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Demographic Shifts in the Jewish World: Forecasts and Implications

Collection of Position Papers Presented by the Jewish Agency

Jewish Demographic Developments: Forecasts and Implications.
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Jewish Demography: Current and Expected Trends and Policy Implications.
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Jewish Identity Research in the United States: Concepts and Findings.
Prof. Steven M. Cohen, **The Melton Center for Jewish Education, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

The Contemporary Ukrainian Jewish Community: Social, Demographic and Political Changes. Dr. Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, **Department of Political Studies, Bar-Ilan University**

The National Consciousness of Russian Jews. Dr. Valery Chervyakov, **The Institute of Sociology, the Russian Academy of Sciences**, Prof. Zvi Gitelman, **Department of Political Science, Michigan University**, Prof. Vladimir Shapiro, **Director, The Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences**

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Jewish Demographic Developments: Forecasts and Implications

Introduction to a collection of position papers

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Jewish demographic studies of recent years reveal the development of some fascinating internal contradictions, most of which are unique to the Jewish people. Some of these developments find expression in the growing and ongoing realization of the Zionist dream to gather the Jewish people in their homeland, Israel, and ensure that it truly serves as a refuge for all Jews in distress in any, and every, part of the world. Other developments raise serious concern for the future of the Jewish people in the Diaspora.

Demographers argue over complex research methods, definitions and thus, too, over results. Estimates of the Jewish population of the FSU today, for example, vary from 450,000 core Jews¹ to 1.3 million people or even more who are eligible for aliya under the Law of Return.² This figure includes non-Jews who do not even live in the same household as the Jewish family member. Between these two figures lies a third group – of core Jews and their immediate household members. According to current estimates, there are some 864,000 people in this group in the FSU.³ The recent survey in the United States found that there are 5.3 million core Jews there. The inclusion of people eligible for aliya under the Law of Return is likely to double that figure.

Diverse opinions and definitions reflect not only varying research methods, but also basic ideological differences. Yet despite these differences over numbers, researchers agree about certain basic facts: the Jewish population of the world is not growing, and is even shrinking; there is a growing trend of losing touch with their Jewish roots among the children of Jews who have married non-Jews; increasingly, the Jewish world is focused in two major centers, Israel and the USA.

This collection of four position papers seeks to give as wide-ranging a picture as possible of Jewish demographic trends and their significance around the world in general (the first and main paper by Professor Sergio DellaPergola), with a special focus to the way these trends play out in the USA (paper by Professor Steven M. Cohen), Ukraine (paper by Dr. Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin) and Russia (extracts from a paper by Dr. Valery Chervyakov, Prof. Zvi Gitelman, Prof. Vladimir Shapiro). Unfortunately, up-to-date figures are unavailable: the release of the US Jewish national population survey has been indefinitely delayed, while the results of a new population census that has recently been taken in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus will only be published in 2003. Nonetheless, the figures that do exist are sufficient to provide a reliable picture that backs up the conclusions of researchers.

¹ Core Jews is the term given by Professor Sergio DellaPergola to people who identify themselves as Jews, and to the children of Jews, even if they do not define themselves as such but do not define themselves as belonging to a different religion.

² The Law of Return allows people with one Jewish grandparent to immigrate to Israel, as well as their first-degree relatives, even if they do not live with the Jewish family member.

³ Prof. DellaPergola

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Preservation and Demographic Dispersion

The Jewish people has grown by only 1.9 million people in the years since the Holocaust, and today numbers 12.9 million. The world Jewish population has grown by only two percent over the past 30 years, in contrast to a general world population growth of 60 percent over the same period. These statistics are complemented by the growing number of surveys that point to rising assimilation and intermarriage. This leads all too often to people losing their sense of belonging to the collective identity of the Jewish people.

Moreover, these years have witnessed dramatic changes in the dispersion of the Jewish people around the world. Over the past 12 years, close to one million Jews from the countries of the former Soviet Union and 45,000 new immigrants from Ethiopia arrived in Israel. Some 6,000 people from Argentina have come to Israel in 2002 as a result of the worsening economic situation there, and at least the same number are expected in 2003.

This aliya realizes the Zionist vision of Israel as a shelter for any Jew who needs one. At the same time, it slowly and incrementally turns Israel into the world's largest Jewish population center: since the creation of the state, the Jewish population of Israel has grown eight-fold, and has almost doubled over the past 30 years (it grew by 94 percent between the 1970s and 2002⁴). The demographic structure of the Jewish people is similarly changing. In Ethiopia for example, there is no longer any Jewish community.⁵ The periphery in the FSU is emptying of Jews, and it seems that within a few years, sizeable communities will remain only in a small number of the region's large cities, while aliya, emigration to the United States and Germany, a low birth rate and high mortality rate, coupled with a high rate of intermarriage, are resulting in the Jewish population there shrinking by 10 percent every year.

Two centers of Jewish population are in essence developing – Israel (5.1 million), and the USA (5.3 million).⁶ Between them, they are home to 81 percent of the world's Jews, in contrast to the some 1.5 million core Jews who live in all of Europe, including the FSU.

Integration and Survival

Research also reveals additional trends, mainly dialectical, that raise very serious concern about the future of the Jewish people in the Diaspora.

⁴ Prof. DellaPergola

⁵ There are only a few thousand Jews remaining in Ethiopia. They are overwhelmingly Falash Mura, whose right to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return is still to be determined.

⁶ According to the first findings of the recent population survey, initial and incomplete results of which were published in October 2002.

It is precisely the realization of the aspirations of Jews to be equal citizens in the countries in which they live that presents the greatest danger to the continued well being of the Jewish people. The Jewish population of the USA has decreased over the past decade, primarily as a result of a low birthrate and a high rate of intermarriage. Increasingly, the children of such marriages do not preserve their parents' Jewish identity. Even though there are differing assessments of the rate of intermarriage – DellaPergola claims that it is 50 percent while Cohen says that it is 40 percent – there is agreement about the growth in the trend, and the fact that the rate is already high. The analysis of the figures points to more fundamental disagreements. There are those who claim that the trend presents a real danger and will lead to a significant reduction in the Jewish population in the USA. There are others, in contrast, including Cohen for example, who believe in the power of a strong Jewish core, even if it is relatively small, to preserve the unity of the Jewish community of the USA. In his opinion, the fundamental changes and the intensity of the connection to the community and Jewish identity allow for the creation of new forms of Jewish identity that adapt themselves to changing situations. Yet even Cohen agrees that the Jews of the US are torn between contradictory dreams: "The American Jew is torn between two aspirations – integrating into and being accepted by American society, and Jewish group survival."⁷

Thus, in a dialectical manner, the process of integration into mainstream society that arouses in us such concern today is no more than the realization of generations-old Jewish dreams. In fact, the process reflects the success of the Jewish people in completely integrating into wider society, and the victory, despite and after the Holocaust, of emancipation – the notion that the fact that someone is Jewish is a personal matter and irrelevant to connections with and acceptance by the surrounding non-Jewish society.

Even in the FSU, researchers point to the issue of Jewish identity and the question of unity versus assimilation and integration into mainstream society as today's central dilemma. Chervyakov, Gitelman, and Shapiro note that the main changes of the past decade among the Jewish population of Russia are precisely different aspects of this central question: on the one hand, the search for Jewish identity after having been forcibly separated from it for two-three generations under the communist regime, while on the other, cultural and social assimilation and integration into the non-Jewish surrounding society, even to the extent of a collapse in Jewish identity and ethnicity.

Hanin notes that the size of the Ukrainian Jewish population has gone down dramatically over the past decade as a result of aliya to Israel, emigration to other countries, and a birth-death ratio of 1:13. Yet Hanin remains optimistic about the survival of the Jewish community in Ukraine, which, he estimates,

⁷ Paper by Prof. Cohen in this collection.

will, within a few years, number some 120,000 core Jews, and a larger number of some 300,000 eligible to move to Israel under the Law of Return. The basis for his estimate is the question of Jewish identity. It is the revival of Jewish identity among the Jews of Ukraine and the growing demand for Jewish communal support services, which will, he believes, ensure the future existence of the community, albeit on a reduced scale.

Israel as the Center

The issue of Jewish identity takes on a different hue in Israel, where the Jewish majority must define for itself the way in which the country will preserve its Jewish character from the point of view of cultural identity, while remaining democratic from the civil and political point of view.⁸ Yet at the same time, despite the clear Jewish majority that the country enjoys, the large waves of aliya are forcing the Jewish homeland and its Jewish population also to confront complex questions of Jewish identity.

Central Issues Facing Today's Jewish Leadership

Today's Jewish leaders face weighty questions about how they must act to ensure the future of the Jewish people. The most problematic issue and central challenge facing the Jewish world in the 21st century is that of Jewish identity and continuity.

At the same time, they must grapple with no less difficult issues: how to prevent young Jews from dropping out from the Jewish people; what steps must be taken to prevent this happening; the nature and content of Jewish identity and how to make it relevant to Jews living in Israel and around the Jewish world; the meaning and preservation of Jewish peoplehood in an era of open, democratic and pluralistic societies.

Within this, the question of the nature of Israel as the center of Jewish nationhood and of Jewish national life comes to the fore. Will Israel become the focal point for preserving and strengthening the Jewish identity of future generations?

This question is inextricably linked to the nature of the relationship between Israel and the second major Jewish center, the USA. The mutual responsibility that these two centers bear and the way in which they present and bear that responsibility to the 19 percent of the world's Jewish population who live elsewhere, will have a direct and decisive impact on the ways in which the Jewish people evolves in the coming decades.

⁸ Prof. DellaPergola

Jewish Demography: Current and Expected Trends and Policy Implications

Prof. Sergio DellaPergola

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Emerging Jewish Population Trends at the Beginning of the 21st Century

With the recent release of new Jewish population estimates in the United States and France, the number of Jews worldwide appears to be lower than we previously thought. Toward the end of 2002, the updated total of world Jewry amounted at 12.9 million people, of which over 5 million in Israel and less than 8 million in the Diaspora. This downward revision of the world estimate reflects a new round of Jewish population surveys carried out in 2001, and results from a continued and ongoing process of demographic erosion among most Jewish populations globally. These trends, and other related developments in the areas of socioeconomic stratification and of Jewish identification, need to be studied carefully and their implications need to be considered for any strategic assessment of the current standing of the Jewish people, and of the State of Israel within it, facing the challenges of the 21st century.

The contemporary experience of Jews worldwide comprises two distinct existential situations, according to their being a generally small minority in a vast and different array of countries and societies, or the majority among the total population of a sovereign state - Israel. Whether or not directly related to this fundamental social structural difference and to its cultural consequences, over the second half of the 20th century demographic trends have evolved in significantly different directions among these two components of world Jewry.

Jewish population size and geographical distribution

- The post-Shoah total Jewish population only grew from 11 million in 1945 to about 13 million currently, and over the last 30 years world Jewry stood close to zero population growth. Since 1970, the world Jewish population has grown by 2% only, versus an increase of 60% in total world population.
- Since Israel's independence, its Jewish population increased eight-fold and its share of the world total increased from about 5% to nearly 40% today. By converse, the total size of the Jewish Diaspora - i.e. all those who do not live in Israel - diminished by over 2.5 millions in absolute terms, only part of which can be attributed to migration to Israel.
- Between 1970 and 2002 (see Table 1), the Jewish population has increased by 95% in Israel, 49% in Oceania, and 12% in Central America, and has diminished in all other regions of the world: minimally in North America (because of the decline in the United States, by 6% in the 15 countries of the European Union, 9% in other countries in Western Europe, 23% in South America, 36% in Southern Africa, 56% in Eastern Europe and the Balkans out of the FSU, 78% in the European parts of the FSU, 90% in the Asian parts of the FSU, 91% in North Africa, 80% in other Asian countries.
- World Jewry has become largely concentrated in the two major poles of

the United States (5.3 million according to the last National Jewish Population Survey) and Israel (currently 5.1 million). The United States and Israel together constitute some 81% of world Jewry. This reflects on world Jewry's available resources and on the creative ability of contemporary Jewish communities globally.

- U.S Jewry has now been reassessed at 400,000 less than the previous 5.7 million estimate that took into account the likely inflow into America of at least 200,000 Jews over the 1990s. France is the distant third largest Jewish population, now evaluated at 500,000 and involving, too, a reduction of about 20,000 versus the previous estimate. Another 600,000 Jews live in other countries of the European Union (including current and prospective member states), surpassing the aggregate total for the 15 Republic of the former Soviet Union now estimated at about 450,000. Over 400,000 Jews live in Latin America, over 350,000 live in Canada, and about 200,000 live in other countries in Oceania, Africa and Asia.
- The location of Jews on the world map is increasingly correspondent to the ranking of countries by the Human Development Index (HDI) - an international measure of quality of life based on economic, educational and health indicators. 90% of Jews currently live in the top 20% of countries in the world. A correlation of 55% exists between the number of Jews in a country and that country's HDI. The large number of Jews in Israel represents the major inconsistency in the generally linear relationship between development of the environment and Jewish population size, but it should be noted that Israel significantly improved its international standing, ranking 22nd out of 170 countries in 2000.
- All these estimates refer to the concept of *core Jewish population*, covering persons who can be identified through national censuses or independent population surveys as Jewish, or of Jewish origin, lacking a personal Jewish identification but not holding an alternative religious identification. An estimate of the total number of people eligible for the *Law of Return*, including non-Jews, would be significantly higher. It would probably amount at multiplying by two the number of eligibles from the U.S., and by three the number of Jews and related non-Jewish family members now living in the Former Soviet Union.
- Three different social and demographic mechanisms produced these dramatic Jewish population changes: the balance of Jewish births and deaths; the balance of international migration; and the balance of accessions to or withdrawal from a form whatsoever of Jewish identification.

International migration

- International migration determined profound social and demographic change among Jews at the global level. Three major waves of Jewish migration took place in the twentieth century, all in connection with

major transformations of the global geopolitical system before World War I, after World War II, and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Jews were extremely sensitive and at times particularly vulnerable to the action of negative factors of push where large Jewish communities existed, and to a lesser extent also of pull elsewhere.

- Large scale net transfer of Jews from the Diaspora to Israel was the leading factor in Israel's population growth, and it could be attributed, at first glance, to the influence of cultural and ideological determinants and to the steady logistics of supporting organizations. Deeper analysis of Jewish geographical mobility over the last hundred years, however, confirms the decisive influence of general factors such as the changing standard of living, geopolitical position and degree of political freedom of nations globally. Israel's impressive success in attracting a large mass of immigrants and in retaining the bulk of them was significantly related to the country's ability to maintain high rates of socioeconomic development over the last decades.
- Sharp ups and downs in the volume and direction of Jewish international migration were determined by the major geopolitical changes of the 1990s. The frequency of *aliyah* has value-oriented motivations, but it also primarily reflects the standard of living and political situation in the countries of origin. A negative correlation of -60% was found between the rate of *aliyah* per 1000 Jews in the countries of origin, and the HDI in the respective countries.
- The frequency of emigration from Israel closely matches the frequency of *aliyah* from countries of a socioeconomic level similar to Israel's, confirming the relationship between global socioeconomic patterns and Jewish migration. Emigration from Israel has been particularly sensitive to expansions and recessions in the Israeli economy, namely rates of change in consumer prices and in unemployment. It has been consistent with the general aspiration and ability of Jews to live in countries offering attractive opportunities at the individual level, or to abandon them to realize own aspirations in more attractive places - whether in Israel or away from it.

