

The Jewish State at 70

Threats and Opportunities in
a Stormy Geopolitical Environment

Israel-Diaspora Bonds

The Jewish State in the American Arts

Israel's Nation State Legislation

The Situation and Dynamics of the Jewish People

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT 2018



המכון למדיניות העם היהודי (מיסודה של הסוכנות היהודית לא"י) בע"מ (חל"צ)

The Jewish People Policy Institute (Established by the Jewish Agency for Israel) Ltd. (CC)



המכון למדיניות העם היהודי (מיסודה של הסוכנות היהודית לא"י) בע"מ (חל"צ)
The Jewish People Policy Institute (Established by the Jewish Agency for Israel) Ltd. (CC)

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT 2018

5778

PROJECT HEAD

Dr. Shlomo Fischer

CONTRIBUTORS

Avinoam Bar-Yosef, Dan Feferman, Avi Gil, Inbal Hakman, Michael Herzog, Dov Maimon, Gitit Paz-Levi, Judit Bokser Liwerant, Steven Popper, Uzi Rebhun, Shmuel Rosner, John Ruskay, Noah Slepkov, Adar Schiber, Shalom Salomon Wald

EDITORS

Barry Geltman

Rami Tal

Copyright © The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI)
(Established by the Jewish Agency for Israel) Ltd. (CC)
Jerusalem 2018/5778

JPPI, Givat Ram Campus, P.O.B 39156, Jerusalem 9139101, Israel
Telephone: 972-2-5633356 | Fax: 972-2-5635040 | www.jppei.org.il

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be translated, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without express written permission from the publisher.

Printed and Distributed by the Jewish People Policy Institute

Graphic Design: Lotte Design

Cover Design: Shlomit Wolf, Lotte Design

ISBN ??????????

Table of Contents

Forward – Stuart Eizenstat and Dennis Ross

PART 1: Suggested Policy Directions, Integrated Net Assessment

Policy Directions

Integrated Net Assessment

Quantitative Indicators of Jewish Life

PART 2: Dimensions of Jewish Well-Being

Geopolitics

The Challenge of Navigating in Stormy Geopolitical Arenas.

Israel's Long Road to Asia

Anti- Semitism after Seventy Years of Sovereignty

Demography

Israel's Contribution to Strengthening the Jewish People.

Bonds Within and Between Communities

The State of Israel: The View from the United States

Beyond the Distancing Discourse: Israel in Jewish American Culture

Identity Formation and Expression

The Nation-State Law and Israeli Society

Jewish Identity in Israel in its 70th Year

Pluralism and Relations Between Groups in Israel

Changes in Haredi Society

The Reform and Conservative Movements in Israel

Material Resources

After 70 Years: Examining US Philanthropy to the American Jewish
Community and to Israel

People of the Book

Innovation as a Strategic Factor

PART 3: Feature Articles

Latin American Jews: Changing Horizons and New Challenges



Foreword

Israel at 70 is a remarkable success story. If David Ben-Gurion were alive today, he would find it hard to imagine the country he sees. It is a dynamo economically, quite literally the start-up nation and with a per capita income of \$37,000 a year. It is the strongest country in the region militarily, with not only the most sophisticated and capable of all the forces in the region but a capacity to fuse intelligence with operational plans in a way that few, if any, countries possess. Whether in science or medicine or agriculture or new wave industries or cyber, Israel is a cutting-edge country. And, it has accomplished all this in an environment that was hostile and rejectionist for much of its existence.

Ben-Gurion would be wowed by what Israel has accomplished but he would have concerns as well. Ben-Gurion, a genuine socialist, would be concerned by the income inequality that

characterizes Israel today, with 20 percent living under the poverty level. He would want to tackle the social gaps and he would worry about whether Israel can still be a light unto the nations when it has not figured out a way to end its control over territories in which the Palestinians reside.

This year's annual assessment offers a balanced overview of how Israel is doing geopolitically, demographically, in its relations with the Diaspora, and in fostering a Jewish identity in Israel while also preserving a home for all streams of Judaism. One would expect a mixed picture, some good, some not so good developments, and that is what this year's annual assessment provides. Geopolitically, there are positives: the support of the U.S. administration politically is strong and symbolically very important; the tacit cooperation with leading Arab states reflects a strategic convergence of threats; the relationship

with big powers like China, India and Russia is good—though with the exception of India, it does not express itself politically and diplomatically.

JPPI has been very helpful to the Israeli government in promoting stronger ties between Israel and the two great Asian powers, China and India. JPPI's recommendations were presented to the Israeli government as well as to the heads of major Jewish organizations active in promoting the relationship with the two Asian giants. The strategic study on relations with China was translated into Chinese in Beijing and serves as a textbook in universities across China. Likewise, JPPI prepared a major study on the history and future path of Israel-India relations, and hosted an event shortly before India Prime Minister Modi's historic visit to Israel—the first by a sitting Indian prime minister—with India's Ambassador to Israel and Stu Eizenstat.

The shadows that are cast on Israel by other developments and threats are real and require Israel to be especially vigilant. Iran has developed a land-bridge from the Islamic Republic through Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to the Mediterranean. It is now trying to create the equivalent in Syria of what it created in Lebanon with Hezbollah and its 120,000 rockets. Israel faces the real prospect of confronting a northern front now and cannot rule out the possibility that a war with rockets from the north could be matched with rockets from Hamas out of Gaza at the same time. Practically, Israel is largely facing all this on its own.

It is not an accident that Prime Minister Netanyahu has met with Russian President Putin eight times in the last two years. He has sought

de-confliction with Russian forces in Syria but also to persuade Putin to contain the Iranians and prevent the spread of its proxy militias. He has succeeded on the former but not on the latter. For some time, Russia has said all foreign forces should leave Syria, but for the first time it is also saying that admonition applies to Iranian and Hezbollah forces as well. The new Russian public posture is hopeful but should not be taken at face-value. Given the Russian record of duplicity in Syria, it is far too soon to know whether Russia's leaders will actually take steps to make this happen or continue to acquiesce in the expansion of Iran and its Shia proxy presence. Russia's record in Syria leaves much room for skepticism, especially since the Russian use of air power has consistently abetted the spread of the Qods Forces and Hezbollah there.

What is beyond question is that until now, Russia has generally given Israel a free hand to deal with the Iranian presence in Syria, even as it also has given the Iranians a free hand to expand as well. Unless the Russians have a change of heart, their willingness to permit each to operate freely increases the prospect of a war between Israel and Iran; it is easy to predict how such a war starts, but not so easy to foretell how it ends.

Historically, the U.S. might have made its influence felt, making clear the eruption of a wider regional war between Israel and Iran was not in our interests and we would intervene to make it less likely. We would very likely have gone to the Russians and made it clear that if they did not stop Iran, we would. That is not happening. President Trump has made it clear, he wants to

get out of Syria—and his focus there is ISIS and not Iran. It is ironic, perhaps, that the Trump administration is prepared to adopt a very tough rhetorical posture toward Iran, walking away from the JCPOA, but its policy toward Iranian expansion in the region is tough talk, but until now, not tough action.

Much like the Obama administration, the current administration seems to want out of Middle East conflicts and it has left Israel to deal with the Iranian threat. Words of support for Israel and its right to defend itself are strong, but that is it. Apart from not acting against Iranian threats in the region, the Trump administration at this point has done nothing to offer additional material help at a time when the Iranian nuclear threat could become more imminent. While the JCPOA had real flaws, it basically limited the threat of Iranian nuclear weapons development until after 2030—and Israeli force planning and the \$38 billion ten-year assistance package provided to Israel by the Obama administration was also based on this premise. What happens now if the Iranians decide to walk away from the nuclear deal and no longer live up to it? Is there any prospect that the Trump administration will decide to take that into account and increase what it provides Israel in terms of military assistance? That is unknowable at this point, but President Trump is not an enthusiast for military and other forms of assistance.

Similarly, it is worth asking whether the administration is going to present its peace plan and whether it will restore the possibility of peace-making. The administration devoted considerable

time to develop a plan with the hope that it would provide a new serious foundation for negotiations that lead to what President Trump calls "the ultimate deal". The administration is aware that it must create the right context in order to allow the plan to have the best chance to succeed. The president's announcement on Jerusalem and the decision regarding the embassy move contributed to changing the regional context and delaying the plan's unveiling. Although the administration continues to emphasize that it will present the plan, its chances of success will depend heavily on producing Arab leader acknowledgement that the plan credibly addresses the national aspirations of the Palestinians. Any hope of building pressure on the Palestinians to respond with something other than a "no" will depend on that.

JPPI has been at the forefront of providing important analysis of the pernicious Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction (BDS) effort to delegitimize Israel as a Jewish state. JPPI's comprehensive report includes the most complete analysis ever published on the BDS movement, in all its dimensions, with recommendations on how to combat it, for the Ministry of Strategic Affairs. This follows on a recommendation JPPI made several years ago to Prime Minister Netanyahu and his Cabinet to establish one ministry to combat BDS, with a budget allocated for this critical activity, leading directly to the selection of the Ministry of Strategic Affairs as the lead agency. This recommendation was accepted in the Cabinet meeting of 23 June 2013.

Absent any movement from the Palestinians, or some kind of Israeli initiative, we are likely to

continue to see the growth of the BDS movement on U.S. campuses and an increasing part of the Jewish community in America distancing itself from Israel.

Despite Israel being such an economic, military and cultural success story, with visits by American Jews to Israel at an all-time high, through Birthright/Taglit and personal visits, and with Israel now the home of a plurality of world Jewry, and by 2030 a majority, there are, nonetheless, troubling clouds on the horizon in Diaspora-Israel relations, one of the main focuses of JPPI's attention. JPPI has conducted a series of Dialogues over the last several years in over 40 locations with Jewish leaders throughout the Diaspora, on issues like Israel as a Jewish and Democratic state, Jewish values and armed conflict, the Jewish spectrum in a time of fluid identity, Jerusalem and the Jewish people, and 70 years of Israel-Diaspora relations.

Israel for the first time in its history is becoming a partisan political issue. This is not yet evident in the U.S. Congress, where Israel continues to enjoy bipartisan support, but it is clearly evident among the general American public. The Democrats in general have more concerns than Republicans about what they see as the occupation of the West Bank, expanded settlements there, and the treatment of the Palestinians and to a lesser degree of Israeli Arabs. A 2018 survey by the respected Pew Research Center found a growing gap between Democrats and Republicans in supporting Israel or the Palestinians: 79 percent of Republicans said they support Israel more than the Palestinians, compared to only 27 percent of Democrats.

Given the political polarization today in America—and the deep alienation of Democrats from the Trump administration—it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain bipartisan support for Israel. The close personal, political, and ideological affinity of the Israel prime minister and the American president, and with the Evangelical movement, add to the difficulty, especially in the American Jewish community.

Roughly 70 percent of American Jews voted for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election. At the same time, as Israel, through demographic changes, is becoming increasingly Orthodox by religious affiliation and conservative and nationalist in their politics, there is a potential collision of values with Diaspora Jews who are largely Conservative, Reform or secular in their religious orientation and liberal in their politics. In 2017, the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) population in Israel is 12 percent of Israel's Jewish population; by virtue of their high birthrates, by 2030 they will constitute more than 20 percent, and by 2065, more than 40 percent all Jews in Israel, and over a third of Israel's total population.

This demographic trend is mirrored in the U.S. with the Orthodox, now roughly 12 percent of American Jewry, and generally politically conservative, growing at a much faster rate than the non-Orthodox population, both because of lower birthrates and high levels of intermarriage (around 30 percent of Jewish children under the age of 18 in the US are being raised in Orthodox households. In the greater New York area, this rate is as high as 70 percent).

The concerns of the non-Orthodox members of the American Jewish community were exacerbated by the government of Israel's decision to cancel the Kotel agreement and make the conversion process more stringent.

Added to these issues, is a series of legislative actions that many liberal American Jews see as a challenge to Israel's democracy.

What compounds these trends is the tendency of the current Israeli government to ignore the concerns of the Reform and Conservative streams of Judaism.

Listening to the Diaspora has never been more important, and with these developments in mind, the Annual Assessment makes a number of recommendations:

- Promote mechanisms for consulting with Diaspora leaders before decisions are taken.
- Mobilize resources that reinforce projects that foster Israeli-Diaspora connections (Birthright and Masa).
- Encourage cultural exchanges between the Diaspora and Israel involving art, music, science, and literature.

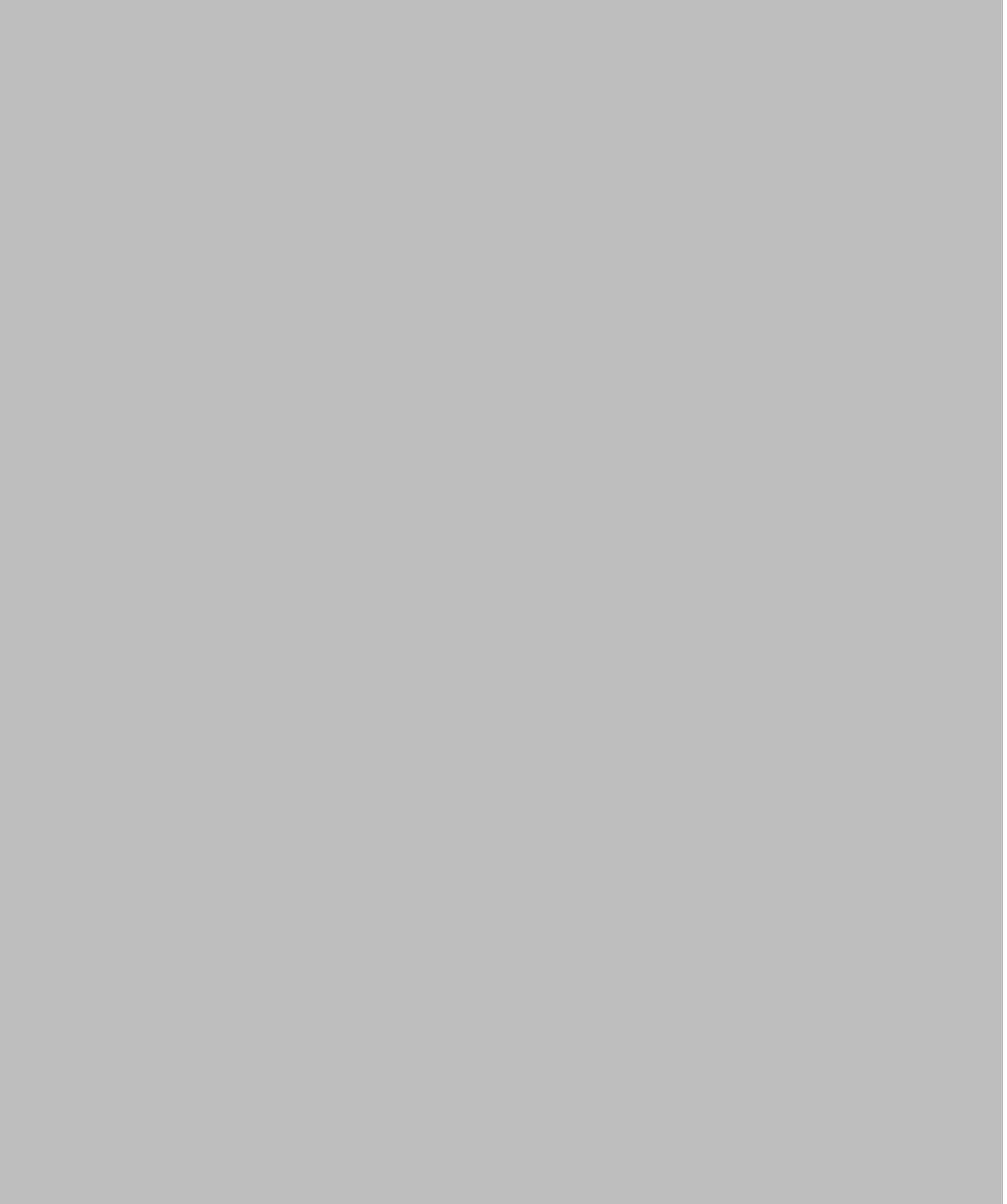
- Engage more with the liberal, progressive parts of the Jewish community. Israel and the Jewish Diaspora's efforts should focus on "expanding the tent" on the one hand, and reaching a consensus "red lines" beyond which entails harming mutual respect and responsibility between the communities.
- Encourage the growing Orthodox community in the U.S. to become more integrated into Jewish community-wide activities and public affairs more generally.
- Make clear that decisions made in the Diaspora on Jewish issues within Diaspora communities will be respected in Israel.

If Israel does not want to find itself losing support in the Jewish community—support that has historically driven close U.S.-Israeli relations—and among significant segments of the American public, non-Orthodox Jews and progressive Americans should not be written off, but rather should be engaged. Moreover, It is critical that the Israeli government avoid Israel becoming a polarizing political issue.

Dennis Ross and Stuart Eizenstat

PART 1

Suggested Policy Directions Integrated Net Assessment



2

Dilemmas and Policy Directions

The Geopolitical Arena

- Israel should prepare for a strategic reality in which the U.S. is less willing to invest in the Middle East, to have a regional presence, and to lead efforts to stabilize and bring calm to the region. This new reality is in opposition to Israeli interests and may even harm perceptions of Israel's deterrence. Israel should encourage Washington, to the extent possible, not to abdicate its leadership position and the various roles it has played in the Middle East.
- Israel has an interest in cultivating its relations with both China and Russia. However, it should continue to navigate cautiously in the face of the rivalry among the super powers and Israel's central interest in not damaging its strategic relationship with the United States. Diaspora Jewry should be encouraged to engage in cultural, artistic, academic and intellectual Israeli-Jewish outreach in Asia to generate "soft power" in this continent whose importance and power are on the rise. Take advantage of immigrant groups that maintain significant ties with their countries of origin.
- Israel should be aware that a reality may emerge

in which the U.S. despairs of the possibility of advancing an Israeli-Palestinian settlement and abandons its leadership role in the peace process. The vacuum this would leave might be filled by international actors who are less friendly to Israel and may therefore promote problematic initiatives.

- American strategic strength along with the amity of the current U.S. president opens a window of opportunity for political moves that will arrest the danger of sliding into a bi-national state reality that threatens Israel's Jewish identity.
- Trump's businesslike tactics of maneuvering and constructing bargaining positions, along with his proclivity for dramatic moves, could lead to some surprising steps. In this context Israel should prepare for possible scenarios resulting from unconventional moves on the part of the American president (such as direct talks with Iran's leadership).

Relations with Diaspora Communities

- Israel and major Jewish organizations worldwide

should prepare for the possibility of retaliatory actions by Iran, as a means of settling scores with Israel.

- Israel and the leading U.S. Jewish organizations should work to foster the Triangular Relationship: Jerusalem-Washington-American Jewry, which is a decisive force multiplier of the power of Israel and the Jewish people. While the Jerusalem-Washington side has reached peaks of cooperation and support, significant tensions have erupted between Jerusalem and the American Jewish community. It is incumbent upon the Government of Israel and American Jewish organizations to strengthen the feeling of Israel solidarity among the liberal Jewish community (especially the younger generation). This is out of concern for Jewish people unity and to safeguard American Jewish influence in Israel-related matters. It is recommended that an inclusive pluralistic approach be adopted in order to widen the tent of Jewish unity and commitment.
- Israel should improve dialogue channels and coordination mechanisms so that the positions of Diaspora Jews can more effectively be considered in Israeli decision-making processes on issues that broadly affect the Jewish people.
- Israel and U.S. Jewish organizations should sharpen their awareness of a trend of growing frustration within the Trump administration that the president's pro-Israel moves (especially the transfer of the embassy to Jerusalem) are not sufficiently appreciated by large segments of the American Jewish community.

- Israel should ensure that it maintain bi-partisan support in the United States. This challenge becomes increasingly complex in light of the growing ideological polarization in the U.S., and as Israeli policy increasingly becomes a bone of contention between the parties (while support for Israel among Republicans is on the rise, it is declining among Democrats).
- Israel should exercise caution in its relations with countries that demonstrate significant friendship to Israel but whose rulers are distancing themselves from democratic norms, and under whose wings anti-Semitic elements may flourish. This is for reasons of moral principles and out of consideration for the feelings of the Jewish communities in those countries.

The Nation State Legislation

- JPPI recommends that Israel include among its Basic Laws, the civil equality of all its citizens. The Institute also recommends that Israel's character as a Jewish and democratic state be given renewed expression in the legislation in the same manner as it appears in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (1992).

Haredi Integration

- Continue the pragmatic policy regarding Haredi integration into general Israeli society, facilitating for those Haredim who desire it, integration into the IDF, National Service, and the labor force in such a way that preserves their unique identity.

- Encourage the Ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox communities, especially in the United States, to take an active role in Jewish communal life and the general American society and increase their participation in politics and public service in the national arena in addition to efforts made on the local level.

Conversion

- JPPI recommends that Israel include among its Basic Laws, the civil equality of all its citizens. The Institute also recommends that Israel's character as a Jewish and democratic state be given renewed expression in the legislation in the same manner as it appears in the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (1992).

Geopolitics

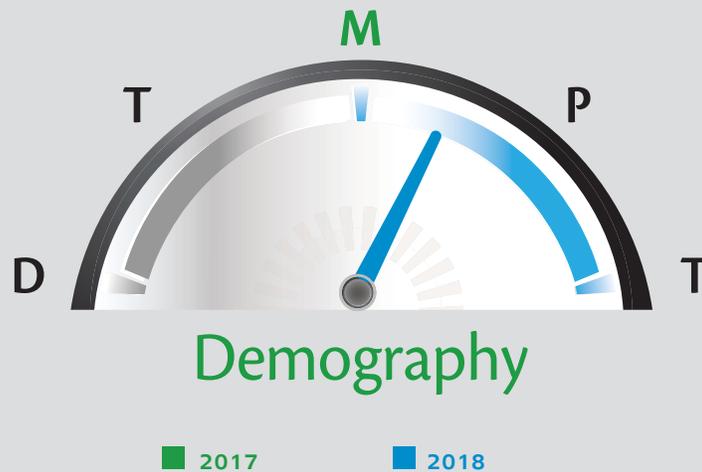


Over the past year, Israel's strategic balance improved slightly, however the overall uncertainty surrounding Israel's geopolitical situation remains evident. Israel is militarily and economically powerful, and there are no conventional military threats at the moment. Israel's deterrence remains strong and it continues to develop new relationships with regional actors. U.S.- Israel relations are at an all-time high, and Jerusalem continues to forge a close working relationship with Moscow. However, potential violent confrontations loom on Israel's strategic horizon, with hostile actors like Iran, Hezbollah, Syria, Hamas, and perhaps the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria.

Thus, despite substantial strategic gains (such as the American recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the transfer of its embassy there, the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA Nuclear Agreement with Iran, the positive coordination with Moscow with regard to Syria, and more), the past year presented no turning point in Israel's fundamental strategic challenges: security threats (such as Iran's nuclear program, Hezbollah, and Hamas), and the political, security, demographic and moral challenges posed by the absence of a solution to the Palestinian issue. Therefore, we move the dial slightly in the positive direction, but note that any of the above-mentioned challenges could shift it back relatively quickly.

4

Demography¹



The most striking feature of Jewish demography this past year was the perpetuation of patterns from earlier years, with slow growth in the number of Jews around the world. The demographic gauge therefore remains unchanged.

In 2017, some 100,000 people joined world Jewry, whose total population is now 14.6 million². Significant aspects of Jewish demography worldwide include the growth of Israel's Jewish population from 6,446,100 in early 2017 to 6,554,500 by the beginning of 2018, and stability in the American Jewish population, at 5.7 million (U.S. and Israeli Jewry constitute the world's two largest

contemporary Jewish communities). According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, 27,000 new immigrants arrived in Israel in 2017 – a thousand more than the previous year. The main countries of origin were Russia, Ukraine, France, and the United States. More specifically, three-fourths of the immigrants arrived from Europe, another 15 percent from the Americas and Oceania, and 9 percent from Asia-Africa.

The fertility rate of Jewish Israeli women continued to climb: from 3.09 in 2014 to 3.11 in 2015, and 3.16 in 2016. The (negative) balance of Israelis who leave the country and return after a year or more abroad

has remained more or less stable in recent years though in 2016 the number declined slightly to approximately 6,300 reflecting both a diminution in departures and an increase in return migration to Israel.

The ratio between Jews and non-Jews in Israel (including Jewish settlers in the West Bank) remained unchanged: 79 versus 21 percent.

Endnotes

1. Data on Israel derive from publications and media releases of the Central Bureau of Statistics
2. Sergio DellaPergoa. 2018. World Jewish Population, 2018. In: A. Dashefsky and I. Sheskin (eds.) American Jewish Year Book, 2018 (forthcoming).

Community Bonds



The following chart summarizes developments in 2017-2018 that either strengthened or weakened relations between Jewish communities around the world – with an emphasis on Israel-Diaspora relations. It goes without saying that troubled relations between Israel and Jews elsewhere, especially the United States, have negative implications in other spheres, including geopolitics and material resources.

The Jewish-relations dynamic of 2017-2018 was not much different from that of the preceding year.

Long-term trends identified in earlier years still prevail in the Jewish world and in Israel. Last year

witnessed several important developments, the two most notable of which were: 1. Stronger ties to the Trump administration, epitomized by the embassy move to Jerusalem and its withdrawal from the JCPOA; 2. The harsh criticism directed at Israel by Jews due to Israel's policy on African asylum seekers and, to a lesser degree, its policy on Gaza, and lately the Nation State Law.

These developments had a certain impact on the Israel-Diaspora relationship dynamic, especially between Israel and American Jewry, putting the relationship under increasing strain. For this reason we place the needle between “Stable” and “Problematic.”

Developments that strengthen relations

Developments that weaken relations

1 The growing political power enjoyed by the U.S. Orthodox community, whose relations with Israel (and with the Trump administration) are robust.

American political polarization is forcing Jews to choose a side – at a time when Democratic Party supporters seem to be distancing themselves from Israel.

2 Developments in the security sphere (Iran, Gaza) motivate and encourage Jewish support for Israel.

Aggressive Israeli security policy (especially in Gaza) makes liberal Jews uncomfortable.

3 The 70th anniversary of Israel's founding constitutes an educational and emotional opportunity for forging and strengthening ties.

Israeli political developments are a source of worry for many Jews. The main concerns this year are: policy toward asylum-seekers, legislation relating to the High Court of Justice and the Nation State Law.

4 Israel's continued achievement and innovation in a variety of fields (especially high-tech) foster a positive image among Jews.

Demographic trends in Israel and the Diaspora remain unchanged, also deepening the differences between the two communities, especially due to mixed marriages.

Identity Formation and Expression



In the ongoing effort to strengthen the intensity of Jewish identification, positive and negative trends continue to balance each other. Therefore we are leaving the needle unchanged.

In Diaspora Jewry we find several groups (most notably the demographically-increasing Orthodox) whose Jewish identity is strong and whose commitment to Judaism and to the Jewish people is high. At present, nearly a third of U.S. Jewish children are being reared in Orthodox families and, consequently, in environments where the tendency toward Jewish identification is strong. However, a large proportion (two-thirds) of this group consists of Haredi (ultra-Orthodox)

Jews who are less involved in the communal affairs of American Jewry as a whole.

At the same time, one can discern large groups of young (non-Orthodox) Jews in the United States whose sense of Jewish identity is not strong – and who are not involved in Jewish frameworks. As we explained in earlier assessments, a high percentage of those identified by researchers as Jews “of no religion,” as “cultural” Jews, or as “just Jews” are notable for their low degree of affiliation with the Jewish community. Evidence amassed over the past year indicates that this group is growing as a percentage of all American Jews. However, numerous educational efforts are being directed

at this group; initial findings suggest that these efforts are helping to raise the level of Jewish identification, though it is too early to say for sure.

For Israeli Jews, the Jewish-identity indicators need to take into account that the Jewish environment itself produces a significant degree of identity and identification, though these can be interpreted in different ways (surveys show that 46% of the Israeli Jewish population sees itself as Jewish first, while 35% regards itself as Israeli first). All of the Israeli groups, secular included, have ties to religious tradition and practice, though at differing levels and mediated by differing interpretations. Israeli Jews also identify strongly with the Jewish people. This identification is higher among the traditional-religious public, and lower – though still quite high – among secular Israeli Jews. However, this identification does not necessarily translate into agreement on how the State of Israel should

express its ties to the rest of the Jewish world, or on how Israel's Jewish identity should be manifested within the state's borders. There is still controversy on both the ideological and the political planes regarding the relationship between religion and state, the status of the Chief Rabbinate, and other questions pertaining to Jewish religious expression in the public and political realms. This controversy, a large share of which relates to the dominance of the Orthodox religious approach in the Israeli political sphere, is eroding the positive image of Jewish culture and generating opposition (to religious coercion) both in Israel and abroad. Diversity and pluralism regarding approaches to Jewish identity in Israel help make Israeli society more resilient. Controversy on this issue, however, is generating, at times a destructive and exclusionary discourse, in which each side tries to delegitimize the other's standing in Israeli society.

Material Resources



There is no significant change from 2017 to 2018.

The positive and negative factors remain largely unchanged since last year. Leaving the needle close to **"PROSPERING"** accords most closely with current circumstances.

Regarding Israel, potentially problematic factors to watch include:

- Israel lacks some 10-12,000 high-tech skilled employees.
- Greater Investments in education and infrastructure are required to enhance long-term productivity and social inclusiveness.

- Product markets need further reform to enhance competitiveness and productivity.

According to 2018 OECD reporting:

- The Israeli economy is robust.
- Income inequality has lessened, but economic disparities and lack of social cohesion persist.

"Israel's economy continues to register remarkable macroeconomic and fiscal performance. Growth is strong and unemployment rates are low and falling. With low interest rates and stable prices, financial policy is prudent, and public debt is comparatively low and declining.

The international balance of trade is solid, thanks to a dynamic high-tech sector. The average standard of living is improving, mainly due to higher employment rates. Continued accommodative macro policies and planned investments in the offshore gas fields in the coming years will spur further growth. Against this backdrop, Israelis remain on average more satisfied with their lives than residents of most other countries.” Regarding Diaspora Jewish communities, Jewish institutions and activities are weathering the transition to new patterns of giving. The rise of donor-designated funds and more proactive philanthropist involvement is leading to new initiatives as well as some problems for long-standing institutions. However, preliminary data from a JPPI research effort suggests that the institutions, such as synagogues, day schools, summer camps and Jewish Community Centers which help form the core determinants of Jewish identity may be under less stress than had been

supposed by many. These subsist largely on funding generated from within the community and by donations and activity fees from those who use them. They seem to find adequate means in the absence of large philanthropic support.

Jewish communities are continuing to concentrate and play active roles in the most developed economies. They also continue an active involvement in the material development of Israel that began prior to the founding of the state. It is true that the level of giving, while still growing, is increasingly outstripped by Israel’s own economic growth. In recent years, Israel has begun to lend material support to Diaspora communities. Yet, a JPPI analysis shows that the importance of funding to Israeli education, basic research, health and social services, community services, religious and arts institutions is disproportionate. Many key elements enhancing the well-being of Israel’s citizens would be seriously affected if this important source of material support were to cease.

Selected Indicators of World Jewry 2018

Country	Jewish Population (Core Definition)		GDP per capita, PPP Intl \$	Index Of Human Development – World Rank	Recent Out- marriage Rate (%)	Aliyah	Number of Jewish Legislature Members / Seats In Legislature
	1970 ^a	2017 ^b					
World	12,633,000	14,511,100	-	-	-	25,977	-
Israel	2,582,000	6,584,000 ^{g,h}	36,340	19	5	-	102/120 ⁱ
North America	5,686,000	6,090,100	-	-	-	2978	-
United States	5,400,000	5,700,000 ^j	59,501	10	58 ^k	2,682	32/535 ^k
Canada	286,000	390,000	48,265	10	15-24.9	296	13/443 ^v
Latin America	514,000	378,900	-	-	-	-	-
Argentina	282,000	180,500	20,875	45	25-34.9	255	-
Brazil	90,000	93,800	15,602	79	25-34.9	579	-
Mexico	35,000	40,000	19,902	77	1-4.9	89	-
Other countries	107,000	64,600	-	-	15-95	-	-
Europe non-FSU	1,331,000	1,078,700	-	-	-	-	-
France	530,000	456,000	43,761	21	25-34.9	4,239	-
United Kingdom	390,000	289,500	44,118	16	26 [*]	632	19/650 ^{*****}
Germany	30,000	116,500	50,425	4	45-54.9	138	-
Romania	-	9,200	24,508	50	-	15	-
Bulgaria	-	2,000	21,687	56	-	11	-
Hungary	70,000	47,500	29,474	43	60	79	-
Other EU	171,000	158,000	-	-	33-75	-	-
Other non-EU	140,000	38,000	-	-	50-80	-	-
FSU	2,151,000	268,500	-	-	-	-	-
Russia	808,000	176,000	27,834	49	80	6,992	-

Ukraine	777,000	53,000	8,713	84	80	5,809	-
Rest FSU Europe	312,000	22,800	-	-	65-75	-	-
FSU Asia	254,000	16,700	-	-	50-75	-	-
Asia (rest)	104,000	18,900	-	-	-	-	-
Africa	195,000	74,000	-	-	-	-	-
Ethiopia	-	100	2,161	174	-	40	-
South Africa	118,000	69,300	13,545	119	15-24.9	220	3/400***
Morocco	-	2,200	8,567	123	-	66	-
Other countries	-	2,400	-	-	-	-	-
Oceania	70,000	120,800	-	-	-	-	-
Australia	65,000	113,200	50,334	2	15-24.9	-	6/150****
New Zealand and other countries	5,000	7,600	38,934	13	15-24.9	115	-

- a. Source: Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, The A. Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- b. Source: DellaPergola, Sergio, World Jewish Population, 2017. In: Arnold Dashevsky and Ira Sheskin (eds.), American Jewish Year Book 2017 (Appendix 7.11)
- c. Source: Website for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook for 2017. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), per capita (world currency).
- d. A measure of a country's development based on public health, educational level and real income level. Source: Human Development Report 2015, Work for Human Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- e. Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, Monthly Bulletin of Statistics in Israel, January 2017.
- f. Based on previous year's statistics, unless otherwise specified.
- g. Does not include "without religion"; includes East Jerusalem, Golan Heights and West Bank.
- h. According to population predictions from the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (medium alternative), by the year 2025, Israel's Jewish population will grow to 7.3 million (Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2014, Table 2.10, p. 111).
- i. Source: Knesset website, May 2018
- j. Aside from this measure of 5.7 million Jews, the Pew Jewish People Survey from 2013 found another one million people (600,000 adults and 400,000 children) who are partial Jews.
- k. Source: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/#nav-B>

* Graham David, (2016), Jews in couples- Marriage, intermarriage, cohabitation and divorce in Britain

** A Portrait of Jewish Americans, the Pew Research Center's 2013 survey of US Jews. Figures are based on current, intact marriages

*** Source: David Saks from SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

**** Statistics were updated with the generous assistance of The Hon. Michael Danby, MP, Parliament of Australia

***** Statistics were updated with the generous assistance of Richard Pater, Director of BICOM in Israel

V Statistics were updated with the generous assistance of David Cooper, Vice President, Government Relations at Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, CIJA, Canada

PART 2

Dimensions of Jewish Well-Being





Geopolitics: The Challenge of Navigating in Stormy Geopolitical Arenas

Introduction

The past year highlighted the dualities that characterize Israel's predicament, and to a large extent the reality of world Jewry. Unprecedented achievements on one hand and deep-rooted problems with the potential to precipitate major crises on the other. The year in which the United States recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital was also the year in which Israel entered – in Syria – for the first time into a direct military confrontation with Iran, a development that could have bloody repercussions. The year in which the U.S. president displayed great sympathy for Israel and a deep understanding of Israeli positions was also the year when tensions came to the fore between the Israeli government and a significant segment of American Jewry, which is troubled by the current president's approach.

The strategic challenges Israel faces in its stormy Mideast environment are numerous and complex. After years of violent upheaval that destroyed the old order, no new regional order that could conceivably ensure stability has yet to emerge.

The international system, which is relevant to the Middle East and to Israel's strategic resilience, is also in a state of turbulence and far from projecting stability. This frenzied geopolitical scene was recently joined by yet another influential player – U.S. President Donald Trump. The new president's personality, and the difficulty of predicting his actions, add a unique dimension of uncertainty to the international stage in general, and particularly to the arenas relevant to Israeli resilience.

A striking manifestation of Israel's strategic uncertainty is the extreme polarization displayed by commentators regarding current developments and their likely impact on Israeli resilience. Well-reasoned theses underscoring Israel's problematic and worrisome strategic status are countered by equally convincing arguments that the country's strategic situation has never been better. Prominently featured on the positive side of the strategic balance sheet is Israel's position as the Middle East's leading military power, with effective deterrence and a qualitative military edge over

its adversaries. The conventional military threat to Israel posed by regular national armies has dramatically declined, along with (for the time being at least) non-conventional military threats: most (though not all) of Syria's chemical arsenal has been dismantled, and the Iranian nuclear program has been temporarily halted by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Iran nuclear deal, (whose future is, however, unclear now that the U.S. has withdrawn from it).

Israel wields considerable economic and technological might; it possesses highly advanced tech and cyber industries, as well as gas reserves in the Mediterranean Sea. According to the International Monetary Fund (April 2018),¹ Israel's GDP per capita – \$42,120 – is higher than that of Spain, Italy, or Japan. Israel's strategic alliance with the United States is strong and

stable. The peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan remain stable anchors, the vicissitudes of time notwithstanding. A convergence of interests has emerged between Israel and key Sunni nations, creating a platform for unprecedented security cooperation. Israel's working relationship with Russia has become stronger, Chinese interest in the Israeli economy is on the rise, and relations with India have grown closer (Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Israel in July 2017, the first ever visit by a sitting Indian prime minister; this was followed in January 2018 by a reciprocal visit to India by Prime Minister Netanyahu).

Peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan remain stable anchors

Alongside these strategic points of light, there are also dark shadows: this year found Israel entering into direct confrontation with Iran, which is trying to extend its sphere of influence to the Mediterranean Sea, with both Syria and Lebanon turning into military fronts vis-à-vis Israel. The JCPOA did not curb Teheran's nuclear ambitions and left the country's relevant infrastructure undisturbed, meaning that, depending on circumstances, Israel could once again face the Iranian nuclear threat.

Hezbollah is growing stronger militarily and politically, and Gaza could pose a simultaneous challenge in any scenario of violent escalation. Russia has become a permanent actor in the region, with a military presence in neighboring Syria. Shared interests between Russia and Israel's sworn enemies is a worrisome reality. In contrast, the United States is currently reducing its military involvement in the Middle East, a development inconsistent with Israel's interests.

The failure to resolve the Palestinian problem fuels hostility to Israel and, in the long term, threatens the state's Jewish character. The humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip increases the danger that war will erupt. Delegitimization and BDS still pose a long-term strategic threat. In addition to all this, Israel is having trouble preserving bipartisan U.S. support, and existing tensions between the Israeli government and broad swathes of American Jewry hold a potential to harm the strategic triangle: Jerusalem-Washington-American Jewry.

Israel's strategic balance sheet includes challenges in several different and interacting spheres:

A. The international system (with an emphasis on U.S. status and performance). B. The threats and opportunities that the entire regional situation poses for Israel. C. The Palestinian situation as a whole. D. The strategic triangle: Jerusalem-Washington-American Jewry. These spheres are known to have a direct impact on the resilience of Israel and of the Jewish people, and they will be the focus of this overview.

The International System: U.S. status and performance and the implications for Israeli strategic resilience

President Trump took office in a geopolitical reality where the United States, though still the world's strongest power, is no longer poised at the "American Moment," a time when the U.S. enjoyed hegemony within a unipolar system, that emerged in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse 27 years ago. Today's rising global powers do not share the liberal-democratic values that guided the U.S. in its post-World War II efforts to institute a world order fostering stability, freedom, and free trade. The attractiveness of these values has been diminished by the 2008 financial crisis, the deepening social inequality associated with globalization, the faded hopes once sparked by the "Arab Spring", the array of crises facing Europe, and the failed U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are witnessing reactions that challenge the values of the modern Western order: a desire to reinforce the idea of the nation state as an insular entity with clearly delineated borders and a distinct identity, economic protectionism, opposition to globalization, erosion

of liberal norms, populism, xenophobia, and the rise of extreme elements on both the right and the left. Consequently, 89 countries saw their scores drop in *The Economist's* Democracy Index for 2017, just 29 saw them improve.²

Europe, which has embodied the values at the heart of the Western world order for seven decades, is now mired in a crisis of identity, structure, and values. The principles that inspired the founders of the European Union are being called into question. Continent-wide dissatisfaction with how the traditional political system has dealt with recent economic crises; Britain's abandonment of the EU; waves of migration and terrorist incidents – are all undermining the open-borders orientation and sense of personal security Europeans have taken for granted, while fanning the flames of right-wing and left-wing political extremism. The political ascendancy of far-right movements poses a dilemma for Israeli foreign policy: how to handle European countries that display strong friendship for Israel but whose leaders are abandoning democratic norms and providing fertile ground for anti-Semitism to flourish. (This issue recently became a matter of public debate when the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, visited Israel in July 2018. When they met, President of Israel Reuven Rivlin saw fit to warn him that "Neo-Fascism is a threat to the entire world" and fuels nationalistic hate.)³ Signs of an identity crisis are also visible in the

**Today's rising
global powers
do not share
the liberal-
democratic
values of the
U.S.**

United States. Trump's election victory reflected the growing influence of large sectors of the American public – people concerned that the existing political order (particularly globalization) is short-changing them and who, consequently, reject the values that underpin the current order.

As president, Trump has added yet another dimension to the global “dis-order.” Unlike his predecessor, he exhibits no sense of commitment to world leadership, to the consolidation of a stable, functioning global order, or to the long-standing alliances with Europe and NATO. This situation has repercussions for Israel, whose strategic resilience is significantly affected not only by the quality of its relations with Washington but also by the global status of the U.S., by the role it chooses to play in the international arena, and by the ambitions and the might wielded by competing powers. Should the status of the United States erode – the power whose friendship for, and assistance to, Israel are so critical, and which is home to a thriving community amounting to half of world Jewry – Israeli deterrence and the power ascribed to it might erode as well. A perception that American strength vis-à-vis competing powers is on the wane, and that the U.S. is abandoning the Middle East, is deepening the region's strategic vacuum, attracting forces to the area that are problematic for Israel, and could worsen instabilities in a volatile region that has depended on the U.S. as a stabilizing force.

Israel has good reason for concern, given Trump's statement that “no amount of American blood or treasure can produce lasting peace and security in the Middle East.”⁴ Trump is leaving the region's nations to cope with Iranian subversion on their

own; he is not committed to ousting Assad (despite the repeated use of chemical weapons), is making only a limited effort to fight ISIS, is reconciled to Russian domination of Syria, and is leaving Netanyahu no option but to meet with Russian leaders again and again in order to defend Israel's red lines.

President Trump's actions and statements indicate that, as far as he is concerned, the decisive criterion is “America first.” He feels no obligation to the idea of the U.S. as a world leader promoting democratic values and human rights; “soft power” is clearly not a major asset in his eyes. Trump lacks regard for America's Western allies, which he sees as having exploited American generosity; he wants them to shoulder their own defense costs. Trump has little interest in alliances or in nurturing international institutions. He withdrew from the Paris climate agreement (June 1, 2017), has left European leaders with major concerns about his commitment to NATO, has embraced a protectionist economic approach, and disfavors the multilateral free trade agreements that coalesced under President Obama. He is abandoning the Trans-Pacific Partnership (January 23, 2017), and imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from the main U.S. trade partners – Canada, Mexico, and Europe (May 31, 2018). He bickered with U.S. allies at the annual G7 summit (June 8, 2018), refused to sign the group's official communiqué, and advocated reinstating Russia as a member-state (four years after its suspension, as a result of its invasion and annexation of the Crimean Peninsula). He sparked a trade war with Beijing when he decided to impose a 25 percent tariff on Chinese imports.⁵

Despite Trump's desire to pull back from "wasting" resources on the international arena, he faces persistent, unavoidable international challenges that require difficult decisions. Two of these challenges have highlighted Trump's proclivity for dramatic actions: his withdrawal from the JCPOA (May 8, 2018) and his meeting with North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Un (June 12, 2018). These two issues (which have reciprocal repercussions) have remained open: how to manage the crisis with Iran so as to prevent its acquisition of nuclear arms and hamper its regional subversion; and how to manage the process undertaken with North Korea to ensure the dismantlement of its nuclear arsenal. (Since the historic meeting both sides have accused one another of not complying with the understandings reached during the summit).

Trump's unsentimental approach to creating bargaining positions, maneuvering and negotiations could result in surprising developments. Trump has lavished praise on Kim Jong-un just after referring to him as "Rocket Man" and threatening to "totally destroy" North Korea. Trump's actions to date make it impossible to confidently predict how he will manage the Iran and North Korea crises in the future, both of which are critical to world peace.

The vacuum left by Trump in the international sphere is drawing Russia and China into it in a number of ways. China and Russia, which from a historical perspective, view themselves as superpowers, are unimpressed by any world order that fails to take them into account. Their behavior is becoming more aggressive, revealing their vision of a multipolar world founded on inter-power rivalry, in which their status and interests are no

less legitimate than those of the United States and Europe. While China wields economic might, Russia compensates for its weaknesses through aggressive displays of military power, cyber warfare, and espionage. Russia is taking advantage of Trump's disinclination for international involvement and Europe's weakness and difficulty in formulating a unified and binding policy. Since Putin returned to the presidency in 2012 Moscow has invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula, held portions of eastern Ukraine, deployed forces in Syria, kept the Assad regime from falling, been a major determining force behind future arrangements in Syria, and competed with the U.S. for the Mideast arms market. Moscow is exerting its influence, intervening in the political affairs of neighboring countries, and brazenly threatening to cut off Europe's gas supply.

Russia is taking advantage of Trump's disinclination for international involvement

The strategic vacuum left by the U.S. has also conveyed signals to China, which believes itself to be in a "period of strategic opportunity" thanks to rapid economic growth and the West's relative stagnation. China represents an alternative to the regime paradigm offered by the West: rapid, consistent economic development without democratic constraints – the ruler's legitimacy based on efficacy and concrete results rather than the ballot. Thus, buoyed by his country's economic and international achievements, Xi Jinping had no compunctions about advancing

his personal status by abolishing the two-term presidency limit (March 11, 2018). China is focused on strengthening its army and exhibits innovation in the security development sphere. It employs a strategy of expanding its international influence, bolstering external legitimacy for its autocratic regime, and blocking criticism of it.

China has exhibited impressive economic growth over the past 40 years. The Chinese economy is now the world's second-largest; the country has remarkable achievements to its credit. Beijing

Russia and China see no sense in a world order that ignores their power

is determined to secure a presence on the forefront of technological innovation, in areas such as artificial intelligence. The One Belt, One Road Initiative is meant to connect China with Europe and the rest of Asia to comprise a huge market numbering 4.4 billion

people in 26 different countries. The plan entails investments and credit amounting to more than 10 times that granted via the Marshall Plan which established U.S. centrality in Europe in the post-World War II period. Israel also appears on the OBOR map as an object of growing Chinese interest, in terms of both acquiring Israeli companies and technologies, and executing Israeli infrastructure projects.

China's appetite for turning economic power into strategic gains is currently manifesting in its immediate geographic region, through efforts to realize its claims on disputed islands in the South China Sea – efforts that are of serious concern to

its neighbors. Because the Middle East is one of its primary oil sources, it is natural that China's interest in the region would increase. China also views the Mideast as a promising market for its goods, and its desire for greater involvement in the region has, accordingly, become gradually evident in the diplomatic arena.

Israel, of course, has an interest in cultivating relations with both China and Russia, but it has to navigate carefully due to current inter big-power rivalries and the overriding interest of not harming its strategic relations with the United States.

The Regional System: threats and opportunities

Israel cannot expect a speedy positive change within its violent and turbulent region. Two-thirds of the Mideast's inhabitants are aged 29 and under. The unemployment rate for those who are employable is 30 percent (double the global average). Economies are stagnating. Tribal and clan ties take priority over civic obligations, and central governments are floundering while political frameworks weaken, frequently to the point of collapse, adding to the region's array of "failed states" with only partial control over the territories within their dominion (Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, and Yemen). Deep disappointment over the failure of the Arab Spring lingers. Unrest across the Middle East, and the weakness of the existing political frameworks, have created a space in which extreme, armed and violent nongovernmental entities are flourishing – local militias, terrorist organizations, and movements aligned with radical Islamist ideologies. The civil

wars in Syria and Yemen, and the murderous terrorism of ISIS, have uprooted millions from their homes. Over 2.5 million people have taken refuge in Turkey, 1.4 million in Jordan, and a million in Lebanon (a quarter of the country's population). There has been no improvement in the Mideast reality of social, economic, religious and political ills. Without a central government capable of imposing its authority over the territory for which it is responsible, a defeated ISIS may be succeeded by heirs who are no less bloodthirsty.

Israel is regarded by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other Sunni nations as a supportive partner in facing the region's major challenges, especially Iran and radical terrorism. Accordingly, these countries are increasing their security cooperation with Israel. At the same time, one cannot ignore the fact that the advanced weapons systems being purchased at huge expense by the Arab countries concerned about Iran, may come to threaten Israel's qualitative military edge (QME) or even be directed at Israel following regime or policy changes. Israel's immediate security threats are from terrorist organizations with military capabilities and from Iran, which aspires to establish an effective military front against Israel in Syria and Lebanon and wishes to avenge the direct Israeli strike that destroyed a major portion of the military infrastructure it had established in Syria.

Assad's army is exhausted from years of civil war, Hezbollah has suffered heavy losses fighting in Syria, and Hamas has been isolated and weakened – yet an outbreak of violence could still occur between Israel and these enemies.

Iran

Two major developments this year were milestones with regard to the challenge Iran poses to Israel: the U.S. pullout from the Iran nuclear deal, and the onset of direct military confrontation between Israel and Iran. Prime Minister Netanyahu warns that Israel will not allow a nuclear Iran to emerge and will not accept the deployment of Iranian forces in any of its neighboring countries. Against this background, the potential for a violent escalation between Israel and Iran is growing. An initial indication of this turnaround was the downing of an Iranian explosives-bearing UAV on its way to a strike Israel (February 10, 2018). Israel responded by destroying the Iranian command-and-control trailer that had operated the UAV from Syria. Speaking at the Munich Security Conference after the incident, Netanyahu warned (February 18, 2018): “[W]e will act, if necessary, not just against Iran's proxies that are attacking us, but against Iran itself.” The direct military confrontation with Iran significantly escalated when Iran responded to several strikes attributed to Israel, including an attack on the T-4 air base where several Revolutionary Guard members were killed (April 9, 2018). The Iranian reprisal – a rocket attack on Israeli positions on the Golan Heights – failed but led to an extensive Israeli strike that destroyed dozens of Iranian targets in Syrian territory (May 9, 2018). Israel's retaliatory actions enjoyed unreserved U.S. support. As far as Iran is concerned, accounts with Israel have not been settled, making it necessary to prepare for Iranian counterstrikes against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad.

In Iran's view, vengeance should also be exacted upon Israel for influencing Trump to withdraw from the JCPOA. Just prior to the decision, Netanyahu unveiled documents at a press conference (April 30, 2018) that had been obtained via a secret Mossad operation, indicating that, contrary to its public statements, Iran had been developing nuclear weapons before it signed the nuclear deal, meaning that the deal was built on a foundation of false assumptions.

Intensification of American sanctions against Iran, including secondary sanctions (i.e., against

U.S. sanctions are severely harming Iran's economy

those who trade with Iran) is also deterring non-American businesses from interacting with Iran and is deepening the country's economic crisis. This crisis is, in turn, fomenting domestic agitation against the regime, highlighting what many regard as a promising path of action – regime

change – for thwarting Iran's nuclear aspirations and regional subversion. Many of the country's significant young adult population are less than enchanted with the official religious-revolutionary ideology, though the Iranian armed forces stand behind a resolute regime willing to shed blood in order to preserve its rule. Trump's advisers are divided on this issue: some want to make Iranian regime change an unequivocal goal, while others would rather exert pressure on Teheran to leverage an improved nuclear deal and curb Iran's regional subversion. U.S. sanctions are severely harming Iran's economy. Sanctions declared in early August

2018 are due to intensify in November. Trump added to that an explicit threat (August 7, 2018): "Anyone doing business with Iran will NOT be doing business with the United States..." Parallel to the tough steps Trump is taking toward Iran, in a surprise move, he stated his willingness (July 21, 2018) to meet Iran's Leaders (who have rejected his initiative).

Trump's pullout from the JCPOA has drawn harsh criticism from the other parties to the agreement, who have united in an effort to ensure continued trade with Iran and to save the deal. Alas, it looks that these steps taken to persuade European companies not to abandon the Iranian market, have been unsuccessful. In any case, the compensation package offered to counterbalance the economic damage caused by American sanctions has been declared insufficient by Iran.⁶ Iran's response to the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal remains an open question: Will Tehran declare itself no longer bound by the agreement, or will it prefer to remain loyal to it? One should consider that in the absence of Europe's ability to compensate for the economic damage caused by the American sanctions, Iran will decide, at some point, to deviate from the JCPOA's provisions limiting uranium enrichment. Once this threshold is crossed, the potential for escalation ripens.

Teheran's regional subversion has not been curtailed by the nuclear deal. On the contrary, the JCPOA seems to have given Iran legitimacy and encouraged its efforts to establish regional hegemony while taking advantage of the chaos sparked by the Arab Spring in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere. The unfreezing of Iranian assets in

the wake of the deal allowed Iran to increase its investment in Hezbollah and other Shi'ite militias under its control.

Although Netanyahu welcomed Trump's decision to abandon the JCPOA, contrary views were heard from within Israel's security establishment, to the effect that the move would not cause the other parties to withdraw from the deal or obligate them to renew sanctions against Iran (China, for example, is Iran's biggest trade partner). Those espousing this approach would therefore argue that, rather than isolating Iran, the decision will split the international community and make it harder to maintain a united and determined front capable of strictly supervising Iran's compliance with the agreement. In the coming months we will be seeing Iran's response to the measures taken by Trump, and the degree to which Trump himself will continue to insist on the 12 demands made by Secretary of State Pompeo as conditions for a new deal (May 21, 2018), the most notable of which are that Iran halt uranium enrichment, allow the IAEA unconditional access to the relevant sites, desist from developing missiles capable of bearing nuclear warheads, end its support of militant organizations such as Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, withdraw its forces from Syria, and cease its threats to annihilate Israel.⁷

Iran, of course, has rejected those demands. It cannot be expected to readily relinquish its achievements in the nuclear sphere or abandon its drive for regional hegemony. After long years of investment, Iran has attained substantial influence in four Arab capitals: Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, and San'a. Iran's ally Assad has remained in power.

Hezbollah's combat capabilities have improved as a result of its experience in Syria, and its political influence in Lebanon has grown stronger. ISIS, Iran's sworn enemy, has been largely defeated, having lost most of the territory it controlled. Saudi Arabia is not winning its ongoing war with the Houthis (Iranian allies), in Yemen. Although Iran does face growing pressure on both the international and the domestic levels, no time frame for a regime change can be predicted. The conflict with Iran will thus continue to pose a significant challenge to Israel.

Hezbollah

The IDF considers Hezbollah to be the entity that poses the gravest immediate threat to Israel. The organization is controlled by Iran and receives generous annual support from it (between \$700 million and a billion dollars a year). Hezbollah's involvement in Syria has not kept it from reinforcing its status in Lebanon. In the May 6, 2018 elections, Hezbollah, along with its political partners, won more than half of the seats in the Lebanese Parliament. This majority is still far from the two-thirds needed to change Lebanon's constitution, but it constitutes an incentive that may tempt the organization to shoulder governmental authority and actual executive functions. Hezbollah has been deterred for over a decade – since the Second Lebanon War – from initiating a military move against Israel and has refrained from responding to Israeli air strikes on strategic weapons convoys

**Teheran's regional
subversion
has not been
curtailed by the
nuclear deal**

dispatched to it from Iran and Syria. Although the organization has suffered heavy losses in Syria, it has also amassed combat experience in complex operations. In many respects it constitutes, for the IDF, an adversary with the capabilities and *modus operandi* of a true army. Hezbollah has more than 120,000 rockets at its disposal, some of them highly accurate and capable of striking deep into Israel, making them a military threat of the highest order. Iran is working to intensify this threat; in order to avoid dispatching weapons convoys vulnerable to Israeli air attacks, it is establishing underground facilities in Lebanon to manufacture rockets and other advanced weapons for Hezbollah. Israel is preparing for the possibility that Hezbollah will undertake an incursion into Israel during the next flare-up, try to capture territory near the northern border, and attempt to damage Israel's offshore gas facilities and other vital infrastructure.

Despite the commonly held view that Hezbollah does not currently want to risk another war with Israel, one cannot ignore the possibility of an unforeseen escalation that leads to war, even against the interests of the parties concerned. An American/Israeli confrontation with Iran over the nuclear issue could also motivate Teheran to push Hezbollah into confrontation with Israel. Escalation to a new war in the north could prove more damaging to the Israeli home front than any previous war.

Syria

The number killed in the Syrian civil war is approaching half a million. Four million people have migrated as refugees and seven million are

displaced persons in their own land. UN data (June 11, 2018) indicate that, since the start of the year, 920,000 people have been forced to leave their homes. After seven years of fighting, Assad, supported by Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, remains in power and is growing stronger. He has regained control of two-thirds of the territory he lost, while ISIS has lost nearly all the Syrian territory it once controlled. The West has essentially reconciled itself to Assad's continued rule of Syria; he is currently being touted as part of the solution – the lesser evil. The West's response to Assad's further use of chemical weapons in Duma (April 11, 2018) demonstrates accommodation to his victory: the U.S., France, and the UK chose to strike chemical-weapons infrastructure targets (April 13, 2018) without endangering Assad's continued rule.

Assad's bolstered self-confidence forms the background to his changing patterns of response to Israeli Air Force strikes; he has started operating anti-aircraft systems that led to the downing of an Israeli fighter jet (February 10, 2018). The IDF retaliated by destroying a significant portion of Syria's aerial defense systems.

Despite warnings that Putin would sink into the Syrian quagmire, the Russian president managed to achieve his main objectives – strengthening Assad, laying the groundwork for Russian influence in the resolution of the Syrian crisis, and making Russia a force to be reckoned with in the Middle East. Moscow has proven its loyalty to its allies and is not too shy to use force, in striking contrast to U.S. conduct as it is perceived in the region.

Iran's plans to fill the vacuum left by seven years of war and the collapse of ISIS, and to make Syria

an Iranian protectorate and military front with Israel, have come under increasing difficulty but have not been halted. The difficulty consists of active Israeli efforts to enforce “red lines” in Syria and, in particular, to prevent Iran and its proxies from gaining a foothold in southern Syria, to prevent the establishment of a broad-based and accurate missile system in Syrian territory, and to keep Hezbollah from acquiring strategic weapons. In addition to its preventive military efforts, Israel wants Russian assistance in keeping Hezbollah and Iranian military forces from approaching its Golan Heights border, and in ejecting them from Syria altogether. Israel has by now managed to forge an effective working relationship with Russia, even persuading Moscow to honor its red lines vis-à-vis Syria and not to interfere when it enforces them. However, Moscow is still aligned with anti-Israel forces in Syria (Assad, Iran, Hezbollah), and continues to engage in a “superpower” competition with Israel’s sole ally – the United States. The deployment of Russian-made S-300 and S-400 missiles in Syria underscores the caution required of Israel if it is to continue operating in Syria without coming into conflict with Moscow. Prime Minister Netanyahu has affirmed that Israel categorically opposes any arrangement that would allow an Iranian/Hezbollah presence in Syria. Thus, at the end of an August 23, 2017 discussion with Putin, he noted that he had given Putin an assessment, according to which Teheran wants to establish a contiguous geographic presence up to the Mediterranean Sea, and to deploy military forces – including naval vessels, fighter jets and thousands of soldiers – to permanent bases in

Syria. Netanyahu told the Russian president that Iran is trying to dominate Syria via Shi’ite militias, as it did with Hezbollah in Lebanon, and that “[w]e will act as necessary according to our red lines.”⁸ At the Munich Security Conference (February 18, 2018), Netanyahu actually threatened Assad directly, warning that if Assad invites Iran into Syria, he would thereby be changing Israel’s stance and “challenging his own position.”⁹

In reality, Israel’s ability, acting alone, to fully achieve its declared objectives in Syria – i.e., removing the military presence of Iran and its allies – is limited. This is due to the involvement in the conflict of a global power such as Russia (whose interests do not align with those of Israel). This limitation will be valid as long as the U.S., as a countervailing superpower, does not actively back Israel up. However, the U.S. shows no inclination to deepen its involvement in Syria. Accordingly, Trump has left Russia to manage the rounds of ceasefire and de-escalation zone talks, confining U.S. involvement (to Israel’s only partial satisfaction) to the strip of territory near the Jordanian border and the southern Golan Heights. At a Trump-Putin meeting (July 16, 2018), both leaders stressed their commitment to Israel’s security and announced that they had agreed to safeguard Israel’s border with Syria in accordance with the 1974 Israel-Syria Disengagement Agreement.

Israel categorically opposes any Iranian/Hezbollah presence in Syria

In response to the Putin-Trump understandings, Netanyahu affirmed that Israel was not opposed to the Assad regime: “We had no problem with the Assad regimes [...] The heart of the matter is preserving our freedom of action against anyone who acts against us. Second, the removal of the Iranians from Syrian territory.”¹⁰

At the time of this writing, Syria is entering a new phase in which the Assad regime, with Russia’s help, is gradually re-enforcing its sovereignty in southern Syria. The emerging picture is that Israel will be forced to accept this development, in exchange for Russian assurances that Iran and its proxies will be kept out of southern Syria, that the 1974 Israel-Syria Disengagement Agreement will be in force in the Golan, and that Israel will retain its freedom to act against the establishment of an Iranian military presence in the rest of Syria. In this context, Russia’s foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, and its military chief, Valery Gerasimov, made a surprise visit to Israel. In the aftermath of their meeting with Netanyahu (July 23, 2018), the media was briefed that the Russians had promised to keep Iranian forces in Syria 100 kilometers away from Israel’s border.

The coming months will show whether Russia is going to uphold its commitments, and whether Assad will allow Iran and its supporters a presence – overt or covert – near the border with Israel. Based on what Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov has had to say, no illusions should be entertained regarding the ease of meeting Israel’s demand for the complete eviction of the Iranian presence from Syria. Lavrov has asserted (July 4, 2018) that Iran is one of the key forces in the region, making it “absolutely unrealistic” to expect it to abandon its interests.¹¹

ISIS

The past year marked the nearly complete defeat of ISIS. The organization’s failures pierced its aura of invincibility and eroded its attractiveness to young Muslims across the globe. It is likely that the organization will try to intensify its terrorist activity, to compensate for its weaknesses. The terrorist entities associated with ISIS are still active in the Sinai Peninsula and are directing most of their attacks against the Egyptian army, though they have already carried out attacks against Israel and may try to do so again.

Successful efforts against ISIS do not ensure eradication of the social and religious infrastructure that gave rise to the organization. There is still substantial support for the ideas and attitudes ISIS represents – in the Middle East and outside the region. Just as ISIS flourished in the aftermath of the U.S.–Al-Qaeda war, one cannot rule out the emergence of a new jihadist entity from the ruins of ISIS. Many ISIS fighters in Syria and Iraq can be expected to return to their countries of origin, where there is large-scale interest in the organization’s message. The fall of ISIS brings urgency to the question of whether the entities filling the vacuum left in Syria and Iraq will succeed in achieving order and stability.

Saudi Arabia

Since King Salman ascended to the throne (January 23, 2015), major changes have been evident in the kingdom’s conduct. The driver of these changes is Muhammad bin Salman, the

king's 33-year-old son, accredited as first in line to the throne (June 21, 2017). Under his leadership, Saudi Arabia is becoming more assertive in its foreign policy, and more aggressive in its actions vis-à-vis- Iran and Iran's allies. The crown prince launched (April 25, 2016) a long-term plan – Saudi Vision 2030 – aimed at diversifying Saudi Arabia's income sources, alleviating its absolute dependence on oil, and setting the country on the path to development and modernization. In this spirit, the kingdom's women are being encouraged to join the labor force; freedoms previously denied them, such as attending sports events and driving automobiles, are being granted (June 24, 2018). Under the crown prince, Saudi Arabia is showing determination to halt Iran's attempts at regional hegemony. His willingness to deepen cooperation with the Trump administration and even with Israel has largely been fueled by a desire to thwart Iran.

Muhammad bin Salman is felt to be more open to Israel than his predecessors, but in the absence of any real progress in tackling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict he is avoiding public normalization measures. Nor is he hastening to comply with the requests of Trump's envoys for normalization gestures, so that the peace plan they are formulating can move forward (see below). It seems that the King is restraining his son's openness towards Israel and her positions, that were strongly articulated in an interview to *The Atlantic*: "The Iranian supreme leader [...] is the Hitler of the Middle East [...] the Palestinians and the Israelis have the right to have their own land [...] Our country doesn't have a problem with Jews. Our Prophet Muhammad married a Jewish woman [...] There are a lot of interests we share with Israel and

if there is peace, there would be a lot of interest between Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and countries like Egypt and Jordan."¹² Indeed, the global and Arab media have published many reports of senior-level Saudi-Israeli meetings and substantive cooperation on security issues. It remains to be seen whether, and to what degree, the crown prince will succeed in advancing the Saudi reforms and avoiding possible attacks by parties in the royal family he has suppressed and alienated.

Egypt

Egypt still faces formidable economic and security problems. Sisi was elected to another term in late March 2018, signaling the continued implementation of an economic reform program that has proved somewhat beneficial to the Egyptian economy, in terms of attracting investors, introducing foreign money, and improving the country's credit rating. However, the recovery plan has resulted in higher prices for basic goods, and high inflation (30.7 percent in 2017 versus 13.8 percent in 2016). The terrorist attacks that occur from time to time still make it hard to attract tourists and investors. At the current birthrate (2.6 percent), Egypt's population will grow from 99 million today to 120 million in 2030. Half of the country's residents live on incomes of less than \$2 per day. Unemployment stands at 13 percent;

Successful efforts against ISIS do not ensure eradication of the social and religious infrastructure behind its rise

for young people the rate is more than twice as high. Egypt, the world's largest importer of wheat, is forced to import over 60 percent of the food required for its inhabitants. The International Monetary Fund has made aid to Egypt (\$12 billion) conditional on significant economic reform. The Egyptian government, which agreed to float the country's currency (causing it to lose half its value in 2016) and to cut its subsidies of basic goods, faces a thorny dilemma: privatization would

At the current birthrate (2.6 percent), Egypt's population will grow from 99 million today to 120 million in 2030

hurt the army, which currently controls a large portion of the economy. The Egyptian government would thereby be undermining the entity that provides most of its support. At the same time, the cancelled subsidies

– one of the IMF's main conditions – are driving basic product prices upward. This, in turn, raises the specter of unrest within the Egyptian public, which lives under a regime whose attitude toward democracy and human rights is even harsher than that of Mubarak (a situation that is not drawing American criticism as it did in the past).

Egypt is treading a fine line. It is trying to preserve its relationships with the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, for the sake of financial and security support. However, it is also flirting with Moscow. Putin's recent visit to Cairo (December 11, 2017) yielded reports of an agreement on the construction of a Russian nuclear power plant in Egypt, at a cost

of \$30 billion, and of a potential agreement that would allow Russian fighter jets to make use of Egyptian airports.

Egypt has yet to vanquish radical Islamic terrorism, including in the Sinai Peninsula. An attack on a northern Sinai mosque took the lives of 300 people (November 24, 2017). The Egyptian defense and interior ministers narrowly escaped an ISIS missile fired on their helicopter at El Arish (December 19, 2017). The threats of terrorism and political Islam, the still-raging war on ISIS in Sinai (which to date has resulted in hundreds of deaths of Egyptian troops), and the danger posed by Iranian subversion, are laying a groundwork for closer cooperation with Israel. The international media have reported extensive intelligence assistance from Israel, and Israeli willingness to allow deviations from the peace treaty so that Egypt can deploy effective weapons systems in its struggle against Sinai-based terrorist organizations. There have even been reports of Israeli air strikes, numbering in the dozens, on Islamic terrorist entities in Sinai, intended to assist Egypt and with Egypt's approval.¹³ In addition to the security cooperation (which also includes Egyptian efforts to rein in Hamas), economic cooperation is emerging. This past February, for example, an Egyptian (non-governmental) company was allowed to purchase gas from the Tamar and Leviathan reservoirs in the amount of \$15 billion over a ten-year period.

Jordan

This year an economic crisis forced Jordan's Prime Minister Hani Mulki to tender his resignation to King Abdulla II (June 4, 2018), in order to quell

public protests against the economic reform Mulki had attempted to introduce. The reform was an International Monetary Fund condition for extending Jordan the credit it needed. At the end of Ramadan (May 31, 2018), people took to the streets throughout the kingdom and called for a general strike to protest tax hikes and higher prices for basic goods. In an unusual move, the Bedouin tribes loyal to the government took part in the protest, which was led by the trade unions (and not by members of the Islamic Brotherhood, as such protests usually are).

Over the years of war in Syria, Jordan was obliged to absorb 1.4 million refugees, who now account for 13 percent of the kingdom's population. They are a burden on Jordan's fragile economy and a source of instability. The refugees from Syria were preceded by hundreds of thousands of refugees from Iraq. Nearly 20 percent of Jordan's budget is now dedicated to hosting refugees within its territory. The Jordanian economy is also suffering due to restrictions on trade with its neighbors, countries mired in violent internal conflict (though stabilization could potentially allow trade to resume with Syria which, before the civil war, accounted for over 50 percent of Jordan's foreign trade). Tourism – a major component of the Jordanian economy – has sharply declined due to a perceived lack of security in the region. The supply of discounted gas from Egypt was interrupted by attacks on the Sinai pipeline, forcing Jordan to resort to more expensive alternatives. These issues are exacerbating more deeply-rooted problems with the Jordanian economy: a bloated public sector, the fact that only 36 percent of all working-

age Jordanian citizens are actually employed, a female employment rate of just 15 percent, and a young-adult unemployment rate of 40 percent.

Alongside the economic woes and social unrest, the Jordanian regime faces security challenges that originate outside the country's borders: terrorism, spillover of the Syrian civil war into Jordanian territory, and now – the danger that, in the wake of the arrangement coalescing in Syria, hostile Iran-backed forces will, under Syrian auspices, approach the Jordanian border. The Jordanian regime also has to contend with locally-based radical Islamic groups, as well as the fact that over half the country's population is of Palestinian origin and influenced by the vicissitudes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Erdogan has not been deterred from a rapprochement with Putin

Jordan's fragility and the threats it has to cope with are pushing it into deeper cooperation with Israel, with an emphasis on security and intelligence (Netanyahu met with King Abdullah II in Amman on June 18, 2018). The two countries' shared interest in maintaining cooperation proved helpful in settling the July 2017 incident in which an Israeli security guard shot and killed two Jordanian citizens. There is meaningful cooperation between Israel and Jordan in the energy sphere as well: an agreement signed on September 26, 2016 specifies the provision of \$10 billion dollars' worth of Israeli gas to Jordan over a 15-year period.

Jordan is concerned about the ramifications of the Israeli-Palestinian diplomatic stalemate for its own stability. Jordan is also worried that the American peace plan will undermine its special role in the East Jerusalem Islamic holy sites – a factor behind its negative reaction, alongside that of the Palestinians, to Trump’s decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem.

Turkey

The liberal-democratic character that once made Turkey a distinctive presence in the Muslim world is fading. Under President Erdoğan the country has become more and more autocratic. Recent elections (June 24, 2018) cemented Erdoğan’s status as Turkey’s sole ruler, equipped with powers that subjugate all governmental authorities to him. Erdoğan’s party, together with its allies, won 53 percent of the vote, giving him a comfortable parliamentary majority.

Although Erdoğan cancelled (July 19, 2018) the state of emergency he had declared two years earlier following an attempted coup, he is still pursuing a campaign of repression against all those whom he regards as enemies: in the media, in academia, and in the military, governmental, and judicial systems. Since the coup attempt, some 60,000 people have been arrested, and 150,000 ousted from their posts. The Turkish economy, whose performance was once a trump card for Erdoğan, is now in a state of crisis. Turkey’s currency has lost 60 percent of its value over the past five years. Inflation is rising, and the country’s external debt has reached a total of \$453 billion. Over the recent six months, Moody’s Investors Service has twice downgraded Turkey’s

credit rating, warning of the danger presented by the country’s large budgetary deficit, its high level of external debt, and its tense political situation.

The thwarted coup attempt also inaugurated a period of rising tension between Turkey and the NATO countries. Erdoğan is fanning the flames for domestic reasons and making use of anti-American rhetoric. Erdoğan’s refusal to release Andrew Brunson, an American pastor held on espionage charges in Turkey, intensified the rift with Trump who reacted by doubling tariffs on Turkish steel and aluminum. In a signed article in the New York Times Erdoğan in response warned that Turkey has alternatives to its historical relations with the U.S. and may “...start looking for new friends and allies.”¹⁴

And so, although Turkish-Russian relations are marred by a history of suspicion and conflicting interests, Erdoğan has not been deterred from a rapprochement with Putin. He has been negotiating (April 2018) the purchase of a Russian nuclear reactor, and in a move that contradicts Turkey’s membership in NATO, Erdoğan purchased advanced aerial defense systems (S-400) from Russia (December 2017). The incorporation of these systems into the Turkish military may jeopardize the secrets of the American F-35 advanced stealth fighter jets also purchased by Turkey. Disapproval of Erdoğan does not negate Turkey’s importance to the West. Turkey is situated at a strategic intersection – it is a NATO member, it is significantly involved in the Syrian crisis, and it is a key factor in blocking or allowing waves of refugees to enter Europe. (On June 29, 2018 the EU decided to allocate another 3 billion euros to Ankara in order to curb migration into Europe).¹⁵

Turkey's foreign relations are rife with difficulties and confrontations: the desire to see Assad deposed was not realized; Egypt is suspicious of Ankara due to its support for the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas; Saudi Arabia and its Sunni allies have borne a grudge since Turkey supported Qatar in the face of a Saudi-led blockade. Erdoğan's aspiration to position himself as a (Sunni) Islamic leader is ramping up tensions between Turkey and other regional actors, as manifested in his efforts to buy influence in East Jerusalem and to drive protest activity against the U.S. Embassy's move to Jerusalem. (On December 13, 2017 Erdoğan convened a summit of Muslim leaders in Istanbul in response to Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.)

Turkey suffers bloody terrorist attacks, some of which are perpetrated by ISIS and some by the Kurdish underground. It is worth noting that Israeli public statements of support for the Kurds have intensified the tension between the two countries. After Netanyahu announced that Israel supports the establishment of an independent Kurdish state,¹⁶ Erdoğan responded with a threat (September 26, 2017) to abort normalization of relations with Israel unless Jerusalem withdrew its support for Kurdish independence.¹⁷

In his effort to attain leadership stature within the Muslim world, Erdoğan is making use of the "Palestinian card" and supporting Hamas. Following an incident in which Palestinians who tried to break through the Gaza security fence were killed, Erdoğan declared that "Israel committed a massacre in Gaza" and called Netanyahu a "terrorist." Netanyahu in due course responded

that "someone who occupies Northern Cyprus, invades the Kurdish regions, and slaughters civilians in Afrin should not preach to us about values and ethics."¹⁸ On May 14, 2018, Erdoğan recalled the Turkish ambassadors from Tel Aviv (and Washington), accusing Israel of "genocide." The next day, the Turkish Foreign Ministry expelled the Israeli ambassador. Israel responded by expelling the Turkish consul general in Jerusalem. At the Islamic Summit Conference held a few days later (May 18, 2018), Erdoğan stepped up the rhetoric by announcing that the people "who were subjected to all kinds of torture in the concentration camps during World War II are attacking the Palestinians with methods similar to the Nazis."¹⁹ In the same vein, following the approval of Israel's Nation State Law, Erdoğan declared: "The spirit of Hitler, which led the world to a great catastrophe, has found its resurgence among some of Israel's leaders."²⁰

China is offering autocratic leaders a guiding model – rapid and consistent economic development without the need for democracy

Even after a reconciliation agreement was signed with Ankara in 2016, Israel harbored no illusions that there would be a return to the security and intelligence cooperation it once enjoyed with Turkey. Against this background and given the need to secure its gas fields and to prepare for bringing the gas to market, Israel has been nurturing for the last few years its relations with Greece and Cyprus in the security and

energy realms. Israel and Cyprus are interested in exporting the products of their gas reservoirs to Europe, whereby Greece could constitute a vital transit point in this ambitious plan.

