

IS MY HEART IN THE EAST IF I AM IN THE WEST?
A STUDY OF ISRAELIS LIVING IN
LOS ANGELES

האם לבי עדיין במזרח אם אני במערב?
מחקר אודות ישראלים שגרים בלוס אנג'לס

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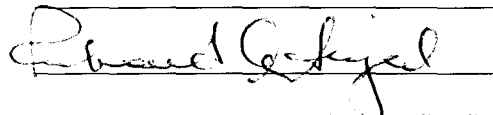
SCHOOL OF JEWISH COMMUNAL SERVICE

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A STUDY OF ISRAELIS LIVING IN LOS ANGELES

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Abstract

Israelis have been living in the United States since the establishment of the state of Israel. However, the Jewish communities in which these Israelis live know very little about why they are there or what they are doing within the community. The study tries to understand the Israeli community in Los Angeles, a community that has not been studied in over 12 years. The study surveys 175 Israelis living in Los Angeles to assess which Jewish communal activities they are involved in and what kinds of connections they feel to other Jews and Israelis in Los Angeles.

Of the Israelis surveyed many are involved in a number of Jewish organizations in Los Angeles. The majority of the respondents send their children to some kind of Jewish educational experience. Jewish education is an important way to connect with Israelis in Los Angeles. The schools and organizations that have Israelis in attendance offer the opportunity to connect them in other ways to the Organized Jewish community. In addition, the Israelis in Los Angeles have similar problems to other Jews living in Los Angeles. For example, they have a lack of knowledge about the programming that is available to them and some feel like outsiders. Although many of the Israelis studied are involved in some Jewish activities, the organized Jewish community has the potential to engage them on a much larger scale.

The Jewish community in Los Angeles needs to be more open to diversity and new ideas in order to attract new and different people, including Israelis. New marketing strategies, suggestions for engagement, and ideas for inclusion described in this thesis hopefully will increase the likelihood that the Israeli community will be knowledgeable about and want to participate in all of the Jewish organizational opportunities available to them in Los Angeles.

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I hope you all enjoy it and find it useful.

Introduction

You would have thought 30,000 Israelis would have been on the streets [at a rally in support of Israel during the 2nd Lebanon War]. I thought to myself that there is no correlation between the number of Israelis that live in Los Angeles and the actions that are being taken by them (Israeli Consulate General Ehud Danoch, quoted in Klein 2007: 1).

Yehuda Halevi wrote a poem in 10th century Spain that began “My Heart is in the East while I am in the uttermost West.” Like other Jews living outside of *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel), Halevi experienced a longing for the Holy Land. Today, there is a group of Jews who were born in the Holy Land and have chosen to leave. Some of them feel more comfortable in the United States while others are always longing for Israel. This paper addresses this question by asking how some of the Israelis living in Los Angeles experience life in the West.

The following paper is the culmination of a series of literature reviews, interviews and a survey of Israelis living in Los Angeles aimed at a better understanding of the make-up of the Israeli community in Los Angeles. I began my research focused on several research questions, including:

- Who are the Israelis living in Los Angeles?
- How are they making a living?
- Why did they decide to leave Israel?
- Do the Israelis living in Los Angeles plan on returning to Israel?
- Do they feel part of the American Jewish community in Los Angeles?
- Do Israelis participate in American Jewish organizations?
- Who do Israelis in Los Angeles interact with socially?

- Is the Los Angeles Jewish community sponsoring programs that Israelis want to participate in?
- What does the Jewish community in Los Angeles not understand about its Israeli residents?

Jewish Immigrants in America 1820-1950

In the United States, there is a mixture of ethnicities, races, and cultures, without which the country would not be what it is today. The Jewish population in the United States is also a diverse mixture of the descendents of many different immigrant groups that have come to the United States over the past two centuries. Once they arrived, their lives and the lives of the Jews in the communities they joined changed.

During the 19th century, there were two major waves of Jewish immigration to the United States. Between 1820 and 1880, about 250,000 Jews came to the United States, and between 1880 and 1920, about two and half million Jews entered the United States (Diner 2006: 79). The first wave of immigrants left Europe for the United States, a country that was unknown to them and had less than three thousand Jewish residents. These communities had no Rabbis or Jewish institutions (ibid: 100). Jews were fleeing persecution: pogroms in Russia and riots in Germany. They were looking for better economic opportunities because they had been stripped of their rights in the countries in which they lived. Once in America, they tried looking for work, and some began peddling or working in the garment industry (ibid: 107). The first wave of immigrants experienced very little help with their immigration because the Jewish community in America was small and disorganized.

The second wave of immigrants was greeted by established Jewish organizations that helped them settle and find homes and jobs. By 1920, there was a large Jewish service network which included hospitals, orphanages, and associations that provided food, shelter, and clothing to those in need, mostly new immigrants (Diner 2006: 135). There were organizations such as B'nai Brith, the Hebrew Benevolent Society, and the National Council of Jewish Women that helped new immigrants acclimate to life in America. Over the next 40 years, these and other organizations helped the immigrants that were arriving in the United States. Gold explains, "Such cooperative endeavors have been essential in allowing Western diasporic Jewish communities to achieve the enviable record of achievement, security, and continuity that they now enjoy" (Gold 2002: 152).

After World War II, America's Jews gained another group of immigrants, refugees from Nazi Europe, Jews that lost everything (Diner 2006: 216). This group of Jews might have been larger if the United States had not had restrictions on immigration until 1949 (Gartner 2001: 380). Hasia Diner writes, "The arrival of Jewish refugees from Germany caused American Jewish organizations to improve on their ability to deliver services to those in need" (2006: 244). Organizations like the National Council of Jewish Women and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society continued dealing with the immediate needs of immigrants, such as housing and jobs. The numbers of Jewish refugees who made their way to the United States was too small to make any significant impact on the "American Jewish social and cultural patterns" (ibid).

Jewish Immigrants in America 1950-Present

While many of the Jewish immigrants currently living in the United States are post-World War II immigrants, it is important to remember that during the 20 years between 1950 and 1970 about 8,000 Jews immigrated to the United States per year. These immigrants came primarily from Cuba, Argentina, Hungary, Romania, and other Eastern European Countries. The next wave of Jewish immigrants began in the 1970s with immigrants from the Soviet Union, Iran, and Syria. In addition, Jews from Canada and South Africa have trickled in (Rosen 1993: 1).

Another large wave of immigrants from the Soviet Union arrived in America between 1979 and 1990. The American Jewish community could not predict the growth in numbers and the diversification that this large influx of Jews would bring. In 1967, only 72 Jews made their way to America from the Soviet Union. By 1973, the number climbed to 1,449 and by 1979, a total of 30,000 Soviet Jews had made their way to the United States. In 1989 alone, another 36,738 Jews emigrated from the Soviet Union (Diner 2006: 317).

The Soviet Jews were coming from a place in which Judaism had ceased to “be a living force” (Diner 2006: 317). These Jews defined themselves very differently from how American Jews, who lived in a democratic society, defined themselves. American Jewish organizations had to determine how to help these new immigrants. Through federations and other social service agencies, American Jews went about “judaizing” the immigrants. The American Jews wanted to help the Soviet Jews define themselves more like American Jews. The Soviet Jews were not very interested in this kind of help from the American Jewish community; they were interested in access to housing, jobs, and education (ibid: 318).

Another large wave of immigrants came when the Jews began to leave Iran after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The arrival of these immigrants changed the cultural landscape of “American” Judaism. Through these immigrants, the Jewish community in America gained a degree of diversity that had not existed before. American-born Jews felt a sense of “communal responsibility” to these new immigrants as well as a “fascination with the exotic” (Diner 2006: 318). American Jews tried to become familiar with these new immigrants and their cultures but also had a “strong sense that they controlled the community institutions and as such knew best how to structure Jewish life in America” (ibid).

Jewish Immigrants in Los Angeles

The specific history of Jewish immigrants to Los Angeles serves as a significant example, contributing to a better understanding of the patterns of assimilation and integration experienced more globally. The following table shows the total number of Jews living in Los Angeles in a given year over the past 150 years.

Table 1: Estimated Jewish Population in Los Angeles over 150 years

Year	Estimated Jewish Population of Los Angeles¹
1850	8
1880	136 (1997 LAJPS)
1900	2,500
1917-1918	19,000
1925	45,000
1935	130,00
1945	150,000
1946	168,000
1951	300,000
1967	509,000
1997	519,151 (1997 LAJPS)

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, these estimates are from Gartner and Vorspan (1970).

In the late 1940s, Jewish immigrants made up 1/8 of the total immigrant population in Los Angeles. In 1948, a local study concluded “that the Jewish population in greater Los Angeles is already approximately 250,000 and that the rate of growth is in excess of two thousand a month” (Vorspan and Gartner 1970: 225). Many of these Jews had migrated from other parts of the United States. As of 1958, half of the Angelino Jews arrived in the previous thirteen years, making the Los Angeles Jewish community young (Diner 2006: 283). However, during this period, Los Angeles was gaining a western-moving older population who were in search of an easier life (Vorspan and Gartner 1970:227). The continuous influx of post-WWII immigrants and migrants from other parts of the United States ensured that housing developments continued to be constructed. Many Jews were in the construction business in Los Angeles, and they prospered greatly in Los Angeles after World War II (ibid: 233).

Statistics about the Jewish population in Los Angeles can help explain the patterns of immigrant populations coming to Los Angeles. In the 1979 demographic survey of Jews living in Los Angeles, 16% were born in the Greater Los Angeles area, 60% were U.S. born but outside of Los Angeles and 24% were foreign born. In the 80s and 90s, Los Angeles experienced a large influx of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union and Iran. Los Angeles and Miami recorded the largest concentrations of these immigrants.

In the most recent Los Angeles Jewish population study in 1997, immigrants from the Former Soviet Union made up the largest immigrant group while Jews from Iran were the second largest immigrant group (LAJPS 1997: 14). Only one third of Jews living in Los Angeles were born in California (ibid: 15). Today about 1 in every 5 Jews in Los Angeles

was born outside of the United States (ibid: 14). Currently, Los Angeles is home to the second largest Jewish population in the United States after New York City (Diner 2006: 105).

Numbers of Israelis living in the United States

There has been a continuous stream of Israeli immigrants into the United States since 1948 (Rosen 1993: 2). The number of Israelis in the United States is debated due to the variety of ways it is possible to identify who is an Israeli and who is an Israeli immigrant (Gold 2002: 22). For example, many people consider themselves Israeli if their parents were Israeli even if they were not born in Israel. The calculations about the numbers of Israelis living in the United States also differ because some of the Israelis living in the United States, like other immigrant groups, are here illegally. Gold explains, “Academics, journalists, communal activists affiliated with Israel, host societies, and émigré communities continue to dispute these estimates, commonly claiming that the local population is three to four times as large as indicated by census or survey based tabulations” (2002: 23-24).

Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the number of Jews who have left Israel has risen significantly. In the early years, the rate of Israeli immigration to the United States stood at about 1,000 people every year. By 1986, the number had reached about 5,000 people per year. In that same year, 141,449 Israelis entered the United States for “nonimmigrant purposes” such as tourism or short business trips (Rosen 1993:4). The Israeli government estimated about 500,000 Israelis living in the United States by 1980 while the U.S. Census in 1980 estimated a number closer to 300,000 (ibid: 23). In the “National

Jewish Population Survey Methodology Series: Israelis in the United States” an explanation is given:

The 1981 Jewish Agency report, based on the investigations of then Director Shmuel Lahis, reported up to 500,000 Israelis residing in the United States. The report was commissioned as part of the Israeli government’s efforts to highlight a perceived problem of emigration from Israel and to provide incentives to bring emigrants back to Israel (Ament 2000: 1).