Socioeconomic characteristics

- Jews are increasingly urban, well educated, and economically specialized. While full urbanization was practically achieved decades ago, internal migration constitutes an important factor of transformation for Jewish communities. Here too, as in the case with international migration, the interplay of local socioeconomic incentives and constraints tends to be the main determinant of change, although the presence of an established Jewish community infrastructure constitutes an important explaining factor of mobility trends.
- Growing concentration in large Jewish communities in capital cities and other main centers of socioeconomic and cultural interest has constituted the main trend over most of the 20th century. More recently,

this is in part counteracted by a tendency to disperse in smaller localities and to achieve a geographical distribution more similar to that of the total population in a given country.

- The educational achievement of Jews in the Diaspora is among the highest in the world and features high percentages of university graduate and post-graduate education.
- Accordingly, much of the Jewish labor force in the Diaspora is now concentrated in professional and higher level managerial occupations. The share of self-employed in trade and craft occupations has declined significantly. The share of employees has increased. This may have determined among the Jewish labor force a greater vested interest and a more conservative stance than in the past regarding the stability and continuation of the system which employs them.
- Jewish poverty in the Diaspora has not disappeared, and it has suddenly increased in countries such as Argentina struck by general national economic crisis since the 1990s.
- Jewish women have rapidly closed the socioeconomic gap versus Jewish men. Women are evolving toward achieving more education than men, an increasing share of the labor force, and a growing presence at the higher ranks of the occupational ladder.
- Much of the blue-collar Jewish labor force in Israel has been replaced by Arab or foreign labor. The increasing tendency among Jews in Israel of holding white-collar jobs makes Israel's Jewish labor force more similar to the socioeconomic profile of Jews in the Diaspora.
- The recession in Israel causes unprecedented high numbers of unemployed, also unmatched in most communities in the Diaspora (though not unheard of in Western societies in general). Full employment is particularly critical in a society like Israel that strives to absorb large amounts on new immigrants.

Marriage patterns

- A distinct erosion in conventional marriage patterns among Jews reflects similar general trends among developed Western societies. Propensities to marry have significantly diminished. An increase in unmarried couples living together (overwhelmingly composed by one Jewish and one non-Jewish partner in the Diaspora), does not compensate for fewer and later marriages. Divorce rates have increased and tend to approach the higher rates of non-Jews.
- In Israel such trends are more conservative, but they develop as demonstrated by the presence of over one million non-married individuals among the adult Jewish population.
- During the 1990s between 40% and 50% of Jews who married in the United States, France and the U.K. did with a non-Jewish partner, and higher percentages approaching 70% and 80% did in Eastern European countries. The differential frequency of out-marriages of Jewish men and women has tended to disappear.

- The majority of children of out-marriages were not identified as Jews. Similar relatively low proportions of children of out-marriages (about 20%) were identified by the respective parents as Jewish in Russia (with underdeveloped Jewish community resources), as in the United States (with highly developed Jewish resources). In view of these findings, the role of Jewish formal and informal education should be re-evaluated regarding the extent to which it actually fulfils its expected role in strengthening individual and collective Jewish identity among the youth.
- As a compound consequence, the family is characterized by an increasing share of configurations different from the conventional Jewish nuclear household of Jewish parents living with their Jewish children. In the Diaspora this comprises today a small minority of all Jewish households.

Fertility

- In a general context of low death rates, Jewish fertility eventually turned to be twice higher in Israel than among the rest of Jewish communities worldwide. The latter reflected or even often anticipated the general decline of fertility in the more developed countries. Jews in Israel - itself quite an economically developed society - were an exception, becoming the group with the highest fertility among developed nations.
- Jews from similar places who migrated to Israel or to Europe converged into the social norms of their countries of absorption. In Israeli society, community is an important intervening factor in fertility trends resulting in larger families than can be found among Jews who moved to other countries.
- Cultural, religious and community related determinants of higher fertility in Israel led to a unique surplus of natural increase and helped to maintain a comparatively young age composition among the Jewish population. In the Diaspora low fertility is the main determinant of rapid Jewish population ageing. This in turn generates a negative balance between Jewish births and deaths.
- Fertility among Muslims in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, is much higher than among Jews. Both Jews and non-Jews in Israel and in the Territories have more children than would be expected according to their general socioeconomic standards. People in Israel and the Territories, regardless of religion and ethnic origin, apparently have additional children for value-oriented reasons, possibly also as a defence mechanism in conflict.

Jewish identification

- Jewish identification plays an increasingly important role in world Jewish demography. The intensity of attachment to diverse aspects of Jewishness is clearly and positively related to Jewish family size and to

migration propensities to Israel.

- A more direct effect on the Jewish demographic equation comes through the willingness - or lack of - to belong to an even loosely defined concept of the Jewish collective. This not only significantly affects Jewish population counts, but also cuts across personal associations, with deep implications for population size and composition. During the 1990s, as noted, unprecedented percentages of young Jewish adults in the Diaspora out-married, and the majority of children of such marriages were not identified as Jews.
- In the Diaspora, lack or loss of socioeconomic status is related to the inability to purchase Jewish services, including education. Unlike in the past, lower socioeconomic status tends to become related to a marginal attitude to Jewish community life, and to assimilation.
- Jewish identification is manifested through increasingly complex and heterogeneous patterns. Rather than one homogeneous constituency, the Jewish population is therefore composed of several sub-communities whose main beliefs, interests, associations and chances of future continuity are quite different. Four major types are those for whom Jewish identity mainly develops along (a) traditional-normative values and behaviors; (b) ethnic-community interaction and participation; (c) a cultural residue out of membership in any Jewish organized framework; or (d) has no meaning at all. Cutting across these types, a strongly identified, functionally active, and stable center exists along with a more evanescent and probably numerically declining periphery.
- If it is true that the minority tends to conform to the majority of society, it is likely that the current rates of assimilation have not yet reached their full potential. In Israel, on the contrary, the possibility for larger scale *giyur* (conversion to Judaism) exists among the over 250,000 non-Jewish new immigrants and their children, mostly from the FSU, reflecting their will to be part of the mainstream Jewish sector.

Population projections

- Recent population projections for Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora indicate that according to different possible scenarios, the Jewish population globally may increase or decrease (see Tables 2 and 3). Different levels of Jewish fertility and assimilation can make a difference of plus or minus 2.5 million Jews globally by the year 2050.
- Assuming continuation of the present trends in fertility, Jewish identification and international migration, Israel might comprise the plurality of world Jewry within the next decade, and an absolute majority after 2025.
- The balance of age composition tends to shift in extremely different ways in Israel and in the Diaspora. Already by the year 2000 the absolute majority of all Jewish children of the world lived in Israel. Most communities in the Diaspora had high and growing proportion

of aged persons.

- Differential demographic growth of Jews and Palestinians will determine each group's representation in the make-up of the total population in Israel and the Territories. The percentage of Jews in Israel, without the West Bank and Gaza but including the Jewish population resident there, passed from 86% in 1968 to 81% in 2001. This decline occurred in spite of the significant inflow of Jewish immigration mainly from the FSU, *including* the non-Jewish family members of immigrant Jews.
- Substantial population increase is expected in Israel the West Bank and Gaza. Under a medium assumption implying declining fertility rates, the total consolidated population would pass from over 9 million in 2000 to 11.7 million in 2010, 14.3 million in 2020, and 23.5 million in 2050 (see Table 4).
- Assuming continuation of present fertility differentials, and a gradual convergence of the fertility of different Arab sub-populations to the same level of the Jewish population by 2050, the percent of Jews out of the total population will diminish. The expected process can be followed through under various territorial scenarios (see Table 5).
- Over the whole territory between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, the current modest Jewish majority (slightly above including non-Jewish FSU immigrants) would soon turn into a declining minority (47% by 2020 and 37% by 2050).
- With reference to Israel's territory within the pre-1967 boundaries, the current majority of 81% (including the non-Jewish relatives of FSU immigrants) would decline to 74% in 2020 and 74% in 2050.
- An hypothesis was raised in some circles that a territorial exchange would take place between Israel and the Palestinian Authority aimed to maximize ethnoreligious population homogeneity under conditions of territorial contiguity. This would be obtained by attributing to the Palestinian Authority sovereignty over about 1% of Israel's current territory including about 400,000 Arabs in the central regions and East Jerusalem, and receiving in exchange an equal amount of territory inhabited by Jews (perhaps in the Greater Jerusalem area). In that case, the Jewish share of total population would pass from the current 87% to 84% in 2020 and 81% in 2050.

Significant Issues for Policy Planning

Facing these trends and prospects, two quite different sets of issues stand at the center of an agenda aimed at monitoring and improving the global Jewish population balance sheet. Wherever Jews confront minority status, their dependency on changing socioeconomic, political and cultural circumstances is largely determined by trends and interests of the majority. The challenge is how to preserve a sense of Jewish community autonomy while enjoying the

whole gamut of creative opportunities offered by open and non-hostile societies such as those in which Jews live in the major Western countries. From a demographic point of view, this requires that those who wish to be part of the Jewish way of life be persuaded that a cultural collectivity cannot survive in the long term without primary biological foundations of family and children. A related challenge is how to pierce the surface of those who cannot be bothered or who do not want to belong in order to resuscitate in them a renewed spark of historical memory and mutual responsibility.

The main challenge in Israel is how a clearly defined Jewish majority can be preserved among the state's total population so that the character of Israel as a culturally Jewish and politically democratic society be maintained and transmitted. Israel's vested interest from a demographic point of view is therefore to encourage all possible legitimate social process that might be conducive to reducing the existing gaps in the pace of growth and the emerging quantitative unbalance between the rival ethnoreligious groups. Existing interconnections between the security situation, the economy, international migration, and trends affecting the Jewish and Israeli identity of Israelis should be thoroughly examined and understood, and the inherent costs should be fully appreciated, in order that wise and long-term decision making be developed.

More specifically:

- *The global system* should be monitored to shed more insight into future Jewish migration and the prospective growth or diminution of Jewish populations in individual countries. Understanding why *aliyah* is higher or lower than expected in specific countries could yield knowledge essential to policy planning. A better set of indicators constantly monitoring the quality of Jewish environment in different countries is needed.
- Trends in Israel's *labor force* need to be monitored as full employment, economic autonomy - to the extent that it is feasible - and control of certain crucial productive sectors are fundamentally related to national sovereignty and societal stability.
- Changes in *Jewish family patterns* are a major topic for assessment and new policy approaches. With the input of sociologists and social psychologists there is a need to survey attitudes and behaviors of young adults in Israel and in the Diaspora, and of unmarried people into their early 30s. Facing high frequencies of intermarriage in the Diaspora, the role of formal and informal Jewish education in shaping Jewish identification needs to be carefully considered.
- A critical review is needed of the prospects for affecting *Jewish birth rates* in Israel and in the Diaspora. Policy instruments can perhaps affect statistically one-half of a child, which multiplied by millions of households over tens of years equals several millions of people. The possible role of social service, financial and value-oriented incentives in

affecting fertility should be better understood.

- A major policy issue relates to the question of how to bring children of *intermarried couples* into the mainstream of Jewish society - particularly in Israel. The issue should also be analyzed of the possible role of relevant institutions such as Israel's Chief Rabbinate concerning the hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish Israeli immigrants mostly from the former Soviet Union and the modes of their incorporation within the Jewish sectors of Israeli society.
- The issue of growing *identificational gaps* within the Jewish collective in Israel and in the Diaspora calls for considerate efforts aimed at creating some enhanced sense of internal coherence and a dialogue respectful of differences.
- Demography is deeply intertwined with *the Palestinian-Israeli conflict*. Differential Jewish and Arab growth rates and population composition need to be evaluated when analyzing the conflict's continuing implications and possible solutions.
- It is imperative that in the evaluation of these problems and in the search for appropriate solutions, the global picture of world Jewry is kept in mind because of the mutual dependency and commonality of interests that ties together Israel and Diaspora. This is a main reason why Jewish population issues should be constantly kept under observation not only on the local but also on the global scale.
- Jewish demography will in any case play a central role in the definition not only of how many but, more significantly, of where and what the Jews will be in the future. This is why demography should be prominently kept in mind in any attempt to develop a coherent effort of policy planning for the Jewish People.

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*Jewish identity research in the United States:
Concepts and findings*

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The Jewish Agenda and the Research Agenda

In the two decades after World War II, American Jews were moving upward socially, and outward geographically, and their central issue was entry into the wider society. For social scientists, predictably, the principal research interest focused upon the drives and problems of an aspiring American minority seeking to rid itself of prejudice and discrimination. Those studying the Jewish experience at the time explored minority status, adjustment, acceptance, status attainment, and related matters.ⁱ

After 1967, the agenda of American Jewry shifted from integration as Americans to survival as Jewsⁱⁱ - from winning social acceptance to assuring group persistence. Since the late 1960s, social scientists too have shifted to the question of group survival, to examining the health of the American Jewish community. As early as 1973, Charles Liebman would articulate the master question up to today in the study of American Jewry.

The American Jew is torn between two aspirations - integrating into and being accepted by American society, and Jewish group survival. These seem incompatible to me but most American Jews do not see it this way. The American Jew makes an unconscious effort to restructure his environment and to reorient his own self-definition to reduce any conflict between these values. Issues of Jewish continuity and identity have become central to social researchers - and to the broader organized Jewish community - over the past decade.

In the mid-1980s, researchers staked out major answers to this master question. Some observed or forecast widespread "assimilation" of Jews and a decline of Jewish community. The signs were high intermarriage rates and lower levels of involvement in synagogues, rituals, and community organizationsⁱⁱⁱ.

Opposed this view were "transformationists" who saw evidence of continuing strength in Jewish identity and community, albeit in terms different from the past^{iv}. They saw American Judaism changing form, dropping some elements and developing or creating others, but not at all weakening, eroding, or declining. In this view Jews were on the move - in terms of geography, social class, professions or other interests - but were also regrouping in new parts of the social and geographic maps they inhabit.

Other researchers discerned a trend toward polarization - the most and least identified ends of the Jewish identity spectrum were growing, and the middle range was shrinking of Jewish involvement. Still other studies were more equivocal.^v

The 1990s saw relatively few heated controversies, save for one skirmish over intermarriage. The official analysts of the authoritative National Jewish Population Study pegged it at 52 percent, but myself^{vi} put it closer to 41 percent. However, rather than engaging in much debate, researchers turned to developing middle-range concepts and observations.

Middle range theories are the building blocks of any research program, and so it is with studies of “American Jewish continuity,” and “American Jewish identity.” This paper presents a selection of important middle-range concepts and findings in recent social scientific studies of Jewish identity in the United States. It aims to provide a reasoned assessment of “American Jewish continuity” in the foreseeable future.

“Jewish identity:” Limitations and distortions

The term, “Jewish identity” most widely characterizes the main sub-field in studying American Jewry. (In Israel, the same field is often called “Jewish demography,” reflecting the prominence of demographers in the study of contemporary Diaspora Jewry.)

In certain aspects, “Jewish identity” is not a particularly apt term. For my tastes, its connotation is too individualist, too attitudinal, and too inflexible. As someone concerned with the health and vitality of American Jewry, I am really concerned about things that embrace, but extend well beyond “Jewish identity.”

