

WHAT WILL THE
JEWISH
WORLD
LOOK LIKE IN

2050

A MOMENT
SYMPOSIUM

EDITOR
GEORGE E. JOHNSON

INTERVIEWS BY
MARILYN COOPER,
GEORGE E. JOHNSON
& LAURENCE WOLFF



WITH

SARAH BUNIN BENOR / DAVID BIALE
STEVEN M. COHEN / ALAN COOPERMAN
ARNOLD DASHEFSKY / ANITA DIAMANT
SYLVIA BARACK FISHMAN / SAMUEL HEILMAN
WILLIAM HELMREICH / BETHAMIE HOROWITZ
ARI Y. KELMAN / BARRY A. KOSMIN
SERGIO DELLA PERGOLA / LEONARD SAXE
IRA SHESKIN / ARNON SOFFER

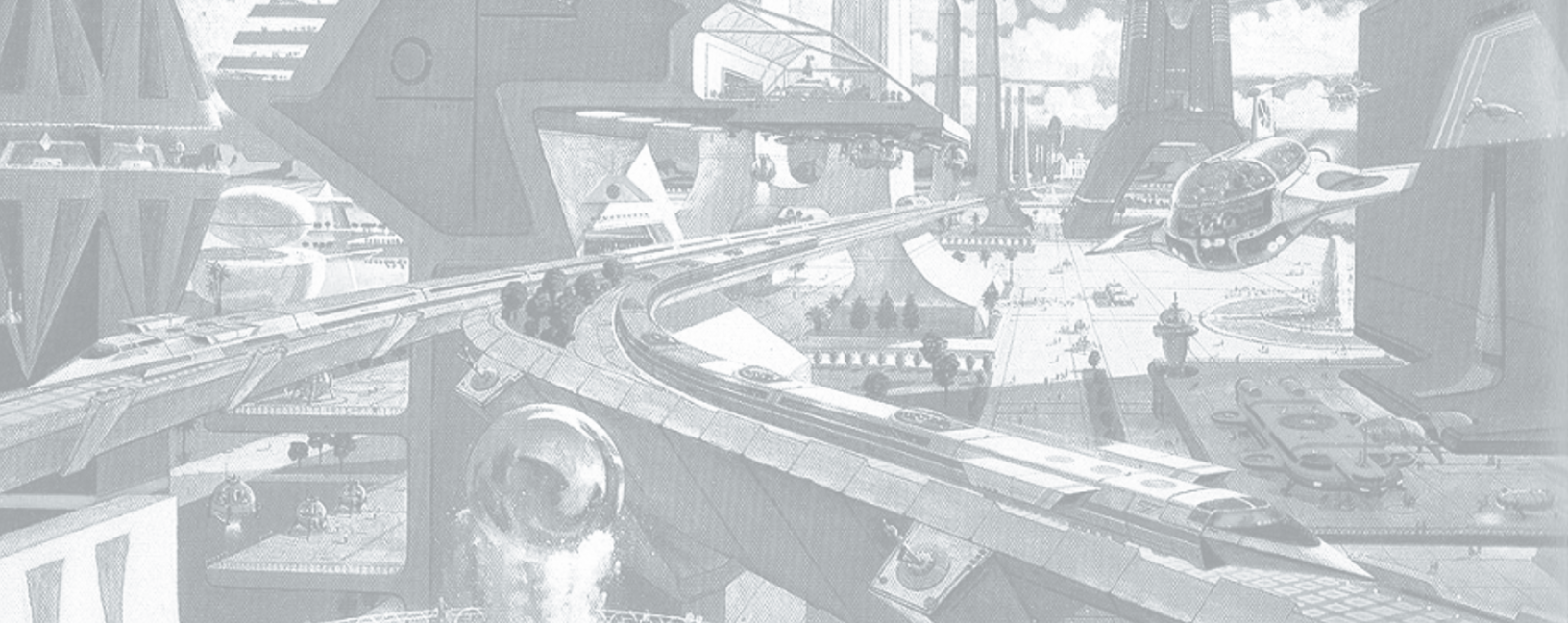


In May 1964, *Look* magazine ran a cover story ominously headlined “The Vanishing American Jew.” Jews in the United States, the article predicted, would disappear by the year 2000. The popular magazine folded seven years later, and despite numerous dire predictions based on assimilation trends and intermarriage surveys, America’s Jews didn’t disappear. In fact, over the last decade, a counter-narrative—backed by numerous studies—has emerged, challenging the idea that the American Jewish population is in danger of extinction, questioning the notion that there is a single accepted definition of Jewishness and disputing that intermarriage is an existential threat to Jewish continuity. The Pew Research Center’s 2013 “A Portrait of Jewish Americans” expanded the intensity of the debate over what it means to be Jewish, how to measure the pulse of American Jewry and what the American Jewish future holds.

This issue’s symposium asks: What will the Jewish commu-

nity look like in 2050, and what trends should demographers be focusing on to find out? Since Jewish trends can’t be separated from larger geopolitical ones, it also explores international dimensions of the Jewish demographic future. We include Israel, where the debate about the future of the Jewish people is at least as vigorous as in the United States. Unlike in the U.S., where sample surveys are conducted by nongovernmental entities, Israel collects official data on the religious groupings, fertility rates, education trends and population movements of Jewish and Arab Israelis, Palestinians and Bedouins—all of which are relevant for determining the character of the Jewish state.

We have assembled some of the most eminent demographers, historians, sociologists, geographers and other prescient observers of Jewish life. Despite the oft-cited Talmudic disclaimer that “since the Temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken from prophets and given to fools and children,” they agreed to share their insights for this symposium.



ARNOLD DASHEFSKY & IRA SHESKIN

Everybody keeps saying that Jews are assimilating. Yet all three methods that currently are being used to count Jews are finding more Jews than there were 25 years ago. We have three estimates of the number of Jews in the United States using three different methods. The Pew Research Center used random digit dialing nationwide and came up with about 6.7 million. In the *American Jewish Year Book*, we estimate, based on local Jewish community studies and other methods, 6.8 million. The Cohen Center at Brandeis,

which takes a whole bunch of surveys that ask questions about religion, is coming up with 7.1 million. All three of those estimates are within a relatively good range of one another. Although each uses a different operational definition of Jewish identity, they all use the same sociological definition: “One is Jewish who defines oneself as Jewish and is accepted by others as Jewish.”

It isn't just the number of Jews in various communities that makes us optimistic about the Jewish future; it is the in-

frastructure of the American Jewish community. There are 145 Jewish Federations, more than 200 Jewish Community Centers, 750 national Jewish organizations and 100 Jewish museums today. Fifty years ago, there were a handful of Jewish museums. There are now 165 Holocaust museums, 155 Jewish overnight camps, 139 national Jewish publications and about 3,500 synagogues. If the number of Jews dropped to half a million, we would have tremendous difficulty running a community, and many Jewish institutions would close. But as long as there are a reasonable number of Jews and a reasonable number of them are dedicated to seeing this Jewish enterprise continue, we can be confident that it will continue.

Over the past 50 years, we've seen two important trends: The geographical dispersion of Jews and increased intermarriage. These trends are likely to continue. However, high internet usage links Jews in tiny communities and intermarried couples to an amazing number of websites to access information, interact with various parts of the American Jewish community, find community and keep up with what's going on in Israel.

In response to those who say that young people are "distancing" themselves from the Jewish community, a better description is "differencing." We have a lot of people today who are part Jewish. They have more than one identity. We also have people who are simply being Jewish in different ways than they were 50 years ago. The 2014 Miami study sponsored by the Greater Miami Jewish Federation found that 44 percent of adults under the age of 35 are taking

classes or learning about Jewish topics informally through the internet, on their own and with friends. Also, there are hundreds of Jewish book fairs, Jewish film festivals and Jewish music festivals. You can run an Israel Independence Day celebration in Broward County and get tens of thousands of people to come. Some of these people are involved in synagogues. Most of them are not. People are being Jewish in different ways. It might not be the absolute core of their identity, but it is at least part of it.

Two final positive measures are how people feel about being Jewish and how non-Jews feel about Jews. The 2013 Pew report asked the question, are you proud of being Jewish? Overall, 94 percent answered "yes." Even for those who had no religious identification, 86 percent claimed to be proud to be Jewish. A 2014 Pew study asked a representative sample of Americans how warmly they felt about other religious groups. Jews rated the highest. You might even argue that some people intermarry with Jews as a form of upward mobility. These broader transformations provide evidence for some more optimistic conclusions about the future of American Jewish life.

