

Annual Assessment No. 9



ANNUAL ASSESSMENT 2012-2013

JPPI's Dashboard for the Past Year:
Threats and Opportunities for
the Jewish Civilization



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

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No. 9

Battling De-Legitimization

30 years of Patrilineal Descent

The Jews of Europe and Latin America

Jewish Leadership

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Foreword

JPPI's 2012-13 Annual Assessment of the Situation and Dynamics of the Jewish People shows a deepening of the dilemmas and challenges confronting the State of Israel and the Jewish people globally we described last year. On one hand, the turbulence in the Middle East has increased, and makes clear that Israel stands as an island of stability and democracy in the region. But on the other, a confluence of rapid developments in the region – Iran's march toward nuclearization; the civil war and implosion in Syria, as well as the increasing spillover to Iraq and Lebanon, and the increasingly sectarian nature of the broader conflict within the Muslim world; the rise of political Islam in Egypt and Tunisia; and the secular protests in Turkey, all paint a volatile and fragile picture.

These challenges do not simply have implications for the region; they also threaten the security of Jews worldwide. Therefore, JPPI recommends that any Israeli decision making process related to these issues takes into consideration, in a structured manner, the implications of any decision for communities in the Diaspora, as well as relations with the U.S. government, Israel's ally. At the same time, it is necessary that local and national Jewish

Diaspora organizations launch an education process and prepare Diaspora Jews for the possible implications of these troubling developments in the region.

As part of JPPI's ongoing work on developing and refining systematic indicators of trends affecting the Jewish people, last year's Annual Assessment introduced a dashboard of gauges that offer measures of Jewish well-being across five key dimensions: geopolitical developments, demography, identity formation and expression, intra and inter-community bonds, and material resources. They have been updated in this Assessment to show – with an accompanying analysis – how each of the five dimensions has been affected by developments in the last year.

On the geopolitical front, 21 dilemmas are laid out in this Assessment that demand a deep strategic approach and require careful attention. In other areas such as identity and identification, community bonds, demography, and economics, we continue to detect slight improvement. This is the result of a very committed group of Jewish executive leaders and the efforts they have made over the last decade.

But, this leadership group, supported by dedicated lay leaders old enough to have experienced the immediate aftermath of the Shoah, the first years of national revival, and the victory of 1967, necessarily will make way for a generational transition. This creates a very serious challenge to identify and prepare the new leadership group that needs to steer the Jewish people toward a new horizon of prosperity and peace. Vision is certainly required, but so is a practical approach in the arenas of major Jewish organizations and federations, government, politics and global affairs.

The assessment covers a number of other events and issues:

1. The phenomenon of de-legitimization of Israel is extremely serious, particularly as it has gained momentum internationally. Many efforts are being made by the government of Israel and Jewish organizations worldwide to confront this phenomenon. JPPI continues to invest its energies in this field, and is near completion of a major study done for the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs. This year's Annual Assessment calls for better coordination and action-oriented planning. JPPI recommends that the government of Israel appoint a person of ministerial rank, answerable to the prime minister, to bear overall responsibility for coordinating efforts to combat de-legitimization, and who is provided the necessary authority and resources for doing so. A project manager and a small staff should support the effort. The minister responsible should be charged with developing a strategy and operational approaches for combating de-legitimization, based on the conclusions and recommendations of the various bodies dealing with this issue, coordinating efforts within the Israeli government and with Diaspora leadership, and working to implement them.
2. Inter-marriage – and its attendant issues of conversion, outreach to non-Jewish family members, and child rearing – continues to require attention. It presses on how we envision future Jewish life and the continuity of Jewish identity. This assessment includes a new, original study of this phenomenon in connection with the 30th anniversary of the American Reform movement's decision to recognize as Jews the children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers.
3. The section on European Jewry takes on a compelling and perplexing paradox: To many American and Israeli Jews, Europe seems to be on a harsh trajectory with rising anti-Semitism, increasingly vocal extreme right-wing elements, and official challenges to traditional Jewish ritual practices. Even though many European Jews have left or are contemplating emigration, their representative bodies have not felt the necessity to launch any emergency pan-European strategic thinking process in response to these developments. Indeed, there is evidence of a thriving Jewish culture in several European nations.
4. The 2012-13 Assessment also offers a thoughtful and penetrating analysis of recent

national elections and the resulting new administrations in both the United States and Israel.

5. The rise of the Asian powers is a subject JPPI has been dealing with since 2003. The strategic pivot announced by the Obama administration toward Asia underscores the importance of Asia to the Jewish people and Israel. World Jewry has an important role to play in strengthening the triangular relationship between Israel, the Jewish People and Asia – with a focus on China and India. The Israeli government should develop and leverage existing ties and networks in coordinating Asian policy. Already, Israel-China trade has reached \$10 billion annually.

Since 2005, the Annual Assessment has examined the most significant challenges facing the Jewish world. What has remained constant is the reality that the responsibility for ensuring a thriving Jewish future is a shared one. It rests partly on the shoulders of the Israeli government, and partly

with Jewish organizations, structures, thinkers, decision makers, and leaders around the globe, but also with the general Jewish public. This demands a deeper, more formal consultation mechanism be created, implemented, and nurtured.

Of all JPPI's many activities and publications, its Annual Assessments are particularly significant. Not only do they provide an invaluable yearly snapshot of the situation and dynamics of the Jewish people, they also present a coherent, comprehensive set of policy recommendations that address current needs and, if properly heeded, could help pave the way forward. Once again, this year's assessment certainly fulfills this critical mission. We are pleased that for the past several years, JPPI has been given the opportunity for a several hour briefing with the Prime Minister and Cabinet on the Assessment and its implications, underscoring its importance. We have also briefed major Jewish organizations in the Diaspora on the Assessment, and will do so again this year.

Stuart Eizenstat, Dennis Ross, and Avinoam Bar-Yosef

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Agenda: Dilemmas and Recommended Policy Directions 2012-2013

JPPI's policy recommendations were presented at the June 23, 2013 session of the Israeli Cabinet. Prime Minister Netanyahu thanked the Institute for the presentation and assigned the Strategic Affairs Ministry with the overall responsibility for the struggle against the phenomenon of de-legitimization, according to JPPI's recommendation. The summary of the presentation, as it was published in a Cabinet Secretary communiqué, appears at the end of this chapter.

Recommendations for the Government of Israel

Given forecasts of a security deterioration (Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, etc.), it is recommended that any decision-making process in this area take into consideration, in a structured manner, the implications of any decision for Jewish communities in the Diaspora.

Explanation: Israeli military action might provoke reactions/backlash against Jews and Jewish communities in the Diaspora.

JPPI recommends that periodic "Israel-Diaspora" consultations be initiated. The subjects discussed should relate to areas of common interest and mutual interaction, and also to enhancing coordination and strengthening Jewish people soft power. JPPI recommends using the structure of the Coordination Committee of the Government-Jewish Agency to take advantage of its legal status for conducting the consultation. For this purpose, it is recommended to expand the Coordination Committee to include key representatives of other Jewish organizations, cultural and academic figures, and former senior public service officials in Israel and abroad.

Explanation: Widespread competition between Jewish organizations over resources and influence harms coordination and the concentrated application of joint efforts.

Combating the De-legitimization of Israel: The Government of Israel should appoint a senior minister, answerable to the prime minister, who will bear overall responsibility for the effort to combat de-legitimization. As part of this role, he should oversee a professional staff and receive

the necessary authority and resources to do so. The minister responsible should be charged with developing a strategy and operational approaches for combating de-legitimization, based on the conclusions and recommendations of various bodies dealing with this issue, and work to implement them.

Explanation: Despite efforts invested in the struggle against de-legitimization and local victories against some practical manifestations, insufficient progress has been made in stemming the phenomenon on the level of consciousness (thought and awareness) and a super-authority is needed to coordinate the efforts of the various bodies in Israel and around the world working on this issue.

Given evidence indicating a significant potential for *Aliyah* from Europe, a concerted effort should be made to achieve the immediate removal of obstacles in the areas of employment and social absorption, by taking the following measures:

- Establish a national authority or inter-ministerial committee including Jewish Agency representation to remove bureaucratic obstacles, ensure recognition of foreign degrees, facilitate the absorption of those whose professions require professional licensing, and amend the draft law.
- Significantly improve the country's absorption mechanisms. Develop a uniform master plan for selected cities and towns that addresses the entire range of absorption elements: *ulpanim*, children's education, community activity, and employment. The master plan

should be implemented by specially trained project managers in cities with large numbers of immigrants.

- Provide a comprehensive solution to those wishing to make *Aliyah* from the West, especially from France, by establishing an implementing body that combines the Ministry of Absorption, the Jewish Agency and Nefesh B'Nefesh's experience with community *Aliyah* projects with the lessons learned from attracting and absorbing *olim* from North America.
- Renew projects designed to promote community *Aliyah* and expand them by establishing a new system for proactively attracting immigrants.

Explanation: As a result of the restrictions on Jewish ritual practice (e.g. circumcision, Jewish ritual slaughter), the rise of anti-Semitic incidents, and demographic changes occurring in Europe, the trend among European Jews to emigrate to stronger Jewish communities is strengthening.

Key Policy Recommendations to Advance Sino-Israeli and Indo-Israeli Ties

Strengthen the staff of the National Security Council that coordinates and manages the policy initiatives of the government and of Jewish organizations in regard to Asia, especially China and India.

- Initiate regular Sino-Israeli-Jewish people and Indo-Israeli-Jewish people dialogues involving influential Jews (former senior officials and politicians, academics, and businessmen) from

the United States, Europe, Australia, Russia and Israel with senior Chinese and Indian officials with the aim of advancing cooperation between the peoples and states in a wide range of areas.

- Encourage semi-official (**1.5 track**) **strategic dialogues** with India and China that involve former government officials and academics on the Israeli side and Chinese and Indian government-linked think tanks, policy experts and former government officials, which will support official strategic dialogue between the countries. This format will allow for deviation from the structural rigidity of government-level talks with India and China, and will contribute to a more open dialogue.
- Strengthen China's economic interests in Israel through Chinese state-owned enterprises. Its possible involvement in large-scale infrastructure and energy projects could influence the Chinese stance toward Israel in the diplomatic arena. As such, the Government of Israel (GOI) should consider involving the Chinese in projects such as the gas fields, privatization of the ports, etc. (this, in addition to the Eilat rail line). Such agreements should be evaluated on the basis of their strategic (not just their economic) importance, and be signed as part of a comprehensive process of upgrading relations between the two countries.
- Develop a **comprehensive Jewish and Israeli cultural outreach strategy** to China and India that involves world Jewry.

This strategy should place an emphasis on mid-level officials and on individuals of standing whose influence is likely to increase in the future. In particular, **Jewish-Israeli cultural institutes should be opened in Beijing and in New Delhi** (based on the model of the German Goethe Institutes and French cultural institutes around the world). Such institutes should offer Hebrew language instruction, intensive courses for diplomats and businessmen, lectures on Jewish religion and history, and seminars and panel discussions on topics related to Israel and the Diaspora.

Explanation: The economic and geopolitical rise of Asia, particularly India and China, together with their involvement in the Middle East, requires that Israel prepare itself accordingly, while at the same time making every effort to safeguard its special relationship with the United States.

Recommendations for Jewish Communities in the Diaspora

In light of the possibility that Israel's security situation will deteriorate (Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, etc.), Diaspora communities must make preparations for crisis management, assisted by the Fund for Jewish Community Security, headed by JAFI's executive chairman and the secretary of the Israeli Cabinet. Crisis management preparations should include coordinating with local security authorities and refreshing the crisis management system according to the training manual of the Jewish People Policy Institute.

With the North American Jewish leadership entering a period of generational change and a decline in Jewish representation in the U.S. Congress, Jewish communities and organizations must encourage promising and talented young people both to enter political life and to take on senior community positions.

In order to enhance the preparation of a pool of qualified new leadership, the following steps should be taken:

- Major Jewish organizations should plan and launch an appropriately budgeted long-term national cooperative initiative that will aid in the recruitment, professional development, and retention of human resources for the next generation of leadership. The project should relate to the network of Jewish organizations as a national system with common

requirements and mutual dependency, and deal with articulating a common vision and agenda for local, national, and international Jewish organizations.

- Establish a North American multi-disciplinary center for executive development.

Increasing levels of immigration by Latin American Jews in the United States requires that the Jewish establishment develop new strategies to promote immigrant integration in order to both strengthen the Jewish community and to benefit from their unique capabilities to build ties with the North American Hispanic community whose influence is steadily growing.

Diaspora Jewry should coordinate its efforts to aid Israel's poor with the Israeli government with assistance by JAFI and the JDC.

Explanation: An OECD report finds that more than 20% of Israelis are poor, when measured by income. According to Israel's National Insurance Institute, which distinguishes between income levels and expenditure levels, only 12.6% of Israelis live below the poverty line when measured in terms of family expenditures. A significant proportion of the overall population of poor Israelis are from the Haredi and Arab sectors, and do not participate in the labor force at rates similar to the rest of the population. Responsibility for correcting this situation lies with the Israeli government. Uncoordinated action by Diaspora Jewish communities could harm efforts to integrate these populations into the work force.

In light of negative developments affecting European Jewish communities, and in order to deal with new challenges, it is recommended that a pan-European coordinating body be established that includes a prominent public figure, a rabbi and a lawyer, as well as two observers, one each from the U.S. Jewish community and the Israeli government. If necessary, the coordinating body should develop a pan-European Jewish strategy to counter efforts to ban Jewish religious rituals such as circumcision and kosher slaughter, and to counter growing anti-Semitic rhetoric and acts.

Policy Recommendations Concerning Marriage between Jews and Non-Jews in the United States

- A. Recent research indicates that the connection of a percentage of non-Orthodox Jewish males to their Jewish identity poses a significant challenge. New, intensive research should be conducted to identify new ways of connecting members of this group to their Jewishness, in the case of Jewish men married to Jewish women, and especially in the case of Jewish men married to non-Jewish women.
- B. From the Jewish people's perspective, the importance of conversion should be impressed upon non-Jewish spouses, especially non-Jewish women married to Jewish men.

Explanation: According to existing research, families in which non-Jewish partners convert show commitment levels very similar to those who married within the Jewish community in terms of their involvement in Jewish life.

Policy Dilemmas in the Geopolitical Arena

Security Threats and Strategic Issues:

1. Should Israel strike Iran alone in the event it concludes that Iran's nuclear program has crossed the red line?
2. How can Israel continue to block the transfer of advanced weaponry to Hezbollah without being drawn into the Syrian morass or being pulled into a war in the north?
3. How can we prevent the use of Syrian chemical weapons against Israeli targets and keep such weapons from falling into the hands of terrorist organizations?
4. How can the terrorist threat from Sinai be curbed?
5. How should Israel deal with Hamas in order to deter it and maintain quiet on the Gaza border?
6. How can Israel build a diplomatic and security apparatus that will ensure the protection of gas drilling areas and delivery channels?
7. Who is the ideal customer for Israeli gas and what are Israel's preferred supply channels?

Israel and its Neighbors

8. What preparations should be made for the possible break-up of Syria and its becoming a failed state?
9. How can Israel continue to maintain the peace treaty with Egypt and to strengthen security cooperation between the two countries?

10. How can we continue to support the Kingdom of Jordan – its security, economy, and stability?
11. How can we continue to foster Israel's relations with Turkey following Netanyahu's apology over the flotilla incident?
12. In what way should Israel relate to the "Arab Spring" and to the rise of political Islam so as to serve Israeli interests?
13. Do Israel and the Jewish people have the ability to moderate the hatred of the Arab Street, whose influence over the policy of Arab regimes is growing?

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

14. What is the best and most correct way to revive the peace process and make it effective?
15. What parameters does Israel prefer for a permanent agreement with the Palestinians?
16. Does Israel prefer an alternative other than a permanent agreement: Conflict management? Interim agreements? Unilateral steps?
17. How can we involve Egypt and other Arab countries in a beneficial role in the peace process?

The Relationship Triangle: Jerusalem-Washington-U.S. Jewish Community:

18. How can Israel continue to maintain its strategic alliance with the United States without relinquishing essential Israeli interests?
19. How can Israel "persuade" the United States to remain a present and dominant force in the Middle East?

20. How can Israel benefit from the support of American Jews without placing them in a difficult position with the administration or with other American citizens?

Israel's Standing in the International Arena:

21. Is it possible to improve Israel's international standing without moving toward an Israeli-Palestinian settlement, and if so, how?

Prime Minister Netanyahu's remarks from the Cabinet communiqué, June 23, 2013

"Jewish People Policy Institute leaders Dennis Ross, Stuart Eizenstat, Avinoam Bar-Yosef and Einat Wilf briefed ministers on the JPPI's 2012-2013 Annual Assessment and referred to – inter alia – the challenges facing the Jewish People in light of the changes in our region and in the international arena.

The speakers also spoke about the need to deal with demographic changes in the U.S. in the wake of which there is growing influence by new population components and elites that have no tradition of support for Israel. They also discussed changes in U.S. and European Jewish communities, the weakening of their relationship to the State of Israel and the need to strengthen it.

The speakers addressed the need to devote resources and develop tools to formulate Israeli policy in light of the changes in our region and in the international arena especially in light of the need to boost efforts to maintain links with Jews around the world.

Special emphasis was placed on the need to develop tools to boost the effort to preserve Israel's status around the world, including in the Jewish communities, and struggle against the de-legitimization and boycott of Israel.

Prime Minister Netanyahu summarized the discussion and said:

"De-legitimization is a very serious phenomenon. It is a network of incitement against Israel and the Jewish People in order to undermine the existence

of Israel as the Jewish national state and its right to defend itself by itself against its enemies. To our regret, this is a wave that has grown in recent years.

For a long time, many efforts have been made, both by the Government of Israel and organizations in Israel and around the world to deal with this phenomenon.

However, in order to optimize efforts, coordination between the various active bodies must be improved via a comprehensive action plan.

I would like to thank the JPPI and its leaders, Stuart Eizenstat, Dennis Ross and Avinoam Bar Yosef for their ramified and welcome contribution on this matter. In light of the data they presented:

- I have assigned to the Strategic Affairs Ministry the overall responsibility for the struggle against de-legitimization, including coordinating the efforts with organizations in Israel and around the world in dealing with the phenomenon directed against Israel and the Jewish People.
- In the framework of its responsibilities, the Strategic Affairs Ministry will coordinate a professional staff on the struggle against de-legitimization. We will see to it that the Ministry will have at its disposal the authority and the tools necessary to carry out this important mission.
- The Strategic Affairs Ministry will be responsible for developing a strategy and ways to combat de-legitimization and will work to implement them."

Germany	30,000	119,000	108,000	39,028	5	≤20	45-54:9	≥50	100	2/691 ^u
Romania	-	9,500	-	12,808	56	-	-	-	51	3/588 ^u
Bulgaria	-	2,000	-	14,312	57	-	-	-	17	2/240 ^u
Hungary	70,000	48,200	34,000	19,638	37	≤15	60	-	110	7/386
Other EU ⁱ	171,000	159,700	134,000	-	-	10-25	33-75	≥50	-	-
Other non-EU ^k	140,000	29,500	34,000	-	-	5-20	50-80	-	-	-
FSU	2,151,000	296,900	173,000	-	-	-	-	-	7,220	-
Russia	808,000	194,000	130,000 ⁱ	17,709	55	≤15	80	-	3,545 ^p	4/616 ^u
Ukraine	777,000	67,000	25,000 ⁱ	7,374	78	≤15	80	-	2,048 ^p	7/450 ^u
Rest FSU Europe ^l	312,000	15,900	15,000 ⁱ	-	-	≤15	65-75	-	679	-
FSU Asia	254,000	20,000	3,000	-	-	≤15	50-75	-	948	-
ASIA (REST) ^m	104,000	20,000	21,000	-	-	-	-	-	189	-
Africa	195,000	75,300	60,000	-	-	-	-	-	2,643	-
Ethiopia	-	100	-	1,191	173	-	-	-	2,432	-
South Africa	118,000	70,200	57,000	11,375	121	85	15-24:9	≥75	125	-
Morocco	-	2,500	-	5,265	130	-	-	-	-	-
Other Nations	-	2,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oceania	70,000	119,600	105,000 ⁱ	-	-	-	-	-	104	-
Australia	65,000	112,000	97,000 ⁱ	42,640	2	65	15-24:9	≥65	-	3/226
New Zealand	5,000	7,500	8,000 ⁱ	29,730	6	-	15-24:9	-	-	1/120 ^u

Country	Jewish Population Core Definition			GDP per capita, PPP U.S. \$	Human Development Index (HDI) – World Rank	Jewish Day- school Attendance Rate (%)	Recent Out- marriage Rate (%)	Ever Visited Israel, % of Jew. Pop.	Aliyah	Number Of Jewish Parliament Members / Seats In Parliament
	1970 ^a	2012 ^b	Projected 2020 ^c							
World	12,633,000	13,848,300	13,827,000	-	-	-	-	-	16,557 ^f	-
Israel	2,582,000	6,014,400 ^g	6,543,000 ⁱ	32,312	16	97	5	-	-	108/120 ^r
North America	5,686,000	5,800,000	5,581,000	-	-	-	-	-	2,525	-
United States	5,400,000	5,425,000	5,200,000 ^h	49,922	3	25 ^h	35-44,9	≥35	2,290	33/53 ^s
Canada	286,000	375,000	381,000	42,734	11	55	15-24,9	≥65	235	8/41 ^t
Latin America	514,000	383,200	364,000	-	-	-	-	-	785	-
Argentina	282,000	181,800	162,000 ⁱ	18,112	45	50-55	25-34,9	≥50	222	11/329 ^u
Brazil	90,000	95,300	90,000 ⁱ	11,875	85	71	25-34,9	≥50	162	8/594
Mexico	35,000	39,200	42,000	15,312	61	85	1-4,9	≥70	-	-
Other Nations	107,000	66,900	70,000 ⁱ	-	-	75	15-95	≥50	-	-
Europe non-FSU	1,331,000	1,138,900	1,070,000	-	-	-	-	-	3,089	-
France	530,000	480,000	482,000	35,548	20	40	25-34,9	≥70	1,653	13/925 ^u
United Kingdom	390,000	291,000	278,000 ⁱ	36,941	26	60	25-34,9	≥75	569	89/1438

- a. Source: Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, The A. Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- b. Source (except where stated otherwise): DellaPergola, Sergio, (2013), "World Jewish Population, 2012," in Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin. (Editors), **The American Jewish Year Book**, Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 213-283.
- c. Source: DellaPergola, Sergio, (2011), **Jewish Demographic Policies: Population Trends and Options in Israel and in the Diaspora**, The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI), pp. 66-67.
- d. A measure of a country's development based on health, educational attainment, and real income. Source: Human Development Report 2013- The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World, **United Nations Development Programme** (UNDP).
- e. Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract Of Israel 2013/1. The data on continents are not sums of mentioned countries but of general Aliyah figures from the continent.
- f. Including country not specified.
- g. Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract Of Israel 2013/1. The population is defined on the basis of the permanent (de jure) population, and consists of permanent residents - Israeli citizens and permanent residents without Israeli citizenship (including those who had been out of the country less than one year at the time of the estimate). The data here are according to segmentation of the population by religion and refer only to the number of Jewish residents.
- h. Based on adjusted response from NJPS 2001.
- i. Revised population projections for 2020.
- j. Without Baltic States.
- k. Including Turkey.
- l. With Baltic States.
- m. Without Israel, FSU and Turkey.
- n. After downward reduction following NJPS 2001.
- o. Source: Website for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook for 2012. Gross domestic product based on purchasing-power-parity (PPP), per capita (international coin).
- p. Source: Press release by Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 27/2/2013 - Immigration to Israel in 2012.
- q. Number of self-identified Jewish members of parliament according to the World Jewish Congress dated June 2011, except where stated otherwise.
- r. Source: http://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/heb/Individual_find.asp
- s. Source: The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life (2012) Faith on the Hill: The Religious Composition of the 113th Congress. http://www.pewforum.org/Government/Faith-on-the-Hill—The-Religious-Composition-of-the-113th-Congress.aspx
- t. Source: The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, Canada.
- u. Data for previous parliament.



2012-2013 Integrated 'Net' Assessment

As previously, JPPI has focused on five key dimensions, **Geopolitics, Demography, Identity formation and expression, Bonds within and between communities, and Material resources.**¹ Some of the reasoning behind this selection is as follows:

- **Geopolitics:** What is the 'net' power of the Jewish People in comparison to the threats it faces?
- **Demography:** Numbers matter for sustaining communities and culture, generating political power, fostering in-marriage, and maintaining excellence in education.
- **Identity Formation and Expression:** The degree of active pursuit by individuals of the various forms for affirming identification with the Jewish collectivity determines much of the trajectory of Jewish people interests in modern times.
- **Bonds Within and Between Communities:** This dimension examines the nature of the fundamental bonds between Israel and other Jewish communities as well as the state of bonds within those communities themselves.

- **Material Resources:** This dimension examines wealth accumulation and its availability for Jewish causes, Jewish involvement in science and technology as key sources of future economic power, and economic growth in Israel.

When compared to the previous year,² our assessment for this year confirms prior trends in the first four dimensions but raises some warnings signals for the fifth, Material Resources, (without changing its gauge). We provide details in the next section.

2012-2013 Net Assessment of the Five Key Dimensions

Two major issues arise when integrating an entire year's trends within these different dimensions. The first is to identify those events or processes during the year that are either prime movers or key indicators of trend or change. The second is to determine how to interpret these factors to arrive at a net assessment that accurately reflects the balance between challenges, opportunities, and responses in each year. In all five dimensions there

is considerable room for subjectivity in making such determinations.

This year, JPPI has continued with planned incremental enhancements to its assessment methodology – as part of a larger, multiyear project – by broadening the base regarding both these issues. We conducted a Delphi-inspired study as a way to convene a digitally based expert panel.³ A small sample of selected and recognized experts in each dimension was invited to participate.⁴ Participants

JPPI conducted a Delphi-inspired study as a way to convene a digitally based expert panel

were asked to respond with their assessment of specific pieces of evidence we offered on core changes or trends, as well as to suggest others they also thought worthy of consideration. The information we received has been combined with other data sources to provide the following assessments of short-term trends. Clearly, short-term changes in some dimensions will be more

visible than in others. Yet, this approach – if applied annually – can provide a detection mechanism for change that might otherwise escape notice.

Geopolitics

In the past year, geopolitical trends continued to develop along lines laid out by the Middle East's Arab Spring (that erupted in December 2010), the economic crisis in the United States (that began in 2008), the American withdrawal from Iraq (completed in December 2011), and the continuing rise of Asia's international importance. From a certain perspective, it can be said that Israel's strategic situation has improved. Arab states are troubled by burdensome domestic and economic problems that are threatening their stability. Conventional war initiated against Israel does not seem a likely. The Syrian army is busy with a civil war, the Iran-Damascus-Hezbollah axis is threatened, Hamas has lost its base in Syria, and the Arab world is rife with internal Sunni-Shiite conflict. At the same time, Israel's peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt remain in place, relations with Turkey are no longer at their nadir after Prime Minister Netanyahu's apology over the Gaza flotilla incident, the development of gas fields off Haifa may turn Israel into an energy exporter, and Obama's visit to Israel signaled the American superpower's unequivocal support for Israel. But these developments do not change the fact that Israel is located in the heart of a stormy and violent region, which – events of the past year show – is undergoing processes that may be very harmful to Israel and confront it with threatening scenarios: **a possible security deterioration, even to the point of comprehensive war, damage to Israel's diplomatic standing, economic damage, and even damage to Israeli-U.S. relations.**

At the same time that Asia was rising and Russia was continuing to pose geopolitical challenges to Washington, the power and international standing of the United States – the superpower whose friendship and aid are so critical to Israel, and which is home to almost half of the Jewish people, who enjoy unprecedented prosperity there – continue to erode.

So far, President Obama's failure to demonstrate forceful leadership in the face of North Korean provocations, Iran's persistence in continuing with its nuclear project, and the terrible blood-letting in Syria, which includes the use of chemical weapons, reinforces the emerging image of a superpower focused on a serious economic crisis and difficult domestic problems; one that prefers to 'lead from behind,' if at all. The ousters of some autocratic rulers in the Middle East did not bring democratic rule and liberal governance in their wake. The regional earthquake paved the way for the rise of political Islam whose performance at the helm of government, as seen in the past year, has been both disappointing and sobering.

In the region, state institutions are weakening: the civil war in Syria and the danger of its disassembly; the economic and political crisis in Egypt; the threat to stability in Jordan and Lebanon; the failure to achieve stability and internal consensus in Iraq – all this while Iran continues to make progress toward achieving a nuclear weapon, with no stabilization or calm in sight. This picture diminishes state-sponsored military threats against Israel – with the exception, of course, of Iran – but strengthens non-state forces hostile to it and makes Israel's operating environment even

more sensitive and complicated. Stalled progress in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to threaten Israel's security and its Jewish-democratic character, and helps fan the flames of the de-legitimization campaign waged against it.

If the current U.S. effort to restart negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians fails, like its predecessors, the Palestinian side is expected to move to replace the model of 'direct talks under American mediation' with an alternative track – the model of a quasi-imposed settlement under multi-national auspices, including a diplomatic-legal campaign in the international arena. In order to increase pressure on Israel, the Palestinians may, in extreme circumstances, return responsibility for running the West Bank to the Israelis, and to favor a 'one state for two peoples' solution. These developments are likely to undermine the security situation, possibly to the point of a third intifada. In contrast to this scenario, progress toward a permanent Israeli-Palestinian settlement would likely hold considerable potential for positive systemic change in Israel's strategic situation.

The American president's visit to Israel earlier this year was the jewel in the crown of the "**Jerusalem-Washington-U.S. Jewish Community Triangle**," which represents a critical strategic resource for

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Israel's and the Jewish people's power. Obama gave strong expression to America's support for Israel during his visit, but nevertheless did not conceal differences over Iran and the Palestinians, which could easily develop into problematic disagreements. The coming year will likely bring about a maturation of critical processes that will force decisions on these issues, decisions that will likely have a decisive effect on the fate of Israel and the Jewish people. Thus, if Israel opens negotiations

There are some disturbing signals coming out of Europe: A relatively high number of Jews say they are considering emigration

with the Palestinians in the coming year, it is likely to face American pressure to overcome differences between the sides, and sensitive questions are likely to arise on matters dear to Jews everywhere, particularly the future of Jerusalem. American Jewry may find itself between a rock and a hard place if Israel decides to launch a military strike on

Iran against Washington's wishes.

In regard to the security and well being of other Jewish communities, there are some disturbing signals coming out of Europe. On one hand, many European Jews believe that they can comfortably continue to live and practice their professions in Europe, and one can also point to new positive developments such as the opening of new cultural institutions especially among the most engaged Jewish core. At the same time, some European courts and political institutions have challenged

certain Jewish ritual practices such as circumcision and ritual slaughter. There has also been a revival of anti-Semitic rhetoric and sporadic vandalism and violence against Jews in some places. The relatively high number of Jews who say they are considering emigration may also indicate some underlying unease. This situation bears watching and the European and world Jewish communities ought to start preparing for all eventualities.

Demography

This is the dimension least likely to show short-term changes. Transitions accumulate over several years, and only several years of data will elucidate what constitutes a trend and what is more transitory.

The overall view of the expert panel was guardedly optimistic about recent data and trends.

The previously identified trends along with new studies released during the past year showed few if any departures from previously identified processes. Jewish fertility in Israel, even among the non-Haredim, remains higher than the OECD average, and is one of the salient factors pointing toward satisfactory demographic trends – if they continue. Jewish fertility continues to rise (it now stands at 2.98 per woman) while the fertility of the non-Jewish population continues to decline (though the fertility of Muslim women in Israel is still higher than that of Jewish women).

There is also little change in several trends at work in the Diaspora – with more mixed implications for Jewish demographic policy.⁵ A study on Jewish families in the New York region showed more

Jewish households and more Jewish members within them.⁶ The study attributed this growth to the following: an increase in the Haredi birthrate, a rise in life expectancy, internal migration of young people, and a blurring of boundaries between Jews and non-Jews. Most of the panel participants did not see these factors as forming a significant change.

At the same time, the more troubling trends for inter-marriage and the patterns of Jewish identification for the children of such unions also continue. In the absence of active policies targeting the identification and affiliation trends of these children, these will be injurious to Jewish population policy interests.

Identity Formation and Expression

Identity, itself a dimension of Jewish people well being, is also deeply integral to the other four major dimensions. Overall, respondents saw a generally positive set of trends. At the same time, the majority of participants indicated a net balance of no change from the previous year. This was less because of a perception of actual stasis and more due to uncertainty about how specific trends may play out.

Those who expressed a sense of positive change appeared to place weight on evidence of growth in Orthodox and Haredi populations in the U.S., and that many of those not affiliated with formal institutions still identify Jewishly. They also pointed to more access portals for Jewish engagement and identification. Some of those who were more

pessimistic worried that Haredi populations tend not to identify with Jewish collective projects as undertaken by the majority or mainstream Jewish population, and appeared to more heavily weight trends in inter-marriage, and inferred more negative interpretations of the increasing ‘fluidity’ of Jewish identity and of the changing forms of identification.

A perceived trend toward a hollowing of the middle range on the Jewish engagement continuum was near unanimously viewed as disturbing. The shares of Jews who are either Orthodox or largely unengaged increased at the expense of those who occupy the center. Polarization was viewed as a source of potential instability within the Jewish community, and this suggests that support to the middle is an important ingredient in policy making.

A perceived trend: A hollowing of the middle range on the continuum of Jewish engagement

This finding also reinforced a message received from the respondents to the Jewish Demography questionnaire: that population policy and identity are deeply connected. This reinforces a plea made in our assessment last year for better data on out-marriage, education, and identity of various sectors of the Jewish community. Only then will it be possible to engage fully in evidence-based policy planning in this dimension.

Two factors not polled on were volunteered as being of importance by several. These were the phenomenon of Diaspora youth travel to Israel⁷ as a positive trend, and the unresolved issues between Israel and the Palestinians as a negative. Though a geopolitical issue, the argument was that the intensification of legal, culture, and ethical aspects of the conflict (to the diminution of physical security concerns) generates tension between aspects of identity and values especially important

to younger Diaspora Jews and specifics of Israeli policy that they perceive as running counter to those values.

The outcome of recent Israeli elections likely contributed to narrowing perceptions of a 'gap' between Israeli and non-Israeli Jews

Bonds Between and Within Communities

Relations between Jewish communities saw no great shift in the past

year. This is not to say that important forces were not at work. Continued travel and exposure of Jewish communities to one another, along with signs of possible changes in the culture within Israel, tended to reinforce bonds. In the material sphere, cross-investment by Jews of one country in ventures being carried out by Jews in another, along with other forms of financial transfer, are both indicators of, and in themselves forces that enhance bonds. Willingness on the part of Israel's authorities to acknowledge issues of great interest

to the Diaspora (e.g., Women of the Wall,) also served to reinforce perceptions of commonality. This was a counterpoise to the irritation and insensitivity perceived by some with how life in the Diaspora was portrayed, for example, in government advertising campaigns advocating the return of expatriate Israelis. The outcome of the recent Israeli election, in which forces having a more liberal outlook on Judaism were propelled to positions of greater influence and visibility, likely contribute to narrowing perceptions of a 'gap' between Israeli and non-Israeli Jews.

Respondents largely accepted recent evidence either refuting or diminishing the effective force of 'distancing' claims, however with caveats. One respondent likened this evidence to the passage of Stage II trials in pharmaceutical testing: heartening, but by no means sufficient to indicate readiness for general acceptance. The principal indeterminacy might be stated as a tug-of-war between the 'Birthright Bump' of enhanced contact and engagement between the youth of the various Jewish communities (especially North America) on one hand; on the other are the pressures placed on the young in reconciling Israeli realities and policies with many of the tenets that frame their outlook as individuals and as a generation. The consulting panel members either saw no change in polling results from the past year that delineated differences in political attitudes and outlooks between Israeli and Diaspora youth, or felt that the results did not fully capture a more complex set of inter-communal interactions. For U.S. Jews, Israel-related issues did not appear to factor much at the ballot box, but this could be viewed as less a

reflection of disinterest or disaffection than of the perceived relative strength of Israel and its standing in U.S. political discourse.

Respondents found some hopeful signs in evidence of an inclination on the part of some Orthodox rabbis to at least acknowledge and conduct dialogue with other streams of Judaism, but characterized this as being of limited scope when viewing Israeli Orthodoxy as a whole. It is worth noting that the timing of the consultation meant that respondents couldn't take into full consideration continuing new developments such as the fierce debate over drafting Haredi Jews to military service, the exclusion of Haredi parties from government,⁸ the battle for the chief rabbinate, developments in the Women of the Wall issue, etc. The evidence should be reviewed in a year's time.

Material Resources

This was the year that saw domestic economic and social concerns trump security in Israel's electoral politics. In our discussion last year we pointed out the rising debate about how to share an economic pie that, while expanding, was being divided in ways that led to the social protests of 2011. This year the assumptions about the growth of that pie are as much in question, and it is quite likely that economic growth will decline relative to previous years. The steps that have already been, and will be, taken to cover 2012's large deficit will affect the entire public, but especially the middle and lower classes. At the same time, Finance Ministry and other government spokespersons emphasized the benefits that would accrue to the consumer due

to planned steps to increase competitiveness and reduce wealth concentration in the Israeli economy.

Panelists saw no net change in the health of the R&D-intensive sectors in Israel. They did however, tend to place more credence in reports showing worrying trends in Israel's educational system than in recent international test results indicating improvement. They saw the latter as possibly being due to selective testing. On the other hand, there was not much concern with recent suggestions of a decline in achievement by Jewish students in the U.S., with most seeing this as a concern only if borne out by longer-term trends.

This consulting panel was not polled on the development of the large offshore natural gas deposits discovered in 2009-2010. The geopolitics panelists all mentioned that this was of tremendous importance for Israel. In this year's 'net' assessment we have chosen not to weight this aspect of material resources too heavily. This is in no way to gainsay the potential importance of these energy assets. However, in the short term, there are questions about how the gas will be developed, whether the range of issues affecting export possibilities are resolved, the future balance of global supply and demand as well as in the Mediterranean basin, how well the new sovereign wealth fund operates and, as always, the security of the facilities.

The increased prominence of mega-donors reduces centralization of community resources according to need and opportunity

In regard to Jewish resources in the Diaspora, the sentiment of the panelists was that the residual effects of recent financial crises were dissipating as was suggested last year. As opposed to this, the New York Jewish Federation reported in a recent study that more than 560,000 Jews (200,000 households) are poor or live on the border of poverty in the New York Area.⁹ In addition, 35% of Jewish children in the NY area are subject to poverty. These figures indicate a significant rise in Jewish poverty rates in the New York area over the last decade.

Most saw an improving trend for community giving and philanthropy, both locally and more generally. There was more concern with the forms of giving. The increased prominence of mega-donors by its nature reduces centralization of community resources and the (at least theoretical) power to shift them according to need and opportunity. But this trend might also be a response to a desire on the part of donors for better assessments of the effectiveness of those resources. It is not yet clear how the transition to new fundamental forms of funding Jewish people priorities (and how such priorities may be determined) will play out.

Current Status and Trends to Watch

Figure 1 shows how we set the dials on the Jewish people 'dashboard' as of mid-2013. The events of the past year and continuing trends were not of a magnitude to warrant much change in our previous assessment (Figure 2). The only exception is that we moved the dial on the bonds between

communities gauge in a slightly more positive direction.

This year's assessment, however, points to several trends that bear watching in the short term for early warning of possible change. By dimension these would include:

Geopolitics:

- Iran's nuclearization.
- The possible implosion of Syria and the resulting consequences.
- The transfer of advanced weaponry to Hezbollah.

Demography:

- Indicators of change in degree and nature of Jewish identification by children of both in- and out-married couples.

Identity:

- Whether the center of the spectrum of Jewish engagement reverses a declining trend.

Community Bonds:

- Signs of strain on young Diaspora Jews regarding Israel-Palestine issues.

Material Resources:

- Trends in funding availability to meet Diaspora community-level needs.
- Growth, innovation, and export trends in Israel's R&D-intensive sector.

2012-2013

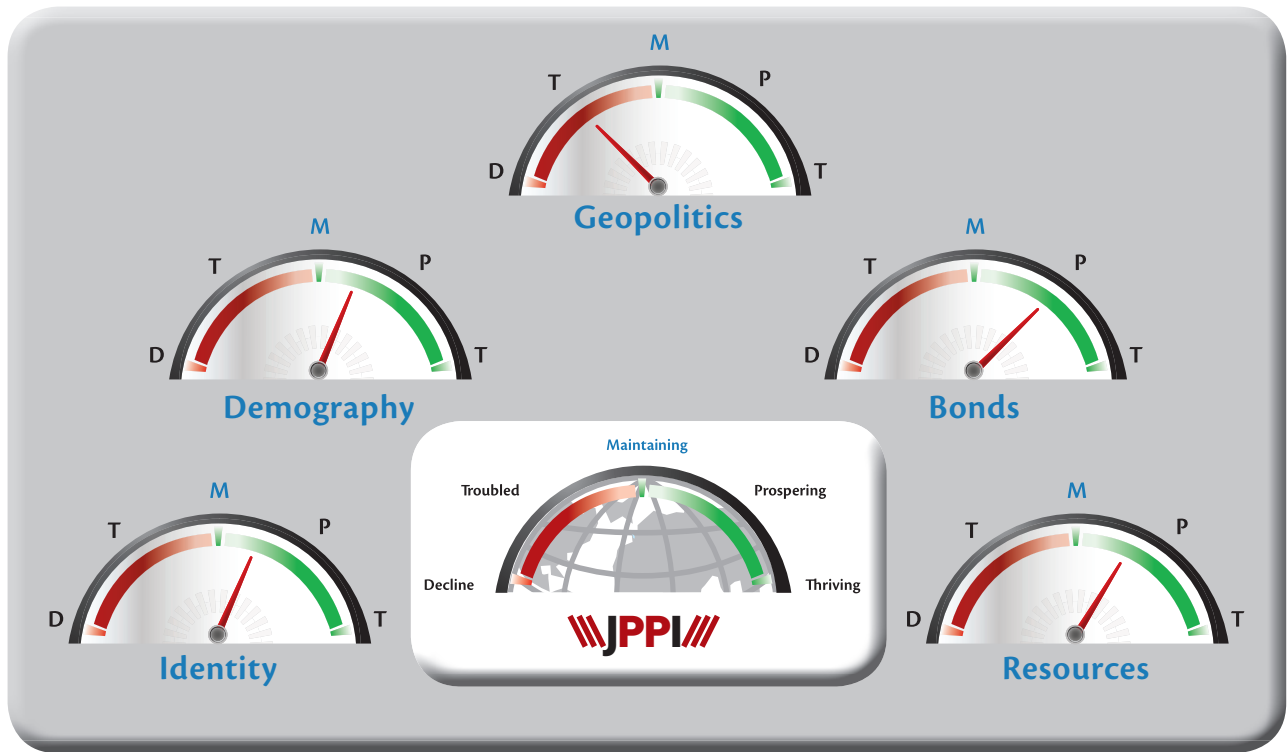


Figure 1. Characterization of Key Drivers Affecting the Jewish People in the Year 2012-13

2011-2012

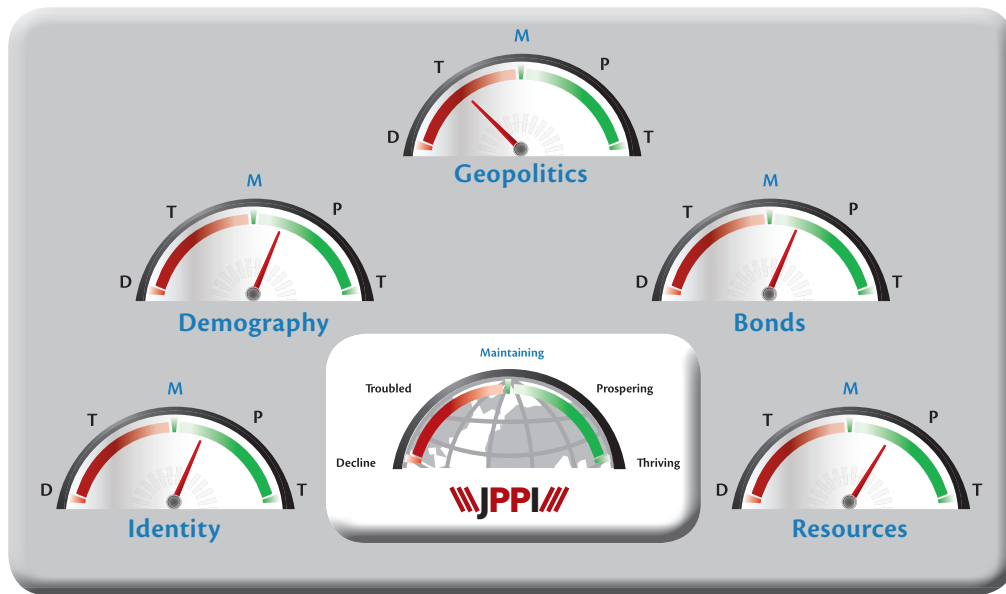


Figure 2. Characterization of Key Drivers Affecting the Jewish People in the Year 2011-12

Notes

1. JPPI's Annual Assessment for 2011-2012 provides a more detailed discussion of the methodology behind both the short-term net assessments and the longer term trends and scenarios ("Integrated 'Net' Assessment", in *Annual Assessment 2011-2012*.)
2. Ibid.
3. A Delphi study is a structured consultation that poses questions to a selected group of experts who then respond with their assessment. In a second round, the anonymous results – both the voting breakdown and the reasoning provided by respondents – are provided to the same group who may then refine their own responses. They may change their vote in light of the updated information or remain with their original answers. This allows participants to respond freely without personal identification, provides a gauge for the firmness of the beliefs expressed, and can be used to develop a factor-weighting scheme by giving insight into which among many factors participants base their vote. In this study the respondents were scholars, policy experts, and leaders of Jewish people organizations. This is a 'quasi'-Delphi because rather than seek better forecasts, the usual object of a Delphi, we wished to use this format to conduct a long-distance focus group.
4. Twenty-seven invitees provided responses to the Delphi instrument. Across the five groups this represented a response rate of approximately 30-50%.
5. For a detailed discussion of the concept of Jewish People demographic policy, see Sergio DellaPergola, (2011), "Jewish Demographic Policies," Jewish People Policy Institute (<http://jppi.org.il/news/96/76/Jewish-Demographic-Policies/>.)
6. Cohen, Steven M., Jacob B. Ukeles, and Ron Miller, "Jewish Community Study of New York: Comprehensive Report," UJA - Federation of NY, June 2012.
7. We have responded to this point by adding it to the list of indicators we track to make the final overall assessment.
8. The religious parties did, however, increase the size of their Knesset representation.
9. Ukeles, Jacob B., Steven M. Cohen, Ron Miller (2013), "Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011 Special Report on Poverty," UJA - Federation of NY, June 2011.

Part One:
Geopolitics

4

Combating De-Legitimization

Introduction

Recent weeks have brought two reminders that the international campaign of de-legitimization against the State of Israel is "alive and kicking" and still posing a strategic threat. In early May, renowned scientist, Stephen Hawking, announced he would boycott the June 2013 Israeli Presidential Conference after having initially accepted an invitation to appear there. And later in the same month, the BBC published its annual survey (of 26,000 respondents in 25 countries) in which Israel was ranked fourth from last in the index of countries (among 16 countries and the EU) whose influence in the world is "mainly negative" (52% – only North Korea, Pakistan, and Iran rated worse). Such reminders are often found in BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) activities, including cultural boycotts by artists, academic boycotts, and economic boycott initiatives against Israeli companies and products.

For the past two-and-a-half years, the Jewish People Policy Institute has been working on a policy-oriented project on the phenomenon of de-legitimization against Israel, which among others,

targets the connection between the Jewish people and Israel. The project, with the participation of top-level experts, examined the phenomenon in every major field in which it finds expression and explored in depth its historical, intellectual, cultural, and sociological dimensions. This paper includes some conclusions drawn from it.

The Modern Face of De-Legitimization

More than a decade has elapsed since the September 2001 Durban Conference, a catalyzing event after which the de-legitimization dam burst. The conference against racism, held under UN auspices, gathered some 1,500 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who called for the imposition of "total and complete isolation" on the "apartheid state" Israel. It took several years for Israel and the Jewish Diaspora to fully grasp that it was not merely a piece of political theater that could be ignored, but rather a new type of strategic threat.

At its heart, the de-legitimization phenomenon is an expression of the denial of the Jews' right

to sovereign self-determination in a state of their own in their historic homeland. Denial of this sort has beset the Jewish people for generations, and has dogged the State of Israel since its creation in the form of rejection, hatred, alienation, and boycott. Yet the modern face of de-legitimization is different and more dangerous. It is focused on the realm of ideas, and from there spreads into the world of action, knocks on the doors of mainstream public discourse in the West,

The prism of the conflict allows criticism of Israel to emanate from a legitimate space of political disagreement

is global, networked, and found in every major public sphere internationally. For the de-legitimization system, the entire world is a front, every field of endeavor offers a forum for confrontation, and every world citizen (including Jews and Israelis) is a potential soldier. Its goal is to ostracize Israel, and turn it into a 'pariah'

state, as South Africa was in its day. It seeks to weaken and marginalize the Jewish state until it withers away. It also targets a central element in the identity of Diaspora Jewry.

