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Tourism and Religion: A Case Study—Visiting Students in Israeli Universities

ERIK H. COHEN

The factors motivating students to take part in overseas study programs are instrumental in understanding the phenomenon of visiting students and other participants in educational tours to Israel. In this study, the reasons why American Jewish students come to study in Israel are examined. Multidimensional data analysis reveals four motivational categories: religion, tourism, religion and tourism combined, and other.

Keywords: tourism; religion; motivations; students; Israel

INTRODUCTION

University Study-Abroad Programs

Every year, tens of thousands of students choose to study overseas, and their numbers are increasing every year as the quality, quantity, and variety of programs grow (Laubscher 1994). Educators and educational researchers have found that spending an extended length of time abroad expands students' worldview (Carlson and Widaman 1988), spurs intellectual and personal growth (Wilson 1993), enhances their self-image and sociability (McGuigon 1984), and creates a more positive attitude toward people from another culture (Sell 1983). Governmental, public, and private institutions have taken an interest in promoting student exchange programs as a means of fostering intercultural understanding and tolerance (Fulbright 1989; Laubscher 1994).

Not all visiting students earn their full degree at a university in a foreign country. Many spend only a semester or an academic year overseas, receiving credit from their home institution for work done at the host school. An understanding of students' motivations for taking part in such programs can give researchers some insight into what is becoming an increasingly common and important part of the university experience for a significant number of students, as well as a unique type of tourism, the study tour. "Clearly the nature of the motivation may have an influence on the whole course of the sojourn abroad" (Kleinberg 1970, p. 33).

Like other types of tourists, visiting students can be motivated by a combination of "pushes" away from their own country and "pulls" either toward a specific destination or to the exotic in general (Herman 1970; Kleinberg 1970; Carlson et al. 1990). They may want to further their career goals, learn a foreign language, travel, broaden their personal horizons, explore another culture, or visit a country from which their ancestors came (Herman 1970; Kleinberg 1970;

Carlson et al. 1990; Huang 1997). For young people of this generation, traveling to foreign countries has become an important part of the search for identity (Desforges 1998). Students may choose to study overseas for academic or career-related reasons and find that they unexpectedly benefit in spiritual and cultural awareness or a new perspective on their home country (Goodwin and Nact 1991).

Participants in semester-long or yearlong programs are less likely to have chosen to study overseas to learn a specialty not available in their home country and more likely to be seeking a cross-cultural experience that will enhance their academic and personal growth in a general way (Carlson et al. 1990; for more on the topic of intercultural encounters, see Bochner 1982; Goffman 1961; on tourism and education, see Bouganin 1988). In Cohen's typology of tourism, motivations for travel range from the purely recreational to the spiritual and existential (E. Cohen 1979). Visiting students similarly span this spectrum. In this sense, the distinction between students taking part in short-term programs to see a foreign country and tourists on extended travels that may be both educational and recreational becomes blurred.

In these semester-long or yearlong study tours, personal growth often outweighs academics, both as a motivator and as an important result of the program. Students return home with new perspectives on their own country, the world, and themselves. The culture shock and unexpected discoveries about others and about oneself while in a foreign country can provide the "disequilibrating experience" that many social scientists believe is a prerequisite for cognitive and emotional development (Piaget 1950; Luria 1976). "Education abroad challenges one's basic assumptions, not only about the external world around us, but also about the inner world of one's identity" (Laubscher 1994, p. 84). In the case of Diaspora Jews who come to study in Israel, the desire to explore personal and ethnic identity is arguably the primary motivating factor. As travel in general helps young people in

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their search for identity, a trip to Israel, for the young Jew, is a particularly important—some would argue essential—part of this quest (Kronish 1983; Chazan 1992; Nitzan 1992). Their time abroad functions both as study tour and as spiritual pilgrimage. Indeed, there are many short-term programs in Israel, both for young people and for adults, that are simultaneously recreational, educational, cultural, and religious journeys (Mittelberg 1999). Due to the similarities between the visiting students surveyed here and other segments of the tourist population to Israel, the typology of motivations developed here can be related to other groups. Further studies will be needed to verify whether participants in other educational tours can be similarly divided along the same motivational lines.

Visiting Students in Israel

Israeli universities attract students from every corner of the globe. For American students, it is the eighth most popular destination for overseas study, chosen by more than 2,500 students in the 1994-1995 school year (Davis 1996). Israeli universities have always encouraged students from other countries to study there. This open-door policy has been aimed both at non-Jewish students, to counter Israel's isolation from its neighbors, and at Jews, to establish Israel as an educational center for Diaspora Jewry (Ritterband 1978).

Visiting students programs involve more than simply taking courses at an Israeli university. Participants also take part in a variety of tours, social and leisure activities, planned encounters with Israeli peers, and other informal educational activities specifically organized for the visiting student. These extracurricular aspects of the program are designed to help the visiting student better understand the history, natural setting, politics, and culture of the country.

The number of participants in the Israel visiting student programs more than doubled between 1982 and 1997. Due to the unique historical, cultural, and religious significance of Israel, the motivating factors that draw students to this country may differ from those that bring their peers to the Far East, Europe, or other common choices for foreign study. Most visiting students in Israel are Jewish (90%), but a significant number of Christian or unaffiliated students also choose to study there, particularly at certain universities (Cohen 1998). For example, while all the visiting students we surveyed at Bar-Ilan University and the Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women were Jewish, 28% of those at Haifa University were non-Jews.