Between 1948 and 1992, the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that there were 581,000 more exits than re-entries by Israeli residents. About half of those exits stated that their destination was the United States. Assuming that all of these Israelis stayed in the United States and did not go somewhere else, the adjusted gross balance of Jewish Israelis in the United States was 216,000. After calculating deaths, and Israelis who returned to Israel, Gold and Phillips estimate that about 172,848 Israelis were living in the United States in 1993 (1996: 58).

The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) yielded a number close to 90,000 Israelis in the United States. The United States Census from 2000 says there are 109,720 people who say that their place of birth was Israel (Census Website). The 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey estimates around 63,000 Israelis adults living in the United States (Cohen and Veinstein 2008:10). The “2000-2001 NJPS Methodology Series: Israelis in the United States” further explains:

NJPS defines “Israelis” as Jews who were born in Israel and estimates a total of 63,000 Israeli-born adult Jews living in the United States. In addition, a total of 30,000 children live in the households of Israel-born adult Jews. Maximally, then, the Israeli-born Jewish population in the U.S. is 93,000. However, only 7,000 of the children were reported born before the Israeli-born adult immigrated to the United States, suggesting the Israeli-born Jewish population residing in the United States is 70,000, with 23,000 children born to Israeli immigrants already living in the U.S. and thus technically first generation Americans (Ament 2000: 2).

Until 1966, Israelis in America were likely to be European-born Israeli nationals, but after the 1967 Six Day War, most Israeli immigrants in the United States were born in Israel. By 1986, 89% of Israeli immigrants in the United States were Israeli born, sabras (Rosen 1993: 4). There is a disproportionate amount of men: about 56% compared to 44% women. The most recent estimate is that three quarters of the Israeli immigrants living in the United States are under 30. Most of the Israelis living in the United States are of Ashkenazi decent even though the majority of Israelis living in Israel are of Sephardic/Mizrahi decent (Rosen 1993: 5).

Jewish Americans reactions to Israelis in the United States

When any Jewish immigrant population arrives in the United States, American Jews vow to help acculturate them and offer them assistance. However, Israeli immigrants are different from other immigrant groups. The emigration of Israelis has evoked a wide range of emotions in Diasporic and Israeli Jews, including confusion, disappointment, and apprehension. Therefore, Israelis have not received the same communal welcome that more recent Jewish immigrant groups from the Former Soviet Union or Iran have received. If Israelis are leaving Israel, why should other Jews want to move there? Some Jews are worried that the Zionist vision is failing if Israelis are leaving the Holy Land. Other Jews are excited about the prospects of merging Israeli and other Jewish identities (Rosen 1993).

Steven Cohen explains the reactions that American Jews have to immigrants, especially Israeli immigrants in his article *Israeli Émigrés and the New York Federation: A Case Study in Ambivalent Policymaking for "Jewish Communal Deviants."* He explains the three types of reactions that American Jewish organizations have to immigrant groups or

communal deviants. “These are groups whose behavior even if through no fault of their own departs or deviates from the expectations of the organized community”(Cohen 1986: 155). The article compares Israelis to other outsider groups such as childless couples, the intermarried, and the divorced.

The first reaction that the American Jewish Community had to Israelis living in the United States was denial. Israelis moving to the United States was so contrary to the ideals of Zionism that the communal leaders just decided to deny that Israelis were moving to the United States in any significant numbers (Cohen 1986: 156). The next step was for the communal leaders to acknowledge the large numbers of Israelis leaving but try to cover it up. Communal leaders were concerned that if “*sabras* (native born Israelis), who are the closest to Israel and its problems can reject the Jewish state, then why should American Jews invest considerable time, money and energy in its support?” (ibid: 157). In order to further this agenda, the communal leaders tried to underestimate the numbers of Israelis leaving Israel.

The next step that was taken was to exaggerate the numbers of Israelis living outside of Israel in order to gain more support for re-*aliyah*. In the late 1970s, there was an estimate made that 100,000 Israelis were living in Los Angeles, which meant that about 1 in 5 Jews in Los Angeles was born in Israel. This gross over exaggeration was made in order to gain support for the cause; a few years later, another study suggested a figure closer to 15,000 (Cohen 1986: 158).

The reactions by American Jews to these “communal deviants” lead to several different types of policies for the Jewish Communal Service world, explains Cohen (1986: 159). The first policy oriented towards Israeli immigrants was one of “malign neglect.” If the Israelis are leaving Israel, they are obviously bad Jews and therefore the organized Jewish

community should have nothing to do with them. This was the policy until the mid-1980s (ibid: 159). The next step is “benign neglect.” Its main premise was to allow the Israelis living in the United States to acquire services like any other Jew because to make special services for the Israelis could have looked like approval for their emigration from Israel (ibid: 160).

The next idea by Jewish communal life was to combat the social trends that gave rise to the group in the first place or what Cohen calls containment. This involves trying to convince Israelis not to leave Israel or to encourage those who had left to return. Cohen believes that this policy could not succeed because “communal efforts to alter Jewish demographic trends in any significant way are doomed to failure” (Cohen 1986: 161). The final action oriented policy is called accommodation, a way to bridge the differences that separate the communal deviants from Jewish institutional life. Accommodation could go one of two ways; it could entail the “creation of Jewish networks and institutions composed primarily of the communally deviant” or “fully integrating the communal deviants into conventional structures such as Y’s and Synagogues (ibid: 162).”

Many other factors contribute to the complexities of the relationships between Israeli immigrants and American born Jews. This could be attributed to the perception that Israelis are not truly immigrants; instead they are temporary “sojourners,” students, emissaries, or even tourists (Rosen 1993: 2). It could also be attributed to the fact that Israeli immigrants are not political refugees fleeing persecution like the Russians or the Persians (Gold and Phillips 1996: 52). The perception of the Israeli immigrant does not include the concept of a Jew seeking a better life for his or her family by emigrating from Israel. To the contrary, however, many of the immigrants are actually moving in seek of a better life but only

temporarily, many plan to return to Israel. This is dissimilar from those who left the Former Soviet Union or Iran who wanted to be in America for the rest of their lives (Rosen 1993: 2). In addition, the Israeli emigrants are not being oppressed by the government while living in Israel like other groups leaving their homeland (Gold 2002: 107).

Another reason for the American Jewish community's different treatment of Israeli Jews is the attitude toward these emigrants from the Israeli government. When Israelis first began immigrating in large numbers to the United States in the 1970s, the Israeli government instructed American Jews not to help these immigrants. They were seen as abandoning the Jewish homeland, and they were called *yordim* ("those who go down"), the opposite of *olim* ("those who go up") to Israel, the Promised Land for the Jews. This was the stance of the Israeli government until 1985 when Israeli officials decided that they could no longer ignore this population (Rosen 1993: 2). *Aliyah* began to drop off during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and this forced the government to reconsider their position about immigrants. There was a public reexamination of the way that the Israeli government was interacting with Israelis who chose to leave Israel.

Since the decision in 1985, there has been a change in the stance of the Israeli government and thus the American Jewish community. The Israeli Consulates in cities such as Los Angeles and New York City are no longer ignoring the Israeli citizens living amongst them and are instead staying connected through the internet and offering programs for local Israelis. However, the official policy of the Israeli consulates and the Jewish Agency still remains one of "re-*aliyah*" because they believe it is absolutely necessary for the well-being of the state of Israel. Many Israeli consulate and government officials state that "ignoring the Israelis won't bring them home" (Rosen 1993: 3).

Some Israeli immigrants are admired by Americans, while others are seen as boorish and arrogant (Gold 2002: 155). Some Jewish communal professionals exclude Israelis from their organizations because of many different stereotypes about Israelis (ibid: 166). In a study conducted by Steven Gold between 1991 and 1996, an Israeli woman working in a Jewish communal setting said, “You Americans kind of generalize that all Israelis are like this... Well, there are a lot of Israelis that are pushy, they’re dirty, they’re a lot of things. But there are nice Israelis too, especially in such a big community. A lot of educated Israelis” (ibid). American Jews have reacted in different ways to Israelis in America, but Israelis in America have also reacted in different ways to American Jews. In an interview that I conducted with an Israeli lay leader of the new Israeli Division of the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance, this point was taken even farther. She explains that the Israelis might not think highly of the Americans, and this causes disdain as well.

Israelis living in the United States have had many different experiences. They have been treated in a variety of ways that have influenced how they feel as Jews; they have experienced diverse reactions from their communities and have practiced their Judaism differently, based on these experiences.

Israelis in Major Cities besides Los Angeles

It is obviously hard to determine definitively how many Israelis are living in the United States. The Israelis, however, are mostly living in four main places, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and South Florida (Rosen 1993: 3). These locations of Israeli enclaves differ in their maturation and their connection to the Jewish community around them. Israeli

immigrants across the country participate differently in their communities and could be “in many ways at an important crossroads” in relationship and community building (ibid: 20).

The largest Israeli population in the Midwest resides in Chicago even though there are no official estimates of the actual size of the population. The population is believed to be relatively young, only about two generations. In addition, the population is mostly middle class in profession and income and is likely to live in family units (Rosen 1993: 14). The Israelis living in Chicago are more organized than the Jewish community perceives them to be, and the numbers of Israelis joining existing organizations is rising. Israelis in Chicago take advantage of the Jewish Community Center and Jewish Family and Community Service often (ibid: 13). The community supports a women’s discussion and support group, a *tzofim* (scouts) group, and an “Israeli School” a supplementary school that has been in existence for 10 years. In 1992, a change in the Israeli Consulate leadership encouraged the Israelis living in Chicago in many different ways (ibid: 14).

South Florida, including Miami, Hollywood, and Fort Lauderdale, could be the third largest Israeli community in the United States, but again the figures are only estimates. In North Miami Beach, there are Israeli restaurants and an Israeli supermarket. Some of the Israeli inhabitants are long term residents while others are more recent arrivals. The Israelis have not organized themselves to the extent that the Cuban Jewish community has. In 1993, the Greater Miami Jewish Federation established an Israeli Committee for outreach “aimed at integrating Israelis into the Jewish community” (Rosen 1993: 15). Other Israelis have expressed interest in organizing to try to influence U.S. policies that affect Israel. There is also an Israeli scout troop in Miami Beach (ibid: 16). South Florida Israelis are just another

example of how different groups of Israelis in the United States organize themselves and interact with their local Jewish community.

New York might have the largest population of Israelis living in the United States but Los Angeles is also a strong contender. In a study by Steven Cohen and Judith Veinstein, they estimate that the Israeli population in New York is anywhere between 31,000-81,000 depending on how one defines “Israeli.” There are more males than females and 75% of Israelis are married (Cohen and Veinstein 2009: 19). Rosen explains about Israelis in New York:

In spite of apparently ever-growing numbers, some observers claim that the current level of organized community activity is lower than it was in the late 1970s and 1980s, when New York was more of an immigrant gateway to the United States than it is today. (1993: 17)

However, there are teen programs, folk dance groups, lecture series, and parent workshops all geared toward Israeli residents of New York. Israeli enrollment in supplementary schools is increasing. In addition, the Jewish Federation of New York has explained that participating in already existing Israeli social clubs, Hebrew-language resources, and public Israeli-style Jewish observance is a stepping stone to draw Israelis into other parts of organized Jewish communal life (ibid: 18).