Today, particularly in Europe, it is easier than in the past for the de-legitimization phenomenon to take root, grow, trickle down and gain traction. This is a world that is moving further and further away from Holocaust awareness and from a connection to the Bible. It is developing new patterns of modern anti-Semitism directed against

Israel and characterized by 'post' discourses – post-modernism, post-nationalism, post-colonialism and post-Zionism. It is less tolerant to expressions of ethno-religious nationalism, and gives precedence to the human rights discourse over the national-security discourse. This is a world of globalization, of a networked society that allows for the mass dissemination and amplification of messages without requiring vetting through ethical and legal filters. This is a world that gives increasing power to non-state actors – from the individual citizen through non-governmental organizations, civil-society forces, and the United Nations, which has become one of the main forums of de-legitimization against Israel. In Europe, the demographic and political weight of Muslims is growing steadily. It contributes to the creation and dissemination of de-legitimizing content and allows for the establishment of anti-Semitic 'green-red' alliances between Islamic and European far-left forces. These alliances are responsible for most de-legitimization campaigns in the West.

To this foundation we must add the continuing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. This conflict – for which no solution is in sight, even as the years go by – is the main fuel for the fire of de-legitimization, the overwhelming majority of which is waged through the conflict's prism. There are those who fan the flames out of political motivations (to influence Israeli policy as it relates to the Palestinians). But many, apparently most, of those doing the fanning are motivated by ideology, or a combination of the ideological and political. Israel is accused not only

of obstructing peace, but also of an immorality rooted in its very existence, of colonialism, racism, of denying human rights and national rights, of war crimes and of threatening world peace. An entire conceptual vocabulary – with "apartheid" front and center – has developed around the conflict to denounce Israel. Some of it has become acceptable in Western discourse. Accordingly, in recent years, public opinion polls in Europe have consistently reflected a strongly negative image of Israel.

We should not underestimate the danger this phenomenon poses. While it is not presented, on the whole, as an explicit denial of Israel's right to exist as the nation state of the Jewish people, it implicitly raises (at the very least) questions about Israel's legitimacy. The prism of the conflict provides a convenient basis for this kind of propaganda since it allows criticism of Israel to emanate from a legitimate space of political disagreement. Crossing the line into the realm of de-legitimization happens in subtle ways, and therefore allows for enlistment of international supporters who are party to the criticism of Israel but who are not always aware that their criticism borders on, or is tainted with, de-legitimization. A negative dynamic is developing in the 'grey area' between criticism and de-legitimization that feeds off the cumulative effect of blackening Israel's name. In European polls of recent years, a majority of respondents conditioned their recognition of Israel as a Jewish state on the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Awakening to the Danger – What's Missing?

In recent years, we have seen a growing awareness, in Israel and among Jewish communities, of the threat. Israeli governmental and non-governmental bodies, Jewish organizations around the world, and private individuals have joined the war against de-legitimization. Studies have been conducted, resources have been allocated, special desks have been set up, and projects have been launched with this as their main mission. There has been a series of important successes in this struggle. BDS initiatives and displays of de-legitimization against Israel, such as marches or flotillas, have been thwarted. The road is no longer unencumbered for the "Israel Apartheid Week" de-legitimization campaign, which for the past eight years has been held on countless campuses and in dozens of Western cities. Now, instead, this event is regularly accompanied by an effective counter-campaign mounted by Israeli and Jewish groups.

Nevertheless, the successes in the struggle against tangible manifestations of de-legitimization have not yet led to significant progress in restraining it in the realm of ideas. Many groups dealing with the issue define de-legitimization differently, and as a result employ different, sometimes conflicting

Successes in the struggle against tangible manifestations of de-legitimization have not yet led to significant progress in restraining it in the realm of ideas

strategies to confront it. In Israel, despite attempts to crystalize where formal responsibility for dealing with the issue lies, there is still no clear, accepted single address to coordinate among various government agencies and guide and inform them with a coherent strategy. There is no correlation between the responsibilities agencies bear and the authority and resources allocated to them. Coordination with Jewish organizations abroad also needs to be improved.

The Challenge of Defining and Distinguishing between De-Legitimization and Legitimate Criticism

Criticism is not limited to Israel's policies or conduct but rather portrays it as having been founded on a deep moral flaw that places a question mark beside its legitimacy

Those involved in the de-legitimization issue must adapt a working definition that is neither too narrow nor too broad. Too narrow a definition of de-legitimization would focus efforts exclusively on declared and outspoken enemies of Israel, but would miss many facets of the phenomenon that are less explicit but no less dangerous. On the other

hand, too broad a definition would risk rendering the effort against de-legitimization into an impracticable challenge. It would define the arena of struggle too widely, bunching honest critics together with malicious deniers. Such a definition

would not only deflect the struggle's focus from more dangerous elements, it would also draw the effort into a sensitive and controversial political area – also within Israel itself – and undermine the struggle's prospects of success with important sectors, particularly with the majority who do not see themselves as denying Israel's right to exist. Thus, distinguishing correctly between legitimate critics of Israeli policy and de-legitimizers is essential. Israel also bears responsibility for ensuring that it does come across as an intolerant country that tries to silence its critics.

As mentioned above, de-legitimization is, at its core, the denial of the Jewish collective's right of self-determination in its own sovereign nation state in its historic homeland. This definition has several aspects: it assumes that Judaism is not only a religion, but also a nation; that it is appropriate and just for the Jewish people to define itself within a sovereign political entity of its own; that a certain piece of land (without getting into the political argument over the future of Judea, Samaria and the Golan) is the essential venue for this self-determination. Denial of any of these individual aspects, or all of them together, is therefore considered de-legitimization of the State of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people.

Even this apparently straightforward definition raises quite a few questions and, for several reasons, is less than adequate. Most importantly, it makes it difficult to identify de-legitimization's 'grey areas': the implied or camouflaged, which are sometimes only identified in hindsight. Apparently, the reason for camouflaging de-legitimization is that explicit de-legitimization of Israel is still not "politically

correct" in the West, though this does not mitigate the seriousness of the phenomenon, or its potential dangers.

Thus, even though the grey area between criticism and de-legitimization is, by nature, quite wide and lacks clear boundaries, and despite the difficulty in examining the intent of those who speak against Israel, we cannot avoid using indicators to identify and diagnose situations and phenomena of de-legitimization that occur in this area. These indicators can identify the denial of the Jewish collective's right to self-determination within a sovereign nation state, even if it is not stated explicitly.

The indicators are as follows:

- A. **Essentialist criticism:** This is criticism that is not limited to Israel's policies or conduct but rather goes, whether explicitly or implicitly, to the root of the state's being, and portrays it as having been founded on a deep moral flaw that cannot be corrected. This kind of criticism places a question mark beside the legitimacy of Israel, if not an exclamation mark beside its illegitimacy, and is therefore considered de-legitimization.
- B. **Conceptual vocabulary:** Perpetrators of de-legitimization have developed a coded discourse to express their essentialist criticism. This conceptual vocabulary has spread and is used not only by the perpetrators themselves, but also by those who disseminate it and contribute to it unwittingly, out of a lack of understanding. The conceptual language used against Israel includes expressions (all of which are taken from the Israeli-Palestinian context) such as: 'Apartheid state' (a clear attempt to portray Israel as a second South Africa); 'Nazi state' (comparing Israel to the Nazis and appropriating their symbols is very widespread); 'racist state'; a state that commits 'genocide' and 'ethnic cleansing'; 'war criminal' (as distinct from a specific case), a state responsible for 'crimes against humanity,' among others. Whoever uses these terms contributes, deliberately or not, to the dissemination of de-legitimization.
- C. **A record of statements or actions that have de-legitimization significance:** This is an important tool that can dispel doubts and concerns over the intent of those who attack Israel. In quite a few cases, those who attack Israel from the position of seemingly legitimate criticism have a record of clear de-legitimization. It is necessary to scrutinize this record and bring it to light. **Some who attack Israel from the position of seemingly legitimate criticism have a record of clear de-legitimization**
- D. **Double standard:** Applying a double standard does not necessarily meet the core definition of de-legitimization but rather depends on context and interpretation. There are different varieties of double standard with regard to Israel, and there are also double standards with respect to its right to "the

benefit of the doubt," and to its right to a fair and equal opportunity to state its position. Double standards with regard to Israel should be considered expressions of de-legitimization, or contributing to it, only in clear-cut cases, extreme cases that are based on an indisputably known lie, or in combination with other indicators of de-legitimization.

E. **Practical indicators** beyond the realm of discourse:

- **Boycotts of Israel or of Israeli goods (BDS)** – Any type of economic, cultural, academic or other boycott is a dangerous weapon that moves the struggle against Israel to populist ground in which anybody can participate actively. Despite the claim that boycott is a legitimate tool for applying pressure on Israel "to end the occupation," it should be considered an indicator of potential de-legitimization. In

many – perhaps most – cases, we can see empirically that the source and purpose of the boycotts are indeed to de-legitimize. This is not surprising. After all, Israel is the only state in the world with a question mark hovering above its legitimacy. Most boycotts against Israel are part of a clear de-legitimization strategy, and those who engineer them

are known de-legitimizers who strive to ostracize, isolate, and weaken Israel until it withers and collapses. Such boycotts are based on double standards and are deployed against bodies and individuals solely because of their national affiliation; they ignore the question of whether they have the potential to influence Israeli government policy.

- **Lawfare** – This phenomenon has become an increasingly widespread anti-Israel weapon in recent years. Behind it lies the intent to criminalize Israel, that is, to paint it as an outlaw entity to be punished according to law, just as one fights against any criminal. Lawfare is applied against the State of Israel in international legal forums (for example, the Palestinian Authority's threat to bring Israel to dock at the International Criminal Court on charges of war crimes), as well as against Israeli citizens (mainly current and former government officials, army officers, and members of the security establishment). Obviously, not every lawsuit necessarily meets the definitional criteria of de-legitimization, but a significant portion do, particularly in their systematic assault on Israel's right to defend itself. The initiative for a substantial portion of these cases comes from clear de-legitimizers.

In many cases we can see empirically: The source and purpose of the boycotts are indeed to de-legitimize

Operational Conclusions

Today, awareness of the de-legitimization problem is well developed in Israel and among the Jewish people, and many important actions are being taken to fight it. Most of its practical expressions, particularly in the legal and economic arenas, have been thwarted so far, or have failed to gain strategic traction. At the same time, we cannot conclude that the danger has been averted, or allow ourselves to become complacent. The de-legitimization campaign has not been stopped in the realm of ideas and we do not know when and how the threat will develop in new dimensions, even from non-state sources. Further, Israel and its friends still lack a clear strategy and organized operational plan for the battle against the phenomenon. Following are a number of steps that should be taken:

1. It is crucial that those dealing with the issue unite, to the extent possible, under an agreed definition of the phenomenon that can serve as a kind of 'compass' for fighting it. They should use the same criteria and toolbox to differentiate between de-legitimization and legitimate, substantive criticism.
2. It is important to understand that the struggle against de-legitimization is not only a matter of public diplomacy and *hasbara*, but also one of policy. It requires a more fundamental treatment in the realm of basic perceptions. Because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the phenomenon's main fuel, it is necessary to understand that whenever Israel is perceived as initiating and working toward a diplomatic

process, its legitimacy to maneuver expands (including the legitimacy of its security operations).

3. It is important to differentiate between different target audiences and to employ strategies appropriate to each:

- **Perpetrators of de-legitimization or those who knowingly contribute to it:** That is, those who deliberately perpetrate, develop, and disseminate the de-legitimization of Israel. In dealing with those in this category, it is necessary to work to expose their true intentions with a "naming and shaming" policy and through a counter de-legitimization campaign against them. Offensive measures, including legal ones, should also be taken against them. To this end, tracking and implementation mechanisms are required, some of them non-governmental.
- **Those who contribute to the phenomenon without having a de-legitimizing intent per se, but rather out**

It is crucial to have an agreed upon definition of the phenomenon as a kind of 'compass' for differentiating between de-legitimization and legitimate, substantive criticism

of ignorance or for other reasons: For this group it is necessary to sharpen the dividing line between criticism and de-legitimization and to clarify that certain terms are nothing other than instruments of de-legitimization.

- **Wider audiences exposed to anti-Israel propaganda:** It is important not to leave the field open, but to show a presence and confront de-legitimization in every arena in which it finds expression (media, cyberspace, campuses, civil society organizations, etc.). We must differentiate between the minority that has a certain amount of knowledge about the situation in Israel and Israeli-Palestinian relations, and the majority that has neither knowledge nor interest. Moreover, and no less importantly, to this wider audience we must proactively present Israel in a favorable light: as a state that embodies positive values and contributes to the good of the world.
- **Jews and Israelis who take part in the de-legitimization campaign:** The perpetrators of de-legitimization strive to conscript Israelis and Jews to the ranks of the anti-Israel struggle in order to strengthen the credibility and validity

of their claims. Even though such Israelis and Jews should also be considered de-legitimizers, in responding to them there is reason to distinguish between internal debate (that has existed for generations) 'within the family' (even though it is sometimes destructive) on one hand, and external criticism on the other. Such a response requires drawing a difficult distinction between those who have the good of the Jewish people at heart, but who assign it an anti/non-Zionist expression, and those who seek an ill fate for the Jewish people. Moreover, some of these arguments take place within the democratic fabric of the State of Israel, which we should be careful not to harm.

- **Potential partners in the battle against de-legitimization:** We must seek out and develop partnerships with as many individuals and organizations as possible prepared to join in fighting de-legitimization. We must work with them to establish 'counter networks' to de-legitimization networks. It is vital to maximally activate the potential (currently far from being so) latent in the Jewish people, as well as the synergy between it and the State of Israel. At the same time, there is considerable benefit in involving non-Jews and Western liberal elements in the effort to combat the phenomenon.
4. Past strategies and steps already taken should be analyzed to determine what works and what does not.

There is reason to distinguish between internal debate 'within the family' and external criticism

5. Even though the battle is a global one, it is important to focus efforts on those arenas and populations where the greatest potential for damage lies – Western Europe, the United Nations (a critical main arena for de-legitimization but one that is relatively neglected), the ‘heads’ of the de-legitimization movement (a preliminary mapping shows that the number of individuals and main organizations perpetrating de-legitimization in the West is not large), civil-society elements, and social networks. We should carefully select cases for which there is a good chance of success through adopting an offensive strategy, in the courts, in the media, and elsewhere.
6. Updated narratives about what the State of Israel represents should be developed – an intellectual narrative of modern Zionism, in whose development respected Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals should be partners, as well as a narrative that presents and markets Israel as a vital, creative, and vibrant state that contributes to ‘repairing the world’ and to its greater welfare.
7. Alongside the centrality of the United States to Israel and the Jewish people, we should strive to develop relations with rising global powers such as China and India, which are not characterized by the classical anti-Semitism prevalent in Europe.
8. We should utilize technological tools, including cyberspace and the blogosphere, to establish and connect networks, to disseminate information and float ideas through various creative means, including visual media. Furthermore, it is important to circulate messages with emotional appeal.
9. Finally, it is recommended that the Israeli Government appoint a single senior cabinet level figure to bear responsibility for coordinating the struggle against de-legitimization. He or she should be allotted the necessary tools to do so, and report directly to the prime minister. This official should be charged with developing – based on the conclusions and recommendations of all those involved in the subject – a strategy and operational directions for the fight against de-legitimization, and with ensuring their implementation.



Israel and the Jewish People: Geopolitical Developments, 2012-2013

Introduction

The battle for votes ahead of the January 2013 Israeli elections focused on social and domestic issues. This focus allowed Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid) and Naftali Bennett (HaBayit HaYehudi) to come together in a united front during the negotiations to form a governing coalition, and even after the government took office (even though the former supports the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the latter vigorously opposes it). During the election campaign, the public and most of its leaders behaved as if Israel's immediate and more distant situation did not pose weighty challenges and dilemmas requiring decisive action. This curious phenomenon can be explained as symptomatic of denial, and deep pessimism over Israel's ability to affect, through its policies, the threatening processes taking place around it.

Some believe that Israel's strategic situation has improved, that Arab states are preoccupied with destabilizing domestic and economic problems, and it is highly unlikely that they would – any time soon – launch a conventional war against

Israel. The Syrian army is embroiled in civil war, the Iran-Damascus-Hezbollah axis is threatened, Hamas has lost its base in Syria, and the Arab world is largely focused on internal Sunni-Shiite conflict. Meanwhile, the peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt remain in place, and following Prime Minister Netanyahu's apology over the Mavi Marmara incident, relations with Turkey are no longer at a low ebb. The development of gas fields off the Haifa coast continues successfully, promising to turn Israel into an energy exporter. And Obama's visit to Israel signalled the region that the American superpower's support for the Jewish state is unequivocal.

Yet these developments, positive as they may be from Israel's perspective, do not alter the reality that Israel is located at the heart of a turbulent and violent region, which is undergoing dramatic changes and processes with the potential to cause serious harm. Israel faces a constellation of perilous scenarios:

- **Security deterioration** – A deterioration of the security situation at Israel's borders; terrorist actions against Israel and Jewish targets overseas, a missile attack against

population centers in Israel; use of chemical weapons; and in an extreme case, the outbreak of comprehensive war in which Israel would have to face concerted attacks on several fronts, including the home front (for example, retaliation for Israeli attacks in Syria, following an Israeli or American action against Iran, or in the wake of a deterioration in relations with the Palestinians, etc.).

The power and international standing of the United States continues to erode

- **Damage to Israel's diplomatic standing** – The possibility of a widening perception that Israel is responsible for the lack of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the erosion of the standing of its American ally; the collapse of the Jerusalem-Cairo strategic axis; and the rise of political Islam in the Middle East.
- **Economic damage** – Sanctions imposed on Israeli products, tourism, investments, etc. resulting from a security deterioration and/or as part of the de-legitimization campaign being waged against Israel.
- **Damage to relations with the United States** – If the scenario of an Israeli attack on Iran against U.S. wishes becomes a reality; if the United States reaches an agreement with Iran unacceptable to Israel; or if Israel does not meet American expectations in making progress toward an Israel-Palestinian agreement. All these could strengthen existing trends in the

United States (though these, at this stage, are far from dominant) in which Israel is perceived as detrimental to U.S. interests.

This chapter formulates the main dilemmas facing Israel in the geopolitical arena in light of the past year's developments. This is important because it sharpens the distinction between international issues over which Israel has no real influence and those in which Israeli decisions can improve its situation and advance its interests. A fatalistic approach would likely push Israel into diplomatic paralysis and into a policy of 'do nothing', even though deciding not to decide carries a cost as well as a benefit.

The dilemmas are broad in scope and the consequences of not making a proactive choice between alternatives will likely have a paralyzing effect leading to a 'wait until the dust settles' policy. But the dust will probably not settle any time soon, so Israel will have to navigate and make decisions in an unpredictable and dangerous geopolitical arena. The number of 'moving parts' in the complex international system makes the task of managing a foreign policy enormously complicated. Weighty decisions are imperative given the geopolitical developments in the following four complexes:

- A. **The Global Complex:** The 'world order' in place throughout the Cold War and then characterized by years of American dominance after the collapse of the Soviet Union has made way for 'world disorder' that has yet to crystallize into a stable and functioning structure. Along with the rise of

Asia and the geopolitical challenge Russia continues to pose for Washington, the power and international standing of the United States – the superpower whose friendship and assistance to Israel is so critical and which is home to almost half the Jewish people who live in unprecedented prosperity – continues to erode. President Obama's approach to date, not to show forceful leadership in the face of North Korean provocations, Iran's persistence in pursuing its nuclear project, and the blood-letting in Syria that includes the use of chemical weapons, exacerbates the emerging image of a superpower focused on a burdensome economic crisis and on difficult internal problems, and which prefers to 'lead from behind,' if at all.

- B. **The Middle East Complex:** The term 'Arab Spring' has revealed itself to be a vision of the distant future at best. The overthrow of autocrats has not brought about democratic rule and liberal governance. Along with the release of popular sentiments seeking freedom, economic opportunity, respect and governability, the regional earthquake also unleashed fundamentally anti-democratic and anti-Western forces that have become dominant. Thus, the way was paved for the rise of political Islam, but the manner in which it has functioned and its accomplishments at the helm of power have been disappointing and sobering. Anchors that long provided relative strategic stability are weakening. Inter-communal and other tensions have been stirred up and undermine state frameworks

so that it is impossible to envision how the situation will calm down and stabilize in the near future: the civil war in Syria and the danger that the country will break apart; the economic and political crisis in Egypt; the threat to the stability of Jordan and Lebanon; the failure to achieve stability and internal agreement in Iraq – all this is occurring while Iran continues to progress toward achieving a nuclear weapon and steps up its subversive efforts to exploit the upheaval to deepen its regional influence. This picture reduces state military threats against Israel but strengthens hostile non-state forces and turns Israel's operating environment into an even more sensitive and complex space.

The term 'Arab Spring' has revealed itself to be a vision of the distant future at best

- C. **The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Complex:** The lack of a solution to the conflict continues to pose a threat to Israel's security and its Jewish-democratic character, and helps to fan the de-legitimization phenomena against it. If the current U.S. effort to restart negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians fails as previous efforts have, the Palestinian side can be expected to move to drop the 'direct talks under American mediation' model in favor of an alternative course – a quasi-imposed solution under multinational sponsorship or,

in the extreme case, adopt policy that 'gives back the keys' and the responsibility for the West Bank to Israel and calls for a 'one state for two peoples' paradigm. These developments could easily worsen the security situation to the point that a third intifada breaks out. On the other hand, progress toward a permanent Israeli-Palestinian solution is likely to have the potential for systemic change in Israel's strategic situation and even to offer an answer,

albeit a partial one, to the new challenges that result from the Arab revolts.

D. **The Jerusalem-Washington-U.S. Jewish Community Triangle Complex:** This relationship is a critical strategic asset to Israel and the Jewish people's power. During his Israel visit, President Obama gave powerful expression of America's support of the Jewish

state, but he did not cover up differences over Iran and the Palestinians, which could grow into highly problematic disagreements.

The U.S. desires to close the chapter of its active military intervention in the Middle East

The United States' Standing in the World and the Region

Developments that support the claim of diminishing American interest in the Middle East relate to the continuing economic crisis in the United States, sharp cuts in the Pentagon's budget, Washington's

focus on Asia – particularly the rise of China, and predictions that the United States in short order will no longer be dependent on Middle Eastern oil or on imported energy resources of any kind. The continuing disengagement from Afghanistan (following the Iraq withdrawal), and the avoidance, so far, of direct military involvement in Syria point to an American desire to close the chapter of its active military intervention in the region.

This sharpens Israel's dilemma: a significant American-led peace process is likely to require painful concessions and pressure from Washington to reach a settlement. On the other hand, American disengagement would likely encourage less friendly elements to vie for control of the peace process and to change the format from direct negotiations between the parties to one less comfortable for Israel (international, United Nations framework, etc.). No less importantly, regional players are wondering how far the United States is prepared to go to stop Iran's nuclear program, or if it will adopt a less passive Syria policy. America's non-aggressive response to North Korean belligerence – in the eyes of Middle Eastern countries – is another test case that casts a shadow on U.S. standing. At the same time, many commentators believe that the United States cannot disengage from the region because of its potential to undermine global security, to spark a nuclear war, and to cause a global energy/economic crisis. The terror attack at the finish line of the Boston Marathon (April 15, 2013) strengthened claims that even if the United States abandons the Middle East, the Middle East will not release the United States.

Open issue:

- In light of the American intention to reduce its involvement in the Middle East and assuming that this, from Israel's perspective, is a negative trend: Should Israel persuade the United States to remain involved in the region, and how could it do so?

Iran's Progress toward Achieving a Nuclear Weapon

Even though sanctions are severely damaging its economy, Iran continues to steadily move ahead with development of a nuclear weapon. A February 21, 2013 International Atomic Energy Agency report found that Iran had begun to install some 180 advanced centrifuges at its uranium enrichment facility at Natanz, significantly increasing its capacity to accelerate production of the fissile material required for an atomic bomb. The former head of military intelligence, Amos Yadlin, estimated that "By the summer [2013], the Iranians will definitely cross the red line that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu laid down in his UN speech."¹

Netanyahu himself said that, "Iran has not yet crossed the red line that I laid down at the UN but is moving toward it systematically."² Western intelligence sources are divided in their assessment of how long it will take Iran to produce a nuclear weapon once it makes the political decision to do so. President Obama made clear that U.S. intelligence estimates that it will take a year,

perhaps longer, from the political decision to create a weapon to the point at which the first bomb is operational.³ Nothing in the differences between these assessments detracts from the single conclusion: Iran is getting very close to acquiring a nuclear bomb, and that it is advancing toward that goal along all necessary development tracks: production of fissile material, development of the weapon system itself and its delivery missile. This ensures that the period between an eventual political decision and the point at which an operational system is in place will be as short as possible. In the meantime, rhetoric between Israel and Iran is intensifying. Netanyahu repeatedly promises that Israel will not accept a nuclear Iran, and Israeli Chief of Staff Ganz, when asked in an interview (April 16, 2013) whether the IDF possesses the capability to attack Iran's nuclear facilities on its own, replied: "Unequivocally, yes."⁴ The Iranian side continues to threaten and Khamenei vows (March 23, 2013) that if Israel attacks his country's nuclear facilities, "The Islamic Republic will wipe out Tel Aviv and Haifa."⁵ Nevertheless, it is interesting that some of the candidates in Iran's presidential election campaign are critical of Ahmadinejad's foreign policy and avoid using wild rhetoric vis-à-vis Israel. Nuclear talks between Iran and the P5+1 Group (the United States, Russia, China, Britain, Germany,

Iran continues to increase its capacity to produce the fissile material required to produce an atomic bomb

and France) have not, so far, led to a breakthrough. Even if the stalled talks restart, it is entirely unclear whether they will yield results (and if there are results, that they will satisfy Israel). Iran's policy of advancing to the nuclear capability threshold will allow for the rapid production of a nuclear weapon. Combined with empty diplomatic initiatives, this will leave Jerusalem, in the coming year, with the dilemma of whether to launch a military attack against Iran (a decision that is likely

Regional anchors that long provided relative strategic stability have weakened considerably

to contradict the U.S. position), or to risk waiting for an American military strike. The Israeli decision will mainly depend on developments in Iran's nuclear program, along with an assessment of the Obama administration's readiness to use force to halt the project (and of course, on whether Israel has the military capability to achieve the goal itself).

The nuclear test North Korea carried out, and the provocative steps it took afterward, test American determination in the struggle against nuclear proliferation. Iran is testing the extent of Washington's decisiveness, and indeed Secretary of State John Kerry stated the need "to show resolve toward North Korea, otherwise Iran will be emboldened by it."⁶

Obama stated, in an interview reported by the *Jerusalem Post* on March 14, 2013: "When I say all options are on the table, all options are on the table

and the U.S. has significant capabilities. Our goal is that Iran will not have weapons that threaten Israel or lead to an arms race in the region." But skeptics maintain that we cannot attach operational significance to the president's rhetoric since he has yet to enact a military response to the crossing of the red line he drew for Assad – the use of chemical weapons. It is reasonable to expect that the practical expression Obama gives to this warning will affect the credibility Iran's rulers attach to his declared commitment to prevent a nuclear Iran, and not to suffice with containing it.

Open Issue:

- Should Israel attack Iran by itself if it concludes Iran has crossed the red line?

The 'Arab Spring' and the Middle East Storm

Recent months have shown that the 'Arab Spring' does not guarantee a rapid and calm transition to democratic regimes that protect human rights and are guided by liberal principles. The optimism that prevailed among many at the start of the revolt has given way to alarm. There is growing doubt that the revolts, which succeeded in toppling dictators will be able to liberalize societies replete with poverty, illiteracy, tribalism, social divisions, radical Islam, repression of women, government corruption, discrimination against minorities, unemployment, inadequate education systems, underdeveloped economies, and a weak middle class.

From Israel's perspective, anchors that long provided relative strategic stability have weakened

considerably. Israel faces an unstable Middle East with a growing dominance of political Islam, which is fundamentally hostile to Israel and the West. Extremist Salafi and Jihadist elements are flourishing, Sunni-Shiite tensions are increasing, and state institutions are weakening. It is becoming increasingly difficult to deal with weakened governments that are not a real 'address' for what is happening in their sovereign territory, and in which, in any case, the region's rulers must pay greater attention than they have in the past to 'the Arab street,' which is very hostile to Israel.

The shockwaves in the Arab world illustrate how difficult it is to craft a single elegant, coherent doctrine from which clear answers to any arising dilemma can be derived. Some argue that in a situation so dynamic, unpredictable, and laden with internal contradictions, it would be a mistake to apply a single rule to all possible scenarios; each challenge should be dealt with independently.

The Danger of Syria's Disintegration

The Syrian civil war, which intensified over the past year, has claimed at least 93,000 lives, and made refugees of more than a million Syrian civilians. Russia and China are blocking binding Security Council resolutions that would mean Assad's ouster. Alongside the strategic advantages inherent in the erosion of the Syrian army's power and the damaged Iran-Damascus-Hezbollah axis, Israel is concerned about the break-up of the central government in Syria and about the country

becoming a haven for Islamic terror groups that will work to undermine the quiet on the Golan border.

In recent months, for the first time since the Yom Kippur War, there have been a number of shooting incidents in the Golan Heights (the first took place on November 12, 2012). Israel responded by firing at Syrian targets, making it clear that it will not refrain from responding to such developments. Tensions between Israel and Syria intensified following Syria's announcement that Israel had staged an air attack on a military research institute near Damascus (January 30, 2013). Foreign sources reported that the attack destroyed advanced surface-to-air missiles en route to Hezbollah in Lebanon. A second Israeli attack took place in two waves on May 2 and May 5, 2013, and targeted Iranian missiles and weapons systems also en route to Hezbollah.

President Obama made clear (May 4, 2013): "I continue to believe that the Israelis justifiably have to guard against the transfer of advanced weaponry to terrorist organizations like Hezbollah."⁷ Uncertainty over what would happen in Syria in the wake of Assad's departure and existing divisions between opposition forces are currently deterring the United States from supplying arms to the rebels. The concern is that such weapons would fall into

The U.S. has been hesitant to supply arms to the Syrian rebels. The concern is that such weapons could fall into the hands of Muslim extremists

the hands of extremist Islamic elements and might ultimately be used against American and Israeli targets. Despite these concerns, the United States has recently increased financial and humanitarian aid to some rebel organizations it believes will not later act against American interests. In Israel, concern is growing over the 'leakage' of chemical and other strategic weapons from Syria to Hezbollah and to Jihadist terror groups that find in Syria a convenient base for their activity.

Various intelligence sources that rushed to predict Assad's imminent downfall are now wary of such sweeping statements

The head of the Research Division of Military Intelligence, Brig. Gen. Itai Baron, confirmed in a public speech that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons: "To the best of my professional understanding, the regime used lethal chemical combat materials on a series of occasions, including the incident on March 19" (in which the

Syrian regime blamed the use of chemical weapons on the rebels). This announcement presented the United States with a difficult dilemma as President Obama had publicly warned Assad that the use of chemical weapons would be a game changer and cross a red line. After a day of hesitant American reactions about the information itself, the United States confirmed (April 25, 2013) that the Syrian army had indeed used Sarin, a deadly nerve gas.

President Obama is now under pressure to keep his word and take military action against Assad.

But as of this writing, Obama is proceeding with caution and has said that additional checks are necessary for final confirmation of the intelligence. He is also reluctant to disclose the nature of the American response to Assad's red line crossing and does not specify how, from Washington's perspective, "the game will change." A poll published in late April showed that 62% of Americans are opposed to military entanglement in Syria, while only 24% support it.⁸ Various commentators believe that, in light of Obama's reluctance to send American troops into another Middle East war, his reaction is likely to be limited to approving the transfer of weaponry to certain rebel groups, and possibly to declaring, to some extent, a no-fly zone.

Various intelligence sources, who early in the revolt, rushed to predict Assad's imminent downfall are now wary of such sweeping statements. In early May 2013, Assad's army even had some successes and welcomed the active military support of Iran and Hezbollah, along with – from Russia – a political-diplomatic umbrella and supply of advanced weapons meant to deter outside military intervention. China, too, is not enthusiastic about the use of military force against the Assad regime. Moreover, we cannot ignore the support Assad receives inside Syria itself: the Alawite minority – some 12% of Syria's population of 22 million, which has ruled the country since 1970 – fears for its very survival should power pass to the Sunni majority (some 70% of Syrians). Syria's Christian minority (around 10%), on the whole, favors Assad's regime or is sitting on the fence (the pro-Assad camp also includes secular

Sunni businessmen who are afraid Assad's ouster would collapse the Syrian economy).

The joint plan of John Kerry and his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, (published on May 7, 2013) to convene an international conference to resolve the crisis in Syria has so far given rise to only limited hope, but the need to wait for the conference to take place is likely to provide Obama with an additional argument against immediate military action against Assad.

Prime Minister Netanyahu stated (April 29, 2013) that "Syria is splitting apart, new forces have positioned themselves there and they present two possible dangers – of attack from the line of the Golan Heights, and of lethal arms falling into the hands of Hezbollah and terrorist organizations."⁹ Israel is therefore maneuvering along a fine line: it is determined to respond to any firing on its territory, to forcibly halt the transfer of advanced weaponry to Hezbollah, and of course, to act in the event that it detects preparations for a chemical attack against an Israeli target – any of which, clearly, could lead to a violent deterioration. Such a deterioration would likely occur in the wake of a Syrian retaliation. Its efforts to acquire Russian S-300 surface-to-air missiles do not help. For this reason, Netanyahu went to Moscow for an urgent meeting with President Putin to try and block the deal (May 14, 2013), without success. At the same time, the *New York Times* published the proactive warning of a 'top Israeli official': "If Syrian President Assad reacts by attacking Israel, or tries to strike Israel through his terrorist proxies," the official said, "he will risk forfeiting his regime, for Israel will retaliate."¹⁰

Open Issues:

- How to continue to block the transfer of advanced weaponry to Hezbollah without being drawn into the Syrian morass and without sparking an escalation on the Golan border or a general war in the north.
- How to prevent the use of chemical weapons against Israeli targets and such weapons falling into the hands of terrorist organizations.
- How to prepare for the possible breakup of Syria and its becoming a failed state.
- Can communication channels with the Syrian opposition be opened and how?

Hezbollah and the Danger of Undermining Lebanon's Stability

The civil war in Syria is undermining Lebanon's stability. Some 400,000 Syrian refugees have fled to Lebanon, creating a significant humanitarian problem. Prime Minister Najib Mikati resigned on March 23, 2013 after severe disagreements with members of his government over their opposition to the creation of an oversight body for upcoming parliamentary elections, and their refusal to extend the term of Ashraf Rifi as director general of Lebanon's national internal security service. President Suleiman assigned (April 7, 2013) the task of forming a new government to a veteran

member of parliament, Tammam Salam, who will need to build consensus on the controversial new election law, the 'Orthodox Proposal,' limiting voters to casting ballots only for candidates from their specific sect. Parliamentary elections were scheduled to take place in July 2013, but have been put off until November 2014.

Salam will have to simultaneously deal with increasing economic and security threats arising from the fighting in Syria, and with resurgent

Hezbollah's allegiance to Assad undermines its standing in the Arab world in general, and particularly in Lebanon

ethnic divisions resulting from Hezbollah's active support of Assad. Hezbollah's allegiance to Assad undermines its standing in the Arab world in general, and particularly in Lebanon. Hezbollah fighters are deployed side-by-side with Assad's forces in Syria. Dozens of them have been killed and returned to Lebanon for burial. This situation

exposes as a lie the organization's claim that its military capacity is only intended to defend Lebanon against Israel. Its taking up position beside the despised Assad is seen as joining the Shiite front against the Sunnis, and pulls the rug out from under the image that Nasrallah has cultivated over the years, of an organization that works for the good of all the people of Lebanon.

Tensions between Assad's supporters and opponents have already boiled over in Tripoli, and there has been unprecedented Sunni criticism of

Hezbollah. The final collapse of Assad's regime would isolate Hezbollah strategically. Not only would it lose its Syrian ally, but its link with Iran would also be severely damaged. Hezbollah's efforts to gain international legitimacy have been damaged by the publication of evidence of its involvement in international terrorism, this following Bulgaria's announcement (February 5, 2013) that its investigation found Hezbollah responsible for the July 2012 attack in Burgas, which left five Israelis and one Bulgarian dead. As a result of this announcement, the EU was forced – under U.S. and Israeli pressure – to reconsider whether to blacklist Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

In light of its attempt to help save the Assad regime, Hezbollah has been discouraged from opening a front against Israel, and so far has not retaliated for Israeli attacks on arms convoys destined for it from Syria and on stockpiles of advanced Iranian missiles stored near Damascus. Nevertheless, we cannot assume that Hezbollah and its Iranian patron will restrain themselves in the future. Hezbollah's continued efforts to secure Iranian arms and to get its hands on stockpiles of strategic weapons in Syria, in combination with Israel's determination to foil these efforts, could well lead to an escalation that could result in revenge attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad and a slide into war.

Open Issue:

- How to continue to foil Hezbollah's efforts to arm itself with high-quality weaponry without sliding into war.

Egypt

Since Morsi's inauguration as president (June 30, 2012), the Muslim Brotherhood has worked aggressively to bring its political power to bear throughout the Egyptian government. Morsi fired the heads of the army and the intelligence services (August 12, 2012), and granted himself powers that free him from judicial oversight (November 22, 2012) until a new constitution (reflecting the Islamist world view) takes effect. These steps by Morsi, along with Egypt's desperate economic situation, led to huge, violent demonstrations and to a more substantial coalescence of the opposition. Morsi stuck to the already-cold character of the peace treaty with Israel, and is interested in calm along the Egypt-Israel-Gaza border. Thus, he provided effective help in bringing about a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas following Operation Pillar of Defense. He continues to press Hamas to maintain it, and to restrain terrorist elements in Sinai.

Tensions developed between Cairo and Hamas following the Kerem Shalom attack in which Islamic extremists killed 16 Egyptian police (August 5, 2012), (Egypt suspected that Hamas knew about the planning of the attack), and Cairo declared a broad operation to destroy the terrorist infrastructure in Sinai. Despite Egyptian efforts, extremist terrorist elements that launched a number of attacks against Israel (including Eilat) over the past year continue to find refuge in Sinai. The flow of smuggled weaponry through the peninsula to Gaza continues, albeit at a lower level due to the growing Egyptian presence. It is clear

that Egypt's economic and military dependence on American aid enhances Egyptian interest in security coordination with Israel to prevent a deterioration, which would endanger the peace treaty with Israel and Cairo's relations with Washington.

For the first time in its history, the Muslim Brotherhood isn't relegated to the opposition, but actually faces the test of governing. It is a high-stakes test given Egypt's desperate economic situation. Its foreign currency reserves, which stood at \$40 billion at the end of Mubarak's rule, dropped to \$13.5 billion by February 2013 – only enough to cover basic commodities desperately needed by the Egyptian economy for three months (Egypt must import 40% of its food and 70% of its energy requirements). Shortages of raw materials required for Egyptian industry have already become apparent. The value of the Egyptian currency is falling; tourism, which makes up 12% of the Egyptian economy and is an important source of foreign currency, is paralyzed by security fears and the clerical atmosphere Muslim Brotherhood rule inspires. Foreign investors are reluctant to risk their money, and local investors prefer to transfer their capital out of Egypt. The International Monetary Fund has demanded reforms in exchange for loans that would give the economy some breathing room and would allow Egypt to obtain credit elsewhere

Morsi stuck to the already-cold character of the peace treaty with Israel

(the cost of every dollar the Egyptian government borrows is relatively expensive because of low confidence in Egypt's ability to pay its debts). President Morsi is concerned that cutting subsidies (which comprise 25% of the Egyptian government's budget), as the IMF demands, would bring the enraged masses back into the streets. Emergency aid from Qatar (\$8 billion) gave Morsi some breathing room and allowed him to put off, though not escape, making difficult decisions. The official

The Egyptian army, its major Western-oriented institution, is likely the reason Israel has refrained from diplomatic efforts to block the U.S. from equipping it

unemployment rate for 2012 was 12.7% (42.7% among the 20-24 age cohort), which translates to 3.4 million unemployed Egyptians. The impact of these statistics is magnified by the lack of supportive social services or of significant savings among the unemployed. The Muslim Brotherhood government has yet to demonstrate its ability

to deal with this challenge, especially since the political crisis makes it difficult to enlist the support of the parliamentary opposition for the necessary economic reforms.

The frustration of many Egyptians has increased in the past two years. The economy continues to worsen and there is disquiet in the political arena as a result of conflict between the Islamic bloc and the opposition (a rivalry has also erupted between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafist camp). Demonstrators are especially outraged

by the continuing heavy-handed behavior of the security services, and claim that almost nothing has changed since Mubarak's overthrow. Many accuse Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood of attempting to impose an autocracy on Egypt while ignoring the demands of the secular organizations that formed the backbone of the anti-Mubarak uprising. Dozens were killed during demonstrations commemorating the second anniversary of the revolution (January 25, 2013) and Morsi was forced to declare a state of emergency in the cities of Suez, Port Said, and Ismailia.

The role the Egyptian army is playing in the current political environment, and the role it is likely to play in the event of a severe political crisis, creates a complicated dilemma for both Israel and the United States. It seems that both countries prefer to continue to cultivate their ties to this Western-oriented institution which has the ability to safeguard the peace treaty with Israel and perhaps, in the event of a crisis, to seize power. This preference lies behind the shipments of advanced weaponry with which the United States is equipping the Egyptian army and behind Israel's refraining from any diplomatic effort to block them.

From Israel's perspective, it is significant that the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty survived the first year of Muslim Brotherhood rule. Egypt hosted the Islamic Summit (February 2013) at which support for the Arab Peace Initiative and the 'Road Map' were renewed, and the Egyptian foreign minister participated in the Arab League delegation that declared, in Washington, its support for an Israeli-Palestinian agreement

that includes ("small scale") land swaps. IDF Chief of Staff Benny Gantz even stated that, "The security coordination between Israel and Egypt has improved in certain respects following the change in government in Cairo... The results of Pillar of Defense – both in terms of the quiet in the south and of the cooperation with Egypt – have surprised me favorably."¹¹

Against this background, we also need to consider that in certain circumstances, such as a crisis in relations between Israel and the Palestinians (the Muslim Brotherhood is ideologically closer to Hamas than Fatah), an escalation between Israel and Gaza, or on the Israel-Sinai border, Egypt could curtail relations with Israel, impede Israel's freedom to operate in foiling terrorism from Sinai and Gaza and perhaps even seek to reopen and amend the military addendum to its peace treaty with Israel.

Open Issues:

- How to continue safeguarding the peace treaty with Egypt.
- How to strengthen security cooperation in curbing terror emanating from Sinai.
- How to continue to benefit from Egypt's assistance in maintaining the cease-fire with Hamas and curbing terror emanating from Sinai.
- How to constructively engage Egypt in the peace process.

The Threat to Jordan's Stability

While the Arab Spring sparked protests in Jordan, they were not on the scale of those in other Arab countries. They focused on corruption, calls for political reform, and expressions of anger over the worsening economic situation and the rising unemployment rate (30%). The cut-off of supplies of relatively cheap Egyptian gas created a significant deficit in Jordan's budget (Jordan imports 97% of its fuel needs, at a cost of about a quarter of its GDP). King Abdullah II was forced to cut subsidies to meet IMF conditions for approving Jordan's request for credit, and this caused fuel price increases that enraged many. The opposition in Jordan has in the past avoided criticizing the king himself: the fact that he is a scion of the Prophet Muhammad's family is a significant source of his legitimacy. But since the outbreak of the Arab Spring, this taboo has eroded and the king and his family are being publicly attacked (particularly his wife, who is portrayed as an out of touch spendthrift).

The January 2013 parliamentary elections did not reflect significant political reform, and at this stage the king has preserved his dominant power. The opposition, which is demanding reforms that would erode his power and lead Jordan

The opposition in Jordan has – in the past – avoided criticizing the king himself

to becoming a parliamentary monarchy, is not limited to the Muslim Brotherhood. There is also unrest and dissatisfaction among King Abdullah's traditional powerbase – the Bedouin tribes (who regard the monarchy as a hedge against the growth of Palestinian power). The civil war in Syria has aggravated Jordan's domestic situation and wreaked additional damage on its economy (some 60% of Jordan's foreign trade passes through Syria). Intense additional pressure has been caused by the

**King Abdullah II:
I would
not allow
any future
government
in Jordan to
repudiate the
peace treaty
with Israel**

400,000 Syrian refugees who have sought a haven in their neighbor to the south. Moreover, quite a few Jihadist elements have moved from Jordan to Syria to fight against Assad, a development that has led to concern over the destabilizing effect they will have when they return to Jordan. In recent months, Jordan has increased

its support for Assad's opponents, as well as its coordination on the issue with the United States and the Sunni Arab countries, so much so that Assad himself explicitly threatened Jordan (April 17, 2013): "We would wish that our Jordanian neighbors realize that ... the fire will not stop at our borders; all the world knows Jordan is just as exposed [to the crisis] as Syria."¹²

The danger that Jordan might collapse has raised serious concerns in the West and, of course, in Israel. The kingdom's importance is illustrated by reports

of American military advisers who are in Jordan to help prepare for the possibility that Assad falls, and the need to safeguard the chemical weapon stockpiles in Syria. A stable Jordan provides Israel with considerable strategic depth. The kingdom's security forces demonstrate professionalism and are effective in curtailing efforts by terrorist groups to use Jordanian territory as a base for attacks against Israeli targets. Israel is attempting to support its neighbor to the east, both in terms of security and economically. Discussions over the supply of Israeli gas to Jordan are well advanced.

Atlantic Monthly journalist, Jeffrey Goldberg, who conducted an extensive interview with King Abdullah (March 19, 2012), described vigorous intelligence cooperation between Jerusalem and Amman that includes, according to various sources, Israeli UAV flights along the border between Jordan and Syria. The Jordanian king confirmed that Netanyahu is contributing to Jordan's stability, that his relationship with him is "very strong," and that "our discussions have really improved." In the interview, Abdullah stressed that abrogating the peace treaty with Israel is a "red line" from his perspective, and that he would not allow any future Jordanian government to do so: "I don't want a government to come in and say, 'We repudiate the peace treaty with Israel.'"¹³

Open Issue:

- How to continue supporting the survivability of the Hashemite government and to preserve Jordan's security and economic stability.

Is the Crisis with Turkey Over?

The intense crisis between Israel and Turkey, which broke out following the Turkish flotilla to Gaza in 2010, took a significant turn when Netanyahu apologized to the Turkish prime minister in a telephone call made at President Obama's side shortly before his departure from Israel (March 22, 2013). Netanyahu expressed, in principle, a willingness to compensate the families of those killed on the Mavi Marmara (negotiations over the nature of the compensation began in April). In response to another Turkish demand – "the removal of the siege on Gaza" – he clarified that restrictions on the movement of people and goods into Gaza are already being eased. The United States pressed for reconciliation between its two allies, which in its view represent an anchor of stability in a stormy and unpredictable region. The Syrian civil war deepened Jerusalem's and Ankara's interest in achieving a thaw in the crisis between them and in creating a framework for cooperation in light of the implications of a continued deterioration in Syria, their mutual neighbor. (The tension between Ankara and Damascus reached a highpoint after the Turks claimed that Syria was responsible for a terrorist attack in the border town of Reyhanli that killed some 50 Turks on May 12, 2013).

Most commentators do not anticipate a return to the same depth of strategic cooperation that characterized the relationship between the two countries in the past. A month before Netanyahu's apology, Prime Minister Erdogan, who discovered just how much his blatant hostility toward Israel won him approval in the Arab world, declared, "Just

as with Zionism, anti-Semitism, and fascism, there is no escape from calling Islamophobia a crime against humanity."¹⁴ Under U.S. pressure, which expressed public disapproval of his statement, Erdogan corrected himself in an interview with the Danish newspaper, *Politiken*, and said that "his words were misunderstood."

In a dramatic move, Erdogan reached a cease-fire agreement with the imprisoned leader of the Kurdish underground, Abdulla Ocalan (March 21, 2013). According to the agreement, Kurdish fighters from the PKK movement are to withdraw from Turkish territory, and the Kurdish population in Turkey (18 million) will receive political and cultural rights. If the agreement is in fact carried out, it will put an end to a bloody struggle that broke out in 1984 and has claimed some 40,000 lives. Along with this move, Turkey is strengthening its ties with the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, which is enjoying stability and economic development (11% annual growth). A new oil pipeline to Turkey will allow for an increase in oil exports to a million barrels a day and is expected to further strengthen the common interests of Ankara and Irbil. These developments reflect a sea change in the fate of the Kurdish people, which numbers 38 million but which is spread out over Iraq (5 million), Turkey

The Syrian civil war deepened Jerusalem's and Ankara's interest in achieving a thaw in the crisis between them and in creating a framework for cooperation

(18 million), Iran (6 million), and Syria (2.5 million).

The Kurdish people – who have been the victims of ongoing deprivation, were attacked with chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein and spilled their blood in a guerilla war against the Turkish army – now enjoy growing autonomy (the pressure on Assad's forces allows the 2.5 million Kurds living in northern Syria to run their own affairs as a quasi-independent entity). An open question remains: Will the Kurds be satisfied with this or will they

strive for unification in a completely independent state? The Kurds are moderate from a religious point of view, and pro-Western in their outlook. Israel's policy toward them will likely be a source of renewed tension with Turkey, as are its Mediterranean gas fields. Ankara has expressed displeasure over the agreements Cyprus has

signed with Israel, Egypt, and Lebanon, which, the Turks claim, impinge on the rights of Turkish northern Cyprus. This background is at the heart of the Israeli dilemma over whether to sell gas to Europe via Turkey's existing pipelines.

