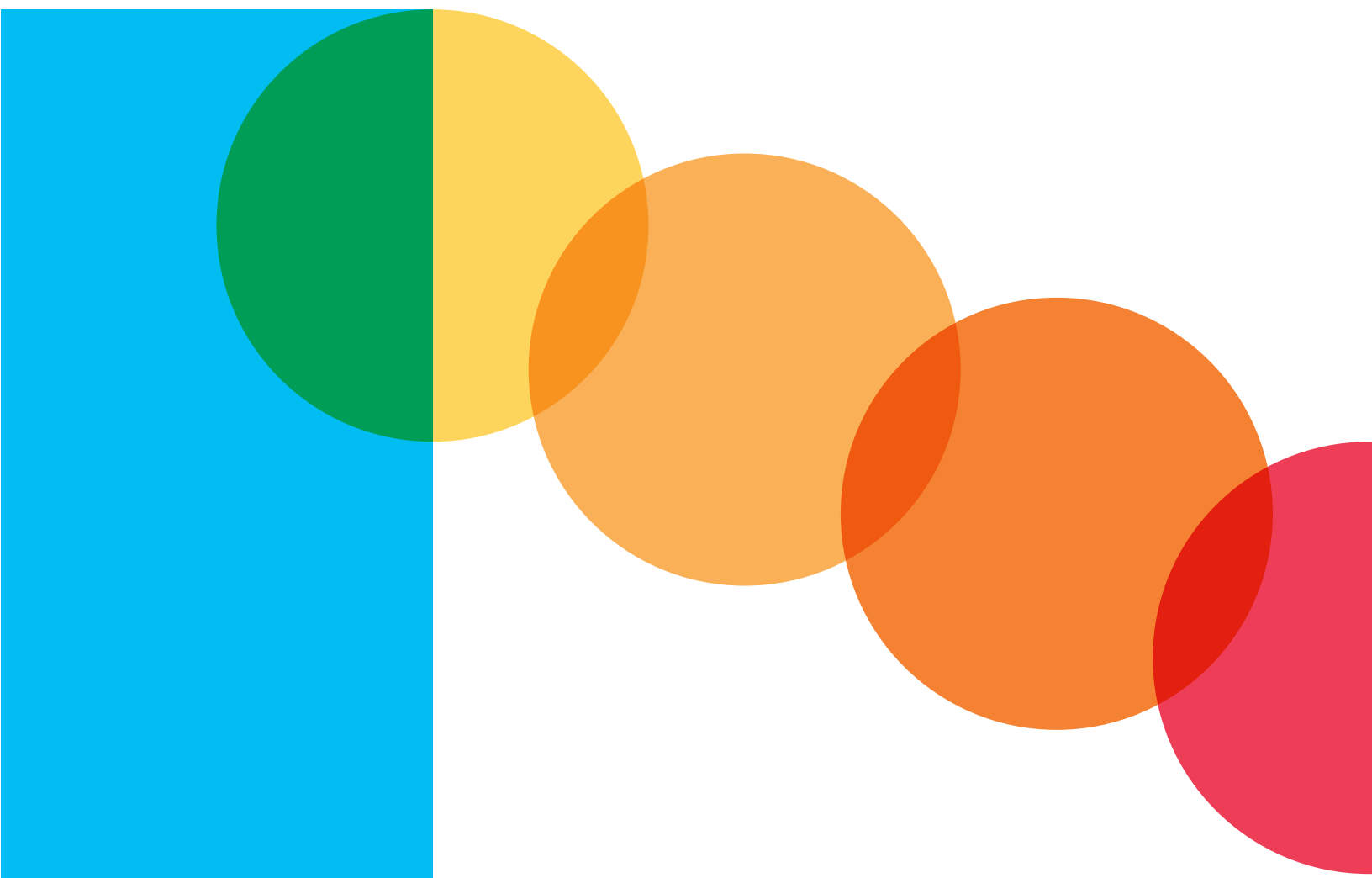


BEYOND DISTANCING:

Young Adult American Jews and
Their Alienation from Israel



Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman
With the assistance of Lauren Blitzer

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The Jewish Identity Project of Reboot
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DISTANCING FROM ISRAEL AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION

American Jews have long maintained a remarkable relationship with Israel. Over the years, their fervent attachment has produced billions of dollars in ongoing philanthropic assistance, a powerful and effective pro-Israel lobby, tens of thousands of visits annually, a steady stream of *aliyah* (settlement in Israel), and myriad other examples of contact and support, ranging from Israeli film festivals to a growing American Jewish competency in Hebrew. All these expressions of support and engagement rest upon a passionate love of Israel by some Jews, and feelings of warmth, attachment and closeness by most.

Yet these feelings of attachment may well be changing, as warmth gives way to indifference, and indifference may even give way to downright alienation. Inevitably, if sufficiently pronounced and widespread, this prospective sea-change in attitudes toward Israel will have profound effects upon American Jews' relationships with Israel, with direct bearing upon Israel's security. In turn, it will also affect Israelis' sense of connection with, or isolation from, Diaspora Jewry, of which American Jews comprise the majority and the most symbolically and strategically prominent component.

Indeed, a mounting body of evidence has pointed to a growing distancing from Israel of American Jews, and the distancing seems to be most pronounced among younger Jews. Insofar as younger Jews are less attached to Israel, the inevitable replacement of the older

population with younger birth cohorts leads to a growing distancing in the population overall.

In recent years, several studies have pointed to the distancing phenomenon, be they studies focusing on attitudes toward Israel specifically (e.g., Cohen 2002; Luntz), or those painting a more generalized portrait of Jewish identity among younger adult American Jews (e.g., Cohen and Kelman 2007; Greenberg 2004, 2006; Ukeles et al. 2006). Studies pointing to an attenuated American Jewish relationship with Israel are not a recent phenomenon; in fact, they stretch back nearly a quarter of a century. With such titles as, "Are American and Israeli Jews Drifting Apart?" (Cohen 1989b), "Ties and Tensions" (Cohen 1987), or "From Romantic Idealists to Loving Realists: The Changing Place of Israel in the Consciousness of American Jews" (Cohen 1985), a long trail of literature documents diminished attachment to Israel among American Jews (see in addition, Cohen 1983, 1986, 1988, 1989a, 1989c, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1996; Cohen and Liebman 2000; Cohen and Lipset 1991; Liebman and Cohen 1990; Waxman 1992).

One explanation for these trends and age-related variations looks to the impact of history and how Israel has appeared in various periods over the last 60 years. Thus, members of the oldest generation of American Jews, born before World War II, may be highly attached to Israel in part because

they can remember the Holocaust and the subsequent founding of the State. Their children, the Baby Boomers, have also experienced events that have, for many, forged a strong sense of Israel connection. For them, memories of the Six Day War and the ensuing period of pro-Israel mobilization have created strong feelings of attachment. Many members of these two generations see Israel as socially progressive, tolerant, peace-seeking, efficient, democratic and proudly Jewish, a society that has successfully withstood mortal threats from malevolent, hostile and fanatical enemies.

But the same cannot be said for younger Jews, especially today's younger adult Jews. Those born after 1974 draw upon memories and impressions less likely to cast Israel in a positive, let alone heroic light. The First Lebanon War in 1982, the First Intifada, the Second Intifada and the Second Lebanon War are all perceived as far more morally and politically complex than the wars Israel fought between 1948 and 1974, casting Israel in a more troubling light.

In addition, in the 1950s Israel was widely admired as a plucky, progressive and largely successful social experiment. In the 1970s, it earned favor for withstanding multiple onslaughts from implacable enemies. In contrast, Israel's position over the more recent years has come under steady criticism from a variety of quarters, with the inevitable impact upon American Jews. In particular,

the political left seems more critical of Israel than the political right, and with so many Jews (still) situated on the left, it stands to reason that Jews generally and Jews on the left in particular should feel less connected to Israel.

Yet another reason to anticipate declining attachment to Israel relates to the shifting character of American Jewish identity. The loci of Jewish identity have shifted from the public to the private, from ethnicity and politics to religion, culture and spirituality (Cohen and Eisen 2000). Jews are more thoroughly integrated with non-Jews, and intermarriage is both a symptom and a cause of this re-formulation of Jewish identities in a direction that makes attachment to Israel specifically, and identification with collective loyalties generally, less intuitively obvious. Many American Jews are claiming or reclaiming their identities as proud, equal, Diaspora Jews who do not necessarily believe that Israel is the center and America the periphery of a global Judaism.

To be sure, the evidence is mixed and inconclusive. Surveys over time suggest a weakening of American Jewish attachment to Israel, with comparable measures generally recording declines over the years (Cohen 2002). Periods of Israeli-Arab hostilities have prompted expressions of American Jewish support, ranging from political mobilization to philanthropic generosity, with accompanying evidence in the surveys. Not surprisingly,

the trend lines are mixed, in that some measures rise and fall over the years.

Methodological problems complicate the study of changes in Israel-oriented public opinion among American Jews. For example, the very meaning of certain measures changes with historical context. Asking survey respondents whether they are “worried the U.S. may stop being a firm ally of Israel,” takes on different meanings depending upon the popularity of Israel’s policies and the perceived solidity of American support for Israel. Even asking if one is “pro-Israel” or a “supporter of Israel” depends heavily upon the circumstances of the day, and upon whether respondents think “Israel” refers to the government, the country, or some metaphoric idea. For many people, the question of being “pro-Israel” is as strange as asking if one is “pro-France” or “pro-Brazil.” Many would also see the question and term itself as loaded in the way favored by Israel advocacy organizations, such that the only way to “support” Israel is to take an “Israel: right-or-wrong” stance, suggesting that public criticism cannot work in concert with a broader notion of “support.” The linguistic and methodological complexities in this realm abound.

