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ANNUAL ASSESSMENT of the Situation and Dynamics of the Jewish People

2019 | 5779

Global Trends and Policy Recommendations
Integrated Anti-Semitism Index: Europe and the US
Special Chapters: Jewish Creativity and Cultural Outputs

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Foreword by Stuart Eizenstat and Dennis Ross

This is the 15th year the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) has published its Annual Assessment. Every year, JPPI's Annual Assessment seeks to offer a snapshot of the state of world Jewry. The gauges used to evaluate how world Jewry is doing year-to-year are largely unchanged this year, with one critical exception, Community bonds. We are including for the first year an expanded version of the yearly Integrated index on Anti-Semitism.

The integrative index examines the threat to Jews in different countries, by tracking anti-Semitic incidents, the public's attitude toward Jews, and the feelings of the local Jewish community, which also express that community's trust in the local government's ability and desire to protect them. Anti-Semitism is rising by every metric and can potentially affect each of the other measures we weigh every year in the Assessment: Geopolitics, Inter-Communal

Bonds, Identity and Identification, Material Resources and Demography. Anti-Semitism is no longer a secondary concern but has significant impact on Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

As the Integrated Anti-Semitism Index describes, the sheer number of anti-Semitic incidents has risen around the world, including in the United States. The FBI reported that Jews are the most targeted religion-based group by hate crimes, although Jews comprise less than two percent of the American population. Most of the more violent anti-Semitic attacks in the US seem unrelated to Israeli policies, although on college campuses the insidious, if non-violent, BDS movement feeds on overblown portrayals of Israeli policies. This has taken a toll on American Jews: nearly three-quarters of American Jews polled felt less secure than they did two years ago.

On the other hand, the rate of those in North America who hold anti-Semitic views is not high nor is it growing. An ADL survey shows that only 14 percent of Americans hold anti-Semitic views while over half of Americans are concerned with anti-Semitic violence. A recent Gallup poll indicates that over 90 percent of Americans would not hesitate to vote for a Jew As President, while another study showed that Jews are the most admired religious group in the US above Catholics, Evangelicals and other religious groups.

Why the disconnect between record high numbers of anti-Semitic incidents and record-high acceptance of Jews in the US? There is a direct connection between this phenomenon and the weakening of globalization and the rise in populist nationalism. Around the globe, a hard-core minority of populist nationalists enjoys increased exposure in "marginalizing the other" in society. The extremists among these at times turn to violence, verbal or physical, including against Jews. Alongside these, worrying trends of anti-Semitism from the other side of the political spectrum abound.

Left-wing groups in Europe, including Muslim migrant populations, also identify an opportunity to advance their own anti-Semitic rhetoric. The anti-Semitism in Europe is entirely more threatening than that in the US. Across Europe, anti-Semitism is rising and sentiment against Israel along with it. The sources are a dangerous combination of a radical minority of the increasingly large Muslim migrant

population in the continent, and the far left and far right on the political spectrum.

At both ideological extremes, the falsehood resonates that Jews control the financial and political strings of the world. Jeremy Corbyn the leader of the British Labour Party regards Hamas and Hezbollah as friends, leading eight Labour members of parliament to leave their party. Jonathan Sacks, the former chief rabbi of the UK, has called Corbyn an "existential threat" to British Jews.

Clearly, the rise in anti-Semitism affects Israel—the state of the Jewish people—insofar as it takes on a greater responsibility both to focus on protection of Jews in the Diaspora and the relations Israel has with a number of different states. Managing these important foreign relations demands navigating a relatively new reality: many of the new populist leaders in countries like Hungary, Italy, Poland and other places may create an environment unfriendly to the immigrant and to "the other," which can encourage a rise in anti-Semitism, but tend to be supportive of the State of Israel.

The dilemma the Israeli government faces is complicated. Strong relations and support for Israel in the international arena has clear value. But it comes with a price: when this support comes from populist governments or leaders, it actually tends to exacerbate growing tensions between the Israeli government and the Diaspora. On the one hand, embracing authoritarian leaders like Orbán of Hungary raises the question of whether the government

of Israel will itself standup against anti-Semitism when it is diplomatically inconvenient. Drawing close to such leaders signals that the rightward turn of the Israeli public and could also signal a departure from such core values as tolerance, kindness, respect for the other—which define the essence of Jewish values for many in the Diaspora.

Nowhere is this dilemma more acute than in the relationship of the Government of Israel with President Trump. America is Israel's most important and indeed only true ally. And, Donald Trump's friendship toward Israel has led to impressive results: declaring Jerusalem Israel's capital, moving the American embassy, recognizing Israeli sovereignty in the Golan Heights, providing unlimited support in the United Nations, consistently backing Israel's right of self-defense in Gaza and elsewhere, and calling out the threat that Iran represents to Israel and the region. However, like other populist leaders, President Trump also raises problems for Israel in America. He is a polarizing figure in the United States and identifying with him so publicly has served to alienate most Democrats and a significant majority of American Jewry from Israel. Certainly, any Israeli leader and government would need to have good relations with any American president. However, the long-term interest of Israel demands strong relations with the entire American political spectrum. The Israeli government runs the risk of alienating a significant part of the Jewish community in

the United States with too close an embrace of the president—especially younger Jews. Moreover, as recent polling shows, such attitudes are no longer limited only to younger Jews but are affecting the importance of Israel in the eyes of many older members of the American Jewish community as well.

All this helps explain why the gauge on inter-communal bonds is slightly more negative this year than last, even at a time when the rise of anti-Semitism should foster greater solidarity within the Diaspora. This seems to be a paradox, but the factors noted above help to explain why the measure is more negative this year than last.

Other measures in the Annual Assessment remain largely the same. In the instance of geopolitics, the picture is mixed with offsetting realities. Yes, Israel's Sunni Arab neighbors have drawn closer to Israel, because they share common perceptions of threats from Iran. However, another factor is driving key Arab leaders to improve relations with Israel: the perception that the United States is withdrawing from the region and is not keen to live up to commitments.

It is geopolitically beneficial that Arab leaders see the value of close cooperation with Israel. It is, however, worrying that one of the reasons driving this is the sense that the US is withdrawing or wants less and less to do in the region. As Russia and China become more involved in the region, especially as the US retrenches, Israel will face more challenges. Additionally,

a US-China trade war will also pose a significant challenge for Israel as it seeks to preserve its economic trading relationship with China. As always, this year's Assessment does not provide just a snapshot of what is changing this year from last, but also makes recommendations for actions. One recommendation that stands out on the rise of anti-Semitism is the importance of developing "a set of guiding principles" for the Israeli government and other global or public leaders to use in responding to this issue wherever it arises. Similarly, at a time

when the US is seemingly less willing to remain engaged in the Middle East, this may be the time to formalize America's commitments to Israel, through "a long-term strategic contractual alliance" with the United States.

Like all of the recommendations, these are thought-provoking and should be carefully considered by Israeli and Diaspora leaders in America and around the world.

Dennis Ross and Stuart Eizenstat

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Policy Recommendations

Anti-Semitism

The proliferation of anti-Semitic incidents in Europe and the US – as documented by the Jewish People Policy Institute's Anti-Semitism Index – amounts to a quantum leap and reflects a waning of Holocaust awareness. To cope with this new situation, the Israeli government and major Jewish organizations will have to take steps of a whole different order and adopt new modes of thinking to replace those that have become entrenched over the past few decades.

We recommend that the Israeli government entrust the handling of anti-Semitic incidents to a single body with powers and executive ability. For this purpose, a governmental operational entity should be established and given appropriate resources

for multidisciplinary action. This entity will monitor the scope of anti-Semitism and assess the nature of the threat (among other things, it will develop uniform indices for evaluating anti-Semitism in the various spheres where it presents itself). Based on its assessment, the entity will formulate an overall policy, set operational initiatives in motion vis-à-vis governments, Jewish communities, and other relevant parties, coordinate implementation between the various relevant bodies, and monitor effectiveness. The entity will launch initiatives in the spheres of education, legislation/law, diplomacy, hasbara (publicity/informational activity), the new media, security in the communities, and more.

Geopolitics

Should there turn out to be no Palestinian partner for the American peace initiative, consideration should be given to leveraging US President Donald Trump's friendship for Israel into a unilateral political initiative, to mitigate the danger of a slide into binational statehood that would threaten Israel's Jewish-democratic identity.

At the same time, Israel should strategically plan for the continual erosion of US willingness to invest in the Middle East, to be present and to lead regional stabilization

and calm-promoting efforts. As part of these preparations, and given President Trump's demonstrated friendship, consideration should again be given to advancing a long-term, contractual strategic alliance with the US. Such an alliance would of course have disadvantages, but given the emerging reality, and the opportunity to leverage the President's friendship for an agreement that would serve Israeli interests, it is worth reconsidering the cost-benefit balance of such a measure.

Relations between Communities

The Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) public's established status as a major factor in the Jewish world makes it incumbent on the Haredi community's leaders and on the leaders of the other Jewish sectors, to cooperate for the good of the entire Jewish people. Accordingly, vital efforts currently underway to further the Haredi sector's integration in Israeli national life (national

service, economic contribution, social and political integration) should be continued. At the same time, efforts should be made to promote similar Haredi integration in Diaspora Jewish community leadership. We should also be advancing initiatives to cultivate a Haredi leadership that will integrate in public and political activity and leadership at both the local and the national levels.

Communal Resources

Declining fertility in most Diaspora Jewish communities has led to an increase in the relative demographic weight of older age groups within the communities. This trend was reinforced recently with the shift of the "baby boomer" generation (those born between 1945 and 1960) into the older age cohorts. In North America, France, and the UK, those 60 or older make up a third of all adult Jews. In some countries, like Germany, the number of Jews aged 60 or older represents more than 40 percent of the Jewish population. We recommend monitoring and allocating resources within these

communities to provide services geared to this age group as it gradually retires and seeks to fill its newfound free time. We recommend, among other things, to design and expand Jewish educational opportunities tailored to this age group. Various studies from recent years show that "close relationships with Jewish grandparents directly influence a range of Jewish behaviors" among the young. Therefore, investing in this generation should not be considered as coming at the expense of the younger generation, but rather as an indirect way to strengthen the Jewish identity of the younger generation.

Additional relevant recommendations from previous years

- As the next US presidential election campaign approaches, Israel should strive to maintain its current good relations with the Trump administration, without signaling that these relations attest to a full adoption of the President's value system. This is necessary due to growing political polarization in the US and the need to preserve bipartisan sympathy for Israel, to the extent possible. At the same time, Israel should cultivate ongoing dialogue with those segments of the American Jewish public that express criticism of Israeli policy, so as to ensure the resilience of the Israel-Washington-American-Jewry triangle.
- As anti-Semitic incidents proliferate, the Israeli government must prepare appropriately for potential immigration, especially from European countries. As noted in earlier Jewish People Policy Institute reports, the main barriers that cause prospective olim to reconsider aliyah to Israel have to do with employment, children's education, and housing. The employment barrier could be addressed by continuing the (unfinished) effort to provide career guidance and degree

recognition even before olim have left their countries of origin; training and placement programs could also be created and offered to olim after their arrival in Israel. Because the relevant immigrant populations are, for the most part, highly-educated and economically strong, there can be no doubt that such investment would be profitable and feasible for the Israeli economy.

- Israel needs to exercise caution in its relations with countries and political parties that exhibit great friendship for Israel but whose leaders are veering away from democratic norms or allowing anti-Semitic elements

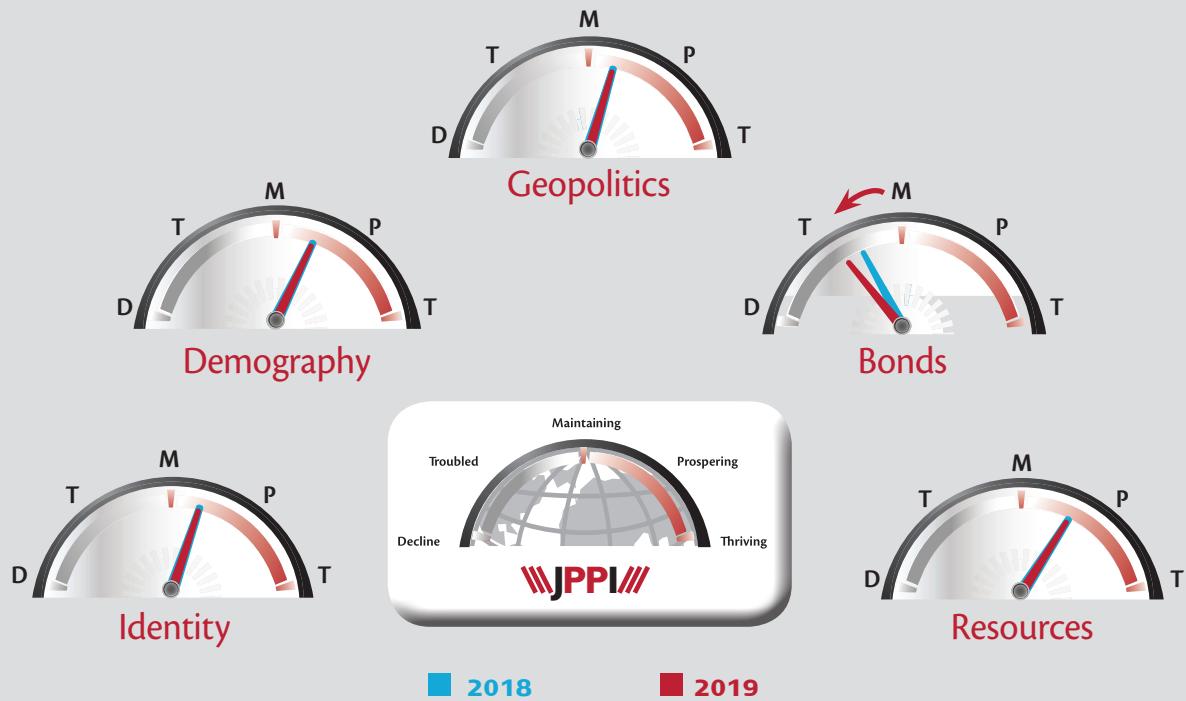
to thrive. Beyond considerations related to actual Israeli values, one should take into account that strengthening relations with countries perceived as hostile to the liberal-democratic ethos harms Israel's image in the eyes of broad segments of the US public, some of which could potentially reach positions of power and promote assertive international policies unfavorable to Israel. Israel's image as a friend of these anti-liberal countries is also causing the younger generation of Jews to distance themselves from Israel, thereby compromising Israel's future ability to rely on American Jewry in times of need.

TRENDS

3

Integrated Net Assessment of the Status of the Jewish People

Key Drivers Affecting the Jewish People in the Year 2019



The status of the Jewish people is relatively stable and has not changed significantly in the last year. However, several trends have emerged that should be monitored and that are likely to have outcomes with long-term implications.

Chief among them is the significant rise of anti-Semitism: the hard facts (number of anti-Semitic incidents in various countries around the world); its increased prominence in public discourse (articles, books, media, social media); and the obvious increased concern of Jews themselves. We have therefore decided to include in this executive summary of the 2019 assessment prepared for the government of Israel JPPI's 2019 integrated Anti-Semitism Index.

Naturally, anti-Semitic phenomena have significant influences on the Jewish communities, in the context of the connection among them (the growing need for a supportive global community), in the context of their effect on the strength of our identity (as Jews sometimes assume a low profile for fear being attacked), and in the context of relations with Israel (which is perceived as a powerful refuge

but also as a pretext for hostile discourse). At this point it is too soon to determine whether the incidents we've seen this year are a passing wave or a long term phenomenon, and how these events will influence Jewish consciousness and identity in the coming years.

Israel continues to be recognized as a regional power, both economic and military/security, even if some of the key issues it is dealing with have yet to be resolved, including the threat from radical entities (Iran, terrorist organizations) and the lack of a political solution on the horizon of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the Jewish world the growing centrality of Israel is recognized, both as a source of identity and a source of social and political controversy. Israel's April 2019 elections, and what will come in their wake – including legislation in which Diaspora Jews have an increased stake (matters relating to religion and state, pluralism, democracy and society in Israel) – will undoubtedly impact the dynamics of Israel-Diaspora relations.

4

Geopolitics

**This gauge has not changed from last year**

The past year, as in previous years, was characterized by a dual geopolitical reality that impacted Israel and the entire Jewish people. On the one hand: Israel is militarily strong and free of threat from regular armies at its borders; relations with the White House are at an all-time high; it has a close working relationship with Russia; it is expanding its economic ties with China, enhancing its network of regional and international ties; it is an economic and technological power; and its natural gas resources in the Mediterranean Sea have enabled new strategic regional connections. On the other hand, there are shadows on Israel's

strategic horizon cast by: Iran's strategic aspirations against Israel, its military strength in the region, and its development of non-conventional means; and the situation in the Israeli-Palestinian arena, which also feeds the de-legitimization of Israel. These shadows could portend a violent decline in one area or another – vis-à-vis Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, Syria, and in Judea and Samaria. Alongside the Middle East's chronic instability, Israel is also affected by changes in the international sphere. The United States does not appear to be interested in playing the role of the "strategic cop" that is present and militarily engaged all over the world – including the Middle East. This reality leaves

Russia and China a larger playing field than in the past in which to expand their influence. Below is a description of some key spheres that impact the geopolitical situation of the Jewish people.

The United States: During the past year we have witnessed the deep strategic pact between Israel and the United States on several occasions. First and foremost, moving the American Embassy to Jerusalem and recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. Sweeping expressions of sympathy for Israel have been heard, especially from Republican Party. However, the Democratic camp has seen a decline in the level of its support, and all told, there has been a deepening erosion in the traditional bi-partisan support of Israel. At the same time, American Jews are, by and large, distancing themselves from the American administration and its close relationship with Israel. At this point in time it is difficult to accurately assess the impact that anti-Semitic incidents in the United States and the increased public debate on the subject will have on the power and influence of American Jewry.

The Middle East: Israel is situated in a violent and tumultuous region – wars, waves of refugees, humanitarian crises, struggling economy, unemployment, failing authoritarian central governments, flourishing terrorist organizations, and movements that promote a radical Islamic ideology (the defeat of ISIS this year does not guarantee the destruction of the social and religious basis upon which it grew, and its ability to carry out serious terror attacks worldwide such as the one in Sri Lanka). The threat posed by Iran and Islamic terror have created a common interest

between Israel and Sunni Arab countries, the result of which is unprecedented security cooperation. Here and there the relations bubble up to the surface. The paralysis in the political process with the Palestinians has not prevented, at this point, the development of these relationships although it makes public normalization more difficult.

Iran: Israel's effort to stop Iran from gaining a military stronghold in Syria and preventing the transfer of strategic weapons to Hezbollah carries the risk that the situation could turn violent. American sanctions have exacerbated Iran's economic crisis and has awakened agitation against the regime. The question is still open as to whether sanctions will lead to regime change or will force Iran to accept demands in addition to those it accepted in the JCPOA, the 2015 nuclear agreement (curtailing its ballistic missile program and stopping its regional destabilization). The question still remains: Will Iran decide at some point to deviate from the treaty's boundaries and thereby cause a greater risk of escalation?

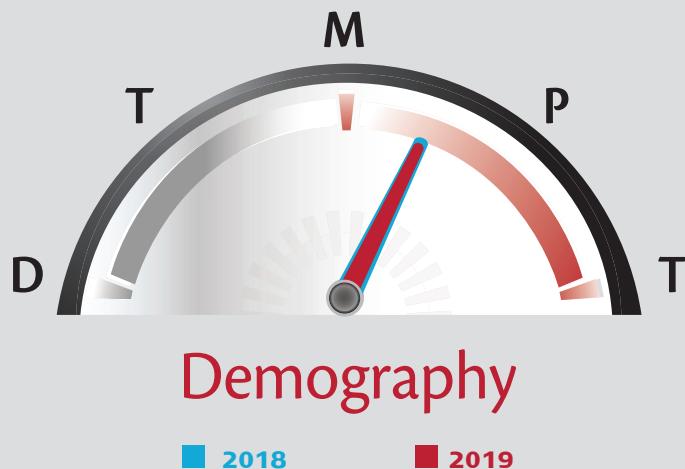
The Palestinian arena: The humanitarian crisis in Gaza increases the chances that temporary rounds of violence, several of which broke out during the past year, will deteriorate into a comprehensive military confrontation. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that the isolation of Hamas, the desperate economic situation in Gaza, and pressure from Egypt will push the Hamas leadership to a long-term ceasefire with Israel. At the same time, the past year saw developments indicating the shaky status of the Palestinian Authority – a decline in its relations with the United States, a difficult economic situation in light of cuts to the American

aid budget and a drop in Israeli tax transfers, a deep internal Palestinian split and internal rumblings ahead of possible change in leadership. The American peace plan was rejected by the Palestinians before it was even officially presented. Concomitant with meaningful accomplishments, this past year did not mark a turning point that

would promise a solution to the basic strategic issues facing Israel: security threats (Iran's nuclear program, Hezbollah, and Hamas) and the challenges – political, security, demographic, and moral –the lack of a resolution of the Palestinian issue bring. Against this background we leave the gauge as it was last year.

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Demography



The gauge remains unchanged from last year

As in previous years, the Jewish population grew in the past year at a moderate rate of around 100,000 people; at the beginning of 2019 it was estimated at 14.7 million. This change derives from the rise in the number of Jews in Israel, from 6.55 million at the start of 2018 to 6.66 million at the start of 2019 (an increase of 110,000 or 1.7 percent), which was partially offset by the slight decline in the number of Jews in the Diaspora. Furthermore, at the beginning of this year there were 427,000 people of no religion in Israel, that is, immigrants eligible under the Law of Return

and who have put down national and social roots in Israel but are not Jewish according to *Halacha*.

Altogether, the ratio between Jews and non-Jews in Israel (including Jewish settlers in Judea and Samaria) remains stable – roughly 79 percent Jews and 21 percent non-Jews. The Jewish group also includes residents with no religion, based on the assumption that they are socially and culturally settled in the majority society (without them the ratio of Jews to non-Jews would be 74 and 26 percent, respectively). It should be noted that this past March (2019), for the first time Israel's population reached more than 9 million persons.

The number of Jews in the United States, the largest Jewish community outside of Israel, remains stable and stands at around 5.7 million people. This estimate relies, in large part, on findings from the 2013 Pew Report and assessments of demographic trends among US Jews since then. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there are also higher estimates of the American Jewish population, up to 6.7 million or 7 million. The differences are due to different definitions of "Jewishness," that is, of who should be included in the count. The broader estimates also include those who indicated in surveys that they were partly Jewish; additionally, other sources were also used.

Most of the growth in Israel's Jewish population stems from natural reproduction (89 percent of the increase) with another 11 percent deriving from a positive migration balance (Aliyah).

The lion's share of those immigrating to Israel – about three fourths – comes from Europe (particularly from Russia, Ukraine and France), another 17 percent are from America and Oceania, and some 6 percent from Asia and Africa. We should note that less than half (46.1 percent) of immigrants to Israel in 2018 were Jews, and only they were included in the number of Jews in Israel and in assessing the demographic change in the Jewish population over the past year.

Following several years of higher birth rates among Jewish women in Israel – from 3.09 in 2014 to 3.16 in 2016 – in 2017 (the latest year for which we have updated data) the rate remained unchanged. Despite the continuing trend of a rise in the number of Jews, because of Israel's positive balance we have left the gauge unchanged this year.

6

Identity and Identification



The gauge remains unchanged from last year

Studies published during the past year in the United States, Israel and in other Jewish communities can enhance our understanding of the status of contemporary Jewish identity. JPPI published an extensive study on Israeli Jewry, and major research was also published on the Jewish community in the Washington DC area and on the Jewish community in Canada.

JPPI's study of Israeli Jews enhances the insights presented in the Pew Research Center's 2016 study. It shows that most Jews in Israel (55 percent) identify with the Jewish national symbols and values as well as traditional Jewish symbols and/

or religion. As the researchers (Shmuel Rosner and Prof. Camille Fuchs) describe it, most Israeli Jews say Kiddush on Friday night and also hang out Israeli flags on Yom Ha-Atzma'ut (Independence Day). The study finds that most Israeli Jews identify with both identity dimensions and suggests that this is a strong identification. Data from the extensive survey carried out as part of the research confirm this. Eighty-eight percent of Israeli Jews rank "their feeling as Jews" with a score of at least 7 out of 10. Eighty-seven percent reported that their Jewishness is important or very important to them.

This relatively high national-traditional identity has implications on the third dimension of identity, the civil-political dimension. Israeli-Jews identify “Israeli-ness” itself with “Jewish-ness.”

The study also elucidated the dynamics of Jewish identity in Israel. It indicates that the main identity changes are in the direction of less religious practice. Accordingly, religious Jews are becoming traditional or secular-somewhat-traditional. Traditional Jews are becoming secular, and so on. This process seems to have an impact on the values of Israel’s secular population, a large portion of which observes a high level of traditional practices (Seder night, b’nei mitzvah, and the like).

Studies on American Jews tell a different story. Intermarriage with non-Jews is the norm today. Among non-Ultra-Orthodox Jews in America (aged 25-54), 58 percent of those married are married to non-Jews. Only about half of the offspring of such couples are raised as Jews.

It might be that the long-term impact of these trends will be reduced somewhat in light of other factors. Research indicates that young American Jews tend to give their Jewish identity a cultural interpretation rather than ethnic or religious. This kind of interpretation allows for a Jewishness whose borders are open to the non-Jewish world. Concomitantly, those who are active in Jewish leadership report that new, “post-denominational” synagogues (that is, those that don’t belong to any recognized religious movement) attract “borderland” Jews (Jews who are only partly affiliated), although these claims are not, at this point, backed up by research. One way or the

other, it is doubtful that exciting developments in culture, literature, research and religion among American Jews can offset the trends in the spheres of demography and identity.

One factor with a long-term influence on these trends is the growing number of Orthodox Jews, particularly the Ultra-Orthodox, in the United States. While the average birth rate among non-Orthodox Jewish women is 1.4 children (far less than the replacement rate), the average birth rate among Modern Orthodox women is more than 3 children, and more than 5 children for Ultra-Orthodox women. Accordingly, in some Jewish communities in America the Ultra-Orthodox already constitute a considerable percentage of the younger age cohorts. The Ultra-Orthodox have a strong Jewish identity and a high rate of retention (that is, there is almost no intermarriage or assimilation among them). These statistics led JPPI to devote its 2019 Annual Dialogue to a discussion of ways to ensure greater Ultra-Orthodox participation in Jewish community life and the general American society, in public service and politics. This is due to a concern that the new demographic may erode the influence of the Jewish community in America.

In other English-speaking Diaspora communities, the intermarriage rate is significantly lower than in the United States. According to a survey Canada’s Jewish population published this year, the rate is some 23 percent there and is not higher in younger age groups. Therefore, the researchers find that the Canadian community has a “highly resilient Jewish identity.” In Australia, too, the intermarriage rate is

significantly lower than in the United States (15-24.9 percent), but it is higher among the younger the age cohort.

A rise in anti-Semitism has had an impact the world over on public expressions of mutual responsibility, which strengthens Jewish identity. However, at the same time and particularly in Europe, displays of anti-Semitism are more prevalent in people's daily lives and undermine

the sense of security. The response by most Jews in France, Denmark, and Sweden to this situation was to lower their Jewish profile and to avoid wearing identifying clothing or carry items that would identify them as Jews in the public sphere. This gradual withdrawal from daily routine and, on occasion, from the Jewish community, may have a negative long-term impact on Jewish identity.

7

Community Bonds



The gauge has moved in a somewhat negative direction this year

The dynamics of the relations between Jewish communities did not change much this year compared to previous years. Long-term trends that had been identified in the past can still be seen throughout the Jewish world and in Israel. First, the trend that continued to register this past year – the governments of the United States and Israel are in the hands of political streams that represent values of conservatism, nationalism, and tradition. In Israel, most of the Jewish public supports this leadership, while in the US most of the Jewish public opposes it. This polarization

undermines the connection to Israel of Diaspora Jews, who tend to hold more liberal attitudes, particularly the younger generation. Some of these Jews feel that Israel is not loyal to values that are important to them. Their claims focus on Israel's attitude toward the Palestinians, the status of Israeli Arabs, gender equality, questions touching on religion and state, suspicions of government corruption, and more. The internal-political polarization in the United States, alongside the dominance of the political right wing in Israel, which was demonstrated once again in this year's elections, make it harder to develop a sense of solidarity with Israel among these groups.

Furthermore, we should mention several additional developments of this past year that have affected relations between the Jewish communities: 1. The impact of anti-Semitic phenomena (for more on this, see the integrated Anti-Semitism Index below); 2. Political trends in the United States, primarily developments regarding the evolving attitudes within the Democratic Party – supported by most American Jews – toward Israel; 3. Perceptions among some Diaspora Jews regarding the passing of Israel's "Nation State" law and its significance; 4. The Israeli elections and the policy emerging in their wake.

These developments have had a certain effect on the dynamics of inter-community relations.

However, it is not always easy to determine whether the influence is positive (enhancing the relationship) or negative (weakening the relationship). The following table briefly describes the trends and developments in the past year that contributed to enhancing or weakening relations between Jewish communities around the world – with an emphasis on Israel-Diaspora relations. It is understood that the nature and intensity of relations between Israel and Jews in other countries, particularly the United States, also has implications for other dimensions relating to the status of the Jewish people, such as geopolitics, or identity and identification, mentioned in other sections.

Development	Dynamic that enhances the relations	Dynamic that weakens the relations
Right wing governments in Israel and the US	The governments are not in a conflict that forces Jews to "choose a side" (as was the case during the previous administration)	Makes it difficult for most American Jews who oppose the right. Emphasizes the gap between political attitudes among Israeli Jews and American Jews
Rising anti-Semitism	Generates solidarity among all Jews	Leads to reciprocal claims regarding policies that "encourage" anti-Semitism
Other global trends (for more information, see the section on Geopolitics)	Lack of stability increases the need for a connection to a community that is very stable (Israel)	Possibility of confrontation between Israel's interests and local Jewish interests
Status quo of relationship of religion and state in Israel	Data presented this year show greater identification with liberal Judaism among Jews in Israel	Issues that permanently create gaps have not yet been resolved (Western Wall, conversion, marriage), and others have joined these (reduced power of the courts to rule on these matters)
Nation-State Law	Emphasizes anchoring Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people	Controversy between the majority in Israel and the majority of Diaspora Jewry regarding the law's effect on the status of non-Jews in Israel

8

Material Resources



The gauge remains unchanged from last year

The gauge indicating Jewish assets and resources has not been changed this year. This conclusion is based on a balance between positive indicators and trends that hint at possible difficulties in the future.

Israel is the primary generator of capital in the Jewish world, and it continues to present a strong economy. The low inflation rate, steady rise in the employment rate, and macroeconomic stability – combine to tell us this is true. Undoubtedly, a great many countries around the world would be happy to present economic conditions like Israel's. Although the government's deficit is higher than

planned, it is still manageable relative to the scope of the Israeli economy.

Nonetheless, a long-term look at Israel's economic future requires that we address the risks that lie ahead. Israel's productivity level is low, as is the growth rate, compared with the levels of other OECD countries. The combination of productivity and population growth is what promotes economic growth, but a look at Israel's economic situation minus the relatively narrow high-tech industry reveals signs of difficulty. Another cause for concern comes from the indices regarding the status of Israel's education system. Both in the context of demography and education, it appears

there is no relative increase in the relative size of the production sector. Similarly, an inefficient resource allocation system causes high prices for many products (which contributes to job security). Higher prices only highlight the gaps between Israeli sectors of disparate economic conditions.

Economists describe Israel's economy as "open," meaning that both exports and imports play a significant role in national income. Changes in the climate of the global economy on which Israel relies are also liable to indicate potential difficulties. Israel has flourished in a system whose natural tendency is to develop in the direction of free trade. An example of such a system can be seen in the free trade agreement signed with the United States in 1985, thanks to which Israeli products enjoy a tax exemption in the American marketplace. Israel has similar agreements with various countries around the world, but the principles of free trade on which Israel relies are under attack, particularly in the US.

If the free access Israel has to the American market is no longer the norm and becomes a matter of special treaties that require specific negotiations, Israeli product exports will likely suffer. If Israel's international trade partners force Israel to open its doors to more competition, we can assume that the Israeli consumer would benefit, but this could also jeopardize employment, particular among workers in low-tech industries.

Jewish communities outside of Israel, including the large North American community, have been stable since its recovery from the economic downturn that began in 2008. JPPI continues with its efforts, as reported in last year's assessment, to thoroughly understand the material condition of institutions that are vital to the existence of Jewish identity in the United States. The results of these efforts will be summarized in a separate report later in the year.

IN-DEPTH ANALYSES

9

The Geopolitical Arena

- Changing features of the prevailing world order pose new challenges and opportunities for Israel and the Jewish people.
- Despite significant achievements, there were no breakthroughs in resolving the basic strategic problems facing Israel: security threats (especially Iran and its allies) and the Palestinian challenge.
- Emerging difficulties in maintaining the stability of the triangular relationship: Jerusalem-Washington-American Jewry.

Introduction

The past year, as in recent years, was characterized by a geopolitical duality that affects Israel and the Jewish people as a whole. On the one hand, Israel is militarily robust and unthreatened by regular armies along its borders; its relations with the White House are stronger than ever; it has a close

working relationship with Russia; it is furthering its economic relations with China and expanding its network of regional and international ties; it is economically strong and technologically sophisticated; and it has natural gas reserves in the Mediterranean Sea that allow it to form strategic regional alliances. They also provide Israel future leverage vis-à-vis Europe and others. (According to World Bank data for 2018, Israel's nominal GDP per capita is higher than that of Japan or France.) On the other hand, Israel's strategic horizon is clouded by the aspirations of Iran, the fragility of the Israeli-Palestinian arena, and contradictions within the strategic Jerusalem-Washington-US Jewry triangle.

Israel is engaged in direct military confrontation with Iran, which aspires to a sphere of influence that extends to the Mediterranean Sea. It assisted by Hezbollah in Lebanon and makes use of Syrian and Iraqi territories to consolidate a menacing military front against Israel. The now-unraveling

nuclear deal (JCPOA) left Tehran's nuclear ambitions in place, along with the infrastructure to advance them; thus, the Iranian nuclear threat could once again pose a challenge, and with little advance warning. The failure to resolve the Palestinian problem fuels hostility toward Israel and delegitimization efforts against it; it also constitutes a future threat to the Jewish character of the state. There is also the danger of a descent into violence on one or more fronts – vis-à-vis Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, Syria, and/or the West Bank.

These destabilizing factors are exacerbated by changes in the prevailing world order: an erosion of the liberal-democratic ethos; the growing relative power of autocratic China and Russia; and dwindling US interest in world leadership or Mideast involvement. Cultivating the special Israel-US relationship, which is a major component of Israeli strength and deterrence, is becoming more complicated, due to the difficulty of maintaining bipartisan sympathy for Israel, and tensions between the Israeli government and broad swathes of the American Jewish public. These tensions are undermining the strategic triangular relationship: Jerusalem-Washington-US Jewry.

Israel's strategic balance includes challenges in several interacting spheres: A. The international arena (with an emphasis on US status and conduct); B. The threats and opportunities that the regional system, as a whole, presents to Israel; C. The Palestinian arena; D. The strategic Jerusalem-Washington-US Jewry triangle.

These spheres have a major impact on the resilience of Israel and the Jewish people, and constitute the focus of this review.

A. The International Arena

Developments of the past decade have raised doubts about the stability of the world order that has prevailed since the early days of Israeli statehood. The contours of this world order, which emerged after World War II, reflected the rivalry between liberal-democratic and authoritarian forces; however, the Western nations, first and foremost the United States, were able to imbue the global system and its institutions with liberal-democratic values. At the heart of the liberal-democratic ethos lies the assumption that peace and prosperity are attainable when nations embrace democracy and exalt the values of freedom and human rights.

However, the vision embodied by this world order – a vision centered around security, stability, freedom, and prosperity – was never fully realized. The past decade's failures and disappointments are legion: the financial crisis of 2008; worsening economic inequality; the fading of the hopes awakened by the Arab Spring; terrorist attacks; mass migration; an eroding sense of personal security. For governments, these problems have manifested in: a growing inability to cope with local and global challenges (due, among other things, to a shift in power and resources from the state to multinational corporations); the identity and economic crises that have been plaguing Europe; Brexit; the failures racked up by the US in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars; Iran's subversive efforts and the problematic nuclear deal from which the US withdrew; the nuclear threat posed by North Korea; international helplessness in the face of the Syrian tragedy; and more.

These difficulties have amplified the trends that are eroding the liberal-democratic ethos: populism, nationalism, hostility toward elites (which are often identified with liberal-democratic regimes), protectionism, trade wars, political extremism, the rise of the far right, national and cultural separatism, the exclusion of minorities and foreigners, the closing of borders to immigrants, the struggle against globalization, and more. According to Freedom House, there has been a consistent global decline in political rights and civil liberties in the past 13 years.¹ It is hardly surprising that Russia's President Vladimir Putin has dismissed liberalism as "obsolete."²

As the signs of a crumbling world order proliferate, an alternative has appeared with growing appeal. China offers a different regime model to that of the West, one that secures rapid and steady economic development without democratic governance or respect for human rights, and in which the government's legitimacy derives not from electoral approval but from functional effectiveness and visible accomplishments. China's impressive economic growth has continued undisrupted for 40 years, and the country is working to ensure long-term markets for its goods and services, as well as securing its own energy, food, and mineral resources. Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, aimed at connecting China with Europe and Asia, will encompass a gigantic market of 4.4 billion people across 26 different countries. The US is suspicious of the project, seeing it as a means of extending Chinese influence worldwide. But other countries are not impressed by the warnings emanating from Washington. In April 2019, China hosted 37 foreign

leaders and 5000 participants from 150 countries and 90 international organizations at its Belt and Road Summit. Most of the attendees want to be part of the project.

Because half the oil China consumes is from the Middle East, China's interest in the region is on the rise, along with its investments. Israel is also on China's ambitious planning map: in 2019 China became Israel's second-largest trading partner, after the US. China is involved in major Israeli infrastructure projects: the Carmel tunnels; the Tel Aviv light rail; the Port of Haifa expansion and its operation for a 25-year period, starting in 2021; a new port in Ashdod, and more. Israel clearly has an interest in cultivating relations with China, but it must tread carefully, given the current inter-power rivalry and the necessity of avoiding damage to its strategic relations with the US. Washington has already warned Israel that its burgeoning relationship with China could potentially damage security cooperation with the US. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has publicly cautioned Israel that intelligence sharing could be curtailed.³

The authoritarian powers in competition with US – China and Russia – see themselves in historical perspective as superpowers, and do not accept the idea of a world order dictated by the West that disregards their might. They are growing more strategically assertive, and claiming legitimacy as superpowers equal to US or Europe (which shows signs of ongoing weakness). Under President Putin, Russia, which invaded and annexed the Crimean peninsula and holds portions of eastern Ukraine, has demonstrated its willingness to fire upon and seize Ukrainian vessels in the Kerch Strait

(November 25, 2018). Russia has sent bombers to Venezuela, which has tense relations with the US; it signaled its strength to the West with Vostok 2018, a large-scale military exercise with 300,000 troops, 36,000 tanks, and 1,000 aircraft; it is a major force dictating arrangements in Syria; and it competes with the US for the Middle East arms market.

Israel's dilemma: how to interact with countries that display friendship for Israel but whose rulers deviate from democratic norms

China, for its part, is pumping resources into the creation of a modern military (the Chinese defense budget is the world's second-largest, after the US), and is taking aggressive measures to assert sovereignty in the South China Sea.

Early this year, President Xi Jinping instructed his armed forces to prepare for war and reiterated China's right to use force to ensure unification with Taiwan.

One can speculate that, for the foreseeable future, the "world order" (some call it the "world disorder") will increasingly reflect Russia's and China's growing power and strategic assertiveness. Declining US interest in international dominance will help this process along.

Policymakers in Israel and the Jewish world cannot change global trends, but it is nevertheless their duty to assess the potential implications of these trends for Israel and the Jewish people. A world order that attaches less importance to democracy and human rights will reduce pressure on Israel to

put an end to the current situation, in which it has to use force in order to advance its interests and ensure its security, and in which it continues (in the terminology of its critics) to "control another people lacking national and political rights." In such a world, it will also be easier for Israel to take unilateral measures in the territories. It should, however, be noted that "unsentimental" behavior in the international arena, displaying indifference to values-based discourse, could cause problems for Israel should superpower interests diverge from its own. Particularly troubling in this regard is the eroding status of the US, the superpower whose friendship has been critical for Israel, and which also houses a thriving community that constitutes half of the Jewish people. This trend could lead to a gradual erosion of Israeli deterrence and perceived strength.

