

# Ausraelis

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## The diasporic identity of Israelis in Australia

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# Abstract

Recently, communities of Israeli immigrants have been formed in Australia. Although Israeli immigrants in Australia now number over 10,000, their Israeli communities have been little studied. The diasporic identity of Israeli emigrants in Australia, termed 'Ausraelis' in this thesis, is the focus of this study. It explores questions about the national, religious and host-society affiliation components of that identity.

The thesis is based on three data sources. The first are quantitative: the Australian-Jewish community survey (Gen08) which included 356 Israel-born respondents (out of almost 6,000 participants); the 2006 Australian Census; and data from 77 Israel-born participants amongst 602 Jewish immigrants, in a 2005 survey by Rutland and Gariano. The second are qualitative sources, collected in fieldwork: participant observation on the *Tapuz* online social forum for Israelis in Australia; 18 interviews; and the responses of participants in a focus group conducted for the Gen08 survey. The third are text-based sources and include: a review of *Eton*, the Israeli newspaper in Australia; literary sources in the form of fictional novels and memoirs. The methodological strategy chosen for analysis combines quantitative methods, mainly descriptive statistical analysis, subject-based categorisation and participant observation

Examining the experiences of Israeli emigrants in Australia, the study points to a shift in the push-and-pull factors for immigration from familial to economic and security-laden motives. Also revealed is a sub-group of Ausraelis, the 'desperate', who challenge past paradigms and perceptions about emigration from Israel. Analysing the interaction of Ausraelis with the Jewish community, the study found that most Ausraelis can be categorised as peripherals, with relatively low levels of involvement in community activities. The social cohesiveness of the Israeli community in Australia was found to be relatively strong, despite its lack of an institutional basis. With regard to religious affiliation, the study identified most Ausraelis as seculars, who employ Israeli civil religion as the primary means for transmission of Israeli national identity to their children.

The policy implications of the study point to the need for a new basis of interaction between the State of Israel and the established Jewish community on one hand, and between the established Jewish community and Israelis immigrants on the other.

# Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been submitted for examination in any other course or accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution.

To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

The research for this project received the approval of the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project CF10/2390-2010001358).

**Candidate's Signature:**



**Date:**

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## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ABS	The Australian Bureau of Statistics
CBS	The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics
DIAC	The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship
FSU	Former Soviet Union
IT	information technology
MOIA	Ministry of Immigration Absorption (Israel)
PR	Permanent residency
SA	South Africa
UK	United Kingdom



## **SECTION ONE**

# 1. Introduction

"בינינו לבין עצמנו, גברת מרקוס, את ראית פעם את אוסטרליה? את בדקת אם יש בכלל אוסטרליה? כי מי מספר לנו על אוסטרליה, מי מפיץ מפות של אוסטרליה, חומר על אוסטרליה, מי מנסה לשכנע אותנו שיש מקום כמו אוסטרליה? השגרירות האוסטרלית. והם הרי לא אובייקטיביים, הם אוסטרלים."

(חנוך לוין, "מה אכפת לציפור" 1987)

*"Just between us, Miss Markus, have you ever seen Australia? Did you check at all if there is 'an Australia'? Because who are the ones that tell us about Australia, who distributes maps of Australia, material about Australia, who is trying to convince us that there is such a place as Australia? The Australian embassy. And they are not objective, they are Australians."*

(Hanuch Levin, "What Does the Bird Care?" 1987)

Contrary to Levin's satirical words, for thousands of Israelis Australia truly exists as their home. One of the informal nicknames used by Israelis in Australia to describe themselves is 'Ausraelis' – a combination of Aussies and Israelis.

The study of Israeli émigrés has been emotionally charged in the past and may well be so today. This is mainly because of an ideological 'baggage' attached to emigration from Israel until recently, which negatively portrayed it as a 'betrayal' in Zionism. In this context, Ian Lustick, an American political scientist who studied Israeli emigration, describes a dichotomy:

Precisely because the demographic issue is so politically fraught in Israel, and in light of the increasing weight of the migration balance in demographic calculations, it is difficult to expect Israeli scholars to produce analytically dispassionate efforts to weigh the long-term political significance of emigration. Should it be considered a minor problem that cannot be interpreted as having long-term implications, or is emigration the sign of a massive and virtually inevitable failure of Zionism, leading to the disappearance of the country as we have known it?

(Lustick, Summer 2011)

Lustick's statement, 'blaming' Israeli scholars for an inability to objectively tackle the issue of Israeli emigration, is undoubtedly provocative. Indeed, Israel's leading demographer, Sergio DellaPergola, responded to Lustick's claims with a lengthy criticism, making the accusation that Lustick "seems to attribute a somewhat conspiratorial character to Israeli social science" and, cynically, stating that "in the

face of such indictment, the interested specialist or layman who also happens to be an Israeli has no choice but to keep silent (DellaPergola, Winter 2011, p. 4). Be this as it may, the actual heat of the argument is indicative of the sensitivity surrounding emigration from Israel even today.

### **1.1. Research questions**

This study focuses on the identity of emigrants from Israel who reside in Australia. It is aimed at exploring the construction and formulation of this identity in the Australian diasporic setting and mapping and classifying it. Based on existing models used for analysing Israeli communities in other parts of the world, the study presupposes that this identity is essentially a result of the interaction between Israeli émigrés and several specific 'social spheres': peer-group members; Israel as the homeland; the host society; and the local Jewish community. Thus, the study sets out to analyse and categorise the interaction of Ausraelis among themselves, and their the encounters with Australian Jewry and the Australian society.

The main research questions are: What is the demography of the Israeli population in Australia? What is their religious and socio-economic profile? Do Israelis in Australia constitute a community and, if so, what kind of community? What characterises the relationship between Israelis in Australia, as well as with their Australian Jewish brethren, the Jewish community organisations and Australian society in general? How much, if at all, are Israelis 'immersed' in Australian society and/or the Jewish community? And what happens to the national identity of Israelis and their children outside Israel?

### **1.2. Structure and content**

After this opening text (chapter one), chapter two of the thesis is devoted to a brief review of the interaction between identity and immigration and the historical development of diaspora studies. It concludes with presenting the frameworks used as a reference for constructing the diasporic identity of Israeli emigrants in Australia, based on studies among Israelis in the United States. The literature review (chapter three) deals with the historical shifts in the study of Israeli emigration: from the ideological *Yordim* perceptive through to economic migration studies and to the interdisciplinary social-transnationalist approach. The review ends with a concise discussion about possible future research directions on this issue.

Chapters four and five are devoted to methodology. The first focuses on the theoretical foundations of ethnography and its application in diaspora studies, and specifically in this study. Also explored are the

implications of the internet as a new ethnographic study-field and the concept of multi-sited studies. The second methodological chapter specifies in detail the research strategy and resources chosen for this project.

Chapter six introduces existing data on the locations, demography and socio-economic status of Israeli emigrants around the globe. Chapter seven provides a closer look at Israelis in Australia by canvassing available studies and data about them and presenting an updated demographic profile of this population.

The discussion about diasporic identity is the focus of the rest of the thesis. First, perceptions by Ausraelis of their emigration and the reasons, circumstances and influence of it are considered in chapter eight. Chapter nine touches on the interplay with the host Australian society, focusing on the question of acculturation and/or assimilation of Ausraelis.

Community is the subject of the next chapter (chapter ten). In it, the concept of community is defined and the Israeli community in Australia is categorised based on existing models of Israeli diasporic communities. Then, the nature of inner-group interaction is analysed and specific features of it are outlined.

The relationship between Ausraelis and the Australian Jewish community is at the heart of chapter eleven. First, the location and division of Israelis within the different segments of the Jewish community are determined. Then, a review of the factors and perceptions that dictate this location is introduced as a possible explanation for the position of Israelis within the social puzzle of the Jewish community.

Chapter twelve deals with aspects of Israeli and Jewish identity in a diaspora setting. It opens with a portrayal of the weight and place of Jewishness within the perceptions of Israeli national identity. Various features of Jewish identification by Israeli emigrants in Australia are then examined, based on an existing model introduced for the entire Australian Jewish community. The task of bequeathing 'Israeliness' to siblings is then explored; and within this context the role played by the ultra-Orthodox Jewish Chabad movement is analysed. The final segment of the chapter looks into the attachment to Israel, as manifested in connectivity and continuous daily ties.

In the conclusion, the validity of defining Israelis in Australia as a diaspora and its characteristics as such are discussed. Later, the unique features of the Israeli community of Australia are presented; and an explanation for similarities found between Israelis and Jews from the former Soviet Union is offered. The

impact of tenure (time since emigration), period of emigration and age on arrival in Australia are than summarised. The main section of this chapter introduces an original model for understanding Ausraelis' social space, followed by a typology classifying the diasporants into prototypes. The chapter ends with suggestions for future studies about Israeli diasporants in Australia.

## 2. Israeli diasporants' identity

### 2.1. Identity and immigration

Identity is an elusive multi-disciplinary concept that can be understood, interpreted and examined in a variety of contradictory or complementary ways, and “can no longer be referred to without challenge” (Kokot, et al., 2004, p. 4). In his introduction to the Encyclopaedia of Identity, Jackson acknowledges that: “identity is a broad term that has been used by so many people in so many different iterations that to detail all of what it means in one encyclopaedia, no matter how many volumes, would be impossible” (Jackson, 2010, p. xxv).

Identity is also being debated within the context of immigration. Most prominent theories on how identity is formed and/or changes as a result of immigration revolve around nature and scope of choice within this process. The influential anthropologist Clifford Geertz suggests that ethnic identity is less open to choice and more a result “primordial loyalties” stemming from being born into a certain community. These may include a distinct language or religion; the influence of family and place of residence; customs and norms (Geertz, 1993)<sup>1</sup>.

American sociologist Robert Ezra Park, a pioneer in the study of immigrants' identity, introduced the concept of “race relations cycle”. According to this Park, encounters between immigrants and the host society<sup>2</sup> occur in a recurring four stages process: initial contact between the two sides, which leads to conflict and competition over resources, followed by accommodation, and eventually assimilation<sup>3</sup> (Park, 1950). In other words, Park's theory can be understood as a deterministic process of gradually eroding Geertz's “primordial loyalties”, not subject to the immigrant's choice.

Psychologist John Berry's theory borrows Park's concept of an encounter with society that shapes the ethnic identity of the immigrant. However, Berry follows Wallman's conceptualisation of ethnicity as “a resource” (Wallman, 1979), and from his point of view, immigrants make strategic choices that determine the outcome of the encounter with the host society. Berry studied cross-cultural psychology following migration by examining “what happens to individuals who have developed in one cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Geertz influence on ethnographical research is discussed in chapter 4 “Methodology - Theoretical framework” of this thesis.

<sup>2</sup> Host society, as opposed to homeland society, is the society in the country immigrated to.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion about the concept of assimilation see in the beginning of the chapter 99 “Acculturation and assimilation into Australian society” of this thesis.

context when they attempt to re-establish their lives in another one” (Berry, 1997, p. 5). According to his model:

Immigrants can choose to integrate, assimilate, separate, or marginalize their acculturation process, on the basis of whether they see any value in maintaining either cultural identity or good relations with the dominant culture. This model suggests that integration results in a culturally pluralistic society. Identification with both the old and the new cultures defines bicultural integration, which immigrants can achieve by synthesizing the two cultures or by maintaining separate ‘spheres of interaction’.

(Wamwara-Mbugua, 2008, pp. 126-127)

Since the 1990s, scholars have introduced the transnational model of multiple identities, permanent movement and cross-border networks (Kokot, et al., 2004, p. 3). Current debate revolves around the meaning of concepts such as ‘adapt’, ‘adopt’ and ‘adjust’, ‘assimilate’ and ‘integrate’. In a globalised world the encounter of immigrants with different cultures is frequently multi-directional, and co-integration occurs where ‘cultural cargo’ carried in by the immigrants can be infused into the host society and vice-versa (Kramer, 2010, p. 387).

Hence, the complexity of identity in an immigration context can be described as a product of “an inclusive conceptual matrix” (Lev Ari, 2012, p. 287) of elements including legal systems, social structures, perceptions and norms, economic issues, and many other factors in the home and host lands. Contact with the host society may redefine part of the immigrant’s identity as “other”. Kramer explains that “[t]he alterity, or otherness, of the identity of the immigrants is based both in language and behavioural differences, which include cultural differences, differences in values, motives, beliefs, and expectations [...] In the real world of immigration, the process of identity morphogenesis is complex and ever present” (Kramer, 2010, p. 384).

One significant aspect of the interaction between the immigrant and the host society relates to group belonging. “Membership of particular groups is most important in constructing a sense of identity. Social identity is a fundamental aspect of what it is to be human” (Marsh, et al., 2007, p. 4). Following immigration, a necessity may arise to connect to new groups and also to redefine existing connections to groups. This process is the context for the development of diasporas, as groups which fosters a sense of belonging based on the familiar (homeland culture) and yet in non-familiar surroundings.

## 2.2. The study of diasporas

The term “diaspora” first appeared in the Greek translation to the Bible (The Septuagint) from the time of Alexander the Great (fourth century BCE). In Ancient Greek, it is comprised of the prefix ‘*Dia*’, which means ‘about, across, over’, and the verb ‘*Speirein*’ translated as ‘to sow, to scatter’. Thus the metaphor used is derived from the agricultural world of dispersal and sowing of seeds (Little & Broome, 2010, p. 221).

In the opening chapter of the second edition of his canonical study “Global diasporas: an introduction”, Robin Cohen introduces a genealogy of diaspora studies divided into four stages corresponding with specific periods (Cohen, 2008, pp. 1-19). According to Cohen, in the first stage, the Jewish experience of dispersion and displacement were considered as the prototype diaspora. It was modelled after Jewish exilic community life outside the land of Israel since the Babylonians banished the Jews from the land of Israel in 586 BCE. The Jews re-established autonomy in their homeland after they returned from Babylon in 538 BCE, but a second exile began in 70 CE when the Romans defeated the Jews and dispersed them from their homeland. Accordingly, diasporas were affiliated with forced exile, suffering, a sense of being victimised and feelings of loss of an ancestral or natal homeland. More broadly, they are created as a result of trauma that falls upon a nation or a people. From this perspective, alongside the Jews, the Greeks were also considered a ‘classic’ diaspora. Since the 1960s more ethnic groups in exile were included under the same definition, specifically groups that were ‘unnaturally’ dispersed from their homeland such as the Armenians and Afro-Americans<sup>4</sup> (Little & Broome, 2010, p. 222; Cohen, 1997, p. ix).

Cohen dates the second stage to the 1980s and onwards, with an increase in academic interest in diasporas, which led to the emergence of a ‘diaspora studies’ discipline and the establishment of the journal *Diaspora* in 1991. The discussion about diasporas, as well as the groups considered as such, was widely broadened to include areas of research such as transnationalism, globalisation, nationalism and post-colonialism.

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<sup>4</sup> The ‘unnatural’ dispersion of Greeks from their homeland occurred in the nineteenth century, when they fled to other countries in Europe during their war of independence. Armenians were banished by the Ottomans and the Irish left as a result of famine. Africans were removed from their homeland to North America through slave trade since the sixteenth century. Recently, several scholars also controversially referred to the Palestinians as a ‘classic’ diaspora (Safran, 1991; Hammer, 2005).



The leading thinkers of the new approach, William Safran and Robin Cohen himself, developed models that specify the characteristics of a diaspora. In his article in the first issue of *Diaspora* Safran rejects trauma as a sole precondition for diasporism. Instead he suggested the following characteristics, which make a minority group a diaspora: migration from the original centre to more than just one country; emergence of collective memory and myth about an idealised ancestral land; maintaining attachments and active engagement with the homeland, which defines its collective identity; and a commitment to support the homeland, and sometimes also reconstruct and rejuvenate it. Another feature included in Safran's models is negative interaction with the host society (such as alienation or marginalisation), which results in identification with diaspora members in other countries and the continued cultivation of the dream of returning to the homeland<sup>5</sup> (Safran, 1991).

Introduced in 1997, Robin Cohen's model is built on the foundations laid by Safran. Cohen broadened the definition of diaspora to include those who left their homeland as work migrants (labour diaspora), people who are part of trading or commercial networks (trade diaspora), and imperialist or colonial settlers (imperial diaspora). His main focus is on a sustainable group conscious by retaining links to the homeland, maintaining a separate ethnic identity and rejection of assimilation. Similarly to Safran, Cohen emphasises positive feelings of empathy and solidarity between peer-diasporants from the same homeland who live in other countries. This trans-border camaraderie is based on common language, religion or culture, and a shared sense of destiny, but can be sometimes accompanied with tension as well. Finally, moving away from Safran's perception, Cohen notes that diaspora life can be positive when in a tolerant society. Furthermore, tensions between ethnic, national and transnational identity components of the diasporants can result in fulfilling and creative cultural or social effects (Little & Broome, 2010, p. 223).

The third phase of diaspora studies started in the mid-1990s is characterised by challenging classical diasporas based on 'homeland' and 'ethnicity', and replacing them with 'origin' and 'belonging'. The aim at this stage was to further broaden the definitions to include groups with common social features. Influenced by social construction theories<sup>6</sup> and post-modernist thinking, scholars regarded diaspora as a process, and emphasised fluidity, hybridity, heterogeneity and mobility of diasporic identities. As a

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<sup>5</sup> The dream of returning to the homeland is sometimes referred to as 'the myth of return'. A detailed discussion about this term in the context of the Israeli diaspora is in subchapter 08.3 "Understanding the new approach" of this thesis.

<sup>6</sup> On social constructionism see, for example (Burr, 2003).

result, new groups were introduced as diasporas based, for example, on sexuality (homosexual diaspora), ideology (anti-capitalist diaspora), occupation (technological diaspora) or disability (diaspora of disability cultures). Religious communities (Buddhists, Sikhs and Hindus), as well as trans-ethnic and trans-border shared linguistic communities (Francophone and Anglophone) were also conceptualised as diasporas (Little & Broome, 2010, p. 224; Brubaker, 2005, p. 3).

Critics of the new approach claimed that social and political agendas eventuated in an amorphous definition devoid of clear boundaries or structure that can be used as basis for analysis. Knight, for example, notes:

The term diaspora is generally used to describe any population that is considered transnational or “deterritorialized ” [...] Almost every minority group these days tend to consider itself a diaspora without giving much thought to the meaning of the word. This has resulted in an over-use and mis-use of the term.

(Knight, 2007, p. 280)

Brubaker labels the description of so many groups as diasporas as a proliferation process, a ‘diaspora of diaspora’:

The problem with this latitudinarian, ‘let-a-thousand-diasporas-bloom’ approach is that the category becomes stretched to the point of uselessness [...] If everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so. The term loses its discriminating power - its ability to pick out phenomena, to make distinctions. The universalization of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora.

(Brubaker, 2005, p. 3)

The fourth phase of diaspora studies was therefore a reaction to the post-modernist approach. Thus, a middle path was sought, one that would embrace the widening of the classification of diasporas and at the same time re-ground theory in terms of the models presented in the second phase. Among the scholars affiliated with this perception is Tölöyan, which describes the production of the Armenian diasporic civil society along with a renewed emphasis on the local and an affiliation to a specific territory (Tölöyan, 2001). Tölöyan also differentiates between an initial state of diasporism, defined as ‘exilic nationalism’, and a later development, which he calls ‘diasporic transnationalism’. The former characterises ethnic groups, which are still strongly attached to a ‘homeland’ (filiation) while the latter is

typical of an ethnic group tied to a 'hostland', and those ties are submitted to personal choice and optional (affiliation).

In exilic nationalism, the nation-state must be maintained – sometimes misguidedly – as a museum, not only because political sovereignty is a value in itself but also because the homeland is where diasporan identity [...] draws its strength [...] The new diasporic transnationalism does not forget the homeland and the older, "exilic" traditions associated with it. But it no longer grants them the authority its advocates seek to extract.

(Tölölyan, 2010, pp. 36, 39)

Brubaker, another scholar affiliated with this phase in the history of diaspora studies, refocuses on dispersion in space, either voluntary or as a result of trauma, as a central factor in the creation of a diaspora. He refers with similar importance to the orientation toward a homeland (real or imagined) and boundary-maintenance, which is the preservation of a distinctive identity vis-à-vis the host society (or societies) (Brubaker, 2005, pp. 5-6).

Safran revisited his definition of Jewish diaspora to introduce a new concept of division between homeland and host society. According to his updated view, diaspora "implies polycentrism - the notion of at least two centres of ethno-national culture: the homeland and the diaspora". Furthermore, claims Safran, diasporas are characterised by transnational actions for both those living inside and outside the homeland. He places such actions on a continuum ranging from maintaining interest in the homeland, which dissipates into a vague memory of elders; through retention of homeland ethno-symbolism and identification with homeland language and/or religion; and at the end of the spectrum - visiting, investing or 'returning' to the homeland (Safran, 2009, pp. 76-79).

At the same time, Safran replaces these terms with 'found home' in the diaspora and the 'virtual home', and points to the abandonment of the desire to return to the native homeland. The result is the creation of a diasporic culture, which imbibes more from the 'found home' than the 'virtual' one. Robin Cohen followed Safran's challenge on the classic definitions of homeland and suggested a transnationalist typology, which differentiates between 'solid', 'ductile' and 'liquid' homelands (Cohen, 2009).

### **2.3. Defining Israelis abroad as a diaspora**

Emigration of Jews from Israel was traditionally not regarded a separate diasporic movement but as part of the existing Jewish diaspora. Israeli political scientist Gabriel Sheffer, in his 1998 provocatively titled

article “The Israeli Diaspora: *Yordim*<sup>7</sup> are the authentic diaspora” was possibly the first to directly challenge accepted paradigms in this context. This, by suggesting Israeli expatriates constitute a separate diaspora, although still related to the Jewish one (Sheffer, 1998). Sheffer introduced a typology of diasporas based on the period of its inception. According to his classification, ‘historical diasporas’ relates to diasporas formed until the Middle Ages; ‘new diasporas’ emerged since the industrial revolution; and current ‘incipient ethno-national diasporas’ constitute the most recent group (Sheffer, 2002, p. 334). Israelis abroad were categorised by Sheffer as ‘incipient diaspora’ because they have yet to be politically mobilised nor are they a transnationally oriented group: “[Israeli emigrants] still lack well-developed organisations [... nor] elaborate trans-state networks, and continue to avoid massive political activity in their host countries” (Sheffer, 1998, p. xxxi).

A year after Sheffer, Canadian resident and Israeli anthropologist Rina Cohen described Israelis in Toronto as a “diasporic community” (Cohen, 1999). However, only in 2004 did she stipulate that the Israeli community she studied constitutes a separate diaspora, by authoring the entry on the Israeli diaspora in the “Encyclopaedia of Diasporas”. At the conclusion of this text, she predicts that “the continuous influx of emigrants from Israel will likely reinforce the institutionalization and the further expansion of the distinct Israeli diaspora” (Cohen, 2004, p. 142).

Jewish American sociologist Steven Gold’s study “The Israeli diaspora” (2002) is perhaps the most influential in successfully attributing Israelis abroad with the title ‘diaspora’. In the opening paragraphs of his book he cautiously notes that although Israeli emigrants might not fully fit Robin Cohen’s definition of a diaspora<sup>8</sup> they do exhibit features of being one and see themselves as such in light of Jewish history:

Israeli emigrants do not qualify as a diaspora *per se*, largely because of the short duration of their exile and the relative ease of return [...] Nevertheless, having been socialized in Israel, they are intimately familiar with the language of diaspora and often describe their experience and identity as such. Accordingly, Israeli emigrants sometimes see themselves as encountering yet another phase in their group’s long record of displacement.

(Gold, 2002, p. 2)

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<sup>7</sup> *Yordim* (descendants) is the negative term used to in the past to describe emigrants from Israel. For a detailed discussion of the *Yordim* perception see subchapter 3.1 The Ideological *Yordim* School of this thesis.

<sup>8</sup> Robin Cohen himself notes recently that Israeli emigration “fundamentally changed the relationship between homeland and hostlands” (Cohen, 2008).

When Lev Ari and Rebhun examine Israelis in the United States in a study published in 2010, their analysis of Israelis as a distinct diaspora is already grounded upon existing scholarship. Accordingly, they decisively state that not only can Israelis in the United States be considered a diaspora but, echoing Sheffer's claim, it may be that currently Israelis abroad are the 'authentic' diasporants:

The American Israelis definitely constitute a modern diaspora. They meet the definitions of a diaspora more closely than do American Jews or any other Jewish community outside of Israel today as well as over the generations of life in exile.

(Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 140)

## **2.4. Understanding Israeli diasporic identity**

Lev Ari defines the concept 'diasporic identity' as the component within the "dynamic transnational" identity of the immigrant in which "the values, social norms, and narratives of the homeland (the origin country) are maintained in the destination country" (Lev Ari, 2012, p. 289). However, this is just one aspect of diasporism. Gold aptly notes that while the study of Jewish identity is difficult and elusive, the complexity of evaluating Israeli emigrants' identities is even greater due to the addition of the nationality factor to the equation (Gold, 2002, p. 182). Despite the complexity of the task, Gold goes on to examine features of identity among Israeli émigrés, and concludes that "[w]hen Israelis move to the diaspora, they often re-evaluate their identity in view of nation, peoplehood and religion" (Gold, 2002, p. 215). In other words, he is pointing to a dynamic process of re-constructing identity in a diasporic setting following immigration.

The most recent studies suggest that Israeli diasporic identity is constantly shaped and re-shaped as a result of migration related experience, the interaction with peer-national diasporants, local Jewry and the host society. A recent report (March 2012) by one of Israel's leading think-tanks, *The Reut Institute*, offers a model for understanding and categorizing the construction of the diasporic identity of Israelis in the United States. The report, titled "The Israeli Diaspora as a Catalyst for Jewish Peoplehood", is aimed at laying out a conceptual framework for what the authors of the report<sup>9</sup> believe is "an emerging opportunity within the changing relationship between Israel and the Jewish world" based on their own analysis. The report stipulates from the very beginning that the Israeli diaspora is "a distinct entity with

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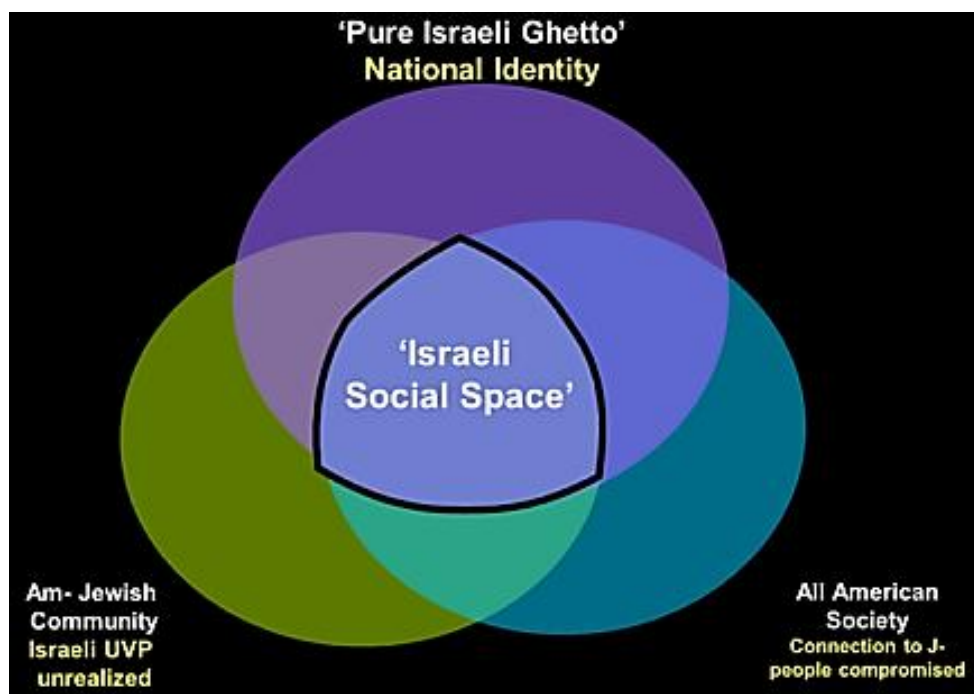
<sup>9</sup> The six member team that authored the report consists mostly of specialists in international relations, who had served in various high ranking official positions in the Israeli government. Among the members of the team were Gidi Grinstein - founder and president of *The Reut Institute*, former negotiator with Arab states and the Palestinians on behalf of the Israeli government; Roy Keidar - CEO of *Reut* and a former member of Israel National Security Council; and also Alissa Littmann – a Melbourne-born Jew and a Monash university graduate.

its own unique added value to the Jewish people has yet to realize its potential within the 'new paradigm'" (The Reut Institute, March 2012, p. 4).

The *Reut* model is based on the concept of 'Israeli social space', where three components interact to construct the diasporic identity of Israelis abroad: Israeli (homeland nationality), host-country's nationality (American in this case) and Jewish. According to the report, "these points of interaction have increased to form a social space within which these three spheres are in vibrant conversation and one's identity can be developed and sustained" (The Reut Institute, March 2012, p. 19).

Over the years since immigration (tenure), the *Reut* report claims, Israelis abroad tend to 'gravitate' and individually situate themselves within the spectrum of the three 'social spheres' which reflect on extreme types of diasporic identity as a variant of their 'Israeliness'. The first sphere is maintaining a 'Pure Israeli Ghetto' in which Israelis choose to remain within their ethno-national enclave, socially isolated from local Jewry and the host society. The second is complete integration into the local Jewish community. The third is the assimilation and full adoption of host-nationality and defining Israeli nationality as second to the local one (The Reut Institute, March 2012, pp. 18-19).

Figure 2.1  
*Reut's* model of Israeli diasporants' social spaces



Source: The *Reut* Institute March 2012, 20.

The *Reut* model is not without weaknesses. For example, the presupposition that the Jewish identity of Israeli diasporants is equivalent to interaction with the Jewish community is a contested notion; It may be that the two are related but not the same, and hence the model fails to distinguish between Jewish communality and Jewish identity. In practice, involvement in an established Jewish community can be a component of Jewish identity but not necessarily a complete personification of it; and interaction with Jews in the host country does not automatically lead to participation in the Jewish community.

Another study, by Lev Ari and Rebhun, introduces a typology of Israeli diasporants in the United States from a wider perspective. The authors refer to several factors that determine and influence the identity of Israeli diasporants in America. These include, among other factors: an Israeli background; circumstances and reasons for immigrating; professional, social and economic environments at the homeland and the host society; interaction with host Jewish community and other Israeli emigrants and time since emigration (tenure). The 'sum' of a mixture of these factors at each point in time is the current diasporic identity, which can alter and change.

Lev Ari and Rebhun identify four prototype identities of Israeli emigrants in the United States, which differ from one another by the focal point of their identity.

Emigrants with an **Israeli identity** are those who choose to continue identifying solely with their origin country; even if this identity has elements of Jewish behaviors, they are manifested in the private sphere and have no institutional connections. Some emigrants who identify in this way settled recently and have not yet been so exposed to the local Jewish community; others are long-tenured but reject organized Judaism for religious or ideological reasons.

The emigrant who has an **American-Israeli identity** tries to integrate the elements of his/her Israeli and Jewish identifications through manifestations that are tailored to the reality of life as a member of an ethno-religious minority in the United States and by striving to preserve a specific way of life and collective belonging.

Those who embrace an **American-Jewish identity** have reached an advanced stage in the weakening of their Israeli identification, and the adoption of local Jewish customs and patterns assure ethno-religious continuity.

Those who adopt an **exclusively American identity** have come to the last stage of a two-fold assimilation- erosion of both the Israeli and the Jewish identification- even if they demonstrate Jewish behaviours and Israeli connections sporadically on special occasions.

(Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 143)

The *Reut* model and Lev Ari and Rebhun's typology, originally referring to Israelis in the United States, are used in this thesis as a point of reference for the study of Israelis in Australia. Hence, aspects of the Israeli diasporants' identity in Australia are explored in an effort to introduce the Australian equivalents to both of them. In that context, components that are party to the construction of Ausraelis' social space are examined. These factors include the question of acculturation and/or assimilation into Australian society; the interaction with peer-national Israelis in Australia and vis-à-vis the institutionalised Jewish community and other Jews in Australia; and their religious and national identity. The aim is to map, characterise and study Ausraeli identity in an effort to understand its implications of Israel, the Jewish diaspora and diaspora studies in general.



### 3. Literature review: The study of Israeli émigrés

The migration of Jews from Israel to other countries is not a new phenomenon in the history of the State of Israel; in fact it started soon after its establishment in 1948. Numerically this migration might be seen as insignificant and at times even negligible, ranging between 0.3-0.6 per cent of the Jewish population in Israel until the beginning of the twenty first century (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 395). According to official estimates, approximately 7-8 per cent of its general population reside abroad (Cohen, 2007)<sup>10</sup>. Compared with other states, this is not unusual percentage. However, ideological and social implications of Jewish emigration as perceived in Israel's society has, to date, made this subject the focus of intense and highly emotional controversy<sup>11</sup>.

The three main perspectives in the research on Israelis immigrating abroad can be arranged in a chronological order: The *Yordim* School, the migration Studies perspective and the transnational approach. Each perspective was dominant, yet not exclusive, at a different period. Occasionally a mix of features from several perspectives can be found in studies from different phases. The shifts in viewpoints were correlated with inner-Israeli social processes as well as corresponded with wider patterns in the way diasporas were conceptualised. Also, each school of thought examines Israeli migration from a different geographical centre (origin, destination, global) and offers its own distinctive explanation for the phenomenon of emigration from Israel.

#### 3.1. The Ideological *Yordim* School

The *Yordim* School of thought was prominent among academics from the earlier days of the Israeli State until the 1990s. As a perspective strongly attached to the Zionist ideology, scholars affiliated with it predominantly adopted ideologically negative and judgemental attitudes towards Israeli emigrants. In doing so, they were mirroring Israeli society's antagonistic apprehension towards emigration at the time. The basic opening question in *Yordim* School studies is: "How come Jews choose to leave Israel?"

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<sup>10</sup> Australia's national diaspora, for example, consists 4.3 per cent of its population, while 21.0 per cent of New Zealand's population lives in a diaspora (Hugo, 2009, p. 10). Some low population countries have more population living in a diaspora than within its borders. For example, 294.2 per cent (5,884) of the population of the South Pacific island nation Niue and 138.5 per cent (2,019) of the inhabitants of the New Zealand territory of Tokelau (Hugo, 2009, p. 9)

<sup>11</sup> For example, Israeli historian Tom Segev notes that after the 1967 war "Nothing undermined faith in the future of the state [of Israel] so much as emigration" (Segev, 2007, p. 128).

*Yordim* (plural form of *Yored*) is the derogatory term used for Jews emigrating from Israel; translated it means “descending people”. This phraseology is connected to the ancient meaning of the verb *Yerida* (“descend”) used in the Bible to portray Israelite movement out of the land of Israel (or out of a Jewish area within the land of Israel), mainly southbound into Egypt in search of food<sup>12</sup>. New meaning was attached to the term *Yerida* in the state building narrative. Within this context, Israeli society considered Jewish exilic existence (*Galut*) as inferior to the morally superior alternative of life in Israel where the Zionist vision is realised and a spiritual centre for the Jewish people is being built<sup>13</sup>. Since the land of Israel is considered in Jewish tradition as morally the highest place on earth<sup>14</sup>, Jewish immigrants to Israel were positively named *Olim* (“ascending”), and *Aliyah* (“ascension”) is a form of homecoming and moral uplifting. Following the same logic, Jews choosing to leave Israel are *Yordim* (“descending”), the opposite of *Olim*.

This notion of the “Negation of diaspora” (Shapira, 2004, pp. 100-101), which considers Jewish diasporic life as obsolete after the birth of the State of Israel, was a dominant cohesion idea in the nation building story of Israel, and common in *Yordim* studies. Judging from this historical point of view, *Yerida* is an exile-bound movement of Jews returning to the diaspora and the emigrants are performing a “centre to periphery” movement.

This negative moralistic judgement of *Yordim* was also built on a security argument regarding demography. Until the 1980s the number of *Yordim* was considerably low and almost insignificant when compared with the influx of immigrants to Israel, the *Olim*<sup>15</sup>. At the same time, the Jews in Israel were (and still are) greatly outnumbered demographically when compared with a fast growing Arab

<sup>12</sup> For instance, Jacob is told by God: “Fear not to **go down** into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation” (“וַיֹּאמֶר, אֲנֹכִי הָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם; אֶל-תֵּירָא מִדָּדָה מִצְרַיִם, כִּי-לְגוֹי גָדוֹל אֲשִׁימָךְ שָׁם”) - Genesis, Chapter 46, Verse 3. In the Book of Judges, Chapter 1, Verse 9, this verb is used to portray Israelite movement from Jerusalem into areas in Israel located to the south or west of Jerusalem: “And afterward the children of Judah **went down** to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the hill-country, and in the south, and in the lowland” (“וַאֲחֵר, יָרְדוּ בְנֵי יְהוּדָה, לְהִלָּחֵם, “(“בְּכַנְעָנִי--יְיֹשֵׁב הָהָר, וְהַנֶּגֶב וְהַשְּׁפֵלָה”).

<sup>13</sup> Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg, known by his penname *Ahad Ha'aam* (אחד העם), was an influential secular Zionist thinker who introduced the idea of Israel being a spiritual centre, together with it being a geographical and political home for the Jewish people, as suggested by Theodore Herzl.

<sup>14</sup> From the *Gemara* (Babylonian Talmud - commentary on the traditional oral interpretations of scriptural ordinances provided in the *Mishna*, compiled early 3<sup>rd</sup> century), *Kidushim* chapter, page 69A: “The Land of Israel is higher than all the countries” (“אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל גְּבוּהָ מִכָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת”).

<sup>15</sup> For example, Israel’s Jewish population was 3.5 million in 1984; up until that year 1,721,426 *Olim* arrived on to Israel as opposed to about 305,000 Jewish Israelis leaving (Sobel & Mittelberg, Winter 1990, p. 768).

population in adversary neighbouring countries<sup>16</sup>, and to Palestinian Arab inhabitants, whilst Arab leaders openly and constantly threatened to destroy Israel. Hence, Israel constantly aspired to increase its Jewish population to ensure continuity of a national Jewish existence. This “need” for more *Olim* was regarded as crucial for Israel’s survival. Within this context, Jews who chose to leave Israel were vehemently rebuffed and viewed with contempt and anger. Although in small numbers, departing Jews attracted a myriad of negative attention and were deemed by politicians and the media to be traitors. *Yordim* were blamed for “abandoning” an endangered and underpopulated Jewish homeland. They left Israel bearing a “Mark of Cain” and were scorned by Israeli leadership, depicted as “the fallen among the weaklings”<sup>17</sup>.

Projecting this pejorative image, *Yordim* studies frequently considered the act of migration as morally illegitimate and focused on negative aspects of the Israeli migration experience. Special emphasis was devoted to the inability of many former Israelis to acculturate and re-adjust on foreign soils. Since *Yerida* was considered wrong, scholars “blamed” the migrants for unnatural or invalid motives, and even a lack of judgement skills leading to their immigration. Often, “accidental overstay abroad” of an opportunist nature was mentioned as the reason for leaving. *Yordim* themselves were testifying to constantly contemplating re-immigration to Israel, although often not taking any action to actually return. This “myth of return” concept became a recurring, prominent and unchallenged theme in *Yordim* studies, a presupposed organic feature in the *Yored* profile (Samuel Shye, 1976; Freedman & Korazim, 1986).

Reproachful terms portraying emigrants as morally flawed or socially crippled were not uncommon in *Yordim* type research. *Yordim* were labelled “social deviants” who willingly detached from their origin identity. A prominent example was the statement by sociologist Yinon Cohen that *Yerida* is “an individualised pervert behaviour... similar to suicide with regards to sabotaging a central norm and undermining it so it forces a strong emotional response by the collective” (Mikhaeli, et al., 2007, p. 203). Similarly, Shapira and Ben Yitzhak determined that “the *Yerida* sickness” was a result of an inability to identify with the national Israeli collective values due to the socio-economic dissatisfaction of different classes (Shapira & Ben Yitzhak, 1983). Since they were publicly accused of forsaking their homeland under threat and turning their backs on the only alternative for Jewish survival and on Zionist idealism, one research aspect focused on was the level of commitment to Judaism, Zionism and the state of Israel

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<sup>16</sup> In 1980 the Arab population in the Middle East was 130 million; it is predicted to reach 400 million in 2050. Israel Jewish population was 3.282 million in 1980 and is predicted to be 11.2 million in the year 2050 (Review, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s words in 1976. In Hebrew: *Nefolet shel nemoshut* (“נפולת של נמושות”).

as a predictor of emigration. Within this frame of reference, *Yordim* were then regarded as devoid of emotional ties and rational understanding of Israel's idiosyncratic place in the Jewish history continuum (Mikhaeli, et al., 2007, p. 203).

*Yordim* scholars also concentrated on feelings of guilt over emigration. *Yerida* was a cause of embarrassment for the migrants and their family and acquaintances. This in turn led the relatives and friends who remained in Israel to feel ashamed of the *Yordim* and sometimes even openly denunciate them. The disgraceful rejection felt by Israeli migrants compelled many of them to adopt the stigma of social misfits, the label imposed on them by Israeli society. Interactions with peer émigrés under these circumstances were mostly fruitless, haunted by the ghost of rejection and stained by the low status of the *Yored*. For example, Israeli anthropologist Moshe Shoked described the relations between Israelis residing in New York in the 1980s as a "one night stand ethnicity". He associated *Yordim* contacts with each other with an unflattering pattern similar to random and promiscuous homosexual encounters. These "rendezvous", claimed Shoked, were aimed only at achieving temporary satisfaction for the need to reconnect with like-minded Israelis, and to gain short-term relief from isolation, but with no intention of developing long term bonding relations (Shoked, 1991).

Able to produce only weak and unstable socialisation, the notion of a sustainable Israeli communalism abroad seemed very unlikely. *Yerida* was affiliated with a marginalised and negligible minority of Jews who failed to "rise up" to the Zionist challenge of life in Israel. Such an extraneous group could not have developed a tenable community. This view was compatible with a wider perception of migrant ethno-national communities prevalent at the time. Scholars considered national migrant groups as "marginal and disappearing social phenomenon", destined either to assimilate completely or return to their home country (Sheffer, 2009, p. xx).

### **3.2. Migration Studies Approach**

The migration studies point of view established itself as a significant interpretation framework on Israeli migrants from the 1980s and until the end of the twentieth century. This approach examines reactions of home-longing, acculturation, adjustment challenges and re-emigration as normal and predictable in general immigrant behaviours and experiences. The migration studies approach main inquiry is "why do people move?"

The inclusion of migration studies into the body of research on Israeli migrants was a result of two processes which occurred simultaneously but on different plateaus: the development of the scholarship of diaspora studies in general; and a revision in the status of Jewish emigrants within the Israeli society on a local national stratum.

On a macro level, since the 1980s ethno-national groups and minorities in different countries were abandoning integrational or assimilative proclivities and choosing instead to exhibit renewed pride in an affiliation to their origins. From that point onwards ethno-national identity was beginning to be stabilised and crystallised in the form of vibrant diasporas. Members of the diaspora, the diasporants, are able to maintain their source national identity in their sibilings, and together “identify as members of diasporic organizations” (Sheffer, 2009, p. xx).

There are different possible answers to the question why was diaspora reinvigorated specifically in the 1980s. One explanation concerns the disintegration of the Soviet Union which was accelerated during that decade until its final demise in 1991. East European peoples, including minorities in their home countries, were gradually being released from the yoke of Soviet rule. As a result, nationalism, formerly suppressed by the Soviets, was reawakening. This has further inspired minority groups in other countries to go through a similar process of reconnection to their ethnic identities.

Whatever the reasons may be, the consequences of acknowledging “the permanency of diaspora” were increased public, and subsequently scholarly, interest in ethno-nationalism, diasporas and migration in a global context. Liberal governments facing assertive minority groups started speaking openly about tolerance towards ethnic groups, and by doing so contributed and encouraged debate on these issues (Sheffer, 2009, p. xxi). Further need to analyse relations between migrant groups arose following an increase in the number and intensity of ethnic conflicts in the 1990s, a trend which threatened international stability and security (Brinkerhoff, 2009, p. 4).

To answer the call for academic work on diasporas, scholars first turned to established analytical frameworks available from migration studies. Prominent relevant theories of the time generally sought explanations for human migration in the economical field. These theories surmised that migration is a normal phenomenon, explainable in ‘neutral’ economic terms.

The earliest theory used in that context was the neo-classical approach. It was introduced after the Second World War and emphasises push-pull factors. According to this theory, humans would leave low-income markets, densely populated areas and politically repressive regimes and go to “receiving countries” offering better economic opportunities with political freedoms, seasonable demand for work and available land (Castles & Miller, 2003, p. 22). Labour migration, at the heart of the neo-classic approach, was also the basis for theories that followed it. A notable example is “the new-economics of labour migration” theory, associated mainly with Oded Stark’s *The Migration of Labor* (1991). It claims that the family, much more than individuals, is the basic unit, which decides on the feasibility of migration. It also added the relativeness of income distribution in a community as push factor for migration (Arango, 2004, pp. 22-23).

Thus, the notion that Israelis can sustain communities abroad was beginning to be accepted as part of the wider process of diasporas being legitimised and studied. At the same time, inner-Israeli developments in the 1980s and 1990s led to the emergence of an alternative ‘neutral’ perception of the emigrants from Israel, different from the *Yordim* school of thought.

The first development in that context was a growth in Israel’s Jewish population, from just over 3.2 million in 1980 to almost 5 million in 2000 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This was mainly a result of a massive influx of Russian and Eastern European Jews after the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the 1990s. Israel absorbed a large part of this exodus of a million former Soviet Union (FSU) Jews, as well as a few tens of thousands of Ethiopian Jews<sup>18</sup> (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 397). The masses of *Olim* diffused most fears of “losing the demographic battle” against non-Jews in Israel. The fact that the Arab Israeli population had also grown and almost doubled at the same period, from 640,000 in 1980 to 1.18 million in 2000 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009) did not affect the perception change.

Israeli sociologist Zvi Sobel was one of the earliest scholars to embrace a migration studies approach when studying Israeli emigration in his 1986 research on Israelis in the United States, *Migrants from the Promised Land*. He concludes that a quest to improving quality of life was a major reason for the emigration of the Israelis he studied. This journey for a better life quality, determines Sobel, was motivated by an image of Israel as too small, with not enough economic or professional opportunities,

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<sup>18</sup> Ethiopian Jews’ immigration to Israel was at its peak during the 1990s as a result of special airborne *Aliyah* operations titled ‘Moses’, ‘Joshua’ and ‘Solomon’.

an inefficient bureaucracy and restrictive society norms used to stifle individualism and personal freedoms.

Sobel claims that a euphoric mainstream Israeli self-perception after the landslide victory in the Six Days War in 1967 both camouflaged and accelerated important undercurrent developments within the Israeli society. The abrupt and instant transition of Israel's status from "sub-normal" (threatened and rejected) into "supernormal" (a super potent dominant regional power) triggered a de-facto erasing of core myths of early Israeli identity, without developing alternative collective symbolism. The outcome was surfacing of tensions amid different segments of the Israeli society, such as between Jews and Arab Israelis, secular and religious, or *Oriental-Mizrahim* vs. *Westerners-Ashkenazim*<sup>19</sup>. A bitter political split erupted over the very meaning of Zionism with regards to Gaza, Judea and Samaria, and the Golan Heights conquered in the war. These rifts were enhanced by an Israeli society increasingly nurturing individualism, as well as consumerism successfully adopted from American culture. Thus, argues Sobel, both the realisation of the Zionist dream and the removal of the cataclysmic fear of the destruction of the Israeli project, resulted in a diminished sense of communal commitment to the state.

Sobel concludes that the powerful ideological restraints against emigration from Israel were rapidly deteriorating from 1967 onwards. This process was interlaced with a general decline in the all-encompassing Zionist melting pot narrative as Israel's nation bonding mechanism. The image of Israel's strength cultivated after the Six Day War was heavily bruised by a near defeat in the Yom Kippur War in 1973, leading to more "atomisation" - accelerated disintegration processes of Israeli communality towards greater emphasis on individualism. The hegemony of the Zionist ideology was further challenged by the emergence of a post-Zionist theory at the beginning of 1980s, following the first Lebanon war (1982). Post-Zionists questioned basic pillars of the nation building narrative, including the idea of "Negation of Exile" (Gutwein, 2004, p. 225). Thus, Post-Zionists (perhaps unintentionally) contributed to an already on-going legitimisation of Jewish existence outside Israel. Evidence for this process was the introduction of a neutral term "diaspora", *Tefutzot* or *Pezura* in Hebrew (both translate into "dispersed people"), which gradually replaced the negatively charged *Golah* (Exile) and its derivative *Galut*, which stands for exilic existence (Shapira, 2004, p. 101).

As moral judgement of emigration was beginning to be abandoned gradually, albeit not totally, migration studies researchers offered a new angle about Israeli Jewish emigrants, depicting them as

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<sup>19</sup> The affiliations of West or Orient are cultural and not necessarily geographical.

integral players in the historical phenomenon of global Jewish migration<sup>20</sup>. The migration studies approaches led to a reconstruction of the discussion about push and pull factors for emigration from Israel as well as to open criticism on official policies. The onus of blame had moved away from the *Yordim* and was now also directed towards the government and Israeli society in general. Both were accused of failing to absorb in-coming Russian *Olim* into mainstream Israeli society. For North African *Olim* and their descendants leaving Israel was sometimes even justified because Israeli leadership was held accountable for forcibly and unnaturally trying to strip them of their cultural assets in a violent process of Western-oriented societal melting pot. Such Israeli emigrants were now rendered legitimate seekers of personal, social and/or financial mobility and as a possible solution for “dealing with the perceived failures of the society” (Sobel, 1986). However, unreserved acceptance of migration was limited to individuals and *Yerida* as a phenomenon was still being denounced as a general trend (Cohen, 2007, p. 274).

Academics endorsing the migration studies perception spotlighted the formation of Israeli communities abroad. In 1994 sociologist Natan Urieli provided an insight into the orientation experience of Israeli inhabitants in Chicago in his article “*Rhetorical Ethnicity of Permanent Sojourners*”. Urieli divided Israeli émigrés into two distinguished groups. The first were the “settlers”, who had left Israel with the intention of never coming back, most of them lower-class with Oriental origins (*Mizrahim*). The second group were higher class Israelis of Western descent (*Ashkenazim*) which Urieli labelled as “permanent sojourners”. The term “sojourner” was originally introduced by Paul Siu in his 1952 study of Chinese immigrants to Chicago:

The ‘sojourner’ is treated as a deviant type of the sociological form of the ‘stranger’, one who clings to the cultural heritage of his own ethnic group and tends to live in isolation, hindering his assimilation to the society in which he resides, often for many years. The sojourn is conceived by the sojourner as a ‘job’ which is to be finished in the shortest possible time. As an alternative to that end he travels back to his homeland every few years.

(Siu, 1952, p. 34)

Siu emphasised the temporariness feature in the sojourner’s life as an immigrant. Thus, the typology Urieli created by conjoining “permanent” with the temporariness of “sojourners” is in fact a

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<sup>20</sup> For example, leading Israeli demographer Sergio Della-Pergola included “Migration from Palestine/Israel” in his historical analysis of Jewish migration in the period of 1881-2002 (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 395).



contradiction in terms. Uriely was trying to portray the in-between existence of these Israeli migrants, constantly contemplating “mythical” plans to return to Israel whilst almost never acting on them. Uriely’s Israeli migrants continuously preserve a transience self-perception as a course of action to enable their long-term orientation in host lands.

Uriely further developed his classification by examining the central component of the Israeli sojourners. He pointed to “symbolic ethnic identity” attributed to ethnic minorities in the United States since the 1960s. This form of ethnicity is restricted to a bordered domain of voluntarily chosen aspects, such as consumption of national foods or speaking the origin language. It is devoid of any social costs and is essentially used as an ornament on one’s self identification. Israelis, suggested Uriely, express a unique form of “rhetorical ethnicity” consisting of an exceptionally powerful allegiance to Israel and a personal concept of Israeli national identity. He argued that this affiliation is stronger than most other ethnic migrant groups’ affiliations. However, among the emigrants, Israeli adherence to source national identity remains on a symbolic level and is barely practised in any community perceivable activity.

*Kibbutz LA* (1996) by Naama Sabar was another step away from the *Yordim* view. She documented former members of the *Kibbutz* after migrating to the Los Angeles area. A *Kibbutz* is a unique Israeli communal settlement form, combining socialism and Zionism. The *Kibbutzniks* were considered in the early days of Israel as a symbol of success and of the rebirth of Jews in Israel as highly committed Zionists and active working class members, a total antithesis for the exilic *Golah* Jew. Prima facie, *Kibbutzniks*’ strong affiliation to Zionism and to Israel should have acted as a type of repellent<sup>21</sup> against *Yerida*. However, during the 1980s the rate of *Kibbutzniks* emigrating was identical to that of the general Israeli public (Sabar, 2000, p. 3). A possible explanation for this alleged paradox was presented a few years before Sabar by Mittelberg and Sobel, who argued that rising emigration among young *Ashkenazi* Israelis, particularly among *Kibbutz* members, is evidence of general decline in national commitment (Sobel & Mittelberg, Winter 1990).

Sabar introduced four categories of the emigrant *Kibbutznik* population in Los Angeles. Alongside *Yordim*, who were full of guilt and unable to assimilate into the American society, she highlighted a small “contented” group who attested to total acculturation and satisfaction with their new society and personal status. The largest clusters of migrants were categorized by Sabar as “The searchers”, undecided about their preferred place of dwelling and unable to feel comfortable in either the United

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<sup>21</sup> Arango suggests adding “Repel-Retain” to the classic Push-Pull factors model for migration (Arango, 2004, p. 30).

States or in Israel. A distinguishable group were the “AmerIsraelis” wishing they could “live in Israeli as they do in the United States” and “to conduct their lives on the America-Israel axis: to raise their children in Israel and to make money in America”. Although adjusted and satisfied with the host society, they still voiced longing for the culture they left behind, living in a state of “permanent temporariness” (Sabar, 2000, pp. 26-27, 86). Also, many of the Israelis she interviewed attested to an active and positive social life. Thus, Sabar’s portrayal of a diverse and vibrant Israeli émigré life was a contradiction to Shoked’s account of *Yordim* as socially dysfunctional.

### **3.3. The Transnationalist Approach**

The Transnationalist approach with regards to migration was developed at the end of the twentieth century to accommodate the emergence of a new type of global market and the re-surfacing of nationalism following the rapid disintegration of the Soviet empire in 1991. A transnationalist migration study starting point is: “What is the globalized migration culture?”

Globalism became a powerful agent for unprecedented border-crossing exposure to a variety of cultures and ideas worldwide. “The Digital Age” of electronic communication produced new cultural patterns where individualism and communalism interact with global consumerism and personal identification with sets of values and norms. Technological advancements of mass global media, accessible international connectivity enabled by the Internet, and modern international air transportation, all foster the emergence of complex cross-borders identities. These “self-definition structures” can be made of a mix of components, be it ethnic, national or outside the realm of classic identity denominators; some of which may even contradict one another (Sheffer, 2009, pp. xx-xxi). The fusion of these elements leads to selective sociability with preferred networks and groups.

The Transnationalist approach was also developed to cater to the changing attitudes towards migration and diaspora as a culture. It is an attempt to conceptualise the complex reality evolving as a result of the multilayered phenomenon of identity nurtured in the cradle of globalism. Such were new ideas and theories of multiple national or “non-national” identities and the evolution of a mixed hybrid culture cultivated by international information channels and other powerful technological agents (Kivisto, 2001). Transnationalism tries to focus on the acculturation and adjustment experiences of immigrant groups in a world-wide market. Migration from this point of view is an ongoing dynamic and multifaceted micro and macro process within diverse systems. It takes place in a global spectrum where

ethnic, geographical and psychological distances can technologically be greatly reduced and even eliminated. It involves social, professional and political networks; it is influenced by personal interaction with political systems, social structures and gender questions and by other ethnic communities (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 13). Unlike past times, immigrants do not necessarily become “lost children” to their homelands. Instead, many proudly and easily maintain a lively cross-border connection with their origin country and culture, as well as peer nationals in the host land. Furthermore, according to the transnational theory “migrants with a more articulated system of social, cultural, and economic ties will manage to avoid many of the obstacles typical of international migration” (Lev Ari, 2-4 October 2006).

Scholars of the Israeli émigrés adopted Transnationalism as a research orientation since the beginning of the twenty first century. This trend echoed the continuation of transformation processes within the Israeli society noted earlier. These changes were embodied in a further weakening of communal bonds based on Zionism and the on-going legitimisation of migration. Tensions within and towards Israeli communal life abroad were eased and emotional ties to the homeland by Israeli émigrés were strengthened, both privately and by the government.

Furthermore, Israel was going through a vigorous globalisation process in the 1990s (Almog, 2004). One of the outcomes of this process was accelerated privatisation and individualisation of society, which further undermined the strength of Zionism as a collective force. Daniel Gutwein, an Israeli historian known for his social-liberal views, Israeli identity was also privatised at the time as emphasis of middle class educated Israelis was relocating from the State and a Zionist “melting pot” society and into the individual. Another development at that time was the adoption of multiculturalism as an official Israeli government policy, following models introduced since the 1970s by other immigrant nations, such as Australia and Canada. This type of policy can be defined as an acceptance to “some degree of long-term cultural difference” (Castles & Miller, 2003, pp. 14-15) by granting minorities political and cultural rights. Gutwein claims Israeli elites saw multiculturalism as part of their efforts to counter continuing segmentation within the society (Gutwein, 2004).

Jewish American sociologist Steven J. Gold published *The Israeli diaspora* in 2002. This study constitutes the boldest and most comprehensive attempt at the time to lay out a diverse and complex profile of the heterogeneous nature of former Israelis across the globe. Gold’s book is pivotal to any contemporary

research of Israeli émigrés as a cornerstone comparison tool, historically and analytically, and as a methodological framework reference point.

Methodologically, Gold declares that he moves freely between research approaches and chooses to “apply them eclectically as warranted” (Gold, 2002, p. 22). Albeit critical of the *Yordim* scholarship, he generally accepts its basic notion that “there are valid reasons for considering Israel emigration as, in important ways, unlike that from other countries”. The uniqueness of the Israeli experience, Gold asserts, leads to a different social membership in Israel unlike any other nation that cannot be fully understood by the prevailing current emphasis on the individual in migration research. From a Migrant studies point of view, Gold determines that Israeli professionals comfortably belong to “the movement of skilled and educated persons” to, or within, developed western societies (Gold, 2002, pp. 17, 46).

However, Gold’s study is mostly compatible with a wide scope multi-focal Transnationalist point of view. He extensively examined various features of national, ethnic and religious identities of Israelis abroad and their motives for migration. He described inner community relations and organisational patterns, as well as interaction with host and original societies. He also pursued issues of networking, cooperation and group behaviour in the familial (gender relations), economic (work market) and political spheres.

Historically, most Israeli émigrés case studies were focused in North America, where the largest Israeli communities existed, while Israelis in European countries were seldom subjects in similar enterprises<sup>22</sup>. In that regard, Israeli sociologist, demographer and a researcher of contemporary Judaism and immigration, Lilach Lev Ari, is a pioneer with her 2008 study about Israelis residing in Europe, titled *Israeli Immigrants Abroad - Jewish continuity or Assimilation?*. She opted for a combined qualitative and quantitative research approach, using both a questionnaire-based survey and interviews to study definitions and possible changes in Israeli and Jewish identity and affiliation with respective groups of source and host countries (mostly UK and France).

Lev Ari testifies to adhering to a transnational perspective as her analysis technique (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 13). Accordingly, her research holistically looks at migration as dynamic process of both sending (Israeli) and receiving (European) societies. Hence, the influence of the migrants’ on-going relations with Israel in various aspects - societal, economic and cultural - receives similar attention as connections to local

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<sup>22</sup> Examples of studies about European Israelis include: For the UK - (Schmool & Cohen, 1998), (Hart, 2007); Holland - (Kooyman & Almagor, 1996); Germany - (Oz-Salzberger, 2001).

Jewry or host societies. Nonetheless, Lev Ari sets out to explore assimilation out of the Jewish faith and 'loss' of Israeli identity of first and second generation immigrants. Lev Ari mentions at the beginning of her study the assumption that assimilation is "the biggest threat on the future of the Jewish people" (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 7).

Lev Ari is also the author of two other Transnational studies on Israeli émigrés in the United States. The first study, *The American Dream - For Men Only? : Gender, Immigration, and the Assimilation of Israelis in the United States* (published 2008), follows the recent trend of "feminisation of migration", which is the growing "awareness of the specificity of women in contemporary migration" (Castles & Miller, 2003, p. 9). In this book, Lev Ari tried to determine whether different patterns between genders exist with regard to the emigration of Israelis to the United States. Based on a considerably big sample<sup>23</sup>, participants in the study were questioned on the motives for emigration and/or returning to Israel, and about economic, cultural and social assimilation and ethnic identity. Differences between the genders were detected in some areas, such as the inclination to return to Israel, where women are less determined than men to return to Israel. Lev Ari concluded that "Women are a significant socialization agent in regard to absorption in the country of origin" (Lev Ari, 2-4 October 2006).

The second study, titled *American Israelis: Migration, Transnationalism, and Diasporic Identity* was written by Lev Ari together with Uzi Rebhun, a contemporary Jewry researcher from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This recent addition (2010) to the body of transnationalist research on Israeli émigrés in general, and specifically in the United States, covers a wide range of migration related issue, such as settlement patterns and socio-economic acculturation and mobility. A separate chapter involves religious and national identity, as well as the relations with the Jewish community and attachment to Israel. The authors used American census data (1980, 1990 and 2000) together with data and findings of specific Jewish surveys of communities with large Israeli populations in New York (2004), Miami (2002), and Los Angeles (1997) and the National Jewish Population Survey (2003). In all cases, they used a combination of characteristics (Israel - country of birth, language at home - Hebrew) to distinguish data about Israeli Jews from the above mentioned sources. One of the main conclusions of this study points to the dynamics of shifting identities over time among Israeli emigrants in the United States. In a process defined by the authors as "Jewish Americanization", identity of Israeli emigrants move from a purely

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<sup>23</sup> Lev Ari's sample constituted 500 men and women from Los Angeles, Miami and Philadelphia and 501 Israeli emigrants who had returned to Israel after less than 5 years stay in the United States.

national affiliation ("Israeli") to a conjoined bi-national and religious one ("Israeli and American-Jewish") (Rebhun & Lev Ari, 2010, pp. 21-24, 143).

