythical new figure of the hard worker who will build the state and so on. All of this was in an effort to lay the foundations and be ready for the establishment of the new state.

However, Zionism was more than one aspect of Jewish nationalism and another forms of Zionism emerged throughout the years, each highlighting different aspect of Jewish life. Political Zionism is the Zionism of Herzl primary focus on securing a Jewish state to save Jewish lives; Cultural/Spiritual Zionism saw Israel as a spiritual, intellectual, cultural, and religious center of the Jewish people. Israel, according to this philosophy, is the glue which connects Jews in the Diaspora to each other. Religious Zionism is the idea that only in the land of the Jewish

forefathers could all commandments be fulfilled. Therefore, the religious Zionism saw no contradiction between Jewish Orthodoxy and Zionism. Revisionist and Socialist Zionism were primarily focused on rebuilding the Jewish self by reconnecting with the land. While founded mostly by secular Jews, Socialist Zionism acknowledges the connection between the Jewish people and their love for Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel). All forms of Zionism revolved around the idea that a Jewish state is a key component in the life of the Jewish people. They all agreed to the idea of the State of Israel but differed on how to execute and promote the idea (Troy, 2006: 82-84). All in all, it is also important to mention opposition to Zionism and groups of some Jews and non-Jews opposed the idea. There are still groups today, mostly extreme Orthodox Jews, that speak against the idea of Jewish nationalism and believe the Jewish exile would come to an end through God's doing (Essrig & Segal, 1968).

The road to achieving this goal was not easy but had the support of many. Before and after the Holocaust, most Jewish people recognized the need for a Jewish State and many shared their support in the Zionist idea. Today, that is not always the case. The fulfillment of the Zionist dream is no longer a consensus among the majority of Jews. Many American Jews define themselves as Jews, but do not feel that being a Zionist is part of their identity as Jewish people (Furman, 1997: 21). Scholars define this shift as the post-Zionist era, mostly since Jews today are much more critical of Israel (Furman, 1997; Troy, 2006).

“To the Zionist, belonging comes before belief” (Troy, 2006: 29). I find this concept very interesting particularly in regards to world Jewry. The Jews are still scattered around the world and one thing that brings them together, besides their faith, is Israel. In their home countries, Jews are loyal and active within their communities, but their shared Jewish educational experiences adds another layer to their identity (Troy, 2006; Low, 2008). Jewish education is

similar throughout the United States Jewish supplementary schools and within that a unique bond can be found with Israel as the wheel connecting Jews throughout the world. The existence of the Jewish state makes the world Jewry stronger and prouder. Those who define themselves as Zionists accept the concept of a Jewish state and feel connected to it not because they were born or raised in Israel, but because the education they received taught them to connect with and love Israel as part of their faith. In the case of North American Jews, Zionism is more than merely a Jewish question; a person can be Zionist and accept the idea of Jewish nationalism regardless of whether the North American Jewish denomination he/she affiliates with accepts this concept within the movement (Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, Orthodox, etc.) (Troy, 2006).

3.0 JEWISH EDUCATION

3.1 WHAT IS JEWISH EDUCATION?

He used to say: At five years old a person should study the Scriptures, at ten years for the Mishnah, at thirteen for the commandments, at fifteen for the Talmud, at eighteen for the bridechamber, at twenty for one's life pursuit, at thirty for authority, at forty for discernment, at fifty for counsel, at sixty to be an elder..

~ Pirke Avoth 5:21 in Melamed and Altabé, 2007

The essence of education is the desire to learn about the world we live in, its people, cultures, space and more. Education has surrounded us since the age of dawn. It has been greatly developed in the past decades as part of the social, cultural and global changes. In the past, the family served as the primary educational and social unit. It was where children first experienced social interactions, learned right from wrong, and practiced the cultural rituals based on imitation of the older generation mostly in informal settings. Eventually in addition to learning all of these principles at home in informal settings, children attended formal institutions for education about such things as religion. These institutions served as important sources of knowledge where children learned about their faith, heritage and customs. Today most United States Jewish students attend supplementary schools which this thesis is focused on.

Jewish learning has profound roots and this paper is too short to contain all the different approaches and implications. In this section, I will try to illustrate a short yet meaningful understanding of history Jewish education. My intention is to focus on the development of Jewish supplemental education in the United States, because Jewish supplementary education is at the center of Jewish and Israel learning for most American Jewish children.

When discussing Jewish education, the main question that should be addressed is “What must a Jew study, and why?” The opening passage of this chapter, taken from the book *Ethics of the Fathers*, might be short in length, nonetheless, it attempts to answer the question and profoundly cover all aspects of Jewish education. These few sentences represent guidelines to the education of the Jewish person. They give a suggested lifelong curriculum according to the person’s appropriate developmental stage.

Isadore Twersky (2003), an internationally recognized expert on Maimonides and the founder of the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University, asked the same questions in an article he wrote based on his thoughts on Maimonides' philosophy of education. Rabbi Moses Maimonides is considered by Jews (from all denominations) to be one of the most prolific Jewish philosophers and Torah commentators as well as an authority on Jewish law and ethics. According to Twersky, Jewish learning should be divided into three main parts: the Jewish written law, the Jewish oral law, and reflection (Twersky, 2003: 53). These three parts correspond with each other. Each adds more value to the process of learning because it develops within the learner skills such as discussion, critical thinking, deep understanding of complex issues, and more. Twersky's analysis of Maimonides includes other areas such as prayer, the spiritual essence of Jewish law; charity, which teaches moral behavior; and the land of Israel, the historical connection of the Jewish people to their homeland (p. 77).

3.2 JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Maimonides' philosophy of education, described by Twersky (2003), which focuses on the three pieces (Jewish written law, Jewish oral law, and reflection), is, to some degree, still relevant today. However, this is not the case for all Jews as the majority of Jews in the United States today are not strictly observant (Orthodox). Although the first major wave of Jewish immigration to the United States was in the 1820s, Jews are recorded to have lived in the United States as early as the 1600s. After arriving, Jews from around the world began to develop alternative ways for practicing Judaism to fit their needs and to assimilate with main stream society (Moore, 1994). Unlike previous generations of Jews, there was no longer one unified way to practice Judaism. Jews attended public schools, and as historian Jonathan Sarna (1998) explains, the school setting was where American Jews confronted the most fundamental question of being American and Jewish - being both part of American society, and apart from it (p.9-10).

During this time period (the 19th and 20th century), however, new Jewish institutions were founded such as federations, family and health services, and the educational bureau. Samson Benderly founded the Jewish Education Bureau in New York together with his "boys" (and girls) who shared the same vision as Benderly, to change the face of American Jewish education. Among them were Zionists and educators from different Jewish denomination such as Alexander Dushkin, Isaac Berkson, Rebecca Aaronson-Brickner and Libbie Suchoff (Krasner, 2011: 5).

Benderly and his protégés realized that many Jewish children were not receiving a Jewish education, or worse, receiving what they perceived to be an inadequate one. For example, the Bureau thought student should engage in more Hebrew studies as a way to learn about history and culture. They looked at many immersion programs to enhance language acquisition such as Ivrit B'Ivrit (literally, Hebrew in Hebrew) and Hashitah Hativit (literal, the natural method). The

Jewish Education Bureau aimed to provide better education and also to be a source of teachers' training. Benderly wanted to professionalize the field of Jewish education and to raise a generation of educational leaders. The Bureau collaborated with the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) where in addition to Jewish education, students also engaged in secular studies. JTS created a special track for Benderly's teachers. The students, mostly in the evening, took special classes in Bible, Talmud, Jewish thought, and Hebrew. In addition, the Bureau staff pursued programs of studies according to their individual interest such as curriculum development or administration (Krasner, 2011: 77-79).

The Jewish Education Bureau developed their Jewish educational philosophy, drawing on progressive education and American philosophers like John Dewey and William Head Kilpatrick (Krasner, 2011: 4-8, 79-81). Benderly believed a good Jewish education should contain active engagement and direct concrete observation. He saw education as something that should be pleasurable and that is founded on inquiry-based learning. The curriculum, according to Benderly and the Bureau, should be designed to advance successful living and to promote human progress (Krasner, 2011: 22-23). In addition to their progressive philosophy of education based on secular theories, their ideas were also influenced by Jewish values. Some of these values are K'lal Yisrael (Jewish peoplehood) and unity of the all Jewish people regardless of their affiliation, Hebrew as the language of the Jewish people, Jewish history, and the study of the Bible. They were also influence by cultural Zionism which put these values in the center of their doctrine.

Not all of Benderly's dreams were brought to fruition. However, Benderly's contributions, more than anyone else's, changed and significantly shaped Jewish Education in the United States between the years 1910-1960 and beyond.

3.3 JEWISH SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The story of Rebecca Gratz is the story of how a big change begins with one person's vision. The Gratz family immigrated to the United States during the mass immigration wave of the 19th century. The family first settled in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and later moved to Philadelphia. The Gratz family became involved in community activities and was accepted by their Christian neighbors. While some Jewish families of this time period honored their faith and customs, many parents did not provide their children with a Jewish education. Rebecca Gratz suggested a new model of Jewish educational programs similar to the Christian's format of Sunday school. At that time, Sunday school was available across the United States as a way for Christians to provide their children with religious education. On February 4th, 1838 Gratz established the first Jewish Sunday school in the United States. Until that time most educational institutions were affiliated with larger communal agencies such as Federations, and Family and Children Services. However, Gratz's school was within a synagogue, which was not part of a large Jewish agency, but rather a smaller subset of the Jewish community. Jewish women and sisterhoods of the synagogues took the role of educating the younger generation. In addition, the Hebrew Sunday school offered educational opportunities and training for women, and they became central to the new schools. Gratz's school was very successful. Soon enough, other new schools around the country opened and enrolled new students who were seeking to deepen their Jewish knowledge (Goldman, 2000: 62-63; Hyman, Moore, & American Jewish Historical Society, 1997: 547-550).

Gratz had a clear vision and by bringing this vision to life she redefined Jewish life and education. She understood the importance of building and strengthening young children's ties to their faith, so as to make it an inseparable part of their identity. Today, years have passed since the first Sunday school opened in Philadelphia, but this model of Jewish education still exists.

Jewish supplementary schools in the United States (also known as Hebrew/Sunday/congregational schools) are the most popular form of Jewish education and they continue to enroll the majority of students receiving a Jewish education in the United States (Aron, 2011: 691; Wertheimer, 2008: 3). Jewish supplementary schools refers to all schools that meet after school hours or/and on the weekends. According to a census conducted by Wertheimer (2008), in his study of Jewish supplementary schools in the United States, there are more than 2,000 active congregational schools and proximally 213,000 students in grades 1-12. When including early childhood into this number (kindergarten and younger) the total of students reached approximately 230,000 (pp. 7-9). Wertheimer's study is one of the largest studies conducted in the past few decades. His research includes data from 1,720 schools throughout the United States (including 16 schools in the greater Pittsburgh area in which I have worked with 12 and are part of this master's thesis). The study shows, as mentioned earlier, that Jewish supplementary school are the most common form of Jewish education in the United States. In addition, Wertheimer mapped the schools based on denomination, the number of school hours per week, and, most importantly, the top goals of Jewish supplementary schools in the United States. Wertheimer's survey asked schools to identify their three top goals from a list of 11 possible options. Among these options were: Hebrew reading for participation in religious services, teaching about holidays and rituals, preparing children for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and teaching about Israel. The survey results show that teaching about Israel is not a top priority for the United States Jewish supplementary schools. Teaching about Israel scored under 5 percent and reinforces my argument. I will expand on this topic in chapter four when I further explore Israel education in United States' Jewish schools and look at the changes in trends of Israel education in previous years (Wertheimer, 2008: 22).

However, the sheer nature of Jewish supplementary schools in the United States brings on its own set of challenges as well. Samson Benderly already in the 1900s summarize them as two basic problems. First, the acquisition of the Hebrew language, which without it there would not be a system of Jewish education. As I argue in chapter 2, language is an important part in studying one's heritage, customs, history, and so on. The second problem, according to Benderly, is the adaptation of many studies which are beyond the intellectual capability of children (Krasner, 2011: 23).

The problems that Benderly well articulated a hundred years ago, still exists today. According to Wertheimer's survey (2008), Hebrew reading for participation in religious services scored second in the list of the top three goals (18 percent), however, the research does not explore if these goals are being met. In addition, Hebrew acquisition refers mostly to learning Hebrew for religious purposes and Modern Hebrew, which is more closely related to Israel, is not even included on Wertheimer's list of categories.