Finally, the global situation described here poses a dilemma for Israel: how to interact with countries that display friendship for Israel but whose rulers deviate from democratic norms and under whose leadership anti-Semitic elements flourish.

The US: growing internal polarization

In keeping with his "America first" slogan, President Trump shows no interest in maintaining the status of the US as a world leader promoting democracy and human rights. He takes an unsentimental view of the country's Western allies, which he feels have abused American generosity; he demands that these allies be self-reliant in terms of defense spending. Trump has little interest in cultivating international institutions or conventions. He has

abandoned the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Iran nuclear deal and is withdrawing from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty with Moscow;⁴ he opposes the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and has given European leaders cause for concern about his commitment to NATO. He embraces protectionism and is engaged in a trade war with Beijing (characterized by ups and downs due to a mutual interest in avoiding a crisis that would harm both parties). He is reducing foreign aid and funding for international institutions; he bickers with traditional US allies (except, so far, for Israel), and does not hide his sympathy for dictators. Despite Trump's desire not to waste resources in the international arena, it poses challenges for him, entailing hard decisions that are difficult to evade. His approach regarding the customary fundamentals of US foreign policy and his propensity for theatricality could lead him into unexpected policy choices.

Trump's decisions on a few specific issues will determine the contours of the international arena over the coming year. These include the Iran crisis and how to handle it (more on this below), and how to complete the negotiation process initiated with North Korea.

The Trump presidency reflects and clarifies the ideological polarization that currently prevails in the US. We cannot discount the possibility that, after Trump leaves the White House, the ideological pendulum will swing back; but even such a reversal would not necessarily mean increased American involvement in the world, as proven during the

Barak Obama administration, and as statements by 2020 Democratic presidential hopefuls have indicated.

B. Threats and Opportunities in the Middle East

The immediate security threats Israel faces are from terrorist organizations with military capabilities, and from Iran, which aspires to build an effective military front against Israel in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, and to exact vengeance for ongoing Israeli operations aimed at destroying its military infrastructure built beyond its borders.

Although the Syrian army is exhausted from years of civil war, and although Hezbollah has suffered heavy losses and Hamas is isolated and weakened, outbreaks of violence with these adversaries are still possible.

Israel has to manage in a violent and turbulent region marked by war, mass migration, humanitarian crises, stagnating economies, unemployment, and failed autocratic regimes. Terrorist organizations and radical Islamic movements flourish in the Middle East.

The defeat of the Islamic State's does not ensure eradication of the social and religious matrix from which it emerged, or its ability to carry out major terrorist attacks like the one that took place in Sri Lanka on April 21, 2019, in which over 250 people were killed. Two-thirds of the Middle East's inhabitants are aged 29 or younger; 30 percent of those of working age are unemployed (double the global average). These young people are also unable to participate in any real political process.

Tribal and clan ties trump civil commitment to the state, central governments are floundering and state frameworks are weakening, and at times collapsing – adding to the region’s roster of “failed states” with only partial control over their legal territories (Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Yemen, Sudan, and Iraq).

The vacuum created by declining US involvement in the region has allowed Russia to become a dominant player with a military presence in Syria, Israel’s neighbor. Despite Jerusalem’s good working relationship with Moscow, the convergence of Russian interests with those of Israel’s sworn enemies is troubling.

The threats posed by Iran and Islamic terrorism are aligning Israel’s interests with those of Sunni Arab nations, resulting in unprecedented cooperation in the security sphere. The frozen diplomatic process vis-à-vis the Palestinians is not currently blocking the development of these relations, though it does hamper public normalization. Mossad head Yossi Cohen has stated that his organization “has identified at this time a rare opportunity – perhaps the first in the history of the Middle East – to reach a regional understanding that would lead to an inclusive regional peace agreement.”⁵ The challenge of utilizing the natural gas reserves discovered in the Mediterranean Sea will contribute to the envisioned understanding, as evidenced by the recent meeting of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (January 14 and July 25, 2019), which was attended by representatives of Egypt, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority. The gas challenge is also driving Lebanon to consider agreements with Israel on a maritime border, so that the gas deposits within its territory can be utilized.

Iran: heightened confrontation

The US withdrawal from the JCPOA, the nuclear deal with Iran (May 2018), and the shift to direct military confrontation between Israel and Iran in Syria, are major escalations of the threat that Iran poses to Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu has warned that Israel will not countenance a nuclear Iran or reconcile itself to an Iran deploying its forces in countries that border Israel. Outgoing IDF Chief of General Staff Gadi Eisenkot has indicated that Israel has struck “thousands of Iranian targets without claiming responsibility or asking for credit,”⁶ and stated that Israel has prevented Iran from implementing its “grandiose vision” (constructing a military infrastructure) in Syria. (The international media has lately been reporting that Israel has attacked Iranian targets in Iraq.)

However, Iran has not abandoned its aspirations in Syria and is still busy recruiting local allies and establishing militias that follow its orders. As far as the Iranians are concerned, accounts have yet to be settled with Israel, raising the possibility of vengeance being exacted against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad. The Iranian attempted launch of suicide drones against northern Israeli targets (thwarted by a preemptive Israeli air force strike on August 24, 2019) is a case in point.

Tehran’s regional subversion continues. After withdrawing from the JCPOA, the US drafted a set of 12 demands, the most notable of which are that it cease uranium enrichment, allow IAEA inspectors unqualified access, halt the development of nuclear capable missiles, withdraw support for militant organizations such as Hezbollah, Hamas,

and Islamic Jihad, remove Iranian forces from Syria, and stop threatening to annihilate Israel. To spur Tehran to accept these terms, the US has adopted a “maximum pressure” policy, stiffening economic sanctions on Iran and declaring the Revolutionary Guard a terrorist organization. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, in cooperation with the American effort, have promised to keep an oil shortage from developing. The US has repeatedly called upon Iran to participate in talks regarding a revised nuclear deal, but Tehran’s has responded that it will not negotiate as long as sanctions remain in place. Trump’s optimistic statement following the G-7 on the possibility of reaching a revised agreement with Iran (and the appearance of the Iranian Foreign minister, Mohammad Zarif, on the sidelines of the meetings) has generated concern in Israel regarding the level of Trump’s adherence to his own 12 demands.

The sanctions have exacerbated Iran’s economic crisis significantly, and escalated tensions in the region. The US has deployed additional forces to the Persian Gulf, but Iran remains undeterred and has made good on its threat to exceed enrichment limits specified in JCPOA should sanctions continue. In early July 2019, the Iranians passed the enriched uranium production threshold, both in quantity (which had been limited to 300 kg) and in enrichment level (which had been restricted to 3.67 percent). Tehran has promised to continue exceeding the specified limits and to gradually depart from the agreement; at the same time, it is taking violent action in the Gulf. Iranian forces have struck oil tankers, signaling their ability to block the Strait of Hormuz and thereby harm the global

economy (over 20 percent of the world energy supply travels through this channel). The Iranians downed an unmanned US surveillance drone it claimed had violated their airspace, an act to which the US has not yet responded. Iran then proceeded to capture a British flag oil tanker in retaliation for the British seizure of an Iranian tanker in the Straits of Gibraltar two weeks earlier (the tanker, which was on its way to Syria, violated European Union sanctions against Damascus). The US is not exercising, at this stage, its formidable military resources deployed in the region, and President Trump has reiterated that there is no justification for the US shouldering security responsibility for the oil shipping lanes that serve other countries.

These developments indicate that Israel must be prepared for all scenarios, from renewed negotiations between the US and Iran to an escalation of Tehran's military moves

These developments indicate that Israel must be prepared for all scenarios: negotiations restarting between the US and Iran; escalation of Tehran’s military moves, which could result in a full-blown confrontation with America; the total collapse of the JCPOA, and a renewed Iranian nuclear threat.

Hezbollah: a strengthening adversary

Over the past year, Hezbollah has reinforced its hold over Lebanon. The organization and its political partners currently hold over half of the Lebanese

parliament, as well as government ministries that give them access to state budgets. For more than a decade, Hezbollah has refrained from open combat with Israel, and has not responded to Israeli air strikes on strategic arms convoys from Iran and Syria. This picture could change following the Israeli drone attack in the area of the Beirut headquarters of Hezbollah. Its secretary-general, Hassan Nasrallah, reacted (August 25, 2019) that Israel had violated the rules of the game that had prevailed since the Second Lebanon War in 2006, and that the conflict with Israel is entering a new phase, and Israel should, therefore, expect harsh retribution.

The organization suffered bloody losses in Syria but gained complex military campaign experience; in Hezbollah the IDF faces an adversary with the capabilities similar to an ordinary army. Hezbollah has over 120 thousand rockets at its disposal, some of which are highly accurate and capable of reaching deep into Israeli territory. Israel is preparing for the possibility that, in the next round of fighting, Hezbollah will try to strike its offshore gas facilities and vital infrastructure, or send forces into Israel to capture territories near the northern border. Accordingly, in December 2018 the IDF launched Operation Northern Shield aimed at neutralizing six attack tunnels that Hezbollah had dug into Israeli territory.

Despite the commonly-held view that Hezbollah has no present interest in risking another war with Israel, the possibility of an unforeseen outbreak of violence on the northern front cannot be disregarded. The deepening nuclear crisis with Iran could potentially spur Tehran to push Hezbollah into confrontation with Israel.

Syria: regime stabilization

Eight years of fighting have resulted in half a million casualties, five million Syrian refugees, and six million displaced persons who have lost their homes but remain in Syria. With the active support of Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, Bashar al-Assad has remained in power, and is growing stronger. Moscow has proven that it is a loyal ally, and unlike the US, is prepared to use force. Assad's forces are increasing military pressure against the rebels, who remain concentrated in the northwestern city of Idlib; an all-out offensive against them could result in a humanitarian disaster and cause a mass influx of refugees into Turkey, which wants to avoid such a scenario.

Ankara is also worried about the possibility of the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish entity in northern Syria and is threatening to take military action against what it regards as a terrorist menace. To Turkey's dismay, Trump has rethought his decision to withdraw US forces from Syria, largely due to concerns about the fate of its Kurdish allies. He tweeted (January 13, 2019) that the US would "devastate Turkey economically if they hit Kurds."⁷

Iran's plan to build a military infrastructure in Syria for use against Israel has been met by ongoing Israeli counter measures aimed at: keeping Iran and its proxies from establishing a stronghold in southern Syria; preventing the deployment of an elaborate precision-guided missile launch system across Syria; and blocking the transfer of strategic arms to Hezbollah.

Clearly, Israel has persuaded Moscow to honor its "red lines." According to IDF Chief of General Staff

Eisenkot (May 15, 2019), “the Russians understand that if Israel learns of Iranian deployments within 100 kilometers of its border, it will have complete freedom of action.”⁸ Evidence of Israel’s good working relationship with Russia can be seen in the many coordination meetings Netanyahu has had with Putin, and in Moscow’s assistance in bringing the remains of IDF MIA Zachary Baumel back to Israel for burial. The superpowers’ recognition of Israel’s strategic weight and the legitimacy of its interests in the Syrian arena were further acknowledged in the June 2019 trilateral summit held in Jerusalem with the participation of the US, Russian, and Israeli national security advisors. (Netanyahu stated that “at the three-way meeting with the US and Russia that was held here, we reached a consensus about the objective of removing Iran from Syria.”⁹)

Despite the foregoing, we cannot ignore the fact that there is a Moscow-supported axis in Syria that is hostile to Israel (Assad, Iran, Hezbollah), or that Russia is engaged in superpower competition with Israel’s single most important ally – the United States. The deployment of Russian-made S-300 and S-400 missiles in Syria indicates that Israel must continue to tread carefully if it is to protect its interests without creating friction with Russia.

Saudi Arabia: murder and policy

The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, 34-year-old Muhammad bin Salman (MBS), is the chief suspect in the October 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey. The murder has raised questions about bin Salman’s status and about

the Saudi modernization program, and has led to pressure by American lawmakers to restrict US relations with Riyadh. President Trump has attempted to curb this pressure by noting Saudi Arabia’s importance to the US arms industry and to the continued struggle against Iran, as well as the fact that it “aids Israel.”

Congressional efforts have also called attention to Saudi Arabia’s plan to build nuclear power plants. It has been disclosed that, due to concerns about losing the plant construction deal (80 billion dollars) to Russian or Chinese competitors, Trump secretly authorized the transfer of sensitive nuclear technology to the Saudis, which could potentially use it to develop their own military nuclear program. Such an outcome seems all the more likely given the crown prince’s recent comment (March 15, 2018) that his country may need such weapons to counter the Iranian threat: “Without a doubt if Iran developed a nuclear bomb, we would follow suit as soon as possible.”¹⁰

Israel has refrained from addressing the Khashoggi murder in any detail. According to Israel’s Ambassador to the United States Ron Dermer, it would be wrong to “throw out the prince with the bathwater.”¹¹ Israel finds MBS’s aggressive line against Iran and its allies, and his willingness to deepen secret cooperation with Israel, advantageous. Beyond the shocking Khashoggi murder, other failures overshadow bin-Salman’s leadership: the ongoing, outcome-less war in Yemen; the ineffectual embargo of Qatar; the failure to weaken Hezbollah by forcibly detaining the Lebanese prime minister; and more. However, as part of an effort to reinforce Saudi Arabia’s status

and salvage bin Salman's image, three concurrent events were recently hosted in Mecca (May 2019): an emergency Arab League summit; an emergency meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council; and a regular summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Jordan's fragility, its dependence on American aid and the threats it faces, are driving it to cooperate with Israel, especially in the security and intelligence spheres

the Egyptian constitution (April 2019) that would allow him to remain in office until 2034. He has also strengthened the military, which constitutes his support base (the army is now also charged with "protecting the constitution and democracy"). Concerns about a potential Egyptian economic collapse (and consequent large-scale humanitarian crisis, mass migration, and a radical Islamic takeover) help restrain Western criticism of Sisi's dictatorial behavior and motivate the Gulf nations to continue bolstering Egypt's flailing economy.

This year Sisi continued pushing implementation of an economic reform plan, which has boosted the Egyptian economy (whose current annual growth rate is 5 percent). The IMF has even praised the improvement of the country's macroeconomic indicators (July 29, 2019), yet half of Egypt's

Egypt: President Sisi consolidates his power

Egypt continues to face major security and economic problems. President Sisi is consolidating his power; this year he enacted changes to

population subsists on less than two dollars a day. The youth unemployment rate is particularly high, and each year two million newborns join the Egyptian populace, which currently numbers 100 million. Feeding all of these people is not a simple matter, given that Egypt produces only 50 percent of its own food needs. The approaching completion of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam poses a threat to Egypt's water supply, 90 percent of which comes from the Nile, and may impede much of its agricultural activity. Terrorism, political Islam, the deadlocked war on the Islamic State in Sinai (which, to date, has cost the lives of hundreds of Egyptian troops), and the danger posed by Iranian subversion, all provide a groundwork for Egypt's current "wide range of coordination with the Israelis" (although the peace remains a cold one and anti-Israel incitement abounds).¹²

Jordan: continued fragility

This year, the King of Jordan has again removed key officials from their posts. In late April 2019, Jordan's head of intelligence, along with seven ministers, were dismissed following reported efforts to foment unrest and destabilize the Kingdom. The dismissal of the prime minister last year, intended to quell public protests generated by the country's ongoing economic crisis, did not solve Jordan's problems: high government debt levels; unemployment (40 percent among young people); an oversized public sector; corruption; low employment rate of women; decreased financial support from the Gulf states, and the presence of a million and a half Syrian refugees (13 percent of the Kingdom's population).

Not only does Jordan have to cope with vexing economic problems and the resulting social unrest; the country also faces security challenges posed by radical Islam, in a situation where its Palestinian residents – half the population – are influenced by the ups and downs of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Jordan fears that a US peace plan would leave it burdened with responsibility for the two million Palestinians within its borders with refugee status. Jordanian tribe-affiliated citizens who see themselves as the Kingdom's indigenous population fear that the "Jordan is Palestine" formulation will be implemented, thereby changing the country's identity and depriving them of the preferred status they have enjoyed in exchange for their support of the royal family.

Jordan's fragility, its dependence on American aid (1.5 billion dollars this year) and the security threats it faces, are driving it to cooperate with Israel, especially in the security and intelligence spheres. However, the Jordanian public adamantly objects to normalization with Israel. King Abdullah was responding to this opposition when he announced, on October 21, 2018, that he would not be renewing the two sections annexed to the peace treaty with Israel that allow Israel to lease the Jordan Valley enclaves of Tzofar and Naharayim.

Turkey: between East and West

To an ever-greater degree, Turkey is shedding the liberal-democratic characteristics that once distinguished it within the Muslim world. Under President Erdogan, nationalist and Islamic sentiment have both been on the rise, and the

country is becoming an autocracy. Erdogan's crackdown on perceived enemies in the media, academia, the military, the government, and the judicial system continues. According to Human Rights Watch (January 2019), nearly 50,000 Turkish citizens are currently jailed on charges of political subversion. Consequently, Europe has made it clear that Turkey's prospects of joining the EU are fading. Ankara's insistence on drilling for oil off Northern Cyprus (which, according to international law, is occupied territory) is also heightening tensions with the EU, which has imposed sanctions in response.

The crushing defeat of Erdogan's favored candidate in the rerun of Istanbul's mayoral election (June 23, 2019) is perceived as a possible harbinger of the Turkish president's political demise. Erdogan-backed candidates have lost elections in other large Turkish cities, and support for him within his own party has wavered (there have been threats of resignation from top party figures and the creation of an opposition party). The Turkish economy, whose former achievements were a badge of honor for Erdogan, is now in crisis, with currency devaluation, a large budget deficit, high external debt, inflation, and surging unemployment. Turkey's "Zero-Problems" foreign policy has been replaced by an abundance of confrontations and crises fueled by Erdogan's pretension to "lead the Muslim world."¹³ The hope of seeing Assad removed from power has not materialized, and Turkey is now jockeying to protect its interests in northern Syria vis-à-vis the US and Russia: both in order to thwart the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish state, and to prevent the violent collapse

of Idlib, which would flood Turkey with migrants (there are already 3.5 million refugees within Turkish borders).

Turkish-American relations are rife with problems. The purchase of S-400 missiles from Russia, whose delivery is now underway, is inconsistent with Turkey's NATO membership, but provides an advantage should it become involved in confrontations over gas reserves. The deal torpedoed the purchase of 100 American stealth aircraft, caused Turkey's removal from the aircraft parts manufacturing project (a billion-dollar loss to its economy), and made Turkey the target of sanctions mandated by US law. Ankara thus finds itself between a rock and a hard place: had it buckled to American pressure it would have been punished by Moscow (whose assistance is vital to Turkey in the Syrian arena). Erdoğan seems to be choosing to strengthen his ties with adversaries of the US. Accordingly (as evidenced by statements during a July 2019 visit to China), he has reconciled himself to China's treatment of its Uyghur Muslim minority (treatment that Erdoğan once referred to as "genocide"). The decision has also led Erdoğan to call for a new, multipolar world order, noting that "Turkey and China, the world's most ancient civilizations, have a responsibility to contribute to building this new system."¹⁴

Abhorrence of Erdoğan does not negate Turkey's importance to the West. Turkey is strategically located, belongs to NATO, is significantly involved in the Syrian crisis, and holds the key to blocking or allowing mass migration into Europe. Nor can Israel afford to disregard Turkey. Notwithstanding the agreement to normalize ties with Ankara in 2016,

Israel has no illusions regarding a return to past levels of security and intelligence coordination. Accordingly, Israel has made an effort in recent years to strengthen its ties with Greece and Cyprus in the security and energy spheres.

The Palestinian arena: a change of leadership in the offing

The past year was rife with developments testifying to the Palestinian Authority's instability: deteriorating relations with the US; economic distress; rising unemployment (31 percent in the West Bank and over 50 percent in Gaza); an erosion of aid from longtime donor countries; less funding available to agencies that assist the PA (especially UNRWA, which the US has cut off entirely). To all of these one may add Israel's withholding of tax revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority in accordance with a Knesset-passed law that mandates deducting funds the PA pays to the families of killed terrorists or those serving prison sentences in Israel – 7 percent of the PA budget. In response, the PA refused all of the tax revenues, which account for 65 percent of its budget, and government services have been reduced, and the salaries of 160,000 civil service workers has been slashed by half. However, the PA's grave economic situation softened its resolve, and led to an agreement with Israel to receive two billion shekels (August 22, 2019). In parallel, the leadership of the ailing, 84-year-old Abu Mazen is losing public legitimacy, and the sense that his time in office is nearing its end has caused rumblings within the PA.

The Palestinian leadership suffered humiliating foreign-relations setbacks this year: the US

recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moved its embassy there; Washington ceased referring to the West Bank as "occupied territories," and the American peace plan, though not yet made public, is considered by the Palestinians to be a one-sided, pro-Israel initiative. The Palestinians are having trouble accepting a "world order" in which they no longer play a starring role. In spite of Abu Mazen's threats to cut off relations with Israel, (the most recent of which was on July 25, 2019 following the demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem), for all the years he has been in power, Abu Mazen has maintained security coordination with Israel and helped ensure relative quiet in Judea and Samaria. His departure may spark succession conflicts and could potentially impair the coordination with Israel. West Bank Palestinians are disappointed by the PA and skeptical about the leadership's ability to bring change and end the Israeli occupation. This atmosphere of frustration occasionally triggers violence. A poll released in early July 2019 indicated that 47 percent of Palestinians favor a return to violent intifada.¹⁵

Publication of the peace plan announced by President Trump shortly after he took office has been delayed, however, the plan's economic provisions were revealed at an economic workshop convened by the US in Bahrain (June 25, 2019). The Palestinians boycotted the gathering, which also had no official Israeli representation. The plan presented offers a 50-billion-dollar investment in the Palestinian economy and in the economies of neighboring countries (28 billion in the West Bank and Gaza, the rest in Egypt and Jordan), without specifying the entities that would be making the

investment. In light of rumors that the American peace plan ignores the two-state formula, President Sisi and King Abdullah published a joint statement following a meeting in Cairo (July 29, 2019) declaring that the basis of renewed negotiations must be the two-state paradigm: "The Palestinian state will be based on the June 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital."¹⁶

Since Operation Protective Edge concluded (August 2014),

Hamas has been trying to reestablish its military capabilities in Gaza, including restoration of its attack tunnels, which the IDF has been working to locate and destroy. The organization, which operates under external pressure (from Israel

The American peace plan, though not yet made public, is considered by the Palestinians to be one-sided and pro-Israel. They are having trouble accepting a "world order" in which they no longer play a starring role

and Egypt), also faces domestic unrest and public criticism due to the tremendous damage wrought in the Gaza Strip by war, rampant poverty, the ongoing blockade, and high unemployment (of Gaza's 2.1 million residents, 1.3 million receive food packages from aid agencies). According to UN reports, Gaza's poverty rate is 38 percent. For those under the age of 30, unemployment stands at 60 percent (42 percent of Gazans are under the age of 15). Electricity is available to Gazans for only a few hours a day, water quality is deteriorating, and there is a threat of epidemic disease outbreaks

(over 100,000 cubic meters of sewage flow into the Mediterranean daily). There is growing awareness in Israel of the dangers posed by the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza; yet despite this awareness, and despite international and regional acknowledgement of the situation's gravity and explosive potential, external aid remains limited. There is reluctance to invest in a "war zone" and aversion to the idea of bolstering Hamas through financial donations. Abu Mazen himself is exerting economic pressure on Gaza, as part of his anti-Hamas effort.

Although Hamas leader *Yehiyeh Sinwar has said that* "with war you achieve nothing,"¹⁷ the organization initiated several rounds of violent confrontation with Israel over the past year: rockets (including on Gush Dan), incendiary balloons, and violent demonstrations along the border fence. Hamas, according to Sinwar, is trying to get Israel to meet its ceasefire conditions, so that the Gaza Strip can be rehabilitated. The humanitarian crisis increases the danger that rounds of violence will escalate into all-out military conflict. Nevertheless, we should not discount the possibility that the situation in Gaza will push the Hamas leadership to prioritize a long-term ceasefire with Israel.

The Strategic Triangle: Jerusalem-Washington-US Jewry

The triangular relationship between Jerusalem, Washington, and American Jewry constitutes a strategic asset and decisive force-multiplier for Israel and the Jewish people. Over the past year, an imbalance has emerged in this triangle. The Jerusalem-Washington side has displayed

outstanding support and cooperation, but there have been eruptions of discontent on the Jerusalem-US Jewry side.

The Trump administration has proven its friendship for Israel on numerous occasions. In 2018, the US Embassy moved to Jerusalem; in 2019, a presidential proclamation recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights (March 25, 2019). As an expression of thanks, Netanyahu convened his cabinet to dedicate a new locality in the Golan Heights named Ramat Trump in honor of the American president (June 16, 2019). US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman announced (June 8, 2019) that Israel has the right to annex at least part of the West Bank,¹⁸ and there have been reports that a strategic alliance between the two countries is being contemplated.¹⁹ A recent testimony to the close strategic cooperation between the two countries was the successful testing of the Arrow 3 anti-ballistic weapon system, which took place in Alaska (July 28, 2019). That system is designed to intercept ballistic missiles from space, and it is considered the most advanced of its kind in the world.

Strong sympathy for Israel characterizes the Republican side of the US political map. A February 2019 Gallup poll found that, in regard to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, 76 percent of Republicans sympathize with Israel, while the figure is 43 percent for Democrats. The liberal-intellectual circles that influence the Democratic Party raise objections concerning Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, discrimination against Arab Israelis, gender inequality, lack of separation of religion and state, prioritization of Jewish values over democratic

values, and more. In contrast, Republicans exhibit robust support for Israel, and vigorously reject the idea that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict harms American interests or erodes the values shared by Israel and the US.

In today's polarized American society, it is becoming more difficult to maintain bipartisan sympathy for Israel, and temptation is growing to seek immediate gain from the supportive (Republican) side while disregarding the price Israel may have to pay in the long run. Indeed, some Democratic presidential hopefuls do not hesitate to voice criticism of Israeli policy (including threatening to cut aid to Israel should it annex West Bank territory, and announcing intentions to cancel withdrawal from the JCPOA). Such criticism intensified following Netanyahu's decision, encouraged by Trump (August 15, 2019), to forbid entry into Israel of Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, two Democrat members of Congress supportive of BDS. In the aftermath, President Trump stated (August 20, 2019) that Jews who vote for a Democrat "show either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty," (he later clarified his statement by saying that he meant disloyalty to Israel). Trump's statement sparked outcry within the Jewish community, and the president was accused of encouraging anti-Semitism for his own political interests. Such a reality where attitudes toward Israel become party-dependent poses a major challenge to the traditional strategic objective of Israeli governments since the founding of the state: to maintain bipartisan support, and to preserve the solidarity of all US Jews (most of whom are Democrats).²⁰

Endnotes:

- 1 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2019>
- 2 *The Financial Times*, June 28, 2019
- 3 *The Times of Israel*, March 21, 2019
- 4 The US withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty on August 2, 2019, which had imposed verification oversight and placed limitations on the development of intermediate-range nuclear missiles. The withdrawal was justified by claims of Moscow's continual violations of the agreement.
- 5 *Haaretz*, July 1, 2019.
- 6 *Haaretz*, January 13, 2019.
- 7 *The Telegraph*, 14 January 2019.
- 8 The Washington Institute, *Policy-Watch* 3123, 17 May 2019.
- 9 *Israel Hayom*, July 18, 2019.
- 10 *Reuters*, March 15, 2018.
- 11 *JTA*, November 13, 2018.
- 12 *Vox*, January 7, 2019
- 13 *Yeni Şafak*, October 15, 2018.
- 14 *Global Times*, July 1, 2019.
- 15 Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), <http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/759>.
- 16 AFP, 29 July 2019
- 17 *Yedioth Ahronoth*, October 4, 2018.
- 18 *NYT*, June 10, 2019
- 19 Recommendations on this issue were submitted by the JUPI during the annual meeting with the Israeli government (June 30, 2019) - <http://jipi.org.il/new/he/article/aa2019g/#.XTQe7OgzZY>

10

The Intra-Jewish Arena

- This year, Jewish communities have been more concerned with local reactions to political and social developments in various countries around the world than with issues of Jewish identity or goals common to the Jewish people writ large.
- As the political discourse has become more focused and sharpened, opinions have become polarized and Jews within and across communities have experienced even more problems with intra-Jewish dialogue.
- Rising anti-Semitism poses a major challenge to Jews the world over, but in Israel the gravity of the situation has not yet registered, and the necessary adjustments of policy have not been made.
- Israel's cultural richness, and the special culture of Israel's Jews, is deepening the gap between Jews who have different interpretations of Jewish identity. This could impact and widen the gap between Israel and Diaspora communities.

Introduction

In the past year, leaders of the world's major Jewish communities – Israel and the United States – as well as of smaller communities were chiefly concerned with domestic political developments in their respective countries, and with the impact of these developments on the practice, image, robustness, and identity of the Jews. At the same time, all of the communities outside Israel experienced growing concern about intensifying anti-Semitic discourse and its periodic eruptions of violence, sometimes deadly, directed at Jews. This duality – in which the individual communities looked inward while also sharing an awareness of the broader anti-Semitic menace – posed a complex challenge to community leaders. The desire to strengthen cooperation in the face of a shared threat (existential challenges to Israel's security and Jew hatred) frequently proved hard to realize due to major differences in outlook and in the specific needs arising from local developments.

Israel: Repeat Elections

The 20th Knesset dissolved in late December 2018 sending Israelis to the polls on April 9, 2019. The election results seemed to indicate that Prime Minister Netanyahu would have little trouble forming another government based on the religious-right bloc, but several weeks of negotiations yielded no practicable coalition. Consequently, the newly installed 21st Knesset decided to dissolve, and Israel embarked on yet another round of elections scheduled for September 17, 2019.

Although the results of the second round of elections are unknown at the time of this writing (August 2019), major trends can be discerned, and important lessons learned from their very existence. The need to hold two rounds of elections in quick succession has made domestic political machinations Israel's main preoccupation over the past year. This in and of itself points to a problem with Israel's political system. A second round of elections within a so short a timeframe constitutes a costly burden for the Israeli public and its elected officials.

By the time the September 2019 elections take place, Israel will have spent the better part of a year in an undesirable state of governance. The government, of course, continues to function and render decisions on current matters, but the lack of a stable coalition makes it difficult to act on major issues and engage in long-term planning. This can be seen clearly with regard to the budget deficit, whose troubling proportions

emerged as the (first) round of elections was called, and remained inadequately addressed for many months afterward. This deferment in addressing the deficit will oblige the new government, once elected, to take harsher measures than might have been necessary under normal political circumstances.

During election seasons, leaders take stronger, more insistent stands, and sharp contradistinctions between their electorates and those of competing political parties. The Israeli political discourse in 2019 has been characterized by separatism and exclusion – toward the Arab minority (which expressed its own separatism and exclusion), toward leftist groups ("leftist" being loosely defined as anyone who doesn't support the religious-right coalition aspiring to renew its government hold), toward the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) public (on the part of secular groups, including the secular-right), and toward the right, especially the religious right (on the part of the center and the left). Each of the aforementioned groups has tried to delegitimize the ideas and deeds of the others. The left has been accused of being unpatriotic, the right of harboring fascist tendencies; religious groups have been accused of *hadata* – "religionization" – and so on. The effect of this discourse on the Israel public is to alienate the various groups from each other, and to foment anger, resentment, and frustration.

The publicly claimed cause of political crisis, (and there are doubtless additional causes, including the prime minister's legal situation),

was the impasse in resolving a contentious and longstanding social issue: IDF enlistment of Haredi yeshiva students. A High Court of Justice-mandated timeframe obliged the political system to make a decision, and the deadline loomed. It became evident that although the differences between various legislative proposals (for a new arrangement regarding the yeshiva-student exemption from IDF service, one that would satisfy the High Court and the Israeli public) were relatively small, no consensus could be reached and, consequently, no viable coalition could be formed. The results of the forthcoming September elections will determine whether and how a majority agreement can be reached with respect to the court-mandated enlistment legislation.

In both rounds of elections, Israeli citizens have been expected, first and foremost, to make a personal decision: do they want to see Benjamin Netanyahu heading the government even after having overtaken David Ben-Gurion as Israel's longest-serving prime minister? The desirability of Netanyahu's continued leadership encompasses a variety of considerations. Some of these pertain to his policy record (avoiding descent into all-out war in Gaza, the ongoing military effort to keep Iran from strengthening its hold on Syria, his close relationship with the US president, and open dialogue with the leaders of Russia, India, China, and other nations, etc.). Other considerations relate to his political approach (alliance with the religious right and the Haredim) and his personal qualities as a

leader who – pending a hearing – is about to be indicted on charges of bribery and breach of trust.

The first round of elections in 2019 showed that Israelis have not abandoned, in any dramatic way, the positions that put Netanyahu and his Likud party in power more than a decade ago. The religious-right bloc, whose advance commitment to strive for a Netanyahu-headed government was one of its defining characteristics this time around, won a large majority of votes. It

was only the high election threshold, and the splintering into satellite parties, that kept this majority from being fully reflected in the distribution of Knesset seats, and in the establishment of a stable coalition.

Another prominent feature of the April 2019 elections was its high centrist-Israel voter concentration. Essentially, the two big parties (Likud and Blue and White), which positioned themselves in the center, together won a clear majority of 70 Knesset seats. However, theoretical considerations (can a government function under a prime minister threatened with indictment?) and issues of political strategy prevented (in the first round of elections) the formation of a coalition that would reflect the Israeli public's "centrification." The group most

To what degree, if any, do corruption allegations necessitate the introduction of new blood into the governmental system?

negatively affected by this sociopolitical trend is the camp formerly identified as the Jewish left. This camp's two major representative parties (Labor and Meretz) garnered, together, only ten Knesset seats (less than ten percent). The share of elected MKs representing the Arab voting public also declined in this election cycle due to political splintering and a substantial drop in Arab Israeli voting rates (an ongoing issue that merits separate discussion).

The recent and forthcoming Israeli election cycles have also called attention to the fact that Israelis are no longer preoccupied by foreign policy issues, on which there is a broad consensus among most voters. In particular, the Israeli-Palestinian conundrum, once a major fault line between political camps, ceased to be a partisan acid test. In its place, personal conduct and corruption issues rose on the agenda, along with the dynamics between the elected legislative and the appointed judicial branches, and religion-state relations. Quite a few members of the main opposition party, Blue and White, strongly – even very strongly – concur with the foreign and security policies of the present government; their criticism touches primarily on the issues noted above: To what degree, if any, do corruption allegations necessitate the introduction of new blood into the governmental system? Is there an urgent need to limit the High Court of Justice's power to intervene in parliamentary legislative activity? And, has the religion-state balance

been harmed (or more explicitly: have the religious-Haredi parties become excessively influential in shaping Israeli public life)?

In this context it is also important to mention that among certain sectors of the public (mainly supporters of the rightwing government but also others), there is a declining trust in legal authorities, the police, the state attorneys and the courts. This decline makes the public discourse on political corruption partisan, as government opponents argue that the government is guilty of corruption while government supporters claim that the legal system is biased against a particular political camp.

The United States: Fear and Politics

In the space of a year, following the murderous attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and in Poway, a suburb of San Diego, the American Jewish community entered a new state of consciousness. These two incidents, the first of which was the most serious act of aggression ever perpetrated on a US Jewish institution, as well as an overall uptick in attacks on Jews (online insults, public statements, physical harassment, and the like), have had a real impact on American Jews' sense of security – as can be seen in the Integrated Anti-Semitism Index in this report. As the American Jewish Committee's (AJC) annual survey (conducted between April 10 and May 7, 2019) showed, nearly two-thirds

of American Jews now feel that the status of the Jews is less secure than it was a year ago (65 percent). Last year as well (2018), a majority of American Jews (55 percent) said that the status of Jews in the United States was less secure than it had been the previous year.

Debate within the community has erupted over the causes and effects of this state of affairs, with many Jews looking to the political arena, President Donald Trump's administration in particular. These Jews, who constitute the majority according to the Jewish Electorate Institute (JEI), feel that the president bears at least "some responsibility" for the synagogue attacks. JEI's poll also looked at what Jews think should be done to fight anti-Semitism and found that most believe the solution lies in political action. "Help people get elected with the right values" was the most commonly-chosen response (43 percent), followed by "Work to get Donald Trump out" (39 percent), and "Press Democrats to condemn anti-Semitism" (31 percent). Interestingly, compared with the political options offered, practical solutions on other planes received much less support. US Jewry has relatively little trust in "armed security" (12 percent), or in the idea of becoming more involved in "Jewish social action groups" (12 percent), or in synagogues (4 percent). These findings indicate the degree to which American Jews are directing their concerns about rising anti-Semitism toward the political arena. They also show that there is no

data to support the idea that the anti-Semitic upsurge will cause more Jews to strengthen their ties to the Jewish community.

Next year is a US election year, and it already appears that topics of concern to the Jewish community, directly or indirectly, will be playing a major role in the elections. These topics include attitudes toward Israel, its policies and elected government, and responsibility for manifestations of anti-Semitism. The political left (i.e., most Jews) lays the blame on President Trump, but the right points an accusatory finger at the radical left, and even at elected officials, whose attitude toward Jews is unsympathetic, to say the least. These groups and leaders often focus on Jews' identification or relationship with the State of Israel, aiming to undermine the legitimacy and status of the American Jewish community. Among other things, they argue that so long as Jews support Israel (the prevailing opinion within these circles is that Israel's actions, and for some, its very existence are illegitimate), the American Jewish community is, by extension, complicit.

It must nevertheless be noted that, as we saw in earlier rounds of elections, most American Jewish voters do not place specifically-Jewish issues nor Israel at the top of their voting agendas. Though most US Jews agree that "caring about Israel" is a "very important part" of being a Jew (62 percent, in the AJC's 2019 Survey of American Jewish Opinion), a majority rank Israel relatively low on their scale

of political priorities. The issues of greatest importance to US Jews are health insurance and Social Security, gun control legislation, and efforts to counter the radical right, white supremacy, and terrorism. Still, it should be noted that about two-thirds (65 percent) of American Jews say that candidate positions on Israel affect their voting choices. That is, even if Israel is not a high-priority issue for them, pro-Israel attitudes nevertheless carry weight in American Jews' voting decisions.

US Jews were less concerned this year – at least, they were less publicly and less intensively preoccupied – with issues unrelated to anti-Semitism or politics. Major trends regarding identity and demographics remained unchanged, as shown in the AJC survey. The AJC survey also provided data on respondents' personal status. Nearly half (45 percent) were unmarried. And of those who were married, only two-thirds (34 percent of the total) were married to Jews, while the rest (20 percent) were married to non-Jews. This picture is consistent with the trend identified a few years ago in several different studies, including one published by the Jewish People Policy Institute (Cohen and Fishman). These studies pointed to demographic erosion due not only to mixed marriages, but also, and perhaps primarily, to a paucity of families and children in some Jewish communities.

Anti-Semitism and its impact

Anti-Semitic incidents have an impact on the entire realm of Jewish activity. They affect the desire of Jews to engage with the community and with the Jewish people, to identify as Jews, to give their children a Jewish education, and so on. Such incidents also, of course, affect the image of Jews in their own eyes, and in the eyes of those around them (see the Integrated Anti-Semitism Index in this report). Troubling anti-Semitic incidents, including physical attacks on Jews, were also reported over the last year in other parts of the world (Argentina, home to nearly 200,000 Jews, is one example).

Germany's Jewish community, this year, had to face the question of whether and to what extent Jews should publicly display their Jewishness. More specifically: Should Germany's Jews wear kippot in public, thereby identifying themselves as Jews? Discussion of this issue began when Germany's Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Anti-Semitism, Dr. Felix Klein, publicly announced that he had reversed his earlier position, and would now be recommending that Jews not wear kippot outside of their homes and synagogues.