Arnold Dashefsky is an emeritus professor of sociology and director of the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life at the University of Connecticut. He is coeditor of the American Jewish Year Book.

Ira Sheskin is a professor and chair of the Department of Geography at the University of Miami. He is coeditor of the American Jewish Year Book.

THERE ARE GOOD REASONS TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE JEWISH FUTURE

BARRY A. KOSMIN



Counting Jews is like holding jello: It's hard to get your hands around it. The problem with the Jews is that they're not just a biological population. It's not only about births and deaths. For the past few hundred years, Jews have been battered by the locomotive of history. What really makes the difference is political events—wars and revolutions and migrations. Moreover, the majority of Jews alive today live on a different continent and speak a different language from what their great-grandparents spoke. That's a particularly Jewish phenomenon.

Social boundaries are the key issue. There's a tremendous debate among demographers over who is a Jew. One person's Jew is another person's Gentile. What's growing, what's declining, what's Jewish, what's not Jewish? There's a lot of self-certification. People without formal attachment say they're Jewish. Some people we regard as Jewish say they're not Jewish. If my child joins the Hare Krishnas, does he still count as Jewish? If he joins the Mormons, probably less so. If he joins Jews for Jesus, what then?

To properly assess trends, you actually need the whole movie,

not just a photograph. The Jewish demography debate tends to focus primarily on the composition of the 20 percent on the periphery. It's also mostly about young people, who matter for the future. If you look at intermarried people today, you only see half the picture, because you don't meet all the people who were previously Jewish who no longer sign up for being Jewish.

We live in complicated times. In 1990, studying intermarriage was about marriages. Today, large numbers of people are in relationships. Some are having children. Single people are having children. Gay couples are having children. Some of those are Jewish. Is the child adopted? Is it biological? Which partner is the biological Jew? It used to be binary, Jew and Gentile. Now we have an alphabet soup: JBCs (Jews by Choice), JBRs (Jews by Religion) and JNRs (Jews with No Religion). It's not a demographer's job to determine who is a Jew, but rather to identify these categories for those who make community policy.

Barry A. Kosmin is a research professor of public policy and law and founding director of the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

ONE PERSON'S JEW IS ANOTHER PERSON'S GENTILE

ANITA DIAMANT



We do not have the kinds of data needed to make a halfway reasonable guess at what the Jewish community will look like in 2050. For example, there have been no studies about the role and impact of people who have converted to Judaism. We have lots of anecdotes, but no research. I fear that much of the data we collect is still colored by a lot of assumptions about what it means to be Jewish. Are we talking about a halachic or legal designation? Looking at congregational membership and other kinds of affiliation as primary indicators of “Jewishness” might not be relevant for a generation that tends not to join organizations—not just Jewish organizations, but any organizations.

Then there is the still-rampant assumption that intermarriage is an existential threat. When I hear Jewish leaders say, “Intermarriage is an opportunity, not a crisis,” it often sounds like they’re trying to talk themselves into believing it. Again, there’s not a lot of data, but in Boston, at least, it appears that

a community-wide commitment to embracing families that include a Jewish and a non-Jewish parent has increased the number of those connecting to Judaism in measurable ways.

Predicting the future is a fool’s errand, but I’m pretty confident that the American Jewish community will look quite different in 50 years. Like the rest of the American population, we will be more racially and ethnically diverse, thanks to conversion, interracial marriage and interracial adoption, and the immigration of non-white, non-Western Jews. We have always been a racially and ethnically diverse people; perhaps by 2050, we will finally be able to see the beauty and strength in that reality.

Anita Diamant is the author of five novels, including The Red Tent, and six guides to contemporary Jewish life. Choosing a Jewish Life: A Handbook for People Converting to Judaism and for Their Families and Friends was recently updated in a new edition by Schocken Books.

THE JEWISH FUTURE WILL BE ETHNICALLY AND RACIALLY DIVERSE



COUNTING JEWS IS LIKE HOLDING JELLO: IT'S HARD TO GET YOUR HANDS AROUND IT.

SAMUEL HEILMAN

I've often said—and I'm not the only one—that a little anti-Semitism, or at least anxiety about it, can go a long way in ensuring the Jewish future. In some ways, being loved to death via assimilation, as we have been in America, is more dangerous than being hated. And who can predict what impact the explosion of

anti-Semitic and racist expression during and after the recent presidential election will have on the future of Jews and Jewish life in America? Everything that follows could change.

There are certain things, however, I think it is safe to predict. One is that Jewish identity will continue to have mean-

ing for people, but not necessarily the same meaning for all the people who call themselves Jewish. And the idea that there is a single Jewish people, if it ever really existed, is unlikely to persist. I think the idea of Jewish distinctiveness in America is something that will diminish. There will be some Jews who are highly distinctive—mostly haredi Orthodox—and they will continue to claim to speak for all Jews and to define themselves as the most authentic.

But there will be other Jews, likely the majority, for whom that whole debate is rather meaningless, who will consider their Jewish identity as something largely symbolic—their cultural heritage and their origins, but not necessarily coincident with purely religious or ethnic identity. That will mean that Jewish character and identity will be contested by different parts of the Jewish world. That, alas, means that Israeli and American Jews are likely to move further apart—something we can see already (except among the Orthodox).

Who the leaders of the Jewish community in America are will be much more open and ambiguous than it already is. Spokespersons and leaders for the majority will be hard to find, since being Jewish will not be the essential or core element of who they are. The attachment to their Jewish identity and to Israel, as we already see, is declining precipitously among young people and those who identify themselves as “just Jewish” in recent surveys. That will widen the gap between the growing Orthodox minority

and all other Jews. It will be difficult for the Jews to act as a collective community in their relationship to the state and to institutions of the state, because the state won’t know who speaks for the Jews. For the majority, the role of rabbi will be less important. As more people who are not halachically Jewish call themselves Jews, rabbis will increasingly have to figure out what rabbinic leadership means.

To the outside world, it looks like the Orthodox are ascendant in American Jewish life. But this is because, increasingly, the Orthodox are the only Jews who see being Jewish as essential to who they are and are still interested in things manifestly Jewish. Other Jews are more interested in less parochial and more cosmopolitan issues. That leaves the Orthodox and people for whom Jewish identity is central to who they are and how they present themselves as the people who speak for and as Jews. That’s why so many politicians who look to speak with and to the interests of Jews commonly look

for photo ops with rabbis with long beards, Jewish organizational leaders or Israeli politicians—even though those people do not really represent the majority of Jews. But that’s not because they’re in the ascendancy in numbers. It’s that they’re the only ones left in the Jewish building.

Samuel Heilman, a professor of sociology at Queens College of the City University of New York, is the author of the forthcoming book Who Will Lead Us? The Story of Five Hasidic Dynasties in America.

CONTINUING FRAGMENTATION OF IDENTITY WILL MAKE IT HARD TO KNOW WHO WILL SPEAK FOR THE JEWS

DAVID BIALE



On a variety of measures, the percentage of Jews outside the Orthodox world who call themselves atheists is very high. This includes members of synagogues and participants in Jewish institutions. This puts the many Jews who have a nonreligious identification outside the American mainstream, which is not particularly secular.

There also is a struggle within Israel between the secular, nationalist Zionist tradition and various types of religious forces, some of which are actually anti-Zionist and some of which are hyper-Zionist, such as the settler movement. That struggle has spilled over into the American Jewish community. It has, in my judgment, poisoned our culture, so that people will no longer talk to each other. It would be interesting to project forward 33 years, because if

THE DEBATE OVER ISRAEL'S FUTURE IS POISONING OUR CULTURE

the territories remain a part of Israel and yet the Palestinian Arabs living there do not have citizenship—my definition of an apartheid situation—it will fracture American Jews. Some will identify with it and say it's perfectly fine, while others will be very disaffected. And the sort of opposition you get now, which is somewhat marginal in groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace (which is sometimes profoundly anti-Zionist), will become more and more acceptable. Israel has served as a unifying force for earlier generations, but that's going to be less true. People will have to find other ways to identify or they won't identify at all.

David Biale, professor of Jewish history at the University of California-Davis, is the author of Not in the Heavens: The Tradition of Jewish Secular Thought.

