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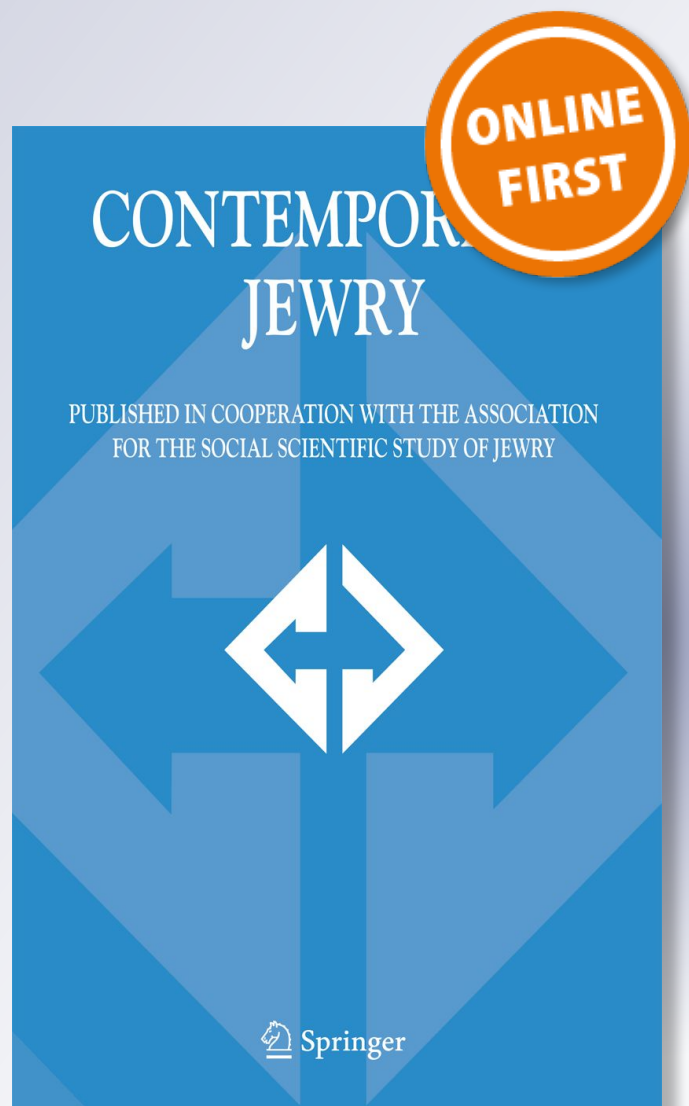
Lilach Lev Ari

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North Americans, Israelis, or Jews? The Ethnic Identity of Immigrants' Offspring

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Abstract Using a sample of 206 Israeli migrants' offspring in North America, who filled in questionnaires and 34 in-depth interviews, this article examines the components and indicators of ethnic identity and identification of the offspring of Israelis in North America, by immigration generation. Are their identities and social network local, meaning that they lead to integration and assimilation, or are they diasporic and transnational, positioned somewhere between North America and Israel? The main findings of this study illuminate complex and dynamic patterns of identity components and the factors that affect them. Generational affiliation, i.e., second generation immigrants compared to those of the 1.5 generation, had a considerable effect on the various indicators of identity and identification. Members of the 1.5 generation are more inclined than second generation immigrants to maintain transnational or diasporic relations and to experience a splitting of identity and estrangement toward the destination society. Second-generation participants, feel "at home" in the destination country and are more inclined to assimilate into their proximal host Jewish group and the non-Jewish majority. This study makes its main contribution by distinguishing between second and 1.5-generation Israeli immigrants in regard to the re-construction of their ethnic identity. It also contributes to understanding the effect of agents of socialization, on the dynamic patterns of this identity in its various dimensions.

Keywords Second and 1.5 generation immigrants · Ethnic identity and identification · Transnational theory · Israeli immigrants · Diasporic identity · Youth movement

L. L. Ari (✉)
Oranim, Academic College of Education and Bar Ilan University, Achziv St. # 6,
P.O. Box 8199, 20692 Yokneam, Israel
e-mail: llevari@oranim.ac.il

Introduction

This study examines the components and indicators of ethnic identity and identification of the offspring of Israeli immigrants in North America. Are their identities and social networks local, meaning do they lead to greater integration and assimilation, or are they diasporic or transnational, positioned somewhere between North America and Israel? The study also examines the effect of parents and participation in youth movements, as agents of socialization, on the diverse components of ethnic identity and identification.

Most studies regarding Israelis living in North America deal with first generation immigrants. Until now, most Israelis' offspring were too young to participate in research; only in recent years has it been possible to identify significant numbers of expatriate Israelis' offspring who have reached maturity, chiefly among those who emigrated in the 1980s and 1990s. Studies concerning Israeli immigrants' offspring, therefore, are few. This paper focuses on the children of Israeli immigrants in North America (United States and Canada). The number whose children are Israel-born is diminishing; that of immigrants whose children are born in North America is growing. In the 1980 American population census, these two immigrant groups were similar in size; by 2000, the former had shrunk to less than one-fifth and the share of those whose children were all born in the United States had exceeded 70 % (Rebhun and Lev Ari 2010).

In research on immigrants' offspring, it is customary to distinguish between first generation immigrants and their successors, who are termed second generation or '1.5 generation' immigrants. First generation immigrants include parents who chose to leave their country of origin and settle elsewhere. Their offspring, in contrast, emigrated with their families but did not participate in the decision-making process regarding the move. Immigration experience is, of course, differentiated when the generations are compared; some children were born in the destination country or arrived at an early age, while others emigrated at older ages, or as adolescents, after having been raised and socialized in their origin country (Oropesa and Landale 1997; Remennick 2003).

Migrants' offspring are divided into three groups according to their emigration age and their developmental stage: '1.75 generation' emigrated as preschoolers, '1.5 generation' arrived at the destination country as preteen school-age children, and '1.25 generation' refers to those who immigrated as teenagers after spending most of their formative years in the origin country (Rumbaut 1997).

In the present study, due to the small number of respondents, and based on Cohen and Habersfeld's (2003) distinction among Israeli immigrants' offspring 1.5 generation, I divided the subjects into two generation groups. First, the '1.5 generation' is comprised of youngsters who were between the ages of eight and 18 when they reached North America with their parents. Next is the 'second generation,' typically used to describe the children of immigrants who are born in this country but in this case describing those who were also at the age of seven or younger at the time of emigration. Due to the similarity in their assimilation characteristics, the second generation groups are aggregated together (Oropesa and Landale 1997).