In July 2010, a report titled "Close and far - Emigration, Jewish identification and attachment to the homeland amongst Israelis abroad" was published. The report was authored by Uzi Rebhun together with Israel Popko, who studied Israel's policy towards Israelis abroad<sup>24</sup>. The study is a joint venture of The Jewish Agency for Israel, Israel's absorption ministry and *The Avraham Herman Institute for Contemporary Jewry* in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

The report analyses data collected in an online survey in five languages (Hebrew, English, Russian, French and Spanish) for Israelis abroad posted in the website of Israel's ministry of absorption between September 30<sup>th</sup> 2009 and March 1<sup>st</sup> 2010. It was completed by 2,002 Israelis world-wide and the authors of the report clearly state that their sample is "not necessarily representative of Israelis abroad" (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 4). The surveyed Israelis were asked twenty five questions with multiple answers from which only one could be selected. The questionnaire was aimed at collecting information about the demography, social and financial features of the respondents, and covering issues such as immigration and settlement patterns, Jewish and Israeli identification feelings. The report ends with a call to find ways to improve ties and affiliations between the State of Israel and Israelis living abroad (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 52).

The process of positive shifts in the image of Israeli migrants still continues. Since individual success is admired in twenty first century Israeli society, high profile or prominent Israeli migrants are portrayed in the media as conquerors of a new world frontier, vibrant players in the sought-after globalised market wealth dream: "Since the 1980s... Israelis who 'make it' abroad are cultural heroes" (Tzfadia, 2008, p. 51). The Israeli government follows suit by readjusting its policy towards reconciliation with its former citizens. Official outreach programs towards Israeli communities abroad reflect a core attitude change and a transformation from rejection to overt embracement by the government<sup>25</sup>.

The historical review reveals how research of Israeli emigrants transformed to accommodate transitions in Israel's society and wider international scholarly shifts in diaspora and migration scholarships. Geographically, the study of Israeli migration moved away from a locally Israeli-centred approach

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<sup>24</sup> On January 2011 Popko initiated the "World Council of Israelis Abroad" conference in Toronto and started a process still continuing for erecting a roof-body for Israeli diasporants (Spivak, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> (Cohen, 2007).

towards migrant host-land attention, and eventually to a global dynamic multi-focal transnational approach. The following table summarises main characteristics of each scholarship:

Table 3.1  
Study of Israeli Emigrants - Scholarship Comparison

Scholarship	Period	Point of view	Movement Model	Opening Question	Focus
<b>Yordim School</b>	1948-1970s	Ideology	Exilic: Centre → Periphery	“How come Jews leave Israel?”	Origin society (Israel)
<b>Migration Studies</b>	1980s-1990s	Economy	Push - Pull: Periphery → Centre	“Why do people move?”	Receiving country
<b>Transnational Perspective</b>	2000s-Today	Interdisciplinary	Multi Vectorial: Origin ↔ Destination	“What is the global migration culture?”	Origin and host societies, the global market

## 4. Methodology - Theoretical framework

### 4.1. Ethnography - Historical Review

This project adopts an ethnographic approach and methodology for the study of the diasporic identity of Israelis in Australia. In Greek 'ethno-graphy' translates into 'writing about people'. There are numerous definitions and views on ethnography and its development; or, as Wolcott put it: "Imagine a group of ethnographers meeting today and agreeing on *anything*" (Wolcott, 2008, p. 11). At the same time, the multifaceted character of ethnography enables diversity of its application in several social science disciplines, as well as its flexibility and dynamic nature to transform and adjust.

Historically, ethnography was developed in the early years of the twentieth century as a research discipline for anthropology, with American expansionist tendencies and European imperialism as its background. Its foundations were laid on a mixture of Darwin's theory of evolution and the immersion of positivist theoretical perspective into social sciences, which adopted scientific tools in search for empirical 'laws of nature' of societies, their behaviour and changes over time (Scott-Jones, 2010, p. 14).

The spread of European colonialism during the nineteenth century into new 'colonies' in Asia and Africa spawned curiosity about the indigenous population of these territories. Accordingly, ethnographers were initially concerned with the study of 'the other' - geographically distant or isolated marginalized groups. In some cases, such studies were aimed at sustaining existing perceptions and models of power distribution, of 'white dominance' over the 'primitive' local populations, yet to evolve to 'civilized' levels (Murchinson, 2010, p. 5; Scott-Jones, 2010, p. 15).

Wolcott suggests that in each of ethnography's locations of emergence, the United States and the UK, the focus was different. British social anthropologists, especially Malinowski, regarded the purpose of ethnography as to describe 'cultures' - the set of meanings shared by a group; and considered sociologists to be responsible for interpreting such accounts into insights about 'society', which was defined in that context as universal laws of human behaviour. Their counterparts across the Atlantic Ocean were cultural anthropologists and scholars of the Chicago school of qualitative sociology, headed by Robert Ezra Park and Ernest Watson Burgess. These American scholars rejected the idea of a dichotomy between the descriptive and the cultural aspects and believed ethnography simultaneously dealt with both (Wolcott, 2008, pp. 11-12).



A few key figures contributed to the development of ethnography. Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski revolutionized ethnography in his canonical text *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922). It is a pioneering study in many respects, which laid the foundations of ethnographical methodology and its theoretical basis (Scott-Jones, 2010, p. 19). In 1923 Nels Anderson, one of the Chicago School ethnographers, published his study of homelessness in Chicago, *The Hobo*. This was an example of the ability and necessity of shifting the focus of attention from 'the distinct other' to the local (in this case, urban and industrial) setting. Clifford Geertz's ethnographical studies in Southeast Asia and North Africa since the late 1950s created a framework for constructing insights and theories about societies in general (and not just as an enquiry about 'primitives' with no implications for other societies). McCurdy and Spradley's collection of a dozen small-scale ethnographical projects conducted by their undergraduate students, *The Cultural Experience* (1972) introduced a systematic new focus for ethnography on familiar and easily accessible micro-cultures – a term borrowed from biology, describing the distinctive culture of a small group of people within limited geographical boundaries or within an organization. Their students chose, for example, to write about pool players, skateboarders, a topless bar, a bingo parlour and a retirement party (Wolcott, 2008, pp. 32-36).

Concepts, methods and practice of ethnography are ever-changing. During the twentieth century, dominant white males' concepts of race, ethnicity or gender were challenged. Ideas such as feminism and multiculturalism ignited ongoing critique on existing concepts of social sciences and inspired vigorous debate between ethnographers. At the same time, ethnography was expanding into new fields, such as psychology, business and communication studies, which raised fresh questions. The result was a dynamic process, which still persists, of building a set of common practices and methodologies for ethnographical research.

Thus, a century after its inception, the methodology and focus of ethnography is still being debated. Murchinson, for instance, chooses to combine early perspectives by defining ethnography as a "research strategy that allows researchers to explore and examine the cultures and societies that are a fundamental part of the human experience" (Murchinson, 2010, p. 4). Goldbart and Hustler claim that ethnography regards peoples as 'meaning-makers', and focuses on "understanding how people interpret their worlds, and the need to understand the particular worlds in which people live and which they both construct and utilize" (Goldbart & Hustler, 2005, p. 16). This view is based on the assumption that cultural meanings shared by a group can explain the behaviour of its individual members and their construction and deconstruction of social environments.

## 4.2. Ethnography in diaspora studies

Ethnography has been a popular approach in the study of communities (Brunt, 2008, p. 89), immigrants and, later, diasporas since its onset as a discipline at the beginning of the twentieth century. Robert E. Park, one of the founding fathers of ethnography, studied immigration to the United States in his time and developed the theory of assimilation into American society. Sociologists Thomas and Znaniecki recorded the correspondence to their homeland by Polish immigrants to the United States in *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1927), building a valuable five-volume archive for future ethnographical studies on immigrants.

William Foote Whyte spent three years with first- and second-generation Italian immigrants in a poor neighbourhood of Boston. He summarized his insights following this experience in his ground-breaking ethnographical work *Street Corner Society* (1943), detailing the activities, events and groups of this social world. Migration scholar, Roger Rouse, was one of the first to use multi-sited ethnography<sup>26</sup> with regard to diasporas, in his 1991 study on Mexican migrants to the United States, “Mexican migration and the social space of postmodernism”.

These studies are selected examples from a growing number of in-depth scholarly works on migration and diasporas. The contribution of ethnography to these areas of interest is not confined to the volume of research. It also a powerful method to reflect historical processes and perception changes on these issues. George Marcus described ethnography as “a reinforcing inspiration” for the development of migration studies as “part of a much richer body of work on mobile and contingently settled populations, across borders, in exile and in diasporas” (Marcus, 1995, pp. 104-105). American geographer, Kevin McHugh, claimed that within the context of transnationalism, ethnographers are best equipped to “capture verifying tempos and rhythms of movement and connection, illuminating implications for both people and places” and to refocus attention on human migration as a cultural event “rich in meaning for individuals, families, social groups, communities and nations” (McHugh, 2000, p. 72).

Ethnography has been used in the past in the study of Israelis abroad. Shokeid’s account of Israelis in New York (1991), Uriely’s study of Israelis in Chicago (1993), Roni Floman’s interviews of Israelis in the Silicon Valley (2007) and Erez Cohen’s study on Israeli Radio ‘Mediascapes’ in Melbourne (2008) are some examples of ethnographic works on Israelis abroad initiated by Israeli researchers.

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<sup>26</sup> For a discussion about multi-sited ethnography, see subchapter 4.5 “Multi-sited” of this thesis.

### **4.3. Implementation of contemporary ethnography in this study**

In the conclusion of her discussion, Scott-Jones argues that contemporary ethnographical methodology is based on a commonly accepted set of eight commitments:

A relativist stance.

A desire to accurately provide a 'thick description' of a social world.

An intention to seek ways to 'understand' a social world through immersion (long or short term) in that environment.

The importance of historical and cultural contextualization.

The intention to present the 'native's point of view'.

The stress on ethics, representation, 'voice', power and inclusion.

The importance of reflexivity.

An awareness of subjectivity.

(Scott-Jones, 2010, p. 26)

Although this set of principles is by no means the only available definition of ethnography, it does present a framework for understanding key elements of ethnography and its practice. Each item in Scott-Jones's list stands on its own and is, at the same time, connected to, influenced by and interacts with the other items. Examining Scott-Jones's characterization exposes the complexity and diversity of current ethnographical practice.

In the following paragraphs Scott-Jones's points are presented and explained, along with a discussion about the specific application of each pledge in the ethnographic practice of this study.

#### **A relativist stance**

One of the contributions made by Malinowski to ethnographical methodology is his paving the way for understanding the significance of a relativist approach in ethnography (Scott-Jones, 2010, p. 18). Relativists reject the notion of the existence of one natural scientific 'reality'. Instead, they state that everything is contextualized and individually comprehended. Relativism is a powerful concept that has implications on many aspects of social sciences, and other fields as well, which are far beyond the scope of this discussion. From a narrow ethnographical context, one example is how relativism dictates a

constant analysis and self-questioning of 'truth' – what is the 'positioning' of particular information in respect to other data.

What counts as the truth depends on where you are standing when you observe or participate in it, what you believe about it in the first place, and what you want to do with it – or who is paying you to do something with it – once you name it.

(Goodall, 2000, p. 12)

One simple and practical example of the use of relativity in this project stems from the gist of Goodall's relativist remark on truth – the necessity to understand that data is interpreted in a context, relatively. Murchinson follows Goodall and embraces the subjective nature by which we comprehend information. He suggests that not all data collected in an ethnographic study has equal value and proposes evaluating it on a continuum of 'relative significance' specific to the context of the study (Murchinson, 2010, p. 188).

Similarly, the source pillars in this study were graded according to their 'relative significance'. The qualitative and the quantitative pillars were deemed to be of central and equal significance, while the text-based-sources pillar was given a supportive role as a means to further expand on issues which emerged earlier by analysis of the two other pillars.

### **A desire to accurately provide a 'thick description' of a social world.**

Fetterman claims that ethnographers should strive "to gain a comprehensive and complete picture of a social group", although he acknowledges the inability to wholly achieve this goal because "no study can capture an entire culture or group" (Fetterman, 1998, p. 19). 'Thick description' is a tool in ethnography's quest for an accurate and complete picture of a social world.

The concept of 'thick description' was introduced by Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973):

... [E]thnography is thick description. What the ethnographer is in fact faced with [...] is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render.

(Geertz, 1973)

Ethnography is “an interpretative exercise in ‘thick description’” (Spencer, 2008, p. 445) which stands on dual foci: the actions included in the behaviour and, at the same time, the context of these actions which render them meaningful to others.

The commitment to present a ‘thick description’ of the social world studied ethnographically was coupled over time with the widening of ethnography’s outreach into more disciplines, new research fields and novel perspectives. Specifically, the effort to provide a ‘thick description’ of a complex reality from a relativist point of view can be enough of a reason for widening the scope of research methods used. Emphasis on fieldwork persists and key ethnography methods are still noted as participant observation, interviews, maps and charts. However, as Murchinson acknowledges “exceptions are almost the norm” (Murchinson, 2010, p. 41). Contemporary ethnographers may employ a variety of research methods and data-collection techniques applied over different time-frames, combining qualitative and quantitative information (Punch, 2005, pp. 152-153). As a result, they constantly face new challenges of methodically integrating and analysing the mixture of data collected.

This current study is based on a blend of data collected from a variety of sources using different methods. It combines quantitative data collected in surveys and censuses with qualitative information gathered through fieldwork, participant observation and interviews, as well as literary and journalistic texts from archives and libraries. The layering of sources gathered for this project serves the purpose of trying to reflect the social complexity of current diasporism. The available data together with the additional information collected is comprehensive in volume; it touches both the structural and the individualized levels and covers different aspects and sub-groups of the Israeli population in Australia.

### **An intention to seek ways to ‘understand’ a social world through immersion (long or short term) in that environment**

Ethnographical practice is different from other social sciences which also examine features of human behaviour using scientific tools and perspectives. One basic distinction from most other disciplines is ethnographers’ learning of human-related activities ‘in action’, and not within controlled settings typical of lab experiments (Murchinson, 2010, p. 4). A ‘pure’ ethnographer could be viewed as a naturalist, who blends into the group researched by becoming an integral part of it: “the key idea is that the researcher should become immersed in the social situation being studied and should use that experience to try to learn how life is lived there” (Hine, 2009, p. 6). Ethnographers “value the idea of ‘walking a mile in the

shoes' of others and attempt to gain insight by being in the same social space as the subjects of their research" (Madden, 2010, p. 1).

As an Israeli emigrant in Australia, the author of this thesis practices immersion on a daily basis in the population researched. I was (and still am) personally involved, or active to some degree, in the major sources of this study, as a participant and/or observer at various levels.

O'Reilly calls for awareness when 'going native' of "the danger for ethnographers to become too involved in the community under study, thus losing objectivity and distance" (O'Reilly, 2009, p. 87). Her warning is relevant in my own personal case. Apart from being a member of the group studied, I have a higher than usual public profile within the Israeli population of Australia as a result of some of my activities (for example, being an editor of the Israeli newspaper in Australia, *ETON*)<sup>27</sup>.

### **The importance of historical and cultural contextualization**

"Ethnographers are dedicated writers of context" claims Goodall (Goodall, 2000, p. 143). Contextualization is the process of placing information and data into a larger perspective. It is one of the ethnographers' tools to "discover the interrelationships among the various systems and subsystems" (Fetterman, 1998, p. 19).

Scott-Jones refers in her definition to two aspects of contextualization. Cultural contextualization helps ethnographers "to realize all things cultural are relative and therefore one should not make judgments on the rationality or irrationality of others' cultural practices" (Scott-Jones, 2010, p. 18). Historical contextualization based, for example, on past studies, archival sources or oral history interviews, is useful in noticing, recording and explaining change and/or continuity over time (Murchinson, 2010, p. 163; Fitzgerald, 2006, pp. 10-12).

The study of Israeli emigration to Australia is situated contextually in a crossroad of three fields of enquiry: history of emigration from Israel, and history and social aspects of immigration to Australia.

The first aspect, of emigration from Israel, is facilitated in this thesis through a historical review of previous studies on Israelis abroad, and specifically in Australia. Presenting and analysing existing studies on Israeli emigrants worldwide is addressed at an early stage as one of the sources for initial conceptual and enquiry development. Past and current studies of Israeli emigrants relied mostly on qualitative data-

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<sup>27</sup> A detailed analysis of the possible implications of my immersion in the population researched is presented in the discussion on reflexivity later in this chapter.

collection methods, occasionally supported by quantitative data. Evidence was collected through interviews and/or in surveys or questionnaires. The sample collected for these projects could not be shown to be representative - a fact acknowledged by the initiators of the projects.<sup>28</sup> Official statistics collected by host-state authorities have been used in a supporting role.<sup>29</sup> A few researchers added fieldwork and/or participant observations to their methodology.<sup>30</sup>

In order to address the Australian history and social of context of the study the historical review also included a comparative component. Data about Israeli emigration to Australia over the years is presented in context with Canberra's immigration policy and general immigration flows to Australia over the same period. The aspect of interaction with the Australian society is touched upon directly in the chapter about shared immigration-related experience of Israelis in Australia<sup>31</sup>. Furthermore, there are also a few available studies on Israelis in Australia, which are very limited in number, scope and volume to start with. These studies, which deal with the social and historical of immigration to Australia, were incorporated into the thesis as resources.

### **The intention to present the 'native's point of view'**

Attaining 'the native's point of view' on the subject being studied and collecting the 'insiders' accounts' is regarded as an "explicit goal" of ethnography (O'Reilly, 2009, p. 110), and may be considered as "the heart of most ethnographic research" (Fetterman, 1998, pp. 20, 22). To that end, for example, ethnographers strive to separate 'etic', which is "an external, social scientific perspective on reality", from 'emic' - a description of reality from within a society. However, Murchinson warns us that this

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<sup>28</sup> See chapter 6 "Israeli Emigrants in the 1990s and 2000s: Figures and Estimates" of this thesis.

<sup>29</sup> Rutland and Gariano used Australian Census data (1991, 1996 and 2001) "to enhance the confidence in research findings" (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 2); Gold relied on "US-based tabulations of Israeli emigrants' characteristics as a general representation of the entire émigré populations' characteristics" (Gold, 2002, p. 24); Lev Ari notes: "This current study did not attain a random statistical sample because locating a framework for sampling was not possible. The findings of this research do not represent all Israelis in Europe, just those who took part in it [the study]. However, using comparisons of the findings in the study to previous researches on the migration of Israelis, we will be able to obtain new information on a population hardly studied in the past. The use of two research methods will enable further validation of the research findings" (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 36).

<sup>30</sup> Moshe Shoked capitalised solely on his own experiences as an Israeli migrant to New York as a source for his study (Shoked, 1991). Nathan Uriely also relied on fieldwork for his study in Chicago (Uriely, 1994). Rona Hart in London (Hart, 14-17 September 2005), Roni Floman in San Francisco (Floman, 2007) and Erez Cohen in Melbourne (Cohen, 2008) harnessed personal connections to access interviewees for their respective works. Lev Ari testifies that she personally handed out study questionnaires to Israelis in Paris and London (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 36).

<sup>31</sup> See chapter 08 "The migration perception and experience" of this thesis.

distinction<sup>32</sup> is not rigid or two-sided only and “has limitations and should not be over-drawn” (Murchinson, 2010, p. 86).

Geertz enumerated other ‘formulations’ used by ethnographers to draw a line between the native’s and others’ point of view. These include, along with ‘emic’ versus ‘epic’, also ‘inside’ versus ‘outside’; ‘first person’ versus ‘third person’ descriptions; ‘phenomenological’ versus ‘objectivist’; ‘cognitive’ versus ‘behavioural’ theories; and Geertz own personal choice of ‘experience near’ and ‘experience distance’, borrowed from psychology. At the same time, Geertz pointed to intrinsic dilemmas in the effort to ‘present the native’s point of view’ and called on ethnographers to humbly recognize that:

The ethnographer does not, and, in my opinion, largely cannot, perceive what his informants perceive. What he perceives - and that uncertainly enough - is what they perceive "with," or "by means of," or "through," or whatever word one may choose. In the country of the blind, who are not as unobservant as they appear, the one-eyed is not king but spectator.

(Geertz, 1974, pp. 28-30)

In order to actively obtain the ‘native’s point of view’ firsthand from Israelis in Australia, two forms of fieldwork were initiated: interviews and participant observation. Interviews conducted specifically for the study, along with casual non-formal conversations, enabled a personal and direct interaction with informants and their views and perceptions on events and actions being studied. Observation with minimum participation on the *Tapuz* online forum served a similar purpose. The forum can be considered as a type of closed environment where ‘the native’s point of view’ is often expressed freely, openly and willingly. This is due to a sense of security as result of the rapport between members of the forum (‘being amongst friends’) along with a sense that the language barrier (Hebrew in a forum for residents of an English-speaking country) enables further protection from non-Israeli ‘strangers’ accessing the texts posted to the forum. Other data not obtained through fieldwork, such as surveys and text resources, assisted in obtaining as far as possible a reliable account of ‘the native’s point of view’.

### **The stress of ethics, representation, ‘voice’, power and inclusion**

In today’s ethnography the focus has shifted to the ‘clients’ and their needs, once considered ‘subjects’ of the research (Wolcott, 2008, p. 22). This shift is reflected in the challenges mentioned by Scott-Jones, which were first addressed following the 1960s growing awareness of rights - civil, women’s, gay and

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<sup>32</sup> The distinction between ‘etic’ and ‘emic’ is borrowed from linguistics, derived from a difference between phonemics and phonetics.



lesbian and increased sensitivity to the influence of people with power and control (usually white males) over those less powerful (Jones, 2010, p. 31).

Ethical considerations and challenges are relevant for all sciences, particularly in research where humans are participants of a study, and such is the case with ethnography. Ethics raises difficult and complex issues that are beyond the scope of this discussion. The universal basic ethical obligation to safeguard the researchers and the research participants' legal and human rights and protect both of them from harm before, during and after the completion of the study is, of course, valid in an ethnographical context.

Other requirements include making sure the study has a beneficial value and is not for research purposes per se; and respect for the participants' values and decisions, which should be treated relatively equally. In the progress of an ethnographical study, harm can be inflicted intentionally or non-intentionally, directly or indirectly, by the researchers or by participants, or both. This harm could be psychological (such as negative feelings of stress or embarrassment), social (loss of social status) and, in extreme cases, physical. The risk of harm is usually higher following the publication of the study, when participants and researchers alike lose direct control of the interpretation or usage of the study's findings and conclusions. The understanding that a study's eventual outcome is publication also touches on the researchers' obligation to protect the privacy and anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the data (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001, pp. 339-341).

Representation in a social context has more than one meaning. It can stand for the researcher 'speaking on behalf the native'; a different meaning is 'taking the place of the native'; and another connotation relates to weighting the ability of symbols of language from the researcher's cultural world to accurately convey the meaning expressed by the native's actions or various communications. Representation is about translating and/or conveying the 'voice', or story of participants as individuals or as parts of a group. As noted earlier, starting from the 1960s ethnographers devoted special attention to making heard the voices of those with "hidden lives" (Jones, 2010, p. 32) - individuals who are not members of dominant elites, who do not hold power within the group (for example, minorities, underprivileged, poor). A similar effort was devoted to gaining access to 'un-included' who were not "integrated into the economic, social, and political framework of society" (Oxoby, 2009, p. 1134).

When discussing representation in ethnography in *Writing Culture* (1986), Clifford and Marcus were the first to raise the issue of 'crisis of representation'. They questioned ethnographers' authority to 'invent'

their version of the native's realities based on their own cultural understanding during the process of ethnography writing, while not according the native his right to 'self-define' his own realities. As a result of the 'crisis of representation' one is compelled to ask: "Who has the right to interpret another's reality, to define what should or should not be excluded and what meaning should or should not be attributed, and by what right do they do so?" (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001, pp. 344-345). Goodall concludes that "Nobody agrees on how to resolve this crisis ['of representation']. Probably nobody ever will" (Goodall, 2000, p. 13).

#### **4.3.1.1. Ethics**

As required by the university, this study received appropriate ethics committee approval.

An ethical dilemma had arisen during the observation on the online *Tapuz* forum. The observation itself was covert for a year. Before starting, ethical considerations relating to questions of informed consent and the issue of representation of online content had to be weighed. As a young discipline, online social research presents opportunities for reaching uncharted ground, but also raises possible ethical and methodological questions.<sup>33</sup> Some aspects of cyberspace lack conceptual clarity, the boundary between public and private being one of them. The definition of the public realm within the internet is flexible and contextually dependent. In some online environments, unlike other types of media, a continuum exists between 'published' and 'unpublished' rather than a clear distinction between these categories. The same question arises with regard to the level of privacy on the internet. Privacy protection offered by using pseudonyms – popular in internet communication – is less potent in social forums, which can lead to personal acquaintance in 'the real world' outside the net. A separate issue is the ability to accurately locate text posted online. Exact quotes from online content are nowadays relatively easily traceable, using search engines and other simple means, which can lead to de-identification of the person quoted.

McKee and Porter specify four variables in relation to online social platforms, including forums, which might endorse a need for informed consent and extra care when quoting online content in studies: public vs. private; topic sensitivity; degree of interaction by researcher; and vulnerability of the subject researched (McKee & Porter, 2009, pp. 88, 107). Judging these variables for *Tapuz* led to a conclusion that in this case there was no need for either informed consent or sharing with members the fact that

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<sup>33</sup> For a discussion about online social research methodology and ethics see: (Johns, et al., 2004); (McKee & Porter, 2009).

they were being observed. Moreover, technically there is no need for a confirmation procedure to view *Tapuz* content; and participation (adding content) only requires open-to-all registration. *Tapuz* is an open and public forum and is thus free to be used as a source without consent from its members.

Thus, initially no informed consent from *Tapuz* members during the observation period was sought. However, circumstances changed in July 2010. At that time there was the possibility of an imminent publication of an article based on the forum's content, written together with Dr. Erez Cohen (who is also a long-time participant of *Tapuz*). This development led to reconsideration of the ethical questions which were raised at the beginning of the observation. As a result of this reassessment, a decision was taken to notify *Tapuz* members about the observation and to apply a number of measures to extend the protection of privacy and anonymity of members when quoting forum content. Thus, five months before the observation period ended, it became overt.

A message (jointly with Dr. Cohen) was posted on *Tapuz* in July 2010. It indicated that the forum itself would be used as a source for the intended academic publications, including this study, and assured members of the forum that products and conclusions of these works would be shared with them. It also invited *Tapuz* members to add their remarks about, or post reviews of, this study and its purposes. The notice stated that ethically the privacy of participants in the *Tapuz* forum is adequately protected due to the fact that aliases ('nicks') are used and that the forum is in Hebrew, which makes it much less accessible to non-Hebrew readers. The notice specified additional measures that would be taken when quoting texts from the forum. These measures included: omitting personal details that might be used to identify the author of the message; translating texts into English (when applicable); undertaking that no exact date or direct link to the quote would be made public; and using false nicknames.<sup>34</sup> Instead, exact quotes, nicknames and direct links (web addresses) are kept within the study's secure database and are available if a need arises to use them. However, this last fact was not noted in the message posted.

Responses to the notice within the forum were supportive of the project and the steps taken to protect members' privacy. No one presented objections, but on one occasion a participant expressed some misgivings by openly stating his view of *Tapuz* as a type of private 'living room', hosting guests who might know each other outside the boundaries of the web (for example, following occasional forum members' meetings). Barnes explains such a reservation by noting that "although the Internet should be

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<sup>34</sup> The original text posted in Hebrew at the *Tapuz* forum (June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010) - <http://www.tapuz.co.il/Forums2008/ViewMsg.aspx?ForumId=697&MessageId=142206848> (accessed November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010)

considered a public space, people often use it as a private space” (Barnes, 2004, p. 203). After considering this remarks, and since this particular participant expressed no explicit wish not be included in the observation, it was decided there was no need to take any further action.

#### **4.3.1.2. Representation**

The ‘crisis of representation’<sup>35</sup> manifests itself in at least two aspects of this study.

The first - meaning transference across languages - is due to the fact that this study is based on a mixture of information in two languages. Qualitative sources are almost exclusively in Hebrew, while the quantitative pillar rests on data collected and later analysed and published in English alone. English is the language in which this study is written; thus, it targets English-reading audiences. Translation, the process of conveying meaning between languages, is in such a setting an unavoidable factor, influencing conceptualizations of realities of and by participants as well as within the final product - a text.

The second aspect relevant to the ‘crisis of representation’ is about authority. Being a ‘native’ (Israeli in Australia) and a researcher of fellow natives (other Israelis in Australia) might serve a claim for entitlement to represent the culture of the group studied (Israelis in Australia). This, as a result of fluently speaking the ‘native’s tongue’ (Hebrew) as a mother tongue and as a product of the native’s original (Israeli) culture.

However, it might be considered presumptuous to assume personal background alone is enough of a justification for authority to represent the Ausraeli culture in this study. Claiming this right suggests accepting an ‘essentialist’ paradigm that Israelis in Australia are a totally homogeneous group. ‘Essentialism’ in social sciences was one of the dominant perspectives in early ethnographies. Generally, essentialism is “a belief in the real, true essence of things, the invariable and fixed properties which define the ‘whatness’ of a given entity [...] essentialism is typically defined in opposition to difference” (Fuss, 1989, pp. xi-xii). It was apparent in the tendency of researchers to assume unchanged, holistic and monolithic characteristics of the group they sought to describe. Essentialism was heavily criticized in the middle of the twentieth century and this led to it being rejected by social sciences in general and ethnography specifically. Instead, the complexity and dynamics of human life and the need for attentiveness to the differences between individual group members is now an accepted concept in ethnographic works (Murchinson, 2010, pp. 6-11).

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<sup>35</sup> The ‘crisis of representation’ is discussed earlier in this chapter, under “The stress of ethics, representation, ‘voice’, power and inclusion”.

Specifically for this study, it is assumed that the Israeli population of Australia is not unchanged, statistic or monolithic. It is versatile, multigenerational and multilayered; and its culture may be dynamic. Being an individual within the group does not automatically mean ‘essentially’ being a duplicate of all other members. Nor does it grant a birth-right or ability to ‘speak for it’ and to have a unique insight about ‘scientific truths’ on its culture. Instead, in ethnographies, “cultures are apprehended, theorized, studied, explained, storied, and otherwise rendered *symbolic* [sic] through language. They are constructed” (Goodall, 2000, p. 13).

#### **4.3.1.3. ‘Voice’**

It is unclear whether the ‘voice’ of some sectors within the Israeli population in Australia is heard in the study sources, at least with regard to their relative representation in the samples collected. For example, in the *Gen08* survey, approximately one tenth of the Israel-born respondents defined themselves as orthodox of different types. A smaller percentage (31 out of 357, 8.6 per cent) indicated they attend a synagogue at least once a week. For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that the sample of Israel-born participants in the *Gen08* survey generally reflects the ratios with regard to religiosity within the Israeli population in Australia<sup>36</sup>. This assumption is based on the reasoning that religiously-affiliated Jews constitute a minority among Israeli emigrants, due to ideological and religious connections to the land of Israel, which prevents the large majority of them from emigrating. A small number of religious Israelis were interviewed for this study - two men and a woman (3 out of 17). However, there is no empirically-tested method to examine whether the proportions between the different religious perceptions among Israelis in Australia are reflected in other sources of this study.

#### **4.3.1.4. Power and inclusion**

Lastly, Israelis who are not included – as matter of choice or as a result of power plays – within the main body of the Israeli population of Australia remain outside the scope of this study. They could be Israelis who do not associate or socialize with other Israelis in Australia. Israeli participants in the *Gen08* survey were recruited using Jewish community databases and Israeli social networks – both require some level of social interaction with either Jews or Israelis. The disengaged Israelis are unlikely to contribute to the content of *Eton*, which is a community newspaper. Young Israelis, under the age of 30, were unrepresented in the study’s interview data (but were better represented in the survey’s data). This is because of their tendency to be less engaged with the Israeli population or Jewish institutes which made

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<sup>36</sup> For a detailed discussion about the religious composition of the Israeli population in Australia see subchapter 12.3 “Religious identification12.3” in this thesis.

approaching them a more difficult. Social platforms used by Israelis in Australia are, by definition, a venue for group interaction.

### **The importance of reflexivity and an awareness of subjectivity**

These last two points are interconnected. As a result of the immersion in the group being studied, ethnography is a total process where researchers “are both observers and participants in an open experimental field” (Madden, 2010, p. 17), acting at the same time as insiders and outsiders of the group. Since the ethnographer is simultaneously both the researcher and part of the group being researched, he/she needs to understand and be aware of the way the ‘self’ is part of every stage of the study process. This is why ethnographers attach great importance to reflexivity. This term relates to the interactions of varying natures which occur between researchers and their subjects for study, the issues in question and their potential readership. Awareness of this set of interactions is pivotal as a tool for thinking critically about one’s own subjective perceptions in general, about the context of reading, comprehending, writing and conducting of social science research; and simply “acknowledging that we are part of the world we study” (O'Reilly, 2009, p. 189).

Goodall defines reflexivity as “the process of personally and academically reflecting on lived experiences in ways that reveal the deep connections between the writer and her or his subject”. He refers to ‘subjective positions’ which are “life history and personal experiences that also affect our research”, and calls on ethnographers to be aware of “who are you?” and “where do you come from?”. Goodall clarifies that “we approach our interpretations of context from ‘fixed positionings’” that define us, such as age, gender, race, nationality and so on. He claims that ethnographers should examine their own life, actions and the data gathered on the participants, as ‘historical artefacts’ in order to understand the place of each of them in shaping the perspective on others and others’ ‘historical consciousness’ (Goodall, 2000, pp. 133, 137, 142-143).

In her outlook on ‘new ethnography’ and its future, Lather explains that “ethnography is under duress from a range of critiques, marked and motored (and mired, some would add), by a ‘reflexive’ turn” (Lather, 2008, p. 477). However, reflexivity remains a popular, vibrant and practical tool in social sciences.

In this ethnographical study I am a ‘minority researcher’ – the researcher and a member of the minority group studied. There is an ongoing debate about the possible benefits and problems of being a minority

researcher<sup>37</sup>. Zinn examined this question with regard to studies on ethnic, national and racial groups done by minority researchers. She pointed to possible advantages of being a minority researcher, such as potentially increased skills for gaining access to the group and building trust and rapport. On the other hand, a minority researcher might come across difficulties that could hinder the integrity of the data collected, such as “meeting obligations of informants” based on the “expectation that minorities will stick together”. Moreover, ‘subjectivity’ by a minority might lead to “bias in data gathering and interpretation”. Despite these possible challenges, Zinn believes that minority researchers are able to “pose different questions and perhaps discover different answers”. She acknowledges that “insiders in the minority world will undoubtedly influence their research”; however she concludes that this is “often for the better” because minority researchers have additional “insight into the nuances of behaviour” of the minority group (Zinn, 1979, pp. 212-213, 216).

Being a minority researcher in this study also touches deeply on the need for reflexivity. Madden suggests a division of reflexivity in social sciences into four types. The first is the ‘basic’ or ‘null’ form, described as a subjective personal quest and self-critique on the ethnographer’s interaction with his study and research subjects. The second is ‘sociological’, which relates to the researcher’s pledge to remain objective and non-intrusive with regard to the group being studied, the methodology used and the outcomes of the project (Madden, 2010, pp. 21-22).

I shall start my own personal account with a mix of these two forms. Extrinsically there was the question of my relatively-known public profile amongst Israelis in Australia. Furthermore, I did (and still do) contribute to, or was involved in one way or another with, the data and information in the sources of this, my own study. Specifically, I: took part in the *Gen08* survey, both in enlisting Israelis to participate and as a respondent; occasionally contribute to the *Tapuz* online forum; serve as an editor and regular writer for *Eton* and its *Facebook* group; work as correspondent for a media outlet in Israel (*Ma’ariv*) and Australia (*Australian Jewish News*), where I occasionally publish stories, analysis and news items related to the Israelis in Australia and to Israel.

I chose three strategies to address the possible influence of my status and involvement in the Israeli community in Australia and the sources of this study. The first was to accept the presence of the ‘self’ in the study and to be aware, as much as possible, of its implications on analysis and writing. I will give just two examples of self-questioning arising from such awareness. What were the reasons for choosing to

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<sup>37</sup> See for example (Maykovich, 1977, pp. 108-119).

study myself – an Israeli emigrant in Australia? And did I, as an interviewer, avoid questions or ignore answers that were not in line with preconceived notions on the subjects studied or that reflected negatively on my own experiences as an Israeli in Australia?

The second strategy addressed possible bias on data. In order to distance myself from potential personal direct influence on the data collected, no content or information authored by me was used as data in this study. The only exception was my participation in the *Gen08* survey. This contribution was completed in late 2008, many months before this current project was initiated officially in May 2009, or had even been thought of. In any case, possible influence on the *Gen08* data is negligible, since it constitutes only 0.28 per cent (1 out of 357) of the answers of Israel-born participants.

The third strategy was to invest effort in creating public awareness of both the study and myself as a researcher. Going public was intended to ensure the target population was aware of the research, its framework and its integrity as imposed by ethical limitations; and to provoke responses, challenges and questions. Actions taken to achieve that end included publishing a story about the study in *Eton* and giving several presentations across Australia in conferences and to Israeli audiences.<sup>38</sup>

The two other forms of reflexivity Madden discusses - ‘Feminist’ and ‘anthropological’ - are closely related. Both focus on “the politics of ‘positionality’ ” which can be explained as the understanding of how we represent the ‘other’ and his/her position in our and his/her environment. The difference between the two is that ‘anthropological reflexivity’ celebrates diversity of complex representations, while ‘feminist reflexivity’ maintains that accepting ‘partial truths’ is a better representation of our surroundings (Madden, 2010, pp. 21-22).

These two types of reflexivity are more challenging in my case, since the representation of the ‘other’ researched in this project could easily be similar to the ‘self’. The main question arising in that context was whether my understanding of the ‘people behind the data’ – the interviewees, forum participants text authors - constantly positioned each of them in my own comprehension of the various ‘positionalities’ of being an Israeli in Australia. For example, I needed to look beyond external features of religiosity such as *Kippah* (yarmulke) which might automatically influence my own understanding of the ‘positionality’ of the person in various political or social spheres.

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<sup>38</sup> Lectures on the project in front of Israeli and Jewish audience were presented at *Limmud Oz* conferences (2009 and 2010), at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation (August 2010), and before members of the Israeli Centre (Hamerkaz Halsraeli) in Melbourne (July 2010), The Israeli Club (Moadon Israeli) in Sydney (September 2010) and the Tarbut Society in Adelaide (October 2010).



Today's ethnographers are faced with the challenge of understanding a complex world of globalization, where humans operate in technology-rich and information-laden environments. In such a setting, ethnography "becomes increasingly constructed as the exploration and description of the practices of locating, connecting, siting, and bounding through which culture is constituted" (Hine, 2009, p. 8). Following on Hine's remark, three characteristics of ethnographical practice should be noted, which have become commonplace in contemporary ethnography: the introduction of the world-wide-web as a vibrant research field; 'going multi-sited'; and a tendency to combine data types and analysis methods.

#### **4.4. New fields - The Internet**

During the historical development of social sciences, the defining boundaries of what constitutes a 'research field' have become more flexible and open. In current ethnography the field "is not simply a geographic place waiting to be entered, but rather a conceptual space whose boundaries are constantly negotiated and constructed by the ethnographer and members" (Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 3).

Recently, internet technology has been widely recognized by social scientists, ethnographers included, as a relevant discipline (Denzin, 2004, p. 1), as well as a research tool which is "one of the most powerful resources available to ethnographers" (Fetterman, 1998, p. 72). It is also a field site, a place where "culturally interesting and sociologically relevant things were happening" (Hine, 2009, p. 9).

Current ethnography projects focusing on the internet as a research field for fieldwork in immigration and diaspora studies surfaced following the emergence of the 'digital diaspora', which can be defined as:

an immigrant group or descendant of an immigrant population that uses IT connectivity to participate in virtual networks of contacts for a variety of political, economic, social, religious, and communicational purposes that, for the most part, may concern either the homeland, the host land, or both, including trajectory abroad.

(Laguerre, 2010, p. 50)

Brinkerhoff expands that, stating:

The Internet's interactive components become an efficient, easy-access tool for Diaspora storytelling and sharing, enabling members to make sense of their experiences and feelings in the encounter between cultures and identities.

(Brinkerhoff, 2009, p. 85)

Digital diasporas explain the rationale for Srinivasan calling on ethnographers to acknowledge the importance of social networks (in and outside the internet); and to examine virtual worlds, which are digital spaces that constitute a new “type of locality that is not physical but still plays a role in forming identity” (Srinivasan, 2009, pp. 168-169).

Diaspora communities’ engagement in online social interaction has already begun to be noticed by scholars.<sup>39</sup> Israelis abroad also initiate and participate in specially-designated websites, forums and blogs across the globe, including Australia.<sup>40</sup> So far, however, the content of online social interaction by Israeli emigrants has gone almost unnoticed by academics. Internet usage in studies of Israeli emigrants has been limited to the application of the web as a tool to access subjects,<sup>41</sup> not as a stand-alone field for social research. In this study, digital diaspora-related fieldwork is used by means of the observation of the online forum of Israelis in Australia (*Tapuz*).<sup>42</sup>

#### 4.5. Multi-sited

As was reviewed earlier, over time and following technological developments, the understanding of ‘place’ in ethnography had gone through an evolution and it is no longer limited to a geographical location dramatically different from one’s own (Wolcott, 2008, pp. 21-22). As part of this process, contemporary ethnography can be practiced by initiating ‘multi-sided’ fieldwork, which is focused on the same subject but in several locations. The emphasis in multi-sited ethnography is on the links and connections between sites and what ties them together (Robben, 2007, p. 331).

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<sup>39</sup> See for example: (Ong, 2007); (Brinkerhoff, 2009); Andoni Alonso and Pedro J. Oiarzabel (eds.), *Diasporas in the new media age* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2010); Ramesh Sirinivasan and Ajit Pyati, “Diasporic information environments: Reframing immigrant-focused information research”, *Journal of the American Society of Information Science and Technology*, Vol. 58, no. 12, pp. 1734-1744.

<sup>40</sup> Examples of internet based forums and websites of Israelis abroad: *Tapuz* forum for Israelis abroad (<http://www.tapuz.co.il/tapuzforum/main/forumpage.asp?id=25>); *Ynet* forum for Israelis abroad <http://www.ynet.co.il/home/1,7340,L-1302,00.html>; <http://www.israelim.com/index.htm>; <http://www.israelim.com/index.htm> ; ישראליים.קום (Israelis.com - <http://www.israelim.com/index.htm>).

<sup>41</sup> Rutland and Gariano set up a dedicated web site for their web-based survey and used email lists to approach their subjects, some of whom were Israelis (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, pp. 1, 5). Lev Ari distributed study questionnaires using the internet, as well as through the on-line magazine (also has a printed form) for Israelis in the UK “Alondon” (<http://www.alondon.net/>). To induce participation of Israelis in the Gen08 Jewish population survey in Australia and New Zealand (conducted September 2008 to April 2009), I utilised the Internet using: personal, community and institutional (for instance “The Israeli Centre” - *Hamerkaz Haisraeli*) email lists; an advertisement in a site for Israelis in Australia “El Australia” (<http://www.australia-il.com/>); and messages in two on-line forums of Israelis in Australia and New Zealand - “Tapuz” (<http://www.tapuz.co.il/Forums2008/ForumPage.aspx?ForumId=697>) and “Ynet” (<http://www.ynet.co.il/home/0,7340,L-1303-10164,00.html>).

<sup>42</sup> More on this forum and the research methodology used on it for this study is in chapter 5 “Methodology - Research strategy and sources” of this thesis.

Marcus identified seven modes of multi-sited ethnographies. The first, 'follow the people', is when the researcher follows the movements between geographic locations of the person/group being researched. Similarly, multi-sited ethnography can track objects or 'things' and their physical movement (commodities exported from one country to another); ideas and metaphors (borrowing a metaphor from one scientific discipline to another); 'plot, story or allegory' (myths created in one culture and spread to other cultures); 'life or biography' (tracing life histories in a social and geographical context) and 'conflicts' (the wanderings of refugees). The last is 'the strategically situated (single-site) ethnography', where "ethnography attempts to understand something broadly about the system in ethnographic terms as much as it does its local subjects. It is only local circumstantially" (for example, conversations between children of workers about their parents' work) (Marcus, 1995, pp. 106-113).

The emergence of the transnationalist approach for understanding immigration and diasporas<sup>43</sup> is compatible with multi-sited ethnography. Transnationalism looks at immigration "as a process integrating various social structures – social, familial and cultural – in the origin countries and the host societies" (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 13). Transnationalism facilitates multi-sited ethnography by laying a theoretical framework for conducting research of diasporants in more than one site. Ethnographers can (in Marcus's terms) 'follow the people', in both the origin and host countries; compare settlements of immigrants in the host country alone, or in several countries (Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 3). Srinivasan stresses that while locally-focused ethnography is still fundamentally valid, it should nowadays be balanced by research which incorporates transnationalism (Srinivasan, 2009, pp. 167-168); and Glick Shiller concludes that "ethnography is, I argue, the most appropriate methodology for the study of transnational migration" (Glick Shiller, 2007, p. 119).

This current study is actively multi-sited in two separate dimensions. The first is geographic. The information collected in surveys and interviews, or by observation on the *Tapuz* online forum, is about and from Israelis living in different locations across the Australian continent (mainly Melbourne, Sydney, Byron Shire, Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane). The focus of the study is not to make comparisons between Israeli settlements in Australia, as the information from all locations is integrated into one database. At the same time, some insights into the differences between localities of Israeli emigrants in Australia did arise and are presented in the study.

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<sup>43</sup> For a discussion about transnationalism - see subchapter 3.3 "The Transnationalist Approach" of this thesis.

The second dimension draws on the distinction between the virtual environment of the internet and the physical 'real' world. This vague and questionably arbitrary division is yet another area of conceptual ambiguity arising following the emergence of cyberspace. Yet, as noted earlier in this chapter, 'digital diasporas' constitute new and rich fields for ethnographical inquiry. Furthermore, diasporants' online activity can be viewed as a 'research site', available for study as part of multi-sited ethnographical projects.

The multi-sited framing of the field need not be exclusively geographic. Migrants and expatriates around the world have established Internet sites containing membership directories, chat rooms, political commentaries, advertisements for goods and services, and news about life in different nodes of the members' network – all of which are grist for the virtual ethnographer's mill.

(Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 4 n2)

In this current study of Israelis in Australia, multi-sited ethnography is practiced when online diaspora social activity or views collected from the *Tapuz* online forum are compared, integrated or contrasted with parallel information collected from all other 'real world' sources.

## 5. Methodology - Research strategy and sources

### 5.1. Aims and areas of enquiry

This project is devoted to the investigation of Ausraelis, the Israeli diaspora in Australia. In this context, it aims initially at sketching a demographic panorama of the Israeli population of Australia. The main body of the thesis is focused on striving to decipher the migrants' ethnic and national identity, and the nature of the social interaction they practice in Australia.

Several components of Israeli identity in Australia are mapped in the thesis. The components were chosen based on the focuses of past studies on Israeli emigrants' identity in the United States and Europe; as well as on issues which kept reappearing during the analysis of the thesis' sources and the daily interaction of the author with Israelis in Australia. Although in many cases these elements are connected, mixed and influence one another, the first task is to understand each one separately.

The first component examined was shared experiences and views as emigrants. Specifically, reasons and circumstances surrounding their emigration; reactions in Israel to their decision to leave; and initial interactions with the host Australian society and with Israelis in Australia.

The second component is the wider relations with other Israelis in Australia, their peer national group members. Here the question arises whether an Israeli community in Australia exists and if it does, what are its characteristics. Answering this question calls for a discussion on the definitions, boundaries and meaning of the term community in general, and specifically in a Israeli diasporic context. It should be noted, that two of the sources used – the Israeli newspaper in Australia, *Eton*, and the online forum, *Tapuz* - may arguably be considered as community institutes, which pertain to one of this study's research questions, with regard to the existence of an Israeli community in Australia.

Another subject that investigated in the thesis in the same context is whether camaraderie and friendship evolve between Israelis merely on the basis of their shared national identity, their 'Israeliness'? And if so, why and what is the nature and features of relationships built on this foundation?

The third component involves the interactions with the local Jewish community. In particular, uncovering the conceptions and images of Israelis in Australia about Australian Jews and the Jewish community institutes. Also, how do Israelis believe they are being perceived by Australian Jews?

The fourth building block is religion. Perceptions of Israelis in Australia on Judaism as a faith, at a ritualistic level (celebrating holidays) and in an institutionalised form are addressed in the thesis.

The fifth factor explored is the connectivity with the homeland, the State of Israel. Emotionally, how do Israelis in Australia describe their ties to their homeland? How do they relate to Zionism, particularly in light of their decision to emigrate? How do they react to criticism on Israel? And what is their prognosis of Israel's future?

The sixth and final element includes Israelis in Australia's views on the identity of their children. Specifically, what is the weight (or lack thereof) attached to Judaism, intermarriage with non-Jews and to the preservation of the Israeli national language of Hebrew at a mother tongue level as identity components of Israeli children in Australia.

## **5.2. Research design and strategy**

Recently, awareness of the growing number of Israelis within the Jewish community led to the emergence of new in-depth data and resources on this group which is now available and accessible. These resources include (among others) Israeli participation in a large scale Australian Jewish community survey; an independent Israeli media in Hebrew in Australia; and online social forums for Israelis in Australia.

These new 'raw' materials presented a methodological challenge as a result of them being of different types - qualitative and quantitative data. Accordingly, the methodology adopted for the study had to incorporate a mix of analysis methods, each one compatible to a different type of source. Pre-existing, updated, quantitative sources on Israelis had to be woven together with qualitative sources, either un-researched or newly acquired for the study. The volume of this recently available data reduced, but has not made redundant, the need for independently gathering additional data from relevant sources.

Consequently, a research strategy was formulated so quantitative data analysis facilitated qualitative research, and vice versa. Subject-based analysis of information collected in surveys and census data served for the creation of assumptions and hypothesis and introduced questions for data collection and analysis on the qualitative sources. Similarly, categorisation of qualitative sources raised in some cases a need to revisit quantitative data.

This model of combining qualitative and quantitative methods can be identified as "track over track analysis". In practice, this means initiating a separate analysis of each track (qualitative and quantitative)

and then “data in one track can be transformed and then crossed over to the other track for comparison and further analysis” (Greene, et al., 2005, p. 276). In this study, data crossing also enables the generation of typology and categories, as a framework for analysis of both tracks. This model also enables the bridging of a gulf between macro and micro levels and reduces the chance of over-generalisation; quantitative sources can define the structural feature of the social interaction researched, while qualitative data is more attuned to shedding light on behavioural and personal aspects.

### **5.3. Primary sources**

With regard to sources, this project rests on three main pillars. The first is a quantitative pillar, which constitutes the Gen08 survey as its foundation, supported by the 2006 Australian census data and the much smaller *Survey of the Jews in the Diaspora* conducted by Rutland and Gariano (2005). Since the study’s focus is social rather than statistical, as a general rule only basic descriptive statistical tests (mostly percentile, distribution and average) are applied to these sources, both to verify their validity and for the purpose of analysis. Analysis such as counting response frequencies and using cross-tabulation was performed using SPSS predictive analytics software (version 19), either on the whole survey’s database or separately on the Israel-born part of it. In addition, Excel 2010 was used for further analysis and the production and design of graphs, figures and tables.

As for the sample itself in both cases (all respondents and Israel-born only) a weight function was applied. The aim of this mathematical tool is to more accurately represent the influence of certain groups within the sample when compared to the survey’s target population. Thus, for Gen08 ‘weighting’ would mean recalculating the response rates of each group in order to ‘correct’ the results to more accurately reflect the total Jewish population. The weight applied (“weight 3 - inflating to national sample total”) was created by the main researchers of the Gen08 survey and was used throughout the analysis they conducted utilizing three key variables: gender, age and educational attainment (Markus, et al., 2009, p. 40). Throughout the thesis, unless specifically noted that the data was ‘unweighted’, the analysis was on a weighted sample. This means that the 356 Israel-born respondents actually represented 390 respondents within the survey’s sample.

The issue of the ‘self-reporting’ of information is relevant for the Gen08 survey as well as all surveys in general. Since respondents ‘self-report’ information about themselves in a survey, the result might be (at least in some cases) data which is “subjective products of mental constructive processes and

therefore subject to various biases and errors” (Watkins, 2010, p. 698). For data in the form of numbers, Gen08 avoids this possible impediment by suggesting ranges in its responses (once a week, once a month, a few times a year). All other information may also be subject to bias due to other reasons, such as “cultural differences in the construction of meaning; social comparison processes in judgements about values [...] and deprivation-based preferences” (Watkins, 2010, p. 698).

Bias in self-reported data collected through interviews, questionnaires or surveys was recorded in health studies, specifically in areas where social norms may inflict shame or guilt on ‘wrong answers’. For example, bias was noted in self-reporting of weight and height, with respondents reporting a lower figure than their measured one (Hayes, et al., 2011). One of the main reasons for such misrepresentation is the impact of cultural pressures as a result of social norms: people reported ‘an ideal weigh’ according to what they understood was society’s expectations (Gil & Mora, 2011; Brestoff, et al., 2011). For the Gen08, diasporic Jewish norms, for example, may include a notion that a Jew is expected to feel closely affiliated with Israel. Such a perception may have affected the responses of Gen08 participants when asked about their emotional connectedness to Israel.

It is sensible to acknowledge that such potential problems exist and that they might affect the reliability of the data collected in a survey. At the same time, awareness of the possible implications of self-reporting, along with a relatively large sample, critically analysing the responses, using comparisons and relaying on a variety of sources to support or contradict the information collected in a survey are methodologically sound techniques applied in this thesis for minimising potential bias on the data due to self-reporting.

The second source pillar of this thesis is fieldwork conducted with qualitative sources. It includes participant observation of the online forum of Israelis in Australia (*Tapuz*) and face-to-face interviews with Israelis across Australia. Acknowledging that the internet is a medium and, at the same time, a communications tool, collecting both online and offline data was aimed at reaching out to informants with and without online presence in the specific forum studied. Furthermore, online behaviour and expression is contextual, and can be either similar to or different from “real life” offline (Orgad, 2009, p. 37). Although the internet as an artefact is not the focus of this study, tracing and analysing differences in data collected from these different environments could enhance the understanding of the subjects researched.



The third source pillar of this thesis is qualitative and is constituted from a combination of text-based documents. It is also constructed from two components. The first is a journalistic source: articles, stories and essays published in the Israeli newspaper in Australia, *Eton*. The second component includes personal accounts of Israelis residing in or visiting Australia; in either oral history format or as literature (autobiographies, essays, online blogs and novels). As part of this study research strategy, these sources play a supporting role and were addressed to deepen, enhance and illustrate insights and concepts identified in the analysis of the other two pillars.

The analytical process on both the qualitative and text-based pillars was practiced using coding.

Coding is a euphemism for the sorting and labelling which is part of the process of analysis. It involves close exploration of collected data and assigning it codes, which may be names, categories, concepts, theoretical ideas and classes. It also involves writing memos or thoughts and ideas, associated with given codes, elaborating and linking codes, and thinking about what they mean in the context of the broader argument or story. It is the first step in analysis.

(O'Reilly, 2009, p. 34)

During the categorising process “the codes become the means by which you can sort through the ethnographic record in a systematic fashion in working toward developing both an ethnographic narrative and an analytical framework” (Murchinson, 2010, p. 179).

In this study, a Microsoft Excel software file was used as a platform for classifying and coding the information and data collected into a set of subjects and concepts relevant to the study's questions and areas of enquiry.

#### **5.4. Data collection**

Wolcott introduces a typology of ethnographic fieldwork data collection methods by dividing them into 'experiencing', 'enquiring' and 'examining'. 'Experiencing' is defined as information obtained passively first-hand through our senses when blending with the group researched. Covert participant observation fits into this category. When 'Enquiring', an ethnographer will play an active role in attaining input of data from his subjects of research, for example, using interviews or overt and active observant participation. The third category, 'examining' refers to the analysis of documented information produced by others (Wolcott, 2008, pp. 48-50).

In this study, each category as presented by Wolcott is of different volume. 'Examining' is the biggest in quantity when compared to the other categories, with an investigation of an abundant of accounts and records created by others (statistics, surveys, ethnic press and literature). The two other components have smaller volumes: 'Enquiring' - the interviews initiated for the study, and 'experiencing' - the *Tapuz* online social forum participant observation and personal experiences gained by the author of this study. However, size in this case is not necessarily the same as importance: the contribution of each source to the body of knowledge of the study varies in regard to the context and the subject queried.

Lastly, the category "Israel-born", used in the quantitative sources of the thesis, is not a synonym for Israelis in general. On the one hand, many who lived in Israel in the past and define themselves as Israelis were not born in Israel. For example, former immigrants to Israel and children of Israeli emigrants. On the other hand, people born in Israel, who immigrated at an early age with their parents to other countries, may not define themselves as Israelis.

## **5.5. The quantitative pillar**

### **Gen08 Survey**

356 Israel-born respondents participated in the "GEN08 2008-2009 Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Survey".<sup>44</sup> During the period in which the survey was conducted specific effort was invested in increasing the participation of Israelis in it. The author of this study was employed by the survey team for that purpose. In order to enhance awareness of the survey, and to encourage participation in it among the Israeli population in Australia, stories and advertisements about it were published in the Israeli newspaper of Australia, *Eton*, and on the website <http://www.australia-il.com>.<sup>45</sup> Notices in Hebrew about the survey were posted in the *Tapuz* online forum<sup>46</sup> and in the *Ynet* forum "Community of Israelis abroad – in New Zealand and Australia". Israeli and Jewish organisations around Australia<sup>47</sup> circulated the notice among their members. Personal networks were also used to achieve this goal.

In addition to Israel-born participants in the survey, 119 other respondents indicated that they had lived in Israel for at a year, 81 of them were residents of Israel for more than 4 years. High percentages in

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<sup>44</sup> For details on the survey see the subchapter 7.1 "Available Studies about Israelis in Australia" of this thesis.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, <http://www.australia-il.com/articles-1458.htm> (Accessed 26 October 2010)

<sup>46</sup> On the *Tapuz* online forum for Israelis in Australia and New Zealand - see in details later in this chapter.

<sup>47</sup> Managers and moderators of organisations and networks that helped circulate the notice about the Gen08 survey among Israelis in Australia included: The Israeli Centre (HaMerkaz Haisraeli) in Melbourne; Kishkashta and the Israeli club (Moadon Israeli) in Sydney; State Zionist Councils of Victoria and New South Wales; The Tarbut Society in Adelaide and Rami Koren's network of Israelis in Perth.

their identification with several characteristics relating to possible self-identification as Israelis, or “Israeliness”, suggest that some or all of the members of this group could constitute a sub-category of foreign-born Israelis.<sup>48</sup> These features include: duration of residence in Israel and Hebrew proficiency and usage as a social tool (spoken at home or with friends) (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

Foreign-born Israeli respondents to the Gen08 survey - characteristics suggesting “Israeliness” (Numbers and percentages of responses)

Category	Total	Per cent
<b>Length of residence in Israel</b>		
0-4	38	31.9
4-19 years	62	52.1
20+ years	19	16.0
<b>Hebrew</b>		
<b>Proficiency</b>		
Reading - well or very well	84	70.6
Speaking - well or very well	92	77.3
Understanding - well or very well	98	82.4
<b>Social usage</b>		
At home	61	51.3
With most friends	59	49.7
<b>N = 119</b>		

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data.

This group of Gen08 respondents are possibly “foreign-born Israelis”. Despite the indications noted above for their ‘Israeliness’ and the assumption that they are probably holders of Israeli passports (as a result of Israel’s Law of Return<sup>49</sup>), analysis of data of this group would not be conducted in this study. There are several reasons for this decision to exclude from the current study. The first is that they were not asked “Do you define yourself as an Israeli?” Positive answers to such a question would have made their identification as Israelis more feasible. Furthermore, evidence collected for this study suggests that for at least some of these “foreign-born Israelis” do not see themselves as such<sup>50</sup>. The second reason

<sup>48</sup> For an explanation on “foreign-born” Israelis see chapter 6 “Israeli Emigrants in the 1990s and 2000s: Figures and Estimates” of this thesis.

<sup>49</sup> The Law of Return (1950) automatically grants Israeli citizenship, including an Israeli passport, to Jews who migrate to Israel (Ernst, 2010, pp. 564-603).

<sup>50</sup> Most notable in that context was the evidence of Alex, a foreign-born Israeli, who claims that many of his friends, foreign-born Israelis themselves, do not recognise themselves as such (Alex, 2011).

relates to the relatively small size of the group (119) which casts considerable doubt on the ability to reach valid conclusion based on such a small sample.

## 2006 Census

Since 1961 the Australian Bureau of Statistics has been conducting a “Census for Population and Housing” every five years<sup>51</sup>. The purpose of the census is “to accurately measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census Night, and the dwellings in which they live [...] The Census also provides the characteristics of the Australian population and its housing within small geographic areas and for small population groups” (Trewin, 2006, p. 1).

This study analyses the 2006 census, whose data was available during the writing of the thesis<sup>52</sup>. It was held in August 2006 and 7,888 Israel-born residents of Australia were counted. Approximately one tenth of them (853, 10.9 per cent) noted Arabic as the language spoken at home, of whom only 6 were Jewish. At the same time, one in every five (1,632, 20.9 per cent) Israel-born residents in Australia indicated a religion other than Jewish in the census, mainly Christianity (the majority of whom are Catholic), some of them Arab speakers. For reasons outlined previously in this work,<sup>53</sup> specifically that they present characteristics similar to Jewish emigrants, non-Jewish Israel-born Australian residents are included in the analysis of the 2006 census data on Israelis. Other members of the non-Jewish Israelis might be children of non-Jewish FSU immigrants, who arrived in Israel during the wave of FSU immigration in 1990s, and immigrated afterwards to Australia.<sup>54</sup>

Not counted in the census are “hidden” Israelis. These are Israelis who reside in Australia and wish to remain unnoticed by the authorities, such as those who overstay their tourist visas and whose status is therefore illegal. It is assumed that this phenomenon is less common nowadays than in the past and the current number of illegal immigrants is too insignificant to influence the statistics<sup>55</sup>. Also not counted in

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<sup>51</sup> Before that censuses were run sporadically in 1901, 1911, 1921, 1933, 1947, and 1954.