Time limitation is another main problem of the United States Jewish supplementary schools and in many ways it is related to Benderly's second problem. Time is a key element in the supplementary schools. Ackerman (1992) explains: "the time available for schooling is one of the more powerful determiners of curriculum" (p. 30). Some believe that supplementary schools cannot provide children with a meaningful experience simply because of the limited number of hours students spend in Hebrew school in comparison to a full day of public school. In the United States, students attend Jewish supplementary school approximately 10 hours a week over one to three sessions. On the one hand, this is not enough time to cover all aspects of Jewish life and Israel education is pushed aside and given less priority in comparison to other

topic. On the other hand, 10 hours a week for a child it is a lot if taking under consideration other commitment such as homework, extracurricular activities, and others.

However, the fact that students attending Jewish supplementary schools don't participate in as many hours of Jewish study weekly as Jewish day school students, does not mean their experience is less meaningful. At the same time, it does raise the question of Jewish identity for students in Jewish supplementary schools upon adulthood. Cohen and Veinstein (2011) studied the affect of a student's Jewish networks in childhood on their Jewish identity as an adult. They found that students who attended Jewish supplementary schools in the United States in their childhood are more likely to have weak Jewish commitment in their adult life (p. 203). This statement reinforces the argument that the time commitment toward Jewish education in the United States is a main challenge.

Even though studies have shown less commitment to Jewish life as adults for products of Jewish supplementary schools, many mention positive memories. They score high in keeping close friendships with their Jewish friends, and remember their Bar/Bat Mitzvah day positively (Cohen and Veinstein, 2011: 207-208). In several informal conversations with students and their parents from the twelve congregations and school I worked with, many spoke of their years of experience at school fondly. They enjoyed sharing with me meaningful stories and milestone events such as confirmation. Many become involved in Jewish life on campuses through the Hillel Student Organization and note that whether or not a school had a Hillel was a part of their decision before choosing where to go to college. As an example, teens in 10th-11th grades who attend Jewish Sunday School and involve in programs that highlight Jewish studies, *Tikkun Olam*, and Israel reported that when they fill their college applications they checked to see if there is an active Hillel where they can continue Jewish involvement. However, in a personal

communication with several teachers that agreed to participate in this research, the teachers shared with me that in each class they have couple of student that express their resentment toward attending school on Sunday morning.

Others express mixed feelings toward the Jewish supplementary school because it is on Sunday morning, during the weekend, or after their regular school on a weeknight. At the same time, many understand it is a part of their Jewish education and Jewish life and they come to embrace it as a way of maintaining their commitment to their religion.

Another challenge to the Jewish supplementary school is on the faculty level. Most of the supplementary schools share the same administrative structure. In many cases, the Congregation's rabbi is also the head of the school. If the principal of the school is not the rabbi, he/she usually holds a degree in education, but not necessarily a degree in Jewish education. For example, in a personal communication with a principal of a congregational school, Daniella, the principal shared with me her educational background. She holds a degree in education but she does not have a degree in Jewish education: "It was not required by the congregation" she told me (Daniella, personal communication, May 25, 2012)¹.

Another problem as a result of this structure is that in some synagogues rabbis and principals are replaced or move on every couple of years which makes it harder to build relationships and curricula for long term planning. Another challenge for some supplementary schools is a difference of educational philosophies and perspectives between the education and religious authority. This can create conflict around educational goals and visions for the school (Aron, 2011). It is important to mention that in most cases that I observed, educational and

¹ All responded names in this thesis are pseudonym.

religious authorities do work in synergy, as they share many of the same values. Educational and religious authorities can bring together several perspectives and enrich the school in the end.

A related issue revolves around the faculty and teachers. Many teachers in the Jewish supplementary schools come from a wide range of academic backgrounds. Many teachers have a background in education to some extent, while others do not hold a degree in education or Jewish studies. For example, according to data I collected in twelve supplementary schools in the greater Pittsburgh area, one of the schools in which this research was conducted, the faculty consists of total of twelve teachers from various backgrounds and affiliation/denomination. Half of the teachers have no background in education. They are students, professionals who happened to be members of the congregations, etc. Another school has a total of eight teachers. Based on the teachers' questionnaire three out of the eight had no educational background. This statistic is for various reasons: first of all, those who work in supplementary schools usually work part time, as an extra source of income. They often do so to give back to the community and to be involved in Jewish life. I will expand on the methodology used to collect data regarding the schools I worked with in chapter 5.

One way to overcome the challenge of Jewish supplementary school teacher's lack of experience and Jewish knowledge is to provide intensive professional development. Our goals for the students in the area of Israel education should be expanded to include the teachers as well. To forge a connection between one individual and Israel we should first consider educating the teacher's on Israel and creating a connection to Israel for the teachers and all adults in the community. This will help in overcoming the gap between the young generation and their parents. With a better understanding of the place of Israel among adults, the effort to pass on this relationship might be somewhat easier.

While the areas of Jewish supplementary school time limitation, lack of skilled staff, constant change of staff are important concerns, the most challenging aspect of Jewish supplementary schools, which is also at the center of this thesis, is the curriculum. First, there is only so much that can be taught in a short time frame and a key question remains, what do we want to teach to children and what things do we want them to remember upon completing such schooling (Schoem, 1992)? The goals of supplementary schools are defined differently from a full time school. Israel education is at the center of the debate over the focus of Jewish supplementary school curriculum. It is already an established fact that Israel is part of Jewish education, however, the priority of Israel education is not agreed upon all. For example, one school which I worked with admitted that although Israel is important to the educator, it does not rank highly with the congregation and therefore is not a focus of the school. Having said that, it is hard to have a clear answer for all schools of what content to include and what to leave out. Therefore, schools are struggling to find curriculum that will satisfy their specific needs.

Since the first Jewish supplementary school in the United States, many changes have occurred and many new initiatives have been implemented in the process of re-structuring and transforming the schools, helping them to re-brand themselves and to maintain their place in the process of educating the Jewish child. According to the i-Center report tens of new initiatives started since the beginning of the twenty first century (Horowitz, 2012). In the wake of this ever changing face of curriculum for the Jewish supplementary school, it is inevitable that educators and scholars will continue to try to meet the needs of both the Jewish supplementary student in the United States as well as the goals of the congregation and the Jewish community as a whole. And many are hopeful that these new and more focused Jewish education initiatives will include Israel education. However, in order to think about the future, we must learn from the past. In the

next chapter, I will examine the evolution and changes of Israel education in Jewish supplementary schools United States.

4.0 ISRAEL EDUCATION

“The Jewish future has no meaning without Israel”

~ Rabbi Harry Essrig & Abraham Segal (1968)

The Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*), the people of Israel (*Am Yisrael*), and the language of Israel (*Hebrew*) has always been a significant part of the collective Jewish identity. People who are involved in Jewish life are most likely to engage with Israel on various levels whether religious, historical or political. Israel is present in Jewish prayer, Jewish customs, and the historical narrative of the Jewish people. Therefore, Israel cannot be separated from the Jewish experience as a whole because without it the fundamental principles, prayers and past would not exist (Grant and Kopelowitz, 2012: 5-6). Maimonides, Rabbi Yehudah Ha'Levi, and Samson Benderly, who I mentioned earlier in this paper, and other Jewish scholars acknowledged Israel as an important part of Jewish learning and their writing about *Eretz Yisrael* reflects a yearning to a distant land full of meaning to them and to the Jewish people everywhere. However, these Jewish thinkers of the past represent different times, and in a way, an era of different Judaism.

Today, the conversation around Israel education as part of the Jewish experience is different. First, today there is more than one way to be a Jew, and there are alternatives to traditional Judaism that also view Israel differently. Secondly, Israel education includes the historical narrative but at the same time Israel education stands alone as a topic mostly around

content related to modern Israel. These two main changes raise a few questions. The first question is what Israel education is and who defines it? Questions that follow are; Why does Israel education matter? How do we approach Israel education today? Who should engage in Israel education?

In this chapter, I will offer both practical and philosophical approaches toward Israel education. I will begin with an overview to examine what has been done throughout the years in Israel education in the United States mostly since the 1950's onward. Specifically, I will focus on Israel education in the United States Jewish supplementary schools. I will explore a few approaches and philosophies toward teaching about Israel and how these philosophies have changed since the establishment of the state of Israel. In particular, I will explore changes in educational priorities of the Jewish supplementary schools in the United States.

Following that, I will examine the goals of Israel education and how they are being achieved within the United States Jewish supplementary schools. In doing this, I will offer an alternative approach in developing a future Israel curriculum for those schools. It is my hope that this approach will be implemented in the schools and therefore brings new educational opportunities that will enhance the learning process and provide hands-on experiences that will last.

For years, Jewish institutions, organizations, and schools of all sorts taught about Israel as part of the education of the Jewish child. However, it is not until recently that the question of Israel education as an independent field of study arose. A theoretical framework could hardly be found, meaning Israel was taught mostly around religious topics which covered only one dimension of Israel, instead of tying together topics (Israel to Hebrew, modern Israel from where the Jewish historical narrative continues, etc).

In the past, Israel education was a mixture of Jewish history, geography, political science, folklore, sociology and culture. (Isaacs, 2011: 480). It has become clear that Israel education needs a definition, a clear vision and distinct goals to provide children with a meaningful experience that will last. The overarching idea we should keep in mind is what do we want the children to learn and what are the things we want them to know after graduating from Hebrew school.

I therefore begin the conversation by presenting four approaches to Israel education which can be broken down into: *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel), *Am Yisrael* (the people of Israel), *Torat Yisrael* (the Bible/the *Torah* of Israel), and *Medinat Yisrael* (the State of Israel). These four dimensions can be categorized into two groups according to Grant and Kopelowitz (2012). The first group includes the first three (*Eretz/Am/Torah*) and is mostly around engaging with Israel on a ceremonial level. In other words, these three dimensions highlight the components that bring Jewish people together. The second group or level refers to *Medinat Yisrael*, the State of Israel. It refers to the real life, lived Israel, since its establishment in 1948. A country with real life stories and people, a place that is complex, inspiring, disappointing and challenged on a daily basis (p. 10)

It is through this fourth dimension (*Medinat Yisrael*), that our students can truly learn and connect with modern Israel and use this understanding to further and more closely connect with the first three dimensions. Through education and social action/service learning we help Jewish children gain the ability to understand more than what is on the surface and to reflect and critique Israel. This will lead them to be strong in their identity and become activist in society; improving the world around them. If we wish to teach our children to be self confident, critical thinkers, tolerant, and committed to the community and their faith, it is important to teach them about their

roots and heritage and Israel education must be a part of this complete Jewish education. Teaching both about the historical and modern Israel should be included in the United States Jewish supplementary schools curricula (although the content is debatable) as a mechanism to building the relationship between the Jewish people and their homeland and as a way to maintain a strong Jewish identity.

In conclusion, let me clarify that Israel education does not mean education in support of the State of Israel. Israel education is about the four pillars I presented in the beginning of this chapter. It is about building relationships between the Jewish people and their homeland as a way to maintain Jewish identity. It is also for the purpose of teaching about the past and continuing to explore the meaning of Israel for the individual as part of a larger community and/or nation in the present and future. Sometimes the outcome of Israel education can result in support of the State of Israel; however this is not the main goal of Israel education. The main goal of Israel education is to form a relationship with Israel as a country, a land and a people. And by providing Israel education through the four realms with the focus on the fourth dimension, Jewish children in supplementary schools will continue to forge that relationship.

4.1 ISRAEL IN UNITED STATES JEWISH EDUCATION

Over the years there have been a wealth of programs, materials, curricula, textbooks, and games published in the United States related to Israel education. However, according to the data I collected in research for this paper, most of them are not being used in educational Jewish institutions today. Israel, as mentioned before, had always been a part of the education of the Jewish child, but today that is not always the case. According to Chazan (1992), Isaacs (2011),

and others, in the last few decades Israel education fails to be a top priority. The field of Israel education has been neglected, especially in United States Jewish supplementary schools.

Before delving into a discussion regarding the problems around teaching Israel today, I offer a historical overview of the place of Israel in Jewish education. Chazan (1980) who studied the subject of pre-state Israel (Palestine) in United States Jewish education provides interesting insights into the content and methodology of various Jewish curricula about the pre-state Israel period. The overall conclusion of the article is that Israel was always a part of various curricula of different denominations, either highlighted by the presence of Jews in many lands or with more of a focus on Zionism and the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel). In a 1933 curriculum designed by Ediden, it is suggested that in the first grade, students should pretend to be on an imaginary trip to Palestine, where they learn, work, sing, and live in the modern *Yishuv* (Chazan, 1980; 233-234, 237-238). Curriculum, according to Chazan, serves two main functions. First, it is an ideological statement about which values and beliefs are worth transmitting to the young students. Second, it is a practical tool to help teachers know what and how to teach. Considering these two functions, we see that the curricula mentioned above have different ideologies to teach the children and the strategy to pursue this goal is executed in more than one way. The Israel room, as we will see, follows this theoretical framework as well.