Certainly not all students who come from other countries to Israel's campuses are on religious pilgrimage. Many come for tourism-related reasons similar to those that motivate visiting students in other countries as well as nonstudents who visit Israel: a desire to see the country, experience its culture, and meet the people who live there. Others come for academic reasons, such as to pursue an interest in Middle East politics and history, learn Hebrew, or take advantage of programs in which Israeli universities specialize.

For young Jews, any sojourn in Israel is bound to be first and foremost an exploration of what this country will mean to them as Jews and has been called a necessary rite of passage or important element in the socialization and identity formation of Diaspora Jews (Nitzan 1992). Diaspora Jewish students in Israel have two traits that distinguish them from the majority of other visiting students: they are members of a

minority group in their home country, and they have a prior emotional, cultural, and often religious attachment to the host country (Herman 1962, 1970). Nonetheless, other populations of visiting students and tourists to other countries may have similar motivations for their destination choice, such as black Americans who go to African countries (Bruner 1996) or Buddhists visiting India from other Southeast Asian countries (Singh 1994).

All students who choose to study in a foreign country can be said to be part of a small and select population. This is equally true for the participants in the Israel overseas student programs, who are more likely to have a strong Jewish identity and to be supportive of Israel than other Jewish American college students.

These students are not representative of their peer group as a whole but rather are part of the core of their Jewish communities, where they come into contact with Judaism, Israel, Jewish friends, and sources on Israeli programs. Students already involved with the Jewish community are more likely to want to study in Israel. Like their peers who come on short-term study tours of Israel, most learn about the study-abroad program through their contacts within Jewish or Zionist organizations (Goldfarb Consultants 1991; Cohen 1999). Over three-quarters of the survey population said they learned about their program through friends or former participants.

These findings confirm those of a study of Jewish American college students in Israel conducted more than 25 years ago (Herman 1970). Now, as then, these young people are drawn by an interest in and attachment to Israel and Judaism, which is fostered by their family, social milieu, and previous Jewish education. Academics play a secondary role to a search for ethnic and religious identity.

Short-term exchange students in Israel constitute a significant, vibrant social movement worthy of in-depth study. Who are the students participating in such programs? How do they identify themselves? How do they evaluate their experiences? Why do they choose to come to Israel? What does their time here represent to them? My goal for this research was to formulate a typology of the motivating factors behind these students' decision to study on a campus in Israel. Understanding the primary motivations is of importance to designers and promoters of study tour programs wishing to increase their impact and recruit more participants.

METHOD

Population

During the 1994-1995, 1995-1996, and 1996-1997 academic years,¹ more than 6,000 students participated in semester-long or yearlong visiting student programs at universities and academic institutions under the auspices of the Council for Higher Education in Israel: Bar-Ilan University, Ben Gurion University, Haifa University, Hebrew University, Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women, and Tel Aviv University. The vast majority of these students (88%) were from the United States. Previous studies of American students are of interest in analyzing these students' experiences in Israel, their expectations, and their encounters with Israeli society (Herman 1962, 1977; S. Cohen 1986; Nitzan 1992; Halpern 1993; Mittelberg 1994; Weisband 1995).

This study considers a specific subpopulation of visiting students, both in terms of country of origin and country of the study program: Jewish American students studying for a semester or a year in undergraduate programs at universities or colleges in Israel.² The survey involved a total of 2,373 respondents. Because of their significantly different profiles, graduate students and non-Jewish students are not considered. Students from different home countries are likely to have distinct profiles, yet the populations from countries other than the United States were too small to justify a cross-cultural comparison. Therefore, only students from the United States were considered in this analysis. A total of 1,886 students are included in the analysis presented here, a large representative sample of the approximately 4,300 to 4,500 students in the targeted population for the 3 years of the study. Questionnaires were distributed shortly before students left Israel, at the end of their semester or year of study. Within the target population, samples were randomly selected. The research team distributed questionnaires in classes, at tables set up in common areas around the campuses, and in dormitories.

Content

Respondents completed questionnaires, which asked them to provide demographic information and answer questions regarding their Jewish identity, relationship to Israel, reasons for coming to Israel, and evaluation of their experience. One section of the questionnaire asked students to rate the importance of six motivating factors—academic, religious, ideological, social, touring, and language study—in their decision to study in Israel. The data from this question form the basis of the typology presented here.

Other sections of the questionnaire asked students to rate various aspects of the program, to ascertain whether their understanding of various issues improved and to indicate what academic goals were important to them prior to coming on this program. The responses to a number of these questions are used in analyzing the structure of the overall program.

Data Analysis

Using partial-order scalogram analysis with base coordinates (POSAC), a multidimensional analysis technique (Shye and Amar 1985), we developed a typology of visiting students in Israel based on relationships between the six different motivations cited above. POSAC is a bidimensional scale developed by the late Louis Guttman. It considers the data from the perspective of the subjects, as opposed to other multidimensional scaling techniques, which look at the data from the perspective of the content variables. The POSAC technique compares and ranges the various subject profiles. A certain number of variables and a specified set of possible responses define each subject. In this study, the variables are the six motivators for overseas study (academics, religion, ideology, social, tourism, and language study). In the questionnaire, students could choose one of three possible categories: very important, somewhat important, or not important. The complete set of items for each subject forms that subject's *profile*. To simplify and clarify the results, in the final analysis we considered only two possible responses, very important and not very important. "Not very important" includes both the responses "somewhat important" and "not important."