<sup>52</sup> In new census was held in August 2011 but only partial data collected in it was released for public use during the writing of this thesis.

<sup>53</sup> See chapter 6 “Israeli Emigrants in the 1990s and 2000s: Figures and Estimates” of this thesis.

<sup>54</sup> Out of the approximately 1 million FSU immigrants to Israel in the 1990s, a third were not Jews according to religious Jewish law (Halacha) but identified themselves as Jews; only about 25,000 registered themselves as Christians in Israel’s population register. Source: (Ilany, 2006, p. 60).

<sup>55</sup> According to Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates for 30 June 2009, 190 Israeli citizens overstay their visa periods in Australia. Another indicator for the decline in the number of illegal emigrants to Australia from Israel is the Non-Return Rate (NRR). NRR is defined as “is the number of visitors who arrived in Australia and who did not depart when their initial visa was valid. The rate is calculated as a percentage of all visitor arrivals whose visas ceased in that period”. Israel’s NRR declined dramatically from 2007 to 2009 - from 7.21 to 1.77 (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010, pp. 54-55, 171).

censuses are foreign diplomats; for Israel this means a few dozen officials at the Israeli embassy in Canberra; and an unknown number of people who choose not to be included in the census.

### **External validity - Gen08 and the 2006 Census**

Several comparative tests were run between the data collected on Israel-born residents of Australia in the 2006 Australian Population Census and the Gen08 data collected from Israel-born participants, in order to determine the validity of the sample of Israelis collected in the Gen08 survey. The comparisons tested the demographic characteristics of the populations surveyed, with regard to age, gender, arrival year in Australia and place of residence (state) at the time of the survey/census (see Figure 5.1, Figure 5.2, Figure 5.3, Table 5.2 and Table 5.3). Some discrepancies in the representation of specific sectors were discovered. For example, a relatively minor difference discovered was with regards to gender - more women (52.8 per cent) participated in the Gen08 survey as opposed to the 2006 census which noted a larger male population (54.6 per cent) of Israeli-born (see Table 5.2). The categories 'females in the 30-39 year age group' and 'arrivals to Australia in the 1950s', both with representation in the Gen08 survey which was over 10 per cent higher than those recorded in the 2006 census. A similar difference (10 per cent) was noticeable with regards to representation of Victorian (higher than 2006 census) and New South Wales (lower than 2006 census) residents in the Gen08 survey.

The discrepancies detected can be attributed to the sample collection methods used in each of these projects, as well as to changes in the Israel-born population due to immigration and emigration, between the time of the census (2006) and the period of the survey (2008–2009). However, despite these isolated variations in specific groups and characteristics, there is a good correlation between the census and the survey.

Figure 5.1  
Israel-born in Australia: State of Residence - Gen08 and 2006 Census (Percentages)

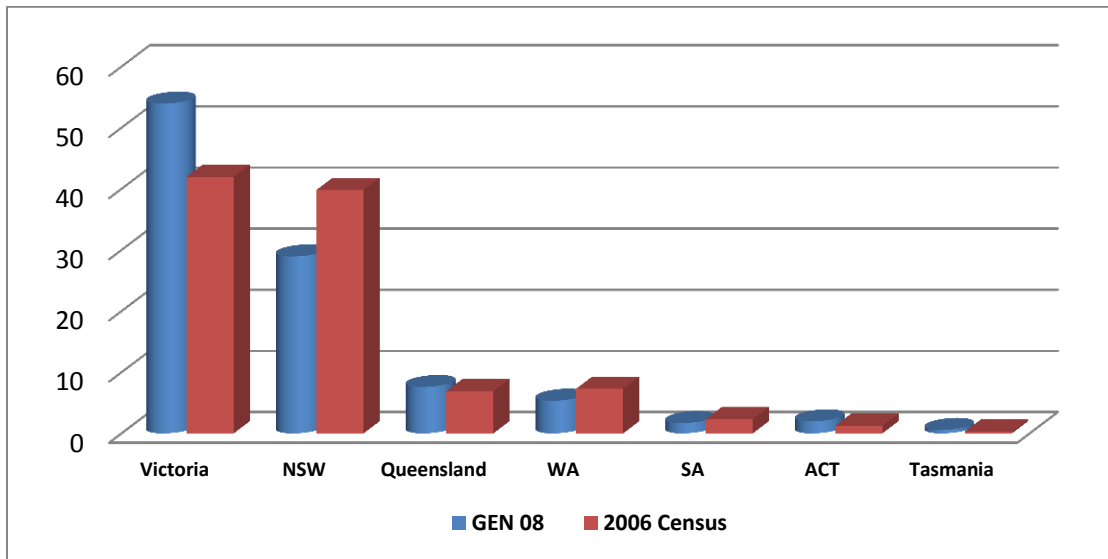


Table 5.2  
Israel-born in Australia: Gender - Gen08 and 2006 Census (Percentages)

Project	Male	Female
Gen08	47.19	52.81
2006 Census	54.64	45.36

Figure 5.2  
Israel-born in Australia: Male by Age Groups - Gen08 and 2006 Census (Percentages)

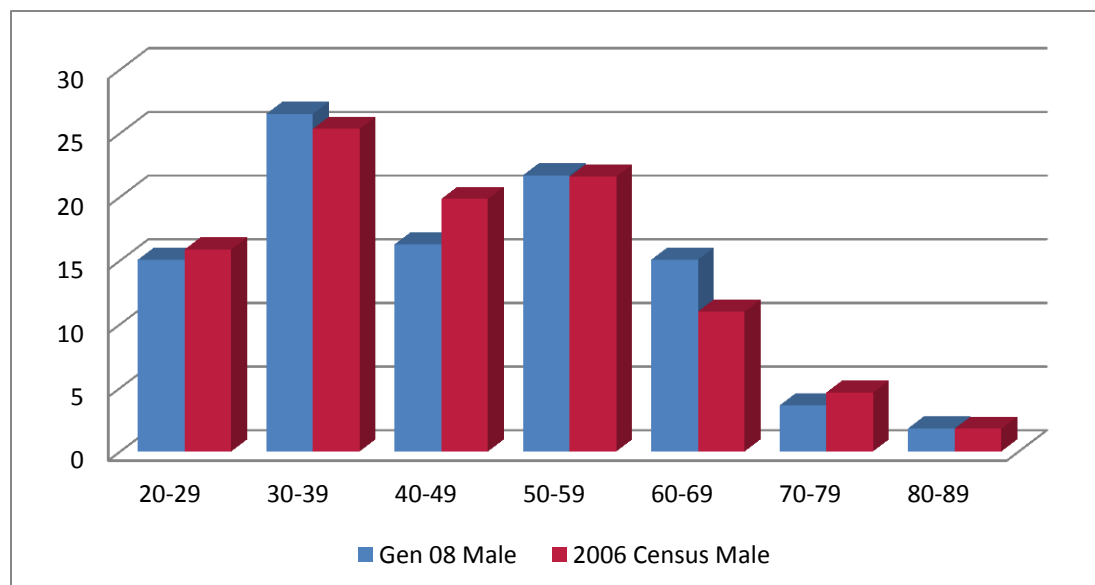


Figure 5.3  
Israel-born in Australia: Females by Age Groups - Gen08 and 2006 Census (Percentages)

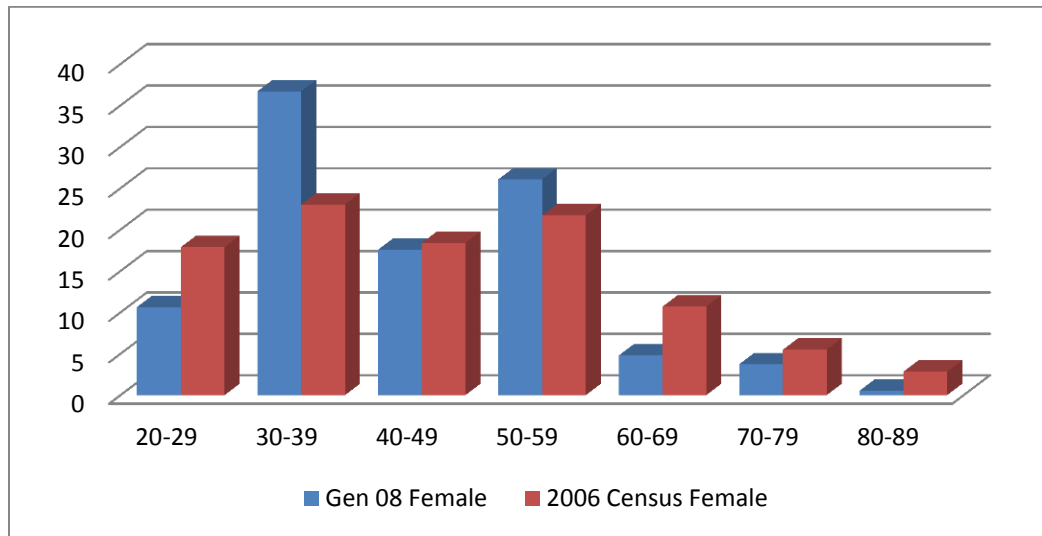


Table 5.3  
Israel-born in Australia: Arrival Year in Australia (Decade) - Gen08 and 2006 Census (Percentage points)

Decade	GEN08	2006 Census	Variation (Gen08 - 2006 Census)
1910-9	0.00	0.13	-0.13
1920-9	1.13	0.87	0.26
1930-9	0.28	0.36	-0.08
1940-9	1.41	1.38	0.03
1950-9	15.77	9.17	6.61
1960-9	6.76	9.15	-2.39
1970-9	8.17	12.54	-4.37
1980-9	18.03	20.56	-2.54
1990-9	14.93	17.97	-3.04
2000-9	33.52	27.87	5.65
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Sources for figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and tables 2.2 and 2.3:

Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data.

2006 Census of Population and Housing, CDATA online.

### **Rutland and Gariano, Survey of the Jews in the Diaspora: An Australian Perspective (2005)**

As part of their study of the Jewish community, conducted in 2004-2005, Rutland and Gariano initiated a survey among the various Australian-born and immigrant groups within the Australian Jewish population. Answers given by 602 respondents were analysed, including 77 Israel-born respondents.

The survey had three formats: an on-line version, available from early 2004 until March 2005, which served as the model for a paper and email version. Several parallel outreach efforts to access potential respondents were initiated. These included: internet promotion (JewishAustralia.com); sending notifications and copies of the survey by mail and email using community lists; personal meetings and group interviews; door-to-door and on-site marketing in meeting places (synagogues, social clubs, Jewish care, Jewish schools); telephone interviews; media advertisements (Jewish press in Melbourne, Sydney and Queensland, as well as Australian-Russian media), and assistance from community leaders. The authors estimate that 5000 Jews were approached, 2000 of them from the target audiences.

The survey was made up of 63 questions, with additional specific questions for each immigrant group, six of them for Israel-born only. It covered a wide range of aspects which included: basic personal information; immigration- and assimilation-related satisfaction rates; questions about national and Jewish identity, faith, education and practices; communal Jewry-life participation; connectivity to the state of Israel and views about its purpose and future; relations with origin country and reasons for immigration; and interaction and perceptions about general Australian society.

The methodology used for Rutland and Gariano survey is different in several aspects from the one which the Gen08 survey was based upon. Gen08 is based on a large number of respondents (5,840) and is very detailed, covering many subjects through hundreds of questions - as opposed to 602 respondents who answered only 63 questions in Rutland and Gariano's survey. In some questions (for instance, on the issue of reasons for immigrating) Gen08 allowed respondents to give more than one answer while *Survey of the Jews in the Diaspora* did not allow such an option.

The component dealing with Israelis in Rutland and Gariano's survey is problematic. The sample is relatively small (77 Israel-born respondents) which requires extra caution when interpreting it. Moreover, despite being born in Israel, the affiliation of these respondents to an Israeli identity is unclear. It is unknown at which age the respondents immigrated to Australia, or whether they grew up



outside Israel and are thus more likely to be less connected to an Israeli identity. In that regard, Yiddish language mastery by 21 of the respondents implies a childhood outside Israel.

Table 5.4

Rutland and Gariano, *Survey of the Jews in the Diaspora: An Australian Perspective* (2005) - profile of Israel-born participants

Category	Respondents	Percentage of total respondents
<b>Participants</b>	<b>77</b>	
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	41	53 %
Female	36	47 %
<b>Arrival year in Australia</b>		
Before 1987		40%
1991-2000		29%
<b>Non-English Languages</b>		
Hebrew	75	97%
Yiddish	21	27%
Russian	5	6%
Ladino	3	4%
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>38</b>	
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed/Self employed	50	65%
Unemployed	24	31%
Retired	3	4%
<b>Partner's religion</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>80%</b>
Jewish or convert to Judaism	55	71%
Non-Jewish	5	9%

Source:

*Survey of Jews in the Diaspora*

The validity of the sample vis-a-vis the features of the Israeli population at the time is also unclear. Israel-born immigrants who were residents of Australia for more than 10 years at the time of the survey seem to be over-represented. Of the 77 Israel-born surveyed, 69 per cent immigrated before the year 2000, which marks the beginning of a gradual increase in the number of Israelis arriving in Australia.<sup>56</sup> The median age of the participants was 38, which implies that the younger generation of Israeli immigrants, aged in their 20s and 30s, as well as the growing number of newcomers to Australia since 2000,<sup>57</sup> are under-represented in the sample. Examining the methods used for enlisting Israelis as survey

<sup>56</sup> See chapter 7 "Israeli Emigrants to Australia: Study and Demographic Characteristics" of this thesis.

<sup>57</sup> According to the 2001 Census, the number of Israel-born residents in Australia aged 20-39 had leaped by 710, the largest increase of all group ages in this population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

participants leads to the conclusion that this latest addition to the Israeli population of Australia was not accessible to the authors of the report (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, pp. 8, 22-23).

## **5.6. Fieldwork on qualitative sources**

### **Tapuz**

The *Tapuz* (translates as 'Orange', the logo of the website) forum for "Israelis in Australia and New Zealand" was launched in January 2003. It is a moderated forum based within the popular Hebrew *Tapuz* ([www.tapuz.co.il](http://www.tapuz.co.il)) internet portal. According to forum stats,<sup>58</sup> and a detailed analysis carried out by one of its moderators on February 2012<sup>59</sup>, more than 150,000 messages were posted in the forum since its inception, approximately 1,000 messages each month. These posts are 'threaded' in groups as responses to close to twenty thousand initial posts which start a conversation on a topic. The number of unique (different) participants in the forum each month was on average around two hundred, with approximately ten new members added a month.

*Tapuz* enables Israelis residing in Australia to continuously engage in lively discussions on a broad spectrum of issues. Participants exchange views, ideas and advice on procedural aspects of migration and settlement in Australia. They argue about acculturation, questions of parenthood and education, and examine Israeli or Jewish-religious identity, as well as matters of online ethics and rules.

It is assumed that the influence of this forum on the inner-Israeli discourse in Australia goes beyond its participating members. Studies indicated that most online communities are viewed by a large number of 'lurkers', who consume information posted by active members but do not generate their own content. In most online communities the "90-9-1" rule applies: 90 per cent behave as 'lurkers', 9 per cent occasionally contribute content and 1 per cent is regularly active in posting information (Brandtzeag & Heim, 2009, p. 168). Based on that assumption, with hundreds of openly active members involved in online social platforms of Israelis in Australia, and estimated ten times as many (the 'lurkers') reading the information and the views expressed, and subsequently discussing the content with other peer-national Israelis who do not use the web, the breadth of exposure amongst the Israeli population of Australia to these platforms is presumably quite considerable.

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<sup>58</sup> Stats obtained from one of the forum's moderators, private correspondence May 2010.

<sup>59</sup> The analysis is detailed in <http://www.tapuz.co.il/Forums2008/ForumPage.aspx?ForumId=697&r=1>

At the same time, there is no practical method to determine whether the participants of *Tapuz* voice the views of a majority of Israelis in Australia. It could be that those one per cent who actively make their opinions known in such forums might just be the more extraverted, vocal or extreme members of their group. Comparing the data collected from *Tapuz* to the other sources about the issues researched in this study suggests that this is not case. It seems that as a general rule posts at *Tapuz* do correspond with data and trends which present themselves in the other sources of the study.

The forum was observed on a daily basis between July 2009 and November 2010. During this period the forum was very active, which meant that the volume of data reviewed was considerable (Table 5.5). During the seventeen months observation period more than 30,000 messages were posted in the forum in over 3,000 separate response threads. The monthly average number of users was just above two hundreds, fifty of them new joiners to the discussions.

**Table 5.5**  
Tapuz activity during observation period (numbers)

Month	Messages	Threads started	Active threads	Active users	New Users
July 2009	1703	200	212	226	56
August 2009	1487	174	184	203	53
September 2009	2006	230	241	227	53
October 2009	2260	267	276	254	64
November 2009	1656	194	205	225	53
December 2009	2011	213	220	214	51
January 2010	2147	205	214	225	63
February 2010	1321	167	175	200	49
March 2010	1442	197	203	213	47
April 2010	1582	181	191	182	38
May 2010	1995	169	180	178	37
June 2010	2714	192	202	210	58
July 2010	2691	194	201	183	36
August 2010	2145	178	184	194	49
September 2010	1279	148	159	186	35
October 2010	1540	156	166	235	82
November 2010	1159	171	175	188	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,138</b>	<b>3,236</b>	<b>3,247</b>	-	-
<b>Average</b>	<b>1,832</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>51</b>

Source: Forum stats analysis by Yuval Yarom, a former *Tapuz* moderator (private correspondence with Ran Porat, February 2012).

The role of participant observer practiced in this study with regards to *Tapuz* needs to be clarified. I started as a participant member of the forum in Israel a few years ago. This was long before contemplating this study, as part of my family's preparations to immigrate to Australia. Once I started looking at the forum as a source for my study, I strove to achieve a role which is close, but not identical, to a 'complete observer' which "maintains distance from the observed events in order to avoid influencing them" (Flick, 2006, p. 217). Messages posted by me on *Tapuz* during the observation period were reduced to notices on events; and participation in debates was reduced to a minimum. Altogether, I posted 140 messages in the forum during the period of observation (8 messages per month on average), which were mostly participation in existing threads (82 messages)<sup>60</sup>. Such a volume of participation is relatively negligible with regards to the total activity in the forum throughout that period. It constitutes less than half a per cent of the total number of messages posted in the forum over the observation period, while the number of discussions started by me (47) is approximately 1.5 per cent of the discussion threads opened during that period.

Discussions on *Tapuz* that dealt with the subjects in question were downloaded in an electronic format (txt) and later reviewed. From the content posted by participants using more than 60 different nicknames, a database was created. After reviewing this database, approximately 150 texts from the discussions were found to be of direct relevance to the study questions. These texts were classified and categorized in an Excel file. Analysis was content-focused, based on the subject studied and not on structure or web interaction<sup>61</sup>.

The vibrant nature of online communities, as is with *Tapuz*, is characterized (among other features) by constant changes in the number, identity and type of participants. Such dynamics makes determining the validity of the sample of members reviewed for this study very difficult. At the same time, some general characteristics on the *Tapuz* participants can be understood from the content of their posts when they openly specify such information, or from their profile page. For example, it seems that the majority of *Tapuz* members are Israelis who have resided in Australia for less than ten years. There are a small number of immigrants who reside more than a decade in Australia, as well as short-term visitors such as tourists, backpackers and temporary migrants. Geographically, participants are from across Australia; most of them are married and with children.

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<sup>60</sup> Data from Yuval Yarom, a former moderator of the forum, who analysed the database of the forum stats available to moderators (private correspondence with Ran Porat, February 2012).

<sup>61</sup> A different ethnological approach on social internet is "virtual ethnography" which is centred on power relationships in web-based social groups (Mann, 2006).

## Interviews and focus groups

Fourteen interviews with Israelis across Australia (Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide) were contacted by the author of this study, either face-to-face or over the internet using Skype (for Brisbane), over a period starting in November 2009 until June 2011. The interviews were open-ended and unstructured, but did follow a general plan. Most interviewees were invited to participate in the study in a message distributed over Israeli social networks and through organisations in relevant cities.<sup>62</sup>

Also included in the study sources is a group discussion meeting conducted as part of the Gen08 survey at Ocean Shores, New South Wales, on March 23rd, 2010. The transcript of the discussion, which was moderated by sociologist Dr. John Goldlust with seven Israelis residing in and around Byron Bay, was kindly made accessible for use in this study.

Another contribution to the study was made by Prof. Suzanne Rutland, who shared private notes taken as part of her study with Prof. Gariano, *Survey of the Jews in the Diaspora: An Australian Perspective* (2005). The documents shared include brief transcripts of a few interviews conducted for the study, a small number of which were with Israel-born residents of Australia. Also made available were correspondence and brief minutes of study staff meetings.

The construction of the demographic characteristics of the interviews used as data for this study - whether conducted specifically for it or originated from other studies - does not constitute a representative sample of the Israeli population of Australia. At the same time, specific selection criteria were used to determine who would be interviewed. The first selection criterion was community engagement. About a third of the interviewees (5 of 14) are community activists and heads of social, cultural and religious Israeli organisations. The remaining interviewees (9 of 14) were chosen in an effort to complete a sample that would better reflect a variety of social characteristics of the Israeli community in Australia (see Table 5.6)

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<sup>62</sup> Organisations and networks which helped circulate invitations to participate in the study included: *Kishkashta* and the Israeli club (*Moadon Israeli*) in Sydney and *Tarbut* Society in Adelaide.

Table 5.6  
Profile of interviewees conducted for this study (characteristics and numbers)

Characteristic	Details					
<b>Gender</b>	Male	7	Female	7		
<b>Birth Place</b>	Israel	13	Foreign born	1		
<b>Arrived as</b>	Adult	13	Teenager	1		
<b>Arrived as</b>	Married	10	Single	4		
<b>Children</b>	Yes	10	No	4		
<b>Residency</b>	Melbourne	5	Sydney	5	Adelaide	3
<b>Religiosity</b>	Secular	13	Religious	1		
<b>Spouse</b>	Israel born	7	Foreign-born Israeli	2	Australian Jew	2
					Australian non-Jewish	1
<b>Visa</b>	Citizen	11	Permanent resident	2	Temp (457)	1
<b>Age group</b>	30-39	8	40-49	3	50-59	1
					60-69	2
<b>Age stats</b>	Average	44	Median	38.5		

The participants of Byron Bay focus group constituted a heterogeneous sample, representing a spectrum of personal and immigration-related characteristics. Six of the group members were born in Israel and one was American-born. The gender ratio was almost equal - 4 women and 3 men. At the time of the session, five participants were in their 30s or early 40s, one was 65 and one did not disclose her age. All group members have children; some are married to Israelis, one to an Australian Jew and one to a non-Jewish Australian resident. All but one of the participants arrived in Australia as adults, no more than 15 years ago.

## 5.7. The text based documents

### Ethnic Press - Eton

The Israeli newspaper of Australia in Hebrew, *Eton* (translates into “Newspaper”), was established in March 2005 as a community not-for-profit project.<sup>63</sup> It is a magazine in large (A3) size format published several times a year. The content of *Eton* is authored by a group diverse writers in terms of generation, geography (within Australia), professionally and gender-wise. It includes a variety of stories about

<sup>63</sup> *Eton* was preceded in 1995 by *Ivriton* (in Hebrew, a combination of the words *Ivrit*, Hebrew, and the suffix of the word *Eton*, newspaper) - a Hebrew supplement to the Australian Jewish News. It was supposed to appeal to Israeli residents in Australia, as well as being a tool for producing news in Hebrew for Jewish day-schools. The editor was Zee’v Bashan, a Sydney-based Hebrew language broadcaster. However, *Ivriton* did not survive – it failed to attract sufficient readership and was published for only four months (April-August 1995) (Rutland, 1995, p. 259).

Israelis in Australia and regular columns (on culture, fashion, cooking and folklore). There is also a calendar of community-related events and a small classified-advertisements section.

Almost every aspect of the publication - management, content and distribution – is run by a small number of Israeli volunteers residing in Australia; some have been part of the *Eton* team from its earliest days. Advertisements for local businesses, most of which are Israeli-owned, fund the printing costs of a few thousand copies. The paper is free and is distributed in major Jewish and Israeli neighbourhoods in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Byron Bay and Canberra (via the Israeli embassy). Recently, *Eton* established an online presence by forming a group within the popular social-network platform *Facebook*. Electronic copies of the latest edition are uploaded to forums and websites of Israelis in Australia and spread via email.<sup>64</sup>

For this thesis, the first 24 issues of *Eton* were reviewed, covering the period from March 2005 until September 2008. An interview with Israelis returning to Israel from Australia, which was published in a later issue (No 31; June-July 2010), was also included. Relevant stories were organised in a database on an Excel worksheet, classified and categorized according to subjects.

### **Ethnic press and diasporic media**

The term “ethnic press” originates from American journalistic history research. This type of press in Australia has been subjected to only limited research (Pe-Pua & Morrissey, 1994, p. 2). McLaren suggests that ethnic newspapers “could be primarily concerned with maintaining the cultural identity of minority groups, communicating [*sic*] local news and values to newcomers, orienting the immigrant to the Australian environment, or acting as a brake on assimilation” (McLaren, 1989, p. v). Miller distinguishes between “immigrant press [which] served the needs of the immigrant generation”, and “the ethnic press [which] has had a longer life through its appeal to those who continued to live within the context of or to identify with their heritage” (Miller, 1987, p. xii). Another, albeit correlative, distinction is made with regard to the language used in publications. Ethnic newspapers and journals are often, but not always, printed in the language of the ethnic group. Non-English press in English-speaking societies is most likely to be either immigrant and/or ethnic press. However, ethnic newspapers can be published in the language dominant in their country; English in the case of Australia.

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<sup>64</sup> In the past, some of *Eton*’s content also appeared in the “El Australia” (Hebrew: to Australia, [www.australia-il.com](http://www.australia-il.com)) website, but this website is no longer active. “El Australia” was run by Ziv Magen, and included a very limited amount of original content; it was mostly news items from the Australian press translated into Hebrew. Since May 2009 it has ceased to be active.

Miller points to the historical value of ethnic press as a reflection of various aspects of the community it is linked to: “The [ethnic] press is the best primary source of an understanding of the world of non-English speaking groups in the United States, their expectations and concerns, their background and evolution as individual communities” (Miller, 1987, p. xii). After analysing thousands of pages of non-English Australian newspapers in five different languages in the 1990s, Pe-Pua and Morrissey conclude that non-English newspapers in Australia do some or all of the following:

Report news; provide entertainment or diversion; facilitate social interaction through providing shared cultural references and experiences; assist consumers to decide what to purchase; give information about employment, social services and social events; may constitute a part of many small scale social encounters [...]; serve as historical records or archives, recording and interpreting a community’s social history; provide a forum for debate on issues.

(Pe-Pua & Morrissey, 1994, p. 97)

While the content of *Eton* does fit most of the features mentioned by Pe-Pua and Morrissey, it was created in a different environment. Most importantly, *Eton* started publication after the spread of information technologies and the internet as popular media. The easily-accessible homeland news via the internet made redundant the reporting of such news in non-English ethnic newspapers, which was commonplace and ever the *raison d’être* of many of such past publications.

*Eton* is written by, directed towards and read by almost exclusively Jewish Israelis in Australia. Thus, typologically, it can be viewed as a non-English newspaper which is a hybrid of immigrant press and ethnic press. It may also be categorised as ‘diasporic media’. This type of media shares many of the features of ethnic press, such as its being an agent for re-socialisation and acculturation vis-à-vis the host society, and the scarcity of manpower and resources. But ‘diasporic media’ is also a mechanism for creating inner-group diasporic social oneness, bridging between immigrants who may be from the same homeland but from different backgrounds. Thus, it forms a ‘sphericule discourse’ aimed at “self-empowerment via solidarity, identity politics, and internal social and cultural cohesion” (Kama, 2008, p. 226).

Although diaspora studies used ethnic and diasporic press in various disciplines since the beginning of the twentieth century as a source,<sup>65</sup> studies of Israelis abroad based on ethnic press sources are rare.

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<sup>65</sup> Sociologist Robert Ezra Park is considered one of the forefathers of Ethnic press study in his classic work: *The Immigrant Press and its Control* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1922). Examples of Ethnic



Israeli migrants' image in Israeli media in Israel has been explored,<sup>66</sup> but specialised Israeli media outside the borders of Israel has remained mostly unreviewed until now<sup>67</sup>.

### **Literature and oral history**

Currently, there are a limited number of literary texts and oral history projects about Israelis in Australia. In this study these texts were used as supporting material, to emphasise or challenge findings and assumptions derived from the two other source pillars. The authors and the Israeli subjects documented in the literature and oral history sources which were used for this study form a diverse sample. They are men and women of various ages, each having arrived in Australia at different periods over the past fifty years and currently residing across Australia.

The literary works by, or on, Israelis with regard to their life in, or their visit to, Australia which were reviewed for this study, can be divided into four types:

#### **Biographies, essays or accounts by Israeli immigrants who settled in Australia**

*From the Promised Land to the Lucky Country* - by Rina Vardi (2000). Vardi was born in 1931 in Germany. She made *Aliyah* as a baby and lived in Israel until she immigrated with her husband to Australia in 1956.

*עולם ועד עתה* (in the English version: *Anything is possible*) – by David Sachar (Kopchick) (1997). An auto-biographical book about an Israeli born in Israel in 1930, who immigrated to Australia in 1967.

“From the promised land to the lucky country” – by Hallely Kimchi (2006). As one of the owners and editors of the Israeli newspaper in Australia, *Eton*, Kimchi portrayed her experiences as an Israeli in Australia in a chapter of a book on Australian Jewry; specifically her feelings surrounding the opening of a synagogue in Melbourne aimed at Israelis.

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press research: *The Ethnic Press in the United States*, edited by Sally M. Miller (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1987). For Australia: Miriam Gilson and Jerzy Zubrzycki, *The foreign-language press in Australia, 1848-1964* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1967); Abe (I.) Wade Ata and Colin Ryan (Eds.), *The Ethnic press in Australia* (Melbourne: Academia Press and Footprint Publications, 1989); Ki-Sung Kwak, *Aspects of the Korean ethnic press in Australia 1985-1990: an analysis of the backgrounds of editors and publishers and news content* (Thesis (M.A. in Communication)-University of Canberra, 1991).

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Tom Segev's account on the *Yored* image in the Israeli press after the 1967 Six Days War (Segev, 2007, pp. 126-134).

<sup>67</sup> The one exception is a study about Israelis in the United States through the prism of the Hebrew newspaper *Israel Shelanu* - Oren Meyers, “A Home Away from Home? Israel Shelanu and the Self-Perceptions of Israeli Migrants”, *Israel Studies*, Volume 6 (3), Fall 2001, pp. 71-90.

“Get out of there” – by Idan Ben Barak (2007). An article by an Israeli living in Australia published in the Israeli media (Blazer magazine and Ynet website), explaining why Israelis should immigrate to Australia.

### **Blogs**

A small number of Israeli residents of Australia write autobiographic internet diaries, or blogs. Most of them are used either to portray their experiences from a touristic point of view or to share thoughts and photos with family and friends. Posts from three such blogs in Hebrew, which touch on issues relevant for this study, were reviewed. Although all the writers immigrated to Australia after 2000, they represent a mix of characteristics with regard to gender (one written by a man, one by a woman and one jointly by a couple), age (late 20s, late 30s and early 40s), personal status (married with children, single) and place of residence (Sydney, Melbourne and Byron Bay). Two of the blogs reviewed were written by occasional participants of the *Tapuz* forum. Blogs reviewed for the study are:

מחשבות על החיים ושטויות אחרות (*Thoughts about life and other nonsense*) - by Dror Nachum, a 28 year-old Sydney resident, single.

מועדון הלקוחות הנאמנים של היחידה לטיפול נמרץ (*Intensive care unit's club of loyal customers*) by Motti and Tali Gadish, Melbourne residents aged in their 30s, parents of two young children.

אוסטריאליה (can be translated as “Aust-reality”) - by Orit Ben-Harush, in her early 40s, an Ocean Shores resident, married with children.

### **Travelogues by short-term visitors to Australia**

חתונה אוסטרלית (*Australian Wedding*) – by Nava Semel (2009). An account of the author’s journey to the Byron Bay area, following a relationship between her son and an Australian non-Jewish girl. During her visit, Semel met several Israelis living in Australia and documented her interactions with them.

אז איך היה היום שלך? (*So how was your day?*) – by Shula Weitz (2009). As a child psychologist, Weitz was invited for a short-term internship in a Sydney hospital (2008-2009). When she returned to Israel she wrote a fictional story based on her real experiences in Australia. The plot follows the protagonist’s relationship with the Australian culture, Australian Jews and Israelis residing in Australia.

### **Oral history**

*Building a Nation* (2009) is an oral history project initiated by the Jewish library *Makor*, recording lifetime stories of Jews in Melbourne. Volume six of the series was devoted to Israelis in Melbourne who immigrated to Australia during the 1950s and 1960s.

Chronologically, reading through and examining these sources was completed after the review and analysis of all other sources. References (page numbers, links, quotes) were organized in an Excel worksheet, using categorization previously established in the analysis of the other sources. The aim of this methodology was to either confirm or challenge the pre-established subject classification and conclusions derived earlier for the two other source pillars.

One final note relates to language. The majority of the qualitative sources used in this thesis are originally in Hebrew. As a rule, all relevant material in Hebrew quoted within the study was translated by the author of this thesis. When necessary, specific terms appeared in Hebrew followed by the transliteration and translation of the word into English - both in parenthesis. The same methodology with regards to Hebrew was implemented for other studies which dealt with Israeli emigrants and were originally published in English such as by Gold (2002), Uriely (1994) and Erez Cohen (2008).

## **SECTION TWO**

## 6. Israeli Emigrants in the 1990s and 2000s: Figures and Estimates

The task of trying to construct a monolithic profile of current Israeli emigrant can turn into a double-edged sword. On the one hand, in order to succeed, one needs to incorporate research findings collected from a range of different study viewpoints – the *Yordim* school of thought, migration studies, a transnational approach or a mix of these points of view<sup>68</sup>. On the other hand, assuming the existence of a uniform ‘meta Israeli emigrant’ with exclusively distinctive characteristics could present a methodological hazard. This is due to the fact that in places where large clusters of Israelis have been accumulating over the years, most notably in the United States, Israeli émigrés are generationally multilayered, economically diverse and socially manifold.

Existing databanks on Israeli émigrés are self admittedly lacking or inaccurate (Paltiel, 2001, pp. 171-172). The scarcity of reliable and comprehensive data on Israelis abroad is a result of a wide range of challenges and questions that arise when attempting to count migrant, ethnic or religious groups in general, and Jews and Israelis in particular. The initial reason for this is a disagreement over an inclusive empirical definition of what qualifies a person to be ‘an Israeli emigrant’. Thus, relevant questions on the subject of Israeli emigrants, such as trying to figure out the current number of Israeli expatriates, would most likely yield multiple answers. Moreover, problems of accurately counting émigrés are common for modern migrant groups (Gold, 2002, p. 23). Additional challenges emanate from a range of technical hurdles preventing the effective monitoring of the movement and duration of stay of modern emigrants outside their country, as well as tracking illegal immigration activity and deaths.

Counting membership in a religious group, as in the case of Jewish Israelis, further complicates matters as often direct questions of religious affiliation are either non-obligatory to answer or even forbidden by law (as in the United States). The process of counting itself is difficult as it touches moral and politically sensitive issues and questions of self-identification (Bouma, 2002, p. 17). For Jews, there is special sensitivity due to an explicit religious law prohibiting the counting of Jews directly<sup>69</sup>. In addition, the

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<sup>68</sup> For a discussion about the different points of view for studying Israeli emigration see chapter 3 “Literature review: The study of Israeli émigrés” of this thesis.

<sup>69</sup> A biblical prohibition to count Jews appears in the Book of Hosea, Chapter 2, verse 1: "And the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which shall neither be measured nor counted." ("וְהָיָה מִסְפָּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחֹל הַיָּם הֵימָּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִמָּד וְלֹא יִסָּפָר"). For a discussion on the problems of counting Jews in the United States - see, for example, Bany A. Kosmin, Paul Rittlerband and Jeffrey Scheckner, *Counting Jewish Populations: Methods and problems*. American Jewish Yearbook. Vol. 88 (1988), pp. 204-221.

persecution of Jews over history (most notably the Holocaust) often involved singling-out Jews from the rest of the population. Thus, some Jews would prefer not being identified as such. On top of all these hurdles, there are Jews and Israelis, most likely secular, who choose not to define themselves in religious terms either due to ideological reasons (atheism for example) or as a way of distinguishing themselves from religious or political bodies with a religious affiliation.

Lack of dependable and up-to-date data is also a result of the scarcity of detailed studies on the Israeli émigré population. So far, only a few large-scale projects have been conducted on the matter since the 1990s. Moreover, the sample of interviewees or survey participants collected for these studies was not scientific and there are no uniform inclusion criteria for the study population. Absent of a single common identification mechanism, each interested party uses a different methodology to tackle the challenge. This could lead to research projects being conducted on very different cross-sections of the Israeli emigrant group. Most studies would turn to one category or a combination of the following categories for identifying Israeli émigrés: country of birth or of parents (“Israel-born”), language spoken (Hebrew), Israeli passport ownership (currently or in the past) and self-perception (“I recognize myself as Israeli”). Other criteria used in that regard are the duration of consecutive stay outside Israel and whether financial assets and/or taxes are still being owned or paid for in Israel. Some researchers even warn against imprudent generalizing of their findings about the wider Israeli emigrant population (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 36; Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 5).

Nevertheless, in the course of the past two decades the Israeli government and several scholars were able to map the demographics and economic and occupational landscape of the Israeli emigrant population.

### **6.1. Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics - Emigrant Stock**

In 1995, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) embarked on an effort to create a stock of Israeli emigrants (Hleihel & Sheps, 20-22 November 2006). The stock is the estimated - not actual or exact - maximum number of emigrants, Jews and non-Jews. In order to determine the number and some personal characteristics of emigrants since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, CBS used data collected by the Border Patrol system, which records exits and entries through Israel’s borders. Israelis with no entry record to Israel for at least a year after departure are considered by the CBS as “Emigrants”. A “Returnee” is defined as an emigrant readmitted into Israel for a stay of 3 months or

more. CBS officials openly acknowledge that this methodology suffers from several distortions. Firstly, it does not differentiate between long-term migrants and fixed-term sojourners, such as students, professionals on a temporary work visa, or people on business trips. Secondly, hundreds of thousands of Israelis are estimated to be holders of dual passports. Occasionally, they would use their foreign passport for departures and arrivals to and from Israel. In these cases, they are not registered in the Border Patrol systems as Israelis. Thirdly, Israeli emigrants tend to revisit Israel for short periods, disrupting the calculation of continuous stay away from Israel. Lastly, the reliability of early Border Control data is questionable considering that until the 1970s hand written cards were used as the record system. In order to compensate for the possible distortions, when building the 1995 emigrant stock CBS combined data collected in the 1983 Census, the 1995 Census, Border Crossing System records from 1983 onwards and the Population Register since 1995. A “Census excess principle” was applied, where people not counted for in the 1995 census was considered “a suspect emigrant” which meant further investigation was needed before determining his or her status and potential inclusion the stock. CBS also invested efforts in locating pre-1970 emigrants, not recorded accurately, or at all, in the older hand written Border Patrol files (Hleihel & Sheps, 20-22 November 2006).

Eventually, CBS calculated its 1995 emigrant stock to be 738,200 persons. Since then, the stock has constantly being updated and validated using other sources and new methodologies. In 2009, CBS presented an updated stock data recalculated for Israeli emigration since 1948, adjusted for mortality abroad and including an unknown number of Israeli-Arab emigrants, speculated to be around 100,000. Eventually the 2009 stock was set at 665,000, out of which between 538,000 and 566,000 emigrants were currently still alive. These figures do not include children born to Israeli parents abroad (Cohen, 2009, p. 119; Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009, p. 4).

Currently, the stock is the only official Israeli database about Israelis abroad. Several analyses of the stock were conducted from a migration studies approach. In 2009, Israeli sociologist, Yinon Cohen analysed the CBS emigrant stock vis-à-vis two external sources: the Data Base on Immigrants (DIOC) in OECD countries for 2000-2001 and the 1990 and 2000 “5 per cent Public Use Micro Data Samples” (PUMS) of the United States Census. Cohen stated that emigration rates have not increased in recent years and that there is “gross over-estimation of the Israeli diaspora” (Cohen, 2009, p. 120; Cohen, 2009, p. 2). Earlier, Israeli demographer Sergio DellaPergola used CBS data along with other resources to calculate Jewish migration rates out of Palestine and Israel between 1881-2002 (DellaPergola, 2009, p. 395). A report from a different perspective - more related to the *Yordim* school of thought - was

prepared in 2006 based mainly on the emigrant stock database (Mei-Ami, 2006). It was submitted to the Israeli parliament (*Knesset*) Committee for Immigration, Absorption and diaspora Affairs. The focus of the report was the emigration of highly skilled Israelis and academics (“Brain Drain”<sup>70</sup>) and of immigrants to Israel from FSU that later emigrated out of Israel<sup>71</sup>.

## 6.2. Other studies

In *The Israeli diaspora* (2002) Gold used official American statistics, mainly the 1990 population census, together with a small number of studies and surveys conducted in the 1990s amongst American Jews. He projected this data on the larger study population of the general Israeli diaspora because of its being detailed and available, and followed precedent of applying the American data (where the largest cluster of Israeli emigrants reside) to other Israeli colonies worldwide.

Gold however emphasized that this data plays a limited supportive role since his study “is not a demographic report. It draws most heavily from interviews and fieldwork in various Israeli émigré communities” (Gold, 2002, p. 24). His team undertook more than 300 interviews in Hebrew and English between 1991 and 2000. The majority of interviewees were Israelis living in the United States, alongside a smaller number of European residents and Israelis returning to Israel after a few years<sup>72</sup>. Gold chose self-definition (“I am an Israeli”) as the study’s inclusion criteria, as well as suggesting that mastering of Hebrew is the best indicator for identifying Israelis (Gold, 2002, pp. 23-24). It is however important to understand, that Hebrew proficiency cannot be a sole indicator of ‘Israeliness’. Hebrew is taught not only in Israel but also in Jewish schools around the world. Furthermore, some past immigrants to Israel (*Olim*) who have then moved abroad out of Israel, do not speak Hebrew at home and/or do not master this language properly, but they still consider themselves to be Israelis.

In 2004, Israeli sociologist Rina Cohen composed a profile of the Israeli emigrant population when she authored the chapter on Israeli diasporants in the *Encyclopaedia of Diasporas* (Cohen, 2004). For the entry, Cohen integrated a range of 1990s locally focused studies on Israelis, mainly in Northern America, including Gold’s *The Israeli diaspora* and her articles (and with anthropologist Gerald Gold) on Israeli

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<sup>70</sup> More on the “Brain Drain” phenomenon in subchapter 6.6 “Educational and professional features”.

<sup>71</sup> The two groups - highly skilled and academics and FSU *Olim* that emigrated out of Israel - overlap in many cases.

<sup>72</sup> The geographical division of the interviewees is as follows:

United States: Los Angeles - 194 + 24 interview transcripts with *Kibbutzniks* from Sabar’s study (Sabar, 2000); New York and Detroit: unspecified number; London: 50; Paris: 14; and 30 returnees to Israel after a 4 year period or more in Canada, South Africa, Argentina, Australia and other countries.



emigration to Canada<sup>73</sup>. She proceeded to compose a concise general overview of Israeli emigrants, dealing with issues of reason for migration, demographic features and identity related questions. Cohen's centre of attention is on diaspora Israeli communities and she barely engages in any discussion about the effects and influences of this new diaspora on the State of Israel. This focus on the diasporic community is characteristic of the migration studies approach.

In the rest of this chapter, a synthesis of the sources mentioned earlier on Israeli émigrés in the 1990s and 2000s is presented. Note, that unless specifically stated otherwise, this review includes information about Jewish Israeli emigrants, not fragmented into ethnic or religious sub-groups. This is because the vast majority of available data on the subject does not include such segmented details. Furthermore, the little research conducted on the separate non-Jewish emigration from Israel so far resulted in insufficient data. However, such research did indicate that most Arab emigrants present similar characteristics to Jewish emigrants - for example, with regard to destination countries, education and entrepreneurship levels (Gold, 2002, p. 27). Thus, until proven otherwise, in most cases it is possible to relate to general data on Israeli emigrants as mainly concerning the Jewish part of it<sup>74</sup>.

### **6.3. Population and yearly movement**

As noted earlier, there is an argument surrounding the number of Israelis residing abroad, with estimates ranging between a minimum of over 500,000 and a maximum of 750,000. One of Israel's Ministry of Immigration Absorption's (MOIA) areas of responsibility is to encourage Israeli emigrants to return and help returnees to resettle in Israel. MOIA tends to voice the highest estimates for the number of Israeli émigrés. In 2003, MOIA officials claimed more than 750,000 Israelis were living abroad; they reset the number at 700,000 five years later (The Jerusalem Post, 2008; Moav & Gold, 2006). Rina Cohen speculated in 2004 that the global Israeli emigrant group enumerated between

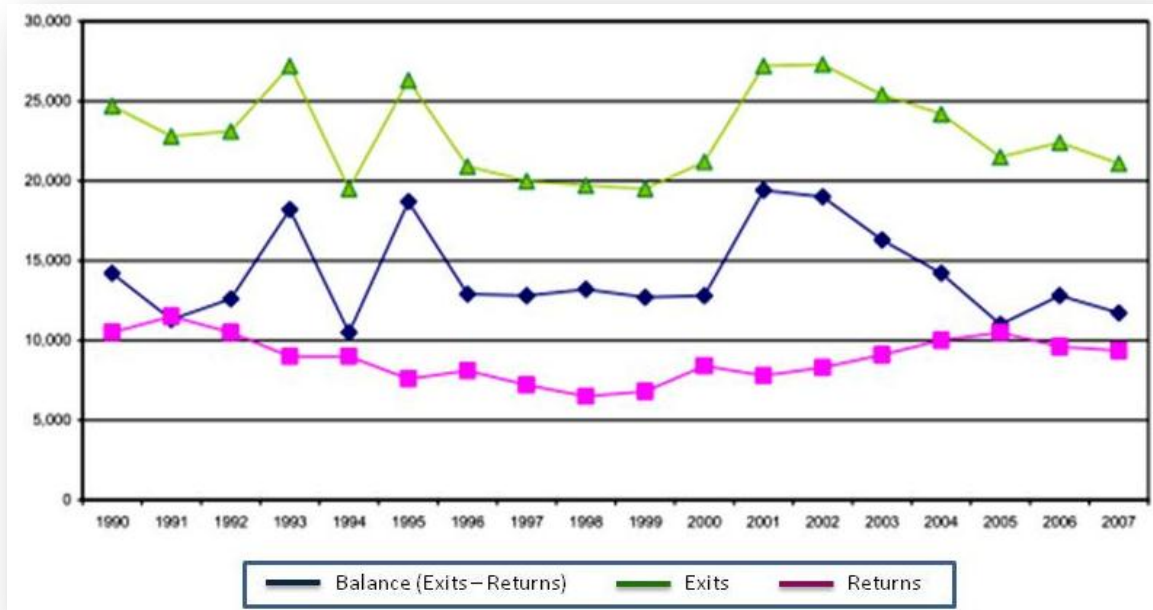
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<sup>73</sup> See, for example, Rina Cohen, "From Ethnonational enclaves to Diasporic community: The mainstreaming of Israeli Jewish migrants in Toronto", *diaspora*, Vol. 8 (1999), No. 2, pp. 121-137; Rina Cohen, "Responding to contemporary issues: The New Immigrants", In Ruth Klein and Frank Dimant (Eds.), *From Immigration to Integration: The Canadian Jewish Experience (a millennium edition)*. Toronto: B'nai Brith Canada, Institute for International Affairs, 2001, pp. 213-227; Rina Cohen and Gerald Gold, "Israelis in Toronto: The myth of return and the development of a distinct ethnic community," *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 38 (1996), No. 1, pp. 17-27; Rina Cohen and Gerald Gold, "Constructing ethnicity: Myth of return and modes of exclusion among Israeli families in Toronto," *International Migration*, Vol. 3 (1997), pp. 373-393.

<sup>74</sup> Gold touches very briefly on the subject of Israeli Arabs for the point of view of Jewish Israeli emigrants and their interaction with Palestinians or Israeli Arabs: "The experience of Israeli Arabs is especially complex. While they maintain relations with Jewish Israelis in points of settlement [...] they are also linked to the Palestinian diaspora" (Gold, 2002, pp. vii, 191-192)

500,000 and 600,000 people (Cohen, 2009, p. 137). The CBS figure of 550,000 in 2009 falls within this spectrum, very close to Yinon Cohen's calculation of 544,000 Israelis worldwide in 2006 (Cohen, 2009, p. 119; Grinshtein, 2009; Cohen, 2009, p. 3).

Figure 6.1  
Israeli Emigrants - Exits and Returns to and from Israel, 1990-2007 (Thousands)



Source:

Central Bureau of Statistics. "Departures and Returns in 2007 of Israelis Staying Abroad Continuously for more than a Year (Hebrew)". Press Release, August 17, 2009

Notes:

1. Exits – Israelis residing abroad for more than 1 year who had not visited Israel over that year or had visited Israel for less than 90 consecutive days per year. These Israelis are defined as "Israeli Emigrants".
2. Returns – Israeli Emigrants who have resided in Israel for more than 90 consecutive days in a specific year, and thus might be considered returnees

The first decade of the twenty first century saw a peak in the number of emigrants per decade, higher than the ones recorded for the 1980s or the 1990s. Nonetheless, Yinon Cohen determined that emigration, which constituted in these decades between 6 and 8 per cent of the total Israeli population, is still lower than parallel Western countries. This figure also places Israel in the median range of

“expatriate rates” of OECD countries (Jean-Christophe Dumont, 2005, p. 10; Greer, 2008; Cohen, 2009, pp. 3, 6).

Emigration from Israel was subject to fluctuations during the past two decades. According to 1995-2008 CBS stock data, most emigration balances were within a 13 to 16 thousands per annum range. However, peak amounts were recorded in 2002 and 2003 with approximately 20 thousands emigrants per year, possibly due to the economic recession felt in Israeli amidst the second Palestinian uprising (*Intifāḍat El Aqṣā*). 2007 witnessed another apex of 21 thousand emigrants. This latest increase is presumably connected to a feeling of deterioration in Israel’s security and increased daily threat from both the Northern and the Southern borders.<sup>75</sup>

Judging the figures from a relative perspective, Cohen determined an emigration scale by weighting it against the general Israeli population. From this point of view, emigration seems stable. Available data of yearly emigration rates since 1985 points to steady levels of 2-3 emigrants per thousand of the total Israeli born population (Paltiel, 21-23 May 2001, p. 173; Mei-Ami, 2006, p. 3). One explanation for the relative stability is the fact that while the number of emigrants increases, Israel’s general population continues to grow as well. Thus, the proportion between these two elements remains roughly unchanged. However, certain segments within the Israeli society display heightened rates of emigration. For example, emigration rates recorded between 1996 and 2003 for FSU immigrants who made *Aliyah* after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991 onwards) were 4.5 to 7.5 per thousand of the total FSU immigration population (Mei-Ami, 2006, pp. 4-5).

#### **6.4. Locations**

Today the Israeli sojourner, travelling or residing abroad for a limited time, is present in almost every corner of the world. Many young Israelis after completing their mandatory service in the army (36 months from men, 24 months for women) embark on long backpacker trips to “exotic” locations in North and South America, Asian countries (specifically India, Nepal and Thailand) as well as Australia and New Zealand. Labour migrant Israelis travel regularly for pre-determined periods ranging from days to a few years, for work or business purposes. Thousands of Israeli students attend mainly American and

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<sup>75</sup> The threats to Israel’s borders referred to are: In the North, following the Second Lebanon War of July 2006, during which hundreds of thousands of Israelis were exposed to direct rocket bombing from Lebanon. In the South, after the emergence of a new entity in Gaza governed by the extreme Islamic Hamas movement in June 2007, which also occasionally fires rockets on Southern Israeli cities.

some European universities (especially in the UK). In between there are the “Tourist Dwellers” (Bloch-Tzemach, 2002), which can be defined as overstaying Israeli tourists working (sometimes illegally) in temporary jobs<sup>76</sup>. These temporary visitors of all kinds sometime participate in activities of Israeli and/or Jewish diaspora communities and may even be included as members of these communities in surveys or censuses.

Clusters of long-term “settlers” or “permanent sojourners” from Israel are concentrated in certain Western societies. At least three quarters of them reside in English speaking countries. Potential economic, social and cultural mobility in these countries serve as primary pull factors. Just as important are religious tolerance and the relatively high command of English (at least as a spoken language) of many Israelis (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 14; Gold, 2002, p. 50; Cohen, 2009, p. 4). Within the destination states, Israeli emigrants tend to gravitate toward those who preceded them as emigrants, and mainly prefer settling in the major urban centres. In many cases Israelis dwell inside or within short distance of established Jewish neighbourhoods, where they are prone to open businesses (Cohen, 2004, p. 139; Gold, 2002, p. 60).

Historically, the United States was the most popular target country for Israeli emigration. Today it is the home of the largest community of Israeli expatriates. Their number in the United States is anywhere between Cohen’s 350,000 and the MOIA estimate of 450,000 (Cohen, 2009, p. 119; Grinshtein, 2009). However, factors such as the influence of global financial fluctuations (such as the crisis which started in mid-2008) on the American economy and a far more scrutinizing American immigration policy following the September 11, 2001 terror acts have resulted in further impediments on Israelis seeking to migrate to the United States.

Canada, being a country encouraging in-coming immigration, has become popular among Israeli emigrants over the past decades. Canada is home to a growing Israeli community of anywhere between 20,000 to 60,000 people (Cohen, 2001; Rachmani, 2009)<sup>77</sup>.

The current number of Israelis with a European Passport<sup>78</sup> is estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands. Currently within Europe, UK hosts the biggest settlement of Israelis, estimated at 50,000

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<sup>76</sup> Examples of popular temporary jobs among Israeli tourists are personal child caring (nannies), sales (pictures, cosmetics) and Israeli women working as hosts in Japan (Bloch-Tzemach, 2002).

<sup>77</sup> 2006 Canadian Census recorded 26,215 Israeli citizens, two thirds of them (17,675) in the Ontario region (Statistics Canada, 2010).

people. An additional 40,000 Israelis live in France. Smaller Israeli migrant gatherings, numbering between a few hundred to a couple of thousand for each country, are scattered across Europe: in Scandinavia, Benelux countries (Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxemburg), Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and a few Mediterranean states, mainly Italy, Turkey, Spain and Greece. Estimates on the number of Israelis in South Africa range from ten to twenty thousand<sup>79</sup>. A few thousand Israelis live in some South American countries, specifically Mexico and Argentina (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 15; Cohen, 2009, p. 5).

Australia is the latest attractive immigration destination for Israelis. For the purposes of this review, it is suffice to say that Israelis in Australia number around 15,000, with most of them residing in Melbourne and Sydney. Also in Oceania, New Zealand hosts around a thousand Israeli settlers.

## **6.5. Age, gender, family and origin**

Most Israeli émigrés are first generation migrants and Israel-born. On the issue of determining how many Israeli emigrants were not born in Israel, Yinon Cohen explains that: “there is no direct method for estimating the stock of foreign-born Israeli emigrants”. Instead, he deducted the number of Israel-born emigrants from the total number of emigrants in CBS the emigrant stock. According to his calculations, in 2006, out of 544,000 Israeli emigrants worldwide, only 238,000 (43 per cent, Jews and non-Jews) are Israel-born. The rest, 306,000 (56 per cent) are foreign-born, of which 120,000 (22 per cent of the total emigrant population; 39 per cent of foreign-born Israeli emigrants) immigrated to Israel after 1990 and then moved to other countries (Cohen, 2009, p. 9).

More men than women compose the Israeli emigrant population (roughly 60 per cent men). Conventional nuclear families (husband-wife), many with children, constitute the majority within the Israeli emigrants. The past image of *Yordim* was that most of them were Oriental *Sepharadim*, of Middle Eastern or North African ancestry. However, surveys and studies from the past twenty years consistently

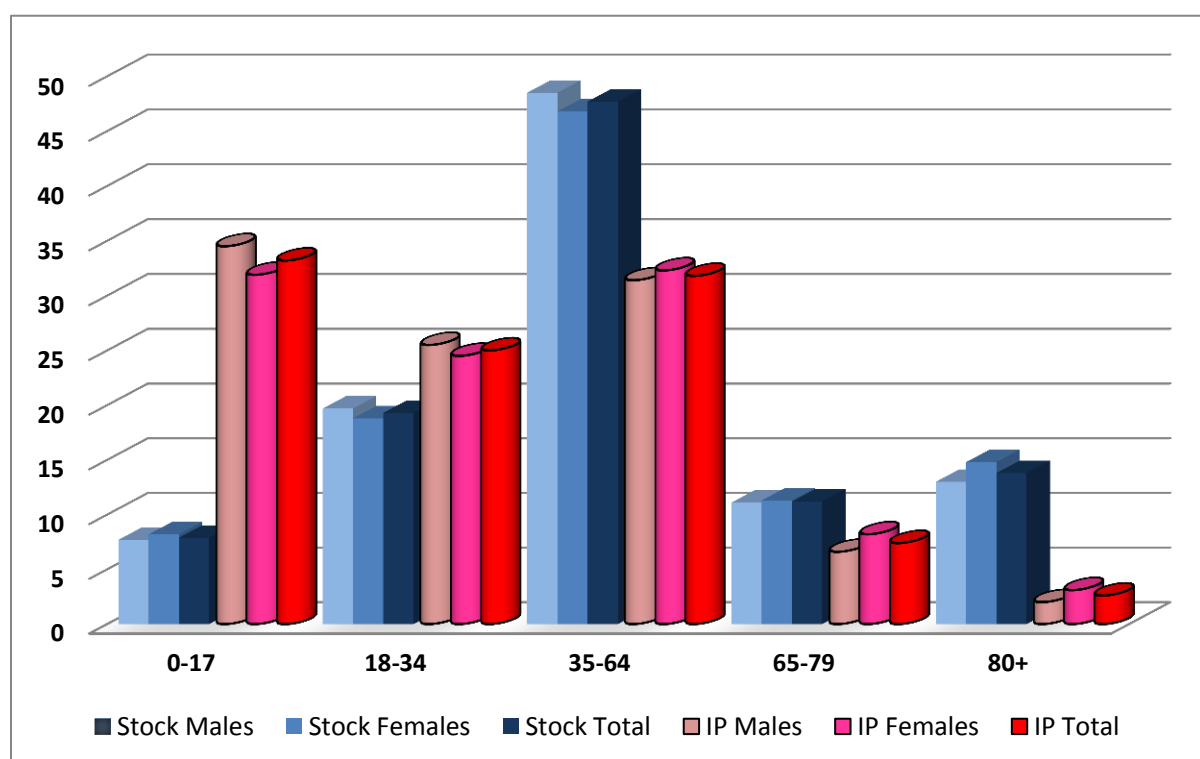
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<sup>78</sup> Applying for a European passport on the basis of ancestry, available for individuals from pre-Holocaust East European families, has become a popular trend in Israel in the past decade. According to one study, at least 53,000 new European passports were issued between 2000 and 2006 to Israeli Jews (Cohen, 2009, p. 3). For a discussion about social circumstances surrounding this phenomenon of issuing dual citizenship in Israel see subchapter 8.2 “A new perception of emigration from Israel” in this thesis.

<sup>79</sup> On one hand, Gold noted 1991 South African Israeli population was close to 10,000 (Gold, 2002, p. 25), while Lev Ari claims that 20,000 Israelis immigrated to South Africa (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 15). On the other hand, Yinon Cohen estimates the total number of Israeli in Oceania and Africa to be less than 6,000 in the year 2000 (Cohen, 2009, p. 4), and partial Official 2002 South African data recorded less than 2,000 Israelis migrants (Lehohla, 2004, p. 89).

prove the opposite - that the origin of the majority of Israeli Jewish emigrants is *Ashkenazi*, namely descendants of Jews from Western societies (Cohen, 2004, pp. 138-139; Gold, 2002, pp. 27, 105; Lev Ari, 2008, p. 39). CBS analysed its 2005 emigrant stock age distribution vis-à-vis the general Israeli population data at the time. The comparison revealed that the largest group of emigrants were aged 35-64. This age group, as well as people over 80 were in much higher proportions in the stock than in the general Israeli population, assumably including deceased persons, who were removed from the stock later. The opposite proportion was evident for the 0-17 age group. These age and gender emigrant characteristics were later supported in OECD data (Cohen, 2009, p. 5).

Figure 6.2  
Age and Gender - 2005 Emigrant Stock and Israel's General Population (percentages)



Glossary: IP = Israel's General Population

Source: Hleihel 20-22 November 2006, 8.

## 6.6. Educational and professional features

Israel has one of the most highly educated populations in the world, with 29 per cent of the population over 25 years of age with a bachelor degree or higher (Belizovsky, 2006). This feature is even more evident amongst Israeli emigrants, presenting higher levels of education than the general Israeli

population and parallel emigrant groups in respective immigration destination countries (Gold, 2002, p. 26; Cohen, 2004, p. 139).

This phenomenon is often referred to as "The Brain Drain" - an international term suggesting that the most qualified and capable of a country's precious human resource is "lost" to foreign economies. Data collected point to the magnitude of what politicians and public figures consider a problem for Israel. The percentage among Israeli emigrants 1995-2002 of graduate degree holders and above was two to three times higher than the less educated ones. A study published in 2005 concluded that 42.9 per cent of Israelis residing in OECD countries have completed tertiary education. According to researcher Dan Ben-David, "The Israeli academics residing in the States in 2003-2004 represented 24.9 per cent of the entire senior staff in Israel's academic institutions that year - twice the Canadian ratio and over 5 times the ratio in the other developed countries" (Ben-David, 2008, p. 3). The findings of a recent 2009 report submitted to the Israeli government indicates almost a quarter of scholars who had studied in Israel and were once faculty members in Israeli universities, now hold teaching positions in foreign academic institutes, the majority of which are in the United States (Zalikovitch, 2009; Menachem, 2010). Arik Gold and Omer Moav argue that since the 1990s this "Brain Drain" has increased every year (Moav & Gold, 2006).