To elaborate this discomfort with “Jewish identity,” the term, “identity” derives most naturally from the fields of psychology and social psychology, with their emphasis on the individual and his or her interaction with others. Sociology, anthropology, economics, and history are concerned more with the group, community, and society. Most researchers of American Jewish identity are ultimately assessing the group character and communal health of American Jewry. For us, the study of individual Jewish identities is a convenient approach to get at larger, more collective questions. Studies of the American Jewish community, specific communities, and cultural representations exist.^{vii} But the bulk of contemporary Jewish social science in the United States derives from the answers of individuals to social surveys, from which researcher draw inferences about their commitment, engagement, and involvement, and ultimately, by extension, about the health and vitality of American Jewry as a whole.

A second limitation lies in the tendency for “Jewish identity” to draw our attention to attitudes and beliefs, rather than to actions and behaviors. Judaism inherently values the performance of specific rituals and undertaking acts of association (marriage, friendship, and making neighbors with other Jews) and affiliation (synagogues, community centers, organizations, charities). Marshall Sklare’s classic sociological work, first published in 1967

on the basis of fieldwork conducted in the 1950s, that pioneered the study of American Jewish identity reflects this emphasis on “sacramentalism:”

For the Jew, this means confronting a religion which is strongly sacramental in orientation. Since the sacraments – what the Jew call mitzvoth – are divinely ordained, their performance has sacred significance. (*Sklare and Greenblum 1979: 46*)

Significantly, the major empirical chapters of this monograph, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier*, focus on ritual practice, synagogue affiliation and involvement, pro-Israel support and attachment, Jewish organizational involvement, friendship ties (with Jews), Jewish socialization of one’s children, and the “image of the good Jew,” an analysis of norms of what a Jew ought to do to be a good Jew. Thus, in this classic analysis of Jewish identity, behavior and attitudes toward normative behavior occupy the bulk of the analysis. Following Sklare, and notwithstanding the shift in American Jews’ conceptualization of belonging to greater subjectivity^{viii}, contemporary analysis of Jewish identity needs to still assess the performance of certain behaviors as ends in themselves, as inherently important components of Jewish group identity, and not merely as indicators of some underlying attitudinal reality.

The third and final concern with “Jewish identity” is that it may well, for some, connote a fixed personality characteristic. We sometimes think of Jewish identity as consisting of a set of beliefs and commitments that individuals carry around with them wherever they may go. The Jewishly motivated will find ways and settings to express their ties to Judaism, and the unmotivated will fail to do so.

Authenticity, subjectivity, continuity

Granting, for the moment, that we take a more complex and enlarged view of Jewish identity, one peculiarly appropriate for the study of Jews and in particular Jews in the United States, any analysis of Jewish continuity still needs to distinguish among major ways of conceptualizing measures of Jewish identity. In particular, I suggest three principal alternatives are available to any researcher or observer:

Measures of Jewish authenticity
Measures of Jewish subjectivity
Measures of Jewish continuity

Jewish authenticity refers to whatever one defines as authentically Jewish. Inevitably, this decision must be informed by values and Jewish ideology. Jewish socialists, Haredim, and Zionists – to take just three diverging examples – will certainly disagree on that which is essential to being Jewish, and ultimately, that which should be measured and analyzed.

The Jewishly authentic, then, can embrace an ideologically wide range of ideas, including ritual practice, text study, and a Jewishly informed social justice advocacy. Although, the determination of the boundaries of Jewish authenticity is heavily informed by ideological considerations, this determination is not entirely ideological. One can analyze a historic culture and its development and declare that certain innovations so radically depart from their cultural predecessors that they lack any reasonable claim to authenticity and continuity. Alternatively, based upon an ostensibly dispassionate analysis, one can declare certain cultural elements – organized community, synagogue participation, study of Torah, love of Israel, ethical practice, etc – central to Judaism, however it has been understood.

Jewish subjectivity refers to the sorts of things rank-and-file Jews define as Jewishly meaningful, be they music, food, comedy, or putative traditions of Jewish intellectualism and philanthropy. For the last several years, the social science of Judaism has been engaged in an implicit, if not sometimes explicit debate over the most appropriate measures of Jewish identity. Measures of authenticity embody the prescriptive pole of this prescriptive-descriptive debate, reflecting the researcher's sense (with Sklare) that one may determine a priori the essential aspects of Jewish identity.

The vast majority of Jews, even some with a tangential tie to Judaism or actually being Jewish, readily claim to be Jewish and almost as readily assent to being proud to be Jewish. Most Jews say that being Jewish is very important to them. By such subjective measures, American Jewish identity and, by extension, continuity seems quite healthy indeed.

Jewish continuity measures refer to those elements that best ensure the continuation of the Jewish group in American society, without necessary reference to authentic Jewish norms or Jewishness as defined by the population. Calvin Goldscheider's work (1986) best exemplifies this approach, with its emphasis on Jews' distinctiveness from the larger society, the frequency of harmonious intra-group interaction, and the persistence of group cohesiveness. In this approach, the maintenance of group ties (in-marriage, in-group friendship, neighborhoods, occupational concentration, institutional belonging) will guarantee Jewish continuity, even if (and when) Jews decide to define their being Jewish in ways that some might find innovative, heretical, strange, or "inauthentic."

Jewish religious individualism

With these conceptual observations in place, we can proceed to consider some of the major trends and tendencies in American Jewry and American Jewish identity. One of the most central is the move to a more personal approach to being Jewish. Again, Sklare proved both useful and prescient:

The modern Jew ... exercises a kind of personalism in contrast to the prescriptionism of earlier generations. That is, the modern Jew selects from

the vast storehouse of the past what is not only objectively possible for him to practice but subjectively possible for him to “identify” with. Of course his personalism is not really individualistic: it is influenced by his spouse, his children, his class position, his times. These forces help assure that the selection from the sacramental heritage will not be a random one.” (*Sklare and Greenblum 1979: 48*)

By the late 1990s, researchers began to understand American Jewry as moving more decidedly in the direction of personalism, as first articulated by Sklare, and later elaborated by Liebman in a number of works (see, for example, Liebman and Cohen 1990). In, *The Jew Within*, a study of “moderately affiliated” Jews, Arnold Eisen and I described these processes in some detail. The main findings of this study, combining both qualitative interviews with 50 such Jews, and a national sample survey, can be summarized as follows: The contemporary American Jewish self sees him or herself as sovereign. The individual feels entitled, with little guilt or hesitation, to decide what to observe Jewishly, and insists on a personal meaning for every observance.

These tendencies are not entirely new, but their importance has grown of late. For years, American Jews have felt free to pick and choose their practices, but now they are justifying their choices in terms of personal meaning, and insisting upon personal meaning as a pre-condition to observance.

Studies of Gentile Americans have come to similar conclusions. However, the Jewish difference is the focus of the sovereignty of the self is on practice rather than belief, home ritual rather than the house of worship -- and the engagement with a familistic community, the Jewish community. To be sure, the self is not as fully sovereign as it could be, or as interviewees may say it is.

Family as the locus of American Jewish meaning

As *The Jew Within* details, the prime locus of Jewish meaning is the family, particularly when small children are in the home. Certain family members emerged as most prominent and influential in the minds of moderately affiliated American Jews. Grandparents (or memories of grandparents) play a crucial role in anchoring Jewish commitment. Parents are ambivalent, or even negative, figures with respect to Jewish commitment.

Negotiation of Jewish practice with spouses is a recurrent theme. Last, much practice and emotional investment in being Jewish for parents is oriented toward their children. Of course, for decades the Jewish family has been a principal arena for Jewish expression. What is new is the extent to which the range of significant Jewish family members has narrowed to a select and near few.

Also new is the extent to which the locus of Jewish meaning has been drawn inward to the self, the family, and the proximate institutions that serve them. Today’s family may not represent a more rich and meaningful Jewish

environment in absolute terms. However, relative to the community, politics, philanthropy, and organized Jewish life, it occupies a larger and more central place than it did two or three decades ago.

Related to this inference is our sense that ritual is a main source of Jewish meaning. This investment in ritual, especially that which takes place in the home, serves to differentiate Jews from most American Christians who, with the exception of Christmas, lack elaborate home-based religious rituals. Passover and Sabbath observance are the main observances people most readily mention. (Chanukah, whose observance is most frequently reported on many surveys, fails to evoke as much personal significance as Passover and Shabbat.)

Individuals feel free to decide whether to observe, when to observe, and how to observe, relating tales of innovation on all levels. The centrality of home ritual has special implication the respective roles of men and women in Jewish family life.

Women, given their greater responsibility for children and the home, even in two-career families, take far more initiative where home ritual is concerned. Sometimes they act against their husbands' opposition, sometimes with their acquiescence or support.

The decline of communal attachments

We found, in *The Jew Within*, in comparison with the not-so-distant past, a steep decline in collective commitment generally and communal attachments specifically (i.e., Jewish federations, organized community, Israel). Interviewees saw conventional organized Jewry as largely irrelevant to their lives. They were affectionate toward Israel, but clearly did not often see it as central and inspiring. Many were annoyed with Israel for, in effect, rejecting their identities as non-Orthodox Jews and as political liberals. At the same time, they did not reject all collective embodiments of being Jewish. In fact, significant numbers of interviewees expressed enthusiasm for their synagogues and for adult learning experiences.

Belief in God (as person or force) was nearly universal among our interviewees. For some observers, this finding may come as a surprise, but this God is not a Jewish God. Our interviewees' God has no special relationship to Jews, no revelation to Jews, no particular providence over Jews, and promises no messiah to the Jews. All is universal and personal. So, few Jews go to synagogue looking for God and few find God there. Like other Americans^{ix} few Jewish worshippers take the content of prayers very seriously, even among those who "pray" with fervor. Rather they seek tradition, familiarity, comfort and community, and if lucky, they find them.

Our findings represent both a break with and continuity with the recent past. In comparison with Jews of the 1960s and 1970s, today's Jews more easily

make the self the arbiter of Jewish involvement. They more readily decide for themselves whether, when, where, and how to observe ritual practices. When they pick and choose (and invent) they do so with less (if any) guilt and less reference to systems of Jewish authenticity such as those embodied in halakha. They concentrate a greater fraction of their Jewish energies and passion in their nuclear families rather than in politics, philanthropy, or social justice arenas. They find far less import in large membership organizations (that, not incidentally, numerically peaked in mid-century and shortly thereafter). They seek community in the synagogue, their children's schools (increasingly of the all-day variety, even among the moderately affiliated), and their JCCs.

Intermarriage – the major vulnerability

Any analysis of American Jewry today inevitably turns on intermarriage, its implications and significance. As noted earlier, in the mid-1990s, I engaged in a sometimes acrimonious debate over interpreting the correct frequency of intermarriage by Jews in the United States in 1985-1990.

By contrast with the widely quoted figure of 52 percent, I argued that the data pointed to a figure of just 41 percent. (Intermarriage refers to the marriage of a Jew to a non-Jew who does not convert to Judaism. The rates here refer to the individual rate rather than the higher “couple rate”). Although I argued that intermarriage was less widespread than others had suggested, I in no way wished to be seen as arguing away the importance and the severity of the challenge posed by intermarriage to Jewish identity, community, and “continuity.”

Certainly, many interfaith families are Jewishly involved, and indeed such families are over-represented among the friends and relatives of Jewish leaders, activists, researchers, and other likely readers of this essay. With that said, the more general picture regarding intermarriage remains quite disturbing. Intermarriage is disturbing in that its high incidence reflects the current state of Jewish identity, community, and connection in America. Social integration, geographic dispersal, and, indeed, weaker levels of Jewish commitment contribute to the likelihood of intermarriage. Hence, evidence of a “high” or growing rate of intermarriage is also an indicator of other telling trends in the Jewish population.

As critically, intermarriage is also disturbing in its consequences for interfaith families. Individual exceptions aside, as a group, intermarried Jews are so strikingly different from in-married families, and, even more different from the sorts of families generally found in synagogues and other organized Jewish precincts^x. Intermarriage weakens Jewish ethnic bonds in several ways^{xi}. Inherently, it means that Jews form immediate families with non-Jews, thus acquiring non-Jewish in-laws and friends.

One consequence is that Jews can less readily maintain in-group solidarity and out-group boundaries. Here, we cannot ignore the boundary-strengthening role of ethnic stereotypes, be they grounded in reality or not, aesthetically pleasing or not. Higher rates of intermarriage almost automatically bring about an acceptance of intermarriage and a weakened preference for endogamy, a norm that is central to historic Jewish ethnicity (and crucial for most other groups' ethnic identity as well).

The practice of Judaism loses its ethnic or group character in mixed-faith households.^{xii} Even if the Jewish partner observes some Jewish religious customs, he or she does so more as an isolated individual and less as a participant in shared family observance -- anecdotal examples to the contrary notwithstanding.

Out-marriage influences the practice of Judaism even where the formerly non-Jewish partner has converted to Judaism, thereby turning a potential mixed marriage into an in-marriage. Such families do exhibit relatively high rates of Jewish religious involvement, far higher than that manifested by mixed-faith households. However, converts score low on many ethnic measures of Jewish involvement, which include maintaining ties with Jewish friends, opposition to children marrying out, attachment to Israel, and organizational involvement.^{xiii} Some evidence points to very high rates of intermarriage among the children of conversionary marriages. Historian Jonathan Sarna has referred to those who convert because of their marriage to a Jew as the only known phenomenon of one-generation Jews: neither their parents nor, he suspects, many of their children, are Jewish.

And intermarriage is disturbing in its ongoing impact on leaders' and educators' conception of and presentation of Judaism, as many of them have subtly refashioned Judaism in ways that are more accepting of intermarriage. Inevitably, a Judaism that approves of intermarriage, even by way of quiet acceptance, is one that becomes less centered on collective Jewish identity, on what Charles Liebman and I once called, "historical familism," or what goes by such names as tribalism, Jewish Peoplehood, and Klal Yisrael.^{xiv}

But alongside these disturbing concerns is an instructive and even hopeful observation: intermarriage is somewhat predictable; it is not at all randomly distributed in the Jewish population. Rather, it varies strongly with Jewish socialization and education, as well as with patterns of Jewish density. In fact, zip code - a proxy for Jewish density - may be a better empirical predictor of in-marriage than intensity of Jewish education.

The well-known rise in intermarriage is but a piece of a larger phenomenon, namely the ongoing and multi-faceted decline in connections between and among American Jews on many levels. Geographically, to take one critical dimension, demographers Sidney and Alice Goldstein (1996) have demonstrated that American Jews have been moving from established Jewish

communities, with thick institutional infrastructures and high rates of communal affiliation, to areas where institutions are fewer, and institutional affiliation is lower. Moreover, those more likely to move are those with weaker or fewer connections to Jewish life. On another plane, Jews long have been moving outward from the cities and inner suburbs to the more Jewishly dispersed outer suburbs and rural areas.