SYLVIA BARACK FISHMAN



The vast majority of American Jews today are more comfortable with and proud of their Jewishness than at any other time in the modern era. But if you look closely at the American Jewish community, particularly at younger Jews and specifically non-haredi Orthodox Jewish adults between 25 and 49, as Steve Cohen and I did in analyzing the 2013 Pew report, you see two trends that are going to be more pronounced as the years pass. We see a very substantial minority who are creating Jewish homes and raising Jewish children and feel connected with Israel, even though some of them might feel critical of Israel. And then we see another, larger group that is much more weakly connected to Jews and Jewishness and might not even have strong feelings about Jewishness or Israel. Those in the second group who are not married or are married to people who aren't Jewish, or do not say that their homes are Jewish, are prominent in the group that is much less likely to have children, and if they do have children, they are much less likely to say they are raising them as Jews. Those who say they are raising their children as Jewish by religion are much more involved with every kind of Jewishness you could measure. People always think about how much parents influence children, but it turns out that having kids in any kind of Jewish

JEWISH EDUCATION DURING TEENAGE YEARS IS THE KEY TO JEWISH CONTINUITY

school has a profound impact on the parents as well.

So, what experiences made the first group more likely to create Jewish families? We found that being involved with Jewish educational settings as teenagers was key to how Jewishly involved they were in college and as young single adults after college. Jewish educational experiences in college—such as Jewish studies classes, informal educational experiences in Hillel and Birthright Israel—also make a big difference in later attachments. These patterns are likely to become more pronounced in the future. People in conventional Jewish families will have more Jewish children and give them more Jewish education. By 2050, they'll be grown up, they'll have families of their own and the pattern will repeat itself. Conversely, the group that doesn't have those Jewish educational experiences as teenagers will tend to marry late, not marry, marry non-Jews, not have children—or if they do, one child—and will be much less likely themselves to be Jewishly connected and much less likely to produce children who will be strongly connected Jewishly tomorrow.

Sylvia Barack Fishman is the Joseph and Esther Foster Professor of Contemporary Jewish Life at Brandeis University, codirector of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute and author of eight books on American Jewish life.

WILLIAM HELMREICH



However you play around with the numbers, the outlook—not only for the Jewish community, but for Israel’s survival—doesn’t look good. Those who take comfort in the growth of the Orthodox community should realize that an unknown percentage of them defect. If this were not happening, then, given their high birthrate, they would already have been at least 50 percent of the total Jewish population. Let’s also not forget that non-observant Jews are assimilating and intermarrying at an alarming rate, thus decreasing their numbers. I do know anecdotally that a certain percentage of Hasidic Jews defect. Also, in the yeshiva community, there are families in which up to half the children are not observant. But the defection rate in the Orthodox community is not easily accessed and hasn’t been studied sufficiently.

In truth, Jews are disappearing as a people. And how strongly do most of them identify? Tikkun olam? Every compassionate, liberal-minded person, regardless of re-

ligion, believes in that. There’s nothing uniquely Jewish about it. Nothing is more emblematic of the underlying problem than AIPAC’s spending \$30 million to defeat the Iran deal. At the end of the day, eight of the ten Jewish senators voted for the deal. If AIPAC’s strong efforts can’t

even get a majority of Jewish senators, that bodes very badly for the future of the American Jewish community. We are counting them as Jews, but we’re not understanding who they are. What constitutes a healthy Jewish identity is changing dramatically. In my view, it’s weakening. Fifteen years ago, nobody would have questioned voting against this deal. Basically,

American Jews’ basic identity is liberal. That’s fine, but there’s nothing particularly Jewish about it.

William Helmreich is a professor of sociology at the City College of New York. He is the author of 'The World of the Yeshiva: An Intimate Portrait of Orthodox Jewry, and 'The New York Nobody Knows: Walking 6,000 Miles in the City.

JEWIS ARE CHOOSING LIBERALISM OVER JEWISH IDENTITY

BETHAMIE HOROWITZ



The study of population trends—though they are important to track—misses out on a more crucial understanding of the state of the Jews in America. We need to expand our studies of the nature of Jewishness and the various ways it is expressed in the American context. The socio-demographic study model of a once-in-ten-years survey doesn't take enough account of the context in which Jewishness is expressed. For example, the stage of one's life and the particular moment in history in which one lives make an enormous difference in how an individual relates to his or her Jewishness. The 2016 presidential election is a case in point. Post-election American Jews are more attuned to dangers in the environment. A model that presumes that a person's "Jewishness" does not change and proceeds to measure how much the person's Jewishness departs from a preconceived standard of what is a good Jew fails to capture the fact that one's Jewishness is activated, in positive and negative ways, by the environment and changes over time. We need to be more finely attuned to those nuances as we study Jews in America. By the year 2050, I hope that the models for studying a person's Jewish-

JEWISH CONSCIOUSNESS IS TRIGGERED BY ENVIRONMENT, AGE AND WORLD EVENTS

ness will evolve to incorporate more sophisticated and finely honed approaches.

Today, a lot of the research being done in the Jewish world is programmatically driven (evaluations of philanthropic initiatives, for example) and as a result, we are missing the new developments, particularly new ways of expressing Jewishness, that are happening around us. I believe that going forward, Israel will be less the central focus of American Jewish life. American Jewish culture—Jewish literature, filmmaking, investigation of Jewish history, social justice practices, giving circles, klezmerfests and so on, along with new expressions of Jewish religiosity—will take its place. Some of these developments are likely to be very different from what we can anticipate today. One

hopes that by that time, research will be able to reflect the new realities of the American Jewish landscape and have the communal support to do so.

Bethamie Horowitz, a socio-psychologist, is a research assistant professor of Jewish education at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University.

DEMOGRAPHY IS NOT
DESTINY... THE FUTURE
IS IN OUR HANDS
TO SHAPE.

STEVEN M. COHEN



Straight-line projections are often wrong. But longstanding tendencies often continue. The growth in Orthodoxy (in parallel with the strength of fundamentalist Christian groups in America) seems very likely to continue into the mid-21st century. One strong indicator: Orthodox Jews are just 5 percent of the Jewish baby boomers but are 35 percent of Jewish children under age five. In parallel, owing to massive intermarriage and to widespread acceptance of Jews in the larger society, we're also seeing an explosive growth of the "marginally connected," that is, people who recognize that they're Jewish and have some Jewish ancestry. They feel Jewish and are proud to be Jewish, but don't have much involvement with Jewish life, don't have other co-ethnics as their friends and don't join institutions. In between the Orthodox and the Jews-by-feeling is the Jewish Middle (Jews who participate in Jewish life outside of Orthodoxy). For the most part, they're engaged Conservative and Reform Jews. Regrettably, in parallel with mainline Protestants and Anglo-Catholics, their numbers have diminished rapidly and will likely continue to do so in the decades to come.

Today's young adult Jews who are Jewishly connected but not Orthodox foreshadow the coming strength and

weakness in Jewish life. By and large, these connected and committed younger Jews are uncomfortable with strong group boundaries that seem to privilege Jews over others. They disdain normative preference for in-marriage, connections with Jewish friends and the Jewish State of Israel (with all its problems of intolerance and the occupation), or anything that seems tribalistic. Future research should examine instruments of Jewish education such as overnight camps, Israel travel, campus rabbis (particularly non-Orthodox, who are now found in small numbers), Jewish preschools, conversion opportunities (be they rabbinic or personal) and innovations for Jewish young adults such as Moishe Houses. An area of current and probably ongoing concern: How do you keep Jews engaged with Israel and at the same time allow

politically liberal Jews to sharply criticize anti-democratic, theocratic and ultra-nationalist tendencies in the Israeli polity? Without an inspirational Israel, we lack a major pillar of collective Jewish purpose, passion and commitment.

Steven M. Cohen, a sociologist, is a research professor of Jewish social policy at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the director of the Berman Jewish Policy Archive at Stanford University.

LESS TRIBAL WAYS OF CONNECTION WILL BE THE NORM

ALAN COOPERMAN



There is a lot of debate over whether intermarriage is increasing or decreasing the Jewish population. The 2013 Pew study showed that the number of haredi Jews is growing, fueled by high birthrates, while at the other end of the spectrum, the number of “Jews of no religion” is growing because of “switching” and, to some extent, intermarriage. The traditional Jewish middle—the Conservative and Reform movements—is still large but appears to be shrinking, at least in percentage terms. The American Jewish population is stable or growing slowly, but declining as a portion of the overall U.S. population.

