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The failure to reinforce Jewishness by becoming Israeli

The acculturation frustrations of Modern Orthodox Jewish American families after their immigration to Israel

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by

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אוניברסיטת תל-אביב
הפקולטה למדעי הרוח ע"ש לסטר וסאלי אנטין
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היחידה למחקר התרבות

הכישלון שבחיזוק היהודיות בתהליך ההשתלבות בחברה הישראלית

תסכולי האקולטורציה של משפחות יהודיות אמריקניות אורתודוכסיות מודרניות לאחר הגירתן לישראל

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Contents

Abstract

Immigration causes alterations in the dynamics of the immigrant family. This study concentrates on two Modern Orthodox Jewish American families whose reason for immigration was to strengthen their religious identity and fulfill their duty as Jews to live in Israel. The parents' original expectations embraced the idea of living in a Jewish country and acknowledged the impending acculturation of themselves and their children. In actuality, they are confronted by the realization that becoming Israeli does not reinforce their Jewishness. While their children were acquiring Hebrew language skills, the gateway to acculturation, the parents grasped more tightly onto American culture and the Jewish traditions that they experienced prior to their immigration.

In this study, the two families, who have immigrated to Israel for a period of less than two years, have been interviewed over a span of six to eight months. The children and parents were separately interviewed in their habitat approximately every ten weeks. Although not all the children displayed enthusiasm towards the idea of immigration, every child acculturated at a more rapid rate than their parents. The parents, whose initial expectation was to immigrate, as they claimed, in order to strengthen their spirituality and embrace the non-materialistic aspects of their lives, were confronted with the cultural influences of Israel imprinting onto their families. Unforeseen, they were affected with the same challenges as any immigrant family faces, the more rapid acculturation of their offspring. As a result of the parents' difficulties in acculturation, they subconsciously and consciously try to maintain past cultural habits in their home as a coping method.

This study recognizes the early stages of conflict that can potentially occur with any family that immigrates. It explicitly reinforces that Modern Orthodox Jewish American families, whose basis for immigration to Israel is with the expectation to enrich their religious and spiritual identities, are susceptible to the same conflicts as any family who immigrates. Although the families interviewed positively anticipated that their immigration would reinforce their Jewishness, they faced the same conflicts of having to accept that their children would become a part of a culture foreign to them. Consequently, they impress upon their children certain expectations in attempts to maintain American culture.

תקציר

מחקר זה מתמקד בשתי משפחות אמריקניות, יהודיות אורתודוכסיות מודרניות, שמטרת הגירתן הייתה לחזק את זהותן היהודית ולהגשים את מה שהן תופסות כחובתן לחיות בישראל כיהודים. הציפיות המקוריות של ההורים היו לקבל ברצון את הרעיון לחיות במדינה יהודית ולקבל את מימוש האקולטורציה בתוך התרבות הישראלית בחייהם ובחיי ילדיהם. אבל המציאות הביאה אותם להבנה שהשתלבות בתוך החברה הישראלית אינה מחזקת את היהודיות. להיפך, בעוד הילדים רכשו מיומנויות שפה, שהן למעשה השער לאקולטורציה, ההורים נאחזו בחוזקה במסורת ובתרבות היהודית- אמריקנית שבה חיו קודם להגירתן.

שתי המשפחות במחקר זה הגרו לארץ לפני כשנתיים, הן רואיינו במשך תקופה כוללת של שישה עד שמונה חודשים. ההורים וילדיהם רואיינו בבתיהם בנפרד בתדירות של כעשרה שבועות לערך. על אף שלא כל הילדים התלהבו מרעיון ההגירה, כל אחד מהם השתרש לבסוף בתרבות המקומית בקצב מהיר יותר משל הוריו. ההורים, שהציפייה הראשונית מהגירתם הייתה לחזק את הערכים הרוחניים ולעודד היבטים בלתי חומרניים בחייהם, מצאו את עצמם מתעמתים עם הטבעת השפעתה של התרבות הישראלית על משפחותיהם. באופן בלתי צפוי מבחינתם, הם נפגעו מן האתגרים העומדים בפני כל משפחת מהגרים ובעיקר מהאקולטורציה המהירה יותר של ילדיהם משל עצמם. בעקבות קשיי האקולטורציה של ההורים, הם ניסו לשמר בבתיהם דווקא את ההרגלים התרבותיים מעברם.

מחקר זה זיהה את השלבים המוקדמים של עימות זה, המוכר ממחקרי הגירה ועל כן צפוי, בנוסף על כך מראה המחקר שמשפחות אמריקניות, יהודיות אורתודוכסיות מודרניות, שעלו לישראל מתוך ציפייה להעשיר את זהותן הדתית והרוחנית, יהיו חשופות לעימותים כמו כל משפחה מהגרת. אף על פי שהמשפחות שרואיינו צפו בחיוב, שהעלייה תחזק ותשנה את זהותם הדתית והתרבותית כיהודים, הן מצאו את עצמן עומדות בפני קונפליקט של קבלת העובדה שילדיהן יהיו חלק מתרבות שונה משלהם. כתוצאה מכך, הן אמצו דרכים להנהיג דפוסי הפרדה תרבותית כדי לשמר את התרבות האמריקנית אצל ילדיהן.

I. Introduction

1.1 The acquisition of language as a gateway to acculturation

Human migration has been a known event since the dawn of history. Commonly referred as immigration, the International Organization for Migration estimates that as of 2010, there are two hundred and fourteen million immigrants worldwide (3.1% of the world's population) (International Migration Stock: The 2008 Revision 2009).

This study supports the theory that there is a direct correlation between the acquisition of the target locale's language in order to achieve successful assimilation, the stepping stone to acculturation (Yinon 2010). Successful assimilation is when the individual is integrated into a society in which they appear native to the locales. In order for an individual to personally achieve native status, acculturation must take place. Fluency of language is also characterized by the nuances of speech including gesticulations, verbal thought processes, and so forth. The acculturation process requires that the individual will modify his own culture as a result of integrating with another culture.

1.2 Emotional conflict as a result of family immigration

There are complex emotional repercussions that occur during immigration which affects each individual on varying levels. When an entire family immigrates, each individual acculturates at differing rates. The unequal rates of acculturation on each individual in the family will impact the relationships between family members. Each is forced to contend with different individual experiences that occur within their ecological system (Addison 1992). As a result of the individual changes which take place during the acculturation process, the expected role of each family member changes.

The majority of the relevant research studies are based upon economic immigrants seeking better economic opportunities for their children. These immigrants may come from countries where opportunities for success are difficult to attain and immigrate for the purposes of enriching the lives of future generations. Although people may immigrate with an advanced educational background and a profession, the immigration from a country with cultural barriers places them

at a disadvantage over natives. For children who attend school and naturally learn how to acculturate, the transition of attaining another culture is more accessible.

Children's more rapid acculturation may negatively impact family dynamics. This study, unexpected familial changes as a result of children's more rapid acculturation leads to parents' attempt to maintain past cultural expectations within the household using unintentional emotional methods in order to maintain their American culture.

1.3 Immigration of Jews to Israel

In 2009 there was a 17% rise in immigration to Israel. 16,200 people immigrated to Israel. While most of them have arrived from the Former Soviet Union, 3,324 North Americans arrived to Israel (Branovsky 2009). By 2011, there were well over 5,000 North American and UK immigrants who arrived in Israel ("Aliyah Statistics" 2012).

Two Modern Orthodox Jewish American families who have immigrated to Israel in between 2009 and 2010 with their children's ages spanning from 5 – 17 are interviewed in this study. The said objective in both of the families' immigration to Israel was embodied in Israel's Law of Return and the responsibility a Jew has to live in Israel. The Law of Return states that every Jewish person has the right to live in Israel. With 613 *mitzvot* in the Jewish religion, each *mitzvah* is considered a good deed a Jewish individual must commit to show devotion, they are a commandment of the Jewish law to be fulfilled according to one's ability. Considered one of the 613, *aliyah*, a Jew's immigration to the land of Israel, is commanded by God. The families explain that a determining factor for immigrating to Israel was based on *Yishuv Ha'Aretz*, a *mitzvah* commanded by God to settle in *Eretz Yisrael* (Guberman 2001).

1.4 Rationale for thesis

Both families in the study mentioned that they abandoned financial security and social status with the anticipation of acculturation in order to strengthen their Jewishness in Israel. Both sets of parents agreed that the value of their children's' lives should not be determined by materialistic worth, but rather improving the spiritual and intangible value of their lives as Jews.

At the same time, parents heavily weighed their decision to move on their ability to find economic stability in Israel. Both families' immigration was determined years in advance and

became a reality when the men secured employment in Israel. For both families' when the decision to immigrate finalized, it had been a long anticipated plan of action that was to become a reality.

Examples of motivating factors for immigration are generally centered around finding a higher standard of living based on economic stability and political soundness or freedom of lifestyle. Many studies are centered on immigration to the United States from other countries. Unlike this study, the factors influencing immigration to the United States are generally centered on fulfilling the "American dream." Coined by James Truslow Adams in 1931, he expressed as "life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement." The idea behind the American dream comes from the Declaration of Independence which proclaims that all men are created equal. The lure of immigration to the Unites States is that everyone is given an equally opportunity at life regardless of social class or circumstances at birth (Truslow Adams 1935).

The idea that one can immigrate to the United States and obtain economic success with hard work is an alluring concept to people living in less than attractive living standards. The theory of the American dream is one that causes many people to choose to immigrate to the United States. Many of the studies written about family immigration are centered on families who move to the United States in hopes of more successful economic living standards for themselves and for their families. According to the theory, arriving in the United States with the motivation to succeed should be enough to build a prosperous life.

What many immigrants fail to fully comprehend is that the level of success during immigration is heavily dependent on a person's ability to acculturate into society rather than their motivational and intellectual ability. The more extreme a person's culture is to the target country, the more difficult it is to achieve success. In literature about immigration, the second generation is more likely to succeed in the target country rather than parents. The ability to adapt a new culture and change patterns of thought is a process more easily achieved by younger children as opposed to their parents (Hwang 2006).

Many research theories are based on the negative impact of familial acculturation are numerously based on the immigration to the United States with school-aged children. The children's ability to acculturate into society more quickly and doubtlessly has given them more opportunities at success in the United States at the cost of irreversibly distancing themselves from their parents.

When a child successfully acculturates in society, the dynamics of a family is impacted as cultural boundaries accepted in the household are overstepped. Children's more rapid acculturation rates provides them with new points of views on values, thought processes, socialization, etc., which may coincide or seem foreign to parental expectations. This is the leading cause of family conflict within immigrant families. In addition, cultural changes often result in bicultural identities to which both child and parent and left conflicted with opposing personal expectations. To achieve personal acceptance, the individual must create a new identity for oneself which includes aspects of both cultures. They may significantly vary between each family member. Often times, an immigrate will suit himself to the appropriate cultural situation in order to achieve success in their new surroundings at the expense of feeling a lack of solid identity within himself (LaFramboise et.al. 1993).

Often times and naturally, parents expect their children to maintain the same familial and social values as they were raised. When children's expectations change over a visibly rapid span of time, a parent's desire to adhere to the old may cause strife within the family. Key conflicting themes occur to varying degrees in studies of families who immigrate to America. The lack of preparedness for the varying rates of acculturation is the root cause of irreversible conflict that occurs within families who immigrate to the United States in search of the American dream.

1.5 Personal influence over the topic

As a child of parents who immigrated to the United States in search of the American dream, I have experienced the conflicts that occur within immigrant families. To my surprise, upon beginning my research, I discovered that the experiences I had undergone were not unique to me, and more surprisingly had researched topics dedicated to the experiences I had undergone.

To me, our immigration had seemed a flawless process. When I was too young to comprehend, my parents relocated to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and we remained an Israeli family in the United States. My parents had adjusted themselves to the Israeli community within the United States and we maintained strong ties to our Israeli background visible in the décor, cuisine, language, and other cultural aspects within our home. At an unrecognizable point early in my childhood, I had mastered the English language and behavioral nuances of American society to which I remember differed greatly from my home life.

In my early adulthood, there were visible rifts between my expectations at home and my behavior outside of the home. My parents became more extreme in maintaining and adding new aspects related to the culture they grew up with, while I became more integrated in mainstream American culture. Despite the fact that my parents' immigration was accompanied by mastery of the English language, upper middle class social status, and relevant economic and academic experiences, my experiences incurred the same conflicts when immigrant parents attempt to maintain the culture of origin and children completely acculturate.

As the daughter and an immigrant from Israel, I have developed a bicultural identity and maintain an identity with minimal conflicting cultural aspects. The relationship with my parents is continuously being defined and reformatted to fit diverging cultural perspectives regardless of my personal decision to immigrate back to Israel while my parents and younger brother (American born) have decided to remain in the United States. This has offered me additional perspectives on bicultural aspects of my own family. When I lived in the United States I considered my parents completely Israeli, but I have now better understood that they have adopted aspects of American culture and have created their own bicultural identities.

1.6 Studies about immigration to Israel

There are research studies on Jewish immigration of refugees and economic immigrants with instances of families moving to Israel who have undergone the same process as immigrants who arrive in the United States. The family purses their goals under the notion that better standards of living will define a successful immigration for individual and the family. In the case of immigration to Israel, generally speaking, there have been varying waves of immigration since

the founding of Israel in 1948. Regardless of the success of the immigration, the process the family undergoes normally results in the same types of conflicting themes.

In recent years, the bulk of immigration to Israel has shifted to North American immigrants. Currently, there are around 110,000 North American Jews living in Israel. With the foundation of *Nefesh B'Nefesh*[*] in 2002, Rabbi Yehoshua Fass and Tony Gelbart in cooperation with the Jewish Agency and the Israeli government have encouraged immigration from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The purpose of the organization is to minimize the financial, professional, logistical, and social obstacles that potential immigrants face in encourage Jews to fulfill the Law of Return to live in Israel ("Aliyah Statistics" 2012).

1.7 The purpose of this study

Many of the families who chose to make an *aliyah* (the terminology adopted from the Hebrew language used to define a Jewish person who immigrates to Israel; literally, "to rise") do so for Zionistic purposes. American families who immigrate to Israel for such purposes are typically stereotyped for leaving behind successful living conditions including economic and social stability in order to reinforce their Jewish identities. The families who immigrate to Israel look to strengthen their Jewish identity to the fullest extent.

Families who decide to move to Israel for primarily Zionistic purposes have accounted for economic and social difficulties in Israel by comparison to the United States. Despite this, the families' primary goal is to successfully acculturate themselves and the coming generations to become Israeli Jews. Typically, they are unaware of the realities of Israeli culture and expect Israel to be a Jewish state.

The definition of Jewish is disputed as both a combination of religion and ethnicity. More often being Jewish outside of Israel is defined as a religion. In Israel the dynamics between the Jewish

[*] The core mission of *Nefesh B'Nefesh* is to revitalize Aliyah and to substantially increase the number of future *Olim* by removing the professional, logistical and financial obstacles that prevent many individuals from actualizing their dreams. In the process of fulfilling our mission, we aim to educate and inspire the Jews of the Diaspora as to the centrality of the Jewish State to the Jewish people and its desirability as a Jewish home. Such enhanced awareness will send an unmistakable signal of Anglo-Israeli Jewish solidarity and of our mutual determination to strengthen the State of Israel and thereby increase the likelihood of an ever expanding Aliyah reality (http://www.nbn.org.il/about.html).

people is most always defined as an ethnicity. There exist radical degrees of Jewish identity to very religious (*Haredim*) to ethnicity defined secular Jews (*Hilonim*). The religious immigrants who arrive to Israel for the purpose of strengthening their Jewish identity are subjected to identifying Judaism as an ethnicity and a religion.

This research focuses on two religious Jewish American families whose move to Israel welcomes the acculturation into Israeli society. Parental expectations were to initially immerse themselves in Israeli culture, but turned out to be surprisingly conflicted with having to define Judaism as their ethnicity. The families focus themselves in the need to redefine being Jewish not only as a religion but also as a part of their culture.

These American families actually anticipated to undergo the same processes as any immigrant. The dynamics in the family inequitably shift as children more quickly adopt the tools to succeed in the new culture. It seems to be that the younger the child is during immigration, the smoother the acculturation process. Inevitably, every family member interviewed adapted and shifted certain aspects of themselves and their existing culture to the new culture.

However, in the two families interviewed, the children's acculturation was impeded by both mothers' unintentional use of selective acculturation to hinder the acculturation process. The initial expectation from both sets of parents welcomed acculturation because they believed that it would strengthen their Jewish identity. Even the parents, themselves, anticipated the opportunity to redefine their lives. Unexpectedly, they were confronted with the cultural implications of being Jewish in Israel. As a result to maintain American culture within the family, the mothers eventually use emotional control on her family. Although the initial intention was to fully integrate into Israeli culture both families encountered the same cultural conflicts arising from family immigration.

II. The acculturation process and accepted theories of conflict

There are reoccurring themes of cultural conflict between the self and family members that precede immigration. The themes are all interrelated to the unequal rates of acculturation. Although there are both negative and positive implications, each ultimately leads to a change in how one's identity is defined.

A successful immigration is considered such if the individual is successfully acculturated into his society. Acculturation is the process of adopting the beliefs and behaviors of another group. "The phenomena which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous firsthand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (Hwang 2006, 297). Aspects of acculturation include language acquisition, attitudes and behaviors, participation in social groups and institutions to the extent that the individual is indistinguishable from the dominating group (Hazuda et al. 1988).

Some immigrant families never achieve the ability to mold into the demands of a new society and as a result, their lack of acculturation directly influences their offspring and generations that follow (Piedra and Engstrom 2009). The impact of immigration on immigrant parents places them in a position of urgency. Their inability to acculturate to a new culture will ultimately create a rift between themselves and their children as the second generation is more directly influenced by their current environment.