"I can no longer recommend Jews wear a kippah at every time and place in Germany," said Dr. Klein. This statement generated a wave of protest and sympathy, with the US Ambassador to Germany himself appearing publicly with a kippah on his head, and Bild, a popular German newspaper published a cut-

out kippah along with the editor-in-chief's entreaty that Germans wear kippot in the streets in solidarity with German Jews. These reactions gratified the organized community and caused the government to publicly change its position. However, Klein's warning still resonates, and Jews in Germany understand that their government cannot ensure their safety and that they will likely continue to be subjected to harassment by the extreme right, by Muslim immigrants, and others.

The kippah issue is, of course, emblematic of the larger question regarding the ability of a Jewish community to exist in a modern setting where anti-Semitic elements are growing ever bolder. Half the Jews in France feel that the status of French Jewry has worsened in the past year (AJC survey), yet most of them (60 percent) also believe that Jews have a future in France. On the other hand, nearly a third of French Jews (29 percent) say that Jews should leave the country as soon as possible. This belief is shared by Israeli Jews. While more than half of French Jewry and three quarters of American Jews feel that Jews do have a future in Europe, most Israeli Jews who have an opinion on the matter (46 percent) say that Jews should leave as soon as they can. In any case, there is a certain duality in the views of Israeli Jews, and in the statements of some of their leaders: On the one hand, concern and harsh condemnation of anti-Semitism worldwide. On the other hand, an implicit assumption that Jews have nothing to look forward to in Europe.

Obviously, the question of whether Jews have a future in Europe (or in other countries where anti-Semitism is on the rise) raises secondary questions, such as: How many Jews are required in order to say there's a "future?" Does "future" presuppose the possibility of a full and public Jewish life? Jews have lived in many different countries and time periods, in conditions where they were obliged to limit their interactions with non-Jewish populations and were often forced to maintain a low profile within the broader public. So, we have to ask not only whether Jews in Germany can place lighted Hanukkah menorahs in their windows without fear of reprisal, but also whether a situation where one cannot do this is tolerable, and whether such a situation will cause him or her to refrain from lighting the menorah altogether, or simply hide it from the eyes of non-Jews. In many countries this kind of discussion still seems premature or alarmist, but not in all countries. In certain Jewish communities the situation is reaching the point where such questions will need to be asked. For example, in places where kosher slaughter has been prohibited (in the Flanders region of Belgium, kosher slaughter was outlawed early this year), or where efforts are underway to ban circumcision.

Israel-Diaspora Relations

Jewish ties to Israel can be seen in nearly every index of emotional attachment in the various Jewish communities. A third of Israeli Jews view US Jews as siblings; a third of French

Jews consider Israeli Jews to be siblings. Only a minority of French Jews (16 percent), and a minority (though a more substantial one) of American Jews (28 percent) say they do not regard Israelis as "family." A minority of US Jews (35 percent) and of French Jews (37 percent) do not agree that "Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew." Only a small minority (13 percent) say that caring about Israel is unimportant. Nearly half of the Canadian Jewish community, the fourth-largest in the world (possibly on its way to becoming the third-largest, overtaking France), have very strong ties to Israel (48 percent).

In parallel, there were growing voices in Israel emphasizing the centrality and dominance of Israel in the Jewish world today. An example of that was a book by Professor Yossi Shain of Tel Aviv University. In his book, *The Israeli Century and the Israelization of Judaism*, Shain writes that "Israel, rooted in sovereign territory, in tribalism and religiosity, is rising in status globally and in the Jewish world, while Diaspora Jewry – American Jewry first and foremost – is fighting for its vitality and communal identity".

This assertion, with which many Jews will disagree, is nevertheless becoming increasingly widespread, certainly in Israel, and in not just a few other Jewish communities as well. In the JPPI Structured Jewish World Dialogue conducted a year ago, marking 70 years of Israel-Diaspora relations, those relations were shown to be "in a state of flux." Demographic, military, and economic fortification, as well as

cultural development, have made Israel the Jewish people's strongest community. Much empirical evidence attests to this, but it was also the belief held by the dialogue participants. Four out of five (81 percent) agreed that Israel is the "center of the Jewish world." This, of course, was true for a very large majority of the dialogue's Israeli participants (96 percent), but a significant majority of the Diaspora-Jewish participants also shared this view. Three out of four Americans (77 percent) and four out of five participants elsewhere in the world (82 percent) affirmed Israel's centrality in the Jewish world.

The Israeli model was extensively presented this year in a JPPI study of Israeli Judaism (Rosner and Fuchs). The model in question is one of identity, whose salient features are: the incorporation of both Jewish tradition and Israeli nationality into an amalgamated identity; being at ease with tradition as a cultural element of the Israeli environment; and lack of fear regarding "Jewish continuity," which seems assured so long as Israel's survival is assured. These characteristics highlight the difference between Jewish life in Israel and Jewish life in the Diaspora and make it hard for Israeli and non-Israeli communities to understand each other's circumstances, cultural challenges, and concerns. This past year, as anti-Semitism has been powerfully felt in the Jewish world, the contrast between the two communities has come into sharper relief. A large proportion of Israeli Jews – second-, third-, and fourth-generation Israelis – have

only a second-hand acquaintance with anti-Semitism. They have heard about it, but do not feel it. Their ability to recognize the essential nature of Diaspora Jewry's plight is, accordingly, diminished.

Diaspora Jews visiting Israel are exposed to this reality to some degree. Data published this year indicate that 40 percent of US Jews have visited Israel at least once in their lives, but the figures for communities elsewhere in the world are higher (eight out of ten Canadian Jews, 65 percent of French Jews). As noted above, studies in all of the communities attest to Diaspora Jewry's strong ties to Israel (even if some in the Diaspora are harshly critical of the country's leadership; periodic reports of an unbridgeable rift between the two communities should be taken with a grain of salt. Nevertheless, the fact that these ties are not identical in quality across all existing communities and subpopulations must not be overlooked; there are groups that unquestionably feel alienated from Israel (and groups within Israel that feel alienated from Diaspora Jewry). We already mentioned the disparity in level of connection to Israel between Canadian and US Jews hardly. Another example: in a study of the Greater Washington, D.C. Jewish community one can detect a disparity in ties to Israel between Jews married to Jews and Jews married to non-Jews, as well as between older Jews (65 and over) and younger Jews. This study's findings also underscore the strong link, one repeatedly substantiated by researchers, between visiting Israel and having emotional ties to it. Among those who have

never visited Israel, nearly a third say they have no sense of connection to the country (29 percent). In contrast, only 2 percent of those who have visited Israel several times attest to a lack of emotional connection.

Diaspora Jews' sense of connection to Israel is affected by many factors, some related to values and political trends, others to personal choice and social trends, still others to developments in Israel/Israeli culture, Diaspora Jewry, and the world generally. Public discourse in the Jewish world commonly emphasizes current affairs and political developments as drivers of general trends. Thus, the fact that most American Jews vehemently oppose Trump administration policy and find Donald Trump personally abhorrent, while Israeli Jews express gratitude and appreciation of the current US president, has given rise to a monumental political dissonance that sometimes spills over into the more complex spheres of identity and values. Similarly, when Israel elects governments that are influenced by the Orthodox parties, difficulties are created for many non-Orthodox Diaspora Jews, for whom Israeli policy on issues of religion and state is a source of alienation.

Nonetheless, it must be stressed that developments on the political plane explain only some of the challenges that characterize Israel-Diaspora relations. No less, and perhaps more significant, are the cultural and social developments underway in both the Diaspora and Israel. The fact that Israeli Jewish culture emphasizes national expression, while Jewish

culture in many other places is religion-oriented, makes it hard to conduct a mutually-understandable dialogue on issues pertaining to the Jewish people's shared future. Once known for its intimate, small-scale feel, Israel has transformed over the past few decades into a teeming populace divided into subgroups, each with its own social agenda and ideology. Israel has a high birthrate and enjoys considerable military/political might and rapid economic growth that puts it well along the path toward a Western-style society of abundance.

Politically, it is dominated by the conservative right, which relies on religious and traditional voters, many of whom are Mizrahim – Jews whose families came to Israel from Middle Eastern/North African countries. Diaspora Jewry, by contrast, is characterized by rising integration in general Western society, diminishing group cohesion (due, among other things, to a fading sense of threat from surrounding societies), an erosion of organized-community power, a shift in philanthropy from community-based to individual, a steep upturn in intermarriage rates, necessarily reflected in changing patterns of Jewish consciousness (given that a large proportion of those belonging to the Jewish community are not Jewish), a growing demand for change in the framework guiding relations with an ever-stronger Israel, and reservations among some groups within the Jewish community on issues of Israeli foreign policy (primarily the Palestinian issue) and religion and state.

Jewish identity

The Jewish People Policy Institute's Israeli Judaism project, mentioned above, made a significant contribution this year to our understanding of Israeli Jewish identity. Among other things, it illuminated the way in which major secularizing trends within Israeli-Jewish society and the Israeli-Jewish public sphere (e.g., a large number of people who do their shopping on Shabbat; religious observance abandoned at higher rates than it is adopted) interact with the demographic and political invigoration of religious subgroups. This study (see chapter, Israeli Jews: Tradition and Nationality) identified four main differences between the Jewish identity that is emerging in Israel, and that of most Diaspora Jews.

The first of these differences: Israeli Jews are not concerned with "Jewish continuity"; they are not worried about it, and do not fear that the next generation will not be Jewish. The second: Israeli Jews do not have to make an effort to be Jewish, to feel Jewish, to be active Jews. The third: Israeli Jews are indeed active Jews. The highly-detailed questionnaire on which the study was based found that, in Israel, hardly any Jews are entirely cut off from Jewish tradition. The fourth difference: For Israeli Jews, Israeliness is a central component of Jewish identity – so much so, that for many of them the distinction between "Israeliness" and "Jewishness" is blurred. For example, they agree that "to be a real Israeli you have to be Jewish."

Of course, these are all generalizations. Neither the Israeli nor the Diaspora communities are monolithic. In both instances there are exceptions that prove the rule. Assuming, however, that these generalizations do reflect the average, we can say that most Israeli Jews feel that living in Israel is an important component (35 percent) or even the most important component (21 percent) of Jewish identity. Not only that, but half of Israeli Jews (54 percent) believe that “to be a good Jew” one must support settlement in the Land of Israel. It is therefore not surprising that two-thirds of Israeli Jews feel that Jewish life in Israel is more meaningful than Jewish life elsewhere (It’s not that they think one can’t be a Jew elsewhere; they understand and accept that it is possible).

Three out of four Israeli Jews (77 percent) believe that to be a good Jew “is to worry about other Jews, whoever they may be.” This is a question that refers to all Jews. Nine out of ten say they feel strongly connected to the Jewish people. This is also a general question about the “people” as a whole. Two-thirds of American Jews (63 percent) say they have a responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world. Jews “in need” are, of course, a more specific group, not the people as a whole, and the term entails additional questions: What constitutes being “in need?” What about taking care of Jews who aren’t in need? A substantial majority of US Jews say that caring about Israel is an essential part of what being Jewish means to them (87 percent). Israel is also a specific target. We may assume that caring for Israel means something different

from caring for Ukrainian Jews, as Israel is the state of the Jewish people, a national project, while the Ukrainian Jewish community is small and shrinking. And, of course, yet another question presents itself: What exactly is meant by “caring about Israel?” It is altogether clear that “caring” does not mean agreeing with Israeli policy or supporting everything Israel does. On the other hand, the decisive majority – those who feel that caring about Israel is an important component of being Jewish – unquestionably do mean something by it.

Not all Israeli Jews feel connected to the Jewish people to the same degree and, accordingly, not all feel the same level of obligation to care for other Jews. The sense of connection/obligation is most pronounced among right and center-right voters and among the religious, and less pronounced among those who self-identify as secular. Nearly nine out of ten right-leaning voters (87 percent) believe that being Jewish means worrying about other Jews, whomever they may be, compared with four out of ten (41 percent) left-leaning voters. One out of five to ten secular Jews feels that concern for Jews in other places is a highly significant component of Jewish identity. Half of religious or ultra-Orthodox Jews hold this opinion.

A similar gradation exists regarding the question of whether being a good Jew means living in Israel. Those Jews who, more than others, feel that it is important for Jews to live in Israel, are actually the ones more likely to think that it is important to worry about Jews who don’t live in Israel.

When these findings are compared to the findings of studies on Diaspora Jewry and, in a more focused way, to the new study on Canadian Jewry released earlier this year, similarities and differences emerge. One similarity is that Jews the world over attach less importance to religious practice and tend to view their Jewishness as a matter of “culture” (half of Canadian Jews) or “ancestry/descent” (15 percent of Canadian Jews), though for the most part they view it as a combination of culture, ancestry, and religion (33 percent). Slightly different responses were registered in the Israeli survey, and there was no “combination” option; but it is clear that Israelis, who rank “religion” and “nationality” as highest in importance, have a somewhat different outlook. Nevertheless they, like Canadian Jews, do not regard Torah and mitzvah observance as the essential elements of their Jewish identity. Two-thirds of Israeli Jews do not feel that “to be a good Jew is to celebrate Jewish holidays, ceremonies, and traditions.” But a third do feel that way, compared with only a fifth (22 percent) of Canadian Jews – reflecting the differences between a population in which Orthodox observance is low (17 percent in Canada), and a population with over double the percentage of Jews who self-identify as Orthodox (37 percent).

Identical percentages of Israeli and Canadian Jews say being Jewish is “very important” to them: 64 percent. The percentages of those who say that being Jewish is not important to them are also quite similar: 5 percent in Israel; 8 percent in Canada. But again, there

are differences. Regarding, for example, the percentage of those who believe in God or in a higher power: 62 percent of Canadian Jews express such a belief, compared with 79 percent of Israeli Jews. Similarly, with regard to synagogue attendance: more Israelis attend synagogue frequently – but, at the same time, more Israelis never go to synagogue. Israelis can easily express their Jewishness without entering a synagogue, in contrast to non-synagogue-attending Canadian Jews who have a much harder time expressing their sense of Jewish belonging. When we look at home-based Jewish practices, such as lighting Shabbat candles, one finds a gradation in which US Jews (on average) do less (16 percent light candles every week), Canadian Jews do much more (34 percent light every week), and Israeli Jews even more (57 percent). Similarly, half of US Jews celebrate bar mitzvah (51 percent), compared to 62 percent of Canadian Jews, and a much larger percentage of Israeli Jews (78 percent). Nearly all adult Israeli Jews say they have celebrated or will celebrate their sons’ reaching bar mitzvah age (95 percent), or their daughters’ reaching bat mitzvah age (90 percent).

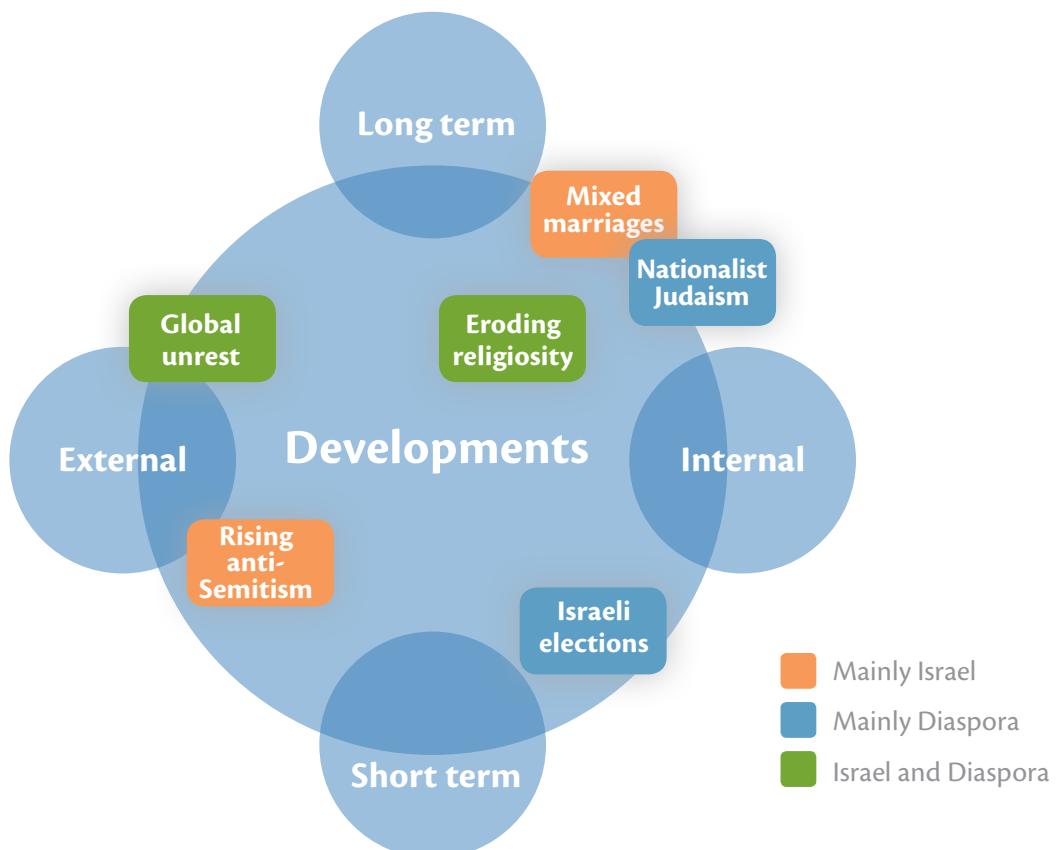
Summary and Conclusions

The situation of the Jewish people is affected by external and internal developments; it is also influenced by short - and long-term developments. In response to rising anti-Semitism, institutions and organizations are developing and deploying various security measures and other initiatives, but history

shows that anti-Semitism is more greatly affected by external events and trends than by what the Jews do (which does not, of course, diminish the necessity of taking action and trying to have an impact, to the extent possible). Similarly, the erosion of religiosity documented among both Israeli and Diaspora Jews is not an isolated phenomenon. Although it certainly has important internal drivers and ramifications, it reflects general worldwide (primarily Western) trends toward a decline in the power of religion and, to an even greater degree, the power of traditional religious authority structures.

The recent uptick in anti-Semitic incidents has been documented over a relatively small number of years. Thus, at this stage, we refer to it as a short-term development, despite strong suspicion (and fear) that it heralds a new era in which anti-Semitism will again be a determinant factor in the trajectory of the Jewish future. Israel's two election seasons in the space of a year are an internal matter with a defined endpoint. However, these elections may also, depending on their outcomes, have effects of long-term impact – on Israel, on Israel-Diaspora relations, and, directly, on Diaspora Jewry.

Some developments affecting the Jewish people, 2019



This chapter utilized the following studies, articles, and books:

JPPI 2019 Pluralism Survey, Camil Fuchs, Noah Slepkov, Shmuel Rosner.

JPPI 2018 Israeli Judaism survey, Camil Fuchs, Shmuel Rosner.

JPPI 2018 Dialogue: 70 Years of Israel-Diaspora Relations: The Next Generation, John Ruskay, Shmuel Rosner.

AJC 2019 Survey of Israeli Jewish Opinion conducted by Geocartography.

AJC 2019 Survey of American Jewish Opinion conducted by the research company SSRS.

AJC 2019 survey of French Jewish Opinion conducted by the research firm Ifop.

2018 Survey of Jews in Canada, Robert Brym Keith Neuman Rhonda Lenton, conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research in partnership with The University of Toronto and York University.

Jewish Electorate Institute Poll, Greenberg Research, 2019.

2017 Greater Washington Jewish Community Demographic Study.

Raising Jewish Children: Research and Indications for Intervention, Sylvia Barack Fishman and Steven M. Cohen, JPPI.

Hebrew Texts

The Israeli Century and the Israelization of Judaism, Yossi Shain, Yedioth Books, 2019.

#Israelijudaism: a Portrait of a Cultural Revolution, Shmuel Rosner, Camil Fuchs, Dvir and the Jewish People Policy Institute, 2018.

ÍNDICES

11

Jewish Demography

Introduction

This chapter offers data on the global Jewish population, on major demographic patterns, and on significant milestones and events of the past year. This year we chose to emphasize two important developments. One is the fact that, by mid-2019, the Israeli population had passed the 9-million mark. The other development we focus on is the baby-boom generation's slide into the 60+ age group, and the ramifications of that transition.

Numbers

At the beginning of 2019, the world Jewish population numbered 14.7 million,¹ representing a hundred-thousand increase over the previous year. This figure takes into account a 111,000 increase in Israel's Jewish population, minus a drop in the number of Diaspora Jews, most of which is explained by emigration to Israel, along with a certain surplus of deaths over births (in

the Diaspora only). Since 2015, the world Jewish population has grown consistently by about a hundred thousand per year, for a total of 392,200 (or 2.7 percent) (Graph 1).

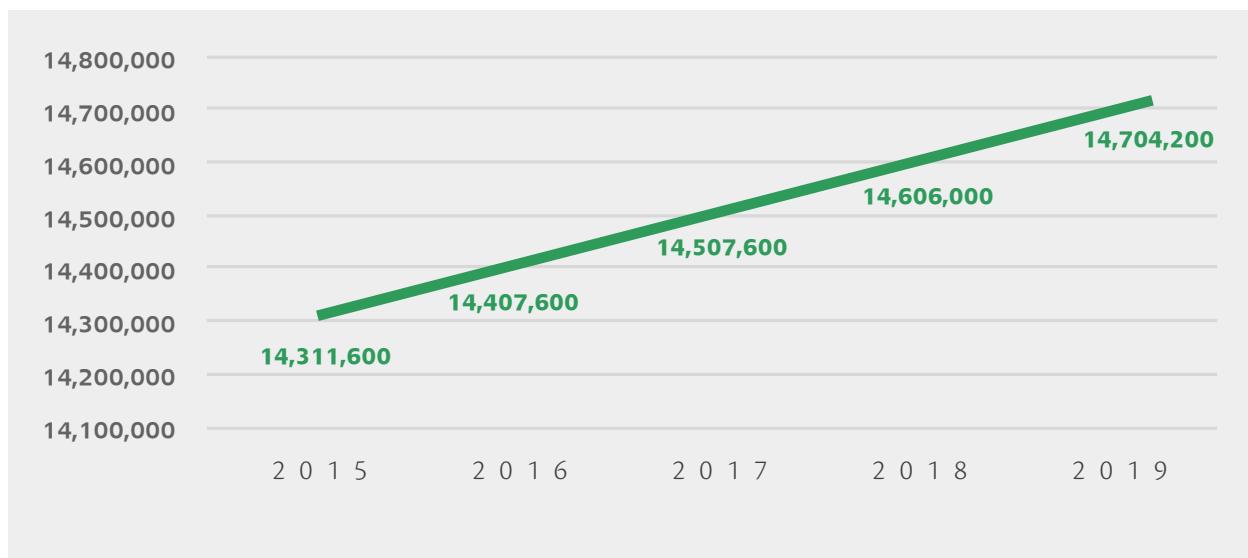
The Jewish population data for residents of Israel is based on the definition of Jewishness as specified in halacha (Jewish religious law). For those living outside of Israel, the data is based on self-definition, so long as no non-Jewish religious identity is claimed. It should be noted that, alongside this latter group, a sizeable number of individuals in the US were found to have no religious affiliation but to consider themselves, nevertheless, to be part-Jewish; most of these people are children of intermarriage.³ We do not know whether this phenomenon is specific to the US, or whether it also characterizes other Diaspora countries. Also, at the beginning of 2019 there were 427 thousand olim (immigrants to Israel) and offspring of olim

whose right to Israeli citizenship is anchored in the Law of Return, but who are not Jews according to Halacha; many of these individuals had integrated socially and culturally into the Israeli-Jewish mainstream (this group grew from 357 thousand in 2015 to its current number, a twenty-percent increase).⁴ Researchers and community leaders are divided over whether part-Jews and Law-of-Return Israelis (who have no non-Jewish religious affiliation) should be counted as part of the Jewish

population; if they are counted as Jews, then world Jewish population numbers slightly over 16 million.

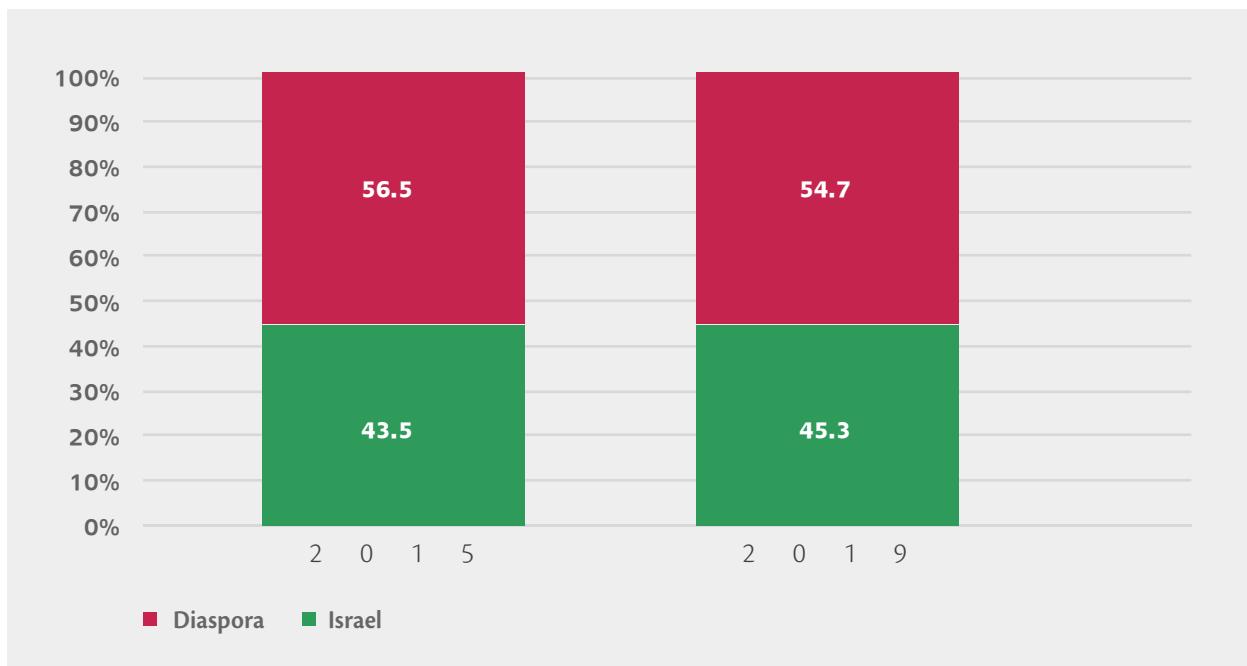
A little more than half of the world's Jews live in the Diaspora (54.7 percent), rather than in Israel (45.3 percent) (Graph 2). We estimate that, within a decade, the Jewish population of Israel and that of the Diaspora will be equal. Israelis living abroad (600 thousand) are counted as part of the Diaspora-Jewish population.

Graph 1. The World Jewish Population, 2015-2019



Source: Sergio DellaPergola, World Jewish Population, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019. In: A. Dashefsky and I. Sheskin (eds.), American Jewish Year Books. Springer

Graph 2. Jews in Israel and the Diaspora, 2015 and 2019



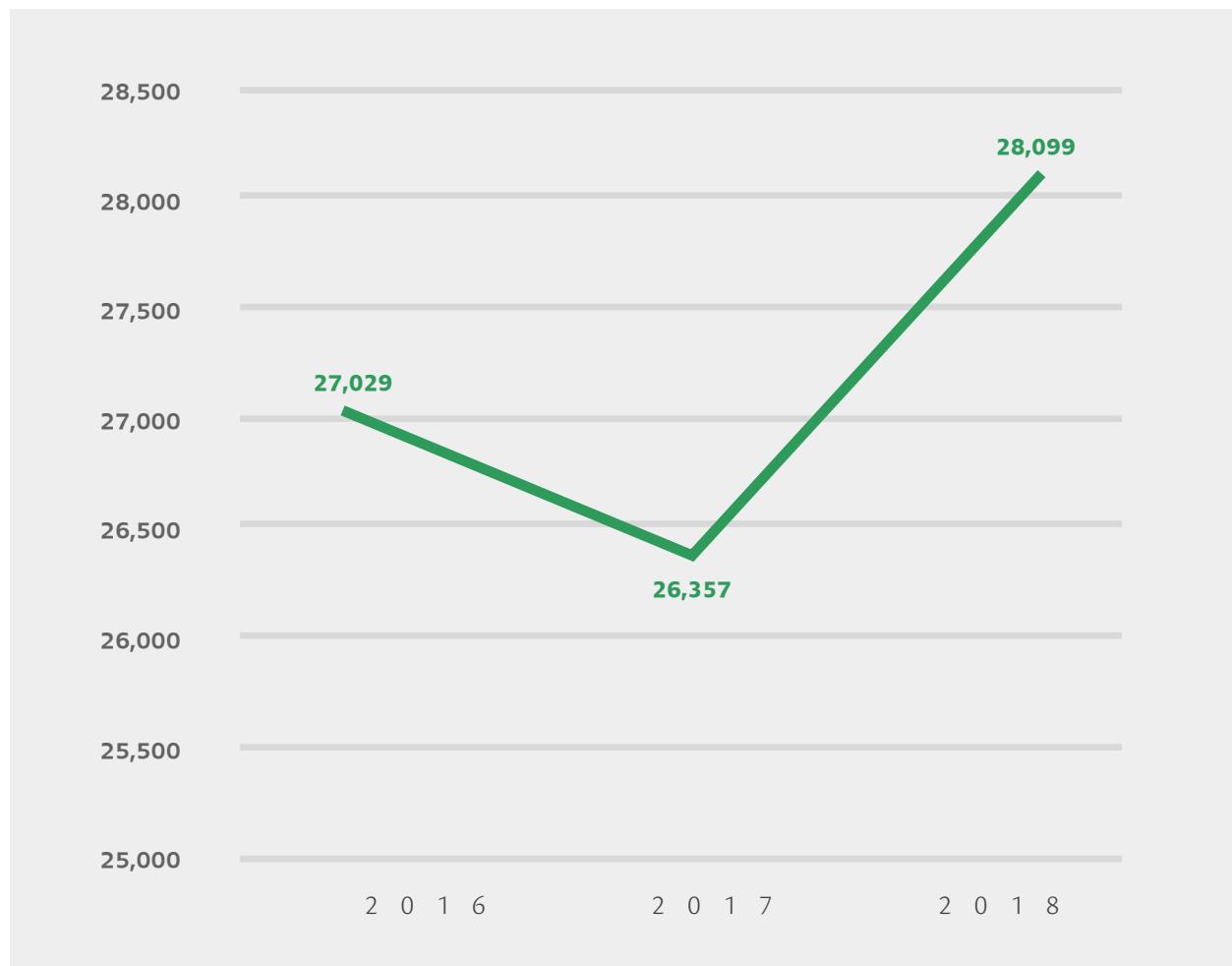
Source: Sergio DellaPergola, World Jewish Population, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019. In: A. Dashefsky and I. Sheskin (eds.), American Jewish Year Books. Springer

Aliyah

Last year (2018), 28,099 people immigrated to Israel, an increase over 2017 (26,357) (Graph 3). The uptick in Aliyah has carried into 2019 as well: during the first four months of the year (January-April), 9,153 olim arrived in Israel,

compared with 7,447 for the comparable period last year.⁵ Slightly more than half (51 percent) of the olim who arrived in 2018 were not Jewish according to Halacha, but met other Law of Return criteria.⁶

Graph 3. Aliyah to Israel, 2016-2019



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, 2019 (May).

Fertility

Jewish fertility outside of Israel currently stands at one and a half children per woman, on average. However, the Diaspora communities vary in their fertility levels: the Former Soviet Union countries exhibit a particularly low fertility rate (slightly more

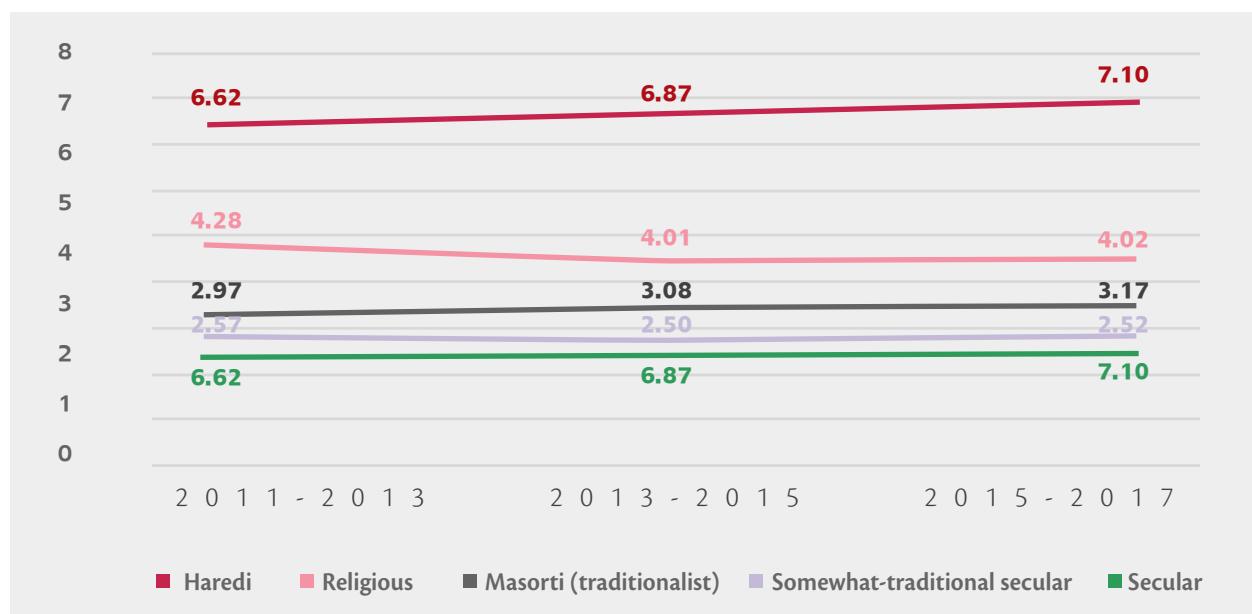
than one child per woman), compared with one and a half children in North America, France, and Argentina, and 2.1 children in Mexico. Israeli fertility rates are much higher. During the period 2010-2014, the Israeli figure was 3.03, with a rise to 3.16

in 2016 that remained unchanged in 2017 (the last year for which information is available).⁷ In general, the Israel-to-Diaspora ratio is 2:1 Jewish births.

One decisive fertility variable is religiosity (see Graph 4). The fertility rate of Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) women is nearly four times higher than secular women, and 1.8 times higher than

that of non-Haredi religious women. Recent years have witnessed a rise in the average number of children among Israeli Jews, but the increase for Haredi women is much greater than for secular women. Should these disparities persist, the Haredi population's growth rate will surpass that for Israel's secular population.

Graph 4. Fertility of Jewish Women in Israel by Religious Identity



Source: Ahmad Hlehel, (2017), Fertility Among Jewish Women in Israel, by Level of Religiosity, 1979-2014, Working Paper, Central Bureau of Statistics.

As seen in the graph, there has been a slight drop over the last few years in religious women's fertility rates. When the figures for this group are examined over a longer period – from the turn of the century – one finds fluctuations ranging from a minimum

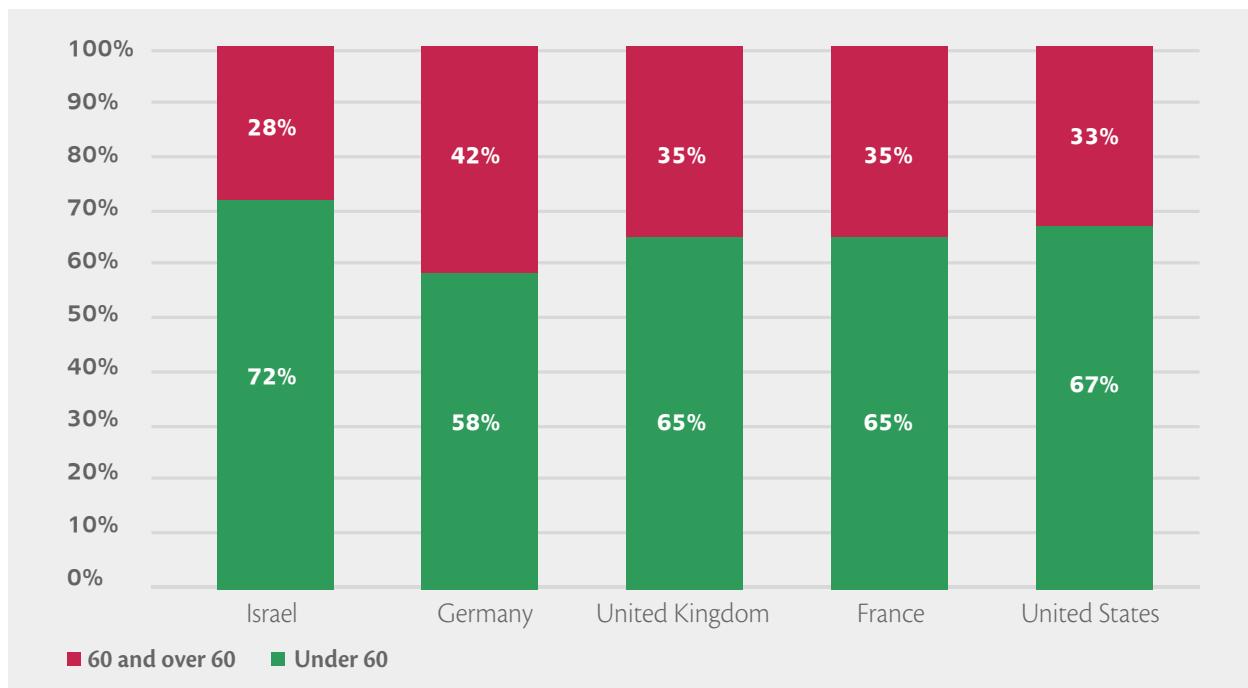
of 3.8 children per woman, on average, to [a peak of] 4.28 children.⁸ We suggest that the 4.28 figure was an outlier, and that one should not, based on figures from the last few years, deduce a downturn in the fertility rate of religious women in Israel.

Age Composition

The fact that most Diaspora Jewish communities' fertility rates have dropped below replacement level has conferred greater weight on the older population groups. This trend has intensified recently due to the baby-boom generation's entry into the older age brackets ("boomers" are those born during the period 1945-1960). Starting next year (2020), all boomers will actually belong to the 60+ group. This transition can be seen in most Diaspora Jewish communities. In the US, France, and England, those aged sixty or over account for a third of all adult Jews (aged 60 or 18 and over). In a few countries, such as Germany, where many adult

Jews from the FSU have settled, the share of those aged 60 and over in the adult Jewish population is over 40 percent (Graph 5).⁹ Jewish fertility in Israel is high, and the Israeli population has not exhibited boomer-type fluctuations. Nevertheless, the many babies who immigrated to Israel during the years immediately after the state's founding, or were born in Israel during that period, especially to families from Asia and North Africa whose fertility levels were in the area of 5-6 children per woman, are now also reaching their senior years. Thus, 28 percent of all adult Jews in Israel (ages 20 and over) currently belong to the 60+ age group.