The Palestinian Arena

The past year has been rife with developments attesting to the instability of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and its leadership. At the center of these developments: the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and deteriorating U.S.-PA relations that intensified due to the embassy move to Jerusalem. Internal Palestinian discord has been complicated by yet another issue: 83-year-old Abu Mazen seems to be approaching the end of his term as PA president, and internal struggles are, accordingly, intensifying. The Palestinian leader suffers from health problems that have sent him to the hospital several times this year. His language has become less diplomatic and he is openly conveying his frustration. In an address to the Palestinian leadership (March 19, 2018) he called the U.S. ambassador to Israel a “son of a dog” and opened a Palestinian National Council meeting (April 30, 2018) by stating that Jewish moneylending and interest-charging are the causes of Jew hatred. During his presidency, Abu Mazen engaged in security coordination with Israel and helped ensure relative calm in Judea and Samaria. His departure may spark a succession crisis, or even compromise security cooperation with Israel.

The West Bank Palestinian public is disappointed with the PA and dubious of the present leadership’s ability to generate substantive change and end the Israeli occupation. This atmosphere of frustration

– especially among the younger generation – formed the background for the “Intifada of the Individuals” (October 2015), which fuels occasional violent incidents, usually stabbing attacks.

Another reconciliation agreement, after a string of unfulfilled agreements between Fatah and Hamas, was signed with Egyptian mediation (October 12, 2017). The concluding announcement promised that the PA would start functioning in the Gaza Strip no later than December 1, 2017. Israel responded that it would not conduct diplomatic negotiations with a Palestinian government that included Hamas. U.S. envoy Jason Greenblatt stated (October 19, 2017) that any Palestinian government would have to comply with the Quartet terms: refraining from violence, recognizing Israel, and accepting the earlier agreements, including disarming of terrorists and commitment to peace negotiations.

However, despite the festive announcements, PA assumption of responsibility in the Gaza Strip went unrealized, as did Abu Mazen’s promise that, at the end of the reconciliation period, Hamas weapons would be subjected to PA supervision. Hamas, which wanted the PA to shoulder the burden of addressing the economic crisis in Gaza, declared that it would not disarm. Its intentions were signaled by a Hamas delegation to Teheran, two weeks after the reconciliation agreement was signed, to ensure Iran’s continued aid. Another indication of the reconciliation’s actual chance of success was an assassination attempt on PA Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and PA intelligence head Majid Faraj, during a visit to Gaza. Abu Mazen attributed the assassination attempt to Hamas.

After his decision to relocate the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem (December 2017), the Palestinians regarded President Trump as completely biased in Israel's favor. Abu Mazen announced that the United States had disqualified itself as a fair broker of negotiations with Israel. Accordingly, the Palestinians boycotted a White House-initiated international conference on the Gaza crisis (March 13, 2018). The Palestinian leadership decided to freeze official talks with Washington and has declined any discussion of a diplomatic plan. Trump warned the Palestinians, in response, that refusing to advance toward negotiations would cost them American support. He tweeted: "We pay the Palestinians hundreds of millions of dollars a year and get no appreciation or respect [...] But with the *Palestinians* no longer willing to *talk peace*, why should we make any of these *massive* future payments to them?"²¹ Cancellation or reduction of American aid would pose a major economic problem for the PA, as U.S. aid accounts for the largest share – \$350 million – of the PA's total annual foreign aid which, according to PA reports, amounts to \$775 million. Indeed, during the first half of 2018 the U.S. froze 65 million dollars of its regular contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). On March 23, 2018, the Taylor Force Act was passed, making American aid to the PA conditional on the cessation of stipends to families of terrorists sentenced to prison terms in Israel. (Similarly, the Knesset passed a law in early July of this year mandating the deduction from tax revenues transferred by Israel to the PA of the amounts paid by the PA

to convicted terrorists or to the families of those killed while carrying out attacks.²²) On August 24, 2018, The State Department announced a cut of more than \$200 million in aid for the Palestinian. The announcement sparked harsh PA reactions, claiming that the U.S. abandoned her historic commitment to pursue peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

There is a growing sense among Palestinians that the two-state solution is becoming untenable. This, in turn, strengthens those calling for abandonment of the independent-state idea in favor of equal rights within a single state. Abu Mazen mentioned this scenario in his address to the UN General Assembly (September 20, 2017): "If the two-state solution were to be destroyed due to the creation of a one-state reality [...] neither you, nor we, will have any other choice but to continue the struggle and demand full, equal rights for all inhabitants of historic Palestine."

The "Ultimate Deal"

President Trump has repeatedly noted his desire to strike the "ultimate deal" for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The continued American role in leading the peace process gives Israel the opportunity to reach an accord via a sympathetic mediator. However, depending on the nature of the still-confidential American plan, it could also put the onus on Israel to make painful concessions, and possibly cast a shadow on its relationship with the Trump administration, however sympathetic the administration might be. Trump's actions to date have reflected an intention to involve the moderate Sunni countries in a

regional arrangement that would also include the Palestinians. However, the Arab countries have not publicly signaled normalization with Israel (they have made this conditional on substantive progress with the Palestinians), or to promise public support for Trump's peace plan (they are demanding a plan that will not significantly depart from the traditional Arab consensus, as reflected in the Arab Peace Initiative). The American administration's challenge is more difficult now that the Palestinians have rejected American mediation and refused to meet with Trump's envoys. The administration

There is a growing sense among Palestinians that the two-state solution is becoming untenable

has responded by bypassing Abu Mazen and appealing directly to the Palestinian public. Thus, President Trump's son-in-law and close adviser, Jared Kushner, warned in an interview with the Palestinian newspaper *Al Quds*: "We have opted not to chase him [Abu Mazen] [...] Don't let your leadership reject a plan they haven't even seen."²³ The American effort's starting conditions are becoming harder still by the security and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. This was reflected in a joint article signed by Jared Kushner, Jason Greenblatt and Ambassador David Friedman that harshly criticized Hamas but also opened a door for change. The three called upon Hamas to acknowledge the reality of Israel's existence and set forth three U.S. conditions for the organization: "... recognizing the State of Israel, abiding by previous diplomatic agreements, and renouncing violence [...]."²⁴ In this light, the Trump administration

must decide if, despite the plan's poor chances of success, it will put it on the table (Kushner stated in the *Al Quds* interview that the administration would likely make the plan public even without Abu Mazen's cooperation). A situation in which the U.S. despairs of achieving an Israeli-Palestinian agreement and abandons its leadership role in the peace process could be dangerous for Israel, as international parties unsympathetic to Israel might try to take the place of the U.S. and promote problematic initiatives.

U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the announcement that its embassy would relocate there were perceived as signs of gross American pro-Israel bias. However, the Trump administration stated publicly that the move does not address the issues of sovereignty, the holy sites, or Jerusalem's borders, which are to be taken up during negotiations. Trump issued a statement (December 6, 2017) affirming that "we are not taking a position of any final status issues, including the specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem, or the resolution of contested borders. Those questions are up to the parties involved."²⁵ The question whether Trump's Jerusalem move entails a price for Israel was clarified by Trump himself (August 21, 2018): "Now Israel will have to pay a higher price, because it's [Jerusalem] off the table. The Palestinians will get something very good, because it's their turn next."²⁶

The United States occasionally expresses reservations about Israeli settlement activity. Trump himself said: "The settlements are something that very much complicates and always have complicated making peace, so I think Israel has to be very careful with the settlements."²⁷

Accordingly, the administration categorically denied (February 12, 2018) Netanyahu's claim – in an effort to block proposed legislation calling for the annexation of parts of Judea and Samaria – that he was talking to the United States about applying sovereignty in the settlements.

Affirmation that permanent borders will be determined in negotiations indicates that even Trump's pro-Israel administration assumes the separation of Israel and the Palestinians via permanent borders in the context of an "ultimate deal." Agreement on such borders entails addressing issues of great significance for Israel's Jewish character, including the status of Jerusalem. Drawing Jerusalem's boundaries touches on the heart of Jewish identity and sanctity. Ceding parts of Judea and Samaria to foreign sovereignty could involve leaving places where Jewish roots are most deeply entrenched (the Cave of the Patriarchs, Rachel's Tomb, Joseph's Tomb, and other important sites). When one adds to this the probable need to dispossess tens of thousands of Jewish settlers of their homes, it becomes clear that such measures could drive a rift within the Jewish people and compromise Jewish solidarity, in Israel and abroad. On the other hand, continued Israeli control of the Palestinian population in Judea and Samaria also fuels deep discord within the Jewish people.

In the debate over where Israel's permanent borders should lie, security/geopolitical considerations intermingle with considerations pertaining to Israel's Jewish identity. Two main arguments lead to conflicting conclusions:

The larger the share of non-Jews in the area under Israel's control, the more likely that Israel will lose its Jewish character. In order to preserve the country's Jewish character, Israel needs a solid Jewish majority, and therefore requires permanent borders that will shrink the territory currently under its control.

Israeli abandonment of Judea and Samaria due to demographic or other concerns would, in addition to intensifying the security risk, constitute a harsh blow to Israel's Jewish character, as it is precisely those areas most closely linked to Jewish identity that would be abandoned.

Thus, should Trump prove determined to advance his ultimate deal plan, profound controversy may be expected to surface within the Jewish people regarding the Jewish implications of any proposed settlement.

Trump: "Now Israel will have to pay a higher price, because it's [Jerusalem] off the table"

Hamas

From the time Operation Protective Edge ended (August 26, 2014), Hamas has been trying to rebuild its capabilities, with an emphasis on rockets, attack tunnels penetrating Israeli territory, the training of special forces for infiltration into Israel, and local weapons production: rockets, mortars, and UAVs. Hamas, which is under external pressure from both Israel and Egypt, is also subject to internal unrest and public criticism due to the destruction wrought by Operation Protective Edge, the

ongoing blockade, and the poverty and rampant unemployment that characterize life in Gaza (the unemployment rate in Gaza of young adults 30 and under is 60 percent). A World Bank report (March 15, 2018) disclosed a steep decline in donations to Gaza – from \$400 million in 2016 to \$55 million in 2017.²⁸ Gaza residents have electricity for only a few hours a day, the quality of their water supply is deteriorating and largely unpotable, sewage treatment facilities are nonoperational, and disease outbreaks are a real concern. In Israel there is a growing awareness of the dangers a worsening of the Gaza humanitarian crisis portends; even so, and despite international and regional awareness of the situation's gravity and volatility, outside aid remains limited. Exasperation with the PA-Hamas rivalry is growing, as is the disinclination for investing in a "war zone" or helping to strengthen Hamas.

In an emergency session of the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee (the international donors group for the Palestinians) (January 31, 2018), Israel presented a plan for internationally-funded rehabilitation of Gaza, to include desalination, electricity and gas projects, and upgrading of the Erez Industrial Zone, at a total cost of one billion dollars. However, Abu Mazen himself is exerting economic pressure on Gaza, as part of his struggle against Hamas. Among other things, he is cutting the salaries of PA staff in Gaza and slashing healthcare payments.

Under these circumstances, the region is subject to the constant danger of military escalation, including confrontation with Hamas, with outbreaks of violence occurring from time to time. Hamas is frustrated by Israel's progress in locating and destroying its attack tunnels, a strategic

asset from its perspective. On March 30, 2018 Hamas initiated a series of demonstrations and violent incidents along the Gaza border, including attempts to breach the fence and push thousands of people into Israeli territory. On May 14, the day before "Nakba Day" and the occasion of the U.S. Embassy's move to Jerusalem, 62 Palestinians were killed and 1,200 injured by Israeli sniper fire meant to keep the fence from being breached. The Palestinians did not confine themselves to firing rockets or mortars at Israel (on May 30, 2018 two hundred such firings were recorded); they successfully employed a new and effective weapon: "fire kites" and helium balloons that set fires across tens of thousands of dunams, causing major damage to Israel's Gaza Envelope localities. The IDF has responded with caution, seeking to avoid all-out war in Gaza, but the sniper killing of an IDF soldier (July 20, 2018) escalated the Israeli response: 60 Hamas targets were hit by fighter jets and tank fire.

Alongside the possibility that these violent events will force Israel into a comprehensive military operation in Gaza, there is also the possibility of consensual, bilateral de-escalation. Hamas' isolation, Gaza's desperate economic situation, Israel's determination to keep the border fence from being breached, and domestic public criticism of the heavy price in human life that has achieved nothing, are pushing the Hamas leadership toward a long-term ceasefire with Israel.

Consequently, following an ongoing escalation where in the course of one day (August 9, 2018) 180 rockets and mortar shells were fired from Gaza at southern Israel and 150 Hamas targets were

struck by Israel in response, the parties are close to achieving a cease-fire arrangement. The agreement, brokered by Egypt, Qatar, and the U.N., is opposed by the PA who view it as a violation of its authority. Criticism has also been voiced in Israel, primarily, that the agreement will strengthen Hamas and violate Israel's position of not negotiating with terrorists while under fire. The strength of the apparent fragile cease-fire will be tested in the coming days.

The Jerusalem-Washington-American Jewry Triangle

In the relationship triangle between Jerusalem, Washington, and American Jewry, a lack of balance was exposed this past year between two of the sides – with Jerusalem at their apex. The Jerusalem – American Jewry side was strained by tensions and problems. Contrasting with this, the Jerusalem – Washington intergovernmental relationship side was characterized by unprecedented support and cooperation. (However, Israel's relationship to the Democratic side of the American political map has been problematic, as will be discussed below.)

Safeguarding the strength of the “triangle,” a crucial and ongoing challenge for every Israeli government demands preserving both America's support for Israel and American Jewry's bond with, and affection for, Israel. Ignoring the changing trends taking place in American society generally, and within the Jewish community there in particular, is liable to gnaw at the strength of the “triangle” and the necessary balance between its constituent sides. The same negative effect may be the result of underestimating the risks involved in exercising

power and influence in the United States.

The special relationship between Israel and the United States is traditionally rooted in shared interests, values, and ethos: freedom, equality before the law, democracy, human rights, fair treatment for minorities, rejecting racism, pioneering spirit, entrepreneurship, and a long history of political, security, economic, and scientific cooperation. In addition to all these characteristics of the two states special relationship exist a unique factor: – the American Jewry.

The American Jewish community – nearly half of the Jewish people – has prestige, status, and influence in the United States in all walks of life: politics, governance, economics, the media, science, academia, culture, society and more. Furthermore, long-standing support for Israel that crosses party lines has always rested on the strength of the American Jewish community, whose status and achievements have also had a positive impact on the friendship and respect Americans feel for Israel. The extraordinary U.S. support Israel has received in the defense, economic, and political spheres as well, as the far-reaching network of relationships that Israel has developed in the country over the years, relies to a large extent on the strength of the Jewish community. The Jerusalem-Washington-American Jewry triangular relationship constitutes, therefore, a strategic resource and vital force multiplier of Israeli strength and that of the Jewish people.

There is a growing awareness of the dangers a worsening Gaza humanitarian crisis portends

The American Side of the Triangle

The Trump administration's friendliness toward Israel has been particularly conspicuous over the past year. Foremost was the decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital (December 6, 2017) and in the wake of this, on May 14, 2018, moving the embassy to Jerusalem (Guatemala and Paraguay have followed suit). Another meaningful highlight was Trump's decision to abandon the nuclear treaty with Iran (May 8, 2018). Thus, a strategic objective defined by Israel's prime minister as having top priority was achieved. The American decision also demonstrates the extent to which Washington has adopted Israel's standpoint on this issue. The United States did not hesitate to use its UN Security Council veto power (December 18, 2017) in defense of its decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital (14 of the 15 Council members supported the proposal submitted by Egypt). When America's UN ambassador Nikki Haley announced the decision to leave the UN Human Rights Council (June 19, 2018), she explained: "In this past decade this organization has passed more resolutions to condemn Israel specifically than to condemn Syria, Iran and North Korea combined."²⁹ The deep support of Israel is also reflected in Vice-President Mike Pence's visit to Israel, who announced before the Knesset (January 22, 2018) that "The United States will never allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon." Netanyahu repaid him by saying that "no American vice-president has had a greater commitment to the Jewish people," and that America's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital was a historic decision that would find its rightful place among the formative decisions in

the history of Zionism, decisions that include the Cyrus Declaration, the Balfour Declaration, and President Truman's recognition of Israel.

Sweeping expressions of support for Israel are heard primarily on the Republican side of the American political map, but the picture is somewhat different on the Democrat side. The relationship with Israel has in recent years become a partisan issue in America. A Pew Research Center survey conducted at the beginning of the year found a widening gap between Republicans and Democrats when asked if they support Israel or the Palestinians. Seventy-nine percent of Republicans reported favoring Israel compared with only 27 percent among Democrats. While support for Israel is on the rise among Republicans, it is seeing a downward trajectory among Democrats. This reality poses a significant challenge to realizing the traditional strategic goal of successive Israeli governments: maintaining bipartisan support and safeguarding the support of American Jewry – particularly among younger Jews – most of whom (two-thirds or more) support the Democratic Party. This challenge is further complicated as the ideological rift in the U.S. grows and attitudes in response to Israeli political measures become a bone of contention between the parties. In U.S. liberal-intellectual circles there are growing doubts with respect to Israel's loyalty to the values that have undergirded its special relationship with America. Their claims focus on Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, discrimination against Israeli Arabs, suboptimal gender equality, the lack of separation between religion and state, the preference of Jewish considerations over democratic values, and

more. On the other hand, support for Israel among Republicans is growing and claims that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict damages America's interests or has eroded the values shared by the two countries are firmly rejected (in this context, it is significant to note the tremendous support Israel receives from U.S. Evangelical Christians, who also tend to support policies that favor the settlement of Greater Israel). In a polarized American reality, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain bipartisan support for Israel; meanwhile, there is also a growing temptation in Israel to win immediate gains from the supporting (Republican) side while ignoring the price that might have to be paid in the longer term.

Concomitantly, one must be prepared for waning American willingness to continue in the role of the Middle East's strategic cop. Such a development does not correspond with Israel's interests, and obligates Israel to revise its expectations accordingly.

The Triangle's Jewish Side

Among American Jews, with an emphasis on those with a liberal perspective, an erosion of the Jewish component of identity seems to be accelerating. High intermarriage rates contribute to this trend. More than half of U.S. Jewry identifies as liberal, and just 20 percent of them self-identify as conservative. Most American Jews (70 percent) were on the losing side in the 2016 presidential elections. Israeli policy on various issues (primarily its continued control over the Palestinians) is perceived by many liberal Jews as inconsistent with the call to be a "light unto the nations" and the value of "Tikkun

Olam." (Along this line, the approval of the Nation State law on July 19, 2018 has generated harsh criticism among these groups).

Thus, there is a tension between their liberal values and their love of Israel. For these Jews, Israel is moving in a conservative direction and distancing itself from liberal and pluralistic values. A reflection of this can also be seen in the controversy over the realm of "religion and state": recognition of Judaism's different streams, conversion and, prayer at the Western Wall.

The concurrence of an internal U.S. trend rightward and the strengthening of the right in Israel makes it difficult for many liberal/progressive Jews to feel a sense of solidarity with Israel. The lack of Jewish unity with regard to Israel also impacts the community's ability to exert political influence on Israel's behalf. Additionally, one should consider the possible decline of the power of Jewish organizations at both the community and national levels, in light of the general trend of abandoning large organizations and the "post-organization" era in America generally, and among American Jews in particular.

The American Jewish leadership also faces a dilemma related to President Trump: if and how to express the discomfort most Jewish Americans feel with the president without losing the status and influence they have acquired through tremendous effort over a period of decades. Moreover, how

The relationship with Israel has become a partisan issue in America

can they do this without harming Israeli interests? Israel sees Trump as a friend who deserves a great deal of credit (the Trump administration has not hidden its frustration that his pro-Israel steps – highlighted by the embassy move – have not been met with appropriate recognition and gratitude from many American Jews).

The internal Jewish polarization points to another phenomenon: the same group of American Jews (20 to 30 percent) – mainly Orthodox – who supported Trump suggests a new strategy for

One must be prepared for waning American willingness to continue in the role of the Middle East's strategic cop

Jewish integration in American society at large. During the past century, the integration model was based on adopting liberal social values – pluralism, tolerance, and equality – while concealing external Jewish cultural and religious characteristics (identified with Orthodox Jewry).

The growing impact of the American Christian right and the relative increase in the number of Orthodox Jews, underscores a different path for integration into American society based on conservative notions of fairness (reward and punishment), loyalty, sanctity, and respect for authority, rather than the liberal values traditionally associated with American Jewry.³⁰

This phenomenon is reinforced by the reality that portions of the liberal Jewish public are assimilating into general American society while the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities, with their high

birth rates, are rapidly growing. However, those communities are traditionally less involved in the public and political discourse and therefore, it still isn't clear what impact internal-Jewish demographic trends will have on the future strength of Jewish influence in America.

The ideological polarization taking place in the United States has, to some degree, an Israeli parallel. The leadership of both countries rests with political parties that emphasize conservative notions of nationalism, religion, and tradition, and support a foreign policy based on competition and realpolitik with no illusions of worldwide brotherhood. These ideological trends in the two countries, along with the growing power of Orthodox Judaism in America, signal a development that is not yet clear will become permanent: the emergence of an alternative relationship triangle whose shared values are significantly different on certain points than those that have characterized the "old" triangle.

Against this background, some among the American Jewish leadership are warning that decision makers in Jerusalem must pay more attention to changing trends in America. They believe that the passage of time is eroding the memory of certain formative historical events – the Holocaust, the heroic establishment of the State of Israel ("the few against the many"), the victory in the Six Day War, the Entebbe Operation, and the 9/11 attacks. Therefore, Israel must make it a top priority to nurture bipartisan American empathy toward it and enhance awareness of its achievements as a valuable U.S. asset. They also emphasize that resources should be allocated to create a support base among the younger generation and among the growing

minority communities in America (Hispanics, African-Americans, Asians). At the same time, they also argue that Israeli policy must also relate to the difficulty of the large liberal Jewish population in the United States to feel an affinity with Israel, particularly among younger Jews.

The phenomena described place complex dilemmas before the Israeli government: Is Israel interested (and capable) of taking a particular approach to the Trump administration that maintain the level of closeness with it while also reflecting the fact that Israel does not agree with all of its views? Should there be additional channels for dialogue and should mechanisms for coordination be improved so that the positions of Diaspora Jewry can be weighted more effectively in the decision-making processes taking place in Israel on Jewish people issues? And, naturally, to what extent should Israel be sensitive to the views and concerns of American Jews when making decisions that have implications for them?

Summary

The light and shadows in the strategic picture indicate that Israel's growing strength cannot resolve the chronic lack of security stability in the Middle East. Calm is frequently temporary and may be upended, even when it seems that there is no interest in allowing the situation to devolve into active warfare. The risk of a rapid deterioration into serious violence obligates Israel to plan its steps very cautiously, taking care not to become trapped in a pattern of strategic paralysis and insufficient diplomatic initiative.

Israel's strategic power and the presence of a pro-Israel president in Washington opens up

opportunities for Israel to take action that can stop the danger of sliding into a reality of a bi-national state that threatens Israel's Jewish identity. The strategic window of opportunity that is presently open for Israel will not necessarily remain open forever.

Endnotes

- 1 <http://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPDPC@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD/ISR>
- 2 *The Economist*, June 14, 2018.
- 3 *Haaretz*, July 19, 2018.
- 4 Reuters, April 14, 2018.
- 5 *Haaretz*, July 6, 2018.
- 6 *Ynet*, July 6, 2018.
- 7 *Wall Street Journal*, May 21, 2018.
- 8 *Haaretz*, August 23, 2017.
- 9 *Haaretz*, February 18, 2018.
- 10 *Haaretz*, July 12, 2018.
- 11 *Haaretz*, July 4, 2018.
- 12 <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/04/mohammed-bin-salman-iran-israel/557036/>
- 13 *New York Times*, February 3, 2018.
- 14 NYT, August 10, 2018
- 15 *Hurriyet Daily News*, June 29, 2018.
- 16 *Haaretz*, September 13, 2017.
- 17 *Haaretz*, September 26, 2017.
- 18 *Haaretz*, April 1, 2018.
- 19 *Haaretz*, May 18, 2018.
- 20 *Times of Israel*, July 24, 2018
- 21 *Haaretz*, January 2, 2018.

- 22 *Ynet*, July 2, 2018.
- 23 *NYT*, June 24, 2018
- 24 *Washington Post*, July 19, 2018.
- 25 The White House, *Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem*, December 6, 2017.
- 26 *The Times of Israel*, August 22, 2018
- 27 *Israel Hayom*, February 11, 2018
- 28 *Haaretz*, March 15, 2018.
- 29 *Wall Street Journal*, June 19, 2018.
- 30 “The rise of Orthodoxy and political-cultural polarization among the Jewish community in America.” *Status of the Jewish People: Annual Assessment 2017 – 5777*. The Jewish People Policy Institute, 2017.



Anti-Semitism after 70 Years of Sovereignty

Concern in Europe, Enmity in Muslim World and Vigilance in the United States

In 1945, after the Nazi extermination camps were exposed and the severity of the carnage wrought by anti-Semitic ideology across the continent of Europe and to the Jewish people in particular, European countries adopted policies rejecting in principle any expression that could be construed as fomenting racism or bigotry. Aside from a few individuals – who dared not speak out in public – a sense of empathy for Holocaust survivors prevailed over Western Europe, accompanied by widespread sympathy for the newborn Jewish state, which lasted at least through the Six-Day War.

Despite the cracks forming in Europe's sympathy to the Jews and Israel, the grace period continued, in practice, until September 1982 (Sabra and Shatilla). Since then, criticism and condemnation of Israel have become the dominant media narrative. The consolidation of the critical discourse on Israel gave renewed legitimacy to Holocaust denial and

anti-Semitic discourse, which had been marginal. Gradually, the Palestinians replaced the Jews in the narrative of victimhood. In this binary construction of oppressor and oppressed, the variety of accusations cast against Jews for hundreds of years in Christian Europe can once again be heard. They are depicted as cruel, blood-thirsty child killers rapaciously gobbling up native lands, the ignominious heirs of the biblical conquerors. After nearly five decades of repression, outbursts of anti-Semitic and anti-Israel anger are increasingly intense and frequent. The expression “the Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz,” attributed to the Israeli psychoanalyst Zvi Rex, reflects Europe's discomfort with confronting the memory of the Holocaust. Obsessively vigilant scouting out of transgressions committed by Israelis and Jews has become a prominent strategy for assuaging Europe's collective guilt.

In the 1990s, largely as the result of the Claims Conference activity which sought to return Jewish property stolen during World War II, several Western Europe countries officially took responsibility for their role in the Holocaust; some even asked forgiveness for their actions. Nationalist elements within some of these countries were angered by what they perceived as the obsequious, preferential treatment of Europe's Jewish citizens.¹

In the 21st century and especially since the Second Intifada (2000-2004), hatred directed at Europe's Jews has become the norm among Muslim immigrant communities and among far-right populist elements in Europe. Increased anti-Semitic incident rates in Europe have resulted from a constellation of factors: widespread internet access, the new platform for the unhindered spewing of hate speech (without consequences); growing popular discontent with the dominance of the post-nationalist discourse that has characterized Europe since the end of the Second World War; economic globalization, blamed for outcomes leading to instability in the social order; and the continued influx of immigrants that heightens the sense that national identities are under threat. The continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides either an occasion or a pretext for rising violence against Jews and Jewish institutions, and the wars in Iraq and Syria have generated an element of jihadi propaganda that has translated into deadly acts of terror not only against Jewish communities but against the general European public.

Today, after 70 years of Jewish sovereignty, which began only a few years after the Holocaust, when measuring the broadest swathe across

societies anti-Semitic sentiment in Western Europe continues to decline. Still, owing to an increasingly vocal and mobilized minority, the wide publication of serious incidents amplifying the experiences of daily life, and shifting demographics, Jews are concerned about their future and many do not feel safe to express their Jewish identities in public. A third of European Jews are considering emigrating, and many more do not see their children's future on the continent (see table below). We can identify three centers of anti-Semitic hatred in Europe: radical Islamists, the far right, and the far-left (the far-left's anti-Semitism often takes the form of anti-Israel rhetoric). These three groups combined constitute between one-fifth and one-third of the total population in the various European countries, and could become a critical mass that (unofficially) blocks the comfortable participation of Jews as Jews in the local public sphere.

The immigration waves washing over Europe are arousing nationalist and conservative sentiments across the continent that could threaten the stability of European Union countries and their common political vision. The future scenarios portrayed for Europe do not bode well for its Jews. It is not implausible that a significant portion of Europe's Jews will emigrate in the coming decades, given the continent's economic concerns, demographic shifts, political swings, undermined sense of personal security, and the anti-Semitic violence that local governments, despite good intentions, will have difficulty in preventing.²

The New Polish Law and the Awakening of National Identity in East Central Europe

The history of the victimization of Jews played a significant symbolic role in the establishment of the liberal order of the European Union and its expansion in 2004 to include some former Warsaw Pact states and Soviet republics. However, the attitude toward Israel and Jews in the Eastern bloc countries is somewhat different from that in Western Europe. A new Polish law passed in January 2018, forbids accusing Poland of complicity in the Holocaust. It did not stem directly from anti-Semitic sentiment (which was rather just a contributing factor), but was the result of Poland's humiliating confrontation with the existential challenge of forging new post-Communist identities occupying much of Eastern Europe. Preventing the enactment of such laws in the future requires a deeper understanding of this and the need to cope with three existential motives for the countries of the region: (1) A need to whitewash their collective memory; (2) the need to formulate a positive national narrative; (3) the need to reclaim lost pride.

In Poland, in addition to the deeply entrenched historical revulsion toward the Jews, three factors combined to give rise to this law, which took the Western world and the State of Israel by surprise:

- 1. Most of these countries were trampled under Communist rule.** The communist narrative described the Soviet struggle as
- 2. Xenophobic Conservative Reaction:** As is the case across much of Europe, a significant segment of Poland's political spectrum is

a liberation from Nazi tyranny. Following the renewed Russian imperialist push (the annexation of the Crimea, for example), the alternative Polish narrative describes both the Nazi and Soviet regimes as forces of repression that trampled the dignity and national identity of the Polish people. Nationalist narratives tend to, by their nature, present a binary picture devoid of nuance. The new narrative seeks to describe Poland as the "victim" and erase its image as an "accomplice". Despite the Jewish and Israeli public's willingness to admit that the Germans were solely responsible for creating the death camps, Polish government spokespeople attempted to assign parity to the losses suffered by the Jewish people with those suffered by the Polish people – a distortion of the historical record. Although it is true that not only Jews were murdered in Poland during the war (in all, six million Polish citizens were killed, among them three million Jews) the percent of Polish Jews killed stands at over 90 percent of the pre-war Jewish population, while the rate of non-Jewish Poles murdered stands at 11 percent). Jewish historians have determined that while 30,000 Poles assisted Jews during the war (6,500 of them were recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad VaShem), the number who collaborated with the Nazis against the Jews is around 300,000.

formulating a conservative, authoritarian, and nationalist response to the forces of globalization and the waves of Muslim immigration. Political leaders who cast doubt over the idea of the European Union are increasingly inclined to make provocative statements that directly contradict the narrative that the Holocaust was a seminal event leading to the establishment of the European Union. The denial, revisionism, or diminution of the Holocaust provides far-right European leaders an additional tool to enhance national pride (at the expense of the Jews) and an opportunity to garner widespread popular support. It is clear that this authoritarianism, with its anti-immigrant and anti-minority positions, is also fertile ground for anti-Semitism.

- 3. Fear of Immigration:** A significant factor in Hungary, for example, (less so in Poland) is an intensifying disdain of immigrants. Throughout Europe there is mass anxiety about the demographic future and therefore widespread support of conservative forces.

The Israeli Response

In reaction to far-right factions joining governments across Europe (Hungary, Austria, Holland, Italy and Germany), the State of Israel issues unequivocal principled declarations but does not back those declarations with concrete diplomatic steps. Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban, who has used anti-Semitic language more than once, was even invited to Israel, much to

the dismay of the Hungarian Jewish community. For local Jewish communities, the absence of a harsh Israeli condemnation sends a message that the State of Israel cares more about its political interests than the legacy of the Holocaust or the distress of local communities.

It should be noted that ultimately, the controversial article in the legislative language of the Polish law was repealed in July 2018 under pressure from the international community. Its cancellation involved a joint declaration by the governments of Israel and Poland and a partial acceptance of the Polish narrative by Israel. As the deeper factors leading to this legislation, as described above, have yet to be resolved, it is entirely likely that similar laws will be proposed in neighboring countries. (Hungary has already witnessed major controversy over prominent Holocaust memorials, such as the moving *Rakpart* depiction of abandoned shoes along the Pest side of the Danube, that attributes to the Nazi atrocities committed by Hungarian fascists.)

A possible direction to formulate an alternative national narrative that could unite the citizens of the post-Communist countries without the negation of Jewish suffering would be to abandon the competition over victimhood status by declaring that both nations – the Jewish and Polish – suffered at the hands of the Nazi past. Eight decades later, it is desirable that both nations open a new chapter in their relations, one of mutual respect and cultural and economic cooperation.

Anti-Semitism in the United States

The rate of anti-Semitic incidents in North America is significantly lower than in Europe or the Arab world. However, recently U.S. Jews have voiced concern about rising anti-Semitism, based on radical groups that find common purpose with the Trump administration. For the Israeli or European observer, it is difficult to understand the cause for these concerns: the acceptance and presence of the Jewish people in the American political and cultural elites, even if they maintain clear outward symbols of Jewish identity, has no parallel in modern Jewish history.³ Despite this, there is concern over a “slippery slope” and a reversion to previous eras (prior to the 1950s and 1960s), in which Jews were discriminated against in the social, academic and economic spheres.

The successful integration of Jews in North America was possible due to the separation of church and state, and therefore the notion of a religiously neutral public sphere. It ultimately facilitated the concept of multi-culturalism and reinforced the ideal of meritocracy. The sense of empowerment felt by Evangelical Christian groups following the election of Donald Trump to president, as well as the efforts of Orthodox Jewish groups along with conservative Christian groups to challenge the existing separation of church and state (mainly by seeking government funding for religious schools), could upset the prior, delicate order that had, to a

large extent, removed Christian elements from the public sphere.

It is no coincidence that leading the efforts against public funding for religious education is a Jewish organization, the ADL (Anti-Defamation League), which champions individual rights and seeks to maintain American government neutrality on matters pertaining to the funding of religious institutions. In practice, this argument is more of an internal Jewish debate than it is between the Jewish community and non-Jewish community. The ADL and others working to prevent public funding for private schools (mostly religious) identify in this effort a weakening of the separation of church and state, and view those elements who support such funding as pouring gasoline on the fire, lacking responsibility or long-term perspective. They believe that the result of their actions could contribute to the reversion of the U.S. back to an era when Jews were excluded from key positions of influence in politics or the economy.

Comprehensive Three-Dimensional Anti-Semitism Index The Need for an Integrated Index

In light of the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe, and efforts by EU member states to eradicate the phenomenon, we identify a need for an integrative anti-Semitism Index that can provide Israeli policy-makers and world Jewry leaders with a policy tool to monitor developments, facilitate decision-making, and assess the efficacy of implemented interventions.

Existing measurement tools only provide partial perspectives, single pieces of the anti-Semitism puzzle. Some only examine public opinion while others only check the number of incidents of violence or harassment against Jews. Occasionally, field studies examine how Jews themselves perceive anti-Semitism.

JPPI's European Anti-Semitism Index is presented here for the fourth year. The index aims to measure the discomfort of European Jewry and the threat levels against it. This integrated index, meant as a tool for policy-makers, relates to three complementary dimensions of anti-Semitism affecting individual Jews and communal Jewish life. Our integrative index utilizes the existing ADL Global 100: Attitudes Towards Jews Index compiled from data collected by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in cooperation with various research institutes, anti-Semitic harassment figures collected by local Jewish organizations entrusted with security (such as CST in UK, and SPCJ in France), and findings regarding perceptions of anti-Semitism among Jews.

An analysis of the data and main developments, as arises from the index:

Attitudes among the general public toward European Jews have been improving over the past few years. It is possible that these sentiments are linked to the rise in negative attitudes toward Middle Eastern and African immigrants, seen as "others," and who are perceived as threats to the main national identity of various European

countries.

Despite this overall positive trend, the number of violent anti-Semitic incidents in Europe rose dramatically in the past year. This discrepancy stems from the presence of fringe groups (radical right and radical left activists and radical Muslims) who do not influence the overall statistics and whose anti-Semitic attitudes have increased.

The number of violent anti-Semitic attacks against Jews rose in the three main countries examined. In France, despite the fact that the total number of anti-Semitic incidents decreased, violent radicalism increased and included the brutal murders of two elderly Jewish women at the hands of their radical Muslim neighbors.

If the anti-Semitic violence in France is associated with radical Islam, in England, the anti-Semitic violence is associated more with criminal elements with a radical-right orientation. In Germany, the government identifies most of the anti-Semitic violence with the radical right (although to be fair, this is the default when the identity of the attackers is unknown). However, in the three main countries examined, the Jewish communities themselves fear violence from radical Muslims more than from any other group.