Throughout the intense crisis between the states, trade between them actually increased (even though the number of Israeli tourists dropped from around 500,000 a year to around 50,000). Even before Netanyahu's apology, Israel allowed Turkish goods to be trucked from Turkey to Jordan

via the road between the Haifa port and the Jordanian border, from where they went on to Gulf markets. This solution was necessary because the Syrian civil war has made the traditional passage of Turkish exports to the Gulf (through Syrian territory) dangerous and unreliable. The potential transport of Turkish goods is estimated at around 500 trucks a week. Thus, trade between Israel and Turkey, and its potential to expand, presents a point of light and significant leverage in efforts to rebuild the relations between the two countries. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore Turkey's consistent support for Islamic elements, including Hamas (Erdogan is due to visit Gaza shortly), and that it is highly critical of Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinians (Turkey recently upgraded the status of its Jerusalem consul general to 'ambassador to the State of Palestine'). And even though Ankara does not want to see a nuclear Iran, it is opposed to an Israeli attack on Iranian facilities. So despite a confluence of interests over Syria, there are quite a few differences in orientation and policy that will likely cast a shadow on reconciliation and future Ankara-Jerusalem relations.

Open Issue:

- How to continue to foster relations with Turkey following Netanyahu's apology.

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Against the backdrop of the paralyzed peace process, frustration over Hamas's increasing strength, and the Palestinian Authority's severe economic recession, Abu Mazen petitioned the UN General Assembly to grant Palestine 'non-member observer state' status (November 29, 2012). The Palestinians won decisively with 138 in favor, 9 opposed, and 41 abstentions. Abu Mazen took this step despite Israeli warnings and personal pleas from President Obama. Jerusalem is concerned that their new status will enable the Palestinians to sue Israel and its citizens in the International Criminal Court. Israel retaliated by announcing plans for additional West Bank construction, including development plans for Area E1 (a step, according to the Palestinians, that would deny them territorial contiguity between north and south in the West Bank), and by stopping the transfer of indirect taxes it collects on behalf of the Palestinians. The United States also stopped its economic aid (and the Arab states have not rushed to send the funds they had publicly committed). Cutting off these funds accelerated the Palestinian Authority's economic decline. This, along with the absence of any diplomatic breakthrough on the horizon, the growing weakness of the Palestinian Authority, and, of course, the events of the Arab Spring, caused an intensification of protests and violent incidents in the West Bank, including demonstrations that erupted over hunger striking Palestinian prisoners. According to Shin Bet data,¹⁵ the month of February 2013 saw a 70% increase in terror attacks against Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Skepticism over the possibility of a successful renewal of peace negotiations has, however, lifted slightly in light of a number of developments: Obama's re-election, John Kerry's appointment as secretary of state (and the priority he has placed on advancing an Israeli-Palestinian settlement), election results in Israel (which signaled the possible formation of a government more centrist than its predecessor), and Obama's visit to Israel and Ramallah. But it remains unclear how willing Obama will be to personally invest in the practical aspects of moving the diplomatic process forward.

At a press conference held in Ramallah (March 21, 2013), Obama unveiled his preferred way of proceeding, Dismissing incremental, confidence building steps that 'serve to delay and put off some of the more fundamental issues,' he said, "If you have a situation where it looks like the incremental steps replace the broader vision, as opposed to incremental steps in pursuit of the broader vision, then I think that what you end up with is four more years, 10 more years, 20 more years of conflict and tension..." Obama favors working toward a permanent settlement over conflict management, interim steps, or unilateral moves. He clarified how permanent settlement negotiations should be handled: "The core issue right now is how do we get sovereignty for the Palestinian people, and

The paralyzed peace process and the PA's severe economic recession intensified West Bank protests

how do we assure security for the Israeli people? And that's the essence of this negotiation. And that's not to say settlements are not important. It is to say that if we solve those two problems, the settlement problem will be solved."

Obama outlines the familiar approach of focusing first on the question of borders ("sovereignty," in his words) and on the question of security. This approach causes discomfort on the Israeli side, among other reasons because it means that Israel

Secretary of State Kerry: The window of opportunity for achieving a two-state solution is liable to close over the next two years

will be asked to give up its main card at the opening stage and be left without any significant bargaining power when other issues, particularly the fate of the refugees and Jerusalem, come up for discussion.

At the end of his visit, Obama made it clear that Secretary of State Kerry would be working on his behalf with the two sides to explore

restarting negotiations. Kerry did in fact meet with Netanyahu and Abu Mazen and even announced (April 9, 2013) that he had agreed on moving forward with a series of economic projects in the West Bank aimed at aiding the Palestinian economy. However, he also made it clear that they are not a substitute for diplomatic talks but rather help set an atmosphere conducive to negotiations. On his return to the United States, Kerry appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee (April 17, 2013) and warned that the window of opportunity

for achieving a two-state solution is liable to close over the next two years, and direct U.S. involvement is therefore required. Kerry is also exploring ways to involve additional Arab states in the process, based on the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (API). We should mention here that despite growing calls in the Arab world to take the Arab peace initiative off the table, the most recent Islamic Nations Summit in Cairo (February 6-7, 2013) reaffirmed its support for this initiative and for the Road Map. The Arab League itself also affirmed its support for the API at its last meeting (March 26, 2012) and even resolved to send a delegation to Washington to present ideas for renewing the peace process. Indeed, the delegation appeared together with Secretary of State Kerry at a press conference (April 29, 2013) in which the Qatari prime minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, declared – on behalf of the delegation – that peace with Israel is a "strategic choice" for the Arab countries, and that the League supports Abu Mazen's peace policy and is committed to providing economic aid to the Palestinian Authority. The Qatari prime minister added land swaps – not mentioned in the 2002 Arab initiative – to the basic principles on which a settlement could be based.

Secretary of State Kerry told reporters, "The Arab League delegation affirmed that agreement should be based on the two-state solution on the basis of the 4th of June, 1967 line, with the possibility of a comparable and mutually agreed minor swap of land."

The Prime Minister's Office was restrained in its response, but Tzipi Livni, the minister responsible for peace negotiations, was more positive.

Nevertheless, Netanyahu stated shortly after the Arab League announcement (May 1, 2013) that we have to reach a settlement with the Palestinians "that will prevent Israel from becoming a bi-national state, but will provide stability and security."

Secretary of State Kerry asked the sides for a two-month "time out" to allow him to formulate a memorandum of principles that would serve as the basis for a renewal of talks. The Palestinians are adamant that Israel accept the principle of the '67 borders as the basis for renewing the negotiations and that it commit to present a map of the borders representing its position, but the Israelis insist that the negotiations should begin "without preconditions." The Palestinian Authority is preparing for the possibility that Kerry's efforts will be declared another failure; according to their calculations, the time out that they committed to expires on June 7, 2013.

Both sides are contemplating how to win the propaganda battle in which each will attempt to blame the other for obstructing the renewal of the peace talks. In this context, the Palestinians are threatening to change the goal and method of the Oslo process: direct negotiations will be replaced by an international diktat imposed on Israel, and the two-state vision will be replaced with a demand for equal rights for all within a single state. Furthermore, the Palestinians are considering a demonstrative step in which they would "give back the keys" to Netanyahu and hand over responsibility for the fate of the Palestinian people to him as the "occupying power."

The diplomatic stalemate provides context to a letter to the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton, (April 2013) signed by 19 senior Europeans who had formerly held top foreign policy positions. Their letter claimed that the Oslo process no longer has anything to offer, and that Europe's waiting for a sterile U.S.-led process to yield results essentially supports the continued entrenchment of the Israeli occupation.

The resignation of Palestinian Prime Minister Salaam Fayyad (April 13, 2013) after long months of tensions with Abu Mazen and the Fatah elite will likely complicate efforts to extricate the Palestinian Authority from its current economic crisis. The West and Israel considered Fayyad a reliable and professional interlocutor who dedicated himself to building the Palestinian economy and government institutions. Without him, there are growing fears of economic collapse and rampant corruption. At the same time, Fayyad's resignation gives a degree of momentum to reconciliation efforts between Fatah and Hamas as it allows for implementation of a key element of the reconciliation plan: the establishment of a technocratic government headed by Abu Mazen or another agreed-upon figure until general elections can be held. Despite a longing for reconciliation among the Palestinian

The resignation of Palestinian PM Fayyad increased growing fears of economic collapse and rampant corruption

public, each side seeks to blame the other for the continuing rift. Egypt (with assistance from Qatar) is leading the reconciliation effort but there are significant obstacles in the way and the vision of a single address for the Palestinian side remains elusive. Nevertheless, we cannot take the challenge a Hamas-Fatah reconciliation would present to Israel (and the United States) lightly. Khaled Meshaal's reappointment to the Hamas leadership (April 1, 2013) sends a signal to the

The view from Hamas: Operation Pillar of Defense ended with a positive outcome

international community that the organization has opted for a relatively moderate line and that it is worth exploring a way to include it in the diplomatic process with Israel. Meshaal enjoys support from Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey and the coming period will show whether he can succeed in imposing his authority on the Hamas leadership in

Gaza, which leans toward a more radical line.

Hamas's high degree of self-confidence is the result of its analysis of the outcome of the violent clash with Israel of November 2012 (Operation Pillar of Defense). Following shooting incidents and rocket fire on Israel, Israel responded by killing the commander of Hamas's military wing, Ahmed Jabari (November 14, 2012) and by destroying most of its Fajr 5 long-range missiles. Hamas retaliated by firing missiles on Israel cities, including Tel Aviv. A cease-fire agreement

was reached with U.S. and Egyptian assistance (November 21, 2013). Israel refrained from a ground invasion of Gaza and agreed to halt targeted assassinations there. For its part, Hamas undertook to halt attacks on Israel – including rocket fire and border attacks – by all Gazan organizations. Measures to ease restrictions on the movement of people and goods through the border crossings into Gaza were also agreed upon.

The confrontation allowed for the successful demonstration of the Iron Dome system, which intercepted 85% of the rockets launched at populated targets in Israel. Hamas, despite absorbing painful blows in the operation, portrayed the confrontation as their victory. According to its leaders, Hamas fighters deterred an IDF ground invasion and forced Tel Aviv residents into bomb shelters. As noted, this claim is consistent with the Hamas view that its regional and intra-Palestinian standing is on the rise. This is chiefly due to the Muslim Brotherhood's political victory in Egypt. In addition, Hamas succeeded in breaking out of the economic-diplomatic isolation imposed upon it under a diplomatic-economic umbrella held by leading Sunni states – Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey. All the same, Hamas is also taking care to maintain the cease-fire in place since the end of Pillar of Defense. Evidence of Hamas's improved standing can be found in the visit by the Emir of Qatar, during which he announced that he would fund – at a cost of \$400 million – the reconstruction of Gaza (October 23, 2012), as well as in the announcement of Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's plans to visit Gaza.

Open Issues:

- What is the best and most correct way to revive the peace process and make it effective?
- What are Israel's preferred parameters in a permanent settlement with the Palestinians?
- Assuming that it is not possible to move forward on a final-status agreement, what is the preferred alternative: Conflict management? Interim agreements? Unilateral steps?
- What is the most appropriate way to deal with Hamas while continuing to deter it?

Israel-U.S. Relations

In recent months, this relationship, a critical strategic asset to the strength of Israel and the Jewish people, has seen clear expressions of American support for Israel, but also of friction between the countries and their leaders. The highlight, of course, was Obama's visit to Israel (March 20-22, 2013) in which he made a special effort to demonstrate his friendship and commitment to Israel. Even before the visit, the president spared no effort in proving his commitment to Israel's security. For example, he signed a new law (July 27, 2012) that commits the American administration to providing Israel with the military aid necessary to confront military threats in a changing strategic environment.

According to the law, the United States will supply Israel with, among other items, aerial refueling planes, anti-missile defense systems and "special armaments."

At the AIPAC Policy Conference (March 4, 2012), Obama re-stated his policy vis-à-vis Iran: "I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon." He also reiterated his commitment to preserving Israel's qualitative advantage. Washington, with a small group of countries, stood with Israel in opposing the Palestinian UN move, and continues to provide substantial assistance in the struggle against the international phenomenon of delegitimization. But at the same time, it was leaked that the United States does not intend to use military force against Iran, and that Obama was furious over Netanyahu's support for his Republican opponent, Mitt Romney. It was also reported that he had claimed, in a closed meeting, that Netanyahu doesn't understand Israel's interests, and that his conduct would lead Israel into severe international isolation.

Claims of Israeli interference in American domestic politics continued to crop up after the elections, particularly during the nomination process of Chuck Hagel as defense secretary. Right-wing Jewish groups in the United States accused Hagel of holding defeatist positions on

Claims of Israeli interference in American domestic politics continued to crop up after elections

Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah. Some, pointing to his past statements against the "Jewish lobby," alleged anti-Semitism (AIPAC, for its part, took care to stay out of the campaign against Hagel's appointment). Once confirmed, Hagel made a special effort to demonstrate his commitment to Israel. In a meeting with then-defense minister, Ehud Barak (March 5, 2013), he expressed his commitment to ensuring Israel's qualitative advantage and promised that, despite Pentagon budget cuts, military aid to Israel would not diminish.

Obama in Jerusalem: So long as there is a United States, *atem lo levad* (you are not alone)

Obama's speech at the Jerusalem Convention Center (March 21, 2013) allowed him to present his main positions on Israel and clarify the emotions and values behind them:

- "When I consider Israel's security, I also think about a people who have a living memory of the Holocaust, faced with the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iranian government that has called for Israel's destruction. It's no wonder Israelis view this as an existential threat. But this is not simply a challenge for Israel – it is a danger for the entire world, including the United States."
- "So long as there is a United States, *atem lo levad*" (Hebrew: "you are not alone").

- "Given the demographics west of the Jordan River, the only way for Israel to endure and thrive as a Jewish and democratic state is through the realization of an independent and viable Palestine."
- "Given the frustration in the international community, Israel must reverse an undertow of isolation. And given the march of technology, the only way to truly protect the Israeli people is through the absence of war – because no wall is high enough, and no Iron Dome is strong enough, to stop every enemy from inflicting harm."
- "I recognize that with the uncertainty in the region – people in the streets, changes in leadership, the rise of non-secular parties in politics – it is tempting to turn inward. But this is precisely the time to respond to the wave of revolution with a resolve for peace."
- "But the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and justice must also be recognized... Just as Israelis built a state in their homeland, Palestinians have a right to be a free people in their own land."
- "Palestinians must recognize that Israel will be a Jewish state, and that Israelis have the right to insist upon their security."
- "Israelis must recognize that continued settlement activity is counterproductive to the cause of peace, and that an independent Palestine must be viable – that real borders will have to be drawn."

- "I've suggested principles on territory and security that I believe can be the basis for talks."

We cannot ignore the ambivalence that characterizes the triangular Israel-Washington-U.S. Jewish community relationship. On one hand, there is acknowledgement of the deepest sort of friendship, which is manifest in the massive U.S. practical support of Israel. On the other hand, there is evidence of frustration, anger, and discomfort over Israel's conduct. This year too, various commentators have warned that support for Israel in the United States is eroding because of Israel's policies, the demographic shifts that are slowly changing the face of America, and the growing concentration on domestic affairs. Yet, this claim is not generally supported by polling data. According to a poll taken in February 2013, support for Israel is actually on the rise among all sectors of the American population, though the most significant increase is found among Republicans, conservatives, and older age cohorts. The lowest rates of support – though even these exceed 50% – are found among the young, liberals, and Democrats.¹⁶

The coming months will show the extent to which these two issues – Iran and the peace process – will be the source of fruitful cooperation or of problematic friction in U.S.-Israel relations. During Obama's Israel visit, Netanyahu stated that he has confidence in Obama and that he "is convinced that President Obama is serious about his intention to prevent Iran from achieving a nuclear weapon." Netanyahu would no doubt be pleased if this wish were to come true in its entirety. In actuality, there

is uncertainty over the form an American response will take. Significant disagreements are likely to arise between Israel and the United States in the event that an agreement is reached with the Iranians that is unsatisfactory to Israel, or if the criteria (red line) that would justify a military attack is put to a practical test. For example: if Iran were to progress to the point of the 'final turn of the screw' and then stop so that it could technically claim it does not have a bomb, and this was acceptable to the United States but not to Israel.

There could also be bitter disputes over the Palestinian issue. For example, if the United States insists on receiving Israel's precise opening positions on final status issues and Israel refuses to lay them out, or if it fails to veto a future Security Council resolution that establishes the terms of an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. It is unclear to what extent the United States will be prepared to provide Israel an umbrella of support in the regional and international arenas if it considers Israel the main cause of the diplomatic stalemate. A scenario in which disagreements develop between Jerusalem and Washington over the Iranian or the Palestinian issues could, of course, leave the American Jewish community between a rock and a hard place.

Against the various commentators that warned support for Israel in the U.S. is eroding, polling data show opposite trends

Open Issues:

- How to continue to safeguard the United States' friendship without compromising Israel's essential interests?
- How to convince the United States to maintain its presence and involvement in the Middle East.
- How to benefit from the assistance of American Jewry without pushing them into an untenable corner.

Israel's International Standing

European support for labeling goods manufactured in the settlements is growing

The UN General Assembly vote to accept Palestine as a non-member observer state revealed Israel's isolation on this issue. The eight countries that supported Israel and voted against the Palestinian move were: Canada, the Czech Republic, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Panama, and the United States. *Haaretz* reported

(February 7, 2013) that in a closed meeting in the Prime Minister's Office, Israel's national security adviser, Yaakov Amidror, expressed the view that settlement construction "is also causing Israel to lose the support of its greatest friends in the

West." There is concern that a deterioration in Israel's international standing would likely cause a strengthening of the de-legitimization efforts against it, and of Europe's imposition of economic sanctions. Thus, in a strongly-worded report by a commission of enquiry of the UN Human Rights Council on the subject of the settlements (January 31, 2013), governments and private corporations around the world are urged to consider imposing diplomatic and economic sanctions on Israel because of its continued construction in the settlements. European support for labeling goods manufactured in the settlements is growing. Half of Europe's foreign ministers (including those of Britain, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Denmark, Belgium, Portugal, and Ireland) expressed their support for such a measure to the EU's high representative for foreign affairs, Catherine Ashton (April 12, 2013) and asked her to publish detailed implementation guidelines. There is no mistaking that anti-Israel sentiment on the settlements issue is gathering momentum throughout Europe.

The diplomatic stalemate provides a supportive backdrop to the embargo efforts against Israel. Thus, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist, Stephen Hawking, cancelled his participation in Israel's Presidential Conference, explaining his actions in a letter (May 3, 2013) saying that he had been asked by Palestinian academics to "honor the embargo." These phenomena, which testify to the erosion of Israel's international standing, join ongoing and more serious processes of severe de-legitimization of Israel's very existence and of Diaspora Jewry's ties to it. Even though there has been greater awareness of the de-legitimization phenomenon in

recent years in Israel and among the Jewish people and these have begun to mobilize to combat it, with Israel succeeding in curbing or responding to several de-legitimization campaigns, it seems that the de-legitimization challenge on the level of international discourse has not been halted and remains a major challenge to Israel and to Diaspora Jewry. It is important to emphasize that there is understanding for Israel when it is forced to take military action to defend itself as happened, for example, in Operation Pillar of Defense. Its forceful actions, whether against Hamas or out of a need to block the transfer of advanced weaponry to Hezbollah, are generally viewed with relative understanding in European capitals. This is not the case when Israel is perceived as continuing to hold the Palestinian people under occupation and as not being interested in an agreement with the Palestinians.

Open Issue:

- Is it possible to improve Israel's international standing in the absence of progress toward an Israel-Palestinian agreement, and if so how?

Israel as an Energy Power

Israel continues progress toward becoming an energy producer and exporter. In early December 2012, it was announced that the Australian firm, Woodside, would pay \$2.5 billion for a 30% stake in Israel's Leviathan gas field in the Mediterranean. On March 30, 2013, gas began flowing from the Tamar field, ushering in a new era that will lead

to Israel's energy independence. Progress in gas field development will likely enrich Israel with considerable revenues, and, provide it with the opportunity to reap strategic dividends from gas exports. But it also raises social, economic, and strategic issues, including where to sell the gas (Europe? Turkey? Asia?), and the challenge of defending the drilling platforms and other infrastructure in a region whose countries have problematic relations with one another – Israel, Egypt, Lebanon (Hezbollah), Syria, Turkey, and Cyprus.

Gas field development and exports may provide Israel with strategic dividends

Open Issues:

- How can a diplomatic and security apparatus be built to provide protection in the areas of the gas drilling rigs and delivery lines?
- From Israel's overall strategic perspective, who are the ideal customers for Israeli gas?
- What, from Israel's perspective, are the optimal natural gas distribution channels?

Conclusion

The prosperity and security of the Jewish people as a whole are substantially affected by trends taking place in the geopolitical arena. Israel's actions in this arena sometimes affect the interests of Diaspora Jews. For example, if Israel resumes negotiations with the Palestinians in the coming year, sensitive questions will arise over issues dear to Jews everywhere. The future of Jerusalem is

Israel's actions in the geopolitical arena sometimes affect the interests of Diaspora Jews

at their heart. Similarly, in another, mysterious area, the suicide of Mossad agent, Ben Zygier, which became public in February 2012, shocked the Australian Jewish community and aroused fears of dual loyalty accusations because he held an Australian passport. While the scope and legitimacy of Diaspora

Jews' involvement in Israeli decisions close to their hearts remains an open question, there is no question that the major decisions must be made by Israel, and that this year it faces an unpredictable and danger-laden geopolitical arena. The number of 'moving parts' the Israeli decision maker must take into account makes the job of managing a foreign and defense policy extremely complex. This is likely to staunch the appeal of a proactive approach that seeks to identify opportunities and take the initiative, and instead reinforce an approach of digging in and waiting 'until the dust settles.'

The following 21 dilemmas, arranged according to their intensity, arise from the issues discussed in this review. All await decisions by the Government of Israel:

Security Threats and Strategic Issues:

1. Should Israel strike Iran alone if it concludes that the Iranians have crossed the red line?
2. How can Israel continue to block the transfer of advanced weaponry to Hezbollah without being drawn into the Syrian morass or being pulled into a war in the north?
3. How can we prevent the use of Syrian chemical weapons against Israeli targets and their falling into the hands of terrorist organizations?
4. How is it possible to curb the terrorist threat from Sinai?
5. How should Israel deal with Hamas in order to deter it and maintain the Gaza cease-fire?
6. How can Israel build a diplomatic and security apparatus that will ensure the protection of gas drilling areas and delivery channels?
7. Who is the ideal customer for Israeli gas and what are the preferable supply channels?

Israel and its Neighbors:

8. What preparations should be made for the possible break-up of Syria and its becoming a failed state?
9. How can Israel continue to maintain its peace treaty with Egypt and strengthen security cooperation between the two countries?

10. How can we continue to support the survivability of the Kingdom of Jordan – its security, economy, and stability?
11. How can we foster Israel's relations with Turkey following Netanyahu's apology?
12. How should Israel relate to the Arab Spring and to the rise of political Islam so as to serve Israeli interests?
13. Do Israel and the Jewish people have the ability to moderate the hatred of the 'Arab street' whose influence is growing?

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

14. What is the best and most advisable way to revive the peace process and make it effective?
15. What are Israel's preferred parameters for a permanent agreement with the Palestinians?
16. Does Israel prefer an alternative to a permanent agreement: Conflict management? Interim agreements? Unilateral steps?
17. How can we include Egypt (and other Arab states) in a beneficial role in the peace process?

The Relationship Triangle: Jerusalem-Washington-U.S. Jewish Community:

18. How can Israel continue to maintain its friendship with the United States without relinquishing essential Israeli interests?
19. How can Israel persuade the United States to remain a present and dominant force in the Middle East?

20. How can Israel take advantage of American Jewish support without pushing them into an untenable corner?

Israel's Standing in the International Arena:

21. Is it possible to improve Israel's international standing without progress on an Israeli-Palestinian settlement, and if so, how?

Some of the necessary decisions deal with questions of extreme political sensitivity. The most critical and sensitive of all involves the form Israel would like to see a future agreement with the Palestinians take. A fundamental effort to clarify Israel's policy goals vis-à-vis this issue would provide a clear and useful compass for dealing with other difficult issues. Considering these many weighty issues, it is difficult to overstate the importance of decisions that will be made in Jerusalem in the near future. They have the potential to substantially impact the future of Israel and the Jewish people.

Notes

1. General (Res.) Amos Yadlin, at the conference of the Institute for National Security Studies, April 23, 2013.
2. *Haaretz*, April 29, 2013.
3. President Obama in an interview with Channel 2, March 14, 2013.
4. Interview with Kol Yisrael, April 16, 2013.
5. *Haaretz*, March 21, 2013.
6. *Haaretz*, February 14, 2013.
7. JTA, May 4, 2013.
8. CBS News, April 30, 2013.
9. *Haaretz*, April 29, 2013.
10. *New York Times*, May 15, 2013.
11. Interview with Israel Army Radio, April 16, 2013.
12. Al Arabiya, April 18, 2013.
13. *Atlantic Monthly*, March 19, 2013.
14. *Haaretz*, February 28, 2013.
15. *Haaretz*, March 4, 2013.
16. *Haaretz*, April 19, 2013.



The Triangular Relationship – Washington, Jerusalem, and the Jewish People

2013: New U.S. and Israeli Administrations, Challenges and Opportunities

Obama and Netanyahu: "A Second Chance"

The results of recent elections in the United States and Israel threatened to lead to a path of continued conflict, and to leave the Jewish community in the United States between a rock and a hard place: between an American president – without future electoral constraints, who is concentrating on domestic affairs and who is perceived by some as likely to conduct a conciliatory foreign policy, sometimes at the expense of traditional allies, like Hosni Mubarak – and an Israeli prime minister with a conservative image who leads a party with members further to the right than in the past, and with former, more moderate members excluded.

And yet, for the time being, it appears that fears of conflict are not on the agenda. The storm over the Middle East heightens Israel's strategic importance to the West and provides a second chance for the two leaders to engage in dialogue and cooperation. The fact that the president is dealing with scandals that may challenge his credibility at home – the murder of the U.S. ambassador to Libya and,

alleged, subsequent State Department missteps; First Amendment issues such as the tracking of telephone conversations of AP reporters, and the unfolding Prism controversy; and the targeting by the Internal Revenue Service of groups opposing the president – does not encourage him to seek out additional fights 18 months before mid-term Congressional elections.

Challenges in the special relationship between the two countries were fueled by different approaches to dealing with Iran's nuclearization, resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, and responding to the dramatic developments in the Middle East. The tension that characterized relations between the two leaders during the previous four years, and the perception that Israel attempted to interfere in domestic American politics, also increased fears of conflict.

Despite criticism of Barack Obama before the elections – at home and abroad – a majority of Americans decided clearly in favor of giving the first African-American president another chance to succeed. Not to do so would have turned the clock back and increased frustration among the ethnic minorities integral to his support base. This

at a time when far-reaching demographic changes herald the growing influence of the U.S. Hispanic, African-American, and Asian communities, many of whom identify as Democrats and pose a considerable challenge to the future of the Republican Party.

In Israel, the election results primarily pointed to an expected generational change of leadership, and a weakening divide between center-right and center-left blocs. This is, primarily, a result of

eroded public confidence that a Palestinian partner for peace negotiations exists. Israeli voters looked for fresh faces and found them in almost every party. Not only Netanyahu, but Avigdor Lieberman, Tzippi Livni, and Shaul Mofaz too, lost some of their magic and were consigned to the old generation. Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid,

and to some extent Shelly Yachimovich, along with many on their party lists, were perceived largely as the 'future leadership.' And yet, pre-election public opinion polls and analysis of the results suggest that none among this new leadership was seen as a real alternative to Netanyahu as prime minister. At the same time, there are signs of another notable development: the successful absorption and integration of the 'new aliyot,' particularly the younger generation of olim from the former Soviet Union. For the

Israel is not the main factor in how American Jews vote

first time, their support was split along lines more similar to those of the general population, and was less motivated by sectorial interests.

Side effects include: the Haredi parties losing their position as power brokers; the Arab bloc, in the absence of a center-left blocking group, was left again without significant bargaining power; and similarly, Meretz remained outside the coalition even though it doubled its numbers at the polls.

Netanyahu was not left without difficulties on the domestic front. He faces complicated political and social challenges. His new coalition does not promise an easy road. He is blamed for the deficit that, according to worst-case estimates, has reached 30-40 billion shekels; an OECD report that placed Israel at the top of both the poverty table and the list showing income gaps between rich and poor in developed countries; and for certain questionable travel costs and expenses at official residences.

Some American Jews, mainly those active in the various Jewish organizations, approached the November elections fearful that, in light of tensions between Obama and Netanyahu, they would find themselves caught between the two. This is a corner they do not wish to be in as it raises a concern that they could be accused of favoring Israeli interests over those of the U.S. They were also unhappy with the American media for playing up a perceived Israeli preference for the Republican candidate, Mitt Romney. This is not the first time this has happened. The late Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin's support for the Republicans was even more overt, and Ariel

Sharon enthusiastically supported George W. Bush. American Jews have never welcomed Israeli interference in their political arena, just as Israelis do not appreciate such interference from the U. S. This feeling was also detectable among some of Romney's Jewish supporters.

On the other hand, Obama was seen by some in the Jewish establishment as ready, at Israel's expense, to advance a worldview inconsistent with its ties to the Jewish state. Some have also noted that he is often reluctant to attend large Jewish conferences. Some prominent Jewish leaders have not regarded him as a friend, even though members of the administrations in both Washington and Jerusalem have pointed out that cooperation between the two countries has reached unprecedented heights during his term in office.

At bottom, Israel is not the main factor in how American Jews vote. They vote according to U.S. interests. This was also the case in the 2008 elections (70% voted for Obama in 2012, compared to 75% in 2008), despite concerns of a possible crisis between the two countries.

The American president's visit to Jerusalem soon after elections allowed Obama's Jewish critics to breathe more easily. In Israel, Obama showed deep friendship. His every word was crafted with an eye to relieving tensions and to strengthening the Israeli public's confidence in him and his policies. Along with the traditional support his predecessors had shown for the State of Israel's accomplishments, he voiced explicit support for the Zionist idea.

It is doubtful that the visit led to a complete reversal of Israeli public opinion regarding Obama. Although the concerns about and opposition to him abated (according to a poll by the Smith Institute in Israel on the eve of his visit and shortly after it, the number of Israelis who defined Obama as a pro-Palestinian president fell from 36% to only 16%); the percentage of support for and confidence in him rose only one point (from 25% to 26%). On the other hand, his words resonated with Jewish audiences in the United States. With a sense of relief, they received his words enthusiastically.

Did Obama's personal attitude toward Israel and Netanyahu change overnight? This is a question for which there is no clear answer. There is no doubt that the absence of Middle East stability strengthens tangential and/or intersecting interests of the countries. The American president cannot ignore the civil war in Syria, the situation in Egypt, and the lurking dangers threatening regimes friendly to the United States elsewhere in the region. This situation positions Israel as an island of stability, a loyal ally whose strategic importance to the United States and the West redounds to its benefit.

The American president's visit to Jerusalem soon after elections allowed Obama's Jewish critics to breathe more easily

More Confrontation or on the Road to Reconciliation?

As things stand, Obama's visit to Israel has set the personal relationship between the two leaders on a positive track. Official spokesmen from both administrations stress that relations between the countries also benefited. The positive atmosphere was also the result of deepening dialogue and cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem

Washington and Jerusalem need to coordinate timetables and other issues related to Iran

against the backdrop of bloody civil war in Syria; turbulence in Egypt that is increasing instability throughout the Middle East; developments over the past two years in Libya and Tunisia; concerns arising in Saudi Arabia; secular protests in Turkey; and the threat to Jordan's stability.

That said, the timing the Americans chose for Obama's Jerusalem visit, two days after Netanyahu's new government was sworn in, was inconvenient. Although the date was set almost two months earlier, it was clear even then that assembling the coalition would not conclude before the visit.

Technical explanations were given: White House scheduling constraints; the desire of the president to visit at the earliest possible time as he had not done so in his first term; meeting the new Israeli government; and confidence building with the Israeli public who had had doubts about him based

on fears that he was committed to dialogue with Iran, mobilizing the support of moderate Islam in advancing withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, removing the Pakistani threat and, particularly, strengthening ties between his administration and the Arab world, even at Israel's expense.

Obama and his advisers understood that progress on a diplomatic settlement in the Middle East, which requires far-reaching concessions, could not succeed without the overwhelming support of the Israeli public. Such support could not be achieved without confidence in the leader running things in Washington.

These various constraints, however, do not fully explain the urgency the U.S. placed on the visit. There is no doubt that these matters could have waited two or three months. Thus, it seems that what the administration considered urgent was the need for Washington and Jerusalem to coordinate timetables and other issues related to Iran.

Prime Minister Netanyahu made halting Iran's efforts to achieve military nuclear capability his top priority at the beginning of his 2009 term. This approach was seen, in the West, as the main goal, the accomplishment of which he regarded as his historic mission. After he was elected, he was disappointed by the level of Israeli preparedness for a military strike against the Teheran-led nuclearization program, and faced broad opposition from most of the heads of the defense establishment. As a result, he acted on two levels:

A. He ordered the defense establishment to prepare and plan alternative options for a

strike, while providing the resources to do so (these efforts bore fruit in 2012).

- B. He reinforced a 'brinkmanship' policy, and simultaneously worked vigorously on the diplomatic front with Western policymakers to persuade them that unless a U.S.-led coalition was formed to attack the Iranian installations, Israel would have no choice but to take action and do so itself before the window for intervention closes.**

Israel's determination percolated during the four years of Netanyahu's term. At the same time, Obama led an international effort for dialogue with, and sanctions against, Iran aimed at halting its nuclear program, while publicly committing to leave all options – including military – on the table. We should emphasize that Obama did in fact order the American military to prepare for such a possibility and to develop the necessary military means.

Even though – at least on the declarative level – Jerusalem and Washington had the identical goal of disposing of the Iranian nuclear capability, there was a difference in defining the red line Iran should not be allowed to cross, and so a gap developed between their timetables. Among other reasons, this was so because the American capability to deploy more extensive force, and at a higher technological level, gave them a later intervention deadline.

All indications were that Israel's assessment was that the right time to intervene was summer-fall 2012. Interested in preventing any Israeli intervention before U.S. elections, Obama objected.

It's possible that this delay contributed to building trust between the two, but at the same it eroded some of Israel's bargaining position, which was better prior to elections. Netanyahu's September 2012 UN address, which postponed the date for an Israeli military operation until summer 2013, can be seen as responsive to Obama's expectations.

Based on this analysis, the urgency the administration attached to President Obama's visit can be seen as designed mainly to ensure a further delay to a possible Israeli early summer military action or, at least, to coordinate timetables with it, to wait for the results of the June 14 Iranian elections and to allow for another diplomatic effort at dialogue to remove the threat.

A lack of coordination on Iran would likely put the relationship between Jerusalem and Washington back on a negative track, possibly leading to a clash. The second issue with the potential to spoil the new congenial atmosphere is the peace process with the Palestinians.

The general understanding is that President Obama did not place the Palestinian issue at the top of the White House agenda at the beginning of his second term. He knows well the pitfalls and challenges he faces internationally and domestically. The Middle

The urgency the U.S. attached to Obama's visit can be seen as designed mainly to ensure a further delay of a possible Israeli early summer military action

East peace process has burned the fingers of a number of U.S. presidents and he wants to protect his own hands.

Nevertheless, his secretary of state, John Kerry, has shown determination to move the process forward out of a sense that it is beneficial to both sides and that it would serve U.S. interests in strengthening its position in the Middle East. The president is giving him freedom to maneuver. If Kerry succeeds, Obama will reap the rewards; if he fails, Kerry will bear the responsibility.

Secretary of State John Kerry has shown determination to move the process forward. Obama is giving him freedom to maneuver

Even so, it is important to emphasize that, notwithstanding the praise Obama lavished on the accomplishments of the Jewish state, of Israeli society and of the Zionist movement in his Jerusalem speech, he left no doubt how deeply he identifies with the suffering of the Palestinians as a people who have lived under

occupation for more than 45 years, and he did not hesitate to ask the Israelis to go over their leaders' heads to bring reconciliation and peace on the basis of 'two states for two peoples.'

The message to the Israeli people was powerful and persuasive. On the one hand, Israelis were impressed that before them stood a president who sought to demonstrate friendship and sympathy, despite the image he had previously had. On the other hand, his address was

different from those of his predecessors. While they mainly emphasized global and regional interests, Obama spoke out of an inner identification with the victim – those under occupation – even if he recognizes the Jews' historic right to the Land of Israel. Obama's emotional identification with the Palestinians as victims, as opposed to those in Israel who see the Six-Day War victory as having liberated the heart of the Land of Israel, risks rolling back the relationship to a darker place.

'Bibi or Bibi'

In the 2009 elections, Tzippi Livni had a winning campaign. At first her strategic advisers focused on Ehud Barak, aiming to erode his image and to force him out of the race for prime minister. Later, they turned to the ultimate slogan: "It's either Tzippi or Bibi." Livni's Kadima led with 28 Knesset seats over Netanyahu's Likud, which took only 27. But Livni's success came at the expense of her potential coalition partners. She took votes from both Labor and Meretz. She was not successful in damaging the right-wing majority bloc, and as a result she was unable to form a coalition.

In 2013, such a scenario was not possible. No party managed to put up an alternative candidate for prime minister. Polls taken on the eve of the election showed that none of the party heads was seen by the public as being able at present to deal with the challenges and threats on the agenda. In the months leading up to the elections, Bibi was King of Israel.

How was it that the strength of the "Likud-Beitenu" list led by Netanyahu and Lieberman, who ran on a joint slate, lost 26% of its strength – an erosion from 42 seats down to 31?

An integrated analysis of the results shows that in 2013, the Israeli electorate voted for a generational leadership change, even if there was no leading candidate to oppose Netanyahu for prime minister. The certainty that, despite the vote share, Netanyahu would ultimately succeed in putting together a coalition made it easier for the other parties to increase their success at Likud's expense. There are also other explanations and facts:

- A. Merging the Likud and Yisrael Beitenu lists immediately eroded support for both parties.
- B. The legal proceedings against Lieberman with respect to the appointment of the ambassador to Latvia, and the general sense that the state attorney's office and the attorney general had not managed to fully exploit the investigation, which allowed the Yisrael Beitenu chairman to escape the main allegations – bribery and breach of trust – deterred committed Likud voters.
- C. Russian immigrants, particularly the younger generation, are becoming integrated into the general population. Many of them have stopped voting automatically for sectorial immigrant parties, and are beginning to identify as Israelis in every way. Their vote was divided according to general interests. In communities with a relatively high proportion of residents from the former Soviet Union (FSU), support for Netanyahu and Lieberman

dropped (for example: in Ashdod, from 50.6% in 2009 to 36.41 % in 2013; in Yavneh, from 41.1% to 30%; in Holon, from 39.9% to 30.84%; in Rishon Lezion, from 41.7% to 31.34%).

- D. Along with FSU immigrants, Lieberman had also enjoyed the support of activist nationalist voters from the Labor movement. In the distant past, those who had identified with Ahdut HaAvoda (Union of Labor), supporters of Yitzchak Tabenkin and Yigal Alon, and later with Yitzchak Rabin, did not find their place in the Labor Party that, in their view, had veered to the left over the last two decades. Historically, it was difficult for them to vote for Likud and for Netanyahu, but some preferred to give their vote to the right-wing bloc. In the recent elections, they sought an alternative.
- E. HaBayit HaYehudi (a union of the National Religious Party and The National Union), headed by Naftali Bennett, itself presented a right-wing ideological alternative and ran a brilliant campaign under the slogan "Bennett and Netanyahu," in spite of problematic relations between them. The union led to a doubling of HaBayit HaYehudi's strength, with a significant number of its new supporters not coming from the religious community

Activist nationalist voters, who in the past voted for Lieberman, found an alternative in HaBayit HaYehudi and Yesh Atid

(which characterized the voters of the two parties individually in the 2009 elections) but rather from the secular population. According to a study by Prof. Asher Cohen of Bar-Ilan University that looked into Bennett's success and examined data from 100 large polling places, most of them on kibbutzim, his support in secular areas grew by between 100 and 250%. The most significant increase

occurred in areas with high concentrations of FSU immigrants (250%); a significant increase (230%) also occurred in wealthy communities with largely secular populations; and it was actually in national-religious communities that support for Bennett dropped by 10% in favor of Otzmat Yisrael, which positioned itself at the right-most edge of the

political map but, in the end, did not reach the electoral threshold.

- F. The second alternative for moderate right-wing voters was the surprise of the 2013 elections – Yesh Atid (There is a Future), Yair Lapid's new party, which won 19 Knesset seats, mostly at the expense of Kadima and HaTnua (The Movement) headed by Tzippi Livni. Yesh Atid also won over some traditional Likud voters who found themselves unable to vote for Lieberman, and who were disappointed with the Likud list, which had become too far

right in their view and did not include figures with liberal opinions such as Benny Begin, Dan Meridor, or Michael Eitan.

It is worth noting that Avigdor Lieberman has maintained his power, for the time being, and continues to be active behind the scenes. Even though he is subject to certain limitations – including a ban on his appointment as a member of the cabinet – for as long as there are criminal proceedings against him, he has delayed the appointment of a foreign minister until his trial has concluded. In the meantime, he holds the most important post in the Knesset, chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Moreover, Lieberman was a central player in assembling the coalition, in the allocation of ministerial portfolios, and – early in coalition negotiations – in bringing Tzippi Livni into the government and her appointment as minister of justice.

Even though it is possible to see the election results as showing a degree of erosion in the strength of the blocs, a true analysis indicates confusion rather than dramatic change. In the end, the bloc that was able to form a coalition in the 18th Knesset, in 2009, did not incur serious damage. Then, the coalition comprised the Likud, Yisrael Beitenu, Shas, Yahadut HaTorah and HaBayit HaYehudi (61 seats), along with four additional members of Knesset from Haichud HaLeumi (who, positioned at the far right of the political spectrum, lacked any alternative). The 2013 results produced a drop in the total number of seats held by the center-right bloc to 61, yet it is important to note that Yair Lapid made it clear immediately

The Labor Party won two more seats, but Yachimovich fell short of her party's potential

after the elections that he would not support the formation of a coalition that depended on the votes of the Arab parties. In so doing he avoided a possible center-left bloc. Furthermore, almost two seats-worth of votes for Otzma LeYisrael were wasted because the party failed to reach the electoral threshold.

An analysis of voting habits also explains Labor leader Yachimovich's decision not to take a clear ideological left-wing position on the peace process: she sought to "bring home" the very nationalist Labor supporters who at the last minute preferred Lapid and Bennett. Even though the Labor Party won two more seats – 15 in the present Knesset – the common wisdom is that Yachimovich fell short of the potential, because of Yesh Atid's success, and because Meretz, on the Zionist left, doubled its power and went from three seats to six.

There were minor fluctuations, to the left and to the right, but at the center of the political map, the 2013 elections do not indicate a dramatic change. When we add the 19 seats won by Yair Lapid, the six seats won by Tzippi Livni, and the two seats of Shaul Mofaz, we arrive at a total of 27. Kadima won 28 seats in the 2009 elections. The number is essentially identical.

Shas – the Sephardi Haredi party – maintained its power with 11 Knesset seats, even though it had the potential to make gains in accord with demographic developments. This is interesting as it may signify an erosion of sectorial voting among its traditional base. That was not the case among the voters of the Ashkenazi Haredi party, Yahadut

HaTorah, which increased its strength by 40% – from five seats to seven.

Thus, the bloc map confusion in Israel was not the result of seismic political change, but rather mostly due to unexpected cooperation between the two young leaders: Yair Lapid and Naftali Bennett. Both of whom, each for his own reasons, decided to join forces under the campaign slogan "equality in sharing the burden" in order to block the Haredi parties. Without HaBayit HaYehudi, Netanyahu would not have been able to form a coalition, even with Haredi support. The moment Lapid vetoed Shas and Yahadut HaTorah's entry into the government, and Bennett made it clear that he would not join a coalition without Lapid, the character and agenda of the government were set: to focus primarily on domestic and security matters and exercise caution in pursuing the peace process, which could have threatened the coalition. This focus is mainly in line with the public's frustration with the peace process. It may also show that Lapid and Bennett, who aspire to replace the current leadership, are beginning their collaborative effort with an eye to the future.

Bennett made it clear that he would not join a coalition without Lapid

The Coalition Survival Test

Benjamin Netanyahu's political seniority was evident given the background of security challenges and the experience he gained as the longest serving prime minister except for David Ben Gurion. Despite criticism leveled against him – on the one hand that his hawkish positions and lack of a diplomatic initiative eroded Israel's

The Israeli public came to appreciate Netanyahu because during his tenure fewer Israelis and fewer Arabs were killed than under any other prime minister

image in the international arena and, on the other, that his excessive caution impeded his capacity to make decisions – the Israeli public came to appreciate him because during his tenure fewer Israelis and fewer Arabs were killed than under any other prime minister, and that under his watch, Israel did not find itself in any serious crisis. He is also

perceived as responsible for Israel's satisfactory navigation of the global economic crisis. Still, he was not able to translate his personal public opinion advantage (some 60% supported him for prime minister in various polls taken on the eve of elections) into a Likud-Beitenu ballot box triumph.

Indeed, up until now, Netanyahu has succeeded in conducting a foreign and security policy that has avoided major military confrontation. After the elections, the political challenges he faces are primarily domestic.

If he decides that an operation against Iran is unavoidable, and if the attacks against Syria herald a major shift in policy, he may, in a time of trial, garner the public support he received in the elections. But the longevity of that support will depend on the results of exercising the military option, including how the other side responds. If, in the same context, or as a result of U.S. efforts, Netanyahu decides to promote the peace process with the Palestinians and loses Naftali Bennett and his party's support, he may be able to replace them in the coalition with Shelly Yachimovich and Labor.

Other complicated challenges facing the prime minister lie in the social arena. At the start of his new term, the Netanyahu government is grappling with serious domestic problems, which are affecting public opinion toward it. At the same time, criticism – of government waste, the entire leadership's use of luxury cars, the opposition by ministers to combining ministries despite the decline in the number of cabinet members, the increase in the cost of maintaining official residences, and of excessive flight expenses – mounts.

The national deficit is estimated at between 30 and 40 billion shekels, and the government has been forced to take emergency steps that mostly hit the lower and middle classes.

A 2010 OECD report, just published in 2013, claims that Israel leads the developed countries in the number of poor with 20.9% – ahead of Mexico (20.4%), Turkey (19.3%), Chile (18%), and the United States (17.4%). This figure is mainly based on income data provided by interviewees in the

Haredi and Arab communities. When purchasing power is factored in, the poverty figures drop to 12%. The last report published by the National Insurance Institute of Israel (for 2011) divides the impoverished population, estimated at 20% of the general population, into two main groups by purchasing power – 63% of poor families are by income and expenditures below the poverty line, and the other 37% is above the line. These figures diminish the number of poor families to 12.6%.

Israel is also among the top countries in the gap index between rich and poor – in fifth place after Chile, Mexico, Turkey, and the United States.

Among the steps the Finance Ministry plans to cover the deficit: requiring homemakers (mostly stay-at-home mothers) to make social security payments, a cut in child allowances, a tax on pension deductions, a tax on those seeking to buy better homes, a 1.5% increase in income tax, and a 1% increase in VAT. These are steps that hit the lower and middle classes hardest. The wealthy are not expected to be affected to the same degree. This is so despite new taxes on yachts, private planes, and luxury goods, and a 1% cut in the salaries of government ministers and members of the Knesset. Large corporations will continue to pay tax at a substantially lower rate despite the planned 1.5% increase in income tax.

These steps, which come in the wake of massive loss write-downs by Israeli tycoons, are generating unrest and threaten to spark a renewal of the social protests of the summer of 2011.

Yair Lapid's appointment as minister of finance places him in a most problematic position at this

junction, given the harsh economic measures necessary to balance the budget. Once the steps are in place it would be more difficult for him to withdraw from the coalition since, from a political perspective, it is preferable to wait for signs that the economy is improving under his watch. He may need a slate of successes before he competes again for the public's vote. A mid-May *Haaretz* poll, taken after the budget and the new measures were approved by the government, shows that Lapid's public approval rate fell by 34% and reached a low of just 19%, even though support for his party, at this stage, has not been damaged. The same poll showed that support for Netanyahu has also eroded, from 53% to 39%.

Finance Ministry plans to cover the deficit are generating unrest and threaten to spark a renewal of the social protests of summer 2011

Obama and the Challenges of his Second Term

Barack Obama's November 6, 2012 victory was decisive, though not overwhelming. He defeated Romney in the national popular vote 51 to 47%. Even so, his victory in the American Electoral College system was pronounced, winning 332 electoral votes to Romney's 206. Beyond the ideological arguments between Democrats and Republicans and the disagreements over the extent of his success in his first term, the citizens of the United States chose to grant him a second term as

president, a second chance to lead their society – which has seen dark periods of slavery and racism in its history – to a more egalitarian future.

In this context, it is appropriate to mention the demographic change underway in the United States, and to point out the continuing trend benefiting the Democratic Party, which leads among minorities. In the last two elections, there was a further decline in the percentage of whites in the electorate, from 79.2% in 2004 to 76.3% in 2008, and 73.7 in 2012. The percentage of blacks grew, from 11.1% in 2004 to 12.3% in 2008, and 13.4% in 2012. There was also a parallel increase in the

This positive trend among minorities points to their deepening identification with the country. This phenomenon helped ensure Obama's re-election

percentage of Hispanics and Asians. Also, a significant increase in the number of blacks actually participated in the elections. This positive trend among minorities points to their deepening identification with the country. This phenomenon helped ensure President Obama's 2012 re-election.

During his first term, Obama was seen as centralizing power and reserving exclusive rights over decision-making to the White House. His most significant accomplishment was healthcare reform, which for the first time will provide all Americans with attainable health insurance. If the reform's implementation is successful, it will be considered an historic achievement. On the economy, he

succeeded in changing its direction and in steadily leading the recovery from the economic crisis of 2008, although at a pace slower than expected. He contributed to the significant rehabilitation of the auto industry that had been facing collapse, and strengthened the banking system. He is also leading a major effort to free the United States from its dependence on energy imports.