Whenever younger people differ from their elders, either of two processes is taking place. One possibility is that “family life cycle” effects are at work – young adults differ because they are largely single and/or

childless; presumably, marriage and parenthood will alter their views or behaviors to come to more closely resemble those of their elders. Joining churches and synagogues is a classic example of a life cycle effect: the advent of children provokes church and synagogue affiliation, and in time, the single and childless unaffiliated adult of today becomes the affiliated married parent of tomorrow.

Alternatively, “birth cohort” effects could be operating – younger people differ simply because they were born at a different time, years or decades after their elders. The imprint of their history differs from that of their elders and, presumably, is less likely to change with the passage of time. Musical taste is a well-known illustration of a birth cohort effect: Baby Boomers will always have a special place in their hearts for The Beatles, Stones and Temptations, while Generation X might have a similar place for Nirvana or Public Enemy. Marriage and child-bearing rarely provoke a re-shuffling of one’s iPod or CD collection.

If it turns out that age-related variations in Israel attitudes are tied to the family life cycle, then we can presume that many young people will come to adopt their elders’ warmer attitudes toward Israel as they mature. However, if these gaps between old and young regarding Israel attachment are due primarily to birth cohort effects, then we may presume that the declines are more perma-

nent and that the gaps today will influence the stance of American Jewry toward Israel for years to come.

In short, with respect to younger Jews and their presumably diminished attachment to Israel, this research focuses upon three questions:

- 1) How broad-based is the distancing, and how comprehensive the evidence? To what extent are younger Jews, in fact, more distant from Israel than their elders?
- 2) Insofar as younger Jews are more distant, can the gap in Israel-related attitudes be seen as a life cycle effect, one that will presumably largely evaporate over time, or does it have the signs of a more enduring birth cohort effect, one tied to relatively permanent features of the younger age groups?
- 3) To what may the age-related variations be attributed? Are they related, as many believe, to political (i.e., left-of-center) orientations? Or are other factors more critical?



THE SAMPLE

To address these and related issues, we commissioned Synovate, Inc. (successor to Market Facts, Inc.) to conduct the 2007 National Survey of American Jews, a mail-back and web-administered survey of identified Jews. Synovate maintains a “Global Opinion Sample,” a consumer access panel of approximately 1.3 million households that have agreed to participate in surveys by either telephone, mail or on-line. Households are recruited by invitation through special mailings or intercepts on web sites. Key demographic variables about the household are captured when the household member completes their member form. The information includes household composition, income, age, employment, employment type, etc. This information is updated periodically. A Jewish respondent is determined by the question in the screening questionnaire that reads, “Please mark whether you are (or your spouse is): Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Other/None.” A Jewish household, then, is one where either the panel member or the spouse is Jewish by religion.

Using its Global Opinion Sample, Synovate fielded the survey between December 20, 2006 and January 28, 2007, eliciting 1,828 Jewish respondents, of whom 703 derived from the Internet sample (with a 48% response rate) and 1,125 derived from the mail sample (with a 59% response rate).

This analysis focuses on the non-Orthodox respondents (1,828 – 124 Orthodox

= unweighted N of 1,704 non-Orthodox respondents). As might be expected, Orthodox Jews maintain far different relationships with Israel than those maintained by the non-Orthodox. If anything, Orthodox engagement with Israel has increased over the years as Orthodoxy has been “Sliding to the Right” (Heilman 2006).

Respondents are weighted by the number of adult Jews in the household, age, sex, region and education to approximate the distributions found in the 2000-01 *National Jewish Population Study* (Kotler-Berkowitz et al. 2003). Comparisons of frequencies for several key variables appear in the Appendix, suggesting that Synovate’s sample of Jewish respondents largely resembles NJPS respondents on most socio-demographic and Jewish identity measures. It does appear, though, that the Synovate sample may under-represent the most traditional Orthodox Jews (who are, in any event, dropped from this analysis) as well as some highly unengaged Jews (those who do not claim their religion is Jewish but who identify as Jews nonetheless). In addition, some argue that a consumer-oriented sample would over-represent the culturally conventional (particularly if they are non-married) – the types of people with a greater than average interest in consumer issues, with middle-brow cultural tastes.

Consistent with these biases, the sample under-represents those aged 21 to 24. These young adults are generally living

at school and unmarried. The sample also under-represents the unmarried.

The effect of these biases with respect to those under age 35 is to, perhaps, present them as more engaged with Israel than the universe from which they are drawn. Those who are married (especially at a young age), who are more culturally conventional and who are Jewish by religion are more likely to hold positive attitudes toward Israel than those who are non-married, culturally off-beat and ethnically identified as Jewish, but who see their religion as “none” (as do nearly 20% of American Jewish adults). Consequently, insofar as these results point to declining Israel attachment among younger adults, this particular sample works to under-state the variation or decline. If, in this sample, those under 35 score low on Israel attachment, then one has to presume that the “real” levels of attachment among those under 35 are lower still.

The questionnaire (reproduced in the Appendix) covers a wide range of Jewish identity-related issues. A large number of items (about two dozen) relate directly to attitudes toward Israel, providing numerous and diverse ways of measuring how warmly respondents feel toward Israel.

With an awareness of these issues and the cautions they imply, we can proceed to an in-depth examination of the findings.



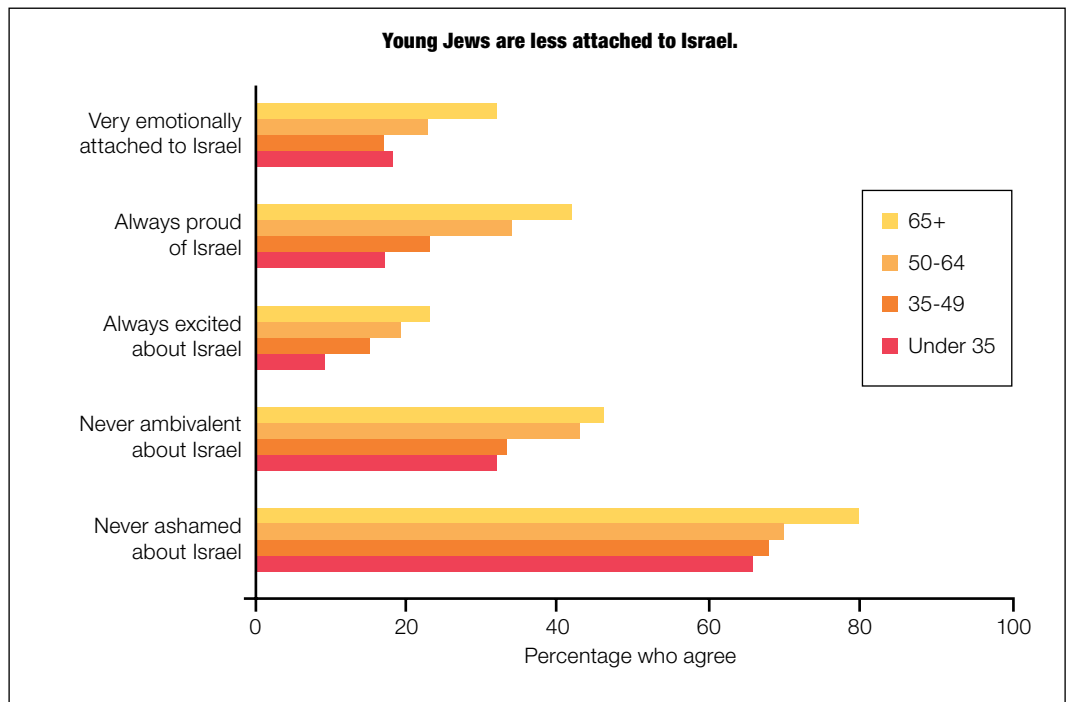
THE FINDINGS **Far lower levels of attachment to Israel among younger Jews**

