

Jewish Peoplehood

עמיות יהודית

עמיות יהודית

Jewish Peoplehood

Jewish Peoplehood

# The Peoplehood Papers

4

A selection of essays on Jewish Peoplehood including pragmatic suggestions on how organizations can create new understandings and action plans around the issue.

יהודית

October 2009



Cheshvan 5770

## **Peoplehood Papers 4: October 2009** *Cheshvan 5770*

### **Table of Contents**

<b><u>FROM THE EDITOR, SHLOMI RAVID</u></b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>GREETINGS, LEONID NEVZLIN</u></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><u>SECTION I: THE PEOPLEHOOD INDEX</u></b>	<b>6</b>
THE PEOPLEHOOD INDEX PROJECT, YOAV SHOHAM AND NIMROD GOOR	6
CLOSENESS AND SIMILARITY BETWEEN ISRAELI AND AMERICAN JEWS: PRELIMINARY RESEARCH REPORT, STEVEN M. COHEN AND EPHRAIM YA'AR	10
THE JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD INDEX: EVIDENCE FROM SURVEYS IN THE US AND ISRAEL, STEVEN M. COHEN AND EPHRAIM YA'AR	14
<b><u>SECTION II: RESPONSES AND CATALYZING CONCEPTS</u></b>	<b>28</b>
JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD INDICATOR, YEHEZKEL DROR	28
JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD :GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS, LEONARD SEXE AND BENJAMIN PHILLIPS	32
REMARKS FROM THE HERZLIYA CONFERENCE, NAAMA SABAR-BEN YESHOSHUA	36
REFLECTIONS ON ISRAEL, PEOPLEHOOD, AND A NEW JEWISH WORLD, LEA CECILIA WAISMANN	40
THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLEHOOD INDEX PROJECT, YOAV SHOHAM	43
APPENDIX, TABLES 1 AND 2: THE PEOPLEHOOD INDEX, US AND ISRAELI VERSIONS	45
ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS	48



## **From the Editor**

*Shlomi Ravid*

Dear Readers,

*Peoplehood Papers 4* is dedicated to the "Peoplehood Index", a research project initiated by Professor Yoav Shoham and Nimrod Gur, and designed and implemented by Professor Eppie Yaar and Professor Steven Cohen. The Index, which was introduced publicly at the 2009 Herzliya Conference on a panel sponsored by philanthropist Leonid Nevzlin of the NADAV Fund, is a groundbreaking and pioneering attempt to quantify and measure different dimensions of the relationships between Jews that make up the Peoplehood texture.

The first section of this publication presents the Index, the intentions of its creators, findings and practical implications. That presentation is followed by the responses of Professor Yehezkel Dror and Professor Naama Yehoshua- Ben who shared the panel at the Herzliya Conference. These are followed by comments from Professor Leonard Saxe and Dr. Cecilia Weisman, who were present at the session.

The consensus among all those involved with the Index is that while still a work in progress, its potential contribution to addressing the challenges of Peoplehood today is tremendous. This potential is not only as a way to help us understand the reality in which we live, directions and trends, but also as a tool to design policy and intervention. At a time when global Jewish policy seems at a loss, tools such as the Peoplehood Index can actually impact the way we build the Jewish future.

I would like to thank the contributors and Dr. Elana Sztokman from the School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies and Safra Turner from Koldor for their editing work. I would also like to announce that *The Peoplehood Papers* has moved to its new home at the Jewish Peoplehood Hub, created by UJA-Federation of New York, the NADAV Fund and Jewish Agency for Israel and thank Beit Hatefutsot for being its initial home.

Our next issue will be dedicated to Peoplehood and Israel education. Do they conflict with or complement each other? Contributions are welcomed.

*Dr. Shlomi Ravid*

Peoplehood@jafi.org



## Greetings

*Leonid Nevzlin*

Jewish Peoplehood is not a new concept. It has been central to the Jewish experience and essential to our existence for much of history.

Jewish Peoplehood, as I use it, refers to a mindset of collectivity and mutual responsibility that is shared among Jews living in disparate cultures and places. This mindset, fueled by deep emotions, has united our people for millennia, especially in periods of hardship and persecution. In the past our peoplehood was based in large part on religious practice and Jewish tradition and reinforced by our exclusion from majority cultures.

Today the situation is different. A variety of modern cultural changes, the creation of the State of Israel, and the strengthening of Jewish communities around the world have produced a new Jewish mindset, one that is often more local and individualistic than global and collective. The Jewish People thrive and prosper. The majority of Jews live in meritocratic societies, with persecution greatly lessened. Modern day openness, enlightenment, and globalization have turned Jews into equal and influential members of societies across the world. Along with the rest of the world, many Jews have multidimensional, hyphenated identities. They are more than “just” Jews.

Despite all of the gains, real challenges still confront our people and the State of Israel, our homeland. The prevalent ideologies of our time value universalism over particularism. They do not encourage pride and connection to one’s own heritage and people over others. But we continue to need such values to take root in young people if we want the Jewish People to survive and thrive.

Jewish Peoplehood offers a constructive framework for describing the situation we face and laying out possible strategies for remedying it. The main challenge to those who wish to strengthen Jewish Peoplehood is finding a common nucleus in our varied identities that will connect individuals around the world who experience their lives and their Jewishness very differently.

The Peoplehood Index, a project described in detail in the following pages, examines the degree of shared identity among various segments of our people and lays out policy recommendations to deal with the disconnects.

The good news is that we can nurture a Peoplehood mindset through education and experiences that expose young people to the richness of Jewish history – which includes Jewish contributions to the advancement of humanity as well as specifically Jewish topics. Books alone are not enough. Belonging has to do with connecting to other people, and so Peoplehood programs must create experiences that forge connections in a Jewish context.

I invest in the field of Jewish Peoplehood because I believe that only a collective Jewish identity will guarantee our future as a nation. Without serious and coordinated efforts to nurture a sense of

belonging in younger generations, the Jewish People will not have future generations. That said, Peoplehood as an organizing principle appeals because it is positive and inclusive. It invites young Jews in to be a part of the Jewish story and to see it as their own. The articles that follow point the way towards the work ahead.

*Leonid Neuzlin*

The NADAV Fund Founder

Chairman, International Board of Governors, The Museum of the Jewish People in Beit Hatefutsot



## ***The Peoplehood Index***

### ***The Peoplehood Index Project***

*Yoav Shoham and Nimrod Goor*

#### **Background<sup>1</sup>**

The concepts and assumptions that have driven the relationship among Jewish communities worldwide since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century require updating. This is true in particular of Israel and the US Jewish community, the focus of the Project in its first year. Traditional slogans ("we are one") and concepts (Holocaust, 1948, 1967) are losing their force. Strong ties and mutual support between the Jewish communities of the world, particularly with Israel, remain critical for the future of the Jewish people, but they must be based on a new contract. The old contract – financial, political and moral support in exchange for a new source of pride and a safe haven in case of future anti-Semitic violence – is fast approaching its expiration date.

Many if not most Jewish organizations have put effort into addressing the weakening of the ties within and among Jewish communities, and in particular between Israel and global Jewish communities. In recent years, a number of innovative programs have been established whose aim it is to strengthen the relationship among the Jewish communities in the world. Birthright/Taglit, the Wexner Foundation programs, and JAFI's Partnership 2000 are some high-profile examples; but a myriad of other examples exist, from day-school twinning to Federations focusing on "connecting" their own efforts to many others.

Inspiring as these efforts are, they are largely standalone, and their reach is still limited to a small part of the Jewish people. Many of the Jewish people around the world are not aware, and some (mostly the older generation) are not willing to accept, that the ground rules have changed. For others, such as the organizations mentioned above, there is a lack of a standard language and common denominator with which to assess their relevance, impact, and efficacy.

The Peoplehood Index (PI) Project was created to address these missing components. The Project tackles these challenges in a two-pronged manner. At the core lies the

---

<sup>1</sup> This is a very slightly edited version of the report published at the Herzliya Conference in February 2009. Uzi Arad of the IDC was co-author of that report, and would also be author of this, were it not in conflict with his current government role. The authors thank him for his invaluable contributions at the birth stages of the PI Project

Peoplehood Index (PI), a measure of closeness among Jewish communities. The PI is quantitative and nuanced; for example, the pilot study, discussed below, attempted to

tease apart the degrees to which Jewish communities know, care about, and interact with each other (the so-called cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions). The first goal of the PI is to provide a quantitative reference point documenting the state of intra-Jewish relations the world over. The PI is based on in part a standardized survey conducted across multiple Jewish communities around the world, and forces one to not only be thoughtful about the questions asked, but also about the very language used to ask the questions. Indeed, one of the goals of the PI Project is to catalyze a discussion of language and basic assumptions, both of which are required if a valid new contract is to be crafted. Thus the PI Project aims not only to be a retrospective mirror, but also to play a transformative role. Consistent with this is the Project's second prong, consisting of specialized versions of the PI tailored for the use of specific organizations or programs. The PI thus aids specific organizations by supplying them with a new planning and evaluation tool. These two components of the Project are mutually reinforcing; the general index is the basis on which the organization-specific surveys are created, and the work with the specific organizations informs the general index and ensures that it remains a living, breathing entity that is anchored in reality.

The pilot study was completed immediately before the recent Herzliya Conference in February of 2009. The PI Project was launched at the Conference, and the results of the pilot study were reported in a session jointly organized with Beit Hatfutsot. In the remainder of this article we briefly summarize the process behind and the results of the pilot study, and outline the PI Project's path going forward.

### **Organization of the pilot study**

Several principles guided the process leading to the pilot study:

- In the spirit of the perfect being the enemy of the good, rapid development and completion of the first survey in less than 6 months;
- In particular, initial focus on US and Israel, without undermining the commitment to a global effort;
- Emphasis on symmetric, bi-national participation and perspectives;
- Separation of project leadership from scientific leadership;
- Scientific leadership consisting of a US and an Israeli co-principal designer, both academics steeped in the relevant material and methodology, advised by a bi-national scientific advisory committee;
- The process consisting of questionnaires in both countries, and a subsequent impartial, data-driven analysis of the results.

The questionnaires were by design largely, but not entirely, symmetric. The Israeli questionnaire was conducted by phone, and the US one by mail and internet. There were forty questions in each questionnaire, and over one thousand people in each of the two (representative) samples. All of the above reflects constraints dictated by the different circumstances of the two communities, means of accessing the respondents, and budget.

### Results of the pilot study

In December of 2008, the first bi-national US/Israel surveys were conducted, and the initial analysis was presented in February, 2009, at the Herzliya Conference. The findings were illuminating – some verifying existing assumptions, other exposing interesting data and indications regarding trends in Jewish Peoplehood. The key findings are detailed below and a more detailed analysis is provided in a separate article also included in this *Peoplehood Papers* volume.

Notwithstanding the value of the findings, one should be cautious about over-interpreting the preliminary results. Firstly, the survey is sufficiently novel that from the outset it was clear that its first installment would require modifications and extensions, and indeed several such changes are already planned (see closing piece in this volume of *Peoplehood Papers*). Secondly, the extended value is in tracking these trends over time; a momentary snapshot contains only so much information (the first data point on the Dow Jones Industrial Average was not as useful as its trend over time). With these caveats, some of the highlights are as follows:

1. Jews on both sides attach high value to their Jewish identity. In particular, Israelis attach a higher value to it than to their Israeli identity. This certainly contradicts some existing prejudices.
2. Overall, the two communities are remarkably alike on almost all scales, with some notable exceptions.
3. In particular, both Israeli and US Jews score highly on the affective (emotional) scale; they profess to a much higher attachment to Jewish Peoplehood than perhaps some might have expected. They score much lower on the cognitive (knowledge) and behavioral (action) scales.
4. The above holds true even when analyzed by certain cross-sections (including, perhaps surprisingly, age).
5. This suggests a challenge and an opportunity for policy planning. The opportunity is the substantial reservoir of good will, as manifested in the affective scales. The challenge is how to harness this potential. Since the communities know little about each other and have limited interaction (as evidenced by the cognitive and behavioral scales), these positive sentiments are for the most part directed towards an abstract concept. It is hard to feel attached to a community you know little



6. about, or worse, of which you have an outdated image that clashes with reality. Much thought must be put into precisely which types of education and programs are the most effective way of converting the potential energy into knowledge and action.

### **What comes next?**

The initial effort was without a doubt very valuable. However, the next phase of the Project is not a simple extrapolation of the first one.