Although the rate of intermarriage was steady during the years 2000-2013, at six in ten (58 percent), there is considerable room for the rate of intermarriage to grow. Even though the rate of intermarriage is historically high, one could argue that the rate still is low, considering that Jews are only 2 percent of the U.S. population and the random likelihood of a Jew marrying another Jew would be one in 50. In fact, the rate

of in-marriage is a lot higher than that. The rate of intermarriage for non-Orthodox Jews is 72 percent. And for the rapidly growing group of Jews who identify themselves as Jews of no religion, the rate is 79 percent.

In-married Jews are much more likely to raise their children as Jews by religion (96 percent), whereas just 20 percent of intermarried couples said they were raising their children as Jewish by religion, and 37 percent said they were not raising their children as Jewish. On the other hand, more than half (63 percent) of those who intermarried said that they were raising their children Jewish in some way. An increasing proportion of the children of Jewish intermarriages are choosing as young adults to identify as Jewish. So there is some evidence to support both sides of the debate.

Alan Cooperman is the director of religion research at the Pew Research Center and conducted the 2013 “A Portrait of Jewish Americans” study.

THE JURY IS OUT ON THE EFFECTS OF INTERMARRIAGE

Demography is not destiny. The size of the future Jewish population is not a fixed outcome of the Jewish birthrate; the character of the population is yet to be shaped, not molded by your family's denomination. Who, and how many of us, there are is going to depend on how the Jewish community responds to the challenges of 21st-century life.

Consider how much demographic change has occurred in less than a generation. For the post-war Baby Boomer generation, and the Gen Xers who followed them, intermarriage was a genuine threat to Jewish continuity. Only about 30 percent of the children of intermarried parents born between 1945 and 1980 identify as Jews when they become adults. That rate doubled for millennial children of intermarriage. It happened in part because the Reform movement welcomed non-Jewish partners and the children of intermarried parents. And it happened because the Jewish community, in response to the findings of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), invested money and ideas in Jewish education.

The 1990 NJPS estimated that there were approximately 5.5 million Jews in the United States. Using similar criteria

to identify who is Jewish, the U.S. Jewish population is now 7.2 million. Until recently, nearly as many Jews were ceasing to identify as Jews as we were gaining by Jewish immigration and the birthrate of some sectors of the population. But a shift is underway and the population is now steadily increasing. Intermarriage, rather than being a source of negative growth, is contributing to an increase in the population.

As Yogi Berra famously said, "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future." But what can be said with some confidence is that the number of Jews is as much a function of the size and intensity of the Jewish education system as any of the current demographic facts. My simple prediction is that if Jewish education continues to be enhanced and transformed, the future is bright. We'll see many more people who identify as Jews and many more Jews who understand and appreciate the richness of Jewish cultural and religious life. The future is in our hands to shape.

Leonard Saxe is a professor of contemporary Jewish studies and directs the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Steinhilber Social Research Institute at Brandeis University.

INTERMARRIAGE AND BETTER EDUCATION LEAD TO AN INCREASED NUMBER OF AMERICAN JEWS



INTERMARRIAGE IS A GOOD
THING, IT BRINGS JEWS
AND NON-JEWS TOGETHER
IN A POSITIVE WAY.

ARNON SOFFER

The history of the Jewish people depends on global geopolitics. And this will bring surprises. We all love Venice, Rome and Paris, but Europe will be a different place and the changes will be linked with what will occur in Africa and the Middle East. Africa's population today is around 1.1 billion and by 2050, there will be more than

two and a half billion people there. Global warming will be a catastrophe worldwide, but initially Africa will suffer the most. Another sad story is, of course, the Middle East. I'm smiling because I'm crying. Egypt is going through a terrible catastrophe now with 90 million people, but can you imagine how the country will be able to supply

enough food and water in 2050? Europe will turn brown and black, receiving migrants from the east, southeast and south. Jews will not tolerate this and will leave Europe. Around 8.5 percent of Jews today live in Europe. By 2050, it will be no more than 5 percent.

Here is my vision of where the Jewish people will live in 2050: Israel will be the core. In 2010, 42 percent of the global Jewish population was in Israel. In 2050, Israel will be 58 percent of the Jewish population, while Jews in Canada and the United States will account for around 38 percent, or possibly much lower.

Most people don't realize that Israel is already nearly the most densely populated country in the Western world. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics estimates a population of 16 million by 2059. Today, the Negev desert is 60 percent of Israel's land, but it will increase to 70 percent because of climate change. Also, and this may be surprising, half of Israel is reserved for military land use. We are reaching the red line in Israel of physical carrying capacity. And another surprise: This year, the numbers of Jews and Palestinians in Greater Palestine are equal. Today there are three million Arabs in the West Bank, two million in Gaza, and 1.5 or 1.7 million in Israel. And the Arabs will soon be the majority. Arab fertility rates are declining in the Middle East at large and in Israel. But the death rate of Arabs is very low because it is such a young population.

HUGE POPULATION SHIFTS AWAY FROM EUROPE AND TOWARD ISRAEL, ASIA AND OCEANA ARE COMING

When you make the calculation, the Jewish people will increase 1.5 percent annually, and the Israeli-Arab population will grow at 2.2 percent. And let us also look at the Bedouin. Soon they will be half a million, or 25 percent of the total Arab population in Israel.

As a secular Jew, my very sad prediction is that we will have a religious state and will annex the Palestinian lands. Israel may not be Jewish as we understand it. There is no real difference in politics between the national religious Jews and the ultra-Orthodox. Both will force the secular to stay in Israel under their rules or to leave. More and more secular Israelis will leave for China, India, Australia and maybe the United States. They will leave and be replaced by religious Jews. Sure, we might still have the secular "state" of Tel Aviv. But we cannot survive if the rest of the country is majority religious Zionist, ultra-Orthodox and Arab.

One more surprise. I can see 200,000 or about 1.2 percent of the total Jewish population living mainly in China in Beijing and Shanghai, and in India, in particular, New Delhi. Africa has no hope and South African Jews will decline radically. And Oceana—Australia and New Zealand—today at 1 percent, could double its Jewish population to as many as 300,000. *Arnon Soffer is a retired professor of geography and environmental sciences in the Department of Geography at the University of Haifa, an institution that he helped found.*

SERGIO DELLA PERGOLA

Because of population shifts, Israel will become more influential in the Jewish world. And it isn't just that there'll be more haredim. Other parts of Israel will produce other leaders in Jewish thought, ideas and culture. Israel might take up the duty to help some smaller Jewish communities in the U.S., which it has already begun to do. This is a historical shift in the power model.

The biggest demographic equation in Israel is that of Jews and Palestinians, Israel and a Palestinian state, Jews and Arabs, majority and minority. This is the most crucial issue in Israel, which the present government is simply ignoring, and this attitude, in my view, is totally wrong. The meaning of Israel is to be the state of the Jews, and to be the state of the Jews you need a conspicuous Jewish majority. The frontiers of that state must include a population that is overwhelmingly Jewish. Today, the minority is about 20 percent. If you include the West Bank and Gaza, then there is no Jewish majority. A 50/50 society is not a Jewish state. Eighty/twenty, you can say it is Jewish. Sixty/fifty, if you don't incorporate Gaza, is a statistical majority, but not sustainable in terms of the identity of the state. We have examples like this in Cyprus, Kosovo versus Serbia, Lebanon, Guyana, etc. Israeli political consultant Yoram Ettinger, who is not a demographer, says the number of Palestinians is exaggerated, and that there are 1.1

ISRAEL, NOT AMERICA, WILL BECOME THE CENTER OF JEWISH LIFE

million fewer Palestinians than what is reported. That's not true. He is saying this for political reasons. In the Knesset, a number of Likud party members rely on him, so they can say, "There is no demographic issue, so we can keep every square centimeter of the West Bank."

Also, the old Ashkenazim-versus-Sephardim dichotomy is over. The socioeconomic gaps between these groups exist but are declining. Most of the poor Ashkenazim are recent immigrants from the Soviet Union. But some political parties try to keep the separation and avoid intermarriage. There is a lot of intermarriage between the two groups. Of my four children, three are married, one to a Sephardi, one to an Ashkenazi and the third to a mixture of Ashkenazi and Sephardi. When I ask my grandchildren what my wife and I are, they say we are Jews of Italian origin. When I ask them, "What are you?" They say, "I'm a Jew. I'm an Israeli."