Israelis in Los Angeles

According to the 2000 US Census, 28% of the 99,600 Israelis living in the United States reside in the Western region. Israelis in Los Angeles have been officially and unofficially estimated anywhere between 20,000 and 200,000. This huge range is due to the incomplete data about the group. Pini Herman estimated that in 1988 there were roughly 10,000 to 11,000 Israelis living in the Greater Los Angeles area (Rosen 1993:11). The

Israelis living in Los Angeles are relatively more recent arrivals than their counterparts in New York (Gold and Phillips 1996: 63).

Los Angeles has the largest concentration of Israeli immigrants living in the western region (Cohen and Veinstein 2008: 12). The Los Angeles Jewish Population Survey (LAJPS), last performed in 1997, found that there were 14,170 Jews in Los Angeles who were born in Israel and another roughly 48,000 who call themselves Israeli (LAJPS 1997: 14). This number could be children of Israeli parents who were born in the United States or it could be others who immigrated to the United States through Israel from another country.

In 2009, Israelis are a prevalent part of the Jewish community in Los Angeles. If you were to walk around densely Jewish neighborhoods like Pico-Robertson, Encino, and Calabasas, you would likely hear Hebrew. Israelis in Los Angeles have the opportunity to lead an Israeli way of life because of the vast numbers of Israelis in the city. There are Hebrew newspapers, a Hebrew channel available on cable, and many Israeli restaurants and clubs; the climate is even similar to Israel (Rosen 1993: 11).

Israelis and the Los Angeles Jewish Community

Israelis have been living in Los Angeles for decades. Over the past 30 years, there have been different reactions to Israelis living in Los Angeles. In the 1970s, the idea of *yordim* was prevalent and thus Israelis living in the United States were looked down upon. In the 1980s, the situation changed and in the 1990s, the Israelis in Los Angeles prospered. They began building groups and forming organizations.

In 1988, the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles reactivated its Commission of Israelis in the Council on Jewish Life section, which was originally established in 1981. The

commission developed a list of projects that they wanted to see implemented that included convincing the Israeli consulate to reverse its disdain for *yordim* (going down from Israel) and allow the Jewish community in Los Angeles to help the Israeli immigrants. Out of the Commission, education about the American Jewish community began, and lectures in Hebrew were aimed at encouraging Israelis to join in communal life (Rosen 1993: 12).

In a 1991 interview by Steven Gold, a staff member of a Los Angeles agency described how the new consul general, Ron Ronen deserved special appreciation for his “support of outreach to emigrants” (Gold 2002: 158). With the arrival of Ron Ronen in 1989, “there was a change in attitude;” explains the staff member, “now, at least on the part of the Federation, and I presume continuing to be the case of the consulate, there is no ambivalence. We want to welcome these people and have them as part of our community” (Gold 2002: 158). There were leadership development programs in which Israelis were encouraged to participate. In 1990, there was the first Israeli group that was trained to make calls in Hebrew for the Operation Exodus phone-a-thon² (Rosen 1993: 12). During the community wide Federation phone-a-thon, Super Sunday, in the early 1990s, some of the solicitations were even made in Hebrew (Rosen 1993: 12).

In addition, in the early 1990s, a Hebrew speaking afternoon religious school was established under the jurisdiction of the Jewish Community Center Association. There were also Hebrew-speaking parenting groups run by Jewish Family Service and a Hebrew branch of Jewish Big Brothers (Rosen 1993: 12). The Israeli Scout movement (*Tzofim*) was also popular in Los Angeles (ibid: 13). *Tzofim* was established in cities like Los Angeles to ensure that children of Israelis had some forms of Israeli experience, including speaking

² Operation Exodus was the effort to rescue Ethiopian Jews and the American Jewish community stepped up to find the funding for this endeavor.

Hebrew and celebrating holidays in an Israeli way (Gold 2002: 110). Not only were the children able to learn Israeli history and traditions, their parents were able to socialize with Israeli peers while waiting for their children (ibid: 136).

In the early 1990s, for Israelis, joining a Jewish Community Center was more common than joining a synagogue; this was evident in the lack of synagogue enrollment by Israelis (Rosen 1993: 13). There was growing hope for affiliation by Los Angeles Jewish organizations around this time because Israelis were believed to be “newly affluent individuals with the time and money for Jewish-oriented community life” (ibid). Construction, real estate, security, and fashion were all industries that were booming, and Israelis were connected to all of them.

Ironically, after the change in opinions brought about in the late 1980s by Federation staff and the Consulate, Jewish communal institutions began to complain about the lack of involvement by Israelis in Los Angeles. A communal professional in Los Angeles stated,

I’ve come into contact with many Israelis for years. Some were here for a long time and they didn’t want to have anything to do with anyone else. They wanted to have a little Israel you know, a junior Tel Aviv here, a Ramat Gan. And they wanted to associate with nobody else but Israelis and have their kids hang out with nobody else but Israelis and they didn’t want to integrate with other American Jews (Gold 2002: 160-161).

As time went on, Jewish communal professionals and volunteers began to realize that they did not need to judge Israeli emigrants according to “host country standards”; instead they needed to understand Israelis better (Gold 2002: 161). The Los Angeles Jewish Federation employees began to realize that it was their duty to welcome the immigrants and help them become familiar with the Diaspora community. The concept of community is different from the one that they are used to in Israel. The Diaspora Jewish Community is supported by charitable donations, not government funds (Gold 2002: 161). Carol Koransky, the

Executive Director of the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance explains this idea even more, “The Israeli community when they first arrived in the United States did not understand how to live in the Diaspora, like the Persian community did. In Israel, the community and its services were established by the government” (Interview, Carol Koransky, October 3, 2008). Similarly, Shoham Nicolet, the Executive Director of the Israeli Leadership Club, says, “Israelis don’t know how to live in a community; when you grow up in Israel, this [Israel] is your community. There is no need for a Jewish community [in Israel]” (Interview, Shoham Nicolet, October 3, 2008).

Methods

After being immersed in the previous literature about Israelis living in the United States, and more specifically in Los Angeles, I began my efforts to learn more information about the current Israeli population living in Los Angeles. It has been approximately 12 years since data about the Jewish and Israeli population in Los Angeles has been gathered, and therefore some of the previous literature is a bit outdated.

I began by conducting several interviews with people in Los Angeles who are connected to the Israeli population in different ways:

- Pini Herman, a demographer in Los Angeles who has spent many years researching the Israeli population.
- Eyal Shemesh, the owner of the Israeli Magazine “We are in America”
- Carol Koransky, the Executive Director of the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance
- Orna Eilon, the founding lay leader for the Israeli Division at the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance

- Shoham Nicolet, the Executive Director of the Israeli Leadership Council (ILC)
- Rabbi Jonathan Aaron, the Associate Rabbi and Director of Education at Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills, which has many Israelis attending its early childhood education center and day school

These interviews were the stepping stones that helped me formulate a survey tool that would ask questions to the Israeli population that would be as beneficial to Los Angeles Jewish organizations as possible.

The survey (see appendix 1) was constructed on SurveyMonkey.com and pre-tested with a handful of Israeli friends and family. I sent an email to all of the people I had interviewed, as well as many other connections in the Jewish and the Israeli community, asking them to forward the survey to their lists. I placed a link to the survey on many different Facebook groups and pages that I thought Israelis might see. The Council of Israeli Communities also emailed their listserv the link to the survey. In addition, an ad was placed in the Los Angeles Israeli newspaper “Israeli Weekly” (see appendix 2).

One hundred and seventy-five Israelis living in Los Angeles responded to my survey. Since I disseminated the survey through the snowball technique with emails as well as referrals and Facebook, my sample cannot be considered a random sample of Israeli immigrants in Los Angeles. The snowball method always leaves some of the population underrepresented. I believe that I am missing a lot of Israelis who consider themselves Orthodox or live in the Pico-Robertson area. I did not reach a lot of older Israelis who have been living in Los Angeles since before 1980. Also, since my survey was in English, those Israelis living in Los Angeles with limited English knowledge may not be represented. In addition, the survey was only disseminated through the internet and therefore those Israelis

without internet access are underrepresented in my survey results. Another underrepresented population could be those who have disdain for the organized Jewish community since the introduction to the survey mentioned the Jewish community. However, due to the variety of ways that I contacted Israeli immigrants, I believe that I have gained important information about this immigrant group.

Results

Demographics

The survey reached a very diverse sample of Israelis living in Los Angeles. Of the 175 respondents, 80% were born in Israel and the rest were not born in Israel but spent some time there during their youth. Respondents were split equally among men and women, contrasting with the majority of the research which states that there are more Israeli men in the United States than women. 74% of respondents to my survey moved to Los Angeles since 1981. This reinforces what Gold and Phillips found that the Israelis living in Los Angeles are relatively more recent arrivals than their counterparts in New York (1996: 63). Respondents equally represented every age range between 18 and older than 65. 77% of respondents were married or partnered, 14% were single and 9% were divorced or widowed. About half of the married/ partnered respondents had Israeli partners.

Profession

Israeli immigrants are enormously entrepreneurial. In my study, 38% of respondents were self employed. Gold's study found that 77% of Israeli men and 37% of Israeli women are self employed (1992: 120). In my study, 49% of the males were self-employed and 29%

of the women were self employed. Previous research also found that many Israelis work in construction, home improvement, electricity, air conditioning and real estate (Kadosh 2009: 10). In my study, only 4% of respondents said they worked in construction and 1% in real estate. Education was the most commonly represented professional field with 18% of respondents. Business was the next most commonly represented professional field with 16% of respondents.

Location

Previous research estimates that 80 percent of Israeli families coming to the United States live in Jewish neighborhoods (Auerbach and Rosenthal 1992: 983). They are seeking familiarity and security from co-religionists. More specifically, Israeli immigrants want to live near other Israelis. Agoura Hills has become home for about 750 Israeli families.

The unusual nature of the Israeli enclave in Agoura goes well beyond the emergence, or perhaps reconstitution of an ethnic gang. Rather, these people can be said to reflect an Israeli riff on the American frontier experience. For these newcomers, the physical journey out of the Israeli enclaves of Fairfax or North Hollywood toward points west like Agoura, Calabasas, and Westlake marks a psychic odyssey every bit as transformative as the decision that brought them or caused them to remain in the United States (Teitelbaum 2001:1).