To be clear, intermarriage both reflects and instigates certain sorts of changes in Jewish identity and community. While associated with lower levels of all sorts of indicators of Jewish involvement, intermarriage is particularly linked with the ethnic as opposed to the religious side to Jewish identity. Indeed, very different tendencies

Decline in Jewish community and peoplehood – both real and imagined

seem to characterize Jewish ethnicity and Jewish religiosity today. Historically, the religious and ethnic dimensions of Jewish identity have been closely interwoven. In fact, so closely bound are they that the traditional Jewish lexicon hardly distinguishes between the two concepts. Notions of Jewish peoplehood, nation, and community were suffused with faith in the Jewish God, the practice of Jewish (religious) law, and the study of ancient religious texts. Indeed, the Bible enjoins Jews to be a “holy people,” fusing, in one succinct phrase, the modern Western concepts of religion and ethnicity.

Yet the Jews' encounter with modernity occasioned a rift between Jewish ethnicity and Jewish religion. With their incorporation into larger national societies, they were obligated to adjust their group identity to the social constructs prevailing among the majority groups among which they dwelled. In the West, where Jews entered more as equals than elsewhere, more overtly religious formulations took precedence, giving rise to Reform, Orthodoxy and Conservatism. In Russia and other parts of Eastern Europe, national, cultural, or ethnic conceptions were given primacy, as expressed in such movements as Zionism and Bundism.

Since their arrival in the United States, consistent with the expectations of the surrounding society, American Jews have publicly defined themselves as a religious group. The tendency has been so pronounced that the religious definition of “Jewish” seems to have more legitimacy, if not more currency, than the ethnic definition.

Since its inception, American society has accorded a special place to religious belief, idiom, and leaders, even as it struggled to preserve a separation between church and state. At the same time, American society has been ambivalent about ethnicity.^{xv} While seeming to welcome immigrants, American society and its leaders have been decidedly uncomfortable with the

persistence of strong ethnic identities among the generations that succeeded the immigrants. Today, almost all groups expressing strong ethnic ties are nonwhite, recently arrived, and/or socio-economically deprived. In this environment, it is not at all surprising that Jews have largely refrained from defining themselves outwardly as ethnic, even as they have established and supported institutions that are seemingly both ethnic and religious in character.

With this said, we should not dismiss the idea that putatively “religious” schools and even synagogues have also served as venues for expressing and perpetuating what must be seen as primarily ethnic attachments and activities.^{xvi} Acting like many other American ethnic groups, Jews have disproportionately married other Jews, maintained friendships with one another, lived near one another, and concentrated in certain industries, professions, and companies. All of these patterns of in-group interaction constitute the fundamental and necessary social bases for cohesive ethnicity.^{xvii}

Among American Jews, ethnicity and religion are in a relationship of symbiosis. Ethnicity is strong with respect to identity and feeling of belonging to a group of purported common ancestry and history, but weak with respect to a structural basis. Religion is weak in the sense that feelings of belonging to a community of shared religious beliefs and practices are declining, but strong in that it provides a firm structural basis. Ethnicity...provides the “real” reasons for joining synagogues and carrying out religious practice. ... Religious institutions...make possible the persistence of a relatively strongly held ethnicity.

Jewish ethnicity: a serious matter

To be clear, “ethnicity” is used here to refer not to such everyday stereotypical matters as bagels-and-lox, comedians, and material ostentation. Rather, ethnicity in this context refers to the more comprehensive way in which social scientists use the word (social networking, formal association, cultural differentiation, and more). In a manner of speaking, ethnicity refers to everything that distinguishes Jews from other American religious groups. It connotes common ancestry, shared circumstance and culture, and common destiny. It underlies all the decidedly non-religious institutions that distinguish Jews from, say, Episcopalians and Methodists.

If the ethnic dimension has been so crucial in defining American Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness, it behooves social scientists to examine the phenomenon closely, especially since several pieces of evidence point to its recent decline. Among these are, as noted above, the rise in intermarriage, a decline in in-group friendship, and the geographic dispersal of the Jewish population, both within metropolitan regions and across the United States.

In the national study cited earlier, among those 55-64 years old, as many as 57 percent belonged to two or more Jewish institutions, as compared with just 34 percent among those 35-44.^{xviii} But beyond these trends, are also changes in Jewish membership organizations that report aging and declining constituencies, and centralized Jewish philanthropies (federations) that grapple with a shrinking, albeit more individually generous, donor bases. Moreover, informed observers sense weakening enthusiasm for Israel. Jewish involvement in leftist politics (socialist at one time, liberal more recently) and social justice causes seems to have waned, as recent studies point to a partial Jewish shift toward the American political center.

Even if Jewish political views remain as far to the left of the shifting American center as they always have been, Jews apparently attach less significance to politics as an expression of their Jewishness.

Indeed, a quick glance back to the mid-twentieth century suggests, by comparison, a reduction in ethnic options of Jewish association as compared with stability or even growth in the religious options. Compared with the turn of the twenty-first century, the 1950s and 1960s seemed to have been characterized by much more vigorous and vital expressions of Jewish ethnicity. These included pro-Israel and Zionist activities; liberal political mobilization; densely settled Jewish neighborhoods (and the Jewish community centers that thrived within them); struggles against anti-Semitic discrimination in housing, employment, resorts, and higher education; and the declining though still living Yiddish culture of the East European immigrant generation (now, of course, vastly reduced in number and influence).

The twilight of Jewish ethnicity?

As Judaism is drawn “into the self,” it is withdrawn from politics, philanthropy, organizations, peoplehood, Israel, and Jewish-Gentile interactions. Insofar as American Jewish group identity may be assuming a *relatively* more religious and less ethnic character, such a turn would be consistent with (and probably influenced by) several larger trends in American society. Among these are the near-evaporation, among all major European ethnic groups, of the social bases for ethnicity (for example, neighborhoods, friendship networks, marrying in) – a phenomenon that sociologist Richard Alba labels “the twilight of ethnicity” (1986).

The findings point to the power of U.S. societal expectations in shaping Jewish self-conceptions and the actual expression of Jewish group identity. Jews have good reason to believe that upper-middle-class white Americans are expected to maintain some sort of religious commitment. At the same time, as Will Herberg, Ben Halpern, Herbert Gans and so many other commentators have long since observed, American society looks askance at the persistence of ethnic attachment.

Ethnicity may be acceptable for the poor, for nonwhites, and for immigrants. But in its most potent forms, it is unsuitable for the socially advantaged (and thoroughly Americanized) distant descendants of immigrant white forebears. Accordingly, declining ethnic attachments move Judaism in the direction of other upper-middle-class white American religious groups.

Taken to an extreme, the weakening of the ethnic dimension to American Jewish life and identity could spell trouble for those institutions that differentiate American Judaism from liberal Protestant denominations. The UJA-Federation annual campaign, the social services it supports, Jews' connection with Israel, Jewish political mobilization, fraternal organizations, and Jewish community centers are all collective expressions of that which most clearly differentiates being Jewish in America from being a member of another religious group.

Indeed, the age-related, and over-time decline in Jewish ethnicity may already have been responsible for the reduction in the number and diversity of institutional expressions of Jewish ethnicity. Examples include the once vigorous and multifaceted American Zionist movement, the disproportionate involvement of Jews in liberal politics, and the prominence of centralized philanthropic agencies such as the UJA and the federation movement.

An unarrested decline in Jewish ethnicity, then, is not only of considerable academic interest to students of contemporary American Jewry. If extended, the trend will present particular difficulties for those institutions and activities that most directly draw upon Jews' historic commitment to peoplehood, including even synagogues. That is to say, given the intertwining of Jewish ethnicity and religiosity, the continued decline of the ethnic impulse will eventually pose problems for the strictly religious sphere of American Judaism.

In the last twenty years, social scientists have sharpened the conceptual distinction between what may be called "real" or "imagined" communities. The former are built around genuine interaction, often face-to-face, abetted by physical proximity. The latter constitute such frameworks as nations, peoples, colleagues, and such geographically dispersed social entities. The available evidence with respect to American Jews points to a clear association between participation in real communities of interaction (family, friends, neighbors, institutions) and attachment to imagined communities (e.g., Israel, Jewish peoplehood). In fact, measures of the two dimensions are more closely bound to each other than is either with what may be called the religious dimension to Jewish identity. Moreover, participation in and attachment to both sorts of Jewish communities, real and imagined, appears to be in decline, both with respect to over-time data and age-cohort comparisons.

Religious stability and growth: prayers, texts, books, and rituals

This apparent decline in ethnicity does not, as some have claimed, come amidst a wholesale decline in all manner of Jewish identification.^{xix} At the same time as Jewish ethnicity seems to be in slow retreat, indicators of specifically religious involvement seem to be holding their own, and in some cases rising. Among these indicators are membership in synagogues, enrollment in Jewish day schools, and adult study of classic Jewish texts. Included here as well are the publication and reading of books on Jewish spirituality, theology, and religious practice. I also include here the solidity in enrollments in Jewish studies at over 400 universities. And I cite the growth in adult education programs sponsored by synagogues, centers, federations, and such networks as the Florence Melton Adult Mini-Schools.

As Aryeh Davidson and I documented, the wide variety of adult Jewish learning experiences and the extent that American Jews participate in them goes well beyond the levels we generally assume (2000). Religious trend lines point to stability or growth in such indicators as faith in God, synagogue membership, religious service attendance, holiday observance, and ritual practice. In these respects, younger Jews are no less religious than their elders (sometimes more so), and those surveyed more recently are no less observant than those surveyed many years ago.^{xx}

Indeed, beyond the individual-level data, a case can be made that all three major religious movements – Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform – appear in many ways healthier and more vital than they were 30 or 40 years ago. The Orthodox movement has certainly developed a far greater degree of institutional independence than it had in the middle 1960s. In addition, normative standards in matters of piety, faith, learning and ritual observance have increased from one generation to the next.^{xxi} Moreover, rates of attendance at Orthodox yeshivas and day schools have increased, as has the extent to which Orthodox parents manage to produce Orthodox-identifying youngsters.

The Reform movement has experienced not only numerical expansion, but also a shift to a more traditionally oriented rabbinate and lay leadership. With some exception, movement representatives and activists urge ritual practice, Jewish learning, and engagement with Israel. Conservative synagogue members, though shrinking in number, have been improving in Jewish cultural quality.^{xxii}

According to continental survey data, the youngest adult members of Conservative synagogue members are a truly exceptional lot. One or two generations ago, Conservative Jews were those who had experienced a huge drop in ritual practice from the homes of their childhood to their current levels of observance. But, over the years, with increasingly younger groups, the parents of congregants have become increasingly less observant, even as

the members themselves have become more observant. Today's youngest group of Conservative congregants is the most ritually observant in recent history. They are the first cohort to exceed and surpass their own parents in level of ritual practice.

The young adult group is distinguished in other ways as well. In the history of the Conservative movement, it is the most Jewishly educated in terms of schooling, camping, youth groups, Israel experience and Jewish Studies at the university level. It is the most practiced in and capable of taking leadership in religious services. It is the most highly committed Conservative generation in American history to educating their children in Jewish day schools. While only 11 percent of these parents of school age children have ever been to day schools themselves, more than three times as many have sent their children to Jewish day schools. Moreover, they have developed a positive view of Conservative Judaism. Relative to the Orthodox, they take pride in their egalitarianism. Relative to the Reform, they take pride in their higher levels of Jewish learning, proficiency, and observance.

Americans, compared to others in the West, are unusual in their reported levels of religiosity, whether measured in terms of beliefs, self-assessment or church participation. In the context of American society's ambivalent view of ethnicity, it comes as no surprise that those aspects of being Jewish that are most compatible with a Protestant-styled religious conception of Judaism are also those that seem to be most firm and stable.

Collective achievements: feminism, traditionalism, politics, Israel, etc.

As I argued at the outset, the matter of Jewish continuity is not simply a matter of Jewish identity. Nor is it a matter of Jewish aggregates, that is, measuring the Jewishness (however defined) of individuals and computing the sum total of their attitudes and behaviors. Rather, we need to also look at what may be called the collective Jewish cultural product. To what extent have Jews been successful at achieving collective goals, be they political, religious or educational, and to what extent do they harbor the potential and likelihood of continuing to produce those collectively based achievements?

It is with this perspective that one arrives at the impression that American Jews are, or at least have been, extraordinarily healthy, vital, and successful. Jewish commitment, infrastructure, mobilization, and available resources all combine and must be present in sufficient quantity to produce collective Jewish achievement. Thus, to take one illustration from the political realm, we may compare the effectiveness of American Jewry during the Holocaust years with its effectiveness in mobilizing American support for Israel post-1967.

By most standards, Jews of the 1930s and 1940s were, in all likelihood and on average, more culturally distinctive and more ethnically connected to one another (and possibly more religiously observant) than were their children or counterparts a generation later. Yet it was the latter generation of Jews who

were clearly more capable of producing a significant influence on American foreign policy to the benefit of Jewish interests.

Jews of the post-1967 era simply had more financial, technical, and political resources at their disposal, as well as a society that was more hospitable to aggressive pursuit of seemingly sectarian interests within American democracy.

In reviewing such sorts of achievement since 1967, we find impressive developments in several domains. In the religious sphere, it is fair to say that every major religious denomination has become, in its own way, more traditionally minded, and its members more Jewishly schooled, if not learned. Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform youngsters of late have been receiving more extensive and intensive forms of Jewish education than did their counterparts from their parents' generation^{xxiii}. As noted earlier, standards of ritual observance in all three movements have edged upward over the years.

In yet another aspect of religious life, during the last four decades, American Jewry successfully launched a Jewish feminist movement, a development that expanded the leadership base of the Jewish people, giving us twice the selection of candidates for rabbis, educators, cantors, lay leaders, and even scholars.^{xxiv} It also very simply made it possible for more women to become more learned, more observant, more active, and more influential in congregational life.

In the political realm American Jews also amassed an impressive record of achievement. In fact, arguably, American Jews succeeded in attaining all their major national political objectives in the last 35 years, of which there were four:

They fought to end antisemitic discrimination in housing, resorts, education, and business, all of which came to an end in the 1970s.^{xxv}

They secured public recognition of the Holocaust, marked by the dedication of public property to Holocaust museums and memorials in scores of American cities, most notably the Holocaust Memorial museum in Washington, D.C.

They pressed successfully for the release of Soviet and other endangered Jewries, placing the matter of Soviet Jewry on the agenda of the then two most important world powers.

They established solid bi-partisan support for Israel, resulting in annual commitments of American financial aid approximating \$3 billion, and, more critically, diplomatic support for Israel that has placed the United States in a more favorable posture toward Israel than that expressed by any other Western country.

Each of these achievements is impressive. Taken together, the attaining of all four objectives is truly remarkable, and testimony to a highly effective, and “productive” American Jewry.

Gains in Jewish education: day schools, universities, adults, and more

Finally, in the educational sphere, the last 30-40 years have also been marked by extraordinary developments. Gains have been recorded in almost all forms of Jewish education, from pre-school to adult text study.^{xxvi} The 1980s saw significant growth in non-Orthodox day schools, followed by the expansion of community-sponsored Jewish high schools in the late 1990s. Over 400 universities in North America offer courses in Jewish studies, and almost all the institutions of higher learning with sizable numbers of Jewish students sponsor significant numbers of courses.

The Association for Jewish Studies, the professional association in the field, boasts about 1,600 members. Predictably, professors and doctoral students have been contributing to an uncharted expansion of publication in a wide variety of fields in Jewish Studies, with both scholarly and popular books for sale at major commercial bookstores throughout the United States. In adult education, several networks and centralized sponsors have been sponsoring courses in Jewish subject matter both for communal elites and rank-and-file Jews at all levels of sophistication. To take one example, the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School, initiated at three locations in 1986, now sponsors 63 sites around the world (most in North America) with an enrollment of about 5,000 learners for their two-year program of weekly classes.