The focus of this study is on second and 1.5 generation Israeli immigrants' offspring and their ethnic identity and identification. An individual's ethnic identity is an inclusive conceptual matrix which the host society constructs in the process of daily interaction, which may assign him or her to a certain social group within the target society, while inducing changes in his or her attitudes toward himself or herself as an immigrant (Mittelberg and Waters 1992; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Ethnic identity is reflected in several indicators: identification as a member of the group; a sense of belonging and commitment to the group; positive (or negative) attitudes toward the group; a sense of shared attitudes and values; and specific components of ethnicity such as language, behavior, and customs (Berry et al., in Tur-Kaspa Shimoni et al. 2004). The term 'ethnic identification' in this context signifies the demonstration of affiliation with a certain ethnic group. Some of the identification process also includes acceptance of the values and norms of the group that is targeted for self-identification, as guidelines that shape the personality and behavior of the self-identifying individual (Rebhun 2001).

This pattern of dynamic ethnic identity and identification might characterize first generation immigrants, but it can also be traced among second and even third generation immigrants' offspring. The last two groups might become interested in their tradition, their homeland, and other components of ethnic roots even though they were initially detached from them (Grillo 1998). Hence, this study contributes to the broader field of research on the dynamic and heterogeneous reconstruction of identity and identification among second and 1.5 Israeli immigrants' offspring in North America.

Theoretical Considerations: Ethnic Identity Among Immigrants and Their Offspring

Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, the complexity of ethnic identity and identification began to be extensively discussed in the academic literature. Since the scope of this paper is limited, I will describe selected theories which address this issue. Scholars differ in their explanations of the origin of ethnicity. Geertz, for example, saw ethnicity as a primordial attachment, which resulted from being born into a particular community with its cultural components. According to this theory, ethnicity is not a matter of choice but pre-social (Geertz 1963, quoted in Castles and Miller 2009, pp. 35–36). Others perceived ethnicity as a strategic option. For example, Wallman (1986) used the concept of 'situational' or 'instrumental' ethnicity and argued that ethnicity is invoked whenever members of a specific group decide that it is useful for them or maximizes their group power in terms of competition. In this context, ethnicity is perceived as an emergent phenomenon, which continues to develop with the changing positions of groups and individuals within the dynamic social structure. As society changes, old forms of ethnic culture may die out but new forms may be generated (Yancey et al. 1976).

Other classical approaches claimed that the longer the residence of migrants in the new destination, the more they socially and economically resemble native-born, even if their ethnic origin continues to have a residual influence on their structural mobility (Gordon 1964). Park (1950) contributed the notion of a 'Race Relations Cycle' that

includes contact (by migration), competition (with other immigrants), accommodation (forced adjustment to host society), and assimilation (although not completed).

In the ethno-cultural domain in the United States, competing concepts stand out: 'Anglo-conformity,' the 'melting pot,' and 'cultural pluralism' (including activist manifestations of 'multiculturalism'). The first concept, 'conformity,' was prevalent in America mainly in the first half of the twentieth century. This theory posited that groups of immigrants, after a relatively short period of volitional separatism, should renounce their cultural origins in favor of the host society's behavior patterns and values, or at least take part in a process of cultural integration (the 'melting pot') between the various immigrant groups and local customs (Gordon 1964). These two concepts, i.e., conformity and the melting pot, largely convey the same set of goals. Both suggest that cultural differences and connections with groups of origin have been steadily eroding over the generations and have been losing much of their importance as the immigrants assimilate into the social mainstream (Blau and Duncan 1967). Many perceive the melting pot idea as a symbol of the liberal vision of American society; it has become the bearer of the political message that the United States is a land of opportunity in which race, religion, and ethnic origin do not hinder social mobility. From this standpoint, conformity is but another interpretation of the symbol that stresses the Americanization of the immigrants (Hirschman 1983).

The concept of cultural pluralism is different. Having risen to prominence in the ideological contest with the other models, especially since the 1960s, cultural pluralism propounds that all ethnic immigrant groups preserve the main fundamentals of their culture of origin, albeit within the framework of U.S. citizenship and economic and political integration. This concept fosters the maintenance of social and cultural autonomy of the various origin groups and legitimizes their preservation of a high level of identificational separatism (Gordon 1964). Another model of ethnicity stresses the fluid, situational, and dynamic character of ethnic identity and emphasizes its socially constructed aspects. Thus, particular ethnic boundaries are continuously negotiated and reconstructed by ethnic group members as well as by others (Nagel 1994). One of the concepts which is related to ethnic-cultural identity reconstruction is that of the 'proximal host,' the group to which the absorbing society is likely to assign immigrants arriving in the host country. The assignment may be based on appearance, national origin, and language; how the immigrants perceive themselves within the ethnic concept; and whether the group closest in its characteristics will accept the new immigrants as suitable members (Mittelberg and Waters 1992).

In addition to these theories, and with regard to immigrants' offspring, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) and Zhou (1997) invoke the concept of 'selective acculturation.' They maintain that few such individuals fully assimilate into American society. This gives these second generation immigrants' offspring a dual opportunity: to acquaint themselves with their ethnic group's traditions and values and preserve the family language (mother tongue) as well as to familiarize themselves with the values of the surrounding society and master the new language. Bilingual and bicultural proficiency facilitates cultural and political life and relations with both countries (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Other scholars suggest that the American-born offspring of immigrants maintain some level of ethnic identity and cultural heritage. Ethnicity, they argue, is a factor deeply rooted in the social reality; not only does it

influence certain events, but it is often the source of the events themselves (Glazer and Moynihan 1963).

Another perspective regarding ethnicity is the 'ethnic revival' of whites, which is a manifestation of an individualism that aspires to enrich the individual's life and promote self-fulfillment (Alba 1990; Gans 1994; Lieberson and Waters 1988; Waters 1990). This is principally the 'symbolic ethnicity' of voluntarism and the personal needs for identification, as opposed to specific cultural behaviors and group organization that had once been central and prominent (Gans 1994). The symbols used by later generations of immigrants may be more overt and visible than the cultures and organizations of earlier immigrants, including the emphasis on ancestral origin in a certain country or geographical region. What is portrayed as an 'ethnic revival' or a 'religious revival' is, in fact, nothing but a new phase in the assimilation of ethnic and cultural groups into the general local society (Gans 1979, 1994).

Introduced in the 1990s, transnationalism theory suggests that migration is a multidimensional process that includes political, economic, cultural, and religious aspects among others, and combines independent considerations in the transition from one country to another. The theoretical basis for understanding the process that reconstructs the ethnic identity has changed; it is now termed the transnational approach (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). This construct posits that immigrants' ethnic identity in the global era is anchored in various geographical spaces that transcend the familiar borders of the nation-state (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992). The mismatch between the geographical space (the destination country) and the social space in which most immigrants go about their daily lives (the origin and destination country) drives an identity-construction process that has its points of reference in different places. Consequently, this identity is constructed through a complex process in which immigrants have to merge different and often contrasting elements that originate in different geo-cultural spaces (Vertovec 1999).