Members of Britain's Jewish community, long an integral part of the cultural, social, economic and political fabric of the nation, are now considering emigrating in record numbers. The percentage of British Jews contemplating leaving has jumped from 19 percent in 2014 to 31 percent in 2018. This

corresponds to Jeremy Corbyn's tenure as leader of the Labour Party and head of the opposition in the British Parliament, which began in 2015. The former Chief Rabbi of Britain, Lord Jonathan Sacks, has publically rebuked Corbyn as "anti-Semitic, unfair and dangerous." For the first time since World War II, a Western democratic-liberal party, which under Corbyn is in serious contention to become Britain's governing power, has adopted a platform with anti-Israel elements and which expresses attitudes that smack of anti-Semitism.

If Corbyn were to achieve ruling power, it would undermine the continuity of the Jewish community in Britain, harm Israel's economic and political standing in Europe, and legitimize manifestations of anti-Semitism held as illegitimate in the post-World War Two liberal West. If the struggle championed by the British Jewish community to bring down Corbyn fails, other leftist parties in Western countries -- especially those proclaiming themselves as the voice of masses of Muslim voters - will in all likelihood adopt similar positions.

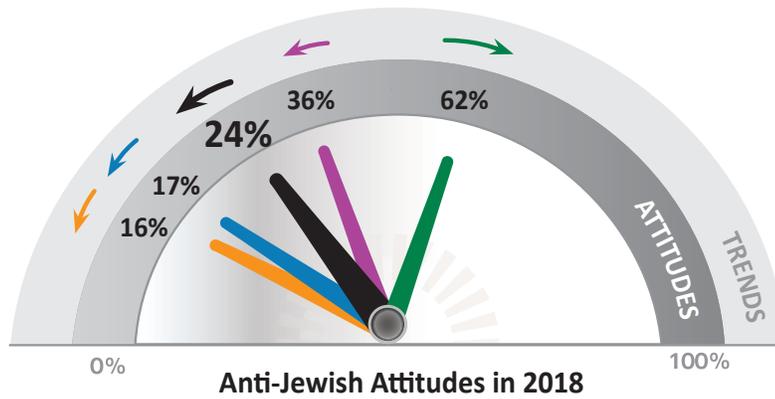
Table 1

Anti-Semitism in Western Europe 2017 [2016]	Trend	Europe average	France	UK	Germany
PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS JEWS					
Harbor anti-Semitic attitudes (%) ⁴	▼	24 [26]	17 [37]	36 [39] ⁵	16 [27]
as above, among Muslims (%) ⁶	▼	62 [55]	49 [83]	58 [54]	70 [62]
ANTI-SEMITIC BEHAVIOR (number of incidents; as reported to official agencies)					
Increase/Decrease in violent assaults (%)	▲		+26	+34	+60
Violent assaults	▲		97 [77]	145 [108]	24 [15]
Total incidents (extreme violence, assaults, damages, desecrations and threats)	▲		311 [335] ⁷	1,382 [1346] ⁸	707 [644] ⁹
Number of physical attacks per 1,000 Jews	▲	5	1.8 [2]	8 [6]	6.7 [6]
Per cent of attacks that are not reported ¹⁰		77	72	73	72
ANTI-SEMITISM AS PERCEIVED BY JEWS¹¹					
Anti-Semitism is a very or fairly big problem (%)		67	86	48	40
Have considered emigration because they do not feel safe in their country (%)		32	49	31 [28] ⁵	26
Avoid places in their neighborhood because they would not feel safe there as a Jew (%)		27	20	37 [35] ⁵	28

* Most recent data. The data in the parentheses is for the previous year

Attitudes towards Jews

- Europe's Muslims
- Average Europe
- France
- Germany
- UK



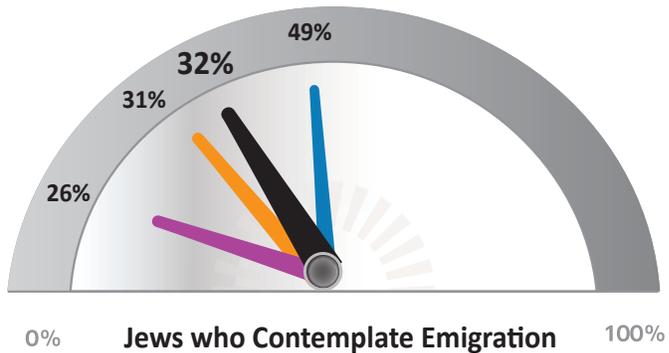
Physical Incidents

- Average Europe
- France
- Germany
- UK



Perceptions among Jews

- Average Europe
- France
- Germany
- UK



Recommendations to the Government of Israel Regarding Future Attempts in Eastern Europe to Pass Legislation that Disavows Complicity with Nazi Germany During the Holocaust

To prevent future attempts to pass legislation similar to the Polish law discussed above, the Government of Israel should define guiding principles and act according to them. Short-term considerations that might ignore anti-Semitic statements or Holocaust denial stemming from countries friendly to Israel should be avoided, as they could lead to a vague indeterminacy that in itself could add momentum to such efforts.

We recommend acting according to three principles:

1. Take a firm stance on all matters of denial or distortion of historical fact, the diminution of the Holocaust, or trampling the memory of the victims. It is incumbent to recall that Holocaust denial is not a casual, isolated act but can lead to the fomenting of anti-Semitic sentiment toward local Jewish communities and the de-legitimization of Israel. Therefore, it is imperative to maintain a firm stance against Holocaust denial in general and historical revisionism particularly.
2. Israeli government leaders should maintain cognizance of the publicly stated positions of Jewish community leaders in the countries where governments grant legitimacy to anti-Semitic former leaders from the Holocaust era,

or express problematic comments regarding the Holocaust or the Jewish people.

3. Any country friendly to Israel is important and Israel should seek to maintain excellent relations with it. Since the fall of Communism, the countries of Eastern Europe have generally voted in the EU and UN in a manner sympathetic with Israel, and these relationships should be appreciated and nurtured.

The Government of Israel, through careful consideration and based on a set of guiding principles, must navigate the thin line that divides political pragmatism, which calls for maintaining friendly relations with friendly countries, from remaining steadfast to the principles that sustain Israel's national and social vision.

Endnotes

- 1 Sharansky, N., "Post-Liberal Europe and its Jewish Problem", *Mosaic Magazine*, September 2014. <https://mosaicmagazine.com/observation/2014/09/post-liberal-europe-and-its-jewish-problem/>
- 2 Maimon D., "Re-Emergence of the Jewish Diasporistic Identity in Europe", *JPPi 2017 Annual Assessment*, pp. 147-155. http://jppi.org.il/new/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Re-Emergence_of_a_Diasporistic_Jewish_Identity_in_Europe-JPPI_AA_2017.pdf
- 3 Fischer S., The Rise of Orthodoxy and Cultural-Political Polarization within the Jewish Community in the US, *JPPi 2017 Annual Assessment*, pp. 131-142. <http://jppi.org.il/new/en/article/aa2017/part-2-dimensions-of-jewish-well-being/identity/the-rise-of-orthodoxy/#.W0PYgtLXI2w>

- 4 ADL Global 100 (2015), Anti-Defamation League, *An Index of Anti-Semitism, Executive Summary*. <http://global100.adl.org/>
- 5 Staetsky, L. D., Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain. A study of attitudes towards Jews and Israel, JPR, September 2017.
- 6 Reynié. *L'antisémitisme dans l'opinion publique française. Nouveaux éclairages*, Fondapol, November 2014. <http://www.fondapol.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CONF2press-Antisemitisme-DOC-6-web11h51.pdf>, Koopmans, Ruud. "Fundamentalism and out-group hostility Muslim immigrants and Christian natives in Western Europe." WZB Berlin Social Science Center, *WZB Mitteilungen*, December 2013. http://www.wzb.eu/sites/default/files/u6/koopmans_englisch_ed.pdf. See also "Türkische Migranten hoffen auf muslimische Mehrheit," *Die Welt*, August 2012, <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article108659406/Tuerkische-Migranten-hoffen-auf-muslimische-Mehrheit.html>
- 7 French Ministry of Interior, January 2018.
- 8 Community Security Trust (UK), *2018 Annual Review*, p. 9.
- 9 Source: Kantor Center - European Jewry and Antisemitism Database. See also Yogev Karsenti, *Report on Antisemitism in 2018*, Israeli Ministry of Diaspora, January 2018, p. 25-26.
- 10 FRA: "*Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism*", Fundamental Rights Agency, November 2013, European Union. |<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-discrimination-and-hate-crime-against>
- 11 FRA and others.

Israel's Long Road to Asia

Zionism's and Israel's long efforts of seeking contact and friendship with China and India are a major chapter in Jewish diplomatic history. These efforts started in 1918 and were patiently continued by a few committed Zionist Jews, pushed by a visionary David Ben-Gurion in the 1930s and driven since 1948 by a small number of dedicated Israeli diplomats and businessmen. The Jewish and Israeli public were indifferent. They had more urgent priorities, and Asia was far from their sight.

These efforts coincided in 1990 with the emergence of the United States as the sole super-power. Together this turned the erstwhile hostility of the two giants into normal diplomatic relations (1992), and finally into cooperation, respect and friendship. Israel's influence in the U.S. has been perceived by Asian governments as very significant and many believed that the road to Washington passes through Jerusalem. This influence was based mainly on the strong Jewish

community which became a strategic asset for Israel and for the Jewish People.

The global balance of power, however, is changing. In 2011, the Paris-based OECD predicted that in 2060 China and India together will produce 46 percent of the global GDP, as against 16 percent for the USA and 9 percent for the Euro-Zone. Implausible? By 2018, the growth rates of both countries have already borne out the OECD forecast for the first seven years of the reference period. Reaching out to Asia is a necessity for every trading nation, and particularly for Israel which has to strengthen its links with all accessible non-Western countries. Even more compelling is that the footprints of China and India in the Middle East are spreading fast. Their energy, trade, investment and personal links with the Muslim Middle East are growing exponentially, accompanied by political and military links. Today, the Arab countries and Iran listen to Xi Jinping's China and Modi's India and seek their support. The two giants are

their nearest great powers and do not carry the West's colonial baggage or the anti-Semitic and biblical traditions. China's "One-Belt-One-Road" initiative plans to spend billions in infrastructure investments throughout the entire Muslim world. India has eight million of its nationals working in the Middle East and has recently shown its political clout when it persuaded Saudi Arabia to open its airspace for direct Air India flights to Israel. In 2009, U.S. President Obama asked for the same concession, but the Saudis rejected his request.

Engaging with Asia while holding its special relationship with America, Israel could be increasingly forced to cope with conflicting objectives. Israel got a foretaste of things to come in 2000 when strong American pressure forced it to break a contract to supply reconnaissance planes to China. This put Sino-Israeli relations back by many years. In 2004, a smaller repeat episode of this clash, then about Israeli drones sold to China, did not help. The United States is not the only source of problems in this regard. In summer 2017 China and India disagreed about their common border in the Himalayas, which triggered military tensions between the two. A wave of anti-Israeli comments appeared on China's social media, including television because the Chinese public suddenly discovered Israel's strong defense relations with India.

The tensions between the United States and a rising China will continue for a long time, fueled by broader issues than defense. So will tensions involving other major Asian powers, including Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Israel will need a better

understanding of Asia at government, academic and think-tank levels, in order to formulate a vision of its future place in Asia and better coordinate its policies.

Like all Western countries, Israel has spent years developing its economic and technological relations with Asia, particularly China and India. In four more decades Asia is expected to represent more than half of the world economy. By then, Israel will likely have at least half of its trade and economic relations with Asia. A shift of global economic power of such magnitude will have geopolitical, military and cultural consequences. Israel would be well advised to prepare for these by forging deeper, civilizational links to Asia, as David Ben-Gurion demanded decades ago. Today Israel is increasingly assertive about its specific historic, religious and cultural identity. It demands to be recognized as a "Jewish State" and shuns European notions of multiculturalism. Asserting their identity is also a distinguishing feature of China, India and other Asian countries. China's President Xi Jinping called the "defense and assertion of Chinese values" a key national goal. Could this help Israel find common ground with Asian countries? The national languages of Asia (except in Muslim countries) had until recently not even a word for "Jew", but these countries are now discovering Israel, Jews and Judaism. Most Asian reactions to Israel and Jews are very welcoming, free of historic and religious baggage and not affected by negative voting records in the United Nations. But the Bible and Judaism are foundations of Western civilization. Israel will not abandon its links with the West and its cultural and democratic values, certainly not with the

United States and American Judaism. Could Israel then become a bridge between East and West? Being a part of two worlds means that Israel's political dilemmas might grow. As indicated, it will have to cope increasingly with competing objectives. It will have to convince the United States and its Jews that it would serve neither long-term American nor Jewish objectives if Israel is seen only as the West's permanent outpost in the Middle East. However, a bridge has to stand on two pillars, and Israel's Asia pillar is still weak.

Israel needs coordinated, long-term Asia, China and India policies with a clear view of Israel's long-term interests. It should greatly strengthen defense links with all Asian countries that do not have adversarial relations with the United States with a careful eye towards Israel's relations with China. It must also greatly increase its cultural, artistic, and intellectual outreach to Asia in order to accumulate "soft power" in this rising continent.



Israel at Seventy: Demography

The thoughts and writings of the founding Zionists on one hand, and the history of Israel on the other, are interwoven in three central demographic goals: Aliyah – the mass immigration of Jews to Israel; shifting the demographic center of gravity of world Jewry from the Diaspora to Israel; and ensuring a Jewish majority in the State of Israel. Reviewing the trends within each of these components over the course of the last 70 years points to considerable achievements. At the same time, it raises challenges and decisions policy makers in Israel and the Jewish world will have to face.

Aliyah

Since Israel's establishment until today, more than three million Jews have made Aliyah. Throughout this period, Israel has become the central

destination for international Jewish migration. Out of a total Diaspora population that numbered 10.5 million Jews in 1948 and today stands at about 8 million,¹ roughly a third chose to leave their places of birth and settle in Israel.

Most of this Aliyah was comprised of Jews from areas in distress, including the remnants of European Jewry, and Jews from Islamic countries and the former Soviet Union, who together make up about 85 percent of all immigrants to Israel. These Jews were mostly pushed out of their home countries by harsh political, economic, or social conditions. The remainder, a relatively small 15 percent, arrived in Israel from Western Europe, North America and Oceania, and were motivated primarily by Zionist and religious considerations.

These trends greatly diminished, and in some cases emptied out the Jewish communities in countries

hostile to Israel and to Jews, and in countries with un-democratic regimes and unstable political climates. Thus, the majority of Diaspora Jews today live in developed and advanced countries, where they enjoy full equality and belong to the highest socio-economic strata.

Noted that part of the addition to Israel's population from Aliyah is offset by out-migration of Jews from Israel (including immigrants who return to their countries of origin or move to a third country, and native-born Israelis). Since the establishment of the country, some 700,000 Israeli Jews have left Israel. Despite that some of them have since passed away, there are still over half a million Israelis living abroad. The challenge from Israel's perspective is not only associated with the size of this group but also that many of those who leave Israel possess high levels of educational achievement and professional skills.

Table 1. Migration to and from Israel, 1948-2018

Immigration to Israel	3 million
From distressed countries	85%
From advanced countries	15%
Emigration from Israel	685,000

Source: CBS, Statistical Abstracts; Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (numbers rounded)

Israel - Diaspora

In 1948, three years after the Holocaust, there were 11 million Jews in the world. By early 2018, that number had risen to 14.6 million.² This increase was not divided evenly between the two parts of world Jewry – Israel and the Diaspora. One explanation for this non-uniform growth is Aliyah to Israel, which was considerably higher than the level of emigration from Israel. Fertility is another factor; today, on average, Jewish women in Israel produce three children whereas Jewish women in the Diaspora produce an average of 1.5 children. Another factor that helps explain the decrease in size of Diaspora Jewry is assimilation, whether by official conversion or simply identifying with another religion.

At Israel's founding, its Jewish population accounted for 6 percent of world Jewry. Israel's share rose to 20 percent by 1970, 37 percent by 2000, and today comprises 45 percent of the world's Jews. In other words, the majority of the world's Jews still live outside of Israel. However, if current demographic trends of Israeli and diaspora Jews continue, we project that Israel will be home to over half of world Jewry by 2030 (Table 2).

It is notable that until around 1995, the American Jewish community was the largest single community in the world. Since then, five decades after its founding, Israel holds this title. Israel is not yet home to most of the world's Jews but, as noted above, it is expected to be so by its 80th anniversary celebration.

Table 2. World Jewish Population by Geographic Area – 1948-2030

	1948	1970	2000	2018	2030
Total	100%	100.0	100.0	100%	100%
(N, in Million)	(11.2)	(12.5)	(13.2)	(14.6)	(15.5)
Israel	6%	19.9	37.0	45%	50%
Diaspora	94%	80.1	63.0	55%	50%

DellaPergola, S., Rebhun, U., Tolts, M. "Prospecting the Jewish Future: Population Projections, 2000-2080". American Jewish Year Book, 2000, pp. 103-146; DellaPergola, S. "World Jewish Population, 2018". American Jewish Year Book 2018. A Dashefsk and I. Sheskin (eds.). Dordrecht: Springer (forthcoming).

Jews and Non-Jews in Israel

Since its founding, Israel's total population has grown from 806,000 to 8.84 million. The growth rate of the Jewish and non-Jewish populations differed, but not to a degree that significantly affected the ratio between the two populations. Thus, Israel's Jewish majority stood at 82 percent in 1948 and today stands at 79 percent.³ The Jewish population includes non-Jewish immigrants eligible under the Law of Return (classified as "with no religion"), who even if not halachically Jewish, have undergone a "sociological conversion,"⁴ as well as residents of Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

The components of change in the Jewish population (including for "those with no religion") include the international migration balance and natural growth. Conversely, the non-Jewish population of Israel is affected only through natural growth. According to projections conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics

("a medium scenario"), in the foreseeable future, by 2030, the ratio of Jews to non-Jews within the "Green Line" will remain fairly stable (77 percent Jews, and 23 percent non-Jews).⁵ In other words, the demographic patterns of the two populations ensure a solid Jewish majority.

However, when taking into account the Palestinian population of the West Bank, the ratio of Jews to non-Jews changes significantly. According to a 2017 census conducted by the Palestinian Authority, the territory it defined as the "West Bank" was home to 2.9 million individuals. After removing East Jerusalem residents from these statistics, as they were already counted in Israel's population statistics, we reach a number of 2.5 million Palestinians residing in the West Bank. Taken together with the non-Jewish (Arab) residents within Israel (1.8 million), the number of non-Jews in the territory of Israel and the West Bank combined reaches 4.3 million, or 38.5 percent of the total population of this area.⁶

Table 3. Jews and Non-Jews in Israel and the West Bank

	State of Israel	Israel + West Bank
Total	100%	100%
(numbers)	(8.6 million)	(11.1 million)
Jews	79.2%	61.4%
Non-Jews	20.8%	38.6%

Source: Sergio DellaPergola. 2017. "World Jewish Population, 2017". American Jewish Year Book, 2017, pp. 297-377

Policy Implications

Israel's thinking and planning on demographic policy requires a new approach in order to attract a large number of Diaspora Jews from developed and advanced countries. At the same time, in order to reduce emigration from Israel and its influence, Israel must make special efforts to ensure the successful absorption of immigrants, which will reduce the rate of those returning to their countries of origin. It must further increase economic opportunities and improve the quality of life in Israel for those at risk of leaving the country and find appropriate incentives for Israelis living abroad to encourage them to return. Successfully coping with these challenges, in any case, will accelerate Israel's becoming the largest Jewish community in the world. However, Israel will still face the challenge of ensuring it remains Jewish and democratic under conditions of controlling over the areas within its sovereign borders together with the West Bank.

Endnotes

- 1 Sergio DellaPergola. 2018. World Jewish Population "2018". American Jewish Year Book 2018. A. Dashefsky and I. Shaeskin (eds.). Dordrecht: Springer (forthcoming).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 CBS, Statistical Abstracts, various years.
- 4 For the term "sociological conversion", see (in Hebrew): Cohen, Asher, Non-Jewish Jews in Israel: Jewish Israeli Identity and the Challenge of Jewish National Expansion. Jerusalem and Ramat-Gan: Shalom Hartman Institute, Bar-Ilan University, Keter Publishing, 2006. "Those without religion" make up 4.5% of Israel's total population.
- 5 CBS, Statistical Abstract, 2016.
- 6 Occasionally, we hear criticism whereby the statistics of Palestinians residing in the West Bank are purposefully inflated. These critics claim that these statistics include Palestinians residing abroad, as well as deceased individuals who have not yet been removed from the population registry. We have no reason to support this claim; especially given the fact that the Palestinian Authority itself slightly corrected (reduced) the original census results. We further note that if someone chooses to reduce the number of Palestinians in the West Bank by half a million, the ratio of Jews to non-Jews in the area of Israel and the West Bank together will be 64% to 36%, respectively.

The State of Israel: The View from the U.S.

The American Jewish community is developing in two distinct directions. One direction is the demographic growth of the Orthodox and especially the Ultra-Orthodox community, which gives them increasing weight and presence. The second direction is that the liberal non-Orthodox community is becoming increasingly enmeshed in a welcoming American society and is developing a new model of Jewish identity based upon personal choice. The challenge facing the liberal American Jewish religious and communal leadership is to craft forms of Jewishness and Jewish belonging that are attractive to Jewish individuals.

The policy challenge facing the Government of Israel is that the liberal American Jewish community and their leadership believes that the Government of Israel has written off their support and their attachment to Israel. They attribute this in part to their view that Israeli decision-makers have erroneously come to believe that the liberal camp is in a state of inevitable terminal decline.

We recommend that the organized Jewish community, the major Jewish organizations and the Government of Israel facilitate and encourage the increased entrance of Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews into the American public sphere and politics on the national (and not only the state) level. Such entrance will enable their influence on issues that are of concern to the entire Jewish People and not only to the Ultra-Orthodox community.

At the same time, we recommend that the Israeli government continue to view the liberal American Jewish community as an important source of support for Israel and as a strategic asset. While we recognize that the liberal non-Orthodox Jewish community is becoming more deeply enmeshed in American life, we do not believe that this necessarily makes for indifference to, and distancing from, both Jewish life and Israel. Evidence from the past shows that educational interventions (post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Jewish

Learning and projects like Taglit and Masa) can keep liberal and even assimilated Jews connected to Jewish life and supportive of Israel. We recommend that such programs be not just maintained but expanded. (A detailed set of recommendations will come at the end of the chapter.)

The effects of these programs can be seen in that Seven in ten Jewish Americans say they feel either very attached (30 percent) or somewhat attached (39 percent) to Israel, according to the 2013 Pew study. Recent studies of Birthright participants show their “connection to Israel persists and is significant.”¹ The number of American Jews visiting Israel has increased in recent years, both in absolute numbers,² and as a percent of American Jews who have been to Israel.³ And the internet and social media enable Jews wherever they live to communicate both easily and constantly. Furthermore, other studies have shown that the children of intermarriage and other “borderland” Jews are responsive to educational programming and in their wake form genuine attachment to the Jewish community and Israel.⁴

However, there are also troubling signs: The multi decade bi-partisan support that framed decades of U.S.-Israel relations is beginning to fray. As noted in a recent Gallup poll, there is now a historically unprecedented 38-point gap between Republican and Democrat sympathy for Israel versus the Palestinians. This has implications for the relationship of American Jews to Israel. 70 percent of American Jews continue to vote for Democratic candidates and have strong antipathy for the values and policies advanced by President Trump. Furthermore, multiple studies have documented

that identified American Jewry can be demographically described as a 90/10 percent split -- 10 percent comprised by Orthodox communities (from Modern Orthodox to Haredi) and 90 percent reflecting those who identify as Reform, Conservative, or Just Jewish. While both groups or camps identify and embrace Zionism have strong positive views about Israel and ties to Israel, most in the “Orthodox camp” – with some exceptions-- tends to vote Republican in substantially greater numbers and to be more supportive of policies being advanced by the present Israeli government; and most in the “Liberal Camp,”—with some exceptions—tend to vote Democratic in substantially greater numbers and have far greater differences with policies being pursued by the present Israeli government.⁵

During Israel’s first decades, broad segments of American Jewry were united in their commitment to mobilize to support for the young state. The widely cited slogan “We Are One” obscured the reality that American and Israeli Jewry lived in two substantially different contexts: in Israel, in a sovereign state with a government elected by its citizens providing one center of integrated authority; and in America where Jews lived in diffuse voluntary communities. These structural differences were less visible as Israel in its first decades relied heavily on both World Jewry and global governments for vital support and legitimacy.

The overall picture of relations between the two largest Jewish communities is one of strong and solid relations. And yet such a picture has an increasing backdrop of concern as changes take

place. Israel today is no longer a weak country in urgent need of American Jewish philanthropic largess. The strength and size of Israel's economy has re-contextualized global Jewish philanthropy which continues to support important work in Israel but is no longer indispensable for Israel's survival. Larger and larger segments of Diaspora Jews no longer live under the emotional power of 20th century Jewish history—the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel, and the Six-Day War. Moreover, whereas Jewish identity in Israel is ascriptive and national, large segments of American Jews are increasingly described by observers as “Jews by choice.”

Said differently, the largest segments of identified American Jews view the religious diversity of the Jewish People as an asset for strengthening the Jewish Future and are deeply troubled by what they perceive as the Israeli Orthodox rabbinate monopoly over religious issues including issues related to conversion. They were deeply troubled by the present government's abrogation of the Kotel agreement in June 2017 and their leaders and those most involved advocate for the Israeli government to recognize the major religious streams and provide equitable funding to them. Large numbers of those in the “Liberal Camp” are also troubled by what they observe to be challenges to Israel's democracy: threats to an independent judiciary and efforts perceived as seeking to stifle dissent. Finally, large numbers in the liberal camp are troubled by the 50-year occupation of the West Bank and would like to see the Israeli Government be more supportive of credible efforts to break the Palestinian-Israeli impasse, although most

recognize that a range of issues in the Palestinian camp are equally if not more responsible for the stalemate.⁶

From “we are one,” two “camps” are emerging. And this is further compounded by the conflation of Israeli advocacy and Israeli education. This has resulted in the perception, particularly among large numbers of the young in the Liberal camp, that there is little support or context within American Jewish institutions—for significant opportunities to learn about the range of Zionist views and visions past and present, to debate difficult policy issues or to deal with the challenging “grey” issues. And beyond this, some individuals or groups which raise difficult issues have been branded anti-Israel, anti-Semitic or both.

The Liberal Camp is stunned by emerging trends in Israel and many of the recent policies being pursued by the GOI. Yet their “representatives,” the leadership of the Reform, Conservative movements and Federations – arguably 70 percent of American Jewry – believe they have less access and less impact on decision makers in Israel. They attribute this in part to their view that Israeli decision-makers erroneously come to believe that the Liberal Camp is in a state of inevitable terminal decline hence Israeli decision makers need not be concerned with the Liberal Camp's grievances even if presently is broadly reflective of American Jewry. Conversely, the Orthodoxy Camp is more supportive of emerging trends in Israel and most policies being pursued by the GOI and is seen as becoming more dominant in American Jewry as the decades unfold.⁷

Despite the liberal/Orthodox divide, deep concerns are increasingly shared throughout the community. In a widely noted op-ed in the NY Times (March 18, 2018), Ronald Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress, a conservative, Republican, Likud supporter for decades, shared his deep concerns about the future of Israel. They included what he described as “Israel’s capitulation to religious extremists and the growing disaffection of the Jewish Diaspora.” He continued “By submitting to the pressures exerted by a minority in Israel, the Jewish state is alienating a large segment of the Jewish People.”

The relationship of American and Israeli Jewry is multifaceted: both strong and challenged by trends in both societies and policies being pursued by the present Government of Israel on the cultural level, the differences between living in a Jewish community increasingly “of choice” as distinct from a national sovereign state are becoming more manifest. As Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove of the Park Avenue Synagogue said “Israeli Jewry and American Jewry are on two very different trajectories. Israel is headed toward centralization, exclusion and insularity. American Jewry toward decentralization, inclusion and pluralism.” (Park Avenue Synagogue, Dvar Torah “The Two Worlds of Judaism,”; May 9, 2015)

To conclude, the State of Israel and the organized Jewish community should continue to invest in both major segments of the American Jewish community: the liberal majority and the Orthodox minority.

One major segment is the Orthodox and especially the Ultra-Orthodox. This community is growing

owing largely to much higher birthrates than among non-Orthodox liberal Jews. (Currently, 30 percent of Jewish children nationally, are being raised in Orthodox households.) Because of this demographic growth, it is important that Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews enter the public sphere and politics and achieve positions of influence. In the second half of the Twentieth century, liberal Jews achieved great professional and public prominence and hence positions of public influence. With their growing demographic rise, it is important that Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews do the same. The Ultra-Orthodox do have considerable political representation on the State level. This representation is mainly concerned with attaining benefits for the Ultra-Orthodox community. We are recommending that the Ultra-Orthodox community expand its representation to the national level and deal with Jewish People concerns and not only with issues that only affect the Ultra-Orthodox community. Placing Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox members in national public service and public life will continue Jewish People influence under changing demographic circumstances. **The organized Jewish community and the major Jewish organizations should encourage this trend, by offering training especially adapted to the Haredi community, to public service and communal professionals. The Government of Israel should encourage and support these initiatives.**

The other segment is the liberal non-Orthodox community. **JJPI recommends that a worthy policy for the Government of Israel is not to disregard segments of the Jewish People but on**

the contrary to maintain a broad, pluralistic Jewish People with many segments and points of view. This is for two reasons: It is the very *raison d'être* of the Jewish state to preserve and maintain the Jewish People in all of its variety. Secondly, the support of the broad Jewish community is a strategic asset to the State of Israel.

In order to maintain and expand the connection with the liberal Jewish community JPPI makes the following recommendations:

- Programs such as Birthright and Masa have had considerable efficacy in strengthening the bonds between the broad, liberal segments of American Jews and Israel. Such programs, with the significant support of the Israeli government, should be continued and expanded into new areas.
- The government of Israel should make an effort to understand and appreciate the new model of being Jewish by choice. It should enter into dialogue with Diaspora communities so to better understand the model's advantages and disadvantages.
- The Government of Israel should explain its security and political needs to the liberal Diaspora community. It should discuss its constraints and its opportunities so as to give the Diaspora communities a more empathetic understanding of its policies.
- The Government of Israel should expand its cultural ties with the liberal Diaspora communities, including the showcasing of art, literature, music, and thought.

Endnotes

- 1 "Beyond 10 Days: Parents, Gender, Marriage, and the Long-term Impact of Birthright Israel", Leonard Saxe, Michelle Shain, Graham Wright, Shahar Hecht, and Theodore Sasson, December 2017 - <https://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/noteworthy/jewishfutures2015.html>
- 2 "סקר תיירות נכנסת" שנת 2015-1998, משרד התיירות"
- 3 The 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey found that 35% of American Jews had visited Israel, while the 2013 Pew Study "A Portrait of Jewish Americans" found that 43% of American Jews had visited Israel.
- 4 Theodore Sasson, Janet Krasnic Aronson, Fern Chertok, Charles Kadushin, Leonard Saxe, "Millennial Children of Inter-marriage: Religious Upbringing, Identification and Behavior Among Children of Jewish and Non-Jewish Parents, *Contemporary Jewry*, April 2017, 37:1, 99-123.
- 5 עליית האורתודוקסיה וקיטוב פוליטי-תרבותי בקהילה היהודית האמריקאית, ד"ר שלמה פישר, המכון למדיניות העם היהודי - <http://jppi.org.il/new/he/article/aa2017/part-2-dimensions-of-jewish-well-being/identity/the-rise-of-orthodoxy>
- 6 For example, "Why Many American Jews Are Becoming Indifferent or Even Hostile to Israel", Daniel Gordis, *Mosaic Magazine*, May 2017 - <https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2017/05/why-many-american-jews-are-becoming-indifferent-or-even-hostile-to-israel/>
- 7 See עליית האורתודוקסיה וקיטוב פוליטי-תרבותי mentioned above and 2013 Pew study "A Portrait of Jewish Americans", pages 81 to 95. This study shows that American Orthodox Jews' opinions are more congruent with those held by the current Government of Israel, compared to those of non-Orthodox Jewish Americans.



Beyond the Distancing Discourse: Israel in American Jewish Culture

Introduction

American culture has engaged with the Jewish state in all its different aspects since Israel's founding. For the past 70 years, up to and including the present day, the American Jewish community's interest in Israel has been translated into a diverse array of compelling cultural artifacts.

American Jewish creative engagement with Israel focuses mainly on the story of the American Jewish community, its identity and culture, and is concerned only to a lesser degree with Zionist history. Scholars of Jewish identity have noted the important role that Israel plays in American-Jewish identity discourse. However, their use of Israel as a prime indicator of the caliber of Jewish identity occurs mainly through surveys, discussions, and in-depth interviews, with very little reliance on cultural analysis.

This chapter of the Annual Assessment looks at the Israel story through the American-Jewish lens, with particular attention to cultural manifestations in the fields of cinema, television, and literature. Literary engagement with the Jewish state is especially striking among an important group of contemporary American-Jewish authors, most

notably Nicole Krauss, Nathan Englander, Jonathan Safran Foer, and Michael Chabon, who in addition to writing about Israel are actually involved in Israeli life and the Israeli experience.

Israel from its Founding to the 1970s

Two momentous historical events helped shape Jewish identity in the modern age: the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. After the Holocaust, Jews' attitudes toward themselves and their relations with the non-Jewish world changed. Jewish sensitivity to anti-Semitism intensified, and an unquestionable linkage emerged between the Holocaust/Holocaust remembrance, a strengthened national Jewish identity, and a belief in Israel's legitimacy as the Jewish people's nation-state. [1.]

In the film *Sword in the Desert* (1949), Hollywood's first cinematic treatment of Israel, a fictional present is set between those two seminal events. The Holocaust hovers in the background, as it were, while Israel's founding is imagined as a longed-for future objective. Despite the film's weighty historical subject matter and attendant emotional

intensity, it is primarily a Hollywood action movie reminiscent of the Westerns for which its director, George Sherman, was best known. Nevertheless, the film's dichotomous good guy-bad guy structure (Jews versus British, presaging future Jewish-Arab bifurcations), its depicted moral justification for the Israeli Jewish struggle, and its pervading sense of American identification with that struggle, are central motifs that would reappear and be further developed in later films, such as *The Juggler* (1953), *Exodus* (1960), *Cast a Giant Shadow* (1966), and

Not only did American Zionism believe in Jewish integration into America, but Zionism itself was an instrument for such integration

Judith (1966). All of these films are notable for their American point of view and main-role casting of such Hollywood icons as Paul Newman (*Exodus*), Sophia Lauren (*Judith*), and Kirk Douglas (*Cast a Giant Shadow*, *The Juggler*), with Frank Sinatra, Dana Andrews, John Wayne and other luminaries in supporting roles.

Without a doubt, the most important and famous of these movies is *Exodus* (1960). Based on Leon Uris' best-selling novel and directed by Otto Preminger, *Exodus* was a global "blockbuster" that did much to solidify the fledgling Israel's status and to shape its (legitimate and positive) image – not only in the eyes of American Jewry or the general U.S. public, but in world opinion as well.¹

The movie, which was filmed in Israel and Cyprus, is historical fiction, but its plot dovetails with actual

historical events. The main conflict is the tension between the Zionist dream and its realization through violent means. The moral quandary of violence is resolved by emphasizing the historical transition from exilic oppression to freedom and national rebirth in the homeland. Viewers veer between sympathy and solidarity. They feel for the Holocaust survivors inspired to seek redemption for themselves and their people, and they identify with the rugged sabras, the pioneer fighters who conquer the land in order to build it.

The similarity between the film's characters and the American audience, is strikingly embodied in the casting of the protagonist – Paul Newman as Ari Ben-Canaan. The half-Jewish Newman (son of a Jewish father and a Catholic mother), blessed with alwl-American good looks, is a hero American viewers found easy to love. In fact, as with the other films of this period, most of Israeli roles were played by American actors. Ari and his fellow sabras have much in common with the iconic American pioneer. The Israeli landscape and the fictional Kibbutz Gan Dafna remind Kitty, Ari's American love interest, of the Indiana vistas of her childhood. The pioneer enterprise naturally accords with the American frontier narrative. Like the American pioneering ethos, Jewish nationalism is also anchored in local landscapes, in this case ancient Biblical ones. Ari quotes the Book of Joshua on the Jezreel Valley's capture from the Canaanites. [2.]

Moreover, the emphasis placed on the morality of the protagonists, especially Ari and his father, is aligned with prevailing assumptions of correspondence between Zionism and

Americanism. The movie thus reflects the common view articulated by the American Zionist-Jewish leader, Justice Louis Brandeis (1856-1941).² Brandeis strove to forge a deep connection between Zionism and the central American values. Zionist realization constitutes the fulfilment of the American vision of democracy, social justice and freedom. It is a salient feature of American Zionism that it not only believed in Jewish integration in American society, but also regarded Zionism as a means of achieving that end. Zionism and Israel constituted a positive basis for Jewish existence in the U.S.

The film's effectiveness in disseminating the message articulated by Brandeis cannot be overstated. U.S. Jewry was quick to embrace this message, which gave them the best of both worlds: it reinforced their separate Jewish identity while also allowing them to be patriotic Americans, loyal to their home country and its basic values. The imagined utopian and Americanized Israel thus became an object of identification and admiration. The cultural channels of film, other artistic media, and explicit pro-Israel campaigns disseminated and reinforced the similarity, intensifying both U.S. Jewry's attachment to Israel and the young Israeli state's positive (essentially American) image.

It is important to understand that the early years of Israeli statehood were also formative years in the history of American Jewry. American Jewish culture was itself reconstituted during the post-World War II period. A diverse group of key Jewish players – journalists, cultural figures, educators, members of Hadassah, community leaders and the like – mobilized individually and, in turn, enlisted

the cultural arena on Israel's behalf. Their primary aim was to "introduce" Israel into the American cultural world. For this purpose they "imported" the hora and other folk dances from Israel, making them a part of the Jewish cultural scene; they commissioned Israeli art exhibitions, disseminated Israeli photo collections, and exposed audiences on a large scale, mainly Jewish ones, to Israeli art and, thereby, to Israel itself. In this sense, *Exodus* should be regarded as an (unwitting) product of this engaged pro-Israel activity, a product that itself became an unprecedentedly effective mobilization and publicity tool on Israel's behalf. [4.]