On the other hand, generations are also directly influenced by the first generation immigrants. Parents who immigrate continue to rear their children with influences from their culture of origin. However, the surrounding environment inadvertently causes small nuances in the home such that parents maintain a household indirectly influenced by their new surroundings. This might include over exaggerating certain areas from the culture of origin that may have been irrelevant before immigration.

2.1 Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory recognizes four systems that influence the individuals' development and culture (Addison 1992). The most immediate and powerful is the microsystem. This is the system in which the individual directly participates (school, family,

neighborhood, etc.) and accepted to include biological composition, as well. The mesosystem consists of interconnections between the micro-system (the relationship of the experiences between the microsystem). The exosystem is the system are not directly experienced by the individual but influence his or her development (influencing parental experiences). Lastly, the macrosystem is reflected by social, political, and ideological norms and ideas in the existing culture. Within the microsystem, the way a family functions will directly influence the outcome of an individual's well-being within the culture. In addition, according to Bronfenbrenner is the direct influence of an individual's psychological development (Addison 1992).

2.2 Assimilation

The levels of the Ecological Systems Theory are intertwined with the culture of each society. Assimilation refers to the way an individual changes their way of life to conform to the norms of the new culture as embedded into the Ecological system. Unlike acculturation, assimilation does not include changes in behavior and values, rather more simply put their ability to "fit in."

Assimilation was once thought to be a straight-lined process in which the individual assimilated into society at a consistent rate until accepted into society as mainstream. However, according to Portes and Rumbaut, the segmented assimilation theory identifies that there are factors that contribute to different rates of acculturation among immigrant families (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). The segmented assimilation theory takes into account that in a society there are many levels of social stratification and adaptation, therefore, assimilation occurs on varying rates for every individual (Greenman and Xie 2007).

In segmented assimilation there is more than one way at become a part of the target culture (Greenman and Xie 2007). The segmented theory can be identified in the microsystem where immigrant families experience different levels of assimilation into society. Within a family, intergeneration acculturation takes place. The process by which parents and their offspring acquire language and normative lifestyles in a new culture is crucial to understanding the conflicts that arise when rates of assimilation vary among family members (Piedra and Engstrom 2009).

The dangers associated with assimilation include (1) being rejected from the target culture, (2) being rejected from the culture of origin, (3) excessive stress as a result of assimilation (LaFramboise et al. 1993). It identifies the factors that contribute to intergenerational family conflict among immigrant families and retards social mobility (Piedra and Engstrom 2009). The assumption made by all theories of assimilation is that an immigrant will be faced with a loss of culture or his original identity as he acquires a new identity in a second culture. This leaves the individual susceptible to experiencing levels of alienation and isolation until he is accepted into the new culture resulting in higher levels of stress, anxiety, and social problems (LaFramboise et al. 1993).

2.3 Acculturation as part of the assimilation process

Success in assimilation can be an *appearance* of fusion within society, but it does not account for the changes that occur within the self. Assimilation is a stepping stone to acculturation. Acculturation is the psychological as well as the cultural changes that are a result of immigration. The changes that occur as a result of cultural clashes change aspects of an individual from day-to-day behavior resulting in changes on a wide spectrum from personal preferences in taste to changing the thought process and personal beliefs (Hwang 2006).

Acculturation is accelerated by communication abilities which suggest that a successful acculturation can be measured by a person's success in for areas of communication: intrapersonal, interpersonal, mass media behavior, and communication environment. A distinguishing characteristic of acculturation is its involuntary nature. For example, for an immigrant group forced to acculturate for economic reasons, there are multivariate models that measure economic factors that influence acculturation such as income, class status, education, occupation, and so forth (LaFramboise et al. 1993).

In an ideal world, both parents and their children will acculturate at the same pace so that the changes that occur on an individual level are simultaneous with one another. However, environmental and biological factors impact individuals differently depending on the event and an individual's personal characteristics (Hwang 2006). Portes and Rumbaut recognized three types of intergenerational acculturation that influence the dynamics of an immigrant family.

Dissonant acculturation occurs when children acquire culture at an accelerated rate than their parents. As a result, the parent-child relationship is undermined because the parents lose the ability to provide necessary guidance and support as a result of being removed for the target culture. Children's mastery of the target culture puts them at a social advantage over their parents which as acculturation includes, a change in behavior and values – differing from their parents. The result is in the emergence of a revised identity that is not reflective of parents' beliefs and values (Piedra and Engstrom 2009).

The process of consonant acculturation is encompassed by a gradual process of the loss of culture of origin occurs as the child acquires the targeted culture. In this type of acculturation process, parents have the means to provide cultural experiences from the country of origin which maintain certain aspects of the parents' culture. While the child gradually abandons his culture, influences from the culture of origin are embedded in his identity (Piedra and Engstrom 2009).

Selective acculturation occurs when the child is immersed in a co-ethnic community. In this type of acculturation, cultural shift is slowed by the parent's ability to influence and maintain the culture of origin within the home (Cort 2009).

The relationship between parent and child is best maintained in consonant and selective acculturation, but the obstacles that the individual faces in his outside environment will heavily impact his identity. If success is measured by full acculturation defined as adapting the behaviors and beliefs of another group, then an individual must abandoned aspects of his old culture behind. Maintaining two cultures within one identity may lead to areas of conflict within beliefs and behaviors. As a result, the well-being of an individual is impacted. Because the culture of origin can never be identical to the target culture, individuals must either abandon their culture of origin or develop a bicultural identity. Both influence the dynamics of the family. Ideally, for successful acculturation, the entire family must completely abandon the culture of origin to attain the same family dynamics. However, in reality, each individual will be influenced by varying degrees and the redefinition of their identity will take bits and pieces from each culture to redefine the individual. As a result, a new identity is built for each individual who reshapes the definition of the roles within the family.

2.4 Acculturative Styles

Acculturation can generally define an individual according to one of four different types of patterns. Generally speaking, families with mismatched acculturation styles experiences levels of discord. However, the levels of discord are also exacerbated by varying acculturated between parents and children. The four patterns of acculturation are assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization (Birman 2006).

Assimilation – Replacing the native culture with the target culture.
Integration – Combining aspects of the target culture with the native culture.
Separation – Retaining the native culture and rejecting the target culture.
Marginalization – Alienation from both cultures (Unger et al. 2002).

Three factors can help assess the rate of progress of acculturation within an individual. The language, identity, and behavior acculturation scale is a method used to measure acculturation (Birman 2006). They include the areas of language competence – how well an individual speaks the language in comparison to a native. Identity acculturation determines the degree to which the individual identifies with the native culture and the target culture. And, lastly, behavioral acculturation which determines how the individual engages with behavior associated with each culture (e.g. language use, media, music, entertainment, food, etc.) (Birman 2006).

2.5 Acculturation Gap

An acculturation gap occurs as a result of children's faster rate of acculturation in comparison to their parents. As a result of differing rates of acculturation, an acculturation gap is said to occur over a period of time – a contributing factor to intergenerational family conflict between immigrant families. Family conflict was lowest when acculturative rates were high for both parent and child and lowest when acculturation rates varied between family members. However, the study's limitation occurred when children and parents overestimate or underestimate each other's level of acculturation. An important aspect to take account in measuring the acculturation gap between families is that members of the family may have different perceptions as the acculturation rates of other family members in relation to themselves. This suggests that self-

perceived notions of acculturation may be an additional factor to family conflict and negative psychological outcomes between immigrant families. In order to assess levels of acculturation, parents and children must be individually assessed (Birman 2006)

The acculturation gap is expressed as having bidirectional mobility. In most respects, the gap considers the effects of acculturation to the target culture. The distancing is accountable for the gap that occurs when parents more slowly adjust to target culture than children. However, in addition, one must consider the conflict that arises when children no longer feel a part of the original culture. A diminished attachment to native culture from a child's perspective may lead to identity confusion and a lack of identification with their parents. For each degree and direction, a family member may experience varying levels of acculturative styles.

2.6 Acculturative Family Distancing

The acculturative gap causes conflict in immigrant families that go beyond the normal discord of functioning families. The acculturative gap has the potential to affect all immigrant families; however, not all families spiral towards conflict as a result. For this matter, Wei-Chin Hwang has more specifically coined the term acculturative family distancing (AFD) to describe a mechanism that increases the risk for familial conflict among immigrant families. AFD is defined according to two different dimensions which include, "a breakdown in communication and incongruent cultural values that develop as a consequence of different rates of acculturation and the formation of an acculturative gap" (Hwang 2006, 398).

Family dysfunction increases as AFD increases. The primary dimension of AFD occurs with the loss or failure of communication between parents and children. This includes both aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication. When the language in the target country is not spoken in the home, there is a risk for the failure of verbal communication. Regardless if the child is fluent with the native language, his access to mainstream culture from school and other varying forms of media will influence his quicker rate of language acquisition. At the same time, parents may have a difficult time fluently communicating in the target language, such that the language of preference at home is that of the native country. The problem arises when the child masters the target language and finds that expressing himself in the native language becomes more of a

challenge. Children maintain the same language skills from their native language and have no opportunity to advance at an academic level, thus leaving there native language skills at a stagnant level. This generally occurs with children who immigrate before adolescence. The lack of language building in addition to the mastery of a new language may cause the child and parent to lose aspects of their ability to communicate, as parents will prefer to communicate in their native language. This may result in the inability to properly communicate emotional needs to the individual (Hwang 2006).

In addition to verbal communication, there are many types of nonverbal communication which include, "proxemics (the use and perception of interpersonal space), kinesics (body movements and facial expressions), paralanguage (vocal cues such as pauses, silences, and inflections), and high-low context communication (the degree to which explicit language is used vs. implied)" (Hwang 2006, 4). Conflict arises when there is misinterpretation of nonverbal communication. Changes in personal space, facial expressions, gesticulations, and physical affections are all influenced by the culture's type of nonverbal communication. Children may misinterpret parents are being cold and distant while parents may perceive this children in lacking emotional control, for example. The inability to perceive nonverbal differences within culture will ultimately lead to family conflict and emotional distancing (Hwang 2006).

The additional aspect of AFD occurs when cultural values are dissimilar among the uneven acculturation that occurs between parents and their children. Although young children are more likely to be exposed to their parents' cultural influences, the outside transmission of culture from outside forces such as school, interpersonal relationships, religion, moral character, and so forth will influence children. In addition, these are also aspects that influence parents as they undergo their own acculturation process often times changing certain aspects of their beliefs to suit a mixed version adapted from the target culture. If the parents and child's ability to communicate diminishes, the parents' ability to transmit cultural values and traditions diminishes, as well (Hwang 2006).

2.7 Intergenerational Family Solidarity

First generation immigrants regard family solidarity with higher value than second generation immigrants. Because recent immigrants are more dependent on their immediate family for support, the degree of intergenerational family solidarity increases. An immigrant family loses personal and social aspects of their lives in addition to the support from the extended family in the native country. They must overcome challenges related to cultural differences in the target country, often time the ties between interdependent roles in the immediate family will tighten. The parents' generation may place high importance in maintaining exaggerated forms. The children, who have not experienced the same degree of loss of culture and family, may differ in values and attitudes towards family solidarity. One study by Merz et.al. concluded that first generation immigrants undergo the greatest amount of intergenerational family solidarity as compared to the second generation (Merz et al. 2009)

2.8 Role-Reversal

Parent-child role reversal is prominent theme that occurs as a negative impact of family immigration. It emerges in concordance with two separate factors; child dominance and family support. Role reversal assumes when the child of a family who immigrates assumes the role of parental behaviors which include acting as parents to their parents, siblings, spouse, or a peer while the parent is helpless, seeking reassurance, or is engages in other helpless behaviors. Often times the parent expects the child to fulfill these roles with no regard to the child's emotional needs (Oznobishin and Kurman 2009).

The changes an immigrant undergoes when moving to a new country may be experienced as psychologically shocking – culture shock. During this time, the support of the immediate family is crucial and a family who is unable to offer support to one another during the transition may result in psychological implications for the dynamics of the family that may be irreversible (Oznobishin and Kurman 2009). The inability of parents to provide emotional support to their children during the time of transition may result in children assuming the roles of the caretaker.

Because children are more adaptive to mastering new languages and acculturating, parents may fall into a sense of loss not only with their surroundings but with their role as parents in the

family. They are faced with child rearing obstacles unfamiliar to them as the language, value, norms, and any other sudden change in their children emerges. The undefined boundaries faced by parents and children may cause dilemma in the way each member of the family is to assume their family roles with newly implanted cultural impacts. In addition, the child's mastery of the new language results in dominance over the parents. The parents are dependent on relying on the child for a voice and the child's voice comes with his or her own identity shifts the traditional role of the child in a family and gives them the power to be the family's main speaker.

The mastery of a new language comes with the responsibility of performing concrete functional tasks for the households, but most likely accompanies other more significant responsibilities that the parents inadvertently place onto their children. Children who acculturate more quickly than their parents are the providers of emotional support and other sources of comfort for the conflicted family. While the parent does not expect to receive emotional support from the child, no guidance or support is given from the parent. This distorts the distinction between parent-child roles. Children who provide for their parents cannot distinguish between parent/child obligations (Oznobishin and Kurman 2009).

The negative implications of such behavior causes children to have disruptive identity development and are at risk for developing self-defeatist personality traits as well as over controlling and assuming inappropriate caretaking roles in their formed relationships (Oznobishin and Kurman 2009). While aspects of role reversal are described to an extreme, these implications can arise on different scales to any family who shows maladjustment and the inability to cope causing the same time of conflict within the family.

The differences between children who are susceptible to role reversible by non-immigrant families, is that the children of immigrant families need to undergo the practical issues such as the acquisition of language and culture which causes successful functioning in a new country. Some studies claim that parental children function more responsibly in a family and as a result have a greater amount of self-esteem, self-confidence, and individualism (Oznobishin and Kurman 2009).

2.9 Bicultural Identity

There are two different theories of biculturalism. The first theory is that the individual adapts both cultures and alternates the bicultural pattern depending on his cultural location. The two cultures are separately defined and the individual switches back and forth according to the cultural context (Stroink and Lalonde 2009). This is also defined as the alternation model. The alternation model is in parallel with code-switching theories of bilingualism. An individual is able distinguish between the varying culture and behave accordingly without undergoing distress (LaFramboise et al. 1993).

In the second theory, the bicultural identity is blended and the individual adopts a new identity with parts from both cultures. In this instance, the individual develops a unique identity (Stroink and Lalonde 2009). Similar to this theory, the fusion model suggests that an individual develops a melting pot identity in which he fuses aspects of both cultures and creates his own unique culture. The problem with the fusion model is its success is difficult to measure as one is apt to appear indistinguishable from one group although they view their identity differently. In addition, the fusion of two cultures becomes unique to each individual – making them difficult to find a person who can identify with the same created cultural fusion (LaFramboise et al. 1993).

The bicultural competence model suggests that developing more than one cultural identity should not be a result of personal conflict. On the contrary, it suggests that those who develop a bicultural identity develop their sense of self awareness and personal integration. Bicultural competence arises from six factors including: (1) knowledge of cultural beliefs and values, (2) positive attitude towards both groups, (3) belief that one is able to function effectively within both cultures, (4) ability to communicate within both cultures, (5) ability to behave appropriately within both cultures, and (6) secure social network within each culture (Stroink and Lalonde 2009).

The struggle occurs when an individual tries to unite various aspects of each culture which may conflict with one another. Avoiding this conflict requires a strong sense of personal and cultural identity. Stroink and Lalonde explain that the social identity perspective which includes the self-categorization theory and the social identity theory may help identify aspects of bicultural

conflict (Stroink and Lalonde 2009). The most commonly found aspects of bicultural conflict include inappropriate levels of aggression, sexual openness, and a pinpointed focus on sports and/or education.

Despite theories of the negative impacts of a bicultural identity, studies suggest the impact of two cultures can have a positive impact on the individual. Depending on how an individual looks at the situation, a bicultural identity can give the immigrant an edge over the non-immigrant. The result of immigration is the adoption of perspectives that the non-immigrant does not have the experience to possess nor identify with. For the immigrant with a bicultural identity, self-awareness, and cultural sensitivity are heightened (LaFramboise et al. 1993). Nevertheless, these "gifts" bestowed on the immigrant, although makes him able to identify with aspects of both cultures – the natives of either culture will never be able to identify with his perspectives.

Aspects of biculturalism have alternative theories of integration and personal identity. The multicultural model suggests that there is a pluralistic approach to maintaining inner-harmony when living in two conflicting cultures. It suggests that public and personal identities need not be intertwined. A person can positively remain his own identity and maintain a public identity (LaFramboise et al. 1993).

2.10 Social Identity Theory

Henri Tajfel's social identity theory proposes that a person defines his social identity based on the groups in which he belongs. The social group in which one maintains his social network is a predetermining factor that identities the self. In other words, a person's social context and the groups he belongs to will be the source of the development of identity. In social groups, self-stereotyping occurs when members enhance the similarities between themselves and the group which they belong. They develop similar cultural patterns and provide a sense of identification and belonging. The social identity theory is said to express in-group identification and positive and negative experiences reflected in a person's social belonging and self-esteem (Stroink and Lalonde 2009). Bicultural individuals may find it difficult to navigate between the different social groups.

Difficulty arises when an individual must internalize negating aspects of values, expectations, and characteristics of varying cultures. The individuals researched were closely tied with two different cultures resulting in their inability to closely fit into either of the group; creating the inability to fully identify with either. Because social identity is directly correlated to the social relationships that occur within the group, the bicultural individual may never feel fully identified to either group. The result is an individual with low self-esteem, higher uncertainly, and an overall dissatisfaction from life (Stroink and Lalonde 2009).