In the area of defense, Obama's greatest achievements have been the tightening of sanctions on Iran and the development of a military option against it, and in leading the operation to kill Osama Bin Laden. Although Obama indeed withdrew U.S. forces from Iraq as promised, he did not succeed in ensuring continued U.S. influence there. At the same time, he is leading a process to withdraw American troops from Afghanistan, and the United States has grown weary of direct involvement in the Middle East. He avoided supporting Mubarak's regime during the revolution in Egypt, decided not to send troops to Syria to intervene in the bloody civil war there, and 'led from behind' in the struggle to eliminate Gaddafi's regime in Libya. The president's opponents have accused him of weakness in the face of repeated North Korean provocations, which has contributed to an erosion of U.S. standing as the world's leading power, and signals totalitarian regimes such as Iran that they do not have much to fear.

And yet, above all, Barack Obama excelled in maintaining a clean image during his first term. Six months after his second inauguration, though, the American president is confronting some difficult scandals:

- A. First Amendment issues such as the Justice Department's tracking telephone conversations that reporters and editors of the AP news service conducted with sources as part of an investigation into leaks of classified information about covert American activity in Yemen, and the unfolding Prism controversy.
- B. Exposure of illegal activity by the Internal Revenue Service against conservative political groups during the 2012 presidential election campaign. The tax authorities issued an apology over painstaking, inappropriate tax exemption scrutiny of dozens of new groups identified with the 'Tea Party' movement. The Justice Department announced the launching of an official inquiry to determine what was behind the "special treatment" these conservative groups received and whether this was done with the knowledge of top administration officials.
- C. A demand to look into the September 2012 incident in Benghazi, Libya in which the U.S. consulate and the CIA compound were attacked by Libyan terrorists who murdered four American diplomats, including Ambassador Christopher Stevens. There are allegations that former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the White House covered up intelligence reports of a planned attack and chose to describe the incident as a Muslim protest run amok.

These affairs, which came to light in May 2013, threaten to rock the Obama administration in the coming months and to preoccupy the

president at the expense of other, weightier issues, including the Middle East. Such a situation may lead to further erosion of the United States' image and, ultimately, harm top-level Israeli interests. In parallel, this Annual Assessment chapter once again raises the impact of the continuing progress of the political influence of U.S. minorities. This trend reinforces the need to think and plan strategically in adapting to the new demographic reality.

The American Jewish Community

American Jews' traditional support for the Democratic Party came in at around 70% because of their liberal inclinations. Only 30% of Jews supported the Republican Party. Even though the Jewish vote is only marginally affected by the administration's attitude toward Israel, the Israeli issue plays a prominent role in the American political system, and especially in election campaigns. This has occurred mainly at the initiative of the Republican Party, which uses the erosion of Israel's popularity among the liberal wing of the Democratic Party to attract supporters and raise funds among vehement Israel supporters, Jewish and Christian alike.

This effort has not had a significant impact on voting itself. As we have written in previous Annual

The political influence of U.S. minorities reinforces the need to think and plan strategically, to adapt to the new demographic reality

Assessments, American Jews vote as Americans seeking to better their country and to influence their country's values, economics, and society. What is represented as an Israeli interest does not comprise the central factor in their voting decisions. This in no way suggests that the State of Israel and its existential interests are not high on the agenda of the organized Jewish community. It is even possible to see the criticism of Israeli policy in liberal circles in a positive light: it likely attests to the

concern and importance that these circles attached to the special connection between the communities.

For American Jews, Obama's first term had its ups and downs

In the 2008 elections, most Jewish voters supported the anticipated change in the United States and considered Obama as a worthy candidate who would contribute to closing the rifts within

American society, to improving the economy, to raising its standing internationally, and to advancing an agenda that would serve American interests. According to various polls, 75% of Jewish voters voted for him in 2008.

For American Jews, Obama's first term had its ups and downs. Some were disappointed by the president, not necessarily in the Israeli context, but because, in their view, he did not run the United States in the way they had expected, or because he did not demonstrate warmth toward the Jewish community, largely avoiding participation in major

Jewish conferences. Others were insulted when they felt that the president was applying excessive pressure on Israel, or that he, and those around him, did not behave respectfully enough toward the Israeli prime minister.

These feelings were fully exploited by the Republican Party's strategic consultants, who used Israel and the long-standing acquaintance between Romney and Netanyahu as a card in their battle for the presidency. This use was of no help to Israel within the American foreign policy establishment or in the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. We should note that, from conversations with Republican supporters, it appears that some were less than enthusiastic about the attempts to drag Israel into the United States' domestic inter-party struggle.

And, in fact, when it came to choosing between Obama and Romney in November 2012, most Jews returned to the usual voting patterns (70% for the Democrats, 30% for the Republicans), out of a fundamental faith in Obama's approach and out of party loyalty. Both camps within the Jewish community noted that it was better to keep Israel out of America's internal political disputes and to continue with the Jewish organizations' policy of ensuring that support for Israel is traditional and bipartisan.

Another phenomenon related to internal American politics worthy of attention is the erosion in Jewish representation in the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate. Jewish representation in both chambers fell to its lowest level in 20 years following the 2012 elections. Only 22 Jews were elected to

the House and only 10 serve in the Senate. This is despite the fact that for the first time the mayors of the three largest American cities – New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles – are Jewish. The lower numbers in Congress may reflect a decline of young Jews choosing a career in politics, as well as the aging and retirement of senior politicians. The Jewish leadership in the United States is also entering a period of generational transition, both among the national professional leadership and on the local community level. It needs to give some thought to this matter and must encourage younger Jews to take over the leadership positions that will become vacant in the next few years.

The liberal attitudes of American Jews, both in the larger society and within the community itself, and the imperative of mutual tolerance between the religious streams, is expressed toward Israel as well. American Jews feel more comfortable with liberal Israeli governments. Extreme phenomena, such as the exclusion of women, discrimination against liberal streams at the Western Wall and increasing ‘Haredization’ provoke concern, particularly among the younger and middle-aged generations. Perhaps for this reason, even though the new Israeli coalition does not show signs of greater ideological moderation in diplomatic areas, it will make it easier to strengthen ties between Israel and the North American Jewish community, given the coalition's efforts to find more liberal solutions in the area of religion, and its openness toward the various streams in Judaism.

The final subject that needs to be addressed in this context concerns security implications for the Diaspora of possible proactive Israeli military

operations related to developments in the Middle East, particularly with respect to Hamas, Assad in Syria, Hezbollah, and Iran. It is true that U.S. Jews enjoy greater individual security than those in other, smaller and weaker communities. But there is a need to refresh community security arrangements in the U.S., on both national and local levels, as well as to prepare for crisis management. This is necessary because, given the difficulties hostile Arab forces face in responding directly to Israel, there is likely to be an effort on the part of the governments in Teheran and Damascus and among terrorist organizations to devise and incite terrorist activity against Jewish targets around the world. The Israeli government, for its part, is committed to including this factor in its decision-making considerations and intelligence gathering before engaging in proactive operations, and to sharing the information with intelligence sources in targeted countries.

Possible proactive Israeli military operations are likely to incite terrorist activity against Jewish targets around the world

Concluding Points

- Obama's visit to Israel considerably reduced the level of suspicion and mistrust toward his administration among the Israeli public, and enables closer cooperation between the countries, as well as an improvement in the personal relationship between him and Netanyahu. Two challenges to this positive trend may arise:

Obama's visit to Israel considerably reduced the level of suspicion and mistrust toward his administration among the Israeli public

A. A renewed American effort to restart the peace process with the Palestinians;

B. An Israeli decision to ignore the American timetable and initiate a military strike against Iranian nuclear sites without agreement on 'red lines' vis-à-vis Iran, and without prior coordination.

- The turmoil besetting the Middle East, the threat to Israel resulting from the transfer of strategic weaponry from Syria to Hezbollah, and the further radicalization of Hamas are likely to force Israel to take military action against Iranian and Syrian interests. The absence of a response capability against Israel and a desire to evade responsibility are likely to encourage efforts by Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas to activate existing terrorist cells against Jews in the Diaspora. The Government of Israel should factor this

consideration into its decision-making, and Jewish communities should prepare for crisis management that includes maximum cooperation with local security forces.

- There has been an erosion in Jewish political representation in American politics that is symptomatic of the generational change within U.S. Jewish leadership. The Jewish community should encourage prominent and talented young Jews to enter the political arena and to assume leadership positions in national and local Jewish organizations.
- The Israeli elections: The increased strength of the new parties reveals a yearning for a generational leadership change. Nevertheless, for now, no leading candidate has been found to challenge Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister. The recent elections also brought good news reflecting the integration of immigrants from the FSU – and particularly among the younger generation – within the wider population, and a significant decline in sectorial voting. The lack of influence of the Haredi sector as the power brokers in the formation of the coalition is an additional result. The composition of the new government allows for relative stability given efforts to improve the economy.
- OECD data on poverty and income gaps demand attention, but it is important to point out that if the spending levels of poor families are considered in calculations,

the poverty rate drops from 21% to 12%. Moreover, since the beginning of 2010, there has been some improvement in the poverty situation. Responsibility for the failure to include the Arab and Haredi sectors (which together make up a major proportion of the poor population) in the Israeli labor force rests on the shoulders of generations of Israeli governments, and it is the Government of Israel that must deal with this issue. A single poor child is too many, but Diaspora assistance should be coordinated with Israeli authorities to be in synch with the state's strategic plan.

- The U.S. elections: At the conclusion of Obama's first term, American Jews returned to their traditional voting patterns: 70% for the Democratic Party and 30% for the Republican Party. Israel played too prominent a role in the election campaign, even though its impact on American Jewish voting behavior was marginal. Israel should excuse itself from the American domestic political arena and should make every effort to preserve its bipartisan support.
- The liberal attitudes of American Jews, both in the general society and in Jewish community frameworks, and the mutual tolerance between the religious streams are also voiced when it comes to the State of Israel. American Jews should be encouraged by the image of the new government and can take part in vigorous efforts that will ensure action against phenomena such as the exclusion of women, discrimination

against liberal streams at the Western Wall, and 'Haredization.'



The Rise of Asia: Policy Implications for Israel and the Jewish People

JPPI's 2010 Annual Assessment included a chapter titled "Asia's Rise: Implications for Israel and the Jewish People." It repeated well-known predictions that China and India were on the way to great power status; emphasized that Israel's and the Jewish people's stake in Asia was high; commented on the critical importance of U.S. Middle Eastern and Asian policies and their impact on Israel's position in Asia; analyzed the trouble with Islam that China, India, and Israel all have to face, sometimes in similar but more often in very different fashion; and criticized that Israel and the Jewish people paid too little attention to Asia. Partly as a result of this lack of attention, Israel's relations with Asia were lagging behind the links that many other countries have established with this continent, maybe by five years if not more, and which continue to lag today.

While there is some merit to comparing the relationships with China and India, there are some key differences in the current nature and shape of challenges facing Israel and the Jewish people in their relationship with these two countries that sometimes require different policy approaches and solutions, as will be shown in this chapter.

1. Key Recent Developments in Sino-Israeli and Indo-Israeli Ties

A. Strategic and Political front: Relative Stagnation

The main, superficial impression one gets when observing the relationship between Israel and Asia's two rising powers is one of relative political and diplomatic stagnation in recent months, particularly following the 20th anniversary celebrations in 2012 of the normalization of ties. Prime Minister Netanyahu's official visit to China in early May 2013, the first such visit by an Israeli prime minister in six years, may indicate a change in this pattern and happened just as the new Beijing government was beginning to formulate policy. China's public rhetoric toward Israel and the Jewish people continues to be positive. But when it comes to some concrete matters, the relationship is difficult. The diplomatic environment in Beijing remains competitive with many governments substantially increasing the size and number of their missions in China. Israel's Embassy in Beijing,

despite an increase in size in recent years and the appointment of a minister-level ambassador, remains relatively isolated and continues to face difficulties in reaching senior Chinese decision makers or advisers. India in turn has left Israel in no doubt that no high level visits will take place between the two countries in the foreseeable future. Neither the Israeli foreign minister nor the Israeli defense minister (who both had visited

Israeli industry has difficulties finding a firm foothold in the Chinese and Indian markets. Technology is already the backbone of future relations

China) was in 2012 welcome in India. A more positive development was a regular flow of visits to Israel by politicians from Chinese provinces, and Indian government ministers responsible for sectors such as tourism or transportation. Israel's finance minister visited India and was well received.

B. Civilian and Military Trade and Economic Links: Growth, but Still Considerable Unexplored Potential

Economic exchanges and trade have been growing gradually, though not as fast as Israel would like. China has become Israel's third largest trade partner, which is encouraging, but further growth potential clearly exists. Trade with India is of the same order of magnitude as trade with Turkey or Italy, but the Free Trade Agreement between the two countries promised by India since 2010 has still not been signed.

Israeli industry has difficulty finding a firm foothold in the Chinese and Indian markets, but this is not necessarily China's or India's fault. Yet in July 2012, China and Israel signed a memorandum of understanding according to which China will co-finance and build a high-speed railway line to Eilat, a project designated a national priority by the Israeli government. For Israel, getting China to invest in a national venture of great, long-term strategic importance was – or would be if materialized – a major positive development. Both China and India show undiminished interest in Israeli technologies and innovation. Technology is already the indispensable back-bone of Israel's future economic relations with Asia.

In terms of defense, relations with India continue to thrive. India remains by far the biggest foreign customer for Israeli military hardware and technology, which gives Israel's defense industries an important boost. There is cooperation in many defense sectors, including in the fight against terrorism. Senior officers are visiting in both directions – the latest publicized visit (not all are made public) was that of the chief of staff of the Indian Air Force who came to Israel at the beginning of 2013. India's defense minister's politically motivated turning down of his Israeli counterpart's request to make an official visit to the Defexpo India exhibition in 2012, and the blacklisting of one Israeli defense company for alleged corruption do not seem to have affected the defense relationship in a major way.

However, the absence of any public condemnation of the attempted assassination of an Israeli diplomat by Iranian agents in Delhi (2012) and

the indulgence shown an Indian citizen involved in the attempt also demonstrate India's inability or unwillingness to defend its sovereignty against Iranian encroachments. With China, military relations are strictly checked by an American veto. Nevertheless, the Chinese military showed its respect for, and interest in, Israel's armed forces publicly in 2011 and 2012, a new and quite unexpected development. China invited Israel's defense minister to an official Beijing visit, while the commander of the Chinese Navy, and later the chief of staff of the Chinese Army, made highly publicized visits to Israel where they were received by the highest political eschelons. The explanation for these visits, according to Chinese sources, was that China was paying more attention to Israel as a crucial factor in the Middle East. At the same time, a growing number of Chinese policy and defense experts were visiting Israel for discussions with their Israeli colleagues.

C. Soft Power and People-to-People Contacts: The Lack of a Comprehensive Cultural Outreach

Both China and India have almost no history of indigenous anti-Semitism. There is relatively little knowledge about Jews and until today almost no animosity, except to some extent among the two countries' Muslim minorities and in the case of India, among its intellectual elite. Hindus and Chinese have no interest in Muslim or Jewish holy places – for the Chinese even the concept is alien. Therefore, in both countries Israel and the Jewish people are still, to some degree, a 'blank slate,' which should rather be seen as an opportunity

than a challenge, as it provides a space to develop Israel's and the Jewish people's own narrative. This opportunity to build soft power through a comprehensive cultural outreach strategy should be seized. Israel and the Jewish people urgently need to expand and better fund their much too small cultural and information policy vis-à-vis Asia. The Jewish people must play a major role in this outreach.

2. Major Global and Regional Trends with Future Implications for Israel and the Jewish People's Relations with China and India

A. China's and India's Future Growth, and America's Relative Decline

Abundant literature has recently appeared describing the noticeable shift in the balance of power from the West to the East, with the West yielding some of its power to a rising Asia led by China and India. This slow but steady shift of global power to Asia has the potential to transform China and, later on, probably also India into great powers in less than a generation. Both

China wants an America that protects stability in the Middle East, and that keeps a lower profile in Asia

could soon exercise regional dominance and major continental or global influence – economically, politically, and militarily.

In November 2012, the Paris-based OECD thus predicted dramatic changes in the distribution of global economic power by 2060.

Global GDP by Year and Country, in %

	2011	2030	2060
USA	23	18	17
Europe	17	12	9
China	17	28	28
India	7	11	18

China’s GDP will surpass that of the United States in a few more years, and India’s GDP will likely surpass that of Japan by approximately 2015. By 2060, the size of India’s economy could even reach that of the United States. The combined economies of China and India are likely to amount to 46% of the world economy in 2060, which is almost exactly the rank the two countries held in the mid-18th century, before their internal troubles and the West’s expansion and imperialist interference began to undermine them. If these forecasts can be trusted – and a parallel U.S. study has corroborated the main trends – one can expect that America’s and China’s share of the world economy will remain relatively stable after 2030. This means that China’s dramatic rise will begin to slow down in twenty years, and it also means that economically, America’s decline will be a very relative process. America will not remain the world’s only

superpower, but it will still be an indispensable great power. As predicted, the two most striking trends are Europe’s precipitous fall and India’s steep rise. Many observers, including Indians themselves, have doubts about India’s rise. The OECD assumption is based on the safe prediction that India’s population will outpace China’s and reach 160 billion in twenty years. A large sector of India’s population will be young, increasingly better educated, professionally ambitious, geographically mobile, and less and less burdened by the traditional constraints of caste, language, and religion.

Economic trend evaluations over half a century are hazardous, sometimes foolhardy. Unexpected events, including natural or environmental catastrophes could change these trends. Moreover, economic growth in China and India has become more sluggish since 2010/2011, which has led some Western observers to cast doubt on the inevitability of Asia’s rise. But no country ever became a great power without overcoming major hurdles, and both China and India have already overcome many. So far, the OECD has had a good forecasting record. It would be wise not to dismiss their Asia forecast.

B. The U.S. 'Pivot' From the Middle East to Asia

In 2011, President Obama announced that the United States would “re-balance” its foreign policy by “pivoting” away from the Middle East, in favor of greater political and military engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. This project raised hackles in China, particularly as America tried to convince the world that the new policy was not directed

against China – which was of questionable veracity. America’s old-new concerns with Egypt, Syria, the Gulf, Iran, Afghanistan and more have made it abundantly clear that it cannot simply walk away from the Middle East. This is what China wants: an America that is strongly engaged in the Middle East, that protects regional stability in general, the Gulf oil fields in particular, and the free flow of oil to Asia on top of everything, and an America that keeps a lower profile in Asia because its means are limited. “Killing two birds with one stone” may not be a Chinese proverb, but it is certainly a major Chinese policy goal.

Despite the recent rise in tensions between China and its neighbors (including U.S. ally Japan) over territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas, it remains unlikely that China and the United States would engage in a direct confrontation in East Asia – this is clearly not in the interest of either power. Facing a perceived American threat – and a “China containment” policy is seen as a threat – China will likely react indirectly, in other parts of the world, including in the Middle East. This is where China’s Iran policy enters the picture. Contrary to widespread commentary, China supports Iran in the United Nations and through trade and investments, not only because it needs Iranian oil, but also because it regards Iran as America’s ‘Achilles heel’, a pressure point, and wants to keep its hand near this heel. Seriously threatened by Iran, Israel has become ‘collateral damage’ of this policy. China bears Israel no ill will, but unconvinced by Israeli and Western assessments of the urgency and magnitude of the threat posed by Iran’s nuclear program, it will

not change its Iran policy only to satisfy Israel. A change in China’s policy toward Iran will likely only materialize as part of a re-balancing of the global Sino-American relationship – that is to say, in the absence of other, more dramatic events.

C. The Entry and Growing Presence of China and India in the Middle East

Although much less talked about than the global shift of power from West to East, the entry and growing presence of China and India in the Middle East will have major implications for Israel and the Jewish people.

Energy is the dominant factor that has drawn China and India into the Middle East and complicated some of the world’s main geopolitical equations. More than 70% of China and India’s oil and gas come from Middle Eastern and other Muslim countries, and it will rise to 80% or more. Conversely, most Middle Eastern oil and gas flows to Asia, not to Europe, and the United States. In fifty years, the trade flow between the Middle East and Asia – mostly, but not only China and India – has risen from little more than zero to more than a trillion dollars. Substantial investment flows are accompanying this trade, and nine million Asian workers – more than four million Indians and more than one million Chinese – live and work in Middle Eastern countries, particularly in the Gulf states. This

The entry and growing presence of China and India in the Middle East will have major implications for Israel and the Jewish people

is creating enormous dependencies the world has not known before.

The traditional wisdom that China and India depend on Middle Eastern oil ignores the flip-side of the equation. The truth is that more and more, Muslim energy exporters depend on Asia. They have nowhere else to go if they want a safe long-term market and big power protectors who will ask for no political pay-backs, such as respect for human rights. Indeed, China and India will increasingly

begin to exert power in the Middle East beyond energy and trade. In twenty years it is possible and even likely that Beijing's and New Delhi's word will weigh more heavily in Cairo, Jeddah, Damascus and Ramallah than will Europe's.

China and India have recently shown interest in Israel's gas finds

A crucial question is whether and how Chinese and Indian power will compete

and perhaps clash with other major powers in the Middle East, particularly the United States and Russia. Various long-term scenarios are possible, depending on whether the current reduction of America's Middle East commitment and military presence turns out to be permanent or whether America will again project its power into the Middle East in order to compete with Asia for control of the region's precious energy resources. Asia's entry into the Middle East will have major consequences not only for China and India's

relations with the United States, but also with all other players, Russia, Iran, Turkey, the Arab countries and, of course, Israel.

China used the opportunity of parallel visits by the Israeli prime minister and Palestinian Authority President Abbas to China in early May to signal its interest in becoming more involved in the region, including offering, for the first time, to organize a meeting between the two visiting leaders if they so wished. The Chinese made sure not to offend traditional sensitivities, meeting with Abbas first and indirectly criticizing Israel's alleged involvement in an attack in Syria, but observers have noted potential behind-the-scenes progress and possible future dividends in trade relations between Israel and China following Netanyahu's visit. One Chinese observer commented that while China wanted to increase its cooperation with Israel, it wanted to do so "quietly."

D. The Global Energy Revolution

The global energy landscape is changing. Until recently there were few long-term alternatives to Middle Eastern oil. Technological breakthroughs of the last few years are making all the difference. New 'fracking' technologies that allow countries to exploit enormous shale-gas sediments, advances in deep-sea oil and gas exploration and recovery technologies, and new, more slowly advancing oil-replacement technologies are shaping a new energy world. America is rapidly moving away from energy dependence toward at least partial independence, and certainly toward complete independence within the American hemisphere. Other countries with huge shale reserves, such as China, have barely

begun to explore their potential. This is likely to fundamentally change the dynamics of the global energy market. As the U.S. and China become more energy self-sufficient, it will free up supplies currently consumed by the two countries (even assuming continued rapid growth of China's energy needs) and in turn, reduce the weight of Middle Eastern energy supplies in the global equation.

Even Israel, as Walter Russel Mead speculated in a July 2012 article published by "The American Interest," could emerge as an *El Dorado* for energy resources, owing to recent discoveries of natural gas and of potentially immense shale oil reserves. Mead writes, "the energy revolution and the change in Israel's outlook has more geopolitical implications than the Arab Spring." Israel might be able to affect the energy equation to some degree with appropriate policy making. China and India have both shown interest in Israel's gas finds. Israel, for its part, has so far not been able to formulate a comprehensive and actionable energy resource policy that incorporates Israel's long-term geopolitical needs. In addition, it is time for Israel to pay much greater attention to energy sciences and technologies and perhaps create centers of excellence in these fields through international cooperation. Israel's science and technology are impressive in many fields and highly regarded by China and India.

E. The Arab Spring and Turmoil in the Middle East

The turmoil that broke out in 2011 in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria and the Gulf caught both China and India by surprise and left them deeply rattled.

Middle Eastern stability is essential for both countries, not only because most of their energy comes from the region, but also because turmoil in the Arab and Muslim world could have a contagious effect on their own Muslims populations and on their Muslim neighbor countries. In addition, both China and India were directly hit by the unexpected revolution in Libya which left tens of thousands of Chinese and Indian workers stranded. China and India had to evacuate their nationals under precarious conditions – leading some in China to call for the establishment of military bases in the Middle East to protect Chinese interests there.

The Arab Spring also led China to pay greater attention to Israel, as mentioned above. Israel is seen as a stable island in a sea of troubles, and also as a reliable source of information and analysis on developments in the Arab world. In recent months, China's attitude toward Israel appears to be more cautious, though it is too early to say whether this diplomatic reluctance will last. China's approach to Israel and the Middle East remains very pragmatic and is based on interests. China's objection to international action against the Assad regime in Syria and the continuing low levels of popularity China enjoys on the Arab street may play a role in China's apparent caution regarding Israel, especially with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Arab Spring also led China to pay greater attention to Israel as a reliable source of information and analysis

In India, the turmoil in the Arab world has generated no new warm feelings for Israel. The Indians are deeply invested in the Gulf, but their understanding of the rest of the Arab world is less advanced than that of China. India has surprisingly few professional Arabists, and the idea that the country might benefit from Israeli knowledge has apparently not crossed many Indian minds – except in the Indian defense establishment, of course.

Israel's attempted interventions with China and India to encourage a policy change on the Iran question have been to no avail

Chinese and Indian perceptions of the Arab turmoil could have a strong effect on their respective policies toward Israel. Israel must be aware of this and should try to influence these perceptions. Also, the calamitous image the Arab Middle East presents today – with the most important Arab country tottering between famine

and civil war and Syria falling to pieces like Iraq and Lebanon before – is likely to reinforce Chinese and Indian inclinations to hold on to Iran. Indeed, some Chinese experts and policy makers believe that Iran might become the next master of the Middle East.

F. China's and India's Muslim Minorities

Three to five percent of the Chinese population is Muslim, and more than 15% of the Indian population is Muslim. Both China and India are

surrounded by Muslim countries with which they have many political, trade, military, cultural, and personal links. Both are deeply concerned about the Muslim issue some regard as an existential challenge, although in China this is less the case. Both countries fear the infiltration of foreign terrorists, and even more the radicalization of their own Muslims. China's Israel policies will not be greatly influenced by its Muslim minorities or its neighbors. But China would like to be seen as a friend of the more than 50 Muslim member states of the United Nations, particularly in the Middle East. China has worked hard to rectify its relationship with Turkey following intense criticism it suffered over Turkey's reaction to past ethnic tensions between Muslim and Chinese residents in the province of Xinjiang. This too could impose some caution on Chinese policies toward Israel.

The case of India is different. Its neighbors as well as the Arab countries are no longer a determinant factor in India's Israel policies. India has understood that Muslim countries will always support Pakistan whatever India says or does, but India's Muslims are a determinant factor. Every Indian government has to watch the careful balance between Hindus and Muslims on the subcontinent and avoid initiatives that could incite violence and bloodshed. No Indian political party can today afford to be seen as anti-Muslim lest it pay a price during the next elections. The Muslim factor – or better the perception of India's political elite that all Muslims are intractably hostile to Israel – continues to hobble India's Israel policies. There are various ways Israel could address this problem.

G. Iran

In the last two years, Iran's march toward nuclear weapons has accelerated. Iran is important to China for various reasons already mentioned. Iran is even more important to India. It has greatly influenced Indian civilization: art, architecture, music, food, and language. India's large Shiite minority is connected to Iran and has until very recently not been responsible for major acts of terrorism. Most importantly, Iran is an essential counterweight to hostile, Sunni Pakistan and the dreaded Taliban. It is a gateway to Central Asia and the nearest source of energy. The last two years have made it clear that no amount of American cajoling will compel the two countries to break with Iran or accept more severe sanctions against it. India's tepid response to an Iranian terror attack in 2012 in the center of New Delhi, aimed at killing an Israeli diplomat, should have opened many eyes. Iran had employed a local Indian Shia Muslim in the preparations for the attack, but India raised little public protest, and a few months later the Indian prime minister visited Teheran for the Non-Aligned Movement Summit and embraced the Iranian president.

Israel's interventions with China and India to encourage a policy change on the Iran question have been, so far, to no avail. In the case of China they have been counterproductive. Years of Israeli and Jewish efforts to badger China with arguments irrelevant to China's perceived national interests have irritated the Chinese and may have contributed to Israel's Beijing embassy having little access to Chinese decision makers. Israel would have been more effective and could have

gained goodwill by convincing China to publicly demonstrate its support for Israel's long-term prosperity and peaceful development.

As things stand today, the possibility of an American or joint American-Israeli attack to eliminate or severely damage Iran's nuclear project, and perhaps even bring the regime down, remains the biggest concern for both countries. Calling on all sides to exercise restraint, Chinese policy makers remain fairly confident that such an attack will not take place. Privately, Chinese and Indian policy experts and advisers have reassured that their countries would take no action against Israel in the event of an attack against Iran.

The defamation of Israel and the Jewish people is also seeping into Asia. India is more affected than China

H. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

At worst, this conflict is an annoyance for non-Muslim Asia, not an emotional issue as it is in Europe, and even less an existential one as long as the conflict does not inhibit Gulf oil supplies. But in the global arena, China and India generally support the UN consensus, which is unfavorable to Israel, mainly for reasons of political convenience, including in India, to appease their Muslim minority, rather than of real conviction. A serious Israeli initiative to restart the peace process with the Palestinians would likely strengthen Israel's political and strategic ties with

the Chinese and Indian leaderships, and open more Asian doors to Israel. As a solution to the conflict continues to prove elusive, it is important to shape a perception of Israel in both countries independent of the conflict, especially through tourism exchanges and a comprehensive cultural outreach policy.

I. The Global De-Legitimization Campaign and its Impact on China and India

The campaign to de-legitimize and defame the Jewish state and those who support it has gathered steam since the 2001 Durban Conference. Europe is the cradle of this campaign. One might have expected that the absence of anti-Jewish traditions in Asia would immunize the continent to this campaign, but this is not the case. The defamation of Israel and the Jewish people is also seeping into Asia. India, where radical intellectuals and communists continue to follow the ideological line of their comrades in the West, is more affected than China. In 2012, an international meeting that called on India to break off all relations with Israel was held at one of India's largest universities. Some prominent Indian artists have also called for an Israel boycott. Israeli and Jewish information outreach should address this problem directly.

Europe is the cradle of the de-legitimization campaign

3. The Way Forward: Key Policy Recommendations to Advance Sino-Israeli and Indo-Israeli Ties in the Next Decade

- Appoint an official responsible for initiating and coordinating Asian, primarily Chinese and Indian, policies in the National Security Council of Israel's Prime Minister's Office.
- Bring to China and to India a selected group of influential Jews (former statesmen and officials, leading academics and businessmen) to open a dialogue with their Chinese and Indian counterparts, and in particular, to discuss the possibility of advancing cooperation in a variety of areas between peoples and states.
- Capitalize on China and India's quests for greater power status along with their growing concerns in the face of the recent upheavals of the Arab Spring to initiate regular and extensive Sino-Israeli and Indo-Israeli track 1.5 strategic dialogues about the wider Middle East (including Turkey and perhaps Pakistan) with Chinese and Indian think tanks, policy experts, and former government officials. Efforts should be undertaken to convince Israeli defense companies trading with India to help fund this dialogue as a long-term investment.
- Invite Chinese involvement in projects related to the gas fields and Israeli infrastructure (in addition to the Eilat train). Such agreements should be valued

for their strategic importance (not only economic) and signed as a comprehensive step toward upgrading relations between the two states. In the case of India, the large investment committed by the Indian conglomerate Tata in Tel Aviv University's technology transfer company – the first of its kind by an Indian company in Israel – is a model to be followed.

- Seek and mobilize links and alliances with the Indian diaspora worldwide to have the latter exert positive influence on the Indian homeland's Israel policy. Here, world Jewry has an important role to play. Jewish communities worldwide should reach out to expand bilateral cooperation and identify areas of common interest with key Indian local diaspora communities – not only in the U.S. but also in the UK, Australia, Canada, South Africa, and elsewhere.
- World Jewry also has an important role to play in engaging and advancing an inter-faith dialogue with India's moderate Muslim leadership and organizations. This dialogue could pave the way for the organization of the first Jewish-Indian Muslim meeting in India and/or Israel, on the model of the past Jewish-Hindu leadership summits. In parallel, Jewish links should be forged with the Indian political Hindu right-wing, including the BJP party, as well as other parties opposing Muslim extremism and violence.
- Develop a comprehensive Jewish and Israeli cultural outreach strategy that targets key

Chinese and Indian subgroups with decisive or growing influence on their respective policy makers. Building countervailing soft power among these key subgroups will be easier due to a growing synergy of values and interests. It is not likely to bring concrete results in the short term in the form of a measurable improvement or expansion of Sino-Israeli and Indo-Israeli-Jewish links, but it will create a positive environment more conducive to the flourishing of both bilateral relationships. In particular, Jewish-Israeli cultural institutes should be opened in Beijing and New Delhi, on the model of the German Goethe Institutes and French cultural institutes overseas. Such an institute should offer: Hebrew language instruction, including intensive courses for Indian diplomats and businessmen, lectures on Jewish religion and history, seminars and panel discussions on Israel-related topics, Jewish and Israeli cultural events, e.g. a Jewish/Israeli book fair, film or food festival, and more. Also, entertainment and media, especially movies and the new media, should be used to reach out to Chinese and Indian youth, their growing urban middle class, and their diaspora communities worldwide.

**Jewish-Israeli
cultural
institutes
should be
opened in
Beijing and
New Delhi**

Part Two:

Developments in the Jewish World



Fathers of the Faith? Three Decades of Patrilineal Descent in American Reform Judaism

Reform Judaism – and Patrilineal Descent – are Today's American Norms

Intermarriages between American Jews and non-Jews increased dramatically in the late 1960s and 1970s. Although intermarriage rates increased for both men and women, Jewish men continued to be much more likely than Jewish women to marry a non-Jew. Those intermarried couples who affiliated Jewishly tended to join Reform congregations, but many were discouraged from affiliation because they assumed their children would not be considered Jewish. According to the matrilineal principle of Jewish descent that guided Jewish law from Mishnaic authorities onward, only the children of Jewish mothers are born with Jewish status. Children of Jewish mothers were considered to be Jews regardless of their father's religion, but children of intermarried Jewish men were not considered Jews unless their born-non-Jewish mothers converted into Judaism. This matrilineal standard was officially changed when the Reform movement's Central Conference of Reform Rabbis (CCAR) voted in 1983 for Jewish

Patrilineal Descent, establishing that in the American Reform movement children of Jewish fathers are also presumed to be Jewish, just like children of Jewish mothers.¹ The sociological results of the Patrilineal Descent decision upon American Jewry over the past 30 years are deeply important to contemporary Jewish life, and are the main focus of this chapter.

The 1983 Patrilineal Descent decision was extremely important, affecting all of American Judaism, because Reform Judaism has become the American Jewish 'default' mode. In contrast to Israel and most Diaspora Jewish communities, where Progressive or Reform Judaism are minority movements, today more American Jews consider themselves to be Reform Jews (more than 35% of American Jewish families) than any other stream.² In the middle years of the 20th century, Conservative Judaism was the default mode of American Jewish affiliation, because Conservative congregations seemed to offer the most normative and the least problematic style of American Judaism. Orthodox affiliation was and today is still the default mode in most other English-speaking countries and in Israel today.

Regardless of their personal religiosity, Jews in Israel, European, and Latin American communities who attend a synagogue are most likely to find themselves in an Orthodox synagogue, while Jews preferring liberal interpretations of Judaism must seek out less numerous Progressive or Liberal or Reform synagogues.

The pre-eminence of Reform Judaism in America today can be understood both on practical and ideological grounds. American Reform Judaism enjoys numerical prominence because it is widely understood to be the most inclusive, practically and ideologically, of the large American Jewish religious movements, welcoming all types of Jewish households,

Many Americans assume they can define their own ethnic and religious identities

including interfaith, homosexual, and other households that differ from historical Jewish norms. Ideologically, the Reform movement has grown because it embraces a 'map of meaning' that is comfortable to most American Jews, incorporating the major tenets of American liberalism. The Reform movement's celebration of free choice as a Judaic concept; its articulation of a Judaic 'mission' of universalistic ethicism, often called 'tikkun olam,' rather than particularistic pieties; its commitment to the 'Judeo-Christian' social and intellectual heritage and to interfaith dialogue; its assumption that religion is justified

as a method of building good character and not as an end in itself; its comfort with the scientific study of Jewish texts, history, religion and culture – and its frequent discomfort with concepts of 'chosenness' and 'peoplehood' – make the movement ideologically comfortable.

On a practical, demographic level, the Reform movement has grown because large and diverse subsets of Jews and their families believe Reform Judaism will accept them as they are, including those with limited Judaic knowledge and/or uncertain religious backgrounds. They perceive Reform Judaism as less likely than Conservative or Orthodox Judaism to make them feel unwelcome. Additionally, it should be noted that many Americans call themselves "Reform" Jews but are not actually affiliated with any congregation. Reform Judaism is the generic liberal movement³ in the popular American Jewish imagination, which makes Reform religious pronouncements – including the Patrilineal Descent decision – critical to the future of American Judaism.

In addition to factors specific to American Reform Judaism, the Patrilineal Descent decision and its aftermath must be framed within the broader American context, in which ethnoreligious identity is voluntary and flexible and many Americans assume they can define their own ethnic and religious identities. Until relatively recently – and still in many places around the world – individuals have been born into ethnoreligious societies and become identified with and defined by those groups. In 21st century America, however, large segments of the population are freer than ever before to "invent" themselves as individuals. Within

the broad spectrum of "white" Americans—which some observers have suggested may now include well-educated Hispanic and Asian Americans as well as Americans of "ethnic" European origins (Greek, Italian, Jewish) – individuals can choose to identify with one or another ethnic group or religion, or can create hybrid new models combining aspects of two or more traditions.⁴ As increasingly complicated U.S. Census form answers illustrate, Americans feel free to select hybrid heritages for themselves and their families. Selecting personalized options further extends a sociological "pattern of mixing" that has long been one of the defining characteristics of American life.⁵ Many Jews, like other white Americans, can and do feel comfortable viewing their ethnoreligious identities as porous and fluid, changing in emphasis over time. The Patrilineal Descent decision took place within this context, in which many Americans regard the definition of their own ethnoreligious identity to be among their personal freedoms and entitlements.

Deciding Fathers as well as Mothers Can Determine Jewish Identity

Two contemporaneous documents produced by the Reform movement spell out the rationales and the rules of the 1983 resolution: The Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent, adopted on March 15, 1983,⁶ and a CCAR Responsa on Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent (#38),⁷ released October, 1983. The Committee's Report focuses on the the sociological crises facing the American

Reform movement, intermixing halakhic discussions with socio-historical interpretations and explanations, while the Responsa delves more deeply into changing halakhic and historical attitudes toward the establishment of Jewish status. The Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent defines mixed marriage "as a union between a Jew and a non-Jew" and clarifies that the resolution deals "only with the Jewish identity of children in which one parent is Jewish and the other parent is non-Jewish." The Resolution's concluding paragraphs stipulate:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis declares that the child of one Jewish parent is under the presumption of Jewish descent. This presumption of the Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is to be established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people. The performance of these mitzvot serves to commit those who participate in them, both parent and child, to Jewish life.

Depending on circumstances, mitzvot leading toward a positive and exclusive Jewish identity will include entry into

The concept of paternity as the determining factor in progeny being considered as having Jewish descent is a constant in the Hebrew Bible

the covenant, acquisition of a Hebrew name, Torah study, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and Kabbalat Torah (Confirmation). For those beyond childhood claiming Jewish identity, other public acts or declarations may be added or substituted after consultation with their rabbi.⁸

The Patrilineal Descent decision is sometimes characterized as a rabbinic and administrative response to existing facts: In other words, large

numbers of American Reform Jewish men were marrying non-Jewish women who did not convert into Judaism, and if the movement wished these couples and their families to become part of their constituencies, they needed to adapt these new Reform definitions of who is a Jew. The reality is more complex. The concept of paternity as the

determining factor in progeny being considered as having Jewish descent is a constant in the Hebrew Bible, as the authors of the report elaborated: "both the Biblical and the Rabbinical traditions take for granted that ordinarily the paternal line is decisive in the tracing of descent within the Jewish people." Numerous examples in the Hebrew Bible determine a child's status by the father's tribe. The Report further asserts, "in the Rabbinic tradition, this tradition remains in force," citing as prooftexts examples of Priestly status – "the child

of an Israelite who marries a Kohenet is an Israelite" and the Talmudic precept, "the most important parental responsibility to teach Torah rested with the father (Kiddushin 29a; df. Shulchan Aruch, Yoredeah 245.1)." Only in the case where "the marriage was considered not to be licit, the child of that marriage followed the status of the mother (Mishna Kiddushin 3.12, havalad kemotah)." The Report offers a sociological interpretation of the reason for matrilineal descent in illicit unions: "the woman with her child had no recourse but to return to her own people."⁹

Pointing out that "since Emancipation, Jews have faced the problem of mixed marriage and the status of the offspring of mixed marriage," the Committee on Patrilineal Descent brought forward precepts suggested in a 1947 proposal of the CCAR Committee on Mixed Marriage and Intermarriage:

With regard to infants, the declaration of the parents to raise them as Jews shall be deemed sufficient for conversion... Children of religious school age should likewise not be required to undergo a special ceremony of conversion but should receive instruction as regular students in the school. The ceremony of Confirmation at the end of the school course shall be considered in lieu of a conversion ceremony.

The Committee then cites the 1961 edition of the Reform rabbi's manual, which stated that Reform Judaism accepts the child of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother "as Jewish without a formal conversion, if he attends a Jewish school and follows

a course of studies leading to Confirmation." Assuming that "It can no longer be assumed a priori... that the child of a Jewish mother will be Jewish any more than the child of a non-Jewish mother will not be," the Committee concluded "that the same requirements must be applied to establish the status of a child of a mixed marriage, regardless of whether the mother or the father is Jewish."

This CCAR decision was not a dramatic break with earlier Reform thinking – as the 1983 decision points out in citing the 1947 and 1961 documents. It was the logical outgrowth of post World War II Reform approaches and ratified decades of earlier statements, as one of its most influential advocates, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, emphasized in his statements at a 1984 Reform Biennial and his 1986 talk before a CLAL Conference on Jewish Unity. Focusing on egalitarianism as a primary motivation, "the full equality of men and women in religious life," Schindler emotionally supported the way in which Patrilineal Descent brought the children of Jewish fathers into the fold:

It is high time that we say to them: By God, you are Jews. You are the sons and daughters of a Jewish parent. With the consent of both your parents, you were reared as Jews. You have resolved to share our fate. You are, therefore, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone. You are in all truth what you consider yourself to be: Jews as worthy as any who were born Jewish.¹⁰

Within the Reform movement, many influential leaders agreed with Schindler "that it was in their interest to accept the children of Jewish fathers and gentile mothers as Jewish, that this was a logical and legitimate religious policy to adopt," according to Reform historian Dana Evan Kaplan.¹¹

The Patrilineal Descent decision was in many ways a logical response to changing American mores in the 1970s and 1980s. While marriage within one's own ethnoreligious group had once been normative for American Christians and Jews, rates of American interfaith and interracial marriages were climbing. Pluralism and multiculturalism were buzzwords, especially among the highly educated affluent socio-economic American environments most Jews inhabited. More non-Jews found Jews to be attractive marriage partners, but fewer non-Jews marrying Jews were willing to convert into Judaism – conversion seemed unnecessary; why should they change who they were? Additionally, it seemed likely that insisting on matrilineality was an unwise policy because it seemed to be driving many potentially Jewish families away from Judaism. Increasing numbers of liberal American Jews were convinced that if Jewish institutions, including synagogues, would only lower the barriers and be inclusive, both Patrilineal and Matrilineal families could be part of the Jewish fold, and numbers of

Liberal American Jews are convinced that if Jewish institutions would only lower their barriers, the number of Jews would increase rather than decrease

Jews would increase rather than decrease. Affirming recently the continuing positive importance of that motivation, Rabbi David Ellenson, President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) and a prominent historian of Jewish societies and thought, commented: "It is necessary for communities to engage in constituency retention."¹²

Ellenson and other Reform rabbinic leaders have articulated principled moral reasons for extending

Jewish ancestry to the children of Jewish fathers.

To many, the gendered differences in Jewish law seemed not only inexplicable but also sexist. If the children of Jewish mothers could be considered Jewish at birth, why not the children of Jewish fathers? Reminding the CCAR in 1986 that Reform Jews "refuse to accept a monolithic

Judaism" because "Judaism does not speak, nor has it ever spoken, in a single, stagnant voice," Ellenson characterized the Patrilineal Descent decision as motivated by "feelings of compassion and justice – themselves informed by the tradition." Comparing patrilineality to "our [Reform] decision to ordain women as rabbis and to accord women the same public status that had previously been reserved for men [1974]," Ellenson asserted that both decisions "represent a deeply felt religious conviction on our part" related to the belief "that God created men and

women in the divine image" – although "the decision to accord Jewish status to the daughters and sons of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers... has not commanded the same unanimity of assent among the members of our Conference because of concerns about sundering Jewish unity, '*Kelal Yisrael*'."¹³

Furthermore, in other situations some Orthodox authorities have voiced the concept that the children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers can be considered – if not halakhic members of the Jewish people – at least Jewish progeny, *Zera Yisrael* (literally, seed of Israel). Ellenson was particularly moved by the halakhic discussions of Rabbi Haim Amsalem asserting that within the context of Israeli society, those non-Jewish born wives "who identify with the Jewish people and live as Jews" should be speedily converted by Israeli authorities, both out of compassion to their plight and also because the presence of so many non-Jews within Israeli families and communities constitutes "a state of emergency." Jewish law itself, Amsalem proposed, "obligates us to be as lenient as possible within the parameters of Jewish law," and suggests that it is "fitting to love them and bring them near."¹⁴ Ellenson and like-minded Reform thinkers extended these Israel-oriented concepts to Diaspora families and communities as well.

Not surprisingly, if even among the Reform movement some rabbis objected to the Patrilineal Descent decision, many Orthodox and Conservative scholars and religious leaders had reservations. Comments from all sides of the issue were gathered together in a special issue of *Judaism* (published by the American Jewish Congress) in 1985, "Children of Mixed Marriages, Are They Jewish: A

To many, the gendered differences in Jewish law seemed not only inexplicable but also sexist

Symposium on Patrilineal Descent," anchored by a scholarly analysis of "The Matrilineal Principle in Historical Perspective," by Shaye J.D. Cohen. Cohen demonstrated the ancient concept of *Zera Yisrael* (the "seed" of a Jewish man as a foundation for patrilineality) in Hebrew biblical texts and searched for evidence of how and why Jewish law began to rely on matrilineality rather than patrilineality for the religious identity of children. Although many colleagues saw the matrilineal principle as being introduced in the period of Ezra (5th century B.C.E.), Cohen argued that it was still being vigorously debated by the rabbis of the Mishnah (2nd and 3rd century C.E.), and he accordingly suggested that "the matrilineal principle is a legal innovation of the first or second century (C.E.)...introduced not in response to societal need but as a consequence of the influx of new ideas into rabbinic Judaism. Cohen hypothesizes that Roman matrilineality was the spur that precipitated changes within Judaism at that time.¹⁵

Rabbi J. David Bleich, then Rosh Yeshiva at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University, saw the decision as a "flagrant disregard of the elemental formal ties which unite all Jews," and rejected it as "tantamount to renunciation of the already tenuous ties which bind Reform Jews to other members of the Jewish faith-community."¹⁶ Orthodox Second Temple scholar, Lawrence Schiffman, warned that the decision facilitated "retracing the steps of Paul and admitting gentiles to the synagogue," a step that would lead to American Reform Jews undermining their own Jewish status in ways perhaps similar to the historical Samaritans, Karaites, and early Christians.¹⁷ Asking "Patrilineal

Descent—a solution or a problem?" Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary scholar Robert Gordis commented, "The motives that led them to take this step are self-evident," namely (1) "the vast proliferation of intermarriages in the United States and throughout the world, not excluding even Israel, represents a drain of human resources from the Jewish community which it can ill sustain, particularly in view of the low birth rate in Jewish families," and (2) non-Jewish women who choose to marry Jewish men may be assumed to be at least allies to the Jewish project. Nevertheless, Gordis urged that the non-Jewish mother be encouraged to convert, preferably before children are born, or at least after their birth, as the children themselves are converted. Gordis concludes: "If she cannot bring herself even to undertake such a course of study, or if she finds herself unable to accept Judaism after study and an exposure to the content of Judaism, then 'raising the child as a Jew' would be meaningless in any substantive sense."¹⁸ Rabbi Joel Roth (often a voice for conservative traditionalism within JTS) commented, "Numbers aren't everything," and warned that breaking the worldwide Jewish understanding that "only the offspring of Jewish females are Jewish by birth; all others require conversion in order to become Jewish" would disrupt the de facto ability of all

The question of Jewish descent was being vigorously debated by the rabbis of the Mishnah (2nd and 3rd century C.E.)

Jews to marry each other.¹⁹ Only Judith Hauptman, professor of Talmud at JTS (she later received rabbinical ordination) raised the implications for unmarried Jewish women, the potential brides of said outmarrying Jewish men:

"...and probably most important, the adoption of the patrilineal principle would confer acceptability upon intermarriage and thereby totally subvert the goals of the laws of personal status

Judith Hauptman warned: The patrilineal principle would reduce the pressure on Jewish men to seek a Jewish mate

as envisioned by the Mishnah....It would reduce the pressure on Jewish men to seek a Jewish mate....One of the last vestiges of Jewish behavior in families who do not openly observe Jewish ritual is the request by parents of their children not to inter-marry."²⁰

Hauptman's comments emphasized that under the guise of religious equality, Jewish women would be placed in an unequal situation, by losing their competitive edge in a Jewish marriage market in which American popular culture glorified what Jerry Seinfeld once called "The Shiksa Goddess." Even though openly Jewish celebrities from Barbra Streisand to Nathalie Portman are celebrated as highly attractive females, Jewish women are still frequently the butt of misogynistic, deprecating remarks. Jewish men often internalize such negative stereotypes and view Jewish women through that tinted lens.