According to Chazan (1979) up through the 1960's, Israel was mentioned in United States Jewish schools and taught as part of either Jewish studies or separately. However, teaching and implementation of the topic was inadequate regardless of the commitment to the State of Israel among American Jews (p. 7). Not much has changed since the 1960's and 1970's, and Israel is still being taught for one year between grades four and nine and then again for one more

year in the high school level (Chazan, 1979: 9). The 1980's and 1990's, according to several studies (e.g Aron, 2011; Chazan, 1979; etc.) which observed the supplementary schools, found that the schools serve as "Bar/Bat Mitzvah factory" and that by the time they leave school not only are students illiterate in Judaism but also do not hold a strong Jewish identity or connection to Israel (Aron, 2011: 693, 697; Choen and Veinstein, 2011: 203). In order to be more successful in promoting Israel engagement and commitment, Israel education needs to be present within the school in that are more than a part of the study session and lesson plans. The next section discusses how Israel can be integrated into the school environment as another way to expose students to the topic.

4.2 ISRAEL IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Subjects, current affairs and topics in education are being taught through a formal system of education. But there are many things that can be learned through informal approaches of education as well. People learn about Israel in formal ways such as reading textbooks, being taught by a teacher, etc. However, it is essential to the student to gain a full sensory understanding of Israel through Israeli music, movies, newspapers, and so on. Many of the teachers and principals that participated in this research have mentioned that they try to create an atmosphere conducive to learning more about Israel. They indicated that Israel is presented in classrooms and hall decorations, and with Israeli maps and flags that hang in the school. In addition, some of the schools report that they have Hebrew and English signs in the school, as a way to create connections between Hebrew and Israel. And while this adds a multi-sensory approach to learning, it is not always integrated into the classroom effectively. As part of the

research for this thesis, I presented a teacher's workshop which focused on designing school environments to enhance the learning experience of Israel. Fifteen teachers who attended the workshop stated that even though their classroom has many decorations and artifacts, most of their students do not engage with these items. When analyzing this information with the teachers, many of them indicated that the wall décor was unrelated to the curriculum that they were teaching in their classroom this year. For example, according to one Hebrew curriculum (Tal-Am), the walls in the classroom need to "talk". The posters and other artifacts should be interactive and related to what the students are studying in class. Furthermore, when school environments are designed for the students and by the students they will be motivated to engage, play, look at, change and learn from these artifacts (Shimon and Peerless, 2007)

In more formal interviews with teachers and educators through the research for this thesis, other activities such as singing the national anthem, Ha'Tikva, in school gatherings and special events, were rarely mentioned except for Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day. However, the majority of teachers mentioned that they wish to incorporate more Israeli arts and culture into the school providing a more full sensory experience of Israel.

The learning process should not happen only in direct ways such as formal education. Sometimes it is the more subtle approach that leaves a lasting impact on the student. Incorporating Israel informally through artifacts, interactive posters, and the presence of Hebrew is essential to a complete Israel education and even further motivates students to learn about Israel both inside and outside the traditional classroom walls.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine the topic of Israel education within United States Jewish supplementary schools. Researching and understanding this topic was of interest to me for several reasons. First, I had a personal interest in the topic. In Israel, Jewish education is part of everyday life and is acquired in formal settings such as in schools, youth groups, etc. but mostly in informal ways as Israel is a Jewish state that follows Jewish laws that have a cultural and educational impact on its citizens. Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest, is on Saturday, Hebrew is the state's official language, and the national anthem and symbols get their inspiration from Jewish artifacts. Since I left Israel, I have become more interested in the Israel-Diaspora relationship, and mostly the United States-Israel relationship. My research has inspired the question of how Israel education is manifested in the United States Jewish education supplementary system.

In addition, as mentioned in the introduction, I have been working with several Jewish supplementary schools as the Israel Education Specialist for the last five years. Many hours of teaching, leading in-services and professional development sessions, and writing educational programs with collaboration from school directors, led me to write this research paper. I wanted to explore the motivation for learning about Israel and their decision-making processes regarding content.

As I took a closer look, I soon discovered that Israel education in United States Jewish supplementary schools in previous years differed from the Israel education paradigm that I offered to them over the last several years. Furthermore, I believe that the methods I used during these sessions with students and teachers resulted in a stronger and more positive relationship between the student and Israel. This was due not only to my training to teach Israel from leading Jewish and Israeli educational organizations (for example the Jewish Agency), but also to the fact that I can bring natural and current pieces to the teaching (my accent, the newest Israeli music, my experiences as a child growing up in Israel, etc).

The core difference between the two paradigms was the layers around the topics related to Israel. I notice that the majority of the schools teach Israel from a narrow perspective, usually one dimensional. I, on the other hand approached teaching about Israel in a different way, creating opportunities to learn about Israel from multiple perspectives, always relating it to the children's previous knowledge of Israel (religion, history, etc).

This study will examine how Israel is taught in United States supplementary schools, the content and materials used, decisions about who teaches Israel, and what are some open questions that remain about Israel education in United States Jewish supplementary schools.

When I began this study, I had some experience in doing ethnographic research, both as an undergraduate and graduate student. Little did I understand that in the past five years I amassed hours of observations, notes, conversations, and artifacts from the schools I visited. I would not be able to write this research without all the preexisting valuable information I had collected as a foundation. In addition, these past five years of working with Jewish supplementary schools has given me the opportunity to build a wide network of educators,

teachers and students and helped me in forming a strong working relationship with these individuals in addition to community and lay leaders.

To paint a larger picture of Israel education, in this research I will use information I gathered from twelve Jewish supplementary schools in the greater Pittsburgh area and other Jewish and non-Jewish educational institutions. When I first entered the schools, I already had some preconceived notions about Jewish schools and Jewish education in the United States. But at the same time I worked hard to stay objective and to put aside my prejudice. This was not always an easy task. At first, I felt that it would be important to have a blank slate when beginning my observations. Then, using Fetterman's *Ethnography: Step-by-Step* (2010), I realized I began with biases and preconceived notions about how people behave and what they think (p. 1). This helped me feel more comfortable about my own preconceived notions of the group. Fetterman states that having a preconceived notion of the group wasn't unusual and in fact could serve some positive functions to the researcher as they not only can accept the group as they are and not try to change them, but also can reexamine their own thinking and come to new conclusions.

According to Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2006), "To become a good fieldworker, you must observe closely and participate intimately, returning to the fieldsite and informants again and again – and still again" (p. 93). I was fortunate to be able to visit and spend a great amount of time within United States Jewish supplementary schools and also to become a participant. I observed while teaching and conducting educational sessions. In addition to observing, I also participated in other settings of the congregations and schools such as attending services and other activities. I was asked by principals, rabbis, and leaders in the community to deliver a *D'var Torah* (a talk on topics relating to the weekly section of the Bible). I think it really helped

me to be accepted by the group and become a part of many congregations. In this respect, I began seeing the emic viewpoint, since I was a legitimate member and not just an observer. There were definitely times that I tried to step back and take an etic perspective but sometimes that was hard to do since I was accepted as a member and viewed by many as one of them due to my involvement in the Jewish community, in addition to, the fact that I am part of the same religious background.

When I began working in United States Jewish supplementary schools, I did not realize that one day it would become the topic of my thesis. I observed and took notes as much as I could, as it was a personal learning experience for me. Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2006) state that most fieldworkers write their notes while in the field, but some find themselves in situations where they can only take minimal notes on site (p.105). In this case, most of my notes were taken after leaving the site since while in school I was teaching and was not able to document some information such as direct quotes from students and teachers. I think writing notes after a session enabled me to think and reflect more fully on my experience. Later on, while writing this thesis, notes were taken during interviews and observations. I used Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater's (2006) two column system to be able to maintain clarity between subjective feelings, interpretations, and insights and objective observances and transcriptions (Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, 2006: 93, 101-106).

When I chose Israel education in United States Jewish Supplementary Schools as my thesis topic, I expanded my fieldwork, observations and participation to include scheduled interviews with principals and teachers. In total I had ten in-depth interviews to help me analyze and learn more about the topic.

In the process of writing this thesis, and as part of the thesis requirements, I applied for the Exempt Study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). I submitted the accompanied documents: request for exempt determination, principals and teachers' survey, and the introduction script to the survey. Based on the information I provided the IRB, my thesis met all of the necessary criteria for an exemption and was approved "exempt" in June 2012.

I designed two surveys: one for principals and one for teachers. Parts of the categories in the surveys were drawn from the work of Alvin Schiff (1968) Barry Chazan (1979) and later by Wertheimer (2008). Schiff and Chazan studied the topic of Israel in American Jewish schools and were pioneers in studying Israel education separately from Zionist and Jewish education (Chazan, 1979: 7-8). The principals' questionnaire was comprised of 20 open-ended questions while the teachers' questionnaire include only 13 questions, both open and closed-ended, regarding their professional and Israel education experience in United States Jewish supplementary schools (see appendix). The introduction script of the surveys included details about the research: I outlined the goals of the research and how it can benefit the Pittsburgh Jewish community, as well as, the larger scale of Jewish and non-Jewish educational setting who wish to promote global and national citizenship.

I considered conducting a confidential survey. However, in order to be able to conduct follow-up interviews, I asked each person who participated to include their names only. All teachers and principals felt comfortable writing his/her name and I did not have participants who refused to answer the survey due to my relationship with the participants and their institutions. Overall, 25 teachers and principals completed the questionnaire of which 10 participants left some questions blank and the remaining completed the entire survey.

After the questionnaires were returned, 10 follow-up interviews were scheduled with a random sample of principals and teachers as part of the effort to ensure better understanding of the Israel learning experience in Jewish supplementary schools. The interviews were conducted in a place chosen by the participants and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. The interviews were on a spectrum of a casual conversation to semi-structured and structured interviews that built upon the principals/teachers' questionnaires. The questions asked in the one-on-one interviews expanded on questions from the survey and focused on their own thoughts on integrating Israel into their classrooms or schools in a more meaningful way as well as their thoughts about the relations between international, national and Jewish education and Israel education. (Wolcott, 2008: 55-56).

In conclusion, the research conducted in this study is comprised of mixed methodology. It consisted of interviews with principals and teachers, involvement, and attitudes towards Israel education, on-site visits, and a record of the content being taught. Choosing more than one technique in this research was intentional since, as Wolcott (2008) explains it, there is a major distinction between each technique. Participant observation allowed me to be in the field in person and to experience Israel education in Jewish supplementary schools first hand. However, surveys and interviews helped me gain more insight through enquiring and thoughtful reflection with the participants. The first technique, observation, is more passive while the others are more active because a researcher is taking the role of asking about what he/she sees in their observations. (Wolcott, 2008: 49).

Lastly, by adding a content and space analysis, I sought to assess how Israel is being taught in textbooks and school environments. I did this through examination of educational artifacts, texts displays, and organization and sequence of information. In addition, I considered

how much coverage the school/classroom devoted to various topics of Israel education. To accomplish the task of the textbook analysis, three textbooks were chosen due to the fact that the majority of the schools that I worked with used these textbooks. To accomplish the space analysis I visited and observed classes in the Israel Room at Adat Shalom synagogue. It is these two case studies together which has given me a full picture of how content and space is utilized to teach students in Jewish supplementary schools about Israel.

Conducting this systematic focused research has enabled me to grow professionally. It has given me the tools to provide better Israel education training to teachers and principals and to help Jewish supplementary schools build their own capacity to teach about Israel. Based on the systematic survey and in-depth interviews with teachers and principals, I identified some of the main challenges of the Jewish supplementary schools in the United States (curriculum prioritizing, working within limited time frame, and cultivating expert teachers) and was able to provide them with alternative solutions to enhance their students' Israel learning (professional development, integrating Israel into other areas of study, adding a multi-sensory approach to Israel learning, etc).

Over the last five years, I have worked with Jewish supplementary schools in the United States to teach about Israel. And while I thought through how and where Israel was being taught, it was not until I conducted systematic focused research that I was capable to truly analyze the positives and negatives of Israel education in Jewish supplementary schools today. Additionally, by working with teachers and principals in Pittsburgh, it has allowed me to further my relationship with teachers, principals and community members which will help as I continue to do this work in Pittsburgh.

In the future, I will be able to use systematic focused research when analyzing not only Israel education, but also how various subjects are being taught in schools and when consulting regarding how to use content, space, textbooks and more to teach children a specific subject. Furthermore, it will be specifically helpful to me in continuing to analyze and consult for Jewish supplementary schools regarding Israel education. By conducting this research and analysis, I am better prepared to be a skilled educator who thinks about education as a whole while working towards improving the students, teachers, principals and community's experience.

6.0 CASE STUDY 1: THE IMAGE OF ISRAEL IN UNITED STATES JEWISH SCHOOLS TEXTBOOKS

Learning is an ongoing process that happens all the time and in many places. Of course, the most common formal institution for teaching is the school system, which uses many educational materials to teach and provide information to young children. There is a variety of pedagogies, methods and ways to teach and they vary from one culture to another. However, one thing most have in common is the use of textbooks. In places lacking the access to textbooks and other teaching materials (including the internet), there is a significant gap in students' achievement. Students in these places, such as the Sub-Saharan Africa and other developing parts of the world, are less likely to develop into critical thinking individuals who are aware to the world around them (Lockheed, Vail & Fuller 1986: 380; Michaelowa, 2001: 1701).