Yinon Cohen represents a minority opinion on this matter. He is critical of the methodology of the 'brain drain' studies and points to the oft-ignored fact that many Israeli scholars (mainly those migrating to the United States) return to Israel after a few years, thus reducing the actual number of permanent emigrants among them. Cohen argues that "labelling emigration of highly educated Israelis as a 'brain drain' is at best an exaggeration" (Cohen, 2009, pp. 120-121).

The professional characteristics of the Israeli diasporants are closely connected to their high levels of education. Skilled and motivated, with record levels of employment, entrepreneurship and self-employment, when compared to other migrant groups and to the general population in host societies (particularly in the United States), Israeli emigrants are successful both in the business arena and the labour market. Most Israeli emigrants to Anglophone countries occupy professional, managerial and technical positions. Israelis generally achieve average earnings and above and gain professional prestige relatively fast after migration. Gold concludes: "as a group they [Israeli emigrants] have achieved a remarkable degree of accomplishment in a variety of endeavours and settings" (Gold, 2002, pp. 26, 60; Cohen, 2004, p. 139).

From a gender perspective, participation in the labour force of the host country is lower for Israeli women than their male counterparts (Gold, 2002, pp. 127-128). This is despite the fact that education levels among Israeli diasporant women are at least the same and sometimes higher than those of men in the same group. Yinon Cohen suggests an explanation for this paradox, by concluding that men are more likely to be the initiators of labour motivated emigration with positions open to them in the receiving labour market. In Cohen's words, "a higher proportion of females than males are 'tied movers' rather than 'pure' economic movers" (Cohen, 2009, p. 17). However, this pattern is just part of the picture, as unemployment of women in many cases is due to legal impediments in the host country, prohibiting a partner of certain visa grantees from working. Existing levels of employment among Israeli emigrants women is actually evidence for their ability to evade this barrier and find work, often in a Jewish or Israeli setting, even though it is illegal for them to work.

Following this review of certain general features of the current Israeli diaspora population, the impression might be of a positive narrative of adjustment and assimilation. *Prima facie*, the average Israeli emigrant, man and woman alike, is supported by a stable nuclear family structure; is highly educated; fits well into the economic arena of his or her new country; and can find peer nationals or people with similar religious affinity in his vicinity.



## 7. Israeli Emigrants to Australia: Study and Demographic Characteristics

### 7.1. Available Studies about Israelis in Australia

The “*Survey of Jews in the Diaspora: An Australian Perspective - Final Report*”, published in 2005, was a pioneering effort which examined Israelis in Australia as part of a wider spectrum of immigrant group within the Australian Jewish community. Historian Suzanne Rutland and Dr. Antonio Carlos Gariano of the University of New South Wales, a sociologist and survey expert, studied Israelis and two other immigrant Jewish groups to Australia (FSU and SA Jews). Initiated at the request of the Education Department of the Jewish Agency in Israel, the study analysed the needs of the surveyed groups with regard to “community connectedness, access to educational services and participation and involvement in community activities” (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 2).

The report uses a mix of sources: quantitative analysis of Australian census data collected in 2001; quantitative study in the form of a small-scale survey; and interviews.<sup>80</sup> Parts of the study dealt with a wide range of topics concerning identity. For example, respondents were asked about their religious affiliations, Jewish education, intercommunity relations and the importance of Hebrew. The study also inquired into the immigration experience, the reasons for it and the adjustment to the Australian society. Rutland and Gariano’s approach is from a community point of view, and the questions asked mainly touched on integration and acculturation.

The most recent study which includes Ausraelis is the “GEN08 2008-2009 Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Survey”. This project was the first national and cross-national survey undertaken in Australia and New Zealand. A lengthy questionnaire of 144 questions was completed by 6,200 respondents, 357 of whom were Israel-born and 675 of whom indicated they spoke Hebrew at home, and thus (though not necessarily) might be Israelis. The survey was a partnership between The Australian Centre for Jewish Civilization at Monash University in Melbourne, Jewish Care Victoria, the Jewish Communal Appeal in Sydney and B’nai B’rith in Auckland. It was led by Professor Andrew Markus, with assistance from Tanya Aronov and Dr. Nicky Jacobs. The survey maps social and professional characteristics of the Jewish population in Australia and New Zealand. It covers a wide range of aspects of Jewish life and identity in Australia, including religious practices and beliefs; Jewish education and

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<sup>80</sup> 602 Australian Jews participated in Rutland and Gariano’s survey, 77 of them Israelis. Also, 41 people were interviewed, only a few of them Israelis (the exact number of Israelis is not mentioned in the report).

Hebrew; social interaction and cohesion within the Jewish community; affiliation with Israel; and social needs and expectations. The findings, analysis and conclusions from the survey were published in a series of reports (Markus, 2011; Markus, et al., 2009; Taft & Markus, November 2011; Graham, March 2012).

In 2008 sociologist Erez Cohen published his analysis of Israeli “Mediascapes” in Melbourne. Cohen, who lived as an Israeli immigrant in Australia for several years, interviewed two Israeli radio broadcasters, operating Hebrew-speaking programs on a community radio station. He tried to illustrate questions of belonging and identity in a multicultural space. He concluded that the content of these programmes reflects “cultural loss and longing” and that is “a product of the ambivalence of the distance from a national space and a society that is in itself vibrant and socially divided” (Cohen, 2008, p. 1016). Although anecdotal and limited in scope, Cohen’s work stands out as the sole academic endeavour of an Israeli in Australia to approach the subject.

The latest addition to the body of research on Israelis in Australia is the recently published “Building a Nation” (2009). This book includes testimonials and life stories of several Israelis who immigrated to Australia in the 1950s and 1960s. The relevance of this oral-history project, initiated by the State Zionist Council of Victoria and the Makor Library in Melbourne, is the historical value it adds to the almost non-existent documenting of early Israeli community.

## **7.2. Before the 1990s**

Until recently, available research on Australian Israelis has been limited. Of the few studies that had been conducted on Israelis, most did not relate to them separately but rather as part of the larger Jewish community. This lack of scholarly attention was a result of two interwoven factors, which persisted until the late 1990s: small numbers and low profile. The combination of these factors led to a sort of “Israeli invisibility” in Australia.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the number of Israelis in Australia was generally stable and subject to only minor fluctuations. This was also a relatively small group compared to the general population and to other migrant groups. Census data collected from 1986 to 2001 (at 5-yearly intervals) recorded between 6,000-7,000 Israel-born in Australia (Table 7.1), representing 0.04 per cent of the general Australian population.

Table 7.1  
Israel-born in Australia, 1986-2011

Year	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Israel-born	7004	6204	6234	6573	7788	9228

Source:

Australian Bureau of Statistics -Census Data 1986-2011

The contribution of Israel-born to demographics of Australian Jewry was more significant - approximately eight per cent of the total Jewish-Australian population during that period (1986-2001). However, until the end of the twentieth century Israelis assumed a status of marginality within Australian Jewry. Evidence for the peripheral status of Israelis in Australia at that time can be found in a rare project initiated by Melbourne University linguist, Tim McNamara. Published in 1987, in the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, "Language and Social Identity: Israelis Abroad" is one the earliest undertakings relating to Israelis in Australia as a separate group.

McNamara conducted sixty interviews with Israeli informants in Melbourne (representing fifty families and five singles), accessed using a snowball-sampling technique. Most of the interviewees were either born in Israel or born elsewhere but were raised from an early age in Israel, and had arrived in Australia before the age of twelve. McNamara's objective was to understand Israeli immigrants interplay in three social spheres: the general Australian population, Australian Jewry and other Israelis in Australia (McNamara, 1987).

His findings indicate that, at that time, the profile of most Israelis who immigrated to Australia as adults corresponded with the general *Yordim* profile<sup>81</sup>. Most of them did not intend to immigrate to Australia as a predetermined destination for long-term resettlement. They came as a trickle of unmarried youngsters, passers-by, over-staying tourists, or almost "accidental" products of cross-national marriages with Jewish Australians.

There is further evidence supporting the assumption that these *Yordim* features of Israelis in Australia persisted until the mid-1990s. Testimonies of Israelis who immigrated as adults to Australia before 1990 ("Monash", 2009; Yafit, 2010) interviewed for this work, and others who documented their personal life stories in the oral-history project "Building a Nation" (Zionist Council of Victoria, 2009, pp. 21-22, 63, 223, 364), indicate how they had internalized the negative features ascribed to *Yordim* at the time. These Israeli emigrants recalled feelings of guilt and shame at the "betrayal" in leaving Israel and the unfulfilled intention to return there as soon as possible. The interviews also revealed feelings of being

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<sup>81</sup> On the characteristics of *Yordim*, see subchapter 23.1 "The Ideological *Yordim* School" of this thesis.

excluded from mainstream Israeli society and from the Australian Jewish community, even though living in its midst. In much the same way as other *Yordim* around the world<sup>82</sup>, Israelis in Australia chose to abstain from formulating separate, sustainable, community structures or institutes, which would suggest embracement of life outside Israel.

Apart from McNamara, only brief attention was being drawn to Israelis in Australia in studies on the Australian-Jewish community. For instance, 32 Israelis participated in the Jewish Community Survey, conducted in 1991 amongst Melbourne Jews. The survey was analysed in a 1993 report, on the needs of the Melbourne Jewish community. John Goldlust, the author of the report, made anecdotal references to the Israeli immigrants. The most significant of his remarks on Israelis was their avoidance of synagogue attendance and general estrangement from Judaism in its religious form, even at a symbolic level. According to Goldlust, this behaviour was a result of nationalistic, rather than religious, Jewish identity nurtured in Israel (Goldlust, 1993, p. 29). Unpublished material from this research also supports McNamara's findings on Hebrew not being maintained in second-generation Israelis in Australia.<sup>83</sup> According to McNamara, most first-generation Israeli immigrants to Australia did not make any special effort to preserve Hebrew as their children's primary tongue. Even if Hebrew was being taught to Israel-born siblings who were attending Jewish schools, as a general rule this language, an ethnic indicator for Israelis, was abandoned in Australia.

Israelis in Australia were briefly reviewed in the 1997 edition of *Edge of Diaspora*, on the history of Australian Jewry, by historian Suzanne Rutland of the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney. Rutland noted the lack of research on Israelis in Australia, while describing their immigration as "temporary". In a similar vein to Goldlust's account, she mentioned Israeli abstention from organized, local Jewish activity, other than sending their children to Jewish schools and functioning as a valuable nucleus of Hebrew teachers in these schools (Rutland, 1997, p. 366).

During the first decade of the twenty first century a gradual, yet steady, increase in research on Israelis in Australia can be noted. This shift is the result of two elements which were once characteristics of the "Israeli invisibility" that are rapidly changing.

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<sup>82</sup> See Shoked's account of abstention patterns of Israelis in New York (Shoked, 1991).

<sup>83</sup> Hebrew spoken at home - extracted from tables detailing the responses of the 32 Israelis participants in the study, as supplied to the author of this paper by Goldlust in April 2010.

### **7.3. The Emergence of an Israeli Cluster**

The first development has been in numbers. Since the beginning of the twenty first century the number of Israelis in Australia has gradually begun to increase. A few integrated factors have led to this population growth.

From an origin-country perspective, emigration from Israel has been increasing. The total number of emigrants from Israel since the turn of the century has reached a peak. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), from 2000 to 2010 more than 150,000 Israelis had left Israel to reside abroad. At the same time, immigrating to the United States, historically the most popular destination for Israeli emigrants had become more complicated. The 2001 September 11<sup>th</sup> terror attacks led to a tightening of regulations governing immigration to the United States. America's image was also declining worldwide, negatively affected by political, economic and social developments of recent years.<sup>84</sup> Israelis were turning to new immigration destination countries.

Australia became one such target country, being relatively open for skilled migration. Australia was open to migrants with a professional and educational profile compatible with the features of the Israeli emigrant population. For many years, the Australian government had been pursuing a policy encouraging skilled workers and professionals to migrate to Australia. Starting in John Howard's government (1996-2007), the "Migration Program", for regulating immigration, succeeded in doubling the intake of migrants, especially skilled migrants. Steady economic growth experienced in Australia since that period has further increased the country's appeal as a preferred immigration destination. Applying for an immigrant visa has also become more accessible from overseas in recent years, with the introduction of online applications via the internet.

These developments have been some of the reasons for the increase in the number of immigrants to Australia over the past fifteen years. Australia's immigrant intake per annum has increased over that time and since July 2000 this increase has become more noticeable, for both immigrants with a permanent resident visa and other types of visas<sup>85</sup> (Betts & Gilding, 2006). The total number of immigrants coming to Australia under the "Migration Program" scheme increased from 80,160 for 2000-

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<sup>84</sup> For a discussion on the changes in the image of the United States see, for example, a United States congress hearing held in 2008, titled: "The decline in America's reputation: Why?" (Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives, 2008).

<sup>85</sup> Non-permanent immigrant visas include: Business (Long Stay) visa (subclass 457) introduced in 1996; overseas student visa; working and holiday visa.

2001 to an estimated 190,300 for 2008-2009 (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009, pp. 26-27).

In the meantime, in Israel and in Australia, emigration-related networks were beginning to develop. The role of networks in inducing migration and mitigation of adjustment to the receiving markets and host societies has been recognized since the early twentieth century. Arango explains that “Networks constitute an intermediate, relational level that stands between the micro level of individual decision-making and the macro level of structural determinants” (Arango, 2004, p. 29). Through networking, prospective emigrants enjoy the support of immigrants who preceded them. The assistance can be in finding employment and housing; communicating with local authorities; parenting in a new environment, such as help in decision-making with regard to educational institutes; understanding relationships and social structures and much more. Immigration-related interaction initiated within networks can continue and develop into new spheres after the initial settlement stage. While some networks are socially based, for instance between family members, friends or former-country peer citizens, others are initiated and managed by immigration professionals, government institutes, organisations and private migration agents. Modern technology, especially global communication and the internet, enhances the ability, and increases the number, of networking channels to convey valuable, up-to-date information on a wide variety of aspects of immigration and acculturation experiences.

Israeli networking to, within and from Australia has been transformed over the past decade. The changes reflect a shift from a familial-acquaintance basis to broader connections based on shared interests, facilitated mostly through the internet. Early networking had been based mainly on the “chain migration” pattern: relatives or friends residing in Australia encouraging and expediting the arrival of new emigrants from Israel.

A change began when, in the year 2000, former Israeli resident Yiftah Saar (“Monash”) became the first Israel-born, registered, Hebrew-speaking immigration agent in Australia (others have since joined him<sup>86</sup>). These agents helped to facilitate the migration of a growing numbers of Israelis choosing Australia (as well as Canada).<sup>87</sup> Immigration policy changes, introduced since 1999, had been aimed at increasing the

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<sup>86</sup> Yiftah Saar’s immigration agency’s web site is: <http://www.emigrationonline.com/>. Examples of other Hebrew-speaking agents specializing in Israeli immigration are Synch1 (<http://www.synch1.com/about.php>), “This Is Australia” ([www.thisisaustralia.com](http://www.thisisaustralia.com)) and Chaim Geron (<http://www.chaimgeron.com/>).

<sup>87</sup> Choosing between the United States, Canada and Australia as immigration destinations is not unique for Israelis. On the contrary, it was commonplace among people who migrated to Australia over the last few years. See survey

proportion of skilled migrants within the total number of newcomers to Australia (Robertson, 2008, p. 85). Israeli emigrants are generally well-educated and have a good command of English. Thus, they have high prospects of being accepted into Australia as skilled migrants under the new policy.

Like other Israelis, migration-agent Saar understood the possible benefits of the internet for enhancing his business and enabling connections with Israelis within Australia and in Israel ("Monash", 2009). Hence, he was one of the Israelis in Australia involved in the founding of new internet-based networks. These networks were built on Israeli-Hebrew online forums such as "Ynet communities for Israelis in Australia" (started in 2000) and the "*Tapuz* forum for Israelis in Australia and New Zealand", opened in January 2003. Most of those original forums are still active today; in recent times they have been joined by specialized online social and professional networks, within applications such as "Facebook" or "LinkedIn". Within them, many Israelis, from both Australia and Israel, had already taken part in discussions and correspondence on a broad spectrum of migration-related issues, and they continue to do so<sup>88</sup>. Most of these groups are either inactive or focused on procedural and legal questions, regarding migration and studying, as well as requests for assistance in job-seeking. The biggest and most active group is that of the Israeli newspaper of Australia, *Eton*, with close to 500 members.<sup>89</sup> It is not a replica of the content of the newspaper, but rather an informative community board which hosts notices on events, projects and messages from the editorial board of the newspaper.

Information about Australia, and immigration to it, has become easily attainable for Israelis. For prospective emigrants, these frameworks make accessible views, ideas and advice on procedural aspects of migration and settlement, from Israelis residing in Australia, some of whom are professional migration officials. The internet also offers many other online sources of information about Australia with regards to immigration, both generally and specifically, from official bodies, organizations and private people. Other features of the immigration experience, such as social issues, questions of identity and interaction between the host society and local Jewry, are also available through these sources.

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among skilled migrants to Australia - Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *New Migrant Outcomes: Results from the third longitudinal survey of immigrants to Australia*. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, August 2007. pp. 16-17.

<sup>88</sup> Facebook is currently the world's most popular online social networking platform, with 500 million users. Apart from the *Eton* group, other groups Facebook hosted (November 2010) were for Israeli students in Australia, Israelis in Melbourne and "Israelis and Jews in Australia". LinkedIn is a business- and professional-oriented online social network. It hosts "Ausrael" – a group of Israelis in Australia (260 members in October 2010). Many members of the group are also members of the *Eton* Facebook group and/or active on the *Tapuz* forum.

<sup>89</sup> The Facebook group "תוני - ETON ISRAELI באוסטרליה הישראלי" (The Israeli newspaper in Australia, ETON) <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/group.php?gid=300452157578> (Accessed October 2010)

Many personal and professional contacts have been created due to the communication possibilities on these internet applications.

From a migration-studies perspective, the changes in the skilled-migrant route for immigration to Australia, and the establishment of Israel-Australia networks, enabled what Faist labelled “transference of social capital”. Faist refers to different kinds of “local assets” that a person has in his/her current place of residence. These assets include economic resources (money and goods), human capital (educational credentials and professional skills) and social capital, which Faist defines as “the transactions between individuals and groups that facilitate social action, and the benefits derived from these mechanisms” (Faist, 2000, p. 15). From this perspective, one of the factors influencing emigration is the question of whether these assets can be moved, at what cost and under what conditions, to the place of migration destination. While the transferring of most assets between states is regulated through international institutes and government, “migrants usually cannot transfer social capital abroad without pioneer migrants and brokers who help establishing migrant networks and link up with institutions in migration networks” (Faist, 2000, p. 17). As noted, changes in Australian immigration regulations and the emergence of accessible Israeli migrant networks greatly eased the transference of assets of all types from Israel. Consequently, the possible costs of transferring local assets became less of a negative incentive for emigration from Israel.

It is assumed that the image of Australia in Israel has also improved over the last twenty years. This assumption is hard to substantiate at this stage due to lack of empirical research on the subject; however, there is some evidence to support this claim. Australia’s appeal to emigrants from around the world over the past decade is evident, by and large, by the increasing numbers of incoming immigrants to it.<sup>90</sup> Among those who freely choose to immigrate to Australia, specifically skilled migrants, Australia is perceived as a country where a better future is feasible and more economic opportunities are possible.<sup>91</sup> It seems that such perceptions also persist among Israelis, the overwhelming majority of whom are immigrants by choice.

The following Table 7.2 and Figure 7.1 illustrate how the rate of Israel-born immigrants to Australia over the past two decades corresponded, on the one hand, with the general trends of Australia’s migrant

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<sup>90</sup> See data in Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Population Flows - Immigration Aspects, 2007-08 Edition*. Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009, pp. 4-5.

<sup>91</sup> See, for example, a survey among skilled migrants to Australia - Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *New Migrant Outcomes: Results from the third longitudinal survey of immigrants to Australia*. Department of Immigration and Citizenship, August 2007. pp. 16-17.



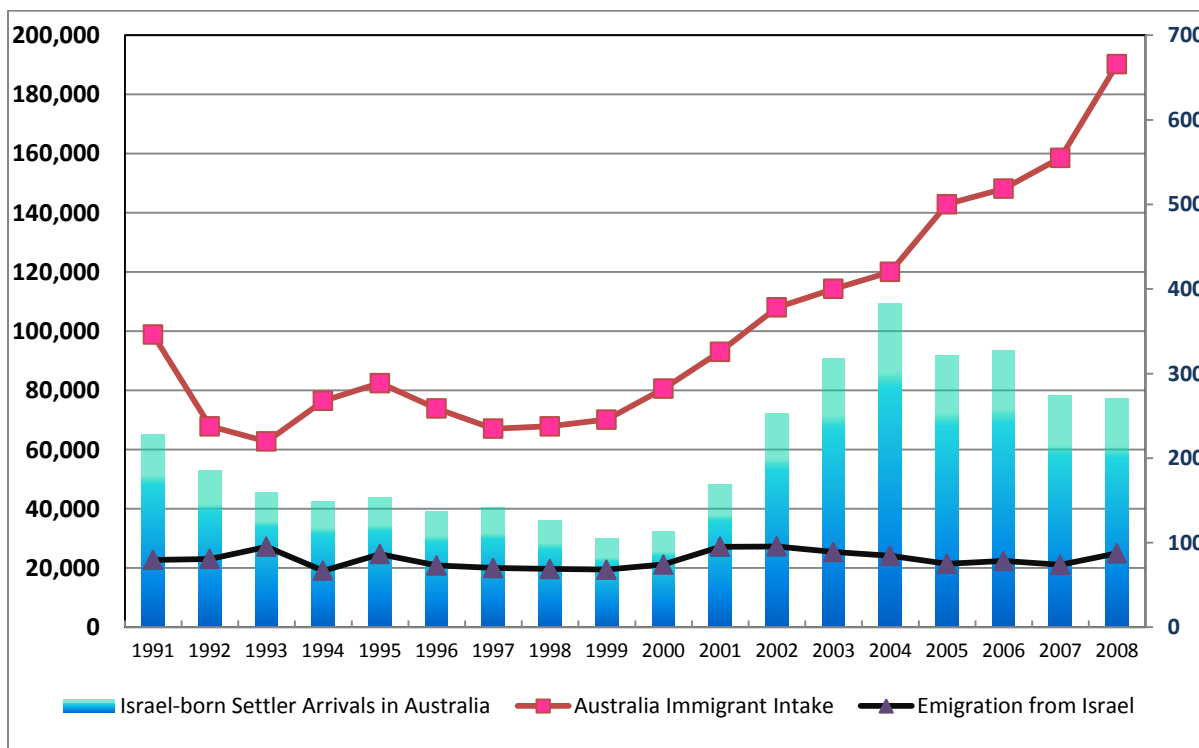
intake and, on the other hand, with emigration levels from Israel. There is clear compatibility between Australia's migrant intake and Israel-born immigration to Australia until 2004. A decrease in emigration from Israel from 2004 onwards is reflected in a parallel decline in Israeli immigration to Australia. The total number of Israel-born immigrants to Australia during the 2000s is already at least twice as high, if not more, than in the 1990s.

Table 7.2

Australia Immigrant intake, Emigration from Israel and Israel-born Settler Arrivals in Australia 1991-2007 (Numbers and Percentages)

Year	Australia's Immigrant Intake # *	Emigration from Israel **	Israel-born Settler Arrivals in Australia *** ##	Israel-born Settlers in Australia as % of Emigrants leaving Israel	Israel-born Settlers in Australia as % of Australia's Immigrant Intake
1991	98,900	22,800	228	1.00	0.23
1992	67,900	23,100	185	0.80	0.27
1993	62,800	27,200	160	0.59	0.25
1994	76,500	19,100	149	0.78	0.19
1995	82,500	24,700	154	0.62	0.19
1996	73,900	20,900	137	0.66	0.19
1997	67,100	20,000	142	0.71	0.21
1998	67,900	19,700	126	0.64	0.19
1999	70,200	19,500	105	0.54	0.15
2000	80,610	21,200	114	0.54	0.14
2001	93,080	27,200	169	0.62	0.18
2002	108,070	27,300	253	0.93	0.23
2003	114,360	25,400	318	1.25	0.28
2004	120,060	24,200	383	1.58	0.32
2005	142,930	21,500	322	1.50	0.23
2006	148,200	22,400	327	1.46	0.22
2007	158,630	21,100	274	1.30	0.17
2008	190,300###	NA	271	-	0.14

Figure 7.1  
Australia's Immigrant Intake, Emigration from Israel and Israel-born Settler Arrivals in Australia  
1991-2007



Note, that in Figure 5.1 graph lines for the data series “Australia Immigrant Intake” and “Emigration for Israel” relate to the primary axis on the left (range 0 - 200,000), while the graph line for “Israel-born Emigration to Australia” data series is scaled to the secondary axis on the right (range 0 - 700).

#### Notes

# Australia's Immigrant Intake is the number of immigrants legally entering Australia annually. The data is defined by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship as “Migration Program Outcome data”.

(Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Population Flows - Immigration Aspects, 2007-08 Edition*. Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009. P27)

## Australian Bureau of Statistics “Permanent Arrivals” data, which is the same as “Settler Arrivals” definition of settlers used by Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010)

### Planned projection

#### Sources for Table 7.2 and Figure 7.1 :

\* Australia's Immigrant Intake (Australia's Migration Program Outcome ):

For the years 2000-2008 - Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Population Flows - Immigration Aspects, 2007-08 Edition*. Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009. P27.

For the years 1991-1999 - Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. *Population Flows: Immigration Aspects 2000 Edition*. Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 2000, P. 16.

\*\* Emigrants Leaving Israel -

Marina Shaps, Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (Private correspondence, 28 April 2010).

\*\*\* Israel-born Settler Arrivals in Australia -

For the years 1998-2008 - Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Settler Arrivals 2008-2009*. Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010, P. 6.

For the years 1991-1997 - Australian Bureau of Statistics, 3412.0 Migration, Australia 2005-06 - Table 1

Permanent arrivals, Country of birth, 1975-76 to 2005-06 (Australian Bureau of Statistics web site:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3412.02007-08?OpenDocument>)

The reasons for Israeli emigration to Australia, as perceived by the migrants themselves are discussed at length in another part of this thesis<sup>92</sup>. For this chapter an Israel-specific explanation should be presented for the increase in the number of immigrants coming to Australia since the beginning of the twenty first century. This growth in numbers is mainly a result of several factors which operated over the past twenty years, and continue to do so today, which increase Australia's appeal as an immigration destination and promote its exposure to Israelis. First, there are individuals and companies who recognize profit-potential in encouraging and facilitating Israeli permanent immigration or short-stay work in Australia. These include migration agents and companies who approach wide audiences and introduce the benefits of migration to Australia. They are joined by recruiting companies, who promote work migration by marketing Australia as a favourable work-destination in newspaper advertisements and on the internet, especially targeting Israeli youngsters.<sup>93</sup> Youngsters are also clients of "Campus Studies"<sup>94</sup> - a specialized agency which helps Israelis to study abroad, including in Australia, and operates as a representative for some Australian Universities.

The number of tourists from Israel to Australia has also doubled over the last two decades. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, visitor-arrival movements from Israel<sup>95</sup> increased from 73,700 during the 1990s (1991-1999) to 145,900 for 2000-2009 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Many of these tourists are young "backpackers", in their popular post-army-service journey abroad. Some of the Israeli visitors to Australia, whether tourists, workers or students, become "Tourist Dwellers"<sup>96</sup>, living and working in Australia for predetermined periods. Occasional news items and stories in the Israeli media,

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<sup>92</sup> For a detailed discussion on the reasons for Israeli immigration to Australia as portrayed by the emigrants themselves see chapter 8 "The migration perception and experience" of this thesis.

<sup>93</sup> A few examples (and there are many more) of companies promoting short-term working in Australia (and in some cases also in other countries) via the internet to young Israelis: [http://www.aust.co.il/JOB/job\\_index.html](http://www.aust.co.il/JOB/job_index.html) ; <http://www.virgo.co.il/Page.asp?id=64> ; <http://zoco.co.il/> ; <http://www.dingodesign.co.il/main.php> .

<sup>94</sup> Campus Studies web site: <http://www.campus-studies.co.il/siteFiles/1/21/275.asp>

<sup>95</sup> Overseas arrivals and departures statistics relate to the number of movements of travellers rather than the number of travellers (i.e. multiple movements of individual persons during a given reference period are each counted separately). The statistics exclude the movements of operational air and ships' crew, transit passengers who pass through Australia but are not cleared for entry, passengers on pleasure cruises commencing and finishing in Australia, and unauthorised arrivals.

<sup>96</sup> A term coined by Bloch-Tzemach for young Israeli women working in Japan (Bloch-Tzemach, 2002).

on the various aspects of Australian life and culture, provide a sporadic exposure to Australia in Israel. Recently, several literary works about the experiences of being an Israeli in Australia have been published, such as the bestseller "An Australian Wedding" (2009) by Nava Semel, and the less well-known "So how was your day?" by Shula Weitz (2009).<sup>97</sup>

Australia's positive image in Israel also resonates in interviews with Israelis. In interviews for this thesis, Israelis who immigrated to Australia before the 1980s described Australia's previous image in Israel as "a desert" and a "faraway place". In contrast to those earlier perceptions, the interviewees testified experiencing very different responses from relatives and friends on recent visits to Israel, expressions of jealousy and envy and constant requests for help in arranging emigration to Australia (Yafit, 2010; "Monash", 2009). A survey among Israelis in Israel about their image of Australia was published in the Israeli newspaper in Australia, ETON, in 2007. Several Israeli residents who were interviewed for the newspaper expressed their aspirations to live in Australia, because of what they perceived as positive aspects of life in this country (quiet, no security threat, spacious) which were absent from life in Israel (Anon., 2007, p. 17).

#### **7.4. Analysis of the 2006 Census data and other sources**

Available Australian census data on Israel-born allows for general demographic analysis.

Analysing Australian census data on Jews in general, and Israel-born Jews specifically, raises additional questions to the other issues of analysing demographic data<sup>98</sup>. Since it is not mandatory to answer the question on religious affiliation in the census, some Jews will not respond to it, or at least not identify themselves as Jews. This is because they might view their Jewishness on a social or ethnic basis, and not a religious one. Secular Jews might differentiate themselves from non-seculars Jews, and consequently answer "no religion" or something similar, although technically, from a religious-law point of view, they are Jews (when the mother is Jewish). Rutland and Gariano claim that, in order to compensate for those Jews unwilling to identify themselves as such in the census, it is necessary to make an adjustment by adding up to 25 per cent to their number. They then summarise that census data on Jews is constrained

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<sup>97</sup> "An Australian Wedding" describes the author's journey to the Byron Bay area, following the relationship between the author's son and an Australian girl, where she also meets several former Israelis. "So how was your day?" is a fictional romance about the life of an Israeli psychologist coming to work in a Sydney Hospital, reviewing also the relationship with Australian culture, Australian Jews and Israelis residing in Australia. It is based on the author's own experiences.

<sup>98</sup> For a discussion on the reliability and challenges of obtaining data on Israeli emigrants see chapter 2 "Israeli diasporants' identity" of this thesis.

by two major limitations: “The coverage reflects Jewishness as defined by religious self-identification alone” and “Issues of under-enumeration” (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 3).

In the 2006 census, one in ten (853, 10.9 per cent) Israel-born residents in Australia noted Arabic as the language spoken at home, almost all of them (all but 6) non-Jewish. These are most likely Arab Israelis. One in every five (1,632, 20.9 per cent) Israel-born residents in Australia indicated religion other than Jewish in the census, mainly Christianity (the majority of whom are Catholic). They are also most likely to be Arab Israelis. A few other members of this group might be children of non-Jewish FSU immigrants, who arrived during the wave of FSU immigration to Israel in 1990s.<sup>99</sup> For reasons outlined previously<sup>100</sup>, specifically that they present similar characteristics to Jewish emigrants, non-Jewish Israel-born Australian residents are included in the following analysis of the 2006 census data on Israelis.

### **Estimating current Israeli population in Australia**

The 2006 census indicated the existence of the largest cluster of Israelis ever recorded in Australia. It counted an all-time peak of 7,788 Israel-born residing in Australia, 18 per cent more than in 2001<sup>101</sup>. However, when trying to estimate the total population of Israelis in Australia it is necessary to add Israelis not born in Israel, or “foreign-born”. One methodology that can be used to estimate the number of foreign-born Israelis in Australia would be to implement Yinon Cohen’s methodology. Cohen claims that within the general Israeli emigrant population the number of Israel-born and foreign-born is similar (Cohen, 2009, p. 6). For Australia in 2006 this means double the 7,788 Israel-born residents, or 15,576 Israelis in Australia.

A different approach to track the number of foreign-born Israeli immigrants to Australia, and the general Israeli emigrant population in Australia, would be to examine the statistics with regard to Hebrew speakers (Gold, 2002, pp. 23-24). The 2006 census counted 7,568 Australian residents who speak Hebrew at home, 85 per cent of whom noted Judaism as their religion. Half the total Australian Hebrew speakers at home (3,576, 47.3 per cent) had been born in Israel; an additional third (2,452, 32.7 per cent) had been born in Australia (Table 7.3). In other words, a maximum number of 3,992 persons speaking Hebrew can be categorised as Israelis, adding 51 per cent to the 2006 Israeli population in

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<sup>99</sup> Out of the approximately 1 million FSU immigrants to Israel in the 1990s, a third were not Jews according to religious Jewish law (Halacha) but identified themselves as Jews; only about 25,000 registered themselves as Christians in Israel’s population register (Ilany, 2006, p. 60).

<sup>100</sup> See chapter 2 “Israeli diasporants’ identity” of this thesis.

<sup>101</sup> The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007 projection for the Israel-born population in Australia was set to 9,737 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008, p. 62). 2011 census counted 9,228 Israel-born in Australia, which is again 18 per cent more than in 2006.

Australia. Thus, according to this methodology, 11,780 Israelis (7,788 Israel-born + 3,992 foreign-born but Hebrew speakers) resided in Australia in 2006.

Table 7.3  
Place of Birth of Australian Residents Speaking Hebrew at Home, 2006

Place of Birth	Total	Per cent
Israel	3,577	47.3
Australia	2,452	32.4
Europe	607	8.0
South Africa	172	2.3
North Africa and Middle East (Not Israel)	142	1.9
Former Soviet Union	133	1.8
USA and Canada	121	1.6
Rest of the world	164	2.2
Not stated / Inadequately described / Other	200	2.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,568</b>	<b>100</b>

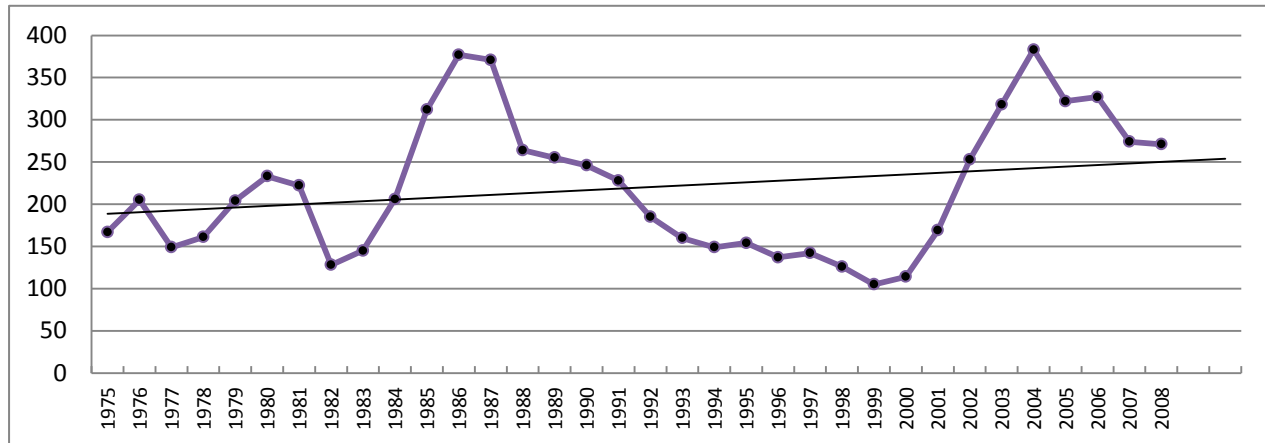
Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, CDATA online.

## Immigration

The Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) defines ‘Settlers’ as persons arriving in Australia with a legal eligibility for long-term settlement, such as a permanent visa, or a temporary visa together with “a clear intention to settle” (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010, p. 62). The Australian Bureau of Statistics uses the term “Permanent arrivals” for the same data.<sup>102</sup> Data gathered from both departments on Israel-born (Figure 7.2) demonstrates that a decline in settler arrivals per annum from Israel was recorded between 1988 and 1999, and a steady increase was recorded between 1982 and 1987, and again between 2000 and 2004, with a peak of 383 settler arrivals from Israel in 2004. 2005 to 2009 data indicates a new downward trend.

<sup>102</sup> With regard to “Permanent arrivals”, the Australian Bureau of Statistics explains that “This definition of settlers is used by DIAC [Department of Immigration and Citizenship]. Prior to 1985 the definition of settlers used by the ABS was the stated intention of the traveller only. Numerically the effect of the change in definition is insignificant. The change was made to avoid the confusion caused by minor differences between data on settlers published separately by the ABS and DIAC” (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Figure 7.2  
Israel-born Settler Arrivals in Australia 1975 to 2009, with a Linear Trend Line



Sources:

1975-2005 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue number 3412.0.

2006-2008 Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Settler Arrivals 2008 - 2009*. Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2010. P11.

Of those surveyed in the 2006 census, almost half (3,430, or approximately 45 per cent) of Israel-born residents arrived in Australia after 1990, and a quarter after 2000 (Table 7.4). Moreover, more than half (54.45 per cent) of Israel-born residents arrived in Australia after 1990 (Table 7.5). These figures indicate that the majority of Israel-born immigrants in Australia, having arrived in Australia after 1990, are likely to belong to the post-*Yordim* type of emigrant, free of the negative perceptions attached to previous generations of emigrants.

Table 7.4  
Arrival Year in Australia of Israel-born Residents, 2006 Census (1948-2006)

Period	Israel-born Emigrants	Per cents
1948-1959	721	9.26
1960-1969	682	8.76
1970-1979	940	12.07
1980-1989	1,542	19.80
1990-1999	1,352	17.36
2000-2006	2,078	26.68
Not Stated	473	6.07
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,788</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, CData online.

Table 7.5

Permanent Arrivals in Australia of Israel-born Emigrants (1975-2008, 5-year intervals)

Period	1975-79	1980-84	1985-89	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-08	Total
Permanent Arrivals	886	934	1579	968	664	1237	1194	<b>7462</b>
Percentage	11.87	12.52	21.16	12.97	8.90	16.58	16.00	<b>100</b>

Sources:

1975-2005 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue number 3412.0.

2006-2008 Department of Immigration and Citizenship - Australian Government, 2010, p11.

The issue of returnees should also be addressed. The return of many Israeli émigrés to Israel, even after a long period of living abroad, is well-documented, and is being monitored and encouraged by Israeli agencies (Gold, 2002, p. 217).<sup>103</sup> In Australia authorities follow the number of permanent departures overseas, defined as “Australian residents who on departure from Australia state that they are departing permanently” (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009), including Israel-born, most of whom, it can be assumed, return to Israel. A “return rate” is the number of returnees to Israel expressed as a percentage of the number of people emigrating out of Israel. Thus, the return rate for Israel-born from Australia to Israel is calculated as the number of Israel-born permanently departing from Australia divided by the number of incoming Israeli immigrants to Australia. The average return rate of Israelis from Australia (as calculated in (Table 7.6) is higher than for the global figure, and is over fifty per cent (52.86), as opposed to the global figure of 37.8 per cent)<sup>104</sup>.

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<sup>103</sup> See Figure 6.1 in this thesis.

<sup>104</sup> The return rate of Israelis from Australia and globally calculated excluding the data not available (worldwide for the years 2008-2010) is 47 per cent. This figure is still ten per cent higher than the global figure (37.8 per cent).



Table 7.6

Arrivals and Departures of Israel-born Residents of Australia, and Return Rate of Israelis from Australia and Worldwide 1997-2007 (Numbers and Percentages)

Year	Arrivals *	Departures **	Net	Return Rate (Departing / Emigrants) , Per cents	
				Australia	Worldwide ****
1997	142	51	75	35.92	36.06
1998	126	57	48	45.24	33.04
1999	105	63	51	60.00	35.04
2000	114	75	94	65.79	39.50
2001	169	97	156	57.40	28.82
2002	253	80	238	31.62	30.40
2003	318	123	260	38.68	35.83
2004	383	103	219	26.89	41.31
2005	322	142	185	44.10	48.84
2006	327	161	113	49.24	42.86
2007	274	171	152	62.41	44.08
2008	271	184 ***	87	67.90	NA
2009	298 #	172 ##	126	57.71	NA
2010	173 #	168 ##	5	97.10	NA
<b>Average</b>	<b>233.93</b>	<b>117.64</b>	<b>129.21</b>	<b>52.86</b>	<b>37.80</b>

Sources:

\* Australian Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue number 3412.0.

\*\* Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Emigration 2007-08 Australia. Belconnen: National Communications Branch of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008. P10.

\*\*\* Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Immigration update 2008-09. Belconnen: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009. P30.

\*\*\*\* Marina Shaps, Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (Private correspondence, 28 April 2010).

# Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Immigration update 2010-11. Belconnen: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2011. P. 15.

# Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Immigration update 2010-11. Belconnen: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2011. P. 30.

The returnees to Israel also include residents who are part of the general flow of temporary skilled workers admitted into Australia on a Business (Long Stay) visa (subclass 457), which was first introduced in 1996. Some work in branches of companies headquartered in Israel. Australian authorities grant entry to a few hundred Israelis (Table 7.7) with such visas every year. Some of these Israelis return to Israel after their visa period expires, while others legally change their status to become permanent residents.

Table 7.7

Israel-born Temporary Business Entry (Visa subclass 457) and Temporary Residents in Australia (June 2008-June 2009)

Date	30/06/2008	30/09/2008	31/12/2008	31/03/2009	30/06/2009
Israel-born Temporary Business Entry*	436	484	461	436	423
Temporary Israel-born Residents Present in Australia**	704	788	815	765	724
<b>TOTAL**</b>	<b>245,479</b>	<b>263,751</b>	<b>264,727</b>	<b>292,413</b>	<b>269,070</b>

Sources:

\* Department of Immigration and Citizenship. [Immigration update 2008-09](#). Belconnen: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009. P47

\*\* Temporary Entrants in Australia Data, Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

### Locations

Similar to other emigrant groups in Australia, most Israel-born emigrants reside in the suburbs of major Australian cities (Hugo, 2002, p. 5). Lev Ari and Rebhun explain that it is anticipated that Israeli Jews immigrating to the United States would settle in or next to regions with high Jewish concentration. In the United States - and the same in Australia - these are mostly large metropolitan neighbourhoods, which are also attractive due to economic opportunities and cultural abundance. Factors such as reasons for emigration, origins (Israel born, foreign born) or level of religiosity may influence choice of residence:

Those who leave Israel mainly due to push factors, as opposed to stimuli in the destination country, encounter more social and cultural difficulties in their absorption, not to mention psychological hardships; accordingly, they seek informal relations with members of their ethno-religious group, including areas of residence.

(Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 49)

Generally, Israelis in Australia follow the same pattern as exhibited by their Israelis in the United States, and settle within or in proximity to large Jewish concentrations. Melbourne, in Victoria, hosts the biggest number of Israeli residents, followed closely by Sydney in New South Wales. Both metropolises include more than 3,000 Israel-born inhabitants and together they are home to more than 80 per cent of the Israeli population of Australia. Other cities which are relatively popular among Israel-born emigrants are Perth in Western Australia, Brisbane in Queensland (approximately 7 per cent each) and, to a lesser extent, Adelaide in South Australia (2.5 per cent).

Table 7.8  
State of Residence of Israel-born Emigrants in Australia in 2006, 2005 and 2001

State	2006	Place of usual residence 1 year ago	Place of usual residence 5 years ago
Victoria	3,268	3,026	2,352
New South Wales	3,100	2,858	2,301
Western Australia	568	547	415
Queensland	537	461	347
South Australia	181	160	133
Australian Capital Territory	97	87	66
Tasmania	23	17	15
Northern Territory	14	12	11
Not stated	N/A	113	196
N/A	0	3	170
Overseas	N/A	504	1,782

Sources: (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009)

Until recently Israelis conformed to the model of “community attraction”. According to this pattern, new emigrants tend to find accommodation within, or close to, the geographical areas where their respective diaspora communities are already settled (Birrell & Rapson, 2002, p. 17). In Melbourne, Sydney and, to a lesser extent, Perth, the majority of Israeli emigrants used to live either inside, or in the vicinity of, established Jewish neighbourhoods.<sup>105</sup> The choice to stay within a Jewish setting was motivated by, amongst other factors, the need to use facilities offered by the Jewish community, mainly schools, and, to a lesser extent, religious services (synagogues, kosher food). Also, Israelis in Australia tend to open businesses within Jewish areas, assuming that Jews are an accessible clientele.

However, this residential pattern seems to be changing. Israelis are moving further away from Jewish urban centres. Over the past decade, the price of buying or renting accommodation has risen dramatically in Australia’s major cities. Prices have become notably higher in Jewish neighbourhoods, which are usually located relatively close to city centres. At the same time, Israeli emigrants have begun sending their children to public and other non-Jewish educational institutes, in part due to the high costs of Jewish education. Thus, a combination of economic considerations and a decline in dependency on

<sup>105</sup> In Melbourne and Sydney, for example, the majority of Israelis reside in the Eastern suburbs, within or next to the Jewish neighbourhoods. In Perth, Israelis reside around Dianella, north of the Swan River. In Brisbane some Israelis have gathered around Carindale (relatively close to the Sinai College Jewish School) and Kenmore, while the rest are scattered around the city.

Jewish community services has led some newer Israeli immigrants to settle in non-Jewish suburbs, or even in locations closer to rural areas.

Table 7.9

Victoria - Suburbs with 80 or more Israel-born Residents and Australian Jewish Population, 2006

Suburb	Israel-born	Rank	Jews	Rank
Caulfield North	352	1	6,127	1
Caulfield South	271	2	3,948	2
Bentleigh East	248	3	1,998	5
St Kilda East	183	4	3,123	3
Caulfield	167	5	2,088	4
Elsternwick	111	6	1,579	6
Brighton East	104	7	1,481	8
Bentleigh	82	8	846	10

Table 7.10

New South Wales - Suburbs with 80 or more Israel-born Residents and Australian Jewish Population, 2006

Suburb	Israel-born	Rank	Jews	Rank
Rose Bay	142	1	2358	2
Vaucluse	131	2	2163	3
North Bondi	121	3	2002	4
Bellevue Hill	116	4	2363	1
Bondi	94	5	1539	7
Dover Heights	81	6	1944	6

Table 7.11

Western Australia - Suburbs with 30 or more Israel-born Residents and Australian Jewish Population, 2006

Suburb	Israel-born	Rank	Jews	Rank
Dianella	96	1	1,548	1
Yokine	46	2	528	2
Noranda	30	3	495	3

Source for Tables 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, CData online.

A different settlement pattern for Israelis in Australia can be found in the coastal areas next to the border between New South Wales and Queensland, mainly in the local government areas of Byron and the Gold Coast. The area hosts a rural-minded gathering of Israelis, specifically in the towns of Byron

Bay, Mullumbimby and Ocean Shores. The 2006 census recorded 276 Israel-born residents and an additional 132 Hebrew speakers at home, who are not Israel-born, which adds up to 408 Israelis in these areas. This number constitutes the largest Israeli cluster outside the most populated Australian cities (Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Brisbane, Adelaide), and 26 per cent of the Jewish population in these areas (Table 7.12). Israeli presence in these towns is seasonally increased when they are joined by a few hundred Israeli tourists and passers-by, mostly youngsters, who are often drawn to the area, considered to be a major tourist attraction due to the coastal setting and the environmentally-oriented community.

Table 7.12

Jews and Israel-born Residents in the coastal Local Government Areas close to border of New South Wales and Queensland, 2006

Local Government Area (LGA)	Jews	Israel-born	Hebrew Speakers, Not Israel-born
<b>New South Wales</b>			
Byron	214	87	47
Tweed	78	20	8
Lismore	36	8	7
Ballina	47	7	6
<b>Queensland</b>			
Gold Coast	1,161	144	57
Beaudesert	33	10	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,569</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>132</b>

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, CData online.

Israelis living in the aforementioned areas testify<sup>106</sup> that over the past few years their number has grown. A story in *Eton* about the Israeli community in and around Byron Bay states that:

The number of Israelis now living in the area has reached 500 people. However, among the residents there is disagreement, and some claim that [the number] has reached more than a thousand [...] Since the beginning of the 21st century immigration [of Israelis] to the Byron vicinity has increased and changed dramatically [...] Over a few years a considerable and united community of Israelis has grown in Byron.

(Kimchi, 2006)

There is some evidence to support these claims. For example, Israeli participation in cultural and religious activities being held at the Centres of the *Chabad* Jewish movement<sup>107</sup>, in Surfers paradise and

<sup>106</sup> An Israeli living in Byron Bay claims the existence of “Tens, if not hundreds, of Israeli families with small children” in his area (*Tapuz* forum for Israelis in Australia and New Zealand, February 2006, in Hebrew: <http://www.tapuz.co.il/Forums2008/ViewMsg.aspx?ForumId=697&MessageId=72794233>)

Byron Bay and in other venues in the vicinity<sup>108</sup>; and the operation in Mullumbimby of a branch of the Jewish Zionist youth movement, *Habonim Dror*, who have 20-30 members, most of whom are Israeli youth.<sup>109</sup> Israeli scholar, Orit Ben-Harush, interviewed five Israeli women residing at Ocean Shores, all of whom claimed the existence of a notable Israeli presence and Israeli social activity in the area (Ben-Harush, Due 2011). A more literary anecdotal description of Israelis living in the “Rainbow Region” (an area from Bellingen in New South Wales, north to the Queensland border) is found in the novel “An Australian wedding” (2009) by Israeli author Nava Semel. She documented her journey to the area following her son’s wedding to a local Australian girl, during which she encountered several Israelis residing there (Semel, 2009).

### **Age, gender, family and origin**

The age distribution of Israel-born Australians suggests that it is a young group compared to other migrant populations. In 2006 the median age of the Israel-born population in Australia was 40.2 years, lower than the 46.8 years median age for all overseas-born, and slightly higher than 37.1 years for the total Australian population. More than half (55 per cent) of the Israel-born are within the 30-59 age range, a higher proportion than for the same age group in the general Australian population (42 per cent). Men constituted 55 per cent of the Israel-born, a sex ratio of 120.5 males per 100 females (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, n.d.)

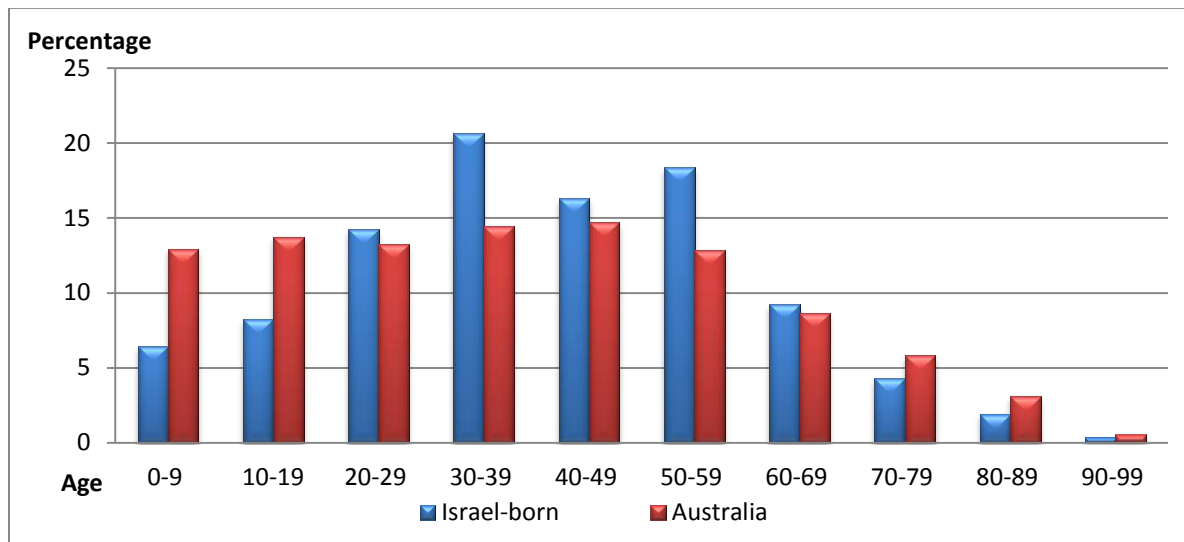
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<sup>107</sup> A discussion about *Chabad* and its interaction with Israelis in Australia, see subchapter 12.7 “Jewish identity of children - *Chabad* and the Israelis in Australia” of this thesis.

<sup>108</sup> Israeli folk dancing is held, for example, in Byron Bay and Mullumbimby (see for example: <http://www.echonews.com/index.php?page=Whats+On&issue=254>)

<sup>109</sup> Information supplied by Eran Berkovich, Head of the JAFI Educational Delegation, Australia - private email correspondence, 4 July 2010.

Figure 7.3  
Age distribution of Israel-born in Australia and Australia's General Population 2006  
(Percentages)



Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, CData online.

Two thirds (67.5 per cent) of Israel-born emigrants in 2006 were either currently married or had been married in the past. 15 per cent (1,143) of these Israelis were aged 19 or younger, while a third (33.5 per cent, 2,230) of Israeli adults (over 20 years old) indicated that they were providing unpaid childcare for their own children.

Table 7.13  
Relationship Status of Israel-born Emigrants in Australia, 2006

Personal Status	Male	Female	Total
Married	2,357	1,844	4,201
Divorced	303	292	595
Widowed	46	207	253
Separated	118	87	205
Total Married or Previously Married	2824	2,430	5,254
Never married	993	694	1,687
Not applicable	439	408	847
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,256</b>	<b>3,532</b>	<b>7,788</b>

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, CData online.

The question on ancestry in the 2006 census yielded answers by Israel-born which can be interpreted in different ways. Most Israel-born respondents (3,200) reported their ancestry to be "Middle Eastern". When given by Israelis, this reply is open to at least two different interpretations. Firstly, that they or

their forefathers or foremothers originate from Middle Eastern countries other than Israel (Arab or Muslim countries), which makes the respondents of oriental origin (*Mizrahim*). Secondly, that they or their forefathers or foremothers were born in Israel, which is also a Middle Eastern country. In the latter case, this response confirms the already-known fact that the respondent, or at least one of his parents, is an Israel-born or a “*Sabra*”.<sup>110</sup> Another possibility is that some members of this group could be the descendants of previous generations of western origin (*Ashkenazim*). An additional 670 Israel-born participants indicated that their ancestry was “Jewish”. This reply reflects what could be confusion between religious affiliation and ancestry, or an ideological perception that both are alike. More than 2,000 respondents reported their ancestors as being from one of the European countries attributed to western-origin Jews (*Ashkenazim*). Also, in the 2006 census up to two responses per person were allowed to the ancestry question. 18 per cent (1,353) of Israel-born added a second ancestry, more than half of which (870) can be attributed to an *Ashkenazi* ancestry.

### **Educational features**

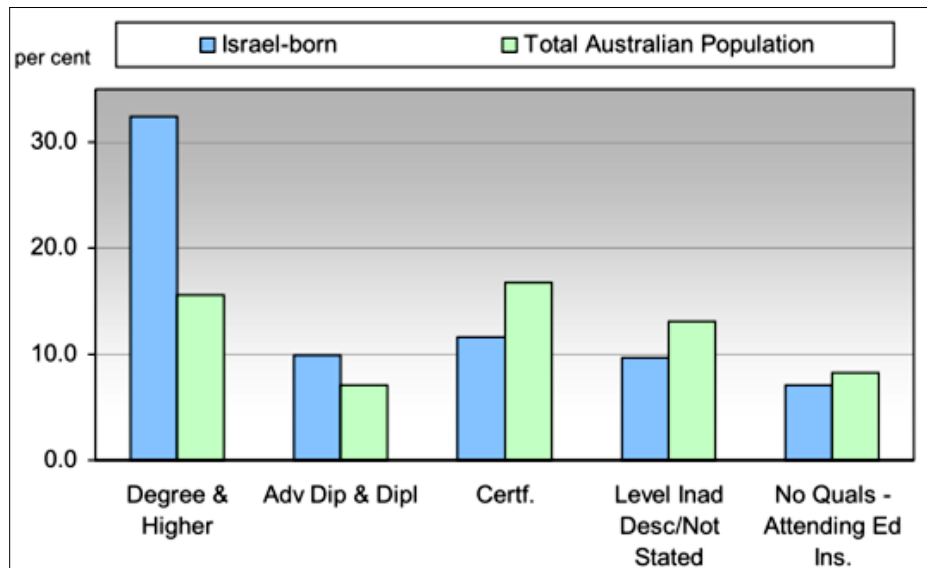
Israel-born Australians are highly educated. This is similar to the levels of education in Israel, and within the Israeli emigrant population in general, specifically in the United States (Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 65). In 2006, 63.6 per cent of adult Israel-born immigrants in Australia (aged 15 years and older) had some form of higher, non-school qualifications, 42.3 per cent of whom held at least a diploma, a degree or higher. This percentage is higher than the level of education achieved by the rest of the Australian public: 52.5 per cent with higher non-school qualifications (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, n.d.). It is also higher than the parallel 2006 data for Jews in Australia (Israelis included) of 56.5 per cent (Markus & Aronov, 2009, p. 49).

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<sup>110</sup> “*Sabra*” - *Tzabar* in Hebrew, translates into “cactus”. A term used to describe Israel-born people.



Figure 7.4  
Qualification Levels of Israel-born Emigrants in Australia and Australia's General Population, 2006 (Percentages)



Source:

Department of Immigration and Citizenship, n.d.

Israelis who come to Australia on various student visas<sup>111</sup> is a relatively new phenomenon. They make up a very small group, a few hundred, of the hundreds of thousands of overseas students studying at higher education institutes in Australia every year (Table 7.14). After graduating, some of these students change their legal status and apply for Australian citizenship; others choose to return to Israel for various reasons.

<sup>111</sup> For an explanation of the various Student Visa types see: Citizenship n.d. According to Saar, the first group of Israeli students came to Australia in 2002 as part of an exchange program. He claims that, before this date, there were only a few of them to be found in Australia ("Monash", 2009).

Table 7.14

Australian Student Visas granted to Israeli Passport Holders and Total Non-Australian Students in Australia, 2002-2010

Period	Israeli Passport Holders *	Total Non-Australian Students ** #
2002-2003	181	171,619
2003-2004	142	177,292
2004-2005	204	190,400
2005-2006	256	208,038
2006-2007	241	248,814
2007-2008	294	317,897
2008-2009	347	386,523
2009-2010	172	NA

# Number of students on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the concluding year of the period (for example, June 30<sup>th</sup> 2003 for 2002-2003). Figures exclude New Zealand citizens.

Sources:

\* Department of Immigration and Citizenship website - Student Visa Statistics.

\*\* For 2002-2003 until 2007-2008 - Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Annual Report 2007-08*. Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2008, P60.

For 2009 - Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Immigration update 2008-09*. Belconnen: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009, P40.

## **SECTION THREE**

## 8. The migration perception and experience

### 8.1. Emigration and immigration

#### Push and pull factors

In his study of the Israeli Diaspora, Gold concluded that the main reasons why Israelis emigrate from their home country are: economic opportunism; kinship in host countries; a personal “need for broader horizons”; reaction to a stressful or rejectionist social sphere in Israel; and disappointment about political and social developments (Gold, 2002). Israeli demographer Sergio DellaPergola enumerates six main determinants for emigration from Israel: response to changes in main economic indicators; migrant return or circular migration; correspondence between immigrant's characteristics and pool of opportunities, mainly in the socio-economic and employment spheres; employment opportunities as against "occupational bottlenecks" in Israel ; response to security related events; "as an expression of the level of cultural and/or emotional identification" with Israel and its society (DellaPergola, Winter 2011, p. 13). When discussing the migration of Israelis to the United States, Lev Ari and Rebhun summarise their perception of the decision making process behind emigration in general:

As a rule, the decision to emigrate, or alternatively to ‘stay put’, is made after weighing the balance of positive and negative factors in areas of origin and destination, considering the intervening obstacles of various kinds, and taking into account the expected cost-benefit outcome of emigration, especially in terms of monetary reward.

(Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 28)

Both Rutland and Gariano’s *Jews in the Diaspora* 2005 survey and the Gen08 survey engaged with the reasons for Israeli immigration to Australia (push and pull factors) (Table 8.1)<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>112</sup> On push-pull factors see subchapter 8.1 “Emigration and immigration8.1” of this thesis.

Table 8.1

Top 5 reasons for immigration and push and pull factors by Israel-born respondents in surveys amongst Australian Jews (percentages of responses)

***Jews in the Diaspora (2005)\****

Reason for immigration	%
Future for family	27
Lifestyle, climate, political stability	25
Did not feel safe/secure	21
Employment	17
Join family & friends	14
<b>N=</b>	<b>77</b>

**Gen08\*\***

Push Factor	%
Join family, relatives	24.6
Came with parents	23.6
Escape war & terrorism	20.4
Poor future for children	15.8
Poor economic prospects	14.8

**N=284**

Pull factor	%
Family in Australia	38.0
A safe environment	30.6
Good economic prospects	22.5
Ability to obtain a visa	16.2
For children's future / Recruited by employer	14.4

Sources:

\* Rutland and Gariano, 17

\*\* Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data.

Notes:

1. In both the *Jews in the Diaspora* survey and the *Gen08* survey respondents were able to choose more than one answer.
2. The question in *Jews in the Diaspora* survey was: "Why did you immigrate to Australia?" (Q27). *Gen08* survey asked: "What were the main reasons for your leaving the country you lived in before coming to Australia?" (Q125).
3. In both surveys, respondents could choose from predetermined answers or write their own answer.

The responses by Israel-born in both surveys about push and pull factors can be divided into two groups. The first is a familial background – joining family and relatives, coming with parents. This type of pull factor can be classified as 'chain migration' in which the existence of social capital (ties to family and friends) in the destination country calculates as a positive when considering immigration to this location. As a result a 'migration chain reaction' can occur because "each act of migration creates social capital

among people to whom the migrant is related, thereby raising the odds of their migration” (Massey, et al., 2002, p. 19).