- Given the timetable, and the principle of the-perfect-is-the-enemy-of-the-good, the pilot survey left important issues unattended. These must be addressed in its next iteration. The Project is embarking on a process of collecting and collating feedback (again, see closing piece in this *Peoplehood Papers* volume).
- The Project must start branching beyond the US-Israeli framework of the first phase.
- The Project must commence its work with the operating partners to customize the PI to their needs.

All of this deepening and broadening of the activities requires both institutionalizing the Project, including cementing its governance structure, broadening its financial support model, and ultimately housing it within a permanent home.

We hope to be in a position to report positive developments on all of the above during 2009.

### **People and organizations behind the PI Project**

The Project is lead by Yoav Shoham of Stanford University and Nimrod Goor of Raanana, Israel, Jewish community lay leaders in the Bay Area and Israel and both graduates of the Wexner Heritage Program.

The principal designers of pilot survey were Professor Steven M. Cohen of the HUC-JIR in New York and Professor Ephraim Yaar of Tel Aviv University.

The principal designers benefited from the counsel of a bi-national Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). From the US, the SAC includes Prof. Sam Abrams (New York University), Shula Bahat (AJC NY), Prof. Sylvia Barack Fishman (Brandeis University), Prof. Shaul Kelner (Vanderbilt University), Tahl Raz (Jewcy.com), and Prof. Chaim Waxman (Rutgers University and JPPPI). From Israel the SAC includes Prof. Sergio DellaPergola (Hebrew University and JPPPI), Dr. Eran Lerman (AJC Israel), Esti Moskovitz (Mandel Leadership Institute), Prof. Gabi Sheffer (Hebrew University), Prof. Yaacov Yadgar (Bar-Ilan University), and Dr. Shai Finger (JAFI ). Initial partner operating organizations include Birthright/Taglit, JAFI's Partnership 2000, and the Wexner Foundation.

## ***Closeness and Similarity between Israeli and American Jews: Preliminary Research Report***

*Steven M. Cohen and Ephraim Ya'ar*

### **Introduction**

The history of the relations between Jews living in Israel and in the US is rooted in the initial formation of those two communities at the end of the 19th century, when many of Europe's Jews began emigrating to different countries throughout the world. A few arrived in Israel in the first immigration waves, while most of them sought their future elsewhere, mostly in the US. Throughout the years, the numerical ratio among the Jewish communities in Israel and the US evened out, and today they represent the two largest Jewish concentrations in the world – with approximately six million in Israel, and a similar number in the US.

While the two communities maintained mutual ties throughout this period, there is no question that these ties became stronger and more important from the establishment of the State of Israel through today, with each community meeting the different needs of the other. Against this background, it is not surprising that there is an essential need for the two communities to track developing trends in the relations between them, to understand the factors influencing these trends – positively or negatively – and based on the findings, to examine ways in which the mutual ties and contributions can be strengthened.

The present report presents the primary findings of a pioneering research, based on two scientific public-opinion surveys taken simultaneously among representative samples of the Jewish communities in Israel and the US. The research was intended to examine different dimensions of closeness and distance between the two communities, with the goal of having it be a basis for examining developments in these relations as well as ways of influencing them in the coming years. As this is the first attempt to examine this issue on a scientific basis, it is to be expected that, based on the analysis of the data and the conclusions drawn in the report, this Peoplehood Index will be improved and extended so as to become a standard, essential and reliable tool for examining the state of relations between Israeli and American Jews over time.

The findings we will present relate to eight scales that represent central facets of closeness and distance, the distinction among which was aided by the statistical analysis of the respondents' answers in the two communities.

Most of the questions in the two surveys were identical, for example "How important is Israel (or the US) as a spiritual center of the Jewish people." At the same time, some topics

naturally did not admit identical questions. In such cases we presented questions with similar significance, to the extent possible. For example, among the questions used to evaluate the level of knowledge by Israeli Jews of US Jews, was a question regarding the three primary streams of Judaism in the US. In parallel, the American Jews were asked about the primary political parties in Israel.

At the Herzliya Conference, we were only able to present partial findings, since, given the short time available, we were not able to analyze and summarize the entire materials at our disposal. Still, a preliminary look suggests that the full picture, which will be presented separately, will be essentially similar to the one presented here.

Our findings will be presented in two ways. First, we will present the average scores of US and Israeli Jews on the eight scales. Second, we will present the same comparisons according to three cross-sections that seemed to us particularly interesting: age, level of religiosity, and frequency of visits to Israel or the US. The age factor, for example, was recently discussed extensively in various forums as a significant factor determining the relations between the two communities. The common argument is that the young generation among US Jews does not feel the same level of closeness with, and sympathy for, Israel as the older generation, especially those for whom the Holocaust, and to differentiate, the War of Independence and the establishment of the State of Israel are not only events studied in history books. It goes without saying that the full report will include other bases of comparison, including levels of education and income.

### **Main findings and policy implications**

1. Jews on both sides highly **value their Jewish identity**.
2. When asked in a variety of ways whether they **care about Jews in Israel/the US**, significant numbers of Jews in both societies claim to feel attached to the other.
3. These feelings are closely aligned with similar feelings toward Jews around the world. Thus, feelings of closeness to the Israeli or US Jewry are part and parcel of feelings of attachment to the Jewish People. The implication: **Feelings of Jewish Peoplehood are critical** to feelings of attachment by US Jews to Israel, and by Israeli Jews to US Jewry.
4. Jewish Peoplehood is strongly related to **positive feelings about being Jewish**. Implication: Strengthening Jewish Peoplehood means strengthening Jewish identity, and vice versa.
5. Levels of Jewish Peoplehood attachment **hardly vary by age**. Contrary to widely held expectations, young self-identified Jews are as engaged with feelings of Jewish Peoplehood as their elders. (The US analysis could not take into account people with one or two Jewish parents who no longer identify as Jews.)

6. Both populations report a considerable number of **family members, friends**, and communication with Jews in the other country. Israelis, in fact, report more such ties, perhaps reflecting the fact that significant numbers of Israelis have taken up residence in the US.
7. Peoplehood feelings increase with the number of contacts in the other society, and with travel. Implication: **Travel** to Israel by US Jews and to the US by Israelis, as well as the fostering of personal contacts, may well sustain and enhance feelings of connection to the Jewish People and to Israel/ American Jews; alternatively, travel may reflect pre-existing feelings of attachment. We believe that their influence is reciprocal.
8. In several ways, Jews in Israel and the US evidence **limited ideological obstacles** to feelings of solidarity. A vast majority of American Jews see Israel as a spiritual center for the Jewish People; however so does a slightly smaller majority of Israelis with respect to the United States. Similarly, a majority of both Israeli and American Jews believe that intermarried couples should be treated no differently than in-married couples. This finding runs counter to the notion that high levels of intermarriage among American Jews will pose an obstacle for Israeli feelings of attachment.
9. While Jews in both societies may say they feel warmly toward the other, in whatever ways we can measure such things, they **know relatively little** about Jews in the other society. On both subjective (specifically, the self-evaluated ability to name personalities and key features of the other society) and objective measures (knowledge of population size), members of both societies demonstrate low levels of knowledge about the other.
10. Notwithstanding the relatively high levels of attachment and caring, **few US or Israeli Jews engage in activities** designed to express and foster strong ties. Implication: The good feelings toward one another can serve as a basis for mutual interaction and education.
11. Overall, the two communities are **remarkably alike** on almost all scales, with some notable exceptions.
12. Both Israeli and US Jews scored **high on the affective** (emotional) scale; they profess to a much higher attachment to Jewish Peoplehood than perhaps some might have expected. They score **low on the cognitive** (knowledge) and **low on behavioral** (action) scales. Since the communities know little about each other and have limited interaction (as evidenced by the cognitive and behavioral scales), these positive sentiments are for the most part directed towards an abstract

concept. It is hard to feel attached to a community you know little about, or worse, of which you have an outdated conceptual understanding that clashes with reality.

### 13. The Policy Takeaway: **From Good Feelings to Real Action.**

Prior to this research, one might have thought that the major policy challenge is to work to strengthen good will and good feelings, both with respect to Jewish Peoplehood in general or the other society (Israel/US Jews) in particular.

This research points in a different direction, encompassing both a challenge and an opportunity for policy planning. Rather than working to elevate good feelings, we find, the critical challenge is to **capitalize on the positive feelings** the two societies of Jews have for one another.

One challenge is to **inform and educate** each about the other. The other is to **translate good feelings into real action** (e.g., facilitating visits of American Jews to Israel), that will strengthen mutual ties and the bonds of Jewish Peoplehood. Much thought must be put into precisely which type of knowledge and behaviors are the most effective way of converting the potential energy into knowledge and action.

## **Methodological notes on the Israeli and American surveys**

### ***Israeli survey***

- N=1000 Israeli Jewish adults, age 18+
- Questionnaires were completed Dec. 12-17, 2008 by telephone using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) by Midgam, Ltd.
- Margin of error is 3.2% with a 95% confidence interval

### ***US survey***

- N=1161 adult Jews, age 21 and over who reside in the continental US
- Questionnaires were completed by mail and online between December 2008 and January 2009
- Includes only Jews who are Jewish by religion. Excludes Jews who say that have "No religion"
- The Jewish sample was weighted by the number of adult Jews in the household, age, sex, region, and education to approximate distributions found in the 2000-01 *National Jewish Population Study*

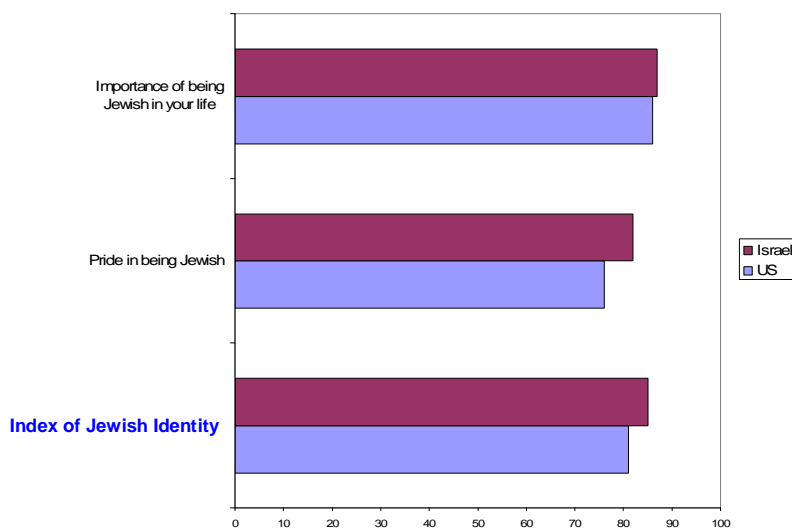
## The Jewish Peoplehood Index: Evidence from Surveys in the US and Israel

Steven M. Cohen and Ephraim Ya'ar

### Eight indices

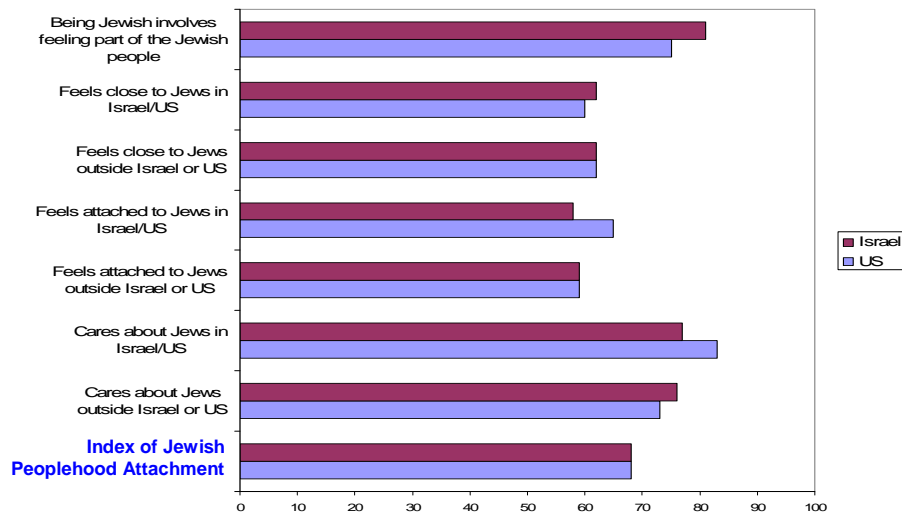
- Importance of Jewish identity
- Peoplehood attachment
- Mutual appreciation
- Mutual centrality
- Mutual knowledge
- Social networks
- Encouragement for mutual connection
- Inclusive approach to intermarriage