Each student has a profile composed of six binary variables, one for each motivational factor. There are 64 resulting profiles, each representing a different type of student. A student who indicated that all six of these factors are important to him or her would be represented by the profile "222222." One who indicated that none of them are important would be represented by the profile "111111." Multiple students can have the same profile based on their responses. For example, 137 of the students have the profile "222222."

A "perfect" order or scale may be found if every pair of profiles within the sample is comparable. Profiles are comparable if their items vary in one and only one direction, that is, if elements of one profile are the same or higher but none are lower than the elements of another profile. Perfect orders are rare. In most cases, profiles vary in both directions. In the case of this study, the profile of a student who considers religion very important and language skills unimportant would not be comparable with the profile of a student who chose the opposite responses. The POSAC is designed to deal with imperfect or "partial" orders. For a more detailed, mathematical description and explanation of this approach, see Levy and Guttman (1994), Shye and Amar (1985), and Waks (1995).

If we consider the profiles of all our subjects at once, we may look for a partial order, consisting of comparable and noncomparable profiles. By definition, a profile is higher than another if and only if it is higher on at least one item and not lower on any other item. Conversely, profiles are noncomparable if a profile is higher than another on at least one item and lower on any other item. The POSAC procedure represents the partial order geometrically in a two-dimensional space. That is, it generates a map of the profiles that preserves as much as possible their order relations. In attempting to represent the partial range of the various profiles, the POSAC isolates the variables that may play the role of axes, along which the subjects can be ranged.

After the POSAC, a second analytical tool was applied to the data, a multidimensional technique also developed by Guttman called smallest space analysis (SSA) (Guttman 1968; Levy 1994). SSA is a subset of the broad family of data analysis called multidimensional scaling, "all of which portray the data's structure in a spatial fashion easily assimilated by the relatively untrained human eye. . . . The essential ingredient defining all multidimensional scaling methods is the spatial representation of data structure" (Young and Haber 1987, p. 3). Multidimensional analysis allows the simultaneous treatment of a large amount of data and the geometric representation of that data. The SSA considers the correlation between the content variables, not the subjects. The aim of the SSA method is to analyze a matrix of nonlinear correlations between n variables by graphically representing them as points in a Euclidean space called "smallest space." From this matrix, the SSA computer program creates a map in which strongly correlated items are placed close together and weakly correlated items are placed far apart. The map is then interpreted according to regions of related variables. These regions are based on content, not necessarily on spatial proximity, and in this way differ from the cluster approach. SSA and POSAC have been used by a number of other researchers studying issues related to Jewish identity (Levy and Guttman 1976; Arnow 1994; Levy 1985a).

After the basic map is formulated, external variables may be plotted as a technique for comparing their relationship to

the structure as a whole. Prior to the placement of external variables, the structure is fixed and the external variables are placed, one by one, into this structure. Only the relationship of each individual external variable to the entire structure of the primary variables is considered. The external variables are not considered in the structure of the map, and the intercorrelation between the external variables themselves is not considered. In other words, the placement of the external variables is dependent on the placement of the original variables, while the externals (Cohen and Amar 1993, 1999, 2002) do not affect the placement of the original variables.

Although these “facet theory” methods are less widely known than techniques such as factor or cluster analysis, they have been in use for more than 30 years. They have been used with success by many sociologists, particularly in Israel, and are gaining greater international recognition. Facet theory techniques differ from others primarily in their method of interpretation. The regions of the maps are not designated on the basis of spatial proximity but rather by similarity of content, determined in the hypothesis at the outset of the study. As long as the regions are contiguous, a number of different configurations may be found, and each of these configurations in itself lends to understanding the model (Levy 1985b). It has been the experience of myself and my colleagues that these methods are accurate analytical tools and allow for a sophisticated interpretation of the data (Guttman 1968, 1982; Ben-Sira and Guttman 1971; Levy and Guttman 1975; Elizur and Guttman 1976; Guttman and Levy 1976; Borg 1981; Canter 1985; Schwartz and Bilsky 1987, 1990; Levy 1991, 1994; Hox, Mellenbergh and Swanborn 1995; Waks 1995; Cohen 2000, 2001; Cohen, Clifton, and Roberts 2001, among many others). However, our purpose here is not to champion one data analysis technique over others but simply to use appropriate tools to understand the data. For a detailed comparison of the Guttman method and other multidimensional analysis techniques, see Young and Haber (1987).

Assessment of the Preliminary Typology

Following the POSAC analysis, a new variable was designed based on the areas that emerged in the scalogram. The categories of this new variable were cross-tabulated with other variables from the visiting student questionnaire. Specifically, students' evaluations of 40 various items—from understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict and intermarriage to ratings of roommates, teachers, and social activities to improvement of Hebrew and Jewish studies and more—were examined in relation to the categories of the typology (Cohen 1998).

This type of multivariable analysis is the first of its kind to be carried out on visiting students in Israel and tests the heuristic value of the typology. In a systematic comparison, major differences corresponding to the categories of the typology consistently emerged. It is evident that they are not the “be-all and end-all” of Israel visiting students' identity and motivations, yet, as discussed below, they prove themselves to be central for understanding the students who study abroad in Israel and for understanding their programs as educational systems encompassing multiple aspects, including but not limited to the formal academic aspect.

RESULTS

General Demographics

Basic demographic data and educational background of the study population for the 3 academic years combined are shown in Table 1. Women far outnumbered men in the visiting students program. This gender imbalance has repeatedly been found, although to a lesser extent, also in short-term study tours to Israel from the United States. The reason is not clear, and its significance warrants further study. The age distribution reflects the popular choice of the junior year, when most students are age 21, as a time to study abroad.