The second group is about home-country stability. It includes three interlaced factors: war and terror (political stability<sup>113</sup>, safety and security); economy (employment, poor/good economic prospects), which also may be influenced by security; and the future of family/children, which can be caused by a one or more components from a wide range of negative perceptions about security, the economy, social or educational aspects in the home country.

Push and pull factors for Israeli emigration to Australia were re-examined according to period of emigration in Australia, as recorded in the Gen08 survey (Table 8.2 and Table 8.3). Emigrants from Israel to Australia since the turn of the century indicate in larger proportions security and economy, and the related family-future responses, as the main reasons for their departure. A similar pattern reoccurs with regards to pull factors of Israel-born participants of Gen08 who immigrated to Australia after the year 2000, with "a safer environment" and "good economic prospects" indicated among the top five reasons why they opted for Australia as their immigration destination. Another interesting finding is that the pull factor ranked first by most Israel-born Gen08 respondents who immigrated to Australia after the turn of the twenty first century was “recommended by friends”. This points to the influence of recent developments in communication technology, which facilitated the emergence of networks connecting Israelis in Australia with their acquaintances in Israel<sup>114</sup>. The pull factor “Recruited by employer” can also be connected to the networks, where Israelis recruit workers directly from Israel, or assist friends in Israel to find a job in Australia even before the actual immigration of the latter. And, it is also related to the few hundred Israelis who are work migrants (relocation) in Australia on Temporary Business Entry (Visa subclass 457).

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<sup>113</sup> To Israeli respondents the term “political stability” has a double meaning - either inner-Israeli political stability (for example rate of government change or tensions between political parties) or the security situation.

<sup>114</sup> On the development on Israeli emigrant based networks between Australia and Israel see subchapter 7.3 “The Emergence of an Israeli Cluster” of this thesis.

Table 8.2

Gen08 - Top 5 push factors (ranked 1st) by Israel-born respondents: according to period of emigration in Australia<sup>1</sup>

Rank	Period of emigration in Australia		
	1900-1979	1980-1999	2000-2008
1	Came with parents	Join family, relatives	War & terrorism
2	Join family, relatives	Came with parents	Poor future for children
3	War & terrorism	Other	Poor economic prospects
4	Poor economic prospects	Poor economic prospects	Education/study
5	Poor future for children	Poor future for children	Other

Table 8.3

Gen08 - Top 5 pull factors (ranked 1st) by Israel-born respondents: according to period of emigration in Australia<sup>2</sup>

Rank	Period of emigration in Australia		
	1900-1979	1980-1999	2000-2008
1	Family in Australia	Family in Australia	Recommended by friends
2	Came with Parents	Recommended by friends	Good economic prospects
3	Other	Safe environment	Safe environment
4	Safe environment	Came with Parents	Recruited by employer
5	Recruited by employer	Good economic prospects	Family in Australia

Source for Tables 7.2 and 7.3:

Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data

Notes:

1. The question asked: "Please rank your top reasons for leaving the country you lived in before coming to Australia in order of importance."
2. The question asked: "Please rank your top reasons for choosing Australia in order of importance."

The growing weight of security- and economy-related factors for emigration can be explained in light of recent Israeli history. Lev Ari and Rebhun explain that "Growth in Israeli emigration to the United States largely overlaps with events in Israel, including the Yom Kippur War, the First Lebanon War, and the inflation crisis in the first half of the 1980s". The first decade of the twenty first century in Israel witnessed the terror-stricken period of the second Palestinian uprising (*Intifadat al-Aqsa*) which started in September 2000, and the Second Lebanon War of summer 2006. According to Lustick, these violent events led most Israelis to a pessimistic view regarding a possible settlement with the adversarial Arab nations. As a response, claims Lustick, Israelis adopted an escape strategy from "The Middle Eastern muck". This strategy included, amongst other measures, setting up cultural and physical barriers

between Israel and the Arabs (such as the "security fence" / "separation wall"<sup>115</sup>) and inner migration away from Arab populations and the borders towards the central parts of Israel. Furthermore, according to Lustick, "There is significant evidence that, since the collapse of the Oslo peace process and the outbreak of the *al-Aqsa Intifada*, the emigration of Israeli Jews has increased, as have activities that would make future emigration easier" (Lustick, Fall 2008, p. 43).

There is another explanation for the pattern shown in Table 8.2 and Table 8.3. It may be that the high number of responses indicating family related reasons for immigration does not reflect the "real" push/pull factors. This over-representation in the data may have been caused because many of the Israeli respondents to the Gen08 survey, approximately 40 per cent (142), who arrived in Australia before the year 2000, were younger than 18 years old at the time. Being non-adults when emigrating from Israel, half of them (74) recorded either "came with parents" or "join family" as a reason for their emigration. In fact, they might have been (or still are) less knowledgeable of the actual push/pull factors behind their family's emigration.

### **A community-based comparative analysis**

Although inclusive and detailed, Gen08 questions touching on the reasons for immigration were not attuned towards Israelis alone, but rather to all parts of the Jewish population surveyed. As such, it enables a comparative view on push and pull factors according to the country of birth of the respective Jewish immigrants to Australia (Table 8.4 and Table 8.5).

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<sup>115</sup> The security fence or separation wall separates Israel from the Palestinian population. For arguments in support of the fence, see Akiva Eldar, "Border control: better late than never", *Haaretz* 16/09/2009 (<http://www.peace-security-council.org/news.events.asp?id=814>). A critical account of the wall in: Michael Sorkin (ed.), *Against the Wall* (New York: The new press, 2005).



Table 8.4

Gen08 - Top 5 push factors (ranked 1st): according to respondents' country of birth

Rank	Israel	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
1	Came with parents	Join family, relatives	Children's Future	Social strife/crime	Join family, relatives	Join family, relatives
2	Join family, relatives	Came with parents	Came with parents	Children's Future	Came with parents	Came with parents
3	Other	Economic prospects	Join family, relatives	Came with parents	Employment opportunity	Children's Future
4	Education / Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyle/climate</li> <li>• Children's Future</li> </ul>	Economic prospects	Join family, relatives	Children's Future	Social strife/crime
5	Economic prospects	Other	Escape persecution	Political situation	Economic prospects	Economic prospects

Table 8.5

Gen08 - Top 5 pull factors (ranked 1st): according to respondent's country of birth

Rank	Israel	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
1	Family in Australia	Family in Australia	Family in Australia	Family in Australia	Family in Australia	Family in Australia
2	Recommended by friends	Children's future	Safe environment	Safe environment	Recruited by employer	Safe environment
3	Safe environment	Economic prospects	Children's future	Children's future	Children's future	Children's future
4	Economic prospects	Recruited by employer	Economic prospects	Similar to country of origin	Established Australian Jewish community	Recruited by employer
5	Other	Lifestyle/climate	Came with parents	Came with parents	Other	Came with parents

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data.

The country-of-birth based comparison leads to a few interesting findings. The first is that Israelis and all other segments of the Jewish community ranked high the corresponding “Join family, relatives” and “came with parents” push factors, and the “have family in Australia” as the pull factor. This may imply that many respondents are probably ‘1.5 generation immigrants’, which means they were born overseas (not in Australia) and arrived at Australia as children.

The push factor “Recommended by friends”, ranked second, is unique for Israel-born only. It is evidence of the influence networks, possibly the recent online formats, of Israelis from Australia communicating with residents of Israel considering or actively undertaking steps towards immigration to Australia.

The pull factor “A safe environment” noted by Israelis and by Jews from FSU and SA seems to correlate with a set of push factors: “escape persecution” and “children’s future” noted by FSU Jews; and “escape Social strife/crime”, “children’s future” and “political situation in home country” recorded by SA Jews. However circumstances for those push factors for FSU and SA Jews are likely to be antisemitism in their respective home countries. For Israelis, and especially those who emigrated since 2000, it’s the security situation in Israel “war and terror” related.

### **Israeli-specific push-pull factors**

Looking at the Gen08 question and their wording raises question about some Israeli-specific push and pull factors may have not been covered by the survey thoroughly enough, or adequately, if at all. One issue that might have affected Gen08 data reliability has to do with differences in interpretation and translation of terms and questions from English to Hebrew and vice versa.

For example, the term 'lifestyle' (part of the push factor 'better lifestyle/climate') can be interpreted in more than one way by Israelis. In Hebrew, 'lifestyle' (סגנון חיים) can be understood also as 'way of life' (אורח חיים), influenced by security or economy, which are mentioned separately in the Gen08 push or pull factors. Alex's explanation on why he wanted to change his way of life, or lifestyle, by emigrating combines security and economy:

Many times when I was returning to Israel from another trip [abroad], it would take me a few weeks to readjust. I always thought to myself: why can't we live like everyone else? [Laughs] It was a strange feeling. And when you have that feeling for years – you come to conclusions. And my conclusion was that I wanted to change – I want to stop thinking about security problems all the time, I want to stop thinking about economy-related problems all the time, I do not want to listen to the news every hour. And I want to see more green.

(Alex, 2011)

Lavie's account on why he and his wife emigrated links the challenging lifestyle in Israel with buying a house, which could be as a result of economic hardships or bureaucracy, and to dangerous driving norms that could be attributed to 'social strife':

It seemed like everything we were doing there [in Israel] was supposed to be more difficult. Every decision! Every decision or action taken. A lot of things are being conducted in the most difficult manner, in a way which is not easy. Buying a house, buying a... [wife adds: roads] yes, driving on roads... I mean, everything is difficult and

procedures are difficult. [...] And we choose to make our lives easy and pleasant. And Israel is a difficult place for me

(Lavie, 2010)

There are also Israeli-specific pull factors to Australia. The first is Australia as an Anglophile society. Most Israeli emigrants choose Western English-speaking societies (apart from Australia, mainly the United States, Canada and UK) as their immigration destinies. Anglophile cultures, considered liberal and/or fostering multicultural policies, are viewed as more open towards migrants. Also, English is a language which many Israelis believe they either master, or at least can communicate easily in it. Gen08 supports this self-perception of Israelis, with a two third majority of Israel-born participants reporting no difficulties with English in Australia (Table 8.6).

Australian-based Israeli philologist Ghil'ad Zuckermann suggests an explanation why Israelis are relatively fluent in English. He asserts that from a linguistic point of view, English is one of the contributors to the creation of the Israeli-language, which he claims is related but different from Hebrew. According to Zuckermann, English is also a *de facto* official language in Israel, although not *de jure* (Zuckermann, 2009, pp. 40, 45). At the same time, a third of Israeli respondents did note moderate difficulty with English. 'Moderate difficulties' in this context may be related to lack of advanced vocabulary or grammatical issues related to correct sentence building, such as choosing the right preposition<sup>116</sup>. However, while this figure on 'moderate' difficulty is ten per cent higher than rates reported by Russian-speaking FSU Jews, a third of the respondents from the latter group also attest to serious difficulties, noted by only a negligible minority of Israel-born (1.9 per cent).

**Table 8.6**  
Gen08 - Difficulties with English in Australia: according to country of birth (percentages)

Response	Israel	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
Yes, serious	1.9	0.0	32.7	0.2	3.0	6.1
Yes, moderate	37.1	0.0	28.9	0.6	7.5	11.7
No	60.7	100.0	37.5	98.5	88.3	81.5
Don't know	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.7	1.2	0.7
<b>N=</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>2212</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data.

Note: Question asked - "Have you experienced any of the following difficulties since you arrived in Australia, and if so was it serious or not? - With the English language".

<sup>116</sup> Private conversation with Prof. Ghil'ad Zuckermann in Melbourne, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

A second specific pull factor is the image of Australia as being relatively sympathetic to Israel and with a low rate of antisemitism; particularly as opposed to current image of European public opinion, perceived as being mostly hostile to Israel and more anti-Semitic.<sup>117</sup> Gen08 supplies evidence of Australia being conceived by most Israelis as having low antisemitism levels (Table 8.7). Close to six out of ten Israel-born respondents (57.7 per cent) noted that they do not view antisemitism in Australia as a serious problem – a rate second only to FSU respond rate (58.1). Only a quarter of Israelis see antisemitism in Australia as very or quite a serious problem - the lowest rate in the community.

Table 8.7

Gen08 - Israel-born: Seriousness of antisemitism in Australia today (percentage)

Response	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
A very / Quite a serious problem	23.3	43.6	39.5	23.6	50.1	30.1	39.1
Not a very serious problem / not a serious problem at all	57.7	50.5	47.5	58.1	41.3	57.4	51.3
Don't know / Decline to answer	19.0	5.7	12.9	18.3	8.6	12.4	9.6
<b>N=</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>2738</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>1135</b>	<b>5843</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data.

Note: Responses to the question – “How serious would you say antisemitism is in Australia today?”

Israeli emigrants' perception of Australia as with low antisemitism is persistent over the years. Gen08 responses to the question about antisemitism analysed according to arrival year to Australia produces a similar picture, with most responses pointing to low levels of antisemitism (Table 8.8). At the same time, the percentage of earlier immigrants (arrived at Australia before the year 2000) defining antisemitism in Australia as "A very serious problem" or “Quite a serious problem” is three to four times higher than equivalent category noted by later immigrants.

The possibility that later emigrants attached lesser importance to the issue of antisemitism might also be substantiated by the fact that a third (36.2 per cent) of the Israeli Gen08 respondents who had arrived at Australia since the year 2000 were either reluctant to answer the question about antisemitism or did not know what to respond. This, while the equivalent responses (Decline to answer / don't know) by earlier Israeli immigrants was 15 per cent at the most.

<sup>117</sup> For example, 2009 and 2010 yearly reports by the Jewish Agency about antisemitism in different parts of the world indicate a continuing increase in antisemitism in Europe. Source: Jewish Agency media Press release, January 24, 2011, as published on the Jewish Agency's website <http://www.jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/Hebrew/Home/media/Press/2011/jan24.htm> (accessed July 19, 2011)

The influence of age at immigration to Australia, particularly arriving as a child (under 18) or an adult, on the perception of Israelis on the seriousness of antisemitism in Australia seems less dramatic. The data (Table 8.8) does imply a trend in which Israelis arriving at an older age perceive the threat of antisemitism in Australia as less serious, but the decline is relatively modest (from 33.1 per cent to 16.9 per cent at the lowest). One possible explanation for this pattern is the statistics which suggests that Jewish university students in Australia aged between 18 and 26 indicate the highest experience of antisemitism (Taft & Markus, November 2011, p. 38). Many Israeli emigrants are skilled migrants and arrive in Australia after completion of tertiary studies and at older ages, after compulsory army service for the least (which ends at age 21 for men, 20 for girls). This means that they would most likely not be attending Australian universities and thus will not be exposed to antisemitism in that setting.

**Table 8.8**

**Gen08 - Israel-born: Seriousness of antisemitism in Australia today (percentage)**

Response	Arrival year			Arrival age		
	-1979	1980-1999	2000-2008	0-18	19-29	30-
A very / Quite a serious problem	35.1	25.2	10.9	33.1	16.9	23.0
Not a very serious problem / not a serious problem at all	50.0	69.7	52.9	61.4	59.2	56.9
Don't know / Decline to answer	14.9	5.2	36.2	5.5	23.9	20.2
<b>N=</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>109</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data.

Note: The question asked: “How serious would you say antisemitism is in Australia today?”

The reason why Israelis, especially recent emigrants, may see antisemitism in Australia as less serious than other Jews in Australia might perceive it may be a positive change within the Australian society's attitude towards migrants in general in recent years. Another reason could be the perceptions of earlier Israeli emigrants themselves, who may have - for historical reasons and lack of knowledge about the country which they immigrated to - placed greater emphasis on antisemitism in their understanding of the world outside Israel.

A different explanation why Israeli do not see antisemitism as a serious problem in Australia is rooted in a perception that some Israelis hold which differentiates between Anti-Israeli sentiments and antisemitism. To those Israelis the former may be reasonable criticism on the policy of Israel mostly vis-à-vis the Palestinians, and might even be rational (or even legitimate, or justified – depends on the political views of the beholder) as long as it is not fuelled by the latter, which is hatred for the Jews.

These Israelis would not automatically recognize Anti-Israeli (or anti-Zionist) sentiments as antisemitism. This type of outlook surfaced during a conversation with a student who grew up in Israel and was interviewed to one of Gen08 related projects which focused on antisemitism. The student ('participant #19') recalled feeling 'horrible' after criticism against Israel was voiced by one of her lecturers during a class. At the same time, she presents the following argument:

[S]he did not feel that the issue has much to do with antisemitism. She argued that antisemitism and anti-Zionism are completely separate issues, where antisemitism is against Jews and anti-Zionism is a political stance against Israel. This includes any kind of hostility towards Israel, which she sees only as a political position. Growing up in Israel, this participant said she did not really associate her identity as an Israeli with being Jewish; they are quite separate in her mind. Antisemitism attacks her as a Jew. Anti-Israel sentiment and anti-Zionism attacks her home country and her Israeli nationality. She does not think the latter is anti-Semitic.

(Taft & Markus, November 2011, p. 42)

The question about the image of Australia with regard to its relations with Israel was not explored in the Gen08 survey. However, close relations between Jerusalem and Canberra over the years, evidence by Israeli emigrants to Australia, as well as other factors that need further research<sup>118</sup>, suggest that Australia is perceived by Israelis as friendly to the State of Israel. Furthermore, secular Israelis (as well as non-religious Jews in general), who make up the large majority of Israeli emigrants in general and in Australia in particular<sup>119</sup>, do not have explicit visible identifiable characteristics which indicate their religion as Jewish. Thus, they might be less exposed to antisemitic reactions that might be triggered by recognition of Jews by others due to their external appearance, mainly cloths or yarmulke.

A third pull factor is a specific sub-component of the search for 'a better lifestyle' is work norms. Specifically, the image of Australian work habits as being more conducive to a balanced work-family life than work norms in Israel, which are generally thought to be demanding and disregarding of family life. Evidence of this perception as well as other Israeli-specific push and pull factors reviewed in chapter so far can be found in the posts by two Israeli women at the *Tapuz* forum. In the posts they enumerate the components of their decision to choose Australia as the immigration destination:

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<sup>118</sup> Public opinion polls in Israel about Australia were not found. However, stories in popular Israeli media about Australia appeal to immigrants and to Israel are published occasionally. See, for example, Hemi Shalev's report "Love Australian style" (Israel Hayom, 11/12/2009), or Rubik Rosenthal's "It's fun to live there [in Australia]" (nrg.co.il, 8/10/2009 - <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART1/951/307.html?hp=1&loc=29&tmp=3926> )

<sup>119</sup> For data and analysis on the religious affiliation of Israelis in Australia see the chapter 12.3 "Religious identification" of this thesis.

I thought about Australia because (not in order of preference): A) Language – the language spoken here is very similar to English and most of us know English from school; B) Climate – it is relatively easy to adjust [to the climate ...]; C) Political atmosphere – a sense that the anti-Israel sentiments which are commonplace in the West[ern world] are not widespread that much in Australia; D) Progress – Australia was perceived by me as the state functioning according to the highest existing standards; E) Possibilities – Australia was perceived as a state with few people and many niches that can still be filled; F) The work culture – in Australia, and for this [reason] alone it is worthwhile being here, the workplace does not treat an employee as if he was a slave – they respect your weekend, and in many places it would be inconceivable that you would stay [working] after five o'clock.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. December 2009)

Why Australia ? Because: it is an English-speaking country; it had the specific [higher education] institute with a specific potential for the specific career for my husband; joint revulsion of the couple [refers to herself and her husband] about America (which was also a professional option); a climate that reminds us of Israel; and a culture which may well be very different from the Israeli one, however it is rumoured to be closer to it [the Israeli culture] than north European-English culture.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. December 2009)

## **8.2. A new perception of emigration from Israel**

### **'Classic' perceptions on emigration**

As noted in the literature review, the Israeli emigrant population could be divided into three groups, corresponding with the time of their emigration – *Yordim*, migrants and transnationals. The study found within the population researched motives that can be attributed to each of these categories.

For example, Yafit articulates a *Yordim* notion of permanent - impermanence, when recalling how she was constantly getting ready to return to Israel in the first years after her migration. In a typical *Yordim* apologetics for not returning, she then explains in great length and details why the family did not go back eventually. But immediately after that, Yafit expresses a wish to be able to live what can be defined as transnational lifestyle - half of the time in Israel and the other half in Australia.

In the first years [after immigration] we really wanted to return. In the first five years I used to go shopping with the aim of going to Israel. What happened was not a pretty thing. There was a craziness of buying shares and we lost all our savings and were left

without a penny. Not only that, we had to sell the flat we had in Israel to pay the debts. After five years we were with four daughters and 'zero money'. It wasn't practical; there was no way [to return]. You see, we started a business; the girls went to school, to universities, got married. Although sometimes I think how good it would have been if I could have lived half of the year here [in Australia] and half of the year there [in Israel].

(Yafit, 2010)

Similarly, Shalom states categorically that Israeli emigrants constantly contemplate returning to the homeland, which is a *Yordim* culture character.

We always have that option [of returning to Israel] and we are keeping this option to ourselves [as a possibility]. Anyone [Israeli emigrant] who tells you that he is not keeping this option to himself [as a possibility] – is a liar.

(Shalom, 2010)

### **A new perception**

Sources in this study reveal that amongst the more recent Israeli immigrants to Australia there is a group which holds a new approach towards their decision to emigrate, the reasons for that decision and the image of earlier Israeli emigrants (*Yordim*). This self-perception of their emigration is composed of several aspects and views about Israel's past and future and about emigration from it. One, several or all components of this approach can be detected in individual Israeli emigrants to Australia. Together they formulate a new narrative on Israeli migration yet to have been researched.

At this point it is difficult to accurately measure or even estimate whether this new group is the dominant one amongst Israeli emigrants to Australia. At the same time, views that can be affiliated with the new approach were repeatedly and coherently identified across many sources reviewed for the study. Furthermore, ideas and perceptions associated with this new approach were voiced clearly by Israel emigrants of diverse ages, and which came to Australia at different periods.

On the one hand, these facts could indicate to a possible bias in the source selection which resulted in over-representation of this group within the study sources. If this is the case, then further study might be called for to determine the magnitude and influence of this group on Israeli emigrants in Australia. On the other hand, the relatively wide scope of this new phenomenon as suggested from the data collected for this research is enough as is to extend the discussion about it.

The components of this new perception are:



### Challenging the *Yerida* narrative

In earlier periods emigrating from Israel, or *Yerida* (descending), was regarded as extremely negative and an act of anti-Zionism, even betrayal, and opposed to immigration to Israel from the Diaspora = the *Aliyah* (ascending). Over the years this perspective has been officially abandoned by the government and by most segments of Israeli society<sup>120</sup>.

*Yerida* as an idea still continues to be used as a point of reference for some Israeli emigrants. For earlier Israeli emigrants, who left Israel when *Yerida* was a predominant perception, this idea is still very much alive in their minds – some accept it, while others dispute it. David Sachar, for example, immigrated to Australia in the late 1960s. He notes in his autobiography how leaving Israel was considered treason (Sachar, 2005, p. 176). Later on, he argues against being negatively judged for his emigration from a Zionist perspective:

Even though I live outside the borders of Israel, I fully believe in Zionism and pray for the ongoing useful development taking place in Israel where the dream of my fathers came into fruition. I take responsibility for my own fate and I know that I did what I had to do. No one has the right to judge me or categorise me according to some ladder of solidarity to national loyalty. Such judgement has its place inside the heart of the person himself. He, and only he, has the right to determine the way he lives. And again, he and only he, is responsible for what he does and accomplishes.

(Sachar, 2005, p. 209)

Recent Israeli emigrants also refer to the *Yerida* narrative. However, they challenge the traditional concepts related to *Yerida*; and they unapologetically and vehemently reject any derogatory meaning attributed to their decision to leave Israel. For example, this is what Zvulun Shalev, one of the regular contributors to *Eton*, writes in response to a reader in Israel who criticised Israeli emigrants to Australia:

I am here in Melbourne, Australia because I emigrated of my free will. I was not banished, nor was I expelled. I can return to Israel immediately if I wish to do so. This, I believe, is the status of most Israelis who immigrated to Australia. Most Israelis in the Diaspora are there as a result of choice. Thus it seems to me that 'an immigrant' would be the correct label. Not *Yored* or a person in exile.

(Shalev, 2005)

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<sup>120</sup> For past perceptions on *Yeridah* (emigration from Israel) see subchapter 3.1 “The Ideological *Yordim* School” of this thesis.

These *Tapuz* members not only disregard people labelling Israeli emigrants as *Yordim*, but also reverse the traditional meanings of *Aliyah* (ascending) and *Yerida* (descending) and the connection between being a Zionist and living in Israel:

It is clear to me that there will be people who would define us as '*Yordim*', but I do not find this of any importance. What I do consider important is how we define ourselves. If you want to be judgmental, then to me moving from Israel to Australia is more an *Aliyah* than *Yerida*.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. September 2009)

*Yerida* from Israel = *Aliyah* in the standard of living. That is why from my perceptive I came to Australia to make *Aliyah*.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. September 2009)

Your question is heavily contaminated with the basic 'Zionist' premise that Jews should live in Israel and everyone leaving Israel does so to "make [Israel] weaker" [...] A Jew who chooses to live in another country is not necessarily an 'anti-Zionist'.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. January 2010)

I envy all those in Australia already. I am on my way. It has nothing to do with Zionism or no Zionism, it is voting with your feet. Anyone with respect for himself and his family should not agree to suffer here.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. September 2010)

### **A positive view on dual citizenship**

Three quarters Israel-born in Australia are Australian citizens, both according to the 2006 census (76.5 per cent) and Gen08 data (74.9 per cent). At the same, Gen08 suggests an overwhelming majority (98.5 per cent) of Israelis continue holding onto their Israeli passports<sup>121</sup> and with dual citizenships.

The Israeli law<sup>122</sup> permits dual citizenship as explained by Harpaz: "Israel's 1950 Law of Return grants automatic citizenship to diaspora Jews who repatriate, and the toleration of dual citizenship serves to facilitate and encourage the acquisition of Israeli citizenship" (Harpaz, 2013 (forthcoming), p. 3). Naturalisation through citizenship is not a legal issue alone. Currently millions of people from

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<sup>121</sup> 351 out of 356 Israel-born respondents noted that they hold an Israeli citizenship (responses to the question: "Are you a citizen of any other country? Please specify") (Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data).

<sup>122</sup> The Israeli law of citizenship (1952).

different nationalities have dual citizenship which is now allowed in most of the world countries. Evidence is accumulating that people with higher human capital are more likely to embrace dual citizenship, and it is not a phenomenon associated with the marginalised or underprivileged (Bloemraad, 2004, p. 38). This development “entails a dramatic transformation of the nature of citizenship itself, as it changes from a segmentary system of exclusive belongings to a matrix of multiple and overlapping affiliations” (Harpaz, 2013 (forthcoming), p. 12).

Historically, an American citizenship was the most sought for by Israelis. Recent changes to European law now enable individuals from Eastern-European families to apply for a European passport on the basis of ancestry. This has resulted in a popular trend of applying for citizenship of these countries by Israelis. The exact figures, of just how many Israelis hold dual citizenship, are unavailable. But studies indicate that over the past decade their number has increased dramatically, and may be estimated by hundreds of thousands (Lustick, Fall 2008, p. 45; Harpaz, 2013 (forthcoming), p. 3; Cohen, 2009, p. 3)<sup>123</sup>.

The reasons for Israelis' efforts to obtain an additional passport were scarcely researched. The one exception is recent study Yossi Harpaz's study on dual citizenship acquisition by Israelis and its motives. Harpaz examined the acquisition of European passports by Israelis since the turn of the beginning of the twenty first century and suggests four explanations for this phenomenon. The first, “the practical approach”, sees the decision to try and obtain another citizenship as the end result of a calculated and logical thinking process. From this point of view, and similar to what Yinon Cohen claims (Cohen, 2009, p. 3), it is motivated by the possible financial benefits entailed in dual citizenship such as ability to work or study outside Israel for themselves and their children. The second rational, defined by Harpaz as “apocalyptic”, sees the non-Israeli passport as a form of “insurance policy”, a means to secure a place to escape to in case of a forced migration scenario if Israel's future is in danger or life there becomes too difficult (Harpaz, 2013 (forthcoming), pp. 3-4).

Harpaz then goes on to claim that the first two explanations are “folk theories” because they reflect the realities of the population researched alone, detached from wider contexts. Thus, he adds two more culturally dependent motives for the quest for foreign passports. One, is that it is “a family project

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<sup>123</sup> Some data about the number of non-Israeli citizenships attained by Israelis recently is available. According to Harpaz, 300,000 Israelis now hold a European passport, and a surge in the applications for such passports was recorded since the year 2000 (Harpaz, 2013 (forthcoming)). For example, at least 53,000 new passports were issued between 2000 and 2006 to Israeli Jews by Austria, Germany, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Greece and the Czech Republic. An increase of 93 per cent was recorded in the number of Israel-born receiving US legal immigrant status (“Green Card”) between 1997-2000 and 2001-2006 (Cohen, 2009, p. 3). At least 100,000 Israelis hold German passports, with about 7,000 new passports having been issued every year since 2000 (Zalsberg, 2011).

governed by family logic”, a gift from parents to sibling. It is an asset with possible financial benefits and life experience enriching value bequeathed from older generations to younger ones. This is true for elderly parents of European descents enabling their children to be granted a European passport<sup>124</sup>.

The final explanation presented by Harpaz relates to holding a non-Israeli passport as “a performative object, part of a set of social distinction strategies which signifies the class superiority of Israelis of European origin”. For Israelis of European descent (*Ashkenazim*), claims Harpaz, the foreign passport is a status symbol and a social capital within the Israeli society, and a personification of the ability to experience themselves as “citizens of a globalised world” and even consider emigration (Harpaz, 2013 (forthcoming), pp. 18-24). Lustick enhances Harpaz’s explanations by adding the decline of the power of the negative perceptions against leaving Israel in recent years. He talks about the “psychological readiness to depart the country, the acquisition of dual citizenship in attractive countries for emigration, and the consolidation of job opportunities and purchase of property abroad as a kind of ‘escape-route-on-the-way’ for many Israelis” (Lustick, Fall 2008, p. 45).

The explanations brought forth by Harpaz and Lustick fit the evidence collected for this thesis from Israelis in Australia. Tamira from Byron Bay, for example, relates to having a non-Israeli passport together with her Israeli one in the context of changed attitudes in Israel towards this issue. She describes the possibility to live outside Israel thanks to a foreign passport as something which is perceived positively in current Israeli society, unlike in the past:

When I was young and I remember people saying “I’m going to live in America or Australia, doesn’t matter”, everybody used to say to them “oh you’re bad, you’re leaving Israel; it’s a bad thing to do”. But today, no - today it’s a good thing. You’re lucky if you have the opportunity, if you have the passport - if you can do it, do it! That’s the general feeling in Israel.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

A *Tapuz* participant justifies the quest for an Australian passport by Israelis, even if they do not emigrate after acquiring it. His justification is based on Harpaz’s apocalyptic approach:

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<sup>124</sup> In a private email correspondence with the author of this thesis (6 July 2012), Harpaz also claimed that it may also be true for young parents who may view the acquisition of a foreign passport as a gift for their own children, who might be very young at the time.

Personally I can fully understand those who came here [to Australia] to get an additional citizenship just so they would always have the option of returning here. Sometimes the knowledge that you have an option is enough to live quietly somewhere else.

(Kimchi, 2006, p. May 2010)

The “insurance policy” view is also the rationale for Michal’s desire to acquire Australian citizenship. Michal is a young Israeli living in Australia which the Israeli author, Nava Semel, met during her visit to Australia and was later quoted in the book Semel wrote about her trip: “ ‘I want an Australian citizenship, an insurance policy for a time of emergency’, she [Michal] declares” (Semel, 2009, p. 95).

### **The 'desperate'**

The push factors "Escape war and terrorism", "Poor future for children" and "Poor economic prospects", and their equivalent pull factors "A safe environment", "Good economic prospects" and "For children’s future", mentioned by many Israeli Gen08 respondents are related to a specific group amongst the more recent Israeli emigrants to Australia. This group can be titled the 'desperate'.

The 'desperate' Israelis express bleak predictions about the future of the State of Israel, which they view as the main push factor for their emigration. They point out various aspects of life in Israel as areas where they foresee further deterioration. These aspects include mainly security and economy, government corruption, social tensions and the state of the public education system.

Zehavit from Brisbane, for example, uses a string of negative terms when asked what she thinks of Israel. She defines Israel as corrupt, ‘insane’, ‘disorganised’ and ‘immoral’ and promptly declares she would recommend to her children not to live there (Zehavit, 2011).

Tommy from Sydney is more specific. He explains how he left Israel pessimistically, charged with anger and frustration due to Israel's policy towards the Palestinians, corruption and the behavioural norms of Israeli society:

When I left the country I had a lot of anger about Israel; about everything, about the government, the political situation. I felt a little bit, sort of guilt feelings, guilt about the whole subject of the occupation, this thing with the Palestinians. And I also felt that the culture there is deteriorating and getting worse, the corruption. I think corruption and the issue of the Palestinians were the subjects that really bothered me and also the little daily things, a kind of lack of *Derech Eretz* ["The way of the land" - desired mode of behaviour], issues that had existed for a long time but I suddenly saw them all as connected. When I left, I remember, it [emotions] was very strong. I remember the time

before I left. A lot of talks with friends and family. There is [currently] a lot of frustration about the situation of the country, a sort of pessimism and how things could improve there. I have yet to see a way out, how things can improve, get better.

(Tommy, 2010)

The 'desperate' are particularly vocal on the *Tapuz* forum. The reason for choosing *Tapuz* as a podium for such views could be that this 'Israelis only' zone in Hebrew is considered as a safe and closed environment. In such a setting people may feel secure enough to openly voice negative predictions about Israel and to communicate with others with similar perspectives. Here are some examples:

Unfortunately I have heard the phrase "there is no future [here]" in Israel a lot of times. The more I thought about it, the more I also came to the conclusion that it is true. As a secular person, examining the trends in Israel – it is either the Arabs or the *Haredim* [ultra-orthodox Jews] who will take charge eventually. It is not right for me, so that is why I decided to do something [and emigrate].

(Tapuz, n.d., p. September 2009)

People flee Israel to Canada/Australia/New Zealand and other countries, not because these countries are heavens but rather because there is no future in Israel. The state [of Israel] is deteriorating, and in one word – it is shit here.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. September 2009)

To all you dreamers – the State of Israel is on a crash course, and will not survive the current decade.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. April 2010)

This *Tapuz* member compares the residents of Israel to abuse victims suffering from the 'Helsinki syndrome' of identifying with their aggressor - in this case being the State of Israel. Thus, he is also implying on his own superior mental state by being able to escape a hopeless fate in Israel:

Similar to the battered wife syndrome that, although she is going through daily physical and mental abuse, often she is unable to detach and even tries to convince herself that there are reasons to stay this way; that is how so many Israelis get used to the daily abuse that life in Israel inflicts on them and persuade themselves that it is normal and it should be accepted. And of course there are those who want to leave and cannot, for these and other reasons. So, the only thing left for them to do is to decrease the cognitive dissonance and convince themselves that it is actually better to stay [in Israel].

(Tapuz, n.d., p. December 2009)

Idan Ben Barak, an Israeli emigrant to Australia who is also a regular contributor to the *Tapuz* forum, published an article in the Israeli media in late April 2007 which raised angry responses. In the article titled "Get out of there" Ben Barak enumerates the reasons why Israelis should emigrate. He accuses Israelis of indifference to the point of numbness to the many negative aspects of life and government in Israel, and categorically states that "the country is crumbling in our fingers. Slowly but surely" (Ben-Barak, 2007).

Shula Weitz's novel "So how was your day?" tells the story of Talia, an Israeli psychiatrist who is a temporary work migrant in Australia. When Talia arrives at the Israeli embassy in Canberra she meets other Israelis. She mentions negative aspects of life in Israel (Iran's nuclear threat, Palestinian rockets fired on the Southern town of Sderot, unemployment and the state of the economy). In response, the Israelis around her justify their decision to emigrate, quoting various push (security threat) and pull (lifestyle) factors and expressing pessimism about Israel's future. One person even suggests helping his parents to immigrate to Australia to save them from the hard life in Israel.

"Sure," said Amnon, the guy [who is part] of a couple with a child, "The Iranians now have a nuclear bomb. I really do not see a future for our country [Israel]. We just received our [Australian] citizenship and I want to bring my parents over here, let them live like human beings as they approach pension [age]."

"Yes, it is paradise here," Motti got all excited. "There is nothing like the Gold Coast. People living it easy, know how to behave. I am here for eight years now and I bless every moment for leaving Israel."

(Weitz, 2009, p. 116)

### **8.3. Understanding the new approach**

#### **Current Israeli society**

Within the limited framework of this work at least one main insight about the Israeli society could be drawn from the body of sources used. This insight suggests that the views expressed by the 'desperate' emigrants are echoing notions and perceptions that exist among specific sectors of Israeli society. Sociologist Gad Yair claims that Israelis are in a constant state of existential anxiety fuelled by Jewish history and Israel's current geo-political situation. As a result of these fears, says Yair, many ponder emigration as an escape route from a disaster that might come one day (Yair, 2011, p. 15). Harpaz bases his explanation to the phenomenon of dual citizenship acquisition in Israel on a similar apocalyptic

approach about Israel 'lack of future', which leads, he claims, some Israelis to emigrate or fantasise about 'escaping' abroad.

The tendency to complain about Israel and about the hardships of life in it seems to be an integral part rooted in Israeli society. לקטר (*Lekater*), translated as "to gripe", was identified by Israeli linguistic cultural linguistic scholar, Tamar Katriel, as "a community specific speech act" characteristic of Israelis. The Israeli form of griping, the *Kiturim*, is different from other cultures because it is not about the individual but rather on issues of public importance, such as society's values or the economy. *Kiturim* are unique in that they enable Israelis to either pent up or ventilate frustrations and tensions about problems they believe should have been solved or dealt with through collective social or institutional action that was not taken (Tracy, 2002, p. 69).

Desperation may be a few steps further than just *Kiturim* because it can lead to actions<sup>125</sup> such as emigration. The connection between the latest emigrants from Israel and "desperation" was made a few years ago by several Israeli public figures and academics. Professor Gabriel Weimann from Haifa University coined the expression "the new desperate"<sup>126</sup> in an article in one of Israel's leading newspapers, *Haaretz*. Weimann was referring to a group of Israelis from the elite of society who acquire a non-Israeli passport and consider leaving Israel in light of extreme scenarios about Israel's existence due to security threats (specifically from Iran) (Weimann, 2008). Weimann was followed by then head of the government opposition, the politician Tzipi Livni, who talked in 2009 about "the despair" of hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens which in response to this despair attain dual citizenship for themselves and their offspring (Wolf, 2009). Recent stories in the Israeli media suggest this trend continues. They include polls indicating that due to pessimism over the country's economic and security

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<sup>125</sup> One form of action that may have been triggered (among other factors) from despair was the summer 2011 mass protest, when hundreds of thousands of Israelis took to the streets demanding the elevation of financial burden and costs of living off the middle class. For a review on the protest, how and why it started see, for example, Catrina Stewart, " Israel's middle class launches mass protest at rising cost of living", *The Independent*, Aug 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israels-middle-class-launches-mass-protest-at-rising-cost-of-living-2333615.html> - accessed November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 )

<sup>126</sup> Weimann was borrowing the expression from the play "The luggage packers" by Hanoch Levin. In one of the play's scenes the character Bella is considering emigrating from Israel to London because "In London desperation becomes more comfortable". This part of the play was later transformed into a famous Israeli song by Hava Alberstein, which was criticised for endorsing emigration (*Yerida*). See about the play and the song: Michael Handelzalts, "Stage Animal / That's art - Hanoch Levin with a multitude of characters", *Haaretz.com*, August 30, 2011 (<http://www.haaretz.com/culture/arts-leisure/stage-animal-that-s-art-hanoch-levin-with-a-multitude-of-characters-1.381483>, accessed July 3, 2012).



situation a high percentage of Israelis, more than a third, would like to emigrate (Klingbail & Shiloh, 2012) and that many Israeli parents encourage their adult children to emigrate (Aspril, 2012).

The approach typical of the 'desperate' group was echoed in views expressed by Israelis still in Israel but in the midst of uncompleted immigration procedures to Australia. For example, an Israeli woman who recently submitted a request to emigrate to Australia states in *Tapuz*:

In politics, economy, education, transportation – the situation is horrible and there is no future [...] And you know what? I don't care who is to blame for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I am tired of the childish "they started" [argument] from both sides. They are all to blame [...] If you cannot achieve peace with them, what is the motivation to stay here? Sending the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren to die in more wars?

(Tapuz, n.d., p. September 2010)

Another woman in Israel describes her outlook on Israel's future as the reason for her upcoming emigration. Perhaps as an attempt to justify her decision, she also mocks the returnees - Israelis who decide to return to Israel after years of living abroad:

Do not try and beautify what is going on in Israel. The situation here is not good. I will be surprised if within a few decades there would be anything here other than Arabs, *Haredim* [Ultra- orthodox], corrupt politicians ... Ah, yes, and a few people who returned from Australia 'because it is so good here'. And give credit to those who do want to make the move and emigrate - that they do take into consideration that in Australia and other places around the world bad things happen. We are not stupid. We just cannot find in Israel anything worth staying for.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. October 2009)

A second indication of the existence of the 'desperate' approach within Israel surfaced in the responses of friends and even family to the decision of relatives and friends to emigrate. As previously noted, in the emigrant *Yordim* were viewed very negatively. Leaving Israel was considered shameful and disgraceful for the family left behind. Recent responses by Israelis to their family members or friends immigrating to Australia, or returning to Israel for a visit, are very different. The reactions vary from acceptance to envy. One of the women in the process of immigrating to Australia notes the responses of her friends to her move: "Everyone is jealous of me because we're getting out of here, and they don't have the courage to take that step" (Tapuz, n.d., p. October 2009).

Nir from Byron Bay records similar reactions amongst his friends when he told them a year earlier that he was about to emigrate: "All our friends, they just said they were jealous that we had the courage to go and live in Australia" (Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010). In a column in *Eton*, an Israeli emigrant recalls how upon departing Israel "most of our friends felt 'well played, you have made it', as if all the essence of our lives was to leave Israel" (Moria, 2005).

Yafit recalls how her father labelled her "traitor" upon her leaving for Australia many years ago. However, her recent experiences when visiting Israel are completely different, when suddenly she becomes an object for jealousy:

Upon coming [to visit] the country [Israel] as a *Yored*, they ask: could you arrange for papers [residency visa]? How is Australia? How much do they earn [there]? What do you do there? Suddenly they look at you with envy.

(Yafit, 2010)

Migration agent, Yitach Saar (nickname "Monash"), notes the reactions in Israel when he says he lives in Australia which reflect a pessimistic view about Israel:

When I was visiting Israel 15 years ago, people would tell me that Australia is too far. Nowadays when you are travelling to the country [to Israel], they say it is not far enough.

("Monash", 2009)

### **The 'desperate' and Gold's 'disillusioned'**

This latest group of 'desperate' shares some characteristics with the 'disillusioned' Israelis identified by Gold in his study of Israeli emigrants in the 1990s. According to Gold, "Some Israelis mentioned 'burnt-out' or unhappiness with the general direction of the country" as the main motive for their emigration. This was a result of political developments in Israel at the time (such as the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 or the outbreak of Palestinian violence in 2000). Other factors mentioned by Gold in that context were social ethnic tensions between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Israelis, and complaints against the allegedly growing power of the religious Jewish institutes (Gold, 2002, pp. 38-39).

There are significant differences between Gold's 'disillusioned' and the current 'desperate'. The differences between them may be a result of methodological choices and/or suggest issues of representativeness in the mix of sources used. However, methodology is at the very least not the only reason for the differences, and there are additional factors that differentiate between the two groups.

First, proportions are different. Gold did not provide accurate and reliable statistics, or even an estimate, about the size of the 'disillusioned' group within the general Israeli emigrant population. This study cannot provide such data either. At the same time, the subject of negative outlooks about Israel's future was a recurring one in all of the various sources of this thesis. This prevalence in mentioning a negative outlook on Israel may indicate that the subject is a dominant one within the recent Israeli emigrant population in Australia.

Second, a transition from specific factors to a multi-layered outlook has occurred. Gold's findings pointed to specific factors that led to the emigration of the 'disillusioned'. Some of these factors are either less prominent or even non-existent with regard to the current 'desperate'. For example, the issue of Ashkenazi-Sephardi labelled by Gold as 'ethnic discrimination and conflict', did not surface at all in the sources of this work. This may indicate a continuing process of relieving this tension in Israeli society as a whole, for various reasons beyond the scope of this research.<sup>127</sup> Political power changes (Gold mentions the establishment of the right-wing Likud government after the murder of Prime Minister Rabin in 1995) were a factor far less significant among the 'desperate' Israelis in Australia.

The 'desperate' tend to observe an interrelation among the various, problems or issues related to their negative outlook on Israel's future. Thus, they are painting a multi-layered and broader picture composed of many aspects of life in Israel (economy, security, international policy, social tensions, the decline of Zionism as the ideological basis of social cohesion) which lead, in their view, to a pessimistic conclusion about the State of Israel and its future.

### **The 'myth of no return'**

The final - and perhaps the most significant - difference between the 'desperate' and the 'disillusioned' touches on the conjoining of the negative outlook on Israel and the issue of return. Gold states that it is a "nearly universal assertion by Israeli emigrants that they missed the country of origin and wished to return" (Gold, 2002, p. 218). Interviewees quoted by Gold as part of the 'disillusioned' group used terms that suggest temporariness of their emigration ("time out", "sabbatical") or openly rejected the idea that they would leave Israel permanently (Gold, 2002, pp. 39, 41).

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<sup>127</sup> On the decline of ethnic Ashkenazi-Sephardi tensions as a factor in Israeli society see, for example, Amir Ben-Porat, "Social inequality in Israel" *In* Ephraim Yaar and Zeev Shavit, *Trends in the Israeli Society* Volume 1 (Tel Aviv: Open University, 2001), P. 577-578.

The possibility expressed by Israeli emigrants that they would go back to live in Israel sometime in the future was attributed by Rina Cohen and Gerald Gold to "The myth of return" (Cohen & Gold, 1996, p. 23) in their study of Israelis in Toronto during the 1990s. This idea of contemplating about coming back to the homeland after a period of time away is not unique for Israeli diasporants (Baumann, 2004, p. 174)<sup>128</sup>, and is grounded in Safran's definition of a diaspora (Safran, 1991).

At the same time, "The myth of return" does have specific characteristics for Israeli emigrants, and it is embedded within the *Yordim* culture. Cohen and Gold define myth "in the narrow anthropological and sociological sense" as "a narrative or a story believed to be true by people who tell it" (Cohen & Gold, 1996, pp. 375-376). "The myth of return" itself is embodied in *Yordim*-minded emigrants constantly expressing their wish to return to and live in Israel in the future; some even outline in detail plans to do so. However, in practice the large majority of them do not act on these wishes and never return to live in Israel. Cohen and Gold conclude that "the myth of return" stresses Israeli emigrants' impermanence outside Israel and enables them to "maintain a distinct ethnic identity" (Cohen & Gold, 1996, p. 24).

Israelis in Australia also refer to the idea of 'myth of return'. Shalom from Sydney grew up in Israel and moved with his family to Australia when he was a teenager. Despite living for many years in Australia, he states that pondering about returning to Israel is always on the minds of Israeli emigrants:

This [Israel] is our place, we know that we can always go back there, you know, 'when the shit hits the fan' [when trouble arises] we always have that option [to return] and we are keeping this option to ourselves. Anyone saying he is not keeping this option to himself is a liar.

(Shalom, 2010)

Similar thoughts are expressed by Hallely Kimchi, the editor of *Eton*, when she describes her feelings of uncertainty and doubts following a visit to Israel:

It is that in such moments I feel so strong the fact that I belong to the 'question mark generation'. And that mark pops out every now and again with the question why do I live elsewhere [and not in Israel]. And is it for good or maybe not? And after these visits I have to choose again not to live in Israel. And it is difficult, very difficult.

(Kimchi, 2005)

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<sup>128</sup> Baumann includes that 'the myth of return' as a component in phase one of his five phase model of phases in the development of diaspora in general, spanning 150 years altogether. He implements his model on the Hindu emigrants to Trinidad (Baumann, 2004, pp. 174-175).

The 'desperate' Israeli emigrants to Australia negative prognosis of Israel's future constitute a new myth which may be viewed as a response or a discourse with the "myth of return". This new myth, which could be titled "the myth of no return", is nurtured on the apocalyptic view. It holds that Israel is no longer a place where it is possible to live a 'normal' life, at least for now. This is because it is a country faced with a never-ending existential threat, whilst Israeli society is in the midst of a process of self-destruction. Thus, "the myth of no return" justifies why the emigrants were forced to leave Israel and why they cannot return, at least for the time being. Safran points to the reversal in the negative perception of the diaspora, when in some cases, particularly for Israelis issuing foreign passports, it is considered "an ultimate demographic sanctuary and a guarantor of the survival of Jews as a community" (Safran, 2009, p. 86).

Similarly, in a further development of this approach by Israeli emigrants, this participant on the *Tapuz* forum attaches a new 'heroic' role to the *Yordim*, once considered social deviants. He claims that the emigrants are 'a selected few' survivors, who would return to Israel in the far future to revive it after a deterministic and unavoidable disastrous future. In his view, it is the holocaust apocalypse in reverse when the emigrants will become a new form of pioneers but in foreign lands outside Israel, just like holocaust survivors and other Jews were before the State of Israeli was born and during its early days. The pioneers would live in the diaspora not to rejuvenate or preserve Jewishness, as they did since Babylonian times. This time it would be for be keeping the flame of 'Israeliness' alive:

Of all people, the *Yordim* will be the ones keeping the flame. In the way the country [Israel] is being managed today, and with all the threats to its future from home and from the outside, we should be happy that there will be those who would resurrect [Israel] from its ruins.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. January 2010)

### **'The wandering Jew' again**

The migration behavioural pattern, of fleeing from hardship to new territories, has deep roots in Jewish history. Arnold Eisen explains that the narrative of "loss and leaving of home" is repeated constantly in the Bible in many shapes and forms starting with the story of Cain.

[...G]eneration after generation of Jews has returned to the depiction of its alien people on the run. There was comfort in the knowledge that one's suffering had been shared by the ancestors. There was, too, a modicum of explanation. If exile had been ordained by

God Himself as the lot of His chosen people, there was honour and purpose in apparent disgrace.

(Eisen, 1986, p. xi)

One aspect of this Jewish exilic destiny was the symbolic mythical character of 'the wandering Jew'. The origins of the legend of 'the wandering Jew' or 'the Immortal Jew' can be traced as far back as the end of the first millennium. The early stories were told at that time about Malchus, the servant of the High Priest in Jerusalem, whose right ear was amputated by Saint Simon Peter, one of Twelve Apostles, with a sword when trying to stop Judas Iscariot and the band of Roman soldiers from arresting Jesus. Because he dared lay hands on Jesus and assist to those betraying him, according to the legend, Malchus was doomed for a life of endless wandering until Judgement day. The story later transformed and evolved in many versions over centuries, and was connected and theologically reasoned using stories from the New and Old Testaments (Gaer, 1961).

Since its inception, the legend of the 'Wandering Jew' has become popular in many forms within Christian culture. Later on, one of its transformations evolved into an antisemitic myth. According to the antisemitic legend, 'the wandering Jew' is a supernatural, never-aging Jew destined for eternal wandering, always accompanied by death yet unable to be laid to final rest because of his rejection of Jesus as the saviour and son of God. The character of 'the wandering Jew' became a symbol of the atrocious destiny of all heretics and an essentialist embodiment of Diaspora Jews in particular. Constant movement and migration, according to the myth, are embedded in Jewish existence over generations.

In the nineteenth century, claims Bordes-Benayoun, "the mobility of the wandering Jew was perceived as strange and ambiguous in a world which wanted to be secure within its boundaries. Human mobility was considered as negative and threatening for the fatherland" (Bordes-Benayoun, 2010, p. 50). The Zionist movement, which started around the same time, saw the resurrection of Jewish peoplehood in the state of Israel, particularly in its early days, as the rejection of Diaspora, as embodied in the theme of 'negation of exile'. This idea of 'negation of exile' is rooted in the *Haskalah* period, the Jewish enlightenment movement, in Eastern Europe which criticised nineteenth century traditional *Talmud* studies and Yiddish speaking Jewish communal life. It was developed and taught in Jewish schools in Europe. Later on, explain Attias and Benbassa, Zionism adopted the derogatory perception of diaspora.

As a result, Zionism set itself up as a counter-model to exile - and as a solution to exile. In the collective memory that Zionism constructed over time, exile was the site of suffering, humiliation, fear, and precariousness [...] It is in this climate, however, that the Zionists

sketched a typology of the exiled Jew - largely inspired by antisemitic stereotypes - as weak and fearful.

(Attias & Benbassa, 2003, pp. 187-188)

From this perceptive, Zionism, and its eventuated goal achieved in the establishment of the State of Israel, offers a 'happy ending' and redemption of the Jew from the "antisemitic stereotypes", including the one about his endless wanderings in the Diaspora. Idalovici asserts that:

The antisemitic legend of 'the wandering Jew', his image and his actions, were adopted by the Zionist movement as a genuine description of the plight of the Diaspora Jew. And for this reason, it was said, Jews must forge a new life in a Jewish homeland, for in Diaspora death would always be a constant companion [...] Disassociation from the image of 'the wandering Jew' was the mark of the rejection of the Diaspora. The act of wandering was assigned a negative connotation, while the act of settlement [in Israel] became a positive attribute

(Idalovichi, Winter 2005, p. 16)

Zionist conceptions of the diaspora amounted to much more than wholesale adoption of antisemitic legends. At the same time, from Idalovichi's point of view, the distinction between the *Olim* (ascenders) and *Yordim* (descenders) can be redefined. Thus, the former are heroic Diaspora Jews choosing to be reborn as the new Jews, the Israelites, through settlement in Israel; thus no longer wanderers. The latter are the feeble-minded and weak Jews leaving Israel, and thus shamefully surrendering their souls to become again 'wandering Jews'. Just like the destiny of 'the wandering Jew', the *Yordim* are destined for never-ending movement in search of a place where their souls can finally be tranquil.

In the conclusion of his discussion about 'the wandering Jew', Idalovichi's claims that the myth lives on and that Zionism and the establishment of the state of Israel did not bring an end 'wandering' of Jews:

The phenomenon of 'the wandering Jew' continues to maintain its mysterious nature and intimidating power since the dawn of Christianity up to the end of the twentieth century. And this despite the attempts to tame or domesticate him in the Land of Israel, to make him a normal person, a normal member of society in a culture that eagerly seeks normalization with its neighbours and the world-at-large, which inevitably seem to fail.

(Idalovichi, Winter 2005, p. 22)

Evidence supporting Idalovichi's point of view that 'the wandering Jew' myth still exists, surfaced in this study. Specifically, the 'desperate' group are producing a counter-narrative to the Zionist interpretation of 'the wandering Jew'. This is done by depicting their emigration as an escape from a deterministic fate

of never-ending troubled life in the Jewish homeland. From this perspective, 'the desperate' are 'wandering' away from Israel because 'the wandering Jew' did not find relief as a result of Jewish national resurrection in Israel. Their approach may contend with the past view of *Yordim* or even challenge core traditional values of Zionism. At the same time, maybe unintentionally, it readily adopts that component of historic Jewish diasporic narrative of escaping to other territories to ensure continuity. This time, unlike the past, these emigrants are fleeing (and not being banished) the place where national Jewish aspirations were fulfilled and where Jewish continuity was supposed to be assured and rebuilt.

The idea of failing to tame 'the wandering Jew' is also embedded in the quest for a non-Israeli citizenship on top of an Israeli one, as a means of enabling an escape to foreign lands in case of possible calamity (the apocalyptic approach). From this point of view, the non-Israeli passport enables Israelis to return to their essentialist roots as 'wandering Jews', which they have tried to deny through Zionism.

The same perception echoes in reflections by Israeli author Nava Semel in her novel about her journey in Australia. Semel records her impression after meeting Israelis in Australia which talk openly about their wish to hold a non-Israeli passport and to immigrate. In her description, Semel uses terms which relate to 'the wandering Jew' as a biologic feature of Jews of biblical origins since the days of the founder of the Jewish people, Abraham:

It is a yearning for endless nomadism and the securing of "Go from your country and your place of birth"<sup>129</sup> that were implanted into our genetic code.

(Semel, 2009, p. 95)

Shalom, a Sydney-based Israeli, specifically refers to 'the wandering Jew' when discussing his own and his family's emigration in a greater Jewish historical context. It is evidence that at least some Israeli emigrants accept the myth:

We are a generation of immigrants; we know generations of immigrants that preceded us, our parents and grandfathers were immigrants. Immigration is in our blood, we are practically the Wandering Jew in that sense.

(Shalom, 2010)

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<sup>129</sup> God's call on Abraham to go to the holy land, Genesis 12:1.



This example from *Eton* may serve best to conclude this argument about 'the wandering Jew'. The writer draws a direct line between Jews escaping the horrors of the holocaust after the Second World War by making *Aliyah* and his own emigration out of Israel to Australia. Presenting a reversed version of the Zionist story, parallels are drawn between Israelis leaving for Australia on a jet airplane and the *Ma'apilim* boat people - the Jewish immigrant ships (ספינות מעפילים) making *Alyiah* to Palestine before the birth of the State of Israel. Similar to 'the wandering Jew', the emigration to Australia is an attempt to escape death that always follows the Jews, even to Israel, where they were supposed to finally be released from his shadow. This metaphor draws a direct line between the memory of past genocide and the apocalyptic approach which looks to the future.

[quoting a famous Israeli song by *Shabak Samech*] "Grandpa made *Aliyah* to the country [to Israel] in a *Ma'apilim* boat, from a place of death to a place where they say life exists" [...]. Two generations later, and Hop! We are also on a Boeing type *Ma'apilim* boat, [going] to a place where they say life exists.

(Moria, 2005)

## 9. Acculturation and assimilation into Australian society

The term 'acculturation' was first coined in the late nineteenth century by John Wesley Powell, referring to changes in Native American languages and the psychological changes induced by cross-cultural imitation. Later on, the definition of acculturation became contested and a subject for debate.

In the context of immigration, one definition of acculturation is as "an individual's process of learning about and adopting the receiving society's [...] cultural norms as well as the degree to which the person maintains his or her heritage culture" (Berry, 1997, p. 28). Jandt mapped four types of acculturation: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. Assimilation eventuates in complete abandonment of the immigrant's home culture and of total adoption of the host country's culture. Integration occurs when both home and host cultures are maintained and valued at similar levels. Separatism is characterized by segregation of the group in geographical and/or social enclaves which enable to continue maintaining the home culture, most notably the language, without the need to attach to and use host society's culture. Those who feel marginalized reject both home and host cultures. Different factors may determine and influence acculturation. Jandt, for example, asserts that cultural similarity and individual features determine the type of assimilation; other factors may be attitude towards each culture (home and host) and personal goals and motives (Donnetrice, 2010, p. 5).

Influential American sociologist Herbert Gans examined acculturation in the context of transnational immigration<sup>130</sup> to the United States since the mid-1960s (Gans, 1997). He challenged classic sociological perception of 'straight line' assimilation that presumed predictable and linear trajectory of immigrants into the host culture. Instead, he distinguished between acculturation and assimilation, explaining that immigrants may be "ethnic retentionists", maintaining their ethnic social and cultural ties with peer ethnics and with the homeland. Thus, claimed Gans, acculturation always outpaces assimilation, and may even occur without assimilation altogether.

[A]cculturation refers mainly to the newcomers' adoption of the culture (i.e., behavior patterns, values, rules, symbols etc.) of the host society (or rather an overly homogenized and reified conception of it). Assimilation, on the other hand, refers to the newcomers' move out of formal and informal ethnic associations and other social institutions into the nonethnic equivalents accessible to them in that same host society.

(Gans, 1997, p. 877)

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<sup>130</sup> About the transnational approach, see subchapter 3.3 "The Transnationalist Approach" of this thesis.

Anthropologist Margaret Gibson followed Gans in her 1988 work “accommodation without assimilation”. Gibson claims that immigrants do not necessarily have to “become” one with the culture by adopting mainstream and dominant cultural ways of life and/or knowing in order to be successful in it. Instead, ethnic communities enable “selective acculturation” and the maintenance of distinct cultural identity (Gibson, 1988).

This chapter examines selected indicators of the acculturation and assimilation of Israelis in Australian society. For this reason, it looks into levels of naturalisation, investigates the difficulties Israeli emigrants face in the new host society and measures the sense of belonging to Australia and satisfaction with life in Australia.

## **9.1. Citizenship**

One of the indications for successful integration into a new country is obtaining citizenship (naturalisation). Rebhun and Lev Ari note that: "Naturalization cements an immigrant's official status as a citizen of his/her new country. Accordingly, it is a major step in his/her social and economic acculturation and integration" (Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 90).

If that is the case, Gen08 data suggests a positive process of acculturation and integration for the large majority of the Jewish community in Australia, with a high percentage (above eighty) of migrants becoming Australian citizens (Table 9.1). This is not a surprising figure, as current Australian policy enables citizenship (qualifying either through skill, marriage to an Australian citizen or on a humanitarian basis) for most migrants after a period of four years<sup>131</sup>. Once granted permission to migrate to Australia, the road from being a migrant to becoming a citizen is relatively simple.

At the same time, according to both Gen08 data and to the 2006 Census (Table 9.1 and Table 9.2), only three quarters of Israelis hold an Australian citizenship. Israelis rank lowest in the percentages of Australian citizenship holders when compared to other sections of the Jewish population. This is possibly due to Israelis with temporary professional work-migrants (457 visa class) or with permanent residency (PR) status. According to current Australian law, PR is granted for a period of at least four years after which citizenship can be applied for. Thus, it is most probable that recent emigrants will be permanent residents who have yet to attain naturalisation. 2006 Census data supports this assumption, as more

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<sup>131</sup> See discussion about Australia's immigration policy in (Markus, et al., 2009, pp. 53-67).

than eighty per cent (1427 out of 1754) of Israel born residents who are not Australian citizens are recent emigrants, arriving to Australian shores since the year 2000<sup>132</sup>.