2.11 The Stranger

Modern theories of acculturation and biculturalism are connected to Georg Simmel's theories on "The Stranger". According to Georg Simmel's definition of The Stranger from *On Individuality and Social Forms*, he is one who is "near and far at the same time (1908)." A stranger is one who arrives at a new place temporarily or permanently. Although he may settle in a new territory, he will always be viewed as the outsider. This is because a stranger brings standards that differ from the existing community. Whether it is the introduction of new customs, beliefs, characteristics, etc. he will always have the ability to leave. Having the freedom to come and go allows the individuals to hold on to prior culture as well as adapting new culture. He has the ability to move back and forth between cultures or retain aspects of both. Because of this, he will never truly be indigenous of either the old or the new territory.

The Stranger's experience gives them an eagle eye perspective because they can never again truly become part of only one culture. As a result, they adapt to the more general qualities of each territory. According to Simmel, The Stranger will always be an individual who is mobile. Once an individual has been exposed to other cultures, he will be susceptible to new ideas which impede him from returning to his original way of life and create an individual who is a part of different cultures, but will never perfectly fit within a specific one (Simmel 1908).

According to Robert Park in *Human Migration and the Marginal Man*, the discomfort the individual feels with this bicultural identity is beneficial to society in for the impending future. The immigrant brings with him ideas that change the repertoire and facets of a culture and introduces change. However, this has lasting effects on the marginal man. The individual who

moves to a new society will develop characteristics of both cultures. More importantly, this stranger will ultimately will be enlightened having the ability to see multiple perspectives as an outsider. His status will prevent him from fitting in to one particular place, but will give him the ability to influence others with new perspectives (Park 1928).

The setback with the Marginal Man is that the individual who has relocated may be forced to assimilate into a different social status or face complete rejection from each group. He will have characteristics that can be defined as two different people because he is intertwined in both cultures. When he comes to term with a group conflict that coincides with a personal one, he finds himself torn within himself (Stonequist 1935). W.E.B Du Bois coined the term double consciousness as an individual is stuck between different views points and their clashing forces the reevaluation of cultural balance (Du Bois 1897).

All these theories and models that occur during immigration may potentially lead to conflict for the identity of the individual. Accepting that children of immigrant parents more readily adopt the new culture and leave the family susceptible to conflict not only with one's self but with the self in correlation to the changing dynamics of the family one must wonder, what causes a family to decide to uproot their children and move to another country?

III. Reasons for Immigration

Reasons for immigration are plentiful and depend on the location and timeline of immigration. The major reasons for immigration include: political freedom, economic opportunity, religious tolerance, political refugees, family reunification, forced immigration, or a free atmosphere.

What is unique about the families I interviewed is that the parents' make sure that their opinions are known that their immigration was based upon the desire to strengthen their spiritual and intangible identities, to immigrate to a country created as a sanctuary for Jews around the world. They were not escaping religious intolerance nor looking for economic opportunity, rather to reclassify their identity in a country where religion and culture have undefined boundaries with one another. Seeking to strengthen their Jewish identity and abandoning materialistic elements of American culture, their path to acculturation was on par with any immigrant, regardless of the reason for immigration.

IV. Research Methods

The research consists of a combination of the theoretical aspects of immigration in conjunction with interviews conducted with the two Modern Orthodox Jewish American families who have immigrated to Israel for a period of no longer than two years; a timeframe considered as new immigrants.

Each family is comprised of two parents and at least two children between the ages of five and seventeen. The ages range from developmental stages in which the children are still financially dependent on their parents, although their emotional stages of development vary. A critical factor in the research was that each child who participated in the interviews be enrolled full time in an Israeli school. In addition, the child must never have lived in Israel or resided in the country for a period of over four months and born and raised solely in the United States with little to no acquisition of the Hebrew language.

The parents interviewed raise their children in a Modern Orthodox Jewish sector. They never lived in Israel for a period of more than six months. They must be born to American parents and have lived their entire lives in the United States with little to no acquisition of the Hebrew language. In addition, they are from middle to upper class socioeconomic status with an advanced academic background.

Each member of the family must be willing to participate in video interviews over a span of six to eight months. The interviews are conducted separately from parents and the children. On some occasions, the parents are present in the children's interviews and vice versa. The separation of the interviews is intended to minimize the expected behavior of the individuals' role as a part of the family and allow them to speak freely.

In order to find willing participants for my research, I published ads on social networking sites and *aliyah* networks including *Facebook*, *Janglo*, and *Tanglo*[†]. In addition, I contacted *Nefesh B'Nefesh* who published my ad in the form of text, and I made use of word of mouth.

[†] Facebook: www.facebook.com, Janglo: www.janglo.net, Tanglo: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tanglo,

Two families expressed interest in participating in my research.[‡] I began to interview the first family who contacted me a little over a year after their immigration. The Zengel emigrated from Richmond, Virginia. The parents are in their mid-fifties with four children ages eleven to nineteen. They moved from an upper middle class socioeconomic status. Jacob, the father, is a pathologist and Randy, the mother, is a licensed psychologist who had her own practice in the United States. Their three children, Beth (eleven), Nancy (fourteen), and Ariel (seventeen) all moved with the family into a house in a religious community located in a small rural village near Hadera. Each child attends different schools. Ariel attends the village school. Beth attends the school in the nearby town of Zichron, and Nancy attends a boarding school in Rosh Pina. Their oldest child, Emily (nineteen) moved to Jerusalem separately than the family. The family considers themselves of the Modern Orthodox sector in Judaism.

The Gould family who agreed to be interviewed is a couple with two young children. A family from an upper-middle class status, Dan, the father, moved to Israel on relocation and his wife Rebecca, a college graduate from Wesleyan is tending to the children as of moving to Israel. They have two children Michael (five) and Adam (three) who are both enrolled in Israeli preschools in Haifa. The family considers themselves of the Modern Orthodox sector in Judaism.

The first interviews with both families took place in November 2010 and continued over a period of eight months concluding in June 2011. The interviews were recorded by a Canon Legria FS306 camcorder in order to document and analyze the gesticulations and body language of the interviewees. The interviews consisted of open ended questions and free spoken dialogue between me and the family members. The topics and questions were prepared before the interviews and adapted accordingly with the actual interviews. The first half of the first interviews served as an opportunity to gain background information about the families and have them feel comfortable with the interviewer. The remainder of the interviews asked direct and indirect questions relating to the family members emotional states and experiences in Israel with reference to the previous interviews that took place.

[‡] All the names have been changed.

The audio from the interviews were taken to a professional transcriber. Both the text and videos were analyzed with the aid of existing research theories and methods in analyzing dialogue and body language.

V. Part 1: The Zengel Family

4.1 Background - Randy and Jacob

The Zengel's tightly knit family immigrated to Israel with older children whose sense of identity is caught between the ability to acculturate fully versus differentiating themselves from the way their parents raised them. My study confirms that children have the ability to acculturate more quickly than their parents, but they are caught between maintaining loyalty to their parents' culture and adopting a new culture. As a result, the family boundaries become unclear as the roles of each member change.

The backbone of the Zengel family is Randy, the matriarch. Her role in the family is to maintain a positive atmosphere within the family. An experienced psychologist, she appears to bear the responsibility of housing the outcome of her family's immigration in her own hands. Although, both she and her husband Jacob agree that immigrating to Israel was a decision made together, Jacob appears to have had more reservations and allows Randy to take the responsibility for the move (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 32-33). In lines 36-41 (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010) Randy explains that the idea for the *aliyah* started as a ten year plan and changed into a twenty year plan and finally Jacob concedes that the only way they would move to Israel was if that someone in his professional position in Israel died and he would be handed the opportunity. When Jacob was given the actual opportunity to interview for the position Randy recalls his pessimism, "I don't know. I don't think they were very interested" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 58).

Randy explains that the final decision was made within a few hours and was more or less a fact and not something that was up for discussion as the family had discussed the possibility so many times before it became a reality (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, l61-62). When asked if there were hesitations after it became a reality, Randy chooses not to elaborate and allows Jacob to express the negative aspects of a life changing decision, but he nevertheless finds religious support to back up his decision (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, l67-169).

The dynamics that appear between Jacob and Randy is that Jacob is a realistic and pragmatic individual who sees the immigration as financially straining and difficult, while Randy is more idealistic and regards the immigration as a chance to start a new life (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010,

616). However, the basis for their immigration is their agreement upon their duty, the necessity, to move for religious purposes. It seems that when immigration became a reality, Jacob and Randy's second thoughts were overshadowed by their religious beliefs (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 69).

Jacob's realism is displayed with cynicism and self-acceptance. It seems as though he understands that the outcome of the immigration should result in a positive outcome for his children. He has accepted that he himself will not acculturate and will never find his niche. He defines success in immigration as, "…to be a part of society, right? But, I won't, I don't feel I ever will be" (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 453). As a result, he expects his success to fall upon his children by productively creating careers for themselves, becoming fluent in Hebrew, and integrating in the religious part of society. His desires weigh heavily on his children, as later discussed in my findings.

Randy's idealism and overly positive attitude often times overshadows each family member's true emotions. For example, when Jacob mentions in the quote above that he will never be part of Israeli society, Randy disqualifies his feelings by telling him that the reason he made *aliyah* was to "make a place in the world, helping by being a doctor," and that his lack of involvement in the community is no different from his lack of involvement in the United States (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 452-453). When Jacob tries again to justify his emotions both his wife and eleven year old daughter interrupt his justification and he submits by changing the subject (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 453-474). This type of interaction is persistent throughout the interviews between Jacob and Randy and evidently is also an impacting factor in the children's immigration experience.

In order to understand Randy's influence on her family, one must understand the environment in which she grew up. Randy's religious experience was a combination of religious curiosity influenced by being a misfit. Teased for her intelligence in public school, Randy's influence from her two religious friends led her to convince her parents to send her to an Orthodox Jewish day school and as a result she became religious (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 17-26). For Randy, becoming religious was a result of a negative experience in public school. She further expresses concern in disappointing her parents even in adulthood. Randy grew up in a family that did not

have a lot of money and her parents were very anxious about this immigration (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 72). She mentions that her mother did not want her to move to Israel (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, l72). Despite its religious implications, Randy's *aliyah* appears to be justified as the beginning of her own life, "creating a midlife crisis", after her parents have passed away.

> But, for me, a lot of it was when my parents were alive it was too hard to leave them, so you know, if they would've come, we probably would've tried to come earlier. And, then at the point which my mom died, because my dad had died first, Jacob began to look for something and he was so specialized at this point that it wasn't so easy (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 36-40).

While both Randy and Jacob's immigration is based on the Jewish Law of Return, Randy's immigration is about creating a new beginning for herself; to create a better life for herself that demands leaving the negative aspects of her life in the United Stated behind, and not looking back, despite her slow acculturation. The way Randy feels is evident in the dialogue I have with her children who are caught between overcoming the hardships of acculturation and maintaining a positive façade for the interviewer.

4.2 Analysis of Jacob and Randy's acculturation process

Jacob and Randy's acculturation rates are different than the acculturation rates of their children. Each of their children who were interviewed is immersed in an Israeli educational system. Randy is self-employed and Jacob is a pathologist at Sourasky Medical Center in Tel Aviv.

Jacob's acculturation is slowed because of his own self-fulfilling prophecy, that he will never be a part of Israeli culture. Randy, on the other hand, welcomes cultural change but her American identity is evident in the way she speaks and expresses herself.

In her interview, Randy speaks profusely in a positive manner illustrating stories of events that occurred to them and views them as a comical nuisance. Both Jacob and Randy lightheartedly complain about having to go through bureaucratic hassles such as ordering a cell phone, opening a bank account, having Randy's degree recognized in Israel. However, despite the comical nuisances of their experiences, Randy and Jacob both have realistic expectations that are unmet in Israel for their career and create an impediment in their rate of acculturation.

Randy, who is an accredited professional, has started her career in Israel from the beginning. Although she repeatedly describes herself as coming from a family with little money, on

occasions she expresses her concern with the salary earned in Israel when in comparison to her occupational worth in the United States. At these times, Randy's positive demeanor conceals its apprehension. Several times she expresses the low pay in comparison to professional experience. In the first interview (lines 303-318) Randy gives us her first true look at how difficult the *aliyah* is on her:

> So at this point, the *michlala* is paying me as if I have absolutely not a stitch of experience. So, last month I got a check for 400 shekels after driving, it doesn't even cover my driving to Jerusalem. I mean, it's sort of a joke, but hopefully I'll get back pay for this you know, and hopefully we'll settle this eventually. So, I'm teaching there, and I'm also teaching out of the blue. Both of these places, I got these sort of interviews not even knowing where they came from, 'cause I got so many resumes and things. I got this phone call from *morot* an email, back, a few months ago, which is another religious women's college in Ariel. So, I went there and I interviewed and they didn't really have anything but I heard really good things about the place, they were interested, they said, maybe you'll come lecture, we'd see what would happen and then like, right before the Jewish holidays I get this phone call, "We have this course were opening for *Chabad* girls in the Ukraine, who were here last year, they were English speakers in English an online class in psychology, would you like to teach it? But, would you like to teach it in 2 weeks?" Basically, they told me like, 2 weeks before. So I'm teaching an online course [inaudible] which is actually kind of fun. So, I'm doing a lot! This is all new to me. I did a little bit of teaching, but not a lot. So, I'm spending hours putting things together, but these things are going to build for me, I think, on other things, so it's probably worth it for now you know, I don't want to be working so hard for so little pay five years from now, but anyway (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010)…

In the very first sentence, Randy admits that she is working for a salary she would never work for in the United States and even goes as far as to disclose that she views it as a joke. However, quickly after, she conceals how she really feels by telling me that she is doing new things and working on projects she would have never had the chance to work on in the United States. Her speech is rapid, and in the first sentence she admits her hardships and glazes over the fact that she is working hard at new things which would be believable except that she is spending a lot of her own time and money for results in hopes of an easier life five years into the future.

She later continues to explain that she is being paid forty shekels an hour for a job she would have been paid one hundred dollars three years before in the United States (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 329). She again hastens to state that she's meeting different types of people and will allow her more work in the coming years (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 331). Her quickness to change from one subject to another and overemphasis on the positive makes it difficult to believe Randy that she is enjoying the repercussions of restarting her career.

Jacob, on the other hand, has accepted that he will not acculturate. Randy attributes his lack of acculturation as more stressful and upset at small matters that are a part of Israeli culture. For

example, in the first interview (lines 654-658) Randy tells us how Jacob is unable to adapt to Israeli's rudeness on the roadways in comparison to Richmond, Virginia. However, in the second interview (lines 86-87); two months after the first interview, Jacob describes an instance when a car is honking at him to move his vehicle. Instead of moving the car, as he would in the United States, he explains that he exits his vehicle and stands in front of the honking car in protest. Jacob admits that although he may not have adopted the Hebrew language or changed his value and belief systems, he reacted according to cultural norms in Israel.

Some of his cultural challenges are evident when he speaks about work. Jacob expresses frustration in feeling abused at work. Randy explains that he is given the most challenging cases and that the doctors do not treat him with the same respect he would be given in the United States. Rather than identifying aspects of religious Benefits Jacob sought for his family during his immigration to Israel, he finds himself overwhelmed with negative cultural obstacles which make his acculturation process slow. The acculturation process for Jacob is difficult, as he tells me in his second interview, "That's what I feel like, I mean, I'm about to be rolled over" (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 284). Again, upon articulating hardship, Randy quickly changes the subject.

In her first interview, Randy describes her family's immigration; "…we don't take regular roads, and we take back roads [laughing]. So, you know, and the symbolism of all of that, sometimes you find the stones along the way. You know, you have to think of different ways of getting around it" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 467-469). Randy makes a special emphasis that for her family to make *aliyah* and to become fully integrated into Israeli society; they will take the longest road to arrive at acculturation – not the easiest road.

In her second interview two months later, Randy admits to enjoying feeling more settled: "Um, I mean, it's still like a back road, but I want it to be. I think I like, you know, being sort of off the beaten path and um, not necessarily doing things the way other people do it. Um, but yeah, I, I mean, I guess I feel more settled. I would say, [pause] yeah I would say in general I'm more and more settled" (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 237-240). She uses a lot of hesitation words such as "like," "you know," "um," "sort of" which leads me to believe she has lessened her resistance to

always doing things that hard way. I interpret this as a step towards her acculturation unconscious that it is not the way she defines acculturation.

When I asked about her family's decision to move to an area with no Anglo Saxon immigrants, Randy describes the reaction of the Israeli based organizations that assist with immigration as: "It's too Israeli. They thought we're crazy. The kids are not going to be able to adjust, it's not the right place for us, etc., etc… says you guys think out of the box, you're not wanting people to solve all your problems for you, he thought we would do fine here. But, Nefesh B'Nefesh thought we were crazy" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 451 – 457). This is another example of the family taking the back road in their immigration.

It is evident that the family's *aliyah* experience appears more isolated and centered around the actual family system rather than integration into Israeli society (even if it were to be with other Anglo Saxons). Randy expresses great success in every small accomplishment towards integration, and takes pride in the family's decision to take "the road less traveled" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 457). Randy and Jacob are a couple that conduct themselves according to the way they see fit, which is not necessarily mainstream. This is evident in examples of both their childhood and young adult stories. I believe they consider success finding their own path and paving their own roads and view the challenge of immigration no differently.

4.3 Analysis of Jacob and Randy's view on the acculturation of their children

As mentioned previously, Jacob's expectations with his inability to acculturate are displaced onto the success of his children. His children's acculturation is reflective on the changes he is unable to make. Jacob's expresses high standards and demands for achievement in his children and in their interviews, his children are faced with meeting their parents expectations and fitting into society.

While the Zengel family each wants to achieve acculturation into Israeli society, each measures acculturation according to their own standards. Jacob measures acculturation as having a successful and well-paying career and obtaining fluency with the Hebrew language; both factors in which he has difficulty achieving. During his interviews he expresses certain expectations for

his children. The children, as mentioned later, express difficulty in achieving balance between their family's expectations and cultural expectations.

