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**Jewish Israeli Identity and Attitudes towards the "Other" in Israeli Schoolbooks:  
An Analysis of Schoolbooks for the State and State-Religious Jewish Sector, Grades 7-12**

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The contents and messages found in Israeli textbooks taught today reflect the tension in Jewish-Israeli society between its ethnocentric group identity and the aspiration for tolerance and pluralism towards the "other." The current study, on which this lecture is based, has examined educational messages in 87 textbooks used in grades 7 through 12 of the Jewish state and state-religious sectors for the 2009-2010 academic year. The textbooks are monitored and analyzed according to criteria developed by IMPACT-SE, based on UNESCO declarations and resolutions regarding education for peace and tolerance.

Findings show that Jewish Israeli identity is often based on attitudes regarding the "other": the Jewish people are presented as a perpetual and historical victim of other peoples such as the Greeks, Romans, Turks, Germans, and Arabs. Most textbooks belittle the suffering of others (for example the Palestinians) while at the same time they attempt to promote peaceful conflict resolution, empathy and respect towards national and religious others (such as Muslims, Arabs, Palestinians). Some Israeli textbooks were found to emphasize the connection between Judaism and tolerance and democratic values, as well as the nature of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. This is true especially in regard to the Israeli Declaration of Independence, in which the Jewish state is defined as such, but equal rights of minorities are promised and a proposal of peace with the neighboring people is extended.

The study goes on to examine trends taught in the Israeli education system following the events of the Second Intifada (2000-2005), regarding the portrayal of Arab and Muslim history, representation of "others" (Palestinians, Arab countries, and Muslims), depiction of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its potential resolution, as well as cultural tolerance and civil rights for Arabs and other minorities. Findings show that although the national collective Jewish self is often portrayed as just, tolerant and peace-loving, and individual narratives of Palestinian and Arab suffering are rarely presented, an improvement was found in messages promoting tolerance and peace towards significant collective "others." In addition, the following previous trends were strengthened: criticism of Israeli intolerance and historic violence towards Arabs and Palestinians; presentation of the Palestinian historical link to Israel and as a legitimate political movement; and respectful portrayal of Muslim and Arab history, customs and beliefs. Finally, messages of peace were found in abundance and in various forms, promoting non-violent conflict resolution and pragmatic peace agreements with the Palestinians, as well as with Syria and Lebanon, and strengthening of existing peaceful ties with Egypt and Jordan.