Additionally, in contrast to the view of Israel as a strategic burden that prevailed among senior U.S. officials during the early years of Israeli statehood, prominent Jewish figures working to promote Israel in American-Jewish and general-American culture posited an alternative narrative, one in which ties to Israel served American interests during the Cold War. Here as well, emphasis was placed on the normative similarity, and the joint ideology a shared by the two nations as well as other points of resemblance. [5.]

Overall, the factors that led to the "special relationship" between the U.S. and Israel were, ultimately, a combination of political/strategic interests and shared values/ideology, the former (the strategic interests) being the deciding factor.

Prominent Jewish figures posited a narrative in which ties to Israel served American interests during the Cold War

[6.] Joseph Nye coined the term “soft power”. [7.] to denote the ability to attract potential allies in a positive manner, rather than through the use or threat of force. Disseminating a positive image and the idea of shared values with Israel through cultural channels is, of course, a manifestation of soft power. The cultural images had less of an impact on U.S. diplomats and policymakers, but they found resonance within the American public, which abounded in pro-Israel feeling during that time period and rejected the unfavorable diplomatic narrative.

The 1970s: Israeli Machismo

In the 1970s the United States underwent a multiculturalism revolution that underscored the country’s ethnic and cultural diversity. Figures from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, Jews among them, began to appear on both the big and small screens.³ This trend peaked in the 1990s, when Jews “ruled” prime time television.⁴ [8.]

Israel was at the center of two American television dramas based on the July 4, 1976 Entebbe hostage rescue operation: *Victory at Entebbe* (1976) starring Anthony Hopkins, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Dreyfus, and *Raid on Entebbe* (1977), starring Charles Bronson. A direct line can be traced between *Exodus* (1960) and these two made-for-TV movies. In both cases the Israeli combat soldier, fighting for his country and his compatriots, is showcased. In *Exodus*, against the background of illegal pre-state Jewish immigration and the War of Independence, Ari Ben Canaan, the Israeli freedom fighter created in the image of the American pioneer, is played by a suntanned, blue-

eyed Paul Newman. The 1976 offering, inspired by Yoni Netanyahu, further elaborates the image of the Israeli fighter, this time as the elite, fearless commander that Yoni indeed embodied for many Israelis, who were taught to view him as a symbol of heroism and moral valor. Both the real Yoni Netanyahu and his fictionalized representation in the TV dramas personify the Israeli values of heroism and courage and illustrate how the initial pioneer image embodied in Ari Ben Canaan-Paul Newman developed over time. In contrast to the earlier pioneer, toiling for the establishment of the state, the new pioneer is already embedded in a reality of national independence, and represents the existing State of Israel. The pioneer fights the British and the Arabs, but is portrayed mainly as a frontiersman seeking to make the desert bloom and to live in peace in Eretz Israel, the land of his forefathers to which he holds a Biblical claim. The new pioneer now conceived as one who strives on behalf of his young country, defending it and its citizens with unapologetic determination and heroism.

The image of Yoni paved the way for other heroic representations, most notably the Mossad agent with his aura of mystery. For Americans, the new image perpetuates the sense of identification with the brave Israelis who, in a manner consistent with American values, work to advance their people and their country while also fighting the forces of evil that threaten the entire world. Thus, Israeli soldiers were juxtaposed with Palestinian and German terrorists, both in the Menachem Golan’s Israeli feature film (*Operation Thunderbolt*, 1977) and in the two aforementioned American TV movies.

On the other hand, the overlap or symmetry between the Israeli hero and his American counterpart eroded somewhat during the 1970s; the Israeli commander or Mossad agent now also represents Israeli difference, especially in terms of how political sovereignty is depicted. Israel is still a “sister” of the United States and the two countries’ shared values are underscored, but Israel is also a strong and independent state determinedly engaged in its own self-defense.

Other differences highlighted in recent American television shows have been conveyed by the distinctive Middle Eastern signifiers that characterize male and female Israeli Mossad agents, such as former intelligence operatives Ziva Ben David in the *NCIS* series and Samar Navabi in *The Blacklist*. Both women are of Levantine appearance and are tough and professional fighters, but their Middle Eastern sex appeal is inextricably bound up with the toughness and foreignness they project.

As an interesting but relevant aside, it is worth considering the Gal Gadot phenomenon. The successful Israeli actress became an American audience favorite this past year; it goes without saying that she personifies Israel for many Americans. News items and interviews with the actress mention Gadot’s military service, calling attention to her country of origin; Israeliness is also conveyed by Gadot’s physical appearance, her sassy and mischievous manner and, perhaps, the warrior-woman role she plays in *Wonder Woman*. In Gadot’s case as well, Israeliness comes with a positive and attractive message, but also with a foreign-Mediterranean exoticness.

Interestingly, the Israeli macho image is also present in serious literature. The major American author Phillip Roth, who passed away in May at the age of 85, wrote several novels that relate to Israel in some way: *Portnoy’s Complaint* (1967); *The Counterlife* (1986); and *Operation Shylock: a Confession* (1993). Roth’s writings give expression to the rough-and-ready Israeli image. The Israeli is the “New Jew,” capable of handling a weapon and fighting his enemies. The Israeli Jew is contrasted in Roth’s novels with the American Jew who still carries the exile within him and who is repelled by Israeli pugnacity and harshness. This is carried to comedic-parodic extremes in *Portnoy’s Complaint* (1967). Israel is a major presence in the sexual exploits of Alexander Portnoy, the neurotic and tormented New York Jew. When faced with a native-born Israeli female soldier on a visit to Israel, Portnoy is unable to perform sexually. His impotence symbolizes the rift between the two communities and the sense of confusion experienced by the American Jew, who is simultaneously attracted to Israel and repulsed by it. In the aforementioned works Roth forecasts the tension destined to erupt in subsequent decades between the American Jewish and Israeli communities. This tension has indeed surfaced in recent literature, but it should not be

Portnoy's impotence in Israel represents to confusion of the American who is both drawn and repelled by Israel

viewed solely as a divisive force, but also as a basis for dialogue about the boundaries of the shared Jewish identity.

Another significant emerging trend with regard to Israel and its place in American-Jewish identity is that of bi-directional movement, to and from Israel. Israel is a compelling arena in which to explore one's identity, both Jewish and American; but it is a temporary space, a way-station, not a final destination. This, again, perpetuates the paradoxical state of affairs in

The choice of Israel by young American Jewish writers as story setting emphasizes their interest in Israeli political affairs

which, as we saw earlier with American Jewish Zionism, both Israel and Zionism simultaneously reinforce Jewishness and Americanness, providing a vehicle for Jewish acclimatization and integration in American society.

In 1976, Saul Bellow published *To Jerusalem and Back* (author's emphasis). This back-and-forth movement recurs in other works of literature, such as Nessa Rapoport's *Preparing for Sabbath* (1981), Anna Roiphe's *Lovingkindness* (1987), and Allegra Goodman's *Paradise Park* (2001). In all these books, Israel is more an element of Jewish identity, a stop on the protagonists' search for self as Americans and as American Jews, than an independent political space.

Israel as idea rather than concrete reality. Recent literary works still reflect this attitude, though with an important difference: Israel is becoming more and more meaningful and real for both the writers themselves and many of their readers.

This double movement, and especially the return to the United States, also express an internal conflict in the American Jewish psyche. Thus, on the one hand the American Jew is drawn to support Zionism and recognizes the importance of renewed Jewish sovereignty and its meaningful place in Jewish history. On the other hand, it is very difficult to leave the United States and relinquish the secure, convenient and tangible American life and identity.

Israel as a kind of transit point reappears in the successful TV series *Transparent*, which debuted in early 2014 and was created by the American-Jewish producer/writer Jill Soloway. The series centers around the Pfefferman family, whose father has come out as a trans woman. The pilot was written after Soloway's biological father came out as transgender. Although the decision to set much of the show's action in Israel and to make Israel part of the protagonists' identity journey underscores the continuing perception that Israel is an important, or at least a natural, stop in the American-Jewish quest for meaning and self-discovery. Naturally, the inclusion of Israel calls attention to current political discourse, highlighting young American Jews' interest in Israeli political affairs and the points of contention that mark them. *Transparent* is drawn to the issue of the Territories and the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict simply by virtue of addressing the question of boundaries in a meaningful way. **Israel is a meaningful place, but it is also a locus of moral controversy. In any case, Israel, as place that marks and establishes boundaries, stands in contrast to the overall spirit of the series (and of young American Jewish life in general), in which boundaries – perceived as an outdated and conservative force whose value has eroded – are blurred.**

1990-2005: Stirrings of Criticism

The first glimmerings of misgiving in the American-Jewish connection to Israel, appeared in the 1980s. By the 2000s, these gradually crystallized into actual criticism. While the 1967 Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 bolstered American-Jewish support for Israel and were perceived as justifying strengthening of the Jewish national home,⁴ the 1982 Lebanon War was not perceived as a war of existential necessity. This war, and the bloodshed of Sabra and Shatila in particular, generated public criticism of, and reservations about, Israel. The 1986 Pollard affair and the Intifada that erupted a year later were also milestones in a nascent distancing process between the two communities. Religious tensions can also be traced to the 1980s, in particular the relations between Israel and the non-Orthodox streams of Judaism prevalent in the United States. These new tensions seeped into American-Jewish cultural production and gave rise to new narratives and images of Israel and Israelis.

The 2005 film *Munich* (2005) is emblematic of this

new critical trend. Two prominent American Jews were behind this production: screenwriter Tony Kushner and director Steven Spielberg. *Munich*, which returns to the scene of the 1972 Olympics massacre three decades later, reexamines the image of the Mossad agent and reevaluates the moral justification for Israeli security operations against the country's enemies. The film tells the story of how a special Mossad unit assassinated the terrorists who took hostage and murdered 11 Israeli Olympic team members at the 1972 Munich Olympics. The movie's reception in Israel was mixed; some decried the equivalence it seemed to draw between Palestinian terrorism and Israeli reprisals. The ineptitude the film ascribed to the Mossad was also criticized; this portrayal was also thought to further erode the prevailing American image of the Mossad as professionally and morally infallible. At the heart of the film lies a moral assessment of the decisions with which Israel, and the American Jewish community, are faced. *Munich* reflects deep divergence and alienation between the two communities with regard to morals and the meaning of Jewish identity. According to the new narrative, U.S. Jewry is not reconciled with Israeliness, which has abandoned the Jewish ethos and chosen in its stead survival at all costs.

This critical perspective, also stands opposed Spielberg's earlier (Jewish) work, *Schindler's List* (1993). This movie ends with a frame of Zionist Jewish unity: The survivors gather on Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem, where they appear unified and protected. This symbolic picture expresses the essence of the State of Israel as a secure homeland – an answer to two thousand years of Exile,

persecution and constant threats to survival. In *Munich*, however, it seems that Spielberg is not satisfied with justifying Israel as a secure refuge for Jews, and wishes to interrogate the legitimacy and limits of the use of force by the state of Israel, even if it was founded as a refuge. According to *Munich*, the American Jew prefers what he recognizes as “Jewish ethics,” even if that means living in exile rather than in Israel. Accordingly, the film highlights (and condemns) the vengeful and violent impulses that lay behind the Mossad operation, while

Spielberg's *Munich* stands in stark contrast to his earlier film, *Schindler's List*, in regard to Israel and Zionism

altogether disregarding the security and deterrence considerations that informed it. For this reason, the film ends with a parting of ways between the American protagonist and the Israeli Mossad agent. [9.]

The question of alienation and separation between the communities, as raised in *Munich*, is being addressed by

other American Jews in the arts, as well as by public figures, scholars, and leaders. In an article in the prestigious *New York Review of Books*, Peter Beinart argued that the reasons behind the currently deteriorating relations between young American Jews and Israel have to do with politics and norms. Beinart also attacked the leaders of American Jewish organizations such as AIPAC and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) for choosing to defend Israel at all costs, even

when it merits opprobrium. He pointed to a conflict between the strong liberal tendencies shared by young American Jews and Israel's political behavior, especially its treatment of the Palestinians, which young American Jews perceive as ongoing oppression. [10.] In his 2012 book *The Crisis of Zionism* Beinart makes a case similar to the one made in *Munich*: that U.S. Jews are, by virtue of their Jewishness, committed to Jewish imperatives of compassion and justice. When Israel violates these rules of conduct, it distances itself not only from American Jewry, but also, and most importantly, from the essence of Judaism and from authentic Zionism. Accordingly, Beinart predicts a parting of ways between the two communities, similar to that presaged by the final scene of *Munich*.

It is particularly interesting to see how the aforementioned critical narrative is embodied in literary form. The year 2007 saw the publication of *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, by American-Jewish author Michael Chabon; the novel is a variation on Beinart's alienation thesis. A piece in *Commentary* called the novel an anti-Zionist work, ascribing to it the view that Jewish nationalism, realized in Eretz Israel, necessarily translates into bloodshed and fanaticism. [11.] Other reviewers also saw *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* as anti-Zionist or antagonistic to Jewish nationalism; some even accused Chabon of being a self-hating Jew. [12.]

However, a close reading of the book reveals a much more nuanced view of Zionism. Chabon wrote a counterfactual novel that is concerned

with Jewish history and, in particular, with the questions of what Jewish nationalism should look like and what role Zionism should play in this regard. One needs to recognize that the novel does not reject or deny Zionism's main principle – Jewish ties to the Land of Israel, i.e., the historical existence of an ancient Jewish people with roots in the historical homeland, Eretz Israel. The main criticism leveled at Israel in Chabon's work refers to **certain religious-messianic elements within Zionism**. The novel cautions against a convergence of factors and circumstances that could, potentially, generate dangerous religious-political fanaticism, some degree of which has indeed surfaced on the margins of in recent Israeli history. This is a specific criticism of messianic-religious Zionism, not an anti-Zionist stand as such. Nevertheless, the novel clearly gives expression to doubts, misgivings, and rising tension between the American-Jewish community (or at least large swathes of it) and Israel, with regard to the character of the state and the practical realization of Zionism.

2005 and Beyond: An Israeli Renaissance in American-Jewish Literature

Another recent novel that takes on questions pertaining to Israel's existence and character and to the distance between Jerusalem and Washington is *Here I Am* (2016) by Jonathan Safran Foer. Here, as well, Israel is depicted in a multidimensional and complex manner. On the one hand, the

novel describes the distancing process underway between U.S. Jewry and Israel; on the other hand, it emphasizes the strength of the connections and affinities between the two communities. Interestingly, *Here I Am* makes half-parodic, half-critical use of the image of the Israeli Mossad agent, and of the Israeli macho ideal. The novel is about a single Jewish family scattered around the globe in the wake of the Holocaust. One brother immigrated to the U.S. while another went to Israel. The narrative, set in the present day, is concerned with the differences between two cousins, one American (Jacob, the main protagonist) and one Israeli (Tamir). The former is the stereotypical progressive-liberal American Jew; the latter is the quintessentially macho Israeli. Some critics complained that writing was shallow and the characters clichéd, but these features might also be attributed to the book's humoristic tone and to the author's desire to push existing stereotypes to their extremes. Also, the reliance on stereotypes presupposes expertise with respect to the characters' physical and emotional worlds, particularly those of the American protagonist, though the Israeli context is also drawn with considerable skill. Moreover, the writing about Israel reflects an interesting, almost paradoxical mix of criticism and intimacy, distance and direct

contemporary writing about Israel reflects a paradoxical mix of criticism, affinity and affection

familiarity with the landscapes, the culture, and the people. The knowledge displayed is concrete and authentic, not abstract knowledge obtained via background research.

It is important to note that the novel takes a critical view of both sides of the Jewish equation, not just of Israel and Israelis. For example, Jacob, the protagonist, accuses his Israeli cousin of crudeness, but ultimately it is his own sexual crudeness that leads to his divorce and to the dissolution of his family. Beyond that, it is the younger generation, the children of Jacob and Tamir, who find a common language through virtual correspondence; the novel ends with a heartwarming gesture on the part of the Israeli cousin, Noam, toward the American cousin, Sam. All of these features testify to shrinking distances and to an ability to overcome culture gaps and apparent alienation.

Foer is not alone. A wave of literary writing centered on Israel reveals a similar picture in works such as *Forest Dark* by Nicole Krauss (2017) and *Dinner at the Center of the Earth* by Nathan Englander (2017). Both of these novels exhibit the mix of intimate familiarity, criticism, and ambivalence noted above. Krauss, Englander, and Foer are engaged with Israeliness; they have lived for periods of time in Israel and they have Israeli friends. These real-life connections also attest to the limited but significant change that has taken place in attitudes toward Israel.

A number of scholars have pointed to a decline in the intensity of American Jews' attachment to Israel and, in particular, to a distancing on the part of the younger generation. However, in

The New American Zionism, Theodore Sasson argues that the connection has not waned, but rather evolved. Some interpret the change as a weakening of emotional ties, but it actually represents a more activist stance, not indifference or a lack of connection to Israel. Ultimately, an "engagement" approach is now replacing the former "mobilization" approach. This current form of engagement is more critical, but it also constitutes a "normal" evolution within the relationship, superseding the former absolute/automatic mobilization on Israel's behalf and the carefully-maintained community consensus on Israel. In many respects, this new approach is really a result of closeness to Israel. Earlier mobilization for Israel characterized Americans for whom Israel was a historical miracle, a small and distant country perceived as more mythical than real. Today, Israel is, as it were, closer than ever. Israeliness is present in American Jewish consciousness and American Jews are visiting the country more often, thanks to such projects as Taglit-Birthright Israel and MASA. In a "flat" world, Sasson argues, American Jews can, with relative ease, stay apprised of what is happening in Israel – politically, socially, and culturally.

Conclusion: Complexity, not Disconnection

New trends in the representation of Israel aside, the Jewish state occupies a central and important place in American culture, and especially in contemporary American literature. Novels by major American Jewish authors such as Nicole Krauss, Nathan Englander, Michael Chabon, and

Jonathan Safran Foer offer a new and paradoxical mix, one in which criticism alternates with affinity and affection. These authors not only illustrate Theodore Sasson's "new engagement," but add depth and complexity to it. All of these novels evince a belief in Israel's legitimacy and in the need for its existence – a recognition that, consciously or unconsciously, characterizes the younger generation's American Jewish identity. Thus, even today, Israel is an integral part of the American Jewish identity. This insight transcends the disagreements and controversies that exist between the Israeli and American Jewish communities. Understanding and embracing this insight contradicts the dichotomous, primarily negative, discourse that currently prevails, replacing its one-dimensional picture of alienation and disconnection with a more complex stance.

Setting discursive boundaries is important, as cultural discourse does not merely describe reality but also structures it. A discourse that critically addresses problematic issues while also emphasizing connection on the levels of emotion and identity, will ultimately perpetuate the existing affinity and relationship, while supporting the quest for a more timely and suitable relationship framework. To ensure the establishment of such a discourse, encounters should be organized between American Jewish and Israeli writers, artists, and cultural researchers. The encounters should aim to cultivate a non-antagonistic, non-extremist discourse, one that addresses the complexity of artistic creation and that encompasses the differences, difficulties, and contradictions that

characterize current American Jewish discourse on Israel. To be clear: what is being called for here is by no means a "mobilized" literature or art, which would be inappropriate on more than one level. Ethically, it would likely be viewed as undermining democratic and enlightened values. Perhaps more importantly, it is inappropriate because of the inherent contradiction between art, which is fundamentally free and resistant to systemized messages and the pursuit of narrow political goals. In contrast, "using" literature's essential diversity to spotlight complex positions, in place of a narrow, one-dimensional and dichotomous political discourse, would be an appropriate – indeed, a necessary – way to proceed.

Bibliography

1. Gabison, R. (2002). "The State of Israel: Theoretical Justification and Desired Image," *Tkhelet*, 13, Fall 2002, pp., 51-88; Gans, C., **A Political Theory for the Jewish People**. Haifa: University of Haifa. [Hebrew]
2. Whitfield, S. J. (1999). "Israel as Reel: the Depiction of Israel in Mainstream American Films," in: Gal, A.: **Envisioning Israel: the Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews**, Jerusalem: the Zionist Library, pp. 247-269. [Hebrew]
3. Sarna, J. D., "A Projection of America as it Ought to Be: Zion in the Mind's Eye of American Jews," in: **Envisioning Israel: the Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews**, Jerusalem: the Zionist Library, pp. 31-48. [Hebrew]
4. Katz, E.A. (2015). *Bringing Zion Home: Israel in American Jewish Culture, 1948- 1967*. Albany: STATE University of New York Press.
5. Ibid.

6. Bar-Siman-Tov, Y. (1999). "The United States and Israel: a Special Relationship (1948-1998)." In: **50 Years of Israeli Foreign Relations**, Jerusalem, Hebrew University, pp. 49-59. [Hebrew]
7. Nye, J. "The Decline of America's Soft Power", **Foreign Affairs**, 83, 3, 2004: 16-20
8. Joyce Antler, "Since the Goldbergs", In: Neal Gabler, Frank Rich & Joyce Antler (Eds.), **Television's Changing Image of American Jews**, (The American Jewish Committee and The Norman Lear Center, 2000), pp. 31-38
9. Rivlin, Y. (2009). **The Mouse that Roared: Jewish Identity in American and Israeli Cinema**. Jerusalem: Toby Press. [Hebrew]
10. Beinart, P. (7.10. 2010). "The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment", *The New York Review of Books*, pp. 16-20.
11. Wisse, R. (2007). "The Yiddish Policeman's Union by Michael Chabon" (07.01.2007). Available at: www.commentary.com
12. See: Rosenfeld, A.H. (2007). "Touching on History and Destiny". *The New Leader*, (May/June-July/August), pp. 34-36; Nussbaum, A. (2007). "The Yiddish Policemen's Union Review". Available at: <http://www.strangehorizons.com>; Rosner, S. (2011). *Shtetl, Bagel, Baseball*. Jerusalem: Keter.
13. Sasson, T. (2014). **The New American Zionism**. New York: NYU Press.

Endnotes

- 1 While there is no documentation, there are several indications that David Ben-Gurion played a role in the writing of the book. According to historian Aviva Halamish, Ben-Gurion, wrote to Uris and complemented him on his important book. He also asked him to write a similar book on the capture of Eichmann. Uris refused (Halamish 2004).
- 2 Brandeis, a distinguished U.S. Supreme Court justice, typically linked the Zionist vision with the American ideals of democracy, justice and freedom. U.S.
- 3 Before the 1970s hardly any Jews were visible on American television, with the exception of *The Goldbergs*, a 1950s series about a Jewish working-class family living in an ethnic Bronx neighborhood.
- 4 The trend was, of course, best exemplified by Jerry Seinfeld's *Seinfeld*.
- 5 Those wars were looked upon as continuations of the Holocaust, and American Jews felt a need to act, in contrast to their relatively minimal involvement during the Holocaust. Efforts to strengthen Israel were regarded as a correction and as a response to existential threat and to anti-Jewish oppression.

The Nation-State Law and Israeli Society

Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People, below – the Nation-State Law, was enacted on July 17, 2018. The Knesset passed the bill with a majority of 62 (55 against and 2 abstentions) and has provoked a ringing controversy in Israel and throughout the Jewish world. The legislation was intended to establish the status of the State of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, but while some see it as an important and natural law dealing with self-definition and national symbols, others call for its revocation claiming that it degrades the Jewish and democratic character

of the state. The law has been through many iterations, starting in 2011 as a draft bill by MKs Avi Dichter and Zeev Elkin. Even then, the draft bill was met with strong criticism. Alternative proposals were proffered by various members of Knesset from different parties, and the final version passed includes extensive changes relative to the original bill.

In general, three patterns of response to the Nation-State Law can be distinguished: support; criticism of flaws in the law, mainly due to the lack of the clause on equality and anchoring the Jewish and democratic nature of the state, and sweeping criticism of the law as discriminatory, accompanied by calls for its revocation.

Supporters

Supporters welcome the legislation and see it as marking a formative and historic inflection point. They emphasize that the law is an expression of the deep foundations of Zionism, and see it as a natural measure strengthening the Jewish character of Israel and the heritage of the Jewish people.

The law's proponents see it as critically important because it stands against those who refuse to recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. Supporters of the law point out that it is common throughout the world to anchor a state's symbols and national characteristics in a constitution or set of basic laws, and argue that there is nothing wrong with Israel doing so with regard to its national anthem, language, and flag. They welcome the affirmation of Jewish national pride. Against the argument of harm to the value of equality, supporters say that civil equality is maintained in practice. At the same time, many emphasize that it is a constitutional response to the ongoing imbalance in Israeli law, originating in the revolution of judicial activism of the 1990s. Here, the argument is that there is already a clear legal bias in the Jewish and democratic equation, and therefore the law is merely redressing the balance in favor of the Jewish national element that has been neglected.

Another point worth noting relates to the law's lack of an explicit equality provision. An examination of the history of Israeli legislation shows that the absence of this component is due to the objection of the religious and

Ultra-Orthodox parties. It is possible that this objection is not actually directed against Israel's minority communities but rather defends against recognition of Judaism's non-Orthodox streams, in a desire to keep management of religious affairs in the hands of the Chief Rabbinate.

Qualified Support Accompanied by Criticism of Significant Flaws

Together with those who totally support the law, many Israelis, qualify their support for "nation state legislation" that guarantees the Jewish character of the state, especially in the face of an international de-legitimization campaign against it. They express strong criticism of the absence of clauses guaranteeing the democratic nature of Israel and absolute equality for all its citizens, in the spirit of the 1948 Declaration of Independence. This criticism does not proclaim a slippery slope toward the demise of the country's democratic nature. On the one hand, they argue that the law is not racist, anti-democratic, or unconstitutional, but on the other hand they fear that it is provocative, divisive, and unnecessarily denigrates certain groups in Israel and among the Jewish people.

Those holding this opinion see nothing wrong with emphasizing the Jewish national identity of the state, but they criticize the careless wording of the law and the internal tensions in Israeli society that have been caused as a result. According to them, nation state-legislation requires greater consensus, and an explicit connection to Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence – a formative,

historic document that cannot be ignored in a basic law of this kind.

The most notable dissonance between the Declaration of Independence and the law are in connection to the principle of civil equality. Although the word democracy is not specifically mentioned in the Declaration of Independence, the document expresses a democratic spirit.

With regard to the abasement of equality, the debate sparked by the Druze protest seems to concede that the law does indeed confer preferential class status to those of Jewish nationality. This is likely to be counterbalanced with special recognition in certain cases, for example with regard to the Druze and other minorities who serve in the Army and are considered to be loyal Israeli citizens. This aspect of discrimination in the law, likely reinforces the perception of Arab Israelis as an underclass that does not serve in the army and are consequently considered to be less loyal citizens.

It should be remembered that proposals to turn the Declaration of Independence into the Nation-State Basic Law were rejected. The statement in the Declaration of Independence on “complete equality and social and political rights for all citizens, regardless of religion, race, or sex” has no parallel declarative expression in the Nation-State Law.

Harsh Criticism

The fierce criticism of the legislation does proclaim a slippery slope toward the demise of Israel’s democratic nature, and decries the law as dangerous, nationalistic, and anti-democratic. This

criticism does not relate to the law alone, but sees it as emblematic of Israel’s descent into anti-liberal and anti-democratic realms. In this context, the general argument relates to a recharacterization of state identity that arises from the law. The law, it is claimed, fixes the identity of the State of Israel on the Jewish basis, causing severe harm to the democratic basis, which should be of equal value.

The strongest argument is that the law undermines two basic values: “equality” and “democracy.” In this connection, Article 7 of the law is the subject of particularly sharp criticism. This article on Jewish settlement reads: “the state sees the development of Jewish settlement as a national value, and shall act to encourage and promote its formation and establishment.” The argument is that only encouraging Jewish settlement discriminates against Israel’s non-Jewish minority.

In addition, there are arguments against the law’s sole designation of Hebrew as Israel’s official language and its relegation of Arabic to “special status.” It should be noted that British Mandatory regulations granted official language status to English, Arabic, and Hebrew, but this has not been the case in Israeli legislation after the establishment of the state.

According to the critics, the law has brought to the surface a deep sense of discrimination and rejection among Israel’s minority citizens, which has resulted in well-attended protest demonstrations in Tel Aviv’s Rabin Square and elsewhere in the country. At any rate, opponents of the Nation-State Law vehemently assert that not only does it enshrine discrimination and hobbles the principle of civil equality over which there should be no

compromise, but it also aggravates internal fault lines and further threatens the stability of Israeli society and its democracy.

Opponents of the Nation-State Law dismiss the contention advanced by its supporters that the law is a response to judicial activism and the exaggerated power of the judiciary, and argue that the law grants legitimacy to those who wish to diminish the Supreme Court's power and legitimacy. According to them, the legislation is an assault on the separation of powers principle, and limits the ability of the judicial branch to protect minority groups from the tyranny of the majority.

The controversy prompted by the Nation-State Law reveals the conceptual rift that characterizes Israeli society. Placing the law on the agenda and the urgency of cementing its formulation have, at this stage, resulted in exacerbating a deep rift within Israel, rather than healing it. The Nation-State Law has also had an impact on Israel-Diaspora relations.

The Nation-State Law and World Jewry

The Nation-State Law has provoked different reactions among Jewish community leaders and activists outside Israel. It appears that in the Diaspora too, there is disagreement over the law's meanings and implications.

In the United States and in Europe, Jewish leaders have criticized the law as an affront to Israel's minorities and the fundamental principle of civil equality. A letter cosigned by various leaders of

North American Jewry was sent to the chairman of the Jewish Agency, expressing their deep concerns in regard to the law, which they fear is liable to destroy one of the basic attributes of modern democracies – “equal rights for all.” They fear the demotion of the Arabic language from official to “special” status erodes the principles of equality and pluralism, and weakens Israel's democratic character.

In addition, there is worry throughout the Diaspora that the Nation-State legislation further damages Israel's image internationally. The law is seen as a wedge that will widen the rift between Diaspora Jewry and the State of Israel, and make it harder to defend Israel against the hostile and defamatory forces of de-legitimization. Some contend that the law will likely be detrimental to the future of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

Proponents of the law emphasize that it is an expression of the continuity of the connection between the Jewish people and the State of Israel, and represents an essential public declaration that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people.

Others contend that the law is no different than the constitutions or national laws of European countries, and is a legitimate expression of Jewish nationalism in Israel. They believe the law protects the natural rights of Jews to a Jewish state in the land of Israel, and stands against attacks by the international community, Israeli Arabs, and post-Zionist Jews.

A Note to the Reader on Terminology

In this Annual Assessment we have retained the common Hebrew terms (transliterated in English) utilized in Israel to categorize population subgroups based on lifestyle vis-a-vis Judaism and the degree of observance of religious practices: **Haredi, Dati, Masorati, and Hiloni.**

We have done so because the cognate English terms, such as “secular” or “religious” do not, in our view, fully capture the connotations of the Hebrew terms in the Israeli context.

Hiloni (pl. Hilonim) is generally translated as “secular.” However, this is somewhat misleading insofar as 60 percent of Hilonim believe in God and similarly significant percentages observe particular religious practices. Hiloni does describe Israelis who observe a fewer number of religious practices than Orthodox, Ultra-Orthodox or Traditionist Jews, and most importantly, whose religion does not define their Jewishness.

Masorati (pl. Masoratiim) is generally translated as “traditional.” Here we have translated it as “traditionist,” in order to denote it as a separate and distinct lifestyle. It refers to one who selectively keeps many of the religious practices but is not committed to a fully Halachic, Orthodox lifestyle. Many Masoratiim, despite their selective observance, accept Orthodox Judaism as the authentic and authoritative version of the religion. (See Yaacov Yadgar, *Secularism and Religion in Israeli Politics: Traditionists and Modernity*, Routledge, 2010.)

Dati (pl. Datim) is generally translated as “religious” and connotes the Religious-Zionist or National-Religious population. In its variations – “Liberal Dati” or “Torani-Dati” it refers to particular segments of the Religious-Zionist population – either the very liberal or the very conservative wing respectively.

Haredi (pl. Haredim) is generally translated as Ultra-Orthodox. In the Israeli context it refers to the population whose males generally do not serve in the Israeli military, because they receive

a Torah study deferment. About half of the male Haredi population works. The other portion studies Torah full time.

Introduction

Approximately 80 percent of the population of the State of Israel is Jewish and Israel is the nation-State of the Jewish people. What sort of Jewish identity does the Jewish population of the State of Israel bear? Israeli Jewish identity is complex. It relates to both practices and beliefs of Judaism as a religion and Jewish culture, as well as to views and understandings concerning the major components of collective identity as they relate to Jewishness – nationality, culture, religion, and ethnicity. Such views and practices tend to affect how Israeli Jews think of the Jewish State – its purpose and rationale – and how Jewishness and the Jewish religion relate to the public sphere. Our major findings are:

- Jewish Israeli society is characterized by a continuum of religious observance.
- Jewish Israeli society is divided in regard to fundamental questions of Jewish existence: What does it mean to be Jewish? What is the *telos* or end of the State of Israel? What is the relationship between Israeli identity and Jewish identity?

Judaism in Blue and White

One of the accomplishments of the Jewish state in its 70 years of existence is that it has created new expressions and forms of Judaism and Jewish

religious and cultural practice. Some of these new forms are of a public or political nature and have been covered extensively by the Israeli national and even international media, such as the Shas Party (The Ultra-Orthodox Sephardic party) and Gush Emunim (the Religious Zionist movement for settling and annexing the West Bank – Judea and Samaria). Yet many of these uniquely Israeli expressions are practiced by the general public and often are “under the radar” of both media coverage and academic analysis.

With this in mind, JPPI inaugurated an extensive in-depth survey of “Israeli Judaism.”¹ This project extensively surveyed the Israeli Jewish population with respect to the celebration and marking of holidays, religious and civil, and other practices such as those relating to food and kashrut, Shabbat, education and other topics. The surveys were very detailed and are still being analyzed. We present here some preliminary findings in order to provide a much fuller picture of Israeli expressions of Jewish religious and cultural practice than is generally available in the media and research literature. These preliminary findings are supplemented with those already published in the Pew Israel Survey (2016).

The first of these findings is that Israeli Jews have a relatively high level of observance, especially in relation to American Jews.² Thus, according to the JPPI survey of 2017, 67 percent of Israeli Jews fast the whole of Yom Kippur as compared to 40 percent of American Jews who said that they fasted in 2012.³ Similarly, 97 percent of Israeli Jews participated in a Passover Seder, while only 70 percent of American Jews did in

2012. This disparity carries over into areas such as Kashrut and Shabbat observance: 63 percent of Israelis keep kosher at home while only 22 percent of American Jews do; 45 percent of Israel Jews report that they do not handle money on Shabbat while only 15 percent of American Jews refrain from doing so (Pew). According to the JPPI study, around 30 percent of Israeli Jews do not travel on Shabbat.

Undoubtedly, many Israeli Jews observe these practices not necessarily as **religious** behaviors, but find in them national, cultural, familial, and community meaning. Indeed, according to recent surveys about half of Israel's Jewish population identifies as "Hiloni"(Secular), while the other remaining half identifies as either "Masorati" (Traditionist, about 30 percent), "Dati" (Religious, 12 percent), or "Haredi" (ultra-Orthodox, about 12 percent). This is reflected in the JPPI study, according to which 43 percent of Israel's Jewish population see "religion" as the central component of Jewishness and 57 percent see either "nationality" (26 percent), "culture" (20 percent) or "ethnicity" (11 percent) as such. Furthermore, approximately a third of the Jewish population had not set foot in a synagogue in the past year.

It is important to note that secular Jews also engage in practices associated with the Jewish religion, assigning them national or cultural meaning. Thus, according to the JPPI study, 93 percent of Israeli Jews identifying as Hilonim Lachalutin (completely secular) participate in a Passover Seder. A cultural, national, or familial approach is particularly prominent in

regard to holidays, and it affects how holidays are celebrated. Thus, 97 percent of Israeli Jews participate in a special family meal on Rosh Hashana that includes the custom of eating an apple dipped in honey. At the same time, many fewer non-religious Israeli Jews attend synagogue for special High Holiday services than American Jews. According to the Pew Israel Survey, 35 percent of American Jews report that they "attend synagogue a few times a year such as for the High Holidays," while only 14 percent of Israeli Jews do (but many more Israelis attend synagogue services on a weekly basis).

The cultural, national, and familial meaning holidays have in Israel partially results from the fact that the official calendar is organized according to the traditional Jewish conception of the week – it starts on Sunday, a work day, and ends on Shabbat, the official day of rest – and reflects both major and minor Jewish holidays. Thus "minor" holidays such as Purim, barely noticed by the non-Orthodox population in America, are major events in Israel. Children and adults wear Purim masks and costumes in a carnivalesque atmosphere, Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Israelis throw Purim parties characterized by liquor, music and dancing. According to the JPPI surveys, fully 66 percent of Israeli Jews observe the custom of sending gifts of food and sweets (*Mishloach Manot*) to their friends and neighbors. This custom is not understood in necessarily religious terms (its origin is in the Book of Esther 9:22), but as expressing neighborly and community sociability and solidarity.

Lag B'Omer is another "minor" holiday that practically goes unnoticed in America but has an appreciable presence in Israel.⁴ Not only does virtually every Israeli school child make a bonfire, but tens of thousands participate in the annual pilgrimage to the Tomb of R. Shimon Ben Yochai on Mount Meron. According to the JPPI surveys, 14 percent of Israeli Jews say that they participate in this pilgrimage when they can. Furthermore, 25 percent of Israeli Jews report that they make pilgrimages to the tombs of saints (Tzaddikim – righteous men) and holy men, a practice which is almost wholly absent from the Diaspora Jewish scene (with the exception of the veneration surrounding the tomb of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Menahem Mendel Schneerson.)