Two main goals are typically associated with curriculum and textbooks. The first goal to provide pupils with the content and knowledge to help them develop in their journey toward becoming adults such as: reading, math, and, in the case of this thesis, their religion. The second goal, which is often examined by scholars, sociologists of education, politician and others, is the complexity of textbooks since they are not only delivering facts, but a product of political and social debate and compromise (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991: 1-2; Crawford, 2003; Hill, 2001:95-96). Beyond the formal facts which are included in the textbooks lies the cultural hidden curriculum. This aspect of curriculum relates to issues of gender, social class, race, sexuality,

religion, and also to construction of collective memory and national identity. And while what is written in the textbook is what the children are supposed to learn, it is this additional aspect of the curriculum that influences the student as they learn their faith, their relationship with other ethnic groups, right from wrong, how to behave, and attitudes towards the world around them (Eitzen & Zinn, 2007: 119).

In the following case study, I examine how curriculum and textbooks about Israel are used as a means towards strengthening the relationship between Jewish students in supplementary schools in the United States and Israel. Also, this case study is an example of how students develop a sense of national identity and collective memory necessary for nation building. The historical narrative is distorted as textbooks about Israel used in United States Jewish supplementary schools, for the most part, are refrained from getting into controversial issues. In addition, I compare between three textbooks used in the majority of the Jewish supplementary schools with which I worked, examining how Israel is being portrayed and taught. I analyze the overarching organizational themes to make comparisons between the books looking specifically at three categories of comparison: geography, religion, and politics. I begin this analysis with a few questions in mind. First, why is Israel portrayed and taught the way it is in United States Jewish supplementary schools? Second, what are the author's goals for the students learning? Third, what are the overarching organizational themes of the books in regards to Israel and why did the author(s) choose to focus on these themes?

It is often said that the mind is playing tricks on us, that the individual's memory is selective and that we sometimes cannot remember things that we want to, while random, insignificant facts make their way into our long term memory. Memories, however, are not necessarily specific to individual experiences. Most of us are part of a larger collective memory

that we attained over many years in various ways such as identifying with mythical heroes or feeling a connection to symbols and places. Benedict Anderson in his classical book *“Imagined Communities”* (2006), argues that the nation is a social construction imagined by the people. The process of nation-building allows state institutions, the state as a whole and socialization agents such as formal educational systems to construct a national identity by teaching a unifying collective memory. I, like Anderson, argue that the nation state is a social and political construction for the purpose of gaining loyalty and reducing the number of conflicts between the state and its citizens. Even in a democracy, there is a significant amount of social control and the citizens are bound to their state. According to scholars (Al-Haj, 2005; Crawford, 2003; Goodson, 1994; Hill, 2001), curriculum and textbooks hold a critical role in shaping the collective memory and strengthening the national and social identity of the students. It is too easy to assume that a school curriculum is based on neutral knowledge (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991: 2), textbooks are, to a large extent, highly politicized (Crawford, 2003: 115). Even more so, textbooks and curriculum often end up a political creation as a result of power relations and hegemonic groups in society, such as religious, gender-based groups, etc. (Hill, 2001: 96).

The politicization of Israel textbooks is particularly important to the study of Israel education within United States Jewish supplementary schools because the textbooks which I studied hold biases pertaining to politics, religious groups, gender, etc and present a narrow picture of Israel. I will further explain this significance when outlining the finding of this case study.

Many North Americans feel close to the homeland of their ancestors and some choose to maintain their language skills through speaking, reading and/or listening to music, while others keep traditional cooking and artifacts. However, the case of Israel is somewhat different since it

is an important character in Jewish life that usually holds great meaning. Many Jews in the Diaspora see and feel that Israel is their homeland even if no one in their immediate past has actually lived in Israel. Jews all over the world feel the need to stay connected to Israel, support it and defend it against those who condemned it. They do it by raising funds, participating in variety of collaborations and so on (Essrig & Segal, 1968).

Another way Jewish people stay connected to Israel is, as previously explained, by attending Jewish educational institutions which among them are supplementary schools. Following the chapter discussing those schools, I look at the textbooks used to maintain and strengthen the connection with Israel and help students develop their collective memory and national identity in addition to their American one and not instead of it.

Although textbooks are not always an accurate picture of what is being taught in class to the students by the teacher, textbooks may serve as a good overview of what administrators, policy makers and others think is important to teach. The books are, in that matter, a way for adults to tell and share with the youngsters what is important to learn (Ackerman, 1986: 4). Textbooks, often times, are culturally constructed and take the role of a social agent in addition to family, schools, peers, and the media. Through textbooks, pupils learn about their culture, other cultures, right from wrong in their society, social stratification, male and female roles, etc. In the case of Israel education, Jewish scholars who create the Israel textbooks also want to teach what they think is important for a younger generation of Jewish children to learn about Israel.

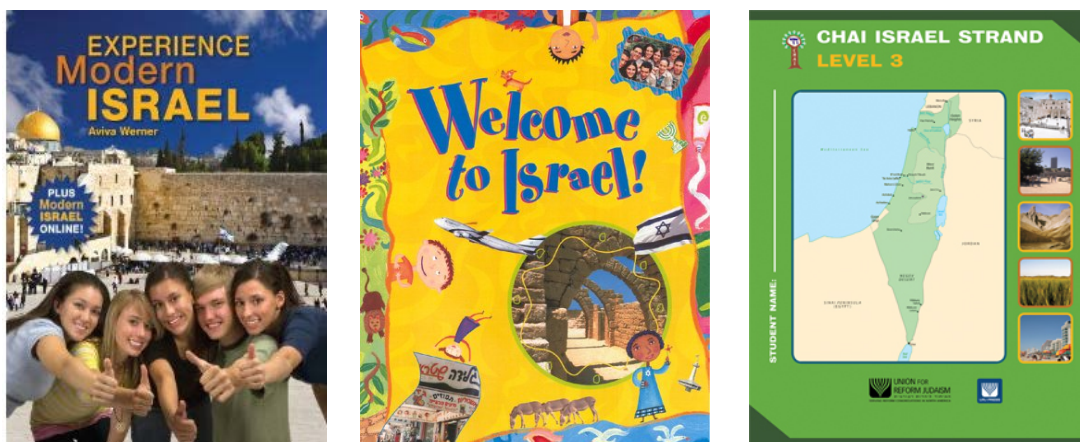
6.1 METHODOLOGY

The research conducted in this paper is based on content analysis. I compare textbooks to assess how the subject of Israel is being taught in textbooks, how these textbooks organize and sequence information, and how much coverage is devoted to various topics in relation to Israel. To accomplish this task, I chose three modern Israel books used in Jewish supplementary schools. I have chosen these particular textbooks because they are widely used among the Jewish supplementary schools in the United States regardless of affiliation (Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist) and because they were the most common among the schools with which I worked. The books are also from major publication houses such as Behrman House, which is considered to be the largest publication company to print textbooks and Jewish / Israel educational materials in North America and other English-speaking countries. These books are intended for students of upper elementary and middle school age level.

The textbooks I review are:

- *CHAI Israel Strand* (2007), New York: URJ Press.
- Rivlin Lily with Gevirtz, Gila (2000). *Welcome to Israel*. New York: Behrman House.
- Werner, Aviva (2011). *Experience Modern Israel*. New York: Behrman House.

Figure 3 –Israel Textbooks in Jewish Supplementary Schools



The first step of the textbook analysis is a review of the table of contents of each of the books to find some common ground and categories for comparison. This also includes an exercise with three school principals and twenty-two teachers as part of a teachers' workshop I conducted in three schools. Nine of these educators teach about Israel, while the rest teach general Jewish topics such as prayer, holidays, and Hebrew. Along with these educators, I analyzed the three textbooks that are being used in the schools. We reviewed the table of contents of each book, locating Israel on the chronological time line and identifying similar topics. The exercise included four main questions, asking about the overarching themes of the books, reasons they feel the author/publisher chose those themes, how they believe the themes relate to the intended school goals of teaching about Israel, and whether they agree with the author's thematic organization. More than 50 percent of the teachers said they never experienced this kind of activity. They were grateful for the experience, as it provided them with the ability to self-reflect about their teaching methods. One example is Ms. Elana, the sixth grade Modern Israel teacher at one supplementary school who said:

"I currently use the *Experience Modern Israel* textbook with my sixth grade students. After analyzing the content of the textbook, I feel that the author of the textbook is right in presenting arts and culture to students before going into Israeli history. I believe that in order to engage students, the text should present "lighter" topics before delving into controversial and challenging topics like history and economics. World history books, for example, always relate Israel to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, but lack any further information about Israeli culture, politics, or economics. This textbook focuses on what other history textbooks lack- which is a foundation for an understanding of Israel." (Elena, personal communication, April 10, 2012).

As was mentioned earlier, many Jewish supplementary school teachers are untrained and have not spent time learning about how to teach Israel. Therefore, it is not a surprise that this example is only one of many reactions of teachers to this type of workshop. Once a teacher has been through this sort of analysis with the textbook he/she is using, the teacher has a better understanding of how and why to teach Israel and can portray Israel to his/her students in a more knowledgeable and thoughtful way.

6.2 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the past few decades there has been an on-going shift in the relationship between the Diaspora Jews and Jews living in Israel. As a result, Israel education in the United States has changed as well, which has affected how Israel is being taught and portrayed in United States Jewish supplementary schools. The textbooks which are used in these schools and which I studied here reflect this change in attitude towards teaching Israel to Jewish students in the United States today. In the following three books, I analyze three main topics: geography, religion, and politics in order to examine how each book approaches these topics.

The first book I studied is the CHAI curriculum. The CHAI curriculum, printed by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), offers materials and lesson plans for the Reform congregational schools. The CHAI curriculum is designed around three pillars, inspired by the overall understanding of the *Ethics of the Fathers*. The ancient rabbis said: “*The world is held upright on three pillars: Torah (the law), Avodah (worship), and G’milut Ch’asadim (acts of kindness)*” (Pirkei Avot 1:2).

The curriculum offers the foundations for Jewish learning which is necessary to help the young students build their religious identity. The students begin with the study of Torah, including the entire body of Jewish texts. Next, they learn by celebrating and focusing on Jewish holidays. Finally, they learn about performing acts of kindness by doing good deeds as part of the *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) guiding principles that has been mentioned earlier (<http://chai.urj.org>). In order to set up a basis of a Jewish identity that will enable people to grow up and continue to practice Judaism, the CHAI curriculum believes that these major pillars should be taught.

However, this is not enough. Supplementary schools invest in curriculum, which they hope will help them achieve goals of the school. The CHAI curriculum is very engaging and attention grabbing, but it lacks an important component, which is modern Israel. For students to become close with the materials and to fully understand it, they should see some of the results of what they study in their years of Hebrew school. Modern Israel is one of these achievements.

In response to this limitation, approximately a decade ago, the URJ developed the CHAI Israel Strand for all grade levels (1-7). The Israel Strand is an additional supplemental material that can be integrated into annual curriculum planning. Each grade level contains two to three lesson plans around a theme such as history, geography, culture, and politics. The URJ attempted to connect the Israel Strand to the core curriculum of that level; for example the Israel Strand level 1 is somewhat similar to the core curriculum used in level 1 and so on. However, there is some disconnect. For example, CHAI level 3 is arranged around the overarching theme of *K'dushah* (holiness). The children learn Jewish rituals and Jewish symbols while the Israel Strand at level 3 teaches about geography and cities in modern Israel. The Israel Strand could teach about *K'dushah* in Israel and focus on the holy sites, while also teaching the symbols of the

State of Israel. Then the children could see a connection between historical symbols and how they are implemented today. Israel's flag, emblem, currency, and so much more are influenced by ancient Jewish symbols. These symbols connect the past with the present and future. Moreover, I argue that two to three lesson plans around a theme such as history, geography, culture, and politics is not enough to provide meaningful inquiry-based learning experiences for the students. A larger focus on these topics is needed to engage students and help them in the process of asking questions and fully comprehending the relationships between what they learn in the CHAI curriculum to its supplemental addition; the CHAI Israel Strand.

Following the CHAI curriculum, I looked at the book '*Welcome to Israel*' written by Lilly Rivlin with Gila Gevirtz (2000). This book is produced by Behrman House Publications. Since it was first published, many Jewish supplementary schools have adopted it and used it to teach about Israel in elementary and middle school levels (the majority of the schools I have worked with use this book between third to fifth grade). The book's main organizational theme is Israel as a homeland. For example, the book uses an idealistic perspective to view Israel as "The modern State of Israel breathed new life into the Jewish people...restored our pride and strength" (p.126). Yet, in a discussion of religious life in Israel, there is a more critical approach. On page 32, the book mentions that the Jewish state is not free from religious disputes and challenges: "Because Israel does not separate religion and government, sometimes there are clashes between Jews with different beliefs". This is important because unlike the other Israel textbooks which paint Israel as a place where there is freedom of religion, this book acknowledges the challenges of living in Israel today. Here, the textbook offers the idea of a problem, and an opportunity for the children to ask questions regarding these issues under a "What do you think?" box designated for the child's reflections.