Fueling all these achievements is an ongoing and prodigious record of philanthropic fund-raising. While Federation centralized campaigns, except during emergency periods, have experienced slow growth if not stagnation at times, communally controlled endowment funds amassed almost \$10 billion during the 1990s and family foundations entered the field of Jewish philanthropy with greater numbers and substantive significance.

In short, over the last 30-40 years, Jewish communal elites (volunteers, donors, and practitioners) have been operating to produce significant collective achievements in many domains, including religious life, the political arena, education, and philanthropy. These sorts of developments also need to be taken into account when assessing such matters as Jewish communal health, vitality and continuity.

Assessing the past, divining the future

Differences over assessing the health and vitality of American Jewry (or any other community or society for that matter) may derive either from differences over fact, or differences over measurement. For the most part, learned observers of American Jewry are characterized by empirical agreement, and value disagreement. Generally, the “facts” are not much in

dispute; more often, social scientists in this field disagree on how to interpret their findings, and may well disagree even more widely on what significance to attach to their alternate interpretations.

Reviewing the material offered above, we may arrive at a succinct summary of the major trends affecting the past and future of American Jewry and bearing upon the matter of Jewish “continuity.”

Jewish life, Judaism, and Jewish community are challenged by a rise in Jewish personalism, in parallel with a greater emphasis upon religious individualism in the wider society.

Intermarriage, though not rising, has reached significant levels; and while not always and inevitably a precursor of diminished involvement in Jewish life, intermarriage is most strongly associated with lower levels of practice, engagement, association, and affiliation, with clear impacts upon the next generation and more.

Measures of Jewish ethnic attachment, be it to real or imagined community and collectivity, have been in decline, and may well be expected to continue to do so.

Notwithstanding all of the foregoing, overall measures of Jewish religious involvement have been holding steady, if not increasing in some areas. Quite possibly, in-married Jews’ greater involvement has been offsetting the diminished activity among the mixed married.

In a period of rising concern about Jewish continuity, the organized Jewish community has managed to produce remarkable achievements in religious life, politics, education, and philanthropy.

How are we to interpret these trends, and what do they augur for so-called Jewish continuity in the United States? Clearly, different notions of Jewish authenticity, different emphases on Jewish subjectivity, and different understanding of the very meaning of Jewish continuity must come into play in answering this sweeping question. My own bias has been to assess American Jewry contemporaneously the way historians have assessed Jewish communities of the past – in terms of their contemporaneous achievements and the historical legacy they left behind. Thus, while the overall Jewish population is bound to shrink, and while average levels of ethnic engagement are clearly bound to decline, the size and resources of the most heavily engaged Jewish population is just as likely to expand. The committed core of the million or so most active and educated Jews who have been responsible for building and sustaining Jewish institutional, cultural, and political life in the past figures to retain or expand its numbers, and match or exceed its predecessors in commitment and educational preparation. They ought to be as well positioned as were their metaphorical and real parents and

grandparents to produce an impressive record of achievement in the major areas of Jewish communal life and culture.

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The Contemporary Ukrainian Jewish Community: Social, Demographic and Political Trends

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Introduction

A strong Jewish national movement is being reborn in Ukraine. It can be seen in the wave of immigration to Israel, the United States, and other countries, as well as in attempts to recreate normal communal Jewish life in Ukraine. The establishment and development of Jewish institutions in Ukraine, including the beginnings of Jewish communal structures, have taken particular and often controversial, forms.

Most of the rich communal, cultural, and national-political traditions of Ukrainian Jewry were lost. This had happened by the end of the 1920s when most of the local Jewish social, cultural, educational, and political structures, including religious communities and a strong Zionist movement, were dissolved. The destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, which began in the 1930s and continued into the 1950s, included not only the genocide of the Jewish population during World War II, but also Stalin's terror in the pre-war and post-war decades from which Ukrainian Jewry never really recovered. Jewish life therefore developed beyond the traditional forms of Jewish self-organization.

1. To understand the current situation of the Ukrainian Jewish community and gauge its future prospects, one should take into account three elements:
2. Social and demographic trends within Ukrainian Jewry
3. Development of institutional and other organizational communal infrastructures
4. Trends and dynamics in local Jewish politics.

Current social and demographic developments

Until the final results of the population census conducted in Ukraine a few months ago are published (presumably by the end of 2003), precise data on the number of Jews there is not available. Most data on Ukrainian Jews derive from the last Soviet population census of early 1989. In that census 487,307 people in Ukraine identified themselves as Jews – a group that demographers define as “the core Jewish population.” To that one should add persons of Jewish or ethnically mixed origin who identified as non-Jews in the 1989 census, as well as non-Jewish members of Jewish households. These along with the “ethnic Jewish nucleus” (the core Jewish population) make up what experts call the “enlarged Jewish population” of Ukraine. Different estimates of this population in 1989 vary from 660,000 to 998,000.

Even then there was an imbalance in age and gender composition – of the entire Jewish population 54.2 percent were women and 45.8 percent men. The average age of a Ukrainian Jew in 1989 was 48.5 years while the median age was 51.6. This was the result of the Holocaust, of a chronically low birthrate, more active assimilation in younger age groups, migration to other Soviet republics, and emigration by mainly young people and middle-aged people with children.

In the next decade both the core and enlarged Jewish groups became subject to contrasting demographic trends – one negative (emigration and depopulation), and one positive (a reclaiming of Jewish identity by many who in Soviet times opted to hide their Jewishness for political reasons). The end

result is that the number of Jews in Ukraine is a now matter of controversy among different scholarly approaches.

In any case, the negative population balance of Ukrainian Jewry in 1989-2002 is obvious and external migration is the major factor in that. After Soviet emigration policy was liberalized in the late 1980s and the right to emigrate was retained by Ukraine after getting independence in 1991, the dynamics of Jewish emigration from Ukraine have been defined by the interrelation of "push and pull."

In 1989, the most prominent "push" factor was the Chernobyl atomic reactor catastrophe. In 1990-1991, the basic "push" factors were the disintegration of the Soviet Union, sharpening inter-ethnic conflicts, and some panicky fears of anti-Jewish pogroms. At that time, Jewish emigration from Ukraine could be characterized as mass flight; in later years, emigration has been stimulated by social and economic crises.

Israeli policy

The consistent "pull" factor for Jewish emigration - apart from a growing sense of Jewish identity and pro-Israeli sentiments - has been the consistent Israeli policy aimed at encouraging aliya, as well as relatively liberal American and German immigration policies toward Jews from the former Soviet Union (FSU). American immigration restrictions enacted in September 1989 encouraged increased aliya to Israel. But the absorption hardships in Israel in 1990-1991 stunted aliya from Ukraine, bringing about a drastic decrease in the number of immigrants and simultaneously, the emigration of Jews to Germany increased.

In the second half of the 1990s, a stable economy in Israel compared to a background of new economic hardships in Ukraine, became an attractive factor for Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants. The new Palestinian intifada that began in September 2000 and the consequent security problems in Israel did not become a crucial factor for trends and directions of Ukrainian Jewish emigration.

Thus in the first ten years after the start of the "great emigration" of Soviet Jewry (1989-1999), Ukraine lost more than half a million of Jews and members of their families to emigration for Israel (63 percent), the United States (23 percent), Germany (11 percent), and other countries (mostly Canada, Australia, Russia, and Sweden). According to some estimates, half of all those who received permission to emigrate from 1989 to 1994 were ethnic (or core) Jews. but beginning in 1995, their numbers substantially decreased both in general and in "Jewish emigration" from Ukraine.

Thus, according to the data from the Ukrainian central statistics office and estimates of experts in the Ukrainian Jewish *Va'ad*, the ethnic Jews composed 46 percent of emigration from Ukraine to Israel, 32 percent of emigration to the U.S., and 39 percent of emigration to Germany between 1994 and 1999.

According to the available data, emigration was higher among young people and couples of working age with children. Thus, as a result of the mass emigration of the 1990s, the percentage of children and young people in the

ethnic nucleus of Ukrainian Jewry - as well as in the age composition of the enlarged Jewish population - had decreased greatly by the end of the 1990s. Re-emigration of Jews to Ukraine from the so-called "remote foreign" countries is quite insignificant, although it has increased in the last few years. Thus, according to the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior, 134 Jews returned in 1989, 236 in 1990, and 558 in 1994. According to Mark Kupovetsky's estimation, less than 3,000 Jews have re-emigrated to Ukraine, mainly from Israel, from 1993-1995.

However, the real proportion of re-emigration could be somewhat larger because not all of those who have returned, and especially those who have retained their Ukrainian citizenship, officially apply for re-emigration to the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior. On the other hand, some of these re-emigrants emigrated again after a short stay in Ukraine. It is important to note that more than half of the re-emigrants from Israel are non-Jews. Thus in 1994, of 1,088 re-emigrants from Israel, there were only 457 Jews - 42 percent.

All in all, the emigration intensity coefficient (the ratio of emigrants to the general population) varied between 6-11 per cent in 1989-1995, Jewish emigration from Ukraine decreased to 2.5-3.5 percent a year in 1996-1997, but had increased again by the end of the decade.

Other factors

Besides emigration, three more factors affect the decrease in the Ukrainian Jewish population - aging and high mortality, low fertility, and assimilation. As a result, recent estimates show a general trend of a shrinking Jewish population in Ukraine by 10 percent a year at the end of the 1990s or, more accurately, an annual decrease of between 30,000 and 50,000 individuals. The most pessimistic figures estimate that the total Jewish demographic decline in Ukraine during 1989-1998 was 342,300, including 267,000 due to emigration and 75,300 due to depopulation.

For instance, from 1989 to 1995, the ethnic nucleus of Ukrainian Jewry decreased by 55,000 people or 11.4 percent because the mortality rate prevailed over the birthrate. The situation became even more difficult in the second half of the 1990s. With increased aging of the local Jewish population, the death to birth ratio changed from approximately 9:1 in 1996 to 13:1 at the end of the decade.

At the same time, the influence of some other negative demographic factors may be more ambivalent. For instance, in the last few years, we have seen Jewish identity being declared to be valuable for various reasons, with the result that real Jewish identification has been rehabilitated. That is why we can suppose that children born of intermarriage, not only in the later years but also in earlier times, may be declared as Jews when a new census is conducted. This supposition refers in the same proportion to adults of Jewish or ethnically mixed origin, who preferred to identify as non-Jews in an earlier census.

Recent sociological studies of Russian and Ukrainian Jewish populations show that this "post-assimilation" phenomenon is statistically significant. In any case, there is a feeling that while modeling the dynamics of the ethnic

nucleus size of the Ukrainian Jewish population after the 1989 census, the negative consequences of assimilation should not be automatically projected onto the modern situation.

Social structure and communal service

Emigration and a rebuilding of local Jewish identity encouraged the rapid expansion of organized Jewish life in Ukraine. By 1992 there were more than 100 Jewish organizations in the country, and in 1993 the number jumped to about 150 in 1993, in 1994 to over 200, in 1996 to 365, and in 1998 to 474. Currently, there are at least 700 Jewish organizations, establishments, and institutions in the Ukraine.

At the moment we can specify a few hierarchical levels in these organizations. At the base of this pyramid were the numerous functional Jewish organizations. There were educational institutions - day and Sunday schools, study circles, academic, public enlightenment, and pedagogical societies, and so on - cultural organizations and clubs, and humanitarian and welfare institutions. Also included are religious communal institutions such as synagogues (mainly Orthodox but also Conservative and Reform) and Zionist organizations, which promote aliya, Hebrew clubs and Zionist unions. Additional needs are served through memorial societies, associations for ghetto and concentration camp survivors, and groups that work with youth, women and athletes. Jewish media outlets include newspapers, periodicals, television and radio programs.

The majority of these organizations were very small, with intense rivalry between them. The role of these Jewish institutions, which dominated the Jewish movement between 1988 and 1992, decreased by the mid-1990s, and Jewish city federations and communities inherited most of their functions. The municipal community became a widely recognized feature of the local organization of Jewish life in Ukraine in the 1990s. At the beginning of 1993 there were 11 Jewish territorial communities in the republic; in the middle of 1995 there were 16, and in 1997 there were 20. During the summer of 2000 the number of such entities reached 40.

These communities present different models of uniting Jews and their structures. There is a traditional model where the synagogue functions as the foundation stone of Jewish communal life in a city. In other cases this role may have been taken over by a local Jewish school. In some places city and regional Jewish councils have assumed the function of central Jewish communal organs. Ukraine also suggested a model of a Jewish municipal community as an association of all (or most) of the local Jewish organizations, united by the town's coordinating body (a city Jewish *va'ad*). Not a few communities were created on an oblast (provincial) basis.

Local chapters of international Jewish organizations, especially the JDC-sponsored Hesed welfare funds and recently created Jewish community centers (JCCs), also play an important community-creating role. This process is being assisted by the Jewish Agency, which is now running an ambitious project to promote Jewish communal, educational, cultural, and identity-building institutions in the FSU.

In addition, in places such as Kiev, Dneipropetrovsk, and Kharkov, there is a model of Jewish community similar to the Jewish federations found in American and Canadian cities.

Umbrella organizations

Finally, the top echelon of post-Soviet Jewish organizations was comprised of Jewish umbrella organizations that appeared during perestroika and post-perestroika times. Some of them involved nothing more than a declaration, while others really united hundreds of local, regional, and sectarian Jewish groups. The leaders among these umbrella organizations are:

- The Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of the Ukraine (Ukrainian Jewish *Va'ad*)
- The Jewish Council of the Ukraine
- The Association of Jewish Religious Communities and The All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress.

In turn, these organizations form two competing, over-arching structures:

- The Jewish Confederation of Ukraine
- The AUJC-United Jewish Community of Ukraine.

Leaders of some of these organizations were among the founders of the *Va'ad* of CIS Jewry, the World Federation of Russian-speaking Jewish communities and the Eurasian Jewish Congress. They also play a notable role in the "reforming" structures of the European Jewish Congress and executive bodies of World Zionist Organization.

The presence and activities of Israeli and other foreign Jewish organizations was also important. In the late 1980s they had already actively supported and sometimes planted the seeds of organized Jewish life in Ukraine and the USSR in general, and later played a very important, sometimes crucial role in developing a local Jewish communal infrastructure. The leading group of these organizations included *Lishkat Hakesher*, the Jewish Agency for Israel (*Sochnut*); the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC); and foreign Jewish religious movements - mainly Hasidic and Reform, but in selected cases also modern Orthodox and Conservative.

In early 1994, the process of active development of the institutional infrastructure of these organizations quickened. At that time, these organizations took over important spheres of the Jewish community. They sponsored numerous *ulpan*s (Hebrew language schools), Jewish pre-schools, Sunday schools, and other Jewish educational establishments, and numerous Jewish charitable funds and communal service institutions. To this one must add an impressive system of communal centers, culture, youth and veteran clubs, leadership training seminars, and Jewish summer camps.

It is evident that the demographic picture of contemporary Ukrainian Jewry provides crucial dimensions for all the above-mentioned organizations and structures and their activities in Ukraine. One of these dimensions is a degree of urbanization. Ukrainian Jewry, like other FSU Ashkenazi Jewish communities, is predominantly urban. In 1989, the Jewish urban population was 99.2 percent of the entire Ukrainian Jewish population.