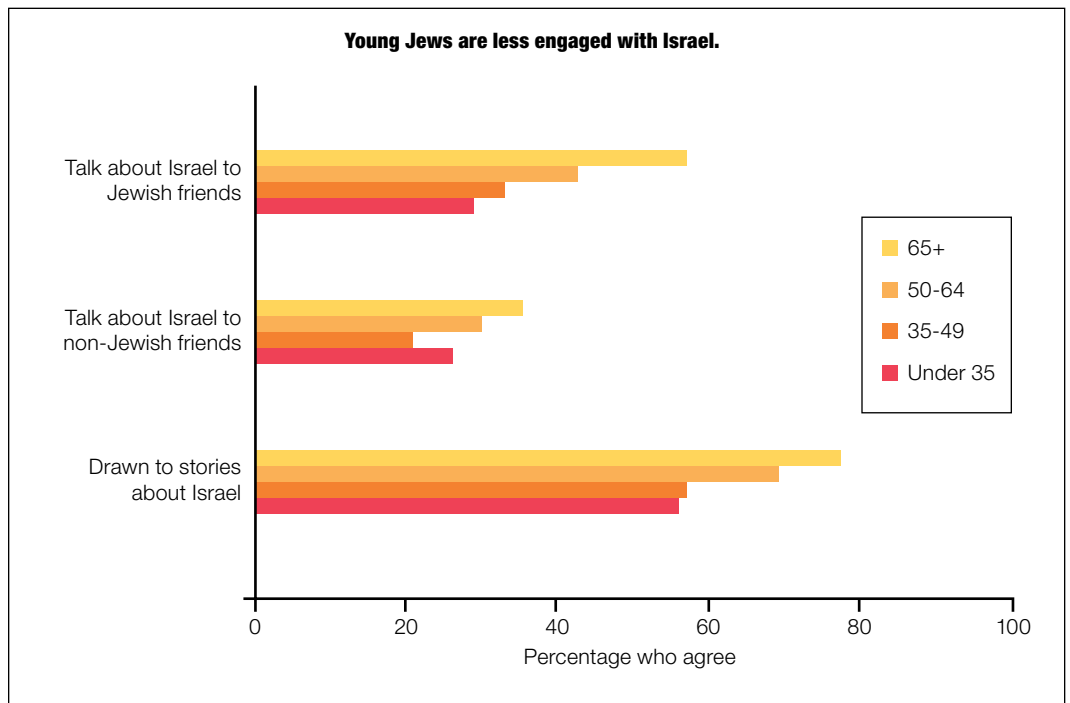
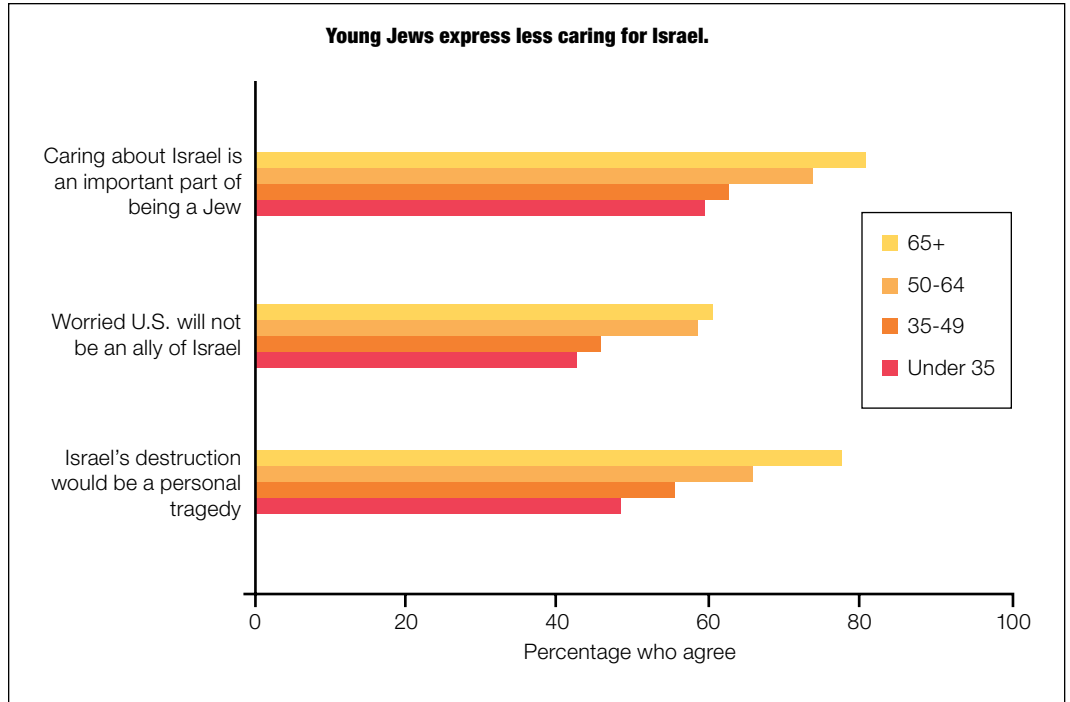
One major advantage of the 2007 National Survey of American Jews is that it contains a large number of questions measuring feelings of closeness toward (or distance from) Israel, tapping into different aspects and dimensions of the concept. The charts below graphically present the results for four age groups, ranging from 65+ to under 35. The results are nearly uniform. In all cases, those 65 and over report the highest levels of attachment (or tie for highest, once, with those 50-64). For all measures, those who are 50-64 exhibit higher levels of Israel-related attachment, support, caring or engagement than those under 50. And in almost every instance (with just two exceptions), those who are 35-49 outscore those who are under 35.

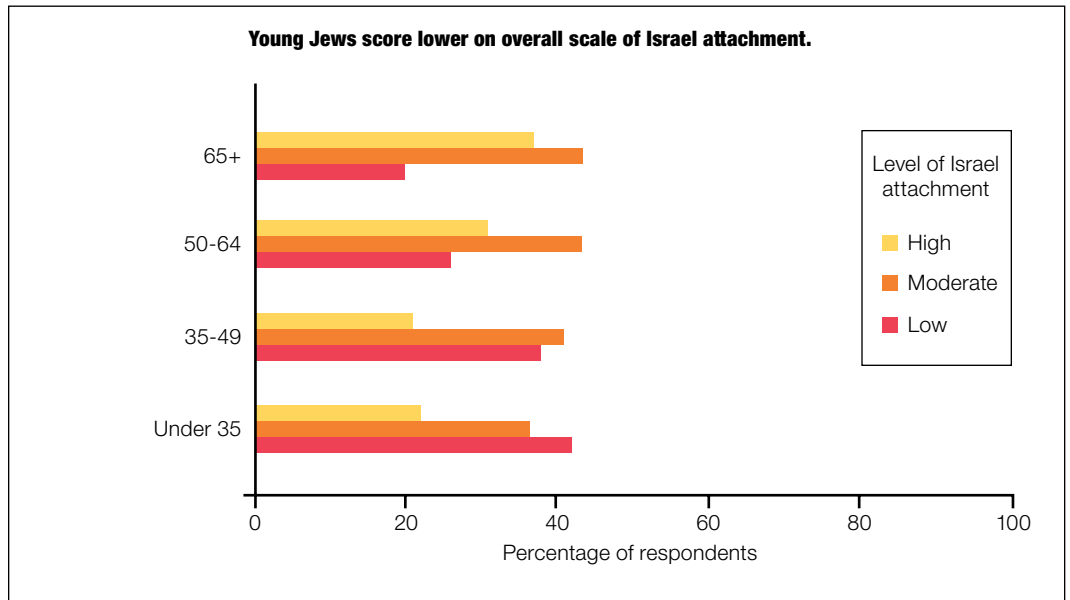
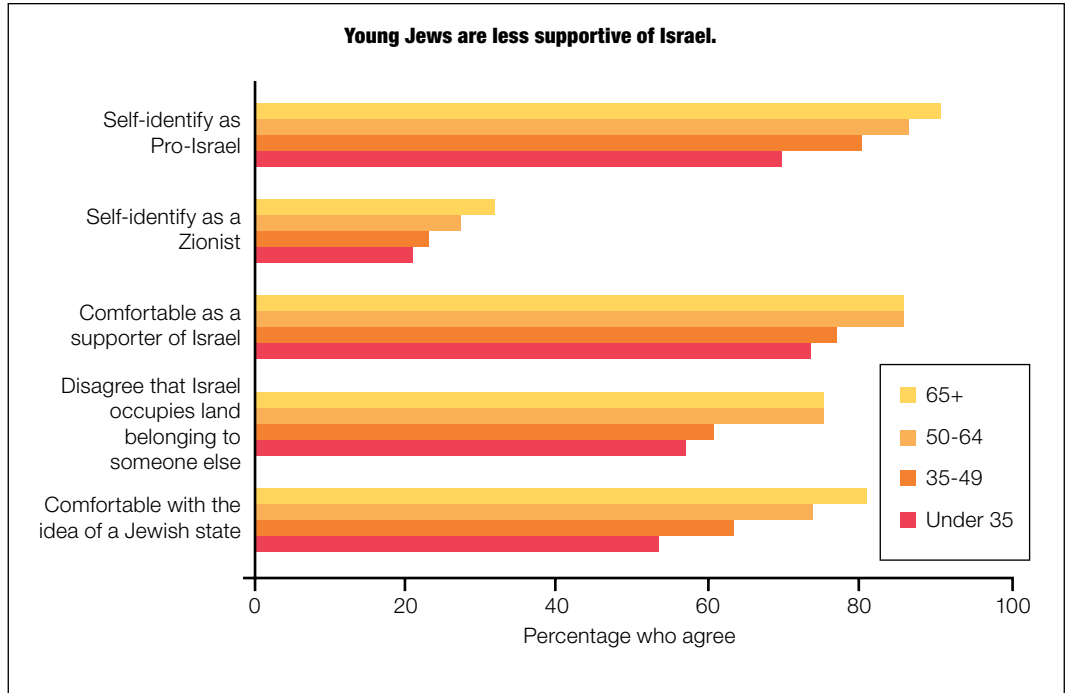
The range of viewpoints covered by these generalizations is truly broad. The survey questions capture attitudes that encompass

feeling attached to Israel as well as feeling proud, excited, ambivalent or ashamed about Israel. The survey also includes questions regarding caring about Israel, feeling concerned about U.S. support for Israel, seeing Israel's destruction as a personal tragedy, talking to others about Israel or being drawn to news stories about Israel. Other questions relate to identifying as pro-Israel, as a Zionist and a supporter of Israel, as well as rejecting the notion that Israel occupies lands that belong to someone else and feeling comfortable with the idea of a Jewish State of Israel.