Another overarching theme in the book is a focus on the geographical features of the country. While “traveling” the country, the book provides a chronological overview of modern Israeli history trying to connect past and present. However, connecting between the Israel of the past to the Israel of the present is marginal. I could hardly find opportunities for the students to reflect on what they had learned, or a higher level of analysis and synthesis. The book mainly focuses on teaching about Israel’s largest cities and their unique characteristics. *Welcome to Israel* is age appropriate, however, to a more trained eye the book looks like a brochure for an exotic, exciting vacation destination and topics such as social gaps or poverty are absent in the book. *Welcome to Israel* gives a great explanation of major Israeli cities and towns, however, there is very little about the people who live there. And while learning about geography is age appropriate for the lower middle school grades who are studying from this book, it would also be age appropriate to learn about the social gaps, poverty, etc which exist in these cities. Not only would this create a deeper connection to Israel, but also it would help strengthen feelings of empathy and social awareness about world societies for these students.

Experience Modern Israel (2011), is to some extent a continuation of the *Welcome to Israel* (2000) textbook. Both textbooks are from Behrman House Publications. *Welcome to Israel* is intended for students in grades 4-6, while *Experience Modern Israel* is a later publication (2011) and is intended for students in grades 5-7. The latest textbook also includes the Modern Israel Online Strand, which provides even more in-depth Israel material to accompany the textbook.

This book, in addition to the information about modern life in Israel, uses Jewish values as a way to help students learn about the relationship Jews have with ancient and modern Israel. One of these values is *Pidyopn Sh’vuyim*, the redemption of any Jew held in captivity. Usually

after a short explanation of a Jewish value, there is a reflection piece where the students need to think about what they have learned. For example, in *Welcome to Israel* (2000), the student needs to explain what the value of “redeeming a captured soldier” means in his/her own words. In *Experience Modern Israel* (2011), a higher level of reflection is expected, as the students are asked to reflect upon the price of bringing captive soldiers home as an ethical question (Rivlin with Gevirtz, 2000: 114; Werner, 2011: 72-73).

In addition, *Experience Modern Israel* contains many images and photos, which captivate students. Through the many pictures in this book, students get an almost real hands-on experience. In a way, this is one of the themes in the book. It is often said that “A picture is worth a thousand words” and here the author did a good job of bringing the Israel experience to the students; especially today in an era of internet, instant messaging, social media and easy access to any kind of information.

There is a clear difference between *Experience Modern Israel*, and the other two books which were talked about earlier. In *Experience Modern Israel*, it is clear that the author decided to focus less on static geographical features and more on the people of Israel and dynamic life. Through the real-life stories, Israel becomes more alive, making it easier for students to relate to modern Israel. The internet and media aspects of this curriculum are key components to helping the student create a full understanding of Israel. Because the program is not happening only by using the text book, teachers and students are able to have an on-line interactive experience which provides easy access to Israel as well as primary sources such as documents, movies, music, people, etc. However, the use of the internet and learning about Israel today, does not subtract from students’ learning about their nation’s history. Actually, the book sends students back to the sources, discovering biblical connection to modern land. I claim that this book, more

than others, allows students to immerse in a creative dialogue and multiple dimensions of Israel education and therefore, helps them to develop global awareness on issues in Israel such as poverty, Palestinian refugees, preserving the environment, etc. (Werner, 2011).

In addition to my content analysis of textbooks, and as I described earlier in this chapter, I also worked with several principals and teachers, some of whom teach about Israel, in analyzing textbooks that are being used in their school. We focused on a review of the table of contents. The exercise included these four main questions: what are the overarching themes of the books, why do they think the author/publisher chose these themes, how do these themes relate to the intended school goals of teaching about Israel, and do they agree with the author's thematic organization. These questions also relate to some of the survey questions and interviews. The participants provided insights and brought up questions regarding the textbooks, reflecting on the main topics of the books and how they met the educational goals of the school/congregation. We also discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the books and brainstormed ideas about how to make them more useful to their needs. After looking at the textbooks, we discussed whether or not these books best serve the school and if they should or should not be used in the future. These exercises and workshops resulted in an on-going process of working closely with the school to help them in developing their own curriculum and set of educational materials to meet their school goals. Also, due to teachers' interest, I continue to consult for these Jewish supplementary schools in Pittsburgh and work closely with them to increase their capacity to teach about Israel from numerous perspectives while integrating these elements of Israel education into the Jewish supplementary schools existing curriculum.

In order to summarize this case study, I will use the example of Dr. Aharon Kessler who founded the first College of Jewish Studies in Pittsburgh in 1953, offering young Jewish

adolescents from all affiliations the opportunity to study about their religion and culture. Already full-time students, approximately 300 students met after school hours and over the weekends to have a joint, shared experience learning about their past (Kessler, 1997: 3-5). Kessler himself, like other scholars mentioned in this thesis, understood that education in general, but also curriculum and textbooks, are a struggle. He defined the struggle between the real conditions as they are and the ideal as it exists in the mind. He also claimed that due to this situation, educators are destined to confront the struggle by learning about the past. Kessler developed curriculum and textbooks to enhance the educational experience. He saw them as essential to the learning process.

Kessler's story asserts the need for a clear curriculum. Without one, an education system cannot follow its goals. We have seen in this case study, the importance of a curriculum and textbooks. However, it is also important to remember to take a closer look and make sure these items portray an accurate picture while encouraging student to ask questions and make inquiries.

The textbooks content analysis in this chapter yields several important findings. First, Israel textbooks are not free of bias. The intent behind Israel textbooks is to teach about Israel and to create a connection between students and their homeland. Therefore, the focal point is describing the positives in Israel. They describe a picture that only focus on a limited aspect of life in Israel. Most books are written around the theme of Israeli cities and geography. I have yet to find the answer to why such an emphasis is put on cities instead of what is in these cities themselves. One theory is that learning about cities provides some knowledge about Israel without getting into deeper topics, such as the implications of a city's demographics or the social problems that arise in the periphery of a city compared to the city itself. Israel's problems are, to a large extent, no different from other first world countries around the world. But when

approaching how Israel is taught in the textbooks I examined, there is often an avoidance of talking about Israel's internal problems. The problems are almost always focused on external affairs relating to the Israeli-Arab conflict and Israel's wars.

Secondly, the Israel textbooks are clearly intended to strengthen young people's connection to Israel. They offer an open invitation for all Jews to visit the country and to further explore the land, people, and history. In fact, these textbooks often read more like a travel brochure from Israel's Minister of Tourism advertising to people from around the world to visit.

Third, as previously discussed, the process of writing a textbook is long and complex and mostly revolves around making decisions on what to include and what to exclude. These three textbooks under examination portray a limited picture of modern Israel. This picture, is very informative and important to share with the students, but at the same time, rarely invites them to ask further questions. In that manner, it is almost entirely up to the teacher to play a role in helping students to put the many pieces of Israel education together, and they are expected to make the necessary connection between the different topics included in the books. It is this challenge combined with the limited training for teachers in United States Jewish supplementary schools that results in a major challenge for teachers and schools when approaching how to teach Israel to students.

There is no doubt textbooks play a paramount role in the Western education system regardless of location or topic. Textbooks, which draw upon various curricula, become central to the learning experience and shape, to a large extent, what is being taught in the classroom regardless of whether it is a public school system or supplementary. These textbooks should not be taken for granted as pictures of accurate fact or as unbiased historical, geographical, and social narratives. As mentioned in this chapter, textbooks are highly politicized and there are

many political decisions that influence this final product that is at the center of students learning. In respect to these processes a few questions remain open.

The first question is in regards to social and political construction. Lawson & Tannaka (2011), Goldberg, Porat, & Schwarz (2006) and others (see also Al-Haj, 2005; Walker, 1995) raise the issue that textbooks are often a source used for transmitting collective memory. Textbooks play a fundamental role in constructing social and national identity. Since these books are published with the authorization of major Jewish publishers and institutions concerns can be raised about whether the content of these textbooks are promoting selective memory among students. The practice of writing textbooks involves many people including educators, historians, politicians, law experts, etc. and therefore the decision making is very difficult. These experts have to determine what to include and what to exclude in the books. Different groups have different agendas, such as affiliation or streams of Judaism, and the individual private memory and knowledge is influenced by various components that might consciously and sub-consciously play a part in the writing process. Given that the books are distributed in mass numbers, people tend to value them as legitimate and accurate. This can lead to the construction of selective memory (Goldberg, Porat, & Schwarz, 2006: 319-320). The collective past, rooted in people's minds, creates a vicious cycle in which the shared memory and information taught through these textbooks, is now transmitted from one generation to the next and therefore alters some historical facts. Writing a textbook is not an easy task. Writing a textbook on Israel is even harder especially around some themes such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and religious disputes and therefore, should be under close observation and supervision.

Curriculum planners in general, and textbook authors in particular, should understand and appreciate different ways of transmitting knowledge by identifying unifying themes which

enable students to learn, preferably in an experiential way, about a particular topic from more than one perspective. The development process of an Israel textbook needs to be founded on a combination of educational theory, learning materials, and the school environment.

Clearly, these books intend to build a relationship between the students and their homeland. They are colorful, engaging, and contain many images in addition to content. However, the question of the nature of this relationship remains. Students should be exposed to more than one lens of Israel and engage in a conversation of topics such as: large cities vs. the periphery in Israel, Israel-Arab/Palestinian relationship pre, during, and post the establishment of the State of Israel, and/or social complexities in Israeli society. A discussion around these topics hardly exists in the three textbooks I examined. This decision, I argue, is driven by the identity policy makers and textbooks authors wish to develop or strengthen among the students. Through textbooks and lesson plans identity is transmitted in implicit and explicit ways which do not cover all aspects of the topic in question. However, students should be given the opportunity to go through a process of making up their own mind and identity by delving into these important topics. Of course, it is important to keep in mind this process should be appropriate to the child's developmental stage.

Unfortunately, United States Jewish supplementary schools have very limited time and within this short timeframe educators are expected to provide students with foundations to build their Jewish identity. Part of this Jewish identity is the need for building the students' relationship with Israel. Content, however, is limited and does not go into much depth regarding controversial topics. It is because of all these factors (limited time, biases of the textbook authors, avoidance of controversial topics, etc) that children who attend United States Jewish

Supplementary schools are not given the full picture of Israel and continue the ongoing struggle Jewish Americans have with Israel as a country and homeland.

7.0 CASE STUDY 2: THE ISRAEL ROOM AT ADAT SHALOM SYNAGOGUE IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

7.1 BACKGROUND OF THE ISRAEL ROOM

You are walking in a long hallway; passing one room, few pictures on the wall, another room, a closet. You keep going; something is hunting your eyes- A door, a different door. Your steps are faster, you are walking toward it and ask yourself what's behind the door and why did the place have a unique entrance. You are still walking, and you cannot put your finger on what's on the door but you see it's not flat. Your curiosity encourages you not to stop. And right then, you are close enough to see. You are enchanted with the stone artwork, with the details. The sign already announcing what's in the room and it raises more wonders. Slowly, you open the door, knowing this place is different and you feel something; happy or sad, proud or maybe angry, confused or confident, frustrated or perhaps hopeful. One thing is clear, you can't stay indifferent.

In 2006, Debi Weingarden, a preschool teacher at Adat Shalom synagogue, traveled to Israel together with Gail Schmitt, the preschool director, after the two participated in a two year long program at the Agency for Jewish Learning focusing on early childhood education. Upon their return to Pittsburgh, the two were dedicated to the idea bring Israel back to the school. Weingarden and Schmitt considered ways to enhance the Israel learning experience for their

students. They tried to create meaningful experiences, like the one they had in Israel. However, the two faced a few challenges and obstacles on their journey to accomplish their ambitious idea. The first one was financial. The only way the room they envisioned would come to life was to find someone to fund the project. After a long search, Weingarden and Schmitt found a local donor. The room honors the late Karen A. Shapira. David Shapira, his daughter and son-in-law saw the educational potential of this kind of room and decided to support the important cause. Karen loved Israel, according to David; she viewed Israel as the center of the Jewish world. The synagogue and the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh also helped finance the room. The ribbon-cutting ceremony took place on August 30, 2009 and was open to the community (www.thejewishchronicle.net).