### Being Jewish equally important to Israelis and to US Jews

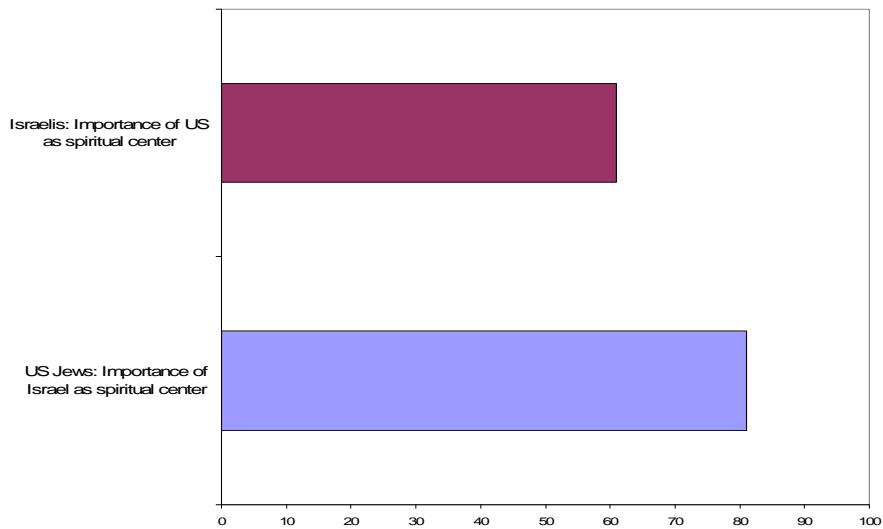




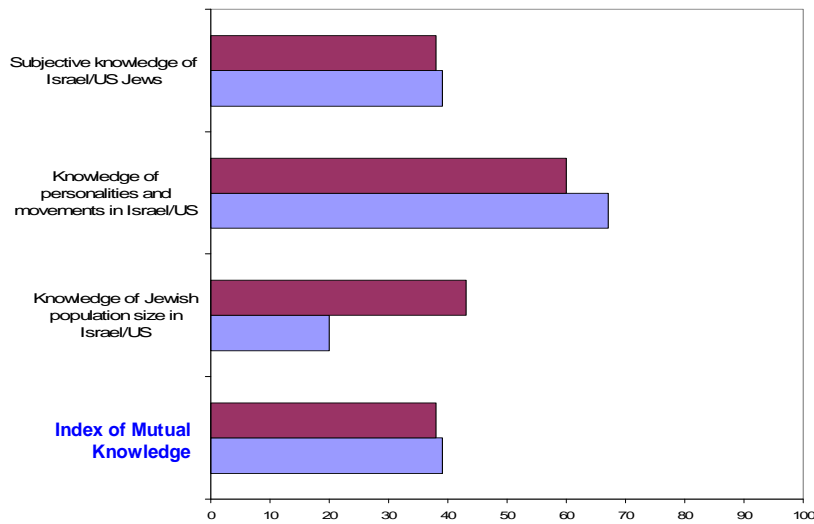
### Israeli & American Jews report nearly equal levels on indicators of Jewish Peoplehood Attachment



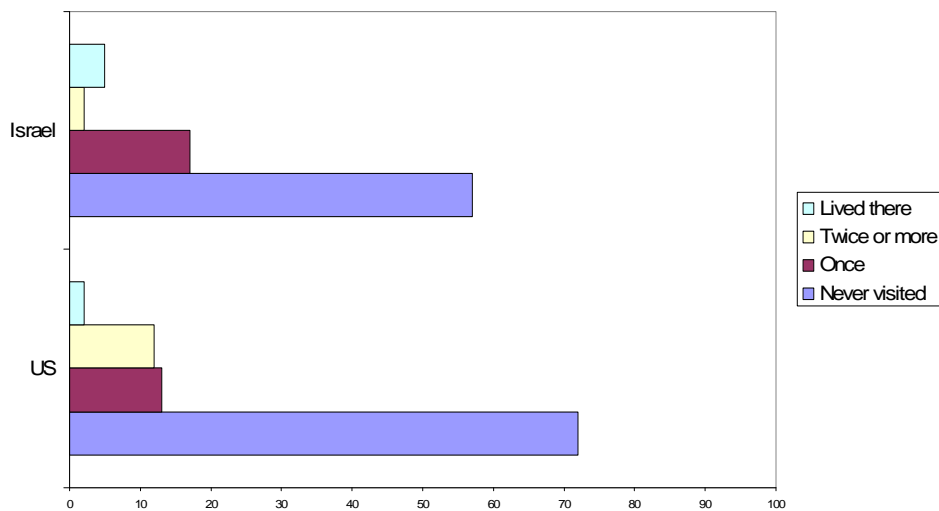
### Most Israeli & US Jews see the other society as a spiritual center of the Jewish People



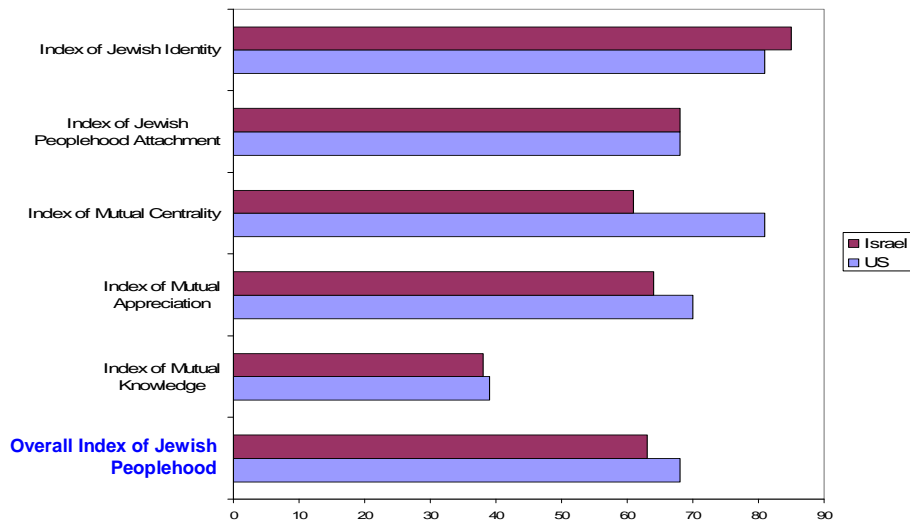
### Low levels of knowledge of Jews in Israel/US



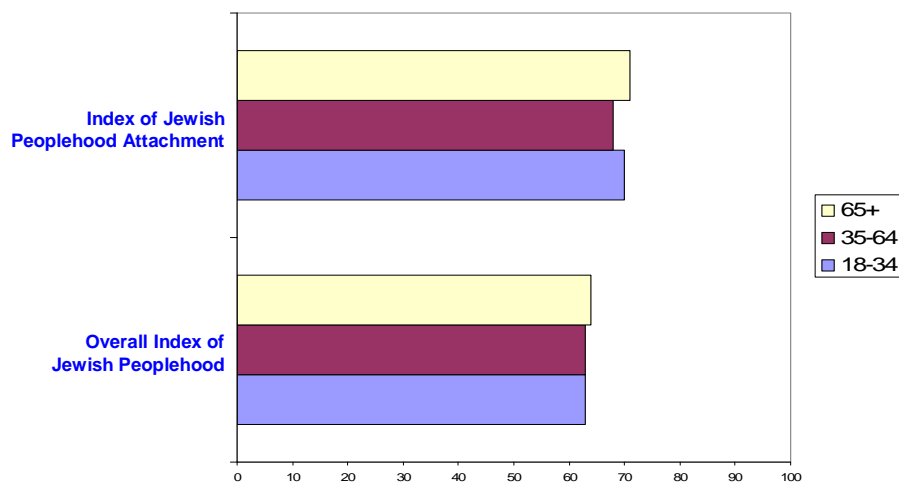
### Similar levels of travel by Israelis to US, & US Jews to Israel



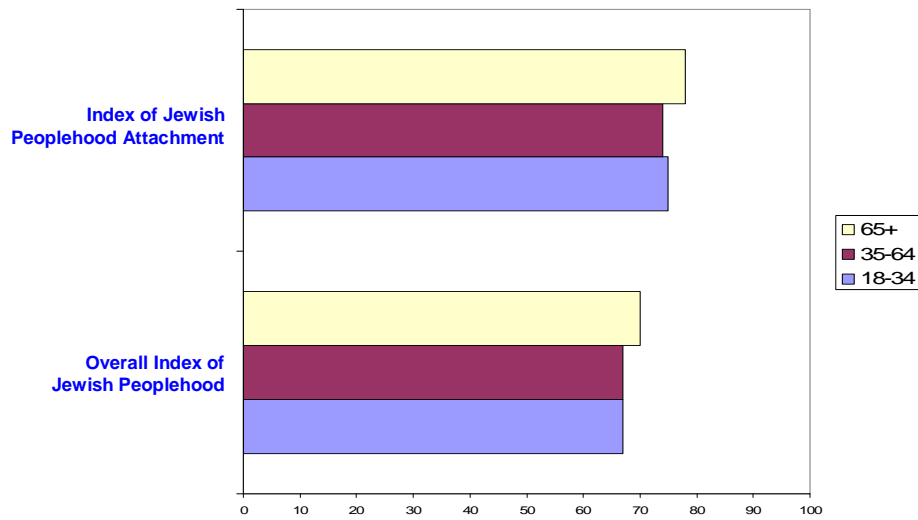
Components of Jewish Peoplehood: Similar scores for Israelis and US Jews; Low levels of knowledge



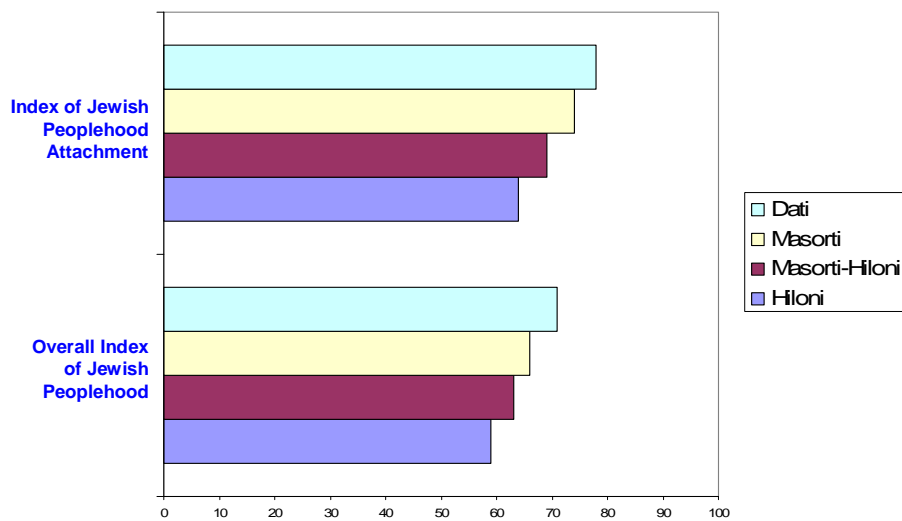
No age differences among Israelis on Peoplehood Attachment and Overall Peoplehood Index



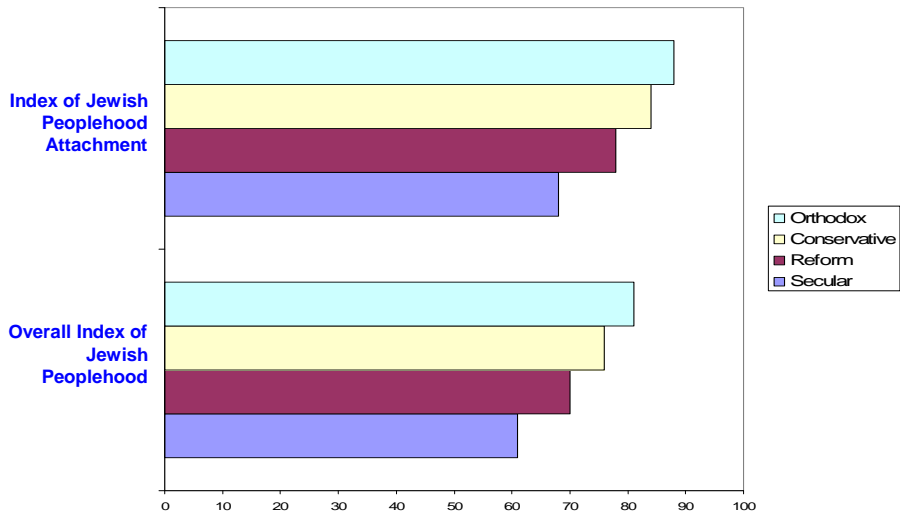
### No age differences among Americans on Peoplehood Attachment and Overall Peoplehood Index