Results for any one of these indicators may be dismissed as a peculiarity or as reflecting a very specific behavior or attitude. But the gaps between younger and older Jews for all measures suggest that a broad-based distancing from Israel is well under way and has been under way for decades. Whereas previous studies have pointed to gaps between old and young in a few select indicators of attachment to Israel, this study demonstrates declining







attachment over a wide variety and large number of indicators, testifying to the breadth, depth and irrefutable nature of that decline.

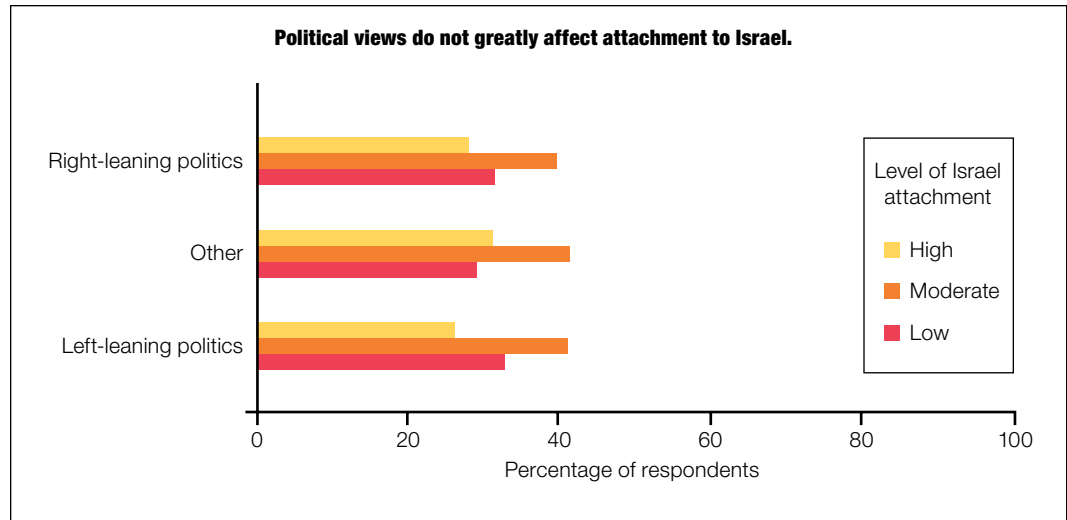
The results for a summary scale measuring overall attachment to Israel make the point most vividly (see the lower graph on page 10). Based upon a composite of respondents' answers to several questions, we divided respondents into high, moderate, and low levels of attachment to Israel. Among the most elderly group, those highly attached to Israel vastly exceed those with low attachment. Among those 50-64, the margin narrows such that the number of highly attached only slightly exceed the low-attached. Among those 35-49, the two figures actually reverse: the low-attached vastly exceed those with high attachment. Among those under 35, the low vs. high gap in Israel attachment widens further still, such that of the four age groups, those under 35 emerge as the least attached, followed by those 35-49.

That each age group is less Israel-attached than its elders suggests that we are in the midst of a long-term and ongoing decline in Israel attachment. The age-related differences cannot be attributed primarily to family life cycle effects, if only because the age-related declines characterize the entire age spectrum from the very old to the very young. Rather, we are in the midst of a massive shift in attitudes toward Israel, propelled forward by the process of cohort

replacement, where the maturing younger cohorts that are the least Israel-engaged are replacing the oldest cohorts that are the most Israel-engaged.

With all this said, caring for Israel among younger adult Jews has not evaporated entirely. Far from it. On a variety of measures, approximately 60% of non-Orthodox Jews under the age of 35 express a measure of interest in, caring for and attachment to Israel. While this figure falls short of comparable figures for their elders, it can be said that most young Jews still express attachment to Israel. Moreover, we need to recall that this analysis sets aside the Orthodox. With the Orthodox, and with their growing percentage in the population, even among younger adult Jews the number who may be reasonably said to feel attachment to Israel approaches three-quarters of the population.

At the same time, as these graphs readily demonstrate, the trend lines for the non-Orthodox population certainly point to declining attachment. These declines characterize not just the youngest adult Jews, but the entire age spectrum from oldest, to older-middle-aged, to younger-middle-aged, to young adults. These powerful age variations demand explanation. How are we to further understand the age variations? What factors might be at work? Are, as many believe, Jews' left-liberal political leanings driving Jews away from Israel engagement? Alternatively, are other factors at work?



Political identities and Israel: alienation on the right and the left

The general expectation is that those on the political left should be less approving and appreciative of Israel than those on the right. To test this hypothesis, we used two questions to construct a political identity scale: party identification and political ideology (liberal, moderate, and conservative). For this left-of-center Jewish sample, we defined relatively “left-leaning” as those who identify both as Democratic and liberal. We defined “right-leaning” as those who identify either as Republican by party or as conservative by ideology. (Thus, it was tougher to qualify as left-leaning than as right-leaning in this left-of-center, non-Orthodox Jewish sample.) All others were defined in the middle and labeled, “other.” By these operational definitions, 37% of the respondents were defined as left-leaning, 21% as right-leaning, and 42% as other, or moderate. The most youthful group was slightly more left-leaning than their elders with 43% on the left, 20% on the right, and 37% moderate.

Among the left-leaning respondents, those with low levels of attachment to Israel

slightly exceed those with high levels. But the same is true for right-leaning respondents, where those with low levels of attachment to Israel also slightly exceed in number those with high levels, albeit to a lesser extent than among the left-leaning. Among the middle-of-the-road respondents, the highly attached to Israel out-number those with low attachment to Israel by a very small margin. Certainly the results do not substantiate the claim that leftist identities are at the heart of the erosion in attachment to Israel. If we can draw any conclusion, it is that political moderation is somewhat more associated with Israel attachment, perhaps suggesting that conventionality or political indifference pose little challenge to expressing positive views of Israel.

In other words, the relationship between political views and attachment to Israel is far from uniform or consistent. Neither left-wing nor right-wing views are clearly associated with distancing from Israel. But perhaps we might obtain a different result if we focused precisely on the most alienated from Israel.

To do so, we have constructed a measure of alienation that relies on the following three items: feels not at all attached to Israel; never feels proud about Israel; and never feels

excited about Israel. Anyone with two or three such responses qualifies as “alienated,” a category populated by just 7.6% of the sample. Of the alienated, almost all say they never feel pride in Israel, most feel not at all attached, and most never feel excited by Israel. For these purposes, alienation, then, is operationally defined as lack of pride in Israel, often accompanied by lack of attachment, lack of excitement, or both.

The relationships between alienation, political views and age are rather curious. The most alienated group is the small number of young people with relatively right-leaning political views (unweighted N=60) where as many as 21% feel alienated from Israel. Among their left-leaning age-peers, just 11% qualify as alienated, as do 12% of those with moderate or “other” political leanings. Thus, contrary to general impressions, it is those who identify as conservative or Republican who are the most distant from Israel, and not those who see themselves as liberal Democrats – at least among those under 35.

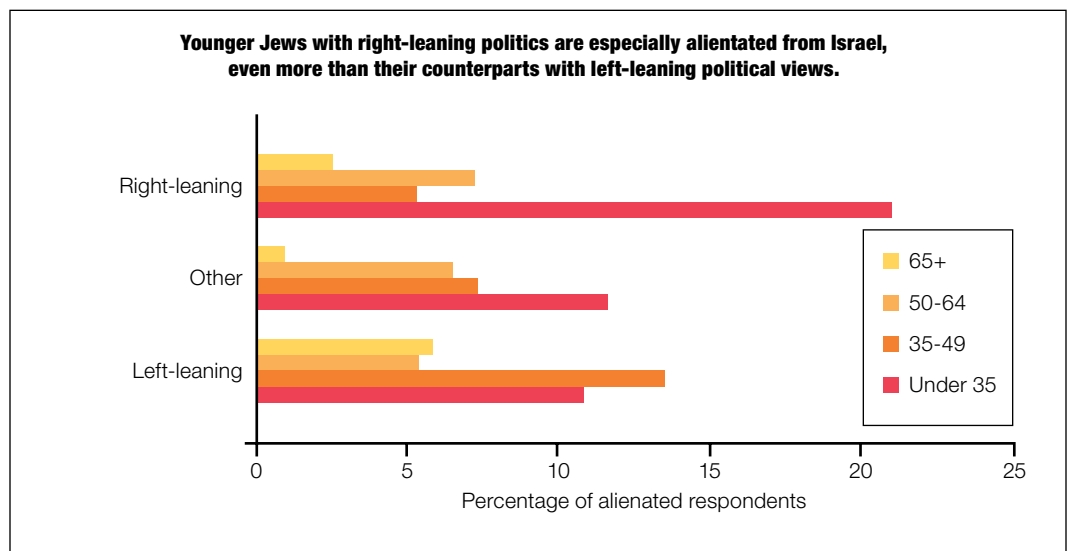
However, such is *not* the case among those 35-49. For this age group, those on the left express more alienation than those on the right (14% vs. 5%). In contrast with the next younger

group, we find more alienation on the left than on the right.