Ethnoreligious Identity and Background

We can immediately see dramatic differences in the religious identity of the students at the various universities. Only 1% of the visiting students at Tel Aviv University affiliate with Orthodox Judaism, while 99% of those at Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women do. From this we can confirm that students are drawn not only to Israel but also to particular programs based on their personal beliefs, goals, and expectations.

The Jewish educational background of the visiting students is more consistent. Most have been to Israel previously, as have their parents, and most took part or even held a position of responsibility in a Jewish youth group or camp. Jewish day school attendance, in contrast, follows the same pattern among the university subpopulations as religious affiliation; students at the schools catering to more religious students have a higher percentage of day school alumni.

Motivations for Studying in Israel

Jewish students have complex expectations, aspirations, and motivations connected to their decision to study in Israel. They are not interested in any single aspect of Israel but in a total “Israel experience.” This is congruent with a theory of travel as an attempt to go beyond the discontinuity of the modern world and to integrate its various fragments into one unified experience (MacCannell 1976; Cohen 1986; Fontaine 1994). Despite being enrolled in institutions of higher education, the academic factor emerged as the least important motivation for undergraduate visiting students,³ while touring emerged as the most important. Social, ideological, language study, and religious factors fell between the two, as seen in Table 2. The importance of various reasons for coming to study in Israel and goals held prior to coming on the program are shown in Tables 3 and 4, broken down by university. These specific reasons encompass the six general motivational factors.

There are 64 possible profiles for these six factors.⁴ One interesting result was that the two most common profiles were the extremes, all six factors important (222222, representing 137 students) and none of the six factors important (111111, representing 101 students). This seems to indicate interconnectedness between the six factors in the minds of the students. To more clearly understand the relationship between the profiles, a *scalogram*, a graphic portrayal of the data, was produced by the POSAC program, shown in Figure 1.

A partial order of the profiles was found in two dimensions. This low dimensionality indicates a strong structure of

TABLE 1
GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
OF THE STUDY POPULATION (IN ROUNDED PERCENTAGES)

	Hebrew University	Tel-Aviv University	Haifa University	Ben Gurion University	Bar-Ilan University	Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women	Total
% of survey population	47	26	4	4	7	12	100
Gender							
Male	35	26	32	40	29	0	27
Female	65	74	68	60	71	100	73
Age							
20 and younger	57	54	46	57	97	100	6
21	26	33	22	28	2	0	20
22-24	11	9	21	11	0	0	8
25 and older	6	4	11	3	1	0	4
Denomination							
Religious	58	45	50	45	93	100	62
Orthodox	11	1	4	5	80	99	25
Conservative	48	48	34	31	12	1	38
Reform	16	30	24	27	1	0	17
Educational background							
Previous visit to Israel	78	64	67	50	92	86	75
Parent(s) been to Israel	85	83	78	69	95	99	86
Member of youth organization	85	78	74	76	91	85	83
Day school student	41	36	30	28	91	99	49
Jewish camp participant	80	69	57	71	89	93	78
Held position of responsibility in a Jewish organization	74	57	66	57	79	85	70

TABLE 2

**RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION: IN YOUR
 DECISION TO SPEND A SEMESTER/YEAR IN ISRAEL,
 HOW IMPORTANT WAS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING
 FACTORS? (IN ROUNDED PERCENTAGES)**

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Touring	4	30	66
Social	5	39	56
Ideological	7	39	54
Language study	8	42	50
Religious	14	37	49
Academics	12	50	38

the data. Four distinct regions are recognizable based on two of the motivations, tourism and religion. The groups are (clockwise from the top right) as follows:

- *Tourist-religious*: This group cited both religious and touring reasons as "very important" factors in their decision to study in Israel—25% of the population.
- *Tourist*: This group cited touring but not religious factors—31%.
- *Religious*: This group cited religious but not touring factors—29%.

- *Other*: This group cited neither touring nor religious factors as "very important" in their decision to spend time in Israel—15%.

This division of the population describes more than their simple responses to the list of motivational factors. It is my hypothesis that this represents a typology of visiting students, with tourism and religion as the distinguishing variables. If this hypothesis is correct, the students represented by these four categories will differ not only in their reasons for coming to study in Israel but also in their perceptions, evaluations, and past experiences.

The focus on these two motivations as distinguishing traits does not mean the other areas—social, academic, ideological, and language study—are unimportant to the students. In the ideological realm, 85% of the respondents consider themselves Zionists, 83% would attend a rally in support of Israel, and 75% consider Israel the Jewish homeland. In the social sphere, 64% said that having a good time in Israel was important to them, and the same percentage said that gaining Israeli friends was an important goal for their sojourn abroad.