Gendered Changes in American Reform Judaism

During the years that the Patrilineal Descent decision was passed and took effect in Reform congregations, intermarriage combined with Reform women's activism to create another perplexing new challenge – the feminization of many aspects of American Reform Judaism. To put both the Patrilineal Descent decision and Reform women's religious activism into contemporaneous sociological contexts, in the late 1960s and early 1970s three social movements – Second Wave Feminism, the Civil Rights Movement, and Zionism – powerfully affected American Judaism. American rabbis of every persuasion, especially large numbers of Reform rabbis, became visible leaders in the Civil Rights movement. Ethnoreligious particularism, rather than the melting pot ideology, gave young Jews permission to explore those aspects of life that made Jewishness distinctive.

Within the Reform movement, renewed interest in Jewish texts and rituals once considered outmoded began to percolate. This interest in things Jewish was nourished by feminism and Zionism,²¹ among other factors. Feminists pressed for genuine equality in Reform religious life, and demanded the abolition of distinctions between men and women in religious and communal leadership. The Reform movement was the first American Jewish movement to ordain a female rabbi: Judith Preisand, in 1972. Reform Jewish women, many of whom had little or no Jewish education, became a powerful force in the revitalization of adult Jewish educational venues. Sociologically, Reform women became the 'brokers'

of a dynamic new involvement in Jewish rituals and ceremonies within the Reform movement.

Women, long excluded by Orthodoxy from public participation in Jewish life, and then assigned a passive role along with the laymen in their Conservative or Reform temples, helped to energize American Judaism. However, one unintended consequence of women's activism was that Jewish connections and activities became increasingly attractive to Jewish women and less attractive to many Jewish men. Harriet and Moshe Hartman have quantified the "significant gender differences" (NJPS 2000-01) which "remain for three factors in all denominations: women express stronger religious beliefs than men, stronger (tribalistic) attachment to Jewish people than men, and a greater tendency than men to express 'being Jewish' as being active in the current Jewish community and practices." That male/female divide is especially pronounced among Reform Jews.²²

The feminization of Reform Judaism is also in many ways part of the process of assimilation into American norms. Female prominence in cultural and religious realms seems "natural" on the American scene. A preponderance of female worshippers is characteristic of many American Christian churches, and popular cultural all-American imagery often depicts men fishing and watching football games while women attend to church business. In social scientific theoretical discussions as well, American scholars have long asserted that women are more "religious" than men through essential psychological differences or social conditioning and there seems to be consensus about this, at least as regards American Christianity.²³

Patrilineal Descent in Action in Reform Jewish Households²⁴

Intermarriages – marriages between a Jew and a non-Jew – among younger American Jews today are about equal for men and women: Among Jews ages 25 to 49, 40% of men and 40% of women were married to non-Jews. (In contrast among those over age 50, 27% of men and 19% of women were married to non-Jews.) Conversionary marriages – in which a born non-Jew converts into Judaism and becomes a "Jew by choice," to use a popular phrase – have decreased over the past 30 years. Looking at marriages with only one Jewish parent, and terming an intermarriage between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman a **Patrilineal family** and an intermarriage between a Jewish woman and a non-Jewish man a **Matrilineal family**, this examination of Jewish behaviors and connections draws on two studies: (1) in-depth interviews with 254 geographically diverse informants in intermarried, conversionary, and inmarried households (2001),²⁵ and (2) an analysis Sylvia Barack Fishman conducted with Daniel Parmer²⁶ utilizing as a primary statistical data set (unless otherwise cited) the last large national study conducted in the American Jewish community, the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS 2000-01).²⁷

Among Jews ages 25 to 49, 40% of men and 40% of women were married to non-Jews. Among those over age 50, 27% of men and 19% of women were married to non-Jews

Even though they intermarry at equal rates, American Jewish men and women do not behave similarly in regards to Jewishness before or after intermarriage. Patrilineal families and matrilineal families are both intermarriages, but sociologically they are quite different from each other. Jewish women married to non-Jewish men have typically married about three years later than Jewish women married to Jewish men; the interviews provide the stories behind those numbers. Jewish women

It is far more likely that they identify themselves as Jews if they have a Jewish mother rather than a Jewish father

often described searching for years for appropriate Jewish male life partners, and eventually giving up and dating primarily non-Jewish men. Jewish men, in contrast, were much more likely to articulate narratives in which the religious identity of their romantic interests was not of particular concern to them. Few intermarried Reform Jewish men

worried about the religion of their children before those children were conceived and born – usually years into their intermarriages. In contrast, many intermarried Reform Jewish women worried about their children's religious identity as soon as they found themselves dating a non-Jewish man they liked, some blurting out to their stunned dates: "You might as well know, I'm going to raise Jewish children."

Both statistical and qualitative research show that Reform Jewish men who marry non-Jewish

women are often deeply ambivalent about their Jewishness, and might be considered the "weak link" in American Jewish life today. The Jewish weaknesses of patrilineal families are apparent in life cycle and social network aspects as well as religious aspects of Jewishness. Patrilineal Descent has brought more Jewish father/non-Jewish mother families into Reform congregations, but it has not made intermarried Jewish fathers as a group more engaged by Jewishness.

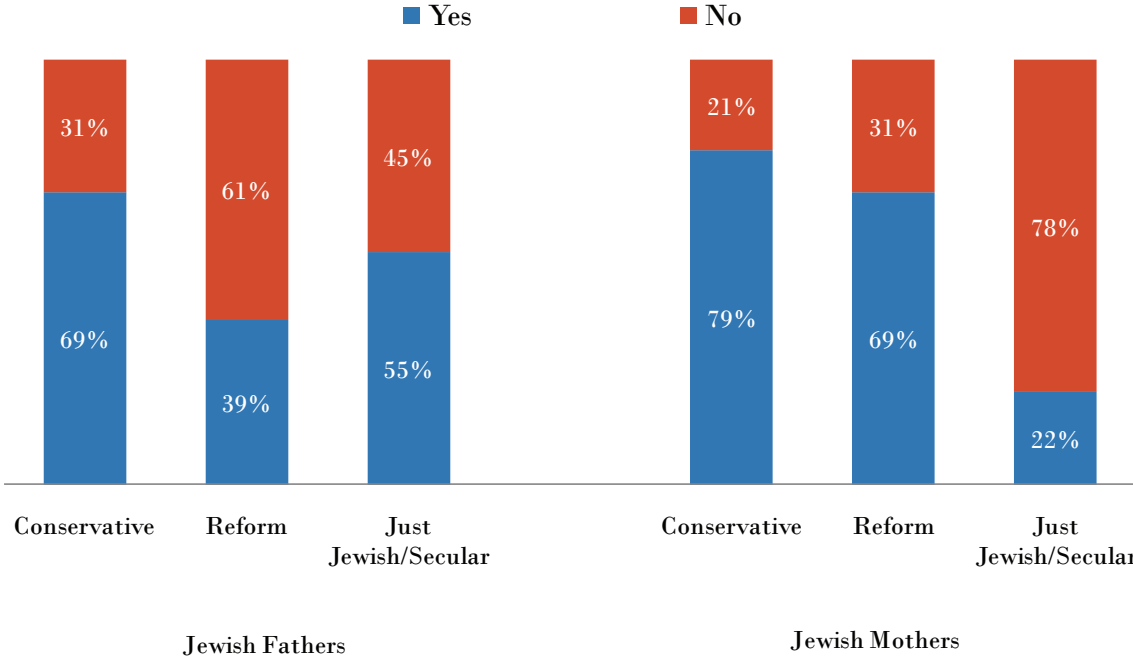
The Jewish ambivalence of American Jewish fathers who marry non-Jewish women may be one significant reason that college students who come from intermarried families are far more likely to identify themselves as Jews if they have a Jewish mother rather than a Jewish father. Linda Sax's 2002 study of America's Jewish college freshmen showed that those with Jewish mothers were more than twice as likely to identify as Jews as those with Jewish fathers: of those freshmen having a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father (matrilineal families), 38% identified as Jews. Of those having a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother (patrilineal families), 15% identified as Jews.²⁸

A 2007 Brandeis study showed that weak Jewish connections continue to precede intermarriage.²⁹ For many mixed-married couples, religious issues do not become particularly intense until their first child is born. Such couples often assume that religion is not very important in their lives, and that their romantic feelings for each other can conquer their religious differences – until they face the prospect of their children being involved with ritual circumcisions or baptisms! Intermarried fathers in particular often exhibit

little concern that their children be actively connected to Jewishness – although many are profoundly uncomfortable with the thought that their children would be raised as, or consider themselves to be Christian. Men in Patrilineal families are more likely to oppose what they see as "too much" Christian behavior, rather than to support Jewish behavior. While Keren R. McGinity suggests that male indifference to Jewish cultural transmission is the result of "the tenacity of traditional gender roles" – "the presence of men at places where Jewish identity is nurtured (at home, the community center, the school, the synagogue) is more limited"³⁰ – much of the data suggest a deeper and more systemic phenomenon.

One vivid symbol of the extraordinary differences in the ways in which Reform men and women behave and experience Jewishness, is their widely differing commitment to the ritual circumcision of a male child—the Jewish *brit milah* (see Table 1). Ritual circumcision is still virtually universal among inmarried Jewish parents who affiliate with any wing of American Judaism, including Reform parents. However, among the intermarried population the picture is very different. In Patrilineal families, 61% of intermarried Reform men report that their male children have not had a *brit milah*. The figures for intermarried Reform women are dramatically opposite: in Matrilineal families, 69% of women report their sons have had a *brit milah*.

Table 1. Intermarried Jewish Parents in Current Wing of Judaism by *Brit Milah* for Male Child



Intermarried Jewish men's comparative lack of commitment to the *brit milah* is perhaps surprising because popular psychological theories say that fathers like their sons to look like them. However, in-depth interviews with 254 geographically diverse informants (2001)³¹ revealed that while intermarried American Jewish women often take upon themselves the responsibility to raise Jewish children – with or without the cooperation of their non-Jewish

Many Jewish parents view giving their children a Jewish education as one of the most significant expressions of their own Jewish identity

husbands. In contrast, many Jewish fathers are not willing to battle with their non-Jewish wives over the issue of providing ritual circumcisions or Jewish education for their sons.

For example, an intermarried Jewish man in the Denver area described how he negotiated with himself – but not his wife – to create a compromise approach to the *Brit Milah* for his newborn son. "You know, I don't know what a *bris* means to me or to my life or anything like that." Knowing his wife would not object to a medical circumcision performed by a physician in the hospital: "Doctor Gonzales was the doctor who I don't think was Jewish, but I told him he was for about 15 minutes. And that he was my surrogate and that I would read a prayer while he did it....I sure hope God has a

sense of humor." Meanwhile, an interview with his lapsed Catholic wife revealed that she was shocked he did not insist on a ritual circumcision. Her conclusion was, "It doesn't seem like it's that important to him. I mean I thought when we had our son, I was thinking, oh, okay, the *bris*, that's going to be a big deal." Her conclusion was that the child might not need Jewish education either: "My vision is that neither of my kids will have a bar or bar mitzvah." For her Jewish husband, a mixture of child-oriented, secularized "Jewish culture and Christian culture all mixed up together" are fine, with his primary concern being that the religious elements of Christianity not penetrate their home life:

"They're not hearing about Jesus Christ or things like that. I mean it's more of the Christmas and the Easter egg hunt and Christmas gifts and a Christmas tree and Santa Claus, which I know as a Jew it's a little hard to think my daughter is growing up believing in Santa Claus, but she is....But we're not talking about going to church or anything like that."

It should be noted for context, that while only 6% of inmarried American Jews report that they have Christmas trees as a "cultural" symbol, 60% of mixed married families who identify as Jewish by religion, have Christmas trees in their homes. (NJPS 2000-01). Intermarried Jewish fathers, like other American men, place less emphasis on religion and its importance, but tolerate practices geared to children.

Jewish Education for Children

Much research indicates that the future of American Jewishness is most profoundly affected by the education of children in Jewish homes. Years and intensity of formal and informal Jewish education is one of the best predictors of Jewish attachments in adulthood, even when all other factors are held constant. Many Jewish parents view giving their children a Jewish education as one of the most significant expressions of their **own** Jewish identity. In inmarried Jewish families affiliated with some wing of Judaism, male and female parents report similarly that the vast majority of their children receive Jewish education. In intermarried families, however, the gender of the Jewish parent makes a great difference as to whether or not the child receives Jewish education. NJPS 2000-01 showed that nearly three-quarters (73%) of Reform matrilineal families giving their children formal Jewish education. In contrast, among Reform Patrilineal families slightly, over half (56%) gave children Jewish education.

In patrilineal families, non-Jewish (usually Christian) religious education was being received by 17% of the children of Jewish men, compared to 7% in Matrilineal families, and well over half of the children of Jewish mothers and fathers who defined themselves as “Secular” Jews.³² The narrative behind these statistical data is often the story of a non-Jewish spouse who is not secular like the Jewish spouse. More often than not, a religiously motivated non-Jewish mother and a secular Jewish father raise children in the mother’s religious tradition. Indeed, many non-Jewish mothers

articulate a willingness to raise the children in the Jewish tradition on the condition that the Jewish fathers will take an active role in their education, an offer which is usually not accepted.

Creating a Jewish Calendar Year

Passover has long been a well-known ritual in American popular culture. Non-Jews are frequently invited to Jewish Seders, and some churches have their own Seders to underscore the importance of the Passover texts, themes and observances to the birth of Christianity. Among Jews, Passover is often thought of as one of the most cherished holidays for creating family memories. It is not surprising that celebrating Passover through participating in some sort of Seder meal is almost universal among inmarried American Jewish parents, who affiliate with any wing of Judaism. Among intermarried Jewish parents, however, in Patrilineal families 29% of Reform Jewish fathers, compared to in Matrilineal families 19% of Reform Jewish mothers said they did not attend a Passover Seder. Among secular intermarried Jews: 63% of “Secular” Jewish fathers and 55% of “Secular” Jewish mothers married to non-Jews reported no Passover Seder participation. After Passover Seders, lighting Hanukkah candles

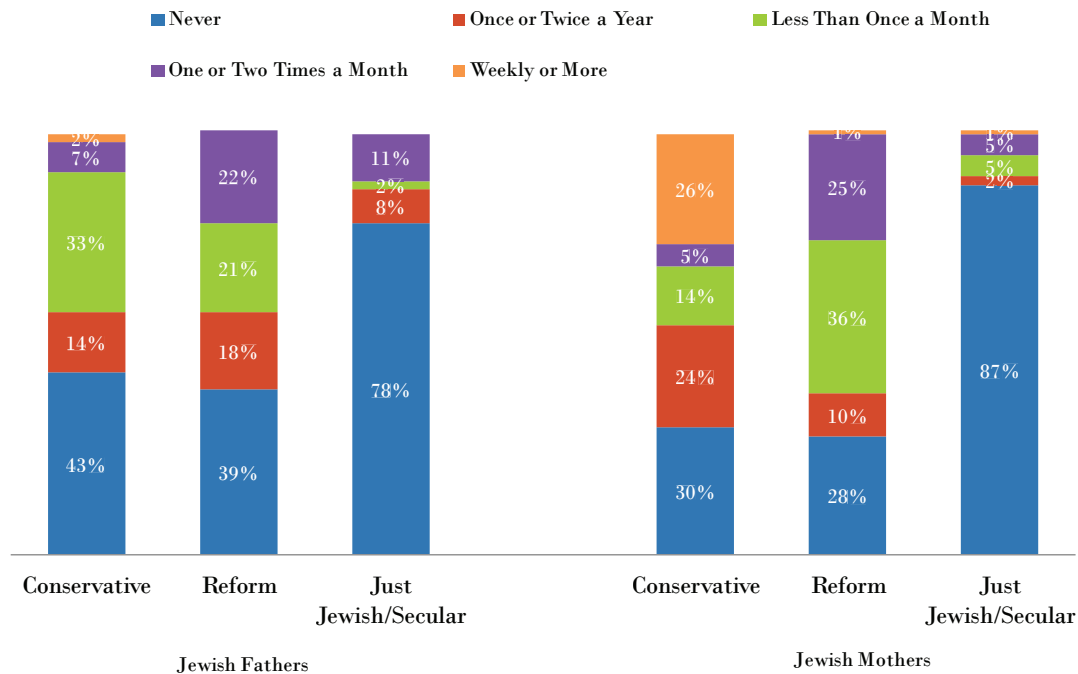
73% of Reform Matrilineal families gave their children formal Jewish education. Among Reform Patrilineal families 56% gave children Jewish education

is the most frequently practiced ritual by American Jewish parents, so the absence of that ritual, like the absence of the Passover Seder, is particularly meaningful in Jewish homes with children. In intermarried households, gender trumped denominational affiliations in reliability of Hanukkah candle lighting. Lighting candles all eight nights was reported in Patrilineal families by 55% of intermarried Reform and 40% of intermarried Conservative Jewish fathers, compared in Matrilineal families to 72% of Reform and 79% of Conservative intermarried Jewish mothers.

Synagogue attendance is much more frequently reported by Reform women than men –statistically corroborating extensive anecdotal reportage (and

reversing, not surprisingly, patterns reported by and observed among Orthodox Jews). The differences between men and women in this regard were most dramatic among the intermarried population (see Tables 2 and 3): Reform and Conservative fathers married to non-Jewish women attend synagogue services much less frequently than Reform and Conservative mothers married to non-Jewish men. “Never” going to a synagogue was reported by 26% of inmarried Reform fathers, 22% of inmarried Reform mothers, 39% of intermarried Reform fathers and 28% of intermarried Reform mothers. Among the Conservative parents, only 4% of inmarried fathers and 9% of inmarried mothers said they never went to synagogue, compared to 43%

Table 2. Intermarried Jewish Parents in Current Wing of Judaism by Frequency of Synagogue Attendance



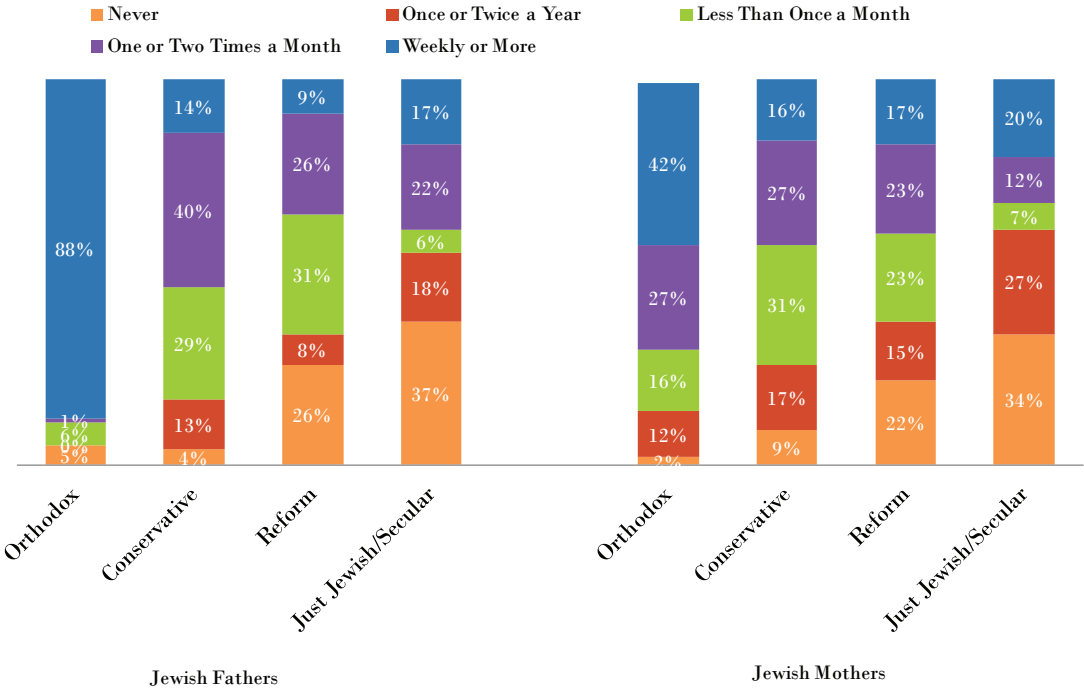
of intermarried fathers and 30% of intermarried mothers.

There were striking gender and denominational differences at the high end of synagogue attendance as well: Among inmarried parents, monthly or weekly synagogue attendance was reported by 35% of Reform and 54% of Conservative fathers and by 40% of Reform and 43% of Conservative mothers. Among intermarried parents, monthly or weekly attendance was reported by 22% of Reform and 9% of Conservative fathers, and 26% of Reform and 31% of Conservative mothers.

As time goes on, sometimes non-Jewish mothers who have agreed to raise Jewish children, become

very interested in increasing the level of Jewishness in the family, and are discouraged from doing so by their Jewishly ambivalent husbands. One typical interview subject complained: "Cynthia is more Jewish than I am, a factor that has annoyed me. I said to her, why are you getting involved with all these Jewish organizations? It's annoying. I married a Christian who is now running around with the Jews – and I avoid them like the plague!" Other non-Jewish spouses sometimes regret downplaying their own religious background and decide to reassert themselves.

Table 3. Inmarried Jewish Parents in Current Wing of Judaism by Frequency of Synagogue Attendance

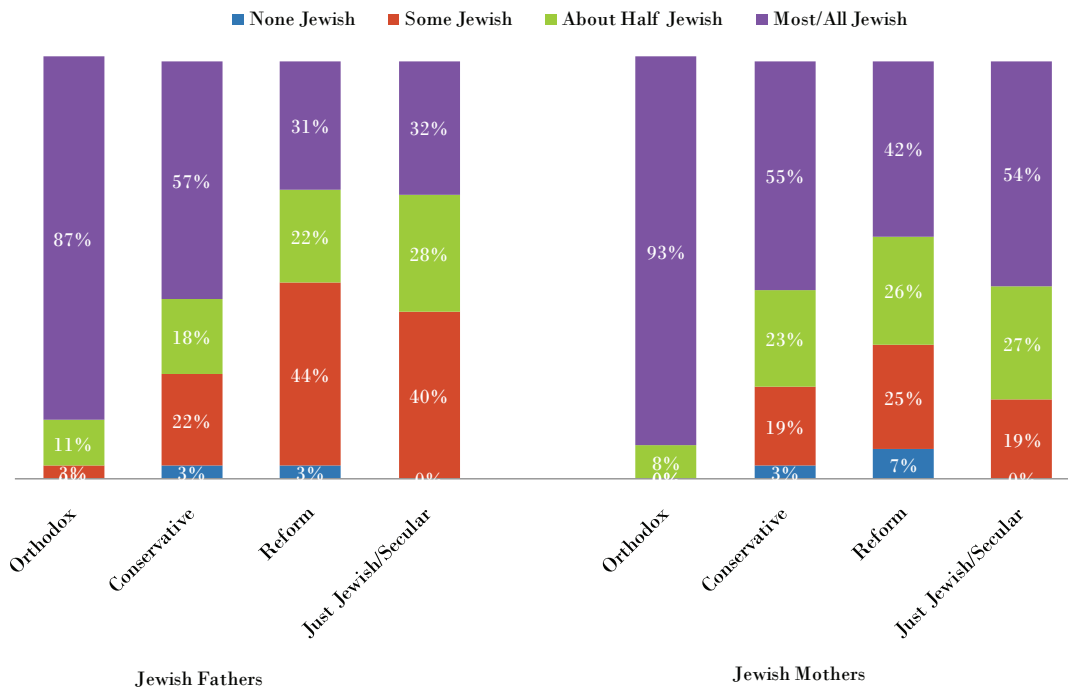


Families with Jewish Mothers Have Jewish Friends Who “Do Jewish”

Social networks have repeatedly proved to be a very salient aspect of Jewish connectedness. Statistically, friendship networks are one of the best predictors of Jewish values and behaviors. Inmarried Reform men and women differ somewhat at the high end of Jewish friendship circles and much more strikingly at the low end (see Table 4). Almost half of inmarried Reform men (47%) report that “some” or “none” of their close friends are Jewish, compared to only one-third of inmarried Reform women (32%). Reports of “mostly” Jewish or “all”

Jewish were given by 31% of inmarried Reform men and 42% of inmarried Reform women, with 22% of men and 26% of women reporting that about half their friends are Jewish. [In comparison, inmarried Conservative Jewish parents have much higher numbers of Jews among their close friends than do inmarried Reform Jewish parents. Among inmarried Conservative Jewish parents, 57% of men and 55% of women each report having mostly or all Jewish friends and only one-quarter (25%) of men and one-third (32%) of women report “some” or “none.”]

Table 4. Inmarried Jewish Parents in Current Wing of Judaism by Proportion of Jewish Friends



Reform intermarried households report markedly lower levels of Jewish friends. Family type – rather than gender – seems to be the salient factor in Reform friendship circles. About two-thirds of intermarried Reform Jewish men (64%) and Reform Jewish women (68%) said “some” or “none” of their close friends were Jewish. Slightly more than a quarter of both men (28%) and women (26%) said about half of their close friends were Jewish. Only 8% of men and 5% of women reported mostly Jewish friends.

The Centrality of Judaism and Jewish Activities

When asked, “How important is being Jewish to you?” (see Tables 5 and 6) Reform women, both inmarried and intermarried, were somewhat more likely to say their Jewishness was “very important” than were Reform men. 42% of inmarried Reform fathers and 36% of intermarried Reform fathers said it was “very important,” compared to 53% of inmarried Reform mothers and 43% of intermarried Reform mothers. In comparison, inmarried Conservative Jews were much more homogenous in reporting the centrality of Jewishness: 69% of inmarried Conservative fathers and 71% of intermarried Conservative mothers reported being “very important.” 69% of inmarried Conservative fathers

Table 5. Inmarried Jewish Parents in Current Wing of Judaism by Importance of Being Jewish

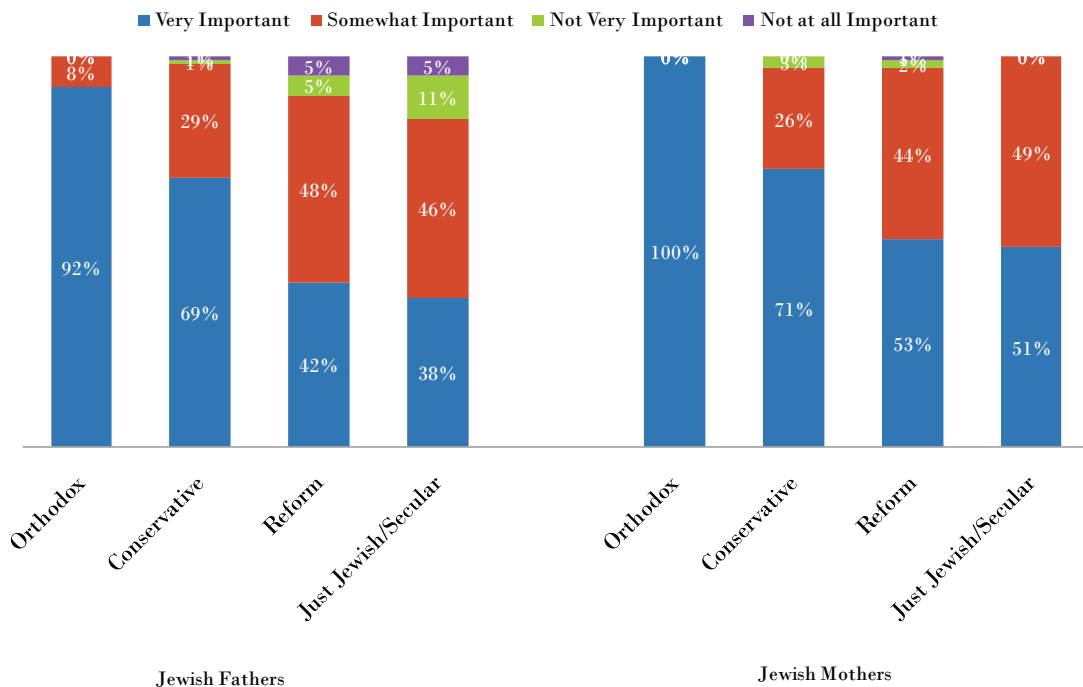
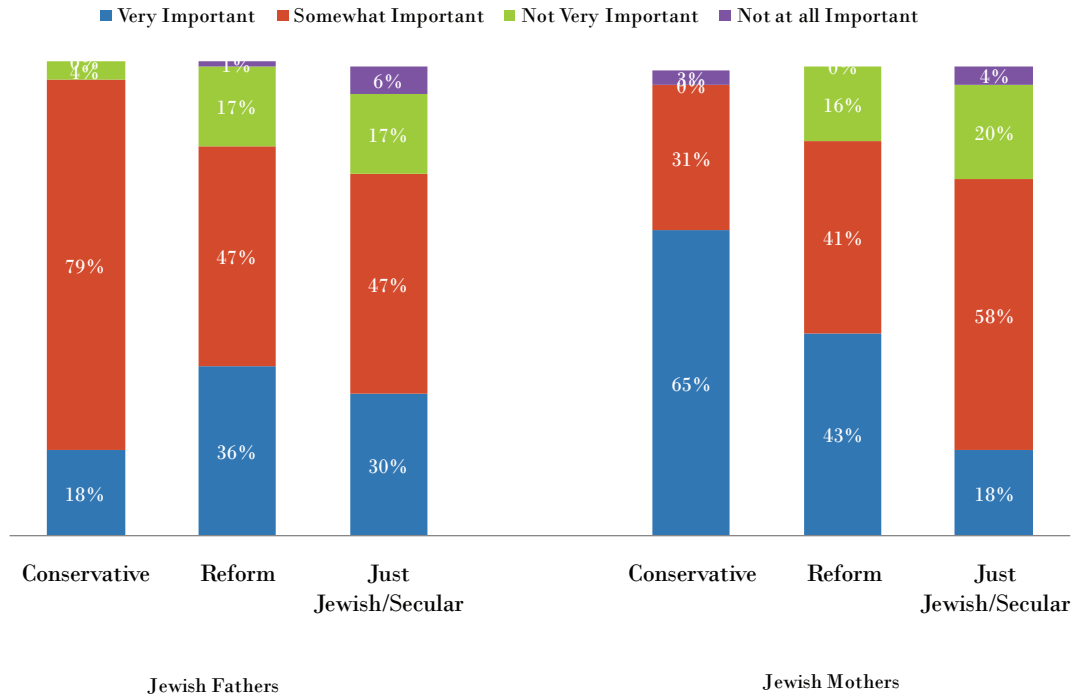


Table 6. Intermarried Jewish Parents in Current Wing of Judaism by Importance of Being Jewish



and 71% of intermarried Conservative mothers said being Jewish was “very important” to them. However, intermarried Conservative Jews showed the sharpest differences between men and women: among intermarried Conservative fathers, only 18% said being Jewish was “very important” to them – compared to 65% of intermarried Conservative Jewish mothers!

Who Makes Decisions About the Child’s Religion?

In a little discussed question on the NJPS 2000-01 survey, parents were asked who makes the primary decision about their child’s religious life. As might be expected, the most characteristic overall respondent reply was that “both spouses” together make these decisions. However, there were significant and highly suggestive departures from this consensus answer along gender lines (see Tables 7 and 8). In intermarried Reform families, while only 5% of fathers said they made religious decisions about their children on their own, with 83% of fathers saying both spouses made decisions

together, fully one-third of inmarried Reform mothers (33%) felt personally responsible for their children’s religious decisions. These gender differences were even more pronounced – and arguably more significant – in intermarried Reform families. In intermarried Patrilineal Reform families, 30% of Jewish fathers said they made decisions about their children’s religion on their own, with more than two-thirds of them (68%) saying they and their non-Jewish wives made these decisions together. However, the answers were exactly and dramatically reversed in intermarried Matrilineal Reform families. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Reform mothers married to non-Jewish men said they made the decisions about their children’s religion by themselves.

Rabbinical Responses to Patrilineal Descent in American Reform Judaism

Intermarriage has been a challenging issue for the Reform movement. Interfaith households comprise a growing proportion of almost every Reform congregation – and the majority in some. On one hand, the large number of interfaith families that join Reform temples are flocking to instead of fleeing from engagement with the Jewish community, and most interfaith families joining Reform congregations seem interested

Table 7. Inmarried Jewish Parents in Current Wing of Judaism by Primary Decision Maker of Child's Religion

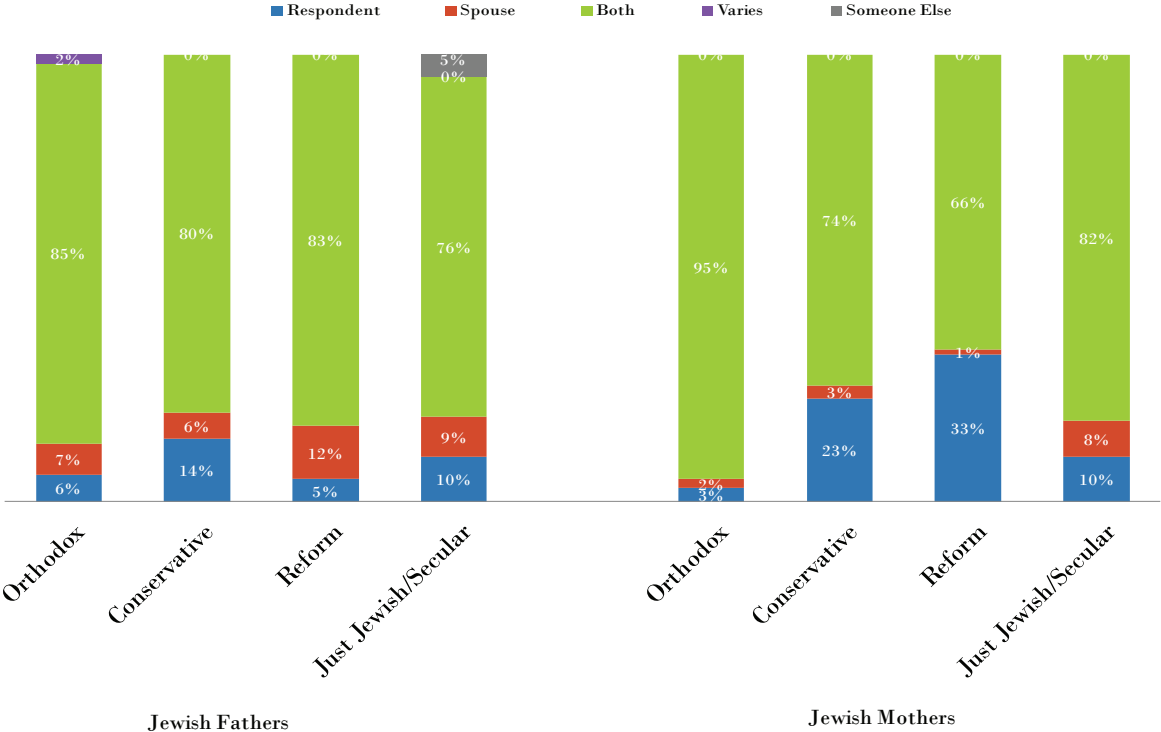
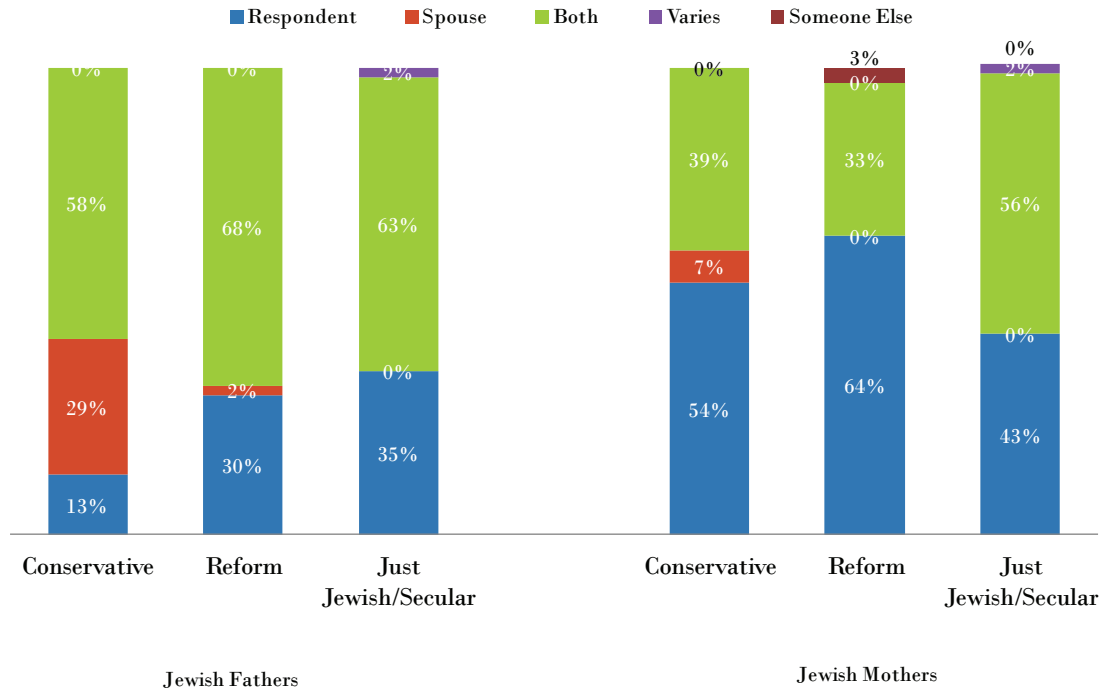


Table 8. Intermarried Jewish Parents in Current Wing of Judaism by Primary Decision Maker of Child's Religion



in maintaining Jewish connections. On the other hand, only one out of four children of interfaith marriages grows up to create his or her own Jewish home.

Reform rabbis, educators, and lay leaders have puzzled over the most appropriate strategies to utilize in serving the interfaith segment of the Reform community. Some voice concern that focusing on families that include non-Jews shortchanges the inmarried or conversionary families that form their Jewish “core,” or that they may be unwittingly changing or distorting Judaism so as not to alienate or disturb their non-Jewish congregants. Among the many issues they puzzle over is how to encourage formal conversion into

Judaism by non-Jewish spouses (especially non-Jewish women), while not making those who choose not to convert, feel like second-class citizens.

The requirement that children in Reform Jewish schools must not be simultaneously receiving another form of religious training was one of the boundaries that distinguished Reform Jewish outreach programs from unaffiliated Jewish outreach programs such as those conducted by some federations and Jewish Community Centers, by outreach organizations like Jewish Outreach to the Intermarried (JOI), and by other independent institutions. This boundary between Reform Judaism and non-sectarian Outreach efforts, that

requires that Judaism be the only religion children are formally schooled in, however, has not been complied with uniformly in Reform congregations, as Rabbi Eric Yoffie noted in his forthright 2005 sermon at the Houston Biennial. Yoffie said:

"It sometimes happens that when an identifying Jew marries an identifying Christian, the couple will bring both religions into the family. They tell themselves that 'if one religion is good, then two religions are better.' But what this does is cause confusion for a child, who recognizes at a very young age that he cannot be 'both,' and that he is being asked to choose between Mommy's religion and Daddy's religion...some parents, desperate to avoid conflict with each other, insist on passing the conflict on to their children by asking them to decide for themselves. And they then enroll their child in both a Christian Sunday school and a Hebrew school."³³

After explaining why he feels that the parental strategy of raising children in two religions is psychologically damaging, Yoffie went on to explain that it is religiously damaging as well, and to urge Reform congregations to "formalize boundaries and say no." Yoffie said:

"Ten years ago, on the recommendation of our Outreach Commission, the Union Biennial passed a resolution encouraging our congregations to enroll only those children who are not receiving formal religious education in any other religion.

That was a wise and humane decision. Still, some synagogues have been reluctant to comply. In some cases, they have adopted a "don't ask, don't tell," policy. Even if a child is attending a church school, as long as the parents say nothing, the synagogue says nothing.

There is no escaping that dual education is harmful and unfair to the child. It also causes problems in the religious school, where teachers are often unable to handle the conflicts that arise. Experience has shown that it is far better for our congregations to adopt our 1995 policy and present it in a sensitive way to all concerned. As our resolution stated, our rabbis and educators should also meet with parents, explain the reasons for choosing a single religious tradition, and offer them study and counseling....Let us not forget the lesson of King Solomon who – faced with two mothers claiming the same child – knew that the parent who refused to cut the child in half was the one who loved him more."³⁴

It sometimes happens that when an identifying Jew marries an identifying Christian, the couple will bring both religions into the family

In a focus group conversation several years ago with principals of Reform religious schools, they were asked whether their admissions protocol

included asking parents of prospective students whether their children would also be receiving Christian religious instruction. Virtually to a person they all confirmed that they did not ask this question, either in the admissions interview or at any later time during the years of schooling. The principals themselves hypothesized that many of the children they taught probably were, but that they would rather not know about it, because knowing would raise issues that they were not comfortable dealing with.

Principals of Reform religious schools are avoiding asking parents whether their children would also be receiving Christian religious instruction

Yoffie's statements discouraging dual religious education were featured in a URJ press release, but were nevertheless not much remarked upon in Jewish newspapers across the country. However, his statements in the same sermon encouraging conversion into Judaism were widely written up, and received a lot of attention – much of it

negative. According to first-hand observers at the 2005 Biennial, a lot of whispering along with a scattering of half-hearted applause greeted Yoffie's assertions that conversion is the best form of outreach to the intermarried. Yoffie asserted that many Reform congregations had been so welcoming to intermarried families that they were actually discouraging conversion. In order to convey the power and lucidity of Yoffie's message here, the complete section of the sermon in which

he urges rabbis and congregations to be more assertive about encouraging conversion is quoted:

"Another challenge that we face is the decline in the number of non-Jewish spouses who convert to Judaism. There is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that interest in conversion has waned in our congregations. In the early years of Outreach, Alex Schindler often returned to this topic. Alex told us: "We need to ask. We must not forget to ask." And, for a while, our movement actively encouraged conversion. Many of our congregations began holding public conversion ceremonies during regular worship services. But such ceremonies are far rarer now. The reason, perhaps, is that by making non-Jews feel comfortable and accepted in our congregations, we have sent the message that we do not care if they convert.

But that is not our message. Why? Because it is a mitzvah to help a potential Jew become a Jew-by-choice. Because the synagogue is not a neutral institution. It is committed to building a vibrant religious life for the Jewish people. Because we want families to function as Jewish families, and while intermarried families can surely do this, we recognize the advantages of an intermarried family becoming a fully Jewish family, with two adult Jewish partners. Judaism does not denigrate those who find religious truth elsewhere. Still our synagogues emphasize

the grandeur of Judaism, and we joyfully extend membership in our covenantal community to all who are prepared to accept it.

And, by the way: Most non-Jews who are part of synagogue life *expect* (Yoffie's emphasis) that we will ask them to convert. They come from a background where asking for this kind of commitment is natural and normal, and they are more than a little perplexed when we fail to do so. So we need to say to the potential converts in our midst: "We would love to have you." And, in fact, **we owe them an apology for not having said it sooner.** Special sensitivities are required. Ask, but do not pressure. Encourage, but do not insist. And if someone says, "I'm not ready," listen. If we pursue conversion with a heavy hand, the result could be to generate resentment. And, yes, there will be those for whom conversion will never be an option. But **none of this is a reason for inaction. The time has come to reverse direction by returning to public conversions and doing all the other things that encourage conversion in our synagogues** [our emphasis]."

Yoffie's sermon itself generated resentment. Not only was it lukewarmly received at the Biennial, it was greeted with howls of outrage by Reform congregants whose children were married to non-Jews and by non-sectarian Jewish Outreach movement periodicals and Internet chat rooms. In these written formats, a new axiom or mantra

soon appeared: **"Conversion is not Outreach. Urging conversion is not an Outreach strategy."**

The non-sectarian outreach industry urged that Outreach professionals should scrupulously avoid giving the impression that conversion is the end-goal of outreach efforts. They urged laypeople and professionals alike to clean up their language so that no perceived denigration to the intermarried could be intuited. Instead, engagement with Jewishness, as an end in itself, is the goal.

The reaction of the official Reform Outreach program³⁵ to the much-publicized conflict over the prominence of conversion as an outreach strategy, has been mixed. On one hand, *Reform Judaism Online*, the URJ journal that advertises itself as the "world's largest circulated Jewish magazine," often includes warm stories about how converts love Judaic texts and Jewish holidays and life cycle events. On the other hand, Yoffie's comments about facilitating conversion are seldom mentioned. A close content analysis of the way Yoffie's speech is presented in a new Reform discussion and study guide, Alan Bennett's *Outreach: The Next Generation*, shows how his original message has been not very subtly transformed. In a section entitled "Presidential Calls for Outreach," the emphasis of Yoffie's talk has been shifted completely to celebrating the

Those who believe in non-sectarian outreach: The engagement with Jewishness, as an end in itself, is the goal. "Conversion is not outreach"

“heroism” of non-Jewish spouses who raise Jewish children – rather than on encouraging them to actually become Jews:

Extending the [Schindler’s] platform in 2005, URJ President Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie used the words “heroes of Jewish life” to describe those non-Jewish spouses who are involved in synagogue activities, offer active support to the Jewish involvements of spouses, learns about Jewish customs, attends synagogue worship from time to time, and commits to raising children as Jewish.³⁶

Rabbi Weber offered to personally pay for six-month memberships to JDate

An unintended consequence of the Patrilineal Descent decision as a communal norm is that rabbis who articulate a preference for inmarriage sometimes evoke outrage from their congregants. An excellent

example appeared recently in the Religion News Service article, “Rabbi Gives Cupid a Nudge with JDate,” which describes a New Jersey rabbi’s Yom Kippur sermon at Temple Rodeph Torah. Rabbi Donald Weber reportedly “offered to personally pay for six-month memberships to JDate, the popular Jewish online dating service, for any singles in the congregation who asked.” So far, about nine singles in the congregation have accepted the rabbi’s offer and are meeting Jews through JDate. Weber, who had served this

particular congregation for almost a quarter-century, elaborated during his sermon on the demographic reasons for his advocacy:

“A recent study from HUC-JIR indicates that fewer than 10% of grandchildren of intermarried parents identify as Jews.... We need you to look at Jewish people when you’re dating. There aren’t a lot of us around. You’re going to have to look in specific places. Number one? JDate. No joke. Half the weddings I’m doing now are people that met on JDate....Do we believe that it’s important enough that it must go on [Judaism], that we make a difference in the world? That if there are no Jews in the world that the world will be poorer than it is now? If we believe that, then we’re going to need to do some things about it.”

While many of his congregants were very pleased with the sermon (and immediately emailed their young adult children advising them to enlist in the rabbi’s campaign for Jewish dating), others were angry and offended. As Rabbi Weber explained, those congregants heard his praise of the creation of exclusively Jewish families as a denigration of intermarried families – which he emphatically insists was neither in his mind nor his words. He analyzed congregational discomfort with rabbinic direction by commenting that rabbis who advocate on behalf of Jewish families try to find a “middle ground,” but are often perceived as “sounding like a dictator.”³⁷ The episode illustrates the extent to which the historical Jewish norm of endogamy (inmarriage) has been turned

inside out: whereas exogamy (outmarriage, intermarriage) was historically considered transgressive and discouraged through social sanctions such as ostracism or isolation. In America today, any expression of disapproval of exogamy – or even a preference for endogamy – is considered transgressive and deserving of public and private critiques. Even rabbis who try to promote endogamy are perceived to be crossing the line.

Conclusion: Assessing Current Realities

"The eventual sociological implications of patrilineal descent are still unknown," Dana Evan Kaplan asserted in his discussion of "Patrilineal Descent: The Reform Movement's Watershed Resolution of 1983" (2000). However, repeated studies, including the research discussed in this paper makes the sociological implications clear.

In terms of welcoming and drawing close Patrilineal families and their children, for the minority who do indeed draw close, the decision has been a powerful success:

- **Highly identified Jewish children of Patrilineal families who believe themselves to be – and act as though they are – fully enfranchised Jews enrich American Jewish life today.** These children of Patrilineal families are enriching the Jewish people on many levels and in many ways. Although statistically the children of Jewish mothers are far more likely to identify as Jews than are the children of Jewish fathers – even in long term Patrilineal

Descent environments – there is no question that some children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers are profoundly drawn to Jews and Judaism. These children illustrate the power and validity of the concept of *Zera Yisrael*. Because they have been raised with the idea that they are fully Jewish through their fathers, some of these offspring feel unambivalently Jewish. Some are involved with Judaism as a religious faith. Some focus on ethnicity and peoplehood, and spend significant time in Israel. Some love – and create – Jewish cultural expressions. Such patrilineally descended Jews often identify with Jewish destiny. Others yearn for and reach out for more Jewish connections. They are significant members of the Jewish community and should be treated as such.

In America today, any expression of disapproval of exogamy (outmarriage, intermarriage) encounters public critique, even if it comes from rabbis

The sociological impact, however, includes several areas of concern:

- **Patrilineal Descent accelerates declining numbers of mothers in Jewish families who identify as Jews** in two ways: (1) It is associated with lower rates of conversion into Judaism by non-Jewish wives of Jews; and (2) It is associated with high rates of intermarriage in which there is no advantage to marrying a Jewish woman. Homes with Jewish mothers are statistically

much more Jewishly active and connected than homes without Jewish mothers. This is true both of mothers who are born Jews and mothers who convert into Judaism. Conversionary marriages – in which a born non-Jew converts into Judaism and becomes a "Jew by choice," to use a popular phrase – were, prior to the Patrilineal Descent decision, primarily the conversions of non-Jewish wives into Judaism. Many of these conversions took place before the marriage,

so that the marriage ceremony could use the traditional language of building a "true house of Israel, according to the laws of Moses and Israel." Others took place after marriage, often before a child had a Jewish birth welcoming ceremony or bar/bat mitzvah. The motivation was to create an "all of one kind" family.