If one million American Jews make aliyah—you laugh and I laugh—they could have 25 members of Knesset and could pass laws with the help of many Israelis who share their values. In that sense, whatever we expect to happen in the political arena reflects the demographic composition and the will of the people.

Sergio della Pergola is a professor emeritus of Israel-Diaspora Relations at the Hebrew University's Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry. He is a specialist in the demography of world Jewry.



WITHOUT AN INSPIRATIONAL
ISRAEL, WE LACK A MAJOR
PILLAR OF COLLECTIVE
JEWISH PURPOSE, PASSION
AND COMMITMENT.

SARAH BUNIN BENOR



People talk about demographic trends generally from one of two approaches—survivalist/traditionalist or transformationalist. Survivalists are concerned about the survival of the people and see any change as a potential negative. Transformationalists see change as just what happens—either neutral or positive. In approaching demographic trends, I am a transformationalist.

The trend that gets discussed the most is intermarriage. This is where I differ from many of my colleagues. I actually think intermarriage is a good thing. I think it brings Jews and non-Jews together in a positive way.

It is a sign that Jews are more accepted in American society than they used to be. Also, intermarriage is unavoidable. And talking about it as a disease, something that needs to be fixed, is offensive to the people who choose to marry someone they love. One of my concerns about our demographic studies is that

the public reactions to them focus too much on that particular issue, and the way that people talk about intermarried couples is unhelpful and unhealthy.

By 2050, because of intermarriage, a larger percentage of our community will have one parent who wasn't born Jewish—some converted, some not. With that, we'll have a lot more racial diversity. We already see that there are more Jews who are black, Latino or Asian, but the sampling of our demographic studies doesn't include enough of them. To better understand their Jewishness, and that of Jews in general, we need more qualitative research, using interviews and observation.

Sarah Bunin Benor is an associate professor of contemporary Jewish studies at the Los Angeles campus of Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion.

TRANSFORMATION, INCLUDING INTERMARRIAGE, IS A POSITIVE

ARI Y. KELMAN



We may have been asking the wrong questions for the last 20 years. We have been asking about identity and affiliation, membership and “engagement,” but we don’t really know about how strongly or weakly people feel that they belong to something called the American Jewish Community. What would happen if you surveyed people, even members of synagogues, about belonging and found that there are very low levels of belonging to something called the American Jewish Community, but at the same time that there were very high levels of belonging to something else? If people feel low levels of belonging to something larger than one’s family or one’s synagogue, then we might not have an American Jewish Community, even though we might have lots and lots of very self-satisfied American Jews.

BELONGING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN RITUAL OBSERVANCE

If we are interested in understanding the strength or health of the American Jewish Community, we should construct scales for measuring belonging and ask these questions. Questions such as “Do you light Shabbat candles?” won’t tell you whether a person feels like a member of a Jewish community. Even if people could explain why they don’t feel like they belong to a Jewish community, that would go a long way toward providing insights for institutions and organizations interested in helping strengthen either the lives of individual Jews or the overall well-being of what we refer to as a “community.”

Ari Y. Kelman is the Jim Joseph Professor of Education and Jewish Studies in the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University.

MENACHEM FRIEDMAN



When I was a Ph.D. student, I wanted to study the haredim. One of the most important persons in the department of sociology in the Hebrew University told me, “I don’t think we can guarantee you a position in the Hebrew University. You are studying a group that probably will disappear in the next ten years.” The haredim were able to grow because the state of Israel and Diaspora Jews supported their institutions like Yeshivot and Kollels (full time advanced study of Talmud for men). Now they control not only education but also the entire socialization process from birth to the age of 22 to 24.

Because of the strength of the haredim, other Jews are frightened and there is anger on both sides. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) projects that they will increase from the current 10 percent of the population to 27 percent by 2059. But in the “high” scenario they could well be 40 percent. At 27 percent the haredim will become still more influential than they are now. They may be able to force others to follow their norms, especially in the laws of marriage and divorce as well as in conversion. The “religious Zionists” and “modern Orthodox” have a flag that is different from the Haredim—the unity of the people and the State. It is much easier for them to accept changes.

It has been argued that when you are 10 percent of the population the state can afford economic support, but when you reach 25 percent the state cannot. In 1990 I thought of that

issue. But I did not take into account that very wealthy Jews in the United States, England, and even Australia would contribute a lot of money to haredi economic infrastructure. And I never dreamed that the state of Israel would become so rich that it could be able to pay for the haredi life style. I don’t know if you can call it pessimistic or optimistic, but I believe that the state can manage to survive even if the haredim are 40 percent of the population.

Haredi life will change, but very slowly, and they have the political power to keep their privileged position. Fertility is down from 7.0 to 6.5 and some do leave the community (in Hebrew this departure is called “*baskalah bish’eila*”, “enlightenment with a question”). There may be a balance between those who are moving out and those who are entering as newcomers to the ultra-Orthodox community.

I’m troubled with the ultra-Orthodox becoming an even greater influence in Israeli, not only in politics but also culturally, and what that will do to the unity of the people. I wonder whether or not my sons and grandchildren, who are not religious, will be able to continue to live here. They will not want to be a minority. They want to be equal. They will not want to serve in the army if the Haredim do not.

Menachem Friedman is the Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Bar Ilan University.

URI REGEV



In Israel “secular” (“chiloni” in Hebrew) Jews for the most part live lives similar to Reform and Conservative Jews in America without identifying themselves as such. You know, the phrase from the Moliere comedy. “These forty years now I’ve been speaking in prose without knowing it!” And so, “All my life, I’ve been a Reform Jew, but I didn’t realize it.” The Israeli secular is not atheist. In fact, I know very few Israelis who are truly atheists. Many people in the United States would say, “Religion is useless and negative and serves no purpose. I’m getting out of this.” But for Israelis the definition of “religious” is what the Orthodox Rabbinate, the chief rabbis and the haredi politicians do and say. If Judaism is about denying me the chance to drive a car on Shabbat, allowing mass haredi draft dodging, segregation of women, and Orthodox marriages, I don’t want to have anything to do with it.

The Chief rabbinate and the religious politicians argue that Shabbat, religious marriages, etc. will save the Jewish character of the state of Israel and maintain the Jewish identity of Israelis. The truth is the opposite. These rules alienate Israelis and draw them away from Judaism.

The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) has been dividing the “traditional” sector into two groups, labeling them in Hebrew “traditional leaning toward religious” and “traditional leaning toward secular.” This second group should, for most practical purposes, be lumped together with the Israeli secular. Unfortunately, the Pew study did not separate out these two.