Graph 5. Age Composition of the Adult Jewish Population in Selected Countries



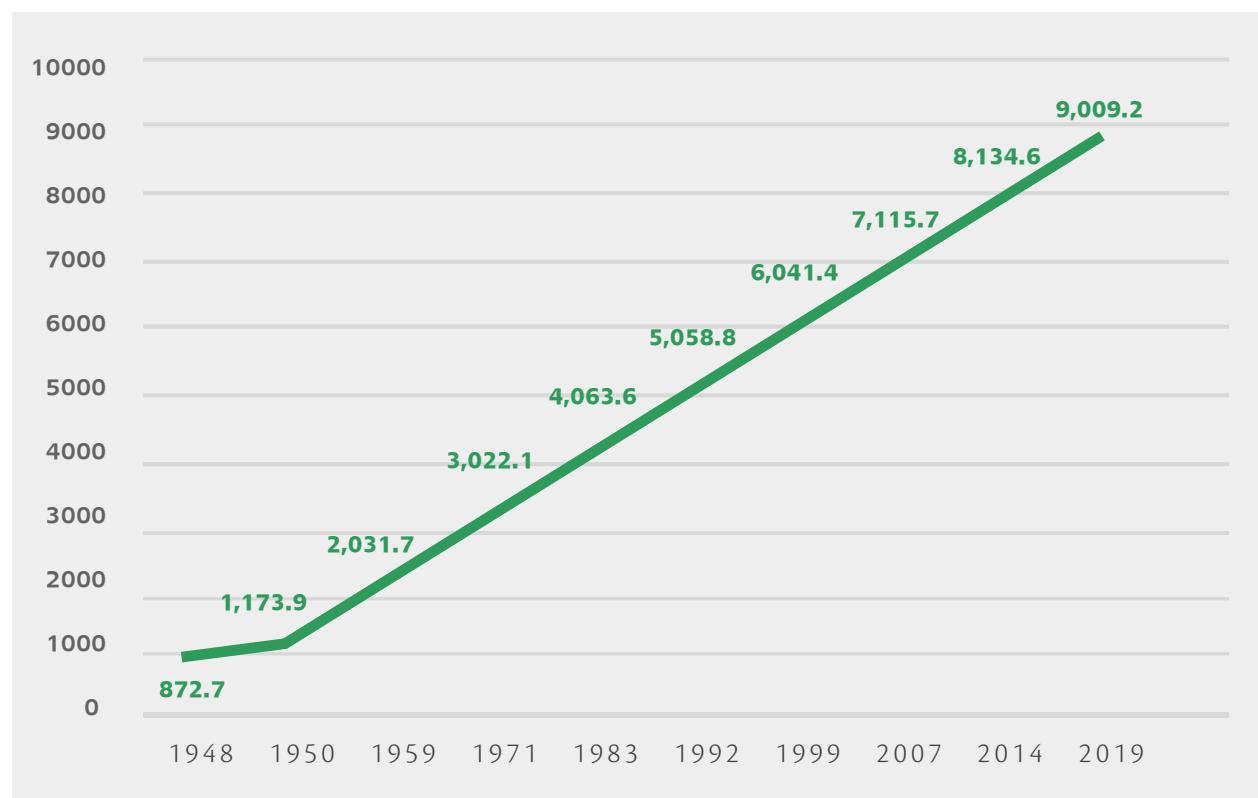
Source: for the US: computed based on the 2013 Pew Survey; for Europe: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2018. *Second Survey on Discrimination and Hate Crime against Jews in EU Member State: Technical Report*, p. 41. For Israel: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 2018.

The Israeli Population

This past April, the Israeli population (Jews and non-Jews) passed the nine-million mark (Graph 6). Shortly after Israel won its independence, in November 1948, the local population numbered 873 thousand. It passed the one-million mark in early 1950, the two-million mark in 1959, the three-million mark in 1971, the four-million mark in 1983, the five-million mark in 1992, the six-million mark in 1999, the seven-million mark in 2007, the eight-million mark in 2014 and, as noted, the nine-million mark was just recently

attained. A larger population, combined with high fertility rates and a positive international migration balance, are shortening the time periods that elapse between each million-person milestone. Thus, while it took 12 years for the Israeli population to grow from two to three million, only nine years passed between the four- and five-million marks, and it took just five years to go from eight to nine million. A Central Bureau of Statistics (interim) forecast calls for the Israeli population to reach 10.2 million by 2025.¹⁰

Graph 6. Israel's Population, 1948-2019 (in thousands)



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, selected years, and *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, May 2019.

Policy Implications

1. The **number of Jews** worldwide **continues to rise**. Alongside this overall growth, the share of Israeli Jews in the world Jewish population is climbing. The consistency of this trend justifies a slight positive movement of the demographic gauge.
2. The growing proportion of Jewish belonging to the older age groups entails monitoring and an adjustment in the distribution of communal resources, as well as a gradual increase in the funds and services intended for this population, which is gradually reaching retirement age and becoming available for other activities. Among other things, adult Jewish education services need to be planned and expanded. Not only can enriching people's knowledge of the Jewish bookshelf, Jewish history, and Jewish customs/values help reinforce their Jewish identity; in the case of older learners, such enrichment can have a broader impact on the family circle and on Jewish society as a whole. At the same time, Jewish communities and organizations, at the local, national, and international levels, need to prepare for leadership transitions in the Jewish world.
3. Israel is now a medium-sized country. As its population grows, the more varied its human mosaic becomes, and this can translate into tension between sectors. At the same time, population growth is enhancing Israeli society's productive and entrepreneurial capabilities, with positive implications for human capital and the local economy.¹¹ These opportunities will multiply should the trend continue of large sectors, the Haredi and Arab Israeli sectors in particular, joining the labor market.

World Jewish Population and Immigrants to Israel by Major Countries, 2018

Country	Jewish Population, 2018 ^A	Cumulative Percentage	Aliyah to Israel, 2017 ^B
Total	14,606,000	-	26,357
Israel	6,558,100	44.9	-
US	5,700,000	83.9	2,567
France	453,000	87.0	3,157
Canada	390,500	89.7	280
England	290,000	91.7	468
Argentina	180,300	92.9	246
Russia	172,000	94.1	7,135
Germany	116,000	94.9	155
Australia	113,000	95.7	138
Brazil	93,200	96.3	618
South Africa	69,000	96.8	281
Ukraine	50,000	97.1	7,046
Hungary	47,000	97.4	52
Mexico	40,000	97.7	76
Netherlands	29,800	97.9	50
Belgium	29,200	98.1	117
Italy	27,500	98.3	115
Switzerland	18,600	98.4	84
Chile	18,300	98.6	26
Uruguay	16,700	98.7	69
All the rest	193,800	100.0	3,677

A) Source: Sergio DellaPergola. "World Jewish Population, 2018," in Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin. (Editors) *The American Jewish Year Book*, 2018, Volume 118 (2018) (Dordrecht: Springer) pp. 361-452.

B) Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 2018, Table 4.4.

Endnotes:

- 1 Sergio DellaPergola. World Jewish Population, 2019.
1 In: A. Dashinsky and I. Sheskin (eds.), American Jewish Year Book, 2019 (forthcoming).
- 2 Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. 2019.
- 3 Theodor Sasson. 2013. "New Analysis of Pew Data: 5 Children of Intermarriage Increasingly Identify as Jews". *Tablet* (November 11).
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, May 2019, Table E/2. Immigrants and ImmigratingCitizens(2)byTypeofPermit—<https://old.cbs.gov.il/publications19/yarhon0519/pdf/e2.pdf>
- 6 We are grateful to Marina Sheps of the Central Bureau of Statistics for providing us with these figures.
- 7 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel* 2018, Table 3.13.
- 8 Hlehel, 2017.
- 9 Diaspora Jewish community data is not for 2019 but for somewhat earlier years. The frequency with which these figures is updated varies from country to country. We may assume that the aging of the Jewish population has only intensified since the data was published. Accordingly, the adult-population shares displayed here should be regarded as conservative figures – the lowest they could possibly be. It is entirely likely that they are now somewhat higher.
- 10 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 2018, Table 2.10.
- 11 Daniel Staetsky. 2019. "Israel Is Not Small: A Demographic Update". *The Times of Israel* (May 1).

12

Israeli Society

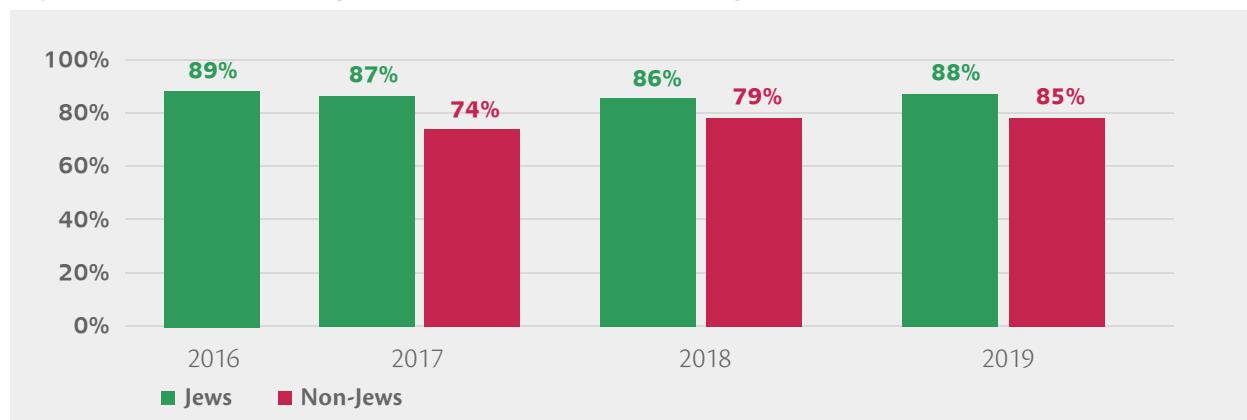
Jews and non-Jews feel comfortable being themselves in Israel; there is a trend of increasing comfort among non-Jews. There is a problematic gap between Israel's majority and its minority groups in understanding the nature of "Israeliness." Israelis prefer particularist values (Jewish values and religious values) to Western values.

Real Israelis

What makes an Israeli a "real Israeli"? What influences how they act? What do they think

of other citizens of the state? These are the questions JPPI sought to answer this year in its annual Pluralism Survey. The results create a clear, yet sometimes paradoxical portrait of Israeli society. Israel's two main minorities, Haredim and non-Jews, each share a common perception of themselves and how they fit into Israeli society, which in many cases is in contradiction with how they are viewed by other groups in the society. Israelis, both Jews and non-Jews, are overwhelmingly comfortable being themselves in Israel.

Figure 1: Percent of respondents comfortable being themselves in Israel



About one in ten Israeli Jews is Haredi. The Haredim believe they make a very positive contribution to the state, that not serving in the IDF makes them no less Israeli than those who do serve; they are very comfortable being themselves in Israel. Most Israeli Muslims, roughly 80 percent of Israel's non-Jewish population, believe they make a positive contribution to Israeli society, that they can be a real Israeli without being Jewish, and one need not serve in the IDF or speak Hebrew (the vast majority do speak Hebrew) to be a real Israeli; they are very comfortable being themselves in Israel. The rest of Israeli society perceives these groups in opposing ways to how they view themselves, but this does not seem to have any bearing on Haredi or Muslim self-assessment or comfort levels. Haredim are as comfortable being themselves in Israel as the average Israeli. Moreover, based on three consecutive years of JPPI survey data, there is an apparent trend that comfort levels of non-Jews are increasing

and approaching parity with those of Jews. The data shows just how severe the perception gap is. As illustrated in Figure 1, most Israeli Jews agree with the statement: "To be a real Israeli, you must be Jewish," with only 23 percent disagreeing. Conversely, an overwhelming 91 percent of Israel's non-Jews disagree that one needs to be Jewish to be a real Israeli. Figure 2 shows a similar divide over the need to serve in the IDF to be a real Israeli. For non-Haredi Israeli Jews, the importance of military service as a societal rite of passage is clear with 75 percent in agreement. Among Haredim and non-Jews, the two main groups that do not serve in the IDF (the Druze are an exception), only 23 percent agree. Speaking Hebrew as a requirement to be a real Israeli is a dividing line between the Jewish majority and the non-Jewish minority. Although it should be noted that a significant group of non-Jews also see Hebrew fluency as a characteristic of real Israeliness.

Figure 2: To be a real Israeli, you must be Jewish

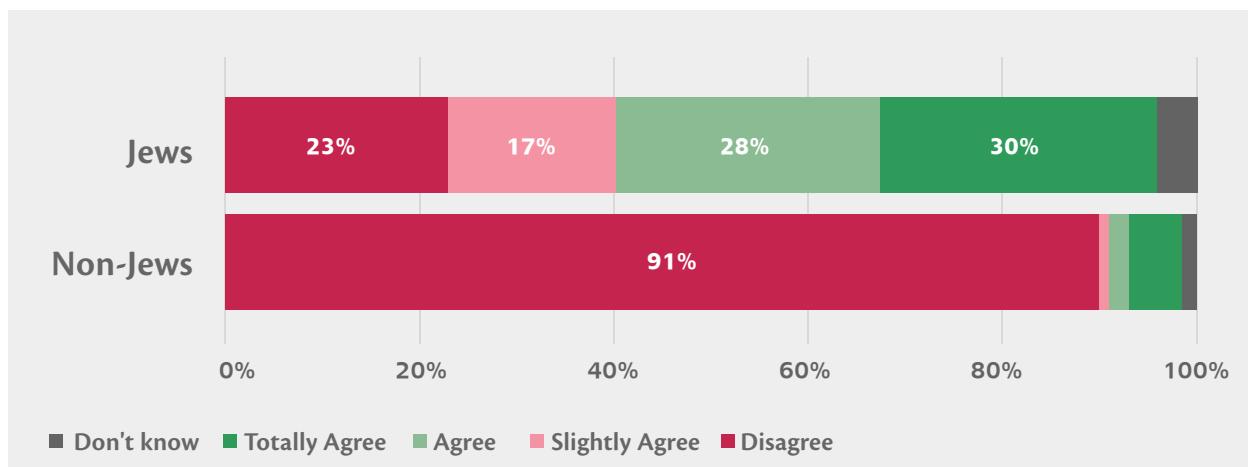
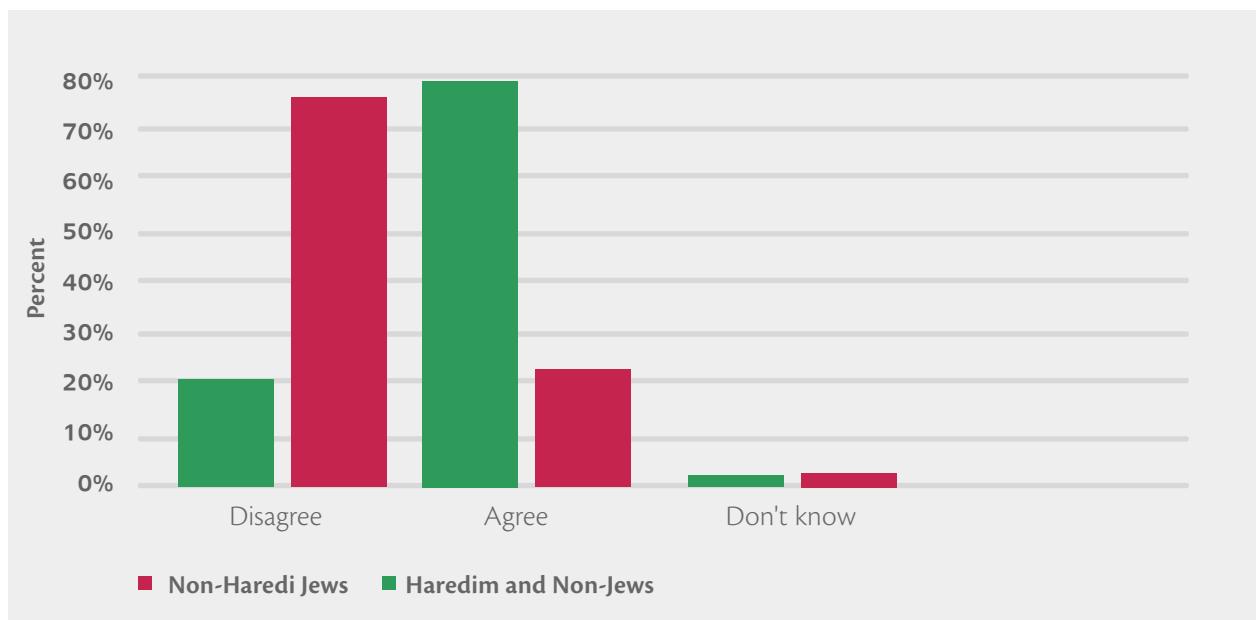


Figure 3: To be a real Israeli, you must serve in the IDF



The significance of these gaps should not be overlooked. A shared national collective identity helps define the boundaries of a society, and without a consensus on what it means to be an Israeli, the social challenge is clear. At the same time, one cannot ignore the fact that Israel's non-Jewish citizens are overwhelmingly comfortable being themselves in Israel. There are several possible explanations for the significance and rationale of this conceptual gap.

Why do Jews view Jewishness as a condition for Israeliness? This is, of course, the most complex and troubling finding in the survey. It implies that full membership in Israeli society is impossible for non-Jews. However, it is possible that this finding - or at least the fundamental motivation behind it - can be explained by how Jews define Israeliness.

One of the main findings of JPPI's comprehensive study on Israeli Judaism (Rosner & Fuchs, 2018; see summary elsewhere in this report) concerns the national interpretation Israeli Jews give to their Jewishness. In fact, according to the study, many Jews in Israel draw no clear distinction between "Israeliness" and "Jewishness." This stems from the assertion that "real" Israeliness requires Jewishness (and similarly, that IDF service is a component of both Jewishness and a genuine Israeliness). As noted, this has problematic and disturbing aspects, but understanding the source of this conception is essential for those advocating social change in this regard.

How can non-Jews feel comfortable living in Israel as they are? As citizens in an open and politically dynamic society, Israel's non-Jewish minorities

cannot be totally oblivious to how they are viewed by the Jewish majority. That is to say, their sense of comfort exists despite their understanding that other groups in society do not fully regard them as Israelis. The reasons for their comfort are complex and numerous. Clearly, their high quality of life (especially compared to other Arab groups in the Middle East) contributes to this. Furthermore, the daily realities of coexistence outweigh the impact of any exoteric formulation of identity. Indeed, the perception of what it means to be a true Israeli does not have any serious consequence on one's ability to live freely in Israel.

What do the sectors have in common? Israel's Jews and non-Jews agree that the most essential elements to being a real Israeli are Israeli citizenship and love for Israel. A majority of non-Jews totally agree that you must be a citizen to be a real a real Israeli, and 45 percent totally agree that you must love Israel to be a real Israeli. Clearly, these two claims are not ideologically loaded, and therefore allow minority groups to find common ground with the majority group.

Key Values

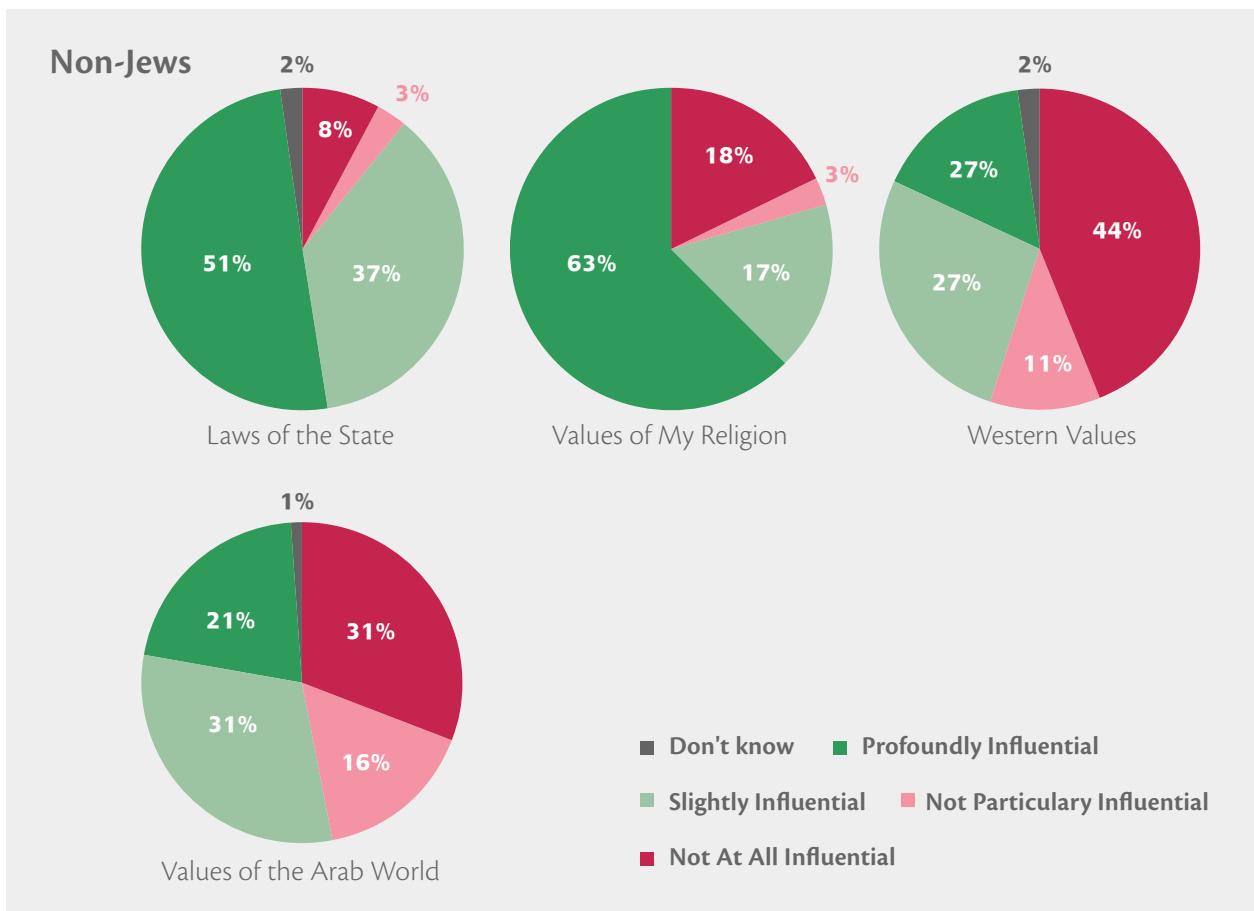
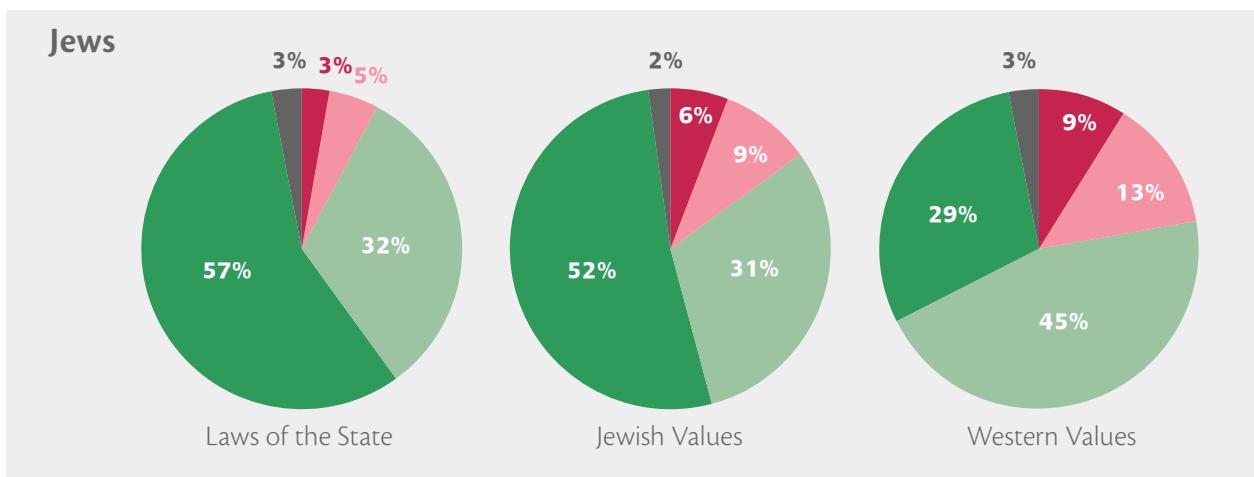
Another common denominator shared by many groups of Israelis, both in the majority and minority, is the importance they attribute to their cultural values (Jewish, Muslim, Christian) as opposed to general Western values. The survey asked Israelis "When you need to decide right from wrong, good from bad, how much do each of the following influence your decision: laws of the state, Jewish

values, Western values, and values of the Arab world (asked only of non-Jews)." A majority of Jews (52 percent) and non-Jews (63 percent) say they are profoundly influenced by religious values. Naturally there is deep disagreement among Israelis as to what such values are, but there is no dispute that such values are more important to Israelis than values they identify as external to their culture.

Even among the Israelis who are secular, 58 percent of totally secular Jews and 72 percent of totally secular non-Jews, religion has a significant influence on informing their sense of morality. However, among totally secular Jews, we observe a clear trend by which the influence wanes in the younger generations. The majority of totally secular Israeli ages 18 to 34 say they are not influenced by Jewish values, compared to the majority of Israelis over 35 who say they are. If a significant gap develops between groups in Israel regarding the influence of religious values, it could be a problematic social development.

Although most Israelis are heavily influenced by their religious values when it comes to determining right from wrong, the majority of Israelis are influenced as much or to the same degree by the laws of the state - 57 percent of Jews and 51 percent of non-Jews are profoundly influenced by them. We understand from this that Israel's minorities regard the laws of the state as a positive force, not detrimental to their lives and freedom. State laws and judicial review help guarantee citizen comfort. Thus, legislation can be used as a bridge (or a divider, if it is not well crafted) between groups in Israel who have opposing or even contradictory visions of what it means to be Israeli.

Figure 4: If you had to decide between right and wrong, good and bad, to what extent do each of the following influence your decision?



13

Integrated Index: Israel-Diaspora Relations

The depth and quality of relations between Israeli and Diaspora Jews are perennially on the public agenda. The Kotel compromise and Israel's conversion and nation-state laws are just some of the topics that have sparked controversy and fueled fiery debate. Many articles have been devoted to the issue of Israel-Diaspora relations, and JPPI has also addressed it on numerous occasions.¹ This paper examines trends and data with the aim of delineating the current status of these relations.

When the findings of many relevant surveys are taken together, a number of issues of importance to Israeli and Diaspora decision-makers surface:

1. The Integrated Index suggests that Israel-Diaspora relations are **eroding**. This trend is particularly evident in the younger generation, and among those groups that are less attached to Jewish (religious) identity.
2. US Jews, in most instances, occupy the **lowest rung** of the ties-to-Israel scale. They

rank low on their sense of attachment to Israel; on their sense that caring about Israel is an essential part of being Jewish; on thinking about the future of the relationship; and on the percentage who visit Israel.

3. Signs of erosion in Israel-Diaspora relations can also be discerned in communities outside the United States. For example, there has been a significant decline in agreement with the statement that caring about Israel is an essential part of being a Jew. Data from France is particularly worrisome. French Jewry's ties to Israel were once considered among the strongest in the Diaspora. However, although the percentage of French Jews that think relations with Israel will strengthen in the future is substantially higher than among US Jews, it is also true that an equal percentage of French Jews think the relationship will weaken. This data may be rooted in demographic changes underway in France, and in the fact that many of the Jews who had felt committed to Israel relocated there (27,542 French Jews

- immigrated to Israel between 2012 and 2018).²
4. Unlike the objective indicator of Israel visits (excluding the US, which shows no significant change in trend), there has been a slight increase in the number of Diaspora Jews who have visited Israel at least once.
 5. Jews in Israel are optimistic about the relationship, compared with their Diaspora counterparts. However, they have an understanding (if partial) that Israel has to make active efforts and invest resources in strengthening ties with the Diaspora.

The Challenge

Despite the extensive discussion and the many studies that have been devoted to the topic, producing an index that would allow one to form a broad view of the state of Israel-Diaspora relations poses a challenge in several respects:

1. Many of the surveys conducted focus on specific target samples, usually respondents in a particular country or region. Few surveys have provided uniform coverage of different parts of the world.
2. Some of the surveys do not represent the entire Jewish population but are limited to those who agreed to take part in the surveys. Therefore, respondents are usually more attached to the Jewish world, to the Jewish community, and to Israel.

3. Most of the surveys were not conducted on a regular, annual basis. Some were conducted once every few years, others on specific occasions. An exception is the AJC survey, which provides nearly 20 years of survey continuity.
4. Question wording is not uniform across surveys, which makes comparison difficult.
5. Many of the studies are based on surveys examining subjective feelings that can vary depending on the events respondents can access through memory, the manner in which respondents are contacted/addressed, and other environmental factors.

Notwithstanding these reservations, we contend that by gathering the data and presenting the findings side by side, we can provide a needed service to decision-makers and policy professionals.

Integrated Index of Israel-Diaspora Relations

Like the Integrated Anti-Semitism Index JPPI has been publishing in recent years, we are offering, for the first time, an Integrated Index of Israel-Diaspora relations. The Index is based on four main questions pertaining to different relational indicators. Together, they form a broad picture of the current state of affairs. Because most existing studies offer the limited perspectives of specific populations or points in time, integrating the data allows one to make cautious comparisons and to try to

identify long-term trends. In the Index, a question that directly measures respondents' sense of attachment (emotional connection) is complemented by a question that looks at the sense of attachment as part of one's Jewish identity ("caring about Israel is an essential part of being a Jew"). A question examining what respondents think about the future of Israel-Diaspora ties is offset by a question that provides an objective, rather than a subjective, indicator of attachment, i.e., familiarity with "the other" (number of visits to Israel). We believe that displaying the responses side by side makes it easier to understand the data in greater depth.

The Integrated Index relies on major surveys, as well as a few secondary surveys. The major surveys are:

- **American Jewish Committee (AJC) surveys (2000-2019)** – a broad status report on US Jewry. In 2019 the survey also covered French and Israeli Jewry.
- **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) surveys in cooperation with the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)** – a status report on European Jewry. The JPR report relies on 2012 FRA data. The sample includes 5,919 Jewish respondents ages 16 and over in nine European countries. The report covers eight countries: Hungary, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and Latvia.
- The second FRA report is *Young Jewish Europeans: perceptions and experiences of antisemitism*. The study included 16,395 respondents ages 16 and over who self-define as Jews from 12 European Union countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The survey was also administered in Latvia, but due to problems with the data, the findings for Latvia were not included in the study.
- **Gen08 and Gen17** – status reports on Australian Jewry. The Gen project is a collaboration between the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) and Monash University researchers.
 - The Gen08 project included 5,100 participants from Sydney and Melbourne, ages 18 and over.
 - The Gen17 project included 8,047 participants from Sydney and Melbourne, ages 18 and over.
- **Survey of Jews in Canada** – the Canadian survey was conducted in 2018 by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in cooperation with researchers from the University of Toronto and York University. It included 2,335 participants (half from Toronto, the rest from Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver) ages 18 and over.

In addition, as noted, we drew on several other

surveys that enabled us to complete the picture, especially with regard to Israel –

- **The Israel Democracy Institute (IDI)** 2014 survey on Israeli Views of Diaspora Jewry.
- **The Ruderman Family Foundation poll** of 2018.

JPPI's survey conducted as part of its **2018 Structured Jewish World Dialogue project** was extensively consulted. We do not use this survey on its own, as most of its participants have ties to Israel and it does not, therefore, offer a representative picture. However, because of its broad scope, in terms of the number of participants and their geographic distribution (it is the only survey that includes participants from the US, a variety of European countries, and Israel), and due to the way it was organized, it allows us to present a kind of expert panel that serves as a reference point. A number of other **JPPI surveys**, including its **Israeli Judaism and Pluralism surveys**, also provide us with reference points.

Below are the questions and their findings:

1 Attachment to Israel

This question looks directly at the sense of attachment that Jews around the world experience vis-a-vis Israel. The question appears on several surveys, though in different wordings. In the AJC surveys from 2000 to 2005, the term “close” was used. Other surveys used the term “emotional attachment.”

US Jewry

The data on sense of closeness to Israel in the AJC surveys refer to the years 2000-2005 only. For these years, we can see a slight increase in the feeling of closeness, though the degree is insignificant (from 74.3 percent in 2000 to 76 percent in 2005). The age of the respondents, and their identification with a religious stream, significantly affect the feeling of closeness. Older age cohorts and Orthodox Jews reported a stronger sense of closeness than younger age cohorts and non-Orthodox respondents.

Figure 1: Percentage Attesting that They Feel Close to Israel – by Age cohort (AJC 2000-2005)

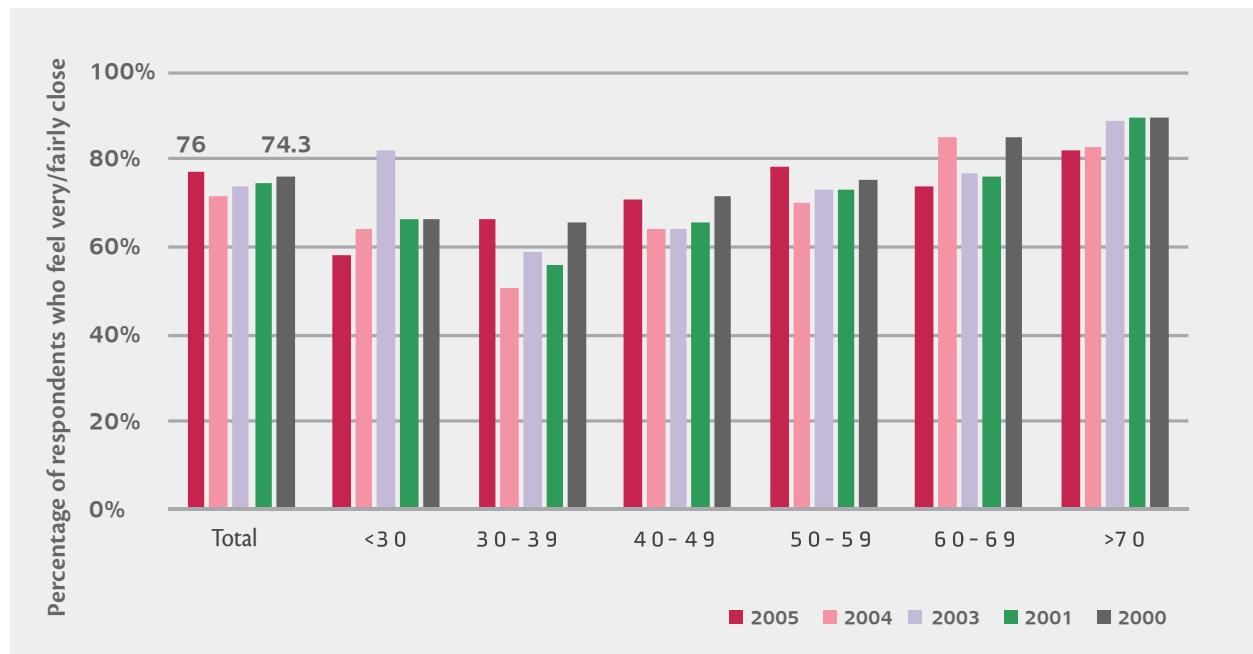
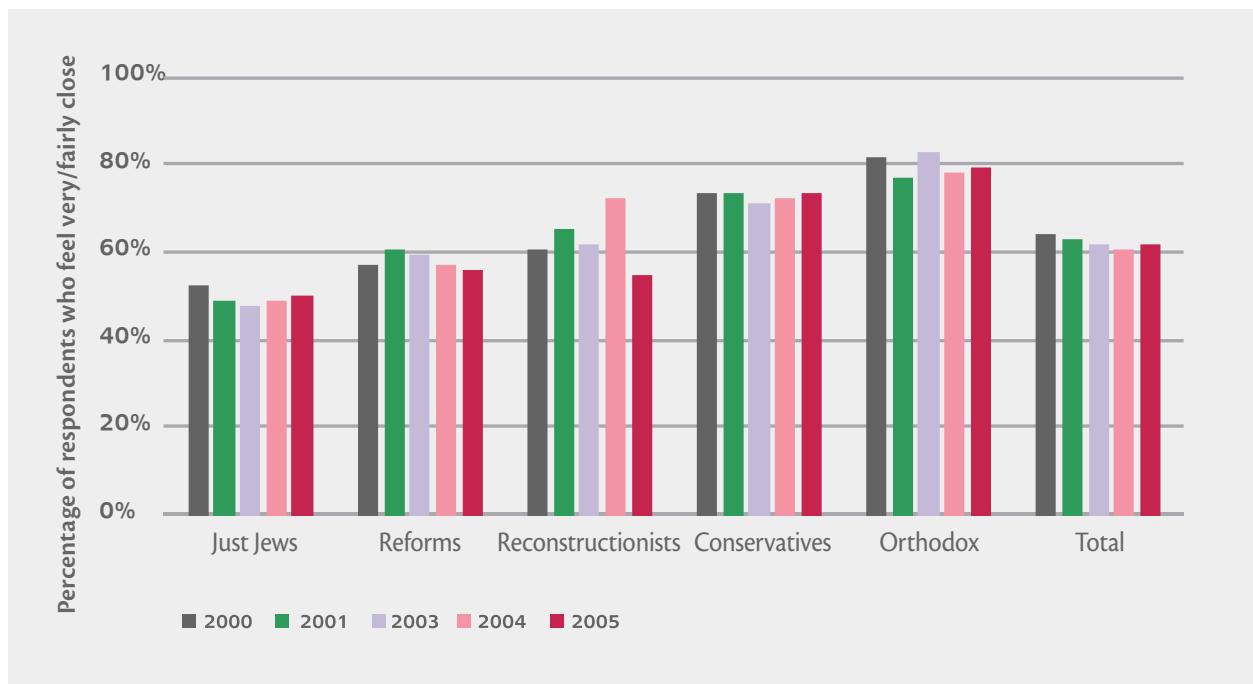


Figure 2: Percentage Attesting that They Feel Close to Israel, by Religious Stream (AJC 2000-2005)



The 2013 Pew survey, *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, used a slightly-different wording from the question found in the AJC survey: respondents were asked how “emotionally attached” they are to Israel. Over 60 percent responded that they felt attached (30 percent very attached, 39 percent somewhat attached), while 31 percent said they were not very, or not at all, attached to Israel. A 2018 J Street survey also asked about emotional attachment to Israel. Thirty-two percent of respondents reported feeling very emotionally attached to Israel, 33 percent said they were somewhat attached, 23 percent said they were not very attached, and 12 percent reported no Israel attachment at all. being at all.

European Jewry

Respondents of the FRA surveys conducted in Europe were asked about their attachment levels

to their countries of origin, their regions of origin, to Europe in general, and to Israel. The 2019 survey found that 69 percent of European Jews feel strongly attached to Israel.³ Like other surveys, a significant relationship was found between respondent age and sense of attachment, with 62 percent of young adults ages 16-34 attesting to a strong or very strong attachment to Israel, versus 69 percent for the 35-59 age group, and 72 percent for those 60 and over.

Canadian Jewry

Most of the Canadian survey participants (79 percent) reported being very attached (48 percent) or somewhat attached (31 percent) to Israel. The Canadian study looked at the basis of the respondents’ sense of attachment to Israel – religious, ethnic, cultural, a combination of the three, or other. The responses were broken down as follows:

Table 1: Connection to Israel by Jewish Identity (Canada)

	Canadian Total	By Religion	By Ancestry/ Descent	By Culture	All Three	Other	American Jews (PEW)
Very attached	48	60	32	36	61	47	30
Somewhat attached	31	25	31	39	28	32	39
Not very attached	11	7	18	14	8	13	22
Not at all attached	8	7	17	11	3	7	9

Australian Jewry

The Gen08 survey looked at the sense of emotional attachment to Israel; 75 percent of the respondents reported a very strong or strong attachment.

2 Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew

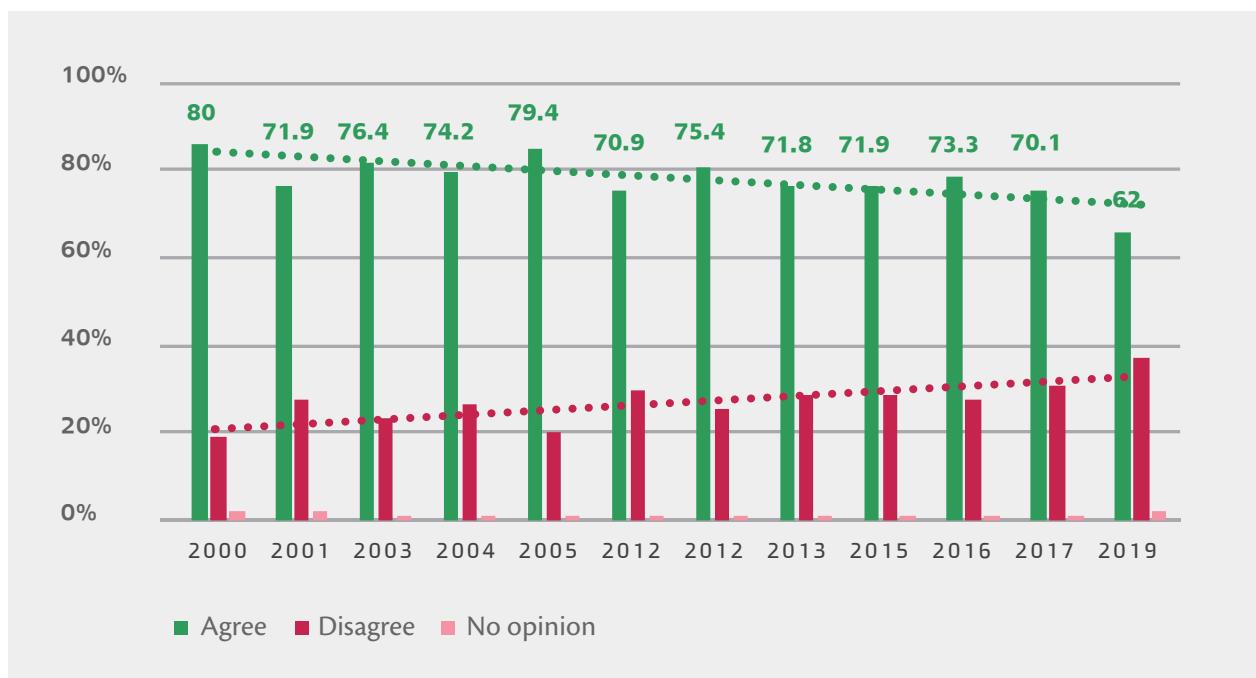
This is a question that is asked consistently and in near-identical wording between surveys. This consistency makes it possible not only to compare different surveys, but also to identify

trends over time. It also allows us to understand not only the importance of caring about Israel within different Jewish communities around the world, but also the relationship between such caring and the way the respondents perceive Jewish identity.