Randy's expectations are more focused on her success in Israel. She accepts that each child will undergo cultural and personal changes and she is accepting as long as the outcome is positive. Randy views her hardships as challenging yet positive, and expects her children to undergo the same type of experience.

Jacob and Randy characterize their children as Zionists (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 123). More specifically, Jacob and Randy decided that their children will be Zionists. Despite Zionism being defined as the return to the State of Israel, there are many American Jewish Zionists that support Israel without the intention of immigration to Israel. Given their own opinion, just because their children are Zionists, does not necessarily support their parents' decision to move to Israel.

Randy briefly explains to me: "So, I think they [her children] were pretty you know, I mean they all had their own issues, but thankfully our kids have all been very Zionist" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 122-123). Randy has a tendency to only mention positive aspects of *aliyah* while occasionally giving me insight to the real story. What is the correlation between labeling a child Zionist and immigration? It seems that their children identify with Israel, but at the thought of the move may not have necessarily wanted to live in Israel.

Jacob and Randy describe their accidental discovery of Camp Stone, a Zionistic overnight camp in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, which is where their children developed a sense of Zionism and met other Israelis (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 126-127). Randy describes as one that mirrors their current habitat: "But it’s a camp that’s in the middle of Pennsylvania, in the middle of nowhere, and it tends to draw kids from more out of the way places, like Cleveland and Pittsburgh as opposed to New York. So, it was a perfect camp for them and um –" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 127-129). Jacob cuts in and explains that the camp is Zionistic. Even before moving to Israel, Randy and Jacob had very precise expectations for their immigration. Their immigration is based upon presenting their children with the life they would have liked to be able to have had for themselves in the United States.

With over a year after their immigration, Jacob and Randy's definition of acculturation differs from their children's definition. Jacob's biggest disappointment is his children's lack of language acquisition. "I, possibly, I mean, that's the one thing, one of the things that I am most disappointed with. I really thought that being sort of pushed into a Hebrew speaking class, that their Hebrew would be a lot –" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 364-365). Randy interrupts Jacob and expresses each child's recent progress with the language. Although they express concern in slow language acquisition, Nancy is bringing home exceptional grades and Ariel has built relationships with Israeli boys from his Yeshiva (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 366-377). Beth, whose parents express concern about her shying away from speaking Hebrew, is the only member of the family who speaks with an Israeli accent as I was told in separate interviews by her siblings.

When asked how they would feel if their children wanted to return to the Unites States, Randy says that she would be sad but accepting. She tells me that if all of her children went back to the United States, she would be shocked (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 541). Both see lack of acculturation as a failure for themselves.

When asked how they would feel if their children remained in Israel but no longer considered themselves part of the Orthodox movement, both Jacob and Randy are appalled at the idea. Randy says, "I mean, I just don't, I would still love them whoever they were. I don't see that happening. I mean, thankfully they are very strong in their religious beliefs in their own ways (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 573-574). Jacob expresses the ease of living in Israel and being a religious Jew, so therefore his logic states that there is no reason that his children should become secular Jews.

Randy and Jacob express other concerns such as having their children drafted into the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) despite army service being a typical passageway in Israeli society (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 545-554). In addition, the way Randy speaks of the IDF is characteristic of Americans when expressing fears about terrorism in Israel (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 73, 101-105).

Randy and Jacob voice that both want their kids to become more Israeli. According to their definition of being Israeli, one is less materialistic and more realistic. An Israeli is less afraid to be independent and more involved in activities. According to Jacob and Randy, their children can be described as possessing these qualities more and more (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 187 – 193). Ironically, a few minutes before when asked what they miss most about the United States, Randy, Jacob, and their youngest daughter Beth all give examples of commercial stores in the United States (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 155-165).

What Jacob and Randy expect for acculturation and how they define Israeli varies from their children as well as from Israeli society. Randy explains that her family is so busy that they do not have much time together anymore. She describes that she spends more time with each child on an individual basis (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 211-212). Each child is busy with his or her own schedule to the extent that Randy and Jacob seem to have made peace with the fact that they are not as involved in their children's social lives.

There is a lack of attention from both parents regarding certain areas in the children's lives. For instance, explaining Beth's shyness about the Hebrew language despite remarkable improvement and Israeli accent. Accepting that Ariel does what he wants to do and doesn't tell his parents (later discussed). After speaking with their children, I believe they fail to identify that each child has begun to acculturate at different rates and in different aspects, however, not as Jacob and Randy define of acculturation. This, it appears will lead to an area of miscommunication and misunderstanding in their future as a family in Israel.

4.4 Background - Beth

Like her mother, Beth maintains a positive outlook of her *aliyah* despite occasionally giving me insight into things that are difficult for her. From the initial interview process, Beth was open and expressive; it was easy to form a relationship with her. Beth likes the latest technology, reading, writing, cooking, baking, watching television, and other things characteristic of an American her age. When outwardly asked about the difference between the Unites States and Israel, Beth claims that they are basically the same. With less direct questions, Beth tells me about some of the differences that she feels in Israel. For an eleven year old, I infer from our conversations, that

her insight is beyond her years. Sometimes her responses reflect those of an adult rather than a child. I was surprised at Beth's maturity, sensitivity, and ability to cope with change. Throughout her interviews, she changes the subject or lessens certain difficult subjects with words such as, "whatever" or "like whatever." From her interviews, I conclude that Beth uses her immigration as a chance to reinvent her image and make a different life for herself – in ways this approach is similar to her mother's.

Beth attended an Orthodox Jewish school in Richmond, Virginia. They lived in a large house with two dogs and a Jacuzzi sized bathroom (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 367-371). She explains to me that she knew throughout her whole life that her family would at some point make an *aliyah*. When her parents broke the news to her of the immigration, she expressed excitement (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 326-332).

4.5 Analysis of Beth's acculturation process

Beth's describes the days prior to immigration as having many goodbyes. She explains that initially her goodbyes were to her friends from Richmond, Virginia. Afterwards, she spent her summer at an overnight camp before her parents picked her up a week early to fly to Israel. Because Beth was so young at the time of immigration, she was not allowed to fly to Israel with her brothers and sisters alone. As a result, her experience included the *Nefesh B'Nefesh* flight with her parents in which after landing in Israel, a celebration follows at the airport. She describes the experience rather apathetically: "So, I got off the plane, it wasn't like confusing, but I got off the plane and I was like, whatever, dancing, whatever" (Merenlender Nov 17, 2010, 443-444). When I ask her about the *Nefesh B'Nefesh* flight, she goes off on a tangent and explains to me how her mother randomly decided that they would move to Kfar Ha'roeh and what she believes is one of the reasons her family decided to move to Israel:

> And then, also like, these people Nadine and Steve, like, they were my parents' friends from college and like, that's one of the reasons why we moved here 'cause like, oh on the phone, we told them "Oh, we're coming," and my mom, my sister and brother came for a pilot trip to check out like, what places we would want, and joking said "Oh, you should move to Kfar…" and then it like, began to get serious and then my mom visited and she really liked it. So, like, they all were finding the house, whatever – (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 449-453).

Beth describes the immigration process nonchalantly, as if she feels the process occurred without any of her input. She describes feeling "weird" and I am given the impression that she has dealt with a lot of the changes on her own. She describes her first month in Israel as "weird" with sentences such as, "I was so confused, in this house…it's just like a weird flight… So, I woke up and I was still like, confused, because I was tired also. So my mom took me up the hill to see the house and I didn't recognize anything, it was like, so weird" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, l 467-478). She recalls describing her neighborhood to her new classmates saying that, "I'm living with nobody" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 556)!

During her year and a half in Israel, Beth was sent to two different schools. The second school is more accommodating to English speakers offering her help in Hebrew. Her hardships include the pressure she experiences in learning Hebrew. Initially she, along with all the other family members, agrees that Jacob is the best Hebrew speaker. She describes him as a doctor who works in Hebrew (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 97). By the second interview she shyly admits that she speaks Hebrew with an Israeli accent (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 420-421).

She describes the differences between the educational systems in the United States versus Israel, telling me she is disappointed with the science curriculum. "We're spending, like, 3 months on different kinds of birds…Like, whatever, and science was like, my favorite subject in the States. I loved it 'cause like, you do once a week an experiment and like, all this fun stuff and learn so much interesting stuff. I don't like families of birds, like, what is that going to help me in my…?" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 188-192).

In addition, she talks about missing friends and family friends in the Unites States. She keeps in touch with her friends via Facebook and Skype. In her first interview she describes that it has taken her time to make friends in Israel. "I also have friends here, like, it was hard a little bit at the beginning because I was in after-school and stuff. So, like, I did know them but they were really rough on me and everything, so now I'm like, close with them" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 146-148). Beth attributes the challenge to language difficulties.

In our second interview, Beth has developed a keener sense of identity and self-awareness. With her acquisition of language and an Israeli accent, she is given the opportunity to be able to redefine her identity.

> I don't know, like, there's not such a big difference between like, Israeli me and like, American me. I guess like, when I'm with my American friends I can like, express myself better because like, that's my language or whatever. When I'm with Israelis it's harder for me I'm not like, as much as myself . So I feel like, eventually I wanna be like, myself with Israelis, like I really wanna be like that. But like, also, maybe like, not too much of myself (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 482-486).

What I find interesting is that Beth recognizes something about her "real self" that she feels does not fit in Israeli society. It seems as if currently her default identity is American, but she recognizes aspects of her Israeli identity that do not correspond to her American identity. Such, she feels she wants to change something about herself to better accommodate her in society.

Her changes are a lot more apparent in her second interview as she continues to identity with a dual identity. "Yeah, like, I wanna stay American. Like, I also, I wanna be Israeli also but like, I feel like I'm Israeli when I'm with my Israeli friends and I'm American when I'm with my family and my American friends" (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 407-409).

In my first interview with Beth, she speaks a lot about things in her American lifestyle that has changed. She places a lot more emphasis on the home she misses, describing it to me in detail in addition to the house down the street from their house in Israel that resembles the conveniences of her American house (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 373-383). By the second interview, when I mention the house she vaguely responds that it's not for sale yet.

Beth tells me in her second interview that Israel feels like her home (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 455-456). She explains to me that she enjoys the freedom she has in Israel that she did not have in the United States. This includes being able to walk around on her own to not being scared of principal or teacher at school. She reveals to me that she hides her cell phone at school without the teacher knowing – something she would not have done in the United States.

We continue to have casual conversation throughout the interview and we identify with American things, but also with difficulties immigrants face in Israel. Beth emerges as undergoing the most rapid acculturation in her family without being aware of how she is changing. When we

spoke about her Hebrew and how difficult she felt in the past expressing her true self, she explains:

> Interviewer: Do you feel like you can, last time you said it's harder to be yourself in Hebrew because it's harder to express yourself?
> Beth: When did you come last? [laughing]
> Interviewer: A while ago. It was like 3 months ago I think, 3 ½ months ago.
> Beth: No, I think I can express myself much better.
> Interviewer: Yeah? Do you feel like it's the you you or it's a different you?
> Beth: I feel like it's the me me. Like next year, next year I'm going to a whole new school except like I feel like bad about this because every single person in my class is gonna be new. I'm gonna be new to them and they're gonna be new to me. Like, like when I came into 5th grade like, all those girls had already known each other for like 4 years. Like, here everybody's new 'cause it's 7th grade (Merenlender 17 Jun 2011, 178-187).

Beth is optimistic about starting a new school. She expresses the opportunity to start over in Israel, and this time around has already identified herself within the culture. The things she has left behind are less important to her by the third interview. Beth is the only individual interviewed in the family who has expressed biculturalism.

> Interviewer: Do you still feel like you're more American? Or do you feel like you're more Israeli?
> Beth: Like, when I'm with Israelis, I'm Israeli, but when I'm with Americans I feel American (Merenlender 17 Jun 2011, 321-322).

4.6 Analysis of Beth's view on the acculturation of her parents

Beth identifies her parents as completely American. She is aware of the cultural changes between herself and her parents. I wonder if this is perhaps one of the reasons she refuses to speak in Hebrew, despite claiming to be the best Hebrew speaker in the house.

An additional example of Beth's more rapid acculturation rate occurs when she describes a time when her mother asked what type of food she would like from the supermarket – asking for corn schnitzel – Israeli cuisine and vegetarian substitute. Her family's response was that of disgust. Beth, however, already accustomed explained that she enjoys it with *ptitim* (*pl.* Israeli round pasta) (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 140-145).

While continuing to identify with her American identity, Beth clearly displays various adoption of the Israeli culture especially after expressing confidence with her language acquisition. Nevertheless, she is aware of her parents' slower acculturation. When passing by during my second interview with her parents, Beth tells her mother: "Can I say something about you? You

can make an incredible effort in Hebrew, but like, when somebody starts making conversation with you, and you get to the spot, all saying words go blank, and like you can't think of words" (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 503-505). She expresses to her parents the awareness she has in their difficulty with acquiring the language in addition to doing things the "Israeli way" (e.g. recording a message on their answering machine with incorrect Hebrew).

As a result, Beth is finding awareness in her dual identity. I predict that over time she will continue to adopt more Israeli cultural nuances identifying with the culture more strongly. While she will maintain her American identity within the home, I believe certain aspects of Israeli culture will influence the way she views her role and relationship with her family members within their home.

4.7 Background - Ariel

Ariel's initial interaction with me can be summed up in one word answers. He seemed reluctant at first to engage in conversation with me, especially when the topics consisted of emotional information. However, by the second interview, we had found some common ground and were open to sharing more personal information with me – information he told me that not even his parents knew about.

Ariel is a humble and pragmatic seventeen year old. Many of his personality traits are reminiscent of his father's which is one of the reasons there is tension between the two of them. Similarly to Beth, he speaks of his *aliyah* indifferently, as another event in his life he knew would eventually happen. Like Beth, Ariel attended a Jewish school. He arrived to Israel with some knowledge of Hebrew. In the first interview the family considers his Hebrew knowledge on par with Jacob's. Ariel has defined interests and goals and the impression I deduced is that his purpose is to reach those goals independently.

He enthusiastically shares with me his interests in marketing and briefly describes the disappointment he feels in his father's expectations for him. In our first meeting, Ariel and I began to know each other on the basis of common interests and his viewpoints about immigration and his future in Israel began to develop in our second interview.

4.8 Analysis of Ariel's acculturation process

Initially, my decision was not to interview Ariel for my project, as I assumed his acculturation would be a slow process similar to his parents given his age. Nevertheless, his mother was insistent I speak with him as well, telling me that perhaps I will "get him to speak to me."

It is clear that Ariel's parents have high expectations for his success and Ariel's expectations are to create his own path (not unlike his parents' ideals). When we began our first interview, Ariel describes school as different in Israel because different topics are chosen as a field of study.

> Interviewer: Why did you pick biology?
> Ariel: Sore topic.
> Interviewer: Why?
> Ariel: My dad is good at it, I don't like it.
> Interviewer: You don't like it?
> Ariel: No (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 34-39).

The assumption I made was that a seventeen year old teenager would be resistant to acculturation. However the dynamics between his family and himself appear to be one in which he seeks separation. Ariel's immigration exacerbates the opportunity to further disconnect from his family in order to "do his own thing." In the short dialogue above, Ariel's rate of acculturation is contingent upon not only the environment, but also his relationship with his parents.

In his first interview, Ariel talks to me about his interests in computers and marketing. He speaks about them separately from his education, and it seems that excelling in these subjects is his way out of the confines of school and his family. In his first interview he displays a lack of interest in social events and indifference to his family (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 160-164). Similar to his father, it seems that "fitting in" anywhere is not something of importance.

Like Beth, Ariel's concerns seem very mature for his age. When asked about his feelings about being drafted into the army, he reacts with negativity but pragmatism.

> Interviewer: Do you want go to the army?
> Ariel: Not really, 3 years of my life to the country.
> Interviewer: But you can do stuff that you like in the army. Like, you don't have to be a fighter, you can do like, academic stuff.
> Ariel: I know, but it's still years of your life.
> Interviewer: Is there a way that you can go to college in the US?

> Ariel: If I wanted to, but I don't think it's worth it. The money and it's more time. Here, college is faster and you learn for your degree. In the US you have to do 4 years of undergrad, then whatever you want. In Israel, it's much faster, much cheaper and to the point (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, l75-183).

It is difficult to understand why Ariel was having worries about money for college; typically affluent Americans view college as a chance to break free of the constraints of parents and rules. In addition, he wittily responds to me that he least misses the drinking age in the United States (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 282). In my second interview with Ariel, it appears to me that Ariel was presented with a myriad of "inappropriate" opportunities in Israel not presented to him in Richmond, Virginia.

In his first interview he lightly insinuates differences in his school stating that "There's a lot of crazy stuff that goes on" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 220). He also boasts about hitchhiking in Israel. When asked if he has ever tried, " No, not really. But, you can take a bus wherever you want" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 271). By the second interview, Ariel volunteers information:

> Interviewer: What do you miss least?
> Ariel: Mmm, the drinking age. I said that last time.
> Interviewer: Yes, you did. You remember everything. Have you tried anything new since you got here that maybe you never did in the US?
> Ariel: Uh, hitchhiking.
> Interviewer: [laughing] Did you really? See, last time I asked you and you said you didn't.
> Ariel: No one knows.
> Interviewer: What? No one knows? Should I keep it a secret?
> Ariel: Mm-hm.
> Interviewer: Ok.
> Ariel: I went to Netanya today. Well, I went with my friend. Every year we have a Purim *shuk* [market], it's like a fundraiser for our class and they give out prizes, like a big carnival thing and you get all the kids to come. So we went to different businesses and we asked them to donate prizes today (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 270-281).

In our second interview, Ariel gives me insight into social aspects of his life. He tells me about his hitchhiking story in detail. Taking pride in ditching school and hitchhiking to Netanya, sea-shore town about 15 kilometers from him, it seems as if his acculturation has accelerated because of his increased social interactions. In Israel, Ariel is given more freedom from his parents. "He doesn't tell us much," (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 141) – as they often remark, that they do not know what Ariel is doing.