Evaluation of the Religion-Tourism Typology

One prominent distinction between the students motivated primarily or partially by religion and those motivated by travel or other reasons is their degree of involvement in

TABLE 3
RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION: WHY DID YOU DECIDE
TO STUDY IN ISRAEL? (IN ROUNDED PERCENTAGES)

	Hebrew University	Tel Aviv University	Haifa University	Ben Gurion University	Bar-Ilan University	Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women	Total
Knew other people there	23	19	4	8	25	48	25
Specific content interesting	33	32	41	42	41	85	41
Heard good things	60	66	42	52	44	92	63
Knew previous participants	59	55	23	26	44	83	57
Inexpensive tuition	20	13	29	11	4	3	15
Parents encouraged it	29	33	22	26	31	52	32
Considering <i>aliyah</i> (immigration)	18	17	35	24	38	48	25
Israel is beautiful	74	78	75	71	64	59	72
Israel is inexpensive	2	2	3	4	0	0	2
Israel is advanced in science and technology	2	2	2	10	0	1	2
Israel is advanced in arts and humanities	3	3	2	3	0	0	2
Israel is free, democratic	11	9	8	11	1	4	9
Israel is the Promised Land	40	49	35	39	60	76	48
Israel needs Diaspora support	35	29	25	28	27	38	33
Israel strengthens Jewish identity	73	62	65	59	66	77	70
Israel is the Jewish homeland	76	69	67	64	70	86	75
Israel is a place to develop spiritual identity	56	50	52	49	66	96	61
Other	8	8	15	13	7	1	7
1996-1997 only							
Good break from academic routine	69	64	74	57	25	21	57
Israel is an international political center	24	20	19	12	8	0	7
To have a good time	74	67	57	60	75	28	64

TABLE 4
RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION: BEFORE COMING ON THE PROGRAM, WHICH OF THE
FOLLOWING WERE IMPORTANT/VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU? (IN ROUNDED PERCENTAGES)

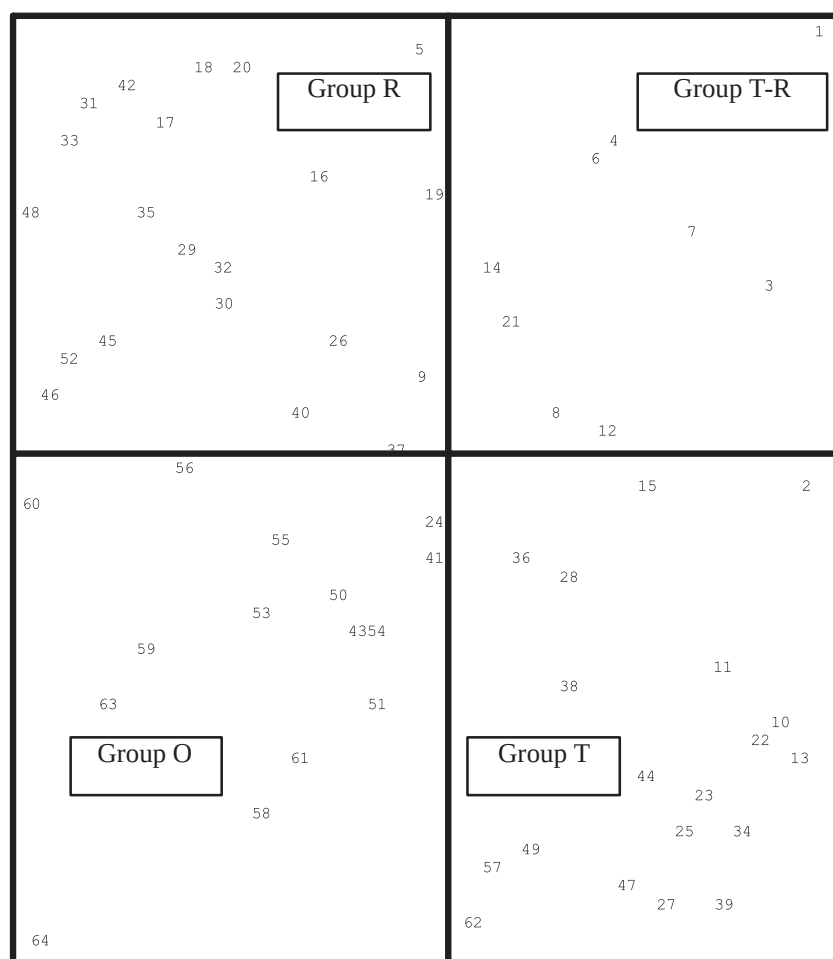
	Hebrew University	Tel Aviv University	Haifa University	Ben Gurion University	Bar-Ilan University	Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women	Total
Improving your Hebrew	85	74	91	85	81	90	83
Enhancing your Jewish studies	82	83	79	78	91	100	85
Enhancing your Israel studies	89	86	94	87	80	83	86
Gaining Israeli friends	70	73	85	82	46	30	64

the Jewish community. The former were much more at the core of Jewish life and community than the latter. Of the students, 51% of the religion group and 36% of the tourism-religion group said they definitely considered themselves religious, while only 3% each of the tourism and other groups did. In addition, 55% of the religion and 39% of the tourism-religion students defined themselves as Orthodox, while only 8% of the students from the other group and 6% of the tourism students did. The students who cited religious reasons for coming to Israel were much more at the core of Jewish life and community than those who did not. They were more

likely to have studied in a Jewish day school, attended a Jewish camp, been members of a Jewish youth group, and held positions of responsibility in a Jewish organization.

Religiously motivated students tend to have based their decision to come to Israel on the specific content of the program, as well as on Israel being the Promised Land, the Jewish homeland, and a place to strengthen spiritual identity. They were much more likely to be considering studying in Israel in the future, living in Israel, or immigrating to Israel than those for whom religion did not play a part in their decision to study in Israel. When asked to choose a religion and

FIGURE 1
TWO-DIMENSIONAL PARTIAL-ORDER SCALOGRAM ANALYSIS WITH BASE COORDINATES POSAC1



nationality into which they could hypothetically be born again, the religiously motivated students were most likely to say they would want to be born Jewish in Israel.