Table 9.1

Gen08 - Australian citizenship: according to country of birth (percentages)

Response	Israel	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
Yes	74.9	84.0	87.6	91.9	91.0	93.5
No	16.4	15.4	11.4	8.0	8.3	5.6
Don't know	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Decline to answer	2.8	0.6	1.0	0.1	0.7	0.5
<b>N=</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>1135</b>	<b>5841</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data.

Note: The question asked: "Are you an Australian citizen?"

Table 9.2

2006 Census - Citizenship of Israel-born in Australia

Citizenship	Australian	Non-Australian	Not stated	Total
Total	5,954	1,697	137	<b>7,788</b>
Percentage	76.5	21.8	1.8	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 2006 Australian Census Cdata online.

Even without including the temporary work migrants or Israelis with permanent residency status rather than citizenship, the three-quarters of Israelis who are holders of an Australian passport can be considered as a high figure when compared with other countries with Israeli emigrant populations. Accordingly, following their survey among Israelis abroad, Rebhun and Popko define as "high percentages" their finding that around sixty-five per cent of Israelis in Canada, France and Oceania have local citizenships (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 13). For the United States the figures are even higher, around eighty per cent, and they increase to close to a hundred per cent with tenure (time in destination country since emigration) (Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 92).

At the same time, the overwhelming majority of Israelis continue to retain their Israeli passports. According to Gen08 data, 98.5 per cent of Israelis hold Israeli citizenship<sup>133</sup>. Israel automatically bestows

<sup>132</sup> The figure for the Gen08 survey is lower: slightly less than sixty per cent (57 per cent, 79 out of 138) of Israel-born Gen08 respondents who arrived in Australia after the year 2000 responded with 'No' or 'Don't know' when asked if they were Australian citizens (Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data).

citizenship either by birth or by immigration to Jews (*Aliyah*), a result of the law of return. Furthermore, Israel not only allows its former residents to maintain their citizenship after emigration but also requires them to use their Israeli passports at its border gateways. It is also assumed that, at least for some, retaining your Israeli citizenship it is a consciously-made decision to 'keep the option' of returning to Israel an open one<sup>134</sup>.

This high rate of Israeli passport holders is possibly misleading, due to the fact that many countries do not allow dual citizenship. For example, most FSU countries, with the important exception of Russia itself, do not recognise dual citizenship. This is possibly part of the reason why the percentage of FSU Jews with another citizenship following immigration to Australia (76 per cent) is considerably lower than the Israeli figure (98.5 per cent)<sup>135</sup>.

## 9.2. Immigration-related difficulties

Like other immigrants, Israelis often face various types of challenges involved in re-establishing their life in a new country. Gen08 looked into the possible difficulties non-Australian-born Jewish immigrants may endure, on a variety of subjects ranging from economy-related issues and housing to social aspects. Specifically, the survey asked about difficulties experienced with regards to English; accommodation and employment; recognition of professional qualifications; achieving financial stability ; making friendships in the Jewish community ; facing discrimination ; children's education and health issues.

Two findings emerge from the responses of Israelis to these survey questions. The first is that as much of a quarter of Israeli respondents report at least moderate difficulty in all the categories presented. The second finding is that in almost all categories the percentages of Israelis reporting moderate or serious difficulties are either the highest in the Jewish community, or rank second to FSU-born Jews percentages (Table 9.3). This finding is becomes clearer when the averages are considered (Figure 9.1). This is done by first calculating the average percentages of respondents reporting moderate difficulty in all

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<sup>133</sup> 351 out of 356 Israel-born respondents noted that they hold an Israeli citizenship (responses to the question: "Are you a citizen of any other country? Please specify"). (Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data).

<sup>134</sup> Israeli law distinguished between new immigrants (*Olim*) who never lived in Israel and returnees (*Toshav Chazer*, returning resident), each granted different social and economic benefits. Further distinction is between a regular returnees (up to six consecutive years abroad) and 'Senior returning residents' (ten years or more consecutively outside Israel) with the latter enjoying the same benefits as new immigrants.

<sup>135</sup> 285 out of 372 FSU-born respondents noted that they hold a non-Australian citizenship, including 36 respondents with Israeli passports (responses to the question: Are you a citizen of any other country? Please specify (Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data).

categories according to country of birth. The same process is then repeated for serious difficulty rates and for the total Gen08 respondents for both moderate and serious difficulties (total averages). This calculation reveals that Israelis slightly exceed the averages for both moderate and serious difficulty; FSU-born averages are even higher. In fact, Israel-born and FSU-born averages are the only ones in the Jewish community with higher difficulty averages than the total averages.

Table 9.3

Gen08 - Rates indication of difficulties: according to country of birth (percentages)

Country of birth	Housing		Recognition of professional or trade qualifications		Employment		Insufficient income	
	Moderate	Serious	Moderate	Serious	Moderate	Serious	Moderate	Serious
Israel	15.8	5.7	21.8	6.0	25.7	8.5	19.1	5.1
UK	10.0	2.8	4.8	2.4	10.1	1.0	15.2	4.7
FSU	26.0	16.5	18.2	14.1	22.1	27.4	32.5	12.1
SA	12.8	2.4	11.5	2.4	13.7	2.0	20.5	3.8
Other	11.1	1.4	7.1	2.6	10.9	2.8	17.8	6.1
Total	14.4	4.7	12.3	4.5	15.7	6.7	20.7	5.7

Country of birth	Children's education		Making friends in the Jewish community		Discrimination at work	
	Moderate	Serious	Moderate	Serious	Moderate	Serious
Israel	16.6	2.9	25.8	6.9	14.6	2.5
UK	7.3	2.4	12.3	3.3	8.6	1.0
FSU	17.5	13.8	34.4	16.4	12.8	3.6
SA	8.4	1.2	14.8	1.8	5.4	1.3
Other	8.2	3.7	19.2	4.0	8.9	3.0
Total	10.7	3.9	20.0	5.3	8.8	2.1

Country of birth	Discrimination when mixing with Australians		Discrimination within the Jewish community		Health	
	Moderate	Serious	Moderate	Serious	Moderate	Serious
Israel	14.2	3.5	17.7	4.4	8.5	4.7
UK	13.9	1.0	11.4	1.9	12.8	2.6
FSU	13.2	12.2	27.6	4.7	22.9	12.9
SA	16.8	2.0	12.8	2.9	15.1	2.4
Other	13.7	1.2	12.2	4.2	11.3	3.4
Total	14.9	3.3	15.3	3.6	14.0	4.4

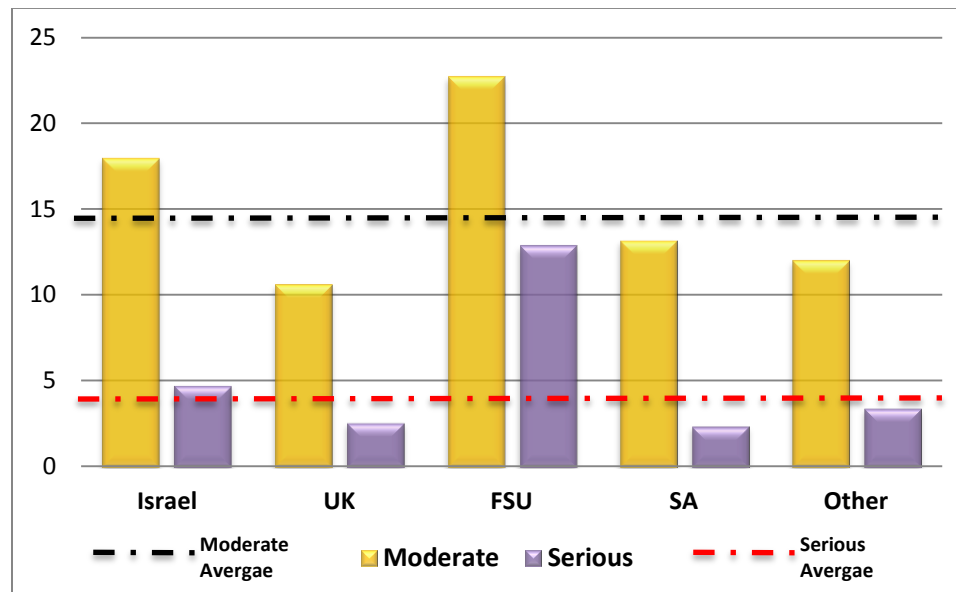
Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, Unpublished data.

Index:  Highest percentage  Second-highest percentage

Note: N= Israel – 210; UK – 301 ; FSU – 839 ; SA – 317 ; Other – 502 ; Total – 2169.

Figure 9.1

Gen08 - Calculated average difficulties' indication rates: 'moderate' and 'serious', according to country of birth (percentages)



Analysis of the array of difficulties experienced by the Israelis in Australia from a comparative point of view leads to two conclusions. The first is on the interplay of the global economy and migration. Gold claims that “since Israelis are often skilled, their migration represents a huge net gain in human capital for the economies of their host societies” (Gold, 2002, p. 46). However, this potential gain for the economy of the country does not mean exemption from facing problems in absorption into the local market. Language is still a barrier to cross, with the need to prove English proficiency both orally and in writing (a difficulty probably greater for Russian speaking FSU Jews). Another issue concerns international transference of human capital, with the need to have not only authorities but also the market recognise, authorise and accept the knowledge, skills and qualifications amassed in Israel. Also, there are immigrants - Israelis included - who claim xenophobia is behind at least some of the difficulties they face the Australian job market and/or business arena. These issues are possibly the main reasons behind Israelis’ noting as a moderate difficulty discrimination at work and vis-à-vis other Australians.

The second conclusion is related to the relationship between Jews and Israelis in the diaspora. Difficulties with both making friends within the Jewish community and facing discrimination by the Jewish community are indications of a problematic interaction between the two groups. The issue of

children's education is possibly connected to the decision whether or not to send children to Jewish schools.<sup>136</sup>

### **9.3. The adjustment period**

Israelis who arrived in Australia before the end of the twentieth century testify to having a long period of adjustment to cultural differences and a need to cope with a lifestyle and behavioural norms very different from those that they were accustomed to in Israel. One example is the testimony of Yafit, who emigrated in 1966 and who speaks of a ten- year-long "trauma" following her emigration. When asked why she felt this way, she replies at length on the cultural differences that existed between Israel and Australia at that time. After discussing some of the dissimilarities, for instance in the food and past-times of each country, she dwells on the social norms:

The lifestyle [in Australia], that each person had a huge house with a backyard, where he spent all of his free time next to the barbeque. Starting from Saturday noon until Monday morning, you could not see a single living soul on the streets. Even today, if I drive to friends in Doncaster [a Melbourne suburb], I go through miles on miles - the houses are beautiful, the gardens are well taken care of, [but] no human beings! You cannot see human beings. And this was a horrible trauma, because when you come from Jerusalem, where it is very crowded, you just open the door and start looking for a little bit of privacy. You have [there] lots of people [close to you]. Here, when you opened the door, you could not see anyone! Not a single person to see with your own eyes. Also, you do not go [to visit] someone unless you call him [first], you cannot meet with another person unless you invite him and he invites you. Suddenly you feel yourself horribly lonely !

(Yafit, 2010)

A series of elements and developments over the past two decades has resulted in a reduction in some features of the cultural shock following immigration mentioned by Yafit. The first is the accessible exposure to information about Australia (and other cultures) via international media; especially the internet. Networking, such as the online *Tapuz* social forum for the Israelis in Australia, acts similarly in providing updated and specific information for would-be immigrants. Also, Israel and Australia have

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<sup>136</sup> These issues and other aspects of the relationship between Israelis and Jews in Australia, as well as the question of children's Jewish identity as manifested in the parents' decision about their education, are explored at length in other parts of this thesis. See chapter 11 "Interaction with the Australian Jewish Community" and subchapter 12.6 "Bequeathing 'Israeliness' - Identity preservation mechanisms" of this thesis.

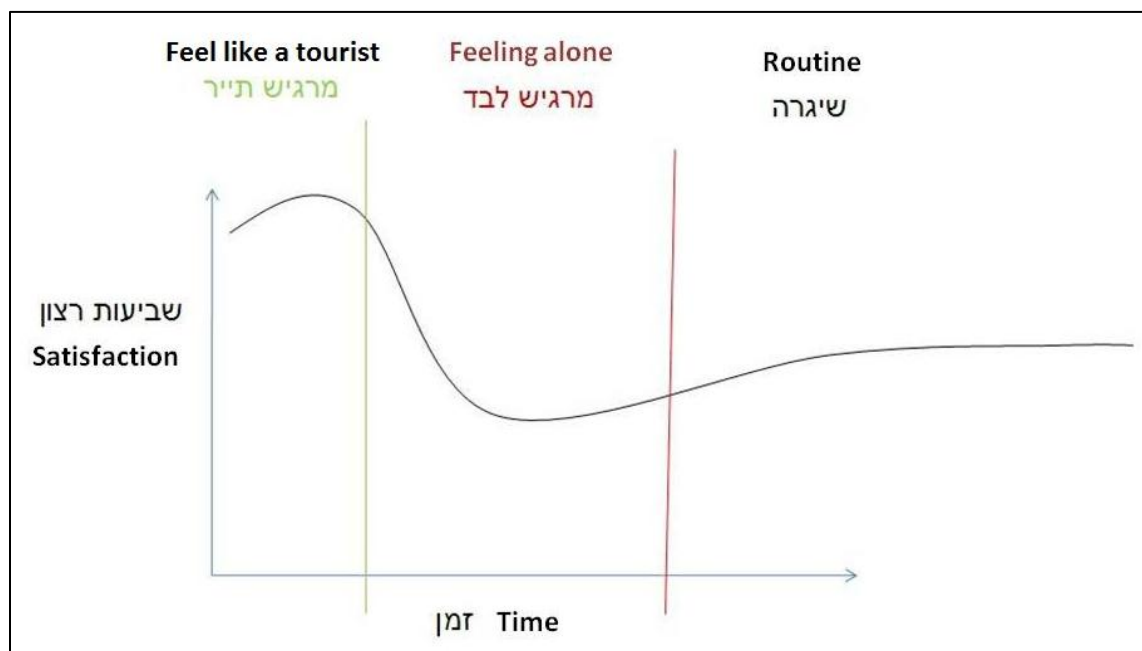


both been going through processes of globalisation and the adoption of cultural aspects now recognised as typical of Westernised twenty-first century societies.

Despite the aforementioned developments, Israeli emigrants, including recent ones, attest to a period of adjustment. However, they describe it in different terms than used by past emigrants and point to other factors related to the adjustment process itself. According to the evidence collected for this study, the adjustment period can be divided into three stages: Early euphoria - derived from the optimism of expecting positive change and of a feeling similar to being on a leisure trip ; Crisis - appears when first having to deal with every-day-life challenges, especially while family and friends in Israel are not present to be of assistance ; and acceptance and relative satisfaction – when (or if) settling into a routine.

One *Tapuz* member graphically portrayed the above-mentioned process in the following figure:

Figure 9.2  
Adjustment stages following immigration (Tapuz)



(Tapuz, n.d., p. October 2009)

And this is the explanation that was attached to the graph:

The attached graph describes the stages in the process of moving to a different country which all the people I know went through. The scale (time and satisfaction) is not the same for different people or families. In the first stage you feel like a tourist. Everything is new, interesting and you have a taste of everything. The second stage [begins] when

you start sobering up from your feeling of being a tourist and enter everyday life. The child needs a doctor [...], a traffic warden gives you a parking ticket, a teacher gets on your nerves ... Suddenly you realise that you do not exactly know how it works and that you are not always as eloquent [in English] as you are in Hebrew ... The euphoria dissipates. In the third stage you start to blend in, understand your environment and can enjoy it.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. October 2009)

This Israeli woman shares online her feelings after the initial stage of euphoria following immigration:

When you first come here it is not really a [leisure] trip. Each one takes it differently, and I personally had quite a nice month in the beginning, up until the big letdown [depression]. I very much missed my friends in Israel. Some of them, upon hearing that I had received [an immigration] visa, evaporated, so I even had no-one to call. My parents, should I call and cry to them? It would only hurt them even further. So I was left with my own depression, alone, and even with your spouse you are careful as you might pull him down as well. And this [having him depressed as well] is not worthwhile. You feel so down, you feel completely useless. I mean, for what [purpose] did you do this nonsense [of immigrating] and what a childish dream [it was] to leave everything and try from the beginning.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. July 2010)

#### **9.4. Identification with Australia**

One aspect of acculturation into local society characterised by a multicultural policy such as in current day Australia, is “the sense of identification with the larger society by all individuals and groups” (García-Ramírez, et al., 2011, p. 87). Nesdle and Mak suggest a model to determine the level of identification with host country as part of immigrants’ acculturation process. This model considers four major factors. The first is an attitude “of wanting to become enmeshed and part of that country’s culture”; the second is feeling of acceptance or rejected by host society; the third is level of social and/or economic success in the new country; and the forth is openness in the sense of “the extent to which immigrants remain psychologically ‘located’ within their ethnic environment” (Nesdale & Mak, 2000, p. 485).

With regards to Israelis in Australia, some of the factors in Nesdale and Mak’s model can be examined with available data. Three of the factors - attitude towards acculturation, feelings of acceptance and openness - are possibly reflected in the sense of belonging to the host country and satisfaction about life in the new country as opposed to life in the homeland.

Gen08 data examined both of these questions. The results (Table 9.4) are ambivalent. On the one hand, a majority of Israelis, more than half (57.2 per cent) testify to a strong or very strong sense of belonging. At the same time, the percentages recorded for this set of positive responses is the lowest when compared other sectors of the Jewish community. This figure is much lower than for most other Jews in Australia (ranging between 70 to 90 per cent approximately), especially due to the small proportion of Israelis indicating a “very strong sense of belonging” (17.6 per cent); at least fifteen per cent lower than the next lower segments of the Australian Jewish population. This finding may be due to the continued strong affiliation of many Israelis to their homeland, Israel<sup>137</sup>. Jews from FSU, SA and possibly other countries might have negative perceptions of the society they left in their homeland, as a result of antisemitism; it is assumed that most Israeli emigrants in Australia do not harbour negative feelings of such intensity about the Israeli society.

At least tenth of Israeli Gen08 respondents, again the highest percentage in the Jewish community, seem to remain undecided or indifferent about their feelings of belonging to Australia. The same sentiments may have led a further ten per cent to note “Don’t know” or “Decline to answer” as their responses. It is also mirrored in the fact the more than fifth (21.5 per cent) of Gen08 Israel-born respondents noted “unsure” as their response to the question “Would you like to spend the rest of your life living in Australia, apart from temporary absences?”. This rate is the highest (by five to ten per cent) among Gen08 respondents when cross tabulated according to country of birth (Anon., 2008-2009, p. unpublished data).

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<sup>137</sup> On the connection of Israelis to Israel as the homeland, see the discussion in subchapter 12.9 “Attachment to Israel” of this thesis.

Table 9.4

Gen08 - Sense of belonging to Australia: according to country of birth (percentages)

Response	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
Very strong sense of belonging	17.6	60.3	42.0	32.7	35.5	36.9	46.4
Strong sense of belonging	39.6	29.4	37.7	38.1	42.0	40.6	35.2
Slight sense of belonging	16.4	5.6	15.1	13.2	15.8	13.3	10.4
No feelings of belonging one way or the other	10.0	1.8	2.5	10.4	2.9	5.6	3.9
Slight sense of not belonging	4.1	1.1	1.2	1.8	1.2	1.1	1.4
Strong sense of not belonging	1.8	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5
Very strong sense of not belonging	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.1	0.3
Don't know	6.9	0.1	0.6	2.0	0.5	1.4	1.0
Decline to answer	3.1	1.1	0.3	1.3	0.3	0.9	1.0
N=	391	2738	324	394	861	1134	5842

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Index:  Highest percentage  Second-highest percentage  Lowest percentage

Note: The question asked: "To what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia?"

Gen08 asked non-Australian born respondents to rate their satisfaction with life in Australia as compared to the countries they immigrated from (Table 9.5). Close to one-third of Israel-born respondents report being more satisfied in Australia than they were when living in Israel. This rate is similar to most other sectors of the Jewish population of Australia. However, the percentage of Israelis expressing much more satisfaction with life in Australia compared to Israel is by far the lowest in the Jewish community (19.6 per cent as compared to 50 per cent and above for most other foreign-born Jews in Australia).

Another interesting figure is the quarter (25.5 per cent) of Israel-born respondents who chose 'Don't know' as their response to this question. This response may be indicative of an inability to decide if they are content with their new life in Australia. This indecisiveness may be in light of Israeli-specific immigration-related difficulties. It may also be connected with the permanent-temporary state of mind affiliated with the *Yordim* culture<sup>138</sup>.




<sup>138</sup> For more on the permanent temporariness of Israeli emigrants, see subchapter 3.2 "Migration Studies Approach" of this thesis.

Table 9.5

Gen08 - Satisfaction with life in Australia compared with home country: according to country of birth (percentages)

Response	Israel	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
Much more satisfied	19.6	50.2	64.3	54.1	36.2	46.5
More satisfied	34.0	33.3	19.6	28.6	31.3	28.9
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14.3	9.4	5.6	8.4	22.0	12.0
Less satisfied	3.4	1.4	0.5	1.8	1.1	1.6
Much less satisfied	1.6	0.0	0.8	1.5	1.9	1.3
Don't know	25.5	3.8	4.8	4.2	6.6	7.8
Decline to answer	1.6	1.9	4.5	1.4	0.9	1.9
<b>N=</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>2299</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Index:  Highest percentage  Second-highest percentage  Lowest percentage

Note: The question asked: "Compared to life in the country you lived in permanently before coming to Australia, how satisfied are you with your life in Australia?"

Additional Gen08 data indicates that Israelis express general satisfaction about various aspects of their life in Australia. These aspects include satisfaction with life as a whole; standard of living; health issues; life achievements; personal relationships; feeling safe; and feeling secure about the future. When Gen08 asked about their level of satisfaction on these issues, seventy to eighty per cent of Israel-born participants, as well as almost all other segments of the Jewish population in Australia, responded with either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" (Anon., 2008-2009, p. unpublished data).

Tenure (time in destination country since emigration) and age at emigration were found to be factors influencing sense of belonging to Australia and satisfaction with life in the new country of Israelis in Australia (Table 9.6 and Table 9.7). According to the Gen08 data, sense of belonging becomes stronger over time since emigration. It is also stronger for Israelis who emigrated as children when compared to those who left Israel as adults. Tenure has been found to be a positive factor with regards to satisfaction with life in Australia but to a lesser extent. Israel-born who immigrated as adults are somewhat more satisfied with life in Australia than those who emigrated at a younger age. This finding may be a result of fading memories of Israel when leaving it as children while adults still retain such memories and are able to more vividly compare between the two countries. The issue of 'self-reporting' may also be relevant

here<sup>139</sup>. This is because adults are more likely to have voluntarily chosen to emigrate and thus maybe justifying to themselves their decision by indicating a high level of satisfaction from their new country.

Another finding which arises from the analysis is that regardless of tenure or age on arrival to Australia, a relatively big portion of respondents may be categorized as ‘indecisive’ or ‘in-between’. These are the twenty to forty per cent Israel-born participants who choose neutral responses (‘Don’t know’, ‘No feelings one way or the other about belonging’, ‘Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’) to the questions on belonging and satisfaction with Australia.

Table 9.6

Gen08 - Sense of belonging: Israel-born respondents, according to immigration year and age on arrival to Australia (percentages)

Response	Arrival year				Age on arrival			
	-1979	1980-1999	2000-2008	Total	0-18	19-29	30-	Total
<b>Sense of belonging<sup>1</sup></b>								
Very strong / strong sense of belonging	79.0	69.4	27.5	57.3	84.2	51.4	40.5	59.1
Slight sense of belonging	3.5	18.2	25.4	16.5	7.1	16.9	27.9	16.9
No feelings one way or the other about belonging	2.6	5.8	20.3	10.0	4.0	9.9	18.0	10.3
Don't know	0.9	0.7	17.4	6.7	0.8	17.6	0.0	6.9
<b>N=</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>379</b>

Table 9.7

Gen08 - Satisfaction with life in Australia: Israel-born respondents, according to immigration year and age on arrival to Australia (percentages)

Response	Arrival year				Age on arrival			
	-1979	1980-1999	2000-2008	Total	0-18	19-29	30-	Total
<b>Satisfaction with life in Australia<sup>2</sup></b>								
Much more / More satisfied	59.6	54.5	50.7	53.6	44.6	50.0	63.0	53.2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14.9	12.5	15.9	14.3	9.5	10.1	23.4	14.6
Don't know	19.1	27.9	25.4	25.5	37.8	31.9	9.0	25.4
<b>N=</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>323</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

<sup>139</sup> For a discussion about ‘self-reporting’ see subchapter 5.3 “Primary sources” of this thesis.

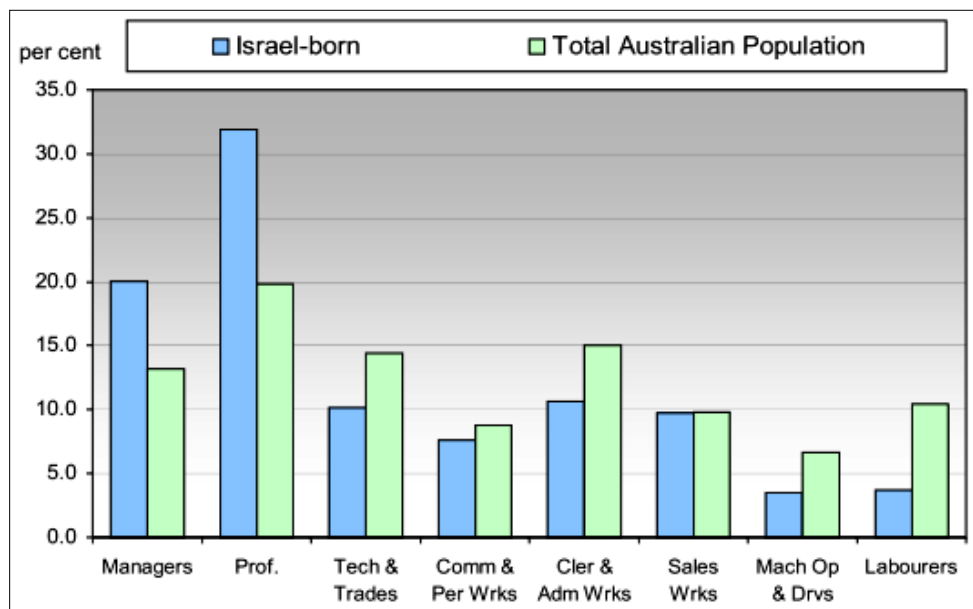
Notes:

<sup>1</sup>The question asked: “To what extent do you have a sense of belonging in Australia?”

<sup>2</sup>The question asked: “Compared to life in the country you lived in permanently before coming to Australia, how satisfied are you with your life in Australia?”

Understanding the level of economic success of Israelis in Australia, another factor from Nesdale and Mak’s model, is possible based on 2006 Census data (Figure 9.3). In 2006, 70.5 per cent (4,530) of Israel-born adult emigrants in Australia were part of the workforce, as opposed to 64.6 per cent of workforce participation in the general Australian population. Moreover, close to half of the Israelis in Australia’s workforce (45.3 per cent) held professional and managerial positions (Skill level 1), which is almost twice as many as the general Australian figure (28.7 per cent)<sup>140</sup>. Unemployment levels recorded were relatively similar, 5.8 for Israelis and 5.2 for Australians in general (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, n.d.).

Figure 9.3  
Occupation of Israel-born Emigrants in Australia, 2006 (Percentages)



Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, n.d.

Israel-born emigrants are also relatively successful with regard to their income, which is above average when compared to other Australians. According to the 2006 Census data (Table 9.8), the median individual weekly income for Israel-born in Australia (aged 15 years and older) was \$552. This figure is

<sup>140</sup> The respective 2006 figures for managers and professionals in the Jewish community of Australia in general (Israelis included) are slightly lower when compared to the data on Israel born Australian residents (Markus & Aronov, 2009, p. 50).

higher than the equivalent figures for all overseas-born in Australia (\$431), all Australia-born (\$488), and the general Australian population (\$466). The percentage of Israeli men and women in the highest income categories (\$1000 and above), most notably in the peak level of \$2000 and above, is more than double that of the general Australian population. At the same time, average income levels of Israel-born in Australia seem slightly lower than respective data of the general Australian Jewish population (Markus & Aronov, 2009, p. 52).

Table 9.8

Distribution of Weekly Individual Gross Income for Israel-born Emigrants in Australia and for the Total Australian Population 2006 (Percentages)

Weekly individual gross income	Israel-born			Total Australian population		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Negative	0.94	1.01	0.97	0.55	0.52	0.54
Nil	8.04	12.39	9.97	5.97	8.62	7.33
\$1-\$149	4.55	8.28	6.21	5.29	9.80	7.61
\$150-\$249	8.62	15.35	11.61	12.79	17.68	15.31
\$250-\$399	9.01	14.10	11.28	10.74	17.53	14.23
\$400-\$599	12.64	14.27	13.37	13.52	16.35	14.97
\$600-\$799	11.56	10.06	10.89	12.92	10.48	11.67
\$800-\$999	9.84	7.67	8.88	10.48	6.97	8.67
\$1,000-\$1,299	10.95	7.40	9.37	10.89	6.21	8.48
\$1,300-\$1,599	7.37	3.67	5.73	6.51	2.91	4.66
\$1,600-\$1,999	5.10	2.22	3.82	4.18	1.35	2.73
\$2,000 +	11.37	3.57	7.90	6.16	1.58	3.80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, CDATA online..

Judging from this data, it is evident that, both professionally and financially, Israelis in Australia are accomplished immigrants. Most of them settle into the higher middle-class socio-economic group and above. This finding may be a feature of Israeli emigrants in general, as it seems to be parallel to the situation in the United States. According to Lev Ari and Rebhun, "Most studies on American Israelis attest that this group has higher socioeconomic attainments than those of the Israeli Jewish population as well as that of the United States population" (Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 72).



## 10. The Israeli community in Australia: Inner cohesion

Hastings, Clelland and Danielson, pointed to three possible change processes following immigration. The first results in assimilation into the host society. The second is 'insularity' on a personal level, which means individual immigrants only being concerned with their in-home way of life, and rejecting host society and its culture. The third process following immigration can eventuate in 'communality' - the formulation of an immigrant community within the host country, or integration into an existing immigrant cluster in the new society. In both types of communality, idealising the home culture is a major feature of the immigrant community (Hastings, et al., 1982).

The existence of a cluster of Israeli diasporants in Australia raises the question of whether they constitute together a community of their own. Prima facie, it is a trivial question with a simple answer. It seems that most of researchers on diasporas simply tend to automatically assume, without debate, that the mere fact a number of people of the same nationality immigrate to a new country makes them a community. Brennan, for example, claims that the joint experience of immigration is "critical in both establishing and enhancing a sense of collective purpose and a common understanding" (Brennan, 2004, p. 70). This assumption of immigration as an experience which automatically generates a collective bond is often made without applying any tests to prove or challenge if indeed a community is formed.

To answer the question 'is there an Israeli community in Australia?' this chapter analyses the sources available from two perspectives. The first is based on the 'structuralist approach' of ethnographic studies of communities. From this point of view, a community is a free-standing entity considered as a set of local social formations, created as a reaction to external social factors, as well as the end-product of a chain of casual influences. Thus, structuralism stresses the need to "document objective facts and casual relationships" (Day, 2006, pp. 152, 154). Accordingly, the question of whether the Israeli population of Australia constitutes a community will be examined vis-à-vis several concepts of community which focus on institutionalised or organisational aspects. Models of existing Israeli communities (specifically in the United States) are presented to understand which one (if any) may be compatible with the situation in Australia.

The second perspective for studying communities, and particularly the case of Israelis in Australia, looks at self-perception. It is formulated on the foundation of 'social constructionism' which emphasises the role of subjective understanding of human actions.

When interpreting their social world, and their position within it, people are compelled to engage in various kinds of theorizing, and to create a range of explanatory social

categories; constructionism undermines the tendency to regard such categories as part of the real world that attain factual status only by virtue of human agreement, and therefore exist only because people believe them to exist [...] 'Community' can be regarded as such a fact, having no independent existence outside the capacity of human beings to conceptualize it.

(Day, 2006, p. 155)

Based on the constructionist approach, this chapter will examine if and how Israeli emigrants in Australia define themselves as members of a community; and, if they do, what the characteristics of that community are, as they understand it.

### **10.1. Concepts of community**

Trying to define the term 'community' is a very challenging and elusive task. Anthropologist Vered Amit refers to a "cacophony" of "competing definitions of community" (Amit, 2002, p. 1), while sociologist Graham Day states that it is "a concept that has been worked to death: its range of meaning is so wide and diverse, its connotations so inconsistent, and at times downright dangerous, that it deserves no place in any serious social analysis" (Day, 2006, p. 1).

The enormity and complexity of the task does not mean workable definitions for this study cannot be found and rationalised, specifically when examining a diaspora community. Following are two perspectives that can be considered structuralist and render validity to the claim that the Israeli population in Australia can be perceived as a community. The perspectives chosen are complementary: one examines the question from a conceptual level, with the idea of 'imagined community'; and the other is less abstract, as it looks into settlement patterns and inner-group social networking.

#### **Imagined community**

Diasporas are often considered 'imagined communities', a concept first defined by Benedict Anderson (Kennedy & Roudometof, 2003, p. 3; Karim, 2003, p. 2). Anderson distinguished between actual communities which are based on face-to-face interaction between its members; and imagined ones, which are based on shared imagined bonds between the members. From Anderson's point of view,

Mass migration and mobility - stimulated by the technological advances of the last decades - lead to pervasive feelings of nostalgia for the homeland. Such feelings

permeate immigrant communities, thereby giving birth to the 'long distance nationalism' of ethnic diasporas, refugees, Gastarbeiter<sup>141</sup> or illegal immigrants.

(Kennedy & Roudometof, 2003, p. 3)

Karim explains that imagined communities "emphasise the diasporic connections facilitated by various media and simultaneous consumption of the same content by members of a transnational group" (Karim, 2003, p. 2). Put simply, same-content media consumption can be an indication of a diasporic community, as it creates the impression among the emigrants of a first-hand interaction with reality and current affairs in the homeland. This assumption was supported by studies on migrants in Europe and Asia with regards to different types of media (Georgiou, 2005; Christiansen, 2004; Gillespie, 1995; Law, 2003).

Israeli Sociologist, Gad Yair, claims in his book "The code of Israeliness" that obsessively consuming news is a basic feature of Israeli identity (Yair, 2011, pp. 8, 21). Accordingly, as two recent studies among Israelis abroad suggest, there exists a near uniformity in content consumption with regards to news and information about Israel. Close to ninety per cent of the two thousand Israelis abroad who participated in a poll conducted with Israelis living across the globe reported that they frequently read Israeli press, either in print or online (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, pp. 42-43). A separate study conducted among Israelis in the United States showed similar news consumption pattern. In this study, 117 Israelis from New Jersey were surveyed and interviewed in 2009 about the role of the Israeli media in their life since emigration. Close to three quarters of the respondents (72 per cent) noted that they mostly refer to Israeli sources for news (Malka & Kama, 2011, pp. 5-6).

This consumption pattern repeats itself with Israelis in Australia. Gen08 examined the aspect of content-consumption, asking respondents to identify their sources of information about Israel and the Jewish world (Table 10.1). The findings point to an overwhelming majority of Israel-born respondents relying on Israeli sources (64.1 per cent). This figure is very high when compared to other sectors of the Australian Jewish community (according to country of birth), which on average only a third of them refer to Israeli sources for information on Israel. Mastering Hebrew reading, as well as familiarity with the Israeli media landscape explains the accessibility of Israeli sources to Israelis over other members of the Australian Jewish community. On the other hand, Australian media in general and the sectoral Australian Jewish

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<sup>141</sup> *Gastarbeiter* ("guest worker" in German) - Migrant workers who came to West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s as part of an official government program.

News newspaper, popular with most Australian Jews, are far less used by Israelis when seeking to be updated about the Jewish world and Israel.

Table 10.1

Gen08 - Most used information sources about the Jewish world and Israel: Responses according to country of birth (percentages)

Sources	Israel	Rank	Australia	Rank	UK	Rank	FSU	Rank	SA	Rank	Other	Rank	Total	Rank
Israeli sources	64.1	1	29.0	6	27.8	6	32.0	5	26.1	6	31.8	6	31.6	6
Mail, email, newsletters	46.8	2	48.7	3	59.8	1	39.3	3	55.3	2	47.9	2	49.4	2
Australian TV & radio	29.0	3	38.6	5	40.1	5	48.5	1	33.8	5	39.1	4	38.1	4
Australian newspapers	26.2	4	50.6	2	54.9	3	43.4	2	42.7	3	47.7	3	47.0	3
Anecdotal, personal conversations	24.6	5	38.9	4	43.2	4	29.0	6	35.3	4	34.6	5	36.2	5
Australian Jewish News	23.9	6	67.7	1	56.2	2	37.3	4	66.4	1	66.0	1	61.6	1
Meetings lectures	12.3	7	20.1	7	23.1	7	25.4	7	19.0	7	26.3	7	21.2	7

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Notes:

1. The question asked: "What are your main sources of information about the Jewish world and Israel?"
2. A multiple response question.

The survey's data is further enhanced by evidence from Israelis interviewed for this study. Shalom, an Israeli from Sydney, explains why he refers to Israeli news sources. To him, it is a continuation of the Israeli lifestyle, characterised by the constant consumption of news as part of everyday life. He also attaches a higher level of credibility to information in Israeli news sources vis-à-vis Australian ones.

We are Israelis. We feed on something; they fed us news with a teaspoon. It was our natural prime time. You cannot give up on it overnight. And also, [from] what you read [in] the somewhat anaemic Australian news [media] you do not get a real picture of what is happening in the world. I am not saying that in Israel you get the real picture, but you do get some balance. So if I sometimes want to know what is really happening in the world, I read the news from Israel [Israeli sources]. [If I] want to know what is going on in sports, [I] read Australian news.

(Shalom, 2010)

Shalom's description is in line with the conclusions of two Israeli media scholars, Amit Kama and Vered Malka, who examined consumption of Israeli media among Israelis in the United States. Their research

population included almost exclusively permanent-temporaries Israeli emigrants who were either on the verge of actual return to Israel or were constantly cultivating the 'myth of return'<sup>142</sup>. According to Kama and Malka, for this type of immigrants, connecting with the Israeli media on a regular basis is 'an identity prosthesis' - one of the mechanisms used to preserve their 'Israeliness':

Analyses reveal that homeland media constitute indispensable identity prosthesis: They not only help combat homesickness, but are basically employed as vital devices in sustaining and even empowering an Israeli identity. Israeli media bolster these migrants' sense as if they never really left home. They are wholly Israeli notwithstanding the geographic distance, which is of no ontological import. Living in the diaspora is masked by an illusion that can be daily and sometimes even hourly maintained via consumption of homeland media.

(Malka & Kama, 27 June, 2012, p. 14)

The 'prosthesis' metaphor may be overly dramatic, and even judgmental by implying a certain 'identity disability'. This impression is possibly a result of the population studied, composed of mostly 'permanent temporaries'. It may also be influenced from Malka and Kama's assumptions that the negative *Yordim* image is still dominant in current Israeli society which makes life in the diaspora for Israeli emigrants "tolerable" but not acceptable<sup>143</sup>. In any case, Israelis abroad may see homeland media consumption an identity preservation mechanism per-se, and not as an 'escapism' tool from a harsh reality of life in the diaspora.

### **Settlement patterns and networks**

Bruhn suggests that geographical proximity between members of the same ethnic group is a sufficient indicator and basis for the existence of a community. Specifically, he asserts that the fact that many immigrants choose to reside in specific suburbs and neighbourhoods, next to the peer-nationals who preceded them in immigrating to the same country, is enough to conclude that together they constitute a community based on a network structure.

Neighborhoods are communities of place [...] Although ethnic communities may be based upon residence in the same locality, they essentially center on the shared attitudes and behaviours that bind the people together [...] the majority of immigrants

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<sup>142</sup> About the 'myth of return' see subchapter 8.3 "Understanding the new approach" in this study.

<sup>143</sup> Malka and Kama make a questionable claim that "Israeli migrants face the still rather common conceptualization of the act of immigration as an act of betrayal, of national irresponsibility "יורדים", בקיצור, [in short, *Yordim*]" (Malka & Kama, 2011, pp. 1, 5). Such a sweeping statement, inspired by the *Yordim* school of thought, is not line with conclusions of recent studies (Harpaz, 2013 (forthcoming); Cohen, 2007).

are connected with networks at the time of arrival that they can use to construct their own personal world and livelihood. The internal social cohesion and cultural coherence that social networks provide enable the immigrant to be separate and maintain an ethnic identity in a pluralistic society.

(Brubaker, 2005, p. 55)

The residential pattern of Israeli emigrants to Australia fits Bruhn's benchmarks for a community. From that point of view, Israeli communities in Australia exist first and foremost as localities. They are mostly concentrated in specific urban enclaves in Australia's largest metropolitan areas<sup>144</sup>, and use various internal social networks to foster and facilitate group cohesion.<sup>145</sup>

In that context, the testimony of Melbournian Yiftach Saar (nicknamed "Monash") is of special value. Being the first Israeli migration agent to Australia, he holds valuable insight on the development of an Israeli community in Australia. A resident of Australia since 1988, Saar personally assisted many Israelis to immigrate to Australia and remained in contact with them since. He is also one of the founders of the *Tapuz* forum for Israelis in Australia and New Zealand and has been constantly active in it since then. Saar recalls past manifestations of an Israeli community in Melbourne. According to his testimony, until the beginning of the twenty first century the small numbers of Israelis were concentrated within the Jewish neighbourhood of St. Kilda; had their own meeting places (restaurants, grocery stores) and their own social activities, such as a sing-along of Israeli songs ("Monash", 2009).

The *Tapuz* forum for Israelis in Australia and New Zealand is one example of a social network that functions as an agent for inner-community connections. As an online forum, *Tapuz* can be considered a community on its own merits. Furthermore, it is assumed that forum's content reaches many Israelis in Australia, far beyond its approximately a hundred regular participating members. Thus, it can be conceptualised as an online virtual version of 'a neighbourhood'; and at the same time, as the same content consumed by a group of people of the same homeland nationality.

*Tapuz* posts contain recurring evidence of the forum's role as a community broker. Participants actively form connections and networking and tell of meetings between them in "real life". The forum hosts debates on shared values of Israelis in Australia. For example, a *Tapuz* contributor living in Australia overtly states that she takes part in the forum to socially engage with other Israelis in Australia: "My

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<sup>144</sup> For a review of the locations of Israeli settlement in Australia, see subchapter 7.4 "Analysis of the 2006 Census data and other sources" of this thesis.

<sup>145</sup> For the description and discussion of Israeli networks in Australia, see subchapter 7.3 "The Emergence of an Israeli Cluster" of this thesis.

country is still Israel. And this is also why I am [participating] in this forum - to converse with Israelis living here" (Tapuz, n.d., p. June 2010).

To sum up, the Israeli population of Australia can be considered as a community. This was demonstrated by putting its characteristics through the two tests - the concept of 'imagined community' and the settlement pattern. Once this assumption was established, the features of this community can be discussed.

## **10.2. Characteristics of the Israeli community in Australia**

### **Models of Israeli communities in the United States**

Past studies, mostly those affiliated with the *Yordim* School, tended to pass negative judgement on the viability of Israeli émigré communities. Gold notes that Israeli communities abroad were described as an "apparent deviation" from the pattern put forward by the scholarship of the 1970s onwards, which rendered new importance and vitality to ethnic communities worldwide. Unlike other diaspora communities, Israeli communities abroad exhibited "a dearth of formal organisations within the emigrant population, few collective ties with host Jews and awkward relations with the country of origin" (Gold, 2002, p. 145).

Bruhn reviewed studies completed in the 1980s and 1990s on Israelis in the United States. He claims that three main models of Israeli communities exist (Brubaker, 2005, pp. 66-67):

**Traditional:** For example, the Israeli community in Los Angeles, as described in Gold's study. This community had at the time a limited number of basic social institutions (Gold notes twenty organisations and a newspaper) but an array of communal events. Israelis in the city also operated inner networks, assisted in job placement and engaged with Israelis with whom they had a common background (Gold, 2002, pp. 174, 178-179).

**Weak:** When describing Israelis in Chicago in the 1990s, Uriely claimed that most Israeli emigrants in the city exhibited characteristics of 'permanent sojourners' that can be attributed to the *Yordim* culture, especially clinging to the 'myth of return'.<sup>146</sup> As a result, their ethnic attachment was merely 'rhetorical' and they were reluctant to develop any sustainable Israeli community outside their homeland (Uriely, 1994, p. 441).

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<sup>146</sup>About the 'myth of return' see subchapter 8.3 "Understanding the new approach" in this study.

**In between** – The Israeli community of New York, as analysed by Levitt (Brubaker, 2005, p. 67) and more recently Cohen and Veinstein (Cohen & Veinstein, 2009, p. 59), is based on close relations with co-nationals but with very few organisations of their own.

The question which presents itself at this point is whether the Israeli community in Australia follows one of these models or constitutes a different model.

### **Israeli organisations in Australia**

In the past there have been attempts to organise Israelis in Australia in an institutional way. But these attempts proved unsuccessful in the long run and ceased to operate after a short time or after the person who was the main facilitator of the group ceased being active.<sup>147</sup>

Currently there are several Israeli organisations that can be considered indicative of a traditional community structure.

First, several Israeli social clubs operate across Australia. *Hamerkaz Halsraeli* (המרכז הישראלי, The Israeli Centre) was formed in 1995 in Melbourne by Israeli veteran emigrant, Menachem Cohen, with the assistance of Mordechai Yedid, the Israeli consul-general at the time. The centre occasionally held social events, holiday celebrations, Israeli folk dancing and lectures in Hebrew. On May 2012 Cohen ceased financing the centre and as a result the centre ceased activity. His Sydney parallel *Hamoaddon Halsraeli* (המועדון הישראלי, "The Israeli Club") was founded in 1981 (Sinclair, 2011) and is still operating. Both offer their services to the whole Israeli community, and event attendance is usually of a few dozen participants, with a maximum of two hundred guests recorded. These clubs are considered more connected to the older Israeli population, the early emigrants who came to Australia more than a decade ago. *Amutat Tarbut* (עמותת תרבות, "The Cultural Society"), which operates in Adelaide, offers similar activities to the members of its small Israeli population in the city and in the surrounding areas.

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<sup>147</sup> In 2003 the State Zionist Council of Victoria established an Israeli group called *Haverim* (חברים, Friends), headed by Dr. Dvir Abramovich, lecturer in Modern Hebrew at the University of Melbourne. The group held a few events, including lectures, discussion nights, film nights and interviews with Israeli authors. However, according to Dr. Abramovich it ceased to operate when he himself could not dedicate time for its activity. The Jewish National Fund (JNF) in Sydney founded the *Kesher* (קשר, "link") group which initially met in private homes and the *Hakoah* Club, but then moved to the Jewish Folk Centre Hall in Bondi Junction. The group offered activities in Hebrew and Yiddish, such as Israeli folk singing (שירה בציבור). But it stopped being active after its coordinator, Aviva Kogus, returned to Israel.



The *Kishkashta*<sup>148</sup> Sydney group might be considered complementary to "The Israeli Club". Founded in 2008, it features activities in Hebrew for families and children, specifically for the Jewish holidays. A periodical email-based newsletter is sent to group members with information about upcoming activities, community notices and personal messages to hundreds of Israeli families in Sydney. The group also has a Facebook page used for similar causes. In the newsletter circulated on September 2010, the founders of the group clarified that *Kishkashta* is religiously unaffiliated; and noted that three-quarters of the Israeli families on the email list, which reaches a few hundred families, reside in the northern part of Sydney. Generally, Israeli emigrants who live in the northern suburbs of Sydney are recent emigrants, while older or financially-established Israeli emigrants reside mostly in the eastern suburbs of the metropolis. In the same newsletter, the group founders stated that the aim of *Kishkashta* is "to reach out to as many Israeli (or half-Israeli) families [as possible] in Sydney, to build a strong and connected community, and to let you know that we are here and we [Israelis] have a 'home' ".

The Australian branch of the WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization), operates a few groups of Israeli women (for example, WIZO Dor or WIZO Amit). The few hundred Israeli WIZO members' groups hold "Israeli style" Jewish and Israeli holiday celebrations and other fund-raising events, for the benefit of both WIZO and various projects in Israel.

Israelis in Australia have also a limited number of uniquely designated media outlets. The Israeli newspaper of Australia, *Eton*, is probably one of the most influential and recognised Israeli institutions in Australia. A couple of thousand copies of *Eton* are distributed across Australia, along with electronic version of the newspaper circulated using the newspaper's Facebook page. The newspaper was founded in 2005 in Melbourne by a group of dedicated Israeli emigrants who still comprise the core staff of the newspaper. The editorial of the first issue reflects the notion, motivation and self-perception of the newspaper as a community facilitator and institution:

Yes, we are important enough as a community, and proud enough, to also have a newspaper [...] We are no longer a small and meaningless community. We are different and special like every other community. We have a language, tradition, music, humour and even a radio station. So why not a newspaper [as well]? [...] It seems that the need for a newspaper and the will to feel [a sense of] belonging to a community are a bit more important than our comfort. We probably wanted this enough to leave our comfort and

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<sup>148</sup> *Kishkashta* (קישקשטא) is a puppet in the shape of a cactus plant, who was the leading character in the famous Israeli television program for children "Ma Pit'um" (מה פתאום, translates into "how come?") during the 1970s and 1980s. The puppet embodied the essence of Sabra Israeli identity and is regarded as a symbol of Israeli childhood of a certain generation.

leisure zones and this time around do something not [just] for ourselves but rather for what we call a community.

(Kimchi, 2005)

There are a few radio stations in Australia which operate Hebrew programs. Veteran Israeli reporter, Nitza Lowenstien, hosts the Sydney one-hour program twice a week for the government-sponsored SBS radio station, with Eitan Drori as her parallel in Melbourne<sup>149</sup>. Triple Z, a Melbourne-based community radio station, which hosts programs in many languages, also has a one-hour program in Hebrew twice a week. During 2010, a group headed by Menachem Cohen (the patron of the *Hamerkaz Halsraeli*) operated LionFM – a radio station dedicated to the Jewish community. The station featured considerable content in Hebrew, including talk shows, news and music from Israel; the overwhelming majority of the station's staff and volunteers were Israelis. The Australian authorities cancelled the broadcasting licence of the station after a year due to administrative reasons, but also following a feud between the operators and members of the Jewish community, which led to complaints about breaching the terms of the broadcasting licence. After an unsuccessful limited AM frequency broadcasting period in December 2012 the station eventually ceased operation<sup>150</sup>.

### **An un-institutionalised community**

None of aforementioned organisations and groups considers itself a political body, and there is no elected, recognisable, effective or operative umbrella body for Israelis in Australia. From a diaspora studies point of view, there is no separate manifestation of 'diaspora politics' by Israelis in Australia. Furthermore, the existing groups and organisations are neither financially supported by the community nor revenue-making ventures. Some are not-for-profit organisations, while others are unregistered ones. In most cases they are operated by a single, enthusiastic and motivated person, who invests their own time and/or money into the project, only occasionally being assisted by a small number of irregular volunteers. Membership fees and other income, when collected, barely and rarely cover the costs of events, not to mention ongoing expenses. The future of media projects and outlets operated and owned by Israeli diasporants in Australia is in question. This is not only for the operational or financial reasons (as mentioned above), but also because some media researchers claim that consumption of media

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<sup>149</sup> Currently SBS Hebrew one-hour program run on Wednesdays and Sundays. From April 2013 the program would air only on Sundays for a two-hour program which also incorporates about 30 minutes to content in Yiddish.

<sup>150</sup> Listening rates dropped dramatically as the AM frequency used (1674AM) was out of range for most radios.

directly from the homeland, now easily available thanks to technology<sup>151</sup>, makes immigrant focused media redundant (Malka & Kama, 2011, p. 22).

Gold offers an explanation for the lack of organisational inclination among Israeli diasporants. He notes that specific sections within the Israeli emigrant population - such as the *Yordim*, work migrants and sojourners – foster a sense of temporariness regarding their stay in the host country. Temporariness then acts as a force that suppresses thinking and/or practical measures which might suggest permanent settlement, meaning institutionalisation (Gold, 2002, p. 64).

Gold's reasoning for lack of institutionalism is supported by testimonies of Israelis in Australia. One example is the account of migration agent, Yiftach Saar (nicknamed "Monash"), of past social interaction amongst within the Israeli community of Australia. His description is similar to Shoked's depiction of relations between Israelis in the United States in the 1980s, defined by Shoked as unsustainable "one-night stand ethnicity" (Shoked, 1991). Without using the specific term, Saar refers to a *Yordim* culture and adherence to the 'myth of return' that determined the earlier character of the Israeli community in Australia as having a weak structure.

They [Israelis in Australia in past days] were more living on their suitcases, you know - 'we are returning' [to Israel]. [...] The community was too small, everybody knew everyone - they didn't have a lot to run away to [...] But it was a community linked by a very fragile thing.

("Monash", 2009)

Similarly, Yafit from Melbourne, who immigrated to Australia from Israel in the early 1960s, makes a categorical statement:

Israelis can't succeed in any way to organise their own valid place where you could spend two or three hours. They can't succeed; despite their attempts, [it is] not working.

(Yafit, 2010)

The experiences of Shira, a long-time Israeli emigrant to Australia residing in Sydney, are similar to the ones voiced by Saar and Yafit. She recalls how Israelis were aspiring to form a community at the time. However, Shira claims that both then and now Israelis cannot operate and sustain social organisations.

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<sup>151</sup> Israeli news websites are easily accessible around the world via the internet and on mobile phone.

Israelis want a community; want that option to do things together, to meet [... In the past] there were meetings; someone would organize something every now and then. We used to sing; there was a girl who came with an accordion. But they do not want to commit to anything! Unwilling to go all the way in a commitment to organise it [...] Israelis – just give [it] to them, let them have it as long as it is free and they do not need to do anything - they will run [to it]. So you figure it out yourself – is there a community? Generally, there is no more a community now than there was twenty years ago.

(Shira, 2010)

Gold's explanation for lack of institutionalism touches not only on the temporaries, in mind and practice, within the Israeli population abroad. He claims that the other sections, mostly the settlers, have no need to organise themselves into an institutional community structure. First, Gold notes, the starting point of Israelis as migrants is better than that of the Jews that preceded them in the host country. Being mostly voluntary, educated and skilled migrants – competent in the host country's languages (usually English); unlikely to face discrimination because of their religion or origins (antisemitism is un-normative and even illegal in most current Western societies) – Israeli emigrants do not have the urge to organise themselves to stand together against negative factors that might compromise their rights. Like other professional immigrants, they have their skills and language competence to open the door into the mainstream of the host society's economy and thus have no use for ethnic community organisations. Moreover, Israelis have the established Jewish institutions in place to use at will, for assistance and activities in the host country or as a possible channel for "feelings of patriotism, nostalgia and loss" (Gold, 2002, p. 180).

The reasons Gold enumerates for his claim, that Israelis have no need for a separate institutionalised community, are relevant for Israelis in Australia. The amenities and organizations offered by the institutionalised Australian Jewish community (Markus, 2011, pp. 3, 30) suppress a need for Israelis to organise themselves in order to attain such services. The services the Jewish community provides to its members, such as religion, education or social assistance, are supplied in Israel by the state. As a result, in Israel "routine life in the public domain connects the individual with his/her identity and ethno-religious belonging group" (Rebhun & Lev Ari, 2010, p. 120). However, in order to receive the same services in the diaspora, Jews need to exert special efforts and invest time and money in cooperative action. Israelis, not accustomed to communal action for such aims, either choose to use existing Jewish services (as Gold notes) or turn to the free public services.

Economically, as the findings of the 2006 Australian census imply, Israelis are absorbed relatively comfortably into the Australian market. Thanks to being highly educated and successful in adjusting, most Israelis earn more than average wages<sup>152</sup>. As for facing immigration related problems, Gen08 data indicates that most Israel-born respondents report no difficulty with using English, as well as a majority which considers antisemitism in Australia not to be a serious problem<sup>153</sup>.

Gold also points to the option (at least theoretically) Israelis have of returning to Israel, which is easier to execute today because of advances in modern transportation, the relative ease of transfer of possessions and credentials (in general and to the homeland specifically). Official Israeli government policy encourages Israelis to return and offers financial benefits and assistance to returnees (Gold, 2002, p. 180).<sup>154</sup> The notion that 'returning is always an option' by some Israeli diasporants reinforces a sense of temporariness in them - regardless if they act on it and return, or not. Such feelings act as a factor against settlement-related activism, specifically institutionalism. For Australia, the 'return rate' of Israel-born, defined as the number of returnees to Israel expressed as a percentage of the number of people emigrating out of Israel, is relatively high, averaging more than 50 per cent for the past fifteen years. This data is especially high when compared to global 'return rates' of Israelis<sup>155</sup>.

The result of the aforementioned factors can be defined as 'lack of community mindedness' by Israelis in Australia. The following testimony by Sydney resident Shalom can be understood as an example of such thinking. Shalom claims that Israelis in his city are just too focused on the challenges of their daily life to invest capital in mutual support for co-ethnics. In his argument, Shalom mirrors the view that community-building is not considered a priority.

There is no help for one another here; this is what is called 'Welcome to Sydney'. Here Israelis first of all work hard, [but] some are surely in [a] situation where they could help, even if they cannot really help much [but do not do so].

(Shalom, 2010)

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<sup>152</sup> See discussion on educational and professional features and income in subchapter 7.4 "Analysis of the 2006 Census data and other sources" of this thesis.

<sup>153</sup> See discussion on immigration related challenges facing Israel, English proficiency and antisemitism perception by Israelis in Australia in subchapter 8.1 "Emigration and immigration" of this thesis.

<sup>154</sup> An example of current official Israeli policy to encourage Israelis abroad to return to Israel was the campaign "Returning home" run by the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. See - [http://www.moia.gov.il/Moia\\_en/ReturningHomeProject/HomePage60.htm?SearchText=](http://www.moia.gov.il/Moia_en/ReturningHomeProject/HomePage60.htm?SearchText=) (accessed November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011).

<sup>155</sup> See discussion and data on returnees from Australia and 'return rate' for Australia and world-wide under "immigration" in subchapter 7.4 "Analysis of the 2006 Census data and other sources" of this thesis.

Inner group perceptions of Israelis in Australia about other group members can also act as a suppressant for 'community mindedness'. Specifically, Israelis who emigrated because of their negative views of a 'sick' Israeli society: disrespectful of privacy or limits, rude, intrusive and rapidly deteriorating. Sociologist Gad Yair claims that often non-Israelis see Israeli social, behavioural and communicational norms as offensive and disrespectful of privacy (Yair, 2011, p. 179). From this point of view, Israelis who emigrate abroad may express similar criticism on other Israelis as a result of a wish to mimic or adopt non-Israeli behavioural norms when living outside Israel. Accordingly, upon arrival in Australia Israelis with such views stay away (at least initially) from any form of organised Israeli (or Jewish) activity. The explanation given for not participating in organised co-ethnic socialisation is a will to avoid what they perceive as the same negative patterns of social conduct and norms that characterise Israeli society and which, allegedly, inevitably resurface when Israelis get together.

Several separate pieces of evidence gathered for this thesis can be related to this perception. For example, a heated discussion in *Tapuz* revolved around the tendency of some Israelis to promptly exploit the kindness of their co-ethnic emigrant friends by using them as child-carers for their offspring. Such behaviour was characterised by a number of *Tapuz* members as not respecting personal space and invading the privacy of others. In that context, one of the participants in the debate stated:

The truth is that many times when I meet Israelis in Australia it very fast leads to them leaving a child/children with you for a 'sleep-over'/dinner/babysitter[...] Some of the reasons why I left Israel were that I was looking for a place where your personal space is bigger and [there is] a little less tribalism.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. April 2010)

Another example for this type of thinking emerged from the description of Gili from Byron Bay of an inner struggle and transformation she has gone through with regards to his relations with Israelis in Australia. Gili speaks of how she started his life in Australia trying to avoid socialising with Israelis and ended up coming to terms with her 'natural tendency' to connect with them.

At the beginning there is a strong desire to be part of the local population and you think "I didn't come all this way to be [with] Israelis, [there is] a lot of frustration behind that". But then you realise they are beautiful people and you enjoy that so much; and it's not a punishment to be socialising with people. So eventually I came to terms with that fact and I'm happy about it; I'm not struggling with that anymore, because it is my natural tendency to do that.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

Another aspect which contributes to a lack of institutionalism is taken from the world of psycho-geography. This area of study examines the interaction between landscape and mind, and was defined in the 1950s by one of its founders, French theorist Guy Debord, as "the study of specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions or behaviours of individuals" (Trubshaw, 2009, p. 88).

The majority of Israelis, an estimated 85 per cent, live in Israel in apartments (Sharoni, 2010). It may be that living in apartment buildings, together with the density of urban neighbourhoods in Israel and the small geographical dimensions of the country as a whole, increases the statistical probability of encountering people that you might connect with. Furthermore, this type of intensive interaction (as noted earlier, described by some as lack of respect for privacy, or tribalism) may be conducive to an institutionalised 'community mind'. Living in physical proximity to neighbours in apartment buildings may very well encourage familiarity, which acts as an agent for socialisation and, later, for joint action in an organised form. The correlation between environment, residential setting and social contact was explored in psycho-geography:

Research suggests that the formation of neighbourhood social ties (NSTs) may substantially depend on the informal social contact which occurs in neighbourhood common spaces [...R]elations among neighbours grow primarily in the course of repeated visual contacts and through short-duration outdoor talks and greetings. Consistent with this, the frequency of face-to-face contacts with neighbours is a strong predictor of both the probability that neighbours are friends and the strength of linking between neighbours.

(Kuo, et al., 1998 , pp. 823, 826)

One type of organisation which is very popular in Israel is the resident-building committee, where neighbours cooperate for the benefit of their shared interests. Resident cooperative action is further encouraged by the government, in supporting and financing The Association for Residential Culture (האגודה לתרבות הדיור, *HaAguda LeTarbut HaDiyur*) which operates close to a hundred branches across Israel (האגודה לתרבות הדיור (The Association for Residential Culture), n.d.).