The spread of this practice, which is shared by Traditionist (Masorati) and Secular as well as Orthodox Jews, in contemporary Israel should not surprise us. In traditional Judaism the religious phenomenology of the Holy Land and sacred sites (such as the Kotel (Western Wall and the Temple Mount) entails a religious conception of graded or hierarchical holiness. In other words, certain sites are holier than others. This conception is indicated by a well-known Mishna:

עֶשֶׂר קְדֻשּׁוֹת הֵן, אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקֻדָּשֶׁת מְכֹל הָאָרְצוֹת....
לְפָנֶיךָ מִן הַחוּמָה (שֶׁל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם) מְקֻדָּשׁ מִ[מְנוּ]... הֵר
הַבַּיִת מְקֻדָּשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ.... קְדֻשַׁת הַקְּדָשִׁים מְקֻדָּשׁ מִ[כּוֹלֵם],
שְׂאִיִן וְנִכְנֵס לְשָׁמַיִם אֲלָא כִּהֵן גְּדוּל בְּיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים בְּשַׁעַת
הַעֲבוּדָה. (כלים פרק א ז'-ח')

There are ten degrees of holiness. The land of Israel is holier than any other land...inside the wall [of Jerusalem] is more holy The Temple Mount has greater sanctity.... The Holy of Holies has greater

sanctity than [all], because no one may enter there except the High Priest on the Day of Atonement at the time of the service (Mishna, Kelim, 1:7-8).

In traditional Judaism this graded conception of holiness also extends to persons. For example, priests (Kohanim) have a greater degree of holiness (in regard to certain areas) than other Jews. This conception which had been downplayed but not abolished in the Rabbinic Judaism of the Diaspora during the hundreds of years of the Exile, seems to have returned with renewed force with the return to Eretz Yisrael. It was adopted and extended in certain forms of Israeli popular religion in a framework of "holy" men and women and especially sacred sites and tombs associated with them, including of course, those associated with the Fathers and Mothers of the nation such as the Tomb of Rachel and *Mearat HaMachpela* (Cave of the Patriarchs).

A related development is the sacralization of national concepts such as the national homeland, Eretz Yisrael and the state itself, among significant parts of the population. In other words, sacredness and sacred meaning do not only attach themselves to traditional Jewish ritual objects such as tefillin (phylacteries), or the lulav and Etrog and the commandments associated with them, but also to national concepts such as the Land of Israel, the state and the Jewish people. Along with such sacredness also come commandments, that is, normative imperatives. Thus, attributing sacredness to the Land of Israel, for many Jewish Israelis, seems to be connected to a *mitzvah* – settling and incorporating the greater Land of Israel.⁵ This

approach manifested itself in the JPPI survey: fully 55 percent of respondents stated that to a large extent or to a very large extent they identify with the statement: **“To be a good Jew one has to support settlement in the greater Land of Israel.”**

Similarly, among a significant portion of the population the very rationale behind the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish state is couched in religious terms. Thus, 36 percent of respondents answered that the main justification for the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish state is **“to realize fully the religious and national nature of the Jewish people.”**

The point is that Judaism is not merely practiced in the State of Israel, as we have seen, life in the Jewish state transforms central aspects of it. Thus, the Jewish religion in the state does not only consist of individual and communal practices but also relates to the national and political spheres. Furthermore, unlike Diaspora Judaism, which as Heinrich Heine pointed out, is truly portable – Sabbath observance was essentially the same in Poland or Morocco, Israeli Judaism is to a certain extent place-bound: The Land of Israel and central locations within it (e.g. The Western Wall) generate experiences and practices which are very specific to them.

Opinion is divided into two main approaches to the nature of the transformation of both Judaism and Jewish identity that Israel effects. One approach claims that the national political framework replaces [ethno] religion as the overarching authoritative framework of Jewish

life and collective identity. The other approach states that the national political framework, i.e. the State of Israel, expresses or realizes traditional Jewish ethno-religion.

The State of Israel: A Replacement of Jewish Ethno-Religious Identity or a Fulfillment of It?

Zionism was a movement to found a Jewish state. However, especially in its early formative decades, it was much more than that – it was a movement to reorder Jewish life and, in particular, its pattern of collective identity. Many of the historical streams within Zionism presented their own unique conceptions of Jewish collective identity and identification. With the establishment and the consolidation of the state and Israeli society, some of these visions, to one extent or another, were translated into social reality. Such translations, of course, entailed changes. Nevertheless, in some cardinal cases one can detect the ideological origins of some of the contemporary patterns of Jewish identity in Israel.

According to the surveys of the Pew Research Center (2016) and the Jewish People Policy Institute (2018) it appears that there are two major patterns of Jewish identity in Israel: one characterizes those who self-identify as Hilonim (secular) and the other characterizes those groups whose self-identity is delineated in one fashion or another by religion – Haredim (Ultra-Orthodox), Datiim (Religious), and Masoratiim

(Traditional or Traditionist) In regard to one area, the Masoratiim constitute their own subgroup, that is, differ from both the Ultra-Orthodox and the Religious and from the Hilonim.

Further analysis of these surveys shows that the difference between Hilonim and those who self-identify as Traditionist or Religious is not only, or even primarily, one of the degree of religious observance. Although there is a graded spectrum of observance of religious or traditional practices in Israel, there are significant differences between the groups regarding deeply held ideological and conceptual ideas concerning the fundamentals of Jewish existence.

Hilonim constitute approximately half of Israel's Jewish population. Those who include a component of religion or tradition in their self-identity (Haredim, Datiim, or Masoratiim) constitute the other half. Again, the Hiloni group is not devoid of religion or practices associated with religion. A third of Hilonim keep kosher and over 90 percent attend a Passover Seder. Sixty-seven percent do not eat pork and over

50 percent always or occasionally light Sabbath candles. Sixty percent, to one degree or another, believe in God. Thirty-one percent of Hilonim believe that God gave the Land of Israel to the Jewish people. In other words, differences among the groups in regard to religious observance are a matter of degree, they are not binary or in polar opposition ("yes/no").

Binary differences emerge, though, when it comes to the construction of Jewish and Israeli identity. Here the differences between Hilonim on the one side and Datiim, Haredim and Masoratiim on the other seem to be in polar opposition. There are also stark differences between Datiim and Haredim on one side and Hilonim on the other mainly in regard to the relationship between religion and public life. The Masoratiim often occupy a midway position in these matters; their responses are often split down the middle. Thus, their responses are very far from those of Hilonim, but equally unlike those of Datiim and Haredim. The different patterns are summarized in the following chart.

	Hilonim	Haredim, Datiim	Masoratiim
Major component of Jewish identity	National and culture 83%	Religion. Haredim 97%, Datiim 85%	Religion 58%
Religion Important?	Very important 2%, , 79% not too important or not important at all)	Very important 100%	Very Important 83%
Jewish or Israeli?	Israeli (59%)	Jewish (Haredi 91%, Dati 80%)	Jewish 59%
Relationship to Diaspora	43% believe that Israel has special responsibility to communities in need	60% Datiim and 70% of Haredim believe Israel has special responsibility	60% Believe Israel to have special responsibility
To be a good Jew one must support settlement in the Greater Land of Israel.	63% Do not agree.	Agree to very great or great extent. At least 70%, including Liberal Datiim	Agree to very great or great extent. 66%
Political Alignment – Identify as Left	14%	2%	2%
Religion and state	religion should be kept separate from government policies (88%)	government policies should promote religious values and beliefs. (Haredi 82%, Dati 80%)	Split 51% Govt. should promote religious values and beliefs.
Judaism or Democracy?	Democracy (89%)	Judaism (Haredim 89% Datiim 65%)	Split 56% favor democratic principles
Shut down public transportation on Shabbat?	94% opposed	Datiim and Haredim over 85% for	Split (44% for, 56% against)
Rationale for States' existence	“enable modern Jewish existence in a civic state with a Jewish culture” (Hilonim 47%, Masoratim 39%)	“to realize fully the religious and national nature of the Jewish people. (Haredim -84%, Datiim 73-84%, Liberal Datiim 47%, Masoratiim 39%	Split 39% for each of the rationales.

To understand these profiles, we must revisit the essentials of the Zionist project – a movement to reorder Jewish life and in particular its pattern of collective identity. We suggest that the segment of the population that self-identifies as Hiloni (Secular) is the group that carried out and underwent the Zionist revolution in the structure of Jewish identity. Or, more precisely, it consists of the literal or ideational descendants of this group. This revolution attempted to replace religion as the overarching authoritative framework of Jewish life and collective identity with a political national framework. It entailed an attempt to base Jewishness upon the “immanent frameworks” of language, political collective, and (to a certain extent) calendar, not upon religious ideals, aspirations, obligations or messianic hopes. If one lives in the State of Israel and identifies with it as expressing one’s identity, is a Hebrew speaking citizen of it, especially if one fulfills one’s citizenship duties in terms of military service and political participation, then one’s life is Jewish. Hence, religion is not a major component of Jewish identity, but national belonging and culture are; and the majority of Hilonim responded to Pew’s question about their identity, that they are Israelis first and Jews second. They also indicate that religion should be kept apart from politics; and the sense of responsibility of Hilonim to the Diaspora (as it currently exists) is not so great. The primary rationale among Hilonim for the State of Israel is “enable modern Jewish existence in a civic state with a Jewish culture.”

The Zionist revolution in Jewish identity, though, remained incomplete. Other, Haredi or ultra-

Orthodox groups in the Jewish population of Palestine-Eretz Yisrael objected vociferously to this program, including the very attempt to found a Jewish national-political framework. Yet other groups, who became known as Datiim and Masoratiim attempted to reinterpret Jewish nationalism and to assimilate it (in one fashion or another) into the traditional religious framework. For all of these groups, as we have seen, religion is a much more important component of Jewish identity than it is for Hilonim. Secondly, for them, **Israeliness is a realization of traditional ethno-religious Jewishness, not a replacement or a translation of it.** As a result, all these groups respond that they **Jewish first** and then Israeli.⁶ Accordingly, they also have a closer connection with the Diaspora – at least 60 percent of Masoratiim, Datiim, and Haredim feel a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need.

As far as the connection between religion and government policy is concerned, the picture is somewhat more complicated. Datiim, Haredim, and Masoratiim believe that insofar as the state **expresses** traditional Jewishness, it ought not be kept separate from religion. However, each of these groups manifests this understanding in its own way. Thus, Haredim and Datiim believe that insofar as the state **expresses** traditional Jewishness, it ought not be kept separate from issues relating to individual religious conduct and traditional issues of religion and state such as enforcing Shabbat and prohibiting women to pray aloud at the Kotel. Accordingly, 80 percent or more of Datiim and Haredim believe that “Government policies should promote religious

values and beliefs.” The vast majority of Haredim and Datiim (96 and 85 percent respectively) too, believe that the government should prohibit public transportation on Shabbat. They also believe that in a conflict between Judaism and democracy, Judaism should be favored and, furthermore, that the primary rationale for the State of Israel is “to realize fully the religious and national nature of the Jewish people” (Haredim, 84 percent; Datiim, 73-84 percent; Liberal Datiim 47 percent). Among Hilonim (of all sorts), support for this rationale is much lower: among “absolute Hilonim” only 6 percent supported this rationale and among the “slightly traditional Hilonim” 16 percent supported it.

The Masoratiim, though, seem to be divided as to whether and to what extent the Jewish-traditional character of the state requires restrictions on individual freedom and choice and limitations of democracy. Thus, with respect to questions traditionally regarded as matters of religion and state, such as Shabbat, Masoratiim tend to be divided. This divided opinion is not limited to practical questions (such as shutting down public transportation on Shabbat or allowing women to pray aloud at the Kotel) but also extends to fundamental issues regarding Judaism and the public sphere. Thus, they are also divided over such questions as the relative weight of Judaism and democracy, and the primary rationale behind the Jewish state – “to realize fully the religious and national nature of the Jewish people” (39 percent), **or** “to enable modern Jewish existence in a civic state with a Jewish culture” (39 percent).

At the same time, Datiim and Masoratiim emphasize that government policy should **not** be kept separate from religion **especially in regard to national and political issues** such as settling and incorporating the Greater Land of Israel, borders, and peace agreements. Thus, among Datiim, and Masoratiim significant majorities responded that, to a great or very great extent, to be a good Jew one has to support settlement in the Greater Land of Israel. Among the Hilonim, in contrast, few responded that supporting settlements was necessary in order to be a good Jew. This of course accords with the political alignment of the religious and traditional populations. Thus, according to both the Pew and JPPI surveys, among those who self-identify as traditional or religious, only about 2 percent identify as Left. The vast majority of these sectors is more or less divided equally between those who identify as Center or Right. People who identify in significant numbers as Left are to be found only among the Hilonim (14 percent), even though among that population too, the majority identify as Center (62 percent).

The Haredim responded to this question in divided fashion. Fifty-five and a half percent did not agree that to be a good Jew one has to support settlement in the Greater Land of Israel while 44.4 percent did agree. This finding underlines that despite the fact that Datiim and Haredim have similar views regarding Jewish identity and the relationship between religion and state in regard to traditional issues of individual conduct, there are, of course,

significant differences between them. The nature of these differences can be seen in their differential responses to the question “Does the term Zionist describe you accurately?” Only 9 percent of Haredim answered that the term describes them very accurately and 24 percent said that it describes them somewhat accurately (33 percent in all). Among Datiim, in contrast, 95 percent said that the term describes them very or somewhat accurately. This difference reflects that fact that religious Zionists, in their own way, support Zionism as a transformative and redemptive project, while the Haredim tend to reject it (while retaining nationalist, right-wing orientations).

Thus, the differences between the various identity groups, and especially between Hilonim and the religion or tradition-oriented groups, go way beyond degrees of religious observance. They involve deeply held ideological and conceptual differences concerning the fundamentals of Jewish and Israeli collective identities and the nature of the Jewish state and public life.

The Hiloni construction of identity was hegemonic in the first decades of the state. Today, it is increasingly contested by more religious and traditional constructions of identity carried by more traditional and religious groups. This development presents a dilemma. It is certainly a positive development that Jewish identity expressions in Israel are more pluralistic and variegated. At the same time, such contestation vis-à-vis fundamental questions could threaten social solidarity and cohesion.

While this paper emphasizes what divides the various sectors of Jewish Israeli society, it must be remembered that much joins them. Majorities of every Jewish population in Israel believe that Israel can be both a Jewish state and a democracy. This reflects wide ranging agreement, of whatever sort, with the constitutional designation of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and with the joint components of collective identity – Jewishness and democracy.

Endnotes

- 1 In collaboration with Prof. Camil Fuchs of Tel Aviv University.
- 2 The data for American Jews is taken from The Pew Research Center, A Portrait of Jewish Americans (2013).
- 3
- 4 In the Diaspora, Lag B’Omer is marked mainly by Chabad who build bonfires and conduct parades for children.
- 5 It is true that certain religious authorities such as R. Moshe ben Nachman (1194-1270, Catalonia) ruled that settling the Land of Israel is a positive commandment. However, this was merely a theoretical statement. It only became part of the lived experience of Jews with the emergence of the Zionist movement and the modern state of Israel.
- 6 Among the general Jewish population of Israel, 46% see itself as Jewish first, 35% as Israel first and 20% refused to answer or rejected the dichotomy.

Pluralism and Relations between Groups in Israel

JPPI Pluralism Survey

This year JPPI released its third annual Pluralism Index, a major element of the Institute's broader pluralism project.¹ As part of the Pluralism Index, JPPI conducts an annual public opinion survey of a representative sample of Israel's population to gauge attitudes relating to pluralism and measure how various segments of Israel's population relate to each other. JPPI's pluralism surveys² were conducted between the years 2016-2018 and included 3415 respondents, 2915 Jews and 500 Arabs. (Arabs were included in the study in 2017-2018.) The results indicate that: an overwhelming majority of Israelis (84.6 percent), both Arabs and Jews, feel comfortable being themselves in Israel; a significant portion of Israel's population is willing to have more social integration between inter- and intra-religious groups; Jewish Israelis seem to be more open to social integration with others if they feel those others make a positive contribution to the success of Israel; and a significant perception gap between how Haredim value their contribution to Israel compared to how other groups view the Haredi contribution.

Religiosity

While most surveys of Israelis divide the population into four broad categories of self-reported religiosity: Hiloni (secular); Masorti (traditionist); Daati (religious); and Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox). Jewish respondents in JPPI's surveys were asked to self-identify as one of the following: Totally Hiloni (Totally Secular, 33.4 percent), Somewhat traditional Hiloni (somewhat Traditional Secular, 17.8 percent); Masorti (Traditionist, 22.7 percent), Daati Liberali (Liberal-Orthodox)³ (2.5 percent); Daati (Religious) (7.6 percent); Nationalist Haredi⁴ (3.9 percent); Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox), 11.9 percent; or 'mixed/not possible to say' (0.2 percent).⁵ Adding the three extra categories of religiosity enables higher-resolution analysis and further explicates the heterogeneity of the Jewish community in Israel.

In addition to the religiosity groupings, Jewish respondents were asked to which religious stream they belonged: Orthodox (35.8 percent); Conservative (4.7 percent); Reform (5.7 percent); no stream (51.9 percent); an additional 1.9 percent gave no response.

The question of belonging to a stream of Judaism helps define a fundamental characteristic that distinguishes between the Totally-Hiloni and the Somewhat Traditional Hilonim . 3.4 percent of the Totally Hilonim indicated that they belonged to the Orthodox stream compared to 20.5 percent of the Somewhat Traditional Hilonim. 82.9 percent of the Totally Hilonim indicated that they didn't belong to any stream compared to 60.3 percent of the somewhat Traditional Hilonim . That even a small percentage of Israelis who define themselves as Totally Hilonim affiliate with the Orthodox stream can be explained not so much in terms of ideological or theological belief, but rather in that they identify Orthodoxy with traditional or 'authentic' Jewish practices. This idea is captured in the old adage "the synagogue I don't attend is Orthodox." In the coming months, JPPI will be releasing an extensive study on 'Israeli Judaism' which explores the beliefs and customs of Jews in Israel with significant depth and analysis.⁶

With regard to political ideology, within the three years of survey data, Jewish Israeli respondents placed themselves on a political spectrum as follows: Left (6.1percent); Moderate Left (10 percent); Center (27.3 percent); Moderate Right (32.8 percent); and Right (23.8 percent). The correlation between political ideology and religiosity level is quite apparent⁷: 33 percent of the Totally Hiloni self-identify as left of center, compared to 15 percent among the somewhat Traditional Secular, 6.6 percent among Traditionist, 7 percent among the Liberal Orthodox, and 2 percent or less among the Religious and Ultra-Orthodox sectors. The political differences among the groups are even more stark when considering that immigrants from the former Soviet Union

predominately identify as Totally Secular (61 percent), accounting for 26 percent of that demographic, are themselves more center-right. When excluding the immigrants from the former Soviet Union, 39% of the totally-seculars are left of center (left and moderate-left) compared to 15% of the Secular, somewhat Traditional.

Comfortability

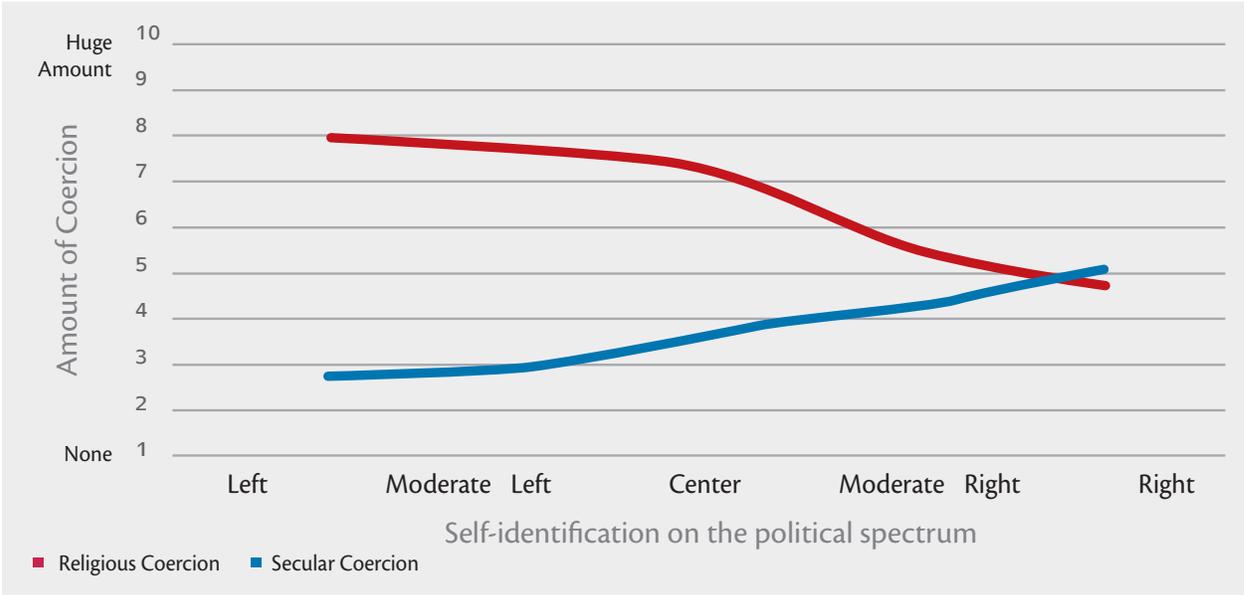
The survey asked respondents: "How comfortable do you feel being yourself in Israel?" Although the results are overall very positive with 86 percent of Jews and 78.5 percent of Arabs feeling comfortable, there was a major divide, at least in perception, between Jewish Israelis on left of the political spectrum and those on the right. 45.2 percent of Jewish Israelis who self-identified as left wing reported feeling uncomfortable being themselves in Israel compared to only 7.2 percent of their right-wing counterparts. The findings show that, overall, that the comfort Jewish Israelis feel being themselves in the country increases in direct correlation to how far right they are on the political spectrum.

Unhappiness with the current political situation, which has a governing coalition dominated by more right-wing parties, is one possible explanation for the left's discomfort. But another, not mutually exclusive, possible explanation why those on the left feel less comfortable being themselves in Israel could be their perceived sense of religious coercion. In their view, it is not just that the government is dominated by right-wing parties, but the political balance of power grants the religious parties disproportionate influence over the status quo as it pertains to religion in the public sphere. Respondents were asked to

estimate, on a scale from 1 (none) to 10 (a huge amount) the level of religious coercion and secular coercion that exists in Israel. As with comfort level, the amount of religious coercion perceived by respondents correlates significantly with political self-identification. As visualized in graph 1 below, the average (arithmetic mean) response on the far-

left was 8.0 (out 10) while the average response of those on the far-right was 4.7. With respect to the amount of secular coercion in Israel, the correlation was predictably inversed, but the gap between left and right was less pronounced with those on the far-left giving an average of 2.8 and those on the far-right giving an average of 5.1.

Graph 1: Religious Vs. Secular Coercion in Israel



As shown in graph 1, far-left respondents perceived the amount of religious coercion in Israel to be significantly higher than the amount of secular coercion, while those on the far-right didn't really sense a significant difference. Therefore, it is conceivable that the amount of religious coercion sensed by those on the left impacts their ability to feel comfortable being themselves in Israel.

Group Contribution to Israel

JPPI's survey uniquely asks Israelis to evaluate the extent to which various segments of Israel's

population contribute to the success of Israel. Respondents were asked to rank the contribution on the following scale: 1 (negative contribution), 2 (slightly negative contribution), 3 (slightly positive contribution), 4 (positive contribution). Table 1 below shows the average ranking received by each group among the general Jewish population in the three years that JPPI has conducted the survey and the ranking made by Arab respondents in the two years they were polled by JPPI.

Jewish Respondents	
Group	Contribution Mean
Soldiers	3.84
Ashkenazim	3.53
Seculars	3.50
Mizrahim	3.46
Kibbutzniks	3.36
National Religious	3.33
Druze	3.28
French Immigrants	3.26
Russian Immigrants	3.25
Right-Wingers	3.21
Ethiopian Immigrants	3.13
Diaspora Jews	2.98
North Tel Avivians	2.92
Settlers	2.83
Reform Jews	2.68
Israelis Living Abroad	2.63
Christian Arabs	2.62
yeshiva Students	2.53
Left-Wingers	2.49
Haredim	2.35
Bedouin	2.30
Muslim Arabs	1.82

Arab Respondents	
Group	Contribution Mean
North Tel Avivians	3.00
Christian Arabs	2.98
Ashkenazim	2.92
Kibbutzniks	2.91
Reform Jews	2.88
Druze	2.87
Seculars	2.87
Soldiers	2.79
Bedouin	2.76
Left-Wingers	2.72
Muslim Arabs	2.70
Mizrahim	2.65
Diaspora Jews	2.43
French Immigrants	2.41
Israelis Living Abroad	2.34
Right-Wingers	2.24
Russian Immigrants	2.21
Ethiopian Immigrants	2.04
National Religious	1.99
yeshiva Students	1.90
Haredim	1.69
Settlers	1.68

What is perhaps most surprising about the results is that both Jews and Arabs ranked soldiers high in their contribution to the success of Israel. Arab respondents ranked soldiers higher than or equal to themselves. Among Jewish respondents, there is, evidently, a correlation between the rate at which various groups serve in the IDF and how respondents view their contribution. For example, the average perceived contribution Druze make

is relatively high (3.28 out of 4) and their rate of participating in the IDF is around 80 percent of those eligible for enlistment.⁸ Conversely, the average perceived contribution of Haredim, Bedouin, and Muslim Arabs (2.35, 2.30, and 1.82 respectively) are the lowest of all the sectors included in the poll, and their rate of participation in the IDF decreases in the same order.

Table 3 below show the highest and lowest rated groups in Israel based on the level of religiosity of the respondent. While there is a broad consensus about the positive contribution of soldiers, the

data especially demonstrates the perception gap between how Haredim view their contribution to Israel compared to a large majority of Israelis whose perception is the reverse.

Table 3

Totally Secular		Secular-Traditional		(Masorti (Traditional	
Soldiers	3.81	Soldiers	3.88	Soldiers	3.86
Seculars	3.66	Seculars	3.63	Mizrahim	3.47
Kibbutzniks	3.59	Ashkenazim	3.53	National Religious	3.45
Muslim Arabs	2.04	yeshiva Students	2.24	Haredim	2.37
yeshiva Students	1.84	Haredim	2.10	Left-Wingers	2.26
Haredim	1.65	Muslim Arabs	1.90	Muslim Arabs	1.76

Liberal-Religious	
Soldiers	3.83
National Religious	3.63
Mizrahim	3.49
Reform Jews	2.49
Bedouin	2.09
Muslim Arabs	1.81

Religious	
Soldiers	3.90
National Religious	3.79
Mizrahim	3.68
Bedouin	2.14
Reform Jews	2.02
Muslim Arabs	1.69

Nationalist-Haredi	
Settlers	3.97
Soldiers	3.91
Right-Wingers	3.88
Bedouin	2.03
Reform Jews	1.67
Muslim Arabs	1.61

Haredi	
yeshiva Students	3.92
Haredim	3.89
Soldiers	3.78
Bedouin	1.66
Muslim Arabs	1.33
Reform Jews	1.15

Haredi respondents rated the contribution of yeshiva students and Haredim as the highest of all groups mentioned in the poll, including soldiers. Conversely, Totally Hilonim and somewhat

Traditional Hilonim, representing approximately half of Israel's Jewish population, rate yeshiva students and Haredim among the lowest contributors. Even Traditionist respondents,

who are more engaged with Jewish tradition and practice than secular Israelis and are presumably more likely to be sympathetic toward the Haredim, ranked their contribution to Israel's success as among the lowest. Secular and Traditionist Jews combined constitute 75 percent of Israel's Jewish population. However, the self-perception among Haredim is that their own contribution is not only positive, but greater than the contribution of all other segments of the population except for yeshiva students. This perception gap is at the very heart of the tensions within Israeli society and is a major obstacle on the path to societal cohesion.

The issue of how Israelis perceive the contribution made by others seems to influence their willingness for greater social integration within Israeli society. This was apparent in survey responses regarding sending children to mixed schools and acceptance of mixed/inter marriage.

Mixed Schools

The survey attempted to understand why respondents thought it was a good or bad idea to send their children to schools that were either mixed with secular and religious Jews or with Jews and Arabs. Despite that Jewish-Arab mixed schools in Israel are quite rare, 54 percent of Arab respondents and 31 percent of Jewish respondents indicated they thought mixed Arab-Jewish schools were “a good idea because it is good to be acquainted with others and relate to them with respect.”

The greatest divide between Arabs and Jews on the issue of mixed schools was that 33 percent of Jewish respondents versus only 4 percent of Arab

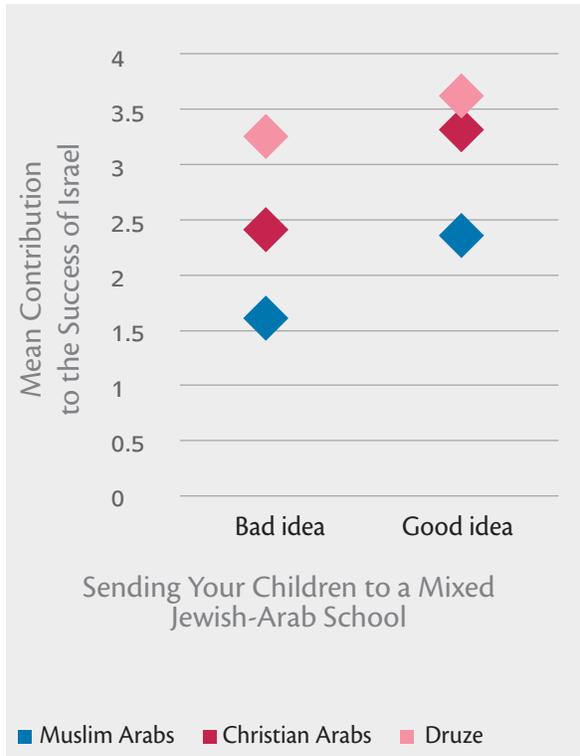
respondents indicated that Arab-Jewish schools were “a bad idea because each segment of the population should have specialized education.” Overall, 80 percent of Israeli Arabs surveyed indicated mixed Jewish-Arab schools were a good idea compared to only 39 percent of Jewish Israelis. Predictably, the more secular the Israeli Jew, the more likely s/he thought sending his/her children to a mixed Arab-Jewish school a good idea – a majority of secular Israelis surveyed indicated that it was a good idea.

Enrolling children in mixed secular-religious schools was thought to be a good idea among the Somewhat Traditional Hilonim, Traditionists, and the Liberal-Orthodox. A slim majority of Traditionists thought it was a good idea because it would “strengthen the bond between Jews from different backgrounds.” The majority of the other religious groups thought sending their children to mixed religious-secular schools was a bad idea. Sixty-three percent of Haredim thought it a bad idea because “it will weaken religious faith and observance” and 32 percent of Total Hilonim thought it a bad idea because “there will be more Jewish studies at the expense of other studies,” and 18 percent of the Total Hilonim feared that “students will become religious or there will be religious coercion.”

In general, Jewish Israeli's willingness to send their children to mixed schools seems to be influenced, at least in part, by how they view the contribution to the success of Israel made by those their children will be mixed with. Graph 2 below illustrates the relationship between how the general Israeli population views the contributions made by

Arab Muslims, Christians, and Druze in relation to whether or not they think it is a good idea to send their children to a mixed Arab-Jewish school. Those who think it is a good idea, on average, rate

Graph 2: Perception of Contribution and Openness to Mixed Jewish-Arab Schools



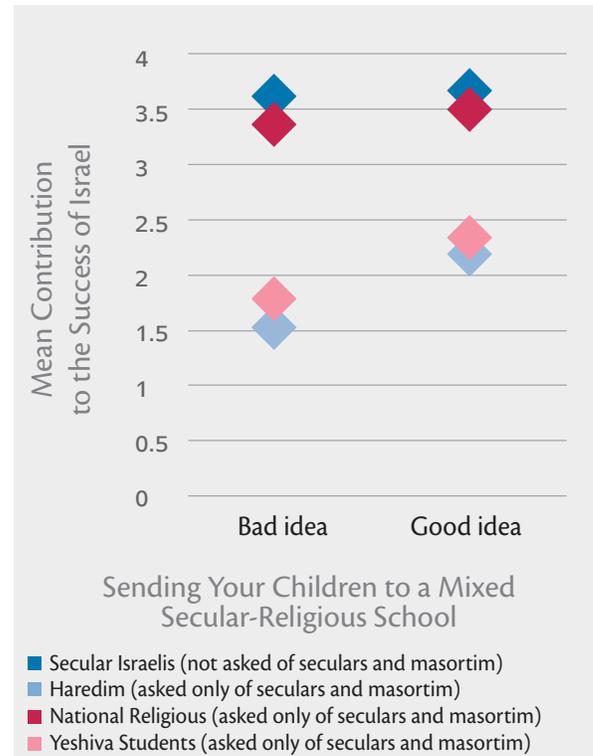
religious than them, the more inclined they are to the idea of sending their children to mixed schools.

Inter-Marriage

JPPI's 2018 Pluralism Survey asked respondents how they would react to various scenarios involving a close relative deciding to marry someone from a different religious, national or ideological background. Given that interfaith

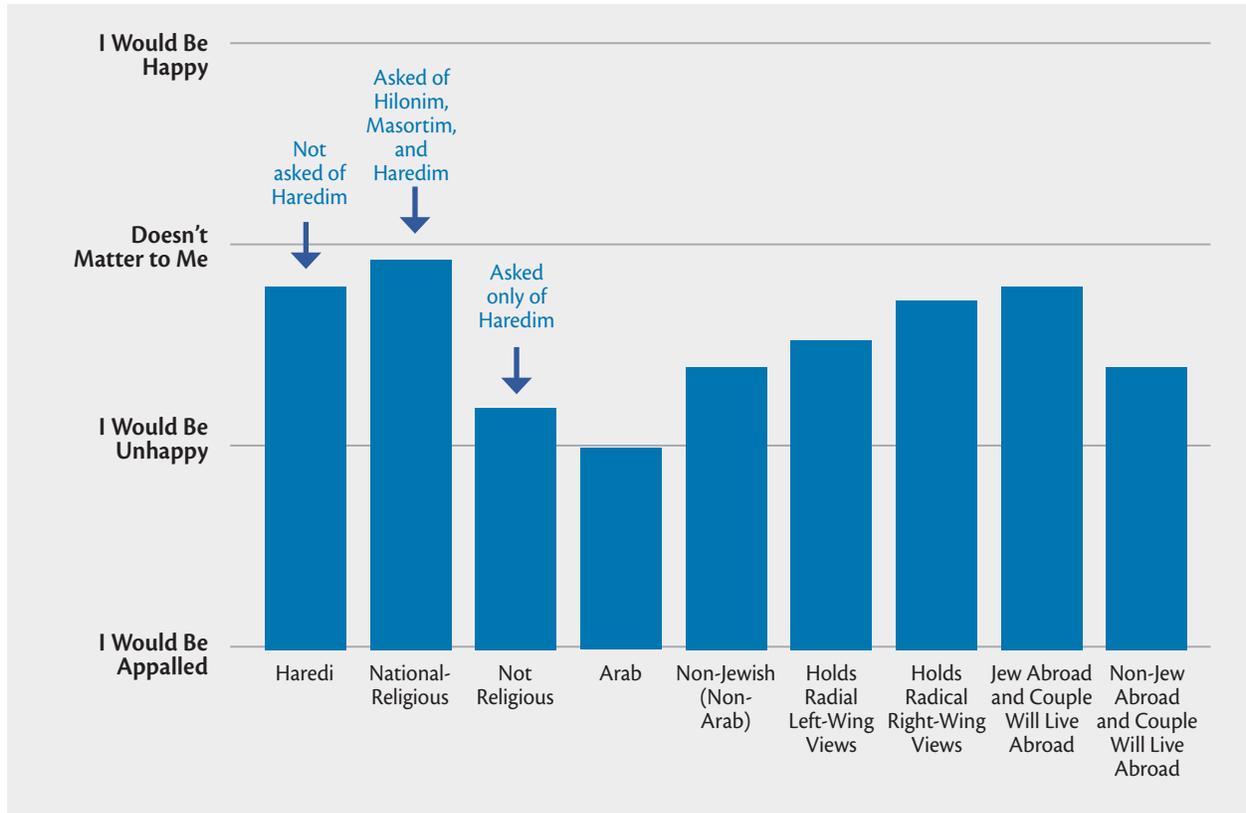
the contribution made by Arabs higher. Graph 3 below shows the same phenomenon as it relates to secular-religious schools, the higher Jewish Israelis rate the contribution made by someone less or more

Graph 3: Perception of Contribution and Openness to Mixed Secular-Religious Schools



marriage cannot officially take place in Israel, the amount of opposition against it is not actually that high. Around 33 percent of Jewish Israelis are indifferent to the idea of a close relative marrying a non-Jew. The results of how the general Jewish population responded to the various scenarios are detailed in Graph 4 below.

Graph 4: How Would You React if a Close Relative Decided to Marry Someone who is/a:



Analyzing the results of the marriage questions in relation to the level of religiosity of the respondent provides some notable observations. The results indicate that Total Secular Israelis would

rather a relative marry someone non-Jewish (who isn't Arab) than marry someone Haredi, even if the couple lives abroad (see table below).

Totally Secular Israelis on marriage questions:

	Would not be happy	Doesn't matter or world be happy
Haredi	52%	48%
Non-Jewish and non-Arab	25%	75%
Non-Jewish and live abroad	42%	58%

Furthermore, Total Hilonim do not show an obvious preference between a relative marrying someone National-Religious or someone who is non-Jewish (who isn't Arab). With the exception of the Haredim, Israel's Jewish sectors show a clear distinction between a relative marrying an Arab and the other scenarios of marrying someone of a deeply different background or identity, with marrying an Arab the least desirable scenario. The Haredim, uniquely, do not make that distinction. Rather, they view all the scenarios involving relatives marrying non-Jews as equally disturbing. The results also suggest that among the Totally Secular, the younger cohorts are not as disturbed as the older cohorts by a relative marrying an Arab scenario. Ironically, for both Totally Secular and Haredi Israelis the marriage scenario that received the least negative reaction was a relative marrying someone Jewish and living abroad, suggesting that relatives living in Israel is not of paramount importance for them.