US Jewry

The AJC data on US Jewry shows a mixed downward trend (from 80 percent who agreed that “caring about Israel” was an essential part of their Jewish identity in 2000, to 62 percent in 2019).

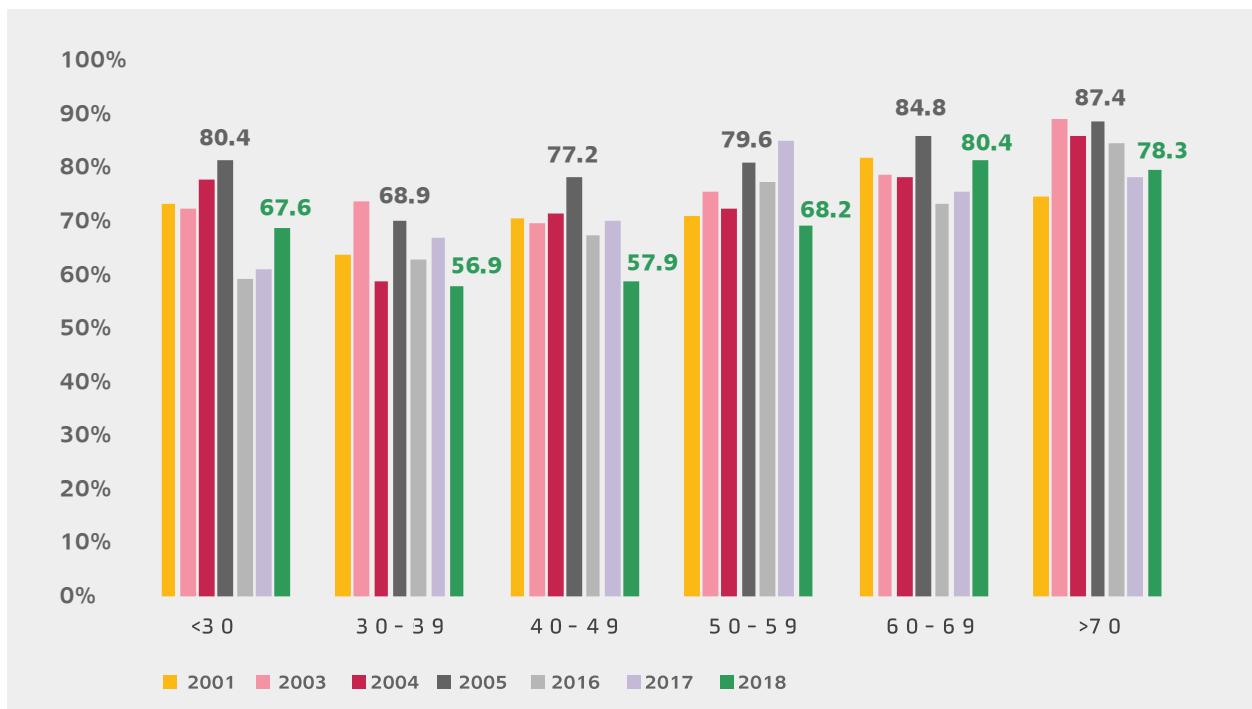
Figure 3: Level of Agreement that “Caring About Israel Is a Very Important Part of My Being a Jew”



The data indicates that the level of agreement/disagreement with the statement is significantly influenced by a large number of demographic factors, including (as in the previous question): respondent age – older people agree with the statement to a greater degree than younger

people; respondent ideological views (ranging from liberal to conservative) – respondents with conservative tendencies agree more than do liberals; and religious stream – Orthodox Jews tend to agree more than do Reform and secular Jews.

Figure 4: Percentage of Those Who Agree that “Caring About Israel Is a Very Important Part of My Being a Jew,” by Age Cohort



As Figure 4 shows the youngest age cohort (i.e., those under age 30) exhibits, for most years, slightly higher agreement rates than the 30-39 age cohort. When we analyze the findings for 2001, 2004, 2005, and 2018, when the percentage of under-30s who agreed with the statement was higher than that of the 30-

39 age cohort, we find that religious-stream affiliation, as noted, was a major factor. During these years, the percentage respondents in the 30-39 age cohort who stated that they do not belong to any Jewish religious stream was over 30 percent, which skewed the answers of the group as a whole. Thus, we see that an overlap

between age and religious-stream affiliation affects participant responses. Another variable with a significant influence on answers to the “caring” question was the number of Israel visits. Jews who have visited Israel tend to agree with the statement to a greater extent. Figure 5

(AJC 2017) shows that, with the exception of two age groups (50-59 and over 70), visiting Israel affects the level of agreement with the “caring” statement. This relationship was also significant in other survey years (2000, 2005, 2012, and 2016).

Figure 5: The Relationship Between Age, Visiting Israel, and Agreement with “Caring ... Is a Very Important Part of My Being a Jew”

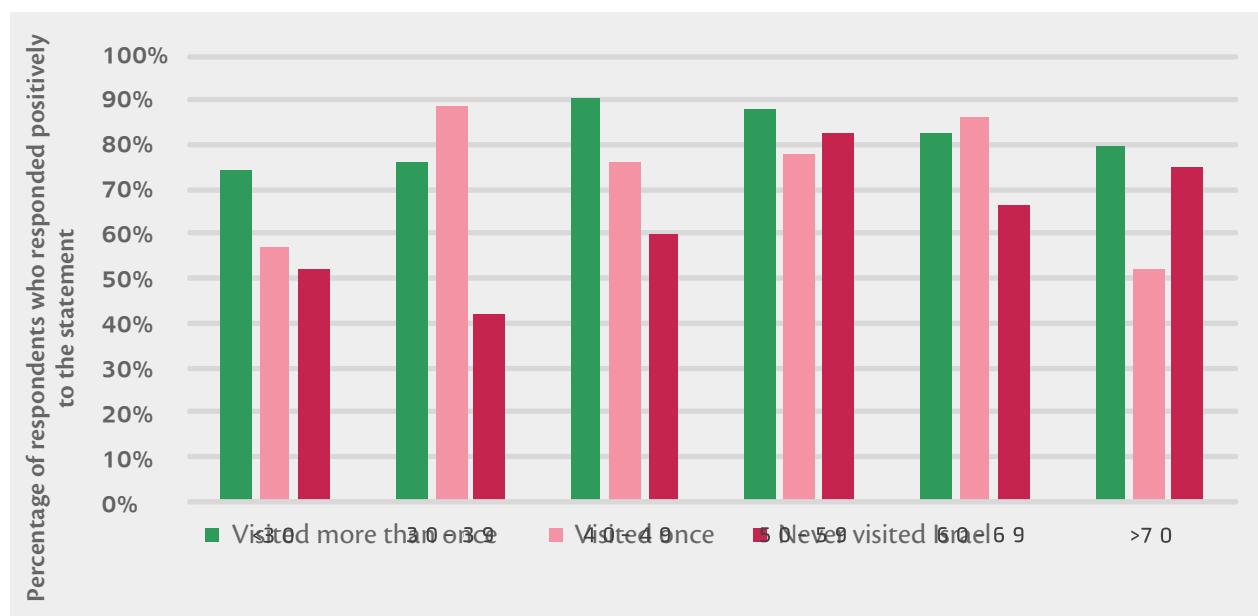


Table 2: Agreement that “Caring About Israel Is an Essential or Highly Essential Part of My Being a Jew”: Data in Different Cross-Sections from Selected Surveys

		AJC					NJPS	PEW	JPPI (US)	JPPI (World)
		2000	2005	2013	2018	2019	2000	2013	2018	
Total		80%	79.4%	75.4%	70.1%	62%	81%	43%	91.1%	87.8%
Gender	Male	80.3%	80.3%	73.3%	66.5%	61%	-	39%	92.6%	87.8%
	Female	79.8%	78.6%	77.5%	73.7%	63%	-	46%	90.1%	87.3%
Age groups	1	<30: 73.6%	<30: 80.4%	18-29: 56.8%	18-29: 67.6%	18-29: 44%	18-34: 75%	18-29: 32%	18-29: 84.8%	18-29: 79.4%
	2	30-39: 85.5%	30-39: 68.9%	30-44: 47.2%	30-49: 57.3%	30-49: 53%	35-49: 78%	30-49: 38%	30-49: 87.3%	30-49: 84.8%
	3	40-49: 78.7%	40-49: 77.2%	45-59: 79.6%	50-64: 74.9%	50-64: 77%	50-64: 83%	50-64: 47%	50-64: 96.7%	50-64: 96.3%
	4	50-59: 81%	50-59: 79.6%	60+: 80%	65+: 78.3%	65+: 72%	65+: 87%	65+: 53%	65+: 96.7%	65+: 97.4%
	5	60-69: 77.4%	60-69: 84.8%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	6	70+: 79.6%	70+: 87.4%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Political outlook	Liberal	-	Very liberal: 77.8%	65.2%	54%	-	-	-	Very liberal: 67.7%	Very liberal: 68.1%
	Liberal tendency	-	80.7%	62%	73.9%	-	-	-	Liberal: 88.6%	Liberal: 86.4%
	Middle of the road	-	80.7%	62%	73.9%	-	-	-	96.4%	90.2%
	Conservative tendency	-	85.6%	90%	92.2%	-	-	-	Conservative: 100%	Conservative: 97.3%
	Conservative	-	Conservati- ve: 84.1% Very con- servative: 80%	89.6%	80.8%	-	-	-	Very conserva- tive: 100%	Very conserva- tive: 87.5%
	Political affiliation	Republican	80.2%	80.9%	91.8%	83.8%	80%	-	-	-
	Democrat	81.5%	81.9%	71.1%	67.6%	58%	-	-	-	-
	Independent	76.6%	73.5%	74%	67.6%	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	67.4%	57%	-	-	-	-

Religious stream	Orthodox	95.9%	91.8%	73.3%	-	-	-	-	95.7%	90.9%
Haredi (ultra-Orthodox)	-	-	-	87.2%	57%	-	45%	-	-	-
Modern Orthodox	-	-	-	95.7%	97%	88%	79%	-	-	-
Conservative	88.8%	90%	80.1%	87.4%	85%	91%	58%	92.7%	92.4%	
Reform	76.1%	75.3%	80.9%	75.7%	68%	81%	42%	85.3%	85.3%	
Non-affiliated/secular	68.5%	67.6%	72%	54.4%	42%	69%	31%	92%	82.5%	
Reconstructionist	80%	77.3%	32%	61.3%	72%	-	-	-	-	
No opinion	60%	40%	36.4%	43.8%	-	-	-	-	-	

European Jewry

The FRA surveys of 2012 and 2018 looked at how important supporting Israel is to respondents' sense of Jewish identity. In the 2018 survey (the data was collected in 2012), most respondents (81 percent) agreed that supporting Israel is a major element of their Jewish identity. The findings by age indicate that support was higher among older age cohorts. While 74 percent of the 30 and under cohort and 72 percent of 30-39 cohort said that supporting Israel is important or very important, the figures for those in the 40-49, 70-79, and 80+ age cohort are 81, 87, and 88 percent, respectively. In the breakdown by country, France had the highest level of agreement regarding the importance of supporting Israel (90 percent), followed by Belgium, Germany, and Italy (83 percent). Hungary had the lowest level of agreement (66 percent). We have no country breakdown

for the survey published this year, but the total agreement rate for Europe declined (73 percent). The age breakdown suggests no change in that sphere. Support for Israel is higher among older age groups: 74 percent for the 16-34 age cohort, 85 percent for the 35-59 cohort, and 86 percent for those 60 or over.

Canadian Jewry

The Canadian survey asked: "What is essential to being a Jew?" Several options were offered, including caring about Israel. Forty-three percent responded that caring about Israel is essential, another 43 percent said that it is important but not essential. This question also shows an age effect; 37 percent of respondents in the 18-29 age group said that caring about Israel is essential (the percentage drops slightly among the 30-44 age cohort), versus 57 percent for those 75 or over.

3 The future of Israel-Diaspora relations

This question mainly appeared in the AJC surveys, with virtually no counterpart questions for populations outside the US. But it is important for completing the picture, as it provides a means of assessing the impact of the “distancing discourse”⁴ on the Jewish public. It is not possible to directly compare all the questions asked on this topic (a different wording could affect the responses). We can see that between 2017 and 2019 (when similar questions were asked), there was a decline in those who believe that Israel-Diaspora relations

will be better in the future, and a rise in the share of those who anticipate a worsening. In JPPI’s Structured Jewish World Dialogue survey, whose participants, as noted, feel more attached to Israel (and do not constitute a representative sample of all Jews), we can also see that over half of the respondents answered that Israeli and Diaspora Jews are drifting apart. The JPPI survey also indicates that US respondents are the most pessimistic regarding the relationship’s future: 42.9 percent of Diaspora Jews did not agree that there is distancing, versus 30.7 percent of American respondents. A small majority of Israeli survey respondents (50.9 percent) did not anticipate further distancing.

Table 3: The Future of Israel-Diaspora Relations: Questions from different surveys

AJC 2000 – Relations between Jews in Israel and the United States	AJC 2001 – Israel Jews and US Jews	AJC 2003 – Jews in Israel and US in 3 to 5 years	AJC 2004 – Jews in US and Israel closer or not in the next 5 years	AJC 2017 – Looking ahead five years, do you think that the ties between American Jews and Israel will be ...	AJC 2018 – Looking ahead five years, do you think that the ties between American and Israeli Jews will be ...	AJC 2019 – Looking ahead five years, do you think that the ties between American and Israeli Jews will be ...	JPPI 2018 – Israel and world
Will become closer	31.9%	30.4%	35.7%	28.8%	Stronger than today: 22.1%	Stronger than today: 19.7%	Agree 69.3%
Will drift apart	11.9%	6.7%	9.1%	9.9%	Weaker than today: 14.4%	Weaker than today: 14.8%	Disagree: 30.7%
Neither	50.1%	59.4%	52.8%	59.4%	Like today: 61.5%	Like today: 60.4%	Disagree: 42.9%
No opinion	6.1%	3.4%	2.4%	1.9%	0.5%	0.3%	—

In 2019, AJC published survey findings for Israel and France as well. When Jews in Israel were asked about the relationship five years from now, 30 percent felt that it would be stronger, 23 percent answered that it would be weaker, and 38 percent expected it to remain unchanged. Among French Jews, 24 percent responded that the relationship will become stronger, 32 percent said it will become weaker, and 35 percent anticipated no change. Nine percent of the French respondents expressed no opinion.

4 Israel visits

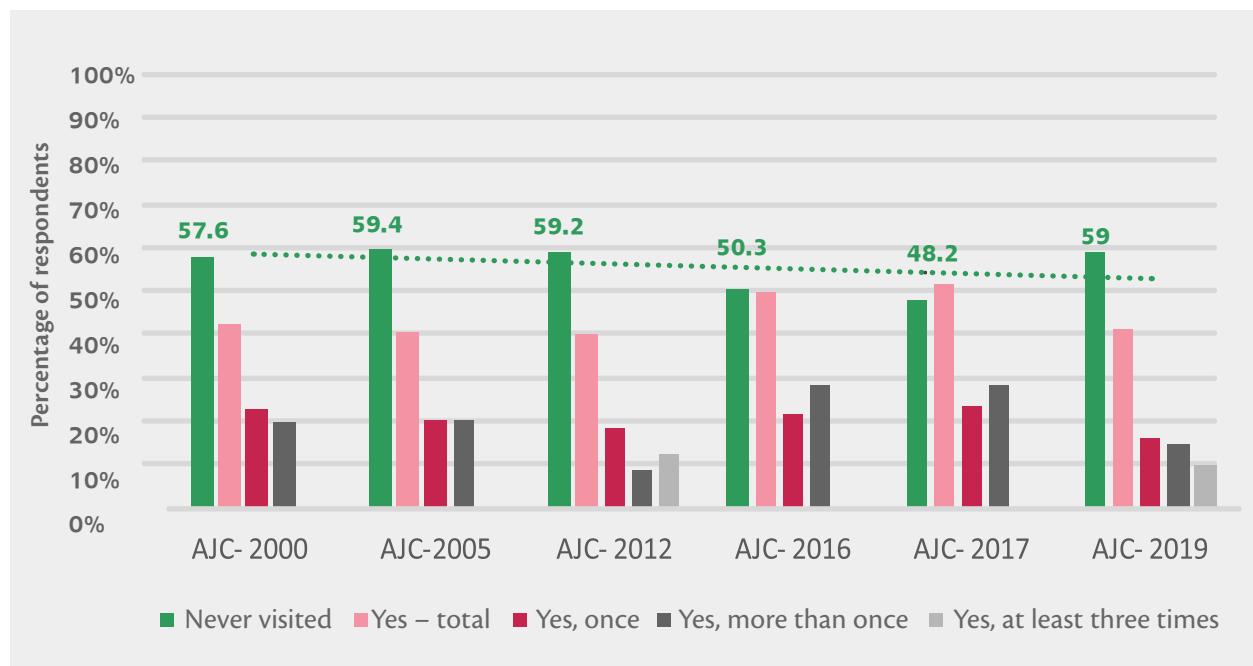
The question regarding visiting Israel serves, in most of the surveys, as a gauge of the sense of attachment. The assumption is that, the stronger the attachment, the greater the desire to choose Israel as a travel destination and to visit the country at least once in the course of one's lifetime.

The relationship between visiting Israel and the responses to the other questions is significant. Although, in the current wording, we cannot point to causality on one side or the other, it would still be appropriate to investigate, via focused surveys, whether causality lies on the side suggested by some researchers, namely that attachment leads to Israel visits, or whether visiting Israel leads to stronger attachment (the view held by Birthright Israel and MASA organizers). It is likely that there is truth in both.

US Jewry

The AJC surveys of the past two decades (2000-2019) do not show a change in the percentage of Jews who say they have never visited Israel. A similar percentage of Jews who have not visited (57 percent) was also found in the 2013 Pew survey.

Figure 6: Percentage Who Have Visited Israel, by Year and Number of Visits (AJC)



European Jewry

Data from the JPR report (based on the 2012 survey) suggests that a large majority of European Jews have either visited Israel or lived there for over a year (87 percent), per the following breakdown: 89 percent for Sweden, Belgium, and the United Kingdom; 88 percent for France, 81 percent for Italy, 78 percent for Germany, 76 percent for Hungary, and 73 percent for Latvia. The findings of the most recent survey, published in 2019, point to a slight increase: 89 percent have visited Israel at least once.

Canadian Jewry

Israel visit figures for Canadian Jews are high: only 20 percent reported that they had never traveled to Israel; 36 percent had visited once; 20 percent had visited three times; 10 percent had visited 6-10 times, and 7 percent had more than 11 visits. Another 7 percent were born in Israel. This contrasts with the 43 percent of American Jews who have visited Israel. The average number of trips to Israel made by the Canadian respondents was 5.1. Ninety-two percent of Orthodox respondents had visited Israel, as had 84 percent of respondents under the age of 45.

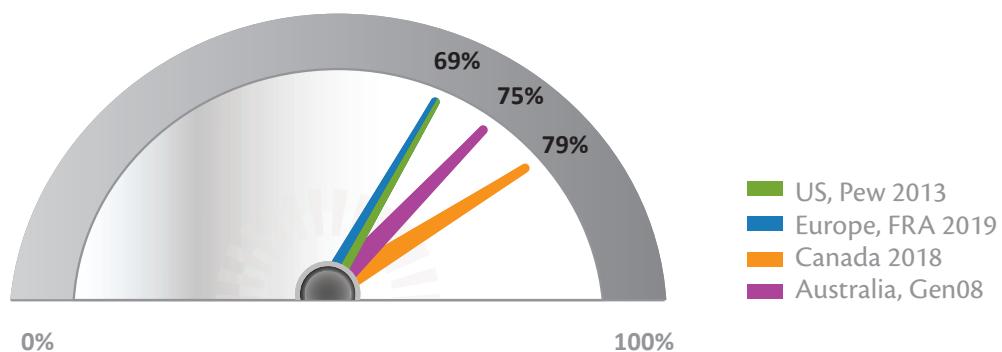
Australian Jewry

The Gen08 survey findings indicate that 86 percent of respondents had visited Israel at least once (50 percent of Melbourne respondents and 45 percent of Sydney respondents said they had visited three or more times). A 1991 survey conducted in Melbourne found an Israel visit rate of 73 percent (compared with 87 percent in a 2008/9 survey).

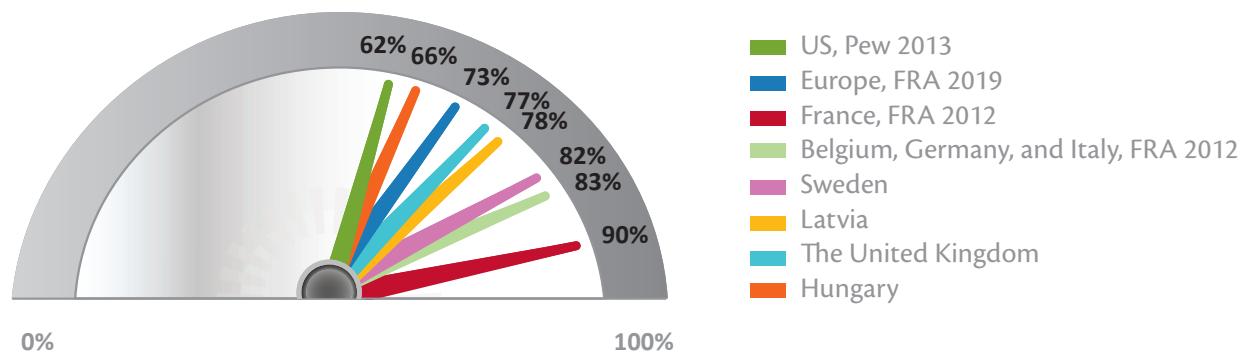
The Gen17 survey showed an additional increase. Ninety-two percent of the respondents reported having visited Israel at least once in their lives. Over 60 percent had traveled to Israel three or more times (62 percent from Melbourne, and 61 percent from Sydney). A fifth of the respondents had actually lived in Israel for a year or more.

Figure 7: The Integrated Index

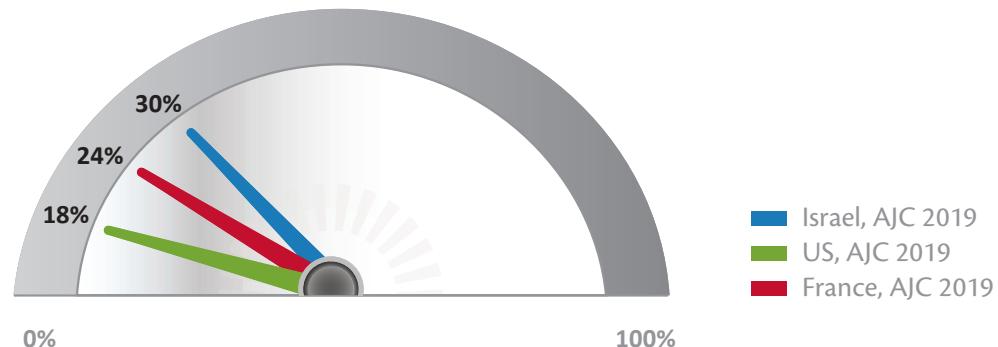
Attachment to Israel



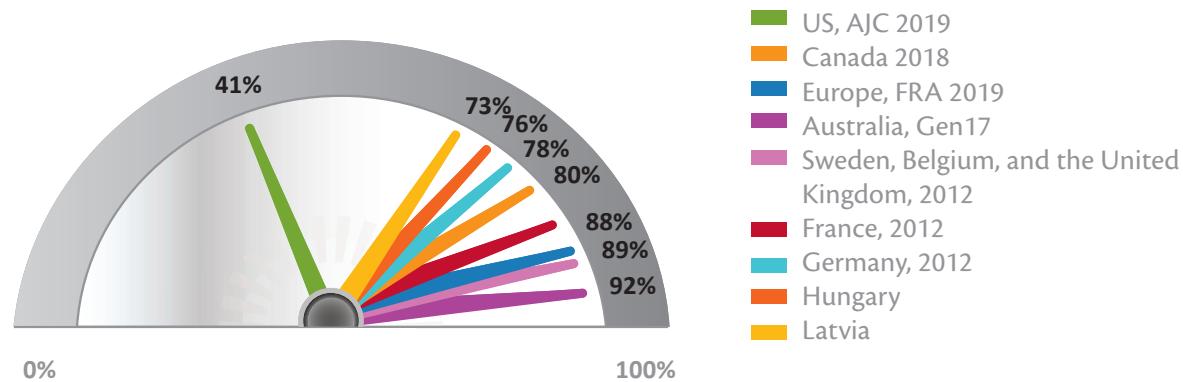
Caring About Israel is an Important Part of My Being a Jew



The Future of Ties: Percentage Who Feel that the Ties Will Become Stronger



Visits: Traveled to Israel at Least Once



Beyond the questions included in this index, the following remarks may shed light on the current status of Israel-US Jewry ties:

The “Family” Metaphor

In the past two years (2018, 2019), AJC surveys included a question that frames respondent attitudes toward Israeli Jews in terms of a “family” metaphor. In both years, a large proportion of respondents tended to relate to Israeli Jews as extended family (38.9 percent

in 2018, and 43 percent in 2019). A sizeable group of respondents did not view Israeli Jews as family at all (31.1 percent in 2018, and 28 percent in 2019). Here as well, religious stream affiliation influenced responses: among Haredim (ultra-Orthodox), most respondents viewed Israeli Jews as siblings (46.4 percent). In many other groups, Israeli Jews were regarded as extended family, but among Reform and secular Jews, a substantial segment did not view them as family (34.4 and 33.3 percent, respectively).

Sense of responsibility for ensuring that Israel continues to exist

The two Australian surveys looked at a wide variety of issues that are not addressed in other surveys, and that can shed a little light on the sentiments of Australian Jews. One question, for instance, relates to the sense of responsibility felt toward Israel. Eighty-eight percent of the survey respondents agreed with the statement, “I feel a sense of responsibility to ensure that the State of Israel continues to exist.” Levels of agreement with the statement climbed with age: 83 percent in the 18-29 age cohort; 82 percent in the 30-39 cohort; 88 percent in the 40-49 cohort; 90 percent in the 40-49 cohort; 90 percent in the 50-59 cohort; 91 percent in the 60-69 cohort; 93 percent in the 70-79 cohort, and 96 percent in the 80-89 cohort.

Jews' opinions on Israel

Many of the questions cited in this index are not suited to Israeli respondents, as they deal with the issue of ties to Israel. If we are to complete the numerical picture regarding Israel-Diaspora relations, we have to understand the views held by the Israeli Jewish public. To ensure consistency and facilitate comparison, we looked at Israeli views based on the main questions cited in this index, adjusted as necessary for the Israeli public.⁵

1. Sense of closeness to Diaspora Jews

No question about the sense of closeness to Diaspora Jews was asked directly in any of the surveys we examined. However, a number of questions that were asked offer hints about this sentiment. For example, JPPI’s Israeli Judaism survey (2018) asked Israelis whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: **To be a good Jew is to be concerned about other Jews, whoever they may be.** Over 90 percent of Israeli respondents agreed: 31 percent very strongly agreed; 45 percent strongly agreed; and 16 percent somewhat agreed. Only 8 percent did not agree with the statement at all. A higher level of agreement was found among religiously-observant respondents: only 1 percent of the liberal-religious⁶ and religious did not agree, and none of the self-defined “Dati-Torani” or more strictly-observant religious respondents did not agree. In contrast, 18 percent in the completely-secular group did not agree at all with the statement.

The 2014 IDI survey included the question: **Are you interested in knowing what is happening with Jews in the Diaspora?** The majority of respondents answered that they did want to know (42 percent said they were very interested, and 39 percent that they were fairly interested – 81 percent combined). Only 18 percent responded that they were not interested at all. Interest levels were slightly lower among the younger age cohorts (76 percent of those aged 18-21 said they are very interested, and 77 percent of those aged 22-24).

The sense of closeness is also reflected in the willingness to invest Israeli resources in Diaspora Jewry. The Ruderman survey (2019) asked **whether Israel should take part in funding programs such as Birthright Israel and MASA**. Seventy-seven percent of respondents said that in general it should, versus 14 percent who felt that in general it should not. Young adults ages 18-24 were less in favor of funding such programs (70 percent), compared with respondents in the 65+ age range (85 percent). Secular, traditional and religious Jews viewed such funding more favorably (80, 79, and 79 percent, respectively) than did Haredi respondents (52 percent).

In a 2016 study by Israel's Government Advertising Agency (LAPAM), 27 percent of respondents agreed that **Israel should invest resources in the Jewish identity of Jewish communities in the Diaspora, just as it**

invests in Jewish culture and identity in Israel. Agreement with this idea correlates with religiosity level: 9 percent of atheists agreed compared to 24 percent of secular Jews; 35 percent of traditional Jews; 32 percent of religious Jews; and 43 percent of Haredim. When asked **How much, in your opinion, should the State of Israel invest in strengthening the Jewish people in the Diaspora?**, 43 percent of respondents agreed that Israel should invest another half a billion shekels; 48 percent felt that the state should invest up to 200 million shekels, and 9 percent said they did not support any investment in Jewish identity.

In another question, 55 percent of respondents agreed strongly that **the state should help Jews in distress, even if they do not immigrate to Israel**; 21 percent opposed such assistance.

Table 5: Closeness to Diaspora Jews*

	To be a good Jew is to be concerned about other Jews, whoever they may be JPPI 2018	Should Israel take part in funding programs such as Birthright Israel and MASA? Ruderman 2018	Agree that Israel should invest resources in the Jewish identity of Diaspora Jewish communities Israel's Government Advertising Agency	Are you interested to know what is happening with Jews in the Diaspora? IDI 2014
Total – agree	92%	77%	91%	Interested – 81%
Total – do not agree	8%	14%	9%	Not interested – 18%

* Gaps exist in some places when respondents did not answer the question

2. Caring about Jews around the world is an important part of my being a Jew

JPPI's 2018 Dialogue survey asked participants about the extent to which they agree with the statement: **Caring about Jews around the world is an important part of my being a Jew**; 89.6 percent of the Israeli respondents agreed (versus 91.1 percent of US respondents, and 87 percent of respondents elsewhere in the world).

3. The future of Israel-Diaspora relations

The 2019 AJC survey, as noted, asked Israeli respondents to answer the following question: **Looking ahead five years, do you think that the ties between American and Israeli Jews will be stronger than today?** Thirty percent answered that the ties will be stronger, 23 percent said they will be weaker, and 38 percent anticipated no change.

The February 2019 Ruderman Family Foundation survey asked another question: **How would you define, today, the relationship between Israel and the United States Jewish community?** Fifty-seven percent of Israeli respondents said that the relationship is, on the whole, good; 30 percent described it as reasonable; and 7 percent felt it was, on the whole, bad. There were no meaningful differences between age cohorts, but there were differences associated with religious identity. Religious respondents saw the relationship as being better (71 percent

described the relationship as good, versus 65 percent of the traditional respondents, 63 percent of the Haredi respondents, and 48 percent of the secular respondents). None of the religious or traditional respondents felt the relationship was bad, compared with 2 percent of the Haredi and 13 percent of the secular respondents.

The Pew 2016 study, *Israel's Religiously Divided Society*, looked at Israeli public opinion vis-a-vis Diaspora Jewry. Respondents were asked about their level of agreement with the statement: **Israeli and American Jews share a common destiny**. Seventy-five percent of respondents said they agreed to a great extent or to some extent with this statement. The percentage of those who agreed was higher among Haredim (88 percent) than among the religious (77 percent), the traditional (74 percent) and the secular (72 percent).

IDI (2014) and the Government Advertising Agency looked at agreement levels for a similar statement: **Jews in Israel and the Diaspora share a common destiny**. Most of the IDI survey respondents said they agreed with this statement (41 percent strongly agreed, and 22 percent somewhat agreed); 20 percent responded that they somewhat disagreed; and 15 percent said that they strongly disagreed. The percentage of those who agreed was lower among the younger age cohorts – 40 percent. As did the Pew survey, this survey showed higher levels of agreement among Haredim (71 percent strongly agreed, 10 percent somewhat

agreed) than among religious and traditional respondents (43 percent strongly agreed, 22 percent agreed) and among secular respondents (28 percent strongly agreed, 27 percent somewhat agreed). Another sector, which was not delineated in the Pew survey, was the “nationalist” group. For this group,

agreement levels were high – 61 percent strongly agreed and 14 percent agreed. According to the Government Advertising Agency survey, 61 percent of the Israeli public feels that Jews in Israel and the Diaspora have a common destiny, while 16 percent do not.

Table 6: Jews in Israel and the Diaspora Share a Common Destiny

	Pew 2016	Government Advertising Agency 2016	Israel Democracy Institute 2014
Total – agree	75%	61%	63%
Strongly/definitely agree	28%	32%	41%
Agree	47%	29%	22%
Total – disagree	23%	16%	35%
Somewhat disagree	19%	9%	20%
Strongly disagree	4%	7%	15%

Endnotes:

1 Among other things, in a 2014 JPPI paper entitled “The Challenge of Peoplehood: Strengthening the attachment of Young American Jews’ to Israel in time of the Distancing Discourse,” and in the JPPI’s Structured Jewish World Dialogue project, which in 2018 was devoted to the topic of “Seventy Years of Israel-Diaspora Relations: the Next Generation.”

2 Processed Central Bureau of Statistics data – immigration to Israel tables.

3 Young Jewish Europeans: Perceptions and experiences of Antisemitism, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2019, p.11

4 For a more in-depth discussion of this issue, see the 2014 JPPI paper entitled “ The Challenge of Peoplehood: Strengthening the attachment of Young American Jews’ to Israel in time of the Distancing Discourse”

5 The question of visits to Israel becomes irrelevant.

6 Although Liberal Religious in the diaspora normally refers to Reform Judaism, in Israel Liberal-Religious (dati liberali, normally refers to liberal Orthodox Jews but also includes some Conservative Jews).

14

Comprehensive Three-Dimensional Anti-Semitism Index

Major Recent Developments

- Anti-Semitism is on the rise all over the world. The two most notable and worrying developments that require urgent attention are the penetration of anti-Semitism in Britain's Labour party, which may endanger the future thriving of the British Jewry, and the two deadly mass shootings by white supremacists in synagogues in the United States, which may inspire "copycat" attacks.
- After a seven-decade grace period following the Shoah, **anti-Semitism returns to becoming a "new normal"** with which Jewish communities will have to learn to live.
- In a world full of fear and uncertainty, in which significant segments of the population have experienced a social downgrading and are worried that their horizons are grim, conspiracy theories flourish and the "Jew" reemerges as a scapegoat that can bring together conspiratorialists from all political, religious, and social backgrounds. Taking advantage of digital means for free expression, simplistic theories accusing the Jews of malicious motivations are spread to millions, perhaps billions, of people across the internet.
- In Europe, anti-Semitism – visible and invisible – impedes the participation of Jewish communities in the life of their general societies as well as demotivates Jews from participating in local Jewish communal life. Despite the fact that anti-Jewish attitudes are steadily decreasing in the population, a critical mass of anti-Semitic elements makes life troublesome for the Jews and in some places social exclusion is running rampant.
- In continental Europe, and despite the existence of some groups of Muslim activists who courageously combat anti-Semitism,

the single main discerning and predictive indicator of Jewish community sustainability appears to be the percentage of Muslims in the population.

- In North America and Australia, anti-Semitism has almost no tangible impact on the social, academic, economic and political integration of the Jews in general society. Yet, in the last two years in the United States, **anti-Semitic right-wingers have become emboldened** in their willingness to express their anti-Jewish prejudices and to act upon them. **Similarly, anti-Semitic views on the left have increased** and Jews (particularly, on college campuses) feel more threatened by them, even though most of the abuse has been verbal and psychological, not physical.
- Anti-Zionism has become a main-stream opinion in Europe and frequently features traditional anti-Semitic components. Jews are often held accountable for the actions and policies of the Israeli government. On American campuses, pro-Israel students are confronted with peer and institutional pressures to decrease their Zionist engagement. These pressures resemble what Jewish students started encountering 20 years ago in Europe.
- **As a positive development, we may mention that the world media interest in the Israeli-Palestinian is declining sharply.** A large part of the leading international foreign media outlets have decided to close their Israel's offices and bring back home their permanent correspondents. As the one-side coverage and

over coverage of the conflict have been the major causes of the anti-Israel propaganda and have nurtured the anti-Jewish discourse, we may expect that this decreasing coverage will give back a lower profile to the Palestinian issue.

- Despite the worsening situation, **comparisons with the blackest periods of Jewish history are mistaken.** All across the Western world discrimination is forbidden by law, occurrences of state anti-Semitism are very rare, there is adherence to the rule of law in countries where Jews live, and the existence of the State of Israel has influenced the status of the Jewish communities living in problematic environments for the better.

These elements and the figures in Tables (1) and (2) below, demonstrate that even in the US the previously inconceivable return of anti-Semitism becomes conceivable: two members of the US House of Representatives have publicly questioned the full allegiance of American Jews to the US; young and energetic anti-Zionist activists on the left may become a significant stream within the Democratic Party; the number of anti-Jewish incidents has doubled during the last year; harassing mail reaches public Jews on a regular basis; anti-Semitic tropes are increasingly detectable in the mainstream discourse and anti-Israel criticism is adopting anti-Semitic rhetoric.

The discomfort European Jews have complained about for the last 20 years has crept into the American landscape. While, as a legitimate precaution, more American synagogues have

begun adopting security measures, they may advance an unconscious message to the general population that Jews are not just “regular citizens” but are “citizens at risk.”

The three-dimensional EU indicator

JPPI’s Anti-Semitism Index on Europe is presented here for the fifth 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 existing data collected globally by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and locally by others (such as CNN, Eurobarometer, IFOP, UEJF, JPR), anti-Semitic harassment figures collected by local Jewish organizations and governmental agencies entrusted with security (such as CST in UK, SPCJ in France, and various specialized governmental agencies), and findings regarding perceptions of anti-Semitism among Jews (FRA, AJC and JPPI’s survey).

What has changed since 2014?

When JPPI launched its integrated “Anti-Semitism Index”, very few reports providing a global perspective have been available. Things have changed: in the recent months the Israel Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, ADL, and the Kantor Center have published global reports on the resurgence of a structural anti-Semitism that has anchored not only in Arab and European countries but in North America too. High-quality research has been published just recently that we refer to in this analysis.

Our role is not to synthesize the in-depth analyses offered in these reports but rather to signal the changes in the chosen three indicators of the JPPI index, articulate a diagnostic summary of in-depth transformations, identify the critical developments to follow, and to provide policy-makers with a policy planning meta-analysis along with a set of recommendations.