What are we to make of these contradictory findings? We could infer that political identities carry a different implication for those under 35 as compared with those 35-49. But such an inference, unsupported by any compelling theory or previous substantiating evidence, demands far more evidence than available in this survey. Rather, we can retreat to a more modest and sustainable claim: political identity, for the general population, has little bearing upon feelings of warmth toward or alienation from Israel. Whatever conclusion one may draw from the actions of political elites, or the writing of intellectual figures, left-of-center political identity (seeing oneself as liberal and a Democrat) in the general population exerts seemingly little influence on the level of attachment to Israel.

The link with intermarriage: lower levels of attachment to Israel

If the impact of political attitudes upon pro-Israel feelings is complex or ambiguous, that of intermarriage is far more straightforward.



Rising intermarriage, with all that it reflects and all that it brings about, has helped drive down feelings of attachment to Israel. The logic is also straightforward: far greater numbers of younger Jews than older Jews are intermarried. In this sample of non-Orthodox Jews, the percentage of individuals who are intermarried climbs as one moves down the age ladder from 9% among the oldest (65+) to 62% of the youngest (under 35).

In addition, the intermarried report far lower levels of Israel attachment than do the in-married (see graph on page 15 for the scale of Israel attachment). Among the intermarried, those with low attachment to Israel are more than double the number with high attachment. Among the in-married and non-married, the number with high attachment to Israel surpasses the number with low attachment. In short, intermarried Jews sharply trail others with respect to overall attachment to Israel.

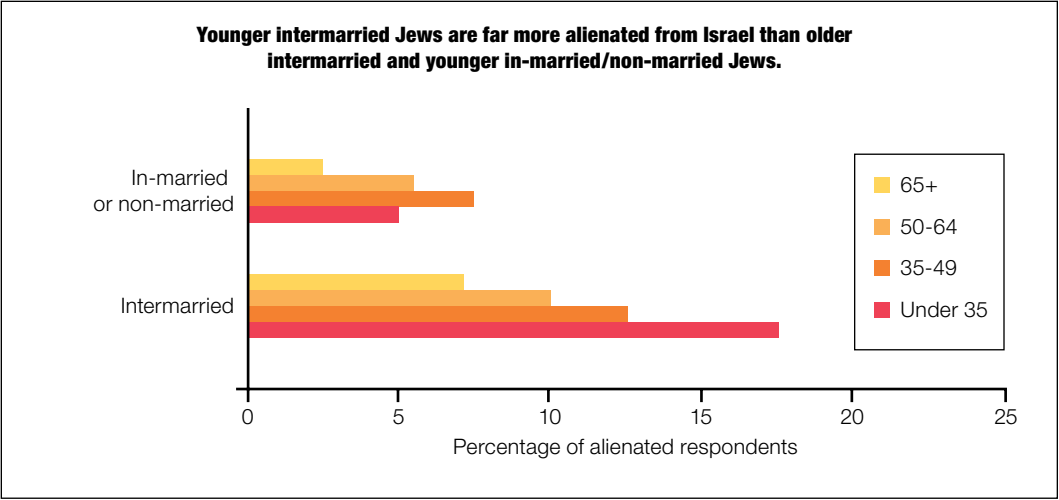
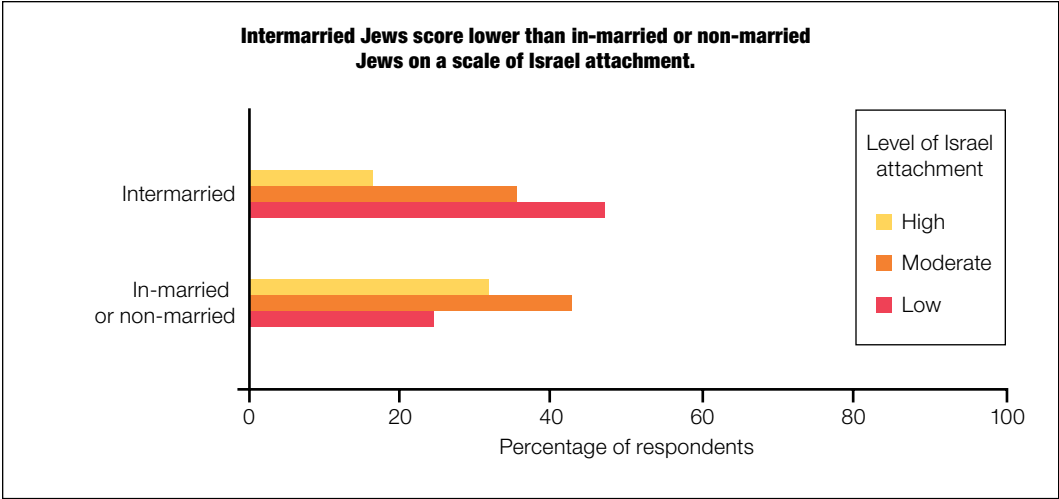
Moreover, we find similar patterns with respect to “alienation” from Israel, the most distant category. Among the in-married and non-married, just under 5% qualify as alienated from Israel, but among the intermarried, three times that number (15%) qualify as alienated.

Among the in-married and non-married, alienation is not at all associated with youthfulness; for them, the youngest are simply not the most alienated from Israel. However, matters are quite different among the intermarried. Here, alienation from Israel climbs

dramatically as one moves from old to young, such that the young intermarried adults are the most alienated among the intermarried. Among those who are under 35 and intermarried, nearly 18% qualify as alienated.

Thus, three trend lines converge to make intermarriage a major factor in driving down the Israel attachment scores of younger adults. First, many more young people are intermarried. Second, the intermarried are more distant and more alienated from Israel. Third, the youngest intermarried are the most distant and alienated from Israel.

Several explanations, both retrospective and prospective, connect intermarriage with alienation from Israel. More than other Jews, intermarried Jews report far weaker Jewish socialization in their childhood years (for work on the meaning and implications of intermarriage, see Fishman 2004; Medding et al. 1992; Phillips and Fishman forthcoming; Phillips 1997, 2005). Many of their parents are themselves intermarried, and they report fewer Jewish friends in high school, and much less participation in Jewish education from pre-school as toddlers to Hillel and Jewish Studies classes as undergraduates. Moreover, by definition, the intermarried live with non-Jewish spouses; and by their choice, more raise their children as non-Jews than as Jews, occasioning far weaker ties to congregations and Jewish social networks. All of these factors, both



those that precede marriage and those that follow, may be presumed to affect levels of attachment to Israel.

A policy consideration: the impact of short-term and long-term travel to Israel

For advocates of warmer ties between American Jews and Israel, the analysis thus far may well seem disheartening. Younger Jews are more distant from Israel, and their shifting attitudes are promoting an overall cooling of American Jewish passions for Israel. Inter-marriage is a significant factor in the distancing of young people from Israel, in that intermarriage is more frequent, and the younger intermarried Jews are especially distant from Israel. The rather unexpected relationship between alienation from Israel and political attitudes points strongly to the importance of ethnic cohesion (Jews relating to Jews) as a factor in buttressing attachment to Israel.

The American Jewish community can do little to stop the advance of birth cohorts through the population, to influence political attitudes, or to significantly drive down the intermarriage rate in the foreseeable future. That said, what can be done to counter the decline in Israel attachment, particularly among younger Jews?

In the last several years, American Jewish philanthropists, communal organizations and

Israeli public bodies have undertaken significant efforts to expand the participation of young people in Israel travel programs, both of short and long duration. Among the many sought-after outcomes associated with this effort is the hope and expectation that participants will return with a stronger attachment to Israel. Indeed, one can argue that if the programs have little impact on feelings about Israel, it is unlikely that they will influence other aspects of Jewish identity and connection.

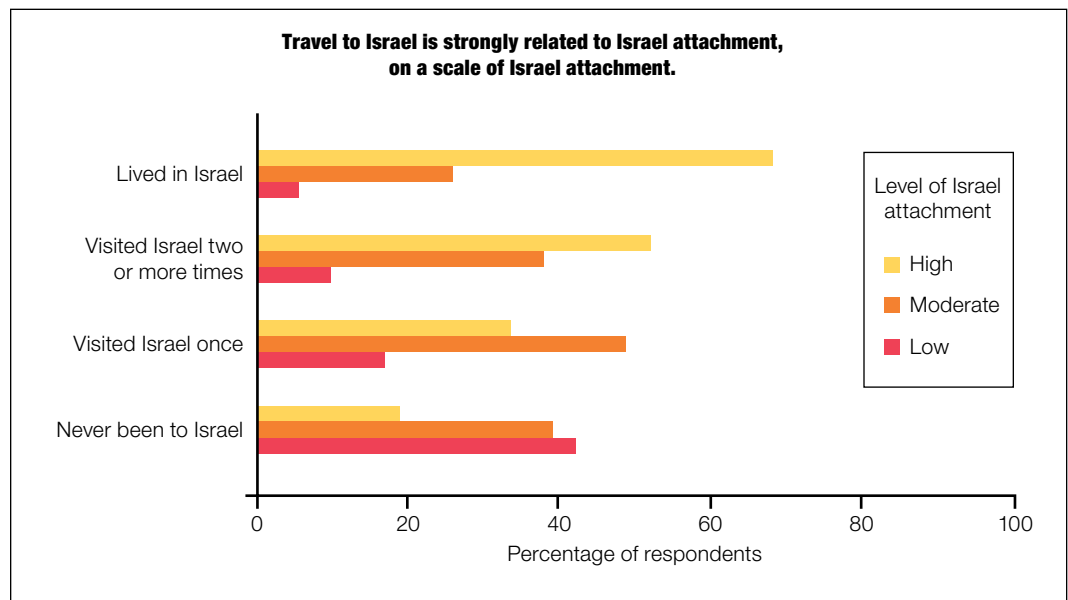
A full and proper analysis of the impact of an Israel trip goes well beyond the scope of this paper, demanding attention to the matter of self-selection and, ideally, measuring the attitudes of participants and non-participants both before and after the trips (see, for example, Saxe et al. 2004), or intensively observing participants during the trips (e.g., Goldberg 2001; Heilman 2001; Kelner 2003-4; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2001). Such is not possible with these data. But, nevertheless, we can gain some inkling as to how Israel travel is associated with Israel attachment, discerning how the relationship between travel and attachment may differ for different age groups. If there is evidence of an impact, is the impact consistent across age groups, or is it higher – or lower – for young adults? To what extent does the trip to Israel matter and to whom?