Today's immigrants, unlike those of the past, are seldom required to suppress certain components of their identity in order to blend into the non-immigrant group. Instead, thanks to the adoption of multicultural policies in most Western countries, immigrants find ways to accommodate their range of identities concurrently by using each identity intelligently in different social contexts (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Vertovec 2001). One possible component of this dynamic transnational identity is the *diasporic identity*, in which the values, social norms, and narratives of the homeland (the origin country) are maintained in the destination country. This drawing of cultural borders amid structural integration gives immigrants a sense of being 'at home abroad.' Central to the particular identity of members of a diaspora is the maintenance of relations with the origin country, as reflected on several different and complementary levels, including the familial, economic, social, religious, etc. (Shain 1999; Sheffer 1986, 2003). However, transnationalism does not endure among all immigrants; while some immigrants build stronger transnational identities of various kinds, others totally disengage from their ethnic identity and identification, and integrate or assimilate into the host society (Faist 2000; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). Transnational participation depends on gender, class, race, and successful assimilation into the host society, among other factors (Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo 2005).

Ethnic Identity of Immigrants' Offspring: Previous Studies

Population estimates of immigrants' offspring in the United States demonstrate that members of the new 'second generation' accounts for one out of six 18 to 32-year-olds, and one out of four of all Americans under the age of 18. Thus, children of immigrants have a significant role in shaping and reconstructing future ethnic relations in the United States (Kasinitz et al. 2008). Most second generation immigrants' offspring identify with their parents and the tradition of the origin country in certain events, depending on how comfortable they feel in the specific contexts (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993). Park (2008) argues that second generation immigrants' offspring from Asia define themselves as Asian-American and as having a dual identity, despite being part of the second generation. According to Park, they define their identity in accordance with a cultural discourse that treats them as Asian-American and, therefore, they accept this term in defining their identity. Similar to some of today's first generation immigrants, their offspring are transnational in their social networks, visit their parents' homeland, and sometimes even return (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Levitt 2007).

Studies relating to members of the 1.5 generation only, conducted mainly among young people of Asian origin (e.g. Min and Kim 2000; Park 1999; Zhou and Bankston 1998), suggest that 1.5 generation immigrants have an immigration experience of their own, in which they encounter problems of loyalty to, and affiliation with, the source culture. For some (chiefly those who belong to visible ethnic minorities, and thus are more exposed to overt and covert discrimination in the target society), the process of assimilating into the majority society is accompanied by the opposition of parents who attempt to prevent it. Some of these young people respond to their parents' objections by dropping out of school and even adopting additional behaviors typical of youth at risk. Other members of this generation, however, respond in the opposite way, by becoming star performers in school in order to ease the conflict that they feel (Remennick 2003).

Most studies of Israeli-born migrants were conducted among those living in the United States, where more than two-thirds make their home. These immigrants can be characterized as a white, highly educated middle class group (Gold 2002; Lev Ari 2008a; Rebhun and Lev Ari 2010). Cohen (2011) estimated the number of *Israeli-born* immigrants living in the United States at 107,744. Israeli-born immigrant children (younger than 15 years old) consist of 12.5 % of the total number of Israeli-born immigrants. The total estimation of Israelis, including that of *foreign-born Israelis* (about 132,256 people), residing in the United States is approximately 240,000.

The main social and economic attributes of first generation Israeli immigrants—high rates of labor-force participation, home ownership, and proficiency in English—influence their sense of belonging and their self-identity, which is becoming more and more American. Given their characteristics, they immerse themselves and integrate into the American social mainstream (Lev Ari 2008a; Rebhun and Lev Ari 2010).

Culturally, the Israelis' national identity is based mainly on a subjective sense of Israeliness and Jewishness and has characteristics of secular Judaism. Most American Israelis neither belong to synagogues or other local Jewish organizations,

nor do they conscientiously observe religious rituals (Mittelberg and Waters 1992). However, the longer these individuals stay in the United States, the more diligently do they observe major Jewish festivals and ethnic and religious precepts that are meant to preserve their Israeli identity. The definition of the Israeli immigrants' identity is essentially ambivalent. They are eager to adopt a bi-national identity—Israeli *and* American—and thereby benefit, depending on circumstances and changing personal needs, from both the opportunities and openness of American society and the warmth and intimacy of the Israeli community (Gold 1992).

During the 1970s and 1980s, the proximal host of American Jews did not welcome the Israeli Americans, and the Israelis were defined as a marginal group in the American Jewish community. The role of Israelis, as perceived by Jewish Americans, was to defend Israel and not to emigrate from it. This attitude has changed recently; the Israeli immigrant community has attained broader recognition from the Jewish community and closer ties have been created (Gold 2002; Gold and Phillips 1996). Today, instead of perceiving Israeli immigrants as a marginal and alienated group, the proximal host of American Jews accepts them, to a larger extent than before, as part of their community. In recent years, Jewish-American organizations have become aware of how beneficial this group can be for the Jewish community and are making a greater effort to absorb Israelis into it (Gold 2002). Israeli immigrants play a role in preserving the Jewish character of the Jewish-American neighborhoods as other Jewish immigrants did in the past. Israelis create businesses, rent and buy houses in Jewish neighborhoods, and participate in the activities of synagogues and schools (Gold 1999; Gold and Phillips 1996).

As time passes, the immigrant Israeli self-definition has been losing ground to an American-Israeli identity, or simply to an American one. Still, most Israelis, even after amassing significant tenure in the United States, identify themselves primarily and principally as Israelis. By so doing, they express characteristics of transnationalism ethnic identity. Furthermore, even when the space of identification is the United States, it is not necessarily 'American' as such, but rather reflects the ethno-religious uniqueness of the Israelis and their utilization of the well-developed institutional infrastructures of the veteran local Jewish community (Rebhun and Lev Ari 2010). When these immigrants become parents, they face a dilemma regarding their children's education. If they do nothing, their children might forget their Jewish-Israeli roots; however, enrolling them in Jewish educational schools creates identity construction difficulties for them as 'diaspora Jews.' Transnational ties, through frequent visits to Israel, expose children to their family and their roots. Thus, by developing formal and informal communal activities (including Israeli youth movements) as well as keeping transnational ties, first generation Israelis hope to preserve their children's Israeli-Jewish identity in the host society (Gold 2002; Lev Ari 2008b).

Rosenthal et al. (1994) found that second generation Israeli immigrants to the United States adopted general American cultural patterns so strongly that they lost their connection and relations with Israel to the extent of total disengagement. Urieli (1995), too, argued that Israeli migrants' offspring were not interested in immersing themselves in the American-Jewish community and found the non-Jewish one preferable. Gold (2002) claimed that Israeli immigrants' offspring are indeed more exposed than first generation immigrants to the non-Jewish society that surrounds

them. These young people identify equally with their ethnic group and the local non-Jewish population, whereas their parents' identification with Israel or with Israelis in the United States is stronger than their identification with the non-Israeli local society.