The room was designed from an early childhood perspective simply for the reason that its visionaries belong to the early childhood education community. This fact presents educators and administrators with some challenges, which I will address further in the discussion part of this essay. The goals and visions for the room were divided into two phases. Phase One's main goal was to provide educational exposure for students, teachers, and congregants of Adat Shalom to the State of Israel and Pittsburgh's sister cities, Karmiel and Misgav region. The goal of Phase Two of the Israel room was to develop an educational curriculum for visiting preschools, religious schools and adults in the community as well as to have special family programs and workshops for educators and to open the Israel room doors to the larger Pittsburgh Jewish community. Phase Two is yet to be accomplished.

7.2 METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the aims, goals and purpose of the Israel room, there is a need for a thorough description of the space as a preparation for the discussion. I approach this section from two perspectives. I begin using an anthropology approach drawing on Clifford Geertz's "*Thick Description*" (1973) paradigm and Geertz borrowed the term from philosopher Gilbert Ryle and he uses it to describe his method of conducting ethnographic work. He distinguishes between "thick" and "thin" description to explain cultures, human behavior and the context that the both accrue in (Geertz, 1973:5-6). Geertz also argues that the process of giving thick description of the field distinguishes between library research and observational reportage, which for this essay is more appropriate. In Geertz's own words, a thick description is "Right down at the factual base, the hard rock, insofar as there is any, of the whole enterprise, we are already explicating: and worse, explicating explications. Winks upon winks upon winks" (p. 9).

Secondly, in addition to Geertz's theory, to better analyze the room's arrangement, objects and artifacts, I have used a perspective discussing museum and gallery education. Museums, along with galleries, gardens, and expositions are instruments of public instruction and they are full of information; providing knowledge about various topics.

In the past, during the time of imperialism, public displays were made by the colonialist and were meant to shape people's mind regarding *us* and *them*. The colonialist in their public displays created a blunt separation between what they referred to as primitive in comparison to what they value as civilized. Political decisions led those in power to provide the public with opportunities to gaze, be amused, and informed. However, those decisions usually did not present an accurate picture of reality (Willinsky, 1998: 56-58).

Today, setting up an exhibition of any sort is different and required proper research. The road for an exhibit is paved in a long and complex process of decision-making including selecting objects and setting up the space. In the course of creating a display, the curator responsibility is to select artifacts which have meaning and cultural value, as well as, reflecting upon what are the most appropriate set of objects to convey a message to enable visitors to interpret and understand the cultural value or heritage. The world today is comprised of a very diverse society, made up of many cultures, religious affiliation, ethnicities, and others various characteristics. We face with charges of “political correctness” (Willinsky, 1998: 61) and while creating a public display the curator makes choices what to include and what to exclude. Most of these decisions are made consciously, while others influence by the sub-conscious.

7.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ISRAEL ROOM

Since opening, the Israel room has been an inspiration to teachers, students, community members and other people who have visited it. The journey to the final version of the room took a long time and included many drafts. To a certain extent it was a process of trial and error to find what the designers believed should be included for a meaningful, lasting Israel learning experience. The collection offers objects to represent both Israel’s heritage and modern Israel. In this section I will provide a detailed description of the room follow by a discussion examine whether the room meets its purpose.

Figure 4 – Israel Room: Mural of Jerusalem



7.3.1 The Door, Entrance and the Windows

I began this case study explaining that the entrance to the Israel room marks a new and different experience in studying about Israel. The door creates a separation between the formal schooling and somewhat informal (within the formal institution) educational experience. Children understand they are about to enjoy a different kind of learning experience. The doorway into the Israel room is made of tan colored stone, with Hebrew words and mosaic stones designed into the door. This represents the Jerusalem landscape and unique buildings such as round rooftops and houses made of Jerusalem stone. The door itself makes it clear that this is not any ordinary classroom. Once one opens the door and enters the room, there is a beautiful clear wallpaper of the Jerusalem looking over the Western Wall and the Old City reflected on the windows. All around the room there are photographs, books, and learning aids to honor the Jewish homeland.

Dalia, the fifth grade Modern Israel teacher, has found that the Israel room has been an invaluable asset to supplement the class text readings, “Most of the time I teach in a regular classroom and offer the Israel room as a reward when students participate. They love putting prayers in the Western Wall replica.” Ms. Dalia tailors some of the other materials she teaches about to the Israel room. An example is a lesson plan about Israeli street signs and how they are written in Hebrew, English, and Arabic.

“Students split up into pairs and labeled items in the classroom in the three languages. It was a great way for my students to practice basic Hebrew words while engaging in a discussion on how Israel is accommodating those who don’t know Hebrew.” (Dalia, personal communication, December 10, 2011).

The room attempts to provide the visitor with a unique, authentic Israel experience. For people who have visited Israel in the past, entering the Israel room creates a feeling of returning to a familiar place. The room tries to replicate the land’s feature, atmosphere, and artifacts where people can experience their own personal connection with their homeland. For those who have yet to visit Israel, the room provides a glimpse of what Israel’s views and cultural have to offer.

Figure 5 – Israel Room: Close Look at the Israel Room’s Door



7.3.2 The Display Panels

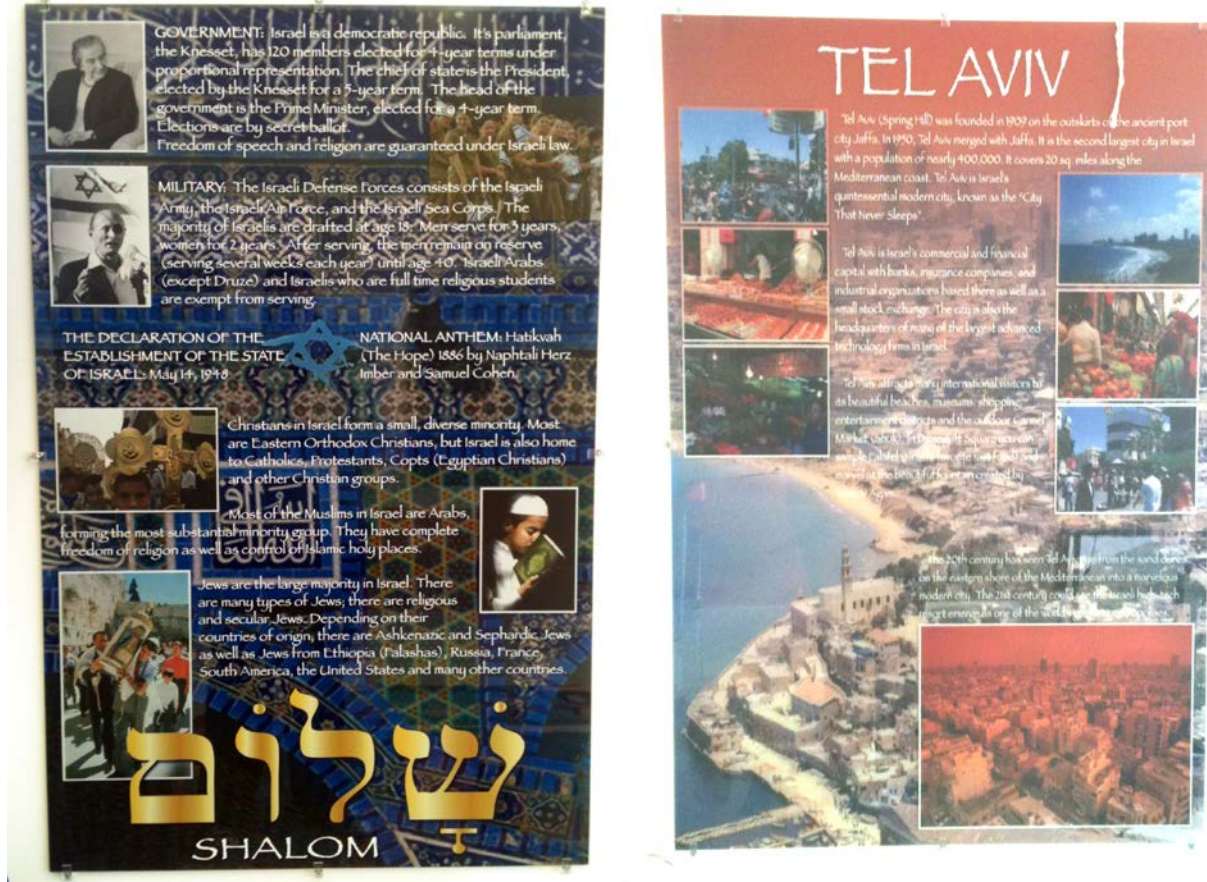
On the walls are seven plexi-glass panels designed by Debi Weingarden, and that were printed by Debbie Green. The glass plaques are museum quality and are divided into three groups, two in each group. The first two panels are an introductory display welcoming students to Israel. These two panels mark the beginning of the journey to Israel for the students and provide them with the information needed to start their learning experience and their “visit” to the land. The display boards contain the formal name of the country, *Medinat Yisrael* (“The State of Israel”) and also include information about the land's main features, such as area size and water area. Also included are the land's geographical characteristics, climate, population, primary religious and the percent of the population, official languages, literacy, and currency. In the background, however not hidden, are images of the map of Israel and the Independence Hall at the Tel-Aviv Museum, where David Ben Gurion, Israel’s first Prime Minister, declared the creation of the State of Israel. In addition, we find Israel's main symbols and a short description of where the Israeli flag, Israel’s emblem, and the national anthem get their inspiration from. Right after presenting us with the symbols of the country, at the bottom of the panel is a designated space dedicated to the founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, who I have mentioned earlier, the spiritual father of the State of Israel, and who envisioned and wrote about the need for a homeland for all Jews in his 1896 book “*Der Judenstaat*”, The Jewish State.

The second plaque goes into more in-depth information of the Jewish State and provides an overview of Israel’s political system and main institutions. On the display board one can also find information about the people who live in the country, broken down to the various minority groups who live in Israel and also background information about the different types of Jews such as Ashkenazi and Sephardic and Ethiopian Jews. Including information about the different

groups who live in Israel helps to understand the diversity of Israel and to introduce students to people they did not necessarily know lived there. It is an introduction to concepts like immigration and the melting pot, and within that also gets into topics such as the complexities and splits in Israeli society. To strengthen the idea of diversity, there is a large world map carpet and image of children portraying various ethnicities in the middle of the room, and where most activities take place. The second display board, just as in the first one, also contains pictures of important figures in Israeli history such as Golda Maier and Moshe Dayan alongside images of Israeli culture, such as a Bar-Mitzvah ceremony in the Western Wall, Arabic script, and Christians holding a cross. At the bottom of the board is the word Shalom in Hebrew and in English.

Three display boards represent Israel's two major cities, Tel-Aviv, and Jerusalem, the third display is dedicated to Karmiel and Misgav region, Pittsburgh sister cities. The last two glass display boards dedicated to the Negev desert and water in Israel. Near these two boards are game and activities related to water and sand. The seven presentations correspond with each other and learning one helps to understand the other, it gives the knowledge needed to understand how Israel came about and how different aspects of the country affect its culture.

Figure 6 – Israel Room: Plexi-glass Panels



7.3.3 Jerusalem and the Western Wall (The Kotel)

"If I forget you thee o Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not put Jerusalem above my greatest joy"

~ Psalm 137:5-6

The Jerusalem display panel enables students to learn about the city in more than one way and gives them proper information about the old city of Jerusalem and the *Kotel*. The description is as follows: *"The Western Wall or the Kotel is what remains of the Holy Temple, which was*

destroyed twice, in 586 BCE, and 70 CE, the remnant of what was the most sacred building in the Jewish world became the holiest spot in Jewish life". Using the display about Jerusalem, the students learn about the city and the combination of old and new. They learn about the history of the city and at the same time how the city has evolved and became a center of modern life with outdoors cafés, museums, houses for advance medicine and academia and much more. On the wall near the Jerusalem display panel is a replica of the Western Wall or the *Kotel*. It is a smaller version of the real *Kotel* in Jerusalem, almost to the fine details such as the cracks. After learning about the city the students can go "visit" the Western Wall and even put a note in it (something that traditionally Jews do at the real Western Wall in Jerusalem). The students are able to experience the real feeling of putting a note in the *Kotel* and to share with God their deepest wishes and prayers, just like in Israel. This activity brings the Israel experience to life; it is no longer something you hear about but rather a physical, hands-on experience. The notes are being collected regularly and are being sent to Israel to put in the actual *Kotel*. This memorable experience strengthens the bond between the students and the holy place and through that bond, their identity is strengthened as well. Many of the students (and teachers) express their yearning to visit Israel and the "real" *Kotel* and to put a note in it.

7.3.4 The Bookcases and Media Center

The Jewish people are often referred to as "the people of the book". Apart from the synagogue's library which holds books about Israel; the room has a bookcase with literature about the country. The bookshelves have mostly children books, however, other books can be found, as well as representing six decades since the creation of the State of Israel.