The poll showed a sharp contrast between the way Jews and Arabs consider marriage between one another. Fourteen percent of Jewish men and 13 percent of Jewish women in Israel would either be ambivalent or happy if a close family member married an Arab, compared to 59 percent of Arab men and 48 percent of Arab women being ambivalent or happy if a close family member married a Jew. Within Islamic tradition, men are allowed to marry non-Muslim women who are 'People of the Book' (Jews and Christians), but Islamic women are not allowed to marry non-Islamic men. This likely explains the difference of opinion between Arab men and women. It should

also be noted that Israeli Druze viewed marriage with a Jew the most positively among Arabic speakers, with 87.5 percent responding that they would be ambivalent or happy.

As with the questions relating to children attending mixed schools, respondent approval of the marriage scenarios correlates significantly with questions on relative contribution to Israel's success. The higher a respondent valued the contribution made by any group, the more receptive the respondent was toward a family member marrying someone from that group.

Republicanism Vs. Liberalism

The results of these surveys are interesting in the light of assumptions concerning the political evolution of Israel, common in the academy and in the media. According to this assumption, the "republican"⁹ orientation that had historically characterized Israeli citizenship, especially among the secular Zionist Labor movement sector had, since the 1980s, been largely replaced by a liberal citizenship discourse – among the secular elites and the secular population at large - and by an ethno-national citizenship discourse among the religious and Traditionist populations.¹⁰ The republican citizenship discourse emphasizes identification with the political collective and contribution to it. The liberal citizenship orientation, in contrast, emphasizes individual rights and individual fulfillment through consumerism and career.¹¹ The ethno-national approach emphasizes that rights and access to resources should be based upon ethno-national belonging.

It is true that on the institutional level, liberal arrangements have come into place in Israel, such as the Basic Laws protecting individual rights (Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedoms-1992), a Supreme Court that practices judicial review of laws and an independent Central Bank.¹² Nevertheless, the survey data indicates that republican attitudes are very much alive on the level of social assumptions. The data indicate that contribution to the collective (Israel) is still the basis for social esteem and makes groups into desirable marriage partners and school mates.

Endnotes

- 1 JPPi's Pluralism Project is headed by its senior fellow, Shmuel Rosner, and supported by the William Davidson Foundation.
- 2 JPPi's Pluralism Survey is headed by its fellow, Noah Slepko. The actual surveys were conducted by the Panels Politics company headed by Menachem Lazar.
- 3 Daati Liberali translates from the Hebrew as Liberal Religious, but we use Liberal Orthodox here for the sake of clarity. See Note to the Reader on Terminology above.
- 4 The 2016 and 2017 surveys used the term Haredali to define this group, while in the 2018 survey the term Dati-Torahni was used.
- 5 All percentages are from JPPi's 2018 survey, unless otherwise indicated.
- 6 The accompanying article, "Jewish Identity in Israel in its 70th Year" contains preliminary findings of this study.
- 7 For a further discussion about religiosity and political ideology see "Jewish Identity in Israel in its 70th Year".
- 8 The Carmel Portal, "Percentage of Druze Recruits Breaking a Record," April 4, 2017. <https://goo.gl/J4LMUH>
- 9 The term republican is used here in the sense of "civic republicanism" which characterized, for a period of time, the Renaissance republics of Florence and Venice and the ancient Roman Republic.
- 10 Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, Cambridge U. Press, Cambridge UK, 2002.
- 11 Compare Benjamin Constant, *The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with that of the Moderns*, 1819.
- 12 Some of these arrangements have come under attack recently in the name of nationalist values.



Haredi Society: Where to?

Significant demographic growth, the influence of consumer culture, and the weakening of the welfare state in Israel are pushing the Haredi population toward integration into the labor market and into higher education, but not necessarily toward social and cultural integration. This integration carries a new challenge for both the Haredim and the general Israeli society: building a public sphere that enables the Haredim to preserve their way of life but makes no demand on the general society to surrender what it considers to be fundamental values.

For the most part, since the founding of the state, the Haredi sector has struggled to safeguard its particularistic concerns, mainly deferment from military enlistment for males and generous

support for the families of yeshiva students. In contrast to the Religious Zionist sector, the Haredi sector did not express an interest in integrating into general Israeli society and state institutions, with the exception of the Knesset, where it acted to ensure state benefits for its community and increase them whenever the opportunity presented itself.

The Likud's rise to governing power in 1977 and the willingness of Menahem Begin to grant the Haredi sector practically all its demands, among them: a fourfold increase in child allowances; a threefold increase in subsidies for yeshivot; grounding all El Al flights on the Sabbath, removal of quotas and restrictions on the number of yeshiva students granted deferments from military service,

and granting such deferments on the basis of declaration alone. This greatly improved economic conditions in the Haredi sector, and greatly weakened its already low motivation, to join the workforce and the general Israeli society.

In recent years, a new trend has begun to emerge, albeit one not shared by the entire Haredi sector: an ambition to start a process of integration into Israel society and into state institutions without giving up one's unique Haredi lifestyle, including strict gender separation. This trend expresses two parallel interacting processes, one of them economic and the other social.

The economic change underway appears to stem from a values shift among Haredi youth. Although young Haredim are light-years from the materialism that characterizes large swaths of Israeli society, they have not remained neutral in the face of Israel's rapidly-rising standard of living. An indication of this is the trend toward lower Haredi birthrates, which may reflect a greater reluctance to be content with a minimal standard of living.

The social change is deeper, and harder to track. An as-yet-untested and unsupported hypothesis is that Haredi life has been affected to no small degree by cellular phones and the internet. Should these trends continue, and no drastic change occur, the sector's exposure to external influences will increase. Both of these processes combine with the demographic factor. In recent years Haredi society has been transformed from a small, ascetically oriented elite society into a kind of mass society composed largely of ordinary people with ordinary aspirations.

Educational and Occupational Integration: Who Sets the Conditions?

A ruling of the Regional Labor Court in Jerusalem that obligated the Civil Service Commission to open, to women, intended for the Haredi sector – a course that had been open to men only – is not yet final. As of this writing, the National Labor Court has ruled in favor of the state's appeal and lifted the temporary injunction against the course. However, the Israel Women's Network has filed a petition with the High Court of Justice. The civil servants' training course intended for young Haredi men is itself a manifestation of the Haredim's desire for greater integration in general Israeli society, however partially and with whatever limits. Usually, this aspiration is met with encouragement and support of state institutions. But the petition filed by the Israel Women's Network against the course indicates that elements in the general society are not willing to let the Ultra-Orthodox decide the rules of their integration process unilaterally. They demand that the Ultra-Orthodox accept the rules of the game that apply to the general Israeli society.

Pragmatic Measure, or Expression of a Pluralistic Worldview?

The controversy is rooted in the question of whether gender separation is inconsistent with equality as a fundamental value of liberal democracy, or whether it should be viewed as a pragmatic measure in the effort to integrate the Haredim in Israel's economy and the expression of

a pluralistic and culturally-tolerant worldview that allows minority groups to preserve their unique character even while integrating in general society. In this context, one might argue that even if the separation can be viewed as a manifestation of pluralism, red lines should nevertheless be drawn with regard to other principles, such as core studies, which, even if they are not fully compatible with the Haredi communal character, may nevertheless uphold a basic liberal-democratic value: the “right to exit.”

Today, a young Haredi person who wishes to leave the community faces objective difficulties due to the lack of education or skills that would enable him/her to “survive” in the general society. Therefore the “right to exit” may require core studies in English, math and civics even this contravenes Haredi norms. Additionally, secular professional entities have expressed surprise that the courts are receptive to the idea of separate and segregated education systems, with budgets in the billions of shekels, but is unwilling to compromise on the employment-integration effort. Thus, the value of equality and the struggle against the exclusion of women are important, but insisting on them with no room for compromise, even at the level of vocational training, reinforces the walls of the ghetto, harms the vital national interest of Haredi integration in the labor market, and ultimately plays into the hands of Haredi extremists.

It is important to note that the Haredi demand for gender separation is not actually a stringent halachic demand. There are a great many Haredi men and women in Israel’s labor market and

institutions of higher education participating in mixed frameworks. Their demand is really a demand for identity and status symbols, and an attempt to maintain the normative boundaries of Haredi society. One should not conclude that the Haredi demand need can be easily dismissed; rather, one should understand that such demands are negotiable, and that at certain points compromises may be reached based on mutual concessions.

Changing the Rules of the Majority-Minority Game: Who is Threatening Whom?

The Haredi share of Israel’s total population was 12 percent in 2017. According to the Israel 2028 report, unless current demographic trends change drastically, Haredim will amount to over a fifth of Israel’s Jewish population in 2028.¹ The share of Haredi pupils entering first grade that year will reach 28.6 percent. One demographic assessment indicates that, by 2059, Israel’s Haredi population will reach 4.15 million and constitute 34.6 percent of the entire Jewish Israeli population (26.6 percent of the total Israeli population).² The number of Haredi youth (ages 19 and under) that year will be nearly equal to the number of [non-Haredi] Jews and others within that age range.

Low employment rates and earning levels have led to a situation where most Haredi households fall below the poverty line. Moreover, due to the Haredi sector’s consistent growth, Haredi poverty has macro effects in terms of tax receipts, transfer payments, consumption, and GDP. This is one of

the main reasons why Haredi employment has been a central issue both in public discourse and among policymakers.

Faced with the demographic growth of the Ultra-Orthodox minority, some in the general society feel threatened and want to avoid contact. According to a recent JPPI public opinion poll, 49 percent of Haredim are interested in living in mixed (secular and ultra-Orthodox) neighborhoods, while 78 percent of secular Jews oppose it. The explanation lies in the fear of religious coercion in common space and Haredi initiatives aimed at bringing the secular youth of mixed neighborhoods closer to religious observance.

Challenges and Recommendations

When the State of Israel was founded, one of the challenges was to ensure true Jewish pluralism that would allow people adhering to different social visions and ideologies to have a shared civic existence under a single political sovereignty – despite disagreement over issues of faith and life style. In 2018, it turns out that Israeli democracy has largely enabled the inclusion of the Haredi “other,” and that its ability to accept him or her “as s/he is” in its institutions is expanding day by day, mainly due to demographic realities that require the Haredi population’s fair participation in economic burden sharing.

There is a consensus among researchers that the Haredi world in Israel is undergoing a process of Israelization. It is reasonable to assume that the

integration process that began in the workforce and in political affairs will continue to grow, and that, in the end, mutually agreed upon solutions will be found for issues that appear to be burning today. In the next 70 years, the Haredi community’s main challenge will be to formulate a narrative that enables it to distinguish itself from the National-Religious sector, even though both will be integrated into the public sector, study in institutions of higher learning, and serve in the IDF. The Government of Israel, on its part, should continue on a course of balanced and pragmatic policy, enabling those who want to integrate without surrendering their unique identity, and guide the adoption of the American Ultra-Orthodox societal pattern.

In the United States, as is well known, the Ultra-Orthodox public observes a way of life that is insular and dedicated to observance of the Mitzvoth and Torah study, while also participating fully in the workforce and the economy and, to a certain extent, in the general society.

The realization of this policy depends on the willingness of the Ultra-Orthodox to respect the general public and to refrain from interfering in non-Haredi lifestyles.

Endnotes

- 1 Brodet, D. (edit.), *Israel 2028: Vision and Strategy for Economy and Society in a Global World*, 2008.
- 2 Ben Moshe, E. “Expected Changes in Structure and Composition of the Israeli Population 2060-2010,” As part of the National Insurance Institute’s Financial Stability Project, 2013.

The Reform and Conservative Movements in Israel

Surveys of Israeli Jewish identity consistently show as many as 12-13 percent of Israeli Jews self-identify as Reform or Conservative. While conservative voices claim that the liberal religious movements have no place in Israel, that secular Israelis are “secular-Orthodox,” it is becoming difficult to ignore this emerging reality. The movements combined maintain 125 communities throughout Israel, 280 affiliated rabbis, 85 of them working in such capacities. Both have active rabbinic seminaries, youth movements, pre-army *mechinot* and three kibbutzim, with many more hosting “Reform-style” synagogues.

Yet the movements report only 12,000 registered adult members combined. Instead, the majority of these “Reform” and “Conservative” Jews are secular or traditional Israelis who engage with Jewish practice such as weddings (~1000/year), bar/bat mitzvahs (~3000/year), circumcisions and more (~1000/year) through the liberal alternatives, rather than traditional Orthodox Judaism.

To understand the emerging religious identity of secular and traditional Israelis, we suggest considering the following elements:

Synagogue membership plays a nominal role, as Israelis rarely “belong” to synagogues, and much of what the organized Jewish community provides abroad is provided instead by the state, school, or in the public space.

Most Hiloni¹ Israelis are not detached from Judaism and engage with Jewish practice, holidays and life cycle events.

Those Hiloni Israelis who are turned off by the Orthodox establishment, are increasingly exposed to non-Orthodox alternatives through travel abroad and interaction with local Jewish communities, interactions with Diaspora Jews in Israel, and attendance of Reform or Conservative life-cycle events.

We propose that this amounts to a significant shift from the accepted paradigm for religious identity

for secular and traditional Israelis. Historically, most Israeli Jews “didn’t attend Orthodox synagogues;” today, a growing number of secular and traditional Israelis now also “don’t attend Reform and Conservative synagogues,” and engage with the movements primarily for lifecycle events.

While this has not yet translated into Reform and Conservative movements with hundreds of thousands of committed followers, it could, realistically mean that in the near future as many as 20-30 percent of Hiloni and Masorati Israelis will prefer to “not attend” Reform and Conservative synagogues. This is already the case in Tel Aviv and other places around Israel.

Public attitudes toward the Reform and Conservative movements is generally positive: highest among Hiloni Israelis; mixed or neutral among Masorati Israelis; and negative among the Dati and Haredi population. A majority of Israeli Jews favor granting equal rights and recognition to the movements. That said, hostility from Orthodox and Haredi groups is significantly more intense than is the sympathy and support proffered by the secular and traditional public.

The Reform and Conservative movements, despite widespread criticism of the government and the religious establishment, have, in fact, significant room to operate in most respects, although much of this has been achieved through legal activism. Thus, today the only major issue with which the movements have no official rights is in the realm of marriage and divorce. They do have full or partial freedom in the area of conversion, access to the Kotel, access to the public education system,

government funding for rabbis and synagogues, and burial. However, public funding is entirely disproportionately low with respect to what is granted the movements (a few millions) vs. Orthodox and Haredi groups (a few billions).

Policy Implications

The unequal status of the movements in Israel is a point of contention between the Israeli government and many Diaspora Jews. There are significant parts of the government and the constituencies that they represent who are strongly opposed to the liberal movements and expressions of religious pluralism in general. At the same time, while there is wide support for these in the general public, this support is not afforded high importance and priority by the supporters themselves. Thus, policies favorable to the movements may find favor with the Diaspora but will cause domestic political damage, not gain.

Continued efforts by the Haredi parties to push legislation that would grant greater control to the Rabbinate and block the non-Orthodox movements (as well as modern-Orthodox), is driving many to bypass the Rabbinate altogether. Some of these efforts are led by Modern Orthodox elements in society as well as the Reform and Conservative movements. This could make the Rabbinate irrelevant to a significant segment of Jewish Israelis if this trend continues (marriage, kashrut supervision, conversion, etc.).

Endnotes

- 1 See Note to the Reader above



After 70 Years: Examining US Philanthropy to the American Jewish Community and to Israel

In this Annual Assessment, we look at two issues related to the sources and uses of Jewish wealth for Jewish people purposes. The first is a preliminary data-based examination of the contention that the face of philanthropy in North America is changing so as to confer ever greater control and influence to big donors. This has become a prime focus of concern in contemplating the sustainability of Jewish community institutions under such changed circumstances. While much discussion has centered on how big giving can be retained for Jewish people uses, JPPI's analysis suggests that at least some of this focus may be misplaced.

We then address how relevant Diaspora philanthropy toward Israel may be 70 years after the founding of the state and especially in light of its profound and sustained economic growth over recent decades. Although the scale of such giving may have diminished in relative terms, it remains significant for selected aspects of Israeli life – and may be even more so from the perspective of maintaining communal bonds across a widening divide.

Small Giving: The essential and underappreciated currency of American Jewish life

In recent years, Jewish media outlets have repeatedly described the changing state of Jewish philanthropy. A June 2018 article captured the message that has dominated reporting on Jewish giving: “How Entrepreneurs are Disrupting Philanthropy.”¹ The Avi Chai Foundation’s 51-page study advanced this core message: “Giving Jewish: How big funders have transformed American Jewish philanthropy.” Written by Prof. Jack Wertheimer, the report documents that 250 Jewish foundations, currently making annual grants of \$500,000 or more to Jewish causes, give between \$900 million and \$1 billion USD each year. To set the context, total annual giving in the U.S. and Israel amounts to roughly \$5.5 billion USD annually.² The report concludes, “the philanthropic landscape has changed fundamentally over the past quarter century.”

But has it? And in which spheres?

To more fully understand the nature of Jewish giving and the funding for Jewish life, JPPI has initiated a multi-year study of Jewish giving. More specifically, it seeks to aggregate data so that JPPI researchers and the community may learn in far more detailed ways about the nature and sources of funding for Jewish life. In stage I, JPPI will focus on the sources of funding for Jewish life in the United States.³

In trying to track Jewish giving, delineating the boundaries of the American Jewish community is no longer clear cut. Core institutions were created by American Jews in the first decades of the 20th century to respond to the needs of Jewish immigrants that reached its shores. In addition to synagogues, community centers, summer camps, and the first day schools, the Jewish community created hospitals, residences and programs for senior adults as well as social service agencies to provide essential care for the poor, the elderly, and those in need of essential health and human services. These health and human service agencies served and employed Jews in fields in which many existing institutions did not. Over time, these institutions became recognized as being of the highest quality and were accepted as respected components of the American Jewish community.

Beginning in the middle of the 20th century, Jewish-affiliated hospitals, social service agencies and senior adult facilities received larger and larger amounts of government funding. The requirement set by government, quite properly, was that these institutions were to serve all citizens. Entering the 21st century, they were essentially seen as

part of “the governments delivery system.”⁴ While most were still “under Jewish auspice” and considered agencies of the extended Jewish communal network, they received most of their operational funding from government. They had become public services. These Jewishly affiliated institutions continue to approach Jewish donors and receive significant support for capital projects. The next time you enter a Jewishly affiliated hospital, senior adult residence, or social service agency, note the names of Jewish donors on the walls of these institutions. While considerable Jewish philanthropic funds continue to reach these institutions, they are no longer viewed by most observers as critical either to contemporary Jewish life or in terms of strengthening the Jewish future.

JPPI seeks to understand the sources of funding for the institutions that are considered critical for the Jewish future. With this mandate, strengthening Jewish identity and connection with Israel are viewed as the most significant challenges facing both American and world Jewry. JPPI is in the initial stage of gathering the data for this study to determine the relative importance of the sources of funding for the institutions considered critical to the Jewish future. The approach will not begin with reviewing how major Jewish donors determine to use their philanthropic funds or how Jewish foundations choose to do so. Instead, JPPI has focused on identifying the institutions considered most significant for strengthening Jewish identity and connection to Israel and then delineating their funding sources.

While virtually every Jewish institution can influence the formation of individual and community Jewish

identity, some have the greatest significance—beyond one’s family—in the two broad areas of strengthening Jewish identity and connection with Israel: synagogues; Jewish community centers and, in some localities, YMHAs; Jewish summer camps (residential and day); Jewish youth organizations; Jewish day schools and yeshivas; Hillels and other campus based organizations; Israel experience programs including Birthright, Masa, and Honeymoon Israel. Each is routinely held to be collectively (and sometimes individually) decisive for those not raised in highly identified Jewish families, the settings in which Jews have been traditionally introduced to Jewish life.

JPPI will seek to understand the funding sources for national agencies that convene, coordinate and provide a range of services to strengthen the critical local gateway institutions identified above. They include but are not limited to federations and national agencies including denominations, Jewish Community Center Association (JCCA) and International Hillel. Institutions of higher Jewish learning (e.g., Hebrew Union College, Jewish Theological Seminary, Yeshiva University) and boards of Jewish education see to the training of many of the professional leaders that staff and provide leadership for the other key gateway institutions and so also require attention.

Prior reports and studies of Jewish philanthropy, which have driven the “Big Givers transforming Jewish life” headlines, are limited for three reasons. First, they include Jewish giving to the institutions that are now essentially government funded—hospitals, senior adult facilities, and other social service agencies. With government now providing

most of the core funding, Jewish communal and donor support is no longer essential. Prior studies also included support from donors for Israel-based institutions. While understandable and perhaps even essential depending on the objective of the individual study, including such support for Israeli institutions tends to reduce the ability to understand the nature and sources of funding for the core institutions of American Jewish life.

Second, prior studies have substantially relied upon publicly available U.S. IRS Form 990 filings, the reporting required by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service from non-profit organizations whose donors, in turn, receive tax benefits.⁵ Religious institutions are not required to prepare such IRS returns. Therefore, prior studies on funding for Jewish institutions have been undertaken without including data from the most ubiquitous Jewish institutions in the United States—synagogues, day schools, and yeshivas—which also tend to be among the institutions which reach and affect the most Jews, young and old.

Third, while the prior studies on Jewish givers and foundations shed light on the ways in which Jewish donors and foundations are shifting funding priorities, they cannot and do not provide an analysis or understanding of the funding sources of the institutions most essential for Jewish living and Jewish learning in the United States. In short, they concentrate on giving from the standpoint of the givers, not that of the receiving organizations.

In a pilot stage designed to provide proof of principle for the methodology, categorization and research strategy, JPPI tested its process by seeking data from ten Jewish organizations in a major U.S.

city. In response, a total of six (two synagogues, a Jewish day school, two Jewish community centers and a Hillel) provided the essential framework for understanding the sources of their funding. The aggregate results —preliminary as they are—are instructive.

The 2016 budgets from these five institutions total \$45,640,832. These institutions were funded from the following sources:

Table 1. Aggregate funding for six Jewish community organizations, by source of funding, 2006.

Source of funding:	Amount	Share of total
Membership Dues	\$11,435,002	25.1%
Tuition and Program Fees	\$16,194,526	35.5%
Contributions from members / family members	\$12,954,812	28.4%
Foundations	\$411,240	0.9%
Government	\$312,558	0.7%
Federations	\$591,873	1.3%
Other	\$3,124,222	6.8%
TOTAL	\$45,640,832	100.0%

Note: Budget for 2016 or nearest equivalent fiscal year.

Data: Jewish People Policy Institute.

These data represent only preliminary findings from a limited number of institutions. These figures may or may not broadly reflect funding patterns for a range of community-based and local institutions. When we include entities such

as Birthright, Honeymoon Israel, PJ Library, or Moishe House – as well as national organizations that coordinate, convene and provide a range of resources for synagogues, day schools, JCCs, Hillels, and training institutions for Jewish professionals – the relative sources of funding may change; foundations and Federations would likely prove to be of greater significance.

However, for most American Jews, their primary settings for experiencing and being introduced to Jewish life are local community-based organizations, such as those represented in our initial small sample. If the above pattern is broadly reflective of the funding for these institutions, our understanding of the nature of contemporary funding of Jewish life will need to be updated and modified. Most of the studies and headlines have focused on the growing number of Jewish foundations and the ways in which large donors have changed Jewish giving. While there is little doubt that such studies have captured and brought to the attention of the wider Jewish community real phenomena affecting an important aspect of Jewish life in North America, we may need a broader perspective to gauge accurately what effect such trends might have and how individual Jewish communities and North American Jewry as a whole should address them.

These preliminary findings are at least suggestive of the need for greater context; Jewish scholars, the media, and conventional wisdom may have underappreciated the essential role of membership dues, program fees and tuition, and donations from members of family members in providing the core resources for the key gateway institutions of Jewish

life. None of this is to gainsay that the largest and biggest donors and foundations about which we read so much are doing important work. Birthright (*taglit*), for example was a “game changer” in scope and impact and remains of huge significance. It was initiated by two philanthropists – Charles Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt – and is now primarily funded by the Government of Israel and Sheldon Adelson with additional funding from national Jewish foundations and individual donors. And such initiatives as PJ Library which distributes Jewish themed children’s books — initiated by Harold Greenspoon – is of enormous value for large numbers of American Jewish families.

The findings, while coming from an exceedingly small sample and by no means dispositive, do, however, lend support for a hypothesis that the institutions which sustain the framework for Jewish living and learning in local communities receive precious few dollars from the major national Jewish foundations and “Big Givers” unless the latter are personally connected to the institution. The large grants of major foundations, proudly announced and publicized, appear to rarely reach the critical gateway institutions which continue to frame Jewish living and Jewish learning. Membership dues, program fees, and donations from members, while small in scale, may prove to be sufficiently large in aggregate to provide the bulk of institutional funding.

The larger foundations may certainly be providing support for piloting new initiatives, educational enhancements for volunteer and professional leaders, and related programs. Big givers and large foundations are deservedly heralded in the media

and in conferences they sponsor. But if the task of leadership is to “stick to their knitting,” then the leaders of core institutions of Jewish living may want to spend less time on engaging the large national donors and foundations and seek new, innovative ways of engaging and aggregating needed resources from members, clients, and those that access their programs for essential institutional support. As more information is gained and assessed, it may well appear that it is those individuals that enter the doors of institutions will be the ones most likely to open their hands and checkbooks to provide the essential support for Jewish communal living and learning.

The Connection between the World Jewish Economy and the Economy of Israel

This year’s Annual Assessment discusses several aspects of the bonds between Israel and the Jewish communities of the Diaspora. Seventy years after the founding of the state, there are causes for concern. Although prior to the creation of Israel Jewish communities divided over the nature of the Zionist enterprise and how it should be manifested, for at least a half century afterwards the hallmark of Diaspora Jewish life had been near unanimity on the value of Israel and the need to preserve it through extraordinary measures if need be. This unitary block has seen cracks and fissures in recent years. The political dimension has come under strain as the course of political transformation in Israel in recent years has diverged to some degree from the political attitudes held by many in Diaspora Jewish communities now overwhelmingly concentrated

in the urban, liberal democratic West. This effect has also been exacerbated by an increase in domestic polarization within the countries in which these communities reside. Similarly, some in those communities are disturbed because they find themselves perceiving an increasing gulf between their own ethical and moral beliefs, for many the essence of their Jewish identity, and the governmental actions of the Jewish state in realms such as religious pluralism, adherence to democratic principles, or the condition of Palestinians in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.

Just how far traditional Jewish bonds have been strained and what this portends for the future is open to debate. There is another, more material set of bonds, beyond those of political and religious identity, that while important in themselves may also provide insight into how serious the present apparent crisis may prove to be. This consists of the types of financial support the Diaspora has provided to the *Yishuv* from its earliest days and throughout Israel's history as an independent state.

The most common narrative is that from the first days of its independence, the financial backing of the Diaspora proved crucial to the State of Israel. Whether providing the means to purchase arms, for the ingathering and settlement of immigrants from Jewish communities in distress or the capital for building up the nascent agricultural, industrial and public infrastructure, Diaspora contributions were crucial for survival and for prosperity. Diaspora philanthropy came to the fore again during the crises of 1967 and 1973. But in the last quarter century, in light of Israel's impressive economic performance, crowned by its accession into the

ranks of the OECD and prominent participation in the major international R&D programs of the European Union, perhaps those days are over. The scale of Diaspora giving relative to the size of Israel's GDP has shrunk markedly compared with its prior share. Even the testimony of the government itself suggests implicitly that this is the case. The Israeli government invests about 400 million shekels⁶ a year in assistance to the Diaspora Jewry. This investment is as explicitly presented as a recognition of both the shift in Israel's economic fortunes and a coming of the time for paying a debt of gratitude toward the communities that had supported Israel in its infancy.

Don't Ask; Don't Tell

It would seem as if it should be a straightforward exercise to track the amount of Diaspora philanthropic funding to Israel since 1948 and determine its importance to the economy over time.⁷

It is not.

Such philanthropy can take many different forms only some of which are routinely tracked. Focusing primarily on the United States, while there are some federal reporting requirements to qualify for tax deductions and to protect the status of not-for-profits that may be involved in such transfers, much giving goes unreported, especially if it derives from individuals. Further, neither in the U.S. nor Israel do the authorities characterize international transfers coming from Jewish donors separately from those coming from all sources. To determine what the scale of philanthropy from North American or other Diaspora sources

might have been over the years, to say nothing of determining the destination and use of such funds when reaching Israel, would require detective work on a heroic scale.

Another complicating factor is the at-first-surprising reticence of individuals and organizations on both sides of the transactions to discuss sources and amounts received. Private discussion by JPPI staff with both Diaspora donors and Israeli recipients make clear the sources of this unwillingness. On the donor side, there is reluctance to find themselves in a contest of comparison over the size of donations. This is true to some degree even with donor-directed gifts but in the case of third-party organizations that aggregate donations from many individuals there is also fear of alienating potential giving. As stated by the director of a large source of Jewish philanthropy to Israel, “I don’t need to have my donors on the left know how much we send across the Green Line [to settlements on the West Bank] nor my donors on the right the amount of our support to Hand in Hand [the operator of joint Jewish-Arab primary schools within Israel proper.]”

A similar and at times matching set of concerns make Israeli recipient organizations equally taciturn. Once again, there is reluctance to open oneself to comparison with other recipient organizations within the same sector: who receives more? There may also be at times a desire to protect the (real or imagined) exclusivity an Israeli organization might seem to enjoy with specific donors by not fully identifying those providing them with philanthropy. Of course,

there are many instances in which it benefits both parties to publicize particular gifts or connections between foundations and Israeli institutions. But the prevailing ethic appears to be to take a low-key approach to both transparency and publicity beyond what is required by law.

This brings up a further complication. In recent years, foreign support to Israeli institutions, particularly those in the so-called “third sector” (NGOs), has become a matter of political debate. The passage of the NGO Law in 2016 requires non-profits that receive the bulk of their funding from abroad to disclose that fact publicly. Further efforts have been made to ban such donations outright. These efforts largely target NGOs identified as being on the left of the political spectrum and focus on donations from foreign governments.⁸ Nevertheless, the current environment has become even less conducive for either donors or recipients to speak openly about the flows of funds from outside to Israel.

And there is one more reason shared by all parties to the transaction to avoid specific discussion of amounts: the remarkable growth of Israel’s economy. The total of philanthropy from the Diaspora to Israel, even if growing, will pale compared to the magnitude of Israel’s GDP. There is a fear held by coordinating organizations on the donor side as well as by recipients on the other that potential donors will conclude that Israel no longer requires such support.

Such may well be the case in aggregate. But there is a case to be made that contributions to specific sectors remain significant and that the Diaspora

funding provides an important link between world Jewry and that of Israel.

Icing on the Cake – or Something More?

We are not completely lacking in information. We will first discuss absolute scale and then take a more disaggregated view of where Jewish donations to Israel are put to use.

We can begin to gain a concept of the scale of philanthropy to Israel by examining the most recently available data from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics. In 2015, philanthropic donations originating outside the country amounted to 8.3 percent of the funding for all Israeli non-profit institutions with annual budgets of over 500,000 NIS.⁹ This represented some 11.3 billion NIS (\$2.9 billion). However, this figure does not include the funding from outside Israel to the "National Institutions" (the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund, United Israel Appeal, and the World Zionist Organization) amounting to an additional 961 million NIS (\$247 million).¹⁰ So, the total of external funding to the National Institutions and Israel's largest NGOs was roughly \$3.15 billion (12.26 billion NIS).^{11, 12}

Israel's GDP in 2015 was approximately \$300 billion. So, despite lacking full information it is probably safe to assume that donations from abroad in total amounted to only a little over 1 percent of national income. This is hardly of a relative magnitude likely to instill in the hearts of potential donors a sense of mission or imperative need. It represents a tremendous

reversal (and remarkable success) compared to the first decades of the state.

On the other hand, it is precisely during the period of Israel's most dynamic growth that we witnessed considerable increase in the scale of U.S. philanthropy toward Israel. From 265 at the end of the 1980s, the number of organizations with "American Friends" in their title grew to 436 by 2000 and 667 by 2010.¹³ If we look in greater detail, a more nuanced story emerges.

A groundbreaking 2012 study by Fleisch and Sasson provides us with a more discriminating lens.¹⁴ By conducting keyword-driven searches of on-line U.S. tax filings they inferred amounts transferred to several named Israeli institutions in the year 2007. This provides us with an ability to compare the size of this philanthropy to the annual scale of operations of those institutions for which public records are available. JPPI collated this information and compared it with the Fleisch and Sasson data to prepare Table 2.¹⁵

There are instances in Table 2 in which apples are being compared to oranges. The data on U.S. donations come from 2007. In the instances noted, the financial data comes from 2008 because 2007 data were not available. Further, in comparing the total of U.S. donations to an institution's annual income, we are seeking only to give a sense of scale and relative importance, not reconstruct actual budgets. For example, the Hebron Yeshiva notes that 35 percent of their annual expenses in 2008 were met by donations from abroad. And yet the philanthropy from the U.S. alone was many times the size of the entire

income claimed. While we do not have precise details in any case, such anomalies (if we are to take the publicly available records and the Fleisch and Sasson findings at face value) are explained on the one hand by the institution tallying only ready cash as income while on the

other donations noted by Fleisch and Sasson may include, for example, large gifts for capital construction that do not appear on the current account. This emphasizes the need to view the table only to gain a sense of scale rather than as a comparison between accounting equivalents.

Table 2. Shares of donations, donations from abroad and donations from the U.S. for selected Israel institutions, 2007.a

INSTITUTION	DONATIONS (Compared to income)	DONATIONS FROM ABROAD (Compared to income)	DONATIONS FROM U.S. (Compared to income)	DONATIONS FROM ABROAD (Share of donations)	DONATIONS FROM U.S. (Share of donations)
	percent				
Ben Gurion University of the Negev	1.5	--	17.0 ^d	--	1155.3
Hadassah Hospital			37.3 ^{a,j}		
Hazon Yeshaya Yeshiva	93.6 ^h	85.9 ^h	93.3	91.8 ^h	99.7 ^h
Hebrew University of Jerusalem	8.0	--	8.7 ^b	--	108.7
Hebron Yeshiva, Jerusalem	39.7 ^{a,e}	35.5 ^a	322.2 ^a	89.4 ^{a,e}	810.8 ^{a,e}
Israel Opera	10.8	--	0.7	--	--
Shaare Zedek Hospital	--	--	14.9	--	--
Shalom Hartman Institute	61.3 ^{a,g}	58.9 ^{a,g}	63.1 ^a	96.2 ^a	119.9 ^a
Weizmann Institute of Science	26.2	--	47.8 ^c	--	182.7
Women's Int'l. Zionist Organization	--	9.8 ^{f,g}	4.0 ^g	--	--
YAHAD United for Israel's Soldiers ⁱ	45.4 ^{a,g,j}	5.5 ^{a,g}	124.3 ^{a,g,k}	12.1 ^{a,j}	273.8 ^{a,j,k}

Data: Fleish and Sasson (2012); web-based searches of publicly available financial data.

Table: Jewish People Policy Institute

Notes: Data availability did not allow all cells to be calculated. Institutions were selected to cover the broad categories of institutions as well as to look across ideological or religious perspectives. For 2007, we used the exchange rate: 1 US dollar = 3.9 New Israel Shekel.

a. In the instances noted, the publicly available information on annual income came from 2008.

b. American Friends of Hebrew University

c. American Committee for Weizmann Institute of Science

- d. American Associates of Ben Gurion University of the Negev
- e. Does not include "Participation in expenses (costs)" [presumably donations in kind]
- f. "Diaspora Federations"
- g. Does not include in income or donations "Sums that were freed from restrictions for current activities and designated goals"
- h. Donations equals "Incomes from Israel" plus "Income from abroad". Note that starting in 2011, the institution reported both "Income from abroad" and "Sale of food products" which had been previously combined. "Sale of food products" in 2011 were NIS 25.1 million and "Income from abroad" NIS 18 million – by comparison, exactly the total of "Income from abroad" reported in 2011.
- i. The merger of two organizations that were separate in 2007-2008: the Libi Fund and the Association for the Well-being of Israeli Soldiers.
- j. "From donations and allocations".
- k. Donations from American Friends of IDF.
- l. Hadassah Medical Relief Association; includes large donation for new hospital wing.

It is not surprising to find that religious institutions such as the Shalom Hartman Institute or the Hebron Yeshiva in Jerusalem are major recipients of Diaspora donations. It is a bit more surprising to find such core health service organizations as Shaare Zedek hospital, also in Jerusalem, being sustained by significant philanthropy from abroad. The data for Ben Gurion University suggests the donation of large capital construction gifts in 2007 that do not appear on the ledger of current cash donations. Only in the case of the Israel Opera and WIZO among the institutions highlighted might the philanthropy from the U.S. be characterized as of only minor importance. (But in the case of the latter, the revenue received from federations, presumably mostly in the U.S. and Canada certainly enhances the total received.)

Again, we point out the problems with this approach. Data are very hard to come by. Reconciling years, categories and types of donations as well as several different approaches to accounting are beyond the scope of this analysis. The data we do possess are not comprehensive. Only some accounts will capture donations through synagogues, direct

donations, bequests and charitable annuities. Fleisch and Sasson themselves point out the possibility of errors in key word searches.

But the underlying message still comes through. In addition to religious institutions and charities, there are important Israeli organizations, such as hospitals and universities, that receive donations of a scale to be significant compared to their annual incomes. The donations from Diaspora communities could be replaced only by placing severe budgetary strain on other parts of Israel's public and private activities. From this we derive three possible findings:

1. In taking some pressure off the public budget, some of the crucial investments made by Israel during recent decades in both its defense and economic development would probably have had to have been curtailed without the release of fiscal pressure provided by foreign donations. Taxes in Israel are already high. In this sense, while the relative scale of Diaspora philanthropy may have been diminished from the earliest decades, the practical and indirect effect may still have been crucial and thus

disproportionate to its size.