He describes a trip with *Bnei Akiva* in which he excitedly describes heading to Eilat at two in the morning and going for a hike before dawn. During that trip, Ariel describes the famous bridge in Eilat with the "no jumping" sign. Aware of his dual identity and of cultural stigmas, Ariel describes the incident to me:

> Ariel: You know that big bridge?
> Interviewer: Yeah, the one you're not allowed to go jump off of it?
> Ariel: People jump off of it. So I have a, a couple of, there was some French kid who asked me to take a picture, I took the picture and I had a friend who jumped off it like, 5 times (inaudible) then suddenly a police officer shows up. He was like, questioning me. So I played the dummy American. He said, "Where are you from?" and I said, "*Be'Artzot Ha'Brit* [in the USA]" He's like, "Who was the cause of that?" I was like, "My friend". He jumped off like 5 times. It's like a big fine if they catch you, or something.
> Interviewer: But he was nice because you were American?
> Ariel: Yeah, he, they couldn't do anything.
> Interviewer: You can talk your way out of it.
> Ariel: No, the police don't do anything in Israel. They just ask you for your seatbelts [referring to fastening your seatbelt during transit] (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 331-345).

Ariel recognizes the cultural differences and uses them to his advantage. Referring to Americans as dummies knowing that Israeli police are lenient on unbeknownst American tourists, he has used his cultural knowledge for his advantage.

It seems that in Richmond, Ariel had certain expectations for proper conduct. He relishes in the fact that in Israel, proper conduct is negotiable. He illustrates an incident in which he saw a driver in a car taking hits from a *hookah* from his passenger. He describes it as "pretty funny" (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 353-366).

To Ariel, being Israeli is the ability to negotiate. Unlike his parents, his definition of Israeli is not about language acquisition, realism, and less materialism. In fact, he tells me that he tries to teach his parents how to be Israeli – meaning, how to negotiate (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 394).

His American identity is evident as he gives other instances of differences in food. Describing the Israeli diet to me, "They get a little mixed up on their food here…I hate all that stuff [Israel breakfast]. I want cereal and milk" (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 376-378). More seriously, he describes his desire to make a home in Israel, telling me that he does not see himself returning to the United States (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 406). Regardless, despite becoming more Israeli, he expects to always retain a part of his American identity (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 408-410). He is consistent throughout until the last interview, when I asked him seriously:

> Interviewer: Last time you told me that you feel like you're always going to be American. You feel more Israeli or does it still feel the same?
> Ariel: A little bit.
> Interviewer: Yeah? What does it mean when you become totally Israeli?
> Ariel: I won't become totally Israeli.
> Interviewer: Ok, what does it mean to become..?
> Ariel: I won't be going to work in tight jeans. [laughing] (Merenlender 17 Jun 2011, 182-189).

Ariel's immigration gives him the opportunity to reinvent himself. His spontaneous and easy going qualities make his adjustment into Israeli society smoother and easier to undergo. The "laid back" Israeli society has made acculturation more welcoming to Ariel (Merenlender 17 Jun 2011, 119-121).

One of the biggest changes I noticed in Ariel during the third interview on June 17, 2011 is that his immersion into Israeli society has been more pinpointed to his community. He has become part of the religious organizations and he adopts their perspectives. During his first two interviews, he discussed army service as a waste of time that deflects from an education. In the third interview, he continues to think of the army as a waste of time – only this time he offers alternatives so that he can defer the army, and not necessarily for his education.

> Ariel: I don't want to go straight into the army. Definitely not for 3 years.
> Interviewer: In Yeshiva, you'd do only like Torah stuff though, right?
> Ariel: Yeah, but it's uh, there's also people who don't show up to Yeshiva. They sign up for Yeshiva and they're there like 3 days out of the week. I know some Israelis who do that (Merenlender 17 Jun 2011, 43-46).

He later continues to tell me that he wants to continue pursing business, but that it does not mean he needs relevant education (Merenlender 17 Jun 2011, 55).

When I ask him if he can switch from American to Hebrew comfortably, he concludes the interview with me in Hebrew (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 423-431). His acculturation is perhaps easiest as the changes he undergoes to separate himself from his parents happened during a time when he was able to fully immerse himself in a new culture and redefine his identity.

4.9 Analysis of Ariel's view on the acculturation of his parents

Ariel does not mention much of his parents during the immigration experience. It appears as if for him they remain the same American parents from the United States. He recognizes changes

in himself adapting to the new culture. As for his parents, when asked what he can teach them, he replies: "Um, I don't know. To be, act like an Israeli. How to negotiate" (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 394).

When speaking with Ariel, he is indifferent about the relationship changes between himself and his parents. The issues he had between him and his parents remain the same; however, the immigration has provided him an outlet and a chance to re-identify himself, detached from his family's expectations.

4.10 Background - Nancy

Nancy is a fourteen year old studying in a boarding school in Rosh Pina, a township in the Northern Galilee about 150 kilometers from her home. Neither Nancy nor her parents explained why they chose to send her to a boarding school, although they communicated that Beth would be attending the same school, as well. Nechma explains that the boarding school provides her with a chance to learn Hebrew more quickly and make friends more easily. Nancy is very quiet and does not volunteer a lot of information. Her answers are short and less expressive of all the siblings interviewed. I recognize that from Nancy's answers, her immigration experience is the most difficult of all the family members I interviewed.

4.11 Analysis of Nancy's acculturation process

During my interviews with Nancy, I felt as if I was invading her privacy. She was not open to speaking about the details of her life, but was polite enough to provide me with answers to finish with the interview. Nancy, like all her siblings interviewed, insists on remaining positive about the immigration experience even though it was clear from her answers that the immigration is not easy, and sometimes perhaps regretful.

Nancy explains that the school systems near their village are not very good, one of the reasons she switched to a boarding school. She often times hints that things in Israel are very different from the United States. When I asked her about receiving extra lessons in Hebrew she politely explains to me that "Last year, I got, but because I switched schools it takes them a long time to figure out" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, l44). She continues to tell me that it is difficult for her to understand the language and is feeling like it's difficult for her to communicate with her friends

in Hebrew. She laughs when telling me that she speaks Hebrew with an American accent and refuses to have a conversation with me in Hebrew (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, l59-64).

My overall impression of Nancy is that the immigration is arduous in terms of having left her friendships behind, her house, and the comforts of identifying with cultural tastes. Nevertheless, she has reached a stage of acceptance that she has succumbed to living in Israel and is embracing acculturation especially by means of languages acquisition as a way of feeling like she has made a new home.

She recognizes that her feelings are temporary, as she explains: "Yeah, I think, I like, I like the Israel life better. It's still an adjustment and I'm still adjusting. I miss America" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 34-35). She expresses that her home feels new, but also feels like home (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 238). Again, it sounds like her answers are a mix of what is very difficult to overcome, with sentences that tell her that her feelings are justifiable, but will soon pass.

In all the interviews with Nancy, she expresses protest that is immediately backed up with a contradictory statement as to how things are actually fine or will be better. It was very frustrating not to be able to hear Nancy simply tell me that something is difficult.

Nancy seems to be someone who feels most comfortable by rules and routine. She makes references to the lack of structure in the Israeli school system and her need to let go of routine:

> It's different like, I feel like also like, school like, in America, school was very about learning and everything. Here it's also more like, there's more *tiyulim*, there's more like, I don't know, like school in America is very academic and stuff and like, Israel is more, I don't know (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 98-100).

Coming from a family who places high standards on academia, Nancy's difficulties are expressed in the lack of structure in the classrooms and the relaxed and less intensive academics. She explains that students regularly answer cell phones during class and because the classes are so large, the teachers have no control over who is on the phone or misbehaving (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 148-164). At the same time, Nancy realizes that going against behaviors she was taught was inappropriate during school hours and not being reprimanded relaxes her academic attitude. She receives support by her parents, who also call during school hours, because they "don't know her schedule" (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, l159).

A difficult observation when interviewing Nancy is that she is studious and dedicated to things she does, and feels that it was difficult to maintain that characteristic of herself in Israel. The classes are more relaxed, the academics are less intensive, and overall she gave me the impression that people care a lot less about learning. Her definition of being Israeli is leaving those things behind her.

In her first interview, Nancy tells about her volunteer with special needs children:

> Nancy: Um, no I started on Thursday, so every Thursday I go for a few hours and I help out with special needs children.
> Interviewer: Mm-hm.
> Nancy: At like, kind of a therapeutic [inaudible] place.
> Interviewer: Sounds cool.
> Nancy: Yeah.
> Interviewer: Does it help?
> Nancy: I just started once. I haven't really done so much.
> Interviewer: How are the kids?
> Nancy: They're good 'cause they're not like, they're still like, they're very functional, they just have problems like walking or talking and like, you help them with their homework and you play with them with the animals and stuff (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 267-278).

Again, she does not elaborate in detail, but it seems she looks for a positive outlet to identify and ease difficulties in her adjustment. Later, she was expressing positive experiences such as learning to play the guitar and going on trips with the *Bnei Akiva*, a Jewish youth movement.

Nancy considers herself American, which is not surprising as she defines the Israeli as extroverted, while she herself is introverted. When asked if she considers herself American or Israeli, Nancy responds:

> Nancy: I consider myself American.
> Interviewer: Not Israeli like, even a little bit?
> Nancy: Like, yeah a little bit, like, the things I like about Israelis I pick up, the things not like…[giggles]
> Interviewer: What don't you like?
> Nancy: Um, I don't know, um, Israelis can be really loud. [giggles]. I'm not like, such a screamer. Um, I don't know.
> Interviewer: What do you like about Israelis?
> Nancy: Um, they're very outgoing, like, they're really fun, like, they can go crazy.
> Interviewer: Yeah?
> Nancy: Um, they're nice like, because like, people know Israelis as like being rude and stuff except like, also they act kind of nice. I have a who's like, she like fits the description of an Israeli, but because of that she always pushed me to like, come to *peilut* [activity] at *Bnei Akiva* which was good for me.
> Interviewer: Mm-hm.
> Nancy: And like, she always called me up and was like, because she wasn't shy and stuff it was good.
> Interviewer: Yeah. That's so true. Um, so do you feel like you have more freedom here? Like,
> Nancy: Definitely.

> Interviewer: Your parents let you do more here than they did in the States?
> Nancy: Yeah like, I take buses like, like, it's really, like, also 'cause I live in a *kfar* [village] it's not so dangerous. Like, in America I lived in not like a city, except it was like a small city in Richmond (Merenlender 21 Jan 2011, 143-161).

From my impression of Nancy, her acculturation process is difficult because she is quiet and shy. In Israel, she is forced out of her comfort zone with new experiences and more independence, aspects that both parents view as important and positive.

During my third interview with Nancy, right before she left for a summer camp in the United States, I had a very hard time holding a conversation with her. She responds with one word answers and seems disinterested to speak with me about things she enjoyed in our last interviews. When asked about how her acculturation compares to the last time we spoke, she quickly responds:

> Interviewer: That's nice. Last time you told me you feel more American than Israeli 'cause Israeli girls like to scream a lot [chuckling].Do you still feel the same way?
> Nancy: Yeah, I still feel more American than Israeli.
> Interviewer: Yeah? Do you think things are gonna change or do you want them to stay?
> Nancy: I don't know. I think I'll always be more American than Israeli.
> Interviewer: Do you like being American?
> Nancy: Yeah [laughing].
> Interviewer: What does it mean to be American?
> Nancy: I don't know, I mean, just your personality, I think.
> Interviewer: Yeah?
> Nancy: Yeah (Merenlender 17 Jun 2011, 85-97).

Nancy does not want to involve me in her experiences during the third interview, and I chose not to interfere. However, it was evident that of the three interviews, she is the most introverted and experiencing difficulty acculturating in comparison to her siblings.

4.12 Analysis of Nancy's view on the acculturation of her parents

The Zengel Family's decision to immigrate was a well calculated decision. All the children recognize the importance of their parents' decision to leave everything and move to Israel as reflected in their positive and selfless attitudes with answers given in the interviews. Mirroring their mother's attitude, the children are concerned with holding face responses rather than

expressing concerns. When I asked Nancy if her parents have changed after immigration, she tells me:

> Nancy: Um [laughing] I don't know. I mean, I think they're much happier.
> Interviewer: Are you happier? Like, do you feel like things have changed for you?
> Nancy: Yeah, I think, I like, I like the Israel life better. It's still an adjustment and I'm still adjusting. I miss America (Merenlender 17 Nov 2010, 301-305).

Nancy does not make much mention of her parents' acculturation. She focuses on the importance of her parent's making their dreams of immigration to Israel a reality, and therefore, she accepts having to immigrate to Israel, too.

4.13 The Zengel family recapitulation

Although my time with the Zengel family was short, the interviews spanned over a period of eight months and the family was in contact with me during that time. I gained insight into their family dynamics and varying stages of adjustments. Acculturation occurs when an individual suddenly realizes that they have characteristically changed in retrospect to an earlier period of time. There were many transformations that I noted when speaking with the members of the Zengel family, but the ones I noticed as acculturation were specifically when the children recalled every day events as mundane without paying notice that they thought differently in previous conversations.

The Zengel children's acculturation process is a multitude of factors combined. The main changes that occurred within the family dynamics were as a result of a number of things. Each of the children was at varying stages of individualizing their identity separate from their parents. Consequently, the change in culture provided each child an extreme opportunity to find themselves in an environment very separate from their parents. At the same time, the children seem more apt to dealing with stressful changes and as a result, I noticed that each of them took on parental concerns. The children would often times worry about money and the future. Although I did not know the family before they moved to Israel, it seems that the parents subconsciously project their fears onto their children. Consciously, throughout all the interviews, both parents and children expressed that Jacob and Randy support each child's opportunity for freedom in Israel. This created a curious dynamic – where the parents allowed the children to be

less responsible, while each of the children expressed money and concerns for the future of themselves and their family.

When interviewing the families, I was twice invited to attend family dinners. The family dynamics seemed like a typical American family dinner. They discussed school and mundane everyday events. In addition, they would also cause culturally different experiences that they had undergone during that week or in the past. On an individual level, the children conversed about more interactive cultural experiences while Jacob and Randy discussed more culturally related obstacles.

The changes that are occurring in the dynamics of the Zengel family are still inconclusive. Randy was adamant about displaying a positive attitude towards hurdles and hardships, but emerges as a façade for missing her life before the immigration. As a result, members of the family continue to maintain American culture.

Each family member is undergoing changes within themselves as a result of the acculturation process and because they are facing different emotional stages as a result of environmental and biological factors. Once the children are more acculturated, their identity will be a balance of dual (bicultural) identity as the relationships and obligation they feel towards their parents is very strong.

V. Part 2: The Gold Family

5.1 Background Rebecca and Dan

Rebecca and Dan met at a religious event in Boston, Massachusetts after receiving their Bachelor's degrees. They grew up in non-religious households and both decided that they wanted to immigrate to Israeli after their first visit that occurred on separate occasions. Dan's first trip was to Poland followed by a few weeks in Israel. Rebecca went on an organized religious trip to Israel during her junior year in college.

Dan and Rebecca are unique in their decision because although they expressed religious motives, neither expresses religious aspects as the sole motivator. Before they had met, both individually decided that they wanted to move to Israel because their motive for immigration simply seemed to be, "the right thing to do":

Rebecca: It seemed like a logical place. I didn't have a specific plan of any sort. But, it was on the list of things that I would like to accomplish in life. Um, was to make *aliyah*.

Dan: After my high school trip. I'd come here with my family when I was 6 years old, then I came back that summer. I think I knew deep down inside at some point I knew I'd move here. My grandfather had 2 brothers that moved here in the early '40's. He had thought about moving here so it's kind of in the blood (Merenlender 19 Nov 2010, 51-55).

Rebecca and Dan resided in Portland, Oregon with their two children Adam and Michael. They arrived to Israel independent of *Nefesh B'Nefesh* and moved into a temporary apartment in Haifa. The move was contingent upon Dan's relocation with his place of employment.

Rebecca takes care of their two children and is the dominant personality in the family. Both she and Dan make an extra effort to maintain only English in the household. Rebecca has strict rules in the house which are based on American culture including specific "bath time" and "bed time." She makes sure her children are fed healthy, non-processed food. Both Dan and Rebecca are concerned of having children who misbehave and do not listen to adults – they have been telling me this often when addressing Israeli children and their lack of rules.

Dan and Rebecca are open minded and accepting of their new culture. Rebecca goes to *ulpan* [a government funded language school] for extra Hebrew help and their friendships are a mixture of Anglo immigrants and Israelis. Nevertheless, during many instances in the interviews, Rebecca

expresses concern about having her children grow up without an American identity. She fears that their children will become Israeli, rather than bicultural. Although she does not admit it, she often makes comments as to her fears of having her children be so different from the way she was raised.

Dan is more relaxed and typically agrees with Rebecca. If he does not she usually corrects him. Dan more readily accepts the acculturation of his children, but at the importance of Rebecca's desire to maintain the American household, the family holds on to past traditions and routines.

Because their children are so young [aged three and five], it was very difficult for me to engage them in conversation. When interviewing the children, we played games and arts and crafts. During the second interview, my entire conversation with both boys was entirely in Hebrew – while they spoke to one another in English (a rule in the house). From my short time with the boys, it was clear that their default mode will be Israeli and they will maintain an American identity within their home only at their parents' insistence.

The interviews with the Gold family were based upon Rebecca and Dan expressing their own acculturation experiences in addition to maintaining biculturalism with the boys. When speaking with both boys, they had a grasp of both cultures without the awareness of the differences between the two. They were able to switch back and forth from English to Hebrew, but yet were influenced by the culture of their household. It will be interesting to see how the two boys develop their identity once school and friends become more of an influence than their parents.

