

Contextualizing Transformation:
A Case Study of Pilgrimage to Poland

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will qualitatively investigate the affect of the Poland pilgrimage on a sample of Modern Orthodox American Jewish females, a population less represented in present day Poland pilgrimage scholarship. I begin this paper by exploring the conceptual framework of the Poland voyage as pilgrimage. I then offer a purview of the history of educational youth trips to Poland as well as provide a glimpse into the educational philosophy of Heritage Seminars, the program under present investigation. Original research in the form of semi-structured, in depth interviews conducted with recent and veteran Heritage Seminars participants is then presented. Thematic analysis was used to address which themes surfaced when recent and veteran participants spoke of their trips to Poland, with particular emphasis placed on how participants felt they were impacted and/or transformed by the journey. By exploring how six participants engaged with, interpreted and synthesized their experiences of Heritage Seminars, I draw conclusions about the impact of the Poland pilgrimage on a sample of Modern Orthodox American Jewish females.