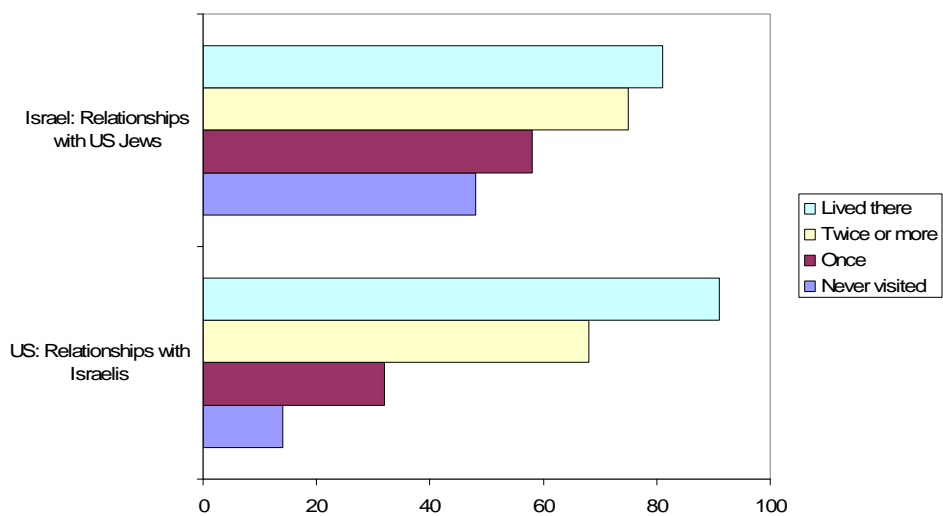
### Religiosity linked to Peoplehood Attachment and Overall Peoplehood Index among Israelis



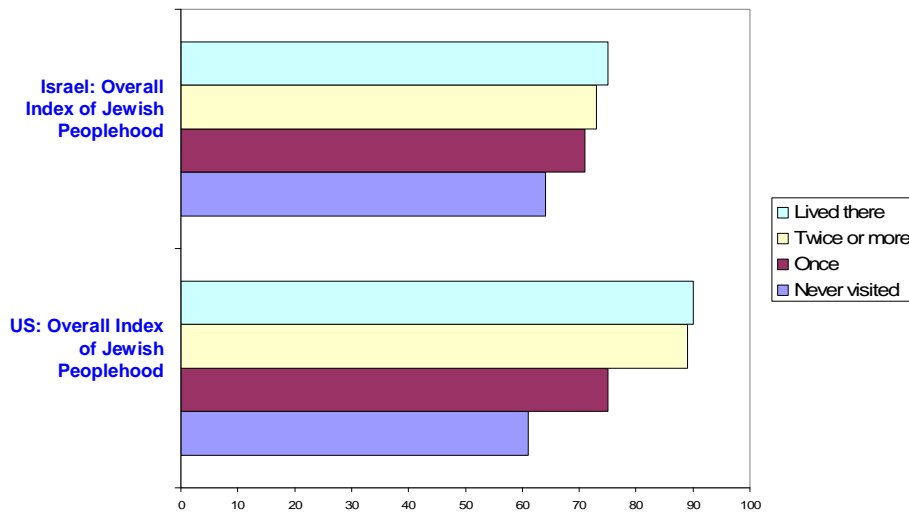
### Religiosity linked to Peoplehood Attachment and Overall Peoplehood Index among Americans



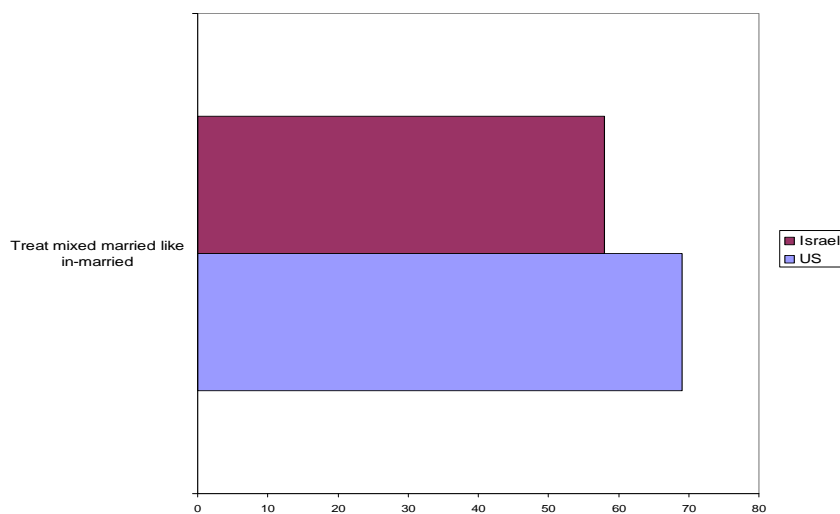
### More travel to US/Israel linked with more relationships with US/Israeli Jews



### More travel to US/Israel linked with higher levels on Jewish Peoplehood Index

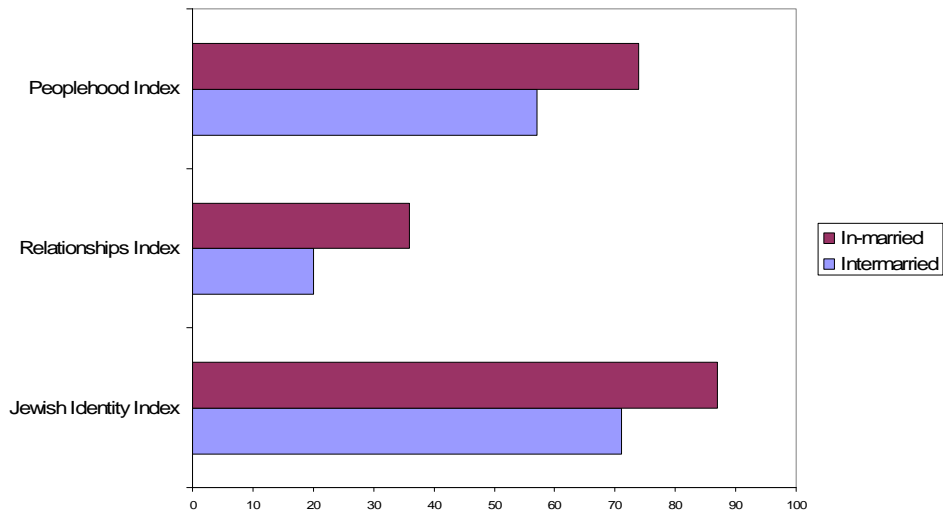


### Most Israelis and most American Jews want intermarried treated like in-married

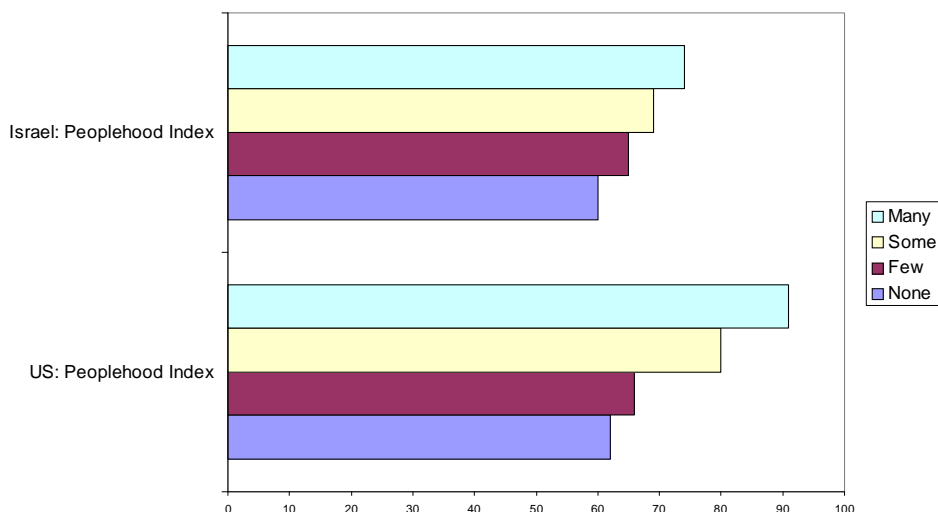




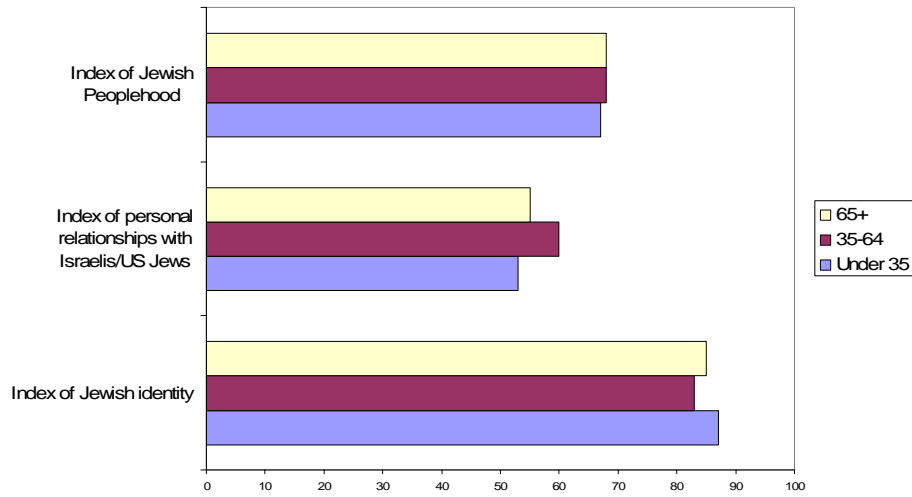
US: In-married score higher than intermarried on Jewish Peoplehood, relationships, Jewish identity



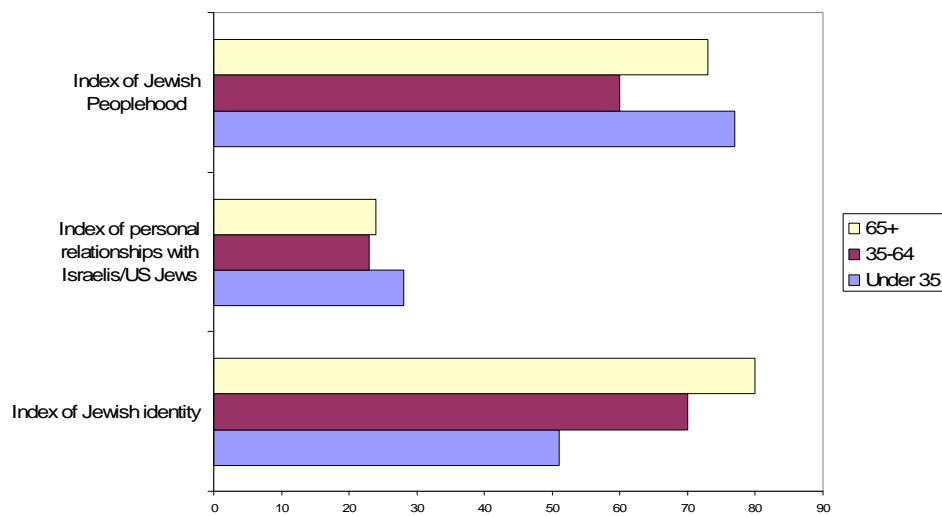
More personal relationships linked with higher levels on Jewish Peoplehood Index



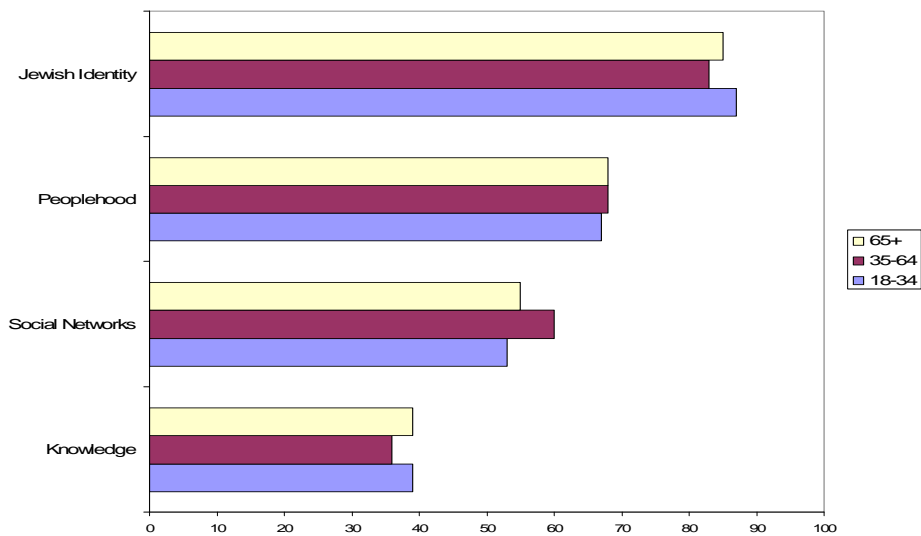
### Israelis: Little variation by age in Peoplehood, Relationships & Jewish identity