In addition to being the people of the book, Israel today is also referred to as a high-tech powerful country. High technology is inseparable from the 21st century. Today, with easy access to the internet, social networks, smart phones and more, people can very simply call other parts of the world. The room enables to connect to Israel in real time. The room is equipped with a flat screen TV, DVD, web cam, speakers and computers. In addition, the school purchased an educational program that is being used in the room. By using Google Earth the teacher can show the student where Israel is. In addition, this technology contains many links to lesson plans, videos and other resources.

7.3.5 The *Shuk*

The *Shuk* is a unique Israeli (and Middle Eastern) experience. It is an open air, outdoor marketplace where many local vendors sell their produce, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, meat, baked goods, etc. It is a mixture of sounds, flavors, and aromas, which really depict the essence of Israel as a melting pot of many culture, along with the new Israeli, the *Sabra*.

Shopping for Israeli groceries at the Shuk provides the children with another hands-on experience. The students became familiar with Israeli products, Israel currency - the New Israeli Shekel (NIS), which they can also convert from the United State Currency and understand the concept of using different money. Understanding the value of the Shekel in comparison to the local currency provides students with global perspective. The Shuk space in the room design as a window where visitors can look and find Israeli snacks, tea, coffee and more labeled with the original price in Shekels. There is also a cash register where student can buy and trade goods. There is an added value to the use of Israeli money, since through printed money and coins students get familiar with an additional symbols and important figures that represent the culture.

7.4 FINDINGS

The Israel room at Adat Shalom synagogue illustrates symbols, artifacts and architecture representing the modern State of Israel. The room provides students with hands-on learning and enables the students to interact with their surroundings for more experiential learning. Like a museum, the room itself can serve as teacher, as it offers students the tools to personally connect with information about the land and culture of Israel. However, to provide a well-rounded learning experience the presence of a teacher in the classroom is important, especially for the younger grades, to help students connect between ancient and modern Israel. The room celebrates the history, culture, and story of the Jewish people and of Israel.

However, the room does not always meet its full potential. First, the room is housed in a synagogue, which means random visitors who express the interest in visit the room cannot show up at the door. Necessary arrangements are needed to visit the room. Adat Shalom synagogue is also located outside of the city of Pittsburgh, which makes it harder to access. Second, the room is too small and can contain only a small number of people at one time. Therefore it lacks the capacity of hosting larger gatherings or community events. Third, the room was initially designed with an early childhood education in mind, therefore, it lacks higher developmental level for older children. The room's curators succeed in overcoming this challenge by using high-tech programs, which uses the equipment in the room, as well as adequate lesson plans develop for other grades. During this academic school year, Gail Schmitt is working with the author on developing a unique, special curriculum for the room to include K-7 grades lesson plans and activities as part of the Agency for Jewish Learning Israel Consultants Initiative.

As I argue throughout this essay, creating a public exhibits involves a complicated process of making decisions in regard to various topics that should be address such as the quality

of the objects, the content, target audience, and more. The room's curators made the decision to include some information and to exclude others. Choices were made mostly around the content and although, for example, demographic information is included on the display panels, the room keepers did not get into in-depth content about religious affiliation or commonalities versus differences between Jews in Israel and the Diaspora.

In addition, an overall review of the room shows that much attention is given to places in Israel such as cities, while other topics such as Israeli politics and/or social gaps are mentioned very little. The choice to refrain from getting into the Israeli–Arab conflict or the absent of Israel's war, for instance, seem appropriate, in keeping that the room was initially designed for early childhood. In accomplishing Phase One that might have been the right decision according to the room planners, since for many of the religious school children the room is the first encounter with Israel and the Israel experience. On the other hand, in order to accomplish Phase Two, further evaluation and assessment is needed to answer questions such as; what other faces of Israel do they want to share with older children and visitors, whether the covenantal Israel, the promised, or perhaps the perceived one is important to focus on, etc. Decisions in general, and educational decisions in particular, have implication on the learners and before proceeding to the next phase, assessment is needed in evaluating if there is sufficient information.

Further research should compare other rooms and Israel exhibits, from around the United States, looking specifically at the content, symbols, object, design and architecture included. The room's attempt to provide a glance on Israel, however, should appeal to different target audience and have different goals.

To conclude this case study, the Israel room provides students of all ages with meaningful Israel exposure and experience. It shares historical facts, Hebrew features, cultural

artifacts and more. People that will visit the room find it enjoyable and a source of knowledge and learning about the State of Israel. Many questions still remain open however; mostly around the appropriate way in which to accomplish Phase Two. Based on this case study, as well as the previous one, along with my survey and in-depth interviews, the majority of school directors and teachers the Jewish supplementary schools, with which I have worked, agree that Israel should remain an important aspect of Jewish learning. This case study answers some of the questions of what and how to be able to better teach about Israel.

8.0 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."

~ Mark Van Doren

Every bee that brings the honey needs a sting to be complete.

And we all must learn to taste the bitter with the sweet.

~ Naomi Shemer (1981)

Translated from Hebrew, these words were written by Naomi Shemer, native Israeli and Israel's national poet and composer. Shemer's songs, throughout the years, reflect on her love of Israel. In her prolific words and with much wisdom, Shemer describes a real situation. Israel, the land of milk and honey, also contains a 'sting'. Although a person can enjoy what is sweet and fruitful, Israel is not free from bitterness. In keeping with Mark Van Doren and Shemer, a relationship between Jewish students and their homeland must come from a place of discovery, as well as, the knowledge that there is more than merely the milk and honey.

My vision of Israel education is built on continuity, which I argue would deepen the student's learning experience. This is different than the approach of teaching about Israel from the simple, immediate connection to Judaism. However, teaching Israel as a Jewish aspect alone, unfortunately, is the approach taken by many Jewish supplementary schools in the United States today. This research paper was intended to explore Israel education in United States Jewish supplementary schools, approaching the topic from a new lens by illuminating the importance of

Israel education in Jewish schools, not only as a way for students to connect with their heritage and faith, but also by demonstrating how learning about Israel can develop global skills such as social justice and international and environmental awareness.

The definitive goal for Israel education, therefore, is beyond building relationships between Jewish students (and educators) with their homeland. Rather, the goal is to develop a generation of people who are confident in their identity, but at the same time, are global citizen, self-thinkers, and aware of the world around them.

The overarching theme of this paper, laid out in the three circles, describe the intersecting relationships between International education, Jewish education, and Israel education. In order to provide students with meaningful and successful Israel learning experience, these three circles need to be at the center of Israel education. I began with a definition of International education and the two main key ideas of education for citizenship and education for international understanding. Following that, I explained Jewish education. And lastly, I provide more in-depth insights about Israel education in the United States in general, and in Jewish supplementary schools in particular. I also presented two case studies focusing on content and space analysis to show how these intersecting fields of international, Jewish, and Israel education stand independently, but at the same time, they are also intertwined and relate to each other.

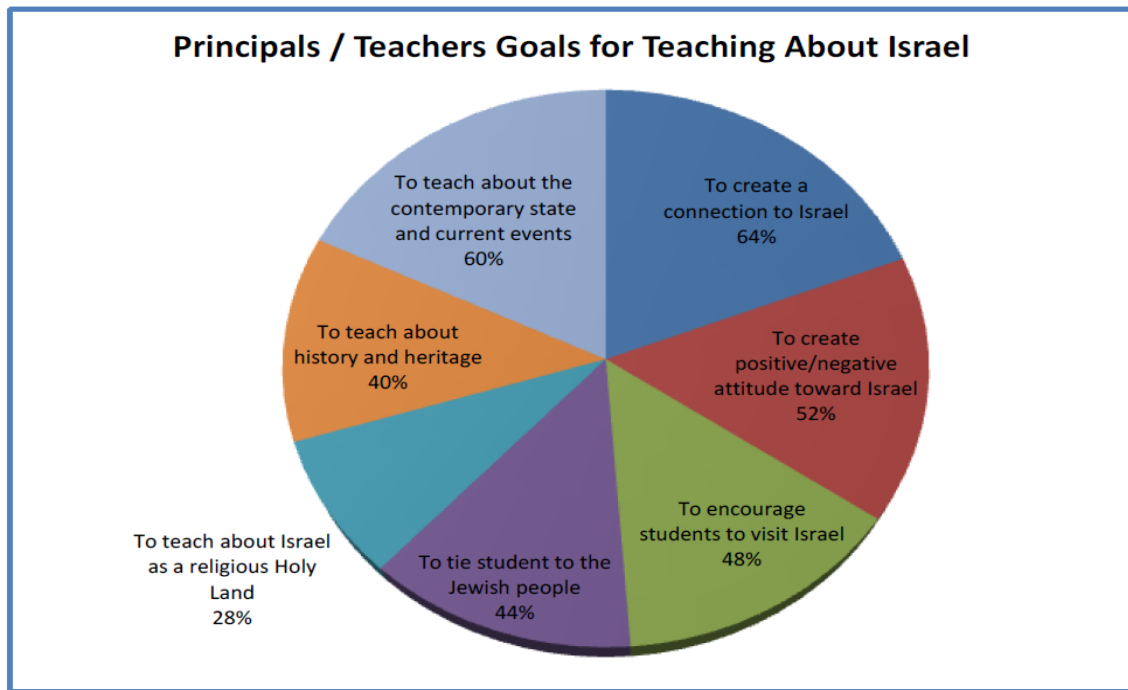
Sharing my vision of Israel education, are also the principals and teachers in the twelve schools I worked with over past few years and mostly during this research thesis. They too acknowledge that in order to create meaningful, lasting educational experience for their students, changes should be made. I will further explain these changes here.

Alvin Schiff's study from 1968, as mentioned in the methodology chapter (chapter 5), provided a list of the goals for teaching about Israel. Even though Schiff's research was

conducted decades ago, their categories are still relevant today, as we can see in Wertheimer (2008) survey. And although the goals have, for the most part, remained the same, the content has to change because Israel is a dynamic and ever changing place. For example, one of the goals for teaching Israel according to Schiff and Wertheimer is “To teach about the contemporary state and current events.” And while this goal is still relevant today, current events in the 1970s, 80s, 90s, etc are different then current events today. Therefore, what is taught also has to be different, even if the goal is the same.

The figure below (figure 7) is broken down into the categories for teaching about Israel, as laid out by Schiff (1968) and Wertheimer (2008), which I used in conducting my survey with teachers and school directors. Included are my specific findings from these surveys. Twenty-five teachers from twelve Jewish supplementary schools took the survey. The survey consisted of thirteen questions. Question 7 asks the teachers “What are your goals for teaching about Israel?” The participants could select “all that apply” from a list 7 closed ended questions with one open ended option titled as “other” at the end. The majority of the participants selected more than one category as their answer, while at least 50% selected more than two. The following pie is a diagram of their answers.

Figure 7 - Principals / Teachers Goals for Teaching about Israel



As seen in the above figure, the majority of the teachers agreed that it is important for the student to create a connection to Israel (64%). However, the rest of the categories in the diagram are all categories that can lead to the same outcome of creating a connection to Israel. For instance, to encourage children to visit Israel goes hand in hand with teaching them about the history of Israel and their heritage. In this figure there is a consensus that Israel should be part of United States Jewish supplementary schools education. It is important to mention that all of the above categories are being taught in United States Jewish supplementary schools to some extent. However, the question is regarding priorities. This can be seen by how much time is dedicated to each category and whether schools are integrating one category with the others.

My initial interaction with Jewish and Israel education in the United States in general and in the Jewish supplementary schools in particular, drew a picture of teaching about Israel from a narrow, one-dimensional perspective, mostly around ancient and mythical Israel. Modern Israel

was taught as a separate topic and many times Jewish supplementary schools did not focus on making the eminent connection between the two (ancient and modern Israel). The two, as I often argue in this thesis, are intertwined and should be taught with that in mind. This led me to choose this as my thesis topic. I wanted to get a better understanding about Israel education in the United States and in the Jewish supplementary schools because it is greatly different then the how Israel education is done in Israel. In Israel, transmission of knowledge happens informally everywhere, where as in the United States people are making a committed decision to immerse themselves in Jewish life and Israel education.

Writing this thesis was not without complications. In the process of writing this paper, I experienced a few challenges. Mainly, I struggled while trying to remain unbiased as I attempted to separate my own personal opinions from my research. However, I worked to provide a legitimate critique. It is clear to me there is a difference between being an American-Jew and an Israeli-Jew and even though Israel is a common ground for a shared identity, there are many differences. As I will never become fully American, American-Jews struggle with Israel. Our personal background, knowledge, experiences, status will always follow us, and therefore, our national and collective identity, will never be the same. We can do our best to help young Jews in the United States see Israel as part of their Jewish identity and to understand that it can help strengthen other identities they might hold. Being part of an identifiable group can help understand other groups that define themselves by religion, ethnic affiliation, etc.