It is unclear what first brought these immigrants to Agoura. "Perhaps the rolling hills directly south of the freeway beckoned, offering ample space for annual *Lag BaOmer* bonfires and bow-and-arrow contests, Israeli customs and activities no longer feasible in the San Fernando Valley" (Teitelbaum 2001:2). In my study, 21% of respondents live in the West Valley with 3% specifically mentioning Agoura or Agoura Hills. 33% of respondents live in some other part of the valleys surrounding Los Angeles; the next highest category is West Los Angeles with 24% of respondents. West Los Angeles included Culver City, Santa Monica, West LA, Mar Vista, Westwood, and Brentwood. Only 6% of respondents live in

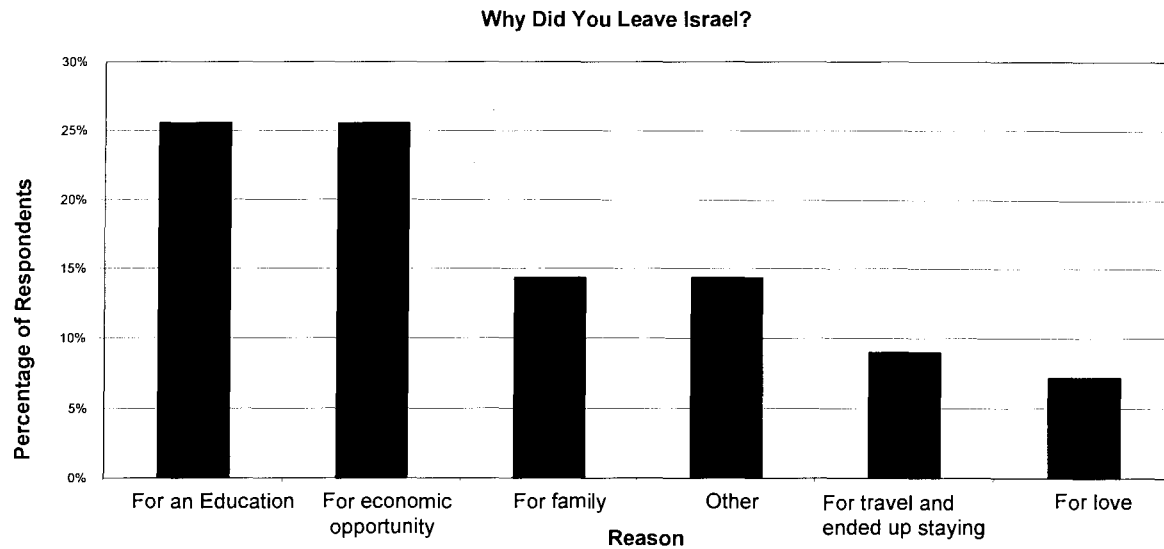
the heavily Jewish neighborhoods of Pico-Robertson and Beverly-Fairfax. While a census would clearly yield more precise results, these numbers are somewhat representative of where Israelis live in the Los Angeles area.

Emigration

As previous research shows, Israelis choose to leave Israel for many different reasons. They leave voluntarily to seek greater economic success through higher education or just a less regulatory government (Gold and Phillips 1996: 64). Some Israelis leave Israel to see the world and just happen to settle down, while others come to the United States to be closer to family (ibid). Since Israel is also a country of immigrants with 40% of its population born overseas, many Israelis have lots of family outside of Israel (ibid: 105). Others leave to avoid war, violence, and terror or to get away from the Jewish state on a kind of “secular pilgrimage” (ibid: 65). Some Israelis feel that Israel is too small and too conformist (ibid: 67). Other Israelis feel less oppressed in the Diaspora than in Israel and leaving Israel “connotes liberation from the mission of the official Zionist Ideology, a victory of private concerns and ambitions” (Beit-Hallahimi 1988: 38).

The following figure shows the many different reasons the respondents decided to leave Israel with the majority leaving for economic opportunity or to receive an education.

Figure 1: Reasons for leaving Israel



Zero respondents said that they left Israel to flee from persecution, and zero respondents said that they were trying to avoid religious coercion.

The timing of the immigrant's departure from Israel correlates with the reason that the respondent gave for leaving Israel. As evident in Table 2, the most common reason given for emigration from Israel in each of the time periods was different.

Table 2: Reason for emigration according to time of immigration

	For an Education	For travel and ended up staying	For economic opportunity	For Love	For Family	For Security	Other
1948-1967	67%	0%	22%	11%	22%	0%	11%
1968-1980	39%	7%	30%	9%	21%	2%	16%
1981-1998	25%	17%	35%	10%	19%	7%	20%
1999-2008	32%	10%	39%	7%	17%	7%	20%

Recently, education has become less and less of a priority for immigrants; instead, the idea of economic prosperity is a more enticing reason for immigration. Newer immigrants are looking to make their fortunes in America. However, if the economy continues to worsen, a new trend will probably emerge. In addition, even though it is a small percentage of respondents, the proportion of immigrants worried about security concerns in Israel has grown.

To leave the place that one grew up is hard for anyone. In addition, it is hard for those affected by proxy, the family members that are staying behind. Immigrants' families may be upset that they are leaving Israel or their neighbors might question their motives for moving away from Israel. Some Israelis that left Israel years ago feel like they are looked down upon for leaving Israel, no matter the reason. More recent immigrants are not experiencing the same types of attitudes towards their departure.

The stigma of *yordim* is also changing. Of the nine respondents to my survey that moved to the United States before the 1967 War, 50% had never been referred to as *yordim* and the other half had been referred to as *yordim* multiple times. Of those respondents who immigrated between 1999 and 2008, 46% of them were never referred to as *yordim* compared to the 9% that had been referred to as *yordim* multiple times. After the 1967 War, Jews across the world rallied behind Israel and leaving Israel was looked down upon more. The trend began to change and of those respondents who came to the United States between 1981 and 1998, 55% of them had never heard the term *yordim* used to describe them.

Immigration to Los Angeles

When Israelis choose to move to the United States, there are 50 different states that they could reside in. However, the majority of Israeli immigrants live in two main city

centers: Los Angeles and New York. Israelis choose Los Angeles for many different reasons. The vast size and expanse of Los Angeles has a lot to offer immigrants from any nation. Many respondents indicated relatives already living in Los Angeles as a reason for choosing to reside in Los Angeles. 45% of respondents said that they had one or more family member living in Los Angeles when they moved. Only 22% of respondents knew no one in Los Angeles before they moved. Some respondents mention the weather and how similar it is to Tel Aviv, Israel, as a motive for choosing Los Angeles. Others cite relationships, large Jewish community and educational institutions as the reason that they moved to Los Angeles.

Since there are so many Israelis already living in Los Angeles, many Israeli immigrants have an easy transition. There are Israeli-style markets, three Hebrew language newspapers, and even Café Aroma, a coffee house similar to the coffee houses that line the streets of Israel. Israeli immigrants can get up-to-the-minute Hebrew-language Israeli news on the internet and on the Israeli satellite channel. Even though the immigrants are living in Los Angeles, they do not have to be disconnected from Israel unless they choose to do so. My survey asked respondents about the Israeli stores and shops that they frequent. These stores stock Israeli brands, Israeli wine, and even fruits and vegetables that remind the immigrants of those available in Israel. All of the survey respondents patronized one or more of these shops at least once. The following table shows their responses.

Table 3: Israel store patronage in Los Angeles

	Never	Sometimes	Frequently
Super Sol	28%	55%	17%
Cafe Aroma	19%	59%	22%
Elat Market	39%	47%	13%
Glatt Mart	57%	29%	14%
Sami's Macolet	45%	47%	7%

Jewish Life

There is a preconceived notion that Israelis are not participating in American Jewish life. Many believe that the Israelis are underrepresented in American Jewish organizations. However, Israelis can be involved in Jewish life in America in different ways. Some have Friday night dinner with their families and friends. Others attend Jewish programs, lectures, or events. Israelis living in America can send their children to religious schools or day schools. Others choose to connect by having mostly Jewish friends. In my survey, 87% of respondents indicated that more than half of their friends are Jewish. These friendships have the opportunity to connect these Israelis to Jewish life.

Previous literature explains that there are many reasons that Israelis are hesitant to join organized Jewish life. Many Israelis do not understand the different types of Judaism that exist in America, such as the Reform and Conservative movements (Shokeid 1988:40). They might also not understand all of the customs that occur in Diaspora Judaism, such as observing two nights of many holidays. Like many other Jews, some Israelis in the United States are hesitant to join American Jewish organizations because they would rather fly

underneath the radar (Shokeid 1988:46) or because they believe it's too expensive or they are too busy.

Synagogue Membership

In the United States, many consider synagogue membership to be the cornerstone of organized Jewish life. 29% respondents to my survey are members of a synagogue. This number is similar to the amount of Jewish households in Los Angeles that are members of synagogues, 34% (LAJPS 1997), and not much lower than the national average, 40% (NJPS 2000). It could be concluded that Israelis Jews are not much different in their synagogue membership than American Jews living in Los Angeles. In fact, their reasons for not joining are similar to those of non-Israelis. Of those who are not synagogue members, 40% indicated that "becoming a member of a synagogue is too much of a financial burden," while another 40% indicated that "I practice my Judaism at home instead of the Synagogue."

The cost of synagogue life is something that Israelis cannot understand. In Israel, they walk down the street, pick a shul, go inside and pray. In the United States, "You have to commit thousands of dollars a year to an agenda that doesn't reflect your values or priorities. They can't understand it or accept it; it angers them and so they turn away from the established temple-going community," explains Siggi Cohen, director of the Alonim Afternoon School for Israelis (Teitelbaum 2001: 2). "For Jewish-Americans, the synagogue is the main community center, for Israelis synagogue is a religious place, not a place for culture or community. You go there to pray...but you have to pay for it" (Interview, Shoham Nicolet October 3, 2008). Not only is money a deterrent for membership but also some

Israelis have not found the right place for them. 21% of respondents just have not found a synagogue that they enjoy.

According to my research, of the respondents who indicated they were members of synagogue, 50% say their congregations are Conservative, 27%% Orthodox, and 23% Reform. The findings from my research are counter to previous research that found that that many Israelis express that American Jewish denominations are alien to them (Shokeid 1988: 40). However, some Israelis come to the United States and want something different than what they can find in Israel. A professor interviewed by Gold states:

In the US, the dominant flavor of Judaism is the Reform Judaism and we liked it a lot, because it allowed us to come as family unit to the synagogue. We are not, you know, religious, observant Jews, but we do come on the High Holidays. For us it was extremely important to be able to sit together...We found Reform Judaism in the US flavor is much more suitable for us. So, in a way, it opened our eyes...(Ben Moshe 2002: 194)

Being a member of a synagogue is not the only way to connect to Judaism through synagogues. 48% of respondents were at a synagogue for either programming or services 1-3 times over the past year. 26% of respondents said that they attend synagogue on High Holidays. Only 15% of respondents did not attend a synagogue program or service in the past year. 29% of respondents said they were likely to attend a wine and cheese party at a synagogue. Clearly, some Israelis are likely to attend programs at synagogues while others will not. The numbers presented here show that the program or event occurring at a synagogue does not need to be religious in context for some Israelis to be wary of it.

While some Israelis feel comfortable like the professor that Gold interviewed, others are confused by the way that American Jews practice their Judaism. Half of the respondents who felt like they were a part of the Jewish community in Los Angeles were members of

synagogues. Israelis do not need to be members of synagogues to feel a part of the Jewish community, much like others in the American Jewish population. I believe that Judaism should be the connecting factor, not the splitting point, between American Jews and Israeli Jews.