An evident difference emerged in the value placed on enhancing Jewish studies, as seen in Table 5. The students for whom religion played a part in their motivation rated an understanding of Judaism and of the Jewish community much higher than those for whom it did not. For instance, 54% of the tourism-religion group and 42% of the religion group rated their understanding of Judaism as "excellent" as opposed to 13% and 14% of the other and tourism groups, respectively. In addition, 54% of the tourism-religion group and 47% of the religion group rated their understanding of Jewish identity as "excellent," as opposed to 21% and 25% of the other and tourism groups, respectively.

Structural Evaluation of the Visiting Student Programs

Much can be learned by studying the percentages of students' responses to each question (as above), yet I wanted to

delve deeper to examine the intercorrelation between the various evaluative issues addressed in the questionnaire to understand the entire system. I used the MONCO procedure (monotonicity coefficient, a regression-free coefficient of correlation) to calculate these correlations. For a mathematical presentation of the MONCO, see Guttman (1986). The resulting matrix shows the relationship between the 40 variables considered.

Using the SSA statistical approach, relationships between all 40 variables, as presented in the correlation matrix, were considered. An SSA map of these 40 questionnaire items is shown in Figure 2. The map reveals distinct regions of correlated data that can be divided into five semantic categories: academics, Judaism and Jewish identity, living situation, the informal program (i.e., field trips and social activities), and Israel. This type of graphic representation of the relationship between the variables gives us some insight into how the visiting students view aspects of country, culture, religion, and program. We can see, for instance, that "intermarriage" (variable 31) is categorized as a Jewish (identity) issue, while "the Arab-Israeli conflict"

TABLE 5
RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTION:
BEFORE COMING ON THE PROGRAM, HOW
IMPORTANT WAS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING
TO YOU? (IN ROUNDED PERCENTAGES)

	Religious	Tourist	Tourist- Religious	Other	Total
Social factors	63	48	80	16	56
Improving					
Hebrew	43	34	62	32	44
Enhancing					
Jewish studies	71	23	68	14	47
Enhancing					
Israel studies	40	35	60	25	41
Why did you					
decide to					
study abroad					
in Israel?					
Israel					
strengthens					
spiritual					
identity	82	44	78	35	62
Israel is the					
Promised					
Land	77	57	80	44	66

Note: Motivations rated as "very important."

(variable 20) is categorized as an Israel issue. The variables that span two categories fall on the border. For example, "understanding of religion/state" (variable 21) lies between the Judaism/Jewish identity and the Israel regions, and "enhanced Jewish studies" (variable 35) was plotted on the border between the academic and the Judaism/Jewish identity regions.

We can gain greater insight into the mind-set of the visiting students by looking at how the religion-tourism typology of students relates to this structure of the Israel study-abroad experience. The four categories of the typology were plotted as external variables into the "fixed" map. The two groups of students who chose religion as an important reason for studying in Israel are located in the region of the map defined by Judaism and Jewish identity. The group who chose tourism but not religion is on the border between the Israel and the informal program regions. The group who chose neither religion nor tourism is at the edge of the map, in the Israel region. This result shows a polarization between the religiously motivated students (religion and tourism-religion groups) vis-à-vis the tourist and the other groups. The two former groups are Jewish oriented, and the latter are Israel oriented.

For the nonreligiously motivated groups, expectations and experiences in Israel are more closely related with universal elements of touring. The tourism group is linked with variables related to the nonacademic aspect of the study-abroad program, such as "social activities" (variable 8), "free time" (variable 19), "guides" (variable 15), and "tours" (variable 11). They are also linked to variables in the Israel region. The students who indicated that religion is an important motivator for their study abroad are in the same region as "Judaism" (variable 30), "Jewish identity" (variable 22), and "community" (variable 32). Although a significant number

of them indicated that they are considering immigrating to Israel, they seem less interested in integrating into Israeli society than nonreligiously motivated participants. They are found at the opposite side of the map from such variables as "social contacts with Israelis" (variable 9), "encounters with young Israelis" (variable 14), and "have Israeli friends" (variable 39).

The students in the "other" category are linked to variables in the Israel region such as "understanding of Israeli society" (variable 23), "understanding of Israel-Diaspora relations" (variable 25), and "understanding of Arab-Israeli conflict" (variable 20). These are students who, perhaps, were motivated by an interest in Israel and the Middle East rather than a desire to travel or a personal quest for Jewish identity. Neither the formal academic program nor the accommodations (dormitories and roommate) seem to be of primary importance to any of the groups of students.

Unlike religion, tourism does not seem to be a uniting factor in terms of interests and priorities. The two groups of students who indicated that tourism was an important motivation for their trip are found at opposite sides of the map and do not constitute a larger general category as the religion and tourism-religion groups do.