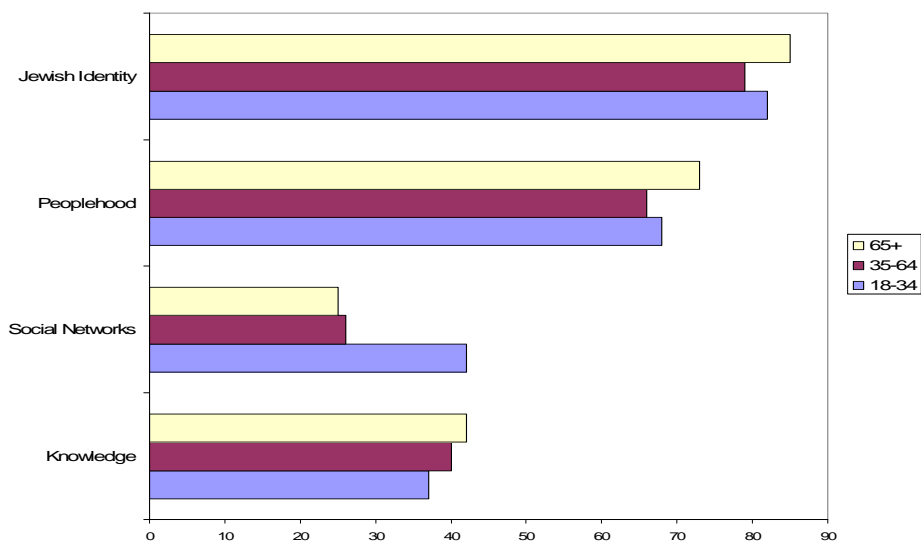
### US: Mixed patterns by age; younger Jews retain Peoplehood ties, lower Jewish Identity



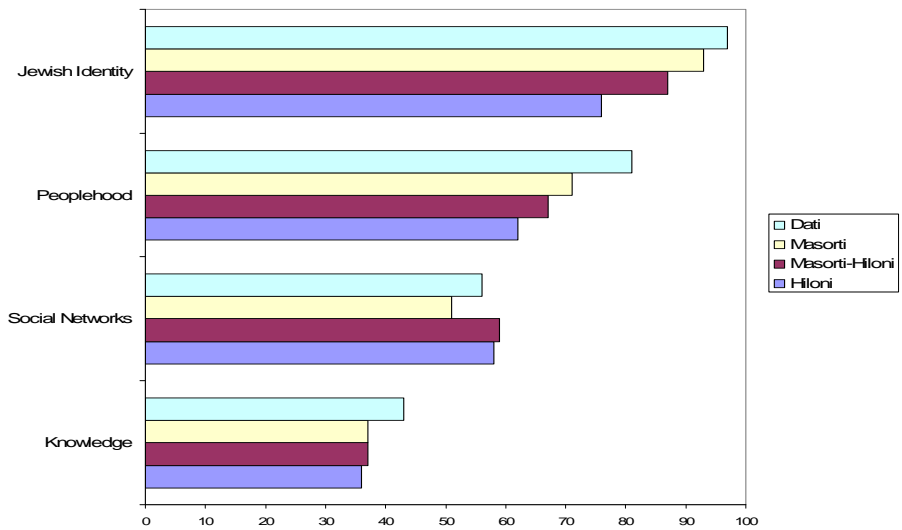
### Few age differences among Israelis on Jewish identity, peoplehood, social networks, and knowledge indices



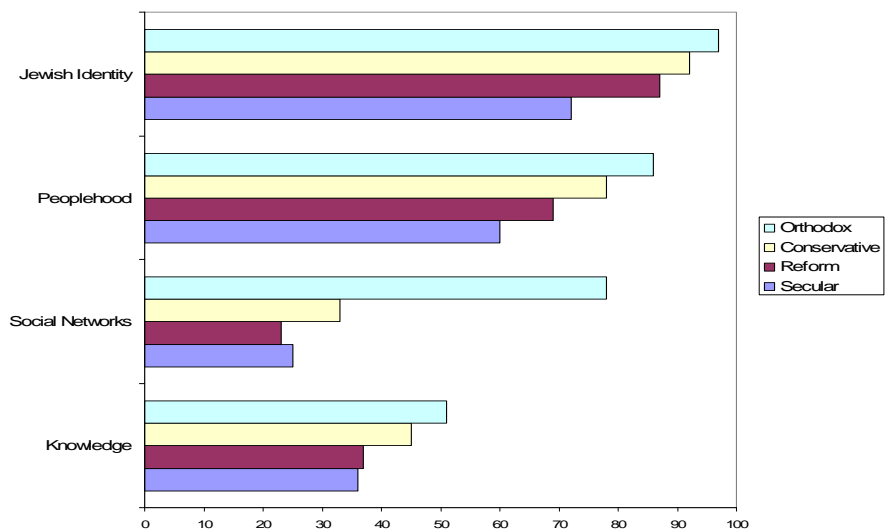
### Younger American Jews have larger social networks, few age differences on other indices



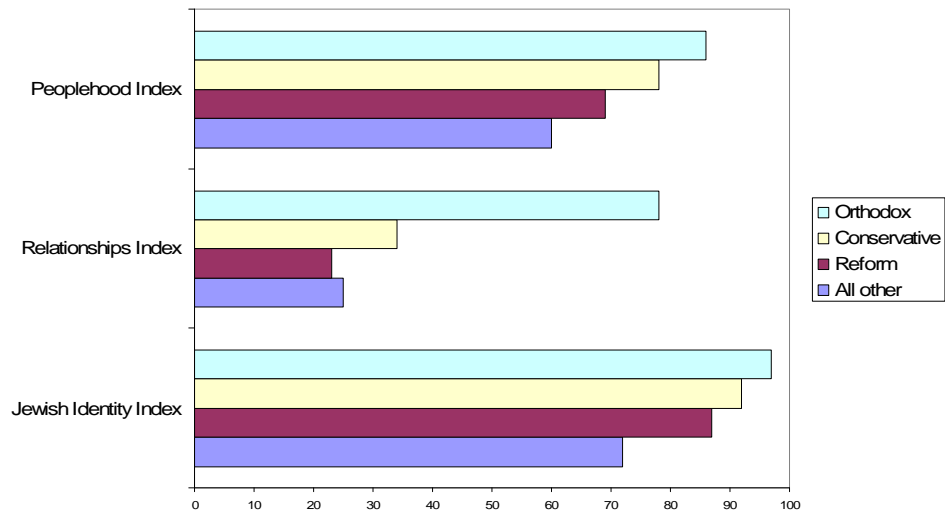
Israelis: Few differences among levels of religiosity and social networks; Dati Israelis outscore other denominations on other indices



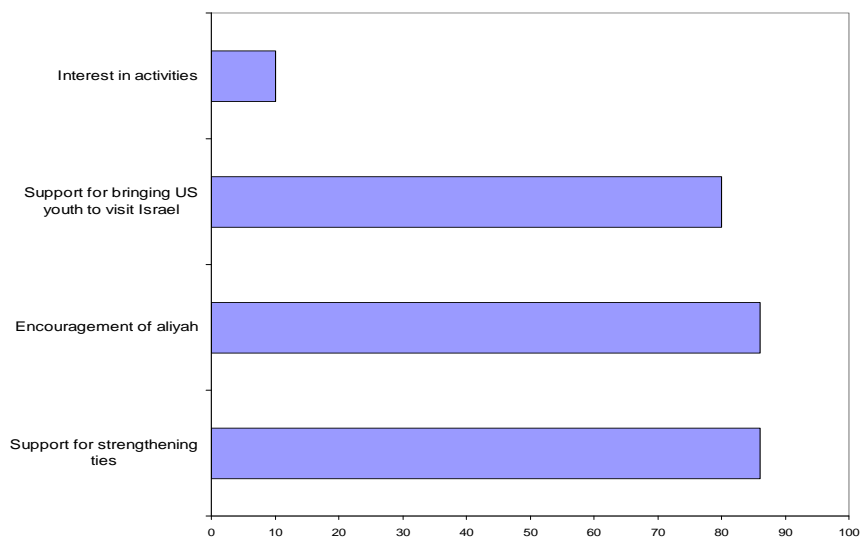
US Jews: Orthodox outscore other denominations on all indices, especially social networks



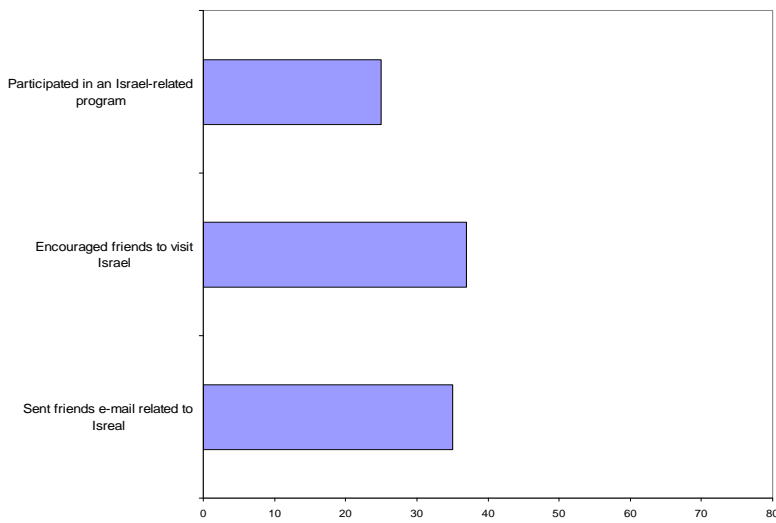
### US: Religious traditionalism linked with higher levels of Jewish Peoplehood, relationships, identity



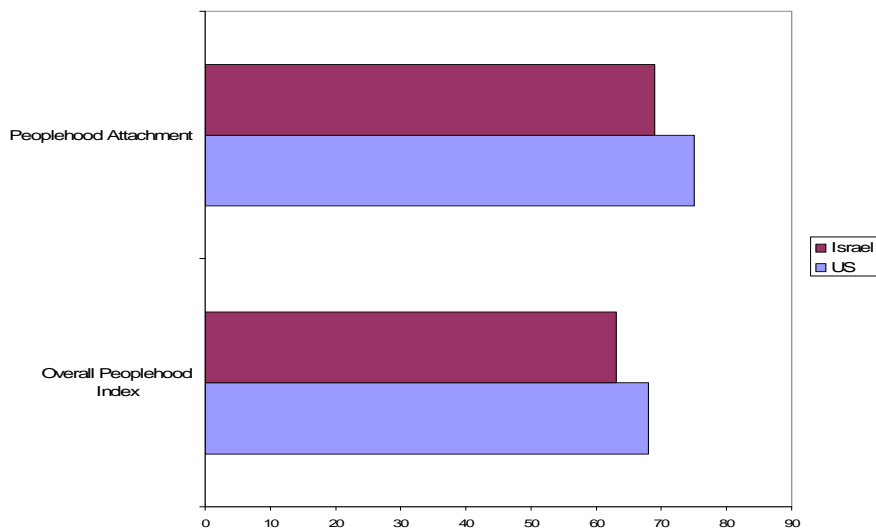
### High levels of support for strengthening ties among Israelis



Some American Jews engage in activities designed to express and foster ties to Israelis

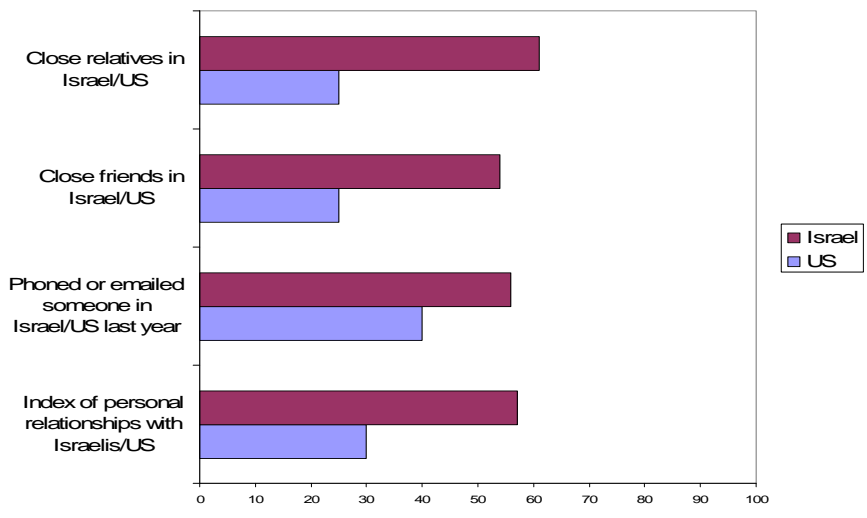


Similar scores for Israelis and Americans on Peoplehood Attachment and Overall Peoplehood Index





### More relationships with the “Other” reported by Israelis than by US Jews



## Responses and Catalyzing Concepts

### *Jewish Peoplehood Indicators*

*Yehezkel Dror*

An indicator can be defined as a visible and, as much as possible, quantifiable sign or symptom of a situation or dynamics. Indicators are widely used in economics and social sciences to describe and evaluate reality and its dynamics. One of the best known examples is the Annual Human Development Report prepared by the United Nations Development Program<sup>2</sup>, which includes a set of indicators on the state of development in all countries such as education, health, and income, and combines them into an integrated Human Development Index which is widely accepted as a reliable basis for rating countries and pinpointing improvement needs.