The urban spread

More than half (54 percent) of Ukrainian Jews were concentrated in only four of the biggest Ukrainian cities - Kiev, Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk, and Kharkov. The process of disappearance of small and shrinking of medium-size Jewish population centers due to emigration and negative demographic trends, as well as due to the migration to bigger Jewish population centers continued also in the 1990s.

Population aging is another demographic parameter, which is crucial for development of communal infrastructure and public policy models in the Ukrainian Jewish community. The median age of the Jewish community of Ukraine is constantly growing and in 1997 reached 56.2 years. Thus about half of the Ukrainian Jewry - or about 300,000 people - are middle aged and older. This happened due to the low birth rate and because the proportion of young people among Jewish emigrants is larger than their share in the Jewish population in Ukraine. Furthermore, if people of a young age are more visible among the Jewish population of big Ukrainian cities, in the small towns Jewish communities predominantly consist of aged people.

While big Jewish population centers provide more space for a wide range of humanitarian, cultural, educational, religious, memorial, academic and organizational communal projects, small medium-sized Ukrainian Jewish entities are more often a target of welfare activities of local and international Jewish bodies. This, however, does not contradict the fact, that in the current social and demographic situation almost everywhere in Ukraine the communal welfare systems became a crucial factor for the survival of veterans, as well as other socially insecure Jewish groups (one-parent families, orphans, the unemployed, as well as single people over the age of fifty, whose employment under the current difficult economic conditions in Ukraine is problematic).

One could illustrate this situation with a few facts. The monthly income of the great majority of older Jews (about 250,000) in the 1990s was, according to some estimates, less than \$30. The monthly income of about 90 percent of them was less than \$20. Only half of the groups in risk could afford basic foodstuff. Sociological studies of Ukrainian Jewish population, conducted in late 1990s, showed, that one-third of the elderly Ukrainian Jews reported a lack of money for even minimally necessary food products, and some even said that occasionally they faced hunger. More than half of the respondents did not have the resources to purchase clothes. Every fourth respondent, which comes to about 75,000 Ukrainian Jews, lacked money to buy medicine, while more than 40 percent could afford only basic drugs. An estimated number of more than 100,000 Ukrainian Jews define their health as "poor," about 50 percent of Jewish veterans (150,000) define it as "not good", and less than 20 percent as "satisfactory" or "good."

During these studies it also turned out that the housing of about 60 percent of elderly Jews of Ukraine was in disrepair, and an estimated 120,000 older members of the Ukrainian Jewish community were in need of some sort of aid

- including 15 percent (45,000) who totally lacked resources even for basic needs and who requested ongoing assistance.

As a result, the welfare services have become one of the most important aspects of communal life in Ukraine and the CIS. The need for further development of this system comes from the fact, that resources, mobilized mainly abroad as well as locally for the solution of social security problems of Ukrainian Jewish population, currently cover only about 30 percent of the estimated amount of \$60-70 million annually needed.

On the other hand, considering the resources involved and the influence on Jewish public life, the social security system, as well as Jewish education and some other spheres of the communal life, became a field of intensive political competition of various organizations and interest groups. In the Ukrainian Jewish welfare service this became a conflict between the Magen-Avot association, jointly created by the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities (*Va'ad*) of Ukraine and the Association of Jewish Religious Communities of Ukraine in 1992, and the JDC-sponsored Chesed welfare centers, now jointly serving approximately 110,000 Ukrainian Jews in need.

Social demography and Jewish politics

The story of relations between two charitable groups is just one example of general trend. The development of a complete institutional infrastructure for the Ukrainian Jewish community since independence has been accompanied by a high degree of cooperation in the Jewish community - but also discord. This reflects a divergence of approaches toward issues of priority for the community:

- The means and patterns of construction of Jewish communal institutions
- The infrastructure, character, and content of Jewish education
- Problems of charity and welfare activities
- Forms and priorities of Jewish national and cultural redemption in Ukraine

Others include:

- The approach to aliya and Israel as well as to the Diaspora Jewish communities
- Lobbying and representation of Jewish interests
- Rights for the restitution of Jewish properties confiscated by the Communist regime
- Distribution of aid from world Jewry
- Relations with other national movements, especially the Ukrainian

Within the Ukrainian Jewish community, one can observe several basic groups and levels of cleavages, each correlates with the relevant social and demographic groups in Ukrainian Jewish population.

The first level is represented by ideological conflicts, which, in turn, can be divided into three groups:

1. Ideological conflicts that deal with ways of developing the Jewish community and understanding its status in an

independent Ukraine. For instance, the Jewish Council of Ukraine (JCU) represents a post-Soviet trend, while the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine (AJOCU) represents the concept of Jewish civil society in Ukraine. While the former quite clearly claimed its pro-government and “integrationist” orientations, the latter’s slogan is a strong independent Jewish community. Such a community would be loyal to an independent democratic Ukraine and, at the same time, would enjoy a strong and independent infrastructure as well as developing a Jewish national identity.

2. Conflicts between the Yiddishist or *shtetl* model of cultural rebirth, which is oriented to local cultural tradition, and the Hebrew or Israel-oriented model.
3. Conflicts between the interests of Ukrainian branches of foreign and international Jewish organizations - the JDC, Jewish Agency, religious organizations, Israeli, American, and European government and public institutions - and local Jewish institutions, movements, organizations, and interest groups.

The following social differences among the Jewish population (noted in sociological studies) are the reason for the second level of division:

- Regional differences between Jews of western and eastern Ukraine - the latter were more deprived of Jewish ethnic tradition. This tradition, in spite of the Holocaust and Soviet anti-Semitic policies, somehow reflected what remained of Jewish culture and national consciousness.
- Age differences between generations - the older generation is more conservative and devoted to the idea of recreating the Jewish traditional culture in the socialist style of the 1920s, while the younger generation is more dynamic and more Israel-oriented.
- Class and property differences between more and less economically well-off groups within the Jewish population.

There are also other groups of cleavages - both generation and class cleavages in local Jewish society are also reflected in regional differences. Thus, western and west-central Ukraine - Vinnitsa, Zhitomir, Trans-Carpathia, Ivano-Frankovsk, Lvov, Rovno, Ternopol, Chmelnitzki, Cherkassy, and Chernigov - have a high level of unemployment and many businesses are standing idle. Their Jewish population is small as a result of the Holocaust and significant emigration, and is mainly elderly. Consequently, the percentage of Jewish population, “eligible” for support of Jewish welfare institutions vary from 37 percent in the Volyn region to 66 percent in the Zhitomir area.

On the other hand the socioeconomic situation in central, southern and eastern Ukraine -Dnyepropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporozhie, Kiev, Lugansk, Nikolayev, Odessa, Kharkov, and Kherson regions - is much better.

In these regions there are many more functioning businesses and a lower unemployment rate. They still have a large but more assimilated Jewish population, as a result of somewhat smaller losses during the Holocaust. Emigration from this area began later than from the western parts of Ukraine, and because of this and other reasons, the demographic picture of the Jewish community looks better. The percentage of clients served by local Jewish charity groups is between 17 percent in the Nikolayev region and 26 percent in Kherson. However, due to the large cities in this region, the search for clients is more complicated and is not yet finished.

It should be also noted, that this sort of generation or regional differences were exposed not only through intra-communal cleavages, but also through the political behavior of Ukrainian Jews in national politics. For instance, such a cleavage was seen during 1999 presidential electoral campaign in Ukraine, when Jews split over the support of incumbent President Leonid Kuchma and his rival, Ukrainian Communist leader Petro Simonenko

The third level of conflict is between the ruling groups of the Jewish community, which include:

- Movements politicians, or communal polity: local Jewish political elites of different origins, including those from underground Jewish national and human rights movements of the pre-perestroika period ("idealists"); representatives of the Jewish periphery in the former Communist bureaucratic "political aristocracy"; and finally, representatives of the new generation of the Jewish elite of the perestroika and post-perestroika periods ("pragmatists").
- Bureaucratic politicians, or communal bureaucracy: officials of welfare, charity, cultural, educational, informational and other "professional" institutions, predominantly sponsored by the local activities of foreign and international Jewish organizations.
- Religious politicians, or communal theocracy: Rabbis and leaders of Jewish religious movements and congregations.
- Business politicians, or communal plutocracy: A new elite of the Jewish movement including representatives of influential groups of Jewish businessmen, both local and foreign.

Finally, the fourth level of conflict is typified by different camps and centers ("clans") within the Jewish political elite, which represent the institutionalized groups of social and political interests. Such camps may coincide with Jewish organizations or represent their organizational core, as well as being umbrella organizations, or they could act as informal groups. Political groups of this sort may include representatives of one or a few ruling groups which are connected to one another by a complicated system of political, ideological, personal, business, professional, and other sorts of relations. As a rule, these relations are based on the principle of conditional or

unconditional personal dedication to a political leader, which often transforms into a patron-client form. Such a leader articulates, represents, and personalizes the interests of his group.

It is clear that such centers of political influence are also areas of power struggle, as well as forming the background for political leadership in the Jewish movement of Ukraine. In their turn, these groups attract different factions of local cultural, educational, academic, administrative, corporate, media, and other elitist groups. These groups are connected to the centers either directly or through the professional organizations such as the Union of Principals of Jewish schools, the Association of Jewish Studies, and the Association of Jewish Religious Communities.

Simultaneously with the decrease in importance of Jewish public associations, which dominated the Ukrainian Jewish movement from 1988 to 1993, most of their former functions are now performed by broad organizations of the communal type. It should also be taken into account that foreign assistance, according to AJOCU officials, covers 95 percent of the Jewish community budget, including 15-20 percent to cover the management of foreign-sponsored programs. All this provides for the communal bureaucracy, predominantly officials and employees of social and communal services of the JDC and other foreign organizations. It is not by chance that the majority of leaders of communities and associations work and get paid by foreign Jewish organizations. On the other hand, there are frequent cases of advancement of "communal bureaucrats" and representatives of other ruling groups (i.e., rabbis) who control social and educational leadership positions in Jewish communities and organizations. This combination of public leadership and public administration has resulted in an increase in the importance of semi-official communal organizations. These organizations, to some extent, have become a channel for mutual adaptation and some cooperation among the Jewish elite of Ukraine.

The organizations described above exist in national, regional, and local variants. In addition, some local groups became branches of higher level organizations, as well as being independent centers of power within local ruling groups.

Influential centers

At the national level, there are a number of influential political centers such as:

1. The Ukrainian Jewish Council (UJC), whose leadership consists of a group of "post-communist "political aristocracy," politicians of pro-government orientation (the so-called Levitas camp). Their ideology is still close to the concept of development of a socialist Jewish culture in the spirit of the Evsektsia's Communist party committees of the 1920s. The UJC infrastructure, which was organized by similar provincial and municipal Jewish councils, became almost irrelevant by the end of 1990s.

2. A group of “new-style” politicians of national-liberal orientation (known as the Zissels camp, they formed the leadership of an independent Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine (AJOCU), still a leading political force in Ukrainian Jewish community
3. The local representative of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - JDC-Ukraine. JDC-Ukraine controls an impressive system of communal services, including cash subsidies, food aid and soup kitchens, medical treatment and medicine supply, as well as cultural events and professional training.
4. The Ukrainian branch of the Habad-Lubavitch movement controls the communal structures of many of the largest Jewish communities, mainly in eastern and central Ukraine.

Finally, two groups of Jewish businessmen, newcomers to Jewish politics, are concentrated around Ukrainian Jewish Congress and Jewish Confederation of Ukraine.

The appearance of umbrella-type centers of political organization points to a combination of all levels and types of political groups, with a focus on many different aspects of Jewish life in contemporary Ukraine that are the subject of controversy.

On the other hand, one of the most important characteristics of the current Jewish movement in the CIS is its almost total absence within national political organizations. In contrast to many other post-Soviet ethnic organizations that quickly transformed into political movements, almost no Jewish community in the CIS has sought political representation at the higher levels of power. There was an obvious disproportion between intensive and dynamic intercommunal politics and the modest representation of Jews in the post-Soviet national political arena.

There are numerous reasons for this. First, the political culture and historical experience of Soviet Jewry delegitimizes the very idea of ethnic mobilization in politics. In addition, there is an emigration orientation among Jews. There is also the influence of post-Soviet political tradition which allows for the presence of some ethnicity in the public square.

However, the margins of political presence of Jewish ethnicity are still very limited, regardless of the ending of state-sponsored anti-Semitism. Many examples of this were evident during the parliamentary and presidential elections in Ukraine in 1998 and 2000. In the course of these campaigns, the Jewish roots of some of the candidates brought out the anti-Semitic rhetoric of their political opponents.

It is indicative that many Jewish public figures see national and Jewish politics as mutually exclusive. Usually, leaders of Jewish organizations carefully acknowledge the political neutrality of their institutions. In turn, public figures of Jewish origin, widely represented among city mayors, ministers, legislative deputies at all levels, those in the governing organs of the different parties, as well as among the bureaucratic and business elite,

often distance themselves from the organized Jewish movement, are not particularly interested in Jewish ethnic issues, and thus can hardly be looked upon as representatives of the Jewish community

Business oligarchs

As a result, the use of personal (patron-client) connections by Jewish communal leaders became the basis of their political influence. This trend became even more obvious when Jewish businessmen entered the Jewish movement and headed a few umbrella organizations as well as some leading municipal communities

There are a few examples of known Ukrainian oligarchs of Jewish origin who head influential Jewish organizations and are said to control parliamentary factions, political parties, public associations, national TV, radio stations, and newspapers.

Vadim Rabinovich, a media tycoon and president of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress (AUJC), and Grigory Syrkis, former vice president of the AUJC who in late 1997 replaced Rabinovich as a confidante of Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, together with Viktor Pinchuk (another former AUJC vice-president and a founding member of the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine-EKU), are listed by the Kiev-based Institute of Politics among the five most important of Ukraine's oligarchs.

This trend can also be seen at the communal level. For instance, the president of the Brooklyn-Torgbud Company, M. Kotlyarevsky, is also the head of the Board of Trustees of the Kiev Jewish community, which also includes 27 important Kiev businessmen, and the president of the Board of Trustees of the EKU.

The Dnepropetrovsk Jewish municipal community (the fourth largest in the CIS) is headed by Gennadi Bogolubov, who is also president of the financial giant, Privat Bank. Efim Zvyagilsky, a noted businessman, and former Donesk mayor and acting prime minister of Ukraine, is currently chairman of the Council of Regions of EKU. All of these people are exerting a great influence in their areas.

However, observers think that many of the politician-businessmen joined the leadership of the Jewish movement in order to achieve personal political and business goals rather than to serve Jewish national interests. These Jewish actors do not ignore opportunities for simultaneous, and often effective, lobbying for Jewish communal interests. At the same time, such unofficial lobbying as a "by-product" of personal relations within informal groups of ruling elite often has an over-personalized and over-politicized character, which may negatively affect the unity of Jewish movement.

In summary, this comparatively new model of political conflict in Jewish communities again makes the Jewish movement a factor in national politics in the post-Soviet countries, although in a less evident way, and its meaning for post-Soviet Jewry is not yet clear.