DISCUSSION

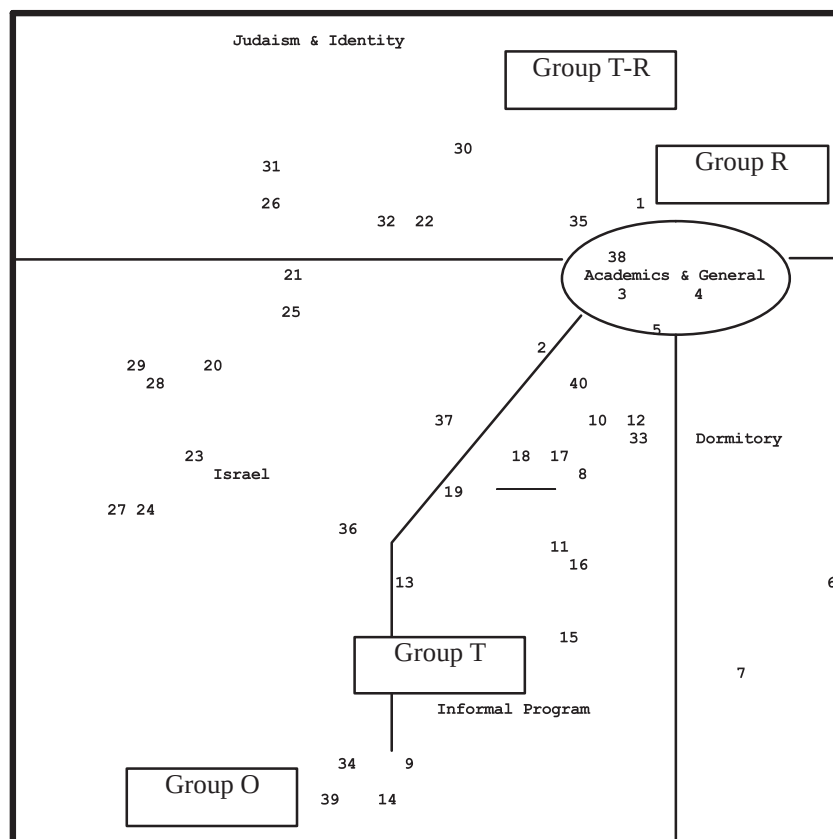
The ways in which these students identify themselves in terms of their Judaism seem to represent different Jewish experiences—religious, educational, and social. These, in turn, affect their perceptions and expectations regarding their time studying in Israel.

The reasons behind students' decision to study in Israel (and at a particular university) grew out of their past experiences and education. These, in turn, affected their study program in Israel. As mentioned before, the students who indicated religion as a motivating factor were much more involved in Jewish community and organizations than those who did not. Being involved in the community sets a general context and perspective in which these students come to join a program and, consequently, the way in which they experience Israel. Community involvement may put a study program in a positive and supportive perspective, as an extension of these students' Jewish identity and future community involvement.

The religiously motivated students largely view their experience in Israel primarily as an opportunity to learn about Judaism, not about the country itself or its residents. Despite the fact that they express a high degree of commitment to a personal future in Israel, they seem to be less interested in socializing and encountering Israelis and Israeli culture. We must bear in mind, however, that the visiting students programs at these universities are *not* primarily religious in content. The expectations of the program's organizers and the actual experiences of the students are, in general, what can more accurately be called cultural. That is, they emphasize the social aspects of the country as opposed to its religious aspects.

Students belonging to the nonreligiously motivated groups were found to be less involved in the Jewish community and their Jewish education less intensive. Their interests and priorities are more closely linked to Israeli society and its history, politics, and culture. The students who see their time

FIGURE 2
GEOMETRIC REPRESENTATION OF THE CORRELATION MATRIX (SSA MAP)
WITH THE FOUR GROUPS (O, T, R, AND T-R) AS EXTERNAL VARIABLES



Note: SSA = smallest space analysis; O = other; T = tourism; R = religion; T-R = tourism-religion. The legend is as follows:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Program enhanced Jewish identity | 21. Understanding of religion/state |
| 2. Program enhanced relationship to Israel | 22. Understanding of Jewish identity |
| 3. Rating of academic program | 23. Understanding of Israeli society |
| 4. Rating of teachers | 24. Understanding of Israeli geography |
| 5. Rating of organization | 25. Understanding of Israel-Diaspora relations |
| 6. Rating of roommate | 26. Understanding of Holocaust |
| 7. Rating of dormitories | 27. Understanding of immigrants' situation |
| 8. Rating of social activities | 28. Understanding of Israeli media |
| 9. Rating of social contacts with Israelis | 29. Understanding of Israeli history |
| 10. Rating of contact with overseas students | 30. Understanding of Judaism |
| 11. Rating of tours | 31. Understanding of intermarriage |
| 12. Rating of seminars | 32. Understanding of community |
| 13. Rating of leisure activities | 33. Rating of activist training seminar |
| 14. Rating of encounters with young Israelis | 34. Have improved Hebrew |
| 15. Rating of guides | 35. Have enhanced Jewish studies |
| 16. Rating of counselors | 36. Have enhanced Israel studies |
| 17. Rating of informal programs | 37. Have good grades |
| 18. Rating of balance of fun/other activities | 38. Have studied with world-renowned scholars |
| 19. Rating of amount of free time | 39. Have Israeli friends |
| 20. Understanding of Arab-Israeli conflict | 40. Would recommend this program |

in Israel as a tour rather than a religious pilgrimage were both more eager to meet Israelis and more likely at the end of the program to say that they had gained Israeli friends than those with more religious interests.

Although Herman (1970) may be correct in his assertion that for Jewish students, studying in Israel is an exploration of what Israel will mean to them as Jews, it seems that this exploration takes two distinctive forms. One can be seen as

an interest in Judaism, the other as an interest in Israel. Paradoxically, those more interested in Israel are less likely to express a personal commitment to a future in the country. As mentioned earlier, the religiously motivated students are more likely to be considering a permanent move to Israel. The students who are less interested in Israelis and Israeli society are those who are more interested in immigrating to Israel. An interesting addition to this picture is the recurring

request of nonreligious program organizers and participants to augment programs of encounters between Diaspora youth and Israeli youth as part of the short-term educational tours in Israel. In light of the mind-set of the nonreligiously motivated students described here, such encounters would help meet these students' expectations for their Israel experience.