Indicators are also not only for evaluating realities and their dynamics but for evidence-based policy-making directed at increasing desirable indicators and reducing undesirable ones. A case in point is the wide use of macro-economic indicators as a basis for economic and fiscal policies.

However this case also pinpoints one of the major inadequacies of indicators: they usually cannot predict radical shifts, such as the 2008 economic crisis. No Jewish Peoplehood indicators would have provided clear warning of the Shoah. Therefore, nomatter how important indicators are for dealing with continuous processes, gearing for turning points requires other approaches.

Given their limitations, indicators are essential for clearly describing situations and mapping dynamics as a basis for understanding and policy making alike. Therefore, if we want to know the situation of Jewish Peoplehood and craft policies to improve it, we need quantitative indicators, in addition to qualitative assessments such as those published annually by the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute.<sup>3</sup>

However, indicator research faces a number of problems which require great care. These include, first of all, the need for a reliable theory from which a series of significant indicators can be derived. Then there are all the problems of empiric research, such as the importance of qualitative variables – hard to conceptualize and impossible to quantify – as well as difficulties of data collection, the high costs of valid survey methods, and finally the difficulty, and often impossibility, of aggregating sets of indicators dealing with different facets of reality into a single or a few numbers which can sum up the situation.

These are problems that can be overcome, at least in part; and they must be overcome as we urgently need Jewish Peoplehood indicators to understand what is happening, identify trends and craft policies. An important beginning has been made in preparing

<sup>2</sup> Accessible at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/>

<sup>3</sup> Accessible at [www.jpppi.org.il](http://www.jpppi.org.il).

Jewish Peoplehood indicators, as described in the papers included in this volume of *Peoplehood Papers*. However, this is only a first, though important, step which requires further efforts with a lot of professionalism, patience, and resources.

An essential next step is much more attention to Jewish Peoplehood theories. However, pending development of such theories, indicators can be less ambitious and still be very useful. We can ask ourselves on the basis of tacit understanding and available part-theories what are the, say, five most important features of Jewish Peoplehood shaping its future and focus on them. My own answer would probably include: (1) the number and ages of people who regards themselves as Jews; (2) the number of Jews expressing their belonging to the Jewish People in actual behavior, classified by types and intensity of activity; (3) the number of Jews actively trying to have their children and grand-children continue belonging to the Jewish People and their actions to strengthen this belonging; (4) the extent to which people have a sense of identification with the Jewish People as a whole and readiness to make efforts to help Jews in distress wherever they are; (5) the extent of people's readiness, if necessary, to kill and be killed to prevent another Holocaust, including the destruction of Israel.

Obviously, others will have different lists of critical indicators, such as keeping *halakha*. However, diversity of views can be handled by using a variety of variables which can be processed differently, as long as we are reasonably sure to include core indicators which adequately reflect main features of Jewish Peoplehood and its dynamics.

Having a relatively reliable set of indicators is essential. However, it leads to the next and no less difficult issue, namely, research methods that provide valid information on the actual situation in terms of the indicators. Although this is not the place to go into quantitative research methodology, three observations will serve to bring out critical issues: One, the sample which is studied must reflect the whole population of Jews as explicitly defined. Two, "flat" yes-or-no answers are often useless, making intensity scaling of responses essential (such as, "how much time do you devote to community activities" rather than "are you active in the community"). Three, data collection must be done in ways leading to reliable findings. Thus, short telephone conversations are inadequate, and at least a sub-set of the population sample should be interviewed at length.

An additional critical requirement is to assure maximum objectivity by keeping indicator research strictly separate from policy recommendations. Otherwise, policy thinking may easily bias the indicator study. However, policy planners should be involved in action-oriented indicator studies so as to focus attention on what may be relevant for policy crafting.

All of this requires sophisticated research designs and a lot of money.

This leads to the practical question what can and should be done. To provide a tentative answer, let me return to the Human Development Report. It took years of hard work by many professionals to develop a somewhat reliable set of indicators. The same applies to Jewish Peoplehood indicators.

We need such indicators in order to better know and understand realities and dynamics, and to craft policies to improve them. Therefore, indicator work on Jewish Peoplehood is important and should be supported – subject to careful professional guidance and prudence in interpretation of its findings – hand-in-hand with advancement of comprehensive theories of Jewish Peoplehood.

## References

- American Association for Public Opinion Research. (2005). AAPOR Code of Professional Ethics & Practice. Lenexa, KS: American Association for Public Opinion Research.*
- Cohen, S., & Yaar, E. (2009, February). The Jewish Peoplehood Index: Evidence from Surveys in the US and Israel. Powerpoint presented at the Ninth Annual Herzliya Conference: Strategies and Leadership for Times of Crisis, Herzliya, Israel.*
- Galperin, M., & Brown, E. (2009). The Case for Jewish Peoplehood: Can We Be One? Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights.*
- Marketing Research Association. (2007). The Code of Marketing Research Standards. Glastonbury, CT: Marketing Research Association.*
- Sasson, T., Mittelberg, D., Hecht, S., & Saxe, L. (2008). Encountering the Other, Finding Oneself: The Taglit-Birthright Israel Mifgash. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.*
- Saxe, L. (in press). Kurt Lewin. Encyclopedia of Group Process and Dynamics.*
- Saxe, L., & Chazan, B. (2008). Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Development. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press.*
- Shoham, Y., Goor, N., & Arad, U. (2009, February). The Peoplehood Index Project: From a Jewish Peoplehood Index to Policy, Planning and Evaluation. Paper presented at the Ninth Annual Herzliya Conference: Strategies and Leadership for Times of Crisis, Herzliya, Israel.*

## Jewish Peoplehood: Greater Than the Sum of its Parts

Leonard Saxe and Benjamin Phillips - Brandeis University

The Peoplehood Index Project (PIP) is an important undertaking to understand the dynamics of identity and engagement of contemporary Jews. To the extent that we can understand how Jews who live in different cultures share identity and are motivated to engage with one other, we enhance our efforts to create vibrant Jewish culture. As with any program of research, our conceptual framework influences our methods; and, reciprocally, our methods influence what we learn. The present assessment of the PIP was inspired this notion of construct-method interaction, in particular the version of the theory and research promulgated by one of the most creative and thoughtful social scientists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kurt Lewin.

Kurt Lewin was the intellectual father of the modern discipline of social psychology and was a German-born Jew. His experience growing up as a Jew in an authoritarian society rampant with anti-Semitism profoundly shaped his view of human behavior. His perspective revolutionized 20<sup>th</sup> century psychology in two ways that have particular relevance for our understanding of peoplehood and the effort to develop a peoplehood index. First, Lewin helped us understand that groups have their own socio-psychological properties, necessarily different from group members. Second, he fostered new approaches to the study of individual and group behavior based on the principle that insight comes from altering the situation of the group and/or individual and observing the differences that result. His thinking has direct relevance to the PIP effort.

### ***What is Jewish peoplehood?***

The goal of the PIP is to measure the degrees to which different Jewish communities “know, care about, and interact with each other” (Shoham, Goor, & Arad, 2009). In the project’s initial phase, creation of the index focused on the two largest Jewish communities, Israel and the United States. As operationalized by Cohen and Yaar (2009), surveys were developed to assess “dimensions of closeness and distance between the two communities.” The surveys (in Hebrew and English) included similar/parallel questions and were developed into eight scales: Jewish identity, pan-Jewish camaraderie, mutual appreciation, importance of Israel/US as a spiritual center, and feelings about intermarriage, social networks, support for strengthening ties between the communities, and knowledge of one another. Overall, the survey questions measure knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of members of one group toward the other.

The underlying question, drawn directly from Lewinian thinking, is whether the perceptions of United States and Israeli Jews of one another measure the “peoplehood” construct.” Consider other discussions of peoplehood. Thus, for example, Jonathan Ariel, a practitioner of efforts to promote Jewish peoplehood, uses the metaphor of a family to describe the underlying concept. According to Ariel, “Jewish peoplehood is a shifting, evolving, dynamic sense that the sum total of the different parts is greater than its aggregate components” (Ariel, cited in Galperin & Brown, 2009). Ariel’s view could be taken directly from Lewinian *gestalt* canon.

In turn, Galperin and Brown use the metaphor of the *bayit* (house) to describe peoplehood. A *bayit* has clear boundaries but also doors and windows that allow residents and guests to come and go. Galperin and Brown's vision of the Jewish community is a *bayit* that exudes warmth and inclusivity and, as well, incorporates a table where "Judaism is taken seriously" (p. 34). Just as a family has properties that are not simply the average of the members of the household, so to is Jewish peoplehood distinct from the perceptions of its members about one another.

Conceptually, the fundamental question is the extent to which we can assess peoplehood by responses to questions about how individuals view one another (e.g., "How attached do you feel to ..." and "How close do you feel to ..."). These questions are not unimportant, particularly if they are used as indices of individual Jewish identity. They do not, however, seem to represent fully the peoplehood construct. Is not peoplehood a distinct concept of groupness that needs "family" measures rather than individual?

Individual-focused items can, perhaps, be helpful if examined in conjunction with a larger unit of analysis. In a sense, individual measures are indirect measures of group identity. Thus, we might expect that someone who scores high on feelings of closeness and knowledge about a group would also have positive feelings toward the group. But this is not necessarily the case and, from a policy perspective, individual measures are likely to be trailing indicators. Understanding calls out for measuring the behavior of Jewish groups and the ways in which group identity is different than that of individuals.

### **Methodological Concerns**

Conceptual issues notwithstanding, the key problems with the PIP are methodological. A Lewinian perspective would suggest that one will not fully understand the construct unless one tries to manipulate feelings of peoplehood. But acknowledging that such experimentation is not always possible, what can we learn from comparisons of survey responses conducted in different contexts, with different structures, and in different languages? Some of the features of the PIP would seem to make such comparative analysis particularly difficult.

One feature of the study concerns whether the individuals surveyed represent the relevant broader population to whom we want to generalize. We need to know whether the survey frame includes the entire population and, among those who were sampled, whether non-respondents are likely to be different than who actually respond. It is not fully clear how the sample (Israel, U.S.) were constructed and responses weighted, but it is apparent that the surveys differ from one another, both in terms of how they were conducted and the questions themselves. One was conducted by telephone and the other, by internet. Both the mode and sampling techniques were different. One (Israel) used a telephone sample (RDD) and the other (United States) did an internet survey of a market research sample. Cross-national comparisons are always difficult, but particularly so when the samples are drawn in such different ways.

Another set of issues surrounds the unavoidable differences in the language of the surveys and the text of particular questions. Small variations in survey wording can produce large differences in responses and the problem is exacerbated when attempting to translate items across languages and cultures. What constitutes "some" as opposed to "many" in one language and culture may have different shadings in another. This is particularly problematic when comparing English and Hebrew items on Jewish topics, when the latter is the language of Jewish tradition.