By the time the Patrilineal

Descent decision was passed in 1983, rates of conversion by non-Jewish women were already declining; conversions have decreased even more over the past 30 years. While we have no way of knowing whether Patrilineal Descent influenced this decline, it must be recognized that since according to Patrilineal Descent, the children of Jewish men are considered Jewish even when the mother remains a non-Jew, there is in a sense no reason for her to convert formally into Judaism.

Nine out of ten intermarried Jewish mothers intended to "raise Jewish children," compared to just over half of Jewish fathers in Patrilineal families

- **Jewish men who marry non-Jewish women – thus creating Patrilineal Jewish families – are among the least Jewishly connected Jews in America today.** The alienation of men and boys from Judaism continues to be a systemic problem in American Jewish societies. It affects not only religious rituals and synagogue attendance, but also attachments to Jewish peoplehood, friendship circles, marriage choices, caring about Jews in Israel and around the world. This alienation both contributes to and is exacerbated by intermarriage, and is on full display in Patrilineal families: For example, when the 2005 Boston Jewish Population Study, conducted by researchers at the Steinhardt Institute of Brandeis University, was released in November 2007, headlines in Jewish newspapers across America spotlighted one finding: 60% of Boston families with one Jewish and one non-Jewish parent reported raising their children as Jews. What didn't make the headlines from the same study was the finding that in Matrilineal families nine out of ten intermarried Jewish mothers intended to "raise Jewish children," compared to just over half of Jewish fathers in Patrilineal families.³⁸ It is important to place the Patrilineal Descent decision into the context of the profound gender imbalance currently evident in American liberal Judaism. American Jewish women are more involved with Jewishness than are Jewish men in almost every religious and secular-ethnic sphere. As this essay has discussed and research details³⁹, Jewish men who marry non-Jewish women are statistically

strikingly less Jewishly involved than intermarried Jewish women. Homes in which the only Jewish parent is a weakly connected Jewish man rank among the most marginal within American Jewry, partially because they do not include a Jewish mother.

- **Patrilineal descent removes the marital "market advantage" that Jewish women previously enjoyed, further undermining the status of Jewish women.** The Patrilineal Descent decision has arguably had a negative effect on the personal options of Jewish women, who, as a group, still articulate a preference for Jewish spouses. Jewish men and Jewish women become "equal" as parents who produce children with Jewish status. A Jewish man need not marry a Jewish woman if he wishes to have Jewish children. The practical, social-psychological result has been that Jewish men, for decades are more prone than Jewish women to intermarriage, are now more liberated than ever to do so. Meanwhile Jewish women now have an intermarriage rate about equal to that of Jewish men, partially as a response to marriage market forces. While the normalization of Patrilineal Descent within the Reform movement has institutionalized inclusiveness to such an extent that even intermarried families who avoid synagogues say they have never been made to feel uncomfortable by Jewish worshippers, it is still primarily families with Jewish mothers who affiliate with synagogues and temples today. The ambivalence toward Jews and Judaism that presumably plays some

role in the intermarriage of some Jewish men also plays a role in the religious character of their households. As we have noted, interview research reveals that Jewish women who marry non-Jewish men often report that they would have preferred initially to marry a Jewish man.

- **Outreach efforts that focus on welcoming non-Jewish mothers in Patrilineal households often shift emphasis away from Jewish fathers and mothers.** Organizations not affiliated with any wing of American Judaism, such as Jewish Outreach to the Intermarried (JOI) have focused much of their energy on the non-Jewish mothers in Patrilineal families, creating JOI "Mother's Circles" that reach out to non-Jewish mothers raising Jewish children. These efforts are highly effective in many ways, and have the great educational advantage of helping to build social networks as well as Jewish cultural literacy. They created, for example, a series of JOI Mother's Day cards that celebrate that American holiday with a special "Thank you" to non-Jewish mothers raising Jewish children. The implication that non-Jewish mothers of Jewish children are special, carries the perhaps unintended message that Jewish mothers are less special. Moreover, this focus has two limitations:

Primarily families with Jewish mothers affiliate with synagogues and temples today

(1) It does not address Jewish male ambivalence toward Jews and Judaism. Because they are aimed primarily at non-Jewish mothers and do not also deal with the ambivalence (and sometimes outright antipathy) of Jewish fathers in Patrilineal families, "Mother's Circles"

and efforts like them can only go so far in bringing Patrilineal families closer to Jewishness. (2) Celebrating and lionizing non-Jewish mothers raising Jewish children – and not the Jewish mothers who raise Jewish children – such efforts may, however unintentionally, further undermine the sociological status of Jewish mothers.

Significantly, Progressive, Liberal, or Reform congregations around the world do not necessarily follow the lead of American Reform Judaism

- **Patrilineal Descent isolates American Reform Judaism from Liberal/Progressive worldwide Judaism as well as from American Orthodox and Conservative Jewish communities.** Significantly, Progressive, Liberal, or Reform congregations around the world do not necessarily follow the lead of American Reform Judaism that the children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers are presumed to be Jewish if they are being raised as Jews. Indeed, at an international conference of liberal Jewish movements in San Francisco in 2011, it became apparent that non-American Reform leaders have often resisted adopting the American Patrilineal Descent example. Diaspora

communities that are strongly tied to Israel, such as South African Jewry, feel deeply affected by (and vulnerable to) the knowledge that Israeli religious authorities do not accept patrilineally Jewish children as Jews, according to journalist Sue Fishkoff. For these and other reasons, Patrilineal Descent is "not catching on in Reform Judaism worldwide."⁴⁰ Thus, Patrilineal Descent is a factor in the current prominence of Reform Judaism in the United States – and, conversely, Patrilineal Descent is a wedge issue not only separating Reform Judaism from Conservative and Orthodox Judaism but also from other international Reform communities.

Policy Implications

The best case scenario for the children of Jewish Patrilineal families is that they should resemble the children of two Jewish parents, coming from households with Jewish mothers. For both inmarried and intermarried families, the Jewish success rate – regardless of parentage – is highest among children who experience rich Jewish educational backgrounds, including formal Jewish education through the teen years, Jewish camping, and trips to Israel. Among American Jews today, girls and women are more likely to have received greater Jewish education than Jewish males. For this and other reasons, as a group (of course there are many exceptions) Jewish men who intermarry often go into the marriage already apathetic or ambivalent about their Jewishness. Men are much less likely than women to become pillars of Jewishness in intermarried homes.

Nevertheless, there are some success stories. Some Jewishly identified children of Patrilineal families have weak Jewish backgrounds, but at a point in their life journeys some encounter inspiring Jewish interventions, such as a welcoming rabbi or teacher, or increasingly a Birthright Israel trip. Such children, teens, and adult progeny of intermarriage can benefit from the same follow-through activities as the children of two Jews. (Yet another argument for creating effective follow-through programs.)

1. Beyond this, we actually know little about strategies to bring boys, young men, and Jewish males in general closer to Jews, Judaism, and Jewish life. The Jewish community has yet to fully confront and deal with this Jewish gender imbalance. The community as a whole – not only intermarried families – is affected by male disaffection. Jewish leaders and educators need to learn more about how to connect American males to their Jewishness: This paper's first policy recommendation is a plea for **further research into strategies for connecting liberal American Jewish males** – including those in mixed married families – to Jewishness.
2. The second policy recommendation is to **increase an emphasis on conversion**. It is very unlikely that the Reform movement will wish to rescind the 1983 decision. Instead, Eric Yoffie's 2005 plea that American Jews, especially in the Reform movement, incorporate warmer encouragement of conversion as an outreach strategy seems particularly appropriate now. Conversionary families are very similar to inmarried families in their Jewish

connections and activities. Gentle, welcoming encouragement of conversion may be the most beneficial outreach strategy currently available to the Jewish community.

3. Thirdly, many painful situations are caused by the reality that Jews converted by Reform rabbis are often not embraced within the Israeli context. Despite the political and religious delicacy that would no doubt be required, this paper concludes by recommending that the Israeli government pursue more concerted efforts to find ways to allow populations both inside and outside of Israel **who think of themselves as Jewish to achieve official Israeli governmental** (even if not Orthodox halakhic) **recognition** that they share the destiny of the Jewish people.
4. Discussing historical Orthodox attitudes toward conversion, David Ellenson and Daniel Gordis wrote, "the parameters of the law and its holdings are forged in the crucible of life by human beings who bring intense convictions in specific historical contexts to the cases that come before them."⁴¹ This paper urges that in the specific context of America in the second decade of the 21st century, faced with the historically unusual situation of widespread intermarriage and weakened male Jewish connectedness, a response of increasing educational efforts for all segments of the population, and welcoming non-Jewish spouses of Jews to formally become part of the Jewish people through conversion, would retain the positive results, and help to mitigate the areas of concern produced by Patrilineal Descent.

Notes

1. "Reform Movement's Resolution on Patrilineal Descent," Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent, adopted on March 15, 1983. Can be accessed at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/source/Judaism/patrilineal1.html>.
2. Jonathan Ament, *UJC Report Series on NJPS 2000-01, American Jewish Religious Denominations, Report 10* (New York: United Jewish Communities, 2005), pp. 8-9.
3. Jacob J. Staubb, "A Reconstructionist View on Patrilineal Decent," in *Judaism* 133, Vol 34, No. 1 (Winter 1985) pp. 97-106, notes that the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot (FRCH) passed a 1968 resolution and a 1979 resolution, both of which declared "that the Reconstructionist Movement and its affiliated institutions will consider these children [born of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother] if the parents have committed themselves to rear their children as Jews by providing circumcision for boys, Jewish education for boys and girls, and if the children fulfill the requirements of bar/bat mitzvah or confirmation." Although the American Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) was the first to admit women and to make the RRC a comfortable place for gay and lesbian Jews, and has long conveyed messages of inclusiveness and acceptance, Reconstructionist Judaism is numerically small.
4. See Mathew Frey Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Mary C. Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identitties in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006); Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks & What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers University Press, 1998).
5. Paul R. Spikard, *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).
6. "Reform Movement's Resolution on Patrilineal Descent," *op.cit.*
7. *Contemporary American Reform Responsa* 38. *Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent* (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, October 1983), can be accessed at: data.ccarnet.org.
8. "Reform Movement's Resolution on Patrilineal Descent," *op.cit.*, p. 4 of 4.
9. Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent (p. 2 of 4).
10. Alexander Schindler, Remarks at the Clal Conference on Jewish Unity (Princeton, NJ, March 16, 1986), in Aron Hirt-Manheimer, ed., *The Jewish Condition: Essays on Contemporary Judaism Honoring Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler* (New York: UAHC Press, 1995), pp. 259-260.
11. Dana Evan Kaplan, *American Reform Judaism: An Introduction* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), p. 236.
12. Rabbi David Ellenson, personal interview at Brandeis University, March 14, 2013.
13. David Ellenson, "The Integrity of Reform Within *Kelal Yisrael*" (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis 97th Annual Convention, ed. Elliot L. Stevens, 1986) XCVI: 21-32.
14. David Ellenson, "The Rock from Which they were Cleft," review essay of Haim Amsalem, *Zera Yisrael (Seed of Israel)* and *Mekor Yisrael (Source of Israel)* in *Jewish Review of Books* (Winter 2012): 41-43.
15. Shaye J.D. Cohen, "The Matrilineal Principle in Historical Perspective, in *Judaism, op. cit.*, pp. 5-13."

16. J. David Bleich, "The Patrilineal Principle: The Crucial Concern," in *Judaism, op. cit.*, pp. 14-19.
17. Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Jewish Identity and Jewish Descent," in *Judaism, op. cit.*, pp. 78-84.
18. Robert Gordis, "Patrilineal Descent—a Solution or a Problem," in *Judaism, op. cit.*, pp. 32-40.
19. Joel Roth, "An Halakhic perspective on an Historical Foundation," in *Judaism, op. cit.*, pp. 62-67.
20. Judith Haputman, "Patrilineal Descent—An Examination of the Issue," in *Judaism, op. cit.*, pp. 45-49.
21. Reform rabbis and laypersons began to spend more time in Israel, and became attached to Hebrew, contemporary Israeli music, Jewish dance, and other aspects of Israeli culture, including the Israeli secular attachment to the holidays of the Jewish calendar year. The formal choir began to give way to guitar-playing rabbis, in some settings, who played melodies they had heard first in Israel. Rabbis and other Reform visitors to Israel came home with diverse Israeli *kippot* (ritual head coverings), and some of them proceeded to wear their acquisitions to Temple.
22. Harriet Hartman and Moshe Hartman, *Gender and American Jews: Patterns in Work, Education & Family in Contemporary Life* (Waltham, MA: HBI Series on Jewish Women/ Brandeis University Press, 2009), p. 138.
23. Scholars seem to be divided as whether this is a universal phenomenon or not. "By now it is so taken for granted that women are more religious than men that every competent quantitative study of religiousness routinely includes sex as a control variable," Rodney Stark, "Physiology and Faith: Addressing the "Universal" Gender Difference in Religious Commitment", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Sep., 2002), pp. 495-505. Stark articulates the supposedly universal assumption. While some researchers assert innate psychological leanings are the basis for female religiosity, others suggest differential socialization creates gender differences, arguing: "men are assigned [by society] roles that are more instrumental than socio-emotional and thus are less concerned with problems of morality," but women are more relational in their development and more inclined toward religiosity. Research, however, shows feminization is neither universal nor inevitable: Examining the intersection of gender and religion around the world, D. Paul Sullins (2006) uses international data revealing that in religions other than Christianity—especially Judaism and Islam—men are often equally or more religious than women. Outside the United States, gendered approaches to religion are diverse. Men, rather than women, are often perceived as more religious. Sullins shows, "Worldwide, there is no measure of religiousness on which Jewish females score higher than Jewish males. Jewish men report significantly higher rates of synagogue attendance and belief in life after death than do Jewish women; otherwise, there is no sex difference in religiousness among Jews." D. Paul Sullins, "Gender and Religion: Deconstructing Universality, Constructing Complexity," in *American Journal of Sociology* 112, No. 3 (November 2006), pp. 838-880, pp. 844, 846.
24. Graphic figures prepared by Daniel Parmer, in Sylvia Barack Fishman and Daniel Parmer, *Matrilineal Ascent/ Patrilineal Descent: The Growing Gender Imbalance in Contemporary Jewish Life* (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2008).
25. Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Double Or Nothing? Jewish Families and Mixed Marriage* (Waltham, MA.: Brandeis University Press/ University Press of New England, 2004). This book is based on 254 in-depth interviews with husbands and wives in four American locations: New England, New Jersey, Atlanta, and Denver, from 1999 to 2000. The initial report was published as *Jewish and Something Else: A Study of Mixed Married Families* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001). The research was supported by the American

Jewish Committee and implemented by researchers at Brandeis University.

26. Fishman and Parmer.
27. The National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 was conducted by the United Jewish Communities (UJC), Lawrence Kotler-Berkowitz, et. al. 5,148 respondents were interviewed. See www.jewishdatabank.org for more information and to download the data.
28. Linda J. Sax, *America's Jewish College Freshmen: Current Characteristics and Recent Trends Among Students Entering College* (Los Angeles: University of California Higher Education Research Institute, Hillel Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, 2002), p. 227.
29. Leonard Saxe, Fern Chertok, Benjamin Phillips, "It's not just who stands under the chuppah: Jewish identity and mixed marriage" (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University's Steinhardt Social Research Institute, 2007).
30. Keren R. McGinity, "Gender Matters: Jewish identity, intermarriage, and parenthood," in *Contact: The Journal of the Steinhardt Foundation for Jewish Life* 14, No. 2 (Winter 2012):12-13. See also McGinity's books, *Still Jewish: A History Women and Intermarriage in America* (New York: NUY Press, 2009), and *Strangers in the Fold: Jewish Men, Intermarriage, and Fatherhood* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).
31. Fishman, *Double Or Nothing?*
32. Increasing Jewish secularism and intermarriage are interrelated: secular American Jews are more likely to marry non-Jews, and intermarried Jews are more likely than in-married Jews to call themselves "secular." According to the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2008, which examined secularism in the United States, percentages of American Jews who identify as "secular," "unaffiliated," or "cultural Jews who identify by ethnicity alone" rose from 20 percent in 1990 to 37% in 2008. "I attribute the shift to a combination of disaffection from Judaism and intermarriage," commented key investigator, Dr. Barry Kosmin. (Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), 2008* (Hartford, CT.: Trinity College, 2008). Indeed, in the NJPS 2000-01 and in earlier ARIS studies it was already apparent that children raised in intermarried households were far less likely to be "raised as Jews," far less likely to receive Jewish education, and much more likely than those raised in inmarried households to identify as "secular" when they reached adulthood. Both the likelihood of creating an intermarried household and the likelihood of identifying as secular increase when intermarriage becomes the family tradition (NJPS Report 2000-01: Variations in Intermarriage, Intermarriage and Current Jewish Connections (NJPS United Jewish Communities/ Jewish Federations of North America). As we have noted, around three quarters of Jews with only one Jewish parent marry a non-Jew. About one-third of American Jewish intermarried families nationally say they are "raising child/ren as Jews." Among those intermarried couples not raising children as Jews many report that the household has no religious affiliation. Almost 60% with only one Jewish parent who were "raised as Jews" are intermarried, and about 86% of those with only one Jewish parent who were "not raised as Jews" are intermarried
33. Sermon by Rabbi Eric Yoffie at the Houston Biennial, Houston, TX, Nov. 19, 2005, Union for Reform Judaism 68th General Assembly (<http://urj.org/yoffie/biennialsermon05/>).
34. Yoffie, Sermon 05, *op. cit.*
35. For further discussion of this phenomenon, see Sylvia Barack Fishman, "The Jewish Outreach Enterprise: Rhetoric and Reality," in Steven T. Katz and Steven Bayme, eds., *Continuity and Change* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 2011), pp. 105-129.

36. Alan D. Bennett, "Outreach: The Next Generation discussion and study guide," in *Reform Judaism online: Union for Reform Judaism* (<http://reformjudaismmag.org/Articles>; Winter 2007), p. 1 of 6.
37. Jeff Diamant, "Rabbi gives Cupid a nudge with JDate," in *USA Today*, Nov. 8.
38. Leonard Saxe, et. al., *Jewish Population Study of Greater Boston* (Waltham, MA.: Brandeis University Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, and the Boston Combined Jewish Philanthropies, 2005).
39. Fishman and Parmer, *Matrilineal Ascent/ Patrilineal Descent*.
40. Sue Fishkoff, "Why is patrilineal descent not catching on in Reform worldwide?" *JTA Jewish and Israeli News*, San Francisco, February 15, 2011.
41. David Ellenson and Daniel Gordis, *Pledges of Jewish Allegiance: Conversion, Law, and Policymaking in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century Orthodox Responsa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 2012), p. 166.



Jewish Leadership in North America – Changes in Personnel and Structure

Introduction

Everything the Jewish people hope to achieve depends on the quality of the professionals and volunteers who serve our organizations, and on senior leaders in particular. The ability to shape the internal dynamics of the Jewish people and influence the external ones relies on these individuals' vision, passion, knowledge, skill and influence and on the quality and vitality of our institutions and communities. The continuous development of high-quality leaders and human resources is fundamental and imperative for the continued thriving of the Jewish people.

Two **critical** questions in regard to leadership concern the North American Jewish community, with **critical** implications for the global Jewish people. Will it successfully replenish an aging senior professional leadership corps, many of whom will soon retire? And will their replacements possess the vision, passion, and skill to reshape the American communal infrastructure to optimally adapt to changing realities? These questions are imbedded in larger and long-standing concerns about the

overall quantity and quality of professionals and volunteers, and the ability to engage young adult volunteers. Success will require an immediate program of executive development, and the implementation of best-practice human resource management, and thoughtful cultivation of Jewish influentials and informal leaders.

This paper seeks to assess the state of North American Jewish communal leadership, identify major challenges and offer policy recommendations, strategies and interventions.

- There are an estimated 9500 Jewish nonprofits in the United States.¹ This paper will address the challenge of professional leadership transition in the largest and most influential Jewish organizations in a manner that responds to the changing nature of Jewish life in North America. They include large national organizations such as American Jewish Committee and Hillel, the major seminaries and Jewish religious movements, the largest federations, Jewish community centers, congregations and others.

- It will define an ideal profile for the next generation of top professionals and assess the ability to fill those positions in the next five to ten years.
- It will consider volunteer leadership and assess the Jewish community's "soft power" resources – Jewish individuals active in political life, government service, public affairs, media and academia.
- It will suggest a systemic framework for how the North American Jewish community can manage its long-term professional leadership needs.

The 2008 economic crisis likely slowed the pace of retirements

The paper draws on Jewish and general nonprofit research literature and written and telephone interviews with a diverse group of 34 individuals active in Jewish affairs.

The Leadership Cliff

In a 2009 Jewish Funders Network report, researchers Michael Austin and Tracey Salkowitz warned, "The National Jewish community appears to be on the edge of a precipice. Within the next five to ten years, the baby boomers will retire and leave upwards of 75-90% of Jewish community agencies with the challenge of finding new executive leadership. The field of Jewish communal service is vastly different today from the post-Holocaust

creation of the State of Israel when hundreds of young Jews decided to dedicate their professional lives to the Jewish community. When this reality is combined with rapid technological advances, the professionalization of the field, the increasing demands on community executives and the rapidly changing needs and culture of the Jewish community, the challenges are monumental and uncharted."²

This concern was also articulated in a 2012 proposal by Larry Moses, president emeritus of the Wexner Foundation, for a national Center for Executive Development.³ A Jewish Communal Service Association study found an overwhelming lack of succession planning by Jewish organizations. The great majority of interviewees shared the concern.⁴

The 2008 economic crisis likely slowed the pace of retirements. However, the issue is imbedded in a wider professional leadership challenge facing American nonprofits. A widely cited 2006 Bridgespan study estimated that by 2016, the nonprofit sector (10.1% of the U.S. workforce) would need to produce 80,000 new senior managers per year, 2.4 times the current demand.⁵ Other studies sound the alarm.⁶ 22.5% of nonprofit CEOs are age 60 or older and 36% of them expect to stay on the job less than three years.⁷ Although the average U.S. retirement age has risen to 67, more than 50% of current CEOs expect to retire by age 65.⁸

Moreover, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* reported that half of chief fundraisers plan to leave their jobs within two years. 40% contemplate leaving fundraising entirely.⁹ The paucity of skilled fundraisers is exacerbated by an average six-month vacancy period. With the growing expectation

that CEOs possess strong fundraising skills, chief development officers are logical candidates for succession to the executive suite.

Additionally, many senior executives (non-CEOs) in larger Jewish organizations are also approaching retirement and are therefore unlikely to seek or be sought for the top spot.¹⁰

A Changing Context

Leading large complex organizations, which are dependent on philanthropy and sustained board support, demands numerous advanced skills. However, those who will assume the top professional positions also face a Jewish and general context far different from that which welcomed their predecessors. The trends and factors are well documented. They include the full integration of Jews in general American society; Israel's strength and complex relationship with the U.S.; dramatic changes in demography, sociology, and patterns of identity and affiliation; changes in the philanthropic marketplace; declining confidence in nonprofits; shifting attitudes and priorities toward Israel, Jewish security, social services, and Jewish identity; and the rapidly changing, globalized, technology-dependent world. Many of these trends represent long-term challenges to the vitality of the North American Jewish community, and in turn, of world Jewry. Some afford new opportunities.

There is ongoing speculation about the relevance and sustainability of the current Jewish organizational network. There are frequent calls for and some progress in re-structuring including

mergers, sunseting organizations, redefining the mission of others, creating new institutions and overall programmatic innovation. Nonetheless, even as change occurs, for the foreseeable future it is likely that the largest, most complicated, best-resourced and influential organizations will still tend to be mainstream.

Because of the changing context and concerns about the quality of current leaders, many may welcome large-scale executive transition despite the accompanying costs and disruptions. The rapid pace of change may challenge the long-valued goal of executive stability. Rabbi Mark Charendoff, on stepping down as president of the Jewish Funders Network, wrote that executive turnover should be encouraged, positing a target tenure of 8-10 years on average.¹¹

Rabbi Mark Charendoff: Executive turnover should be encouraged, positing a target tenure of 8-10 years on average

The next CEOs will have to straddle a difficult line. They will need to understand and master the existing context while simultaneously responding to, envisioning and leading institutional change. There will be many obstacles. The need for change is not universally accepted. Volunteers, donors, and staff may defend current power and resource allocation. Executive power is limited by volunteer governance. Day-to-day pressures will crowd out time and resources for working on change, which is usually slow and process heavy.

The Desired Professional Profile

There are at least two ways to define the desired professional profile. One starts from an analysis of the role, organizational needs and environmental context, and then specifies the knowledge, competencies, experience, values and personal attributes required to succeed. A second approach is defined by the expectations and perspectives of those doing the hiring. Regrettably, these two

approaches do not always align. Selection criteria are affected by generational differences, gender, and religious perspective. They are frequently reactive to assessments of the incumbent. Areas of tension include those who believe extensive experience in the field is critical versus those who seek non-traditional candidates with fresh

perspectives and skills; those who see business, management and fundraising skills as supreme and those who seek Jewish literacy and vision for the Jewish people. Younger volunteers, particularly entrepreneurs, will likely reject the profile of retiring CEOs and the perspective of older volunteers, perceiving them as agents of the status quo. These tensions call for careful attention to the composition and process of executive search committees. Special attention must be given to the voices of younger, next-generation volunteers if the capacity for institutional change is to be fostered.

Selection criteria are affected by generational differences, gender, and religious perspective

The majority of interviewees do not believe there is one best trajectory to the CEO's office, and advocate openness to multiple pathways. Yet, although each job requires a unique combination of qualifications, the interviews and management literature point to the following ideal criteria for the next CEOs. In general the criteria also apply to rabbis:

- A desire and ability to lead, built around a forward-looking vision, passion, personal empowerment, courage, perseverance, interpersonal and communications skills and the ability to inspire others. This must be coupled with humility. Changing cultural expectations and the reality that many challenges are adaptive, call for greater use of servant, distributed and shared leadership models. The next CEOs must maintain a careful balance between being strong, empowered leaders on one hand, and collaborative, empowering leaders on the other.
- A personally meaningful Jewish life and commitment to Jewish values, Jewish peoplehood and Israel's security.
- Jewish knowledge including of the demographics, sociology and operation of the North American Jewish community, contemporary knowledge of Israel, world Jewry and the global Jewish agenda. Literacy in Jewish religious thought, classic texts, and the Hebrew language – along with cross-cultural competence to relate to Israeli and global Jewish leaders are highly desirable.

- Respect for the variety of Jewish expression and support for pluralistic policy. Individuals in their 40s, able to understand, communicate, motivate and build relationships with diverse constituencies in their 20s to 40s.
- Collaborative boundary spanners, who will emphasize broad concerns and community building rather than institutional preservation.
- Willingness and skill in fundraising and long-term donor cultivation and stewardship.
- Strategic management skills, with particular emphasis on financial and human resource management, change management and board governance.
- Nuanced understanding and skill in managing lay-professional relations, which includes respect for the imperative of volunteer governance and commitment to empower effective boards.
- Skill and commitment to develop and empower high-quality, collaborative teams, with attention to preparing their own successors.
- Flexibility, adaptability, creativity, and a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. Openness to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary thinking.

Of course, no one candidate will possess all these qualities. Essentials include Jewish vision, passion and energy; interpersonal, team building and fundraising skills; and the ability to master lay-professional relations.

Quality of the Pipeline

The notion of pipeline implies high-quality middle managers, working their way to the top, with the requisite training, experience and qualifications to ultimately enter the executive suite. Most believe the pipeline is weak. Austin & Salkowitz found that although about 25% of current CEOs could identify “up and coming stars,” the vast majority don’t know where their successors will come from.¹² This impacts the immediate question of executive succession, as well as concerns about the overall quality of the Jewish professional workforce. Exceptions of greater confidence were noted in New York City, within the Orthodox community, and in the ability to fill top positions in Jewish public affairs. Nonetheless, most individuals interviewed could identify several “rising stars.” Most possess advanced educational degrees and a long record of Jewish engagement. Several were interviewed. They generally expressed self-confidence and readiness, though some noted ambivalent desire.

Many believe the concept of a pipeline is antiquated, unrealistic and only reinforces the status quo. They believe the Jewish community must cast a wider net, looking at high-quality individuals with Jewish knowledge and passion from other nonprofit and public sector settings,

The vast majority of CEOs don’t know where their successors will come from

noting business and law in particular. All acknowledge that these individuals face barriers to entry, will require training, mentoring and coaching and will face serious adjustments to the realities and demands of Jewish organizational life, most particularly the lay-professional relationship. Most see the transition from committed layperson to professional as the hardest and most likely to fail.

The quality of lay-professional relations (particularly the presumed “partnership” between chief volunteer and professional officers) is a critical factor in Jewish organizational success. Yet the reality and/or perception of dysfunction is widespread. Most complaints emanate from professionals, many of whom describe the environment as toxic.

The quality of lay-professional relations is a critical factor in Jewish organizational success

The inherent power differential and common socio-economic differential between volunteers and employees can be expected to yield tension. However, a number of frequently present factors can exacerbate the situation. These include:

- Perception among volunteers that professionals undermine their role and authority, preferring to use boards as “rubber stamps” and/or valuing volunteers solely for their giving potential.
- Resentment and perception among professionals that volunteers, who frequently

have minimal subject-matter expertise, do not value, respect or recognize professional training, experience and achievements.

- Resentment and frustration over instances of volunteer micro-management.
- Resentment over low pay and long hours and the belief that volunteers legitimate this because of their commitment to mission.
- Expectations that professionals must cater and defer to unrealistic volunteer demands or demeaning behavior.
- Limited tolerance for professional errors accompanied by limited volunteer accountability.

The extent of the reality or perception of these factors is variable, but they are present to a certain degree in almost all Jewish organizations. However, this is rarely discussed openly or constructively.

Recent studies find strong motivation among young people to enter mission-oriented professions. Sometimes disillusioned with business or diminished opportunities in law, combined with a commitment to social justice, the 2008 “Ready to Lead” study of nearly 6000 young people exposed to the nonprofit world found that 32% aspire to be a nonprofit CEO, and 47% say their ideal job is in the nonprofit sector.¹³

In the Jewish world, some young people have entered the entrepreneurial innovation sector, starting organizations addressing Jewish education, identity, art, culture, public affairs or communal change. They display many of the characteristics defined in the ideal profile and are a potential, long

range, though possibly overlooked talent pool. However, they will need to be nurtured and will demand significant adjustments in the nature of the lay-professional partnership and work-life balance if they are to take mainstream organization roles.

Contributing Factors

The leadership cliff results from numerous factors relating to demand and supply. Research has given us a vivid picture of personnel issues within the Jewish community.¹⁴ Additional insights are extrapolated from general research on the subject.

Factors affecting demand

Despite the economic crisis, the nonprofit sector continues to expand in number and size.¹⁵ A similar dynamic likely exists in the Jewish community, with the exception of the rabbinate where demand may be shrinking.¹⁶ Growth may come from small entrepreneurial start-ups and the foundation sector. Larger organizations require more senior executives, who might otherwise serve as CEOs in smaller organizations. Even if the number of organizations holds constant, the successor generation to the baby boom CEOs is numerically smaller.

CEO tenures in the corporate world are decreasing from an average of 9.5 years to 7.6 years. Poor performance creates demand as 40% of CEOs fail in the first 18 months.¹⁷ 30% of nonprofit CEOs are fired or forced to resign.¹⁸ Younger, entrepreneurial lay leaders often express concern about the skill sets of current-generation CEOs. Stories abound about forced separations.

Factors affecting supply

Though demographic factors such as the smaller post-baby boom population cohort play a role, factors primarily relate to changing Jewish identity and affiliation and overall weak human resource practices.

The Jewish nonprofit environment is widely seen as less than optimal and frequently described as toxic to professional recruitment, development, retention and career.

Factors identified in the literature and anecdotally include:

- Jobs are harder. Most senior professionals report that factors including communal changes, increasing fundraising pressure and competition, increasingly complex issues, organizations and regulation, and challenging or toxic lay-professional relations are increasing stress and frustration.
- Poor screening and hiring practices.
- Unrealistic workloads and performance expectations.
- Low tolerance for failure.
- Limited, inadequate or unsupportive supervision.
- Limited quality and quantity of in-service training.

**40% of
CEOs fail
in the
first 18
months**

- Lack of career development support.
- Lack of recognition and respect.
- Insufficient compensation in early career stages.
- Limited maternity leave, flex time, job sharing and other strategies to accommodate working parents and enhance the work-life balance.
- Disincentives and barriers to women's career advancement.

Perception among many young people that mainstream Jewish organizations resist change, focus only on fundraising, and are technologically unsophisticated.

Decreased mobility is due to the fact that in dual-earner families fewer employees are prepared to relocate for opportunity

These push factors diminish the attractiveness of professional careers and are reinforced by pull forces. For example, competent fundraisers often find they can earn more in other settings,

with less stress. Young women often exit within two to three years when they marry or begin families. Push factors are salient to the millennial generation, who expect to change jobs frequently, have little patience for pipeline advancement and do not contemplate a career limited to one type of organization.¹⁹

A large, widely noted factor is reduced mobility. With dual earner families, fewer employees are

prepared to relocate for opportunity. Canadian communities find it difficult to recruit American candidates. Those working in small and mid-size communities and unable to move, find few opportunities for advancement (or fear reprisal if they look) and seek career advancement in non-Jewish settings.

Schools of social work and Jewish communal service are producing only a small number of professionals.²⁰ High-cost, long-term, professional development programs have received mixed reviews. Professional organizations are weak and most in-service training is of the one-day nature, generally under-resourced and of mixed quality.

Impact of Jewish identity

With reduced levels of affiliation and loyalty to traditional institutions, interfaith marriage, and growing discomfort with Israeli policies, it is less likely that young Jews will proactively seek a career in a Jewish organization.

Yet there is also evidence of significant interest among young Jews in developing new programs and organizations related to Jewish education, social justice, religious life, public affairs and community. Many interviewees point to the innovation sector as a place filled with passion and talent, and a potential source of future top leaders. However, these talented, motivated young Jews generally do not wish to work in traditional organizations. And some older leaders view them as unlikely or unsuitable candidates. In fact one highly prominent and respected social entrepreneur expressed great surprise that no

one from a mainstream organization had reached out to him about a possible career move. His experience echoed that of a current top CEO.

Whether or not today's young entrepreneurs will eventually become more comfortable in mainstream organizations is conjectural. What does seem likely is that capitalizing on their talents will require active outreach, nurturance and significant changes in the structure, operation, leadership style and working culture of target organizations.

The Shoah, Israel, and anti-Semitism were powerful motivators for current CEOs. Changes in identity and attitudes raise the possibility that those attracted to professional roles will increasingly be drawn from the more religiously traditional. Does this potentially limit their ability to engage an increasingly secular population?

Institutional inertia

There is strong evidence that current CEOs and their boards have avoided or failed to address the executive cliff and the larger challenge of effective human resource management. Few organizations have undertaken formal succession planning, either long term or emergency, despite common wisdom that this is a basic leadership responsibility and management best practice. Transitions are generally unplanned and poorly managed.²¹

Nonprofit realities such as limited budgets, lack of associate directors and few intermediaries hamper proactive succession planning and mean nonprofits are far less likely to develop talent and hire from within.²²

Economic and emotional issues may lead CEOs and boards to avoid facing succession. Noble (2012) outlines some of the complex feelings aroused by the subject:

- CEO's belief that "my work isn't done."
- Lack of confidence that a successor exists.
- Belief among CEOs that they should control their own exit timing.
- Lack of personal planning for next phase of life.
- CEOs fear becoming lame ducks or being forced out if they raise the subject of retirement.²³

Few organizations have undertaken formal succession planning

Why have we failed to address the coming crisis?

A decade ago, David Edell, a former Jewish professional and leading search consultant, issued a call to action stating, "We know a great deal about the personnel crisis, but have lacked the will to address the problem on a system-wide scale. This crisis will affect the Jewish community's ability to realize its potential. Its resolution requires the commitment of top volunteer and professional leadership." He repeated his warning in July of 2012.²⁴ It has been echoed in the larger nonprofit world.²⁵

There are real costs to this failure. Most Jewish organizations are already pressed to maintain perceived relevance, impact and financial sustainability. Failure to secure high-quality personnel can trigger a vicious cycle of organizational decline. Poorly planned, avoided, or unforeseen executive transitions can trigger:

- Instability and reduced impact.
- Exodus of key staff and poor morale.
- Reduced fundraising.
- Tarnished image of the professional.
- Excessive concentration of power in a long-serving CEO, which can also discourage competent employees.
- Abandonment of loyal executives after a lifetime of service.

Only some forward thinking philanthropists consider supplementary or planned gifts for professional development

Yet, despite repeated warnings and collective hand wringing, the Jewish community has not addressed the personnel matter vigorously. At times it has been negligent. Why?

Categorized as overhead, matters of internal organizational capacity and infrastructure are often accorded little value

and attention by governing boards. In a climate of increasing needs, limited revenues, skeptical donors and charity watchdogs, the ratio of overhead to program expense is under immense scrutiny. These

are strong disincentives to use unrestricted funds for training, coaching, sabbaticals etc.

Either out of fear of intruding on the CEO's domain or due to executive resistance, boards often have little insight into employee matters. They often fail to adequately set expectations and evaluate their chief executives. Even when they do, personnel management is rarely a key criterion.

With the exception of some forward thinking philanthropists, professional development is not an attractive option for donors considering supplementary or planned gifts.

An adaptive problem requiring a systemic response

The immediate challenge of CEO succession results from and is embedded in a broader set of human resource issues. The extent of the problem, the multiplicity of factors and the degree of dysfunction mean that short-term technical or individual strategies such as adding training programs or expanding recruitment will not be sufficient to make real progress. The personnel situation is an adaptive challenge.²⁶ As described by management and leadership scholars such as Ron Heifetz and Donald Laurie, adaptive challenges are problems lacking readily apparent technical solutions. They require new strategies that depend on changing behavior, giving up old ways and obtaining the buy-in and ownership of individuals across the system.²⁷

It is an issue that transcends any one organization or sector. It fits the paradigm John Kania and Mark Kramer described as "collective impact" to address complex, deeply-rooted problems and large-scale

systemic change efforts such as revitalization of poor urban neighborhoods or urban education.²⁸The personnel challenge requires long-term, collaborative action, built around a shared vision, by a broad coalition of institutions and actors.

The personnel crisis needs to be understood as a shared responsibility of CEOs and governing boards. Enlightened, responsible CEOs will embrace the challenges. However, governing boards, which possess fiduciary responsibility, must take an ownership stake as well. They will need to adopt new policies, provide financial resources, collaborate with other organizations and clearly define human resource management expectations for their CEOs, holding them accountable for performance.²⁹

Short-Term Strategies

Responding to the adaptive challenge and building collective action initiatives are long-term processes. They will take time to define, mobilize and yield results. However, executive transitions are ongoing and many are imminent. These must be treated as a priority. Several strategies can be pursued independently or together.

1. Delay transitions for top echelon CEOs. Due to the economy and emotional factors, some may desire to continue. However, there are several potential adverse implications:
 - Financial costs will rise. These are generally highly compensated people. Retention incentives will likely be additive, and

delay the savings an organization may realize through transition.

- Retention may delay needed organizational changes (e.g. leadership style, adopting new technologies, fundraising strategies). This can discourage younger volunteers, frustrate the career aspirations of middle managers, and alienate millennial generation employees.
 - Increasing reliance on long-standing (perhaps iconic) leaders may further tip the lay-professional power equation.
2. Recruit aggressively from the existing pool of Jewish organizational talent. There are people who are ready to lead. Some may require coaxing to leave comfortable positions or incentives to overcome mobility barriers. There should be greater openness to crossing organizational settings.
 3. Two strategies with similar implications are a) to recruit successful leaders/managers from non-Jewish settings, and b) to recruit baby boomers seeking an “encore career.” The number of transitions together with a limited pipeline means that, for the foreseeable future, organizations will hire people with minimal

Short-term technical or individual strategies will not be sufficient to make real progress in the immediate challenge of CEO succession

Jewish training and experience, either by design or necessity. Research from large corporations suggests that differences in overall success rates between internal and external candidates are not great, but that external candidates tend to do better when organizations are in crisis and internal candidates succeed more when the company is strong.³⁰ External individuals will need to adjust to the Jewish professional's public lifestyle and the impact of lay-professional

For the foreseeable future, organizations will hire people with minimal Jewish training and experience

relations. Lacking an existing supportive professional network, these individuals will require careful 'on-boarding,' executive coaching and supplementary training to manage the transition. They may struggle for legitimacy in the eyes of colleagues, employees and

the community at large. Some believe such individuals should be required to begin in a sub-executive role and/or obtain education and credentialing before being employed as CEOs.

This discussion raises interesting questions regarding a) how organizations broach the sensitive issue of succession with older CEO's,³¹ and b) what roles retirees can play in their own organizations or others. Those with humility and openness to change can be an enormous resource for ongoing teaching, consulting, mentoring, and coaching. Defining post-retirement options may ease the ability to talk about transition.

Recommendations and Best Practices for Professional Human Resources Management

The interviews and literature suggested numerous strategies to address the personnel needs of the North American Jewish community. These are distilled into two major policy recommendations and a summary of best practices to be implemented.

1. Design and launch an appropriately resourced, national, long-term, collaborative initiative to adopt best-practices in human resource recruitment, professional development and retention, as well as designing organizational culture, policies and practices that support professional excellence. The initiative will conceptualize the Jewish organizational network as a national system with shared and inter-dependent personnel needs. The initiative must incorporate and build on a campaign of advocacy and education of lay leaders, donors and senior managers as to the nature of the challenge and the need to address it. Using collective impact principles, the initiative will engage and define a shared vision and common agenda for local, national and international Jewish organizations, institutions of higher education, foundations, professional associations, for-profit search firms and others. It will promote mutually reinforcing activities and identify where new programs and possibly new organizations are needed.³² It will define shared measures of success and engage in ongoing communication. Critical to

success will be the establishment of a neutral 'backbone organization' which plays an ongoing role as catalyst and coordinator.³³

Collective impact strategies require adjustments to typical modes of organizational independence and governance. In such inter-organizational alliances, individual organizations may deliver specific services or programs, but "service delivery is designed, organized, resourced, and coordinated" (i.e. governed) by the network of relationships among organizational leaders involved in the collaborative effort.³⁴

2. Create a multi-modal, North American center for executive development. The center would develop educational curricula and strategies for training and inspiring newly-hired CEOs (e.g. the Harvard Graduate School of Education, one-week seminar for new university presidents), high-potential mid-career individuals, and high-potential individuals seeking to enter the field. It would also provide systemic leadership on the issues of executive development, succession planning, transition, executive coaching and continued professional development. If positioned to support the entire Jewish organizational network, it could assume the backbone role described above. Larry Moses' thought piece for the Jim Joseph Foundation offers an intriguing set of goals and considerations for further exploration.³⁵

Ideally, by the time one becomes the CEO of a major Jewish organization, s/he will have developed a coherent vision for the Jewish future, the critical leadership, management and fundraising skills,

detailed knowledge of the chosen field of service, broad knowledge of the Jewish world and a robust network of relationships. These assets equip the CEO not only to lead a particular organization, but also to play an instrumental role in shaping the global Jewish agenda. Corporations often achieve this by a planned program of assessment, training, job rotation, and growth producing assignments. Jewish professionals can't be managed like chess pieces. However similar job rotation, including experiences outside the Jewish community, could enhance a future CEO's value and improve collaboration and innovation. Professionals and lay leaders should value such layered experiences and work to remove barriers to their achievement. The executive development center could provide unbiased career assessment, planning and counseling services to candidates of very high potential that might incorporate aspects of various corporate models.

Job rotation, including experiences outside the Jewish community, could enhance a future CEO's value

The role of Israel

An Israel experience can inspire Jewish identity and engagement. If properly leveraged, it can be a launch pad to a professional career. An important recruitment strategy is to build exposure to professional and volunteer roles into all Israel experiences (as well as summer camp programs). In an exit survey of recent Israel MASA

participants, 47% said they would like to work in a Jewish organization and another 40% said they would potentially consider it.³⁶ Professional visits, institutes and sabbaticals in Israel can serve as periodic motivational “booster shots.” Beyond inspiration, it is important that high-potential professionals spend extended and repeated time in Israel to develop a deeper understanding of contemporary society, acquire Hebrew language skills and develop relationships that can

facilitate global dialogue, collaboration and mutual support. An Israel experience of at least three months, and preferably a year, should be part of any long-term professional development program.

It is important that high-potential professionals spend extended and repeated time in Israel

Funding

It is evident, and reinforced by interviewees, that implementing the best practices described below,

launching a center for executive development, a collective impact initiative and the creation of a backbone structure will require increases in funding. This will mean organizations devoting a greater portion of their operating budgets to these matters as well as seeking new funding. However, from a cost-benefit and leverage perspective, these investments should be seen as reasonable and essential, and not dismissed as overhead.³⁷

The role of Jewish foundations is critical. It should be a concern shared by all of them, as they are

dependent on the quality of grantees to fulfill their philanthropic visions and strategic priorities. They, no less than others, suffer from personnel weakness.

The foundations could incentivize a collective impact approach through a compatible funding model known as 'high stakes donor collaboration.' The Bridgespan Group defines the following criterion, “a shared multiyear vision around which donors pool talent, resources, and decision making.”³⁸ Subsuming individual decision making into a funding collaborative as well as governance into a larger organizational collective is rare and difficult, but offers enormous potential and may be the essential factor in moving the initiative forward.

Best practices in human resource management

- Within any organization, a well developed, comprehensive human resource function needs to address the following: careful design of organizational structure and job descriptions; continuous scouting, identification, cultivation and recruitment of high-potential employees; skills in screening, interviewing and hiring; proper on-boarding, orientation, training, supervision and performance management; employee retention and career development strategies, competitive compensation and personnel policies; supportive work culture and environment including reasonable expectations, team building and productive lay-professional relations. Such practices will improve the reputation and attraction of Jewish professional careers.

- In the Jewish community, emphasis is usually placed on recruitment, especially of beginning workers. However, effective retention strategies, embedded in a comprehensive HR program, are equally critical to sustain a high quality work force, leveraging investments and reducing turnover costs.
- Proactive emergency and ongoing succession and transition planning. Special care is needed in cases of long tenure, charismatic or iconic, CEO's. Potential successors may worry that even when organizations desire change, the sense of loss and inevitable comparisons will make it difficult to succeed. As one potential CEO candidate noted, "it might be better to be the second successor." Succession planning and executive searches should include substantial representation from younger leaders to a) provide input into critical strategic questions and b) assess candidates' capacity to relate.
- Many, if not most, Jewish professionals did not plan for careers in Jewish organizational life. For some, an interesting job turned into a career. Individuals were often encouraged to consider a position by a friend, mentor, or chance acquaintance. These individuals were literally 'tapped on the shoulder' and encouraged to think about Jewish organizational work. All professional and volunteer leaders can play a similar role. As part of a broad initiative, special attention should be given to continually scouting for potential candidates, especially from the Jewish innovation sector.
- Many organizations actively or inadvertently discourage employees from exploring new opportunities. Rather than risk good people leaving the field, the community needs to develop ways to encourage retention and career development within the field, if not in a particular organization.³⁹
- Special efforts are needed to encourage and support the advancement of women. Attention must be paid to flexible work schedules, maternity leave, work-life balance and providing on-ramps for women returning after child rearing.
- Organizational culture must change to destigmatize and set positive expectations for remedial or ongoing training for CEOs. New CEOs should automatically be provided an executive coach and peer mentor. Annual performance reviews should define areas for growth and further training.⁴⁰
- Professional associations, recognition activities, mentoring, collegial support, and proactive marketing can enhance the image and status of the profession.⁴¹
- Boards of Directors must set expectations, actively monitor performance and hold management accountable for effective human resource management.⁴²

Succession planning and executive searches should include substantial representation from younger leaders

Volunteer & Informal Jewish Leadership

Although most of the burden for the Jewish future will fall on professionals, volunteers and prominent individuals in government, entertainment, media, and academia will be central to shaping the future and continued thriving of the Jewish people. In a decentralized, individualized and global Jewish world, inspiration, thought, leadership, and the

Successful nonprofit leadership entails creative power sharing between the Board and CEO

impetus for change may come from anywhere. One needs only reflect on the establishment of Birthright Israel, Sarah Silverman's "The Great Schlep," Steven Spielberg's role in Holocaust education or Thomas Friedman's influence on Jewish public opinion, to recognize that the efforts

and impact of mainstream Jewish organizations are balanced by forces outside their control. We are fully dependent on the continued willingness of the wealthiest Jews to support Jewish causes. Prominent Jews in popular culture will shape and reinforce attitudes and behavior. Israeli leaders will influence how young Jews connect to the Jewish people.