2. It would appear that replacing overseas donations with domestic resources would be difficult over the short term. Philanthropic giving within Israel has grown over the years but would need to do so many-fold to come anywhere close to replacing the foreign component of philanthropic giving.¹⁶ And it is not at all clear that all institutions currently supported by Diaspora funding could find suitable replacements even given some time. While this might be viewed as a potential market test of relative value of such institutions as perceived by Israel's citizens, it is also likely that some value to Israeli society would inevitably be either lost or reduced to some extent.
3. We end as we began. While Diaspora giving no longer represents the balance of survival that it once did, the nature and type of institutions being supported within Israel give those on both sides of the transaction reason to feel connection and a sense of bonding. This would be true on the institutional and individual level by virtue of the sense of engagement in a joint enterprise that holds meaning for these involved in its support and delivery – whether in education, Jewish learning, health or social activism. And it would also be true in the larger sense of a feeling of bonding in the larger enterprise of ensuring a strong, resilient and growing Israel

Endnotes

- 1 (6/11/18 ejewish philanthropy, by Dhana Sabanathan).
- 2 Wertheimer, Jack (2018). "Giving Jewish: How Big Funders Have Transformed American Jewish Philanthropy", March, Avi Chai Foundation. (http://avichai.org/knowledge_base/giving-jewish-how-big-funders-have-transformed-american-jewish-philanthropy/)
- 3 Currently we can rely only on secondary rather than primary information on the latter as may be seen in the discussion in the second part of this chapter.
- 4 (Jeff Solomon, President of the Andrew and Charles Bronfman philanthropies, as quoted in "26 Billion Bucks", Josh Nathan Kzis, April 2, 2014)
- 5 See, for example, "How I built my Jewish charity data base," by Josh Nathan-Kazis in The Forward, 24 March 2014. The Nathan-Kazis data were also a primary source for Wertheimer (2018).
- 6 The sums are calculated according to the following calculation: The Israeli government invested in 2017 about 100 million NIS in the Joint Initiative of the Government of Israel and Jewish People in the Diaspora. (G.O.I Resolution no. 1660 June 1, 2014 and revised by Resolution no. 95 passed June 19, 2015) which is about a third of the entire projects budget for one year. About 100 million NIS is invested per year in Masa (Budget Proposal 2017/18), Birthright Israel is also budgeted at 150 million NIS per year (GOI Resolutions 2050 and 825), About 60 million NIS is invested in Nativ (The Liaison Bureau), a government supported unit which is active among Jews in the former Soviet Union in order to encourage their ties to Judaism, Zionism and Israel (GOI Budget). Upon this one should add smaller projects such as the Morasha program which was budgeted at 10 million NIS per year (GOI resolution 2980, August 2018).
- 7 Financial flows from members of the Diaspora to Israel may take many forms including direct investment, bond purchases, deliveries in kind (e.g. weapons and

ammunition during the War of Independence or gift delivery of ambulances and medical supplies,) private remittances and philanthropic giving to Israeli institutions. We will focus primarily on the last of these.

- 8 Twenty-five of the 27 NGOs that are subject to the NGO Law's provisions are viewed as being primarily on the left of Israel's political spectrum.
- 9 The non-profits cover culture, sports, and recreation; education and research; health; social services; environmental, development, and workers' organizations; synagogues, mosques, churches, yeshivas for adults; advocacy organizations; philanthropic and volunteer organizations (Brenner and Hazan, op. cit.)
- 10 Such institutions are also responsible in part for funding non-profits of various types so the actual share of external funds making up the budget of such organizations is actually greater than the reported 8.3 percent (Brenner and Hazan, op. cit.)
- 11 JPPI calculation based on CBS data found in Brenner, Nava and Osnat Hazan (2017). "Philanthropy of Israelis 2012–2015", Central Bureau of Statistics [Israel] 353/2017, 30 November. This must be viewed as a conservative estimate because it is largely based on funds moving through official channels, particularly cash donations.
- 12 There is a discrepancy between these figures and those reported in the regular CBS series on current account transfers from the rest of the world to Israel ("Table 2.A.46. Current Transfers, 1980-2015"). Those show only \$1.6 billion of transfers to non-profit organization. But these figures come from the Bank of Israel and may only represent transfers to Israeli non-profits from which donors may receive tax credits. The data in Brenner and Hazan, however, are based upon

surveys and so will not only include organizations which may not offer tax credits but could include transfers of several types including estate planning receipts, etc. We presume these data to be more comprehensive than those reported in the regular tables from the CBS statistical yearbook.

- 13 Fleisch and Sasson, op.cit., p. 3.
- 14 Fleisch, Eric and Theodore Sasson (2012). "The New Philanthropy: American Jewish Giving to Israeli Institutions", Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, April.
- 15 We began with the list of institutions identified by Fleisch and Sasson and sought to select representative samples from each of the major areas of giving: education, health, etc. The actual selection stemmed from a desire to look across the political spectrum as well, but the final selection of institutions to include in the table was largely driven by opportunity in finding the necessary data.
- 16 See Brenner and Hazan (2017) for a detailed treatment of Israeli domestic philanthropy.

The Innovation Challenge

In a little more than one generation Israel's innovation has transformed its place in the world. Just recently Israel won the Eurovision contest with a notably creative performance by Neta Barzilai. In addition, the Israeli delegation came home with four medals in the Physics Olympics held for high school students, not for the first time. Of course, Israeli high-tech startups and firms are world famous including Mobileye, Checkpoint and Waze.

Statistical data confirms Israel's innovative capacity. Israel has received high scores in various global indices, some of which refer specifically to innovation and creativity. The GCI (Global Creativity Index) ranked Israel fourth among 75 countries in its Global Technology Index (a sub-index of the GCI) in 2010, and third among 139 countries in 2015. Israel ranked 20 among 75 countries in 2010 and 28 among 139 in 2015 in the Talent Index which measures the share of the workforce in the creative class and the share of adults with higher (post-high school) education.¹

In the Global Innovation Index, Israel ranked 17 of 127 countries in 2017, 14 of 142 in 2013, and 23 of 132 in 2009-2010.²

In a third global index, the Bloomberg Innovation Index of more than 200 economies, Israel ranked 10th in 2018-2017, 11th in 2016, and 5th in 2015.³

Israel also received high rankings in more specific indices. It ranked first in the Science and Technology section of the Global Dynamism Index (GDI).⁴ In IMD Competitiveness 2015 Yearbook (of 148 economies), Israel took first place in innovative ability, second place in innovation, and third place in global innovation.⁵

Today, research-based innovation generates approximately half of Israel's export revenues. But this is not the main story. Countries, East and West, seek cooperation with Israel in order to benefit from its innovation in the informatics, health, agriculture, space, defense, energy and other sectors. Among these countries, quite a few are politically distant from, if not publicly critical of Israel. As in the past, when China and India discreetly asked Israel for defense and agricultural technologies while publicly attacking its policies, today there are still countries where the defense establishment holds sway over reluctant politicians to allow cooperation and trade with Israel. Israel's innovative talent increases its links

with the wider world and enhances its reputation and “soft power.” More than that, Israel’s innovation has created positive interest in Jews and their culture in Asian countries – half the world – which until recently were not aware of Judaism. In the West, there are subtle changes. The French media, for example, would today report unbiased economic and innovation news from Israel. In the past, most French media coverage of Israel was about war and occupation.

Zionism and the State of Israel are among the greatest innovations of the Jewish people. There is ample evidence that both Zionism and the Jewish state, in turn, have stimulated innovation and creativity generally in both Israel and the Diaspora. This is obvious in literature, historiography, and some of the performing arts, and can even be shown in science and technological achievement.

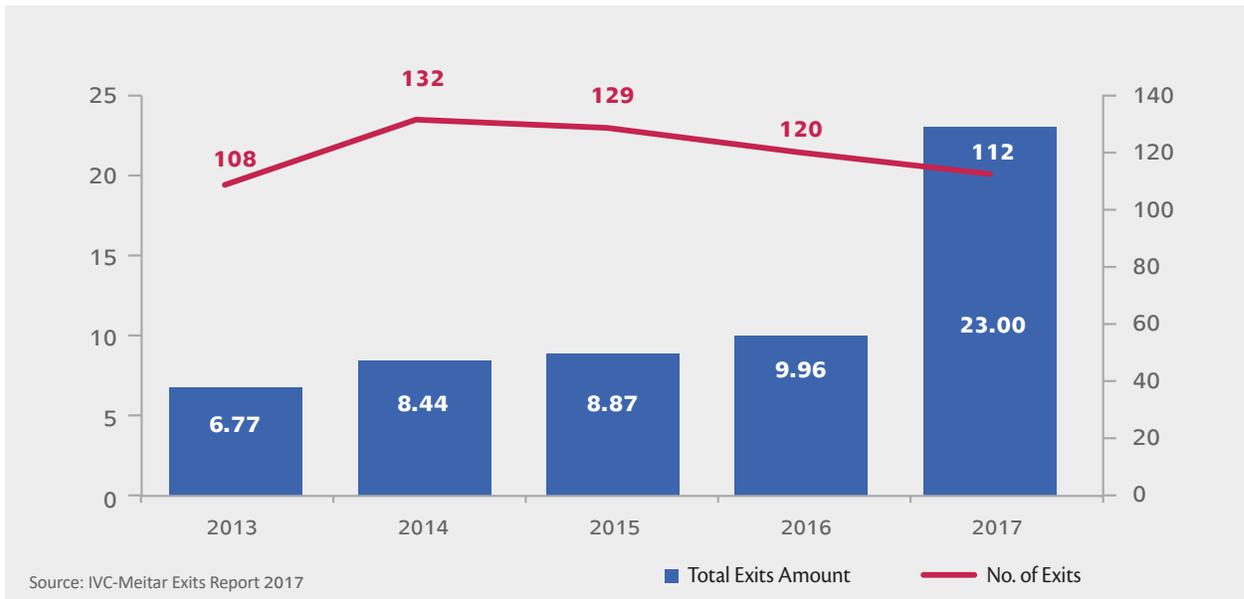
Israel’s high-tech startups are the ‘calling cards’ of its innovation.

The high-tech sector has impressive achievements and continues to serve as the economy’s growth engine. Data from recent years continues to be encouraging and Israel continues to enjoy the fruit of its cutting-edge industry. At the same time, we cannot ignore the warning signs and challenges that confront us. Many studies as well as the data from recent years include warning signals that in order to continue to enjoy a comparative advantage, one must implement a thoughtful policy that responds to both external and domestic challenges. Chief among the external challenges is rising foreign competition. Among the domestic challenges are inadequate numbers of properly trained and educated personnel (see below) and maintaining Israel’s relative position as a top investor in research and development (R & D). Israeli companies also face the challenge of scaling up. This seems to be the reason that Israeli technologies are bought by foreign companies, which results in Israeli financial and intellectual capital leaving the country.

Israeli High-Tech Capital Raising Q1/2012-Q1/2018



Total Exits 2013-2017 (\$B)

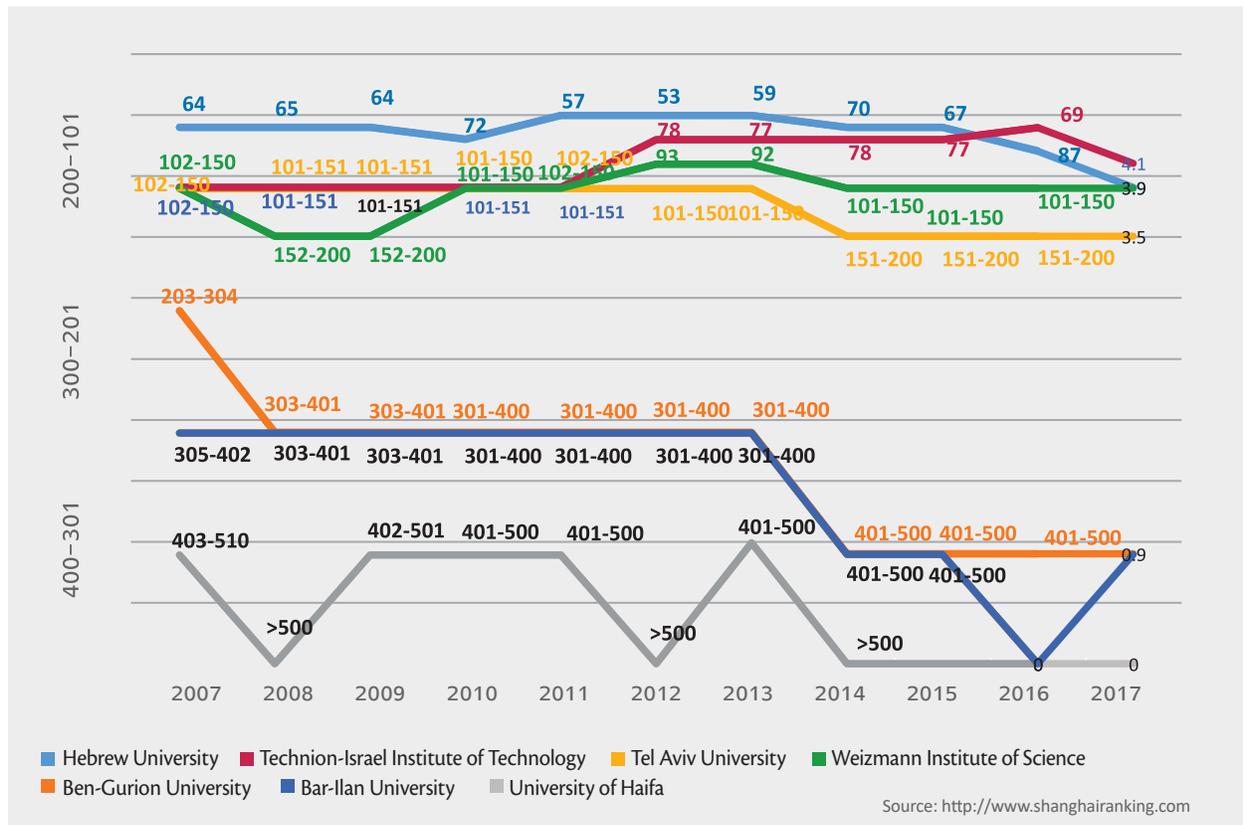


Innovation – used here more broadly than just the economic and technological sense – means change, rupture, and transformation. The Israeli taste for innovation did not suddenly appear out of nowhere. Jewish history abounds with change and innovation. It has largely been the response of a minority to the challenges of discrimination, persecution, and migration. The Jewish minority had the resources to respond flexibly and innovatively to persecution and discrimination over the centuries because it had a tradition of literacy and education, and because large parts of it specialized in urban, commercial, and financial occupations. For the State of Israel, foreign hostility is still the single most important and most extensive driver of innovation. But what is Israel’s main long-term innovation challenge? The late Shimon Peres defined it years ago: How can Israel maintain its innovative power and leadership

in a world where every country is rushing to catch up, often investing more money than Israel? Also, the focus of innovation might change. If the external dangers to Israel recede, and if Israel’s economy keeps growing, civilian innovation will become more important compared to defense innovation: environment, water, health, energy, transportation. This process has started already.

Knowledge acquired through education was key to innovation in the Jewish past and will remain so in the future. Today, Israel’s performance in science and technology, and the underlying research and education, are critical. The number of peer-reviewed scientific papers published by Israelis continues to grow. However, insofar as other countries publish more, Israel’s international ranking declines. Much more worrying is the decline in the standing of Israeli universities.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2003-2017



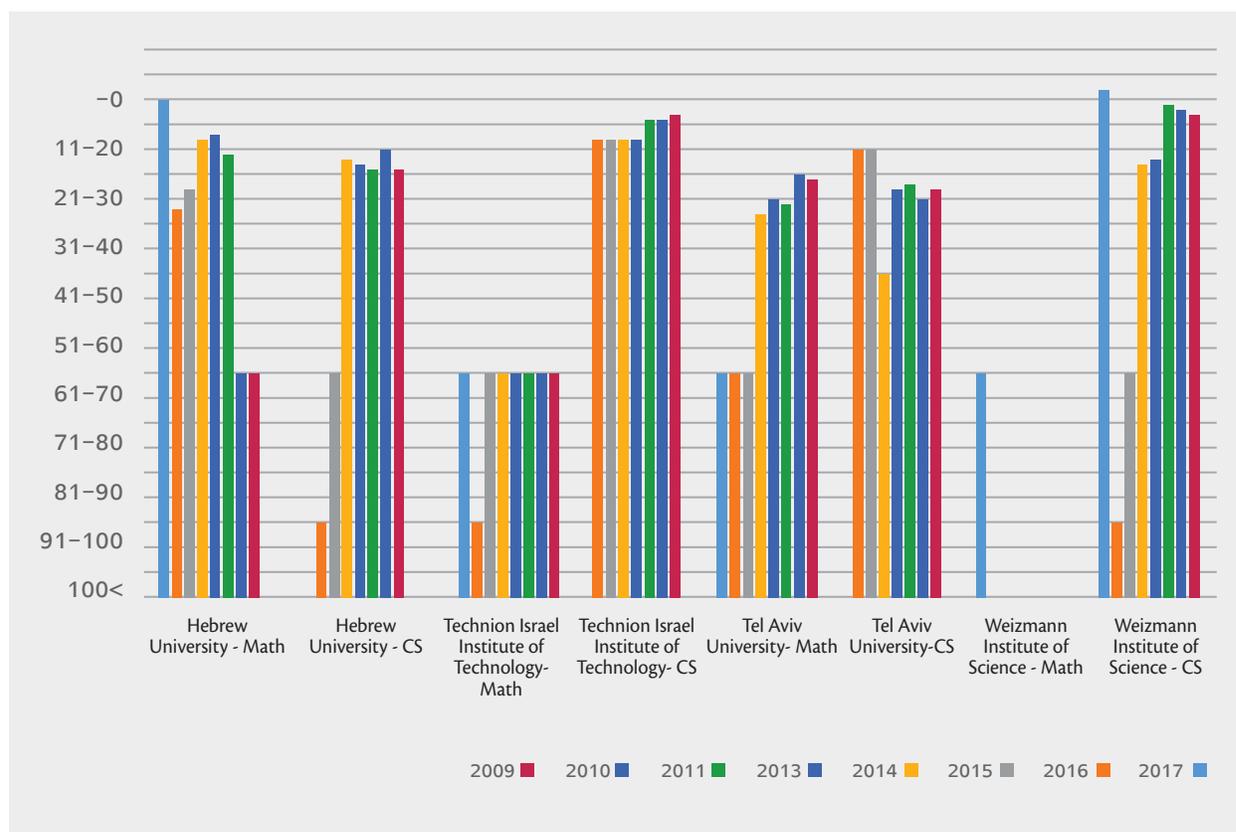
According to the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), all Israeli institutions declined in 2017. The Technion is the only remaining Israeli educational institution that ranks in the top 100 worldwide.⁶

If we look deeper, at the performance in academic ranking of world universities by subject field, four Israeli universities are among the top 100 in science, and specifically in mathematics and computer science. In 2017, Weizmann Institute of Science was ranked 10th in Computer science, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem ranked 11th in mathematics.

Israel's education lags behind some other advanced countries in quantity or quality. Science merits a more robust protection against the vagaries of Israeli coalition and budget politics. Another challenge is coping with major educational gaps in Israel's population. Large numbers of Haredim reject modern education and make few contributions to science and technology. Without change a national crisis may be looming here.

Diversity is a second source of innovative performance. Israel's diversity has been a huge advantage. People from different countries and backgrounds have different perspectives when

Academic Ranking of World Universities - Math and CS



looking at a problem, and various solutions to solve it. Is diversity of culture and thought increasing or decreasing in Israel? Cooperation is essential and does not stifle diversity. Nobody can innovate alone. Large, innovative countries can have an advantage over small countries. Small innovative countries such as Switzerland or The Netherlands, surrounded by large, cooperative countries, have a huge advantage over another small country – Israel which is surrounded by a hostile environment. Israeli science and technology policy struggles to overcome many of these disadvantages. Israel

engages in a lot of scientific and technological cooperation with the United States and Europe. The BDS movement has had little effect so far, but this could change. Although opportunities are opening up in Asia, too many Israelis still hesitate to go east. Another way of compensating for isolation in a hostile environment is by enhancing cooperation with the Jewish Diaspora. While much scientific and funding cooperation exist for research and new technological ventures between Israelis and Jews in the diaspora new platforms and networks can enhance this cooperation even further.

One of the most important factors in maintaining high innovation in Israel is the Israeli government. Small countries with large research-based multinational companies – Switzerland and The Netherlands were already mentioned – can do with less government, Israel cannot. Israeli government policies both in regard to education, science and technology and in regard to economics are crucial to maintaining and even increasing Israel's innovative edge.

Endnotes

1 הניקוד הכולל של ישראל במדד אינו גבוה באף אחת מהשנים, בין היתר מכיוון שהמדד בוחן גם מידת טולרנטיות, שבה ישראל מקבלת בעקביות ציונים נמוכים

2010- 66

2015- 93

http://martinprosperity.org/media/Global-Creativity-Index-2010_Reissued.pdf

<http://martinprosperity.org/content/the-global-creativity-index-2015/>

2 <https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/userfiles/file/GII-2009-2010-Report.pdf>

http://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/economics/gii/gii_2013.pdf

<https://www.globalinnovationindex.org>

3 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-22/south-korea-tops-global-innovation-ranking-again-as-u-s-falls>

4 <https://www.globaldynamismindex.com/gdi.html>

5 <https://www.luzzatto.co.il/images/publications/israel-national-technological-innovation-report-2016-hebrew.pdf>

6 <http://www.shanghairanking.com>

PART 3

Feature Articles



21

Latin American Jews: Changing Horizons and New Challenges

There has been a significant revitalization of Jewish life among the Jewish communities of Latin America although they are shrinking, mostly due to emigration processes.

Over the course of two generations, Latin American Jewry has transformed from mostly immigrants and immigrant communities to rooted communities of locally-born citizens and, simultaneously, of emigrants and expatriates.

Latin America has become an exit region for wide social sectors. In parallel to processes of growing pluralism – political, institutional, and cultural – and the ensuing affirmation of civic commonalities, recurrent failures of modernization processes, followed by economic crises, political instability, high levels of public violence and lack of security have had a negative impact.

Migration waves from Latin America in the last 40 years have been of diverse nature and scope; they have encompassed forced migration and exiled

individuals under high risk (such as politically involved activists and intellectuals); voluntary household mobility motivated by safety, security, and economic considerations; and movement of professionals prompted by opportunities and entrepreneurial expansion in the context of increasingly interconnected markets. Indeed, there has been a sustained movement of professionals in privileged occupations, who operated businesses and sought education; Jews have constituted a high proportion of these.

Simultaneously, under the impact of globalization processes and the move toward social and institutional pluralism, Jewish individuals have increasingly entered the political sphere and assumed high-ranking public roles, while organized Jewish communities have attained prominent positions as a result of increased top-to-bottom citizenship participation. Thus, the twofold complex process of the erosion of a national ethnic narrative and the greater recognition of religious

and ethnic minorities have conferred increasing visibility and legitimacy to Jewish communities. At the same time, there have also been exclusionary initiatives directed against minorities.

Jewish presence in Latin America's public sphere is defined by a new agenda in which citizenship-building and collective identity seek to converge. Thus, in Mexico and Argentina, Jewish communities take an active role in regard to general civic issues such as fighting poverty and advancing democracy.

Democratization in Argentina has involved a subtle but significant transformation: a shift

Collective Jewish identity gains a renewed importance

from an overwhelming focus on persisting differences of a single center-linked diaspora to a broader focus that encompasses emerging civic commonalities and transnational links as well.

The concept of integration into the country has been transformed from complete assimilation to a process of becoming similar to other citizens as well as similar to those Jews fully integrated into plural Western democracies. As more Jewish institutions have participated in the public sphere demanding justice after the two terrorist attacks perpetrated in 1992 and 1994, they have been increasingly viewed and valued as citizens deeply involved in fighting for democracy and against impunity.

In the more traditional Mexico, a new concern with civil society and the public sphere also became a claim among both intellectual sectors and leadership. Local Jewish communities have

increasingly joined the commitment to social causes, the fight against poverty, attention to educational needs, and the fight for human rights and democratization in the society at large.

Community arrangements, actors, flows, and narratives of collective belonging also point to new ascription and self-ascription: a collective affirmation of being, firstly, Mexican citizens and thus sharing civic commonalities and the national interest, while being perceived as bearers of transnational links and loyal to a transnational center. Prime Minister Netanyahu's June 2017 tweet regarding the proposed wall between Mexico and the United States, the community's reaction, and his subsequent September 2017 visit highlight some of the new dynamics that have impinged upon traditional patterns of relation. Collective Jewish identity gains a renewed importance both in its own spaces as well as in the public sphere.

Globalization and economic liberalization have led to increasing gaps in national societies and within Jewish communities that reflect economic polarization. Notwithstanding, globalization is twofold. On the one hand, it has generated a crisis of the middle classes, impoverishment and unemployment of professionals, a decline of manufacturers who had previously enjoyed the protection of autarchic industrial policies, deterioration in the economic standing of various sectors of the Latin American communities, and poverty among the lower classes. These sectors, however, have been experiencing a slow recovery in recent years. On the other hand, segments of the upper middle class have succeeded to incorporate themselves into the most dynamic venues of

transnational links: commerce, high tech, real estate, services, sciences, academic institutions, and finance.

Indeed, although Latin American Jewry has historically grown out of an immigration capable of establishing powerful and original patterns of Jewish life and community organization, in recent decades, the net direction of migration flows has tended to be from Latin America to other destinations. It is estimated that in the past 40 years between 150,000 and 250,000 Jews emigrated, mainly to Israel, the United States, and to a lesser extent, countries in Western Europe (Spain) and Canada. While during the 1970s, violence and authoritarianism were determinant factors of regional and international emigration and political exile, especially in South America, a decade later re-democratization was a pull factor for Jewish exiles and emigres to return to their homelands. However, since the late 1980s and 1990s, the intertwined complex of economic crises and security problems again pushed Jews into a global international migration pattern.

Latin American Jewish migration to the United States has shown higher rates. Although we do not have precise figures on the number of Latin American Jews in the United States, estimates range between 100,000 and 156,000. Mobility and relocation set the stage for the potential reconstitution of an enlarged, redefined ethno-religious and national/transnational diaspora. Latin American Jews do not simply replicate social relations transferred from country of origin to destination society; rather, their subjective and socially expressed experiences are quite

diverse. Resulting from the interaction between the organized American Jewish communal spaces, migrants' associational initiatives within their everyday life spheres as well as prevailing patterns of home attachments, the social capital of both American and Latin American Jewry is being restructured and enriched, in a context that displays aspects of both mobility and permanence. The outcome of such interactions are reflected in the education, religion, and communal dimensions.

Migration from Latin America has not been unidirectional. There are known instances of return migration, of repeated and circular migration, and of bi-local or multi-local migrants. All of these features have contributed to the diffusion of transnational networks and identities, as well as to a complex array of trends where tacit disagreement and even disputes regarding the frontiers of identity and its collective expression take place. The emergence of new models of relations between communities and with Israel shed light onto common trends in the Jewish world and singular developments in Latin American Jewish communities. New meanings of center-home (spiritual, symbolic, material) and transnational ideational motives develop redefining systems of relations among communities that keep differentiated, modified and strong links among them and with Israel.

**In the past
40 years
150,000-250,00
Jews have
emigrated,
mainly to Israel
and the U.S.**

Differing and even contradictory trends coexist in Latin American Jewish life. Decline in historical criteria of belonging coexists with a diversified Jewish life displayed along religious, sub-ethnic, and political differences. Communities are facing the challenge of offering the appropriate and differentiated space to reduce the dis-affiliation as an elective option. Thus, policies should be developed and refined regarding inclusion measures for entering Jewish peoplehood, while greater attention should be given to defining whether a threshold exists for exiting Jewish peoplehood, and what it is.

Varying degrees of collective order of Jewish life show a diversified Jewish communal configuration. Affiliation

**Argentina:
Economic
upheaval and
leadership
failures have
led to an overall
decline of the
community**

rates differ from between 45 and 50 percent in Brazil, with a Jewish population of around 100,000 and in Argentina, with over 180,000 Jews, to 85 percent in Mexico, with a population of 40,000.

The conjunction of economic upheaval and leadership failures in Argentina have led to an overall decline of the community, whose affiliation rate is under 50 percent. Brazilian Jews, however, while showing equally low rates of affiliation have reinforced their perception of a growing social integration and confronted the old concept of *kehila* with the need of a more pluralistic approach to the community's institutional arrangements.

While Brazil and Argentina represent models of centrifugal communities, Mexico shows a high structural and institutional proliferation. The last socio-demographic studies (2000, 2006, 2015) pointed to a continuous increase of membership rates, while its inner communal composition also shows radical changes. Out-marriage rates are 10 percent in Mexico while in both Brazil and Argentina they reach 50 percent.

Israel, Jewish Education, and Jewish Educational Trips to Israel

Historically, the multi-functionality of Israel for Latin American communities as identity referent, organizational axis, and energy catalyst for building communal life has been determinant. However, both these functions and the traditional pillars of Israel-Diaspora relations – its institutional channels and the types of connection – have changed.

For Latin American Jews, besides its condition of national sovereign and creative cultural center, Israel has historically been a vital space for those in need. While regional and national trends point to dependency of Aliyah (and Jewish migration in general) on the unfolding of specific local circumstances, varying recurring economic crises, and political unrest; ideological attachment has also played an important role.

Data on Mexico shows that while 97 percent of the Jewish community's older members (individuals 70 years old, for instance) express the belief that Israel is of utmost importance, only 77 percent of the young population (18-19 year-olds) report the same belief. These percentages are far higher

if we compare them with opinions expressed by members of other Latin American communities. In Argentina, the percentage of those who expressed the belief that Israel is of utmost importance diminished to 57 percent.

Data on Jews living in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela show that both age (generation) and country of origin influence the place of Israel in people's lives and their attachment to it. Mexico has exceptionally high rates of visits to Israel while lower rates characterize Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela.

Latin American Jewish migration to the United States implies an altered posture vis-à-vis the connection to Israel. A geographically diverse transnationalism replaces older binary connections between Latin American Jews and Israel. That does not necessarily imply the weakening of attachments but rather their re-signification. There is a departure from the previous dominant pattern of almost exclusive interaction with Israel or Israel-Zionist based organizations, as North American Jewish institutions become an important source of direct political support and a model for collective organization for Latin American communities.

Education has played a central role in the shaping of Latin American Jewish life. It has constituted the main field for shaping and displaying Jewish collective identity. Whereas the centrality of Israel cannot be denied, and main aspects of the educational system are interwoven with it, today, historical, political and ideological currents that differentiated schools in Latin America have been replaced by religious and communitarian (sub-

ethnic) criteria, in consonance with world Jewish trends.

Looking at the educational ecology, the highest rate of population growth takes place in the religious schools. While acknowledging the fact that this trend is related to the incidence of community social policies on communal cultural profiles – as expressed in the massive support offered through scholarships by religious schools – it also must be noted that this process reflects an increase in religiosity and observance.

Argentina is characterized by its comprehensive community school system, which has grown in spite of the various crises it has suffered since the 1990s. Today's 34 day schools have an enrollment of 22,000 students. The highest rate of population growth takes place in the Orthodox-Haredi religious schools. In total numbers these schools experienced an increase of almost 49 percent in the last ten years.

The highest rate of population growth takes place in the religious schools

In Mexico, 9,500 children, close to 93 percent, attend the 16 Jewish schools of a diversified and highly structured educational system. More than 30 percent of the student population benefit from scholarships; more than 40 percent do so in the Haredi schools. The latter, serving 26 percent of the student population, show the highest growth: 55 percent in the last decade.

In São Paulo, the largest, traditionally liberal community in Brazil, five religious schools have

been founded recently. Moreover, Orthodox teachers have a growing presence in Jewish secular schools.

The increase in the number of students in religious schools reflects the demographic changes in the composition of the communities, the arrival of educators coming from intensively Orthodox South American communities, and the overall trend in Jewish education.

Educational trips to Israel are a relevant part of the cultural and institutional practices for which

Educational trips to Israel are a relevant part of cultural and institutional practices

Israel is conceived to be a site for the symbolic encoding of meanings and the formation of a sense of belonging, while awareness of an interconnected Jewish world is strengthened. Both the State of Israel and Eretz Israel are foci for a diversified

population. Jewish educational ecology, in-group sociability patterns and communal affiliation act as central factors behind the close relation between modes of Jewish life and types of educational trips.

These trips are closely related to the institutional density, the social capital and the communal legacy of the diverse communities. Jewish educational ecology and communal institutional density act as central variables. While Mexican youth have visited Israel in the framework of the school system, they also have a subsequent

stronger presence in long-term programs and, therefore, reduced representation in the framework of Taglit. Concomitantly, it explains the latter's success in Argentina and Brazil – in larger Jewish communities with lower levels of Jewish education attendance and similar rates of intermarriage. However, Jewish education still explains why, in spite of lower affiliation rates, there is a strong cultural component among Jewish families. Families of participants are engaged and related to the Jewish community. While in Argentina 86 percent feel very connected to Israel, in Brazil this percentage only reaches 20 percent.

Religion shows a noteworthy strengthening not only in the educational field, but also in overall community life. In the last few years, paired with changing trends in world Jewish life, Orthodox groups have formed new religious congregations. Religion played a minor role in what were basically secular communities and its status was further diminished by the scarcity of religious functionaries, a factor that dates back to the earliest days of Latin American Jewry.

However, new rabbinical leadership has emerged in the different religious streams. The Conservative Movement has continued to provide – through its Buenos Aires-based Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano – rabbis that serve throughout Latin America and also in U.S. communities. This phenomenon not only results from a lack of opportunities available in local communities, but also reflects the wider phenomenon of regional migration from the South to the North.

Today, the spread of Chabad and the establishment of Chabad centers, both in the large, well-established communities as well as in the smaller ones, is striking. The expanding presence of Shas and Aish Hatora in communities where the Sephardic and Mizrahi presence is dominant complements the picture (Mexico, Panama). There is a very important trend toward religious observance and Haredization. In Mexico, these trends were specifically analyzed among the population below 40 years of age and the figures for very observant went up from 7 to 12 percent; observants from 17 to 20 percent and traditionalist fell from 62 to 59 percent.

Religious developments not only respond to deep cultural and spiritual transformations but also to the reconstitution of the social fabric. Thus, religion acts not only as a moral code but also as an anchor of belonging and social order. Simultaneously, global flows also have a relevant influence in restructuring cultural life in the region.

Cultural changes have been registered in a more strictly defined intellectual field. Jewish writers, rabbis, and journalists have accessed national spheres and the media to function as cultural referents of the communities through newspaper columns and television programs.

This process of diversification and participation of Jewish intellectuals in the public communication spaces of, science, the academy, arts, popular music, and culture marks a new extraordinary presence.

Criticism of Israel, Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism

Anti-Zionism together with the de-legitimization of Israel has become an expanded “transnational ideological package” that symbolizes and codifies the struggle against globalization and U.S. hegemony, so dominant in Latin America. Lately, it has incorporated the narrative and concepts of colonialism (occupation= conquest=domination) relating its meaning to the history of the continent. Post-modern and post-colonial motives co-exist with renewed struggles for modernization.

Anti-Zionism has become a mobilization myth for action and political identification of the anti-globalization left in both local and transnational public spheres. Unlike the balanced criticism of Israel from some Latin American governments, anti-Zionism is a radical mobilization myth of local social movements that combat U.S. globalization and also Israel, perceived as a rogue state refusing to afford legitimacy to the Palestinian national aspirations. This has been augmented by a more open anti-Semitism by right-wing xenophobic groups. While these developments lead to new convergences between seemingly different and even opposing actors – left and right – important progress has been made in the legal measures adopted and applied in combating anti-Semitism.

In a more general vein, one has to point out that Iran has been involved in an active quest for allies in the region to countervail the international community’s pressure against its development of nuclear capabilities. In the recent years, following the elections of left-oriented leaders in the region,

Iran has intensified its efforts to find governments sympathetic to its cause. Benefiting from the anti-American climate and discourse, as well as from the recurrent search of a realignment in the region, Iran has extended its trade and energy ventures to create increasingly strategic relations with Latin American governments. Venezuela represents the most extreme and conspicuous case, where convergences in bolstering oil prices by controlling production volume has projected itself into the political arena. Its current crisis has weakened this trend. While Brazil has also developed joint ventures with Iran, its relationship focuses only on economic goals, not endorsing the latter's "anti-imperialist" position.

Following the U.S. decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem, Guatemala and Paraguay were the first Latin American countries to follow suit. The importance of this step should be evaluated in the light of the historical role the region played in the UN deliberations leading to Resolution 181, which approved the partition of Palestine. Out of the then-57 member-countries, 20 were Latin American, which constituted the major bloc. Of them, 13 voted affirmatively, 6 abstained, and only one (Cuba) voted against.

The role played then by the Jewish communities in order to mobilize the governments and societies, and the attention Jewish National bodies (WZO and JAFI) directed to government and communities were determinate.

There was some expectation that Colombia, a close ally of Israel in Latin America, would also move its embassy to Jerusalem. Instead, in a surprising move, the outgoing president of Colombia, Juan

Manual Santos, recognized Palestine as a sovereign state. Colombia's present government, headed by President Duque, is currently reviewing this decision.

Recommendations

Today, Israel and the Jewish communities globally need to affirm the importance of a Jewish public conversation based on shared and specific dialogues, comprised by leadership and constituencies – affiliated and non-affiliated – to strengthen the bases of a pluralistic coexistence as a way of being faithful to the Jewish past and its current challenges. It implies differentiated inclusive policies based on agreed thresholds instead of exclusions that find their source in unilateral decisions.

The Government of Israel should commit itself to a joint effort with local Jewish communities in Latin America to strengthen ties to Israel, Judaism and other Jewish communities, especially those whose Jewish connections have eroded.

In light of the current political Latin American map, Israel should take advantage of the prevailing centrist character of the governments and the existence of regional organizations that may collectively act as allies (the LIMA Group or the OAS).

Israeli immigration authorities would highly benefit from an accurate assessment of the required support and immigration needs of the different sectors of olim, including those from Latin America, as well as the needs of potential new immigrants who are able or may be willing to maintain a significant link to their countries of origin and to other (third) countries where parts of their families live.