Conclusion

Though the future of Ukrainian Jewry is unclear, when evaluating recent developments in Jewish life in the Ukraine, it is evident that:

- Jewish emigration from Ukraine has reached the level of 2.5% a year. If massive emigration continues for the next few years, and then decreases substantially, as it is expected to do during first decades of the 21st century, the Ukraine will still have 300,000 people who are part of the Jewish community (as defined by the Israeli Law of Return). An “ethnic core” of this group will consist of 120,000 Halakhic Jews concentrated in a few larger cities (Kiev, Odessa, Lvov, Chernovtsy, Dnyepropetrovsk, Kharkov, Donyetsk, Zaporoshye and Vinnitsa) and a few smaller towns. This disproves previous estimates, which predicted the disappearance of the Ukrainian Jewish community within a short period of time.
- Both external and internal factors have had a significant impact on the development and organizational patterns of Jewish communal institutions. External factors include the massive intervention of Israeli and international Jewish organizations. They have created an institutional infrastructure in the Ukraine which provides about 80 percent of the approximately \$45 million budget of the Ukrainian Jewish community. Internal factors influencing the development of Jewish communal organizations have to do with ongoing social and economic problems in the Ukraine.
- As a result of these difficulties, the Ukrainian government distributes the limited funds available for education, culture and welfare to support the institutions, which were established by ethnic minorities in Ukraine. These factors have encouraged the development of a specifically Jewish institutional and organizational framework within the Ukraine. These factors are also contributing to the rapid process of spiritual and cultural revival, as well as the involvement of Ukrainian Jews in national politics.
- In any case, the end of the first few decades of the 21st century will continue to bring about a dramatic rise in the demand for services and institutions, provided for by the Jewish community. This includes a need for national and traditional education, welfare services, synagogues, cultural activities and institutions, information outlets, youth and adult clubs, libraries, sport centers and other institutions.
- Ukrainian Jewish politics, itself a subject of current demographic trends, will continue to impact significantly on the local Jewish community, which in turn, will continue to be a noted factor of international Jewish movement and, if the Law of Return is not changed, it will remain an important source for immigration to Israel in the near future.

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The National Consciousness of Russian Jews

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Introduction

Russian Jewry, the largest Jewish population in Eastern Europe, has seen radical changes in the past decade. According to the 1989 census, the number of Jews in the Russian Federation was larger than in any other part of the USSR at 551,000, - 39.2 percent of all Soviet Jewry -.

The 90s saw not only large-scale emigration to Israel, the USA, Germany and some other countries, but also an awakening of Jewish national consciousness. A revival of full-blooded Jewish life took place and the Jewish community was restored with all its institutions, traditional and modern, and became capable of meeting the challenge of the times. A wide variety of national associations, organizations and institutions - social, political, cultural, educational, religious, charitable, for women, for youth, for veterans and so on - have sprung up and become active in the capital and in the provinces. A considerable part of the Jewish population in some way or other got involved in their activities.

At the same time the Russian Jewry developed numerous connections with the State of Israel, the Jewish Diaspora and international Jewish organizations. The Jewish community of Russia is rapidly integrating in the world Jewry, which in its turn has become a significant factor in shaping the image of the Russian Jewry. The representatives of Israeli, American and some other Jewish organizations from abroad, both secular and religious, are the main vehicles for this many-sided, at times contradictory influence.

These wide-ranging changes are in fact different aspects of a single process - the search for Jewish identity, which had mostly been lost for several generations. However, parallel to this process a different, directly opposite process that had began long ago among the Russian Jewry went on intensely in the 90s - namely, assimilation and acculturation under the strong influence of the surrounding nations, causing the erosion of the Jewish ethnicity and identification.

Empirical imaging

The research carried out by the Jewish scientific center (JSC) in Moscow was the first to provide an empirically grounded picture of the national consciousness of Jews in Russia, of the motivations and forms of their behavior in diverse spheres of national life. The results obtained are differentiated for social, professional and demographic groups. The main method used was a formalized interview lasting from 60 to 90 minutes. The specially selected and trained interviewers were almost exclusively Jewish, with a few of partial Jewish descent.

The first stage of the research project accomplished in 1992-93, albeit wide-ranging in its aspects, gave only a static picture of the Jewish consciousness and life. To assess the dynamics of the processes and to get an idea of the changes in the former Soviet Jewry as well as around it, the JSC conducted a new investigation in 1997-98 in the same three cities as the initial stage (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg).

The same methods and the same sample volume were applied, the criteria and procedures for the formation of the sample selection, the methods for selecting and training the interviewers remained unchanged. In the questionnaire titled "What does it mean to be Jewish?" most of the questions and scales were also unchanged. This ensured a high degree of reliability and validity in comparing the results of the two surveys.

The total Jewish populations in the above-mentioned three Russian cities amounted to 288,100, which was 53.2 percent of the urban Jewish population in Russia registered in the 1989 census.

Of them 174,800 lived in Moscow, 102,400 in St. Petersburg, 10,900 in Yekaterinburg. The sample embraced 1,300 persons, of them 500 in Moscow, 500 in St. Petersburg and 300 in Yekaterinburg.

Table 1
Distribution by age groups of the urban Jewish population aged 16+ (in %)

Age	The 1989 census		1994 partial census	The sample in the 3 cities	
	All Russia	The 3 cities (total)		1992-93	1997-98
Males					
16-19	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.6
20-29	9.9	9.3	7.9	9.3	9.2
30-39	14.7	13.1	11.8	14.0	13.4
40-49	16.6	16.7	17.7	16.2	16.7
50-59	21.7	22.2	20.6	22.3	22.5
60+	34.1	35.7	39.1	35.3	35.6
Females					
16-19	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.5
20-29	7.9	7.3	6.5	7.0	7.1
30-39	11.9	10.5	9.5	10.9	10.5
40-49	13.6	13.5	14.6	13.2	13.2
50-59	18.1	17.7	17.3	18.7	18.0

60+	45.9	48.5	49.5	47.6	48.7
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Ethnicity and consciousness

The question of what it means to be Jewish was the key point in the survey. Although seemingly simple, it turned out to be far from trivial.

Even the many pages of the questionnaire form, despite the title “What does it mean to be Jewish?” were not always sufficient for an unequivocal conclusion about the interviewee's opinion on the matter, not to mention the wide divergence of individual attitudes, cultural levels, life experiences, psychologies and origins.

All the interviewees were considered to be Jews by the people close to them (relatives, friends, colleagues) and were either officially registered as Jewish or, if not, regarded themselves as Jewish.

Eventually 83.7 percent of them were found to be officially registered as Jews, while most of the rest were registered as belonging to another nationality (mostly Russian), and very few of the youngest had no such entry at all in their documents.

The percentage of officially registered Jews is higher among the older people, reaching 96.1 percent in the 70+ group. In the 30-39 group almost a quarter are registered as belonging to another nationality, whereas among those under 30 the percentage reaches 42 percent.

Table 2

Jewish nationality officially registered in the ID in relation to age (%)

Age	Registered as Jewish	Registered as Russian
70+	96.1	2.8
60-69	86.4	10.8
50-59	86.0	11.3
40-49	79.2	18.3
30-39	76.3	21.2
16-29	57.6	39.6

It should be noted that Jews do not generally approve the official registration of nationality. Only 43 percent said they would ask to be registered as Jewish if nationality became an optional entry in the new ID.

The majority prefers to bypass the question by either leaving the blank unfilled (13.6 percent) or writing “Russian citizen” in it (39.1 percent).

Incidentally, among those of fully Jewish descent the percentage willing to indicate their nationality in the new ID is higher - 49 percent, and in the oldest group of 70+ this percentage is 50 percent.

But in the youngest age group of under 30 less than 40 percent would like to keep the nationality entry in the new ID, while about 20 percent would leave the blank unfilled.

The overwhelming majority (90.9 percent) declared that they regard themselves as Jewish - 1.6 percent regarded themselves as Russian despite

their Jewish roots. The rest either could not identify themselves as belonging to any particular nationality or preferred to use non-traditional descriptions like "Jewish-Russian," "citizen of the world," "assimilated Russian Jew," "Latvian and Jewish simultaneously," "Russian of Jewish descent," and, finally, "internationalist."

A peculiar fact shows that parental influence while playing an obvious important role in the formation of national identity, is not always decisive. More than 60 percent of the interviewees whose both parents did not regard themselves as Jewish nevertheless declared themselves to be Jewish. This testifies to the emergence of a still very small group of "new Jews," whose national consciousness is not inherited.

Four fifths of the interviewees are of fully Jewish descent. The survey shows, however, that this group diminishes fast in Russia. In the past 5 years the percentage of interviewees whose both parents were fully Jewish dropped by 6 points - from 86.3 to 80.3 percent.

Socialization and adoption

Of course, the ethnic roots of the interviewees did not interest us from the genealogical viewpoint, but as the basis for differences in the national consciousness of diverse groups of Jews. The results of the survey demonstrate that socialization and adoption of Jewish traditions and culture proceed differently in fully Jewish and mixed families.

The differences stem from two causes. On the one hand, they are determined by ethno cultural factors - national motives are often blurred in mixed families and are pushed to the background in everyday life. On the other hand, they reflect purely historical developments: the interviewees of partially Jewish descent are a younger generation raised under new historical conditions, the average age of this group being 15 years lower than in the group of fully Jewish descent (43 against 58).

Dual ethnicity leads to a deeper split in national consciousness. Among the interviewees of partially Jewish descent more are not quite certain in regarding themselves as Jewish, more are likely to choose the option of not being referred to any particular nationality or to give evasive answers like "citizen of the world," "Russian Jew," "Jew and Russian simultaneously." On the whole, 94 percent of the interviewees of fully Jewish descent definitely regard themselves as Jewish, whereas among those of mixed descent only three quarters give this answer.

On the average those of partially Jewish descent come to realize their national consciousness much later in life. Half of the interviewees of fully Jewish descent said that they began regarding themselves as Jewish before the age of 9. Among the interviewees of mixed descent only one in four came to this realization as early as that, while one fifth of them made the choice only on coming of age. Note that only one in ten interviewees of fully Jewish descent was so late in acquiring their national ego.

People of partially Jewish descent display a less emotional attitude to their nationality. In reply to the question "Were you more often in your life proud

or ashamed of being Jewish?" more than a third declared that they had experienced neither feeling, whereas among those of fully Jewish descent a little more than a quarter gave the same answer.

This seems to result from the fact that in fully Jewish families introduction to Jewishness, to Jewish culture and traditions is due to direct parental influence, whereas in the case of partially Jewish descent a greater role was played by secondary socializing factors like a spouse, colleagues etc. Besides, family traditions like Jewish cuisine and holiday rituals had a stronger impact on the formation of the national consciousness in the former case, while for those of partially Jewish descent literary sources were at times more significant.

In a word, people of fully Jewish descent are more often attracted to their roots by sensual perception, whereas for those of partially Jewish descent the cognitive motivation is more powerful. Anti-Semitism, which was the strongest factor in national consciousness for all the Jews above the age of 50, affected those of fully Jewish descent more strongly, while for those of partially Jewish descent it took second place after the influence coming from literary sources.

Pride of nation

The interviewees of fully Jewish descent are more outspoken in their pride for their nation, evidently as the realization of the Jews' ability to confront Judophobia and as a psychological defensive reaction. To the question "What does it mean to be Jewish?" they replied more often, "To feel proud for my nation" (13.2 percent gave this as the main factor compared to 7.3 percent among those of partially Jewish descent). The latter replied, "To feel my difference from people of other nationalities" more often than those of fully Jewish descent (8.1 percent as against 2.2 percent).

For a majority of the interviewees (52.5 percent) the first realization of being Jewish was linked to negative emotional experience, although historically the situation changed perceptibly enough. In the oldest age group of 70+ almost 40 percent recollect the events linked to the awakening of their Jewish consciousness with warm feelings.

But in the next generation of the 60-69 age group the percentage of those who remember it as a pleasant experience dropped by half, while for two thirds in this group the memory is associated with tactlessness or insults from other people. With insignificant fluctuations this was the situation during all the decades of Soviet power. Only among the younger people under 30 does positive emotional associations begin to slightly exceed negative memories (34 percent as against 32 percent).

The impact of anti-Semitism is apparently responsible for the fact that the circumstances giving rise to the feeling of solidarity with their nation are more often unfavorable among those of fully Jewish descent than among those of partially Jewish descent (55 percent as against 44 percent).

While among the older Jews the positive emotions were due to the favorable atmosphere of family upbringing, for the younger people the family's role in

the formation of Jewish consciousness is steadily decreasing. Only 12.5 percent of the older interviewees said that there was practically no Jewish atmosphere and national spirit in the family where they had grown up, whereas in the younger group 36 percent gave that answer. Inversely, almost half of the older Jews said that the national spirit was rather strong in their families, while in the younger group only 13.4 percent chose that answer.

Comparison with the data of the first survey shows that the duality of the consciousness has intensified. In 1992-93 55.1 percent of the interviewees regarded their consciousness as both Jewish and Russian, but in 1997-98 the figure rose to 60.5 percent. However, in the younger group, where there percentage of partially Jewish descent is the highest, those who consider their national consciousness predominantly Jewish are most numerous, amounting to almost a third.

Realization of the duality of being genetically Jewish, yet alienated from the national cultural roots and strongly attracted to Russian culture, led the interviewees to describe themselves as "Russian Jews" (41.3 percent) or "Russian citizens" (21.6 percent), while only 18.4 percent chose the unequivocal answer "Jew."

Self-identification as "Russian Jew" or simply "Jew" was more typical of fully Jewish descent (44.4 percent and 21.4 percent respectively), while "Russian citizen" was more characteristic of partially Jewish descent (31.9 percent). Besides, almost a quarter of the latter group preferred the terms "cosmopolitan" or "citizen of the world," which those of fully Jewish descent used less often by half.

Self and national consciousness

National consciousness and thoughts about one's national identification are linked to individual sets of stereotypes based on life experience, positive or negative, on knowledge from books, on emotional associations. Genetic connection with Jewry quite naturally plays a key role in the process of self-identification, but due to the spread of inter-ethnic marriages this seemingly undeniable criterion is no longer predominant for the young people.

For those under 30, among whom the percentage of partially Jewish descent is the highest, the imperceptible, immaterial aspiration "to feel a part of the Jewish people" becomes more important than biological affinity; in other words, the ideal aspects of self-identification gain the upper hand over the material stimuli.

An inner feeling of belonging to the nation is more important, especially for young people, than imposed identification, that is, being regarded by others as "a person of Jewish nationality."

It should be noted, after all, that young people attach great importance to ritual elements of national identification, evidently assuming that one who feels oneself Jewish ought to behave like a Jew, to follow the traditions and commandments preserved in the national memory. It is thus much less important whether others regard you as Jewish.

Such a manifest orientation towards traditions in the young people's consciousness may also be due to this age group attaching particular

importance to religion. Thus, analysis by the groups testifies that “feeling oneself Jewish” is ever more nurtured by the inner resources of traditions preserved in the nation rather than by the external factors linked to differentiation from other nations. Consolidation is becoming more important than alienation.

Religion and traditions

The cognitive and sensual ways by which Jews find their national roots must be complemented by behavioral components, by giving practical expression to one's being part of the Jewish nation. And this is what we see in reality. Manifestations of this could be expected that are most strongly nurtured by the feeling of participation in traditional and customary activities, rituals and festivities.