However, the pattern of Israeli residential-living in Australia is different, at least in the suburbia of major urban centres. Most Israelis in Australia reside in houses or units in suburban areas of the Australian metropolises of Melbourne and Sydney. They may live relatively close to one another, but usually not within walking distance. Thus, opportunities to meet potential partners for joint activities for the benefit

of the community decrease dramatically and are limited to structured meetings, such as in schools, community events or workplaces. The maxim "No mating without meeting" (Vervoort, 2011, p. 3), in practice and as a mode of thinking, applies here. Fewer 'meetings' between Israelis on a casual basis leads to less 'mating' and cooperative activity. Furthermore, as psycho-geography suggests, while apartment buildings often function in Israel as a form of closed and organised community, private houses in Australia are more conducive to individualism and 'being on your own'. In this context, an Israeli who visited Australia remarked on the lack of familiarity among neighbours in private houses, unlike her experience from living all of her adult life in apartment buildings in Israel: "It's not like in Israel; you just cannot knock here on your neighbour's door and ask for a glass of milk".<sup>156</sup>

### **Networks and social hubs**

Bruhn suggests that for Israeli emigrant communities "social networks are more important than place" (Brubaker, 2005, p. 66). In Australia, there are a few internet-based social and professional networks. One is the aforementioned *Tapuz* forum; another is the *Ausrael* group within the business-focused LinkedIn social-network website. Transcending geographical limitations, these networks are used as a basis for social and professional interaction. Friendships (and rivalries) are formed, as a result of initial contacts made through the various online networks and social platforms. Events and gatherings, both formal and non-formal, are constantly advertised, enabling network members to meet in person. In that sense, internet technology, which facilitates immediate connectivity, enables the bridging of geographical distances between people in different locations. At the same time, the option for anonymity on the internet, for example by using an alias or a nickname, can facilitate the overarching of possible gaps between persons of different backgrounds or perceptions (Brinkerhoff, 2009, pp. 47-48).

The influence of internet networking on sections in the Israeli population of Australia is mentioned in Weitz's novel about the experiences of an Israeli migrant-worker in Australia, "So how was your day?". Ronit, a characters in the book, an Israeli emigrant in Australia, talks of the impact of online networks.

I have met a lot of the [Israelis] at internet forums around Australia. Many are friends of friends who come to Australia; [they] want to ask [questions], enquire, show interest and somehow end up connecting. All in all, Israelis are looking to cling a little bit to one another.

(Weitz, 2009, p. 134)

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<sup>156</sup> Private conversation with the author of this thesis, December 2010.



A few individual Israeli emigrants in Australia have taken it upon themselves to become local 'social hubs'. Within the context of networks, 'social hubs' can be defined as persons who "1. Have relationships with many people; 2. Frequently connect these people together; and 3. Do so for personal pleasure, as opposed to some tangible reward" (Wojnicki, 2004, p. 521). The third feature is disputable, as some social hubs may try and capitalise their status within the network for various types of profit, such as psychological (a sense of importance) or even financial. Be that as it may, social hubs play an important role in the propagation of the network. This is not only because they quantitatively and qualitatively distribute similarities within the members of the network, but also because of their potential ability to bridge 'structural holes' and connect new members to the network, as well as reconnect members who may have left the network (Goldenberg, et al., 2009, pp. 2, 3).

Several social hubs within the Israeli community across Australia were interviewed for this study. Some of them initiated organisations, formal or non-formal. One of them is Dafna from Sydney, who operates a non-formal activity group which encompasses hundreds of Israeli families, accompanied by a periodical email connection for community information, notices and personal messages. Dafna is fully aware of her role as an agent for community cohesion, and declares that she is "on a mission to reach all the Israelis, so that everyone would know that we are here", and that she would do "Everything! We are here to serve the community" (Dafna, 2010). Dafna recalls how after the first meeting, participants praised her initiative for enabling the bridging of geographical isolation between Israelis in her area:

And people said: finally there is something that brings us together as Israelis; because one of the characteristics of Israelis in the north [of Sydney] is that there are a lot of families here but they are so scattered, in a really huge radius. We needed something to connect us.

(Dafna, 2010)

Zehavit functions as a social hub for a network of Israelis in Brisbane. Her description reveals that Israelis in her area were actively searching for a platform for co-ethnic interaction regardless of the reason.

I organised all sort[s] of activities and slowly this [email] list got bigger and these events were very, very open and many Israelis came. I have done it for three years, almost every month there was some event somewhere. We used to just make up a reason to celebrate. If we had no holiday, we would throw a party for everyone with birthdays in October.

(Zehavit, 2011)

Shimrit recalls how she fostered social interaction with another Israeli emigrant in the Byron Bay area, thus actually depicting herself as a social hub:

I introduced her to the Israelis that were here because she was isolated, she didn't hang around with anybody; and then I introduced her to a few Israelis and she started to take charge! Yeah, [I] started to get her involved.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

According to Ben-Harush, who studied social interaction among immigrant Israeli women in the Ocean Shores area, social hubs may be a two edged sword:

Israel-born locals played an active mediation role in welcoming Israel-born newcomers to the place and to their sub-community, with the unintended consequence of making the belonging process to the wider community more challenging.

(Ben-Harush, Due 2011, p. 210)

### **Inner-group social ties**

Gen08 opens a window for understanding the composition of the circles of friends of Israelis in Australia. The survey examined the languages spoken with friends, and also asked them to rank these languages in order of the most-spoken.

Gen08 data seems at first glance to suggest a high level of social interaction between Hebrew-speaking Israelis in Australia and non-Hebrew speakers (Table 10.2). Close to eighty per cent of Israel-born converse in English with their friends, while only two-quarters (sixty five per cent) speak Hebrew with most of their friends. Some non-Hebrew speakers noted by Israelis as friends, can be with an Israeli background (for example, made *Aliyah* from Australia and then returned to Australia). However, when the data is analysed according to the age on arrival in Australia and to the arrival year, a somewhat different picture emerges. Emigrants arriving in Australia as adults after the year 2000 are most likely to have more, if not much more, Hebrew-speaking friends than non-Hebrew speaking friends (Table 10.2). This is revealed when the percentages of Hebrew speaking friends for later years of emigration or an older age at arriving to Australia jump from approximately thirty to seventy and even close to ninety per cent. At the same time, the percentages of English speaking friends drop from close to all to eighty or sixty per cent, corresponding to a later age or a more recent year of immigration. Furthermore, the wording of the Gen08 questions in English might be open to interpretation, which could have affected the validity of the responses by native-tongue Hebrew-speakers. As it is considered impolite to speak

non-English languages in public spaces or around other who do not understand Hebrew, respondents might well have given both English and Hebrew as the languages spoken with friends. Thus, English as a language spoken with friends could have been (at least slightly) over-represented.

Table 10.2

Gen08 - Languages spoken with most friends: Responses of Israel-born (percentages)  
All Israel-born respondents\*

Language	Arrival year			Arrival age			Total
	1900-1979	1980-1999	2000-2008	0-18	19-29	30-60	
English	87.9	80.1	68.1	99.2	63.4	80.9	78.1
Hebrew	41.4	65.2	84.1	29.6	87.4	71.4	64.6
<b>N=</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>390</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Note: The questions asked: "Which languages do you usually speak with most of your friends?"

Gen08 asked directly about preferences with regards to friendships. Analysis of the survey's data on this issue (Table 10.3) again points to preference of Israelis to foster friendships with other Israelis. A third of Israel-born respondents indicated that they are more at ease with other Israel-born than with Australian-born. This figure is similar to the percentages noted for other Jewish immigrant groups in Australia, specifically FSU and SA Jews. At the same time, less than half (46.8 per cent) of Israel-born respondents indicated the feel equally at ease with Australian born and people born in their own country. Only Jews from FSU scored lower (37.2 per cent) for the same response.

Table 10.3

Gen08 - Feeling at ease with Australian-born and/or people from own country of origin: according to country of birth (percentages)

Response	Israel	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
More at ease with people born in Australia	6.4	8.4	17.0	8.5	13.1	11.0
More at ease with people from my country of origin	35.5	8.4	37.2	32.2	14.5	24.3
Equally at ease with people born in Australia and in my country	46.8	81.7	37.2	57.7	68.6	60.2
Don't know	8.2	1.5	3.8	1.0	2.8	3.0
Decline to answer	3.1	0.0	4.8	0.6	0.9	1.5
<b>N=</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>1135</b>	<b>3100</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Note: The questions asked - "Do you feel more at ease among people born in Australia or people from your country of origin?"

When the data is broken according to age at arrival to Australia or tenure (period since immigration), the conclusion is that recent emigrants and/or those who have arrived as adults to Australia are more likely to feel at ease with other Israelis than with Australia-born (Table 10.4). This conclusion becomes evident with the dramatic increase (from around ten per cent to more than forty and fifty per cent) in the percentage of Israelis noting feeling at ease with people born in their country of origin with a more recent year of emigration or an older age at arriving in Australia.

Table 10.4

Feeling at ease with Australian-born/Israel-born: Responses according to year and age of arrival to Australia (percentages)

Response	Arrival year			Arrival age		
	1900-1979	1980-1999	2000-2008	0-18	19-29	30-60
More at ease with people born in Australia	13.0	5.9	1.4	13.5	4.2	1.8
More at ease with people from my country of origin	9.6	40.7	52.2	7.9	44.8	58.7
Equally at ease with people born in Australia and in my country	67.0	48.9	28.3	75.4	32.2	37.6
Decline to answer	10.4	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0
Don't know	0.0	4.4	18.1	2.4	18.9	1.8
<b>N=</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>109</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Note: The questions asked - "Do you feel more at ease among people born in Australia or people from your country of origin?"

This finding is compatible with the analysis of a recent survey among two thousands Israelis abroad from different countries. According to the report on the survey, tenure acts as a negative variable on feeling of closeness to other Israelis, especially in countries where Israel-born make most of the local Israeli emigrant population (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 39). Since it is presumed that most of Israeli emigrants to Australia are Israel-born and relatively recent arrivals (from 2000 onwards) than it is safe to assume that the circle of close friends of the majority of Israelis in Australia constitutes mostly other Israelis.

Feeling less at ease with Australian-born than with people from your own homeland is not an Israeli-specific phenomenon. This is evident from the responses on the amount of Australian-born friends. It is unsurprising that more than half of non-Australian born Jews which participated in the Gen08 survey (1615 out of 3100, 52 per cent) reported that none or less than half of their friends were born in Australia (Table 10.5).

Table 10.5

Gen08 - Friends born in Australia: Responses according to country of birth (percentages)

Response	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
None	21.1	0.6	8.7	25.6	18.4	15.5	9.6
Less than half	38.8	8.1	30.4	29.2	42.2	30.2	22.1
About half	17.0	13.9	21.4	9.4	18.1	17.6	15.6
More than half	12.1	18.6	14.9	6.9	11.7	13.0	15.0
Nearly all	9.3	45.6	16.8	13.5	6.4	13.8	27.5
All	0.3	10.5	2.2	1.8	0.6	1.3	5.5
Don't know	1.3	2.4	4.7	6.9	1.7	4.9	3.1
Decline to answer	0.3	0.4	0.9	6.9	0.9	3.5	1.5
<b>N=</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>2738</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>1134</b>	<b>5838</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Note: The question asked: "Thinking of your close friends, how many of them were born in Australia?"

Preference for Israeli friends among Israelis abroad was noted in studies about Israeli communities in the UK (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 53) and the United States (Cohen & Veinstein, 2009, p. 58). It was later reinforced in a report analysing results from a survey among more than two thousand Israelis living abroad. According to the survey, Israelis from English-speaking countries (Australia included)<sup>157</sup> recorded the highest rates of noting that most (30 to 40 per cent) or all (10 per cent and slightly above) of their friends in their current place of residence are Israelis (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 39).

### "A replacement family"

Psycho-geography<sup>158</sup> may also be a factor that influences positively on social ties with other Israelis. Specifically, with regards to patterns of ethnic settlement, concentration in ethnic enclaves may act as a hindrance force against connectivity with people outside the group and with the majority ethnic population (Vervoort, 2011, p. 1). Israelis in Australia, especially those living in Melbourne, settle within a relatively limited geographical space of specific neighbourhoods. Thus, their connectivity with non-group members might be restricted by this spatial factor, while statistically the chances to interact with other Israelis increases.

Individual testimonies collected for this study support the psycho-geography explanation of the nature of social interaction of Israelis in Australia. For example, A *Tapuz* member describes how the

<sup>157</sup> By 'English speaking countries' refers to the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and the category defined in the survey as 'Oceania', which includes mostly Israelis from Australia and New Zealand. Similar pattern, of preference for Israeli friends, was also noted for the approximately 70 Israelis classified as living in countries from the category 'Asia-Africa', a quarter of them (23) live in China.

<sup>158</sup> Psycho-geography is mentioned earlier in this chapter with regards to lack of institutionalism.

concentration of Israelis in his city of residence, Melbourne, is a positive factor for developing friendships with other Israelis around him:

Melbourne is nice in that there is [...] a big supply of Israelis to enable each one to find someone who is 'in the same head' [like-minded]. Now that I think about it, the friends I have here are the best friends I ever had.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. March 2010)

Sydney is somewhat different from Melbourne with regards to Israeli geographical settlement pattern. According to the 2006 Census data, many Israelis are concentrated in the Eastern suburbs of the city, however a similar number are scattered in many other areas, sometimes far from one another. Sydney resident Dafna is very active socially among Israelis in her city and knows many of them personally. She describes social dealings in the form of small networks of friends, which she believes characterise connections within the Israeli community in her metropolitan area:

When small groups amass, I know that they meet in much higher occurrence, they travel together on weekends, they hold Shabbat and holiday meals together, and they celebrate birthdays [jointly]. This means that there is crystallisation here.

(Dafna, 2010)

Orit Ben-Harush, an Israeli scholar who lived in Australia, researched the interaction amongst women who reside in and around Byron Bay in New South Wales. When she inquired with the five Israeli women she interviewed for her study why they had chosen to move to the area, all of them noted the importance of co-ethnic proximity and a community:

One day, when I was living in Sydney I read a story in an Israeli newspaper [Eton] about Byron Bay. I was very happy to learn that there are other ways of life to Israelis outside Sydney [...] Having Israelis around was one of our reasons for the move. We sought the presence of other Israelis.

(Ben-Harush, Due 2011, p. 122)

More basically, most human beings are homophiliacs, which means that they would primarily prefer fostering social ties with those whom they perceive to be similar to them in ethnic, socio-economic, behavioural or intrapersonal characteristics (Vervoort, 2011, p. 3). In his description of relationships among Israeli diasporants in the United States, Gold concludes that they often portray peer-nationals as "easier to communicate with than out-group members as well as being more resourceful, knowledgeable, predictable and, sometimes, more trustworthy" (Gold, 2002, p. 72). Sociologist Gad Yair

claims that the ability of Israelis to instantly create intimacy and camaraderie with other Israelis is a one of the main features of 'Israeliness' (Yair, 2011, p. 175).

The same perceptions and feelings of familiarity between Israelis emerge from interviews conducted for this study. Tommy from Sydney discusses several reasons why he actively looks for other Israelis to connect with. He notes common background, history and language as factors which facilitate and ease communication with co-ethnic Israelis. He also refers to a cultural understanding and behavioural norms defined by him as an Israeli character or ethnic personality:

I think the language [Hebrew] [and] the cultural connections are very strong; that there is just a cultural understanding [between Israelis]. And clearly [...] the similarities in character and culture just make it easier for you to connect with Israelis.

(Tommy, 2010)

Similarly, Aviv is a young Israeli bachelor who immigrated to Australia on his own as an adult. He testifies to having non-Israeli friends in Australia. However, Aviv notes that the relationships he developed with Australian friends are not "like friends I have in Israel". He refers to growing up together in Israel as a culture bed in which strong friendships were brewed and which enables him to "open up" more and talk about his personal life (Aviv, 2010). Similarly, Shimrit from Byron Bay explains why it is easier for her to associate with fellow Israelis than with local Australians: "[When] I meet Israelis and I talk to them for five minutes, I'm friendlier with them than with Australians that I have known for five years here" (Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010).

Homophily offers one explanation or reason for the 'strong ties' observed in this study amongst Israeli emigrants. The differentiation between weak and strong ties, first defined by sociologist Mark Granovetter (Granovetter, 1973), is dependent on the frequency of contact and openness to accepting support and advice. Vervoot proposes the following distinction:

Social ties are considered weak when contact is infrequent (less than once a week), when no support is received and when advice is not received from the social tie. In contrast, a social tie is considered strong where contact is frequent (at least once a week), where support is received and where advice is received from the social tie.

(Vervoot, 2011, pp. 2-3)

A recurring metaphor used by Israeli emigrants conceptualises the 'strong ties' with their co-ethnic friends in Australia as a "replacement family". Rebhun and Lev Ari explain that "The family is a central

value in Israeli Jewish society [...Its] status is much more solid than that of the family in other modern societies" (Rebhun & Lev Ari, 2010, p. 44). The family in Israel, which in many cases functions as a supportive structure, is very much missed by the Israeli emigrants. As a result, they seek co-ethnic camaraderie in an effort to compensate for the void felt by the absence of familial proximity.

Hallely Kimchi has immigrated to Australia more than two decades ago. She is the editor of the Israeli newspaper of Australia *Eton* since its inception. This position enabled her to develop a network of Israeli friends spread across Australia. Thus, she can be considered as a valuable and reliable source with considerable insight on Israelis' interaction in Australia. Kimchi refers to this subject of in one of the first editorials of the newspaper.

[W]hat I have discovered over the years of living outside Israel is that you cannot replace a family. But you can create another one. My family here is constituted of a lot of good friends that give you a warm feeling of home.

(Kimchi, 2005)

The 'family away from home' metaphor is also used by an Israeli woman from Ocean Shores in New South Wales, interviewed by Ben-Harush for her doctorate study. The woman explained why she thinks familiarity is the basis of peer-national interaction of Israelis in Australia:

I feel comfortable among Israelis. I know their nuances. I have spent most of my life in Israel [...] They accept me [...] Because, we are all far away from home, we have this need and motivation to get together. We are each other's family.

(Ben-Harush, Due 2011, p. 122)

The 'replacement family' can be a source of support for Israeli emigrants in Australia. On the other hand, as noted by Hagit, one of the interviewees for this study, such relations can lead to a limiting type of dependency. Hagit came with her husband on a relocation (Temporary) visa and is contemplating applying for a permanent resident status. She speaks with pain about her need and reliance on Israeli friendships and the difference between her relationship with Israelis and with Australians:

The [Israeli] friends here have become more than a family [...]the dependency on friends is total... It's psychological... You cannot be without friends here. I feel, as time goes by, that I understand less the ones I considered my friends, Australians. We have Australian friends, but it is more on practical issues almost [...] But the real connection, the place where I really feel that it is flowing to the [right] spot, is almost [only] with Israelis.

(Hagit, 2011)



Negative feelings about Israel and its society were a push factor in the emigration of some Israelis to Australia.<sup>159</sup> However when living abroad, outside Israeli society, the same emigrants may well long for Israeli companionship. A *Tapuz* member points to an inconsistency when Israeli emigrants harshly criticise Israel and yet actively seek social and geographic proximity with other Israelis and with typical Israeli features (food, music):

I know quite a lot of Israelis who, although [they have] made *Yerida* [emigrated] from Israel and have only bad things to say about Israel [...] most of their friends are Israelis; they go to [Israeli] folk dancing, look for Israeli food - in short, [they] very much miss the country they so love to hate. And even if they do not live in the Jewish ghetto [an nickname for the area where most Jews and Israelis in Melbourne reside] they still fervently seek ties to Israelis, even if only via this forum [*Tapuz*].

(*Tapuz*, n.d., p. March 2010)

One of the Israelis who consciously chose to centre their daily lives away from the clusters of Israelis (and Jews) shares with *Tapuz* members the implications of such a resolution:

As you know, we have made a decision not to live near the Israelis. My dear partner is totally at peace with the decision, but for me it causes misgivings which come up every once in a while. Especially after we return from a visit to Israel or after I hear of this or that meeting [between Israelis] that we would never be invited to, because we do not have many opportunities to get to know Israelis or deepen relations because we are physically far away. And, yes – I do sometimes very much miss Israeli companionship or just someone to 'pop over' to for a coffee and a chat.

(*Tapuz*, n.d., p. August 2009)

Not everyone Israeli in Australia prefers Israelis as friends; not all of them seek 'a replacement family'. A *Tapuz* participant notes in that context: "most of my friends are Israelis, but not every Israeli is my friend" (*Tapuz*, n.d., p. March 2010). Specifically, Israelis with a non-Israeli partner or single young people tend to be more open to relationships with non-Israelis, Jews or non-Jews. This pattern of social interaction was exhibited, for example, in Lev Ari's study of Israelis in Europe (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 47). Rebhun and Popko claim, following their analysis of their survey among two thousand Israelis abroad, that only a third of Israelis not living in Israel "are interested in preserving an Israeli social environment through Israeli friends in Israel or abroad" (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 40).

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<sup>159</sup> For push and pull factors in Israeli emigration to Australia, see subchapter 8.1 "Emigration and immigration" of this thesis.

Hagai was interviewed for a story in *Eton* about forging relationships in the new country. He offers an immigration-related explanation for Israelis' tendency to connect to other Israelis, referring to work migrants in Australia on immigration visas for pre-determined periods of time and to permanent-temporaries:

I think that the willingness to connect with new people has to do with your dream - did you come to Australia for a short or a long run? When you come for two years as an emissary [relocation] your motivation to blend in is different. Even Israelis who mentally did not leave Israel will mainly search for contact with [other] Israelis.

(Ben Yami & Miri, 2006)

## **11. Interaction with the Australian Jewish Community**

### **11.1. Introduction**

Gold explains that in diaspora-Jewish communities' history "the entrance of each new wave of Jewish immigrants has brought with it significant challenges for host and newcomers alike" (Gold, 2002, p. 152). A wide variety of reasons and factors, ranging from prejudice and fear of antisemitism to personal gain, were negative factors working against the often sincere and honest efforts to accept and embrace newly-arrived Jews into existing communities. Gold concludes that:

[H]istorical evidence suggests that the fabrication of inclusive and effective Jewish communities is a long and difficult process. Thus, it is not surprising that Israeli emigrants during the late twentieth century encounter difficulties in building communal activities.

(Gold, 2002, p. 154)

Sheffer notes that one of the most important aspects to examine when assessing what he defines as 'ethno-national diasporas' is "the individual and collective decisions taken by the migrants themselves in regard to joining existing diasporas or forming new ones" (Sheffer, 2007, p. 52). From this point of view, for Israelis abroad the choice could be either to aim for integration at some level into existing diaspora Jewish communities or to opt for initiating or joining a separate Israeli community in the host country.

The chapter is aimed at understanding where Ausraelis are situated in their interaction with the local Jewish community, their proximal ethnic host group (Cohen, 1999, p. 124). It follows Mason's definition of a community as "a group of people who share a range of values, a way of life, identify with the group and its practices and recognize each other as members of that group" (Mason, 2000, p. 21). Delanty adds to the definition by stating that communities "concern particular forms of belonging" (Delanty, 2003, p. 41). Sarason discusses the "sense of community", which he defines as "the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure" (Sarason, 1974, p. 157).

Gen08 data and supplementary sources are analysed in this chapter in order to determine Ausraelis' sense of belonging and level of identification with the Australian Jewish community. The analysis in this chapter is multi-layered. First, it is based on a comparison with other sectors of the Australian Jewish community, according to country of birth in order to evaluate Israelis' sense of belonging to the Australian community vis-à-vis the same feelings of others in the Australian Jewish community. The

second layer of the analysis is internal for Israelis in Australia only, and looks at the effect of tenure (time since immigration) and age during immigration on the issues in question.

The characteristics examined include feelings of connectedness (on a personal and institutional level), acceptance, and level of influence with regard to the community. Also, participation levels in community functions, synagogue attendance rates and donations to Israel and the community's institutes. The findings of the analysis are further matched with parallel data collected around the world in recent studies on Israelis abroad. The chapter concludes with translating the findings of the analysis to the place of Israelis in relation to the Jewish community of Australia.

## **11.2. Israelis and the segmentation of the Jewish community**

The authors of the report on Australian-Jewish community continuity, based on the analysis of the Gen08 survey, suggested a fragmentation of the Australian Jewish community (especially in Melbourne and Sydney) into three segments - core, middle and periphery. The core group, estimated at 25 to 30 per cent of the community, exhibits "strong Jewish identity, unity and coherence in values and outlook, strong transmission of values across generations". Within the middle segment of the Jewish community, which constitutes approximately 40 per cent, transmission of Jewish identity is "challenged" and "decision-making may occur in the context of values less strongly integrated or conflicting" with Jewish concepts and meanings. The periphery populates more than 30 per cent of the community; for them transmission of Jewish identity is "minimal" and "decisions are as likely to be made on the basis of a non-Jewish as [of a] Jewish value system". Further analysis of the periphery group led to the finding that this group accords low priority to Jewish identity; is unconcerned over intermarriage and records relatively high rates of intermarriage; and also expresses lack of interest in attending Jewish functions (Markus, 2011, pp. 69-70, 73).

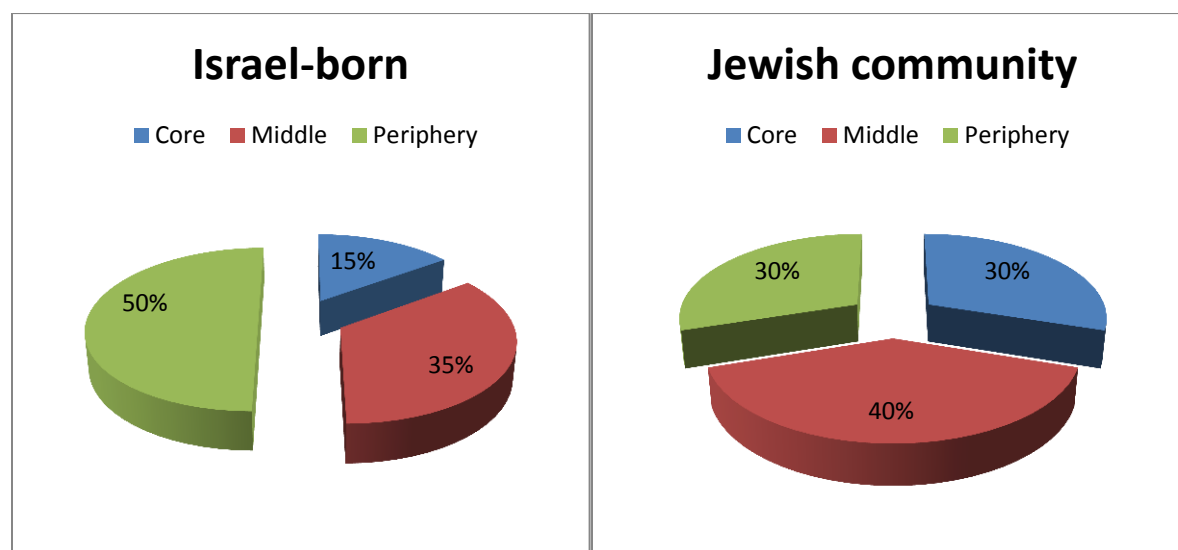
Based on the segmentation as proposed in the report analysing the Gen08 data, a methodology for best estimating the segmentation within the Israel-born population of Australia is suggested in this study. The end result of the estimation process (which is explained in details in appendix 1), was the best possible estimate of the division between core-middle-periphery among Israel-born in Australia, based on the data collected for the Gen08 survey.

For Israelis, the estimation process eventuated in a 15-35-50 per cent ratio of core-middle-periphery segmentation. This means that the core segment within the Israeli population is proportionately smaller than in the rest of the Jewish community, while the periphery segment is proportionately larger and the

middle segment is relatively similar (Figure 11.1). It should be noted, that this estimate of the segmentation may be considered as logical guess albeit based on data. At the same time, it does constitute the best possible estimate, and it does enable to point to trends and to better understand the relative sizes of each segment within the respective group that are part of the Australian Jewish community.

Figure 11.1

Estimated community segments for Israel-born and the general Australian Jewish population (Percentages)



### Further analysis of the segmentation of Israelis in Australia

#### The middle segment

The middle segment among Israelis is similar in size to the rest of the Jewish community, constituting an estimated thirty five per cent of the Israeli population in Australia. Gen08 data gives further indication for the existence of a considerable middle group among Israelis. The survey included a set of questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the Jewish community. The views of Israelis in Australia on these issues seem to be compatible with the views on these subjects expressed by most of the Jewish Australian population, according to the survey. The top four strengths and weaknesses of the community as ranked by Israel-born also appear as the highest ranked by Melbourne and Sydney respondents. The strengths most ranked were: 'Support for Israel' followed by 'A welcoming community', 'Support for the less fortunate' and 'Traditions which are passed from one generation to the next'. The weaknesses most marked were: 'Divisions between religious and secular Jews',

‘Intermarriage and assimilation’, ‘Divisions between rich and poor’ and ‘Young people rejecting the traditions of Jewish life’. Also, factors noted by those who indicated not feeling a part of the community, or feeling only slightly part of the community, were identical for both Israel-born and the Melbourne and Sydney respondents. The only factor on feeling part of the community which, naturally, was ranked higher by Israel-born was the negative influence of being an immigrant (Markus, et al., 2009, pp. 8, 10).

### **The periphery segment**

Proportionately and compared to most other sections of the Jewish community of Australia (with the exception of FSU Jews), a relatively high proportion of Israelis, as much as fifty per cent, is estimated as being part of the periphery segment.

This conclusion is further supported by the finding that Israel-born in Australia rank highest (or second highest after FSU Jews) in a range of characteristics related to low identification with the Jewish community as well a low sense of belonging to it. These features include several aspects that together make up a picture indicative of community peripherals. Several high percentage responses by Israel-born participants to specific Gen08 questions can be understood as typical to people with low (if at all) sense of belonging to the Jewish community (Table 11.1).

First, High rates of feeling of barely connected or not at all connected to Jewish communal life (the combined set of ‘Slightly’ and ‘Not at all’ responses). This finding was also noted by the researchers who examined Gen08 data for Melbourne and Sydney (Markus, Jacobs and Aronov, 2008-09 Jewish Population Survey. Preliminary Findings: Melbourne and Sydney 2009, 33).

Israelis also express the highest rates of dissatisfaction about their acceptance into the Jewish community. This could, on the one hand, indicate a sense of disappointment about their interaction with the Jewish community, but it also may suggest an aspiration to be accepted. The response ‘Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied’, which for Israelis was second highest after FSU Jews, is probably more difficult to fully decipher. It could be that it is revealing either moderate satisfaction with or an indifference to being accepted by the community. In any case, it can be assumed that at least some of the respondents are apathetic about being accepted or not.

Israelis exhibit similar levels of dissatisfaction as the rest of the Jewish community segments with regard to the question of influence in community decisions. At the same time, a high proportion of the Israel-born respondents - a quarter (25 per cent) - chose to respond with ‘Don't know’. The parallel set for

respondents from Sydney and Melbourne was nearly ten per cent lower (16 per cent). It is unclear what the sentiments of the 'Don't know' respondents on this issue are. However, it may be assumed that, at least for some of these respondents it is indicative of lack of interest in being involved (hence this question is irrelevant for them) or discontent from level of influence on community decisions.

Low (or no) sense of belonging to the community is likely to be translated into lack of involvement in its functions. Rutland and Gariano note on this issue that "Israelis in general are seen as less involved" in the Jewish community (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 63). This conclusion is supported by Gen08 data, which records that about a quarter of Israelis hardly attend Jewish functions (responses 'Never' and 'Seldom'), second only to FSU Jews.

On the issue of donations or philanthropy, the differences between diaspora Israelis and non-Israeli diaspora Jews are more notable. Rutland and Gariano conclude that "Israelis feel very alienated from the community when it comes to fundraising" (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 63). This statement is supported by Gen08 data: close to one third of Israel-born respondents did not donate to a Jewish cause over the 12 months that preceded the survey. This rate constitutes the highest proportion of non-donators when compared to other sectors of the Jewish community. Furthermore, a relatively high rate (8.7 per cent) chose 'Don't know' as their reply which, at least for some of them, could also imply not donating.

On an interpersonal level, a third of Gen08 Israeli participants attested to the difficulty in meeting and making Jewish friends. This while one-fifth of them - second only to FSU Jews – noted little or no importance in having a Jewish circle of friends.

Lack of concern regarding intermarriage was one of the views flagged in the report on Australian-Jewish community continuity as characteristic of the periphery segment. On this issue, Israel-born participants recorded the lowest percentage of respondents who feel regret over intermarriage (about a third) and the highest percentage of respondents who have no opinion on the subject (fifth of respondents).


Finally, there is the question of discrimination by the Jewish community. A fifth (second highest, higher than the total percentage) of Israel-born respondents reported having experienced some kind of discrimination against them by the Jewish community.

Table 11.1

Gen08 - Indications of sense belonging, involvement and interaction with the Jewish community: according to country of birth (Percentages)

Category	Question	Response/s	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
Sense of Belonging									
Connectedness	How connected do you feel to Jewish communal life?	Only slightly/Not at all	31.4	18.4	19.5	35.6	17	16.7	19.9
Acceptance	How satisfied are you with your acceptance in the Jewish community?	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	19.5	12.5	11.8	20.8	12.2	13	13.5
		Dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied	7.7	5.4	2.8	4.6	4.5	2.8	4.7
Influence	Do you feel able to have a say in the Jewish community?	Hardly ever/Never	28.2	29.7	27.5	36.8	30.1	30.4	30.2
		Don't know	24.9	10.5	9.9	19.5	12.9	11.6	12.6
Involvement									
Attendance	How often do you attend organised Jewish functions?	Never/Seldom	34.1	26.3	24.1	48.2	27.8	22.6	27.6
Donations	Have you donated in the last twelve months to any specifically Jewish causes?	No, I have not donated	32.3	15.5	15.7	23.2	11.7	7.8	15.1
		Don't know	8.7	2.3	0.9	2.3	1.5	0.8	2.2
Interaction									
Friendships	How important is it to have a Jewish circle of friends?	Not an issue that concerns me/Not very important/Not important at all	22.4	17.3	19.5	26.2	14.4	18.3	18.1
	Difficulty in meeting and making friends in the Jewish community? <sup>1</sup>	Yes - Serious / Yes - Moderate	32.7	-	15.6	50.8	16.6	23.2	25.3
Intermarriage	When you hear about intermarriage in the community, how do you feel?	Some / very considerable regret	37.7	58.4	50.6	43.4	64	58.3	56.4
		I have no view – it is not my business	20	8.8	14.8	15.5	12.8	11.4	11.4
Discrimination	Have you experienced discrimination within the Jewish community? <sup>2</sup>	Yes - Serious / Yes - Moderate	22.1	-	13.30	32.3	15.7	16.4	18.9
N=			390	2738	324	393	861	1135	5840

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Index:  Highest percentage Second-highest percentage Lowest percentage



Notes:

<sup>1</sup> N=

Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
318	NA	211	311	842	505	2187

<sup>2</sup> N=

Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
317	NA	210	301	839	502	2169

Gen08 further investigated respondents who indicated feeling either only slightly or not at all part of the Jewish community, and asked them to indicate and rank the reasons for their feelings with a multiple response option (Table 11.2). Israelis noted different views from the community leadership as the most prominent reason for not feeling part of the Jewish community, with the highest response-percentage for this response across the community. Lack of geographical proximity to Jewish suburbs was ranked second among Israelis as a reason for not feeling part of the community, with similar percentages to most other respondents (except for SA Jews). A few Israel-born respondents (twenty eight in number) chose ‘other’ as the reason for their feelings, which was ranked third. The reasons noted under the ‘other’ response range from religious (‘Not religious’) to personal, from criticism against the community (‘Reject the elitism’) to identification with Israeli nationalism instead of the Jewish community (‘See myself as an Israeli, not as Jewish’). Perhaps, surprisingly, the response ‘being an immigrant’ was only ranked fourth and in lower percentages than indicated by other non-Australian Jews in the community.

Table 11.2

Gen08 - Reasons for not feeling part of the Jewish community: responses according to country of birth (Percentages)

Reason	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
Views different from the community leadership	29.3	24.3	14.3	16.4	25.9	23.7	23.4
Living outside Jewish neighbourhoods	27.9	26.0	30.6	21.3	12.9	34.7	25.7
Other	21.3	30.1	28.6	13.6	23.1	39.5	27.7
Being an immigrant	18.0	2.0	4.8	28.6	21.9	5.8	10.1
Financial situation	9.0	12.9	12.7	14.9	18.4	10.0	13.0
Partner not Jewish	4.9	14.9	22.2	9.2	11.6	11.6	12.6
Not a Zionist	3.3	10.0	4.8	7.1	12.2	7.9	8.6
Sexual identity	0.0	5.4	3.2	0.0	5.4	2.1	3.5
Children not Jewish	0.0	5.4	9.5	0.7	3.4	6.3	4.4
<b>N=</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>1165</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Note: The question asked: “Which (if any) factors have led you to feel that you are not (or only slightly) part of the community?”

### 11.3. Factors influencing sense of belonging and connectivity

Marital status and having children were found to be factors working in favour of positive feelings of connectedness, acceptance and tendency to attend community events (Table 11.3). This finding is based on an increase in positive responses to these issues by married respondents (calculated as deducting the response rates of non-married participants from responses of married participants). As most of married Gen08 respondents also have children (78.2 per cent of 4,566 married respondents) it is not surprising that a similar increase in sense of belonging and connectivity to the Jewish community was found for participants with children (calculated as deducting response rates of participants who have no children from the response rate of participants with children). It should be noted that the influence of these factors seems to be the most dramatic for Israelis when compared to non- Israel-born members of the Jewish community.

Table 11.3

Gen08 - Feelings of connectedness, acceptance and attendance rates: influence of marital status, according to country of birth (Percentages)

Category	Question	Response	Increase (Married - Non-married)						
			Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
<b>Connectedness</b>	How connected do you feel to Jewish communal life?	To a great extent/ To a moderate extent	18.5	11.2	14.6	5.8	5.4	11.8	9.1
<b>Acceptance</b>	How satisfied are you with your acceptance in the Jewish community?	Satisfied/ Very Satisfied	16.8	12.9	15.2	5.2	19.6	8.9	12.3
<b>Attendance</b>	How often do you attend organised Jewish functions?	Every now and again/ Often/ Very regularly	13.5	2.7	20.2	-0.7	11.7	-0.9	4.3

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

The link between parenting and a need to connect with a Jewish community among Israeli emigrants was noticed in a recent study conducted by Israeli psychologist and professor of political science Udi Sommer (published in 2009). Sommer conducted interviews with Israeli emigrants in the United States who have children to understand the influence of parenthood on self-perceived identity and the shaping of siblings' identities. He points to the tension Israeli parents feel after immigrating between two parts of their identity: the national Israeli component and the Jewish religious one. Sommer concludes that Israeli parents in the diaspora are very much aware of the fact that "without belonging to a religious community, many parents will find it difficult to maintain Judaism in their children" (Sommer, 2009, p. 123).

Additional factors that were found to affect Ausraelis' sense connectivity and feeling of belonging to the Jewish community are tenure (time since emigration) and age on arrival in Australia. More accurately, emigrating since the beginning of the twenty-first century and/or arriving in Australia as an adult (19 and over) act as negative variables on the sense of belonging and identification with the Jewish community.

Table 11.4 details the response percentage for Gen08 questions indicating community peripheralism, when tabulated according to age on arrival in Australia or the period of emigration. The table shows how, in a large majority of cases, emigrating from Israel as an adult or at a later time is associated with a higher rate of negative responses regarding community connectedness, involvement and interaction. To some questions (for example on connectedness, attendance and donations) the increase in negative responses of recent and/or older emigrants is dramatic – several times higher.

Table 11.4

Gen08 - Influence of arrival period and age on arrival to sense of belonging, involvement and interaction with the Jewish community:  
Responses by Israel-born (Percentages)

Category	Question	Response/s	Age on arrival			Arrival year		
			0-18	19-29	30-	-1979	1980-1999	2000-2008
Sense of Belonging								
Connectedness	How connected do you feel to Jewish communal life?	Only slightly/Not at all	20.6	32.2	45.5	17.2	29.4	45.6
	How satisfied are you with your acceptance in the Jewish community?	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	17.5	17.5	26.4	13.9	24.3	18.8
		Dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied	5.6	7.7	10.9	5.2	10.3	6.5
Influence	Do you feel able to have a say in the Jewish community?	Hardly ever/Never	30.4	24.5	34.0	26.1	33.1	25.2
		Don't know	12.0	41.3	21.1	13.9	12.2	45.3
Involvement								
Attendance	How often do you attend organised Jewish functions?	Never/Seldom	26.4	42.9	34.6	22.8	43.4	34.5
Donations	Have you donated in the last twelve months to any specifically Jewish causes?	No, I have not donated	7.9	40.6	53.2	6.9	31.6	54.0
		Don't know	4.0	20.3	0.0	2.6	3.7	18.7
Interaction								
Jewish friendships	How important is it to have a Jewish circle of friends?	It is not an issue that concerns me/Not very important/Not important at all	17.4	30.6	21.6	18.1	16.8	32.6
	Difficulty in meeting and making friends in the Jewish community?	Yes - Serious / Yes - Moderate	26.4 <sup>1</sup>	36.0	32.7	34.8 <sup>2</sup>	36.6	28.5
Intermarriage	When you hear about intermarriage in the community, how do you feel?	Some/Very considerable regret	55.6	26.1	36.7	51.7	38.9	24.7
		I have no view – it is not my business	10.3	21.1	31.2	6.1	16.9	34.1
N=			126	143	110	115	136	138

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Notes: <sup>1</sup> N=72 <sup>2</sup> N=46

### **Synagogue attendance as an indicator of community-connectedness**

The question of synagogue attendance as an indicator of community-connectedness deserves special attention. Examining synagogue-attendance frequency is a factor sometimes used for understanding Jewish community-connectedness levels (Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 120; Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 29).

As an indicator of community-connectedness, the level of synagogue attendance can be taken as further evidence of a relatively high proportion of Jewish community peripherals amongst Israelis in Australia. According to the Gen08 survey findings in Melbourne and Sydney, Israel-born exhibit the lowest level of synagogue attendance in comparison to other sections of the Jewish community - only 14 per cent of Israel-born Gen08 respondents noted that they attend synagogue at least once a month (Markus, et al., 2009, p. 33)<sup>160</sup>.

The pattern of Israeli synagogue-attendance becomes clearer when Gen08 data is broken into four main categories (Figure 11.2): people who attend synagogue regularly (every day to once a month); occasional visitors on holidays or special celebrations (Bar Mitzvahs, weddings etc.); those who never go to synagogue; and those who responded 'Don't know/Decline to answer'. This category distribution reveals that, similar to others in the Jewish community, most Israel-born are occasional attendees of the synagogue. At the same time, Israelis exhibit the lowest rates of regular synagogue attendance and the second highest (after FSU Jews) rates of non-attenders altogether.

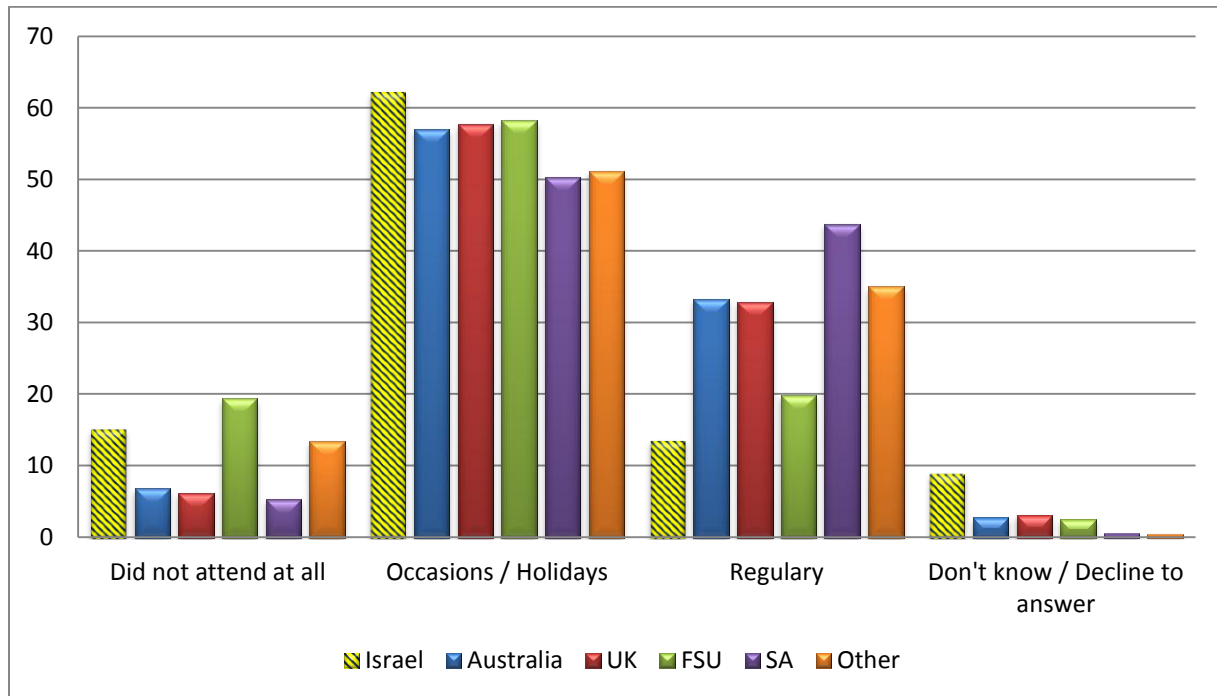
Furthermore, when the data is analysed through the prism of period of emigration, the possible relevance of tenure emerges. On the one hand, there is no difference in the percentage of occasional Israeli emigrant attendees to the synagogue (approximately 60 per cent for all periods). On the other hand, more recent an emigrant is in Australia are far more inclined not to attend a synagogue at all: a third of all emigrants arriving in Australia since the year 2000 and 16 per cent of emigrants arriving between 1980 and 1999 report not attending a synagogue, as opposed to only about tenth (11 per cent) of the Israeli respondents arriving in Australia before 1980 (Anon., 2008-2009, p. unpublished data).

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<sup>160</sup> Synagogue attendance levels as recorded by Melbourne and Sydney Gen08 respondents at the level of one or more times a month were: 41 per cent for Jews born in South Africa, 33 per cent for Jews born in Australia and United Kingdom, 17 per cent for Jews from FSU and 14 per cent for Israel-born (Markus, et al., 2009, p. 33). The 54 per cent data for Shule attendance recorded in the Rutland and Gariano 2005 study is probably not indicative of religious observance or community connectedness, but rather the result of the small and misrepresentative sample (of the 77 Israelis sampled, almost all were emigrants who arrived before the year 2000); and of the fact that the question asked: "Attend a Shule"? could only be answered with 'Yes/No/No comment' (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 40).

Figure 11.2

Gen08 - Synagogue attendance: Responses according to country of birth (Percentages)



Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Notes:

1. The question asked: "In the last twelve months, how often did you attend any type of synagogue, or organised Jewish religious service?"
2. N= Israel - 389; Australia - 2737; UK - 322 ; FSU - 393 ; SA - 861; Other - 1135.

However, synagogue attendance might be a problematic factor to take on face value as a feature of community-connectedness. Lev Ari notes that: "most Israelis abroad are secular, and will stay away from local communities because they are perceived as religious. These perceptions also characterize the secular majority in Israel" (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 108). For secular Israelis, visiting a synagogue is assumed to be strongly tied to religious ritualism not practiced by seculars; for them, attending a synagogue is devoid of any social meaning. It is unclear whether, and to what extent, Israelis recognise or accept the social aspect that other diasporic Jews may attach to attending a synagogue. Furthermore, tensions between seculars and religious in Israel as reflected in the constant struggle in the Israeli political arena<sup>161</sup> may echo in the way diasporant secular Israelis relate to synagogues abroad. They may reject the idea of attending a synagogue (especially orthodox ones) because they identify it as one of the religious establishments they are at odds with in Israel.

<sup>161</sup> For a detailed description of the struggle between seculars and religious since the establishment of the State of Israel see (Ben-Porat & Feniger, 2009).

Non-survey information collected for this thesis supports the assumption that Israelis, especially secular, view the synagogue as mostly associated with religion and do not attach social meaning to it. One notable example is the testimony of Dafna from Sydney, who operates a networked social group for Israelis and is well-acquainted with many of her peer-countrymen in her city. She explains that secular Israelis are not used to affiliating with a synagogue:

Many Israelis here do not have the mentality of connecting with a synagogue [...] For a secular Israeli, a synagogue is not an institute that you affiliate with easily. I think it takes time to understand that a synagogue is a community centre beyond a religious centre.

(Dafna, 2010)

Similarly, this *Tapuz* participant remarks, that Israelis do not understand the social meaning attached to a visit to the synagogue and see it as a religious act first and foremost. According to his view “for many Israelis going to a synagogue on a Saturday is much more than a social event” (Tapuz, n.d., p. September 2009).

#### **11.4. Interaction on a personal level**

It seems that for most Israelis in Australia socialising on a one-on-one basis with Jews is easily attainable and it is a desirable and preferred basis for friendships. According to Gen08 data (Table 11.5), and similar to other sectors of the Jewish community in Australia, for the majority of Israelis, Jewish friends constitute at least half, or more, of their circle of friends. This they view as important and attest to having no real difficulty in attaining such friendships.

At the same time, when moving from personal interaction to the relationship with the community as a whole, the issue of peripherals resurfaces. A third of Israel-born respondents noted difficulty in meeting and making friend in the Jewish community, second only to the fifty per cent rate noted by respondents born in the FSU. In other words, when asked about making friends in the context of the Jewish community more Israelis respond negatively and point to difficulty of some level.

Table 11.5

Gen08 - Jewish friends: Responses according to country of birth (Percentages)

Question	Response	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
How important is it to have a Jewish circle of friends?	Very important/ Somewhat important	74.6	81.2	79.6	70.7	85.1	80.8	80.5
	It is not an issue that concerns me	19.3	13.0	15.2	20.4	12.4	15.0	14.3
How many of your close friends are Jewish?	All/Nearly all	56.3	54.8	53.8	43.7	71.5	55.2	56.6
	About half/ More than half	34.2	25.2	29.5	36.0	20.7	29.3	26.9
Have you experienced difficulties in meeting and making friends in the Jewish community? <sup>1</sup>	No	65.4	-	84.4	42.1	82.1	73.9	72.3
	Yes - Serious/ Yes - Moderate	32.7	-	15.6	50.8	16.6	23.2	25.3
N=		389	2739	323	393	861	1135	5840
<sup>1</sup> N=		211	-	211	311	842	505	2187

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

### 11.5. Factors and perceptions with a negative effect on Israeli-Jewish interaction

Qualitative non-survey data collected in this study indicates that many Israelis voice deep reservations about social interaction and its depth with local Jews on both a community and a personal level. A variety of negative perceptions by Israelis about Australian Jews were recorded in sources gathered for this research. These perceptions were expressed by Israelis who can be categorised in all of the segments of the Jewish community (core-middle-periphery). Such opinions are also accompanied by meaningful differences in attitudes and values that may negatively shape interaction between Jews and Israelis in the diaspora in general, and specifically in Australia.

Some of these factors explored in the rest of this chapter are likely to be Israeli-specific, while other factors are found in the relationship patterns between other parts of the Jewish community in general. Determining which factors are typical to Israelis only and which are shared by other segments of the Jewish community is outside the scope of this thesis and requires additional research.

At the core of the perception of many Israelis about their Jewish brethren in the diaspora is a conviction that the two parts of the Jewish people are different. This point of view was exhibited in a recent study conducted in Israel by The Israel Democracy Institute and The AVI CHAI Israel Foundation, which examined how Israeli Jews perceive their bond with diaspora Jews. The study found that over the past



two decades at the very least “an overwhelming[ly] majority of Israelis feel that they are part of world Jewry” and three-quarters of Israelis believe that the Israeli Jews and diaspora Jews have a shared destiny. At the same time, “more than half of the respondents ‘agree’ or ‘totally agree’ that the Jews in Israel are a different nation from the Jews abroad” (The Israel Democracy Institute and The AVI CHAI Israel Foundation, 2011, p. 72). Gold details the differences between the two groups:

Israelis and diaspora Jews speak distinct languages, maintain different cultural norms and practices, eat different kinds of food, have contrasting political outlooks and like different kinds of sports, music and entertainment.

(Gold, 2002, p. 183)

This perception, emphasising the differences between Israelis and diaspora Jews, was recorded in several cases in data gathered for this thesis. One example was ‘hidden’ inside Gen08 data. Two Israel-born participants of the survey explained why they do not feel part of the Jewish community<sup>162</sup>. One stated that “I’m an Israeli living in AU[strialia] and feel myself part of Israel”, while the other noted his national affiliation precedes his religious one: “[I] see myself as an Israeli, not as Jewish”.

A prominent Israeli official with many years of experience dealing with Jewish communities and with Israelis abroad (who asked to remain anonymous) recently defined the relationship between the two groups with the following words: “Israelis abroad and Jewish communities are like two flowers in the same pot growing to different directions”<sup>163</sup>. Hallely Kimchi, the editor of *Eton* – the Israeli newspaper in Australia – reaches her own conclusion about the Israeli population of Australia and the nature of its interaction with the established Jewish community:

Today though, one can talk about the Israelis in Australia as a community - clear, distinct and thriving. Like other communities, this one has its own language, traditions and customs – which, perhaps surprisingly, are totally separate from the mainstream Jewish community; indeed, sometimes painfully so.

(Kimchi, 2006, p. 87)

The insights of one particular *Tapuz* participant are valuable in this context as he is very actively engaged with both the Jewish and Israeli communities in his place of residence and Australia wide. This core member of the Jewish community summarises the main areas where dissimilarities between the two communities exist, and laments the tension which arises as a result of these differences:

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<sup>162</sup> Responses to the question: “Which (if any) factors have led you to feel that you are not (or only slightly) part of the community?”.

<sup>163</sup> Private conversation with the author of this thesis, Melbourne, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

The Israeli and the Jewish communities have a lot in common, much more than each of them [have] with other ethnic communities. At the same time, Israeli *Yordim* (especially secular) and the *Golah* [diaspora] Jewry are two separate communities. They have totally different world views, mainly on issues related to Judaism, the State of Israel, and language and so on. In these issues there exists an abominable misunderstanding between the two communities.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. September 2009)

In a story published in *Eton*, this Israeli, who operates a social network of Israelis in Perth, refers to complaints made by Jews in Perth about Israelis' absence from community events. He blames the absence on lack of information about the activities. At the same time, he claims that Israelis in his city are articulating their will to be more involved in the Jewish community, and/or in community events designated for Israelis only:

I have heard [from Perth Jews] complaints that the attitude of the Israelis, who almost never attend activities in the community, is really insulting. I am personally convinced that most Israelis here are completely unaware of all these activities. [After] talking to many of them I had the impression that most would be happy to be much more involved, either within the framework of the Jewish community and/or in activities meant for Israelis only.

(Anon., 2006)

The views of Ronny, interviewed for this research, carry special weight in the context of community belonging. This is because he can be positioned on the one hand as an insider, possibly part of the middle or even core segment, with regards to the Jewish community; and on the other hand, as an outsider vis-à-vis the Israeli population in his limited interaction with other Israelis in Australia. Ronny has integrated into the Jewish community while detaching himself almost completely from 'Israeliness'. He immigrated to Australia with his family as a teenager, studied in a Jewish school, married an Australian Jew and feels connected to the Jewish community. His point of view on Israelis in Australia is based on a dichotomy, in which there can be only a choice between assimilation and separatism. Accordingly, Ronny blames Israelis for purposely rejecting the Jewish community and failing to fit in by choosing to foster separatism and peripheralism.

If you want to live with the Jews, you should blend in with them, come into their synagogues, learn English, learn the language, attend their schools, live in their areas [...] But do these people [Israelis] do that? Or do they come to safety? They know where the

Israelis are, and they come to dinner with Israelis and speak to Israelis. So, they are generally creating a ghetto for themselves.

(Ronny, 2011)

The rest of this chapter will present the main causes for the tense interaction between Jews and Israelis (when such tension surfaces), as expressed by the latter group. It is a mixture of Israel-brewed cultural elements interacting with mutual group-perceptions, along with past residues, official narratives and social economic aspects.

### **Past tensions**

In the past, the relationship between Australian Jewry and Israeli emigrants to Australia was generally saturated with tensions. Similar to the interaction recorded in the United States between Israelis and Jews for the same period (Gold, 2002, p. 155), evidence suggests that many Australian Jews did not accept Israeli emigrants warmly into the community. Past negative feelings towards Israeli emigrants by Australian Jews were motivated by a number of factors. First, some Zionist Australian Jews were following the *Yordim* narrative and were critical of Israelis “abandoning” the State of Israel, which was parallel to the harsh criticism of *Yordim* being voiced at that time in Israel. However, such criticism was uncomfortable for the Australian Jews themselves, as it forced them to face the fact that they do not live in Israel nor did they make *Aliyah*. The testimony of Yafit, who immigrated to Australia in the early 1960s, is one observation indicative of such views. Yafit recalls past unpleasant experiences with local Australians when the issue of *Yerida* came up:

It was not as hostile as when [Prime Minister] Rabin named the *Yordim* “A fallen among weaklings”. But the local Jews looked at us a little bit negatively in the sense of: how did you dare to leave Israel? It was as if you [Israelis] had to sit there [in Israel] and watch over us [Jews in Australia]. What are you doing here? [...] And you had nothing to answer because you couldn’t have asked them what they [Australian Jews] were doing here.

(Yafit, 2010)

Cultural differences and socio-economic features were just as dominant in fostering past misunderstandings between Israelis and Jews in Australia. Several characteristics and Israeli behavioural norms, especially (but not uniquely) in emigrants of oriental descent (*Mizrahim*) or from lower classes in Israel, were often perceived negatively as rude or unacceptable by Australian Jews, most of whom were from a European background. Unfavourable images on both sides were bolstered by isolated incidents of opportunism, or even illegal activities, by a handful of Israeli immigrants. Such incidents were

mentioned by several of the interviewees for this study who had emigrated before the turn of the twenty-first century ("Monash", 2009; Alex, 2011; Yafit, 2010; Shira, 2010).

These testimonies on past tensions between Israelis and Jews were supported by a study concluded in Melbourne in the mid-1980s by McNamara. Following interviews he conducted with sixty Israelis, he concluded that Australian Jews were "anxious about anyone rocking the boat or drawing negative attention to the Jewish community" from the general Australian public (McNamara, 1987, p. 221) which might give rise to antisemitic incidents. According to Yiftach Saar (nicknamed "Monash"), who is an immigration agent and was himself an immigrant to Australia in the 1980s, such fears were also nurtured by a few cases of single Israeli men courting Australian-Jewish girls, in order to marry them as a fast track towards citizenship ("Monash", 2009). Rejected by home and host communities, most Israelis in Australia at the time retained a low profile, peripheral and marginalised members of the larger, organised Australian-Jewish community.

It is assumed that these past feelings of negativity have disappeared. One reason for this is the decline of the *Yordim* attitude in Israel since the 1990s, along with the introduction of multiculturalism as a norm within Australian society. Other reasons could be a change in the characteristics of the Israeli emigrant population to Australia, the majority of whom are now skilled migrants. Remnants of such past tensions may still live on in a few Australian-Jewish community members, according to at least one piece of evidence of this thesis. It is the testimony of Nir, who talks about his friend who recently moved from the religious Jewish part of Melbourne to a neighbourhood populated with non-religious Israelis. His friend explained to Nir that the reason for his relocation was his wish to stop facing unpleasant questions in synagogues, criticising his decision to immigrate to Australia:

Australian religious people consider us as traitors [asking:] When are you going back?  
Why are you opening a clinic [in Australia], you should be heading back to Israel.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

### **Israeli nationalism as superior to diasporic identity**

Gold notes that "Israelis find diaspora Jews to be rigid, cool and shallow" (Gold, 2002, p. 155). Moreover, as Rina Cohen concludes in her study of Israeli emigrants in Toronto, "Unlike the of Canadian Jews, the ethnic identity of Israeli immigrants is not synagogue based, nor is it based on involvement in Jewish organisations or on financial support of Israel [...] Israelis express their identity in terms of nationality, citizenship, language and shared history" (Cohen, 1999, p. 126).

Similar views were recorded among Israelis in Australia. Many perceive their Israeli nationalist identity as different; possibly conflicting with, and in some cases even superior to, what they understand as the diasporic character of Australian Jews. Israelis' perceptions of local Jewry may sometimes be chequered with prejudice, misconception and misunderstanding; in some cases, they might even be considered by local Jews as borderline antisemitic. Negative perceptions by Israelis of Australian Jews are centred around three main issues: the '*Magiah li*' (I deserve it) attitude, diasporic Judaism and connectivity to Israel.

### **'Magiah li'**

One area where negative images constantly recurred in the qualitative data collected for this study was related to the socio-economic status of Australian Jews. Local Jews were described by Israelis as financially affluent and, possibly as a result of their perceived financial situation, also as conservative and condescending towards others, and to Israelis in particular. For example, Israelis speak of witnessing patronising behaviour by Australian Jews towards servants and workers of Asian origin and towards Israelis (Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010). In her novel *So How Was Your Day?*, about an Israeli psychologist working in Australia, Shula Weitz describes an unpleasant meeting between Talya from Israel and an elderly Jewish holocaust survivor in Sydney. The old lady questions Talya about her origins (*Mizrahi/Ashkenazi*) and criticises her for having tattoos on her hands – remarks interpreted by Talya as racist and arrogant (Weitz, 2009, p. 83). And this *Tapuz* participant describes his view of the Jewish community of Australia and its relationship with Israelis, perceiving them as condescending and interested only in money:

The Jewish community does not 'count you' [relate to you as equal], it does not count most Israelis here, [...] the main thing it does count is money. And this I have been told by people with much more experience here, including Australian Jews and non-Jews.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. August 2009)

Such prejudice may be related to a projection of the image of world Jews, specifically American Jewry, as rich and influential<sup>164</sup>. Rutland and Gariano noted the expectation of Israeli migrants, specifically young backpackers, of financial assistance from the Jewish community. Such anticipation is based, assert Rutland and Gariano, on the '*Magiah li*' (I deserve it) attitude (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 20). Israeli sociologist Gad Yair sees such perception, of giving and contributing to Israel as a form of conditional

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<sup>164</sup> On the image of Jews as powerful and rich people who shape the world see, for example, Steve Linde, "World's 50 most influential Jews", *Jerusalem Post*, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010 (<http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishFeatures/Article.aspx?id=175871>, accessed January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012)

contract with the state, as one of the pillars of 'Israeliness'. It views life in Israel and duties performed for the state - first and foremost military service, but also paying taxes and facing the financial and physical difficulties of daily life in Israel - as a propagative that leads to entitlement for benefits from Israeli society (Yair, 2011, pp. 71-75).