Several scholars (Kahane 1986; Shokeid 1988; Urieli 1995) have highlighted the importance of the socialization of the parents' home, and its effects on the children's ethnic identity and identification. Socio-psychological studies emphasize the influence of other agents of socialization on the identity of the second generation. Tur-Kaspa Shimoni et al. (2004) also cited the family as a major influence on the development of adolescents' ethnic identity, but stress the role of the community and ethnic group in the adolescents' social setting. Others call attention to the youth movement as another meaningful agent of socialization, especially in the sensitive years of adolescence (Kahane 1986, 2004). Socialization agents such as parents and youth movements can be perceived as mediatory mechanisms between cultures from the origin country and that of the host society. These socialization agents serve as a filter through which selective values are transmitted to young immigrants, and have different impacts on their absorption process (Kahane 1986). Youth movements are characterized by an informal code; they are distinct from the family, the school, and primary peer groups. These movements institutionalize the autonomy of young people and serve as a socialization agent that might affect (among other components) the identity formation of participants (Kahane 1997). Youth-movement activities also acquaint teens with symbols that are sources of identification, strengthen their self-image, and, generally, are helpful in the process of forming ethnic identity (Shapira et al. 2004).

Methods, Participants, and Variables

The quantitative method used here is based on a correlational design, in which relationships among variables are investigated on the basis of data gathered via questionnaires (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2008). More than a half of the respondents (122 of 206) filled in Likert-type questionnaires in the United States or Canada after they were distributed in person (about 70 %) or online (from September 2008 to February 2009). Respondents were traced through 'snowball' sampling, as that was the only option available for finding them. The other 84 questionnaires were distributed to participants in a 'Tzabar group'¹ within a few days of their arrival in Israel. In the questionnaire, those respondents were asked about their lives in North America. Since they had been in Israel for only a few days when they filled in the questionnaires, their impressions of their lives in North

¹ Since 1977, the American-Israeli Scouts movement has been active in places where concentrations of Israelis exist. Incorporated under a 'Tzabar' leadership, they are an integral part of the Scouts movement in Israel. The purposes of the 'Tzabar' leadership activities are to provide an educational setting for Israeli immigrants' children (ages 9–18) in order to reinforce their Israeli-Jewish identity and stay in touch with Israeli culture. After finishing high-school studies in the United States, members of the movement can choose a self-realization track that includes returning to Israel and enlisting in the Israeli army with assistance from a 'Tzabar group' (Israeli Scouts website 2010). I estimate that participation in 'Tzabar Scouts' is between 4–8 % among the total Israeli immigrants' offspring in the United States.

America were still fresh. These mixed and non-random samplings might affect the findings, since they are not a representative sample of Israeli offspring in North America. However, this sample does represent a group of young Israelis, most of whom have two Israeli parents (90 %), from various social backgrounds. The questionnaire examines their parents' attitudes toward Israel and Judaism and especially the respondents' youth movement participation. In addition, the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents' parents are compared with those of previous research findings. The quantitative data analysis included descriptive statistics such as: frequencies, means, and standard deviation. *T* test analysis was used to compare the second and the 1.5 generations. In the final model forced steps regression was employed in order to analyze the impact of the independent variables on various ethnic identity components.

In order to further investigate ethnic identity and identification among Israeli offspring, I used a qualitative method. I based the qualitative part of the research on in-depth structured interviews that I conducted in February 2009 with 19 offspring of Israelis in the United States and Canada. The contents of the in-depth interviews were transcribed and analyzed by grouping main themes into common topics that were meaningful for the research questions (Shkedi 2003).

The purpose of the study was to investigate various components of the ethnic identity and identification of Israeli offspring in North America by generation and impact of socialization agents. Members of the second generation comprised 66 % of all respondents and members of the 1.5 generation 34 %. Those in the latter group were on average 9.62 years old when they immigrated to North America (S.D. = 4.88).

Regarding the participants' *demographic and socioeconomic background characteristics*, 47 % of the 206 respondents were male, age 21 years (S.D. = 4.77; range 15–46 years). No generational differences were found regarding these two variables. Below I describe those variables which were found to be significant by generation.

Almost all second generation immigrants' offspring live in the United States, whereas only two-thirds of those in the 1.5 generation do so; the remainder live in Canada. Another significant finding in which participants in the two groups differ is the countries of birth of the participants and their parents. While most second generation immigrants' offspring were born in North America, most 1.5-generation immigrants were born in Israel and another one-fifth were born in the former Soviet Union.

Most of second generation respondents' fathers were born in Israel (72 %, another 13 % in the United States and the rest in other countries), while only 55 % of the 1.5 generation's fathers were born in Israel (another third in Europe, and the remainder in other countries). Regarding the respondents' mothers, the same pattern is observed: 64 % compared with 59 % were born in Israel (second and 1.5 generation respectively). Since the median year of arrival of the respondents' families in North America was 1995, I compared the parents' countries of origin to previous findings (see Rebhun and Lev Ari 2010), where 67.9 % of first generation Israeli migrants to the United States in the 1990s were native-born Israelis. It seems that on average, the parents' origin in the current research is similar to that of other Israelis.

The parents of participants in both groups had similar higher education attainment. More than one-third of parents of second generation immigrants' offspring and 44 % of those of the 1.5 generation held university degrees. This finding corresponds to those of other studies regarding Israelis in North America (e.g., Lev Ari 2008a) and, above all, those concerning recent Israeli immigrants in the United States, who gained more human capital than those in previous decades (Rebhun and Lev Ari 2010).

As for the gender, age, and ethnic-origin variables, the differences were not statistically significant. However, the proportion of males and Ashkenazi (parents' countries of birth located in Europe or America) was noticeably higher among the 1.5 generation group. Second generation immigrants' offspring assigned themselves to three different ethnic groups (the most frequent, but not the overall majority, being the Ashkenazi), whereas more than half of members of the 1.5 generation placed themselves in the Ashkenazi group. This finding contrasts with earlier findings to the effect that most longer-tenured Israeli immigrants are Ashkenazi (Rebhun and Lev Ari 2010).

The participants' Jewish schooling was primarily day school, which was more common among second generation immigrants' offspring, than compared with the 1.5 generation (47 % versus 29 % who attended day school 'to a large degree,' respectively). Exposure to supplementary school (one to several days a week) characterizes less than a fifth of the second generation immigrants' offspring and less than 10 % of the 1.5 generation.

Prior Israel visits were also more frequent among second generation respondents, compared with those of the 1.5 generation (5–9 visits and 1–4 visits respectively).

Second generation Israeli immigrants are characterized by a higher exposure to Israeli-Jewish socialization agents, compared to those of the 1.5 generation. Below I discuss two other Jewish socialization agents: Jewish environment in the participants' home and synagogue attendance. The last two variables were included in the final model, while Jewish schooling and prior Israel visits were not, since they did not contribute significant explanation to the dependent variables, namely ethnic identity and identification.