In the case of the Hebrew and English versions of the Peoplehood surveys, there is an inexplicable difference in items that are later part of scales that are compared. Thus, the question in the scale regarding attachment concerns “emotional attachment to Jews in Israel/US”. Although the Hebrew item is correct and asks about emotional attachment to “American Jews”), the English

version concerns emotional attachment to “Israel” (not Israelis). Attachment to Israel as a state versus attachment to Israelis as people are somewhat different constructs. Similarly, parallel surveys questions about how much people “care” are formulated differently. Thus, the Hebrew version concerns the degree to which respondents “Care about American Jews,” while the English question concerns “Care about Israel.” Again, subtle translation issues aside, the different questions assess different constructs.

### ***Can Empirical Data Make a Difference?***

Understanding how Israeli Jews and Jews in the United States view themselves provides valuable information about individual identities. But the PIP, to be even more useful, needs to develop indices that reflect the ways in which Jews with different national identities engage in common cause. The Lewinian approach would necessarily focus on an assessment of change efforts to enhance peoplehood. Thus, for example, studies of samples of the nearly 225,000 participants in Taglit-Birthright Israel could be used to measure the impact of a peoplehood intervention (see, e.g., Saxe & Chazan, 2008, chapter 8). Such analysis is dynamic and allows us to see the ways in which attitude, behavior, and cognition are interrelated. Taglit is particularly well-suited to this task because it includes both Diaspora and Israeli participants (see Sasson et al., 2008).

Studies of educational programs are not the only way to assess peoplehood and there are a variety of possibilities for tracking how different groups of Jews interact. Measures could be developed of how much intra and inter-community interaction take place, including how many Jews travel between Diaspora communities and Israel. The role *schlichim* and the way in which Israel is projected in Jewish communities around the world can also be assessed. Finally, as a measure of Jewish peoplehood, we also need to understand and assess the diverse representations of Jewish identity. Thus, for example, we need to track Russian Jewish communities – their interaction with one another and their engagement and relationships with Israel.

### ***Peoplehood as Aspiration***

The concept of Jewish Peoplehood is so broad and encompassing that, perhaps, any effort to measure it and reduce it to quantifiable and comparable terms is destined to be inadequate. But that suggests we need to be more bold in developing ways of thinking that both express what we mean by peoplehood and can be operationalized to assess how it functions. As Kurt Lewin famously said, “there is nothing so practical as a good theory.” We need better theory and with it will come the means to understand how to reach our aspiration ideal of Jewish peoplehood.



## References

- American Association for Public Opinion Research. (2005). *AAPOR Code of Professional Ethics & Practice*. Lenexa, KS: American Association for Public Opinion Research.
- Cohen, S., & Yaar, E. (2009, February). *The Jewish Peoplehood Index: Evidence from Surveys in the US and Israel*. Powerpoint presented at the Ninth Annual Herzliya Conference: Strategies and Leadership for Times of Crisis, Herzliya, Israel.
- Galperin, M., & Brown, E. (2009). *The Case for Jewish Peoplehood: Can We Be One?* Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights.
- Marketing Research Association. (2007). *The Code of Marketing Research Standards*. Glastonbury, CT: Marketing Research Association.
- Sasson, T., Mittelberg, D., Hecht, S., & Saxe, L. (2008). *Encountering the Other, Finding Oneself: The Taglit-Birthright Israel Mifgash*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.
- Saxe, L. (in press). Kurt Lewin. In J. M. Levine and M.A. Hogg, Eds., *Encyclopedia of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*. Sage Publications.
- Saxe, L., & Chazan, B. (2008). *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Development*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press.
- Shoham, Y., Goor, N., & Arad, U. (2009, February). *The Peoplehood Index Project: From a Jewish Peoplehood Index to Policy, Planning and Evaluation*. Paper presented at the Ninth Annual Herzliya Conference: Strategies and Leadership for Times of Crisis, Herzliya, Israel.

## **Remarks from the Herzliya Conference**

*Naama Sabar-Ben Yeshoshua*

The presentation of an index for Jewish Peoplehood is a refreshing innovation, both because it aids in the explication of the new umbrella concept of "Peoplehood" in the field of Jewish identity and the Jewish People, and also because it is important to present the Peoplehood Index from the concept's inception in order to examine and cultivate this subject. The Index can be helpful in the identification, examination, and analysis of the degree of change in the affiliation to the Jewish People for all those who will study the material and will go through a cognitive and experiential process of the topic under discussion.

In order to understand the issues of actually assigning an index to Peoplehood, we must first carefully examine its initial findings. One of the problems that arose from the initial findings, which its creators already hinted at, is how to explain the positive picture it presented despite all that was known in the past and despite great worry among the Jewish leadership here and in the Diaspora? In other words, how do the two pictures correspond – one from the field indicating a weakening Jewish identity and a feeling of disassociation and lack of involvement, and one emerging from the initial positive findings of the Peoplehood Index?

This subject calls for further investigation and requires deep examination of the questions asked of the respondents. That is, the survey will not be scientifically sound and substantial if it is not accompanied by supplementary open interviews with some of the respondents to explain the meaning of their answers. In addition, every questionnaire in the survey was built on a question and a limited amount of possible answers. The creators of the survey developed both the questions and the answers, while presuming the range of possible answers to every question. So their actions were actually restrictive; the participants in the research had to adapt their responses to the creators' thinking. On the other hand, if one asks an open question and leaves the answer up to the respondent, then he or she can interpret the question differently from how the author of the questionnaire intended.

There are countless illustrations that can explain how we may gain additional information from the participants in the research. I will present one: If the respondent is asked "What do you understand from the following saying: 'Jewish-Israelis and Jewish-Americans feel a connection to each of these groups in the same way'?" we are likely to receive, in the first stage, a personal interpretation of the statement. From there we can continue, and the interviewer can then add on and make the question more difficult. For example: "How far are you willing to go for each one of these groups?" and "Is there something in your

biography that illustrates your willingness to act towards the strengthening of this connection?" and from there to continue. There is no doubt that open questions and the use of the open interview as a supplementary research tool allows us to gain a clearer and deeper answer.

Moreover, the optimistic picture that the creators of the index presented of the deep connection between the Jewish community in Israel and that in the United States is not, unfortunately, the same picture that comes up among the communities with which Beit Hatfutsot works: children and teenagers in formal and informal educational frameworks. On the contrary, publications in Israel and abroad indicate a growing weakening of the identification of the individual Jew with the collective foundation of Jewish existence in inverse correlation with age. Meaning that the younger the respondent – the longer time after the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel he was born – the weaker his or her connection to the Jewish People.

The identification with Jewish existence and the feeling of belonging is what we are calling "Jewish Peoplehood." The concept of Peoplehood is a new umbrella concept, a synonym for "Jewish People" and "brotherhood" as the creators of the Index have defined it. The concept of Peoplehood places the creation of a feeling of belonging not only on individual emotions but also on knowledge and action, namely the feeling of educated and active belonging to the Jewish People.

The concept of "Peoplehood" has a double meaning. The first is descriptive, as a concept factually describing the existence of the Jews as a people. The second is normative, as a value that describes the feeling of belonging and commitment to the Jewish People.

The University of Tel Aviv's School of Education took on the challenge of confronting this subject in the academic context, to the extent that there is now a Department of Research on the Education and Instruction of Jewish Peoplehood. The new department is currently being established thanks to the donations of the NADAV Fund, whose mission is to promote the subject of Jewish Peoplehood in all of its aspects. The central goal of the department will be to advance the subject of Peoplehood in thinking and research in education, and principally to improve and deepen the research of teaching-learning processes in this subject in the field of education.

In other words, our goal is to build an academic framework which will strive to increase the bodies of knowledge of Jewish Peoplehood and its instruction. It is our intention to examine and research processes that cause a strengthening to the feeling of belonging. The work of the department will be done in cooperation with the International School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies and with Beit Hatfutsot which is also greatly supported by the NADAV Fund. This school will develop educational programs and work with teachers and students to advance and strengthen the Jewish People.

The research channel will prepare and promote research among different target populations in Israel and in Jewish communities outside of Israel and will attempt to examine questions such as: How should the subject of Jewish Peoplehood be taught? What is the weight of the cognitive component as compared to the experiential component? How can we succeed to get students involved? How do we get teachers interested in the subject, agree to take class time to teach it and be intellectually and emotionally involved? How is Peoplehood connected to the other subjects taught within the educational framework and how can we integrate the subject of Peoplehood into the existing subjects and show the strong connection that it is possible to make with other subjects in the school program?

The research channel will also examine issues related to instruction of the subject: how do we train teachers to teach a subject that exists neither in the regular school day nor in the consciousness of the students and teachers?

The additional research direction that we are planning to implement is evaluation research, which will be dedicated to evaluating the programs that have been opened and will open at schools near Beit Hatfutsot and in other centers. The first evaluation research will focus on an outline – a syllabus for Peoplehood Studies – which has already been developed and is currently being published, as a conceptual infrastructure for the rest of the materials that will be developed in the school.

In addition, we will strive for international cooperation between researchers in the field of Peoplehood. We hope that the language and the conversation that arises will serve the Peoplehood researchers in Israel and abroad and will be used to create a shared research arena by, for example, hosting international workshops and conferences.

The bodies of knowledge that will be formed on the basis of the findings of this research will create a language and conversation that will serve researchers in Israel and abroad. These researchers, however, will still be separated from one another by the importance they give to the concept of Peoplehood and also in the ways in which they can promote the subject.

The department will do all that it can to lobby for the inclusion of Jewish Peoplehood instruction to be added as a M.A. and Ph.D. program in the School of Education at Tel Aviv University and also in other frameworks; especially in the Master's Program for Educational Leadership and Management, which trains school principals and directors of other educational programs.

It is needless to say that without recruiting the leaders in the education field to support the subject, the project will fall apart. This is a fact that has repeated itself in all school subjects that were developed; for example, with the Shenhar Report on the cultivation of a secular Jewish identity, training the teachers without training the hearts of

the principals and cultivating an open and supportive school culture did not allow for the trained teachers to implement their programs. A large part of the investment went to waste. Therefore, we must invest in principals in order to encourage the success of the absorption of the subject of Peoplehood in the schools.

We have set very high standards. However, if only some of the goals will be achieved, we will be able to say that we are at the beginning of blessed change both in Israel and in the Diaspora.

## **Reflections on Israel, Peoplehood, and a New Jewish World**

*Lea Cecilia Waismann*

At the ninth annual Herzliya Conference in February 2009, "Jewish Peoplehood" emerged as an important concept that can help educators understand and hopefully contribute to strengthening the idea of Jews as "One People". Although this concept is broadly used, its contemporary significance is questioned in some places, while at the same time there is increasing worry about the consequences of its abandonment.

Today we face a new "Jewish World" in which different shapes and forms of being Jewish are rapidly developing. The establishment of the State of Israel is undoubtedly one of the main factors in these changes, because it created a space where Judaism is a nation-wide common denominator and Jews are the majority group. The experience of being a Jew in the Israeli context is significantly different from that of other Jews around the world. On the other hand, the growth and centrality of American Jewry (the second largest Jewish community in the world) has created yet another experience of "being a Jew". Although numerically only a small percentage of the American population, American Jews as a group are slowly establishing a significant place at the American national scene. The remaining 14% of Jews, spread around all over the world, face diverse experiences, mostly unknown by the rest of the Jewish World, but certainly affected by the establishment of the State of Israel. The relationships between all these communities, as well as their interactions, their perceptions of one another and of themselves, and their understandings of who they are, all put into doubt whether they all belong to the same People.

How dangerous is this doubt? Can the confusion about one's own identity put the existence of all Jews at risk? For example, the increasing tendency to mistakenly define Jews as a religious group – partly as an attempt among Jews themselves to be accepted by the local majority group – has become a risk factor for assimilation among Diaspora Jews.

The Peoplehood panel at the Herzliya conference advocated for the development of a peoplehood concept that can help make sense of this complex situation. Leonid Nevzlin introduced the panel by defining Jewish Peoplehood as a "global connection basic to the survival of new generations of Jews", strongly supporting all educational approaches to strengthen this idea. Shlomi Ravid argued that "those who feel a deep sense of responsibility to their people and are concerned with the weakening of the sense of belonging believe that if we are to work at strengthening and teaching Peoplehood, we need to understand and define what it means".