JPPI Survey Findings

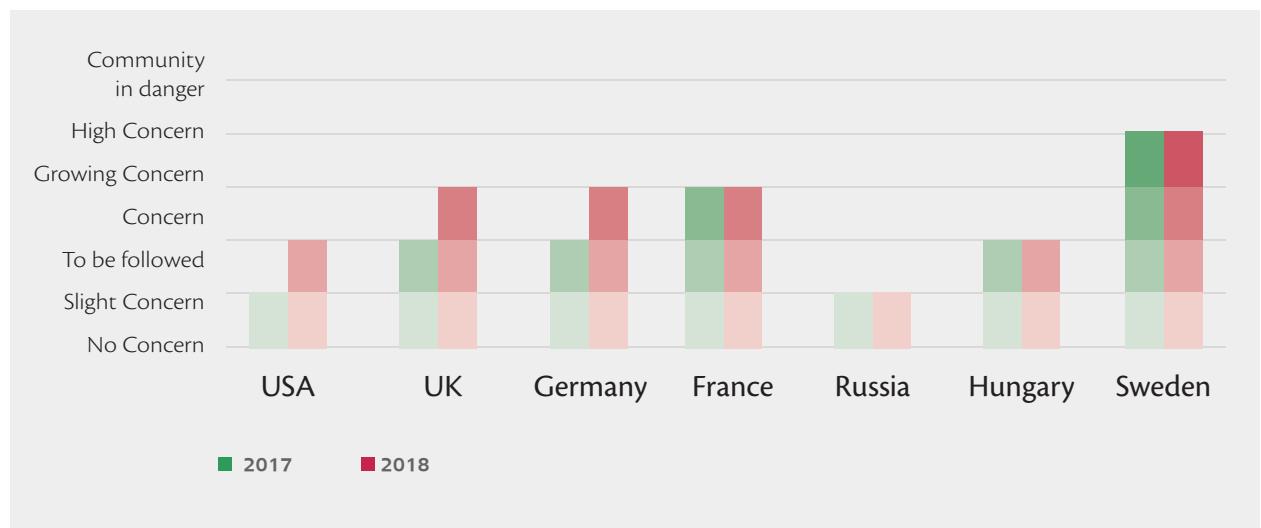
According to a recent JPPI survey of a selected group of 180 US rabbis and communal leaders, a large majority stated that anti-Semitism has increased considerably over the past five years. Fifty percent of respondents believe the government does not combat anti-Semitism effectively, forty percent worry about a possible decrease in community participation in their area for fear of a possible anti-Jewish incident, but only a third are worried that in the next 12 months a person close to them will be a victim of anti-Jewish harassment or physical attack. While alarming, these figures appear less bleak when compared with answers to the

same questions in Europe: 24 percent of the 16,000 Jewish respondents in an FRA survey (see below) say they have witnessed other Jews being verbally insulted, harassed, or physically attacked in the past year 56 percent are worried about their friends or family members falling victim to anti-Semitic harassment in the coming year, 71 percent of the European Jewish respondents hide – at least occasionally – their Jewishness, 70 percent give a scathing assessment of their governments' efforts to combat anti-Semitism, and 38 percent have contemplated emigration as they don't feel safe in their countries.

Monitoring the level of anti-Semitic threat in different countries

(based on perceived discomfort among Jews)

	USA	UK	Germany	France	Russia	Hungary	Sweden
Level of severity in 2018	To be followed	Concern	Growing Concern	Growing Concern	To be followed	Concern	High Concern
Level of severity in 2017	Slight Concern	To be followed	Concern	Growing Concern	To be followed	Concern	High Concern



Part One: Anti-Semitism in Europe Affects the Day-to-Day Life of Jews

In 1945, following the exposure of the Nazi extermination camps and the realization of the severity of the catastrophe caused by anti-Semitic ideology, European countries adopted a policy of rejecting in principle any expression that could be construed as supporting racism or bigotry. But seven decades after the Shoah, the grace period that had been extended to the Jews is over. Resentment of Jews that had been long silenced has again openly erupted. The consolidation of a critical discourse on Israel has granted renewed legitimacy to Holocaust denial and anti-Semitic expressions, which were once confined to the margins.

In addition to this development, immigration waves washing over Europe and other developments, boosted nationalist and conservative sentiments across the continent and threaten the stability of European Union and the common political vision of its member states. A large segment of the middle class in the Western countries where Jews live, feels that it is under existential threat. Some fear that migrants may “replace” them and take over the political and cultural control of the country (largely on the right); others fear a socio-economic downgrading that might leave them impoverished (mainly on the left). Jews often find themselves on the receiving end of such fears.

Main findings:

1. Security threats significantly affect the lives of European Jews.
2. Jewish communal life is under direct threat.
3. The participation of Jewish communities in their general societies is reduced.
4. Because of anti-Semitism and other factors, Europe's Jewish population is declining.
5. Local governments could do much more to increase security for Jews.
6. If nothing is done, a significant number of European Jews will relocate to more inviting environments, some will self-segregate while others decrease their Jewish profile and distance themselves from Jewish communal life.

Selected quantitative data illustrating the deteriorating trend:

- A recent French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP) poll found that nearly nine in ten Jewish college students in France have experienced anti-Semitism on campus.¹ Of those students, 85 percent said that they were subjected to an anti-Semitic trope, 75 percent said they had been on the receiving end of Jewish and Holocaust jokes, and 19

percent said they had been subjected to anti-Semitic “aggression.” The situation is clearly deteriorating and not only on campuses: according to the French government, anti-Semitic acts in France increased by 74 percent over the previous year. Anti-Jewish stereotypes and among the activists of the populist “yellow vest” social movement conspiracy theories associated with Jews are especially high (30 percent as compared to 10 percent in the general population). Despite efforts invested in Holocaust education, one of five French young adults say they have never heard of the genocide of Jews during the Second World War.²

- In a major break with the past, the German Agency for Domestic Security has revealed what was well-known by local Jews: Muslim migrants have imported from their countries of origin strong anti-Semitic prejudices and a large proportion of the anti-Jewish violent incidents are perpetrated by Muslims.³
- While anti-Semitism in France and Germany largely comes from fringe populations, in Britain, it emanates from what may be its next ruling party, which has been described as “institutionally anti-Semitic.” Drawing on extensive research, a report sponsored by the CST (the security organization of British Jews) says the Labour party has failed to prevent itself from becoming

a host for contemporary anti-Semitism, failed to effectively tackle anti-Semitism, and has failed to root out a culture of anti-Semitism denial and victim-blaming.⁴

- The biggest spike in violent incidents against Jews was in Ukraine (paradoxically, a country in which both the newly elected President and the Prime Minister happened to be Jewish), which registered an increase of more than 50 percent. This increase emerged against the backdrop of renewed nationalism in Eastern Europe and attempts to whitewash and glorify the nationalist leaders and movements of the past who were also responsible for the murder and expulsion of Jews before and during World War II. In May 2017, the Pew Research Center conducted a study of 2,000 residents in each of Central and Eastern Europe’s 18 countries. The study found that 20 percent of the respondents did not want Jews in their country, and 30 percent did not want Jews as neighbors. In addition, 22 percent of Romania’s citizens and 18 percent of Polish citizens were interested in denying the right of Jews to citizenship in their country.⁵
- Other countries are not in much better shape: the majority of Austrian adults do not know that six million Jews were killed during the Holocaust.⁶

Table 1: Anti-Semitism in Western Europe 2018:

Anti-Semitism in Western Europe	Trend	Europe average	France	UK	Germany
PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD JEWS (%)					
Harbor anti-Semitic attitudes (%) ⁷	▼	24 (26)	17 (37)	36 (39) ⁸	16 (27) ⁹
– as above, among Muslims (%) ¹⁰	▲	62 (55)	49 (83)	58 (54)	70 (62)
ANTI-SEMITIC BEHAVIOR (number of incidents; only as reported to official agencies)					
Increase/Decrease in violent assaults (%)	▲		+74%	+16%	+10%
Violent assaults ¹¹	▲		183 [97]	123 [149]	62 [24]
Total incidents (extreme violence, assaults, damages, desecrations and threats)	▲		541 [311]	1,652 [1,420] ¹²	1,646 [1,504] ¹³
Number of physical attacks per 1,000 Jews	▲	5	3.1 [1.8]	9.3 [8]	7.4 [6.7]
Per cent of attacks that are not reported	▲	79 (77)	76 (72)	80 (73)	79 (72)
ANTI-SEMITISM AS PERCEIVED BY JEWS¹⁴ (%)					
Anti-Semitism is a very or fairly big problem (%)	▲	85 (67)	95 (86)	75 (48)	85 (40)
Have considered emigration because they do not feel safe in their country (%)	▲	38 (32)	44 (46) ¹⁵	29 (18)	44 (25)
Avoid places in their neighborhood because they would not feel safe there as a Jew (%)	▲	38 (27)	35 (20)	68 (37)	35 (28)

Note: Numbers in parenthesis are the latest available data. Numbers in brackets are 2017 scores.

An analysis of the data and main developments in Europe, as arises from the JPP's 2019 Anti-Semitism Index, indicates that:

- General public attitudes toward European Jews have somewhat improved 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, who are perceived to threaten the primary national identity of various European countries.

- Despite the overall positive trend, the number of violent anti-Semitic incidents rose dramatically in the past year. This discrepancy stems from the presence of fringe groups, radical right and radical left activists and radical Muslims.
- These three groups, who combine to make up between one-fifth to one-third of the total population in the various European countries, combine to create a critical mass

- that (unofficially) blocks the comfortable integration of Jews to the local public sphere.
- 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 devout Muslim neighbors.¹⁶
 - If the anti-Semitic violence in France is associated with radical Islam, in England, the anti-Semitic violence is associated more with a radical-right orientation. In Germany, the government identifies most of the perpetrators of anti-Semitic violence as belonging to the radical right (a caveat: this is the conclusion made when the identity of an attacker is unknown). However, in the three main countries examined, the Jewish communities themselves fear violence from radical Muslims more than from any other groups.
 - While anti-Semitic sentiment in Western Europe continues to decline, 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.

Impact on Jewish life

Anti-Semitism and Jews are not on a first blind date. Jews have been able to live, and sometimes thrive, despite anti-Semitic environments. Jewish discomfort comes from several different populations that harm the Jews in different spheres. The following figure, drawing on field research, illustrates the three main types of anti-Jewish hatred and their expressions in daily life¹⁷

Who will remain, who will go?

As indicated in Figure 1, while all anti-Semites want Jews to feel like second class citizens and are interested in expunging them from public life, the different types of anti-Semites do not equally harm Jewish life.

Jews will continue to live in their places of residence when symbolic expression of disdain such as cemetery desecration (generally perpetrated by far-right activists) occurs in their vicinity. They may conceal their Jewish belonging when they encounter derogatory remarks and discrimination in the work place or on college campuses (such as perpetrated by right-wingers and anti-Israel left-wingers).

However, they will seriously consider relocation when their children are insulted and beaten in the streets (violence most often perpetrated by Muslim anti-Semites) and they feel that the local government does not protect them. The impact of the imposition of mandatory gender studies in Jewish orthodox schools as well as the ban on kosher slaughter and circumcision is

less immediate but is likely to have a long-term determinant impact on organized Jewish life.

We may, therefore, expect that Jews will remain and even thrive in Eastern Europe while, unless drastic interventions by local governments are implemented, Jewish communities in Scandinavia, France and Germany will likely decrease. Despite this pessimistic perspective, Britain is an exception as the Jewish community there is well organized and may be able to confront the anti-Semitism emanating from the political left effectively.

The considerable Muslim presence in Western European and Scandinavian countries is therefore a factor influencing and perhaps predicting the future of Jewish existence in them. The Muslim sector is not the only one with the highest proportion of those responsible for physical harm to Jews, it also motivates left-wing politicians to criticize the State of Israel disproportionately - in order to court Muslim voters - and motivates right-wing politicians, to adopt conservative and nationalist positions and promote anti-multicultural

policies and laws that limit non-Christian religious expressions in the public sphere.

Although this policy of right-wing leaders is a counter-reaction to the spread of Islam, and is primarily aimed at limiting Islam, it also includes laws that harm the lives of Jewish communities. For example, laws that restrict circumcision and kosher slaughter without pre-stunning, laws that mandate gender and sexuality curricula in all schools, laws that prohibit the display of religious symbols in the public sphere, and policies that restrict the transfer of public funds to religious institutions.

The future scenarios forecasted for Europe do not bode well for the Jews of the old continent. It is likely that a significant number of Europe's Jews will emigrate in the coming decades, given the economic stagnation on the continent, demographic shifts, political instability, the undermining of personal security, and the anti-Semitic violence that local governments, despite good intentions, will have difficulty in preventing.¹⁸

Figure 1: Types of Anti-Jewish Hatred and their Impact on Communal Life

Different Types of Anti-Semitism	Classic Anti-Semitism	Israel-derived Anti-Semitism	Aufklärungs Anti-Semitismus
The unacceptable entity	The Jewish individual	The Jewish nation-state	Jewish particularistic religious practices
Goal	Jew-free world	Israel-free world	Judaism-free world
Ideology	Racism Nationalism	Anti-racism Post-nationalism	Rationalism. Human and animal rights
Jews perceived as	Non-European Semites invading Europe	European imperialists in the Middle East	Tribalists. Adepts of obscurantist and cruel rituals
Discourse	Negative Stereotypes about Jews	Anger against the Jewish state	Core Jewish practices (Mila, Shechita, etc.)
Political leaning	Right-wingers	Muslims & Left-wingers	Liberals & left-wingers
Primary manifestations	Derogatory remarks and acts of social discrimination	Violence toward Jewish institutions, symbols and people	Public debate and legal prohibition of certain Jewish practices
Part of Europe	Central & Eastern Europe	Western Europe, UK and Scandinavia	Western Europe, UK and Scandinavia
Demographic context	Small Migrant Population	Large voting Muslim population	Large voting Muslim population

Part Two: 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, American Jews have been voicing concerns of rising anti-Semitism, mostly among radical groups on the right. The prominence and acceptance of Jews in the American political and cultural elites has no parallel in modern Jewish history.¹⁹ Despite this, there is concern over a “slippery slope” and a reversion to previous eras (until the 1950s and 1960s), in which discrimination of Jews, and anti-Jewish expressions were more common.

A three-dimensional US indicator

Although still only a peripheral phenomenon of the conservative backlash against globalization and political liberalism, the Alt-Right phenomenon is a source of significant anxiety among Jews. But there are at least three questions that did not yet get a clear answer on the significance of this group.

1. Is the Alt-Right a transitory fringe phenomenon or the beginning of a cultural backlash that will endanger 70 years of Jewish prosperity and successful social integration in America?
2. Can white supremacists inculcate anti-Semitism in the white, blue-collar masses suffering the effects of economic globalization by scapegoating the Jews and other minority groups?

3. Is there a tacit support of political elites (including the current occupant of the White House) for this group that includes a willingness to ignore anti-Semitic tendencies?

Nobody currently knows the answer to the three questions posed above, so our role will be, to provide an integrated methodology for assessing American anti-Semitism, similar to the one we have for Europe. Given the inherent differences, we will keep US and European analyses separate.

The integrated index illustrates the fact that both anti-Semitic incidents and anxiety among American Jews concerning anti-Semitism is on the rise. As we follow the evolution of the index for the US and gather reliable data regarding the feelings of the Jews regarding anti-Semitism, we will hopefully be able to elaborate concrete directions for action.

JPPI's integrated Anti-Semitism Index has three dimensions:

Dimension 1: Public opinion toward Jews.

Dimension 2: Anti-Semitic incidents of different sorts (extreme violence, assault, damage and desecration of Jewish property, threats, abusive behavior, literature), including online harassment.

Dimension 3: Anti-Semitism as perceived by Jews.

There is data for the first dimension (ADL and Pew reports) and for the second one. Regarding the third dimension, which relates to the degree of anxiety among American Jews, systematic

data is still missing. Inspired by the work of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), JPPI has launched in May 2019 a limited Delphi consultation with 180 rabbis and communal

leaders in the United States to collect their perceptions about the rise of anti-Semitism in their vicinity and its possible impact on the communal life.

Table 2: Anti-Semitism in the USA

Anti-Semitism in the USA	Trend	2019	2018	2017	2016
PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS JEWS					
Harbor anti-Semitic attitudes (%) ²⁰	▲	NA	10%	9%	
ANTI-SEMITIC BEHAVIOR (number of incidents; only as reported to official agencies)²¹					
Increase/Decrease of Assault (%)	▲	+105%	-47%		
Assaults (physical)	▲	39	19	36	
Vandalism (property)		774	952	510	
Harassment (verbal, written)	▲	1,066	1,015	720	
Total Incidents (extreme violence, assaults, damages, desecrations and threats)		1,879	1,986	1,266	
Number of incidents per 1,000 Jews		0.28	0.29	0.2	
ANTI-SEMITISM AS PERCEIVED BY JEWS²²					
Anti-Semitism is currently a very serious or somewhat of a problem in the United States			73%		
Anti-Semitism is currently a very serious or somewhat of a problem on the American college campus			57%	74.2%	
Compared to a year ago, the status of Jews in the United States is less secure		65%		89.9%	
Compared to a year ago, the climate on college campuses is more hostile toward pro-Israel students		57%	55%		

Dimension 1: Public opinion towards Jews.

According to ADL findings, 9% of American adults in 2014 and 10 percent in 2015 harbored anti-Semitic attitudes. According to the Pew Research Center (2014), half of US adults rate Jews “very warmly” (over 67 degrees on

the “Pew Thermometer”). Only 9 percent of US adults rate Jews “very coldly” (under 33 degrees on the Pew thermometer). Certainly, the Pew data and the ADL data converge.²³

Dimension 2: Anti-Semitic incidents.

Data from the 2018 ADL Anti-Semitic Incidents Audit, published in May 2019, shows that anti-Semitic incidents in the United States surged by 100 percent in 2018.²⁴

Dimension 3: Anti-Semitism as perceived by Jews

As they are few available data about the perceptions of the anti-Semitism among the US Jews (In Table 2 above, the results of the few questions on the subject from the American Jewish committee 2018 survey are shown), JPPI has decided to launch a short had-hoc survey among a selected group of rabbis and community leaders to collect their perceptions of the developments of a possible anti-Jewish sentiment among non-Jews in their specific neighborhood, to assess their worries about possible negative developments (harassment, violence, physical attacks) and their assessment of the impact of the increased anti-Semitism (including the recent deadly shootings) to the participation to the communal life. Altogether, some 180 respondents answered the survey and we are presenting below some of the results.

The survey was administered to a broad group of Jewish lay leaders (N=136) and then to a group of 44 rabbis in addition. The desire for a rapid response to immediate events militated against designing a survey that would yield clinically rigorous statistical output. Nevertheless, the results do reflect several broad areas of shared sentiment. There is a clear sense that something

has changed in North America compared to five years ago. The responses were weighted toward the choices indicating that these changes have been considerable and not just a perceptible shift from prior patterns. Several phenomena ranging from anti-Semitic graffiti, desecrations, vandalism to hostile expressions were claimed to have been directly observed by 20-55 percent of respondents. More than half of both survey respondents observed what they considered to be anti-Semitic expression in the traditional media. Numbers were higher when asked about political life or internet and social media. However, in the US, anti-Israel sentiment may not be as much of a driver or cover for anti-Semitic expression as appears to be the case in Europe. When asked whether “the Arab-Israeli conflict affect[s] how safe you feel as a Jewish person”, three-quarters of all respondents answered either “Not at all” or “A little”. An even higher share answered “Never” or “Occasionally” to the question, “Do you ever feel that people accuse or blame you for actions of the Israeli government because you are Jewish?” (as opposed to the other choices of “Frequently” or “All the time.”)

Another difference from what the perceptions within some European Jewish communities is that there is a strong feeling among the laity and the religious establishment that local governments “[respond] adequately to the security needs of Jewish communities.” More than half of the general sample and 75 percent of the rabbis answer this question “Yes, definitely”. They are less certain that these local governments, mostly city and county, are capable of combatting

antisemitism effectively. This may well reflect that these jurisdictions have really not needed to confront the attendant issues for a half century and more and did not by and large consider the phenomenon as a societal problem before that. The biggest divergence in views among the laity and rabbis is in characterizing the primal cause for the recent increase in attacks and mass killings in churches, synagogues and mosques. The laity puts more weight on explanations resting at least in part on a rise in antisemitism while over 60 percent of the rabbis (responding to a slightly different set of choices)²⁵ lay the blame on the general increase in mass murder in the US.

What may be considered the bottom line finding, perhaps reflective of the perceived trust in the authorities' ability and willingness to prevent physical harm, is that among the laity two-thirds

are either "Not at all worried" or "Not very worried" that "in the next 12 months [they] or a person close to [them] will be the victim of harassment or physical attack because they are Jewish". Despite the changes in perception of threat attested to in the survey responses, more than 80 percent of the laity and an even larger share of rabbis "never avoid certain places or locations...because [they] don't feel safe there as a Jew." And while a third of the laity worries about a possible "decrease in the number of participants [in Jewish communal life] in the coming year for fear of a possible anti-Jewish incident," only one respondent among the 44 rabbis answered yes with three-quarters responding "No.". These may be the key indicators to be scrutinized most closely over the coming years to gauge the changing sentiments of North American Jews.

Part Three: Directions for Action

1. Recommendations to the Government of Israel

A. Special programs for occupations in high demand in Israel. The figure of 38 percent of the Jews in Europe investigating leaving their country can't leave us indifferent. As high-end employment is the main impediment to Aliyah of young professionals, this field requires our attention. Should Israel be able to provide tailor-made attractive Aliyah programs, dozens of thousands of European Jews could relocate in Israel. Structured employment programs should be launched similar to those designed in the past for engineers and physicians from the CIS. In coordination with Israeli employers interested in hiring their graduates, these programs would involve early identification in France and Belgium and initial training in Israel. Relevant occupations include researchers in selected fields, specialist physicians, engineers, investment consultants, and more.

B. Vocational guidance centers. In cities with large numbers of immigrants, it is advisable to establish vocational guidance centers that provide assessment, courses and training vouchers, and personal guidance and placement services. These centers should also be accessible to Aliyah candidates, prior to immigration.

C. Provide training for Israeli politicians on effective ways to address Diaspora communities in times of anti-Semitic and terror attacks. It is important to avoid making unhelpful remarks to Diaspora communities, such as "come home to Israel." American Jews feel at home in the United States. Further, generalizations about "anti-Semitism in the Democratic Party should be avoided (it could become self-fulfilling prophecy), as should conflating legitimate criticism of Israeli policies with anti-Semitism.

D. Relationship with European countries ruled by far-right parties: We recommend adopting four guiding principles in combining political pragmatism with Jewish values:

- Zero-tolerance of Holocaust denial, historical revisionism, distortion of historical fact, diminution of the Holocaust, or trampling the memory of victims.
- Take a firm stance against any official anti-Semitic infringement on local Jews or attempts to grant legitimacy to anti-Semitic past leaders.
- Appreciate and nurture all national leaders friendly to Israel who respect principles (1) and (2).

- Encourage Eastern European countries to abandon the **competition over victimhood status** by declaring that all European nations – Jews and non-Jews – suffered at the hands of the Nazi past and communism.

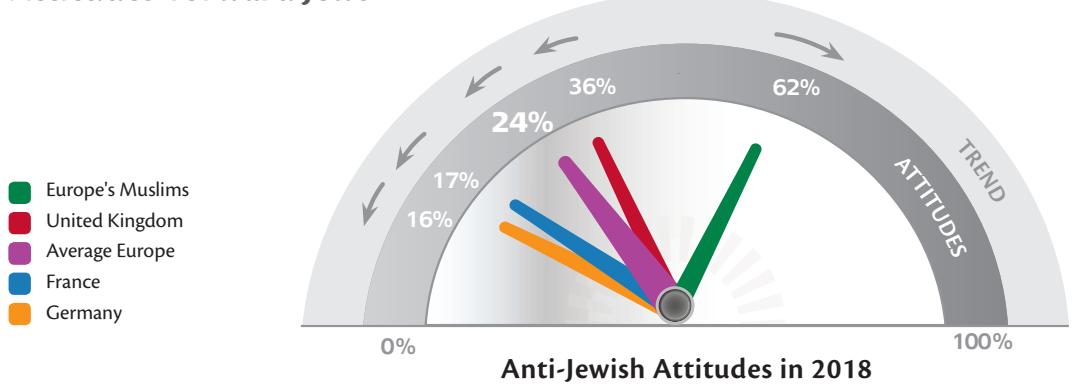
2. Recommendations to Communal Leaders in North America

A. Security training for young activists in the United States. Projects should be investigated (in communities that demonstrate interest) to integrate local Jewish youth who wish to take responsibility for the security of their communities. Twenty years of successful experience in France and the UK has shown that a large number of young people who had been Jewishly unaffiliated took interest in being engaged in communal security. In France and the UK, turning a threat into an opportunity, well-funded youth organizations have been established to train these new activists in self-defense, crisis management, and coordinated intervention. The activities to be investigated include trans-regional training gatherings, crisis simulation *shabatonim*, visits to para-military and anti-terror centers in Israel (including

gadna, kravmaga courses, and more). It is notable that at one point the French Youth Organization SPCJ included more than 15,000 male and female Jewish youth who met regularly on holidays for training sessions and provided professional security services to local synagogues and JCCs.

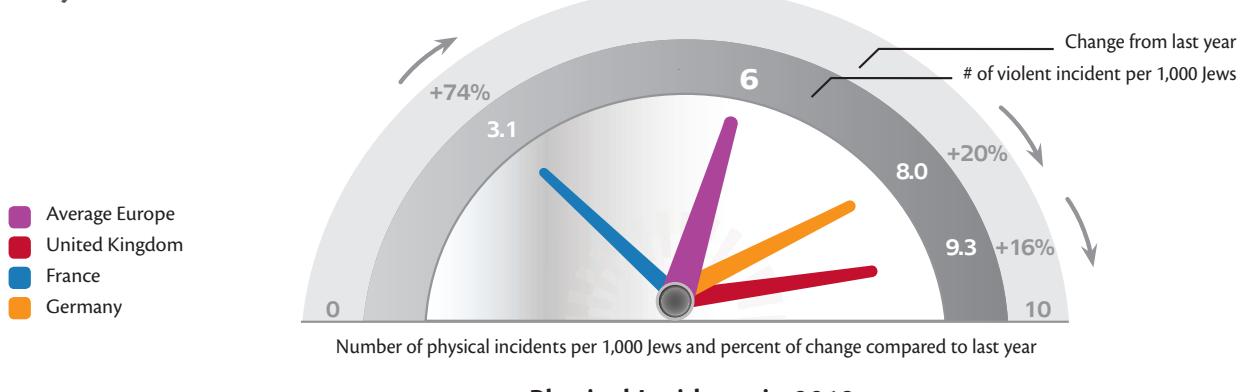
- B. Interfaith programs.** The mass killings in synagogues and mosques present the opportunity to build trust, long term relationships, dialogue programs, anti-hatred educational programs, mutual understanding programs for youth, and interfaith coalitions against racism and xenophobia.
- C. Security.** Watchfulness, forethought, and action plans for security are fully justified under the current circumstances. At the same time, the lay and religious leadership should take care that responses are consistent with the actual level of threat rather than presuming the worst. It is a fine line, but it would be ironic if North American Jews, fearing potential ostracism or isolation, took measures that might be deleterious to the very bonds that characterize their place in Jewish history and among Jewish communities around the world.

Attitudes Toward Jews



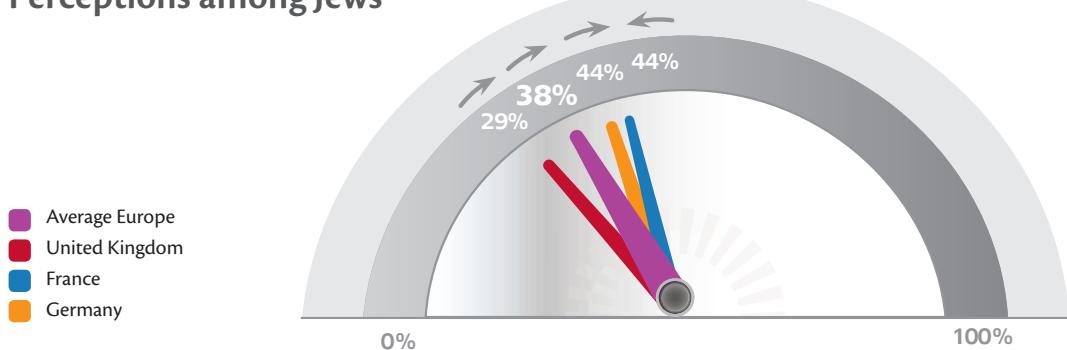
Sources: ADL, Fondapol, CAA, WZB

Physical Incidents



Sources: Kantor Center, SPCJ, CST

Perceptions among Jews



Sources: FRA European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, IFOP

Endnotes:

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28. The choices posed as responses in the lay survey were, "Mainly reflects the increase in mass shootings" (7.8%), "Mainly reflects the increase in attacks on churches, synagogues and mosques" (19.5%), "Reflects in a similar manner the increase in mass killings and heightened anti-Semitism" (53.9%), "Mainly reflects heightened anti-Semitism" (15.6%) and "None of the above" (3.1%). Rabbis were not presented with the second of these choices. There responses were, respectively, 61.9% [increase in mass killings], 35.7% [mass killings and anti-Semitism], 2.38% [anti-Semitism] and 0%.

JPPI REPORTS

15

Israeli Jews: Tradition and Nationality

A vast array of data was published this year in a new book based on JPPI's #IsraeliJudaism project. This data shows that Israel's Jews reinterpret Judaism by mixing tradition and national identity. JPPI's work was conducted by its senior fellow, Shmuel Rosner, and Tel Aviv University professor, Camil Fuchs. Some of the book's main findings are summarized in this paper (the full book is now available in English on Amazon.com).

The book begins by stating that Zionism was envisioned to answer three main challenges posed to the Jewish people in the modern world. "Since in the modern world nations exist in civil states – we will build for the Jews a civil state; since in the modern world religion no longer serves as a strong glue for Jews – we will gather them to a place in which their Judaism no longer depends on strict observance of halacha; since the modern world makes it easy for Jews to assimilate and disappear – we will offer a social framework in which there is not much opportunity for assimilation."

Four Types of Israeli Jews

Israeli Judaism is unique to a place and to a time. An amalgamation of tradition and nationality. In many cases it is very hard – maybe impossible – to determine where the Jew ends and the Israeli begins, or where the Israeli ends and the Jew begins.

To reach this conclusion, we scanned many thousands of data points and utilized several methodologies of statistical analysis. Our most telling model was locating the Jews of Israel on a graph with two dimensions – one for tradition, one for nationality. We used 32 questions from the survey to create a map (if you are an Israeli, we invite you to answer these 32 questions here). If a Jew lights candles on Friday night, they get a point for tradition. If they shop on Shabbat, they get a point for non-tradition.

We measure points of Jewish tradition, such as keeping Shabbat laws, and we measure behaviors of Israeli nationalism, such as raising the Israeli flag on Independence Day. Those who

raise it get a point for nationalism. Those who say that Israel should not be a Jewish but rather a neutral civil state (about 9 percent of the Jewish population), get a point for non-nationalism.

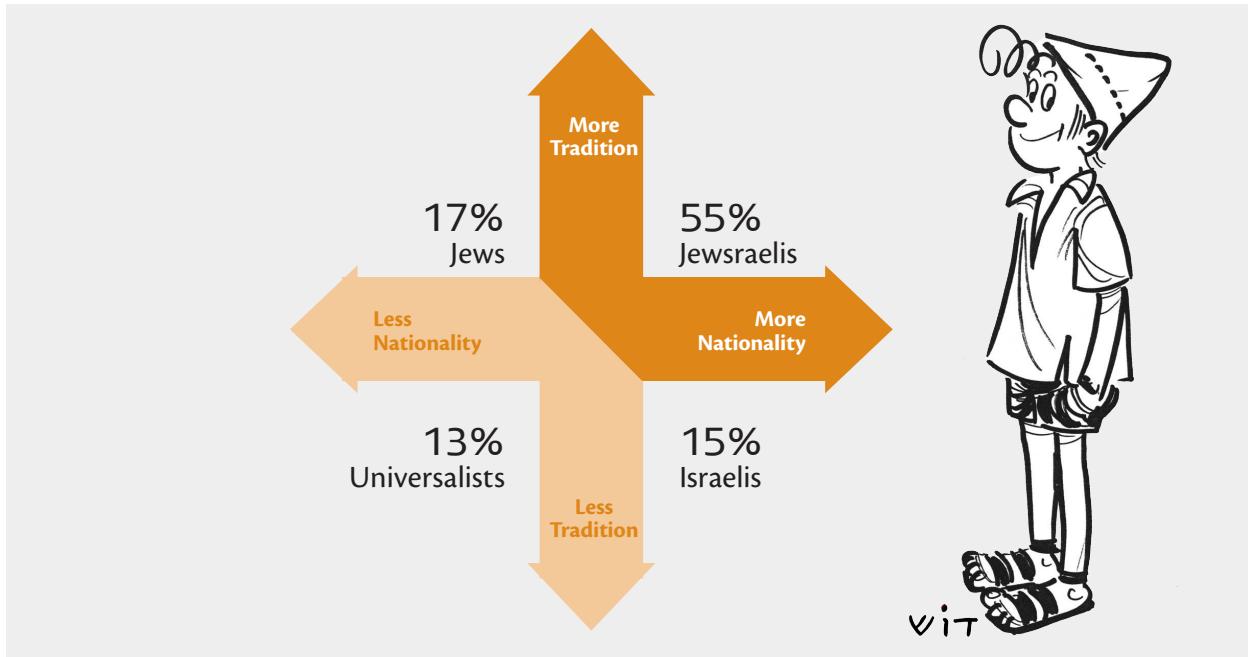
Our map shows a Jewish population unequally divided into four groups. The majority is the group of “Jewraelis” – that is, Jews who score high on both keeping Jewish traditions and on keeping national practices. Here is one example

of what such Jews look like: 38 percent of Jewish Israelis raise the flag on Independence Day (nationalism) and make Kiddush on Friday nights (tradition) and say that it is important for them to be Jewish (level of intensity). The percentage of Jewish Israelis who don’t make Kiddush and don’t raise the flag and say it’s not important for them to be Jewish is much smaller – 8 percent.

DO Raise Flag on Independence Day AND Make Kiddush Friday Night AND Important to me to be Jewish	38%	DO Raise Flag on Independence Day DO NOT Make Kiddush Friday Night NOT Important to me to be Jewish	4%
DO Raise Flag on Independence Day AND Make Kiddush Friday Night BUT Important to me to be Jewish	1%	DO Raise Flag on Independence Day DO NOT Make Kiddush Friday Night IT IS Important to me to be Jewish	18%
DO NOT Raise Flag on Independence Day DO Make Kiddush Friday Night AND Important to me to be Jewish	12%	DO NOT Raise Flag on Independence Day DO NOT Make Kiddush Friday Night NOT Important to me to be Jewish	8%
DO NOT Raise Flag on Independence Day DO Make Kiddush Friday Night NOT Important to me to be Jewish	1%	DO NOT Raise Flag on Independence Day DO NOT Make Kiddush Friday Night IT IS Important to me to be Jewish	12%

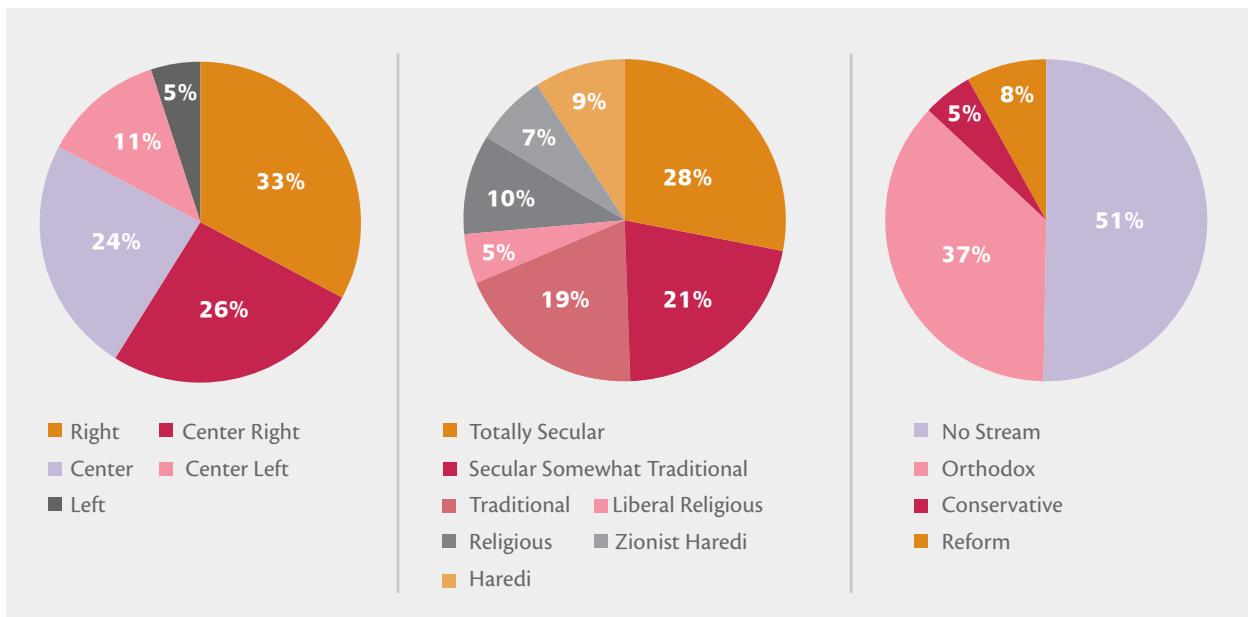
So, we have four groups: those practicing tradition and nationality (“Jewraelis,” the 55 percent majority); those who mostly practice nationality (15 percent we call “Israelis” in the book, who tend to come from the secular quarters of the old-fashioned Labor Party Zionists and whose culture is relatively devoid of

keeping Jewish traditions); those who practice mostly Jewish traditions and many fewer Israeli customs (17 percent we call “Jews,” who are mostly Haredi Israelis); and those who, relatively speaking, practice neither (13 percent we call “Universalists” – urban, liberal, left leaning and often alienated from other Israelis).



Basic Statistics

All the numbers presented here are taken from JPPI's 2018 survey of 3000 Israeli Jews, under the supervision of Israel's leading pollster, Prof. Camil Fuchs.



Four Main Characteristics

Zionist thinkers, from their early days, believed that the role of a national homeland was to rescue the Jews and Judaism from their cosmopolitan condition. The historian Ben-Zion Dinur expressed that view without mincing words: “There’s one problem with Judaism, and it is called exile.” Thus, political Zionism stressed the need to offer the Jews a physical refuge from anti-Semitism. Its adherents had woken up from the dream of integrating among other nations and believed that only a defined and secure geographic territory could sustain the Jews. Spiritual Zionism emphasized the need to offer the Jews a cultural refuge from assimilation. Its adherents realized that the prospect of preserving Judaism when among other nations wasn’t viable. They believed that only a defined geographic territory could supply Judaism with the spiritual energy for its continued existence.

All Zionist streams strived to create a new Jew. But they argued bitterly about what this new Jew should be like. Some wanted to abandon Jewish traditions, others wanted to revive them, still others wanted to create new traditions. Still, the idea of the “new Jew,” like the principle of Diaspora negation, explained Prof. Yitzhak Conforti of Bar Ilan University,

“provided a middle ground for all forms of Zionism.” All Zionists rejected the Diaspora, “and all saw a need to create and educate a new Jew. However, each of the various forms created a type of new Jew that reflected its particular ideology.”