A possible explanation for these findings is that, unlike the case of American Jews (see for example, Mittelberg 2007), these two variables have only minor (and insignificant) effects on ethnic identity. Israeli migrants, first, second, and 1.5 generations consider Jewish schooling to be unnecessary since they are Israeli Jews and, as such, do not need further Jewish education in order to reinforce their identity in the host society. In addition, prior trips to Israel do not necessarily include visits to the holy places, but are instead devoted to visiting relatives and friends in Israel and thus have no impact on their ethnic identity.

Independent Variables

1. *Parents' attitude toward Israel* was composed of the nine variables that make up parents' attitudes toward Israel and were grouped into one summarizing variable (Cronbach's α 0.87).

Generally speaking, parents' attitude toward Israel is positive in both groups with no significant difference between them. Among several variables within the 'parents' attitude toward Israel' indicator, however, significant differences between the groups are visible. Second generation immigrants' offspring perceive their parents as attached to Israel more strongly than 1.5 generation immigrants and also regularly visit relatives and friends there. Respondents of the 1.5 generation, in contrast, stated that their families converse mainly in Hebrew and that their parents do transnational business in Israel (although participants in both groups rated these connections as only of medium strength).

Consequently, both groups show evidence of a transnational connection but each group manifests it a little differently. The parents of second generation immigrants' offspring, in the view of these immigrants, are emotionally connected with Israel, visit the country frequently, and maintain transnational family and social ties. Members of the 1.5 generation spoke mainly about maintaining the connection by frequent use of Hebrew and, to some extent, through the parents' economic relations with Israel. Due to these differences, the 'parents' attitude toward Israel' index is included in the model that explains different indicators of identity and identification below.

2. *Jewish background* was composed of two variables: going to synagogue and the Jewish atmosphere in respondents' homes (Cronbach's α 0.63). At the time the research was conducted, less than 25 % of the respondents still lived in their parents' home, and within six months most of them left to join the IDF in Israel.
3. *Youth-movement activity* was composed of two variables: activity in a Zionist youth movement and activity in an Israeli youth movement (Cronbach's α 0.71).

Several significant differences between the two groups were found with regard to the participants' Jewish background and youth movement activity (Table 1). The rate of synagogue attendance was significantly higher among second generation immigrants' offspring than the 1.5 generation, mainly on Jewish High Holidays, but also on the Sabbath. However, half of the 1.5 generation participants stated that they hardly ever go to synagogue, compared to only one-fifth of those in the second generation. The second generation immigrants' offspring were more than twice as likely to describe the Jewish atmosphere at home as meaningful as compared to those in the 1.5 generation. However, the 1.5 generation respondents were more active in Israeli youth movements.

In sum, Jewish background—the Jewish atmosphere at home—is quite strong among second generation immigrants' offspring and moderate among those of the 1.5 generation (similar to the pattern that was discussed earlier regarding Jewish schooling and prior Israel visits). However, exposure to socialization processes within an Israeli or Zionist youth movement was stronger among those of the 1.5 generation.

In addition, it should be noted that more than half (60 %) of the respondents were part of the 'Tzabar group,' of whom 70 % had been exposed to Israeli or Zionist youth movements (while only 25 % of other Israelis participated in youth movements). The 'Tzabar group,' as a whole, is more homogeneous in most

Table 1 Jewish background and youth movement participation by generation (Cross table analysis)

Variable	Second generation (incl. those who immigrated by age 7) N = 132	1.5 generation (N = 68)	Significance of differences
Synagogue attendance			**
Almost never	22	52	
On the High Holidays	59	42	
Almost every Shabbat	16	6	
Almost daily	3	0	
Jewish atmosphere at home			**
Slightly Jewish	10	17	
Moderately Jewish	29	52	
Strongly Jewish	61	31	
Active in Zionist youth movement (pct. of respondents answering "Yes" only)	39	34	N.S.
Active in Israeli youth movement (pct. of respondents answering "Yes" only)	39	59	**

** $\leq .01$; NS Not significant

variables, compared with other Israeli immigrants' offspring who were included in the sample (for more details see Lev Ari 2010). However, regarding generational distribution, in each group two-thirds were second generation immigrant offspring and one-third were from the 1.5 generation.

These differences in exposure to various socialization agents, according to generation of immigration, might engender different patterns of identity and identification, as will be further analyzed in this paper.

Dependent Variables

Ethnic Identity and Identification

Table 2 shows the several ethnic identity and identification components by generation. The indexes for each component were based on the following variables (1 = not at all to 5 = to a very large extent):

1. Jewish identity was composed of the following seven variables (Cronbach's α 0.81): feels Jewish, feels a bond of fate and future with the Jewish people, attributes importance to being Jewish, feels affinity with other Jews, has social relationships with Jews (generally), and frequency of social interaction with Jewish friends and acquaintances.
2. Israeli identity was composed of the following eight variables (Cronbach's α 0.86): feels Israeli, feels a bond of fate and future with the Israeli people, feels proud of the State of Israel, feels affinity with Jews in Israel, has an emotional

- attachment to Israel, talks with friends about Israel, has social relationships (generally) with Jews in Israel, and considers living in Israel.
3. North American identity was composed of the following seven variables (Cronbach's α 0.78): feels American or Canadian, feels a bond of fate and future with North America, has an emotional attachment to the United States or Canada, attributes importance to being North American, feels affinity with (non-Jewish) American/Canadians, has social relationships with Americans or Canadians (generally), and frequent social interaction with non-Jewish friends in North America.
 4. Diasporic identity was composed of the following three variables (Cronbach's α 0.82): feels affinity with other Israelis in North America, has social relationships with other Israelis in North America (generally), and has frequent social interaction with Israeli friends in North America.

Results

Descriptive Statistics: Indicators of Ethnic Identity and Identification, Second and 1.5 Generation Compared

Regarding the indicators of the participants' ethnic identity and identification (Table 2), only in the categories of Israeli identity and identification were no significant differences between the groups found in the summarizing indicators; significant differences between the groups were detected in all the other identity indicators examined. In each component of identity—itsself composed of several variables—differences in both averages and standard deviations make it possible to profile a generational group by its specific identity and identification characteristics.

Jewish identity and identification is strong in both groups but stronger among the second generation, particularly in feeling affinity with other Jews and frequency of social interaction with Jews in North America. Although feeling affinity with other Jews was stronger among second generation participants than among those in the 1.5 generation, not all members of this generation shared this sense of connection to the same extent. In the other variables, Jewish identity and identification was stronger among members of the second generation, a finding manifested in the summarizing indicator and demonstrating a significant difference relative to the 1.5 generation.

An Israeli or transnational identity, in contrast, is stronger among those of the 1.5 generation, mainly in the sense of being Israeli, feeling affinity with Jews in Israel, and having social relationships with them. Also, the homogeneity of the responses was generally stronger among 1.5 generation participants, indicating that they were in consensus about this identity. However, since second generation participants also reported a strong Israeli identity, the difference between the groups in the summarizing identity indicator was not significant, even though the 1.5 generation had a stronger sense of transnational identity than the second generation. Furthermore, the Israeli identity indicator was stronger than the Jewish identity indicator in both groups.