5.2 Analysis of Rebecca and Dan's acculturation

I began interviewing Rebecca and Dan short of a year after their immigration to Israel. During the interviews, I thought that the immigration process was easy for them, but after analyzing the transcription, I realized their difficulty and resistance to the acculturation process. I interviewed Rebecca and Dan on three separate occasions between two to three month intervals. Their interviews show consistency in their dynamics as a couple regarding how they interact with one another and their children. Both are extremely optimistic about their decision to move to Israel. As I will discuss later, during the interview they are always repeating one another's responses and looking to synchronize their answers – although at time one of them may not agree with the

other. Their relationship is founded upon supporting each other during all times. At the start of each interview, I had difficultly discerning if their answers were truthful or whether they were what they expected I wanted to hear, generally the case to some extent. However, each time I touched upon issues that concerned child rearing, I felt the truthful answers surfaced revealing a very culturally embedded American way of though. They contribute thorough and concrete answers which defined them as set in their identities and beliefs despite their desire to make cultural changes. Many times during the interview I felt that Rebecca and Dan's assertion of their acculturation was negated in later interview answers and they appeared hypocritical though not conscious of how they were truly feeling.

Because their children are so young and their immigration is new, it was difficult for me to conclude how their children will acculturate in the future, so I am limited to making an educated speculation. However, what I did discover was how I believe the process of miscommunication and dilemma forms in its early stages amongst immigrant adults and their children.

5.2.1 Asserting control in order to maintain American culture within the household

During each interview with Rebecca and Dan there are occurring themes in conversation that seem to heavily influence the set expectations of the family. Control is the main theme in interviews with Rebecca and Dan. It is challenging to differentiate whether the concern was solely Rebecca's or whether Dan openly felt similar concerns or was mostly passive.

The theme of control manifests itself in multiple forms during every topic. Both Dan and Rebecca equally discuss their apprehensions regarding money in each interview. They first introduce their concerns with money when I asked them about their final decision to move to Israel. The decision was based on a number of factors which included Dan's job accepting his relocation to Israel. It took them over nine months after accepting the new position to make the move.

a. Monetary Matters

As already indicated, Rebecca is the dominate personality in the household and although Dan is currently the breadwinner, monetary topics are analyzed and discussed before any major

decisions are made. She comments that her American upbringing is well entwined in the way her family functions and intends to keep it functioning in the same manner with minor adjustments.

From Rebecca's interview, it seems that she very much wants to become more relaxed and lenient; her definition of what is means to be Israeli. However, her American culture is deeply rooted into the way she makes her daily decisions and she subtly inserts malevolent stereotypical comments of the typical Israel which she fears she will become – an obvious struggle within her identity. Rebecca's desire for control is a combination of her personality and her desperation to hold on to her American identity.

Control to Rebecca is a characteristic of high socioeconomic status as defined by her and it symbolizes the way Americans with class and values should live their lives both at home and in the eyes of the public. When discussing control over money, Rebecca depicts a very clear example of how she views Israeli culture as uncalculated and irresponsible. As an American, she expects a family to put the needs of their children first making sure a family has food, shelter, and a good education. To Rebecca self-indulgence expresses a lack of self-control and maturity. She tells the story of a friend who purchased expensive designer shoes:

> Rebecca: It's not how you get what you want in our family. And I think some of that is where we come from and then also I was talking to her [a friend] and she got these great new boots and I was like, I've been on the lookout for some new shoes and I'm curious to know like, where my Israeli friends buy clothes and shoes and stuff. And I said, 'Those are great boots, where'd you get them?' And she commented she got them at Daniela Halevi which is a really shishi designer up the street, and she commented they were on sale. But even still on sale they were 1000 shekels and I thought I would never spend 1000 shekels on shoes. I wouldn't spend 250 dollars on shoes, 300 dollars on shoes without a whole lot of thought. We would've- that's like the level of spending we would need to have a discussion in the family. Either I'd come home and be like, 'These were 5000 dollar boots and I got them for 300.' Ok, that's fine, you know.
> Dan: I would still say where [inaudible].
> Rebecca: And then we'd still have to say, where's the money coming from? Right? And for her, I, you know I was just sort of like, where do you think you have 1000 shekels? Like, ok, great boots, I'm sure it was a good deal, but it's still 1000 shekels. You know, that's a shitload of money in this country.
> Dan: Americans are like that too.
> Rebecca: Americans are like that, exactly, but I just can't get into that. But I think Israelis are even more so (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 203-220).

Even though Dan reminds Rebecca that Americans also spend without second thought, Rebecca still expresses that Israelis are even more extreme. Her discontent with careless Israeli behavior at times appears even envious of the culture. She is unable to lose control and allow herself to indulge because she views these aspects as lacking responsibly for an adult with a family. When

a family is in control of their income, they hold on to their American identities. She closely associates responsible allocation of money with being American.

> Rebecca: You know, I would spend and I would enjoy doing it but I would spend a couple hours on Sunday going through the paper and weeding out the sections I didn't want and finding the ones that I did and making comparisons [for stores offering best deals] and we would talk about, and we would talk a lot about what do we need to buy and did we need to. You know, and I think, we're better than most Americans in that we would talk about do we really need this and if not, then why are we buying it and can we justify it, is there a reason to justify it but yeah, I don't, I went to the States and I was in Chicago in January for a visit. I had a list of some things we needed to get and I was like, you know what, I'm gonna go to CVS and if they happen to have them, great and if not, then I'll go to Walgreens. And I'm not gonna care if it's 50 cents more at Walgreens. You know, these are the things I need to get and I need to not spend my entire vacation shopping. You know, whereas when we were living in the States we were like, well, where can I get this cheaper, where I can get that cheaper (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, l455-465).

Rebecca's experience with Israeli culture in regards to money is very different from the way Rebecca was brought raised. In the quote above, she is flustered at the thought of spending fifty cents more when a better buy can be found in a nearby store. Her struggle with her identity is subtly displayed as she resists the urge to fall back into her normal American habits of occupying her time to finding the best deal, as she consciously realizes during this trip that there are more important matters that deserve her attention.

When asked about the difficulties in controlling money due to the language barrier, Rebecca remarks that her friends say: "Just pay the bill." She responds: "And that just totally goes against how I was raised by my parents and stuff, so I'm like well, we're gonna do it here too. That's how we did it in the States" (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 151-153).

b. Diet

The Gold family defines having control over money as symbolic and expected in order to achieve high status, functional family in American society. Rebecca's areas of controlling the rate of acculturation of her family's American identity are manifested in the food she prepares for her family.

Much of the food in the United States is processed, a concern for Rebecca, who expresses content with the healthy aspects of Israeli food. Nevertheless, she categorizes and criticizes Israeli parents who lack control over their children.

> I think the Israeli parents are probably a little bit more lenient than we are vis-a-vis sugary kinds of things but, you know, we definitely, we're with a population who expect their kids to eat vegetables and eat healthy, you know, not your classic Israeli kids who are living on *Krembo* and *Bamba* and *kariyot* um, running wild and filthy, and you know, feral (Merenlender Nov19, 2010, 440-443).

Rebecca refers to the majority of Israeli children, "the classic Israeli kids," as those who are lacking control and are misdirected. A child who is not fed a balanced diet and lacks direction and control is comparable to a wild animal.

There are various other examples throughout the interviews in which Rebecca expresses her concern over her family's diet. In other examples, it is clear she struggles with her old American habits and is realizing that she has to adapt to Israeli ones.

> Rebecca: And I think really what's at this point, is I'm able to say you know, things like *Bamba*, ok, we can sort of integrate them somewhat sort of into our life. They are not a staple food in our house; you'll probably always find a bag or two of *Bamba* [Israeli peanut butter flavored snack] in the house, for special occasions. As opposed to, *Bamba* is only something we buy at the *makolet* [grocery store] on a special occasion. Do you know what I mean? In my mind, I guess there are sort of levels. And I think, in terms of compared to normal Israelis (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 278-283)…
> Rebecca: I mean in particular I think about food because that's a big one. You know, the kids ask to have a Popsicle at the *makolet* or um, we have juice popsicles in the freezer almost all the time than we would've had back in Portland.
> Dan: That's true.
> Rebecca: And yogurt popsicles, but at the same time those are healthy, I guess. 'Cause the comparison here, to what's normal for kids, it's normal for kids to go every day after school to the *makolet* and get a Popsicle. Ok, so my counter is let's choose popsicles in the freezer, where I know it's just made out of juice. Or it's made out of yogurt with some jelly mixed into it, kinda something for them. So that they're not buying a sugar popsicle at the *makolet*. And it's not, I didn't even need to do that in the States, because this idea of going to the *makolet* doesn't exist (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 317-328)…

Rebecca's correlation between lack of control to Israelis results in her excessive obsession over making certain that her family does not become like the typical Israeli. Her worry is specific towards Israeli based products and behaviors. When she mentions snacks she mentions Israeli snacks. There are plenty of imported snacks in Israel from the United States – if her children were to request a bag of Doritos, would she not object, as well? How would she categorize them, then; typical obese American children? My third interview took place at a falafel joint with Dan and Rebecca who later purchased falafel for lunch when their children finished school.

I believe that all of Rebecca's control issues are a result of her dissatisfaction with Israeli culture and her struggle to maintain her identity and keep her family's upbringing similar to hers.

c. Acceptable Behavior

Other forms of control are demonstrated in behavioral expectations. As expressed earlier on, Rebecca fears her children might become what she views as "the classic feral Israeli child". She sometimes associates that behavior with poor socioeconomic status as a result of poor education. Other times, she includes affluent and middle class Israeli children as feral, too.

So many times throughout the interviews Rebecca prides herself in her ability to acculturate which is so often contradicted by her negative monologue of Israeli culture. Becoming feral is a definite concern that Rebecca has for her children. This embodies children who lack discipline, education, manners, respect, and so forth. The first time she compares a child to a wild animal seems accidental as mentioned in the quote above. This also is the point in which she stops censoring her answers and expresses her true fears and expectations. The feral motif arises several other times the in interviews.

One interesting mention Rebecca makes of her fear of having feral children comes up in conversation between her and Dan. During the interviews, he lets Rebecca have control and dominate the conversation, typical of their family dynamics. As I mentioned above, Rebecca mostly mentions that feral Israelis are poverty stricken in order to alleviate her own fears of acculturation. Dan subtly sheds light on Rebecca's hypocrisy when she tells of American children who have become feral and Israeli which Rebecca ignores.

> Rebecca: … and also this area of Haifa is more affluent, um, a little more gentrified I think
> Dan: More educated.
> Rebecca: And better educated so you don't see the feral Israeli.
> Interviewer: [laughing]
> Rebecca: We've got some friends of ours who are planning to make *aliyah* in a few years. They've got some family in the Jerusalem area. They came to visit, brought the kids for the first time when their kids were; what was it? Like, 2 years ago, so Ezra was like, 4 and Gabi was 6 or 7. And they commented within like, 48 hours of spending time with their cousins, they were feral. And that was the only way to describe the children - they'd become feral. And that's what Israeli children are, like that's a serious stereotypical - that your child is feral.
> Dan: Well, the funny thing is that they're Americans.
> Rebecca: Right, they're cousins, but, well now they've been here for so long that they're Israeli children.
> Dan: But their parents are Americans (Merenlender 19 Nov 2010, 448 460).

Rebecca changes the topic after Dan's comment. It is quite a painful struggle for Rebecca to accept that her children will acculturate. Dan, on the other hand, seems apathetic to the changes. When I commented to Dan and Rebecca after my interview with her boys that they speak

fluently without an American accent, Dan says to me that he thinks his boys are becoming Israeli. And Rebecca quickly steps in to say: "They are becoming Israeli, but not in a bad way" (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 615-617).

The examples of the inevitable acculturation of their children throughout the interviews are a main concern for Rebecca. She is constantly searching for reinforcement of her actions and the denial of the inevitable and the distinction of herself from the Israeli.

About herself as a parent:

> In that way, we're very non-Israeli. We'll hold ourselves very accountable, like, in the moment right now with what we're doing and I think it hold over for our kids too…We hold them [her children] accountable for their behavior right now in the moment and I don't think Israeli parents do that much" (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 239-240).

About the Israeli parent:

> …and she [Rebecca's friend] was saying we really wanna go but our son doesn't want to go. Her ten year old son. I was thinking, I would never let my kids dictate what we're doing as a family of 5 (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 188-189)… : And um, and I just sort of looked at her, and I was dumbfounded you know I was like, and to her it was totally normal. I was like, ok, you know she lets her kids drive things. And I look at her and it's a very Israeli kind of thing. She's not a pushover of a parent, but it's clearly just sort of when the younger kid screams for something it's just easier to just not put up the fight and get him whatever the kid wants. In our house, you get a time-out for screaming at me (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 197-201).

Rebecca's speculations of Israeli behavior also don't take cultural differences from the Israeli perspective into account. I would speculate that if Rebecca's friend really wanted to go an event, she would not use her son as an excuse. I think Rebecca fails to realize that the so called feral child is not a result of lack of discipline but is a result of the geographical influence of living in Israel. The area is expensive, hot, belligerent, stressful, and has been described negatively with numerous other adjectives. Which leads me to wonder, that once Rebecca is more enveloped into that part of society – will she care less, too? She has mentioned before:

> I would say, I would say that I have relaxed a little bit in my parenting because I feel like especially at least for the first year for the kids um, expectations need to be a little bit low, you know (Merenlender 19 Nov 2010, 431-432)… . I don't know, it's um, I'm feeling like I've definitely relaxed a bit, just in general. [Interviewer: Do you want to?]...I think so, yeah, I definitely think so (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 299-302).

e. Other areas of control

Other areas of control manifest themselves in peculiar fashion. The Gold's decided they will not have a television in the house because "What do we need a TV for? It just rots your brain" (Merenlender 19 Nov 2010, 245). Although, a mutual decision, that Dan comments he misses having a television.

> Dan: No, it's not missing the TV, but by not having a TV, I'm not connected in a pop culture way. You go to work and you say oh did you see such and such on TV last night? No, I don't have a TV. But that could happen in the States not having a TV either.
> Rebecca: Sure, sure.
> Dan: Um, but I think there's a lack of a connection, I think.
> Rebecca: Yeah.
> Dan: Part of it is the language, part of it is just we've been here for a year, and not 30 years.
> Rebecca: Yeah.
> Dan: So, there is that, there's something missing (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 402-411).

There are so many absences in the Gold family household that are preventative measures to increasing the rate of acculturation. Besides those mentioned above, Hebrew is not allowed to be spoken in the house. The family speaks only English to maintain and develop their children's English. This includes American stories, games, and household rules such as chores and certain manners.

5.3 Analysis of Rebecca's perspective on her individual acculturation

After discussing and justifying her perspective on the way her family is adjusting and emphasizing the importance of maintaining an American household, Rebecca concludes that she, herself, at this point feels more Israeli. The statement was made in the second interview (525-528) after a trip she made back to Chicago where she felt she did not belong. She later explains in more detail: "I would say 70 - 30 for me. 70% on the Israeli end of things and 30% American" (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 533). Rebecca's observation of her acculturation does not match her child rearing habits nor the way she describes typical Israelis. In fact, from nearly all of the comments she makes regarding Israelis are negative observations and stereotypes far from what she hopes she or her family will become. The type of Israelis she regards positively is those who have had interaction with American culture or are educated. Analogously, the type of Israeli she

wants to become is the same version of her current self that speaks Hebrew. Nevertheless, she does not speak Hebrew.

For this reason, it is difficult to decipher what Rebecca's innermost opinions and intentions are regarding acculturation into Israeli society. On the one hand, she considers herself more Israeli than American, but on the other hand the source of her anxiety in Israel stems from that fact that her children might lose their American identity and become Israeli.

When interviewing Rebecca, her initial response is to tell me what I want to hear, but later on when asked about specific details concerning her family, her authentic opinion of Israeli culture surfaces. Rebecca feels that she no longer belongs in America but she does not belong in Israel either.

Rebecca's acculturation into Israeli society is described as being direct and real:

> Yeah, I think Israeli is much better. And I really, that's one of the biggest things I need to integrate into my life across the board, is this directness. You know, like my uh, my 10th reunion, my 10th college reunion is coming up and I've been asked to be on the slate of officers for my class. And it's really not a big deal and what I said to the woman who was doing the nominations, I said, "Look, I'll be happy to do any of the roles that need to be filled, 'cause it's most important they get filled, but if somebody else comes up between now and literally the minute we do elections in June, I'm happy to step aside. I'm not going to be upset, or crushed or whatever." And we, there was another classmate who had expressed some interest in being class secretary and she and I had both sent emails to this woman saying hey, we have to get the nomination forms in, do you want your name on it or do you want Rebecca's name on it and…So, neither one of us heard back from this woman and she was a very good friend of mine from college and I didn't hear, didn't hear, and didn't hear. And I finally sent out an email, I said, "Liz are you pissed at me?" Because I had sent her an email being very direct and saying "Look, I appreciate you wanna be class secretary, but you haven't responded to any of our emails so it seems to us you have too much on your plate and this really wouldn't be a good idea for you to do." And I was pretty blunt and direct with her, 'cause I know I can be (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 545-561).

She continues to discuss how Americans have a "fake friendly" demeanor and that because of her acculturation; she no longer feels that she can relate to that sort of behavior. It appears to me that Rebecca is at a crossroad of leaving her American upbringing and allowing Israeli culture to dominate. At the same time, she is terrified to lose herself and raise her children in a way in which they will become so different from her. As much as she claims she is 70% Israeli and 30% American, the stories she tells during her interviews reveal that she is far from accepting Israeli culture to become part of her family, let alone herself.