Overall, we do indeed find very sharp differences in attachment to Israel associated

with travel to Israel. Among those who have never been to Israel, the number with a high level of attachment is less than half the number with a low level of attachment (19% vs. 42%). Among those with only one trip, the relationship is reversed: those with high levels of attachment are double the number of those with a low degree of attachment to Israel (34% vs. 17%). Those who have been to Israel two or more times are even more firmly attached to Israel, with 52% scoring high and under 10% at the low end of attachment. Finally, among those who have lived in Israel (such as might be reported by participants in a semester or year program in Israel), 68% score high on attachment, and just 6% score low. These results do not definitively establish the impact of the Israel trip, but they do open the door to the possibility, if not probability, that trips matter, that more trips are better than fewer, and that trips of longer duration have more impact than those with shorter duration.

Certainly not all these variations in Israel attachment can be attributed to the trips

themselves. Self-selection plays a major role in determining who chooses to travel to Israel, and who travels multiple times or for extended periods. Simply put, the more Jewishly involved travel more readily, more often, and for longer duration. Statistically controlling for Jewish involvement helps explain some of the variation in attachment by travel experience. In other words, one explanation for the wide gaps in Israel attachment between those who have been to Israel and those who have not entails the strong Jewish background and commitment of the former group. In fact, statistically, almost half the gap between travelers and non-travelers remains after controlling for Jewish involvement. That said, it seems fair to say that the Israel trip still leaves a noticeable lasting impact on attitudes toward Israel. On an Israel-attitude scale ranging from 0 to 100, the single Israel trip taken at any point in one's life is associated with about 8 percentage points of improvement in scores and a reduction of 4 points in the number who qualify as alienated from Israel (about 8% of the total sample). These numbers are both substantively and



statistically significant. When considered in light of other published studies, these findings certainly underscore the value of trips to Israel as promoting attachment to Israel.

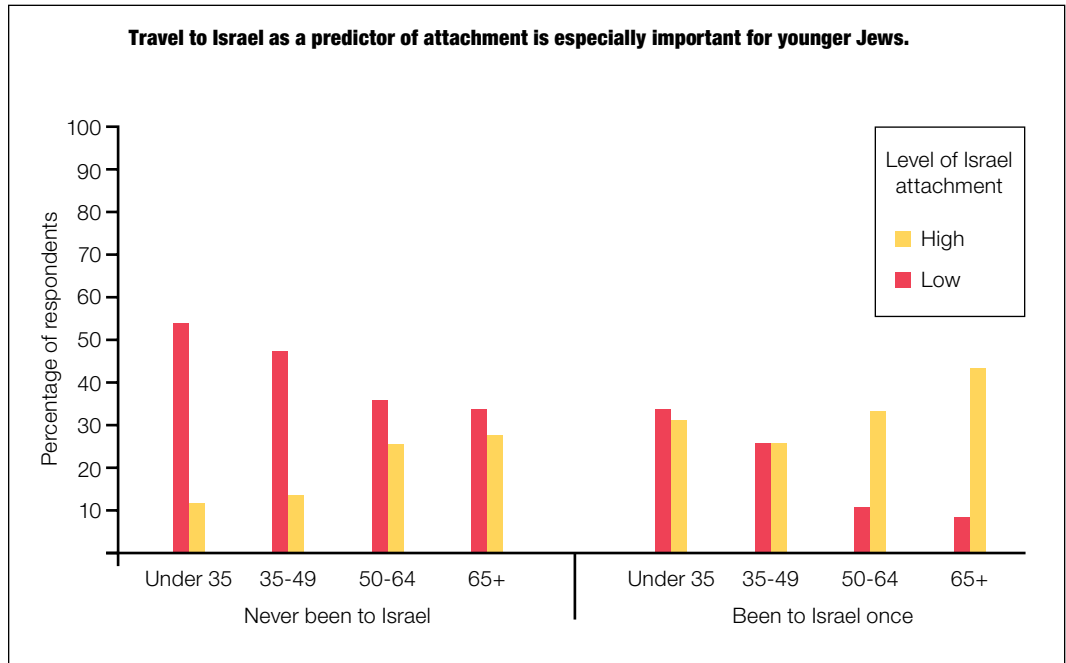
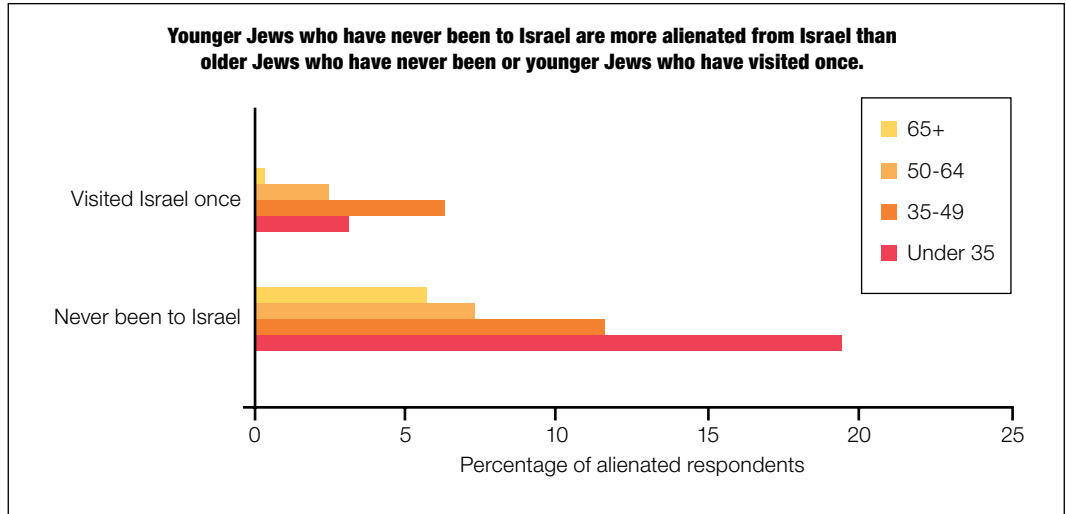
Perhaps of greater interest is evidence of a differential relationship between trips and attachment, depending on age. In brief, however important the single trip to Israel may be for promoting attachment toward and preventing alienation from Israel, the impact is clearly more pronounced among those under the age of 35 than those 35-64.

The net impact of a trip on the 0-100 Israel-attitude scale amounts to just 4 points for those 50-64, 9 points for those 35-49, and 12 points for those under 35. For the issue of alienation, the same progression runs from 1 point to 4 points to fully 13 points for those under 35. In other words, even when we extract the differences in Jewish identity between one-time travelers to Israel and those who have never been, the apparent impact of the trip on feeling attached to Israel and upon (not) feeling alienated from Israel is noticeably strongest among the younger adults. The bottom line: as important as Israel travel may be for fortifying commitment to Israel and preventing alienation, it is even more important, and most important, for younger Jews.

The basis for this finding can be seen in the shifting attitudes toward Israel by age among those who have never been to Israel. For the oldest Jews who have never been,

those scoring high on attachment slightly trail the number with low attachment: 27% to 33%. For those 50-64, the gap widens to 10 points (25% vs. 35%). For those 35-49, the gap is substantially wider (47% score low and only 13% score high). And the gap is wider still for those under 35 (53% to 11%).

Absent any trip to Israel, most Jews score on the lowest rung of Israel attachment, and only a few manage to harbor warm feelings toward Israel, but even among the non-travelers, the putative impact varies by age group. For those 65 and over who never went, more than twice as many score high on attachment and not quite half as many score low when compared with those under 35 who have not gone. In other words, going to Israel at some point is almost a requirement for a young person to feel highly attached to Israel. Older generations (especially those who can remember the founding of the State) manage, at times, to develop closeness to Israel even without having ever visited.



SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Older Jews express considerable attachment to Israel, and very few are genuinely alienated from Israel. The same cannot be said for younger adult Jews. In sharp contrast to their parents and grandparents, non-Orthodox younger Jews, on the whole, feel much less attached to Israel than their elders. Moreover, in the past one could speak of mounting indifference to Israel as the major orientation of the unengaged. In contrast, these days we find instances of genuine alienation as many more Jews, especially young people, profess a near-total absence of any positive feelings toward Israel.

This age-related decline characterizes almost all available measures of genuine Israel attachment and thus cannot be attributed to measurement idiosyncrasy. At the same time, the bottom has not fallen out entirely: about 60% of younger adult Jews who are not Orthodox profess some attachment to Israel. While less attached than their elders, most younger adult Jews still view Israel positively.