Table 2 Ethnic identity and identification components by generation. Means: 1 = Not at all; 5 = To a very large extent (S.D.) (*t* test)

Variable	Second generation (incl. those who immigrated by age 7) N = 132	1.5 generation (N = 68)	Significance of differences
Jewish identity			
Feels Jewish	4.24 (1.02)	4.07 (0.82)	N.S.
Feels a bond of fate and future with the Jewish people	3.78 (1.28)	3.78 (1.29)	N.S.
Attributes importance to being Jewish	4.18 (1.07)	4.01 (0.91)	N.S.
Feels affinity with other Jews	3.34 (1.10)	3.04 (0.99)	*
Has social relationship with other Jews (generally)	4.05 (1.06)	3.68 (1.08)	*
Frequency of relations with Jewish friends	3.61 (0.69)	3.56 (0.91)	N.S.
Frequency of relations with Jewish acquaintances (from work, studies)	3.24 (0.61)	3.03 (0.800)	N.S.
Jewish identity index	3.78 (0.71)	3.58 (0.58)	*
Transnational identity (with Israel)			
Feels Israeli	4.07 (1.04)	4.53 (0.81)	**
Feels a bond of fate and future with the Israeli people	4.00 (1.19)	3.93 (1.22)	N.S.
Proud of Israel	4.29 (0.93)	4.29 (0.80)	N.S.
Feels affinity with Jews in Israel	3.77 (0.97)	4.10 (1.06)	*
Emotional attachment to Israel	4.43 (0.94)	4.47 (0.83)	N.S.
Talks with friends about Israel	4.22 (1.02)	4.40 (0.78)	N.S.
Has social relations with Jews in Israel (generally)	3.99 (1.10)	4.28 (0.94)	*
Considers living in Israel	3.79 (1.38)	4.00 (1.22)	N.S.
Transnational identity (with Israel) index	4.07 (0.82)	4.23 (0.64)	N.S.
North American (non-Jewish) identity			
Feels American or Canadian	3.50 (1.17)	2.32 (1.13)	**
Feels a bond of fate and future with the North American people	2.52 (1.20)	2.12 (1.03)	*
Emotional attachment to United States/Canada	3.31 (1.21)	2.46 (1.00)	**
Attributes importance to being North American	3.35 (1.09)	2.59 (1.15)	**
Feels affinity with Americans/Canadians	2.92 (0.94)	2.66 (1.08)	N.S.
Has social relations with non-Jewish Americans/Canadians	3.57 (1.15)	3.40 (1.10)	N.S.
North American identity index	3.12 (0.74)	2.53 (0.63)	**
Diasporic identity			
Feels affinity with other Israelis in North America	3.90 (1.01)	4.33 (0.89)	*
Has social relations with Israelis in North America (generally)	4.07 (1.15)	4.35 (0.92)	N.S.
Frequency of relations with Israeli friends in North America	3.31 (0.94)	3.59 (0.78)	*
Diasporic identity index	3.63 (0.95)	3.99 (0.74)	**

* $\leq .05$, ** $\leq .01$; NS Not significant

Local identity and identification with non-Jewish North Americans is more significantly distinct than the two previous identity indicators in the inter-group comparison. Although the total value of the indicator was lower here than in the previous identities, it was higher among second generation participants. These participants identify themselves as North American more than those of the 1.5 generation do, sense a bond of fate and future with them, are emotionally attached to North America, and attribute more importance to being American or Canadian. These feelings are of medium intensity and the dispersion of responses is wide among second generation respondents, whereas the salient features among 1.5-generation participants are estrangement from North America and a much stronger consensus about it.

Finally, the diasporic-identity indicator, i.e., identification with other Israelis in North America, is stronger among 1.5 generation participants and is manifested in feeling affinity with other Israelis in North America and frequent social interaction with them. Expressions of diasporic identity and identification are common among 1.5 generation participants and the consensus about those variables is stronger than among the second generation.

In sum, second generation participants are characterized by the following dimensions of hierarchical ethnic identity and identification: transnational (with Israel), Jewish (local), diasporic (with other Israeli immigrants in North America), and North American (local non-Jewish). Members of the 1.5 generation have almost the same components of ethnic identity but their hierarchy is somewhat different: transnational, diasporic, Jewish, and North American. The former, in conjunction with their transnationality, identify more strongly with local groups—Jewish and non-Jewish—while the latter identify with the homeland and its inhabitants, particularly in Israel and in North America.

Qualitative Findings: Ethnic Identity and Identification, Second and 1.5 Generation Compared

In-depth interviews with the research participants clearly reinforced the foregoing statistical findings about the various groups' sense of identity and identification. Some respondents described a dual or split identity that accommodates several components. Others reported a bifurcation of identity that attests to tension among the components, and yet others described the varied components of their identity as complementary and not contradictory. In all cases, the respondents related to the four identity and identification indicators surveyed in Table 2 and as manifested in various intensities and different social spaces.

The second generation immigrants' offspring described the complexity and dynamic of their ethnic identity thus: "As much as I'm an American, I'm Israeli" (Shuly). And another one elaborated:

I would consider myself an American ...Well, that's funny because my name is Darren and Darren is the American, Itzik is Israeli....My mom has never said the word Darren to me once—she only calls me Itzik. Close family and friends call me Itzik. When I'm with my American friends I'm Darren. So

there's two people, when I'm Darren I'm an American, an American Jew. When I'm Itzik I'm an Israeli.

A 1.5-generation Israeli, speaking in Hebrew, described relations between Israelis and local Jews (in Miami) as estranged: “The American Jewish community, I don't know them so well, I know it's a very large and very organized community. They love Israel, lots of donations, lots of conferences, most of what they do is for Israel. Most Israelis want to stay with Israelis, they don't get along with the Jewish Americans, it's a different mentality” (Haim).

A second generation Israeli woman described the indicators of her identity in an Israeli transnational context and expressed her wish to pass this identity on to her daughter:

I feel like an Israeli, like if I—I think Israelis and Americans, a lot of it is because they go to the army and they mature faster, and they see things that we don't see. We hear about it, but we're not actually going through it. And they're stronger willed, we're not [...]. I feel it's very important to take [my daughter] to Israel; you know, I think it's going to change her way of thinking of stuff. (Shuly)

Yoni, a 1.5-generation Israeli described his social networks in Canada as mainly Israeli: “The Israeli community here in Toronto, we're here when we go out, the whole group” (Yoni).

When asked what the word ‘home’ signified, more than half of the second generation immigrants' offspring cited the United States or Canada. One respondent said: “Canada...because this is where my roots are, where I was born, everything I know from....It's comfortable, it's safe...that's about it” (Jeffrey).