In chapter 3, I discussed the development of Jewish education in the United States and Samson Benderly's contribution to the field. Benderly argued that education in general and Jewish education in particular, should be founded on principles of inquiry-based learning and observation. He also claimed that education should be pleasurable and that the overall goal of

education should be to advance successful living and to promote human progress. I agree with Benderly and argue the same in this thesis. I emphasize, in my writing, that the only way to truly engage in Israel education, is to base this learning on inquiry and question asking. It is important for students to learn about Israel from a multi-dimension approach and challenge them to examine topics related to Israel from more than one lens.

The ultimate goal of Israel education is to create critical thinkers who hold high levels of social awareness both of their own culture, as well as of the cultures of others. It is also to build a generation of young people who are knowledgeable and have a better understanding of global issues. Therefore, they can become committed to their relationship with their own nation-state, and at the same time acknowledge their special bond with Israel. Ultimately, Israel education will not only produce people who are committed to their community and their faith, but also people who are self confident and tolerant and will get involve in social justice projects.

To accomplish all of the above, values of knowledge, social understanding and progress should be the pillars of Israel education and the curriculum design process. Having said that, after examining these values in regard to United States Jewish supplementary textbooks and school environments (especially the Israel room), a few questions still remain; mostly regarding whether the textbooks and the room follow the above guidelines. The answer, I argue, can be divided into two. First, yes. The books and the room follow these guidelines. On the one hand they provide a few perspectives on how to look at Israeli topics. On the other hand, they do not follow these guidelines because they provide a narrow view on topics related to Israel or non at all. Both Jewish supplementary textbooks in the United States as well as the Israel room focus on developing a relationship between the student and his/her homeland and therefore are somewhat biased. It is the second phase, after building these relationships, that is missing.

Despite the challenges there is a ray of hope. Most Jewish children today still attend Jewish supplementary schools, where they receive Jewish and Israel education. Many parents take a stand and make a conscious decision to continue to provide Jewish education to their children and maintain Jewish life. Many graduates of the supplementary system feel connected to Israel and their Jewish heritage and maintain Jewish identity and pride including connection to Israel (Cohen and Veinstein, 2011).

Learning about the mythical, covenantal, historical Israel is essential in the process of building the foundation of young children's Jewish identity. However it is not enough, and in the today's world when one can easily consume news and information, there is a growing need to expand the dimensions of Israel education, to challenge students to think about the real-life and perceived Israel. As educators we want to help our youngsters to be able to make decisions, to be critical and to understand other. Teaching about Israel should be more than idealizations of the country. For example, in *Welcome to Israel* (2000), the students learn about Tel-Aviv and Jaffa. Both cities are shown as center for arts and culture. The section is focusing mostly on Tel Aviv, the city that never sleeps. Jaffa, in the other hand, is in Tel Aviv's shadow. Furthermore, there is no reference to the Jewish community in Jaffa, or discussion about the Arab-Israeli relationship in the city (pp. 52-58). In addition, the interesting demographic changes, the diversity of the cities and social problems are not talked about. I argue that exposing students to the gap between the residences in the northern neighborhoods in comparison to the southern neighborhoods will not affect the student motivation to learn and connect with Israel. The Israel room in that sense makes an idealization of Israel and portrays it only from one angle without delving into deep conversation of other aspect of life in Israel. Even though, the room was designed for preschool

age children, I argue that Israel can be taught differently without harming the children developmental stage.

It is to be said, that if Jewish supplementary schools in the United States would teach about more than the idealization of Israel, children would be able to relate to Israel more and to see that Israel is facing challenges, the same as their own society. For some students, it might build the motivation to get more involve in service learning programs for instance, while others will develop a critical way of looking at Israel, asking for further inquiry on the matter.

Israel itself and Israeli citizens can contribute to the relationships between United States Jews and Israel. In the era we live in where traveling is made easy and technology enables us to consume the news and see places in real time, it is very simple to contact people in Israel to people in the United States and vice versa. Through programs and collaboration, a person-to-person relationship forms and both Israelis and American get the opportunity to learn about each other cultures, shared identity, and connection to Israel. One example that is often talked about is the presence of emissaries in the Jewish schools. Young Israelis come to the United States as emissaries to help provide Israel education within the schools. The second example is of the *yordim*; Israeli Jews emigrated from Israel. According to Ackerman (1996) and Hyman (1967), Israelis who live in the United States for various reason teaching in Jewish schools and with their presence bring the Israel experience to the communities they live in (Ackerman, 1996: 188; Hyman, 1967: 231). Further research, should examine Israel education within the State of Israel as a growing field of study based on Israeli society's needs. According to the Center for Jewish Peoplehood in Jerusalem most Israelis view Israel as the State for Israelis who are also Jewish but there is a distant between Israelis and the Jewish world outside of Israel. While it seems that

Israelis have high degree of national identity and collective memory, internal concerns call for an Israel education within the borders of the country (Ravid, 2012).

I wish to conclude with a few words on a personal note. Israel, being my home country and my homeland, is very close to my heart. Often times I feel deep pride being a citizen of my country and in others times I want to see a change on various levels. I believe in Israel education not only because I have strong feelings toward my country, but also because I argue it can enhance the way children view the world at large. For young Jews in the United States, Israel is a place that will always accept them with open arms; another place they can call home. For others, Israel education is to teach and show them that Israel is not an aggressive place as they see on the news. Rather, Israel is a place that faces many external challenges and sometimes has to use power in order to protect its citizens to ensure they will have a home.

Israel education helps develop critical thinkers, the kind that does not accept things as they are and challenge their peers, teachers, parents, and so on. Furthermore, the aspiration is to raise a generation that sees past the difference and who can communicate with each other regardless of a person's faith or background. We teach about Israel for these young students to learn and touch the past. We teach about Israel to help them become educated in the present. We teach about Israel to give them a better future.

APPENDIX A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The existence of Israel is essential for the survival of the Jewish people. The two share a unique relationship that goes back a long time. Furthermore, Israel is the only Jewish homeland in the world. Israel has always been a part of Jewish studies and was integrated into Jewish schools programs. In recent years there has been a shift in Israel education in order to strengthen future generations' relationship with the Jewish State. The following research examines the place of Israel, not only within the United States Jewish supplementary schools but, also by illuminating a new focus relating to a broader spectrum of International and national education. At the center of this essay are a few lines of inquiry: why do we teach about Israel? what are the goals for teaching Israel? how should Israel be integrated into the school curriculum? and in what ways can Israel education strengthen students' national and global identity?

First, I lay my theoretical framework illustrating a Venn diagram of three circles. Each circle stands independently but also shares a few overlapping areas. The three circles are international and national education, Jewish education, and Israel education. The reason for locating Israel within Jewish education on the one hand and independently on the other is because Jewish education is the foundation for Jewish life and identity, while Israel education builds upon and adds another dimension to one's Jewish educational experience. I provide an

analysis of two case studies. The methodology used is twofold: content and space analysis, as well as survey and interviews. In this section I first examine textbooks teaching about Israel including in-depth research with principals and teachers. I continue with a physical space analysis of where students gain in-depth Israel education showing the informal aspect of school environment and its affect on the students' learning experience.

Today, Israel education is still an important component of Jewish studies and most Jewish supplementary schools in the United States teach about it. However, Israel education has shifted significantly in the last few decades and is facing some challenges such as the need for curriculum prioritizing, working within limited time frame, and cultivating expert teachers. Based on half a decade of experience, I make a few recommendations for educators, lay leaders, and community members of how to continue teaching about Israel in the supplementary system with the goal of strengthening the students' identity as Jews. In addition, these recommendations will contribute to strengthening young Jewish students' identities as national and global citizens.

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTION SCRIPT AND SURVEY/INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Dear Participant,

I would like to invite you to participate in a study that will be carried out as part of my Master thesis research at the University of Pittsburgh studying *The Place of Israel in American Jewish Supplementary Schools*. The purpose of the research is to learn about various curricular, text books, learning aids, and methodology used in the Jewish supplementary schools to teach about Israel. In particular I would like you to share with me your experiences and knowledge regarding Israel education in your school. For that reason, I will be surveying and conduct interviews with principals and teachers from different supplementary schools in the grated Pittsburgh area. As a participant in this study, your role is to help me to get a better understanding and insights of your experience as a principal/teacher who is involve in Israel education. I will ask you to complete a brief (approximately 10-15 minutes) questionnaire comprises of closed and open-ended questions.

If you are willing to participate, the questionnaire will ask about educational background as well as about your experience with Israel education in your school. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project, nor are there any direct benefits to you. Participation in the research is voluntary.

The questionnaire is confidential. All responses will be kept under lock and key.

As a follow up to the questionnaire, I might ask to speak directly with you about your experience and knowledge regarding Israel education in the Jewish supplementary schools. This will take in the form of interview (between 15-30 minutes) which will be held at your place of preference.

It is hoped that our community will benefit from this study in the future. Your agreement to participate is very important in ensuring better understanding of the Israel learning experiences in the Jewish supplementary schools.

Should you have any further questions or queries about the research please feel free to contact me at (412) 877-0049 or at efrate@gmail.com

Yours sincerely,
Efrat Avramovich

How many years have you been teaching in religious school? _____

1. What grade/s do you teach? _____
2. What do you teach (i.e. Jewish life, holidays, prayers, modern Israel)? _____

3. How often do you teach (Sunday / weekday / both)? _____

4. Do you have an academic background in education? **Yes / No**

4.a If Yes, what is your background? _____

5. Do you have an academic background in Jewish education? **Yes / No**

5.a If Yes, what is your background? _____

6. Do you use any textbooks? **Yes / No**

6.a If yes, what textbooks are you using? _____

7. What are your goals for teaching about Israel (select all that apply)

To create a connection to Israel

To create positive/negative attitude toward Israel

To encourage students to visit Israel

To tie student to the Jewish people

To teach about Israel as a religious Holy Land

To teach about history and heritage

To teach about the contemporary state and current events

☐ Other _____

8. In your opinion, what are key elements of Israel education curriculum? _____

9. Beside religious school, where does Israel education occur? Please check (✓) the box that best describes your opinion in the following areas

	None	Little	Medium	A Lot
Summer camps				
Friday night services				
Youth groups				
Social networks				
Modern Hebrew language classes				
Israeli teachers / <i>Shlichim</i> /speakers				

Special events (i.e. Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration, concerts)				
Partnerships (i.e. pen pals, joint program with region partnership)				
Other, please specify:				

10. What are some challenges that you experience in teaching about Israel? _____

11. What are some strengths you feel you have when teaching about Israel? _____

12. Generally, do you feel that there are any weaknesses in teaching about Israel? If so, how would you go about improving Israel education in the Jewish supplementary schools? _____

13. Is there anything you'd like to comment on? _____

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY

Am Yisrael – the people of Israel, the Israelite.

Avodah – literally, work. The term also can appear in the context of worship or other sacred practices.

Chai – literally, alive (adj), or to live (verb). Also refer to the CHAI curriculum designed by the Union for Reform Judaism.

D'var Torah – A short talk on topics usually related to the weekly portion of the Torah. Usually, the D'var Torah has a life lesson backed up by passages from the Jewish text.

Eretz Yisrael – the land of Israel.

G'milut Chasadim – are acts of kindness or good deeds.

Hashitah Hativit - literally, the natural method. A foreign-language teaching technique designed to imitate primary-language acquisition.

Ha'Tikva – literally, the hope; Israel's national anthem.

Israel (Yisrae-El) – literally, to wrestle. The origin of the name is in the biblical story of Jacob (Genesis 32:28). On a journey to Can'an Jacob wrestled all night with an angel (God), who blessed him and gave him the name Israel. Also stand for an ancient kingdom in Palestine, and for the State of Israel.

Ivrit B'Ivrit - literally, Hebrew in Hebrew. Immersion programs to enhance language acquisition in Jewish religious schools.

K'dushah – holiness.

Pidyopn Sh'vuyim – literally, redeeming captives. The term refers to the redemption of any Jew held in captivity.

Pirkei Avoth – *Avoth* (fathers) – *Pirkei* (tractate). literally, the Chapters of the Fathers. *Pirkei Avoth* contains a collection of rules and principles of conduct (Melamed and Altabé, 2007: xii)

Shmita – literally, to release and/or to drop. The Seventh year in a seven-year agriculture cycle during which all planting, plowing and harvesting is forbidden according to the Jewish law. In addition, debts are cancelled. The year of *Shmita* still observed in the State of Israel today.

Shuk – open air market.

T'fila – literally, prayer.

Tikkun Olam – literally, repairing the world. The term for mending a suffering society by acts of good deeds, and restoring the world to the right order.

Torah – the Torah is the accumulated body of Jewish texts and wisdom; including Genesis through Deuteronomy, commentaries on those texts, and the values that arise from them.

Yishuv – literally, settlement. The term for refers to Jewish community in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut – Israel's Independence Day

Yordim - literally, decent. The term for emigration by Israeli Jews from the State of Israel; It is the opposite from Aliyah, literally ascent; the term for immigration to Israel.

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