Volunteer leadership

A shift has occurred in the classic lay-professional relationship. Built on nonprofit law and historical evolution, the classic paradigm (with the partial

exception of the rabbinate) was that 'the board sets policy and the staff implements it.' To a large degree, CEOs and senior staff played a facilitative role empowering the board to lead and then taking responsibility for managing implementation and administrative. Numerous factors have caused a power shift in favor of the CEO, which is endorsed by most interviewees. The new ideal is a vision-driven, empowered leader, who not only manages effectively, but shapes direction, policy and strategy. Nonprofit management literature validates a new paradigm where the board and staff develop policy together; the board sets policy; the staff implements policy and the board and staff evaluate policy together (Herman, 2010, p 157-161). However, whether or not boards actually assert leadership, they possess authority and legal and moral responsibility for organizational success and sustainability. Successful nonprofit leadership entails creative power sharing between the board and CEO, a dynamic fraught with complexity and danger.

There are great risks if the board lacks the capacity or will to play its mandated role. Agency failure may ensue. The board's role in giving and fundraising is critical to organizational success. And as discussed earlier, it should assume a measure of ownership for assuring effective human resources practices.

Regarding volunteer leadership, there are several well-recognized, troubling trends:

- Inadequate numbers of high-quality (knowledgeable, skilled and financially capable) volunteer leaders.

- Limited and declining proportion of Jewish wealth and volunteer activism directed to Jewish causes.
- Difficulty attracting and retaining next-generation volunteer leaders.

Overall, the extent and depth of volunteer orientation, training and development is very weak and problematic. Many volunteers resist training and professionals are hesitant to point out weakness.⁴³ Most effort is focused on ‘young leadership’ prospects. Efforts should be expanded to recruit, train and develop volunteer leaders.

However, the most impactful long-term strategy may actually be developing a professional leadership corps and CEOs who value and empower volunteer governance and are capable of inspiring and engaging high-capacity volunteer leaders. This can launch a reinforcing, virtuous cycle of improvement, where better volunteers recruit better CEOs and so on. Today, CEOs are expected to be the true chief development officers. That role should transcend fundraising and include the development of high-quality volunteers. CEOs must apply the same cultivation skills and efforts to identify, engage, empower and place individuals of vision, intelligence, knowledge, and diverse skills, in top governance positions. Organizational culture must change to value these qualities as much as financial ability.

Informal leadership

The subject of informal leadership appears to receive little focused consideration regarding its extent, trends and strategies to strengthen it. It is important on at least two levels:

- The impact that informal leaders may play on the internal thinking, direction, policy, strategy, operation and culture of the Jewish community and its organizations.
- As ‘soft power assets,’ able to influence external public opinion, government policy and action on critical issues of Jewish concern such as the security of Israel. However, growing division over Israel, and the willingness to publicly criticize it mean that these individuals often work in conflicting ways.

Informal leaders can be categorized at least five ways, though these are not mutually exclusive:

- Prominent, widely recognized Jews who are influential in their professional fields, possess a strong Jewish identity and willingness to lend their prestige and power to Jewish issues – either internally or externally. In particular, this includes Jews in politics, high government positions, journalism and academia. They are able to leverage their knowledge, relationships and credibility, especially around issues related to Israel and Jewish security, and to shape opinion and attitudes inside and outside the Jewish community.
- Others, similar in prominence, who may have rich Jewish lives and may serve as sources of Jewish pride, but do not act formally in Jewish

Today, CEOs are expected to be the true chief development officers

affairs. Some of these individuals like Jon Stewart, who command wide followings, may be seen as role models or serve as the voice of a segment of the Jewish population. In that manner they may shape or reinforce attitudes or patterns of behavior.

- Extremely wealthy individuals, who by virtue of their philanthropy or their multi-faceted business, social and civic involvements, can assert leadership and influence. In particular, these individuals use mega-foundations to shape organizational policy and priorities.
- Israeli or other global political, business and cultural leaders, whose opinions or actions shape North American thinking and attitudes, or through government policy, impact Jewish life in North America.

There is growing concern about the declining share of Jewish philanthropy directed to Jewish causes

Most interviewees believe that the Jewish community continues to produce substantial numbers of prominent and influential Jews and that it continues to have

substantial soft power assets. Yet given geopolitical challenges, more would be better. There is growing concern about the declining share of Jewish philanthropy directed to Jewish causes.

Worthy of further examination is a provocative article by Ron Unz (2012) that suggests a decline in Jewish academic achievement. Unz speculates

that this may ultimately limit the current disproportionate Jewish access to elite universities, which he claims produce the majority of U.S. influentials.

Activities to cultivate informal leadership and soft power assets exist, primarily within individual organizations. CLAL and national programs such as the Doro Fellowship and Wexner Fellows play a role. Programs like Birthright Excel, the Bronfman Fellowships and ROI are focused on younger innovators and potential influentials. However, there is a sense that there is more opportunity and that devising strategies to identify, develop and engage rising Jewish influentials would be valuable. As an example, “She Should Run” is a U.S. organization that works to identify and encourage promising women to seek public office. Another model is the Ruderman Fellows program, which brings Israeli Knesset members to the United States. As a caveat, collaborative efforts will be challenged by the diversity of opinions and will need to build a tolerant, inclusive attitude.

Policy Recommendation

Convene a national consultation that involves leadership of the Jewish public affairs world on the topic of “Expanding Jewish Soft Power Resources.” Ideally, leaders of the major national public affairs organizations, the Republican Jewish Coalition, Jewish Democratic Council, and the largest local community relations agencies would convene under the sponsorship of a neutral umbrella to explore strategies and opportunities to deepen the number, activism and impact of highly-visible

and influential Jews in government, public service, politics, media, academia and the arts.

Such a consultation would need to be strictly non-partisan and encompass diverse perspectives. Careful attention and preparation are required to identify the most effective convener(s) and create an environment where promising ideas can move forward.

Outlook

We have been conditioned to view leadership as embodied by the image of the heroic, visionary, and charismatic individual, capable of igniting the masses and bringing about dramatic change.⁴⁴

However, the challenges we currently face, though substantial and urgent, lack the clarity, acuity and drama of crises that typically give rise to heroic leaders. In truth, we pray that the need does not arise. And the North American Jewish community is voluntary and resists centralized authority and uniformity. Moreover, changing cultural norms as well as evidence from leadership and management literature point to the need today for more empowering, collaborative leaders and processes where leadership is distributed and change emerges from a shared vision for the future.

In that context, we will require an army of professional, volunteer and informal leaders, who possess a deep understanding of the current context, and the passion, will and skill to take on the task of sustaining a thriving Jewish people.

Sadly today, we are inadequate to that challenge and a broad, sustained and urgent focus on leadership is required.

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44. In the very critical venue of global political leadership, Yehezkel Dror has called for what he terms "The New Ruler." Many of the qualifications align with, though transcend, the ideal profile contained herein and are instructive. Dror, Yehezkel (2008). *The New Ruler. Background Policy Documents for Facing Tomorrow*. Jerusalem: The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, p 133-155.



Latin American Jewish life in the 21st Century: The paradox of shrinking communities, and expanded - revitalized Jewish life

In the second decade of the 21st century, Latin American Jewish life faces new opportunities and challenges created by globalization and migration processes. Globalization and its contradictory nature have sharpened sectorial inequalities while posing new opportunities affecting Jews. New economic models have brought achievements and cyclical crises, and growing pluralism and democratization processes have reached high points. Economic and political changes combined with social inequalities provoked increased emigration fluxes of Latin American Jews from the region, leading them to transition from communities of immigrants to communities of citizens and simultaneously, of emigrants; also to new professional opportunities and expanding markets.

Indeed, in the last decades, the net direction of migration flows tended to be from Latin America to other destinations. Outward mobility of Latin American Jews is part of a larger globalization phenomenon of unexpected scope – from 75 million migrants in 1965 to 120 million in 1990, and 214 million in 2009 (Held et al. 1999; UNDP 2009). It is estimated that in the past 40 years between

150,000 and 250,000 Jews have emigrated from Latin American countries, both inside and outside the region, mainly to the United States, Israel, and to a lesser extent, countries in Western Europe (Spain) as well as Canada. Thus, there has been a significant drop in the number of Jews in the region – from 514,000 in the 1970s to 392,000 today (DellaPergola 2009, 2011). Argentina still hosts the largest Jewish community on the continent in spite of its significant demographic reduction – from an alleged half a million in the 1960s to 390,000 a decade later, and subsequent radical drops. Today, its core population numbers around 180,000.

The demographic profile of the Jewish population in Mexico has been more stable, due to more traditional socio-demographic patterns and the influx of Jews from other parts of Latin America. Mexican Jews presently number 40,000. The Jewish population in Uruguay has dropped from 50,000 to 22,000; in Venezuela, from 30,000 to 15,000; and in Chile, from 30,000 to 21,000. El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, and Paraguay have also experienced significant decreases in their Jewish populations since the 1970s. In Brazil, the number of Jews fell from 140,000 to 96,000, mainly as a result of

assimilation. In the last few years, however, this trend has stabilized and the numbers even show a slight increase (Ibid.).

Sharp Jewish population decreases in Central American countries since the mid-1980s represent relatively significant outflows. But in the case of Guatemala, more than half of its population decided to remain in their homeland. Neighboring Costa Rica has increased its Jewish population by two-thirds since 1967, while Panama became

a relocation destination for groups of Jews from other Central American countries.

Migration waves from Latin America are of different nature and scope; they reflect both needs and opportunities: they encompassed forced migration and exiled individuals at high risk (e.g. politically

involved activists and intellectuals); voluntary household relocation motivated by safety, security and economic considerations; and movement of professionals seeking opportunities and entrepreneurial expansion within a context of interconnected markets. Indeed, there has been a sustained movement of professionals in privileged occupations who began or operated businesses and sought education; Jews constituted a high proportion of them. The diverse processes leading to emigration have operated selectively. Thus, changes in migration streams shed light on

35% of Argentina's Jewish population migrated between 1970-2009 and yet only 8% expressed that emigration constitutes a serious threat

different moments of migratory movements and their impact on communities and societies of the region.

Current scenarios can be viewed from diverse perspectives. The new trends point both to emigration and to an expanded and revitalized Latin American Jewish life in origin countries and beyond the territorial borders of local communities, nation-States, and the region at large. Migration flows influence both sending and receiving Jewish communities/national societies within wide social spheres and institutional arenas characterized by increasingly dynamic relationships between Jewish individuals and groups (Bokser Liwerant 20 02, 2006). For the various receiving Jewish communities, immigration constitutes a factor of demographic support while bringing cultural enrichment and institutional renovation. Thus, one cannot analyze Latin American Jewish life through conventional dichotomous categories (such as internal-external, periphery-center) but rather via elastic and comprehensive frameworks based on a transnational perspective. The recent election of Chávez's successor, President Nicolás Maduro, will likely reinforce the prevailing trend.

As stated, a contrasting case in the leadership's perceptions is Argentina, which has also experienced a significant demographic reduction (-35% of its Jewish population, 1970-2009), and yet only 8% expressed that emigration constitutes a serious threat. We may explain the differences in perceptions first, as a result of an ongoing process of institution building and communal recovery, and secondly, because of return movements that have taken place there. The perception of emigration as

a serious threat is shared by the leadership of other Latin American Jewish communities: Colombia (45%), Peru (33%), Mexico (25%), Uruguay (20%), and Chile (10%). Venezuela stands out with the highest percentage (90%). For the majority (8 out of 10 respondents), their country would likely not receive Jewish immigration in the coming years, thereby signaling a negative balance between emigration and immigration.

Contemporary migration has also expanded Latin American Jewish life. It includes steady, repeated, circular, bi-local and multi-local movements. In a world in flux, new phenomena include expanded mobility, multiple relocations, transmigration and the creation of sustained links and interactions across borders of the nation-states. Furthermore, new patterns of circulation of people and knowledge develop, as well as the exchange of intellectual, scientific, and cultural production. Latin American Jews are part of the cohort of qualified migrants with “red carpet” status who increasingly move to OECD countries. Because of its proximity and the opportunities it offers, the U.S. attracts a large number of highly qualified Latin American migrants. In the first decade of the 21st century there were 494,000 scientists of Latin American origin; this number represents 15% of foreigners incorporated into the science and technology system. At present, education of Latin American students at U.S. universities and their insertion into the academic and professional spectrum is widespread. In 2007, 229 Mexicans, 180 Brazilians, 141 Argentines, and 121 Colombians obtained a PhD in the U.S. In 2003, naturalized individuals or non-residents constituted 19% of

those who had graduated with a PhD or were engineers employed in the U.S. (UNESCO 2010). Yet, within a region that ranks as the third highest source of migrants in the world, the increased mobility of qualified migrants coexists with large marginal sectors of non-skilled workers and the rural poor who lack formal education and face restrictive immigration policies (so-called “red card” migrants) (Faist 2010).

In this context of interconnected realities, according to the AJDC survey of opinion makers, almost all interviewees (99%) agreed that it is “very important” to “strengthen” relations among Jews living in various parts of the region. 8 out of 10 agreed that “Latin American Jews had a special responsibility to one another.” 77% agreed that “Latin American Jews have unique and valuable perspectives to share.” However, 6 out of 10 disagreed with the statement that “each local community was strongly integrated to other Latin American Jewish communities.” Thus, while there seems to be great interest in closer cooperation and exchanges across Latin American communal-territorial borders, this expectation has not necessarily been matched by the reality on the ground. It remains a challenge to communal regional and global policy.

Demographic trends associated with the migration of Latin American Jews mainly to North America, Israel, and Europe imply diverse models of Jewish life

An estimated range of between 100,000 and 133,000 Latin American Jews live in the U.S. today

that partly reflect global trends, and partly reflect the specificity of the region. As to their presence in the United States, precise numbers still need to be discerned. But estimates range between 100,000 and 133,000 (by core and enlarged definitions – DellaPergola 2011) and 156,000 (Sheskin and Dashefsky 2011). It is calculated that a similar number migrated to Israel (115,000/150,000 – core/enlarged definition) and 12,500/20,000 to other places. In comparison to other Jewish

Latin American Jews have incorporated into different American milieus while maintaining their socio-cultural distinctiveness

migrant groups in the United States, the various Latin American flows feature steady growth, although differences prevail in each particular national context.

The relocation of Latin American Jewish life in the U.S. should be seen within the broader Hispanic/Latino concrete and imagined world. Hispanic/Latinos have reached

nearly 50.5 million in the U.S. (16.3% of the total population) and have become the largest minority in the United States, a 61% increase since 1990. It is estimated that they will comprise 25% of the U.S. population by 2020.¹ This demographic trend is even more significant when compared to the growth of the total U.S. population and the demographic trends of the U.S. Jewish population. Given their group's size and profile, Hispanic/Latinos residing in the U.S. have significantly increased their social and cultural influence –

ranging from literature to music – as well as their political leverage, as demonstrated in the 2012 presidential election.

Latin American Jews have incorporated into different “American” milieus while maintaining their socio-cultural distinctiveness, both with respect to their culture of origin and their Jewishness. Jewish collective models have been transferred to and recreated into educational institutions and communal organizations in the United States while hybrid models are also part of the new scenarios. In a global Jewish world characterized by high institutional and organizational density, Latin American Jews can incorporate and even integrate into different host communities by displaying multiple identities – as Jews, as Latin American Jews, as Latin Americans or Hispanic/Latinos, as Mexicans, Colombians, Argentines...Americans/Israelis. Their increasing arrival numbers and their demands for inclusion test conventional boundaries and mutual perceptions of similarity and difference.

Permanence amid mobility characterizes urban sites where Latin American Jews have relocated. In the United States, Jewish communities become magnets for settlement. For example, Miami-Dade county in Southern Florida and San Diego in Southern California constitute new centers where diverse transnational processes operate concurrently: out-migration, translocation, relocation, return, short-term and temporary experiences. In both places, the non-homogenous character of American Jewish life stands out. San Diego's Jewish population of 89,000 is smaller than the traditionally large community of Argentina,

but larger than the Mexican Jewish community. The Jewish community in Miami-Dade county, combined with the neighboring Ft. Lauderdale and Palm Beach areas (Southeast Florida), represents the third most populous in the country. Although updated data needs to be collected, the number of Latin American Jews is estimated at 16,000 individuals in Miami-Dade (Sheskin 2004) and 600-700 Mexican Jewish families (or 2,400 Jews) in San Diego (private estimates).

Mobility and relocation widen the spectrum of social and cultural encounters between distinct principles, historical trajectories, models and logics of the collective: congregational and community (*kehilah*). However, both differences and similarities today shape the paths of incorporation and mutual influence with outcomes still in the making. Overall, affiliation rates in Latin America are higher than in the United States. While the gap between Mexico City and San Diego is striking (80 and 35%, respectively), cities in Brazil and Argentina have far lower affiliation rates (40-45%), closer to the U.S. national average. Intermarriage rates in the U.S. (about 50%) contrast with much lower rates in Mexico and Venezuela (less than or just above 10%) but are similar to those in Argentina and Brazil.

The integration of Latin American Jews into the U.S. and the keeping of both original collective codes of old-country cultural norms/models and of transnational connections are not mutually exclusive social processes; therefore, the possibility of “simultaneity” is increased (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004). In turn, integration is not a one-sided process; it entails reciprocal influences

that are part of the connecting-reconnecting experiences across communities within American Jewry and which widen and enrich the scope of Jewish life.

Migratory waves to Miami from Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, and Mexico draw convergent scenarios of trans-local status. Mexican Jews in San Diego travel to Tijuana/Mexico City; Venezuelans and Mexicans do so from Miami to Caracas and Mexico City. The well-established connections of Venezuelan and Mexican Jewish businessmen in Florida highlight the way current economic changes create favorable conditions for transitory migration that, as will be seen, do not exclude permanence or incorporation into American Jewish communities/society.

Mobility and relocation widen the spectrum of social and cultural encounters

Educational institutions in the U.S. reflect a mosaic of experience that ranges from more religious frameworks to pluralistic ones. In both Miami and San Diego, stable Jewish educational settings, which are also socially cohesive, have attracted Latin American Jews even when characterized by greater religiosity levels than those to which they belonged in their countries of origin. Some Jewish educational settings – with a significant ratio of Latin American migrants – show integration and mutual influence, and the reciprocal adoption of new religious and quotidian cultural practices

within bilingual environments. Pluri-national and sub-ethnic origins act as defining factors of practices and institutional arrangements (Bokser Liwerant, 2013).²

Paradigmatic examples of patterns of participation, leadership, and activism of these migrants can be observed in local communal organizations (e.g., Jewish Federations, Hillel, AIPAC, Israel's University Associations). Similar to *Hebraica/JCC* in Miami, the *Ken* in San Diego

Links and attachment to Israel have a central role in Jewish Latin American life

can be seen as an ethno-national bordered space that reproduces and sustains Latin American Jewish social practices (including language, food, music, social gatherings, and Zionist identification).

Additionally, it is worth underscoring the transfer of the *Hebraica/Latin American communal model* worldwide,

including to the United States, Central and Western Europe and the FSU, mainly through global Jewish institutions and highly mobile individuals with key community roles. The Jewish communities of Spain, mainly in Madrid and Barcelona, have experienced revival of Jewish life through this model aided by the presence of Latin American Jewish educators, intellectuals, and professionals. The clear bond between *Hebraica* and JDC can be found in Eastern Europe as well.

The Latin American presence in Israel, where they have been incorporated in major scientific, academic, sociocultural and economic realms, points to high levels of integration and the centrality of the place and role of the Zionist idea and the State of Israel in the region (Roniger and Babis, 2011).

While sharing global trends and expressing singularity, the links and attachment to Israel have a central role in Jewish Latin American life. Political concepts, values, aspirations, and organizational entities of the global Jewish world played a fundamental role in the cultural and institutional formation of the Jewish communities, while the State of Israel and the Jewish/Zionist ethos were singular actors/catalysts in one center-periphery model. Family ties, youth travel programs, and educational programs are today understood as key to strengthening support for Israel.

Data on Mexico and Argentina show that the level of importance attributed to Israel and the degree of proximity are largely determined by age³ and country of origin.⁴ In the region, Mexico has exceptionally high rates of visits to Israel while lower rates characterize Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela. Past tendencies in the U.S. show that just over one third of all American Jewish adults have been to Israel (35%), almost two thirds (63%) of American Jews say they are emotionally attached to Israel, and nearly three quarters (72%) say U.S. and Israeli Jews share a common destiny (NJPS, 2001). In America, ties to Israel also vary by affiliation and age. The affiliated are uniformly more connected to Israel than the unaffiliated. However, an interesting debate regarding the

“distancing hypothesis” has developed. While some researchers claim that there is a growing distance from Israel by the younger American Jewish cohort, with the exception of Orthodox youth, and this trend will likely lead to a general distancing of American Jews from Israel, (Cohen and Kellman, 2009), others do not find a dramatic change in attachment. According to Sasson, Kadushin and Saxe (2010), the weakened attachment among the young is not the result of a distancing pattern but a characteristic of the Jewish life cycle. Further discussion has highlighted the increased complexity of Israel-diaspora relations and the lack of conclusive evidence regarding the above mentioned erosion, which shows the need to consider both the changing circumstances of American Jewish life and Israel’s social and political scenario (Rosner and Hakman, 2012).

On their part, Latin American youngsters in the U.S. increasingly participate in *Taglit*, a watershed initiative that has come as an alternative to the study trips and *Hachsharot* in their countries of origin (Saxe et al, 2011). Recent data reveal that *aliyah* propensities in the U.S. are the lowest of any country worldwide (DellaPergola, 2011). Cultural activities and events, public opinion and political support for Israel are growing in importance, though differentially in the region, depending on the scope and nature of the public sphere, civil society, and citizen participation (Sznajder and Roniger, 2013). New public codes have developed legitimizing transnational links of the Jewish communities both related to Israel and other communities through a wide web of lateral ties and interactions.

An important perspective from which to analyze border crossing and mutual influences is the impact on individual and communal religious practices (in Latin America and beyond its geographic boundaries) by both the Conservative and Orthodox religious movements, as part of old and new Jewish transnationalism. In the 1960s the Conservative movement spread to South America providing the first congregational model that was imported from the United States (instead of Europe). This movement brought the synagogue to the forefront of communal and societal life by mobilizing thousands of otherwise non-affiliated Jews (Elazar 1989). One proof of the lack of religious leadership to which Elazar refers and its importance to religious development is found in the success of Rabbi Marshall Meyer.

In the 1960s the conservative movement spread to South America providing the first congregational model imported from the United States

Rabbi Meyer took upon himself the task of preparing a new rabbinical leadership, establishing the *Seminario Rabínico Latino Americano* in Argentina. Today its graduates serve throughout Latin America and beyond. Their presence in communities in the United States is not only due to the lack of opportunities in local communities, but also reflects the new phenomenon of regional migration. Close to 22 rabbis presently serve throughout the United States. They circulated to the North due to new windows of opportunity

associated with regional migration as well as to growing shared patterns of collective life. Latin American rabbis and their participation in the new settings contribute to the expansion of communal practices, as Congregation B'nei Jeshurun in New York City exemplifies.

These rabbis maintain links with their communities of origin by travelling to the region to lead holiday services. As mobile agents of change across national borders, they recreate a congregational-communitarian matrix. Thus,

Orthodox groups have gathered new momentum; the spread of Chabad is one exemplary case. In Latin America there are close to 80 Chabad centers

the relocation of Latin American Jews in the U.S. constitutes a case that allows examination of such processes by looking at frontier experiences, cultural trade-offs, and incorporation strategies in a globalized Jewish world where diverse historical trajectories and shared trends coexist.

The transnational religious circuit has also spread to Orthodoxy. Indeed, Orthodox groups have gathered new momentum, founding new religious congregations and supplying communities with religious leadership. The spread of Chabad is one exemplary case. In Latin America there are close to 80 Chabad centers. Its presence is noteworthy in small and large cities in the U.S. and other countries; thousands of Chabad *shlichim* (emissaries) currently work around the world.

Connecting processes that imply social transformation are also evident along a North-South influence axis as illustrated by the recent establishment of Hillel chapters in Argentina and Uruguay (by individuals connected to Taglit-Birthright Israel).

Although extreme religious and self-segregation strategies are still marginal in Latin American Jewish life, their growing presence corresponds to global Jewish trends. Jewish communal life and concomitant identity building processes face new challenges. In fact, in a seemingly paradoxical context of shrinking and expanding in revitalizing Latin American Jewish communities, identity referents are being redefined as new expressions of spirituality and forms of religious sociability fill some vacuums. In certain ways Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Miami, San Diego, New York City, Jerusalem, Madrid and Zurich express similarities along the transnationally constituted Jewish communal-religious axis.

Local communities face different opportunities and challenges with respect to central issues of continuity. Along the region, strengthening Jewish education is a top priority for Jewish communities. Education has had a central role in the shaping of Latin American Jewish life. Jewish education has been historically prioritized over other collective needs in the region, and characterized by integral education in day schools. In Mexico, close to 93% of Jewish children today attend Jewish schools with a constant student population from kindergarten through high school. A strong organizational structure of 16 day schools has developed (one school for each 2,500 Jews in Mexico City). The

student population has grown 16.5% in the last eight years as compared to a 6% Jewish population growth earlier.

Ashkenazi schools show the greatest percentage of decrease, 28%, and Maguen David (*Halebi*) schools show the highest growth rate with 46% of the total student population. Of this group, 40% attend Haredi schools. The increase of attendance numbers in religious schools reflects both demographic changes in community composition and the arrival of educators from intensively Orthodox South American communities. It also reflects a global trend in Jewish education.

A comparative look at Argentina sheds light on meaningful changes. While in the last decade of the 1990s a total of 16 schools closed and only six were able to pass through rational institutional restructuring, today there are a total of 42 schools out of which 14 day schools educate from elementary through high school levels, and 17 are limited to kindergartens and elementary schools. While figures show a systematic increase of the school population compared to previous years (only 17,075 in 2002, against 19,274 in 1999), they point to a total coverage of 43% of Jewish school-age children. The highest enrollment numbers are found in religious schools. These educational trends should be seen in light of the changing approach to education in the Jewish world. Precisely, over the last two decades, the number of children educated in Jewish day schools has increased at an unprecedented rate. In the United States, it is estimated that there were 60,000 pupils in days schools in 1962, but by 1982-83 there were some 104,000 students (10% of the Jewish school-

age population); in 2000, approximately 200,000, nearly one quarter of all Jewish school-age children attended Jewish day schools. Today, estimates point to 242,000.

Linking the concepts of continuity and education in public discourse was a relatively recent phenomenon outside Latin America. It developed in full force in *A Time to Act*, the deliberations of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America (1990–1991). This expansion in Jewish education and the high population growth rates among the Orthodox sector have become central trends that parallel new regional and world Jewish patterns.

Similar to other Jewish communities worldwide, Latin American Jewish collective life has been radically transformed by global patterns showing both convergent and divergent trends: transitions from individualization to collective affirmation as well as the reverse; from congregational to communal axes simultaneous with the growing role of synagogues; from secularization to rising religiosity. Even among Latin American Jews, these trends are not linear; instead, they reflect different moments, fluctuations and crossing paths.

Amid processes of globalization and transnationalism, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict

Latin American states play a key role in the positioning of Palestinian statehood as a central issue on the world political agenda

reflects the complex interplay between international, regional, national and local dynamics. Latin American States play a key role in the positioning of Palestinian statehood as a central issue on the global political agenda. As early as December 2010, there emerged a chain of recognitions of Palestine by different Latin American states. Brazil took the initiative and was followed shortly after by Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay-, neo-populist governments

Latin America can be seen as fertile ground for the two simultaneous but opposing processes of de-legitimation of Israel and legitimation of Palestine

in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua had a leading role (see Annual Assessment JPPI 2011).

It has been further facilitated by the international and national realignments of interests and similar “cultural codes” that identify wide sectors of public thought, media, progressive camps and leftist intellectuals.

Latin America’s historical and ideational trajectory of anti-Americanism, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism has led to the mutual reinforcement of meanings between different components: anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, and anti-Israelism (Volkov 2007; Bokser 2012).

However, on September 23, 2011, with Brazil once again a key detonator, a parallel process of worldwide political legitimation of the Palestinian cause developed following the support given by more than 100 countries to the Palestinian proposal

of Statehood to the United Nation’s General Assembly. Latin America can be seen as a fertile soil for the two simultaneous but opposing processes of de-legitimation of Israel and legitimation of Palestine. The latter has followed a pattern of *Transnational Advocacy Networks* of activists bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services. They are significant insofar as they interact with states and other non-state actors (civic associations and NGOs, academics, media, unions, students) thereby contributing to the convergence of social and cultural norms (Keck and Sikkink 1999; Wajner 2013).

When analyzed in Brazil, one observes that in the media struggles that legitimize the creation of a Palestinian state, a wide spectrum of regional, ethnic, social, religious, labor and academic organizations converge (Ibid).

Across the region, interacting and similar trends favor a fertile soil for emerging civil societies in the process of democratization. The degree of legitimation of Palestinian aspirations to statehood among local populations that results from *Transnational Advocacy Networks* is largely founded on the presence (or lack thereof) of a “primary base” of support (e.g., a large Arab population in Brazil – estimated at 11 million among which 60,000 are Palestinian, and a significant Palestinian population in Chile: 400,000). As in the past, this could today lead to a domino effect that could very likely result in the further realignment of positions by Guatemala, Mexico, Chile, and Costa Rica.

Other expressions of transnational realignments that were nationally anchored in a conflicting scenario of political polarization are the latest developments in Argentina regarding the government's agreement with Iran to create a joint Truth Commission to investigate the 1994 terrorist attack on the Jewish community center, AMIA. Protracted and failed investigations were followed by the formal accusation of Iran by two Argentinian prosecutors (Alberto Nisman and Marcelo Burgos). In 2007, the Argentinian government issued arrest warrants against 6 Iranians, including the defense minister and former president. The agreement to create a joint truth commission represents a new regional and transnational realignment between Argentina and Iran.

The search for a leading role in the continent after Chávez's death and the interest in widening economic relations with Iran, have acted as main motors behind Argentina's stance. This agreement, approved by Congress, and its condemnation by the community's leadership condenses a series of processes related to complex interactions between citizenship, loyalty, and the global Jewish world. The role and Jewish identity of Foreign Minister Timerman, who has played a crucial function in the negotiation process; the expressions by different world actors – from the State of Israel to the World Jewish Congress who opposed the agreement – throw light on such interactions.

The confrontation with the government reached unprecedented high points and unified a leadership that otherwise mirrors political national divisions in an extremely polarized scenario. Thus, issues of being and belonging, of collective participation as

well as of the overlapping community/national spheres of debate and action point both to a singular case of communal politization and a shared growing visibility of Jewish communities in the region. Latin American Jewish communities have achieved a growing presence and participation in the expanding public spheres of regimes that have succeeded in democratizing processes and autonomous civil societies.

Policy Recommendations

International migration and new patterns of circulation point to the need to design community policies oriented toward identifying: a) the mobility patterns that characterize Latin American Jews and thus the human resources available in both origin and destination countries; b) the circuits and networks that facilitate the intellectual, scientific, educational, and artistic exchanges so that knowledge and creative products no longer remain isolated but instead can be accumulated, transmitted, and shared. Thus, Jewish communities in the region develop in more equitable terms; c) the definition of mechanisms and platforms – in situ and virtual – for intra-regional and global cooperation.

Increasing migratory fluxes of Latin American Jews to the United States, Israel, and other destination places pose new challenges to the host communities' diversity and therefore demand from Jewish institutions strategies of incorporation addressing specificity instead of searching after homogenizing responses. Avenues for creating intercultural dialogue within communities, and synergies between collective models should also be devised.

Transnationalism today points to the need to think globally

Taking into consideration the already largest and growing Latino-Hispanic minority in the U.S. (reaching 50 million), Latin American Jews should be understood by policy planners as potential bridge builders and they should, consequently, formulate strategic inter-group collaborations.

New signs of change point to the need to define ways to approach policy making vis-à-vis Latin American Jewish life that are less based on collective support in critical times, and more oriented toward prevention and consolidation of communal life, which take into account cultural legacies. A multi-centered reality and increasing lateral ties between the new and old home(s) should also guide the design of new perspectives by key actors from Latin America in leadership positions.

Transnationalism today points to the need to think globally and, accordingly, global approaches are required when responding (or influencing) local and regional public policies vis-à-vis Israel. They should further take into consideration two levels: on the one hand, coordinated policies at the governmental level and on the other, new strategies oriented toward civil society, its changing role as well as its new actors and mechanisms of participation.

Notes

1. The number provided by the Pew Hispanic Center (2009) is smaller: 48,348,000 Hispanics live in the U.S.. Of this total, 31,674,000 are Mexican (based on self-described family ancestry or place of birth). <http://pewhispanic.org/>
2. Exemplary cases of Orthodox settings are Soille Jewish Day School in San Diego and Hillel School in Miami. The Jewish Academy in San Diego works in a pluralistic framework, while Chabad Schools are present in both settings.
3. While among members of the Mexican Jewish community above 70 years, 97% declared that Israel is of utmost importance, among the age group between 18 and 29 years old only 77% feel this way.
4. Figures are much higher in Mexico than in Argentina (Jmelnizky and Erdei, 2005).

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European Jewry – Signals and Noise: Is there a point of negative inflection?

A paradoxical reality with possible negative implications

In the eyes of many American and Israeli Jews, European Jews seem to be on a harsh trajectory. Observing recent negative economic, political and anti-Semitic developments in Europe, many of them question the future thriving of Jewish life on the old continent.

For their part, European Jews, on the whole, enjoy comfortable day-to-day lives, and their representative bodies have not felt the necessity to launch any emergency pan-European or even local strategic thinking process in response to these developments. Since they do not encounter state-sponsored anti-Semitism or barriers to their social and professional fulfillment, they trust their governments to protect them and believe that – provided they lower their Jewish profile – they can comfortably remain in Europe.

At the same time, and this may partially explain the lack of urgency in the behavior of the local Jewish leadership.

In the affluent and protected West Paris and North London suburban Jewish neighborhoods, Jewish life is more vibrant than ever, and every week new families move into them from other communities. Moreover, Vienna's Jewish community is growing (following an influx of Hungarian Jews), Berlin's Jews have launched the *Jewish Voice from Germany* – a publicly-funded quarterly periodical with a circulation of 50,000 – Budapest's Jews have opened an effervescent Israeli Cultural Center, and kosher restaurants, centers for Talmudic studies and Jewish museums open continuously in European capitals. Viewed from Europe, Jewish life is enjoying a renaissance that does not signal any imminent disaster.

Beside this apparent 'business as usual' discourse, it may, however, be possible that Jews are much more pessimistic about the future than they claim. According to a large-scale survey on Jews' experiences and perceptions of anti-Semitism commissioned by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), the official results of which will be published in October 2013, Jews all over Europe feel insecure. An EU delegation representative in Israel recently presented basic results and trends that emerge from this survey:

- More than one in four (26%) of Jewish respondents claim to have experienced anti-Semitic harassment at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey, and one in three (34%) had experienced anti-Semitic harassment over the past 5 years. 5% of all Jewish respondents said that their property had been deliberately vandalized because they were Jewish while 7% of respondents had experienced some form of physical attack or threats in the last 5 years.

- In three of the nine nations surveyed (namely Belgium, France and Hungary), between 40 and 50% of respondents said they had considered emigrating from their country of residence because they did not feel safe there.¹

In Belgium, France, and Hungary, between 40 and 50% of respondents said they had considered emigrating

Henryk Broder, the foremost Jewish journalist in Germany and one of the most widely-read columnists in the general press there declared in a recent interview that if he were younger, he would leave Europe. He is not the only Jew who thinks the future is elsewhere and, indeed, many of the sons and daughters of European Jewry have already left Europe for North America or Israel. Some 200-300 Jewish families of French origin have recently immigrated to Montreal, and at least 120 families to London. On Manhattan's Upper West Side, there are two congregations of French Jews.² 5,000

visitors attended the Jewish Agency's Aliyah Fair in Paris this past May. Beyond the Aliyah of 50,000 French Jews since 1990 (10% of French Jewry), new-immigrant associations claim there are some 20-30,000 additional French Jews who live part of the year in Israel, but for convenience – and in order to avoid Israeli bureaucracy – prefer not to take Israeli citizenship.

We lack reliable sociological surveys to tip the balance to one or the other opinion about this complex and paradoxical reality. But from a prudential policy planning perspective vis-à-vis the State of Israel and world Jewry, our position is that European Jewish life has quite possibly reached a negative inflexion point.

We have been tracing the larger ideological and social currents in Europe: the demise of the multicultural paradigm, the decline of the value of family autonomy and the increasing view of the state as *parens patriae*, economic decline and political turmoil, and the centrality of secularist ideology. For this reason we follow, however cautiously, the pessimistic observers that fear – beyond sporadic anti-Jewish violence already evident in France, Scandinavia, Hungary, Belgium and Holland – a rejection of Jewishness and its subtle political and legal ejection from the public sphere. Such a loss of status may lead organized Jewish communities into a vicious spiral of successive social marginalization (chosen assimilation of the wider community, and self-segregation of the core engaged Jewish community), parochialism, disengagement of quality leadership and ultimately, communal decline.

The following pages explore and analyze recent global, regional and national shifts that may pave the way for the further emergence and development of this process. We identify possible points of intervention and propose activating local and international bodies to confront negative trends.

Recent Developments

Against the background of demographic shifts, including the mass migration of non-European populations to Europe, the recent attempt to restrict rights to normative Jewish practice there could be viewed as the latest juridical/political aspect of a larger identity backlash against multi-cultural policies. While apparently directed mainly against Muslims, this new and vigorous opposition to particularist religious practices also profoundly affects the status of Judaism and may, in the long term, pose a serious challenge to the future thriving of organized Jewish communities in Europe.

Even if each discrete restriction on traditional Jewish life appears to be anchored in universal values and in the interests of general societal good, their cumulative effect does not bode well. They include:

- The attempt to ban circumcision in Germany (so-called 'intactivist' movement has also pushed for a ban in Denmark, Austria, the United Kingdom, and other European countries) – *resting on children's rights and medical claims*;
- The attempt to ban ritual slaughter (*Shechita*, along with *Halal*) in Holland and France, which

is already proscribed in Poland, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, and Iceland – *resting on animal rights claims*;

- The abolition of eternal cemeteries (in Switzerland and Belgium) – *resting on environmental claims*;
- The rejection of requests to accommodate conflicts with the Jewish calendar in scheduling public examinations (in France and Switzerland) – *resting on a claim of church/state separation*;³
- The rejection of requests by Shabbat observant Jews for non-electric entry access in private condominiums (in France) – *resting on security claims*;⁴
- The reconsideration of traditional public funding of Jewish cultural institutions (in France and other countries) – *resting on equity claims*;
- The increasing state interference in the internal operation of Jewish day schools (all over Europe) – *resting on ethnic non-discrimination claims*.

The larger identity backlash against multi-cultural policies is directed mainly against Muslims

Taken together, the effect on the daily life of traditionally observant Jews is significant and marginalizes them from the general society.

The Circumcision Affair: a Case Study

The circumcision affair in Germany that began with a ruling in a Cologne court, made public on June 26, 2012 and ended – temporarily – in the Bundestag on December 10, 2012, illustrates how a single ruling of a local court could potentially drastically destabilize the Jewish continuity in Europe. Questioning the preconceptions of the debate's

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different stakeholders, JPPI, in August 2012, issued a comprehensive policy paper presenting some analytical questions, policy dilemmas, and communal implications associated with the attempt, and proposing directions for local, pan-European, international and Israeli policy responses.⁵

Anti-circumcision advocates deny they are motivated by anti-Semitic or anti-Islamic feelings. The issue, they say, is children's rights. One survey, taken last year, found that 60% of Germans consider it genital mutilation, and most German medical groups, including the German Pediatric Association, condemns male circumcision as bodily injury without health benefits. In contrast, the American Academy of Pediatrics delivered the following statement:

“After a comprehensive review of the scientific evidence, the American Academy of Pediatrics found that the

benefits of newborn male circumcision outweigh the risks, but the benefits are not great enough to recommend universal circumcision.”

The AAP policy statement, published in August 2012, says the final decision should “still be left to parents to make in the context of their religious, ethical and cultural beliefs.”

It seems that Germans have cultural predispositions to consider “infringement of bodily integrity” of an infant to be worse than negating its parents' right to freedom of religion. This may be questioned theoretically, but practically this kind of attitude makes Jews feel uncomfortable in Germany.

From a policy planning perspective, it is of interest to observe the organized Jewish response to this affair:

- Europe's main Orthodox rabbinical body urged Jews in Germany to uphold the commandment to circumcise newborn sons regardless of the Cologne court's ruling. Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis, called the court decision “one of the gravest attacks on Jewish life in the post-Holocaust world.” Stephan Kramer, secretary general of the Zentralrat (Central Council of Jews in Germany), said, “the *brit* [*mila*] is fundamental for our religion. If this is put into legal jeopardy, then we have to reconsider whether we can stay in Germany or not.”
- Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi travelled to Berlin and, after meeting different parties without coordination with the local Jewish leadership, intervened in a way that was

perceived by local Jews as highly intrusive and counterproductive. The German ambassador in Israel was summoned to the Knesset to explain his country's policy and various Israeli politicians denounced the anti-Semitic dimension of the ruling.⁶

- American Jewry didn't stay idle and, as part of the effort, a bipartisan group of 20 U.S. members of Congress sent a protest letter to the German ambassador in the United States.⁷
- Following Jewish and Muslim protests, both local and international, Chancellor Angela Merkel was quoted as saying in a closed meeting of her Christian Democrats (CDU): "I do not want Germany to be the only country in the world where Jews cannot practice their rituals. Otherwise we will become a laughingstock." Some people took Merkel's statement to indicate that she was more concerned with Germany's image than with the effect of the ruling on Germany's Jews.
- Following the personal and decisive involvement of Chancellor Merkel, the Bundestag adopted legislation legalizing circumcision on December 10, 2012. But while the circumcision crisis was belatedly resolved by a government still acting out of traditional guilt and feeling of responsibility to the Jews, the attitudes prevailing among the younger generation of German politicians suggest that the Merkel government may be the last to feel a special relationship with Israel and the Jews. More disturbingly, if before the Bundestag decision, the rate of Germans who opposed circumcision was 45%, this

number reached 75% following the vote.

- The case continued snowballing internationally.⁸ According to a survey published on March 2013, about 45% of Britons favor banning Jewish ritual slaughter and 38% favor banning non-medical circumcision.⁹

As a matter of policy planning, and as the attempts to regulate Jewish rituals gain momentum, **it is worthwhile considering whether the approaches and methodologies currently employed by Jewish communities – winning short-term votes and attaining back-door agreements but not always engaging on the wider shifts in public opinion – will protect Jewish practices over the long term.**

Do these assaults on the foundations of Jewish life reveal attitudes of "Jewish rejection"? For Joshua Hammer, an American reporter of Jewish descent based in Berlin, "the court judgment and ensuing anti-circumcision backlash reinforced the notion that many Germans regard Jews – and Muslims – as outsiders, clinging to backward, unsavory rituals and beliefs."¹⁰ German Muslims, many of whom already feel like second-class citizens there, were also incensed. Ali Demir, chairman of the Islamic Religious Community, said that the ruling would make it more difficult for Muslims to assimilate into German life.

It is worthwhile considering whether attaining back-door agreements will be enough to protect Jewish practices over the long term

Mega-Trends and Deep Cultural Causes

Though probably not intentional, this marginalization phenomena are the result of a series of interconnected demographic, political, sociological, cultural, and economic developments that affect all of Europe and have particular fallout on European Jewish communities.

1. Economic decline, political turmoil, anti-Semitism

First and foremost, the old continent is in bad economic and political shape

First and foremost, the old continent is in bad economic and political shape. Populist and far-right parties have emerged as the third-strongest – sometimes second – political actors in several countries, and anti-Semitic discourse spreads accordingly. As a result of budget cuts, but also of pressure to

provide similar assistance to other minorities, the traditionally high level of public funding of Jewish institutions has declined. Studying European history, Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) found that as a general rule every major anti-Jewish persecution in Europe was preceded, accompanied or followed by a severe economic crisis.¹¹ Indeed, anti-Semitic incidents in Europe increased by more than 30% in 2012. In France, anti-Semitic incidents increased by 58% in 2012, with a staggering 96 violent attacks.

The rate accelerated rapidly after the lethal attack in Toulouse on March 19, 2012 by a French-born Jihadist of Algerian descent. Anti-Jewish hostility has different faces. Whereas in countries like France and Sweden anti-Semitism is fueled by Muslim elements and rationalized as a response to Israeli policy in the territories, in Greece and Hungary it draws on calls for ethnic purity and nationalism.

There is indeed sporadic anti-Jewish violence in France, Scandinavia, Belgium, Germany, Ukraine, and Holland. In Hungary, public anti-Semitic rhetoric has up-surged to a degree not seen in Europe after the Second World War and is accompanied by anti-Jewish vandalism and sporadic violence, which had been directed against the chief rabbi himself.

Beyond violence that hurts specifically recognizable Jews, political anti-Semitism – the main threat to Jewish continuity – is, unfortunately, gathering force. Popular parties often affiliated with the reactionary extreme-right, which espouses nationalism, anti-Muslim xenophobia and sometimes anti-Semitism, are taking hold in major political arenas. This is already the case with the neo-Nazi parties in Greece, Latvia, Austria, Ukraine, and Hungary. And the Italian popular comedian, Beppe Grillo, leader of the Five Star Movement (MoVimento 5 Stelle), uses anti-Semitic rhetoric.

2. Tolerance threshold and reaction against cultural transformation

Multiculturalism in Europe started in Great Britain in the mid-1960s. Governments (especially in Great Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia) attempted

to facilitate integration of new ethnic groups by incorporating their modes of cultural/religious difference into national society. However, since the early years of this century, and certainly since the terrorist attacks of September 2001 in the United States and July 2005 in London, multiculturalism has faced mounting criticism and has gradually been sidelined by a new 'post-multiculturalism' considerably more hostile to certain practices associated with ethnic minorities and immigrants.¹²

As long as Jewish ritual slaughter and circumcision were carried out on a very small scale, they were not regarded as a public policy issue worthy of attention, and were tolerated under special arrangements. The scaling-up of these practices as a result of the growing Muslim presence in several European countries now seems to require official regulation. Opposition to these practices, as of now, seems to be directed not toward Jews in particular, but rather toward Muslim populations. Islam is in the process of becoming a major component of the European cultural landscape, with an increasing number of Muslims holding leading public and private positions. As a reaction to this demographic shift, popular voices advocate a return to 'European core values' while nationalist and Christian parties gain substantial political influence. Muslims are not going to return to their countries of origin, so they are asked to adopt a low profile, adapt to the European ethos, and to privatize their ethnic and religious practices. The ban against minarets in Switzerland, which was supported by 57.5% at the polls, and the *burqa* ban in France can be seen as expressions of this assimilationist political determination.

3. The European secularist ideology

From its early colonial days when English and German settlers came in search of religious freedom, America has been profoundly influenced by religion. That influence continues in American culture, social life, and politics. According to a 2009 Gallup survey, 65% of Americans said that religion plays an important role in their lives, compared to 13% in France, 25% in Italy, and 34% in Germany.¹³ Consequently, the culture of the United States is very different from that of Europe. In America, with the importance in its history of dissenting Protestantism, freedom of religion is conceived of in terms of the family lifestyle and bringing up one's children in accordance with one's beliefs. In Europe, however, religion came to be seen as negative and ever since the Enlightenment and the French Revolution the aim of liberty in regard to religion is to break free from the controlling Church.¹⁴ Thus, if personal and family religious freedom is fundamental to America's value system, it is much less so in Europe. What is central is personal dignity, including the dignity of children.

As a reaction to this demographic shift, popular voices advocate a return to 'European core values' while nationalist and Christian parties gain substantial influence

Analyzing recent conflicts between European liberal ideals and Semitic religious practices may help identify trends and anticipate potential developments. The conclusions of Professor Cecile Laborde, who conducted a comparison

between contemporary Anglo-American and French political theory, is worth mentioning here. Observing the intellectual debate around the 2004 ban on religious symbols in French public schools (a ban aimed at stemming the increased prevalence of Muslim head scarves and that incidentally also encompassed Jewish *kippot* and Catholic crucifixes), she claims that opponents of religious practice justified their positions based on three key French republican ideals: (1) **individual autonomy**,

Jews are faced with an impossible choice: they are asked to assimilate, but the environment emphasizes primordial ethnic differences

to argue that women must be emancipated from oppressive forms of religious beliefs; (2) **secular equality**, to suggest that a religion-free public sphere is the best way to show respect to all citizens regardless of their religion; (3) **national cohesion**, to denounce religious signs as conspicuous symbols of divisiveness and of insufficient integration of

minorities into the national community.¹⁵

If Laborde is correct, the opposition to religious dress, rituals, and practices is not an incidental conflict between the value of religious freedom and the bodily integrity of children or the rights of animals that can be resolved by conciliation. **Instead, these rituals will be increasingly perceived as threats to the national ethos and to its core values of Equality (secular neutrality in the public sphere), Liberty (individual autonomy and emancipation) and Fraternity**

(civic loyalty to the community of citizens), especially as conceived in the French political tradition. According to the French conception of the Social Contract (Rousseau), one gives all of one's powers and rights to the *volonté générale* and one receives back civic rights, not natural rights. In the predominant political philosophy in America, that of John Locke and Jefferson, in contrast, one retains one's natural rights and only gives the state the power to protect them. In response to the massive influx of Muslims, the state's secularist attitude has been strengthened in France as cultural patrimony.

4. Refusal of Jewish particularism

If, in America, young Jews of the current generation have gently integrated their Jewishness into their multifaceted identity, in Europe Jews still live according to the binary identity that characterized previous generations of American Jews. Like the grandparents of today's American Jews, even the European Jews who have very little in the way of Jewish ethnic capital, who knew little or nothing of Jewish languages, written texts, and cultural expressions, have a sense of being viscerally, even tribally linked – positively or negatively – to their Jewish ancestry. Even if young European Jews do not experience any impediment to their educational, occupational, or social mobility, their Jewishness is a key element of their identity – and Jewish belonging is never a trivial issue. In practical terms, Jews are faced with an impossible choice: they are subliminally asked to assimilate, but the environment emphasizes primordial

ethnic differences between non-Jews and Jews and does not allow them to do so easily.