Further Applications of the Typology

The religion-tourism typology outlined in this article can be readily applicable to other populations of visitors to Israel. Understanding the motivations behind tourists' travel plans is a major area of study in the field of tourism research (MacCannell 1992; Singh 1994; Bruner 1996; Selwyn 1996). Just as the administrators of study-abroad programs wish to more accurately understand potential participants, planners in Israel's large tourist industry need to understand the various types of visitors coming to the country. Distinguishing between those coming on religious pilgrimage who are primarily interested in sites associated with Judaism, Christianity, or Islam and those coming as more traditional tourists interested in seeing the countryside is an important way to help organize tours and services.

Further study would be needed to verify to what extent this dichotomy of motivations is relevant to visitors in other parts of the world. Visitors and students in areas with religious significance such as Rome, India (Singh 1994), Bali (Picard 1996), and Malta (Selwyn 1996), for example, are perhaps also dividable into the religiously and recreationally motivated. Although people traveling to sites and ceremonies of their own religion can be distinguished from those observing others' religions (Bauman 1996), "people increasingly consume their own ethnicity in touristic forms" (Wood 1998, p. 231), thus narrowing the gap between pilgrim and tourist. A body of sociological literature is being developed analyzing the connection between travel to foreign countries and the religious and ethnic identity both of the hosts and the guests (Bauman 1996; Bruner 1996; Picard and Wood 1997; Wood 1998, among many others). Visiting students represent a special type of long-term tourist, and their place in this dynamic deserves to be considered and explored further.

CONCLUSION

In this study of visiting students, we were able to distinguish between those who come to Israel for religious reasons and those who come to see the country and meet its residents. The POSAC scalogram of motivating factors reveals a typology along two axes—religion and tourism—with four corresponding categories of students: religious, tourist, both, and neither. The SSA map based on the larger survey questionnaire shows a structure of the Israel university study-abroad experience. This structure consists of the regions Judaism/Jewish identity, Israel, academics (formal study program), informal study program, and dormitory. Placement of the four categories from the POSAC typology as external variables in this structure offers a visual representation of the polarization between the profiles. The two basic motivations of exploring Jewish identity or exploring Israel can be seen as influencing student interests and priorities during their study-abroad program.

The students with religious motivations are concerned with issues related to Judaism and Jewish community and continuity and less interested in Israel per se. Those who came primarily as tourists or for other nonreligious reasons are concerned with leisure and social activities, tours, free time, and meeting their peers, both Israelis and other overseas students (see also Dumazedier 1974). They are most interested in learning Hebrew, meeting Israelis, and exploring current Israeli political and social issues. It would be interesting to conduct an in-depth analysis to determine whether these students correspond to the "traveler" type described by Boorstin (1964).

The analytical tools used enabled us to gain new perspectives on and insights into the issues involved in the Israel visiting student programs. I developed a step-by-step methodology for analysis by (1) creating a typology of visiting students based on their motivations using POSAC, (2) assessing the significance of the typology, (3) constructing a correlation matrix and running an SSA of the evaluation issues in the questionnaire, and (4) inserting external variables in the SSA map. This methodology of creating a typology and using it in an analysis of interests, motivations, and evaluations may prove highly effective for research in the fields of sociology of education and tourism. It could be applied to studies assessing the motivations drawing travelers of all sorts to any tourist destination.

A structural understanding of the phenomenon of visiting students in Israel sheds light on the motivations of different groups of students, the types of curriculum they expect, and so forth, and these findings may help educators and organizers in designing programs for such students. Sponsors and promoters of visiting student programs, both in Israel and in other countries, would also do well to understand their target populations in the context of these profiles and shape marketing approaches accordingly. With a greater understanding of the actual constituencies—pilgrims, tourists, and others—visiting student programs can be structured to best serve the visiting student population. These findings can be further tested with other types of tourists, particularly those coming to Israel on short-term educational programs. Since tourism is one of the largest sectors of the Israeli economy and has been particularly hard hit by political instability in the region, increased knowledge about what brings people to the country is essential.

NOTES

1. In 1995-1996, after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the rash of terrorist bombings throughout Israel (in which, among others, two young Americans were killed), a number of students left their programs mid-year. Nonetheless, there was no significant change in either the number or the profile of the students who came to study in Israel the following academic year, and the students from all 3 years can be considered together as one subpopulation.

2. I did not include in this study high school or younger students temporarily studying in Israel since their reasons for coming may be due to a family move rather than an independent decision. I also did not consider the thousands of people who come to Israel to study within the framework of purely religious houses of study (*Yeshivot*) or those who come only for summer programs. Although some graduate students participated in the survey, they are not considered in this analysis, which I chose to limit to only undergradu-

ates. Non-Jewish students, who have a distinctly different profile and set of motivations, were included in the survey but not in this analysis.

3. Although not included in this article, Jewish American students who study in graduate programs in Israeli universities show a markedly different profile. Most notably, I found that graduate students were more motivated by academic factors and less by social factors.

4. The full partial-order scalogram analysis with base coordinates (POSAC) table and/or the correlation matrix for the smallest space analysis (SSA) are available on request from the author.

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