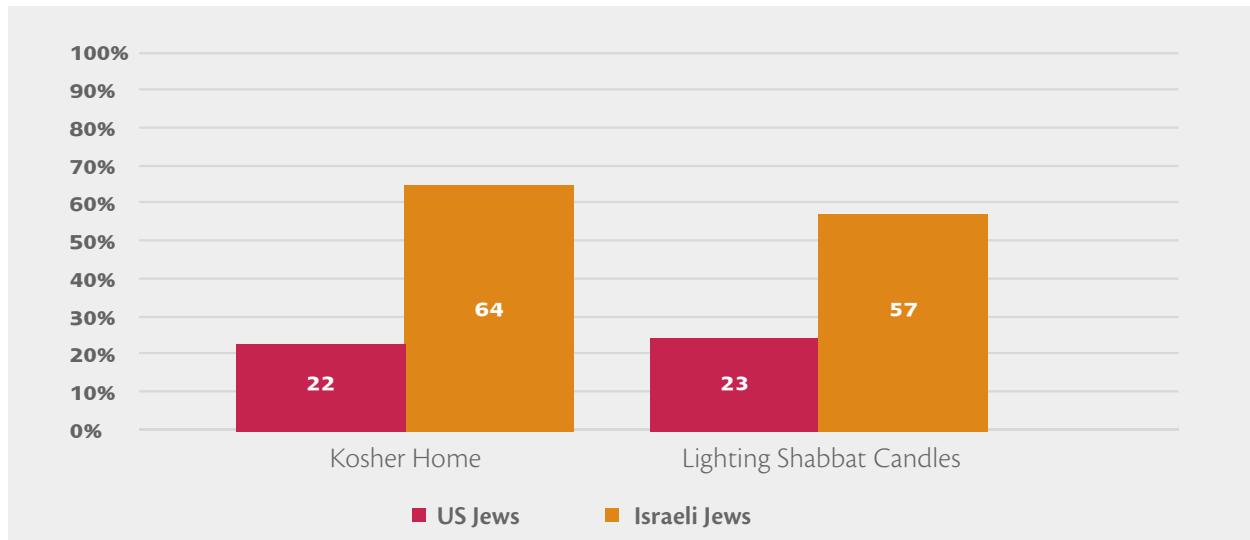
So, Zionists expected a new Jew to emerge. They were correct in their assessment – a new Jew was born. It has the following main characteristics:

- High level of confidence in Jewishness;
- Attribution of importance to Jewishness;
- Nationalist interpretation of Jewishness;
- High level of Jewish practice.

Here are examples of all four characteristics:

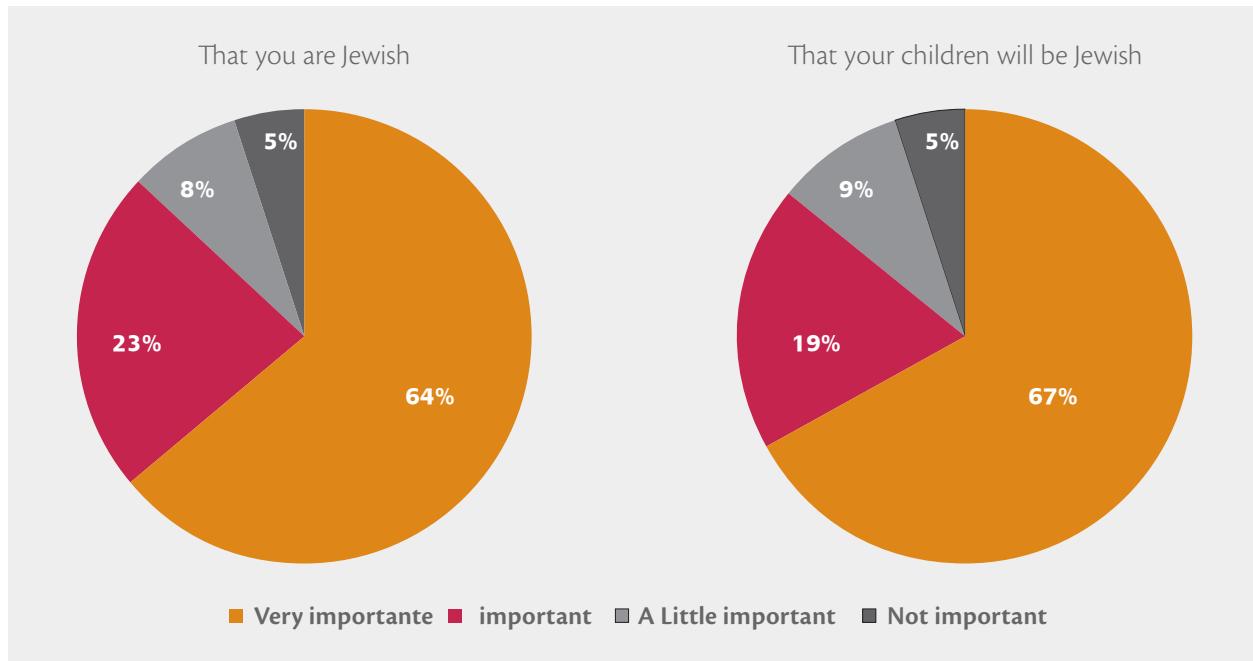
The first shows: Jews in Israel, on average, practice a lot more Jewish tradition than other Jews. This is one benefit of living in a society in which Jewish practice and Hebrew language are given. In 65 percent of Israel’s Jewish homes, candles are lit on Friday night. In 68 percent of these homes, Israelis make a Kiddush. More than 80 percent of Jewish Israelis have a family meal on Friday night – that’s tradition. Jewish Israelis keep many of the Jewish traditions, but without the need to be religious or follow the script dictated by ancient religious texts.

The second shows how Israeli Jews have the



habit of mixing Jewishness and Israeliness. Thus, Independence Day becomes a Jewish holiday – not just an Israeli holiday. Most people who celebrate it are Jews. The flag they raise is Jewishly themed. The ceremony on Mount Herzl includes 12 torches lit by 12 Israelis who represent the 12 tribes. Why 12? Read the Torah and find out. Why torches? Go to the Mishna and find out. The themes of the day make it Jewish, as do the views of those celebrating it. We asked the Jews of Israel many questions about their beliefs and values, and from their answers it is easy to extract a simple reality: many of them no longer

see a difference between being a good, patriotic Israeli that makes a contribution to Israeli society to being a good Jew. Among others, Israelis were asked about living in Israel, serving in the IDF, and supporting settlements in Greater Israel (Eretz Israel Hashlema). For instance, there are non-Jews serving in Israel's military, such as Druze and Bedouins; nevertheless, more than 70 percent of Jewish Israelis believe that to be a "good Jew" one must serve in the Israeli army. Israeli Jews say it is important to them that they are Jewish and that their children be Jewish:



What about Jewish continuity? When we asked Israeli Jews about their level of confidence that their children and grandchildren will be Jewish, the outcome was remarkable. Almost all of them are confident that their children will be Jewish (86 percent). A similar number are confident that their grandchildren will be Jewish (79 percent).

JPPI's Israeli-Judaism project draws from a 2018 survey conducted of 3000 Israeli Jews in two rounds, one of 2000 Israeli Jews and another of an additional 1000 respondents, a representative sample of the Jewish public in Israel. The statistical margin of error for the sample of 3000 survey respondents is 1.8 percent.

16

The Orthodox Jewish Community in America: Facilitating Civic and Political Engagement

Preliminary Report

- The significantly growing population share of Hassidic and Yeshivish Orthodox in American Jewry raises the question of increased Haredi communal, civic and political engagement.
- JPPI initiated a project to address this issue and conducted structured dialogue discussions with Haredi and communal leaders.
- In these discussions most Haredi and general communal leaders endorsed the goals of building trust and enhancing cooperation between the communities.

In the second half of 2018, JPPI initiated the project *Facilitating the Civic and Political Engagement of the Haredi Community in the United States*. Its purpose is to open a conversation on the implications of an important demographic shift taking place in American Jewish life: The increasing share of the Orthodox, especially the Hasidic and Yeshivish communities, in the North American Jewish population. This project examines whether given this demographic trend, greater Haredi participation in American public life and in

general Jewish communal life and organizations, such as the federations, desirable or necessary. To this end, JPPI has opened a series of discussions with leaders of both the Frum and larger Jewish communities and has conducted several structured dialogue sessions with Orthodox and non-Orthodox participants in major North American Jewish communities. Seminar participants also completed a short survey. The project seeks to identify some reasons for greater engagement of the Frum community, and the challenges that may be encountered and/or engendered.

A Note on Terminology: We found during the course of the project that not all Yeshivish and Hasidic leaders agree as to how they should be referred to. Furthermore, this issue is a sensitive one because of the connotations that various names may carry. We therefore use the terms “Yeshivish and Hasidic Orthodox,” “Haredi” and “Frum” [pious in Yiddish], interchangeably while noting the various connotations (positive and negative) that each term carries.

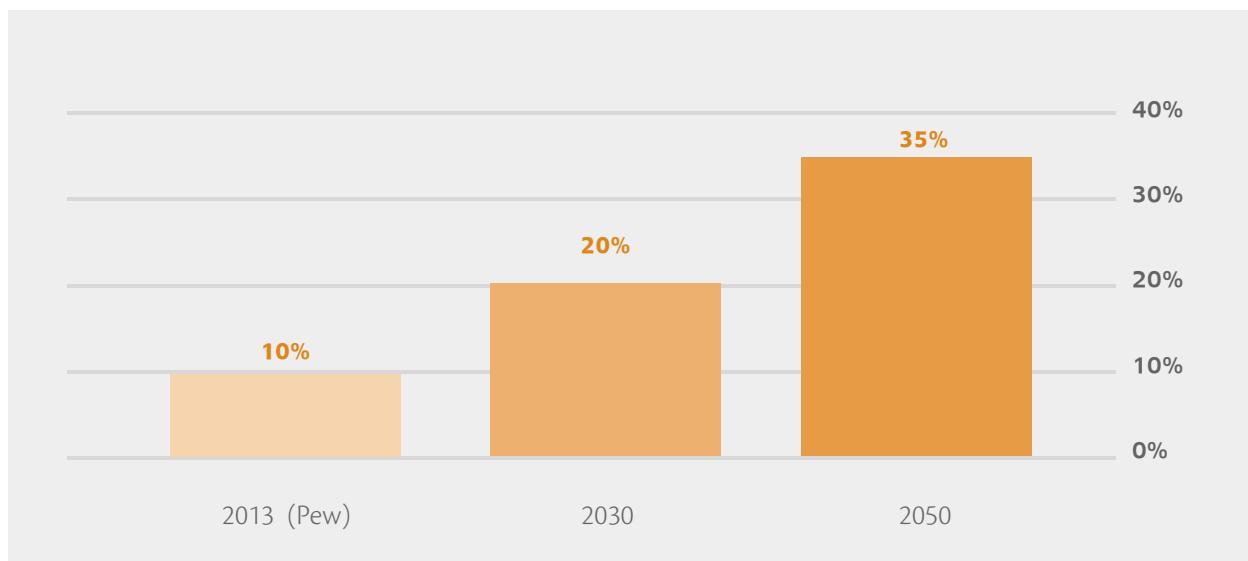
The Demographic Shift

Although the American Jewry is often considered in the aggregate, segments of American Jews who both self-identify and participate in Jewish life tend to divide into two broad rubrics:

1. “General” Jewish communal organizations, such as the federations, which include in their leadership and staff non-Orthodox as well as some Orthodox Jews. Of course, each of the religious streams has its own organizations as well, but in general, the non-Orthodox and the Modern Orthodox are substantially integrated into the general communal organizations.

2. The *Hasidic* and *Yeshivish* Orthodox who maintain their own philanthropic, religious, educational, and communal frameworks, minimally participate in general Jewish organizations.
3. In the past, both frameworks depended on a population base to erect and staff its organizational structures and organizations. Yet, by the beginning of the 21st century the relative weight of the various Jewish Diaspora communities began to change. This change, largely the result of differing fertility and assimilation rates, entails a reduction of the population base of the general communal organizations and a strengthening of its Orthodox counterpart.

Figure 1: Share of Orthodox Jews among the US Jewish Population



According to the 2013 Pew survey of American Jews, almost 30 percent of all Jewish children are being raised in Orthodox households. If present trends continue, the Orthodox segment of the American Jewish community will constitute approximately one third of its total population by mid-century. Not only has the Orthodox community increased numerically, it has also developed economically and institutionally. Some Orthodox households have achieved prosperity in the past 75 years and the *Yeshivish* and *Hasidic* communities have built impressive educational, religious and social welfare infrastructures. In order to meet its needs, the Frum community has established connections with political leaders – on the local and state levels especially, but also on the federal level. In recent years, it has to some degree become part of a politically important religious coalition with Evangelicals and conservative Catholics working to protect common interests, such as their perception of religious freedom. Haredi Jews are beginning to enter government service and private sector jobs. More and more Haredi Jews are able to retain their traditional dress, distinctive signs of Jewish religiosity, and strict observance of Jewish law while also acquiring business prominence and political influence.

JPPI Dialogue Project

The project launched with a series of preliminary discussions and individual meetings with the American Haredi national communal leadership, mainly affiliated with

Agudath Israel of America. These were held both in Jerusalem and in New York. At these meetings, the leaders expressed interest and initial support for the project. From there JPPI proceeded to hold structured dialogue sessions with local Haredi and non-Haredi leaders in seven North American communities: Toronto, Cleveland, Baltimore, Detroit, Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. Local Jewish federations played a significant role in organizing the dialogue sessions. In some communities – Toronto, Cleveland, Baltimore, Detroit, and Chicago – the federations were solely responsible for enlisting participants and organizing the sessions in New York and Los Angeles, non-federation leadership also played a role.

The sessions were structured and facilitated by JPPI Senior fellows Shlomo Fischer, John Ruskay, and Steven Popper (in Los Angeles). In the course of the sessions, which took about two hours, participants completed a short questionnaire soliciting their evaluation of relations between the Haredi and the larger Jewish community and gauging their willingness to take concrete steps and strike compromises to enhance cooperation. Each session included between 10 and 20 participants; in total, 110 participated. In some of the sessions Haredi participants clearly outnumbered their non-Haredi counterparts, and in other sessions, the groups were more evenly balanced. It is noteworthy that in a number of sessions, the most senior federation leadership attended.

The Haredi participants were mainly Yeshivish, except in New York where there was also some Hasidic participation. The Yeshivish participants were generally businessmen and engaged in various federation activities – many were college educated (in Cleveland, Baltimore and Los Angeles especially).

Preliminary Findings

The findings and discussion here are based upon three distinct sources of information: the individual and preliminary conversations held; the dialogue sessions conducted, and the questionnaire participants completed in the course of the sessions.

The first round of dialogue sessions took place in late February and early March 2019 and involved four communities: Toronto, Cleveland, Baltimore, and Detroit.

All four communities took pride in their extensive cooperation and collaboration to date (Perhaps Toronto less than others). This cooperation is based on the education aid the Frum community receives from the federations. Local factors in each community enhance cooperation. (In Cleveland, Jews of various stripe live in physical proximity to one another in the Beechwood suburb. This leads to interaction and familiarity. In Baltimore, Herman Neuberger and the tradition of Yeshivat Ner Israel leaves a legacy of cooperation.)

Nevertheless, as the sessions in each community progressed, participants realized that their

cooperation and collaboration was less than it could be. This was due to a number of factors:

- **Lack of communication between the Frum and non-Orthodox communities.**

To a certain extent this was due to technical factors and living in different neighborhoods. Yeshivish Orthodox don't use social media. A prevalence of stereotypes results from this lack of communication. There is a mutual lack of knowledge of the other community. For example, if the Orthodox do not attend a certain event, it is often assumed by the non-Orthodox that they have ignored the underlying issue, even if they have conducted their own events around same issue. For instance, the Yeshivish in Toronto did not attend an event held by the Toronto Federation related to the June 2014 kidnapping of the three Israeli teenagers at the Tzomet Gush Etzion because the event was held at a large Conservative synagogue. Some Reform and Conservative Jews assumed that the Yeshivish had ignored or neglected the entire issue. In fact, the Orthodox, including the Yeshivish, held their own well-attended events in regard to this, which included reciting *Tehillim* and other activities.

- In the New York Dialogue session, held in May 2019, several new issues were mentioned. The first is that the ultimate goals of project – increasing **involvement of Haredim in general American public life, in public service and politics** – may be antithetical to Haredi ideals and the Haredi way of life.

The Haredi ideal is that one should dedicate one's life to serving God through Torah study, observance of the commandments, and prayer. American Haredim for the most part agree that one needs to earn a livelihood, but that activity always carries a secondary, instrumental character. Successful involvement in American public life, whether in politics or civil service, in contrast, generally involves a career orientation.

- To a certain extent, **Orthodox (including Modern Orthodox) and non-Orthodox frame the American Jewish community discourse in very different terms.** The Orthodox tend to place emphasis on assimilation and the resulting diminution of the non-Orthodox community. In our individual conversations with Haredi leaders, we learned that they have a sense of self-confidence. They feel that their model of Jewish life has stood the test of time and the trials of modernization and secularization; their population is growing, they are not beset by assimilation, and their institutions are flourishing. Thus, they desire some recognition from the wider Jewish community. However, some of the non-Orthodox reject this way of thinking, claiming that the discourse of survival/assimilation is not at the center of their Jewish lives. Rather, emphasize creating meaningful, creative Jewish lives. Thus, a potentially significant cultural chasm emerged in this session.

In almost all sessions, participants, to one degree or another, expressed a desire to learn far more about "the other" part of the community, in order to dispel stereotypes, and identify areas where joint thinking and planning might be productive. In some communities these themes were more pronounced in the discussion than in others. The discussion in the Los Angeles community was especially noteworthy insofar as these themes were the centerpiece of the session, both in the formal and informal sections. Here, the participants expressed a serious desire to extend the process.

The Haredi leadership feels that their model of Jewish life has stood the test of time and the trials of modernization and secularization

Questionnaire Findings

First, we must note that the respondent sample is very small (110 people) and the findings should be considered preliminary.

The aggregated responses are moderately optimistic concerning relations between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox sectors, and affirm widening cooperation between them. Thus, almost half of the respondents answered that the relationship between the two communities is either "satisfactory" or "acceptable." Similarly, almost 73 percent of the respondents thought that one of the "most

appropriate models of collaboration" should be Yeshivish and Hassidic Orthodox serving as federation board members. Again, 70 percent of respondents answered the question, "Should we encourage the Hassidic and Yeshivish Orthodox to participate in community-wide events attracting Jews from the whole spectrum of Jewish life and the Jewish community (including non-Orthodox)?", with "Yes and it

should be carefully planned so that those who prefer mixed gender seating can do so, and those that prefer separate seating can do so."

The cooperative attitude also extended into

In almost all sessions, participants expressed a desire to learn more about the "other" part of the community, in order to dispel stereotypes

the sensitive area of education. A majority of Orthodox respondents (58%) answered that Orthodox Jews should participate in the planning and funding of Reform and Conservative Jewish education. Similarly, 71 percent of Non-Orthodox respondents stated that Jewish organizations should be supportive of increased government funding for Jewish day schools, which is mainly a concern of the Orthodox, especially the Haredim. This support breaks with the long-standing opinion of liberal Jews who were against any "cracks in the wall" separating church and state.

Beyond the aggregated results of the questionnaire, it is of interest to look at select

communities and how they compare to the responses of the entire group. Two such communities are Baltimore and New York. Both are outliers, but on opposite sides of the spectrum. Baltimore is a community in which unusual collaboration exist between the (mainly) Yeshivish Orthodox and the general community and it prides itself on that score. Respondents in New York evinced the least optimism and readiness for collaboration.

Close to half of the Baltimore respondents expressed "satisfaction" with the current relations between Yeshivish and Hassidic Orthodox, and the general community. Among the entire group, only a quarter expressed satisfaction. Similarly, over 70 percent of the Baltimore respondents (including Yeshivish and Hassidic), indicated that one should support the federation, a significantly higher rate than the group as a whole.

New York gave almost the mirror image. First, the rate of satisfaction with relations between Haredim and the general community is significantly less in New York than in the group as a whole. Only 12 percent of New York respondents said they were satisfied, while 25 percent of the entire group expressed satisfaction. Conversely, 62 percent of New York respondents answered that relations should be improved, while in the general group 40 percent thought so. Combatting anti-Semitism was identified as the main arena for possible collaboration among New York respondents (87.5%) and received far more votes than any intra-Jewish communal topic, including "helping Jews in need." In other words, in New York it was felt that cooperation

between Jews can best be obtained in regard to defense against the non-Jewish world. In the overall group, the same number of respondents (70%) felt that helping Jews in need alongside combatting anti-Semitism could be an area of collaboration. Furthermore, in a sharp departure from the attitudes of the entire group, 50 percent of New York respondents felt that there should be greater Haredi participation in community-wide events and that Orthodox norms should be maintained for everybody – in the overall group only 19 percent felt that way. Fewer Haredi participants in New York than in the overall group felt that Orthodox Jews should participate in the planning and funding of educational programs for interfaith couples or LGBT Jews.

Recommendations

JPPI's recommendations relate to the next stage of the project: the operational or interventionist stage. In the next phase, we will explore possible steps to promote enhanced collaboration between the communities and increased involvement of Hasidic and Yeshivish Orthodox in general American life.

National-Global Israel Advocacy

National Jewish organizations, especially those that engage in Israel advocacy, should explore concrete steps to increase Haredi membership and involvement. These could include Haredi recruitment campaigns and educational programs aimed at the Haredi community.

Community Relations

Local federations and other Jewish organizations should explore the active recruitment of Hasidic and Yeshivish Orthodox participation in Jewish Community Relations Councils. This should include setting up educational seminars to facilitate their participation.

Community Services and Jewish Education

Local communities should set up task forces composed of federation and Haredi community activists and volunteers to examine where family services and other community programs can be pooled and where redundancy can be reduced.

Public Service, Professional Development

National Jewish organizations and philanthropic agencies and individuals should examine the creation of special professional development and mentoring programs for gifted Haredi individuals so that they can qualify for public service positions in both domestic and foreign policy areas.

All further exploration of intervention steps must include constant consultation and dialogue with the relevant Orthodox and Haredi leaders.

17

From the Margins to the Mainstream: Millennial American Jews and the Reorientation of the Jewish Middle

The American Jewish community has rarely stood still throughout its long history. It experiences ebbs and flows, expansion, contraction and transformation, often reflecting its wider social and religious surroundings. According to historian Jonathan Sarna, the face of American Jewry undergoes fundamental shifts in style and structure every few generations.¹ Established American Jewish institutions, including synagogues, federations and others, have, to an extent, struggled in engaging with younger adult Jews (millennials). As one researcher notes, “engagement of young people is almost a preoccupation in the Jewish community,” while another states that “it’s a very real fear ...”² Synagogues across the US (non-Orthodox) are consolidating, aging and even closing.³ Such concerns are often based on metrics such as a decline in denominational identification and synagogue membership.

Indeed, national and local studies reflect this trend. However, a different reading of the same studies also suggests that young adult Jews are as interested, and as likely to engage in Jewish behavior as older ones. However, they are doing so through a variety of innovative independent projects and frameworks.

This May (2019), leading Jewish innovators gathered for a “Collaboratory” in Brooklyn, hosted by Upstart, “to expand the picture of how Jews find meaning and how we come together... building the future of non-traditional Jewish life... (amidst a) growing network of initiatives.”⁴ Also in May, Hakhel, the Jewish Intentional Communities Incubator, held its international conference, bringing together leaders from 21 Jewish intentional communities from across the globe.⁵ Only a year before, the seven independent members of the Jewish

Emergent Network (JEN) met in Los Angeles for the first JEN conference, to celebrate, collaborate and share lessons about the new models of independent synagogues they are developing and that are attracting younger and unengaged Jews.⁶

While these are only a few of more recent developments in the ecosystem of American Jewish innovation, one can place them on the structural platforms started by the Independent Minyan movement, which held its first conference more than a decade ago, led by Mechon Hadar.⁷ Taken together, and despite the clear differences among the range of Jewish innovation, a set of common principles can be discerned.

Hyper-individualism and reduced trust or interest in institutions and authority leads many young Jews to eschew denominational identity and affiliation

funders on how to better navigate Jewish institutions as American society, and American Jewry, transform.

To be sure, parts of what will be discussed here may be familiar to many readers. Our intention is to present a coherent picture of fairly recent developments, which when taken together might offer a glimpse into the developing structure and character of what mainstream American Judaism could resemble a generation away.

Necessary Adjustments

Declining denominational affiliation and synagogue membership, alongside continued interest in Jewish practice among millennials, and the rise of an innovative Jewish ecosystem leads to some possible initial conclusions.

Current mainstream institutions, built and designed to serve primarily the “Boomer” generation do not resonate as much with millennial Jews. Moreover, these institutions are often geared less to attract the unengaged but rather work with those who are already engaged.

1. Beyond institutional structure, style, and even geography, Jewish leaders must reexamine the purpose and meaning those institutions espouse as their *raison's d'être*. Young adult Jews must explicitly define and connect to this meaning, which was once more implicit.
2. Many millennials are developing different concepts of what is and is not important to being a Jew in the 21st century United States. This has implications for community and engagement professionals as well as for researchers.

What's Changed?

Young Jews in the US (and young Americans) are different from older Jews (and older Americans) in several ways: (For a partial list of resources, see the endnotes).⁸

- In the US today, affiliation in organized religious communities is considerably less important for communal participation than it was for the Boomer generation.
- Young Jews are more confident in their “Americanness.” They hold multiple and overlapping identities, in which “Jewish” plays a part but is not necessarily the main identity.
- Young Jews are part of a post-ethnic shift in America where identity is constructed more than inherited. This includes the loosening of institutional control over culture, which allows for organic and grass-roots expressions.⁹
- Young Jews are more historically removed from unifying memories of the Holocaust, Israel’s founding and Jewish vulnerability.
- There is a possible shift to a view of Jewish identity and practice more in terms of “tradition” rather than “religion” or “ethnicity”, which demands less commitment.¹⁰
- Young American Jews can no longer be “guilted” into coming to synagogue or marrying Jewish; Judaism must convince, entice, and offer value.
- Young Jews are digital natives and live much of their lives online. This empowers small groups and individuals to innovate, while simultaneously allowing those who do not seek the full benefits of community to engage in a-la-cart and DIY Judaism.
- Hyper-individualism and slackening trust or interest in institutions and authority leads many young Jews to eschew denominational identity and affiliation with establishment institutions. This leads to seeking alternative and more “niche” expressions of Jewish identity.
- In an age of hyper-individualism, a consensus-based community that seeks to serve a broad range of Jews is increasingly difficult to maintain and perhaps less relevant.
- Young Jews and young Americans in general, are delaying marriage and establishing families, as well as reurbanizing. They are also less financially stable than the previous generation.
- Engaging young Jews, who often feel out of place in mainstream institutions, due to low Jewish literacy or other identity components (sexual orientation, political views, etc.) requires a vastly different approach. Many of the successful initiatives we discuss embody elements of this approach. This approach has been described in terms of “disruptive innovation”, and is key to successfully engaging with those whom the current institutions cannot engage.

Concepts of Change

Elements found across such successful initiatives—religious, social, text-learning, social justice, environmental and other forms – include:

- Emergent communities and other Jewish start-ups often form around a leader and their vision, brand, or style and do not seek to cater to or build consensus among a range of ages, tastes or opinions in an existing community.
- Many are independent of established denominational or national movements. They question the benefits of belonging to a national denomination and stress nimbleness as an advantage.
- Many of these initiatives seek depth and authenticity through reengaging with Jewish texts and traditions. Within religious start-ups such as independent minyanim and the JEN communities, services are highly musical and participatory, but at the same time mostly in Hebrew. The JEN communities, for example, employ significant thought to make the services accessible to new comers, while being authentic, and without “watering down” the experience. Text study, lectures, and social programming are approached with similar thoughtfulness.
- To make services more participatory, opulent sanctuaries are eschewed, and prayer books are often designed by each community according to their needs – fully

translated and transliterated; some have done away with printed texts altogether and use electronic screens instead.

- Some communities employ unique membership and payment models. While most have some form of membership, they realize unengaged and younger Jews are put-off by the common membership practices of most synagogues. Most employ a hybrid “Chabad” model, in which all are welcome for services, but “members” or “partners” have access to the rabbis for life cycle events. Sixth and I in Washington DC has membership system and asks participants to register and pay for each event on their community website. The past decade has shown that making such changes significantly affects turnout and the overall funds raised.¹¹
- Perhaps by their nature, but crucial to their success, many of those involved in such endeavors are charismatic, entrepreneurial and talented young leaders.
- On the branding and conceptual level, we see names reminiscent of start-ups, often evoking a sense of informality, youth, creative energy and intimacy.

Examples to be discussed include:

- **Lab/Shul, The Kitchen, Mishkan and Ikar** among the JEN communities.
- **The Riverway Project, ATID, The Porch and Tribe** among successful young adult projects within established denominational synagogues.

- **Hadar** and the independent minyan movement.
- **Svara**, a “traditional radical” Talmudic Yeshiva centered around the LGBTQ experience.
- **Hazon**, focusing on Jewish environmental sustainability.
- **Moishe House**, a network of home-based and lay-led Jewish communal initiatives throughout the world.

How Many Participate? Who Participates?

It is difficult to estimate how many people engage in such communities, and in the broader innovative Jewish world that has been building for the past two decades. The seven JEN communities, for example, report hundreds of family member units each. Many more non-members attend each week, hundreds attend Shabbat services each week, and 2000 or more attend High Holiday services each year. Sixth and I, which does not have membership, reported that close to 30,000 individuals have registered for various Jewish services, classes or events, 10,000 of whom came for the High Holidays (they rent churches near the synagogue).

The various established synagogues that employ such models similarly report that a few hundred young adults attend regularly and a few thousand attend throughout the year. There are, of course, more independent communities being established each year, as

well as dozens of non-religious initiatives. One can assume that there is significant overlap within this innovative ecosystem and even with established institutions. If taken together with about 60 or so independent minyanim around the US, it would be safe to estimate that such activities attract tens of thousands of young Jews each year. Were other non-establishment frameworks to be included, such as Chabad and Aish Ha Torah (Orthodox outreach programs), these numbers easily reach into the hundreds of thousands.

On a local level, we can see that over half (53 percent) of young adult Jews in the DC area (one of the largest in the US) participated in some kind of young adult Jewish program in the previous six months, organized by the likes of Sixth and I, Gather DC, One Table, Moishe House or the young adult wings of established denominational synagogues.¹² However, the current scope is not necessarily a reflection of the larger impact of this ecosystem, which will only be discernable down the road.

Who participates? Such initiatives are generally geared to young adults. However, since the minyanim and places like Ikar and Romemu have been around for nearly two decades, many

By virtue of their "start-up" appeal and ethos of "radical inclusivity," emergent communities attract a considerably larger number from the margins of the Jewish community

of the original young adults are now in their 40s and parents of young children. Additional young adults continue to join, many of whom bring their parents, creating a more multi-generational platform than perhaps originally envisioned.

By virtue of their “start-up” appeal, and their ethos of “radical inclusivity,” they seem to attract a considerably larger number of “borderland” or “engagement” Jews than do traditional synagogues and federations, including those who were never a part of or moved away from the institutionalized Jewish world, younger Jews, Jews by choice, intermarried Jews, Jews of color, and LGBTQ Jews. These communities often also draw a relatively large number of non-Jewish “seekers.” Of course, is not that Reform and many Conservative synagogues are not welcoming and inclusive of, but rather that in such emergent communities, this crowd “tends to be the norm” and not the exception.

Decline of Millennial Participation?

Denominational identity has traditionally been a common metric of Jewish identification. Two national studies, the 2013 Pew study of American Jewry and the 2017 PRRI study of religion in America, showed that those aged 18-29 were less likely to hold a denominational identity than older age cohorts. This findings reflected in a number of more detailed demographic studies of major Jewish communities, and reflect a general shift in American religious identity among post-Boomers.^{13,14}

Another common yardstick has been synagogue membership. Here too, we see a drop in membership among the young adult cohort. However, when looking at other markers, such as programming participation, home observance of Jewish traditions like Shabbat meals or Passover Seders, and informal markers such as keeping up with news on Israel or Jewish culture, we see that young adults are often as interested in being Jewish as their older counterparts.

The community studies’ authors devised an alternative and perhaps more relevant method to measure and characterize Jewish identity. Utilizing Latent Class Analysis (LCA), the authors distinguish between five involvement levels ranging from low, moderate (both institutional and cultural), and high involvement. These classifications take into account a range of practical behaviors that cut across denominational and organizational boundaries. Through this prism, one can see a shift, but not necessarily a net decline in identity or behavior.¹⁵ While there are some signs of weakening, there are signs of stability and even some signs of strengthening.

Implications and Concluding Thoughts

It is worthwhile to note that even with the popularity and seeming success of such initiatives, there are still “only nine Sharon Brouses (the charismatic rabbi of Ikar in LA) and 900 Reform synagogues,” as one observer noted.¹⁶ However, two decades since its formation, this world seems to be expanding with new collaborative platforms and the growing participation of young leaders from across denominational boundaries. We could be seeing the building blocks being set in place for the next phase of the mainstream Jewish community as innovations underway spread and gradually reshape the norm.

Being able to understand this shift could help struggling communities get on board and navigate these challenges better. As Sarna explained, “We see lots of fascinating Jewish religious start-ups today — emergent congregations, partnership services, independent minyanim, and the like. Many of these start-ups will not survive, I suspect, but some of them will make it very, very big. They will reshape American Judaism in the decades to come.”¹⁷

These developments may have significant implications on a number of practical levels for Jewish communities and professionals, such as in regard to organizational and physical structures, staff and hiring decisions, programming, outreach and fundraising, and are well worth looking into.

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18

Striking an Improved Balance Between Religion and State in Israel

JPPI launched a key project this year on the topic of religion and state in Israel. The aim of the project is to define and propose an improved model with boundary lines for managing the religion-state interface as it relates to a number of critical issues, while considering the connections and potential trade-offs between them.

The project is headed by former Chief Justice Miriam Naor, and Brigadier General (res.) Michael Herzog, a JPPI senior fellow, with the participation of JPPI senior fellows Dr. Inbal Hakman and Dr. Shlomo Fischer. This paper offers a brief introduction to the project, which is in its early stages.

Background

The State of Israel was conceived and established by its founding fathers as a Jewish and democratic state. This definition encompasses both the state's Jewish character – as reflected in nationality, religion, and culture – and the

fact that it upholds the principle of civil equality for all its citizens regardless of race, gender, or creed. In the 1990s, Israel, which lacks a formal constitution, enshrined fundamental civil rights in two Basic Laws: Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (1992); and Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation (1994). Last year, legislation was passed that addresses Israel's collective identity: Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People.

From the earliest years of Israeli statehood, there has been an inherent tension between the two sides of the Jewish-democratic equation. The internal tension is between the Jewish majority and the non-Jewish minority as well as between the different streams of Judaism. It also characterizes, with greater intensity in recent years, Israel-Diaspora relations (regarding major issues, such as conversion and the state's attitude toward the non-Orthodox streams as illustrated by the ongoing saga of the "Kotel compromise"). The question of how Israel should balance its "Jewish" and "democratic"

characteristics is, therefore, one that extends across several axes – internal/external, Jewish/non-Jewish, intra-Jewish. It is one of the most vexing issues on the Israeli public agenda, from the national, ideological, religious, public, and political points of view; and it has been a perennial subject of debate in Israel and the Diaspora.

For years, efforts have been made in governmental and civil-society frameworks to address this tension and find ways of mitigating it. But in several spheres the tension has grown over time, for political, demographic, and other reasons.

The Project

Two questions are at the heart of the JPPI project: What kind of balance is desirable, and possible, as a means of alleviating the tension between Israel as a “Jewish state” and Israel as a “democratic state”? And: How can this balance be translated into everyday life in Israel? The assumption underlying these questions is that Israel’s unique character and existential realities do not allow for the separation of religion and state. What we should be striving for, then, is their optimal coexistence. Other central premises are that Israel, mainly due to domestic political pressures, has yet to identify the optimal means of striking such a balance; and that it must and can meet the challenge more effectively.

Much has been written about the desired religion-state balance. Israeli civil-society

organizations have drawn up various documents aimed at delineating what religion-state relations should look like (e.g., The Gavison-Medan Covenant (2004), the Kinneret Convention (2001), the Meimad-Lubotzky-Beilin Covenant (1999)). There have been many Supreme Court rulings pertaining to this balance. JPPI has also addressed the subject from a number of angles. Nevertheless, the Institute decided to take the issue up again for several reasons, including its great importance, even more so at this time, to Israel-Diaspora relations, the exacerbation of social tensions emanating from confrontations over the issue, and the unique tools at JPPI’s disposal, which allow it to treat the topic with the seriousness it deserves (quality personnel, a deep knowledge base, experience, and a wide-ranging network of contacts in Israel and the Diaspora). Former Chief Justice Miriam Naor, for instance, dealt extensively with the issue while serving on the Supreme Court.

The project is addressing a number of central issues that reflect the tension between religion and state. These include:

- A. Conversion
- B. Marriage and divorce
- C. Shabbat and the public sphere
- D. Education
- E. Military/national service
- F. The state’s attitude toward the non-Orthodox streams (including the issue of an egalitarian prayer space at the Kotel)

The major questions to be examined by the project are: Where should one draw the balancing line on each of these core issues? How should one anchor or regulate proposed solutions for achieving the desired balance (through legislation? administrative decisions? judicial review? some other way?)? Are there potential tradeoffs between these issues, and if so, what form might they take? To what degree, if any, should the state provide religious services to citizens? Should these services be privatized and if so, to what degree, and how? What is the best mechanism for handling these issues and implementing their solutions – in Israel, and between Israel and the Diaspora?

JPPI aims not merely to define the balance between religion and state, but also between the desirable and the possible in this context. Accordingly, it will take into account the constraints of Israeli public and political realities, and seek solutions that, rather than merely embodying inclinations or theoretical positions, actually have a chance of being realized.

Methodology:

- A. Gather and review existing information from a variety of sources, including governmental sources.
- B. Define guidelines, principles, and criteria for formulating positions on the core issues outlined above.
- C. Conduct in-depth conversations and interviews – based on a set of focused

questions pertaining to each of the core issues – with prominent representatives of the various sectors, streams, and main approaches (the religious streams spanning from Haredi to Reform; the government; alternative organizations (e.g. Tzohar), the Jewish Agency; Diaspora Jewry; public figures and intellectuals, and more), so as to gain familiarity with a wide array of opinions and arguments. The project directors, who have begun their work, have already met with the Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel and heard his positions on the role of the Rabbinate, whose status has declined in the eyes of many Israeli subgroups despite new trends of openness to tradition.¹

- D. Upon completion of these conversations and interviews, and on the basis of the guidelines defined by the project's directors, conclusions will be formulated and the final policy paper written. The paper will contain an analysis and policy recommendations, and will propose an appropriate mechanism for advancing and implementing the recommendations.
- E. Before the report and recommendations are published, the project heads will meet discreetly with relevant figures in the Israeli government and the Diaspora, to discuss the conclusions and recommendations and their chances for, and mode of, implementation.

Endnotes:

- 1 These trends have been explored in depth by Shmuel Rosner and Camil Fuchs in the course of their Israeli-Judaism research on behalf of the Jewish People Policy Institute. Their findings were recently published in the book, יהדותישראלית, #, (Kinneret Zmora-Bitan Dvir) (**#israelijudaism, A Portrait of a Cultural Revolution**). English translation is available on Amazon.com.

19

Reform and Conservative Jews in Israel: New Data

JPPI's 2019 publication, *Rising Streams: Reform and Conservative Judaism in Israel*, shows that as many as 13 percent (roughly 800,000) of Israeli Jews self-identify as Reform (8 percent) or Conservative (5 percent).¹ This number is slightly larger than, but in line with, a number of surveys conducted in recent years.²

At the same time, the report also showed that a combined 12,000 individual adults were registered, dues-paying members of 127 Reform and Conservative communities in Israel. There is a significant discrepancy between the number of those who identify with these movements and actual membership statistics. One explanation of this gap is the growing number of Israelis who participate in life cycle events conducted by Reform or Conservative rabbis.

JPPI's study of Israeli Judaism³, which was based on a comprehensive survey conducted by Prof. Camil Fuchs found that most Israelis who identify as Reform or Conservative do so while concurrently identifying as secular or traditional, and do not view themselves

as religious. Thus, JPPI concluded that their affiliation model is one of low commitment and not a defining element of their identity.

The study concluded that: "Israeli Jews who identify with the movements, beyond the few thousand registered hard-core members, hold a generally loose association that is likely as much political statement against the Orthodox and Rabbinate as it is a positive statement about their own identity."⁴

We offer here a brief and complementary take regarding the identities of Reform and Conservative Jews in Israel, based on new findings. In May 2019, JPPI presented new data as part of its annual Pluralism Index.⁵ This 2019 survey focused on around 600 of the roughly 2000 individuals who had participated in the previous 2018 JPPI study (Israeli Judaism), which also served as the basis for the Rising Streams study.

In this follow-up survey, we saw that of those who identified in the 2018 study as Reform, only 13 percent subsequently identified as Reform.