Zionism, in the rhetoric of most haredi spokespeople, is a

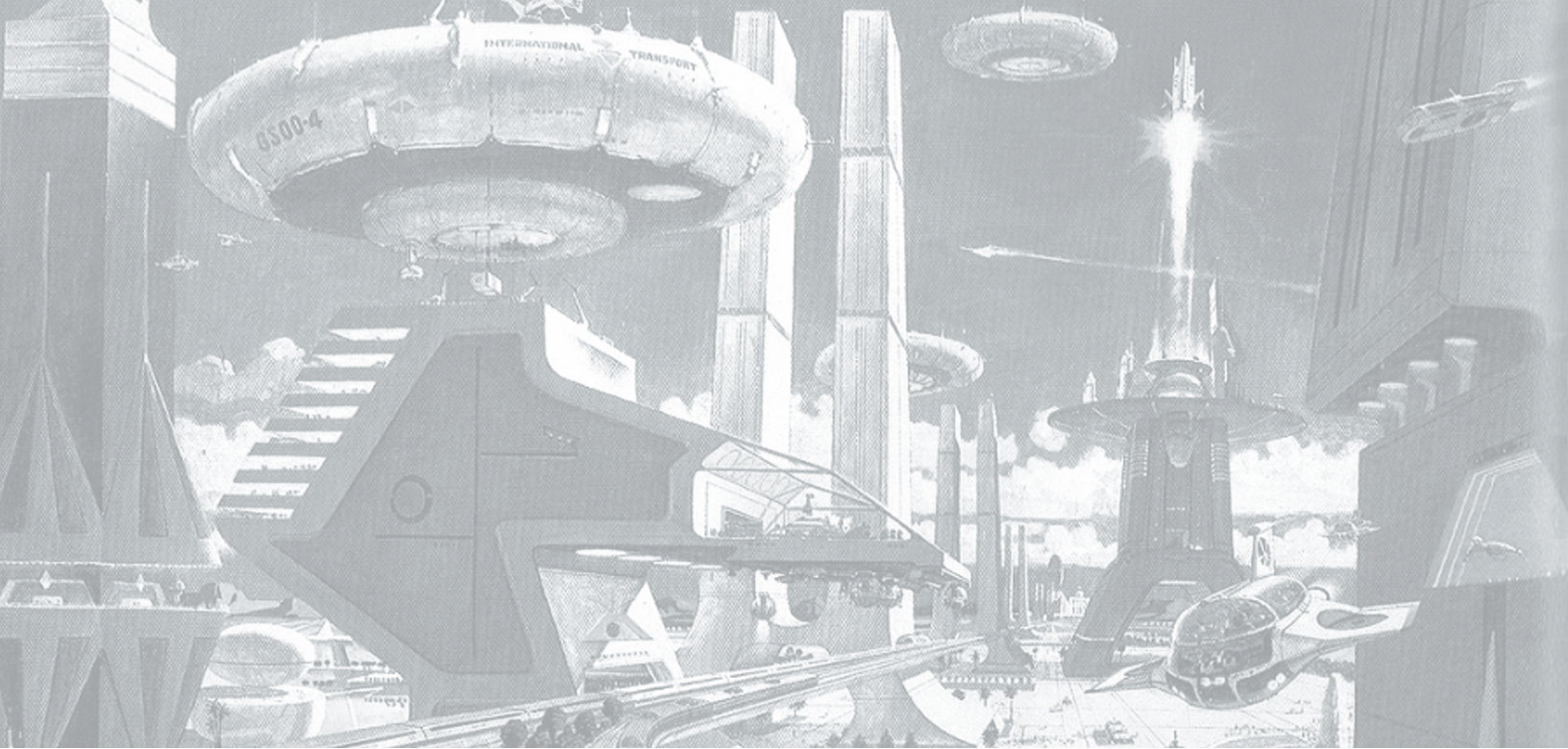
commitment to the land of Zion—the religious heritage connected to the land, not to the state.

The Chabad Lubavitch literature is explicitly anti-Zionist, in the sense that it rejects outright the legitimacy of Jews taking our fate into our hands and establishing a Jewish state. Rabbi Shlomo Amar, the Sephardi chief rabbi of Jerusalem, believes that Israel should be a Torah state, a theocracy.

I am uncomfortable talking about Israel 20, 30 years from now since there are so many unknowns. I can say that soon the majority of Israel’s citizens (Arabs and ultra-orthodox) will not share the Zionist dream and vision. Religious fundamentalism and radicalization will probably grow, part of a global phenomenon, while at the same time others will be more accommodating, inclusive, and tolerant. The tendency will be to move from more religious to less religious to secular, with defection from haredi camp to Orthodox and from modern Orthodox and “traditional” to secular. The political right and left will have to work together in order to retain a civil democratic society.

A silver lining is the growing focus of the American Jewish community on religious freedom and pluralism in Israel. In the case of the Soviet Union, American Jews practically changed the course of history. Support from American Jews could balance and possibly outweigh theocratic political pressures within Israel.

Rabbi Uri Regev is the President and CEO of “Hiddush – For Freedom of Religion and Equality” a trans-denominational nonprofit organization aimed at promoting religious freedom and equality in Israel.



UZI REBHUN

After World War II and in the late 1950s and in the early 1960s, there were approximately 5 million Jews in the United States. According to the 2013 Pew study, the number has increased to 5.7 million today.

There are four reasons for stability in the number of Jews in the US. One is that the modern Orthodox, but especially the ultra-Orthodox, have high fertility rates. A second is immigration. Since the 1990s, Soviet Jews, as well as Iranians

and Israelis, have immigrated to the United States. 300,000 Israelis live in United States, and their children increase the number to 400,000. A third factor is that people live longer than they used to live. So, while the Jewish community is aging, more people live for a longer time. The fourth explanation is that increasing numbers of the children of intermarried couples are being raised Jewish. In the Pew survey, 60 percent of the children of intermarried couples identify as Jews. This means that mixed marriage does not cause a demographic loss to the Jewish people. This is in part because today in the United States it's very popular to be Jewish. The total American population is increasing faster than the Jewish population, so the declining percentage of Jews may have an impact on the social, economic, and cultural roles of Jews in the US.

Jews that are offspring of mixed parentages for the most part have a weak level of engagement with the organized Jewish community. The challenge is to encourage them to become more active and engaged in Jewish activities, join synagogues, enroll their children in Jewish schools, etc. This leads to a policy question—encourage those with less Jewish identification, or focus on fewer Jews but fully committed and connected to the community. The American Jewish community in 2050 will be more Orthodox. Today, they constitute 10 percent of adult American Jews but 25 to 28 percent of Jewish children. A generation from now this will be their share of the Jewish community.

In Israel, if you look backwards, there have been changes that people never imagined. A million Russians emigrated to Israel. There was an unexpected decline in Arab birth rates in

Israel, and increase in birth rates among secular Israelis. Fertility of Russian immigrants went from 1.0 in Russia to 2.0 in Israel. Their life expectancy, which was around 50 to 60 years in the Soviet Union, is now 70-80 years.

Ultra-Orthodox women are increasingly studying in colleges where there are only women students and teachers, so as to accommodate to their religious way of life. Their employment rate is now almost identical to that of the non-ultra-Orthodox, although much of it is part time. Men have increased their labor market participation from 41 percent a few years ago, to 50 percent now. Fertility rates may decline but it could be that, while there may be timing delays, each woman would eventually have the same number of children as in the past.

There's another important topic. Since reunification of Jerusalem in 1967, there has been a steady decline in the proportion who are Jews. Today, 60 percent are Jews and 40 percent non-Jews. I and some of my colleagues have suggested that some parts of East Jerusalem could become independent towns and villages, like villages in the Galilee, with an elected mayor or head. They would remain permanent residents of Israel but they would not be part of the City of Jerusalem. Arabs gain because they have their own budget, a mayor or head of the village, and their own elections. The proportion of Jews in Jerusalem could then increase to 70 or 75 percent, one third of whom would continue to be Haredi.

Uzi Rebbun is a Professor of Israel-Diaspora Relations in The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University and a fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI).

In 2015, the Arab fertility rate was 3.2, the same as all Jews, compared to 4.5 between 1985 and 2002. The surprising decline came about because of a changing balance between modernity and family values, as well as increased education. Over time the Arab population will remain at around 22 percent. In Israel, among the Bedouin population, fertility was more than 9.0, the highest in the world, and it is now a bit more than 5.0. The decline in fertility parallels declines in the Arab and Muslim world as a whole.

Among Jews outside of the Haredim, the fertility rate of secular in 2003-5 was 1.9, and now it's 2.1. More than 90 percent of secular will remain self-identified as secular. If they go to synagogues, it will be to Reform synagogues, but their self-identification will remain as "secular." Secular Israelis, however we define them, will continue to be a political, social and economic force. The modern religious sector will remain stable or maybe increase to 13 percent. The fact that religious families have more children is balanced by the tendency to leave religious and move to traditional and to secular.