Regarding identity and identification with the non-Jewish majority in North America, second generation immigrants' offspring described their feelings as follows: “Wanting to be normal, wanting to be like everybody else. I think that [plays a factor]. I think that anti-Semitism sometimes plays a factor” (Adam).

A 1.5-generation Israeli described (in Hebrew) his encounter with non-Jewish Canadians on the campus of the university that he attended: “There were shouts and racist epithets and whatnot, a very heated atmosphere, and then this Jewish student from the university got a phone call with a death threat. Campus security wasn't able to get rid of them, so not long ago they called the police” (Yaniv).

In sum, the respondents' testimonies convey a strong sense of the complexity of identity and identification. The second generation immigrants' offspring in the study experienced a split identity that was both dynamic and complementary and treated the transnational aspect as an inseparable part of that identity. Among those of the 1.5 generation, the sense of alienation from the local society, both Jewish and non-Jewish, was manifested more conspicuously and was coupled with a preference for diasporic social networks.

The Model: Factors that Affect Ethnic Identity and Identification

The model in Table 3 examines the effect of the background variables and agents of socialization on the indicators of ethnic identity and identification. Some identity

indicators are affected by demographic and socioeconomic background factors only; others are affected mainly by agents of socialization or by a combination of all variables. The contribution of the agents of socialization is meaningful particularly in respect to the local Jewish, diasporic, and transnational identity and identification, whereas local (non-Jewish) identity and identification is explained almost entirely by demographic background variables.

In this section, I describe the factors that affect each indicator of ethnic identity and identification. In regard to the local Jewish identity in North America, the most significant background variable is the respondent's immigration generation. Thus, the second generation immigrants' offspring in the study (including those who

Table 3 Factors affecting ethnic identity and identification, standardized coefficients (Beta) and R² (based on Forced Steps Regression models, N = 169)

Variable	Jewish identity in N. America	Diasporic identity (as Israelis in N. America)	Transnational (Israeli) identity	Non-Jewish identity in N. America
Independent variables				
Ethnic affiliation (Sephardi/Ashkenazi)	-.10	-.14*	-.08	.02
Gender (M/F)	.05	-.02	.15*	-.09
Age (year of birth)	-.02	.36**	.23**	-.22**
Immigration generation (second/1.5)	-.15*	.16*	.06	-.39**
R ²	.04	.18	.10	.22
Ethnic affiliation (Sephardi/Ashkenazi)	-.02	-.12*	-.01	.01
Gender (M/F)	-.02	-.14*	.05	-.07
Age (year of birth)	-.07	.21**	.11	-.19**
Immigration generation (second/1.5)	.02	.15*	.14*	-.40**
Youth-movement activity	-.02	.26**	.03	-.08
Jewish atmosphere in parents' home	.46**	-.06	.13*	-.05
Parents' attitudes toward Israel	.18*	.36**	.46**	-.04
R ²	.25	.40	.31	.23
R ² change	.21**	.22**	.21**	.01

Note: The independent variables were defined as follows

Ethnic affiliation: 0 = Sephardi, 1 = Ashkenazi; Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; Age was defined as year of birth; Immigration generation: Second = arrived to NA until the age of 7, one and a half = arrived from the age of 8 years; Youth movement activity: 1 = no, 1.5 = moderate, 2 = yes; Jewish atmosphere and parents' attitudes: 1 = to a small extent, 2 = to medium extent, 3 = to a large extent

* ≤.05, ** ≤.01

arrived in North America with their parents before age seven) have developed a stronger Jewish identity and identification than those of the 1.5 generation. The combination of a meaningful Jewish atmosphere in the respondents' homes and frequent synagogue attendance is the most important agent of socialization in constructing the Jewish identity of Israelis' offspring—mainly in the second generation. Positive parental attitudes toward Israel also help to strengthen Jewish identity, but are less effective than the Jewish background in the respondents' home.

The diasporic identity, i.e., identification with other Israeli immigrants in North America, is affected by several background variables. The younger the Israelis' offspring are (the later their year of birth), and the more they affiliate as Sephardi, the higher their diasporic identity compared with older and second generation Israelis. When socialization agent variables are added to the equation, gender becomes an additional explanatory background variable—men have a stronger diasporic identity than women—and parents' positive attitudes toward Israel and activity in youth movements have made a meaningful contribution to the construction of a diasporic identity. However, as was mentioned earlier in this paper, more than a half of the sample consists of the 'Tzabar group,' most of whose members participated in Israeli or Zionist youth movements. Other Israeli immigrants' offspring in the sample were barely exposed to this socialization agent. As a result, diasporic identity was affected by participation in a youth movement.

Transnational identity and identification, i.e., the preservation of ethnic-identity focal points in North America and Israel, are influenced by age and gender in such a way as to make them most typical of young women. However, when background variables are controlled for and the socialization variables are added, the effect of both background variables (gender above all) declines considerably; immigration generation becomes significant, making transnational identity typical of those of the 1.5 generation. Positive parental attitude toward Israel and, to a lesser but still significant extent, the Jewish background in the homes of the immigrants' offspring, had the largest effect on the indicators of transnational identity and identification.

Finally, the local non-Jewish identity is not affected by any socialization agent, as already stated. Respondents' age and immigration generation are the main variables that explain this identity and identification. Older second generation immigrants' offspring (of earlier year of birth) are the ones who most identify and socialize with members of the local society. If this is so, then extensive assimilation into the non-Jewish majority is a function of longevity in the destination country and long-term exposure to the influences of non-Jewish local inhabitants.

Discussion and Conclusions

This article explores patterns of ethnic identity and identification among second and 1.5-generation Israeli immigrants' offspring and the socialization agents that construct this identity. Are Israeli immigrants' offspring in North America Americans, Canadians, Israelis, or Jews? What are the main focal points of their identity and identification: diasporic or transnational? Do they tend to assimilate into the local non-Jewish population of North America in any case?

Ethnic identity and identification are complex, dynamic, and constantly reconstructed through social interactions; the offspring of immigrants in North America, including Israelis, may choose how far they wish to adopt each type of identity. Few immigrants' offspring opt for greater assimilation; most choose selective assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

As has been claimed in respect to the offspring of immigrants to North America from other origin countries (e.g., Park 2008) and in view of the transnational theory of migration (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Vertovec 1999, 2001), the identity and identification indicators of some Israeli immigrants' offspring are anchored in different geographical spaces and coexist with local-identity indicators and a tendency toward assimilation. In addition, some immigrants' offspring develop an ethnic identity which corresponds with more classical approaches (e.g., Gordon 1964), i.e., nearly total assimilation, including with their proximal host, namely local Jews, while others are less assimilated and adopt pluralistic assimilation patterns (Portes and Rumbaut 2001), and still others chose an identity that is primarily transnational (e.g., Kasinitz et al. 2008; Levitt 2007).