The small but growing minority of younger generation Jews who are indifferent toward, if not alienated from, Israel did not suddenly emerge. Their distant views are not a matter of a recent, single, pivotal development or a sudden plunge in attachment. Rather, the erosion in Israel engagement has taken place over the entire age spectrum, from elderly, to upper-middle-aged, to lower-middle-aged, to young adult. The phenomenon has the markings of a birth

cohort effect rather than a family life cycle effect. A family life cycle effect would show strong relationships with marriage or the advent of children. We might see increases and decreases in attachment over the life cycle as family circumstances change. But here, the trend lines are fairly consistent with age: each drop in age is associated with a drop in Israel attachment. While the evidence is not and cannot be conclusive, it does appear that levels of attachment are linked to when people were born and came to adulthood, rather than a particular stage in life. We see a pattern of shifting (declining) attachment to Israel stretching over 50 years, from those who are now 65 and older down to those in their 20s.

Contrary to widely held beliefs, left-liberal political identity is *not* primarily responsible for driving down the Israel attachment scores among the non-Orthodox. If left-liberal politics were influential, we should see significant differences in Israel attachment between liberal-Democrats and conservative-Republicans. The absence of such a pattern, and the inconsistent variations within age groups, run contrary to the assertion that political views are the prime source of disaffection from Israel. This is a case where a “non-finding” is a finding. The results point to no clear impact of political leanings on Israel attachment, contrary to the widely held view that left-liberal ideology is especially incompatible with warmth toward Israel.

Rather, in thinking about why many younger Jews are indifferent to Israel, we need to look at intermarriage and what it reflects, promotes and symbolizes. The intermarried are far less attached to Israel than the in-married or non-married. They are far more numerous among young people than among their elders. And the distance from Israel is greater among the younger adult intermarried than among the older adult intermarried.

Intermarriage flows from and helps produce a more personalized rather than collective view of being Jewish, a trend that has mounted and become increasingly apparent over the years, as reported in Cohen 1998, Cohen and Eisen 2000, Horowitz 2000 and Liebman 1999. These works speak of “ethnic decline,” “The Jew Within,” “Jewish journeys” and “privatized Judaism,” all of which accompany, reflect and contextualize the intermarriage phenomenon. Intermarriage represents and advances more open and fluid group boundaries along with a commensurate drop in Jewish tribalism, collective Jewish identity and Jewish Peoplehood (Cohen and Wertheimer 2006). It also both comes out of and promotes a more open notion of community, a more fluid conception of Jewish identity, and a more critical approach to peoplehood and belonging. As much as anything else, this shift in the meaning of being Jewish in America explains the retreat from engagement with Israel.

This study underscores previous findings showing that promoting trips to Israel may be the most policy-relevant action organized Jews can undertake to stem the erosion in Israel attachment among younger adult Jews. A single trip has clear positive effects on Israel attachment, repeat trips are even more effective and so are trips of longer duration.

Travel to Israel is more essential for securing a pro-Israel identity among young people than it is among their elders. Older people who have never been to Israel have had several ways of shaping a positive relationship with Israel. Their younger counterparts have had few such experiences or opportunities aside from travel to Israel.

Notwithstanding the clear patterns of age-related decline in attachment, as well as the clear emergence of small (but growing) minorities who may be termed indifferent or even alienated from Israel, the results also point to a majority of young adults with warm and positive feelings toward Israel. Their large number suggests a sizeable and significant reservoir of good feelings, and of potential candidates for travel programs and other forms of Israel education.

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Comparisons of Synovate 2007 sample with NJPS 2000/01, both weighted
(Synovate unweighted N=1828; conducted December 2006 – January 2007)

	Synovate 2007	NJPS 2000/01	
APPENDIX	Age 70+	18%	18%
	55-69	21%	18%
	40-54	30%	29%
	21-39 / 18-39	30%	35%
	Male / Female	49% / 51%	48% / 52%
	Married	58%	57%
	Intermarried (of all cases)	26%	31%
	Region: North East	42%	41%
	Midwest	12%	12%
	South	24%	24%
	West	23%	23%
	No BA / Post-grad degree	40% / 26%	45% / 24%
	Jewish Education: Day School	7%	11%
	Other	76%	58%
	None	17%	31%
	Denomination: Orthodox	7%	10%
	Conservative	26%	26%
	Reform	30%	35%
	Reconstructionist	2%	2%
	Other	35%	28%
	Been to Israel	40%	36%
	Most close friends Jewish	34%	33%
	Seder	73%	68%
	Fast Yom Kippur	58%	59%
	Services High Holidays	54%	52%
	Shabbat candles	25%	28%
	Attend services monthly	24%	23%
	Synagogue member	40%	38%
	Been to JCC past year	32%	32%
	Donor to Jewish Federation	37%	25%
	Being Jewish very important	46%	52%
	Attached to Israel	25%	28%
	Democrat / Republican	63% / 14%	59% / 15%



THE 2007 NATIONAL SURVEY OF AMERICAN JEWS

Dear Panel Member,

Your household has been selected for a national survey about topics of importance to the American Jewish community. The information provided will contribute to the development of a unique understanding of contemporary American Jewry. All responses, of course, will remain anonymous and be compiled together with hundreds of others in the form of statistical summaries. The statistical profile will be available to Jewish organizations and leaders, journalists, and academics interested in these issues. For the research to be valid, it is important that everyone selected complete the survey — not just those who feel they are “strongly Jewish.”

IMPORTANT: Because we need a balanced number of replies from men and women, this questionnaire needs to be answered by an adult Jewish [male/female] whose age and gender is listed above. If [he/she] is unavailable, another adult Jewish member of your household may answer.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie".

THE 2007 NATIONAL SURVEY OF AMERICAN JEWS

1. How important is being Jewish in your life?
- | <u>Very
Important</u> | <u>Fairly
Important</u> | <u>Not Very
Important</u> | <u>Not At All
Important</u> | <u>Not
Sure</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 45% | 39% | 12% | 3% | 1% |
-
2. Do you see yourself as:
- | | <u>Yes</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| a. Religious? | 35% |
| b. Secular? | 44% |
| c. Spiritual? | 61% |
| d. Observant (religiously)? | 31% |
| e. Jewish by religion? | 89% |
| f. Jewish by ethnicity? | 82% |
| g. Culturally Jewish? | 78% |
| h. Pro-Israel? | 82% |
| i. A Zionist? | 28% |
-
3. With respect to your belief in God, which term best applies to you?
- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Believer: 67% | Agnostic: 14% | Atheist: 6% | Not sure: 13% |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
-
4. How much anti-Semitism do you think there is in the United States today? Is there...
- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| A great deal: 38% | A moderate amount: 48% | A little: 13% | None at all: 0% |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
-
5. Looking ahead over the next several years, do you think that anti-Semitism in the United States will increase, decrease, or remain the same?
- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Increase: 47% | Decrease: 6% | Remain the same: 47% |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------|
-
6. How much anti-Semitism do you think there is in Europe today? Is there...
- | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| A great deal: 62% | A moderate amount: 32% | A little: 5% | None at all: 0% |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
-
7. Looking ahead over the next several years, do you think that anti-Semitism in Europe will increase, decrease, or remain the same?
- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Increase: 62% | Decrease: 4% | Remain the same: 34% |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------|

YOUR BELIEFS & OPINIONS

8. Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?	Agree Strongly	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
a. The Holocaust has deeply affected me.....	39%	46%	8%	6%	0%
b. I am proud to be a Jew.....	64%	31%	4%	1%	0%
c. I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people.....	49%	34%	11%	6%	1%
d. Being Jewish is the primary way I identify myself.....	25%	30%	10%	29%	5%
e. It is important to me to have friends who are Jewish..	21%	40%	13%	22%	4%
f. I wish I knew more Jewishly.....	15%	34%	24%	24%	4%
g. I want any Jewish community that I'm a part of to include non-Jews.....	22%	48%	19%	8%	2%
h. I feel part of a number of communities.....	22%	48%	18%	12%	2%
i. I have a Jewish responsibility to care for people in trouble (as with Darfur or Katrina).....	18%	39%	24%	16%	3%
j. I feel as moved by the oppression of non-Jews as by the comparable oppression of Jews.....	27%	47%	16%	9%	2%
k. I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world.....	20%	39%	23%	16%	2%
l. If I were marching for a social cause where the march had a Jewish contingent, I'd march with it....	15%	33%	37%	13%	3%
m. It bothers me when people try to tell me that there's a right way to be Jewish.....	41%	39%	11%	8%	1%
n. Most synagogue services are not interesting to me.	11%	31%	14%	35%	8%
o. I find some synagogue services appealing to me.....	15%	55%	14%	12%	3%
p. Even if I don't observe every aspect of the Sabbath, I do try to make it a special day.....	12%	27%	16%	36%	8%
q. Jewish charities place too much emphasis on helping only Jews.....	6%	20%	27%	36%	10%
r. Jewish organizations stifle productive conversations about Israel.....	5%	11%	42%	32%	10%
s. I find Jewish organizations largely remote and irrelevant.....	6%	23%	27%	34%	11%
t. Jews should marry whoever they fall in love with, even if they're not Jewish.....	29%	34%	13%	14%	9%
u. I would be upset if a child of mine were to marry a non-Jew who did not convert to Judaism.....	13%	17%	14%	29%	28%
v. I am concerned that the number of Jews in the U.S. will diminish over the next couple of generations..	23%	39%	19%	16%	3%