Although many different aspects of Jewish Peoplehood were raised, one could feel an underlying need to understand and to define what has connected the Jewish People up to now, in order to enable us as educators to develop tools to help save its future existence as one people. Arguments were raised about the anti-Semitic threat as a key factor. Yehezkel Dror argued that, "What kept Jews together is the memory of dramatic historic events". He believes that the anti-Semitic tragedies of history explain much of the connecting bonds, which can diminish significantly over time as the emotional impact diminishes over generations. The bonding value of such experiences is unquestionable; however its relevance to all Jewish communities it is not so obvious. Today, we are increasingly aware of the experiences of Jews who live in geographic areas where this argument does not readily explain their feeling of connection to other Jews and to Judaism – for example Jews from African countries.

Yehezkel Dror also emphasized the importance of understanding the current sociological context of the Jews, and anticipating future impacts on their identities. He believes the Jewish people are reaching a turning point and suggests a paradigm shift to reflect the complex balance of power between Israel and the Diaspora, revolving around issues such as: to what extent Israel is responsible for the life of Jews in the Diaspora, and whether the Diaspora is a strategic asset to Israel. He also believes that it is important to consider the opinion of Diaspora Jews in important decisions in Israel so they can feel part of the Jewish People.

Dror's argument is central to the discussion of the place of Israel in any Jewish Peoplehood discussion. Do all Jews perceive Israel as playing a major role in their lives? Is it our function as educators to pursue tools that strengthen this idea? The Peoplehood Index presented by Ephraim Ya'ar and Steven Cohen is trying to shed some light on this subject, asking youth from the two largest Jewish communities in the world about their perceptions and knowledge of one another, and the place of Israel within their Judaism.

Although the geographic diversity in which Jews live and have lived has strongly affected their way of living, the preservation of basic common values has been essential to the preservation of their Judaism. Misha Galperin defended the important common denominator of mutual responsibility, an essential ingredient of Jewish Peoplehood. He described the Jews as "a family with a mission", with a powerfully shared feeling of belonging, as well as a common fate. Jewish Peoplehood is the profound essence of connection between different individuals, based on a combination of culture, religion, history and values.

Galperin believes that the community component – that is, the understanding that one is part of the collective – is particularly important within the context of Jewish geographical diversity. He completely rejects the individualistic approach of Judaism as an individual experience, arguing that individual Jewish identity does not predict collective Jewish



identity -- an important principle to take into account when translating Peoplehood into practice. Naama Sabar Ben Yoshua further elaborated on this difficult task, especially within the formal education context.

Regarding the current tendency to seek globalization approaches which question any national, ethnical, or religious boundaries, Galperin clarified that, in his view, Peoplehood is about differentiation. Peoplehood is not about removing boundaries, he says, but rather to be tolerant, respectful of others while identifying oneself, by making choices.

There are still many questions to be addressed, and many answers to help explain the connection among Jews. Educators do not need to wait for final answers, but rather should use the guidelines provided by these panelists and other experts in the field to promote engagement with the process. Today, educational tools should engage users as part of the creative process, especially when the topic at hand is one's own identity. Often, the perception of one's Jewish identity is of an inherited legacy, an identity received, rather than an active choice. Only when people perceive their active role in their own Jewish identity, and their own relevance to the process, will they be able to commit and to truly feel part of the Jewish People.



## ***The Future of the Peoplehood Index Project***

Yoav Shoham<sup>4</sup>

The opening piece described the state of the Project circa February 2009. The project has now doubled its lifetime, and has reached the ripe age of 18 months. This is a good opportunity to take stock of current inventory, and the plans going forward.

Let us start with a quick summary of some key events of the past nine months, during which the project began the process of institutionalization: (a) The project has started operating out of our temporary home at the Re'ut Institute in Tel Aviv. (b) Serena Eisenberg was hired as project manager. (c) The Project gratefully acknowledges grants from the NADAV Foundation and Jim Joseph Foundation, which together with existing contributions will sustain the project (if frugally) for up to 18 months.

The project's goals for this next period are to synthesize a conceptual framework that will guide the PI going forward; based on that framework, to create a long-term plan for data gathering and analysis; to complete three specialized deployments with operating partners; and to identify its permanent home. Vigorous work has started on all these fronts, but the most crucial of them is the first one, and here the discussion engendered by the pilot survey, some of which appears in this *Peoplehood Papers* volume, is invaluable.

The term "Peoplehood Index" is ambitious, especially so in the complex and multi-dimensional context of Jewish Peoplehood. There are questions of what aspect of Peoplehood is being tracked, for what purpose, how the data is collected, and how it is analyzed. The contributors to this *Peoplehood Papers* volume, in addition to heartening support for the very endeavor, offer some constructive criticism and suggestions. Some of the comments are specific to the details of the pilot survey, but some apply more broadly. Such input is critical to the success of the project; the task is too challenging to tackle without harnessing the collective wisdom of the best minds. The project has now initiated a structured process to elicit feedback and suggestions, and let me use the opportunity to invite all readers of this *Peoplehood Papers* volume to chime in. This is not the place to delve into certain technical social-scientific methodological issues, though they are important and must be addressed. But our starting point consists of some broad questions, to which both professional social scientists and lay people alike can lend insight. Here are some of the issues on which we seek feedback:

---

<sup>4</sup> I thank Nimrod Goor and Serena Eisenberg for their wise counsel

1. While the pilot version focused on the US and Israel, the PI has its sights set on the Jewish people all over the world. Do you agree it should, or would it be better off focusing on the 85% of the Jews residing in Israel and North America, and doing a good job of it?
2. When considering Jewish communities in the world, the PI views Israel as a "first among equals", with an emphasis on both 'first' and 'equals.' Do you agree or disagree with this view?
3. There are many ways of getting at Peoplehood, witness the diverse viewpoints expressed in the *Peoplehood Papers* Volumes 1-3, the collection edited by Revivi and Kopelowitz, and many other places. The PI has focused on the notion of "connectedness" or "closeness" (indeed, its initial name was the "closeness index", or "*madad hakirva*"). We'll drill down on "connectedness" below, but even before we do, how important do you think this concept is in the context of discussing peoplehood? What are the other concepts that you view as more, or at least no less, important?
4. Connectedness is multifaceted; one question is connectedness between what. The PI has so far placed the greatest emphasis on people's connectedness with some other, different collective. For example, the pilot study asked American Jews about their connectedness with Jews in Israel, and vice versa. But one can also ask about intra-community connectedness, that is, about the collective to which one belongs). The pilot study had some such questions (for example, when asking about connectedness with the Jewish people), and our current project with the DC Federation delves into the subject much deeper. Finally, one can consider connectedness not to another collective, but to a concept (for example, Holy Scriptures). Call these inter-community connectedness intra-community connectedness, and concept-connectedness. How do YOU see the relative importance of these types of connection when discussing Peoplehood?
5. Regarding inter- and intra-community connectedness, how would you rank the various units of analysis in terms of their importance to Peoplehood – the nation, the local community, a particular institution? Another collective or network?
6. Then there is the question of what dimension of connection do you focus on. The pilot survey followed a very well established methodology in sociology and social psychology, and made a distinction among the cognitive dimension (what people know and believe), the affective dimension how they feel), and the behavioral (what they do). What do you think of these dimensions' relevance to Peoplehood, and what other dimensions would you press into service?

7. Do you think survey-based research, possibly including some in-depth interviews of a small sample to get deeper insights, is the right methodology to stick with? If not, how would you augment or replace it?
8. What are some the terminological and linguistic pitfalls to watch out for when asking people Peoplehood-related questions?
9. Finally, from the standpoint of policy or programmatic needs of your specific organization (if you have one), what would like to see include in the Peoplehood Index?

**Appendix**

**Tables 1 and 2: The Peoplehood Index, US and Israeli versions**

**Yoav Shoham and Nimrod Goor<sup>5</sup>**

Jewish Peoplehood (Israeli Version),

*Below are different ways Israeli Jews may feel about Israel. In each case, how often would you say that you feel this way?*

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Always</u>
1. Proud .....	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
2. Disappointed.....	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
3. Indifferent.....	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

<sup>5</sup> 12/18/2008

Jewish Peoplehood (US Version)

Below are different ways American Jews may feel about Israel. In each case, how often would you say that you feel this way?

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Always</u>
4. Proud .....	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
5. Disappointed.....	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>
6. Indifferent.....	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

7. In your view, how important is Israel as a spiritual center for the Jewish People?

- Not at all important..... <sub>1</sub>
- Not so important ..... <sub>2</sub>
- Somewhat important ..... <sub>3</sub>
- Very important..... <sub>4</sub>
- Not sure ..... <sub>5</sub>

Do you agree or disagree:

	<u>Disagree Strongly</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
8. Jews can live a full Jewish life <i>only</i> in Israel.....	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>5</sub>

9. To what extent does the existence of Israel benefit the American Jewish community?

	<u>Not at All</u>	<u>To Some Extent</u>	<u>To a Great Extent</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>4</sub>

10. In your view, how important is the American Jewish community as a spiritual center for the Jewish People?
- Not at all important..... 1
  - Not so important ..... 2
  - Somewhat important ..... 3
  - Very important..... 4
  - Not sure ..... 5

Do you agree or disagree:

11. Jews can live a full Jewish life *only* in Israel.....
- |                                    |                            |                            |                                 |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <u>Disagree</u><br><u>Strongly</u> | <u>Disagree</u>            | <u>Agree</u>               | <u>Strongly</u><br><u>Agree</u> | <u>Not</u><br><u>Sure</u>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1         | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4      | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |

12. To what extent does the existence of the US Jewish community benefit Israel?
- |                            |                                 |  |                            |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <u>Not at All</u>          | <u>To Some</u><br><u>Extent</u> | <u>To a</u><br><u>Great</u><br><u>Extent</u> | <u>Not Sure</u>            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2      | <input type="checkbox"/> 3                   | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |

## **About the Contributors**

Prof Steven M Cohen, a sociologist of American Jewry, was appointed Research Professor of Jewish Social Policy at HUC-JIR/New York.

Prof. Yehezkel Dror is a professor of political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His fields of interest include policy planning and strategic issues.

Nimrod Goor is a seasoned entrepreneur and business leader with hands-on experience in both private and public companies.

Dr. Benjamin Phillips is an associate research scientist at the Steinhardt Social Research Institute and the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and a lecturer in the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program.

Dr. Shlomi Ravid is the outgoing Director of the School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies at Beit Hatfutsot, currently with the Jewish Peoplehood Hub

Prof Naama Sabar-Ben Yehoshua is Director of the Department of Research on Education and Instruction of Jewish Peoplehood

Prof Leonard Saxe is Professor of Jewish Community Research and Social Policy at Brandeis University, and serves as Director of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute.

Prof. Yoav Shoham is Professor of Computer Science at Stanford University and a hi-tech entrepreneur.

Dr. Lea Cecilia Weissman is the European Desk Coordinator at the School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies, Beit Hatfutsot.

Prof Ephraim (Eppie) Yaar, is the Director of The Evens Program for Conflict Resolution and Mediation at Tel Aviv University



## The Jewish Peoplehood Hub

**Our mission:** Inspired by the promise of the Jewish People to realize its collective potential, we will invigorate the value of "Klal Israel" and nurture commitment to the Jewish future.

**Our role:** We will be a catalyst to:

- **Articulate** Peoplehood language and strategies through a global think-tank
- **Cultivate** leaders and activists to embrace the challenges of the Jewish collective
- **Incubate** creative ideas for Peoplehood programming
- **Generate** Peoplehood actions through conversations, resources and networking

**Our founders:** UJA – Federation of New York, the NADAV Fund and the Jewish Agency.

For more information write: [peoplehood@jafi.org](mailto:peoplehood@jafi.org)

## מרכז לעמיות יהודית

**משימתנו:** לטובת מימוש הפוטנציאל שבקולקטיב היהודי נחזק את הערך של "כלל ישראל" ונבנה מחויבות לעתיד היהודי.

**תפקידנו:** אנו נהווה זרז (קטליזאטור) ל-:

- **ניסוח** שפת עמיות ואסטרטגיות פעולה, באמצעות מרכז חשיבה (think tank) גלובאלי.
- **פיתוח** מנהיגות ופעילים להתמודדות עם אתגרי הקולקטיב היהודי
- **אינקובציה** של יוזמות ותוכניות יצירתיות בתחום העמיות.
- **יצירת** פעולות של עמיות דרך שיחה, משאבים ופיתוח של רשתות.

**המייסדים:** הפדרציה של ניו-יורק, קרן נדב והסוכנות היהודית

לפרטים נוספים אנא כתבו ל-: [peoplehood@jafi.org](mailto:peoplehood@jafi.org)