Jewish Education

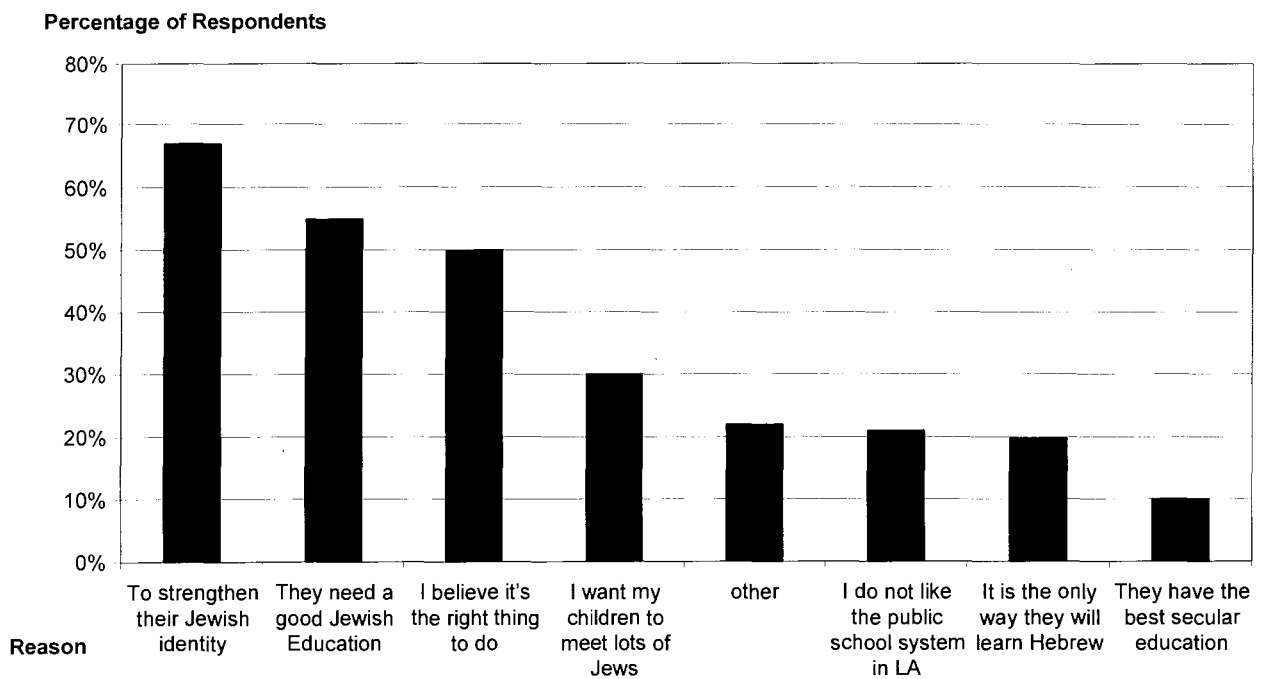
86% of respondents to my survey send or sent their children to some kind of Jewish school including Jewish day schools, religious schools, Jewish Community Center day cares or preschools, or other Jewish preschools. This is consistent with many other studies of Israelis living in the United States. 43% of respondents indicated that they sent their child or children to Jewish Day Schools. In the most recent Los Angeles Jewish Population survey, 40% of children ages 5-17 in Israeli households attend Jewish Day School, which is twice the rate for all Jews in Los Angeles (Gold 2002: 202). There were several schools across Los Angeles that many respondents indicated that they sent their children to, including: Heschel West, Heschel Day School, Kadima Hebrew Academy, and Milken Community High School.

57% of Israeli immigrants provide their children with some kind of Jewish education other than through a Jewish Day School (Auerbach and Rosenthal 1992: 985). Many parents chose to educate their children through after-school programs and Israeli or Hebrew activities (Teitelbaum 2001: 2). Also, many Jewish organizations offer after-school Religious School and Sunday school programs. 22% of the respondents to my survey sent their children to Jewish supplementary formal education programs.

In addition to formal Jewish education, Israelis enroll their children in informal Jewish educational experiences. 33% of the respondents send their children to Jewish summer camp. Only 10% of respondents indicated that they enroll their children in the Israeli Scout program. This is contradictory to Gold's finding that scouting programs were very popular (2002:136). Others send their children to Hebrew lessons or have tutors come to them. Respondents' children also participate in Israeli dance classes, Israeli social gatherings, holiday celebrations, and Israeli festivals across Los Angeles.

Respondents to my survey indicated many reasons for sending their children to Jewish educational experiences varied greatly, as Figure 3 shows.

Figure 3: Reasons Respondents Sent Their Children to Jewish School



These findings are remarkable. Only 20% of respondents sent their children to Jewish school to learn Hebrew. Jewish identity is obviously important to many of the Israelis living in Los Angeles. Having a strong Jewish education is also significant for many of the Israelis living

in Los Angeles. Jewish identity and Jewish education play an important role in the lives of Israelis when determining how to educate their children.

Some of the survey respondents did not send their children to Jewish schools or enroll them in any Jewish educational experience. 24% of survey respondents who have kids did not send them to a Jewish primary school. There could be many different reasons that these people choose not to send their kids to these experiences. Previous research has found that the decision to send their children to Jewish schools helps solidify the Israelis' decision to remain in the United States. Other Israelis are hesitant to enroll their children in Jewish education in America because they would be learning Diaspora Judaism, not Israeli Judaism. Steven Gold writes,

[Israelis living in America] face a two pronged dilemma as they plan for their children's education. If they do nothing, the kids will forsake their Jewish and Israeli heritage. However, if they enroll the youngsters in local Jewish institutions, they will be confronted with another, and to an Israeli- equally foreign- notion of identity: Diaspora Judaism (Gold 2007: 190).

The notion that Israelis fear Diaspora Judaism may no longer hold true; only 1 respondent cited teaching Diaspora Judaism as the reason their children do not attend Jewish primary schools. The reasons were more practical in nature: 65% of respondents who did not send their child to Jewish primary school responded that it is too expensive. Another 29% said that the schools were not located near to them, while 21% said that they educate their children Jewishly at home.

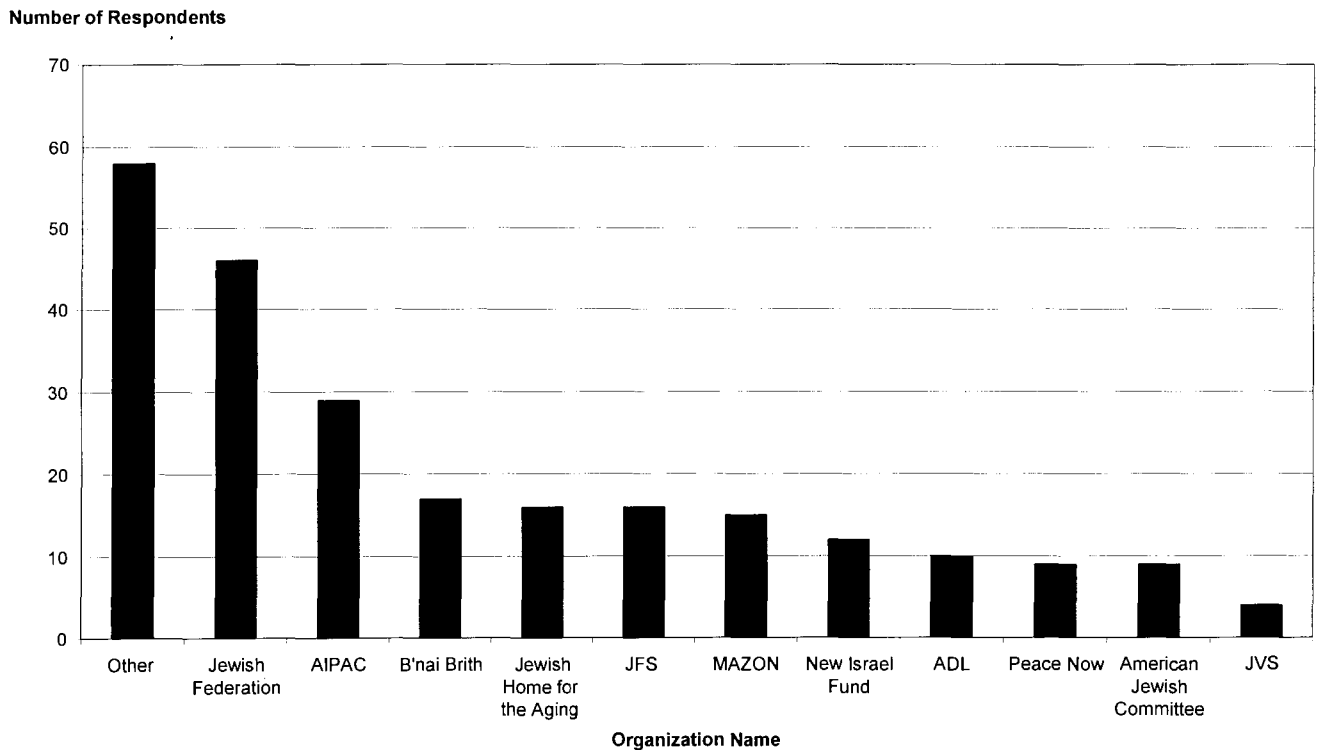
It is evident that Jewish education is important to the Israeli respondents to my survey and probably to most Israelis living in Los Angeles. There are ways to connect Jewish education to the greater Jewish community through joint programs and by including the

Israeli parents in their children's education. Jewish education can be a connecting factor between Israeli Jews living in America and American Jews.

Jewish Communal Institutions

In my survey, 54% of respondents said that they donated money to any American Jewish organization. The following chart shows those organizations and the percentage of the respondents who donated. Respondents were allowed to check more than one answer.

Figure 4: Donations to American Jewish Organizations



Included in "other" are many organizations not originally listed in the survey question, such as Chabad-Lubavitch (mentioned several times), the Jewish National Fund, the Bureau of Jewish Education, and SOVA. Many other responses in the "other" column were Israeli oriented organizations such as Magen David Adom and Friends of the IDF.

Israelis can support organizations in other ways besides donating funds. 52% of respondents said that they volunteer at their child's school. Others said that they volunteer for AIPAC or the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. Volunteering is a great way to bring people into organizations. Making a connection through a non-monetary commitment might be easier for some Israelis initially.