Built following centuries of bloody ethno-religious and national conflicts, the founding ethos of the European Union is that strong ethno-religious and national identities are better avoided. Jewish particularism is regarded with suspicion. Nicolas Sarkozy's successor as leader of the UMP liberal party and current French opposition leader, Jean-François Copé, whose mother is of Jewish Algerian descent and whose father is of Jewish Romanian ancestry, illustrates this pressure to disengage from 'assigned' Jewishness in order to make one's way to national political leadership. He felt the need to declare, "[his] community of reference is not the Jewish one but the French one." Whereas Judaism as a culture is sometimes praised and celebrated, the ethnic, collective, and communitarian dimensions of Jewishness are repudiated. All over Europe, Jews are increasingly encouraged to privatize their identity and avoid emphasizing their Jewishness. This has already been the rule for the last two hundred years, but with the demographic shifts and the massive influx of Muslim populations, this expectation of 'voluntary amnesia' is becoming mandatory in the public sphere.

Given this wider context, we do not yet know whether the Jews are what we could call 'collateral damage' of a backlash aimed against the increasing Muslim presence, or the victims of a European nationalistic resurgence that specifically targets Jews as well as Muslims.

Implications for Jewish Communal Life

We started this chapter by presenting two perspectives, one optimistic and one pessimistic, regarding maintaining a Jewish way of life in Europe. In the light of the broad social and cultural context we discussed, we can perhaps understand this reality in all of its complexity and present both perspectives as two sides of the same coin. Indeed, it seems that in the wake of the developments described above, the Jewish communities have become polarized. On one side, a small minority, which includes the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox, lives a vibrant Jewish life and has become more committed and connected to its Jewishness. At the same time there is another group that seeks integration into the space of national and public life. This group attempts to lower its Jewish profile and to detach itself, culturally and socially from Jewish institutions. As a result, Jewish communities have become weakened and are becoming less and less capable of engaging in future-oriented strategic thinking.

All over Europe but especially in the United Kingdom and France, which are home to 80% of Western Europe's Jews, we find the expression of this polarization. In order to avoid friction with

Jewish communities have become polarized, they are becoming less and less capable of engaging in future-oriented strategic thinking

their environment, Jews take various steps – **the more practicing Jews relocate in self-segregated neighborhoods, the more idealistic ones make Aliyah, and the most ambitious ones quit Europe for more promising horizons.**

This state of affairs sends two important messages to world Jewry. First, that the European Jewish leadership may not be sufficiently professionally equipped to organize itself on the Pan-European plane and deal with the huge challenges it is

Leaders could find in this problematic situation a window of opportunity for Aliyah

confronting. Second, based on the high motivation to emigrate, Israeli policy makers and American communal leaders could find in this problematic situation a window of opportunity for Aliyah of a well-qualified population.

Recommendations: Challenges and Possible Jewish Responses

Emigration challenges: Will the Jews leave Europe?

Benefiting from relatively high social, professional, and economic personal status, most European Jews will in all likelihood remain in Europe. However, we observe two phenomena:

1. **Internal migration to stronger communities.**

As mentioned earlier, families prefer to relocate to neighborhoods in which their children can attend schools along with sufficient numbers of other Jewish children, and preferably with a low Muslim presence. Moving is never easy and if people decide to relocate, this certainly indicates a discomfort.

2. **International relocation.** European Jews are fervent Zionists and Israel has the potential to become the relocation destination for many. Unfortunately, as shown in JPPI's 2011-2012 Annual Assessment,¹⁶ **there is as yet no Israeli political determination to set up appropriate structures to ease the professional and educational integration of new immigrants from non-Russian speaking European countries.** Solutions that have been proposed to improve Israeli capabilities in this field fall into four categories:

1. Removing bureaucratic barriers, such as those involved in gaining recognition of foreign degrees and professional licenses, and a reexamination of the military enlistment regulations (for instance, making the compulsory military draft law more flexible) by setting up an inter-ministerial committee/national authority charged under a cabinet mandate.

2. Significantly improving the absorption system in Israel. Creating plans for selected cities, towns and communities to ensure they include all absorption services – *ulpanim*, children's education,

community activity, and employment. The plan should be implemented by specially trained project staff in cities with high concentrations of *olim*.

3. Renewing and expanding 'community Aliyah' projects, including a proactive system of attracting *Olim*. This also includes an effort to remove bureaucratic barriers associated with small and middle size businesses setting-up and relocation.
4. Establishing an operational body that integrates the experience of 'community Aliyah' projects and the lessons learned from attracting and absorbing North American *Olim* – that can provide a comprehensive solution to those from Western Europe, and especially from France, who seek to move to Israel.

Organizational challenges: Possible action bodies

The European Jewish Communities: Confronted with new trans-European developments, European Jewries, which have traditionally been autonomous and separate, should investigate the creation of a new, Pan-European coordinating body to deal with the current situation. Such a body should include both religious representatives and community leaders in the common effort to preserve fundamental elements of Jewish belonging.¹⁷

Israeli and American participation in such a pan-European body – perhaps as observers – should not be excluded, since the face of European Jewry also has many implications for the Jewish world at

large, even though it is the Europeans who are, at the moment, on the front line. One direction to be investigated for an effective executive body could take the form of a sextet including four Europeans (a leading rabbi, a leading jurist, a communal leader, and one politician of Jewish descent), with one American representative and one Israeli government official as observers.

World Jewry and Israel: It is important to distinguish between actions taken by the Jewish people as a whole, with American Jewry's involvement, and exclusive Israeli intervention in this matter, as they could stem from different considerations and interests. Herein lies one of the sensitivities of the issue: while the vibrancy of European Jewish communities will be impacted by the future of Europe and its attitude toward Muslims, Jews, and Israel, it is also very likely that – in the case of unfavorable conditions – the most engaged of the 1.3 million European Jews will relocate to more hospitable environments. In this context, Israel and North America Jewries may have conflicting interests.

As such, the appropriate role of American and international Jewish secular and religious organizations is clear: they have to support, as they are used to doing, local Jewish organizations to defend and present in the best professional

Confronted with new European developments, European Jewries should investigate the creation of a new, Pan-European coordinating body

manner their legal, medical, rabbinical, and historical arguments to judicial and political decision-makers in Europe. International Jewish leaders have to be careful to coordinate with local community leaders, and discreetly demonstrate to public authorities that local Jews are not alone in this fight.

Regarding possible intervention by the State of Israel, things are even more delicate: it can certainly be seen as a foreign state's interference in

Public intervention by the Israeli government is a delicate issue that may exacerbate charges of dual loyalty

another country's affairs and this may place local Jewish leadership in an uncomfortable position. Although discreet diplomatic interventions by Israeli embassies are often useful, a public intervention by the Israeli government in the local media is a delicate issue that may exacerbate charges of dual loyalty leveled at European Jews

and should be considered with caution.

Conclusion

The campaigns to restrict Jewish rites we are observing today seem to be part of a wider cultural mega-trend that is not disconnected from the political, economic, and demographic European identity crisis. It is worthwhile considering whether current approaches and strategies utilized by Jewish communities – of winning short-term votes and attaining back-door agreements, but not always engaging with wider developments in public opinion – can protect Jewish practices over the long-term. There is no certainty that answers and institutions that have been effective in the past will adequately fit tomorrow's challenges.

There is a need to assess existing national and trans-European communal mechanisms and to launch an innovative process to develop a bold vision to meet future developments as they emerge. As numbers and political influence diminish within some European Jewish communities, coordination with non-European Jewish actors could be considered in order to elaborate a global coordination mechanism and propose a comprehensive and professional response.

Today, Europe itself is at an inflection point and we do not yet know whether it will become more open to religious diversity or more closed to it. The Jewish people must be prepared for all possible eventualities.

Notes

1. Communication of Ms. Sandra de Waele, First Counsellor, Head of Political and Press Section of the European Union delegation in Israel, at the 4th International Conference of the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism (28-30 May 2013) in Jerusalem. Several surveys on anti-Semitic attitudes have been launched in the past, but this one, conducted by the London-based *Institute for Jewish Policy Research* and carried out in nine European countries is unique because it measured anti-Semitism as perceived by Jews themselves.
2. See, for example, Molinari, Maurizio, "Manhattan terra promessa degli ebrei in fuga da Parigi", *La Stampa*, March 13, 2013.
3. Such an exceptional arrangement that is working satisfactorily can be seen in Italy's "Concordato" with the Jewish Community, which grants Jews the right to abstain from working and/or going to school and/or taking exams on Saturday and Jewish holidays, while requiring universities and public offices to refrain from setting exams and other obligations during Jewish festivals. See Sacerdoti, Giorgio, *L'Intesa tra Stato e Unione delle Comunita' Ebraiche del 1987 e la sua attuazione*. <http://www.governo.it/Presidenza/USRI/confessioni/doc/sacerdoti.pdf>
4. For a discussion of the human rights dimension of the legal precedents that limit Jewish daily life of observant Jews in France, including restrictions regarding mezuzot, sukkot and intercoms, see Amar, Jacques, "Laïcité 2005 : zones d'ombre et droits de l'individu, l'exclusion rampante des juifs pratiquants," *Controverses*, n° 1, March 2006, p. 176-193. <http://www.controverses.fr/articles/numero1/amar1.htm>. This ban is a step up: traditionally, the secularization process in Europe was accompanied by a separation between private space, in which religion expression is allowed, and public space, in which religious expression should be avoided.
5. Maimon, Dov and Nadia Ellis, "The Circumcision Crisis: Challenges for European and World Jewry," JPPI, August 2012.
6. From a Jewish people perspective, the Israeli politicians' reactions can be perceived as counterproductive. See Ellis, Nadia and Dov Maimon, "Israel, don't capsiz the Jewish people's boat", *Times of Israel*, September 10, 2012.
7. <http://waxman.house.gov/sites/waxman.house.gov/files/documents/UploadedFiles/Letter%20on%20Circumcision%20in%20Germany%202012.08.08.pdf>
8. For a presentation of the diverse national legislation regarding circumcision, see the comprehensive Australian report: *Non-Therapeutic Male Circumcision*, Tasmania Law Reform Institute, August 2012. <http://www.law.utas.edu.au/reform/documents/CircumcisionFinal.pdf>
9. "Poll: 45% of Britons favor banning shechitah," *Jewish Press*, March 30, 2013.
10. Hammer, Joshua, "Anti-Semitism and Germany's Movement Against Circumcision," *The Atlantic*, January, 7, 2013.
11. Braudel, Fernand, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the age of Phillip II*, Vol. II, Trans. Sian Reynolds, Suffolk 1982, p. 820 quoted by in Wald, Shalom Salomon, *Rise and Decline of Civilizations, Lessons for the Jewish People*, Academic Studies Press, 2013 (Hebrew trans. Yediot Books, 2013).
12. See Christopher McCrudden, Multiculturalism, Freedom of Religion, Equality, and the British Constitution: the JFS case considered (2011) *International Journal of Constitutional Law*.

13. www.gallup.com/poll/114022/state-states-importance-religion.aspx; www.pewforum.org/Christian/Catholic/During-Benedicts-Papacy-Religious-Observance-Among-Catholics-in-Europe-Remained-Low-but-Stable.aspx
14. See David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Oxford 1978).
15. Laborde, Cecile, State Paternalism and Religious Dress Code (August 21, 2011). *International Journal of Constitutional Law* (I-CON) Vol. 10, No. 2, 398-410. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1913771>
16. JPPI 2011-2012 Annual Assessment, pp. 207-209.
17. For a comprehensive presentation of the challenges confronting European Jewries and possible intervention policies, see Maimon, Dov, *Background: European Jewry in 2030*, JPPI, 2010, p. 63-100.

Part Three:

Developments to Watch: Religion and Politics in Israel

Israel Faces the Ultra-Orthodox Challenge: Why Now, and What Next?

The integration of the ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) sector into the general Israeli society has been at the center of the political agenda for over a year now, and is expected to grip Israel in the coming months and years with a relatively high level of intensity. It is a complex issue with many important and interconnected sub-issues, so finding a single quick 'solution' that would satisfy all concerned parties is highly unlikely. In principle, the dynamics of Israeli Haredim vis-à-vis the wider society involve three key problems: their economic integration as a productive sector that contributes to Israel's economy; equality in burden sharing – meaning, primarily, drafting Haredi youth for IDF or national service; and reformulating the cultural-religious status quo to diminish the Haredi influence on institutions that impact the lives of other Israeli citizens.¹ The rapid demographic growth of the ultra-Orthodox (forecasts estimate that by 2020, 50% of the Jewish first-graders will be ultra-Orthodox) reinforces the need for a timely response to these dilemmas. In the absence of appropriate solutions, they may prove intractable in the future.

This paper is an elaboration of some fundamental issues and how they have developed in the last year:

- Why has the ultra-Orthodox issue moved to the top of the political and social agenda at this particular time?
- What are the main components of proposed changes in the ultra-Orthodox sector's relationship with the larger Israeli society?
- What are the chances of implementing change, and what could facilitate or obstruct steps toward implementation?

Background: 'The Year of the Haredim'

Israel's 'Year of the Haredim' began with a legal crisis, continued with a coalition crisis, and concluded (for the time being) in a political reshuffling that holds both challenges and opportunities for addressing tensions between the ultra-Orthodox minority and the non-Orthodox majority in Israel.

The legal crisis erupted in February 2012, when the Supreme Court² decided to revoke the extension of the Tal Law, which is the legal basis for *Torato Omanuto* [lit. Torah Study is his main occupation]

arrangement, which exempted (couched as 'deferment of service') over 60,000 Haredi Yeshiva students from compulsory military duty. The court's action was the result of an appeal contesting the constitutionality of the arrangement allowing Yeshiva students to avoid military duty, arguing that such an arrangement "violates the right to equality as part of the basic right of human dignity." The Tal Law's annulment (August 2012) effectively toppled the legal structure enabling the exemption, and at least on its face, obliged

The Plesner Committee also considered conscription of Israel's Arab citizens

the Israeli government and the IDF to prepare for the induction of many thousands of Yeshiva students (in 2011 alone, 7,700 individuals, for the first time, formally declared Torah study their main occupation and had their military duty deferred). The urgent need to find an alternative to the Tal Law – which, on one hand, would exempt

the state from a legal obligation it does not want and probably cannot meet without expending considerable resources, and on the other hand, would curb the upward trend in the number of annual exemptions – triggered various political maneuvers culminating in the coalition agreement with the Kadima Party ('the Coalition of 94' [Knesset members]) in the summer of 2012.

In early May 2012, Prime Minister Netanyahu's governing coalition was expanded when Kadima,

the Knesset's largest party, joined under the leadership of Shaul Mofaz. This surprise move, which granted the prime minister a majority of 94 of 120 MKs, was justified by the two leaders in a press conference as heralding a new agenda with four key action items: first among them, as defined by Netanyahu, was "to pass a fair and equal division of the burden to replace the Tal Law"; in other words, to formulate a new law to replace the existing one exempting ultra-Orthodox students from military duty. Following the coalition's expansion, a commission 'for equality in the burden,' headed by Kadima MK Yohanan Plesner, was set up and tasked with formulating the replacement bill. The committee's term, however, was brief, ending abruptly in a political crisis after the prime minister canceled it for undisclosed reasons. Its conclusions, published only after it was clear that Netanyahu had no intention of endorsing them, asserted a key principle, 'military service for all,' and included a 2016 target draft rate of 80% of each recruitment-age cohort in the Haredi sector. Heavy penalties were also stipulated for draft evaders and the learning institutions harboring them. The Plesner Committee also considered conscription of Israel's Arab citizens, declaring that the principle of universal service should also apply to them. Nevertheless, the Plesner Committee avoided setting specific target numbers for Arab service, suggesting that they be defined by a future committee set up for that purpose. As mentioned, the prime minister had reservations about the committee's conclusions, finding its proposals exaggerated and "aggressive," and called for a more consensual and gradual

solution to the 'equal burden sharing' problem. In any case, the dismantling of the Plesner Committee rang in the demise of the short-lived 'grand coalition,' and soon after, Netanyahu called for early elections.

The legislative and political crises resulting from the failure to find a Tal Law replacement were integral to the 2013 elections and the formation of a new coalition government. Haredi parties were not invited into this coalition, the result of an ultimatum by the two key leaders: Yair Lapid of the liberal centrist party Yesh Atid (There is a Future), and Naftali Bennett of the religious-Zionist party Habait Hayehudi (The Jewish Home). In the negotiations leading to the coalition agreement, both leaders insisted that they would not join the coalition unless the Haredi parties (Shas and Yahadut HaTorah) were excluded. Lapid explained: "I don't believe Shas and Yahadut Hatorah can sit in a government that will pursue the change for which we have campaigned: changing the criteria for housing, a core education for all, burden sharing, the requisite cuts in Yeshiva budgets."³ In this, Lapid effectively made changing societal arrangements with the Haredim one of the new government's top priorities. The prime minister, who wanted the new coalition to include the current member parties and the ultra-Orthodox parties, was forced to come to terms with a reality that encumbers him with a political agenda he never wanted. This new reality also found expression in the agreements the prime minister ultimately reached with his coalition partners. The key points are discussed below.

Why Now?

There is no single answer to the question why Israeli society has reached its moment of crisis in regard to the Haredim at this particular point in time. A confluence of several different factors and circumstances pushed the Haredi question to the top of the agenda, while clearing the agenda of other competing issues.

The Decline of the Peace Process

The set of factors behind the ascent of the Haredi issue to the top of the agenda certainly includes the marginalization of political/diplomatic issues, especially the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. This marginalization process actually began immediately after the collapse of the Camp David conference in 2000 and the outbreak of the Second Intifada, and has strengthened in recent years. A consensus opinion has crystallized in Israeli society that questions the probability of a diplomatic breakthrough vis-à-vis the Palestinian Authority, and of achieving a peace agreement.

67% agreed with the statement, "regardless of which party wins the elections, the peace process with the Palestinians will remain stuck for reasons unrelated to Israel, and there is no chance for any progress in the foreseeable future."⁴ This consensus

**Lapid:
I don't believe
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for which we
campaigned**

has marginalized the Palestinian issue in favor of other topics on the national agenda, allowing a focus on a more 'civil' agenda compared to previous years. This preference has been evident in every sector of Israeli society, but it has been especially salient among centrist and center-left voters who, in previous years, had placed greater emphasis on the peace issue. In 2013, they opted to give priority to the top domestic/internal issues: religion, society, and the economy (80% of Yesh Atid voters; 51% of all voters).⁵

The perception that a minority rules the majority leads to agitation and demands for change

This shift not only impacted the 2013 election results, but also the shaping of the new coalition. Historically, the political parties tended to align in a right-left bloc formation – i.e. 'hawkish' parties in one bloc and 'dovish' parties in the other, with the ultra-Orthodox tipping the scales and, thus, enjoying kingmaker

status. Because Haredi parties have traditionally focused on sectorial concerns, not showing much interest in external political issues, the political arena would often align itself according to their needs and demands. In a two-bloc reality, the bloc willing to allow the ultra-Orthodox more autonomy and to pay them in hard currency for their support would win their votes and enable the pursuit of that bloc's political aims, at least up to a point.⁶ With the political issue off the agenda,

and with the two-bloc constellation no longer a central element in coalition-building tactics, the ultra-Orthodox have lost their bargaining position. This was especially visible in the pact between Yesh Atid and HaBayit HaYehudi, two parties with several political disagreements. They managed to locate considerable common ground on other issues deemed more urgent by their leaders, allowing them to join forces despite their political divide.

The Frustration of the Silent Majority

For a while now, there has been a widespread sentiment in the public discourse objecting to what many Israelis regard as 'minority rule.' Different groups have identified this minority according to their worldviews: at times it has been the settlers, whom the Israeli left perceives as controlling Israel's Judea and Samaria policies; at other times, it has been the wealthy, perceived as controlling Israel's economic policy; and often, this minority has been the Haredim, who are perceived as patrolling and enforcing a religious-cultural agenda in Israel unacceptable to most of its citizenry. This perception that a minority rules the majority invariably leads to agitation and vociferous demands for change, with which the majority attempts to reclaim its turf and in so doing forces its own views on the minority. Such demands are discernible, for instance, in waves of pressure on the Knesset to pass laws curtailing the power of the media, the courts, the left, and the Arabs, all of whom have been accused of twisting the freedom they enjoy in Israel to impose their agenda on the majority.

The recent wave, which was largely curbed by the government and the Knesset, as well as by the increasingly vocal public demand to revise arrangements vis-à-vis the Haredim, attests to a yearning for the hegemonic reinstatement of the gainfully employed and army-serving Israeli-Zionist majority over Israeli society as a whole.

Lapid himself, in a sharp and widely publicized confrontation with Haredi MKs at the opening of the Knesset's 2013 summer session, expressed this feeling when he said to Yahadut HaTorah MK Moshe Gafni, "I don't take orders from his honor. The state stopped taking orders from his honor. For that reason you are no longer the chairman of the [Knesset] Finance Committee, because we are tired of taking orders from his honor."

This yearning for control is also at the root of the demand that the IDF, rather than ultra-Orthodox rabbinical leaders, arbitrate in matters related to which Haredim are drafted into military service and which are granted exemptions to continue religious studies.

The Rise of Socio-Economic Issues

Societal issues have claimed the top of Israel's agenda partly because there was an opening for this new discourse, but also for other reasons. Labeled in JPPI's last Annual Assessment as the "Revolt of the Undeprived,"⁷ which culminated with hundreds of thousands of Israelis taking to the streets in a summer of mass protests against the government's socio-economic policies, the 2011 protest movement was a clear manifestation of this trend.

The reasons for this trend are not entirely clear. It is probably the result of the interplay of numerous factors, including the rise of individualism; widening gaps in Israeli society; the 'sectorialization' of society, which diminishes the sense of collectivity; global trends related to the spread of capitalism and the repercussions of the global economic crisis. Ironically, the sense of relative well-being presently enjoyed by a large portion of Israel society engenders in these Israelis a stronger desire for a resource redistribution that would further benefit them. As Israel boasts of its hi-tech pioneers and 'rich and famous' success stories, more and more Israelis are seeking a larger share of the pie. A sharp resentment felt by the 'sucker' class (*frayerim*) – those who do more but receive less – toward the Israeli ordering of priorities was at the center of the 2011 summer protests. This sentiment helped Yesh Atid garner 19 Knesset seats, and has continued to fuel Lapid's speeches following his appointment as finance minister. He has spoken of an 'Israeli middle class' comprising families earning up to 20k shekels per month – well above the median income in Israel – who can afford to go abroad "once every two years."

As mentioned, the shift in public attention to socio-economic issues partly explains the outcome of the 2013 elections; but for the ultra-Orthodox

The Haredi religious-cultural agenda is unacceptable to most Israelis

issue to become so critical in the formulation of the new coalition's agenda, another ingredient was necessary: the Haredim as a unifying thread that ties together disparate controversial subjects.

The Ultra-Orthodox as a Unifying Factor

As written in last year's assessment, "the present government and its successors will find it much harder to implement economic and social policies without consulting 'the people' first." And 'the people,' when asked their opinion, whether due to a principled choice or out of political necessity, often give confused and contradictory answers. The social protest moved like a pendulum

The majority of Israelis perceive the ultra-Orthodox as a burden

between the wish to help out a middle class that was not always defined in clear terms, and the desire to benefit and elevate the weaker classes. The struggle has also taken the shape of a political dichotomy. The Labor Party spoke on behalf of the protest, focusing on the weaker classes, education and income, while Yesh Atid

put much more emphasis on the protest as a movement that gave voice to the frustration of young, highly-educated Israelis, whose income was incommensurate with their expectations.

In contradistinction, there was almost no political division around the ultra-Orthodox issue. While there were differences of nuance and emphasis

between various leaders as they addressed the Haredi challenge, an examination of voters' attitudes clearly shows that there were no real gaps between centrist and leftwing parties. In fact, this is almost the sole area where the will of the majority coalesced into a consolidated and clear statement, predicated on the total or nearly total nullification of the Haredi exemption from military service; the revocation of economic subsidies that benefit the ultra-Orthodox "at the expense" of the general public; and accelerated calls for Haredi economic participation as a productive segment of the population.

This aspect of the people's demands is consistent with the findings of nearly every public opinion poll.⁸ An overwhelming majority of the Israeli public clearly supports equal burden sharing with respect to security and military duty. Israeli economists and captains of industry have been warning for years that Haredi dependence on state support could not last long. In recent decades, the ultra-Orthodox society has become one of 'learners,' in which the employment rate of males over 25 years of age is below 50%, and the poverty rate is extremely high (56%).⁹ In Israel, the average income of ultra-Orthodox households is about half that of non-Haredi households.

Under these circumstances, focusing on the ultra-Orthodox issue in the political arena is a very tempting proposition for leaders of non-Orthodox parties. The risk of losing non-Haredi votes as a result of an uncompromising demand to deal with the ultra-Orthodox sector is almost nonexistent – certainly not for leaders of secular parties (76 % of the population supported the establishment of a

government without Haredi parties.)¹⁰ From the politicians' perspective, the ability to formulate a resounding popular message is an obvious advantage. The majority of Israelis perceive the ultra-Orthodox as a burden, whose contribution to the general good is inadequate, and whose demands from other sectors are unjustified. In the religious-cultural context, the 'year of the ultra-Orthodox' could not have come at a worse time for the ultra-Orthodox themselves.

Concurrent with the legislative and political crises described above, several events have taken place in the last year or so, which helped to concretize negative images of the ultra-Orthodox in the minds of Israelis. Prominent among them was the story of an eight-year-old Bet Shemesh girl who was spat upon for alleged "immodesty," as well as stories about women being banished to the back of (illegally) gender-segregated buses to preserve modesty.

It is, therefore, unsurprising that many of the political parties that stressed societal and economic issues in their election campaigns found the uncompromising demand to address the problem of the ultra-Orthodox sector an irresistible game. Kadima, led by Shaul Mofaz, was anxious to leverage the Plesner Committee, which it chaired, into a campaign that demanded to "pay soldiers what yeshiva students are paid."¹¹ Yesh Atid posed this question to the government: "Where's the Money?" insinuating that ultra-Orthodox allocations lacked proper returns for Israeli society. The leftwing party, Meretz, used the Labor Party and Shelly Yachimovich's, its leader, obvious reluctance to attack the ultra-

Orthodox to win over voters to Meretz, arguing that "Yachimovich will join the ultra-Orthodox and the Settlers."¹² In their self-imposed isolation from the rest of society, the ultra-Orthodox could not find a channel for rapprochement that would diminish some of the intensity of the alienation and rage directed at them.¹³ At the same time, in light of their total dependence on state subsidies, they found themselves vulnerable to an immediate deterioration of their situation unless they were willing to accept the new rules of the game.

The Elections and their Results

The results of the January 2013 Israeli elections were a surprise and dictated a new coalitional order. The two parties, Yesh Atid and HaBayit HaYehudi, emerged much stronger from the elections and with an immensely significant impact on the new agenda – as long as they remained united – placed the

In their self-imposed isolation, the ultra-Orthodox could not find a channel to diminish the alienation and rage directed at them

'burden-sharing' issue at the center of coalition negotiations. The result of these deliberations dictated two major changes. First, a coalition without any Haredi representation, and in effect free, at least in theory, from any political dictates stemming from subordination to the ultra-Orthodox agenda. Second, relatively detailed

coalition agreements were drawn up, which included a specific commitment to an accelerated revision of arrangements pertaining to the ultra-Orthodox community.

It was obvious that, deprived of the key political positions they occupied for so long (chair of the Knesset's Finance Committee; ministerial posts in key strongholds such as the Interior and Housing Ministries; de facto control of the Ministry of Health), the ultra-Orthodox would be

Some within the coalition are reluctant to 'burn bridges' with the ultra-Orthodox community

unable to directly affect the new arrangements concerning them. They could wield some indirect influence through both civil activity (demonstrations, non-cooperation) and preserving existing ties with parties within the coalition government reluctant to 'burn the bridges' with the ultra-Orthodox community. It

is no secret that the prime minister had objected to the demand to keep the ultra-Orthodox out of the coalition, and that he would continue to try to represent and keep his former (and possibly future) partners' interests close to heart. The means of the struggle mounted by ultra-Orthodox leaders to counter the planned measures may be very limited, but they are now free to do so without fear of losing key positions or coveted budget allocations.

The Test of the Coalition Agreements

At this early stage in the life of the new coalition, it is difficult to speak of implementing decisions that would transform the patterns of relations between the ultra-Orthodox and non-Orthodox in Israel. Nevertheless, the coalition agreements stipulate both principles and resolutions scheduled to take place according to an agreed-upon timetable. Monitoring the implementation of such understandings in the coming months should provide a clearer indication of the government's pace and seriousness of intent in this matter.

The first test of the coalition's earnestness was passed immediately after Passover, when the government met the provisions of the coalition agreement by establishing a ministerial committee assigned with writing a bill to replace the Tal Law. Chaired by Yesh Atid minister, Yaakov Perry, the Perry Committee (known as the Knesset Committee for Equal Burden Sharing, but officially, 'the Ministerial Committee on the Integration of ultra-Orthodox and Minorities in Military and Civil Service, with the Aim of Integrating them in the Labor Market and Creating Equality in Burden-Sharing') submitted to the government a draft of a proposed new law on May 23, which implements and regulates the recruitment of Haredim to the IDF and civilian National Service, after having been accepted by all coalition member parties. The proposed new law covers the entire range of 'equal burden sharing' issues, rather than focusing solely on the revision of the *Torato Omanuto* arrangement with the ultra-Orthodox. Thus, it also addresses reduced mandatory IDF service terms, as well as provides the option of national service

for those who do not wish to serve in the IDF. In the initial discussions disagreements emerged, among other matters, in regard to the degree of coercion to be exerted on those slated for Haredi military service, and the timetable for implementing the changes (the chairman wished to shorten it from that originally set in the coalition agreement). However, in the end, a compromise agreeable to all was found.

The establishment and efforts of the Perry Committee constitute the first, but certainly not the last, test of the depth of the changes expected during Israel's 33rd government's term. The coalition agreements stipulated in advance that revisions to the *Torato Omanuto* arrangement be gradual, taking effect progressively over at least the next four years – and other agreed-upon changes. In any case, the move would be initiated during the incumbent coalition's term, but its final stages are scheduled to take place during the term of another, future coalition; and as long as the move has not been completed, it is possible that a variety of political contingencies could obstruct its progress, or even reinstate former arrangements.

Key ultra-Orthodox-Related Economic Changes

A considerable portion of the coalition agreements between Likud-Beytenu, the senior coalition member, and its two main partners, Yesh Atid and HaBayit HaYehudi, are dedicated to transforming the relationship between state institutions and the ultra-Orthodox population. The proposals for change are significant and many, and factor into nearly every provision of the coalition agreement.

For instance, the section on education stipulates that the minister of education – a member of Yesh Atid – “will consolidate a ‘core studies curriculum’ [including Math, Hebrew Language, English, and Civics] for the education system within the first six months of the government’s term.” This provision is, first and foremost, yet another attempt by the state to insist upon ‘core studies’ in ultra-Orthodox schools – an issue that all previous attempts to regulate have failed. The state views the introduction of a core studies curriculum in ultra-Orthodox schools as a *sine qua non* condition for the ability of ultra-Orthodox youth to eventually join productive vocational frameworks that would contribute to the Israeli economy and relieve the state of the economic burden of permanently supporting a population that chooses to live below the poverty threshold.

Past attempts to introduce and regulate a mandatory ‘core curriculum’ in ultra-Orthodox schools have failed

The agreement’s section, ‘Groups and Sectors Advancement,’ stipulates “the government shall address the issue of women’s exclusion and examine the exercise of legal means to prevent it in the public sphere.” If a decision to employ such measures is reached, these will be used primarily to thwart ultra-Orthodox attempts to compel gender segregation on public bus lines. The section on housing, as well the ‘Miscellaneous’ section, feature similar – and critical – provisions regarding

the regulation of government support in the ultra-Orthodox sector. These stipulate, “upon submitting the budget, the minister of finance will formulate a plan for the gradual integration of the ‘realization of earning potential’ criterion, in any benefit, allowance, or exemption granted by government

Under the proposed arrangement, the cost of not joining the work force would become more onerous, perhaps even intolerable

ministries.” Reliance on such a criterion – which also appears explicitly in the section on housing as a substitute for ‘years of marriage’ – actually puts the ultra-Orthodox in a distinctly worse position in terms of eligibility for benefits and allowances if they opt to study in a yeshiva rather than seek employment. We should note, however, that

implementation of this provision is not immediate, but rather one of ‘progressive implementation,’ and thus may not be fully put into practice. Even if it is, it is always possible to reverse under different political circumstances in the future.

The coalition agreement contains many more provisions that limit direct or indirect government support of the ultra-Orthodox sector. For instance, it asserts that the Ministry of Welfare will no longer be allowed to transfer support budgets unless they are allocated to “rehabilitation or treatment institutions.” It also stipulates that eligibility for daycare discounts (for which yeshiva students are eligible) would be in effect for “up to five years of support,” rather than the indefinite period

currently in effect. The agreement stipulates that reductions in health insurance and national security payments would also be limited – to a period of seven years – as opposed to the current arrangement, which includes no time limitations. In effect, if implemented, the proposed arrangement would force ultra-Orthodox citizens to face a much harder decision when choosing between employment and Torah study (which bears no distinct economic fruit). The cost of not joining the workforce would become more onerous, perhaps even intolerable.

The Proposed Change in the Military Service

The basic policy statement of the new government stipulates that it will “take steps to increase equality in burden sharing...whether through military or civil service.” The agreement’s appendix asserts that “Israeli society is ripe” for a shift “toward bringing the Torah-studying sector within the sovereign sphere.” This Appendix outlines the agreed-upon plan to phase out the *Torato Omanuto* scheme, and the gradual transformation of ultra-Orthodox society from economic dependence to greater productivity commensurate with other population sectors.

The plan asserts the universal duty to serve, while affirming the importance and centrality of Torah study “as a central value in the State of Israel.” Key tenets include:

State Authority: The IDF will decide who gets drafted. This provision is a bitter pill for the Haredim to swallow as it expropriates their

control, effectively subjecting the world of Torah students to state control and priorities.

Recognition of Cultural Differences: Integration into military or civil service will be carried out with utmost consideration of special cultural characteristics, while attempting to provide dedicated programs that would allow the ultra-Orthodox to remain in ultra-Orthodox environments, even within the state framework, to counter allegations that this is a governmental attempt to ‘secularize’ the Haredim.

Economic Measures: As detailed above, the duty to serve the state will be enforced through sanctions against conscription evaders, i.e. through withholding benefits rather than direct confrontation.

Striking a Balance between Sectors: Concurrent with increasing the ultra-Orthodox’s share of the service burden, a parallel initiative (albeit on a much smaller scale) in the Arab sector will be advanced. Allowances and benefits to sectors that perform military duty in large numbers (economic rewards to those who carry the burden) will also be offered.

Progressivity: The steps outlined in the agreement will come into effect over four years. In the interim, the ultra-Orthodox will enjoy a grace period in which they can either join the military, stay in yeshiva, or work. This interim period is designed to allow the Haredim to begin the fundamental process of social change expected of them if the decisions in the coalition agreement are in fact implemented.

It should be noted that the burden equality plan,

even if not fully implemented, leaves certain islets of inequality intact: it fails to address the role of Haredi women, leaving the present situation as is (i.e. ultra-Orthodox women are exempt from any form of duty, military or civil, and will remain so); it enshrines the special status of ‘Hesder yeshivas,’ which combine short military service with Torah studies; and while it does posit the goal of “increasing the number of minority groups doing national service,” it refrains from specifying enforcement measures, unlike its ultra-Orthodox policy.

Some allege that the government is attempting to ‘secularize’ the Haredim

Conclusion

The mounting public interest in burden equality and ultra-Orthodox integration issues, the results of the last elections, the composition of the current coalition and the coalition agreement – all indicate a significant and fundamental change in the relationship between the Haredim and the state. Nevertheless, the change process is neither immediate nor irreversible. It may be halted at various stages, for reasons that include:

- A political situation that necessitates a reversion to the classic agenda of defense and security policy, pushing socio-economic issues down the state’s list of priorities; and
- A change in the domestic political/coalitional situation, which would increase the ultra-

Orthodox parties' power to thwart the new arrangements. Such a change could occur during the term of the incumbent government, or as a result of future elections.

Since most measures for effecting the change will come into effect step-by-step, with some only scheduled to commence years from now, numerous obstructions may appear that impede the progress of change, possibly ending it altogether. Nevertheless, it currently appears that, even if there are further delays in the plan's full implementation, there is a growing realization in Israeli society (including within the ultra-Orthodox community) that the status quo is unsustainable in the long run. We expect the change process to continue for the following reasons:

- The ultra-Orthodox society's economic dependence weighs heavily on the economy, as well as on the ultra-Orthodox community itself.
- Social change within the ultra-Orthodox society amplifies the power of sub-sectors interested in change (in varying ways and degrees).
- The alienation of ultra-Orthodox from the non-Orthodox population greatly diminishes the motivation and willingness of the larger Israeli society to carry the burden of supporting the ultra-Orthodox (economically and in terms of security). The public regards this issue as crucial and is sure to charge anyone standing in the way of reform a hefty political price.

Assuming that change processes will continue and intensify, several questions remain open and include:

- What shape will a working ultra-Orthodox society take?
- Would it be able to retain its separateness, or would the integration process inevitably lead to increased cultural assimilation?
- How will Israeli society as a whole deal with increasing friction between the ultra-Orthodox and the non-Orthodox, which would inevitably occur if they were fully integrated in the economic life, defense system, and the general Israeli society?
- Might an economic strengthening of the ultra-Orthodox society, combined with its continued demographic growth, lead to yet another eruption of social strife, in which the Haredim would be much more powerful actors?

Notes

1. In this context, see Dov Maimon & Shmuel Rosner, 'The Haredi Challenge,' JPPI, February 2013.
2. *Ynet*, 21 February 2012: 'Supreme Court Revokes Tal Bill as Unconstitutional; Bill to expire in August'.
3. *Jerusalem Post*, 2 March 2013: 'Lapid: "Haredim in the Opposition is not a Disaster; Bennett: 'I Will Keep my Promise to Him'.
4. Tamar Herman and Ephraim Yaar, 'The Peace Index,' December 2012, Israel Democracy Institute.
5. Tamar Herman and Ephraim Yaar, 'The Peace Index,' January 2013, Israel Democracy Institute.
6. In effect, most ultra-Orthodox voters identify with the right bloc's ideology, so that their leaders' room for political maneuvering has been limited to begin with. The ultra-Orthodox recoiled at the last minute from supporting 'the stinking trick' played by Shimon Peres in an attempt to form a government in the early 1990s. But they did support the Sharon government's Gaza Disengagement plan.
7. 'Summer 2011 in Israel: The Revolt of the Undeprived: What it was, How it was, what's left,' *Annual Assessment 2011-2012*, JPPI.
8. Dror Walter and Hanan Cohen, 'Public Attitudes toward Yeshiva students' recruitment,' Israel Democracy Institute, August 2012.
9. Plessner Committee figures.
10. Channel Ten Opinion Poll, 1 March 2013, Prof. Camil Fuchs and Midgam Ltd.
11. *Channel Seven*, 26 December 2012: 'The Demand by Haredi Public Figures to Disqualify Kadima's Campaign as Inciting is Rejected; Elections Committee: "Kadima's Campaign is not Incitement"'
12. *Haaretz*, 22 October 2012: 'Meretz Campaign: "Yechimovitch will join the Ultra-Orthodox and the Settlers'.
13. The most complex and highly-charged score to settle is the one between the ultra-Orthodox and the Religious-National sector, with which they also have an ideological dispute regarding the role of the state, as well as a power struggle for control over jobs and budgets earmarked for religious services. Equally painful is the emotional score that they must settle, due to the ultra-Orthodox's endorsement of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Disengagement plan.

Women of the Wall: Toward Compromise or Continued Conflict

Where we Stand

In December 2012, following more than a year of constant media coverage of the Women of the Wall (WoW) and their quest to secure the rights of women to pray aloud, read from the Torah, and wear *Tefillin* and *Tallit* at the Kotel, and under pressure from American Jews, Prime Minister Netanyahu tasked Jewish Agency head, Natan Sharansky, with finding a workable compromise arrangement. Sharansky presented a plan at the beginning of April 2013, according to which the Western Wall (*Kotel Maaravi*) and its current plaza would be extended to include an area south of the Mugrabi Bridge (i.e., the area around Robinson's Arch), where a section would be built to accommodate non-Orthodox Jewish practice, including mixed gendered, egalitarian prayer.

According to the plan, the new plaza would be separated from the current one by the Bridge, but they would share an entrance, and both would be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Orthodox rabbi of the Kotel would retain control over the present prayer area but would relinquish management of the Western Wall

Foundation (which currently manages the site), the Ceremonies Esplanade, as well as the new Wall area, which would be under the auspices of a new body that includes representatives of non-Orthodox Jewish streams and of Jewish Diaspora communities.

The plan, which could take a year and a half to two at a cost of 100 to 200 million shekels to complete (if planned and implemented promptly), received the unanimous, albeit cautious support of all Jewish parties involved (the Palestinian Authority has strongly denounced any modification at the site). That is until the situation was overturned at the end of April, when the Jerusalem District Court ruled that Women of the Wall can pray as they wish, and that the police have no reasonable justification to detain them. Following the arrest of five women and a police appeal for a three-month restraining order, Judge Moshe Sobell ruled that a 2003 Supreme Court decision upholding a government ban on women wearing *Tefillin* and *Tallit*, or reading aloud from the Torah at the Western Wall was never intended as a permanent injunction or to confer criminality on women.

In the eyes of some activists, Sobell's ruling made Sharansky's compromise somewhat superfluous. At least as far as WoW is concerned. If they could pray as they wished at the current Western Wall, why be shunted aside to a remote area?

Background

The road to Sharansky's plan was long. After more than 20 years of activism, utilizing public demonstrations, legal challenges, and confrontations with the police (and a very heated media debate in the last 18 months), WoW attracted a crescendo of attention and support. Opposition from the ultra-Orthodox rabbinical authorities who interpret how Judaism can be practiced at the Wall, and WoW's insistent refusal to practice in an alternate location (as suggested by the Supreme Court in 2003), made this struggle a monthly ritual widely covered by international media, with an embarrassing impact on Israel's image. Images of women under arrest being led away from the Kotel not only reflected the non-equal status of non-Orthodox streams and approaches in Israel (unlike the Diaspora), but the gender-based discrimination and restrictions on Jewish worship also raised questions about the state's democratic character.

Possible damage to Israel-Diaspora relations was mainly behind Netanyahu's tasking Sharansky with finding a solution. But beyond the need for a practical solution to a practical matter, the Kotel controversy encapsulates several larger issues that Israel has been brushing aside for decades. First among them relates to the pros and cons of the

Orthodox monopoly over official Israeli Judaism. The second goes to the question: "Whose Wall is it?" This question goes beyond the day-to-day affairs of the Kotel. It snags the fabric of relations between Israel and other Jewish communities worldwide. Early in June, the board of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), the umbrella organization of 154 Jewish federations, voted unanimously to endorse the Sharansky plan.

As a result of Judge Sobell's ruling, Women of the Wall were granted protection for their Rosh Chodesh services (as was demonstrated in the services of Sivan and Tamuz), by the same police that had arrested them only a month earlier. At the first of the two services, 6,000 Haredi seminary girls crowded the women's section in protest, and 2,000 Haredi men loudly joined them at the other side of the plaza (some of them throwing curses, garbage, chairs, and plastic bottles). On Rosh Chodesh Tammuz (June 9, 2013), only about 200 Haredi men showed up to protest and the prayer service took place in relative peace.

Developments to Watch

One has to appreciate the compromises both sides of the debate would have to make in order for the Sharansky plan to provide a comprehensive solution to the issue: those insisting on a strictly Orthodox Kotel would have to adjust to non-Orthodox Jewish practice there, and to the consequent state recognition of other Jewish streams. On the other hand, those fighting for new Kotel arrangements would also have to compromise, mainly by accepting a new

reality of separation, their being sent to the 'new' location to accommodate the sensitivities of the Orthodox establishment. Such compromise is still necessary. It's the only path to resolving the WoW issue. But not only that, it would also establish a Kotel mechanism with the potential to prevent similar battles in the future – legal and otherwise.

Full implementation is far from guaranteed, and many obstacles could still delay or disrupt it. Several of them are listed here in question form as 'developments to watch' over the next year:

- Will WoW continue backing Sharansky's plan after having been granted historic legitimacy by the Jerusalem District Court ruling last April?
- If yes, can a reasonable implementation timetable be developed, and can the budget for implementation be found?
- Also, will the government agree to demonstrate its seriousness in the interim period until construction is done, by moving forward with other parts of the plan, such as proposed changes to the administration of Western Wall affairs?
- Construction at the Kotel Plaza is geopolitically sensitive: will Palestinian, Jordanian and other Muslim resistance to the plan persuade the government to reconsider?
- If WoW rescinds its support of Sharansky's plan, will month to month clashes at the Kotel, following the court ruling, continue, and would such clashes interfere with progress toward compromise?

- If the Sharansky plan becomes moot, will Minister for Religious Affairs Naftali Bennett attempt to formulate new regulations for the holysites, looking for some sort of compromise such as the one WoW agreed to on Rosh Chodesh Sivan and Tammuz (praying with *Tallit* and *Tefillin* but without reading aloud from a Torah scroll)?

What to Expect

Ironically, while the plan was initially conceived to find a solution for WoW's requests, it is now possible that the Orthodox have more of a real interest in its implementation. If the plan doesn't move forward, in fact, WoW will keep holding the right to pray according to their custom every Rosh Chodesh at the Kotel.

Thus, as implementation planning progresses, there are three possible scenarios for an ultimate outcome:

Full implementation of the plan within a reasonable timeframe

This would make the following question an important one for further developments: What percentage of Kotel visitors would prefer the new plaza over the old one? If the number is negligible, further claims for representation of non-Orthodox streams in Israeli religious life would be rendered more difficult. If, on the other hand, the number is significant, the battle for equality is likely to move to the next stage (i.e. legitimacy in other fields of Jewish practice).

The plan is not implemented

If either side demurs and Sharansky's plan gets stuck, one can expect two parallel outcomes: 1) Ultra-Orthodox Jews will keep protesting against WoW, until the government must intervene to calm the situation down and, 2) A new round of legal battles will take place, as the courts will be asked to a) Reconsider the latest ruling, and b) Grant rights not just to WoW, but also to Jews who prefer mixed-gender prayer. The Supreme Court will likely be asked to weigh in on Sobell's ruling, and possibly reverse its own 2003 decision.

Partial implementation of some kind

Such a development is likely to fracture the Sharansky coalition, and make things even more complicated. Consider the following points: Since the latest court ruling didn't solve the problem of non-Orthodox practice, the new section is still needed. However, the Sobell ruling might tempt non-Orthodox entities to insist on representation at the current Kotel area, causing them to drop their support for the new section. Furthermore, if a third section is only partially built and isn't seen as equal (in size and status) to the current sections, more battles are to be expected, and more protests from world Jewry are all but guaranteed.

Main Publications of the Jewish People Policy Institute

Rise and Decline of Civilizations, Lessons for the Jewish People, Shalom Salomon Wald, Foreword by Shimon Peres, (English language original published by Academic Studies Press, Boston; Hebrew translation published by Yediot Books, Israel), 2013.

Peoplehood and the Distancing Discourse, Background Policy Documents prepared for JPPI's 2012 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People, JPPI Staff, 2012.

Annual Assessment 2011-12, Executive Report No. 8, Introduces JPPI's Dashboard of Jewish People Indicators, and includes special in-depth chapters: Geopolitical Turmoil in the Middle East; Creating Jewish Meaning in the U.S. and Europe; and Israeli Democracy: Politics and Society; Project Heads: Avi Gil and Shlomo Fischer; JPPI Staff and Contributors, 2012.

The Challenge of Peoplehood: Strengthening the Attachment of Young American Jews to Israel in the Time of the Distancing Discourse, Shmuel Rosner and Inbal Hakman, 2012.

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China and the Jewish People: Old Civilizations in a New Era, Shalom Salomon Wald, Strategy Paper, 2004. This is the first strategic document in the series: Improving the Standing of the Jewish People in Emerging Superpowers without a Biblical Tradition.

About JPPI

The Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) is an independent professional policy planning think tank incorporated as a private non-profit company in Israel. The mission of the Institute is to ensure the thriving of the Jewish people and the Jewish civilization by engaging in professional strategic thinking and planning on issues of primary concern to world Jewry. Located in Jerusalem, the concept of JPPI regarding the Jewish people is global, and includes aspects of major Jewish communities with Israel as one of them, at the core.

JPPI's activities are action-oriented, placing special emphasis on identifying critical options and analyzing their potential impact on the future. To this end, the Institute works toward developing professional strategic and long-term policy perspectives exploring key factors that may endanger or enhance the future of the Jewish People. JPPI provides professionals, decision makers, and global leaders with:

- Surveys and analyses of key situations and dynamics
- “Alerts” to emerging opportunities and threats
- Assessment of important current events and anticipated developments
- Strategic action options and innovative alternatives
- Policy option analysis
- Agenda setting, policy recommendations, and work plan design

JPPI is unique in dealing with the future of the Jewish people as a whole within a methodological framework of study and policy development. Its independence is assured by its company articles, with a board of directors co-chaired by Ambassadors Stuart Eizenstat and Dennis Ross – both have served in the highest echelons of the U.S. government, and Leonid Nevzlin in Israel – and composed of individuals with significant policy experience. The board of directors also serves as the Institute's Professional Guiding Council.



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