It seems that the formation of ethnic identity among immigrants' offspring is not always linear and can be characterized as dynamic. The Israelis in this study have diverse ethnic identities and modes of identification as compared to the second or 1.5 generation in the general population of immigrants' offspring. Some of the identity components that they display resemble those of the immigrant population at large, while others are unique for each group. Second or 1.5 generation immigrants have shared effects with other demographic variables as well as socialization agents that make these individuals interesting with regard to the various components of their ethnic identity.

While both groups have a strong transnational identity, those of the 1.5 generation are more inclined to preserve this identity than are second generation immigrants' offspring. In an even more conspicuous manifestation of this pattern, those of the 1.5 generation also tend to identify and socialize with members of their diaspora group, i.e., other Israelis in North America. Among the second generation, in contrast, it is the local Jewish identity, with the proximal host, that stands out. As they explained in their in-depth interviews, those of the 1.5 generation feel more estranged from local Jewry. Furthermore, while second generation respondents expressed only moderate feelings of identity and identification with non-Jews in North America, they also expressed the possibility of future assimilation in so doing, more than among members of the 1.5 generation.

Consequently, immigration generation has a significant effect on the construction of ethnic identity in the destination country. Members of the 1.5 generation are more inclined than second generation immigrants' offspring to maintain transnational or diasporic relations and to experience a splitting of identity and estrangement toward the destination society (see also Min and Kim 2000; Zhou and Bankston 1998). Sigal, a member of the 1.5 generation, expressed this sentiment (in Hebrew): "I identify very strongly with the Israeli culture and the Jewish identity. Well, I do feel my American side very, very strongly....But it's strange that when I'm in America I feel very Israeli...and when I'm here [in Israel] I always feel American."

Second generation participants feel 'at home' in the destination country and are more inclined to assimilate into their proximal host Jewish group and the non-Jewish majority. As Joseph, a second generation immigrant, said: "I have one identity. I'm an American immigrant. I was born in Israel but I view myself as an American citizen, I'm from America, I don't know anything else."

Generational affiliation aside, parents' positive attitude toward Israel has a powerful effect on the preservation of their children's transnational identity, the strength of their diasporic identity, and, to a lesser extent, the local Jewish identity and identification. Jewish background in the parents' home was very important in the formation of a local-Jewish identity and identification and, to a lesser extent, a transnational identity; however, it has no effect on the diasporic identity and identification. Finally, youth-movement activity contributes to the strengthening of diasporic identity only and particularly among those who were exposed to it (mainly from the 'Tzabar group').

Although intergenerational differences were found mainly in Jewish background and youth-movement participation, these neither encouraged nor discouraged the tendency to self-identify as North American or to socialize with North Americans (non-Jewish). Similarly, the parents' attitude toward Israel had no effect on the formation of this identity. Immigrants' offspring, especially those born in the destination country, are more exposed than their parents to social relations with local people and, therefore, are much more prone to greater assimilation.

This study contributes to broader theories regarding ethnic identity and identification by distinguishing between second generation and 1.5 generation immigrants in regard to the construction of a transnational, diasporic, or local (Jewish and non-Jewish) identity and identification. In light of the various theories presented here, from the classical to the most recent, it seems that being second generation immigrants' offspring may predict stronger assimilation; this, however, does not mean that transnational identity is weak among them. Immigrants' offspring who came with their parents as older children (i.e., members of the 1.5 generation) are of course more alienated from the host society and more attached to immigrants who share their ethnic identity. Concurrently, however, they interact with other peers and may even oppose being part of their own ethnic group. Assimilation and diasporic or transnational ethnic identities are complex and manifest differently among Israeli immigrants commensurate with longevity in North America but not in a dichotomous way. It is also important to consider the effect of agents of socialization on this re-construction of ethnic identity in its various dimensions.

There are some limitations to this study, due to its modest size and non-random (snowball) sampling. Its findings may be biased; even though the respondents' socioeconomic characteristics resemble those of larger representative samples of Israeli immigrants in North America (particularly the United States), a large portion of the sample are participants in the 'Tzabar group.' The heightened rate of diasporic and transnational identity can be attributed to the over representation of the 'Tzabar group' in the sample, their membership in the Israeli youth movement as well as having parents who are extremely attached to Israel. Other Israeli immigrants' offspring are less attached to Israel, or to their Israeli peers in North

America, since their parents are less attached to Israel and thus encouraged them to a lesser degree to participate in an Israeli youth movement (see also Lev Ari 2010).

Further research on Israeli immigrants' offspring should broaden the investigation of their ethnic identity and identification, particularly the transnational and diasporic ethnic identity components, by including larger and more heterogeneous groups.

Immigrants' offspring may choose to affiliate with their origin group in the country of origin, their origin group in the host country, or the host society exclusively (almost total assimilation). The choice between 'there' and 'here,' between living in Israel and being American-Israeli or Canadian-Israeli, is up to these young people. Some of them are influenced by agents of socialization, primarily their parents' attitude toward Israel, and may establish their homes in Israel for this reason. Most of them, however, especially those of the second generation, are equally susceptible to the influences of various social groups in North America, including non-Jewish ones.

The findings of this research may have several policy implications. The first concerns avenues of transnational connections with Israel through youth-movement activities (membership) but primarily along alternative approaches. It seems that only a small portion of Israeli migrants in North America participate in youth movements and that such movements hardly contribute to transnational identity. Participation in youth movements (Israeli-Zionist ones) reinforces the diasporic Israeli ethnic identity, a significant factor in preventing assimilation. This informal socialization agent, however, hardly affects any other components of ethnic identity and identification. As for the Jewish identity versus assimilation reckoning among these young migrants, there is a need to strengthen relations with their local Jewish community, the proximal host. If this is done, it may reinforce focal points of identity and identification—not only Israeli-diasporic, but also local-Jewish—thereby discouraging the offspring of Israeli immigrants from stronger assimilation and loss of Jewish identity. Finally, the first generation of Israeli migrants, namely the parents, has a significant impact on their children's ethnic identity and identification. Both Israeli and local Jewish communities should join together to focus their efforts on first generation Israeli immigrants, along with their offspring, and find ways to strengthen their attachment to Israel as well as their involvement in the local Jewish community. If the first generation of Israeli immigrants is positively connected to Israeli and local-Jewish agencies, their offspring may reconstruct a sustainable multiethnic identity without losing their roots.

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Author Biography

Lilach Lev Ari, Ph.D. is the Head of the Research and Evaluation Authority, and Senior Lecturer and Head of the Sociology Department at Oranim Academic College of Education. Lev Ari is also a lecturer in the Contemporary Jewry Department and a Research Fellow at the Rappaport Center at Bar Ilan University. She is the author of *The American Dream—For Men Only? Gender, Immigration and the Assimilation of Israelis in the United States* (2008) and *American Israelis, Migration, Transnationalism, and Diasporic Identity* (2010, with Uzi Rebhun), as well as various publications regarding ethnic identity among first and second generation Israeli migrants.