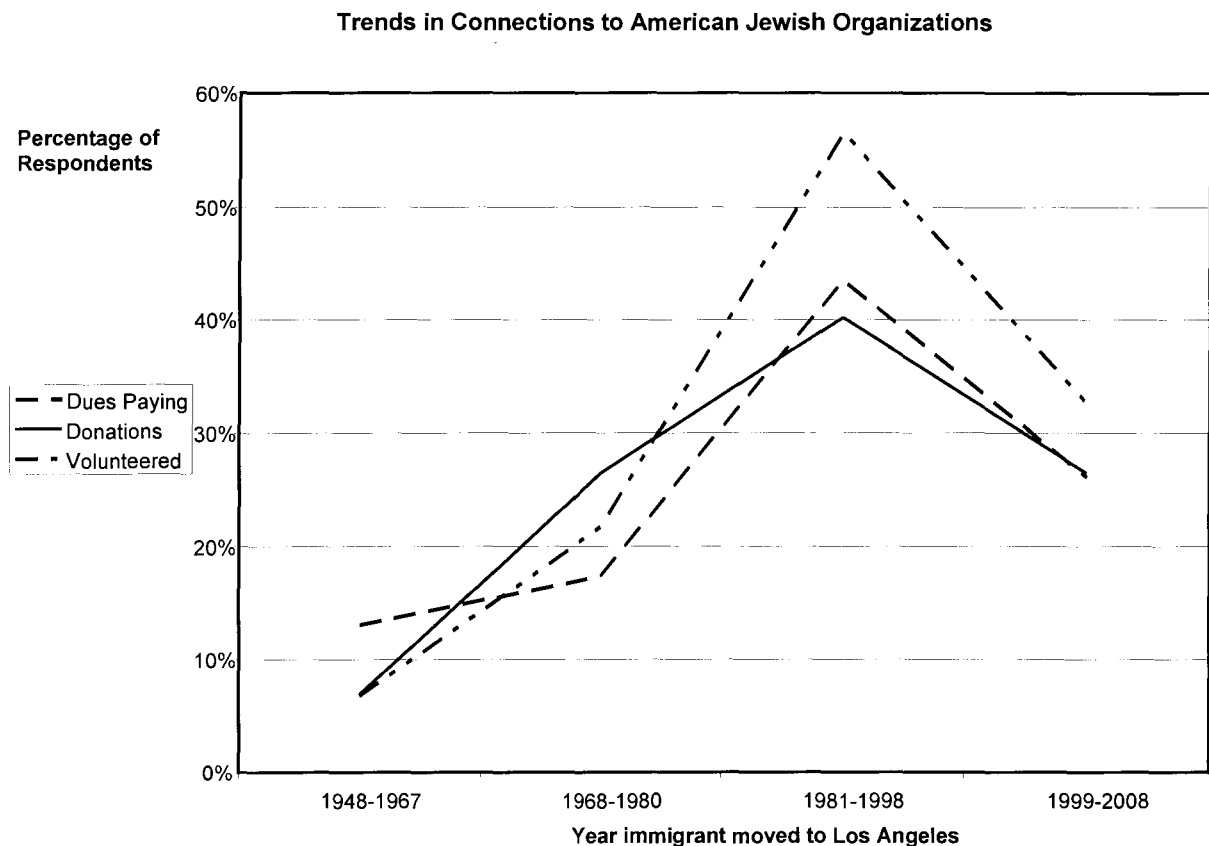
There will always be those Israelis, like some other Jews, who choose not to connect with Jewish organizations. Steven Gold believes that some Israelis' lack of connection with traditional American Jewish organizations could be caused by their desire to return to Israel (2002:147). If the Israelis decided to join or form organizations they might solidify their attachment to the United States and make it harder for them to return to Israel (Gold 2002: 145). Moshe Shokeid confirms this notion by stating that Israelis have a reluctance to confirm finality of their departure from Israel (1988: 45). Shokeid goes on to write that an Israeli delegate involved in Hebrew education for various Jewish agencies explained, "A contribution to the UJA made by an Israeli would add the last nail in the coffin of *yerida*, reaffirming his position as an outside observer of Israel instead of his self image of a sojourner" (1988: 45).

49% of respondents to my survey reported being a dues-paying member of an American Jewish organization. One Israeli explained to me that "The way that one gives in Israel is to go and serve in the military or help your community... the notion of donating money is a new idea" (Interview, Shoham Nicolet, October 3, 2008). According to my results, it seems like the Israeli Jews are beginning to understand how important charitable giving in the United States really is.

This promising trend could be attributed to the fact that the newer Israeli immigrants are more likely to realize that their move to the United States has more permanent roots.

“The most recent Israeli arrivals are more comfortable than their predecessors in thinking of themselves as immigrants and likelier to join the outreach programs...” explains a New York Federation executive (Rosen 1993: 19). The respondents to my survey that have moved to Los Angeles since 1981 were more likely to participate in American Jewish organizations than those who moved to Los Angeles before 1981. The following chart shows the trends for connections to American Jewish organizations compared to the years that the immigrant moved to Los Angeles.

Figure 5: Trends in Connections to American Jewish Organizations



Immigrants within the last 10 years donate to the Jewish Federation much less than those immigrants who immigrated after the 1967 war. A multitude of factors could explain this trend, such as a lack of Israeli crisis or an overall downward trend in younger people donating to the Jewish Federation, since many recent immigrants are young adults. Also, those more recent and probably younger immigrants are less financially stable, less likely to have children, and busier with other non-Jewish activities.

Israeli Communal Institutions

In an interview, a Jewish Communal professional in Los Angeles expressed to me that Israelis since 1970 have been “sitting on their suitcases,” expecting that they will return to Israel eventually. She offers this phrase as an explanation for the Israeli community in Los Angeles’ lack of self-organization in years past (Interview, Carol Koransky October 3, 2008). In an article written around the time of the Second Lebanon war in 2007, the Israeli consul general Ehud Danoch, stated that there should have been 30,000 Israelis at a rally sponsored in support of Israel but very few actually showed up. Danoch explains that this is typical of Israelis living in America (Klein 2007). Danoch continued to explain, “The Israelis here are Israeli; it’s clear to them that they are Israeli. They watch the Israeli news, the Israeli sports. It’s like Israel’s TV slogan: Chayim B’America, Margishim Yisrael. (Living in America, Feeling Israel.)” (Klein 2007).

The Israeli community in Los Angeles has begun to try to organize itself over the past couple of years. Several different organizations are springing up across the city, some sponsored by Israeli funds and others sponsored by Jewish communal funds. Some of the

organizations are joint projects between Israeli organizations and American Organizations, mostly the Jewish Federation. Others are funded in part by American Jews and Israeli Jews. The following are explanations of these organizations.

Israeli Leadership Council

The Israeli Leadership Council (ILC) is a young organization backed by the support of several wealthy Israeli-Americans who are active in the Israeli and Jewish communities and have a desire to support and promote the interests of the state of Israel (ILC 2008-2009 Action Plan). The ILC's vision is a unification of a Los Angeles Israeli-Jewish American Community and its goals are to serve as a role model, a resource, and a bridge to connect the Jewish and the Israeli communities. Their mission is "to fortify a long lasting relationship between Israeli-Americans in Los Angeles and the state of Israel through the shaping of an active and involved Israeli-Jewish-American community" (2008-2009 ILC Action Plan). Members must be already donating to other Jewish or Israeli causes in Los Angeles and pay a \$3,600 membership fee to be a part of the ILC. The ILC takes the funds raised and supports Israeli-Jewish programming throughout the city (Interview, Shoham Nicolet, October 3, 2008). This organization is an elite membership organization that only aims to have about 100 members. The philanthropic commitment to be a member of this organization is high and therefore only a limited number of Israelis would be able to be members.

Council of Israeli Community

While the ILC is targeting a certain population, the Council of Israeli Community (CIC) is trying to reach a much broader audience. The CIC is an organization that receives funding from the ILC and runs programming for the Israeli community in Los Angeles. The CIC often works together with the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles to sponsor Israeli themed

programs, such as a rally centered on raising an Israeli flag outside of the Israeli Consulate building on Wilshire Blvd. The CIC has a mailing list of 6,000, a weekly newsletter, and a website boasting all of the Israeli programming happening in Los Angeles (Interview, Haim Linder, January 25, 2009). The website lists the upcoming programs with Israeli themes and has a list of Israeli vendors across the city. The CIC recruits members, and members receive several perks and benefits as explained on their website www.cicisrael.org.

Israeli Division of the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance

This year, the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance has come together with some of the Israelis in the valley to begin an Israeli Division as part of the Federation system. According to their promotional material, “The Israeli Division of the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance is a group of individuals and families who come together to connect, celebrate, and make the world a better place through our support of the Jewish Federation” (Israeli Division Flier). They boast a long list of events that include a Mitzvah Day, Chanukah celebration, Super Sunday, and a Progressive Fundraising Dinner, to raise funds for the Jewish Federation. The Israeli Division is a product of Israelis living in the Valley who wanted to get their children involved in Jewish life (Interview, Orna Elion, November 7, 2008). However, they are reaching out to all Israelis living in the Valley.

Merkaz Tarbut Israel

Merkaz Tarbut Israel, (MATI) or the Israeli Cultural Center, is another recent addition to Israeli communal life. Their mission statement as written on their website is, “The Israeli Cultural Center will offer unique enrichment, activities & entertainment, which will build bridges between and among diverse Jewish/Israeli religious and ethnic communities, based on the Israeli culture, heritage and traditions, mostly in Hebrew, to all

ages.” MATI runs out of the West Valley Jewish Community Center in West Hills. They receive funding from the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance, as well as the ILC. They hold classes and workshops for children, adults, and seniors and co-sponsor other events such as candle lightings and Tu B’shevat celebrations. Their website is www.maticenter.com/index.html.

Israeli Independence Day Festival

Israeli Independence Day Festival is a long-standing tradition of collaboration between Israelis and American Jews. American Jewish organizations have booths and exhibits about their organizations. These booths give these organizations the opportunity to reach out to all of the participants in the festival. The booths could include games, information about the organization, and friendly faces. Yoram Gutman, the executive director of the Israeli Festival, believes about 20,000 Israelis come to the festival every year. Both American Jews and Israelis flock to Woodley Park in Van Nuys for a day of fun to celebrate the Jewish homeland’s Independence Day.

In my survey, I asked questions to gauge how well the Israeli organizations, described above, that are maturing in Los Angeles are doing in outreach to other Israelis. 54% of respondents indicated that they did not attend the Israeli Independence Day festival in May of 2008. Many offered explanations for their absence such as the crowd, the heat, and not knowing about it. 62% of respondents have never heard of the Israeli Leadership Council, while 57% have never heard of the new Israeli Cultural Center, MATI. 32% had never heard of the Council of Israeli Community but an overwhelming majority of 75% did not know that the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance has an Israeli Division. Even when the respondents to the survey who do not live in the Valley were eliminated, of the Valley residents who

responded to the survey 63% did not know that the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance has an Israeli Division.

The majority of respondents indicated that they have participated in the Israeli Film Festival in some way in the past. An overwhelming majority of those surveyed did not attend the “Blue and White over Wilshire” Israeli Flag Raising at the Consulate on September 28, 2008. Of those who did not attend, 30% did not know about it and 40% said it conflicted with other plans. Many others added write-in-responses stating that “it wasn’t important” or “why should I care?”

The organized Israeli community is still struggling to bring together the Israelis living in Los Angeles. Even events and programs centered on an important milestone in Israeli history did not get impressive attendance by the respondents to my survey. 57% of respondents did not attend any kind of celebration to commemorate Israel’s 60th birthday.

Even though the organized Israeli community is struggling to reach all of the Israelis in Los Angeles, 63% of respondents to my survey indicated that half or more of their friends are Israeli. This could show that the community is insular and sticks to itself. 50% of those respondents who are married to Israeli partners indicated that they have all or almost all Israeli friends. 53% of those respondents who are married to non-Israelis indicated that less than half of their friends are Israeli. However, the respondents’ spouses’ origins do not have an impact on whether their friends are Jewish. The majority of respondents to the survey have mostly Jewish friends. This data is essential to understanding how word of mouth spreads among the Israeli community. These connections are essential to the spreading of information amongst Israelis.

Two Communities Living in One City

Israeli immigrants are bonded by their shared feelings of distance from and incompatibility with American Jews. These are rooted in the two groups' differing cultural, linguistic, ideological, and religious outlooks, and the fact that American Jews' support of the State of Israel (which opposes the emigration of its citizens) makes many view the Israeli immigrant presence in a negative light (Gold 1994: 119).