By 2059, Haredim will likely account for 27 percent of the population, compared to 10 percent today. A reduction in children's allowances has impacted on fertility. For every child, families used to get 800-900 Shekels a month, but now it is 200 Shekels. The government of Israel is encouraging increased Haredi academic training, labor market participation, and service in the army which may impact on fertility rates and haredi

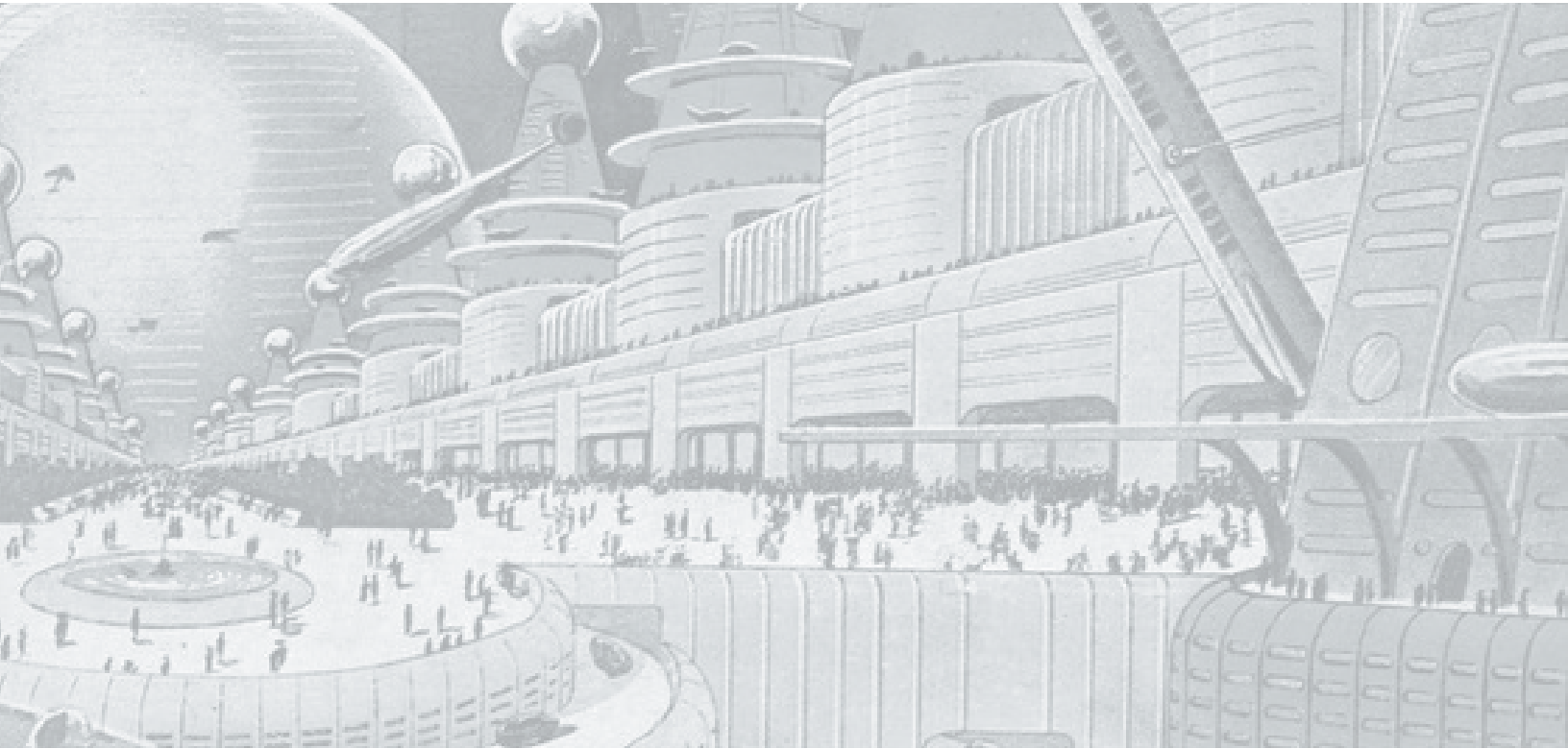
identity. While the number of those studying Torah may remain stable, the percentage going to work will grow. Overall I don't believe that the state will turn from a democracy to a theocracy, in part because the haredi community will slowly become integrated into the economy.

The population in Israel in 25 years will be double that of today's. Okay, so there might be 2 million people in Jerusalem and 4-5 million in the Tel Aviv area. Creativity in the vibrant sectors, in the technology sector, the top 10 percent—the "island area"—the source of economic growth—could deal with the problem of rapid growth. For example, we have found a solution to the scarcity of water through recycling.

Creativity could grow among the Haredim and Arabs. We recommended moving the focus of government programs from integration of the haredim to any part of the labor market to getting them into the more productive and technological sectors. There is also a major program to increase Arab participation in higher education. So, the peripheral sectors are entering and becoming part of the modern state of Israel.

There are some researchers who say that many of the creative 10 percent are running away from the state (brain drain). I can't say how serious this problem is now but I believe it is exaggerated.

Gilad Malach is a researcher at The Center for Religion, Nation and State, of The Israel Democracy Institute, where he heads the ultra-orthodox program.



DEBRA KAUFMAN

Survey data reveal, in the United States and in other western countries a shifting emphasis among non-Orthodox Jews from religion per se to a cultural/ethnic/secular context for their definition of what it means to be a contemporary Jew. Trends toward individual choice have increased the number

and ways in which one can self-define as Jewish, or, as some have put it, the many ways of “doing” Jewish. One consequence of this turn is to raise the question whether without a distinctive religious core of beliefs and practices we can maintain Jewish identity from one generation to the next.

While large quantitative socio-demographic surveys give us a fair shot at what is in comparison to what was, the future poses special challenges. In part this is true because as social scientists we bring macro-narratives (theories) to our research that are more in sync with conventional understandings (models and measures) of what counts as Jewish when counting Jews than what the sociological reality or the current experience is like for many contemporary Jews. On *conventional* grounds most survey data support an erosion narrative about contemporary U.S. Jewry; that the majority of contemporary Jews are headed, primarily through high rates of intermarriage and a distancing from religious belief, belonging and behavior, toward an ethnic and/or secular Jewish identity. The 2013 Pew portrait of American Jews finds the number of Americans with direct Jewish ancestry or upbringing who consider themselves Jewish, yet describe themselves as atheist, agnostic or having no particular religion (Jews Not by Religion), to be rising. Some see this as a sign of resilience and growth; others see it as a sign of erosion and decline. Whose life, whose rituals, and whose experiences will serve as the yardstick from which we measure Jewishness for the population at large? Who “counts” as Jewish, when estimating our population statistics, may lead to different narratives about the future of Judaism.

Large quantitative surveys are not equipped to give us the answers to these kinds of questions. Perhaps the severest limitations for such surveys are that the responses gathered do not capture why and in what ways questions asked are important to respondents. They tend to confine responses to pre-conceived and often conventional categories of meaning gener-

ated by social scientists rather than by respondents. If we are to better understand the future of Judaism in the U.S. we need to explore more fully those who self-identify as Jews without religion, on their own terms, in their own voices and in the spaces where they practice and perform their Jewishness. Although idiosyncratic data from qualitative studies cannot be generalized to the “population at large”, it can and does provide a meaning structure for the ways in which the “population at large” expresses and connects to its Jewishness.

There is a growing body of qualitative work, including my own on post holocaust Jewish identity narratives among millennials, which suggests that those who don’t “have” religion are anything but indifferent to it. While they may eschew normative practices of belonging, belief and behavior (as measured in surveys) they are creatively inventing their own social and cultural Jewish spaces and traditions often using the language of the past to do so. Therefore, I see for the Jewish population of 2050 a vibrant and inclusive Jewishness that crosses not only denominational boundaries but includes new ones, such as secularism; one that mixes and matches traditions of its own with that of others. I see “modern” Orthodoxy moving toward increasing accommodation to a secular world, as seen in the push of modern Orthodox women toward better representation within their communities. I see ultra-Orthodoxy as relatively smaller, more cultish, and no longer at the core of Judaism. Most of all, I see multiple variations within and between denominational and non-denominational strands of what it means to be Jewish.

Debra R Kaufman is Professor Emerita and Matthews Distinguished University Professor, Northeastern University, Boston Ma.

"FRAGMENTATION"

AN AFTERWORD BY GEORGE E. JOHNSON

As demographer Barry Kosmin puts it in his symposium response, Jewish demography is a lot like holding jello. It is getting increasingly difficult to use any one descriptor to characterize an increasingly fragmented American Jewry. Analytically, it makes sense to categorize Jews as he has done, and as Pew Research Center's Alan Cooperman has done in Pew's "A Portrait of Jewish Americans." We can glean a lot from the finding that 20 percent of American Jews consider themselves "Jews of No Religion;" that, as historian David Biale tells us, a huge number of American Jews, even synagogue goers, are atheists; and, as Jewish studies professor Sarah Benor and author Anita Diamant suggest, American Jews are becoming increasingly diverse racially and ethnically. Sociologist William Helmreich says we are disappearing. On the other hand, sociologist Arnie Dashevsky and geographer

Ira Sheskin, as well as Benor, Diamant and socio-psychologist Bethamie Horowitz tell us, Jews are not so much disappearing as they are different—different from the traditional model, and different from each other. The fragmentation is such that sociologist Samuel Heilman questions whether anyone can reasonably be said to speak for American Jews. And he not alone. Jewish studies professor Ari Kelman wonders aloud whether there is such a thing as "the American Jewish community." The data show that certain groups, particularly the haredi Orthodox and the number of one-Jewish-parent families, are rapidly increasing, while "Jews in the middle," though still a majority, are rapidly shrinking. Sociologist Steven Cohen, and Jewish studies professors Leonard Saxe and Sylvia Barack Fishman propose antedotes to disaffection and polarization. But they do not contest the evidence that we are grow-

ing apart and going in different directions. There are more Jews today than 25 years ago, several respondents note. But can we any longer fit under one umbrella? What if the umbrella that is offered no longer attempts to encompass all American Jews? And what if, as Biale suggests, the same kind of religious-secular divisions that are infecting Israeli politics are "poisoning our [American Jewish] culture"?