ISRAEL & YOU

9.	Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?	<u>Agree Strongly</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree Strongly</u>
	a. Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew.....	26%	44%	12%	15%	3%
	b. I am worried the United States may stop being a firm ally of Israel.....	17%	37%	16%	25%	5%
	c. If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest personal tragedies of my life.....	34%	30%	18%	13%	5%
	d. I would call myself a supporter of Israel.....	34%	48%	12%	5%	1%
	e. I am sometimes uncomfortable identifying myself as a supporter of Israel.....	3%	11%	15%	44%	27%
	f. Israel occupies lands that belong to another people.....	3%	10%	17%	32%	36%
	g. Though I don't condone terrorism, I am sympathetic with the Palestinians' drive for national liberation.....	4%	21%	21%	24%	30%
	h. American Jews should not publicly criticize the policies of the government of Israel.....	6%	20%	23%	39%	13%
	i. Given my views on tolerance, diversity and pluralism, I am uncomfortable with the idea of a "Jewish State" of Israel.....	4%	8%	18%	34%	36%
10.	Below are different ways people may feel about Israel. In each case, how often would you say that you feel this way about Israel – never, sometimes, often, or always?	<u>Never</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Always</u>	
	a. Proud.....	6%	29%	33%	32%	
	b. Excited	12%	40%	28%	20%	
	c. Ambivalent	38%	46%	12%	3%	
	d. Ashamed	71%	27%	2%	1%	
11.	How emotionally attached are you to Israel?	<u>Very Attached</u>	<u>Somewhat Attached</u>	<u>Not Very Attached</u>	<u>Not At All Attached</u>	
		25%	43%	24%	8%	

12. Answer ...	Yes
a. Do you frequently talk about Israel with Jewish friends?.....	44%
b. Do you frequently talk about Israel with non-Jewish friends?.....	31%
c. Do you find it hard to criticize Israel when talking with Jewish friends?	16%
d. Do you find it hard to criticize Israel when talking with non-Jewish friends?	27%
e. When reading the news, are you drawn to stories about Israel?	66%
f. Do you understand simple sentences in spoken Hebrew?	28%
g. Do you have any immediate family or close friends living in Israel?	35%
h. Are you planning to visit Israel in the next 3 years?.....	22%
i. Do you regularly read Israeli newspapers on the Internet?.....	9%

ORGANIZED JEWISH LIFE

13. To what extent do you feel attached to each of the following local Jewish groups and organizations?	Extremely Attached	Somewhat Attached	Not Very Attached	Not Attached	Not Sure
a. A synagogue or temple	22%	23%	18%	35%	0%
b. A Jewish Community Center (or YMHA)	6%	13%	25%	55%	1%
c. The local Jewish federation/UJA	5%	18%	26%	51%	0%
d. Another Jewish organization	11%	20%	20%	46%	3%

14. As you know, some Jews are active in synagogues, JCCs, Jewish federations and other Jewish organizations – what some people call the “organized Jewish community.” While it is always hard to generalize, each question below asks you to choose between two alternatives. **Choose the one that most fits the way you feel.**

a. With respect to the people who are active in Jewish community life, in general , do you feel that	
You share much in common with them	50%
OR, you share little in common with them	50%
b. Do you feel, in general, that	
They are fairly bland and boring to you.....	30%
OR, you find them diverse and interesting	70%
c. Do you feel, in general, that	
They expect other Jews to believe and behave in certain ways	50%
OR, they genuinely welcome Jews with different ways of being Jewish.....	50%
d. Do you feel, in general, that	
They place too much emphasis on distinguishing Jews from others	39%
OR, they have a healthy distinction between Jews as a group and others .	61%

- e. Do you feel, in general, that
 They place too much emphasis on that which divides
 Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews 41%
 OR, they maintain a healthy respect for the distinctive
 approaches and philosophies of the various movements in
 Jewish life 59%

YOUR JEWISH BACKGROUND

15. Have you been to Israel?

- No, never 60%
 Yes, once 21%
 Yes, 2 or more times 15%
 Yes, I have lived in Israel 4%

16. What is the main type of Jewish education you received as a child? **(MARK ONE)**

- None 17%
 Sunday School 20%
 Hebrew School or other part-time Jewish school 51%
 An Orthodox Yeshiva or Day School 5%
 A non-Orthodox Day School 2%
 Private tutoring 3%
 Any other type 3%

17. Were you raised Jewish, converted to Judaism, or are not Jewish? What about your spouse or partner, and your parents?

	<u>Raised Jewish</u>	<u>Converted to Judaism</u>	<u>Not Jewish</u>
a. You.....	95%	4%	1%
b. Your spouse (or your partner).....	65%	5%	30%
c. Your mother.....	92%	3%	5%
d. Your father.....	91%	1%	8%

18. Referring to Jewish religious denominations, in which of the following were you raised, and what do you consider yourself now? **(MARK ONE IN EACH COLUMN)**

	<u>Raised</u>	<u>Now</u>
a. Orthodox.....	14%	7%
b. Conservative.....	37%	26%
c. Reform.....	25%	30%
d. Reconstructionist.....	1%	3%
e. Secular Jewish.....	3%	5%
f. Culturally Jewish.....	6%	7%
g. Just Jewish.....	11%	22%
h. Not Jewish.....	3%	0%

19. Among the people you consider your closest friends, would you say that:	
None are Jewish	10%
Some are Jewish	41%
About half are Jewish	16%
Most are Jewish	24%
All or almost all are Jewish	8%
20.	<u>Yes</u>
a. Did you have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?.....	61%
b. Did you participate in a Jewish youth group as a teenager?	52%
c. Did you ever attend a Jewish sleep-away camp during the summer?.....	37%
d. Last Passover, did you hold or attend a Seder?.....	72%
e. During the last Yom Kippur, did you personally fast all or part of the day?.....	57%
f. Does your household usually light candles on Friday night?	25%
g. In the last year, have you had a significant spiritual experience in a Jewish context?.....	27%
h. In the last year, have you had a significant spiritual experience in a non-Jewish context?.....	14%
i. Do you usually attend services on the High Holidays?	52%
j. Do you attend Sabbath services at least once a month?	24%
k. Are you currently a member of a synagogue or temple?	38%
l. Have you attended any program or activity at a Jewish Community Center during the past year?.....	32%
m. In the past two years, have you served on the board of a Jewish organization, synagogue or temple?	11%
n. In the past two years, have you served on the board of another type of organization (one that isn't specifically Jewish)?	18%
o. During the past year, have you volunteered regularly for a social justice organization?	13%
p. In 2006, did you or anyone in your household make a financial contribution to a UJA-Federation campaign?	37%
q. During the past year, have you done any volunteer work for or sponsored by a synagogue, Federation or other Jewish organization?	27%
r. Have you <u>personally</u> experienced any anti-Semitism in the past year?	21%
s. Do you often talk about Jewish matters with your friends?.....	50%
t. Do you feel a special connection to Jews you meet because they are Jewish?	63%
u. Do you regularly read any Jewish magazines or newspapers?	34%
v. In the last year, have you attended any concerts or musical performances with a specifically Jewish or Israeli orientation?.....	22%
w. In the last year, have you listened to any kind of Jewish or Israeli music?.....	54%
x. In the last year, have you seen any movie with a Jewish or Israeli orientation? ..	41%
y. In the last year, have you read any books with a Jewish or Israeli orientation? ..	38%
z. In the last year, have you taken any classes with a Jewish or Israeli theme?	13%

- aa. At any point in your adult life, did you ever attend a Jewish singles event? 31%
- bb. Do you maintain some sort of “web presence,” such as a web site or a profile on MySpace.com, Facebook.com or AOL? 23%
- cc. Do you regularly read Jewish-themed blogs on the Internet?..... 9%
- dd. Do you regularly check out Jewish web sites on the Internet? 22%
- ee. At any point in your life, did you ever have a romantic relationship with someone who was Jewish? 84%
- ff. At any point in your life, did you ever have a romantic relationship with someone who was not Jewish?..... 70%

21. Do you think that you would undertake more Jewish activities in your life if the following circumstances were different?

Yes

- a. If you had more time 44%
- b. If the available options were more attractive or interesting to you 64%
- c. If the Jewish community were more open and welcoming of people like you.... 39%
- d. If there were more people like you involved in Jewish life 50%

YOUR PERSONAL BACKGROUND

22. Are you: Male: 49% Female: 50%

23. Are you (MARK ONE):
 Married: 57% Divorced or Separated: 11%
 Never Married: 23% Widowed: 9%

24. (OPTIONAL QUESTION) Do you regard your sexual orientation as:
 “Straight” (heterosexual): 90% Gay or lesbian: 4% Bisexual: 1% No answer: 5%

25. How many children do you have?
 None34%
 One16%
 Two29%
 Three or more21%

26. What is your age as of your last birthday?
 Under 25 3%
 25 – 3422%
 35 – 4413%
 45 – 5423%
 55 – 6413%
 65 and over26%

YOUR POLITICAL BACKGROUND

27. With respect to your political views on most issues, do you regard yourself as (MARK ONE):

Liberal: 42%

Moderate: 42%

Conservative: 16%

28. With regard to political party identification, do you regard yourself as (MARK ONE):

A Democrat: 63%

An Independent: 23%

A Republican: 14%