Despite this common understanding, in my study, 58% of respondents said that they agree or strongly agree that they are part of the Jewish community in Los Angeles. Only 12% of those Israelis who felt like they were part of the Israeli community felt unengaged with the Jewish community in Los Angeles. This is important: in contrast to previous findings (such as the quote from Gold above), because those who are a part of the Israeli community do feel engaged with the entire Jewish community in Los Angeles. 64% of participants in the survey indicated that they felt like they were part of the Israeli community in Los Angeles. One respondent explains when asked why they do or do not feel engaged with the Jewish community in Los Angeles, "Perhaps there is an Israeli community that does not necessarily overlap with the Jewish community..." Another 24% of those who do feel part of the Jewish community in Los Angeles do not feel like they are part of the Israeli community. While there will always be Israelis who feel like part of only the Israeli community or only the Jewish community, there is a great deal of overlap between the two communities and more needs to be done to bridge the two communities.

American or Israeli

Self proclaimed identity can be an indicator of the connectedness of one person to a community. Gold found that "nearly all Israeli immigrants- including those with U.S. citizenship- continue to define themselves as Israeli and seldom refer to themselves as Americans" (1994: 118). However, in my study only 31% of respondents stated that they

never call and do not intend to ever call themselves Americans. 34% respondents say that they call themselves Americans sometimes and 24% frequently.

54% of those respondents who send their children to Jewish School call themselves American sometimes or frequently. I found that more recent immigrants are less likely to ever call themselves Americans than older immigrant generations. One respondent comments: “Naturally, as we live longer in the U.S, we strike deeper roots here and become more involved and therefore more American.”

Marriage can sometimes have an influence on the partners’ sense of identity. 37% of respondents that are married to Israelis indicated that they have never called themselves American and do not plan to do it ever. This is compared to 11% of respondents who are married to Israelis that indicated that they call themselves American frequently. According to previous research, Israeli immigrants who are married to Jewish American spouses have a higher level of social assimilation in the United States than those who are married to Israeli spouses (Auerbach and Rosenthal 1992: 990). I found that to be the case in my survey: 38% of those respondents who are not married to Israelis call themselves American frequently, and 28% sometimes call themselves American.

Likelihood to Return to Israel

As I wrote this thesis, an economic crisis came crashing down around the United States. Since many Israelis came to the United States to find economic opportunity, their dreams may be fading away. According to a recent article in *The Jewish Journal*, there is a 58% spike in the number of Israelis returning to Israel as compared to the same time last year (Kadosh 2009: 10). “Within the past three or four months, the Israeli Consulate has seen a dramatic increase in calls from Israelis desperate to return home immediately” explains

Kadosh (2009:10). The Israeli community was hard hit by the economic crisis because of the high numbers of self-employed Israelis, especially in the construction and real estate business. In my study, however, 72% of respondents said they could probably or definitely see themselves living in Los Angeles in 5 to 10 years, compared to only 37% who said they could probably or definitely see themselves living in Israel in 5 to 10 years. It is possible that the number of potential returnees is currently higher than it would have been before the economic crisis hit, and it is likely that the number of those Israelis living in Los Angeles who want to return to Israel will continue to grow.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the open ended response to the question “To what extent do you feel engaged with the Jewish community in Los Angeles?” one respondent explains, “I don’t think the Jewish community (i.e., the non-Israelis) is very accepting of the Israelis. As a matter of fact, I am aware of a few instances where there is open hostility towards us.” Another respondent explains, “The American Jews are very unwelcoming, they smile and they don’t mean it. It’s hard to make friends with them.” Another respondent expresses, “The Jewish Community in LA is simply not interested in engaging the local Israelis in their activities. They do not care about our input, they do not share our concerns, and they do not think that we have anything to contribute or offer them (except money of course...) and in my mind if they have no use for us... It is funny, but they may be afraid of us...” These responses, while not an overwhelming majority, are still alarming and the Jewish community needs to be aware of them.

Stanley Gold, the Chairman of the Board of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, said recently in a speech at Hebrew Union College, “We need to reach out to the Israeli community in the Valley on their terms” (Speech on February 10th). Learning and understanding the best way to reach out to the Israeli population is hard. First and foremost, a new Los Angeles Jewish Population Survey is needed. Using information that is over 12 years old to understand the Jewish population living in Los Angeles is not beneficial. The sheer discrepancies in the numbers of Israelis living in Los Angeles make it important to commission a new Jewish population survey in Los Angeles, one that has a focus on the immigrant populations and their needs. A new demographic study will benefit every Jewish organization in the city of Los Angeles. It will help them gauge where to center services for all Jewish people in the city, not only the Israeli immigrants.

The next step is advertising, marketing, and public relations. There are three Hebrew language newspapers in Los Angeles. American Jewish organizations need to place ads in these newspapers, not just *The Jewish Journal*. According to a recent article in *The Jewish Journal*, Susan Forer Dehrey, associate executive director at Jewish Family Service, says that Israelis do not even know that JFS can help them (Kadosh 2009: 10). Eyal Shemesh, the owner of *Anachnu B’america*, the Hebrew language paper, *We are in America*, told me that he does very few ads for American Jewish organizations. He would like to do a lot more. Hebrew advertising is essential to being able to successfully outreach to Israelis. 70% of respondents who live in some part of the Valley said that they did not know that the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance had an Israeli Division. More Israelis should know about this group, and the first step is advertising. Respondents to my survey overwhelmingly indicated that they read the Hebrew language newspapers at least occasionally. Even though some of

the respondents did say that they read *The Jewish Journal*, it is still important to have Hebrew language ads in these other newspapers because a wider audience will be reached. However, the Israeli channel on satellite television does not seem like a good way to advertise to Israelis, at least those in my survey, because 65% of them do not have the channel in their homes.

The internet is a great asset for every organization in the city of Los Angeles. The internet is a cheap and fast way to reach out to those individuals who are missing the information in other more traditional realms. Social networking sites are a rising phenomenon in the Jewish community and can be a huge tool for recruitment, especially for unaffiliated individuals, including Israelis. In addition, once more Israelis know about the organizations available to them they will spread it by word of mouth to others since many Israelis in Los Angeles are friends with mostly Israelis.

Advertising and marketing are important, but the organizations need to make it apparent that they have an open and welcoming culture. Organizations need to leave behind negative stereotypes about Israelis, move past their disdain for *yerida*, and connect with these Israeli individuals living in the United States. Public relations strategies that encourage openness to change and diversity will help “outsiders” understand that they do not necessarily need to be outsiders any longer.

Knowing about programs and considering them welcoming is not everything. Israelis living in Los Angeles can have a mini Israel. There are Israeli markets, Israeli movies, Israeli restaurants and Hebrew spoken in the streets. Israelis have to want to bridge the gap and connect to the community in which they live. “It is hard for an outside community to organize other communities. Your community has to reach a certain maturity level and be

able to want to organize itself” explains Carol Koransky. The Israeli community living in Los Angeles is beginning to reach that place. 78% of the survey respondents see themselves living in Los Angeles in the next 5 to 10 years; for the most part the community believes that Los Angeles is their home now and forever. Maturity of a community comes with a group of people who understand that Los Angeles is their home, not just a temporary resting place.

Carol continued, “How can we [the organized Jewish Community] support, grow and partner with the organizations that they create with themselves? The Israeli community needs to define the types of things that they want for their community” (Interview, Carol Koransky October 3, 2008). In addition, the Israeli immigrants must recognize how those things overlap with what the Jewish organizations in the city believe to be important for the community. After defining these things, the Israeli community needs to find or develop the communal leaders needed to help bridge the gap with the other Jews in the city. The Israeli Leadership Council has begun this process, but more money and dedication to leadership development is needed. Those Israelis who are involved and well connected in Israeli and Jewish networks need to take on more leadership roles. Of the respondents who felt engaged with the Jewish community, 46% of them indicated that they have mostly Israeli friends. Those connections to others are essential in bridging the communities. Collaboration between the communities is essential. It is my belief that there should not be an Israeli community and a Jewish community; the Israeli community should be a part of the Jewish community in Los Angeles.

Another way to bridge the gap is to bring the communities together in the same buildings. Israeli clubs can be in the same buildings as the American Jewish clubs, youth groups, etc., especially Jewish Community Centers. This would allow the Israelis an

opportunity to see what else is going on in the community. In addition, organizations that bring Israelis and Americans together can be another way to bridge the gap. 51% of respondents to my survey responded that if American Jewish organizations could bring more Israelis and Americans together, they would get more involved.

Connections are important. Carol Koransky, the Executive Director of the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance explains, that connecting people to Judaism, no matter the particular reason or motivation for the initial disconnection, is one of the Jewish Federation's main goals. Israelis are Jews living in Los Angeles. As such, the Jewish community should be including them as Jews and not as outsiders.

Addressing the concerns expressed by Israelis is an important factor in making the Jewish community in Los Angeles more attractive and accessible. One main request that survey respondents have is to reduce the cost of Jewish education. One respondent explains, "Really make the commitment to bring Jewish education to ALL Jewish children, not just those who can afford the high price tag! It's really a shame to lose our children because of a buck!" Another agrees, "Make Jewish schools more affordable, we must keep our children's identity clear to them, many families are giving up on that because it's very costly." If there are scholarships available, maybe the Israelis in Los Angeles do not know about how to obtain them. Making Jewish schools more accessible is essential to connecting more Israelis with the Jewish community. Of those respondents who sent their children to some sort of Jewish school, 87% feel connected to the Jewish community in Los Angeles, and 91% feel engaged with the Jewish community in Los Angeles. These percentages overwhelmingly show the importance of Jewish schooling in the connection of Israelis to the Jewish community.

In order to bridge the Jewish and Israeli communities successfully, it is important to view Israelis as “equal partners and not as beneficiaries of our economic largesse and perceived greater wisdom” (Rosen 1993: 22). American Jews need to realize that Israeli Jews have the same needs that American Jews do, such as community, sharing traditional values with their children, a connection to a common homeland, and a spiritual search for meaning. Also Israelis, like other Jews, are looking for programs that are beneficial but also convenient. This approach means moving past the idea of *yerida* as derogatory, pressuring the Israelis to return home or viewing their Israeli approach to Jewishness as wrong (Rosen 1993: 22). Equality means sharing a city and a community that includes everyone no matter where they were born or how they express their Judaism.

The American Jewish community needs to open its arms and embrace these co-religionists living in the same city, the same way that they are reaching out to the inter-married, the unaffiliated, and the childless. The American Jewish community should not treat these people, including Israelis, as outsiders anymore. Every underserved population has a lot to contribute to the Jewish communities in which they live. Israelis have the ability to make a difference in the Los Angeles Jewish community. The American Jewish community needs to listen to Israelis and take them seriously, or a growing number of Jews living in Los Angeles will continue to feel isolated in a city with 600,000 Jews. While many Israelis living in Los Angeles experience the longing for the Holy Land that Yehuda Halevi wrote about, they are currently on American soil and deserve the attention of the American Jewish community.

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Appendix 1: Survey Tool

Welcome!

You are asked to complete a survey about Israelis living in Los Angeles. The researcher, Anna Schwarz Shabtay, wants to learn how American Jewish organizations can more effectively reach out to the Israeli population in Los Angeles. This thesis project is part of the course work required for a Masters Degree in Jewish Communal Service from Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion and a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Southern California. Your identity will remain confidential - no names or other identifying information will be disclosed.