Rebecca describes in the second interview, which took place in February 2011, the family has hit a plateau in their immigration process and the family is beginning to feel more settled (Merenlender 29 Feb 2011, 24-27). During our last interview in April, she describes that she is feeling more comfortable being able to read and understand Hebrew more easily and that her family is enjoying exploring the country together (Merenlender 29 Apr 2011, 353-358). Yet, the way Rebecca truly feels surfaces sporadically when she describes the difficulties of moving to a new place alone: "I mean, I miss feeling like a part of the society, but again that's something that we can, it just takes time" (Merenlender 29 Apr 2011, 336-337).

Each time I asked Rebecca and Dan what they missed most about America they would respond with materialistic answers. In the second interview, Rebecca answered to my surprise, more profoundly. The response illustrated the exact hardships one undergoes when moving to a new culture. Instead of hiding her feelings or justifying her fears about the typical Israeli she gives me one of the most realistic answers in all three interviews:

> Interviewer: Alright, so what do you miss most about the US?
> Rebecca: Not feeling like an outsider. But, um, you know like, there are those moments where you're just like, yeah I really have no clue what's going on here. And it just you know, you sort of get filled...
> You sort of get filled with a sense of melancholy, I think, if you think about it and you just have to push through it. I think it's true, it happens in the States too when you move city to city, but it goes away faster because you can acclimate faster. And the language is definitely a buffer. That's me, but if you miss your TV that's fine [in response to Dan missing his TV] (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 395-404).

Finally, I think without realizing her intentions, Rebecca breaks down and gives me an honest answer. In the end, having a television or maintaining proper nutrition, or saving money are all just façades to hide the most difficult part of her transition: feeling like she does not belong. Once Rebecca feels she belongs, the importance she places on controlling her family's diet, etiquette, language, behavior, and so forth will lessen and allow her to acculturate into society and even feel like she can relate better to her family, who is more easily acculturating.

Her need to find Israeli friends who have American upbringing or to move to a Kibbutz with Anglos will subside as she finds she makes a home where her family and her heart belong.

At this moment, Rebecca sums up more truthfully than ever that at this point in time, on the whole, to her, Israel is "Home enough" (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 724).

5.4 Analysis of Dan's perspective on his individual acculturation

Dan does not dominate the conversation but his answers are direct and clear. Many times Rebecca tries to convince him otherwise where he complies, but his initial emotional responses are comparable to the description of how he views the situation.

With Rebecca dominating the household decisions, during the interview Dan sometimes offers his true opinion. In terms of his acculturation rate, he remains pragmatic of the level of acculturation he has undergone since his move to Israel.

In the second interview, I asked both him and Rebecca if they felt more Israeli or American. While Rebecca analyzes her progress, Dan explains that he feels that he is both. When asked what his definition of Israeli means to him he explains:

> Just in the way we work, arguing to get a better answer in the end. The Israeli straight-forwardness. And somebody else I haven't worked with for a while goes, "No, he was like that before, he's always been an Israeli in that way. So, that's why I say it's like half and half that I'm still the American who speaks English who came here, but at the same time I figured out how to work like an Israeli" (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011 538-541).

Dan's definition of acculturation is described by an outward characteristic referring to the manner of expression as opposed to emotional changes that occur. He recognizes that language acquisition is a large part of acculturation, but the ability to fit into society is another dominating factor. Throughout his interviews, Dan measures rate of acculturation by his ability to fit into society rather than by emotional setbacks and changes – aspects that make Rebecca more conscientiously aware and fearful.

With that in mind, Dan is more willing to accept his own acculturation and the acculturation of his family, because to him it means that they will adopt characteristics that will allow them to blend in with a new culture, but does not mention emotional repercussions. "But yet, we drive with Israelis, take the bus with Israelis" (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 241). It was difficult to have Dan elaborate on conversation because Rebecca would answer before Dan had a chance to define what he meant. It seems that throughout our conversation he was satisfied with his personal progress in Israel as measured by his success in the work place and his children's success in school. Dan emphasizes the importance of biculturalism – and defines this well in the second interview by explaining: "I want them to be Israelis that when they go to the States aren't out of

place [638]…the happy middle somewhere [652].” Dan, who has family living in Israel, holds clear expectations of what immigration will mean for him and for his family.

He does not expect to become totally Israeli, but rather anticipates being able to fit into society. For his children, he requires that they will go one step beyond him, and feels that they belong both in Israel and America. Successful acculturation in Dan’s eyes means finding your identity as a part of both and not having to switch between the two: “In day to day to find the right balance of the two, without switching” (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 658).

A lot of what Dan hopes for his children is reflective in his expectations for his own acculturation. The reason for the Gold’s immigration to Israel is not motivated by economic or social reasons – rather a place in which both agree is the right place to be, not necessarily the better place. More explicitly, Dan and Rebecca are seeking a place of belonging. When I asked Dan and Rebecca how they would feel if their grown children decided to move back to the United States, I sensed that Dan was contemplating the reasons he decided to move to Israel. Being that it is not a place that is better, as he explains, but a place that offers more meaning. Deduced from the few sentences he expressed, his disappointment would be that his children did not experience what he most sought to find in Israel – a place to belong.

> Dan: I‘ll say it this way, if they decide to go back to the States when they’re 18, 19, then clearly, I’d say clearly us moving to Israel was the wrong decision. Because Israel isn’t better. Because it, I hope that…
> Rebecca: Well, no, they might decide at age 18 they wanna go experience the US for a few years.
> Dan: What I’m saying is to make a life decision.
> Rebecca: Then it wasn’t the right decision. It might be the right place for us and not the right place for them.
> Dan: Maybe (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 694-701).

In retrospect, Dan’s interviews are frustrating as Rebecca dominates the conversations. Dan considers his children fully acculturated due to their language acquisition and ability to fit into their preschool class.

Dan explains that he holds on to his American values by maintaining that the rules of the house are the correct rules for his children. He explains: “Just because the teacher says one thing, or the kids at school do one thing doesn’t mean that’s the way it is” (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 252). This aspect of acculturation, more emotionally related than that of societal etiquette, is the first

inkling insinuated by Dan that although he accepts his new society, it is important for him that his children maintain certain elements of how he was raised.

Dan's acculturation process is best summed up in his own words: "So, now although maybe I can't fully understand the news [television news reports] to become a part of the culture, I'd say maybe we're not culturally part of the society but we are part of the society" (Merenlender 29 Apr 2011, 347-348).

5.5 Dan and Rebecca: Recapitulation

The process of acculturation includes finding their home; belonging and feeling grounded. This is the strongest elements of desire in the interviews with Rebecca and Dan. Both of them experiment with different methods in order to grant them the feeling of belonging. They implement these practices with their children in determination that they will sense belonging. From my interviews with the boys, each seems to be well adjusted and the acculturation process is one that plagues Rebecca and Dan, not their children at this point.

During my first interview with Rebecca and Dan they were quick to tell me that we should hurry up with my interviews as they would be moving to a *kibbutz* in a few months. Part of the conversation during each interview was about, the acceptance process to the *kibbutz* and the house and educated their children would receive. In my third interview with Rebecca and Dan, they explained that their plan to move to the *kibbutz* diminished. A *kibbutz* was a means to the end of not belonging -- something it seems that Rebecca and Dan have been searching for together.

> Dan: Um, but I think there's a lack of a connection, I think.
> Rebecca: Yeah.
> Dan: Part of it is the language, part of it is just we've been here for a year, and not 30 years.
> Rebecca: Yeah.
> Dan: So, there is that, there's something missing.
> Rebecca: We're a little adrift. A little, just in general. I mean, you know, we know our neighbors across the hall, we know somebody else here in the building, that's it. We know a couple of people in the neighborhood, but, and I think part of it is also just this neighborhood. It's just, that's just kinda how it is, people keep to themselves.
> Interviewer: Yeah?
> Rebecca: Um, which is another reason to move to the *kibbutz* to really feel like we live surrounded by people.
> Dan: That we know.

> Rebecca: That we know, who care about us. That we care about. Um, you know, when you see a stray dog you know who's dog it is, as opposed to being like, ok, that dog's in the road.
> Dan: 'Cause it's not a stray dog.
> Rebecca: Exactly, it's not a stray dog. It belongs to somebody. You see a kid, you know, you know whose kid it is and you know you can reprimand them because they're not supposed to be climbing that tree. Like…
> Dan: Right, you're at the playground and you know..
> Rebecca: And we would've been looking for this in the US anyway as well, and having, probably even having a harder time finding it, because you don't have communities like a *kibbutz*.
> Dan: Right.
> Rebecca: Really, where you can, at least not Jewishly where you can live.
> Interviewer: Mm-hm.
> Dan: Even not Jewishly.
> Rebecca: No, we could move to a small town in the US, we could choose to live in a small community (Merenlender 8 Feb 2011, 409-435).

In this short dialogue Rebecca and Dan are honest to one another about difficulties experienced during immigration. Both express their lack of belonging due to unfamiliarity with their neighborhood believing that finding their home means finding a place where they are accepted for the way they are even if they are different. Rebecca analyzes the situation to a stray dog – one no one wants, yet belonging to someone. The family struggles to find the place (in the United States, as well) where they will feel wanted and accepted regardless of their acculturation progress and perhaps, this has been the conclusive reason for the decision of why they chose to immigrate.

5.6 Analysis of Adam and Michael's acculturation

Initially I planned to only interview Adam, who was five years old at the time. Because of his tender young age our interviews consisted of art projects and play time which his brother Michael, three at the time, was eager to participate in, as well. I interviewed Adam and Michael on three separate occasions. The first interview was after preschool in a playground with his parents present. Adam and Michael colored on construction paper when we spoke in English only, as I assumed a conversation in Hebrew would be difficult. On the way home from the playground, I realized I could hold an entire conversation with Adam in Hebrew. During the second interview two months later, Adam, Michael, and I assembled an art project in their home and later played with their toys. The rules were that we only speak in Hebrew. Without their parents present, they were very talkative, attentive, and eager to hold my attention while communicating only in Hebrew. During the third interview, again, after preschool and in the

playground with their parents present, both boys were shy and did not speak much with me unless their parents coaxed them.

None of the interviews with the boys have been transcribed as our interviews are of play time conversation. As I was filming these events, I found it more efficient to analyze their body language and to listen again to their general conversation with me.

My first interview with Michael and Adam took place on a sunny Friday afternoon in Haifa on November 19, 2010 after the boys had finished preschool. Dan picked them up from pre-school and brought them to the park to meet me. I greeted them with crayons and construction paper. Both were delighted that someone had brought them something to play with. Adam colored and his mom and dad sat closely on a bench while he and I sat on the floor. I asked him to draw me a picture of his family and his mother commented that he is not the artist of the family. Adam was shy and did not want to speak much about his pictures. During the interview I continued to draw with him asking him to say various words in Hebrew. He either answered quickly or was coaxed into speaking to me in Hebrew. I was disappointed at the end of the interview when I thought it would be difficult to get to know Adam.

To my surprise, on our walk back to our car, when the camera was placed in my bag and out of sight, Adam had a full discussion with me in Hebrew about school and Israel. His father later told me he did not understand the entire conversation.

My second interview with the Adam was more successful as his parents attended to errands and left me alone with the boys while their grandmother, who was visiting from the United States, was in another room. Getting to know both boys during this interview was much more successful. I promised them to play games and art projects, but on the condition that they could speak with me only in Hebrew.

When listening to the interviews, Adam speaks with me in nearly fluent Hebrew. He sometimes has masculine and feminine confusion and verb conjunction errors. His American accent is relatively absent. Both Adam and Michael's manners and behavior are reflective of what their parents have told me in the interviews. During our art project they were extremely well behaved asking permission to use my things and politely asking me for help. At one point during our art

project, Adam coughed and put his arm in front of his mouth to cover the cough. Their mannerisms and behavior are indicative of how they were taught to behave at home. Nevertheless, our activities took place in their home; their classroom behavior may be different.

After our art project, the boys showed me their toys and started becoming more active and excitable. At one point when we played dominos, they started throwing them across the room and I convinced them to help me clean up quickly so that we could surprise their mother.

My third interview with the boys took place nearly three months later and once again took place on a Friday afternoon after school. The interview was somewhat unsuccessful in terms of our communication as their parents were present and the boys were distracted by their lunch and their parents. Our conversation was mostly in English.

It was challenging to interview children who were so young. Their behavior at home and their body language is reflective of what their parents have taught them, but their language is the beginning process of developing a more rapid acculturation rate than their parents. The conclusions I drew from my interview with Adam and Michael is that they are happy and settled in their homes and at school. Neither is yet aware that it is different to be speaking one language at home and another language at school. For now, it is the norm until they are older and will notice that there are differences between the way their parents are raising them and the culture in which they are live.

VI. Reflection

My research confirms that the acculturative rates of immigrant families will differ between parents and their offspring resulting in negative changes within family dynamics despite parents' acceptance and welcoming of the integration of a new culture. Both of the families that I interviewed made the decision to immigrate when their lives were financially stable and settled in the United States. Each family came from a high socioeconomic background and practiced Modern Orthodox Judaism in the United States. The reason for their immigration was so that their children were provided with spiritual and intangible values to their lives; to find non-materialistic meaning in their lives. What became evident throughout the interviews was that the parents were in fact also searching for the spiritual and non-materialistic meaning for their own lives. The parents in both families recognized unfulfilling aspects from their native home and with parts of their identities. Changes due to immigration provided them with the means for providing solidity to their identity.

Although there are many studies that discuss and prove that children's more rapid acculturation leads to discontinuity in the dynamics of a family, it has been researched primarily for families who immigrate to raise socioeconomic standards or as a result of oppression.

Israel is the only country created for the Jewish people. As a result, defining Jewishness in Israel falls between defining one's identity through religion or as an ethnicity. The population of Israel is divided across a spectrum consisting of religion and ethnicity. *Hilonim* [secular Israelis] are more likely to identify with Jewishness as an ethnicity while religious and traditional Jews incorporate Judaism as also defined by religion. Jewish Americans are typically defined as Jews by their religion and their nationality as American.

The two families that I interviewed intended to strengthen their spirituality and connection to their religion in Israel. The parents of each family anticipated and welcomed acculturation in hopes of enriching their identity as Jews in Israel. The unexpected frustration arises with both sets of parents when their expectations of enhancing Judaism are intertwined with having to become Israeli.

The distinguishing factor in this study is that the families researched who immigrated to strengthen their religious identity must confront the entanglement of Jewishness as an Israeli. Once defining their culture as components of American and Jewish, they realize the failure to become more Jewish by becoming Israeli. Parents are faced with their children not only becoming culturally unique to themselves, but to also practice their religion differently than accepted in the home.

Although the families I interviewed are dissimilar, there are a number of characteristics that unify them. The prospect of losing their religion altogether is a unifying concern. In both families, the matriarch preserves the family. She sets the tone and expectations for the entire family – and the family functions because she sets the standards. Each matriarch possesses elements of control over her family. Although both insist she welcome her family's acculturation she expects them to occur in certain way almost as if to decide which aspects of her family may change and which are expected to remain the same. Each matriarch anticipates similarities in family traditions and routine despite the relocation.

The patriarch of each family is concerned with their family's financial status and maintaining the same standards of living the family experienced in the past. Although every member of the family seems satisfied with their current living conditions; the patriarch's role is to be able to provide for his family as before. Their focus is not about acculturation or even assimilation in terms of their identity, but rather about being able to identify and assimilate into their social context so that they can properly provide for their families.

Because I did not know the families prior to their immigration and the interviews with the family members took place during a time when they were undergoing individual changes, it was difficult to conclude the outcome of their immigration. However, it was evident that varying rates of acculturation were taking place and that the beginnings of the reformation of identities for each of the family members was beginning. I could only predict from my interviews which areas of conflict as a result of immigration would occur in the future and identify where areas where the dynamics of the family was subtly changing.

The major affecting differences between the families interviewed are the age of their children during immigration and the location they chose to live in Israel. Both are influencing factors that determine acculturation rates and changes in family dynamics. For example, the impact of immigration is only subtly recognizable with the Gold family children because they are so young. Their identities are currently heavily influenced by their lives in their home. However, the children's acculturation into society is also rapidly taking place. Both have acquired conversational Hebrew which will continue to develop and surpass their parents' level of Hebrew, while their level of English will at some point become stagnant and less preferred in conversation. When they mature, their culture will be heavily influenced by their peers and other socially identifying groups. Culturally, the school they attend and other social institutions which will define their identity outside of the house.

Their parents' current focus is maintaining certain aspects of American culture including the English language, mannerisms, and certain values. If these factors remain important, they will acquire both cultures as a part of their identity. They will develop a bicultural identity and will be faced with determining how much of their American identity will be present and in what situations. While their bicultural identity will be determined according to the alternation model or the fusion model, the acceptance of a dual identity will be influenced by their family's approval of Israeli culture.

Throughout the interviews with Rebecca and Dan, elements of control are present. While she emphasizes her approval of acculturation for herself and her family, she is constantly plagued that her children might turn into "the typical Israeli children". To impede the transition, she manages the household with elements of control. Despite the acknowledgement that her level of parenting has relaxed, Rebecca demands that rules be followed in the home and when representing the family outside of the home.

When the influence of their peers will be a more determining factor than the influence of the parents, as with any child, the family dynamics will then be tested. For now, the children are integrating with Israeli society and their values and behavior are being influenced both by their society and by their parents. They will soon be able to identify themselves as Israelis and identify with their parents' upbringing. The conflict will occur when they recognize the differences

between the two cultures and if Rebecca continues to demand certain behavioral aspects that will cause them to choose to regard or disregard.

Rebecca and Dan's acculturation rates will vary and their parenting expectations may also change resulting in conflict. Their unity as acculturation continues will determine the continuity within the household will also determine where their children will find that they most belong.