For me, the issue is Jewish continuity. Jews have been around for more than 3,000 years, yet Jews always have been obsessively concerned that our own generation might be the last—that our own generation somehow is unique and pivotal. Jewish historian Simon Rawidowicz said it all in the eponymous title of his essay, "Israel -The Ever-Dying People," which first appeared in English in the journal *Judaism* in 1967. I am not worried that we will disappear, but I am worried that our increas-

ing numbers are masking our decreasing cohesion.

So when I look at Pew's "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," and the many interpretations of that study and other studies in our *Moment* symposium, what strikes me hardest is the way in which religion and religious identity has assumed a subsidiary role in the discussion of continuity. For me, continuity means focusing on what we will preserve as well as what we will change.

Applying this thought to the *Moment* symposium and to the question of What is the Jewish future?, I believe we need both the haredi Orthodox and the "just Jewish," as well as everyone in between. To survive physically, there must be some level of common solidarity. We need each other. But to have any reason for our continued existence as a corporate entity, we need the people who make it their business to preserve and apply what makes Jews and Judaism distinctive. Ideally, the objective, as philosopher and author Rabbi David Hartman put it in his *A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit of Traditional Judaism*, would be to create a Jewish consciousness and polity for today based on a contemporary transformation that maintains fidelity to the tradition. Diversity, as Benor says, is inevitable. But cohesion and purpose are not.

For more than 2,000 years, Judaism has propelled the Jewish enterprise, in the most adverse of circumstances. In the late 19th century, Judaism's central role was challenged by secular alternatives – Zionism, Bundism, Yiddishism. But each was put forward as the rallying point for the People; each was presented as a way to continue the Jewish enterprise. And in Israel today, secular Zionism remains a credible, if beleaguered, alternative. But what is the American alternative? Secularism? Political party affiliation? Jewish music? Israel? Jewish camps? Of the many cultural expressions of Jewishness described in the *Moment* symposium, where is a viable vehicle for American Jewish continuity? The fragmentation, weak sense of belonging, and personalization of Jewish identity described by numerous respondents raise serious question about viable alternatives to Orthodoxy as a path of continuity, and, conversely, the viability of Orthodoxy as a path for the non-Orthodox.

In America, the middle is shrinking and the polarized edges are winning. One of the most telling trends observed in the symposium is the way in which haredi Orthodoxy in Israel and America are reinforcing each other, demographically, religiously and politically.

Continuity depends upon acknowledgement and concern by one group

of Jews with other, dissimilar, groups of Jews. For me, we need not only the find out what makes Jews on the periphery tick, but what makes the haredi Orthodox tick. Not only that, we need to care about the answer. So while I am heartened that families in which one parent is Jewish are increasingly raising their children to be "Jewish in some way," I am concerned with the finding that only 20 percent of those families raise their children to be "Jewish by Religion."

As a Jew and a journalist, I believe that knowledge is empowering. Several respondents noted that even though the Jewish community is increasingly diverse, racially and ethnically, we are doing little to study this growing phenomenon. How can we hope to encourage involvement of those who are part Jewish in the Jewish enterprise if we don't study who they are and don't attempt to engage with them? But the same can be said about the other end of the equation. There are almost no studies of haredi Orthodox Jews, or modern Orthodox Jews, for that matter, nor are we thinking about whether or how to create a two-way dialogue between these important groups and with the broader spectrum of Jews. Whether and how we address these questions will have a lot to do with how the Jewish community will look in 2050 and beyond.

WHAT I LEARNED FROM SIX DEMOGRAPHERS, SOCIOLOGISTS, POLITICAL SCIENTISTS, AND OTHERS* WHO HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT ISRAEL'S FUTURE BY LAURENCE WOLFF

*Menachem Friedman, Gilad Malach, Sergio della Pergola, Uzi Rebhun, Rabbi Uri Regev, Arnon Soffer

•Thanks to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS)—the equivalent to the US Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics—real data is available on the current composition of Israel's population, and projections based on current trends provide a vision of Israel's future population profile. But no projection can predict disaster, war, political upheavals, vast population movements. Israel's past has shown extraordinary unexpected population changes, such as the arrival of one million

Russian immigrants and the rapid reduction in the Arab birth rate. Any picture of Israel 20 or 30 years from now must therefore be viewed with healthy skepticism.

•The most striking scenario of the future is that the haredim or ultra-Orthodox are likely to account for 27 percent, and possibly more, of the population by 2059 (up from the current 10 ten percent). This could well mean domination of the country by a closed and rigid population, the

establishment of a “theological state,” and negative impacts on Israel's political, social, economic, and cultural life. But there is an alternative view, and one that I believe is more likely—that the haredi community will slowly become integrated into the economy, increasingly attend secular elementary schools, graduate from higher education institutions, join the armed forces, participate in the labor market, have fewer babies, and experience increased “leakage” from its fold. Already

diverse, the haredim could splinter further between more modern and/or traditional.

- A second possibility is that Israel could annex the West Bank. If this happens, the Jewish Arab ratio would be 60/40. Since the West Bank Arab birth rate is higher than in Israel, the ratio would slowly move toward 50/50. If Arabs get the vote, then there could eventually be a Palestinian led government. Lacking the vote would lead to recurring episodes of violence. This is the greatest failure of the present government, which appears to believe that the status quo can be sustained indefinitely or that Arab West Bank cities and towns could be given limited autonomy without any consequences. There must be a space for a Palestinian state even if it takes 20, 30, or even a 100 years.

- A third perspective is that Israel's population is expected to double from the current 8 million to 16 million, making it the most densely populated Western country. Its available land is low because of the desert area of the Negev as well as the control of much land by the Army. It could be paved over with roads and filled with families and concrete apartment buildings. But perhaps Israeli creativity will make life tolerable in such a crowded place.

- In spite of the current domination by the right wing of Israeli politics, today secular and liberal Israelis appear to be satisfied with their life in Israel. Especially in greater Tel Aviv, Israel is still a land of excitement, creativity, culture, and economic growth, sprinkled with a little bit of chaos. In Israel "secular" Jews for the most part live lives similar to Reform and Conservative Jews in America without identifying themselves as such. Their definition of "religious" is what the Orthodox Rabbinate and haredi politicians do and say. The Rabbinate argues that Shabbat, religious marriages, etc., will maintain the Jewish identity of Israelis. The truth is the opposite. The secular may well start to leave if civil life becomes further constricted and also if Israel's economy stops growing. Israel's economic, social and culture life would be impoverished if the secular population declines.

- Israel's Arab population will eventually stabilize at around 22 percent of the population. Increased educational opportunities as well as urbanization will enable them to be more closely integrated into Israeli society. More Arabs will attend Jewish schools and intermarriage will slowly increase. Because of very high birth rates, the Bedouins, the poorest and least educated of Israel's

ethnic groups, will soon account for 25 percent of Israel's Arab population.

- Demography does not have to be destiny. If Israel is to be a decent and peaceful place to live, then it must keep open the option of a two-state solution. If Israel is not going to be a land filled with overflowing families and concrete apartment buildings, then state subsidies for large families should be kept low. If Israel is to continue to have a vibrant and growing economy, then its public investments in haredi and Arab education and training should be vastly increased. If the creative secular are to be convinced to stay, then the ultra-orthodox monopoly on life cycle events should end. A far-sighted government would insist on respect for the rights and validity of the narratives of each of Israel's four "tribes"—ultra-Orthodox, Modern Orthodox and religious Zionist, "secular" Jewish, and Arab—starting with teaching tolerance and respect for others in the currently divided school system. The connections between the Israeli Orthodox and haredim and their counterparts in the Diaspora are strong. How can we create similar lasting connections between liberal, progressive Jews in Israel and those in the Diaspora?

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