A small portion (8 percent) this time identified as Conservative, an even smaller portion (4 percent) identified as Orthodox, and the majority (75 percent) identified as non-denominational. Of those who identified in 2018 as Conservative, only a third (33 percent) did so in 2019, while a third (33 percent) identified as Orthodox and a third (33 percent) identified with no denomination.

Adding another element to determine identity, the 2019 survey included the question: "How do you define yourself religiously?" It offered respondents seven options: totally secular, secular traditional, traditional, liberal religious⁶, religious, nationalist Haredi or Haredi. Immediately following that question, respondents were asked: "Again, how do you define yourself religiously? Please pay attention as there are now more options" and the options of Reform and Conservative Judaism were added to the seven options for a total of nine.

Only 1.1 percent of "secular" respondents changed their initial response to Reform or Conservative in the second question. That is, only three out of 322 secular respondents preferred the designation "Reform" to secular. Among the 257 respondents who identified initially as secular traditional, traditional, or liberal religious, four switched their response to Conservative in the second question. Overall, these results suggest that only a marginal number of Israelis consider Reform and Conservative Judaism as the main signifier of their religiosity. A 2019 American Jewish Committee (AJC) survey had a similar finding. It listed "Reform" as a possible answer

to the question: "How do you define yourself religiously?" Only 0.6 percent of respondents chose this option.

Between the two surveys conducted by JPPI within the course of a year, respondents had four opportunities to express their identities as Reform Jews – two questions from the Israeli Judaism survey (2018) and two questions from the Pluralism survey (2019). In the former respondents were asked: "If you go to synagogue, which type of synagogue do you attend (meaning when you go not as a guest to a wedding or bar mitzvah of somebody else)." And, "From the following options, check all the boxes you feel describe you." For both questions respondents could choose from a multiple-option menu that included "Reform" and "Conservative". In the 2019 Pluralism survey, along with the question described above regarding religiosity, respondents were also asked: "Which stream in Judaism do you see yourself belonging to?" (only one option could be chosen).

Of all the individuals surveyed (600 partook in both surveys and answered all four questions), not a single respondent chose "Reform" to answer all of the four questions offering this option.

Figure 1 shows the various combinations of respondent answers vis-a-vis Reform Judaism. Overall, 42 of 672 respondents (6.25 percent) positively associated themselves with Reform Judaism in one of the questions. Of those respondents, roughly 75 percent indicated they are Reform in only one of the four questions.

Figure 1: Four Questions Regarding Identification with Reform Judaism (how many responded to each combination of answers)

2019 Pluralism Survey	Top Question "Which stream do you belong to?"	V	V	V	X	V	V	V	X	X	X
	Second question "Again, how do you define your level of religiosity (please note that there are now more options)?"	V	V	V	X	X	V	X	V	X	X
2018 Israeli Judaism Survey	Top Question "When you go to a synagogue, which type of synagogue do you go to (not as a guest at a bar mitzvah or a wedding)?"	V	X	V	V	V	X	X	X	V	X
	Second question "From the following options, select all that appropriately describe you (select all relevant answers)"	V	V	X	V	X	X	X	X	X	V
Number of respondents		0	1	2	1	1	5	17	9	5	1
											Total 42

How to read this table: No respondent answered affirmatively to all four questions (therefore, there is a 0 at the bottom of the first column). However, 17 answered affirmatively to the first question, and then negatively to the other three questions (see the seventh column from the left).

Even if one assumes a sampling error influenced these findings (the sample size was relatively small), statistical error alone cannot explain the obvious inconsistencies described above. Rather, perhaps even more than we originally thought, identification with Reform Judaism (and to a lesser degree Conservative Judaism) in Israel is a fluid, loosely defined construct. Among a majority of those who identified, at one point or another, as Reform or Conservative, we can more clearly see that these associations are not strong expressions of high levels of commitment or identification.

This is not, we should add, a purely academic matter. It could have a significant impact on

the Israeli government's decision making, and prioritization of resources. It may also have implications for leaders and philanthropists in North American Jewish communities.

And yet, even though many Israelis are not identifying strongly with the non-Orthodox denominations, the anti-Orthodox sentiment, along with a preference for a post-Halachic or non-Halachic Judaism, is evident among a growing segment of the population. This trend will continue to influence the number of those who turn to Israel's non-Orthodox communities to receive religious services, especially among those who consider themselves secular.

Endnotes:

- 1 Feferman, Dan. "Rising Streams: Reform and Conservative Judaism in Israel." The Jewish People Policy Institute. 2018.
- 2 Pew Research Center. "Israel's Religiously Divided Society." And, Hermann, Tamar and Cohen, Chanan. "The Reform and Conservative Movements in Israel: A Profile and Attitudes." The Israel Democracy Institute. 2013. And, The Reform Movement's study, conducted by the Dialogue Institute, has not been published, the data was shared with JPPI by IMPJ.
- 3 A comprehensive survey of Israeli Jewish identity, conducted by JPPI's Shmuel Rosner and Prof. Camil Fuchs of Tel Aviv University, in 2018.
- 4 Rising Streams (p. 38).
- 5 Slepkov, Noah. The 2019 Pluralism in Israel Survey. The Jewish People Policy Institute.
- 6 Liberal-religious, or "Dati-Liberali" in Israel would refer to someone who is liberal-Orthodox.

CULTURAL CURRENCY

20

Intimacy in an Era of Distancing: Literature, Television, Film, Theater, Art

Jewish culture is flourishing. Creative work that is varied and compelling, and that engages with the Jewish people's past, present, and future, is being produced in the world's two major centers of Jewish life, Israel and the United States. Jewish culture creators in both centers are interacting in meaningful ways; the geographic and cultural distances between them are described in literary texts and on film and television screens – sometimes in stark relief, sometimes deliberately blurred. This review will summarize the past year's major trends in Jewish culture.

Israel's cultural periphery on the rise

Several distinguished Israeli authors died this past year: Haim Gouri (1923-2018); Amalia Kahana-Carmon (1926-2019); Aharon Appelfeld (1932-2018); Amos Oz, (1939-2018); and Ronit Matalon (1959-2017). Each of these writers represented a different segment of Israeli culture. Oz was the undisputed tribal shaman, the one who mirrored Israel and Israeliness for Israelis and non-Israelis alike. Haim Gouri represented the Palmach generation, a literary

and social group that preceded Oz and is identified with Israel's War of Independence and the founding of the state. Kahana-Carmon came to prominence as a woman writer in a man's literary world – the likely reason she disappeared from public view relatively early in her career.¹ Aharon Appelfeld was the voice of the Holocaust survivor population and wore with pride the label of "exilic" writer. Ronit Matalon, the daughter of Egyptian immigrants, whose disjointed, experimental writing style reflected postmodern influences, belonged to a cadre of authors who conveyed the Mizrahi sensibility at a time when Ashkenazi Jews dominated Israeli culture and society. Matalon's status as the "odd woman out" in the Israeli cultural scene also hints at the nature of a bygone literary era when a Holocaust writer and a Mizrahi writer could exist side by side, but which was incontestably dominated by Amos Oz, the quintessential Israeli who represented the nation's cultural core. Or in other words, a writer born in Jerusalem to Ashkenazi immigrant parents, who left Jerusalem for kibbutz life and socialism of the Labor Zionist variety.²

The current literary and cultural period in Israel is marked by far greater diversity and an abundance of voices. There is no dominant center; rather, there are multiple alternative centers, corresponding to the groups that constitute Israel's cultural periphery – Haredim, Arabs, Ethiopians.³ Later we will provide a few examples of the new diversity in Israeli culture, as manifested in outstanding creative works. We will focus on literature and film, as well as on television, whose cultural status is robust and ascendant, in Israel and abroad. The works to be discussed were chosen for their artistic quality, but also for their effective embodiment of current trends, developments, and the new spirit emerging in Israeli culture.

The television series *Shtisel* (Yehonatan Indursky and Ori Elon, 2013) tells the story of a Haredi family in Jerusalem and centers around a widowed father and an unmarried son having trouble finding a *shidduch* (match) that meets his expectations. It has touched the hearts of many Israelis, secular and religious alike. The series, licensed to Netflix, is being broadcast abroad with subtitles, rather than being dubbed. *Shtisel*'s artistic elements – screenwriting, direction, acting, cinematography – are of high caliber, but the singular charm of the series lies in the human quality of its narrative. *Shtisel* depicts Haredim as "real people," preoccupied with matters large and small, subject to everyday pain and hardship. The creators of the series, an ex-Haredi (Indursky) and a crocheted-kippah-wearer, i.e., a Religious Zionist (Elon) have

succeeded in blending the unique ingredients of Haredi life into a universal formula. The family at the heart of the story, though deeply embedded in the Haredi world, nevertheless epitomizes "family" as such. The series' overall approach to the Haredim is candid and non-patronizing. It should be noted, however, that *Shtisel* is not the first show to have been made about Haredim. It was preceded (and succeeded) by several other major television series and feature films dealing with the ultra-Orthodox community, including: *A Touch Away* (Ron Ninio, 2007), *Shababnikim* (Eliran Malka and Danny Paran, 2017), *Ushpizin* (Shuli Rand, 2004), *Fill the Void; Through the Wall* (Rama Burshtein, 2012; 2016).⁴ Also worthy of note are the series *Mearav Yerushalmi* (Jackie Levy, 2004-2009) and *Srugim* (Laizy Shapiro and Hava Divon, 2008-2012), and the films *Campfire* and *Time of Favor* (Joseph Cedar, 2000; 2004), which dealt with Religious Zionism before the "Haredi wave" got underway.

In the case of Religious Zionism, the relevant series and films predicted, to some degree, the national-religious community's rise in status within Israeli society as a whole. It will take a few years to determine whether the many television shows and feature films depicting Haredi life will have a similar effect.

The growing interest in Israel's cultural periphery has also manifested in a more substantial representation of the Arab-Israeli sector. New creative works are taking an in-depth, non-stereotypical look at Arab Israelis. What is more, these television series, books,

and films place Arab Israeli figures at the center of the action as protagonists. Author/screenwriter, Sayed Kashua, paved the way with a deeper and more complex depiction of the Arab Israeli in his novels *Dancing Arabs* (2002), which was adapted to film, and *Let it Be Morning* (2004), as well as in the TV series *Arab Labor* (2007) and *The Writer* (2015). In contrast to the breezily comic treatment of national-societal problems that marked *Arab Labor*, *The Writer* is not a comedy; its complex-ridden main character, Kashua's alter ego, has trouble finding his place not only in traditional Arab society but also in Israeli society, which regards him with esteem and sympathy, but in which he feels like an outsider. The choice of the Arab actor Yousef Sweid, who physically epitomizes "Israeliness," drove home the message of closeness and similarity between Arab and Jewish Israelis of the same class and social circle. The protagonist's complexity contrasts with the stereotypical Arabs of earlier Israeli films and television series, which Kashua mocks; it also reflects the ambivalence Arab Israelis feel toward the country's majority group.

A similar ambivalence is conveyed in the first season of *Mouna* (2019-), whose eponymous main character, an Arab Israeli photographer, leads a turbulent life in Tel Aviv, and like Kashua's protagonist in *The Writer*, struggles over issues of identity and belonging: she is torn between the conservative Arab culture she was born into, and the cosmopolitan world of Tel Aviv. Her love interest is an Israeli Jew.

The series is based on the experiences of Arab Israeli actress Mira Awad; Maya Heffner, the screenwriter, has acknowledged being inspired by the creators of *Shtisel*. *Mouna* is a very Israeli show, featuring a familiar mix: war and rockets from Gaza, bereavement, the "state of Tel Aviv" with Sderot as counterpoint. However, the emphasis is on the human and feminine side of things, and on the protagonist's experiences as a young woman in Tel Aviv who also happens to be an Arab Israeli.

And then, of course, we have the most celebrated of all the series dealing with the Jewish-Arab interface: *Fauda* (Lior Raz & Avi Issacharoff, 2015-) which features Palestinian characters, rather than Arab Israelis. Beyond the series' success in Israel and abroad (it also appears on Netflix), *Fauda* is a ground-breaking work. Though marred here and there by stereotypical portrayals – the Arab terrorist, the *mista'arev* (Israeli soldier disguised as an Arab) – the series transcends them. Doron, the protagonist, has ties to Arab culture which, no less than Israeli Jewish culture, is part of his identity. Arabic and Hebrew are almost equally featured in the series, one of whose major story arcs is the affair between Doron and Shirin, a Palestinian

Fauda, the most celebrated of all the series dealing with the Jewish-Arab interface, features Palestinian characters and transcends stereotypes

woman married to a senior Hamas terrorist. The complex messages conveyed by *Fauda* have been absorbed by the Israeli mainstream without the softening humor employed by Kashua, and despite the fact that the series deals with a painful issue – the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A Very Important Man looks at the cultural differences between American and Israeli Jews. The encounter between individuals and communities from both sides of the Atlantic is also an encounter between two exceedingly different cultural worlds, which cannot always be effectively bridged by Jewish identity

her birth, and her non-Jewish boyfriend. On the small screen, the sitcom *Nevsu* (Yossi Vasa, 2017) has enjoyed local success and garnered recognition abroad, including the International Emmy Award for best comedy series in 2018. *Nevsu* is about a “mixed-marriage” household in which the father is Ethiopian and the mother Ashkenazi, and is based on the experiences

The Ethiopian Jewish community is one of the most prominent groups in Israel’s social periphery, and the subject of *Fig Tree* (2018), a film by Alamork Davidian. Mina, *Fig Tree*’s protagonist, is a Jewish Ethiopian girl whose family decides to leave their village, and Ethiopia, and emigrate to Israel. She finds it hard to leave the village of

of actor/writer Yossi Vasa, who immigrated to Israel from Ethiopia in 1984 and married a non-Ethiopian Israeli. The racism directed at the couple led Vasa to write the series, but he depicts the problems, hardships, and culture gaps with a forgiving smile. No television series or feature film has yet been written about the Ethiopians and the difficulties they face without the defense mechanism of humor.

Before the Ethiopian Jewish community became a presence here, Israel experienced ethnic rifts of other kinds. Several recent works address these rifts – most of which are, however, losing their meaning as Israelization erodes the memory of the “ingathering of the exiles” process. Of particular note in this context are: the film/documentary series *The Ancestral Sin* (David Deri, 2017); the documentary series *Ma’abarot* (Dina Zvi-Riklis, 2019); and Eli Amir’s novel *Bicycle Boy* (2019). While the first of these works is concerned primarily with the discrimination and humiliation endured by North African immigrants to Israel in the 1950s, *Ma’abarot* and *Bicycle Boy* take a softer approach that tries to understand the full picture, in all its complexity. Without downplaying the pain or whitewashing the discrimination, the latter two works show that the “discriminators” themselves were also beset by difficulties. *Ma’abarot* highlights the tremendous logistical challenge faced by the fledgling state as it absorbed waves of new immigrants. Amir’s novel depicts the personal pain of an immigrant from Baghdad, but also shows the character’s pride and sense of belonging to the Israeli society that absorbed him.

Dialogue, culture gap, and alternative Jewish space

Creative people in the Jewish world's two major population centers, Israel and the US, engage with each other and display great interest in the other Jewish geographic and cultural space.

As noted in JPPI's Annual Assessment last year (2018), many contemporary American Jewish writers are intensively concerned with Israel, and their works reflect a sense of connection and familiarity with the country. Here, mention should be made of the literary "grandfather" of today's American Jewish writers: Phillip Roth (1933-2018). Roth died last year, and though he did not, as many had expected, win a Nobel Prize, no one would dispute his literary greatness or the profound influence he had on American Jewish culture. Roth depicted the formative experience of his generation – second-generation Americans brought up with a sense of Jewish chosenness, but also with the desire to integrate, even assimilate, in American society, even at the price of their Jewish identity. He translated this ambivalence into a condemnation of the conservative Jewish establishment's hypocrisy. Roth also wrote about Israel, thereby paving the way for today's American Jewish writers, who have made Israel a major focus of their work. The current wave of writing about Israel reflects an intimacy that never existed before in American Jewish letters. And Israeli authors, for their part, are making use of American spaces as they explore issues of Israeliness and Jewishness.

The series *Autonomies* (2018), created by Yonatan Indursky and Ori Elon of *Shtisel* fame, was televised in Israel this past year. *Autonomies* depicts an alternate reality in which, following a bloody civil war, Jerusalem is separated from the rest of Israel as an autonomous Haredi entity. The series opens with a shocking discovery: the granddaughter of Jerusalem's rabbi and leader was switched at birth with an infant born to secular parents who has grown up non-religious in Tel Aviv. The discovery leads to the girl's abduction and to outbreaks of violence between the two Jewish national entities.

It is easy to draw parallels between *Autonomies* and *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, a 2007 novel by American-Jewish author Michael Chabon. Although *Autonomies* does not take place on American soil, the similarities are notable and engender a cross-continental Jewish cultural dialogue. In many respects *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* and *Autonomies* are complementary works. They both engage with burning Jewish issues such as the nature of Jewish nationalism, and Jewish religious extremism, in Israel and outside it.

As noted, in an earlier article⁵ JPPI looked at American-Jewish writing about Israel and Israel's positioning as a central geographic space in novels by American-Jewish authors, such as Nicole Krauss, Nathan Englander, Jonathan Safran-Foer, and others. There is a flip side to the coin: Israeli writing about the United States. Several Israeli novels with an American focus (set primarily in New York) have been

published in recent years. These include: *Isra Isle (Isralsland)* (2005) by Nava Semel; Matan Hermoni's Hebrew Publishing Company (2011); *At a Distance* (2018) by Vered Kellner; *The Ruined House* (2013) by Ruby Namdar; and *All the Rivers* (2014) by Dorit Rabinyan.

All the Rivers depicts an impossible love affair between Liat, an Israeli Jew, and Hilmi, a Palestinian Arab. Love blossoms and flourishes in New York City, and only there can the Israeli protagonist maintain her Jewish and Israeli identity while also accommodating a love that would be inconceivable in Israel. A different kind of tension characterizes *The Ruined House*⁶: a tension between American-Jewish New York and Israel – both today's Israel and the ancient kingdom. Despite the differing plot lines, both novels treat New York as a space that is both Jewish and an alternative to Israel. Within this alternative Jewish space, Jewishness and Israeliness are re-examined.

A different perspective on the American-Jewish and Israeli relationship is offered by the series *A Very Important Man* (Shirly Moshaioff, 2018). This Israeli drama is based on the life of Yehuda Levi as a young and very successful Israeli actor. During the second season of the series, Levi leaves Israel to try his luck in Hollywood and seek international stardom. *A Very Important Man* looks at the cultural differences between the two societies – Israeli improvisation versus American rigidity. When Levi encounters Elli, an Israeli expat who has become more American than the Americans, the cultural differences

are transposed onto their relationship. Thus, the series also touches on a major issue in the relationship between American Jews and Israel. The encounter between individuals and communities from both sides of the Atlantic is also an encounter between two exceedingly different cultural worlds, which cannot always be effectively bridged by Jewish identity.

The American-Jewish experience from a generational perspective

This year, three American television series have engaged with the Jewish experience in interesting ways: *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* (2017-), *Transparent* (2014-), and *Broad City* (2014-2019).

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel (Amy Sherman-Palladino) is set in the colorful New York of the 1960s and tells its story from the point of view of a young and talented upper middle class Jewish woman. On the one hand, Miriam "Midge" Maisel is the quintessential American Jewish woman. The ease with which she occupies her place in society, the confidence with which she navigates the streets of New York while buying kosher food for the post-Yom Kippur shed light on American Jewry's integration into the larger society. Midge Maisel's serene and family-oriented daily routine reflects American Jewry's sense of being at home. On the other hand, the crisis precipitated by the separation from her husband Joel, who shockingly falls in love with a "shiksa" secretary, and her surprising

transformation into a stand-up comedian, reflect other aspects of her life. As a woman, a Jew, and a comedian, Midge also symbolizes Jewish otherness, the sense of marginality that has preoccupied Jewish creative people in the United States and elsewhere. In this sense, Midge's double life – typical American Jewish housewife by day, racy stand-up comic by night – represents the duality of the American Jewish experience – integration/merging versus insularity and otherness.

In contrast to *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, Jill Soloway's *Transparent* revolves around a present-day American Jewish family. The differences between the Weissmans (Midge Maisel's family of origin) and the Pfefferman family are great, and illuminate the Jewish integration process in the United States. While Midge Maisel embodies a robust Jewish identity and a relatively conservative orientation toward family life (alongside a feminist story of personal fulfillment), the Pfefferman family tests and breaches the boundaries of identity, embodying a liberated model of general and gender identity that also encompasses Jewish identity.

The spirit of feminism, sexual freedom, and women's liberation are also present in the television sitcom *Broad City*, whose co-creators and costars are two young American Jewish comedians, Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson. Though covering some familiar ground with its New York setting and Jewish protagonists, its contemporary feel contrasts with the 1960s of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*.

Ilana and Abbi depict today's twenty-something women as self-absorbed and hard put to find meaning in their lives. In one fourth-season episode they ridicule the now-common Jewish-American custom of taking lengthy and meaningful trips to Israel. Criticism is directed at US Jews who need Israel to validate their flimsy Jewish identities. Comparison reveals the major generational shift in Jewish-American attitudes toward Israel. In the 1960s Israel was regarded as a young desert nation light-years from New York. In *Transparent*, the Pfeffermans criticize Israel, which functions as a metaphor and a stage set for the exploration of boundaries and their shattering. Ilana and Abbi show that, in the global era, Israel is closer than ever, but not everyone embraces this closeness.

The picture painted here is one of creative abundance and cultural, thematic, and stylistic diversity. Israeli culture blurs boundaries between the social center and periphery and highlights the voices of minority groups. In the United States, engagement with Jewish issues persists, and successful TV series concerned with Jewish topics are also addressing such contemporary issues as feminism and blurring boundaries of gender and sexual identity. Encounter

**Israeli culture
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between creative people on both sides of the Atlantic are a mix of closeness, intimacy, and fear. Creative people feel inspired to depict the alternative Jewish space and in so doing

reveal the mutual attraction between the world's two largest Jewish communities – even in an era when narratives of distance are being emphasized.

MILESTONES OF JEWISH CULTURE 2019

VALUES: SKIN

by Guy Nattiv and Jaimie Ray Newman. Nattiv, an Israeli, conceived and directed the film; Newman, an American Jew, edited it. The screenplay was written by Sharon Maymon, an Israeli. In his acceptance speech, which began with a Hebrew greeting (*Layla tov Yisrael* – “Good night Israel”), Nattiv spoke about his grandfather and grandmother who survived the Holocaust, and the importance of teaching tolerance and combatting racism. His spouse (Newman) dedicated the award to their baby daughter, Alma. Nattiv is the second Israeli to win an Oscar; the first was director Moshé Mizrachi, whose *Madame Rosa* won Best Foreign Language Film category in 1977.

The Nattiv-Newman film depicts a racist hate crime from the point of view of two children, white and black. The full-length feature film that bears the same title tells the story of Byron Widner, a former skinhead who leads a gang of neo-Nazis. Following his wife’s example, Widner “repents” and tries to change his life. He becomes an FBI agent and wrestles both with his past and with his former associates’ revenge efforts.

The most recent Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film was awarded to *Skin*, produced

ROLE MODEL: RBC

A Google search of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg shows the degree to which her popularity has surged over the past three years. She is now one of the most influential women in the United States and, perhaps, the country’s most influential

Jewish woman. Ginsburg’s rise in popularity is, of course, attributable to her impressive and inspiring career. She is the second woman, and the first Jewish woman, to serve on the US Supreme Court. A social justice warrior, she worked to change attitudes toward women and minorities within the justice system and in American society. In 2017 she won the EMET Prize, which honors those who have made outstanding contributions on behalf of the Jewish people. In 2018 two films about Ginsburg were released.

RGB is a documentary about Ginsburg’s life, while *On the Basis of Sex* is a drama that focuses on Ginsburg’s early career and rocky road to success as a woman in a man’s world. No less worthy of note is *I Dissent*, a children’s book about Ginsburg published in 2016 by the venerable Simon and Schuster. A Hebrew translation of the book was released this year.

Two Jewish creative works that achieved great acclaim this year are *Synonyms*, a film by Nadav Lapid, which won the Golden Bear at the 69th Berlin International Film Festival, and Moriel Rothman-Zecher's *Sadness Is a White Bird*, a 2018 National Jewish Book Award finalist for debut fiction. Both works are concerned with Israel and feature complex attitudes and criticism toward it, against the background of such issues as IDF service, militancy in Israeli society, and the occupation. Beyond the esteem enjoyed by these works, their subject matter has generated fiery debate and controversy.

Synonyms, which was filmed in Paris, tells the story of Yoav, a young post-army Israeli who flees to Paris in an attempt to escape his inner demons. Eager to shed his past, he strives to build a new life for himself. He refuses to speak Hebrew and swears never to return to Israel. But his experiences in France teach him about the nationalistic character of all societies – whether in the turbulent Middle East or in Europe. The film is strongly autobiographical: Lapid himself sought to sever his ties to Israel and moved to Paris, where he made the film. Similarly, one can discern the connections between Moriel Rothman-Zecher's life and the narrative he wove. Rothman-Zecher was born in Jerusalem and grew up in the United States. He was discharged from the IDF after spending time in military prison as a conscientious objector. His book's candidacy for the National Jewish Book Award aroused opposition, due to its critical stance regarding the IDF and Israel generally.

CONTROVERSY: LAPID AND ROTHMAN

YIZKOR: STAN LEE

In late 2018 (December 11), Stan Lee passed away at the age of 95. Lee was a key figure in the Marvel Comics world – the co-creator of such imperfect superheroes as Spiderman, Thor, the Hulk, Iron Man, the X-Men, Doctor Strange, Daredevil, and Black Panther. Lee was born in New York in 1922 to a Jewish family. Like many teenage boys of his generation,⁷ he took an interest in comics. When he started working for a relative's publishing house, he could never have dreamed that this small-time concern would, under his leadership, become the major brand name "Marvel Comics," or that his creations would become Hollywood stars with billions of fans worldwide.

Endnotes:

- 1 Her descent into obscurity is reflected in the fact that her children did not feel it was necessary to announce her passing, news of which reached the public with considerable delay. See: Avraham Balaban, January 27, 2019, *Haaretz*, "On the Passing of Amalia Kahana-Carmon."
- 2 Baruch Kimemrling referred to this elite group as "*Achoslim*" – a Hebrew acronym denoting "Ashkenazi, secular, veteran-Israeli, socialist, nationalist."
- 3 Along with the changes in representation and power, there has been periodic change in the status of the Jewish writer. See: Gitit Levy-Paz, June 21, 2019, *Makor Rishon*, "The End of an Era."
- 4 Other series and films worthy of mention are: *My Haredi Wedding* (Corrin Gideon, 2019), *Autonomies* (Yehonatan Indursky, Ori Elon, 2018), *Iron Doom*, (Yoav Gundar Goshan & Ayelet Gundar Goshan 2017-2018).
- 5 "Beyond the Distancing Discourse," *Annual Assessment*, 2018.
- 6 Rubi Namdar, like Maya Arad and Ayelet Tsabari, is an Israeli author who resides in North America. These three writers blend elements of here and there in their works, and are naturally concerned with the affinities and tensions between the Israeli and American/Canadian places and cultures.
- 7 American Jewish author Michael Chabon wrote about the era known as "the Golden Age of Comic Books" in his *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, Random House, 2003.

21

The Basic Conditions of Jewish Life: Religion, Theology, Philosophy, Sociology, History

This survey is devoted to reviewing trends in Jewish traditional and religious culture both in Israel and the Diaspora. These developments show that Jews today are occupied with the religious cultural meaning and implications of the basic conditions of Jewish life.

The Meaning of Israel

In Israel many of these developments are concerned with the impact, in one fashion or another, of the Jewish state and the particular life that developed within it on “Judaism.” Two notable books discuss the contemporary application of religious Halacha in the state context while a whole slew of books examine the meaning of contemporary Jewishness from the opposite vantage point – that of “secular” Israeli life. More books deal with the concept of “Israeliness” or “Hebrewness,” both as distinct from Jewishness.

The two Halachic works stem from the Religious Zionist camp. They represent long standing, but still very potent trends in the religious Zionist/modern Orthodox world. The first of these is Rabbi Ido Rechnitz's *Medina K'Halacha*. The

title is a play on words, which discloses some of the ideological freight the book carries. The title translates first, as “A State According to Halacha.” However, in idiomatic Hebrew it also means “a state as it is supposed to be” or “as is worthy to be.” Indeed, Rabbi Rechnitz, in an interview in the *Makor Rishon* newspaper, stated that the underlying purpose of this book is to overcome the compartmentalization of life in the modern world – that is, to subject all the spheres of life to religious (Torah) regulation and imbue with them religious meaning, first and foremost the state and political spheres.

The potency of this tendency in Religious Zionist circles can be seen from Minister Bezalel Smotrich's recent statement that the State of Israel must be governed according to the Halacha, “as in the days of King David and King Solomon.” Yet, the scholarly and nuanced tone of *Medina K'Halacha* is a far cry from Smotrich's declaration. The book argues that Halacha preserves individual privacy and democratic procedures and that the enactment of religious norms (if they are at all enacted) would be a far cry from that of fundamentalist states.

The focus of the second Halachic work, *And Beit Hillel Rules*, is somewhat different. It does advocate applying the Halacha to all areas of life, but its overriding goal is not de-compartmentalization, but rather confrontation with issues and values characteristic of a liberal or inclusive society. The book is the result of a collective effort on the part of the participating Orthodox rabbis, both men and women of the *Beit Hillel* organization, which defines itself as “attentive rabbinical leaderships.”

Thus, a significant portion of the book is devoted to issues of women and Judaism – can women say the Kaddish or deliver Halachic rulings. It also considers attitudes toward non-Orthodox Jews – can one invite them on Shabbat even if they drive? It is significant that the organization defines itself as “attentive” and not as liberal. This attentiveness is rooted in the text’s structure: each Halachic essay is proceeded by an extensive introduction giving the relevant psychological, sociological, historical etc. background. In addition, arguments for a permissive ruling are adduced. But there is no guarantee that after taking everything into account the ruling will in fact be permissive.

The broad trend that these Halachic books represent, of extending the Halacha and its regulation to the state and the broad society, whether in an attentive or more conservative mode – is related to the public debate over Israel’s claimed “religionization,” which is, of course, a complex debate we cannot fully cover here. But one can briefly state that there seems

to be a partially successful attempt to cast in religious or sacred terms national and public issues – such as the Land of Israel, borders and peace agreements. This “religionization” of how Israelis think and talk about national issues has elicited a counter movement – a reflective pre-occupation with Israeli secularism and the initially secular character of the Zionist movement and the Israeli state. Some writers and thinkers wish to reconsider Zionism and Jewish nationalism as alternatives to religion, not as a fulfillment of it.

Fully seven books published in the last year address the issue of Israeli secularism or closely related concepts such “Hebrewism” or “Israeliness.” They can be divided in accordance with their central thrust or tendency. Three of these books, Ram Furman’s *HaDerek Hachilonit* (The Secular Path), Aviad Kleinberg’s *Madrich Lehiloni* (the Hiloni Handbook) and, in a slightly different way, Amnon Rubinstein’s *Sipurum shel Yehudim Hilonim* (Life- Stories of Secular Jews), are aimed at reinforcing secular consciousness and identity. They explain to secular Jews how to rebuff the wave of religionization and provide arguments for living a secular lifestyle and being a secular Jew. Much of Kleinberg’s book provides arguments against religion and the belief in the existence of a supreme, non-corporeal being, while Rubenstein’s book, the stories of key figures such as Einstein, Kafka, and Freud addresses how to be a secular Jew – how one can maintain a strong Jewish identity while being secular and what that would entail.

Two books, one celebratory and one elegiac, discuss Israeliness as an orientation that is an alternative to Judaism or religion. Yossi Shain's book, *HaMeiah HaYisraelit VeHayisralizatzia shel HaYahadut* (The Israeli Century and the Israelization of Judaism) argues that the State of Israel has had a profound impact on Judaism and Jewish life. His argument is that Israel today is Judaism, that Israel and the Israeli experience is the center of Jewish life, and that involvement with Israel takes the place of what had been religion and Jewishness. Rami Livni's book, *The End of the Era of Hebrewness*, is an elegy to the Israel that was – the Israel that was dominated by a secular, Ashkenazic elite with a socialist orientation. In a certain sense this is a soft version of the complaint (more imagined than actually heard) of the old Ashkenazic elite – “They stole the State from me!”. While Livni mourns the loss, there are populations – religious, masorati, Mizrachi who do not grieve the passing of the Yishuv era and that of the first decades of the state.

The final set of two books, challenge the traditional dichotomy of “religious” and “secular.” The first, *Israeli Judaism*, by Camil Fuchs and Shmuel Rosner accomplishes this through a descriptive approach (more on this book elsewhere in this Annual Assessment). The second, Micah Goodman's *Hazara Bli Tshuva* (Return without Repentance), has a normative orientation. Fuchs and Rosner's central claim is that the majority of Jewish Israelis are both national and traditional. To use their plastic

metaphor, they both make Kiddush on Friday night and hang the Israeli flag on Independence Day. To a certain extent this conclusion is in tension with the celebration of Israeliness and the adoption of national identity as a totally secular **replacement** of traditional Jewish religious identity.

Micah Goodman, a talented and prolific author, has devoted considerable energies to bridging dichotomies. He founded and heads the post-army beit midrash in Ein Prat with a combined religious and secular student population. His newest book, which he presents as part of a diptych concerning Israeli society (last year he released a book on the Arab-Israeli conflict attempting to overcome the dichotomy of left-right), takes as its point of departure that human beings have two equal needs – the first for belonging and meaning, the second for freedom. Organized religion provides for the first need, while a secular life style supplies the second. This book attempts to show how to satisfy both needs together. In so doing, Goodman proposes new readings of both religion and secularism.

Fully seven books published in the last year address the issue of Israeli secularism or closely related concepts such “Hebrewism” or “Israeliness”

Diasporic Interpretations

Significant Judaic works were also published in the Diaspora in the last year. Three of the most significant deal, more or less directly, with the question of translation. Two of these works are translations of canonical Jewish texts, Robert Alter's translation, *The Hebrew Bible*, and *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, translation and commentary by Daniel Chanan Matt. The third explores the precise meaning of a

key term: *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion* by Daniel Boyarin. Interestingly, all three are leading scholars in their fields and current or former professors at the University of California, Berkeley.

Jewish life in the Diaspora is Jewish life lived in an alien language and the question of rendering Jewish concepts and texts into this lived non-Jewish language tends to be constant

The theme of translation is inherent in Jewish life in the Diaspora. Practically by definition, Jewish life in the Diaspora (the word Diaspora itself is Greek) is Jewish life lived in an alien language and the question of rendering Jewish concepts and texts into this lived non-Jewish language tends to be constant. (This is especially true in modern times, but it should be recalled that at base, Yiddish, Ladino and Judeo-Arabic are non-Jewish languages, despite their "conversion".)

Robert Alter's translation of the *Tanach* is a singular accomplishment. Almost all of the widely utilized translations of this text, including the King James version (1611), were the product of committees. Alter's translation is a continuation of his particular engagement with the Biblical text, which is reading the Bible as literature. Since the 1970s Alter has published a series of articles and well known books (most notably, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981)), which have illuminated the literary techniques with which the Biblical narrative has been constructed, and have demonstrated the contribution that literary analysis can make to the understanding of Biblical texts. Alter's translation is meant to convey those linguistic and narrative techniques (e.g. alliteration, repetition, key words and images) that constitute the "art of Biblical narrative" to the English reader.

A similar challenge faced Daniel Chanan Matt in his pioneering and landmark translation of the *Zohar*, a twenty year endeavor involving Matt and other translators. Stanford U. Press issued The Complete Set of twelve volumes in 2018. This translation does not represent the first attempt to translate this canonical but esoteric work. Soncino published extensive parts of the *Zohar* (in five volumes) in 1934. However, it was not certain that the text that they translated was indeed the authentic text of the *Zohar* and they did not translate many passages that were too involved or found to be extremely unreliable. Daniel Chanan Matt's

translation has the supreme virtues that it is based upon a critical reconstruction of the entire authentic Zoharic text and it provides, in addition to a translation, explanations and notes regarding many of the terms in the Zohar's unique language. The Zohar is the cornerstone of the Kabbala and deals with the Godhead and its emanations and the relations of these to (among other things) the world, Israel, the Torah, the Messiah, and evil. It sets out its doctrines not in dry exposition but in narrative terms with R. Shimon Bar Yochai and his disciples as protagonists who use a highly symbolic and mythic language. This is all rendered in a unique Aramaic that was invented in medieval Spain on the basis of Babylonian and Palestinian Aramaic and medieval Hebrew. The result of all this extraordinary and it is no wonder that passages of the Zohar have entered the liturgy. It remains to be seen how much of this magical text can be conveyed to the English reader.

Daniel Boyarin's new book, *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion* examines a key term: "Judaism"-*loudaismos*, *Judentum*, *Yahadut*. Boyarin makes the startling claim that the contemporary usage and understanding of Judaism as a "religion," a belief system that can be abstracted out of the other spheres of life (family, language, work), is a modern invention. He argues that in fact it is the result of Jews internalizing (anti-Semitic) Christian discourse and is alien to the historical Jewish manner of thinking and speaking. This work is

a continuation of Boyarin's long term project which started with his seminal *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in the Talmud* (1993), and takes as its premise that the terms and assumptions of Jewish civilization in fundamental categories: spirituality, religion, the body, etc. are fundamentally different from Western, Christian assumptions (as Boyarin, who is anti-Zionist, is fully aware, his claims sound remarkably similar to those of right wing settlers and religious Zionists who also claim that authentic Jewish morality, spirituality, and religion is totally different from Western, Christian approaches).

Fueling a Discussion

Jewish religious cultural creativity in 2019 (5779) was to a large extent preoccupied with questions in regard to the basic conditions of Jewish life, religion and culture. Is the State of Israel a secular alternative to Jewish religious existence or an opportunity to enhance and make more complete the practice of the Jewish religion? Can Jewish culture develop and flourish under conditions of the modern Diaspora, that is, in a mental environment constituted by an alien language and conceptual vocabulary? Various approaches and answers were given to these questions. What seems certain is that the works issued in the past year – in Halacha, Jewish, and Israeli thought, translation and philological scholarship will fuel the discussion of these questions for years to come.

DEVELOPMENTS OF NOTE 2019

RESEARCH:

KABBALAH

Yosef Avivi's new book *Kabbalat HaRa'aya* (The Kabbalah of R. Kook, Yad Ben Tzvi, 4 volumes) shows in comprehensive detail how Kabbalah and especially the Kabbalah of the Ari, R. Yitzchak Luria, was woven into the very fabric and substratum of R. Kook's thought. It may not lay to rest the ongoing controversy as to whether R. Kook was primarily a modern Western or traditional Jewish theologian, but it should make the discussion much more nuanced. Perhaps, it will also raise the question of the extent that the Western philosophical thinkers that R. Kook was in dialogue with such as Hegel were also influenced by (Christian) Kabbalah.

This year is the 25th Anniversary of the death of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson. A number of new books on his thought and activity have been published in connection with this anniversary. *Social Vision: The Lubavitcher Rebbe's Transformaitve Paradigm for the World*, by Philip Wexler together with Eli Rubin and Michael Wexler represent s an attempt to deal with the fact that basic sociological concepts derive from the Christian religious tradition. Wexler utilizes the late Rebbe's social thought and activism to create universal sociological concepts from the Jewish religious tradition. Thus Wexler redefines the notions of mysticism and spirituality: As opposed to the common assumption that mysticism involves withdrawal from the world and community, Wexler shows, based upon the Jewish-Chabad tradition, that It can become a basis for community and the transformation of the world.

LEADERSHIP: REBBE

SCANDALS: TAL

Are scandals of interest? They might be if they point to a general trend of spiritual exhaustion and decay. This year scandals beset the Neo-Hasidic movement which has been of such importance spiritually in the past 20 years. R. Shmuel Tal, the Head of Yeshivat Torat Haim, an important institution in this context, has been accused of having had an inappropriate relationship with a married woman and leading his followers on the basis of "heavenly voices." This scandal joins the sex scandals of previous years involving R. Eliezer Berland and R. Sheinberger. Are we dealing here only with the foibles of fallible individuals or is there a more general trend?