Most Jews in Russia admit that they are not well acquainted with the national traditions - only 18 percent said that they had sufficient knowledge of them. Despite an insignificant growth in that percentage in comparison with the 1992-93 survey, it is obvious that the rupture in the religious and cultural continuity affecting several generations of Jews in Russia has yet to be healed. Moreover, in the 5 years between the two surveys the interest for Jewish traditions had somewhat diminished. Although about a third of the interviewees claimed adherence to them, and this index had remained practically unchanged since the first survey, in 1992-93 30 percent considered it their duty to learn more about the subject, but only 22 percent expressed this view in 1997-98. A similar conclusion can be made from another, indirect index: in 1992-93 a third of the interviewees considered the knowledge of the national traditions as an indispensable condition for regarding someone as genuinely Jewish, whereas in 1997-98 only a quarter chose this answer.

Such dynamics are surprising, for participation in festivities celebrating the major dates in the Jewish calendar has become considerably more widespread. The number of interviewees who had not observed any Jewish holiday within a year before the survey decreased by a quarter as compared with the first survey and was less than 30 percent. More than a third make a point of observing the most popular holidays, especially the Passover.

Indeed, observing holidays is a most effective and pleasant way to join the national tradition. A Jew is believed to be never so strongly confirmed in Jewishness as at the moments when the Jews the world over perform the same rituals - on the Seder evening or on Yom-Kippur.

Belief in God

Only 13.5 percent of the interviewees declare that Jewishness is first and foremost belief in God; 35.5 percent answered that they see Jewishness primarily as observing the traditions and commandments; 36.8 percent attach equal importance to both of these aspects. Only 7 percent identify Jewishness with practicing Judaism, while for 23.5 percent observation of Jewish traditions and customs is sufficient. Knowledge of the foundations of Judaism is considered obligatory for a genuine Jew by 13.4 percent of the interviewees, belief in God - by 16.6 percent, acquaintance with the Jewish traditions - by 25.3 percent.

The role of Judaism in the preservation of the Jewish national identity is recognized by most of the interviewees, who perceive it broadly as not just a religious outlook, but also a vehicle for passing on the national traditions, the historical memory, the entire Jewish way of life. The distribution of the answers to the question "Do you agree that the Jews owe their survival as a nation to Judaism?" shows that only a small minority of 8.7 percent categorically deny this historic mission of the Jewish religion. That does not mean, however, that the Jews in Russia extend this opinion to the present. As Martin Buber aptly wrote, "Jewish religiosity, if viewed from the standpoint of inner reality, is a reminiscence, perhaps a hope, but by no means a present reality."

7.7 percent of the interviewees can be considered genuinely religious, as they definitely declared that they believed in God and observed at least some religious commandments. Most of these (4.8 percent) are Judaists, 2.1 percent are Christians. The percentage of Judaists among the younger interviewees (under 30) is disproportionately high - 17.6 percent of those considered as genuinely religious belong to this age group, although its specific weight in the entire sample is only 10.6 percent.

Putting the ritual aspect of Judaism above its philosophical and theological system, most Jews in Russia cannot presumably submit to the entire set of its strict demands and follow them in everyday life. Thus the national identification role of the religion is emphasized, it serves above all to imbue a feeling of unity with the Jewish nation.

The attitude toward Israel

For more than half a century since the State of Israel was established the developments in and around it have made a powerful impact on the destinies of the Soviet and Russian Jewry. The undeclared pervasive discrimination practiced for decades against this national minority was mostly based on the official anti-Zionist, anti-Israel doctrine. Israel's victory in the Six-Day War of 1967 and the subsequent confrontation with the hostile Arab world aroused empathy with the country and stimulated a profound interest for it among many Jews in Russia. It also marked the start of the prolonged, but eventually successful struggle for the Jews' right to repatriation. Large-scale emigration to the Jewish state has become a historic event and an ongoing process, resulting in the formation of the largest Russian-speaking community outside the former USSR.

By the mid-90s a considerable part of the Russian Jewry had personal contacts with relatives and friends in Israel and were involved in a variety of religious, cultural, social, scientific, commercial and other exchanges. The consular services of the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Education, Israeli cultural centers, the Jewish Agency for Israel, other official and unofficial Israeli bodies have been conducting a wide range of continuous activities in many Russian towns, some directly related to preparations for repatriation and subsequent immigrant absorption, while others are devoted to providing information, arranging recreation for children and young people, to publishing, education, charity etc.

To understand the present-day context in which the Russian Jewry interacts with the Jewish country, it should be taken into consideration that in the 90s the inter-state relations between Russia and Israel were at last fully normalized.

In December 1991 Russia joined the overwhelming majority of UN member states to vote for the annulment of the resolution which had been adopted by the General Assembly in November 1975, branding Zionism as "a form of racism and race discrimination" and "a threat to international peace and security" and in fact denying Israel's right to exist. Malicious slandering of Israel as "the Zionist aggressor," "an agent of American imperialism," its "strike force" disappeared from the Russian official vocabulary.

The state renounced the double standard in its Middle East policy *de jure* and *de facto* and became one of the co-sponsors of the Arab-Israeli peace process, thereby recognizing the rapprochement with Israel and adopting an unbiased attitude to it as important components of Russia's geopolitical strategy.

The two states established full diplomatic relations and have been expanding active cooperation in all spheres, including humanitarian and legal problems, culture, tourism, sports, business, science, technology and even military industries. Jews in Russia have been granted the right to unhindered emigration and visits to Israel, while Israeli organizations and individuals are free to conduct a wide range of activities in Russia.

The objective view

In comparison with the early 90s the Jews in Russia undoubtedly knew more about Israel and its problems in 1997-98 and could form a more objective opinion on diverse aspects of the country's life. The greater knowledge is based, among other things, on personal experience, as more than a quarter of the interviewees had visited Israel at least once, whereas in 1992-93 that percentage was only 9.7 percent.

The emotional attitude of Jews in Russia towards Israeli Jews varies widely from neutrality and indifference ("no special attitude, a nation like any other") to exaltation ("my people, I feel an inseparable bond of blood with them"). But neither of these two answers is predominant: the former was given by a quarter of the interviewees, the latter by one fifth - only half the percentage in 1992-93. The most widespread attitude manifested in almost half the answers is composed and sympathetic: "I do not feel any profound kinship with that nation, but I have a particular sympathy for them."

The Israeli culture and way of life are favorably viewed by almost a fifth of the interviewees, who have practically the same opinion on the Western European culture and ways of life. Other cultural and civilization areas, including the USA, are viewed by the interviewees as much more alien. However, analysis by age groups shows that in this respect people under 50 feel closer to Western Europe than to Israel, and only for the elderly is Israel closer than Western Europe.

Israel is obviously considered much more promising for full-blooded Jewish life. The interviewees believe that it offers incomparably better opportunities for starting Jewish families, although, incidentally, the matrimonial

attractiveness of Israel is assessed more highly by the elderly and less optimistically by younger people.

The levels of security in Russia and in Israel differ little in the opinions of the interviewees - 44.6 percent believe that Israel provides better protection, while 42.9 percent rate both countries similarly or even give preference to Russia. Prospects for personal and professional advancement, for material well-being were obviously not considered cloudless for Jews from Russia in Israel. It is worth noting that those who had visited Israel rated these prospects higher than those who had not been there. However, having close relatives in Israel failed to tip the scales in favor of the country.

Emigration to Israel as the most acceptable life strategy for Jews in Russia was approved by a quarter of interviewees in 1997-98, which was fewer than 5 years before, when almost a third held that opinion. As for the individual choice in the hypothetical case of deciding to emigrate, a drop in the attractiveness of Israel is evident - in 1997-98 it was named as the preferable destination by 35.9 percent as against 45.8 percent in 1992-93.

Among those who have close relatives in Israel 54 percent chose the country as a possible destination if emigration was decided upon, as against 29 percent among those with no relatives in Israel. This may indicate that immigration to Israel is now more often motivated by family reunion.

TABLE 1. ESTIMATED CORE JEWISH POPULATION, BY CONTINENTS AND MAJOR REGIONS, 1970 AND 2002

Region	1970		2002 ^a		% Change
	N.	%	N.	%	
World	12,645,200	100.0	12,877,100	100.0	1.8
Diaspora	10,063,000	79.6	7,852,100	61.0	-22.0
Israel	2,582,200	20.4	5,025,000	39.0	94.6
America, Total	6,199,800	49.0	6,076,300	47.2	-2.0
North ^b	5,686,000	44.9	5,664,000	44.0	-0.4
Central	46,800	0.4	52,500	0.4	12.2
South	467,000	3.7	359,800	2.8	-23.0
Europe, Total	3,231,900	25.6	1,539,500	12.0	-51.8
European Union (the 15)	1,097,450	8.7	1,015,400	7.9	-5.7
Other West	21,450	0.2	19,600	0.2	-8.6
Former USSR ^c	1,896,700	15.0	410,000	3.2	-78.4
Other East and Balkans ^c	216,300	1.7	94,500	0.7	-56.3
Asia, Total	2,936,400	23.2	5,069,900	39.4	72.7
Israel	2,582,200	20.4	5,025,000	39.0	94.6
Former USSR ^c	254,100	2.0	25,000	0.2	-90.2
Other	100,300	0.8	19,900	0.2	-80.2
Africa, Total	207,100	1.6	87,200	0.7	-57.9
North ^d	82,600	0.6	7,400	0.1	-91.0
South ^e	124,500	1.0	79,800	0.6	-35.9
Oceania^f	70,000	0.6	104,200	0.8	49.0

a January 1.

b U.S.A. and Canada.

c The Asian regions of Russia and Turkey are included in Europe.

d Including Ethiopia.

e South Africa, Zimbabwe, and other sub-Saharan countries.

f Australia, New Zealand.

Source: DellaPergola (2001a).

TABLE 2. JEWISH POPULATION PROJECTIONS ASSUMING MIGRATION RATES AS OF LATE 1990s AND VARIOUS LEVELS OF FERTILITY, BY MAJOR REGIONS, 2000-2050 - THOUSANDS^a

<i>Region</i>	2000	2010	2020	2030	2050
Medium fertility					
Total world	13,109	13,428	13,847	14,125	14,480
Diaspora	8,235	7,863	7,619	7,250	6,251
Israel	4,874	5,565	6,228	6,876	8,230
North America	6,065	6,025	5,980	5,763	5,036
Latin America	420	394	364	335	277
Europe	1,125	1,084	1,030	962	795
FSU	413	163	62	22	2
Asia, Africa, Oceania	212	196	183	168	141
<i>% in Israel^b</i>	37.2	41.4	45.0	48.7	56.8
<i>% in North America^b</i>	46.3	44.9	43.2	40.8	34.8
<i>% in other countries^b</i>	17.5	13.7	14.8	11.5	8.4
Lower fertility					
Total world	12,944	12,935	13,002	12,825	12,026
Diaspora	8,137	7,586	7,161	6,589	5,153
Israel	4,807	5,349	5,841	6,236	6,873
North America	5,991	5,810	5,617	5,234	4,146
Latin America	414	379	341	303	229
Europe	1,112	1,047	971	878	659
FSU	410	160	60	22	2
Asia, Africa, Oceania	210	189	172	152	116
<i>% in Israel^b</i>	37.1	41.4	44.9	48.0	57.2
<i>% in North America^b</i>	46.3	44.9	43.2	40.3	34.5
<i>% in other countries^b</i>	16.6	13.7	11.9	11.7	8.3
Higher fertility					
Total world	13,273	13,916	14,698	15,498	17,286
Diaspora	8,332	8,140	8,084	7,957	7,544
Israel	4,940	5,777	6,614	7,541	9,741
North America	6,138	6,239	6,349	6,238	6,086
Latin America	425	410	387	369	333
Europe	1,138	1,121	1,090	1,052	954
FSU	416	166	64	24	3
Asia, Africa, Oceania	215	204	194	184	169
<i>% in Israel^b</i>	37.2	41.5	45.0	48.7	56.4
<i>% in North America^b</i>	46.2	44.8	43.2	40.2	35.2
<i>% in other countries^b</i>	16.7	13.7	11.8	11.1	8.4

^a Projection baseline: 1995. Minor discrepancies due to rounding.

^b Out of world total.

Source: DellaPergola, Rebhun, Tolts (2000).

TABLE 3. JEWISH POPULATION PROJECTIONS ASSUMING MIGRATION RATES AS OF LATE 1990s AND MEDIUM FERTILITY, BY MAIN COUNTRIES AND REGIONS, 2000-2050 - THOUSANDS^a

Region	2000	2010	2020	2030	2050
Total world	13,109	13,428	13,847	14,125	14,480
Canada	368	375	381	375	348
United States	5,697	5,650	5,600	5,388	4,688
Central America	54	56	56	56	53
Argentina	193	171	149	130	96
Brazil	98	93	87	80	67
Rest of South America	75	75	72	67	61
France	520	502	482	455	380
United Kingdom	272	253	238	221	183
Germany	85	106	108	103	87
Rest of European Union	136	131	127	121	105
Rest of Europe (non-FSU)	111	92	75	61	39
Russia	249	115	49	19	2
Rest of FSU in Europe	131	37	10	2	0
Rest of FSU in Asia	34	11	3	1	0
Israel	4,874	5,565	6,228	6,876	8,230
Rest of Asia	21	21	21	21	21
North Africa	7	5	3	2	1
South Africa	86	70	57	44	25
Oceania	99	100	101	100	94

^a Projection baseline: 1995. Minor discrepancies due to rounding.
Source: DellaPergola, Rebhun, Tolts (2000).

TABLE 4. POPULATION IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE, BY MAJOR ETHNORELIGIOUS GROUPS, 2000-2050 - THOUSANDS, MEDIUM PROJECTION^a

Year	Israel Jews	Israel Jews, enlarged ^b	Israel Arabs	Total Israel	West Bank	Gaza	Total Territories	Total Israel/Palestine
2000	4.969	5.168	1.178	6.346	1.845	1.128	2.973	9.319
2010	5.689	5.980	1.555	7.535	2.518	1.645	4.163	11.698
2020	6.368	6.697	1.976	8.673	3.338	2.342	5.680	14.353
2050	8.230	8.780	3.121	11.901	6.414	5.146	11.560	23.461

a Assumptions: Jewish fertility stable at 2000 levels; Arab fertility declining gradually to Jewish level by 2050; net international migration = 0. Not including foreign workers and undocumented residents.

b Including non-Jewish immigrants from FSU.

Source: DellaPergola (2001b).

TABLE 5. PERCENT OF JEWS^a AMONG TOTAL POPULATION IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE, 2000-2050, MEDIUM PROJECTIONS

Year	Israel plus territories	Israel without territories	Israel with territorial exchange ^b
2000	55	81	87
2010	51	79	86
2020	47	77	84
2050	37	74	81

a Including non-Jewish immigrants from FSU (footnote b in Table 4). Not including foreign workers and undocumented residents.

b Assuming an exchange between Israel and the Palestinian Authority of a territory of about 250 km² in central Israel and East Jerusalem including significant population minorities.

Source: S. DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

[חזרה לתוכן העניינים](#)

Glazer 1972; Sklare and Greenblum 1979^{xvi}
Goldscheider 1986^{xvii}
Cohen 1998^{xviii}
1997