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Anna Schwarz Shabtay

(901)-268-1938 or annaes84@gmail.com

Masters candidate in Jewish Communal Service and Public Administration at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion and the University of Southern California.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: The survey may take about 20 minutes of your time.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS: Please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact - anonymously, if you wish - Richard Siegel, Interim Director of the HUC-JIR School of Jewish Communal Service: rsiegel@huc.edu or 3077 University Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90007, or toll-free at 800-899-0925.

By completing this survey, you give permission for your responses to be included in the study and any published results.

Beginnings

1. Were you born in Israel? (If yes, please continue with question #3)

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. If you were not born in Israel, did you spend 8 or more years of your childhood in Israel?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Do you live in the Greater Los Angeles Area?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Thank you but....

Thank you for your interest in my survey. However, I am only looking for respondents who were either born in Israel or spent at least 8 years of their childhood in Israel. In addition, I am interested solely in the Israeli population living in the Greater Los Angeles Area. If you have any questions, Feel Free to contact me at annaes84@gmail.com

Demographics Information

4. Where do you currently live?

- ☐ West Valley
- ☐ Encino, Tarzana, Reseda
- ☐ Pico-Robertson
- ☐ Fairfax District
- ☐ Long Beach
- ☐ Culver City
- ☐ West LA
- ☐ Another part of the Valley
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. Check one:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

6. How old are you?

7. What year did you first move to the United States?

Why did you move to the United States?

8. How old were you when you moved to the United States?

9. In what year did you move to Los Angeles?

Why did you move to Los Angeles?

10. Did you serve in the Israeli Defense Forces?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. Did you live in any other country besides Israel for longer than 6 months before moving to the United States?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, Please tell us where.

12. When you moved to Los Angeles, did you know anyone else living in LA at the time? (Check all that Apply)

☐ No

☐ Yes, 1 or more acquaintance

☐ Yes, 1 or more friend

☐ Yes, 1 or more family member

☐ Other (please specify)

13. Please tell us about your relationship status.

☐ Single

☐ Married/Partnered

☐ Divorced/Widowed

14. If you are married or have a partner, was he or she born in Israel?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Applicable

15. How many children do you have?

☐ 0

☐ 1-2

☐ 3-4

☐ 5+

16. What kind of job do you currently have? (Check all that Apply)

- ☐ Self Employed
- ☐ Restaurant/Hospitality
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Tv/film/theater
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Medicine
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Homemaker
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Emigration

17. Why did you leave Israel? (Check all that Apply)

- ☐ For an education
- ☐ For travel and ended up staying
- ☐ To flee persecution
- ☐ For economic opportunity
- ☐ For love
- ☐ For family
- ☐ For security
- ☐ To avoid religious coercion
- ☐ Other (please specify)

18. When you left Israel, did you feel that other Israelis still living in Israel looked down upon you for leaving?

- ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Why?

19. Was the term "Yored/Yordim" ever used to describe you or your family?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ Yes, multiple times by one person
- ☐ Yes, multiple times by several people

20. Do you feel like the term "Yordim" is derogatory?

- ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

21. Do you see yourself living in any of the following places in 5-10 years?

	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
Los Angeles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Israel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Another Country	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Since you have been living in Los Angeles, approximately how often have you visited Israel, on average?

- ☐ More than 2 times a year
- ☐ Once or twice a year
- ☐ Every other year
- ☐ Less than every other year
- ☐ I haven't been back since I left.

Immigration

23. Are you a member of a synagogue?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I am not a member but, I attend on High Holy Days

If so, Which one?

24. If you are a member of a synagogue, what is the denomination?

- ☐ Reconstructionist
- ☐ Reform
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Orthodox
- ☐ None
- ☐ Not Applicable
- ☐ Other Denomination

25. If you are not a member of a synagogue, what is keeping you from becoming a member? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Becoming a member is too much of a financial burden
- ☐ I do not feel connected to Diaspora Judaism
- ☐ I do not have any kids that need to be connected in that way
- ☐ I do not feel connected to American Judaism
- ☐ I have not found a synagogue that I enjoy
- ☐ I practice my Judaism at home instead of at the Synagogue
- ☐ I attend/participate in a minyan instead
- ☐ Other (please specify)

26. How often did you attend any synagogue service or program this past year?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 1-3 times per year
- ☐ 4 or more times per year
- ☐ 1-3 times per month
- ☐ Once or more per week

Jewish Organizations

27. Do you or did you send your kids to any kind of primary Jewish School? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ I do not have kids (Please skip to question 32)
- ☐ No (Please skip to question 31)
- ☐ Yes, I send(t) my kids to the Jewish Community Center
- ☐ Yes, I send(t) my kids to Jewish Day School
- ☐ Yes, I send(t) my kids to Yeshiva
- ☐ Yes, I send(t) my kids to Jewish or Israeli Gan/day care
- ☐ Other (please specify)

28. If you answered yes to question 27, Please tell us which school (s) your child (ren) attend(ed).

29. If you answered yes to question 27, Why did you choose to send your child(ren) to a Jewish School? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ They need a good Jewish Education
- ☐ It is the only way they will learn Hebrew
- ☐ They have the best secular education
- ☐ I do not like the public school system in Los Angeles
- ☐ I want my child(ren) to meet lots of Jews
- ☐ To strengthen their Jewish identity
- ☐ I believe that it is the right thing to do
- ☐ Other (please specify)

30. If you answered no to question number 27, Why do you or did you choose not to send your kids to any kind of Jewish School? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ It is way too expensive
- ☐ The commute would be too long
- ☐ I believe that public school is best
- ☐ I teach my children about Judaism at home
- ☐ They teach diaspora Judaism at those schools, I want my child to learn Israeli Judaism
- ☐ Other (please specify)

31. What other Jewish/Israeli activities do your children participate in? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Israeli Scouts
- ☐ Sunday/Religious/Hebrew School
- ☐ Israeli Dancing
- ☐ Jewish Summer Camp
- ☐ Other (please specify)

American Jewish Org.

32. Are you a dues paying member of any of the following organizations? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Jewish Community Centers (JCC)
- ☐ National Council of Jewish Women
- ☐ Hadassah
- ☐ AIPAC
- ☐ Other (please specify)

33. Have you donated money to any of the following organizations? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles
- ☐ AIPAC
- ☐ Jewish Family Service
- ☐ Jewish Vocational Service
- ☐ New Israel Fund
- ☐ Peace Now
- ☐ American Jewish Committee
- ☐ B'nai Brith
- ☐ Anti-Defamation League
- ☐ MAZON: Jewish Response to Hunger
- ☐ Jewish Home for the Aging
- ☐ Other (please specify)

|

34. Have you volunteered for any of the following organizations? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ AIPAC
- ☐ Birthright Israel
- ☐ National Council of Jewish Women
- ☐ Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles
- ☐ Your child's school
- ☐ Jewish Family Service
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Israeli Involvement

35. Did you attend the Israeli Independence Day Festival this past May?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why or Why not?

36. Have you ever participated in the Israeli Film Festival? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ No
- ☐ I have seen a movie or two
- ☐ I have seen several movies
- ☐ I have sponsored the festival
- ☐ I have volunteered at the festival
- ☐ I have encouraged my friends to attend
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

37. Have you ever patronized the following places?

	Never	Sometimes	Frequently
Super Sol on Ventura	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cafe Aroma on Ventura	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elat Market on Pico	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glatt Mart on Pico	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Macolet Sami on Fairfax	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. Did you attend any Israel at 60 celebrations in Los Angeles?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, Which ones?

39. Do you read any of the following newspapers?

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
אנחנו באמריקה (We are in America)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
שבועון ישראל (Israeli Weekly)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ידיעות אמריקה (Events in America)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Jewish Journal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. Have you ever seen an advertisement for an American Jewish Organization in any of these newspapers?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, Which American Jewish Organization?

41. Do you receive the Israeli cable tv package?

☐ Yes

☐ No

42. Have you ever seen a commercial for an American Jewish Organization on the Israeli Channel?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, which American Jewish Organization?

43. How many of your close friends are Israeli?

☐ None

☐ Less than half

☐ Half or more

☐ All or almost all

44. How many of your close friends are Jewish?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Less than half
- ☐ Half or more
- ☐ All or almost all

Jewish Organizational influence

45. Did you attend the Israeli Flag raising at the Consulate on September 28, 2008?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

46. If not, why? (Check all that Apply)

- ☐ I didn't know about it.
- ☐ I was discouraged by the amount of people and the traffic.
- ☐ I think its a bad idea for security to place a flag outside of the consulate.
- ☐ It conflicted with other plans
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

47. Have you heard of the Israeli Leadership Council?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

48. Have you heard of MATI, the Israeli Cultural Center? מרכז תרבות ישראלי

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

49. Have you heard of the Council of Israeli Community?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

50. Did you know that the Jewish Federation Valley Alliance has an Israeli division?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

51. How likely are you to participate in these programs in the future?

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Unsure	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Israeli concert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Channukah celebration at the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Israeli cultural center programming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jewish Federation fundraiser	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
AIPAC fundraiser	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Israeli movie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteer at an underprivileged school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wine and cheese party at a synagogue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Gap Between the Communities

52. Do you feel like you are a part of the Jewish community in Los Angeles?

☐ Strongly Agree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Unsure
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Strongly Disagree

53. To what extent do you feel engaged with the Jewish community in Los Angeles?

☐ Very engaged
 ☐ Somewhat engaged
 ☐ Unsure
 ☐ Somewhat unengaged
 ☐ Very unengaged

Why?

54. Do you feel you are a part of the Israeli community in Los Angeles?

☐ Strongly agree
 ☐ Agree
 ☐ Unsure
 ☐ Disagree
 ☐ Strongly disagree

Ending

55. Do you want American Jewish organizations to reach out to you or to try to get you more involved?

☐ Yes
 ☐ No

Why or Why not?

56. What could American Jewish organizations do to get you more involved? (Check all that Apply)

- ☐ Donate more money to Israel
- ☐ Hold gatherings centered around holidays
- ☐ Have Israeli speakers
- ☐ Host Israeli musicians
- ☐ Connect Israelis and Americans
- ☐ None of the above

57. What does the statement, "Israelis are always sitting on their suitcases" mean to you?

58. Have you ever referred to yourself as an American?

- ☐ Never, and I do not expect to.
- ☐ Not yet, but I can see myself doing so in the future.
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Frequently

Comments (Optional)

59. What kinds of social services do you feel would be beneficial to you and your family? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Young adult programming
- ☐ Family counseling
- ☐ Foodbank services
- ☐ Child care
- ☐ Parenting classes
- ☐ Financial assistance or free loans
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please specify)

60. Is there anything that you feel the Jewish community in Los Angeles can do for you or your family?

Appendix 2: Israeli Weekly Advertisement

Is My heart in the East if I am in the West?: A study of Israelis living in Los Angeles

Sources differ on how many people that were born in Israel currently live in Los Angeles. The U.S. Census reports that about 28,660 Israelis were living in LA in 2003. The 1997 LA Jewish Population Survey states that 14, 170 Israelis live in LA.

The Israeli population in LA is significant and deserves attention. Please help me discover what all of these Israelis are doing.

The information will be used as part of my masters' thesis at Hebrew Union College.

I am looking for people of all ages who were born in Israel or spent at least 8 years during their childhood in Israel and currently reside in the Greater Los Angeles area. Please fill out my survey which can be found at:

<http://tinyurl.com/Israelthesissurvey>

It will only take 15 minutes and the information gained will be very beneficial to my research and to the community.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at annaes84@gmail.com or at 818-627-5728.