During the interview period, Rebecca expresses concern in multiple contexts about having her children "turning into the typical Israeli." Despite that in the general meaning of being Israeli, she expresses that she would be happy if her children acculturated. Rebecca is aware of her slower acculturation rate and is aware that Dan welcomes acculturation at any level and is accepting that his children will change. Rebecca's duty is to carry the brunt of the burden of the acculturation of her children. She constantly struggles with accepting acculturation and keeping some stagnation in terms of family traditions and values.

When her children grow, I believe her main conflict will be accepting her children as they find their identity and recognizing that she might become marginalized. She will have to accept that her home in the United States will no longer feel like home – as she mentioned previously in one of the interviews along with knowing she may never feel like an Israeli. Rebecca's acculturation will consist of finding the right balance where she can make Israel feel like her home despite that her identity will always be unique to both American and Israeli culture. Rebecca will likely undergo selective acculturation and her bicultural identity will be defined as a fusion of both cultures.

What is certain for now is that their children are acculturating more quickly than their parents as they are developing new language skills are immersed in Israeli social institutions. While their proxemics, kinesics, and values mirror what they were taught in the home, our interviews were very different with and without the presence of their parents.

When alone, both children interacted with me comfortably in Hebrew, but in the presence of their parents they were more reserved and spoke to me in English and even acted as if they did not know certain words in Hebrew. Adam and Michael's acculturation is a subconscious transition, while Rebecca and Dan struggle not only to acculturate and assimilate, but also to

maintain their native culture. My private interviews with Adam and Michael were reflective of children who were further acculturated than what their parents (or at the very least, Rebecca) have concluded. It is already evident that they are able to recognize the differences in culture. When they talk to me alone, and I requested that we only communicate in Hebrew, their transition between languages is natural and both of their personalities were present. What more, with the presence of their parents they are more shy and reserved. I believe this is a reflection the mannerisms they were taught to abide when an adult is speaking to them. For their parents, when speaking to an adult, American mannerisms are present – including respectful in terms of talking at appropriate times and only speaking to the adult when being spoken addressed. I gathered much more of the boys' personality on an individual basis.

The level of biculturalism they may adapt depends on how much of their identity they choose to associate with being American or Israeli. Most likely they will undergo selective acculturation with the influence of American culture within their home. I predict that they will eventually find their identities influence by their social identity as their social lives will take precedence over their home lives. They will then be forced to grapple with the notion of pleasing their parents for appropriate behavior and intellectual matters and accepting that they can feel at home within Israeli culture. Because of Rebecca and Dan's strong cultural influence, they will always have strong American culture embedded in them. The extent at which they choose to have a bicultural identity will be reflective in their future and the extent that they are accepted into Israeli society.

The Zengel family, like the Golds, the matriarch is responsible for holding the family together during transition while the patriarch is concerned with maintain the same level of socioeconomic status in the household. I met the family during various rates of acculturation. Each of the children was at different developmental stages and was defining their identity as part of adolescence and through immigration. It was difficult to assess how solely immigration has influenced each of them individually – as I had only met them during their transition period. However, the overall ambience in the household when I would visit felt like sadness masked by the optimism of new opportunities.

During his interviews, Jacob presented me with three facts. The first is that he will always be American and that he would never fit into Israeli society. The second is that he is constantly

struggling with the cultural differences in the workplace and in society. Lastly, he is stressed to the point of nightmares. Jacob has clearly emphasized feeling marginalization during the time of the interviews, stating that he feels detached from anyone else. Like the early stages of The Stranger, he sees the new world from the outside but does not feel he will ever belong because he has too many other perspectives in comparison. Unlike The Stranger, he has not acquired the ability to fit into Israeli society – but he does have the ability to see multiple perspectives as an outsider.

His view on acculturation is neutral. He is neither welcoming nor disregarding for changes that do or do not occur to him or his family. Throughout the interviews Jacob is plagued by apprehensions concerning financial issues and practical matters. Randy's concerns are over grandiose aspects of living in Israel such as war. Both are concerned with financial status, but Randy is overly optimistic throughout every interview and both regard their children's difficulties lightheartedly. They accept acculturation for their children and were fully prepared that the process would be difficult on their children. Although many times during the interview individuals expressed difficulty, it felt quickly brushed over or impeded with the interruption of Randy; conversationally or in the back of someone's mind.

Randy's constant optimism in conversation felt like she was either trying to deter me from knowing everyone's true feelings or her inability express difficulty and hardships to her family members. From my interviews with Randy, the reason she and Jacob chose to uproot their family when they were already settled in their lives had much more to do than Zionism or religion. Adamant about making a new life for herself, Randy's immigration is based on re-defining her role as an individual and as a mother. She seems to still be searching for meaning and improvement, while Jacob seems to be along for the ride in acceptance of his unchangeable identity.

Both are in the process of assimilation by trying to function properly within Israeli culture. While Jacob claims that he will never fit in anywhere, he is still forced to find the area where he can successfully become a part of the workplace in Israel. In that aspect, both are trying to find their niche in Israel. Jacob and Randy live in a secluded area within an Israeli religious community.

Their social influences are mostly Anglo immigrants. Their acculturation rates are slow and not because they object to acculturation but because they are already set in their ways.

I felt a similar ambiance in my interview with the Zengel children. From three interviews it was difficult to determine their genuine thoughts because of issues regarding their level of comfort with me, the way they were prior to immigration, and the importance of maintaining a positive name for their family. Regardless, during my interviews with the children – some long and short – I felt a sense of sadness and struggle among them.

My interviews with Beth were the most comfortable and direct. During our interviews she was talkative and expressive with me despite the impression she often gave me that it is taboo to speak of difficulties that occur during immigration. Beth is friendly and open to new experiences. She is undergoing selective acculturation. She is at the developmental stage her identity is influenced by her peers and her sense of self is being determined. Her social identity is defined by her experiences in school and the influence of her peers. Her acculturation is evident in language, taste, friendships, and other social contexts. Beth is openly aware of a bicultural identity when she feels, as she expresses, American at home and Israeli with her friends. Too shy to speak in Hebrew in her home, from what I understood, her Hebrew sounds native.

Despite missing her friends from the United States, Beth openly accepts living in Israel and accepts acculturation. It seems that Beth finds stability and acceptance within her social institutions, rather than within the home. From what Beth explains, school was more academically interesting and challenging, but she is having better experiences socially in Israel. She is exceptionally aware of the changing contexts and the difficulties she faces, but uses them as an opportunity to redefine herself in terms of who she wants to be and how she wants to be regarded.

Beth's positive social experience will cause her to acculturate more quickly than her parents, as already evident. Beth will most likely maintain a bicultural identity because of the influence of her sibling and parents; I believe she is most likely to become a part of the consonant acculturation process. Her family intends to send her to a boarding school next year. There she will communicate in Hebrew and her English will remain someone stagnant. Her ability to

communicate in English will eventually be limited to a conversational level or on par with an Israeli's English unless her parents maintain lessons to further her on a more an academic level. Her identity will further be influenced socially, as she expresses the desire to recreate herself. I theorize that while she will remain bicultural, Beth will gradually loose elements of her American culture and find she identifies herself as an Israeli.

Nancy is in the process of defining her identity. Reserved and lacking confidence, the immigration and acculturation process for Nancy seems difficult. She pursues hobbies and friends to help define who she wants to become. Her acculturation is inevitable as her social environment is immersed in Israeli culture. Her contact with American culture is when she visits her family on some weekends and holidays, speaks with her friends from America, or her summers at camp in America. In order to succeed and survive, she has no choice but to acculturate.

My impression on Nancy is that she is able to assimilate into Israeli culture, but she does not feel that her identity cannot be defined by either culture. My impression of Nancy is that her bicultural identity will be defined as unique. She will have to decide between conflicting aspects of both culture and determine which aspects of culture will define her; a unique blend as only she can define. From her experiences and social integration it seems she will be able to fully assimilate into Israeli culture. Nevertheless, she is susceptible to marginalization and will struggle to find her balance. Like The Stranger, she will always be on the outside, she will have the ability to come and go, but never fully identify with either culture. This will result from her inability to fully express difficulties and her mother's insistence on remaining positive and continue trying to become a part of Israeli culture.

When speaking with Ariel, he offers the impression that he is happy about the ability to take advantage of the extra freedom given to him by his parents in Israel. When living in America, he was surrounded by rules at home and at school. In Israel, he boasts about doing whatever he wants whenever he wants with disregard to the rules because it is acceptable in Israel. This attitude has probably made it easier in the social context in addition to regarding his future without his parents' influence. Both topics are confirmed with various stories he told me during our interviews.

Ariel seems less concerned defining acculturation, but relishing in the freedom he has been given to fully decide for himself. His mother often expressed with acceptance that he does what he wants and does not tell them anything anymore. Ariel's immigration in positively influenced by moving to a place which he perceives as having less boundaries. In addition, it seems that he has an easier time being accepted by his peers than in the United States – as observed stories he told me in different social contexts.

What I noticed is that like his father, his goal of immigration is not acculturation. Unlike his father, Ariel is defining his identity the way it suits him, not noticing that his ability to do so is because of the relocation and purpose but also because of differences in American and Israeli culture. Ariel's ability to "do whatever he wants" is highly influenced by his culture. While exploring his independence and establishing his adult identity independently from his family, unbeknownst to himself, he is picking up social aspects of Israeli culture and redefining his identity.

Ariel's immigration has taken place during his transition into becoming an adult. His identity is still being defined and now is influenced by unique cultural intrusions. He is pragmatic and realistic and often expresses adult concern. It seems that the timing and the circumstances of the Zengel family's immigration provided Ariel with the loophole to rebel from his parents.

The way he spoke to me sounds influenced by his parents' beliefs and concerns. His move to Israel is regarded as a chance to define himself on his own terms. Ariel is aware of his acculturation and his limitations in becoming fully acculturated, but he welcomes biculturalism. He allows his social identity to be determined by the social contexts in which he is present. Unlike the rest of his family, he appreciates the notion of bicultural fusion. He sees the positive aspects of having knowledge of two different cultures and the ability to feel that he belongs two both, or rather, can use them to his advantage. He is satisfied with never becoming fully Israeli and accepts that his identity will be defined by different elements of two cultures; happy to be able to define those aspects himself. To Ariel, a bicultural identity is positive justification to being unique from everyone instead of just being defined as another awkward American.

While the Zengel's family religious identity is strengthened in Israel, the cultural aspects of Judaism in Israel are an element of stress for the family members. The dynamics of the Zengel family was unknown to me before their immigration. However, certain elements that I observed are evident of changes in the family dynamics. Primarily, Randy and Jacob have their own personal struggle with the cultural differences they are faced with. Jacob's reaction is open and during the interviews is made to be concealed by Randy's overly optimistic attitude. The acculturation process for them is slow. They maintain religious aspects of their household, but it seems that their daily routines have changed tremendously. This includes having one child who lives in Jerusalem during the immigration period and one child at a boarding school (and maybe two). The children seem to confront with acceptance that they are a part of a new culture, but during the interviews conceal negative aspects and hardships. Randy's influence on the family is to accept acculturation (in a relative sense), remain positive, and take it one day at a time. Randy sees success in overcoming every culturally related obstacle from paying at the grocery store to being successful in school. Jacob's focus is on getting by on a day to day basis in a place where he feels alienated.

It appears that members of the Zengel family are aware of each other's hardships, but cope internally. Randy provides the impression that a positive attitude is a solution and hushes Jacob when he speaks of his struggles. When Jacob ponders and expresses his acculturation and his disappointment with his place in Israeli culture, Randy responds with positive alternatives. I would conclude that the relationship is similar with their children.

Given their more rapid acculturation and the definition of their identities, I think there are many different types of contributing factors to dissonance within the dynamic of the Zengel family. Though I cannot determine the outcome of their immigration at this point, the different experiences each family has undergone and the elements of acculturation they choose to accept all differ from one another.

Randy and Jacob are susceptible to intergenerational family solidarity as their children build new lives different from their own in Israel – deciding to live their lives differently than in the United States whether it is because of acculturation or out of resentment for forcing their children immigrate at such a late stage in life without consent.

From their interaction with Ariel now, I believe eventually the children will set the tone and terms for the dynamics of the family. Randy and Jacob decided to move their entire family with an underlying level of guilt that will reside for having changed their entire lives. For this reason, Randy is constantly positive and lets their children deal with elements of immigration on individual levels accepting all situations. Randy and Jacob's difficult acculturation and assimilation process may influence their children's experiences. Furthermore, as it seems each member of the family copes with their struggles individually, they create distance rather than unify with one another when presented with obstacles.

If the children decide to stay and acculturate into society, they will be the ones who define the terms of the family. Their identity as defined by acculturation will take precedence in how they maintain their lives and homes. Randy and Jacob will be the ones who will have to accept that their children may decide to live their lives with a culture and values that do not reflect their own. They will also be the ones who will accept that the first generation born in Israel will be more strongly defined if not fully defined by their Israeli identity.

In the current situation in which I was interviewing the Zengel family, the parents were open to giving the children the freedom to define themselves in their new culture. The challenge will emerge once the children have made their home within Israel and Randy and Jacob are still searching and accepting their identity as American immigrants in Israel.

Both families are undergoing the early stages of immigration. During the interviews, it was clear that each member of the family was acculturating at different rates. In both families, the children were more easily able to acculturate into society although levels of biculturalism and identification with Israeli culture differed among the older children. Each individual interviewed achieved varying levels of success in assimilation.

The families interviewed were undergoing constant efforts to define their identity and to redefine which areas of their former selves they willing to compromise and change in order to acculturate into society. Acculturation rates were highly impacted by individual personality traits. The youngest children were most unaware of cultural changes and were most easily adaptable. The children interviewed who were conscious of cultural changes and most easily acculturated were

members who were apathetic (rather unopposed) or welcoming the changes. The lack of resistance provided them ease with adapting to the new culture. Introversion, shyness, and the inability to come to terms with a new life hindered the process and even created negative experiences. For the parents, regardless of personality and ability to welcome a new culture, their rates of acculturation were much slower due to lack of exposure in comparison to their children and having deeply embedded cultural nuances developed over a lifespan.

The development of conflict will occur as the children redefine their identity as a result of cultural influence. The acceptance of the parents may or may not impact the process. My research was not conducted over a large enough span of time. However, from the families interviewed, particular the Zengels, the beginning of what may be conflict is present, whether it is with one's self and identity or with reluctance to change. Each is open areas for varying types of family conflict and changes in dynamics.

Immigration for any reason is means for individual and familial modification. At least one of the parents in the family felt that immigration would be a time for their own personal growth and identification, just as deeply as they expect the result of immigration to be for their partners or children. The expectations for these families are that they undergo a revitalization of the self, and that their children and/or partner undergo the same changes in religious spirit and identity. The result is that each individual defines his acculturation process in a unique way. The parent, who tries to control which elements of change take place, must release their expectations and let their children redefine their identity on their own terms in order to reduce the beginnings of family conflict and dysfunction in American families who immigrate to Israel for religious and spiritual purposes.

VII. Conclusion

Immigration research taught us that the more defined a person's identity, the more difficult it is for them to acculturate. While language acquisition is the forerunner for acculturation, it also marks the beginning when one has to redefine the sense of self. With both of the families interviewed, acculturation was more difficult for those whose identity was already defined by past culture and other life experiences.

Despite the short time span of the interviews, the levels of acculturation that took place over eight months were conspicuous with all family members. The path in which each family member overcame obstacles resulting from immigration manifested itself in different ways. What was common among both families is that the parents set the tone of expectations and inadvertently set cultural boundaries by trying to maintain similarities in the household that existed prior to immigration.

From the youngest child interviewed, who unintentionally adapted, to the oldest, who was given an opportunity to redefine himself, each faced the new situation and adapted both willingly and unwillingly – as if to survive. For the parents, it was less critical to acculturate, as certain aspects of their identities were defined and their social situations did not directly depend on their ability to acculturate.

Despite the immigration to Israel with the expectations that their children would strengthen in their Jewish identity, they found themselves deferring to American culture to maintain the same family dynamics and traditions as before moving to Israel. The problem that immigrants face is that when different acculturation rates take place, miscommunication becomes more prominent.

In this research parents expected to strengthen their Jewishness by becoming Israeli, but post immigration, their goals became maintaining religious traditions from their American household and overcoming the conflict of redefining their cultural identity. They were undergoing the same transition and hardships as any immigrant, and if not more, were forced to contend with the reality that becoming Israeli would not necessarily strengthen their Jewish identity. For these parents, the realization that becoming Israeli does not reinforce Jewishness initiates the potential for interfamilial conflicts as acculturation is no longer the desirable outcome of immigration.

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Glossary

*Aliyah (*עֲלִיָּה) immigration to Israel

Be'Artzot Ha-Brit (ארה ב) In the U.S.A

*Bamba (*במבה) snack food made of peanut flavored puffed corn

Bnei Akiva (בני עקיבא) religious national youth movement

Chabad (חבד) a Chasidic movement in Orthodox Judaism

*Haredim (pl.) (*חֲרֵדִים) ultra-orthodox Jews

*Hilonim(pl.) (*חִלּוֹנִים) non-religious person

Eretz Yisrael (ארץ ישראל) the Land of Israel

Karyot (כריות) Israeli cereal

*Kfar (*כְּפָר) a village

*Kibbutz (קיבוץ)*Israeli collective farm

*Krembo (*קרמבו) a chocolate marshmallow snack

*Makolet (s.)(*מַכֹּלֶת) grocery store

*Michlala (s.) (*מִכְלָלָה) college

Mitzvah (s.) /Mitzvot (pl.) (מצווה/מצוות) commandment

Morot (f., pl.) (מורות) teachers, instructors

*Peilut (*פְּעִילוּת) activity

Ptitim (פתיתים) Israeli cuscus

Shuk (s.) (שוק) open marketplace

Tiyulim (pl.) (טיולים) hikes, trips, journeys

*Ulpan (*אֻלְפָּן) government fueled Hebrew school for immigrants

Yishuv Ha-Aretz (ישוב הארץ) settling the Land of Israel