The '*Magiah li*' approach is further grounded in Israeli narratives on the diaspora, specifically the 'negation of diaspora'. Dan Bar Or, who examined the history of identity construction of Israeli Jews, explains that the "Zionist movement sought to differentiate itself from traditional religious and Diaspora Jewish identity constructions, emphasising the new, emerging collective Zionist self" (Bar Or, 2008, p. 8). The 'negation of diaspora' was successfully incorporated into the Israeli national identity as the rejection of the Jewish diaspora way of life and of religious practices.

Negative perceptions of the diaspora, as 'inferior' to 'Israeliness', were evident in the past (and may still be an undercurrent today) in official Israeli government policy. Israeli scholar and Australian resident, Shahar Burla, identified in his doctorate thesis two conflicting official Israeli narratives used when approaching diaspora Jewry. The first describes Israel as the powerful guardian of physical and spiritual Jewish existence. According to this narrative, the State of Israel is the answer to the never-ending threat of antisemitism or the occurrence of a new holocaust in the diaspora. Immigrating to Israel is thus considered an achievement, a process for Jewish salvation and the realisation of true Jewish identity. Diaspora Jews not making *Aliyah* are instead required to devote funds to Israel in order to ensure Israel's strength and its existence as a safe haven for Jews in case of danger. In the second narrative, Israel is epitomised as vulnerable and under constant existential threat. It depicts Israel as isolated as a result of anti-Israeli sentiments, which are the new form of centuries-old antisemitism. Diaspora Jewry is again called upon to support Israel financially, as well as politically (Burla, 2011, p. 205). In both cases, Jews are expected to donate money to Israel and humbly accept that they are morally dependent on the Jewish state. Also, these narratives suggest that diasporic Jews are possibly inferior to Israelis because they are not true Zionists, as demonstrated by their choice to swap the harsh life in Israel for the calm and prosperous life in the diaspora.

Based on such narratives, the '*Magiah li*' expression incorporates a social statement about the Israel-diaspora relationship. Encompassed in it is the perception of how diaspora Jews are able to live peacefully and prosper thanks to the Jewish state and the Israelis who 'spill blood' in wars, protecting and preserving Jewish existence. Thus, according to this perception, world Jews forever owe an unpayable moral debt to Israelis.

Rising costs of Jewish life in Australia also contribute to tensions between Israelis and Jews. Specifically, the constant increases in Jewish school fees and costs for accommodation in Jewish areas (Markus, 2011, pp. 35-38). For some Israelis, the mere fact that some Jews live in houses situated in expensive neighbourhoods (most of which were purchased years ago, when prices were much lower) and are able to send their children to expensive private Jewish schools is proof of their sound economic status. This, whilst economically, most Israelis perceive themselves as middle class. Consequently, class-fuelled socio-economic tensions also contribute to enhancing the image of Australian Jews as 'rich'.

The '*Magiah li*' attitude is also a major reason why many Israelis reject fundraising activity. Some view money-collecting for Israelis as creating a derogatory image of the Jewish state as "a beggar", shamelessly and emotionally "squeezing" funds out of aging, rich diasporic Jews (*Shnor* in both Yiddish and Hebrew), only to use the money inappropriately afterwards<sup>165</sup>. An Israeli quoted in the Rutland and Gariano report projected, on top of these negative images, feelings of neglect and abandonment by Israeli official representatives. The emissaries (*Shlichim*) and embassy personnel are (in his view) only interested in local Jewry for *Aliyah* or *Shnor* purposes (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 63).

The statistical data indicating alienation of Israelis towards fundraising for Jewish and/or Israeli causes was supported by other evidence gathered for this thesis. For example, during the interview with Dafna from Sydney, she shares her personal experience regarding donations by the Jewish community of Sydney. She talks about the idea of giving money to Jewish causes as foreign to Israelis:

When I go to Jewish events, such as the JCA [Jewish Communal Appeal] for women, there are some Israeli women, but not from my generation [older than me...] I did not see a lot of Israelis connecting to it. Maybe the whole thing with fundraising and all that stuff [...] is foreign to us [Israelis]; it took me several years to get used to it. Once I went with my husband [a South African Jew] to an event and they asked for his donation. He wanted to give a thousand dollars to Israel for some cause. I was shocked!

(Dafna, 2010)

Evidence of the '*Magiah li*' attitude was found in qualitative data gathered for this thesis. One example is Hagit's testimony. Hagit is a religious Israeli women living Australia due to the fact that her husband was relocated to Melbourne via his workplace. She refers to the features that can be related to the

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<sup>165</sup> One Israeli, a former UIA *Shliach*, summarised this negative attitude towards fundraising by saying: "I donated 180 AUD to the JNF so Avi Pazner [the chair of UIA worldwide] can fly first class" (private conversation with Ran Porat, August 2009, Melbourne).

'*Magiah li*' notion, without using the exact term, when she reveals her husband's views on how Australian Jews should relate to Israelis:

My husband says: every Israeli living here [in Australia] has done a million times more than any Jew living here is doing. The Jews here cannot 'click their tongues' [an expression of condescending sympathy] one bit at any Israeli, because Israelis have already paid the price: they were in the army, they were in difficult situations when there was terror in Israel; they have paid the price. And if they choose, for many reasons, to live here, the Jews, the community here, should embrace, admire, cherish and acknowledge all the [efforts] invested during the years they [the Israelis] lived in Israel.

(Hagit, 2011)

Zehavit from Brisbane, expresses a typical '*Magiah li*' argument when she explains her view that guilt motivates diaspora Jews to donate to Israeli causes, while Israelis abroad state that they have paid their dues by serving in the Israeli army:

It's all those donations to Israel, to lands in Israel, to WIZO. You know, all these guilt feelings that you [the Jews] are here [in the diaspora] and people are suffering [in Israel] and you need to pay some taxes. Now, go and listen to Israelis talk. What would they tell you? They would say: I have paid my tax, I was in the army.

(Zehavit, 2011)

Another example of the '*Magiah li*' attitude surfaces in a description, posted by a *Tapuz* member, of local Jews as 'shallow' and 'spoilt', without values or real Zionism. In his view, Australian Jews expect Israelis to fight wars and endure a hard life "while the Jews here 'lick honey'. Quite a comfortable arrangement for them, right?" (Tapuz, n.d., p. September 2009). Similar feelings are expressed by Talya, the main character in Shula Weitz's novel about an Israeli migrant worker in Sydney. Following a hostile encounter with elderly Jewish women who preach to her on how to behave, she is furious:

She [Talya] wanted to tell the distinguished ladies that she was the one who spent thirty something years of her life in the Jewish state, which is under constant war threat; [that she] had served in the army; sat in a shelter and a sealed room [during the first gulf war] and paid crazy taxes so they [Australian Jews] can sit in St. Ives and talk about tattoos. So they should not 'chatter' [preach] to her on what 'a Jew' should know.

(Weitz, 2009, p. 86)



## Connection to Israel

Another factor that might sometimes play a negative role in Israeli-Jewish interplay in Australia is the perceived connection of the latter group to Israel. Also stemming from the '*Magiah li*' narrative, Israelis may voice expectations of special appreciation and connection to the State of Israel by local Jews. This is accompanied by a view that life in the diaspora is a choice, openly opted for by local Jews over *Aliyah* and living in Israel. In light of this view, stated Zionism by diaspora Jews may sometimes be judged by Israelis as superficial and even hypocritical. Gold explains that “[I]n spite of their mutual support of Israel, they [Jews and Israelis abroad] have differing national allegiances” (Gold, 2002, p. 183).

This perception with regards to the gap between stated and practised connection to Israel by Australian Jews was mentioned by several interviewees for this study. For instance, Tommy from Sydney recalls his interaction with an Australian Jew. Her interest in what was happening in Israel seemed to him in dissonance with her life in the diaspora. From his point of view, it is unclear how a person can claim to be a Zionist and not go to live in Israel. He does note that he understands why this person lives in Australia and not in Israel, implying that life is more comfortable in the former than in the latter. Despite making a similar choice (not to live in Israel), Tommy can't come to terms with the strength of her Zionist activism:

There is that misunderstanding, where you do not comprehend why a person who is so much a Zionist lives in Australia and does not make *Aliyah* for example. On the other hand [...] you also live in Australia and it is clear to you why they do not make *Aliyah*. But still you do not get it, why they are so active about it.

(Tommy, 2010)

Gold notes that the national holiday of *Yom Hazikaron* (Israel's Memorial Day for fallen soldiers and terror victims) is a distinct example “[e]pitomizing the difference between Israelis' national identity and the religious outlook of diaspora Jews” (Gold, 2002, p. 183). Gold's observation is supported by the harsh criticism voiced by Hagit, a religious nationalist-Israeli living in Australia after her husband got relocated to Melbourne for work purposes. She describes being shocked and upset when discovering that her daughter's Jewish school barely marks *Yom Ha'tzmaut* (Israel's Independence Day). Similarly, the community ceremony she attended to commemorate *Yom Hazikaron*, a significant event in Israel, was in her view “poor and wretched”. For Hagit such norms are indications of a deeper problem in the relationship between Israel and Australian Jews. She blames Jews for not understanding that (in her

eyes) Israel's existence is an insurance policy for Jewish survival in the diaspora and a shield against a new Holocaust.

On the most meaningful and inner level there is something here – their [Australian Jews] lack of connection to the State of Israel is what kills me [...] In my eyes, without the State of Israel, *Galut* [diaspora] also cannot exist; [In such a scenario] we can erase the Jews from the world, because they would have no 'back' [someone to guard them] and the Holocaust shall return [...] And their lack of connection, the fact that they cannot see the line [between] the responsibility we take on ourselves in Israel and what is happening here – this is what drives me insane; it is the split [between us].

(Hagit, 2011)

The connection between Jewish continuity and the importance of Israel is also mentioned by a *Tapuz* participant when explaining why diasporic Jews and Israelis do not mix. He claims that diasporic Jews are in the midst of a deterministic, cultural, self-destruction process. And they need Israel, which is the growing bed of a flourishing Jewish identity and the only entity securing Jewish continuity.

Over the last two centuries, the Jewish people had gone through two annihilation attempts: the physical attempt [the Holocaust ...] and the spiritual attempt which encompasses identity loss of Jews in the diaspora. [...] The holocaust failed, while] the second attempt is an internal and methodical process happening without any resistance, and it seems that nothing will stand in its way. In between there is the new model, "the Israelis in Israel" which formulates a new identity for the Jewish people, but one which is a continuation of the historical Jewish people. Theoretically, it would have seemed that Israelis and Jews living in the diaspora were meant for each other. In reality, despite the genealogy of both groups [connecting them] to the historical Jewish people, there are many differences, and it seems that these are two different branches growing in two different directions without any connecting points.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. June 2010)

### **Diasporic vs. Israeli Judaism**

Another aspect where Israelis might negatively perceive Australian Jews is Jewishness itself. The 'Diaspora form of Judaism', as understood by Israelis, is more than once portrayed in the qualitative data of this study as superficial and shallow, focused on ritualism and not content; and driven by guilt and fear instead of deep understanding of Judaism's true meaning. Gold explains that Israelis and diaspora Jews "often express their common religious identification in disparate ways" (Gold, 2002, p. 183). Growing up in Israel and being educated in Israel's nationalist education system is recurrently described by Israelis as resulting in a higher form of Judaism than the one specifically practised by

Australian Jews and diasporic Jews in general. This notion could be a reflection of 'the negation of exile' narrative, in which living in Israel is conceived as altogether morally superior to diasporic life.

Most of the evidence for this perception surfaced during interviews with Israelis. For example, Gili from Byron Bay contrasts his secular Israeli way of life with the more religious Australian Jewish lifestyle, which he views as closed and motivated by fear.

We [Israelis] live like a normal person that's what I mean, you don't live like a religious person in Israel. Whereas the Jewish [sic] here they live a bit like religious people, they live like in a cocoon, they're scared of people who are not Jewish.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

Zehavit from Brisbane is an Israeli functioning as a social hub in her city. She notes that she had considerable contact with Jews in her area, with whom she tried to work on organising events for Jewish holidays and special occasions. When asked about the way Judaism is practiced by Australian Jews, she is critical. According to her perception, Australian Jews' faith practices are old-fashioned and rigid especially when compared with Israelis' Jewishness:

It's a totally different culture. You know, they, the local Jews, have some sort of social debt, guilt feelings. They need religion more to connect amongst themselves. Israelis [on the other hand] do not need any ceremonies to be Jewish. They are Jews because they were born Jews and they do not need to celebrate anything to feel Jewish. They have no feelings of such duty that "I must do something", they do so [practice Judaism] because they feel like [it], because they want to, because it is pleasant for them. If it is not pleasant, they do not [do] it. But [local] Jews are more archaic. They are into "this is the way you do things".

(Zehavit, 2011)

Another valuable testimony in this regard is that of Hagit - a religious Israeli who interacts on a daily basis with the Jewish community. Her harsh attitude to local Jews is constructed on several foundations. She reproaches diaspora Jews for choosing a life of comfort instead of implementing their Judaism in a nationalistic context by living in Israel. 'Jewish existence' as witnessed by her in Australia is meaningless and untruthful.

For me, anyone whole truly believes in God [...must] come to Israel. There is such a *Mitzvah* [commandment] - to live in the land [of Israel]. And only if you live in the land [of Israel] can you perform the rest of the *Mitzvahs*. Your Jewish existence abroad is very weak and I am not clear on what do they [Jews] do here [instead of in Israel]. And as time goes by I am more 'crazed' by this, because I am saying [to myself]: They are faking

it! They are lovely people and all, [...] but if they do not make any effort to come to Israel and live there [...] they are faking it. And I am sick of it! I don't want to hear of any more fakes.

(Hagit, 2011)

Similar strong negative feelings regarding Jewish faith as practised by Australian Jews were voiced by official Israeli *Shlichim* (emissaries) to the Australian Jewish community, recorded in a study by Aharonov which was published in 2010. These individuals are sent by Israeli authorities and agencies for pre-determined periods, to teach Zionism and collect funds for Israel within the Jewish community. Thus, although they are temporary visitors in Australia, these Israelis are in close interaction with Jewish Australians during their time of duty abroad. Simon, for example, is a religious *Shaliach* who blames Australian Jews for living a “world of lies” in the way they practice Judaism and by proclaiming to be Zionists, yet choosing not to live in Israel. Another *Shaliach*, Eitan, makes a clear distinction between “the truly real life” in Israel vis-à-vis the “diaspora perception”:

He criticized the emphasis the community put on the external and how things look from the outside rather than stressing content, depth and essential matters of faith. As a result he perceived Judaism in Australia as being "technical" as compared to Israel.

(Aharonov, 2010, p. 63)

In that context, Israelis occasionally misunderstand the reason for attending a synagogue in the diaspora, which combines inner-Jewish social interaction and religious worship. For some Israelis in Australia - most of whom are secular - this mixture is a sign of weakness, as they consider national Israeli identity to be strongly embedded with Jewishness. For example, a *Tapuz* participant explains what a synagogue means in her view for Australian Jews, and why its function in the diaspora is less important for Israelis:

Synagogue is indeed a meeting place for these people [diasporic Jews], a social centre. The Jews that live here must celebrate all the holidays and must be more religious because this is what defines their Jewishness, and helps them not to assimilate and preserve custom. We, as Jewish Israelis who had lived in Israel and absorbed enough [Jewish] atmosphere, do not feel the need to go to a synagogue in order to feel Jewish.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. June 2010)

The words of Shimrit from the Byron Bay area summarise in a nutshell many of the factors mentioned in this chapter as negatively influencing Israeli-Jewish interaction in Australia. She recalls an inner transformation in her relationship with Australian Jews. Shimrit testifies that early on in her days as an

emigrant in Australia she was plagued by prejudice, negative perceptions and unflattering images of local Jews. But now having a common religion is a positive agent for socialising on a personal level.

In the beginning also I felt to the Jewish [sic] like all these rich Jewish, these fake Jews, who keep all the Jewish traditions but they don't go to live in Israel and all the time talking about Jewish, Jewish, Jewish. Go live in Israel; let's see you [make it there]! But now I actually do feel close. [...] Now I'm at the point that if I meet someone and I find out he's Jewish it makes me to feel closer to them, even if they're Australian. That [positive feeling] I [have] never felt [before]; before that I felt resentful.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

### **11.6. Comparison with Israelis in other countries**

Aspects of community involvement, influence and feelings of connectedness were researched in several recent studies conducted on Israelis around the world. On the one hand, in most studies there is no methodologically viable or updated data to use as a basis for evaluation. On the other hand, general conclusions on the subjects aforementioned can be used to point to trends and possible resemblances.

A few insights can be drawn from these studies about Israelis abroad and their interaction with local Jewish communities. The first is that with regards to community connectedness and involvement, the picture in European countries where a relatively large cluster of Israelis reside (UK and France) seems to be similar to the one in Australia. More than half of the Israelis surveyed by Lev Ari in these countries claim that they are neither members of the Jewish community nor active in it. In both countries Israelis report feeling uninfluential and alienated from local Jewish communities; donate to Jewish causes less than others in the Jewish community do; and are likely to attend community events only occasionally. One study found that attendance levels in organised community events among Israelis were relatively low for central and Western Europe (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 29).

With regards to the issue of friendship circles, just under half of the respondents to Lev Ari's survey in Europe noted that all or most of their friends are other Israelis in their host country; sixteen per cent stated that most of their friends are local Jews. Lev Ari concludes on this issue that for Israelis in Europe "local Jews are hardly a social focus". Also, the perception that Jewish communities are 'not as developed' as the Israeli society (diasporic vs. Israeli Judaism) was raised in studies conducted among Israelis in Europe (Lev Ari, 2008, pp. 53-60; Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 30).

The situation in North America is more diverse. Gold states that generally in the United States “there has been limited organised contact between host Jews and Israeli migrants” (Gold, 2002, p. 154). However some differences between communities have been found. For example, a recent study concluded that Israelis in New York are more community-engaged than other Jewish populations in the city and even ‘outscore’ the Jewish community on donation levels (Cohen & Veinstein, 2009, pp. 42, 57). Lev Ari and Rebhun claim that “[o]verall, consistently among the various indicators, one may say that the Israelis have settled in and reconciled their community patterns with those of their American Jewish peers” (Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 122). Rina Cohen’s study of Israelis in Toronto, Canada, at the end of the twentieth century suggests a similar pattern. According to Cohen, Israelis in Toronto are hardly involved in organised Jewish community activities and mostly socialise with peer-nationals. However past tensions between the Jewish and Israeli communities are gradually transforming and moving towards reconciliation (Cohen, 1999, pp. 126-127).

The aforementioned studies point to a trend of growing involvement and an increase in positive feelings towards local Jewish communities by Israelis abroad, particularly when compared to the past. It is possible to assume that this process has occurred in Australia as well, with the changes in attitudes towards Israeli emigration. Also, findings indicate that tenure is a factor acting positively on feelings of connectedness; on the level of participation in the Jewish community; and on synagogue attendance (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, pp. 30, 50; Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 125).

## 12. Aspects of Diasporic 'Israeliness' and Jewishness

The essence of Israeli national identity has been the focus of ongoing and fierce debate among scholars, thinkers and public figures for many years. It consists of many colours and it is dynamic, constantly evolving and changing.

An analysis suggested by Ben-Rafael of the core components on which Israeli national identity ('Israeliness') is constructed can be valuable in the discussion about the diaspora-Israeli identity. Ben-Rafael claims that Israeli national identity is built on several bases. The first is "the centrality of the territorial dimension", which refers to the State of Israel as a geographical entity. The second component is defined by Ben-Rafael as "the tie to Jewish legacies that it sees as a culture that may be 'nationalized' and for many also secularized". It is the way in which Judaism is understood mostly as a culture and not as a religion, and is weaved into the Israeli national narrative, which is often perceived as a secular one. The final component is "commitment to both the Israeli nation and the Jewish world" (Ben-Rafael, 2008, p. 93). In this wording Ben-Rafael points to the differentiation within 'Israeliness' between the devotion towards those who live within Israel, many of which are not Jewish, and the separate obligation towards to Jewish diaspora.

Israelis living outside Israel need to adapt their 'Israeliness' to new environment. They are faced with the challenge of compensating for the lack of "the territorial dimension" and seeking new ways to act on their "commitment" to those living in Israel. Their ties to "Jewish legacies" were previously managed by the state in Israel; in the diaspora these ties have to be re-examined. They also discover that without initiative and an active approach these ties to Jewishness are not maintained. And expressions of "commitment" to the Jewish world are challenged by direct interaction with the Jewish diaspora.

Ben-Rafael's definition also touches on the inner structural tensions between religion and Israeli nationalism, constantly moving between secularism and religiousness. These internal tensions may have different meanings in a diaspora setting. In the introduction to their book "Diaspora, identity and religion" the editors state that "In the context of diaspora, religion has always remained central to paradigmatic definitions" (Kokot, et al., 2004, p. 7). Specifically, the significance of Judaism for diaspora Jews during history is unquestionable. The State of Israel is the transformation of Jewish peoplehood into a national form of 'a Jewish state' which is also 'a state of the Jews'. The question is how can Israeli diasporants' resolve their perception of Jewishness, brewed in a national context, with diasporic Judaism?

This chapter examines this question and looks into other aspects of 'Israeliness' within the Australian diasporic setting. It maps the religiosity of Israelis in Australia, inspects expressions of Israeli national identity in the Australian diaspora and analyses the question of ethno-national continuity and the passing on of 'Israeliness' to future generations.

### **12.1. The Jewish component of 'Israeliness'**

Israeli sociologists Ezra Kopelowitz and Lior Rosenberg differentiate between two prototypical Jewish citizens of Israel - 'Jewish-Israelis' and 'Israeli-Jews':

"Jewish-Israelis" view [the] "Jewish" component of their identity as autonomous from the fact that they live in Israel, in that they are able to imagine themselves as living as Jews outside of Israel. In comparison, the people who we label as "Israeli-Jews" do not distinguish between the Jewish and Israeli components of their identities. They view the fact that they are Jewish as one and the same as living in Israel. The Israeli-Jew is proud to be a Jew, but cannot conceive of living as a Jew outside of the Land of Israel.

(Kopelowitz & Rosenberg, 2004, p. 2)

This division can be a feasible approach for mapping the Israeli population of Australia in relation to their Jewish identification. To further understand the proportion between these two types of Israelis in Australia, this chapter relies on the model for analysing Jewish identification as suggested by the report on Jewish continuity based on the Gen08 survey. This model (Table 12.1) is built on four themes which were used to construct a scale for 'measuring' Jewish identity. Each theme is comprised of specific survey questions which were shown to be related by the statistical procedure known as 'factor analysis'<sup>166</sup>. The themes examined were: Jewish continuity and group connectedness; religiosity; community involvement; and attachment to Israel. The survey questions examined in the model touched upon identity of sibling, importance of Judaism as reflected in personal views and feelings, and choices of social environment (Jewish or not). Other questions included in the model looked into practices of Judaism (such as synagogue attendance, *Shabbat* and *Yom Kippur*), interaction with the Jewish community and level of connectedness to Israel and interest in news from Israel (Markus, 2011, p. 55).

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<sup>166</sup> On factor analysis in statistics see for example: Child, Dennis. *Essentials of factor analysis* (New York : Continuum, 2006).



Table 12.1  
Gen08: Model for measuring Jewish identification

Theme	Questions
<b>Jewish continuity and group connectedness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Importance of children being Jewish.</li> <li>2. Feelings about own children marrying out (intermarriage).</li> <li>3. Importance of Jewish friends.</li> <li>4. Preference of nursing home if required – Jewish or not.</li> <li>5. Proportion of friends who are Jewish.</li> <li>6. Feelings about intermarriage.</li> <li>7. Importance of being Jewish.</li> <li>8. Frequency of spending Friday night Shabbat with family.</li> </ol>
<b>Religiosity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Observance of Kosher dietary laws.</li> <li>2. Nature of Shabbat observance.</li> <li>3. Frequency of synagogue attendance.</li> <li>4. <i>Yom Kippur</i> observance.</li> <li>5. Sense of being Jewish.</li> </ol>
<b>Community involvement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sense of being able to have a say in the Jewish community.</li> <li>2. Sense of connection to Jewish communal life.</li> <li>3. Sense of acceptance by the Jewish community.</li> <li>4. Donation to Jewish causes.</li> </ol>
<b>Attachment to Israel</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extent of interest in events which involve Israel.</li> <li>2. Desire to live in Israel.</li> <li>3. Level of concern when Israel is in possible danger.</li> <li>4. Number of times visited Israel.</li> </ol>

Source: Markus, Jewish Continuity 2011, 55-56.

## 12.2. Community involvement

A starting point for the discussion could be the theme of community involvement, of the Gen08 model for Jewish identification. This subject is explored at length in a separate chapter of this thesis.<sup>167</sup> For the sake of the discussion in this part it is suffice to note that possibly half or more of the Israeli population of Australia exhibits low levels of involvement in the Jewish community when compared with most of the other Jews in Australia.

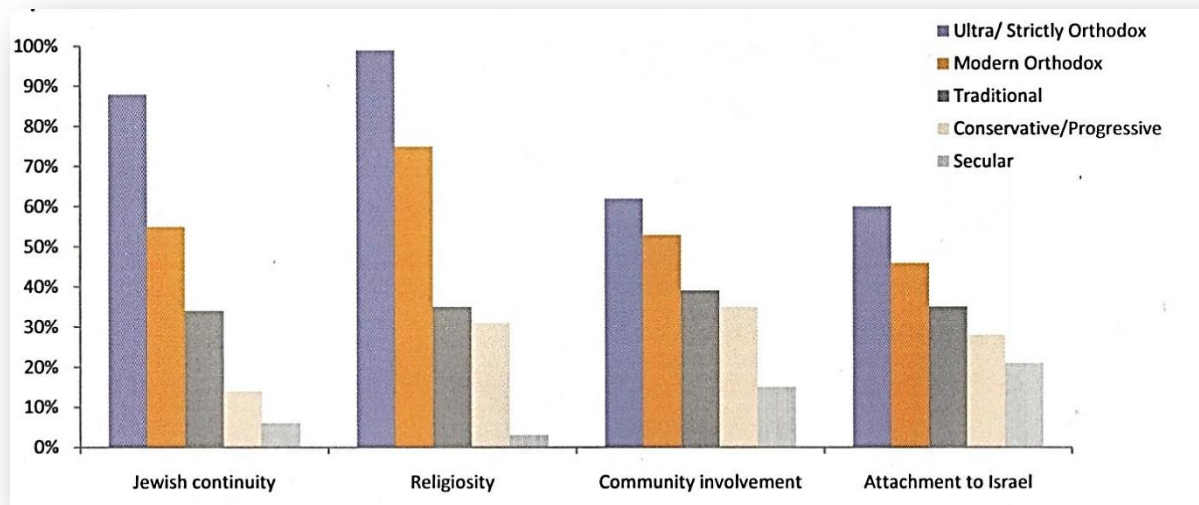
<sup>167</sup> For Israelis' involvement in the Australian Jewish community, see chapter 11 "Interaction with the Australian Jewish Community" of this thesis.

### 12.3. Religious identification

Following the analysis of the responses of all survey participants based on this model, the Gen08 report ranked the Jewish identity themes on an identity scale, according to respective religious groups (Figure 12.1). The conclusion was that with regard to all four themes, Ultra/Strictly Orthodox ranked the highest in the identity scale while seculars were at the bottom. The ranking suggests a correlation between religious affiliation and Jewish identity.

Figure 12.1

Gen08: Four identity scales, scores within the top third level: by religious identification, all respondents (percentages)



Source: Markus, Jewish Continuity 2011, 56.

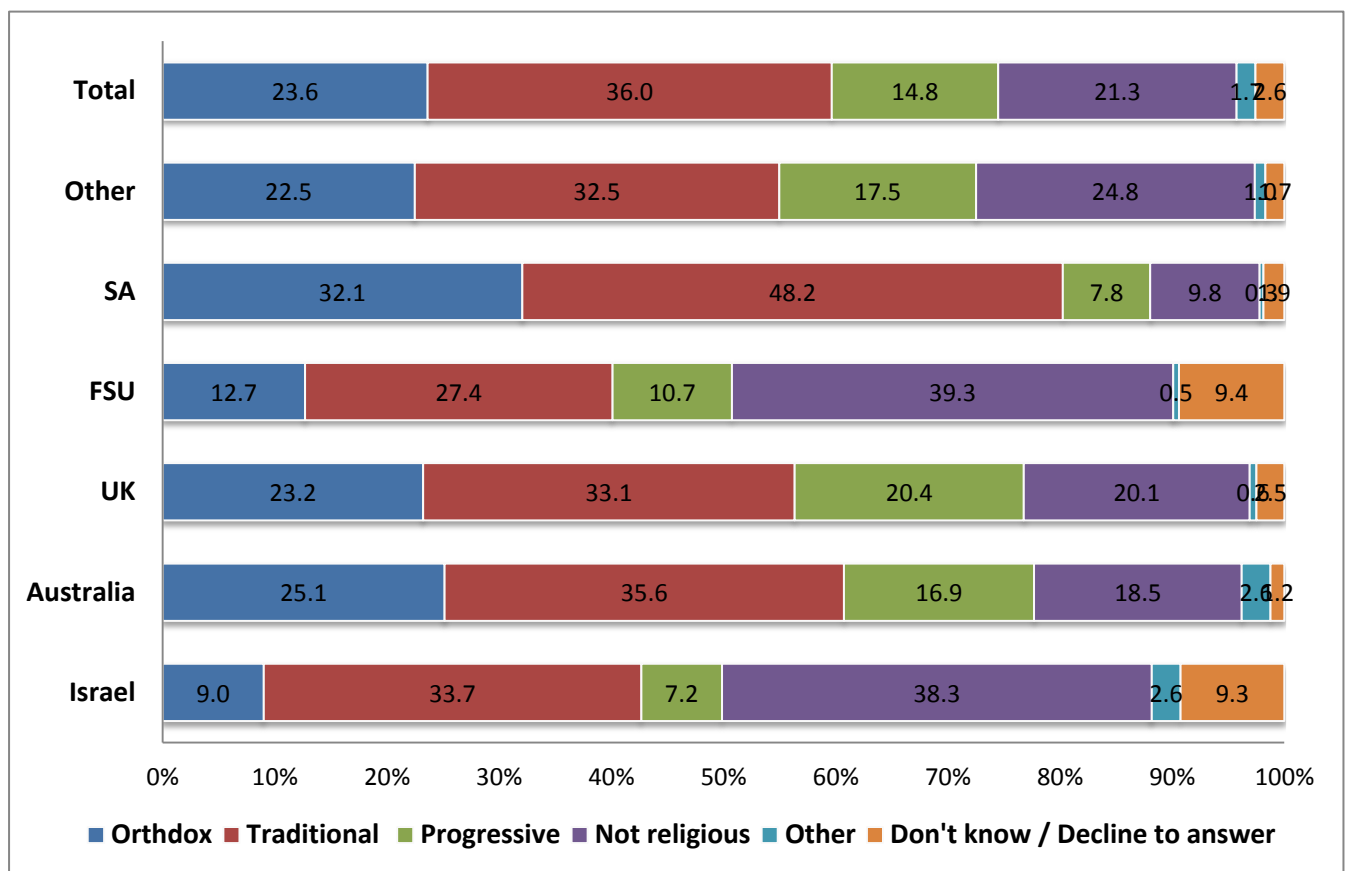
Thus an important step in the understanding of the composition of Jewish identity among Israelis in Australia and its implications is to map, as much as possible, their religious affiliation. Currently, no data or study exists to evaluate whether the Gen08 sample of Israel-born participants reflects their religious affiliation. For that reason, caution should be taken when examining the survey's data on this issue.

According to the Gen08 survey (Figure 12.2), 'not religious', otherwise defined as 'secular', constitutes the largest portion of Israel-born in Australia, followed by 'traditional' and 'Conservative / *Masorti*'. This apportioning is generally similar to recent official statistics about the religious division among Jews in Israel itself. Within the Jewish population of Israel in 2010, 43 per cent were defined as secular and 38 per cent were defined as traditional of various types (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012, p. 3). Latest studies about Israeli emigrants also suggest that seculars are the majority among Israelis abroad,

followed by the traditionals (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 102). For example, according to a recent survey seculars constitute a majority of sixty to eighty per cent among Israeli communities in most places of residence outside Israel<sup>168</sup> (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 25).

Compared to the Jewish community as a whole, Gen08 data suggests that the traditional are the biggest religious group. The exception is Jews from FSU countries, with the largest group being secular, similar to Israelis. However, the traditional group among FSU Jews may be smaller than among Israelis.

Figure 12.2  
Gen08 - Religious groups: according to country of birth (percentages)



Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

**Notes:**

1. The question asked: "As far as your present feelings about the Jewish religion are concerned, which of these best describes you?"
2. Responses included in each category:

<sup>168</sup> The two exceptions according to the survey by Rebhun and Popko are France (54.4 per cent secular, 35.6 per cent traditional) and Latin America (43.6 per cent secular, 44.9 per cent traditional).

Orthodox	Traditional	Progressive	Not religious	Other	Don't know / Decline to answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ultra-Orthodox-Hareidi</li> <li>• Strictly Orthodox</li> <li>• Modern Orthodox</li> <li>• <i>Chabad</i> / Lubavitch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional</li> <li>• Conservative/<i>Masorti</i></li> </ul>	Progressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not religious</li> <li>• Opposed to Judaism</li> <li>• Opposed to religion</li> <li>• Atheist/agnostic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Something else</li> <li>• Cultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't know</li> <li>• Decline to answer</li> </ul>

3. N= Israel 389, Australia 2738, UK 323, FSU 394, SA 861, Other 1135, Total 5840.

A breakdown for religious affiliation according to year of emigration and age when arriving in Australia (Table 12.2) points to a recent shift in the religious composition of the Israeli emigrant population. According to Gen08 data, since the 1980s there has been a constant increase in the relative proportion of seculars within the Ausraeli population. Also, Israeli emigrants who were adults at the time of emigration are more likely to be secular. With regard to actual numbers, it supports the assumption that seculars are currently a majority among Israelis in Australia. Since the year 2000 onwards the number of Israeli emigrants to Australia has grown gradually and constantly.<sup>169</sup> This means that seculars have substantially increased in number among Israelis in Australia, possibly becoming the majority.

Table 12.2

Gen08 - Israel-born religious groups: according to year of immigration and age on arrival in Australia (percentages)

Group	1900-1979	1980-1999	2000-2008	0-18	19-29	30-	Total
Orthodox	18.4	11.4	5.3	20.1	5.0	7.3	11.8
Traditional	40.0	37.7	16.7	39.6	32.7	20.9	31.8
Progressive	13.3	4.9	4.4	11.8	5.9	3.6	7.6
Not religious	26.7	41.8	67.5	25.7	50.5	65.5	45.1
<b>N=</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>356</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Notes:

1. The question asked: "As far as your present feelings about the Jewish religion are concerned, which of these best describes you?"
2. Responses included in each category - see note 2 for figure 11.2.

Further clarification is necessary to understand seculars in an Israeli context. Israeli multi-disciplinary scholar and leading thinker, Joseph Agassi, claims that Israeli seculars are unique. In his view, seculars in

<sup>169</sup> For data and discussion on the number of emigrants from Israel to Australia, see subchapter 7.3 "The Emergence of an Israeli Cluster" of this thesis.

Israel are part of the Jewish nation and maintain a tension-laden interaction with the religious institutes. Outside Israel however, claims Agassi, seculars are a distinct ethnic group:

Secular means worldly, devoid of religious import. Secular Jews do not observe Jewish Law. In the West, their Jewishness is ethnic; not so in Israel, where officially, regardless of personal preference, every citizen belongs to some nation and some denomination; most Israelis belong to the Jewish nation as well as to the Jewish denomination [...] Israeli non-observant ("secular") Jews disdain and support the rabbis simultaneously. As they wish to be the Chosen People and discriminate against non-Jews, they tolerate the rabbis.

(Agassi, 1998, pp. 472, 474)

If seculars do constitute the largest group among Israelis in Australia, and are most likely to fit the 'Israeli-Jews' archetype, then it can be assumed that the majority of the Israeli population in Australia are 'Israeli-Jews', and not 'Jewish-Israelis'. Further examination of the characteristics of their Jewish identification, according to the model suggested for Gen08, can serve to test this assumption.

#### **12.4. Jewish continuity and group connectedness**

The following table (Table 12.3) introduces the responses to the Gen08 questions that were categorised as indicative of Jewish continuity and group connectedness, when examined according to the country of birth of the respondents.

Analysing the data in the table leads to two major findings. First, in most categories relating to a sense of being Jewish and to Jewish social life, the majority of Israelis exhibit lower levels compared the rest of the Jewish community, with the exception of FSU Jews. Specifically, only a small majority of Israelis seem to attach high importance to being Jewish and to a Jewish social environment (Jewish circle of friends; preferring a Jewish nursing home or hostel in the future). At first glance it looks as if there might be a contradiction between these responses, indicating relatively low preference for Jewish friendships, and the fact a majority of Israelis (54.9 per cent) acknowledge that more than half or nearly all of their close friends are Jewish. An explanation to this alleged contradiction might be because Gen08 did not make a distinction between Jews and Israelis in the responses the questions asked here. This is of importance due to Israelis' friendships with other Israeli Jews. In other words, the data collected in this question suggests social preference towards people of the same religion (Jewish), while Israelis might prefer people of the same nationality (Israeli).

Second, with regard to children's identity the views of Israelis resemble those of most other members of the Jewish community. This is evident from the proportion of Israelis stating that they desire or prefer bringing up their children as Jews, which is at similar percentages as the rest of Gen08 respondents. As for intermarriage, it may seem that the majority of Israelis express liberal opinions or indifference, with respondents who view intermarriage with regret constituting the lowest percentage in the whole community. But this finding might be misleading, because when Israelis are asked about own children's possible intermarriage they respond with reservation and disapproval, similar to the levels of other groups in the Jewish community. Another aspect that can be affiliated with children's identity is the spending Friday night Sabbath with family. Here, again, the percentage of Israelis are who do so every week or most weeks is within the same level as for non-Israel born Jews, with the exception of FSU Jews.

The conclusion following these findings is that, according to the Gen08 model, the Jewish continuity and group connectedness of most Israelis is different for the self than for the next generation. The majority of Israelis exhibit relatively low sentiment of importance to being Jewish themselves and maintaining a Jewish social environment. However, they do attach significance to having their children retain a Jewish identity, in similar intensity to most other Australian Jews.

Table 12.3  
Gen08: Indicators of Jewish continuity and group connectedness (percentages)

Category	Question	Response/s	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
Being Jewish									
Importance	How important is being Jewish in your life today? <sup>1</sup>	Very important	59.1	62.4	62.7	43.5	71.0	69.0	63.5
		Somewhat important	26.7	28.4	29.3	32.3	23.8	23.2	26.9
Nursing home	If you were unable to care for yourself and had to seek accommodation, would you prefer a Jewish or non-Jewish hostel or nursing home? <sup>2</sup>	Prefer it to be Jewish	55.7	69.4	73.7	49.6	84.4	72.6	70.3
		No particular preference	24.6	19.2	18.4	21.2	9.9	18.0	18.0
Shabbat	How often do you spend Friday night Sabbath with your family?	Every week	45.8	48.2	43.1	27.7	65.1	44.8	48.2
		Most weeks	24.7	26.9	22.2	16.8	21.9	19.4	23.6
Jewish social life									
Jewish friends	How important is it to have a Jewish circle of friends?	Very important	45.0	53.7	49.5	39.2	57.0	52.7	52.2
		Somewhat important	29.6	27.5	30.0	31.6	28.1	28.1	28.3
	Thinking of your close friends, how many of them are Jewish?	More than half	14.9	14.5	19.0	13.8	17.7	17.7	15.7
		Nearly all	40.7	41.2	31.7	48.8	40.9	35.9	40.4
Children's identity									
Jewishness	Would you like, or have liked, your children to bring up their children as Jews?	Desire it strongly	51.7	60.4	44.1	36.5	69.1	56.4	57.5
		Prefer it	35.8	29.9	45.1	42.5	28.6	31.3	32.3
Intermarriage	When you hear about intermarriage in the community, how do you feel?	View intermarriage with regrets	37.7	58.4	50.6	43.4	64.0	58.3	56.4
		Have no opinion	20.0	8.8	14.8	15.5	12.8	11.4	11.4
	If one of your children said they were going to marry a non-Jew, how would you feel about it? <sup>1</sup>	Feel some regret	24.2	25.5	30.4	18.9	27.0	26.5	25.7
		Feel very considerable regret	38.5	42.5	29.7	31.8	50.1	40.4	41.3
N=			389	2739	323	393	861	1135	5840
<sup>1</sup> N=			265	1790	286	301	653	1020	4315
<sup>2</sup> N=			386	2697	304	345	838	1052	5622

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Index:  Highest percentage  Second-highest percentage  Lowest percentage  Second-lowest percentage

## 12.5. Religiosity

Gen08 questions about the importance and sense of being Jewish yield mixed results for Israelis (Table 12.4). On the one hand, the majority of Ausraelis attach importance to being Jewish, in similar percentages to most other sectors of the Australian Jewish population. On the other hand, only two thirds of Israelis indicate that their sense of being Jewish is either central to or significant in their life, the second lowest percentage in the community (FSU rank first on this question).

Table 12.4

Gen08 - Jewish identity features: according to country of birth (percentages)

Subject	Response	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
<b>Importance of being Jewish</b>	Very/ Somewhat important	85.8	90.8	92.0	75.8	94.8	92.2	90.4
<b>Sense of being Jewish</b>	It is a central/significant element of my life	66.1	82.1	76.9	57.6	83.5	73.7	77.7
<b>N=</b>		<b>389</b>	<b>2738</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>1135</b>	<b>5839</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Secularism, and possibly Jewishness as comprehended and/or practised by Israelis, is also reflected in the selection of religious practices Israelis follow (Table 12.5). In some cases, such as spending Sabbath with family or holding a Passover *Seder*, they exhibit a similar pattern to other sectors in the Jewish community, except for FSU Jews who are the least observant among Australian Jews. For Israelis, Sabbath is usually spent with family with some rituals being observed; *Seder* is celebrated every year. Fasting at *Yom Kippur* and keeping Kosher are far less common among Israelis when compared to the rest of the Jewish community (similar to FSU Jews).



Table 12.5  
Gen08 - Jewish practices: according to country of birth (percentages)

Practice	Response	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
Spend Sabbath with family	Every week/Most weeks	70.5	75.1	65.3	44.5	87.0	64.2	71.8
Observe Sabbath	Observe some rituals such as lighting of candles and blessing	61.6	55.5	61.8	56.8	52.6	45.7	54.0
	Do not observe any rituals <sup>1</sup>	16.5	7.5	6.8	9.5	2.6	12.1	8.1
Kosher	I keep some Jewish dietary laws and not others	28.5	47.4	52.9	22.6	56.0	37.7	44.2
	I don't keep Jewish dietary laws	64.6	38.3	35.3	59.5	32.3	46.1	42.0
Passover <i>Seder</i>	Every year	84.6	88.1	80.6	47.1	93.1	79.4	83.7
Fasting at <i>Yom Kippur</i>	Always	33.2	57.6	48.9	31.8	81.0	53.3	56.4
	Never	31.6	17.2	23.2	30.5	8.3	24.6	19.5
	N=	389	2738	323	393	860	1135	5838
	<sup>1</sup> N=	279	2241	220	190	780	809	4519

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Index:  Highest percentage  Second-highest percentage

A recent report, on the religious traditions, norms and beliefs of Jewish Israelis in Israel, offers an explanation for the variance in the ritual observation by most Israelis in Australia. The report divides religious customs into six categories, according to the religious sector that practises each set of customs within the Jewish-Israeli population. Fasting at *Yom Kippur* is categorised as one of the "traditional practices", practised by most Israeli Jews who refer to themselves as traditional or religious. The Passover *Seder* belongs to the "civil-religious practices and customs" set, which is practised by most secular Israeli Jews (The Israel Democracy Institute and The AVI CHAI Israel Foundation, 2011, pp. 45-46). Accordingly, the secular, who constitute the largest group among Israelis in Australia, would practise their Israeli civil religion: most likely not fast at *Yom Kippur* but would hold a *Seder*; while the traditional would both fast at *Yom Kippur* and hold a *Seder*.

### 'Israeliness' as a national civil religion

At this point a clarification of the term 'civil religion' used by the AVI CHAI report is needed, specifically in the Israeli context. Agassi explains that "The difference between religion and 'civil religion' is that between congregation and nation" (Agassi, 1998, p. 474). Ben Rafael affiliates nationalism with civil religion, by claiming that nationalism "often tended to mutate into a 'civic religion'. Nationalisms generally draw on the religious background of the population, even when the nationalists themselves reject it personally" (Ben-Rafael, 2008, p. 91). A similar process seems to have occurred to Israeli

nationalism, which was developed into civil religion by the first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion. Initially it was a policy of 'Statism' which was "a selective affirmation of only some elements of the Jewish religious tradition". Later on, following the Six Day War in 1967 and the Yom *Kippur* War in 1973, several religious components were reincorporated into mainstream civil religion. This was done, among other things, by reinterpreting traditional Jewish symbols, such as the myths of Masada or the Maccabean. Israeli civil-religion rites embraced the sacredness of the Western Wall, Yom *Kippur* and the commemoration of Holocaust Day, alongside the symbolically-attached, secular, national Memorial Day (*Yom Hazikaron*) and Independence Day (*Yom Ha'atzmaut*) (Sharot, 1995, p. 24; Don-Yehiya, 1995; Diamond, 2000, pp. 332-333).

Israelis practice civil religion as an expression of their nationalism. Since secular seem to constitute a majority among Israelis abroad, it is no wonder that Gold concludes that "being Israeli" is the "most immediate and powerful base of identity" for Israeli émigrés who consider themselves "more Israeli than Jewish" (Gold, 2002, p. 184). Rina Cohen, who studied Israeli emigrants in Toronto, reaches an identical conclusion, stating that Israelis abroad "consider the core and origin of their identity to be a sovereign state rather than a shared set of religious beliefs" (Cohen, 1999, p. 127). Benchmarks for this perception appear in testimonies by Israelis in Australia. For example, Zehavit from Brisbane is categorical in her self-perception, almost rejecting a Jewish identity over an Israeli one:

My philosophy is that I absolutely do not need a Jewish identity. I was looking for an Israeli identity [...] I do not recognise myself as a Jew as much as I recognize myself as [being] an Israeli. I think that 'Israeliness' is stronger in me than Judaism.

(Zehavit, 2011)

Similarly, Gili from Byron Bay differentiates between being Israeli and being Jewish. He tells of how he had to explain to an Australian the distinction between the Jewish religion and cultural Judaism. Later, he emphasises "Israeli values" over religious ones:

And at one point the guy said "what do you mean Israeli, aren't you Jewish?" And then we had to explain that being an Israeli [is] a nationality thing and [being] Jewish is religion, and I don't think they know this difference [...] I'm Jewish in the cultural point of view and I would love to preserve my tradition and pass [it] on to my kids, but I wouldn't go into being only Jewish, it's a bit too harsh a definition for me. I'm much more relating to the Israeli values which are more about the land, about society, about the culture, rather than sticking only with the Jewish religion.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

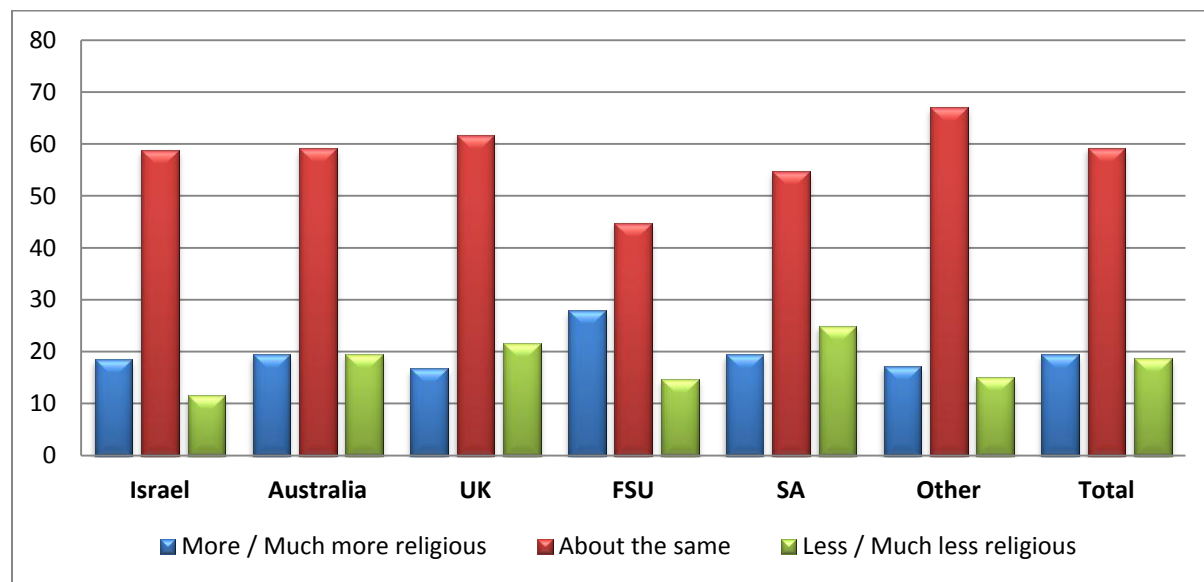
## Re-connecting with Judaism

Several studies (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 28; Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, pp. 110-111; Gold, 2002, p. 201) claim that tenure results in Israeli emigrants becoming more religious or, alternatively, strengthening their Jewish identity. Gen08 survey asked about changes in religiosity over time. The wording of the question asked - "Are you more religious or less religious today than you were a few years ago, or are you about the same" - is in itself disconnected from an emigration context or a specific time frame. At the same time, it can be one indicator of a process of gradual religiosity change.

The findings on Israelis in Australia are inconclusive. Most Israel-born report no change in their level of religiosity over time (Figure 12.3), in similar percentages to other sectors of the Jewish community (except, again, for FSU Jews). In the majority of cases, Israelis included, in what may resemble a normal distribution of data, the positive and negative change levels seem to almost cancel each other out (the percentage indicating being less religious is close to the percentage indicating being more religious).

Figure 12.3

Gen08 - Change in religiousness over time: according to country of birth (percentages)



Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

### Notes:

1. The question asked: "Are you more religious or less religious today than you were a few years ago, or are you about the same?"
2. N= Israel 389, Australia 2737, UK 324, FSU 393, SA 861, Other 1134, Total 5838.

Focusing on Israelis alone, and breaking the data to period of emigration in Australia, again does not

result in a definite conclusion. On the one hand, the data implies that tenure acts slightly more as a negative factor on the religiousness of Israelis than as a positive one (Table 12.6). This is based on the trend of increase in the proportion of Israelis indicating being less religious as the period of their emigration is earlier. On the other hand, the percentage of Israeli emigrants who arrived to Australia since the 1980s attesting to being more religious now than in the past is approximately five per cent higher than those claiming that they are less religious today than a few years ago. In any case, the proportion of Israelis indicating change, positive or negative, is less than twenty per cent of each group.

**Table 12.6**

**Gen08 - Change in religiousness over time: responses of Israel-born according to year of arrival in Australia (percentages)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>1900-1979</b>	<b>1980-1999</b>	<b>2000-2008</b>
More/Much more religious	15.8	21.3	13.2
About the same	62.5	62.3	75.4
Less/Much less religious	20.8	14.8	7.9
<b>N=</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>114</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Notes:

1. The question asked: "Are you more religious or less religious today than you were a few years ago, or are you about the same?"
2. Responses do not include "Don't know" and "Decline to answer".

Gold presents an explanation for the process of reconnection with Judaism by some Israelis abroad, many of whom are secular: "Finding it difficult to sustain a secular Jewish identity in the diaspora, emigrants look to the Jewish religion" (Gold, 2002, p. 200). Evidence of this reasoning was found in the non-survey sources of this thesis. For example, echoing Gold's description, Yafit, who arrived in Australia in the 1960s, talks of her own process of reconnection with Judaism:

No matter what, you go back to the Jewish society, you really want more to feel that you are Jewish and belong. That there is meaning to your [sense of] belonging and that there is meaning to all this hatred [antisemitism]. You become more sympathetic to Israel and to your Judaism, because within all this great hate you want to know where you do belong to. You cannot run away from it. Why do I belong to this? What meaning does it have? You begin searching. You look in the synagogue and you suddenly find God, suddenly find religious ritualism, suddenly find prayer, which is wonderful; suddenly find Friday, Friday dinners which are wonderful and unifying the family.

(Yafit, 2010)

Joe from Byron Bay speaks of the need to make a special effort to produce external manifestations of his religious faith vis-à-vis the non-Jewish environment:

When I live here I find that I need to be more demonstrative of my Jewishness and so I... you become connected to the community and become part of [it], go to the synagogue or follow all that kind of stuff more. I can make a more conscious effort.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

Safran notes that “for many a Jew today, there is more religious pluralism in diaspora than in Israel, and he prefers his individual freedom in diaspora” (Safran, 2009, p. 85). This issue, of the ability to choose how to be Jewish, instead of having the state dictate Judaism as happens in Israel, is recurrent in the evidence collected for this thesis. Alex from Melbourne is an Israeli who was not born in Israel. He sees the element of choice for Israelis abroad - unlike the 'religious coerciveness' in Israel - as what led him to reconnect with his Judaism. Alex also mentions being in a religious minority and the need to converse in Hebrew as the reason behind his desire to affiliate with local Jews:

With regards to religious coerciveness, you don't have this in the West[ern countries]. And it brings you closer [to Judaism]! I mean, in Israel it has distanced me from religion. In Australia you ease up on this because you do not have that thing; no one is forcing religion on you here. And in order to feel Jewish, you do not have a choice. If you want to feel Jewish, you [need] to look for Jewish connections. Because we are few here [a minority], in relation to the population [...] As an Israeli I missed talking in Hebrew, and being amongst Jews, so that is why I searched for it here.

(Alex, 2011)

Unlike other interviewees for this thesis, Hagit is religious, not secular. However, she also speaks about being more connected to her Judaism since immigrating to Australia, as a result of having to carry the responsibility for the maintaining and celebrating of Jewish holidays and the Sabbath. Also, for Hagit, Jewishness is a manifestation of her national feelings of yearning for Israel:

Since I [live] here I am more attached to my Judaism [...] Suddenly we are independent. So I have to initiate Shabbat, and I have to initiate *Chagim* [Jewish holidays]. It's not that I passively decided to go on a vacation in the North [of Israel] or be at my parents' during the Shabbat. I have to organise Shabbat [...] I manage myself around *Chagim* and Shabbat. And it also becomes with a lot of meaning [...] It could be my longing for Israel, it [the longing] suddenly 'sits' [is expressed] more on a kind of Jewish place.

(Hagit, 2011)

Re-acquaintance with religion, if and when it occurs, does not automatically translate into attending a synagogue more often. As noted previously in this study,<sup>170</sup> Israelis exhibit the lowest level of synagogue attendance when compared to other sections of the Jewish community. Yet the correlation between level of belief or religiosity and attending a synagogue (or a church or a mosque) is a contested connection. Ben-Porat and Feniger, for example, suggest that in current Western societies "believing without belonging" is possible. Lack of attendance at religious institutes, claim Ben-Porat and Feniger, does not necessarily mean lack of self-perceived religiosity. They quote studies among Christians in Europe which show that "a reduction in church attendance does not necessarily lead to the adoption of secular alternatives and, on the other hand, most people who perceive themselves as religious do not feel any obligation to attend church on Sunday" (Ben-Porat & Feniger, 2009, p. 301).

Thus, the absence of many Israelis from synagogues could have other explanations which do not stem from a religious position. One such explanation presented by evidence collected for this thesis relates to the individual's feelings of discomfort when attending a synagogue outside Israel. Gen08 data on this issue (Table 12.7) should be handled with care due to the relatively small sample of each group. It does however point to a trend: most secular Israelis do not indicate feeling comfortable at synagogue. Approximately a third of secular Israelis noted not feeling comfortable; a similar proportion of seculars chose the response "Neither agree nor disagree" for this question, which might infer indifference or just not feeling connected to the synagogue they attend and/or its congregation.

Table 12.7

Gen08 - Feeling comfortable in a synagogue: responses of Israel-born according to religious affiliation (percentage)

Response	Orthodox	Traditional	Progressive	Not religious	Other	Don't know / Decline to answer	Total
Strongly / Somewhat agree	76.1	66.0	84.6	27.7	37.5	0	54.4
Neither agree nor disagree	4.7	15.0	11.6	26.7	12.5	0	17.2
Somewhat / Strongly disagree	14.5	17.0	0.0	35.6	37.5	50.0	22.4
Don't know / Decline to answer	4.7	2.0	3.8	10.0	12.5	50.0	6.0
<b>N=</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>285</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

<sup>170</sup> For synagogue attendance data on Israelis in Australia see subchapter 11.3 "Factors influencing sense of belonging and connectivity" of this thesis.

Note: The question asked: "Thinking about the synagogue that you attend most often, do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'I feel comfortable and at home in this congregation'?"

But why do secular Israelis not feel at ease in a synagogue in Australia? Several non-survey sources of this thesis shed light on the reason. The descriptions of Israelis' experiences when attending a synagogue reveal a mixture of cultural factors, uninviting social interaction and inherited alienation against religious establishments, which can result in an unpleasant experience.

For example, Talya, the main character of Shula Weitz's novel about an Israeli working in Sydney, also visits a synagogue in Australia. She reacts with mixed feelings, which reveal a sense of alienation from both the religious setting and the other attendees of the synagogue.

What do I have in common with all these congregants? Thought Talya [to herself]. They live in a place different from where I grew up, staring now in a book written in Hebrew [the Bible] and do not understand a word, and I am hanging-out in a synagogue unlike anything I know. Moreover, the last [time] I saw a synagogue from within was in the *Bar Mitzva* of my cousin [years ago...]. Still, she recognized something in common between herself and them – in the look, manners, the body language; and she could not tell exactly what it was [that she had in common with them]. She only felt that it was something very different and at the same time so familiar.

(Weitz, 2009, p. 82)

A prominent example for the experiences of secular Israelis with an Australian synagogue is the testimony of Hallely Kimchi, the editor of *Eton*. She describes her visit to a local synagogue in *Yom Kippur*, following the birth of her first son, as a trauma:

After all, in the *Golah* [Diaspora] you have to preserve tradition and you need to work a little bit harder in order to feel that it is a *Chag* [holiday], I argued. [...] We arrived, entered, didn't recognize anybody at all and felt so strange and estranged that after approximately two and half minutes we left and vowed never to return.

(Kimchi, 2006, p. 88)

### **Children's Jewish identity**

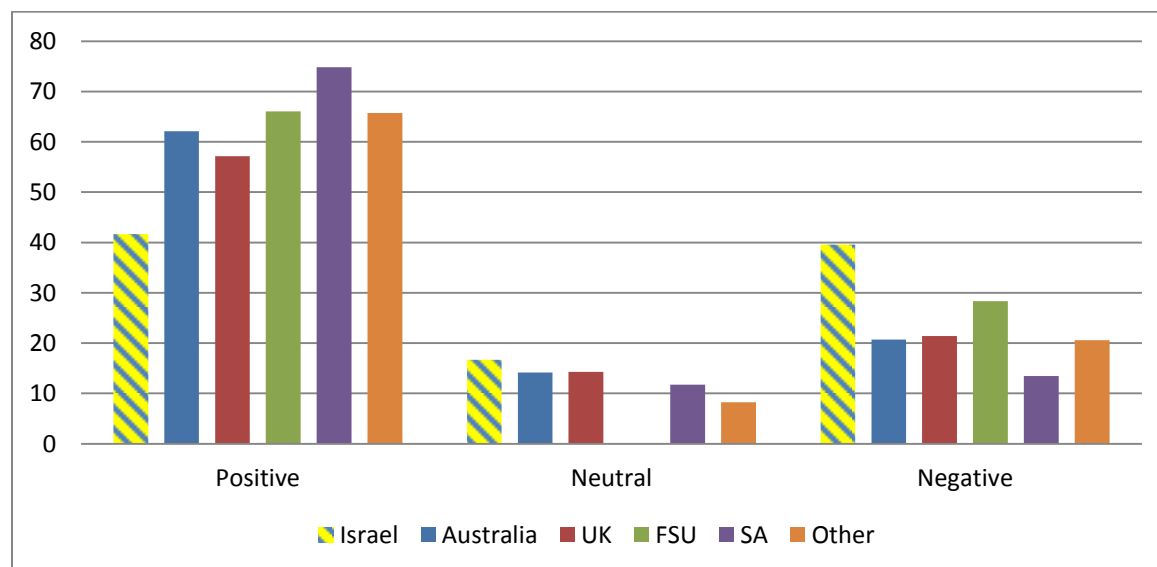
Jewish continuity and religiousness can also be manifested in the education choices made for offspring. The Australian Jewish schools system is considered a success story and was dubbed "The Jewel in the Crown" of the Jewish community (Forgasz & Munz, 2011). Gen08 asked participants if they would send their children to Jewish schools. The results should be taken with caution as the number of respondents,

when examined according to country of birth, is quite low in some cases because only participants with children under the age of five were asked this question. However, it can give an indication of general trends on this issue.

The responses to this question can be grouped in sets (Figure 12.4) as: positive ('Yes, definitely', 'Yes, very likely', 'Yes, quite likely'), neutral ('Still to be decided') and negative ('No, not likely', 'No, not very likely', 'No, definitely not'). This structure of responses suggests Israelis are divided equally between positive and negative views on this issue. Moreover, the lowest percentage of positive responses in the community was recorded among Israelis, which means that Israelis are possibly the least likely to send their children to Jewish schools. Also, most secular, Israel-born Gen08 participants noted negative responses to the question on their preference for sending their children to a Jewish school (30 out of 52) or they remained undecided (12 out of 52); while Israel-born traditionalists responded positively to the same question (25 out of 32).

Figure 12.4

Gen08 - Sending children to Jewish schools: responses according to country of birth (numbers)



Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Notes:

1. The question asked: "When your child/ children start school, is your current thinking that he/she/they will go to a Jewish day school?"
2. N= Israel 96, Australia 396, UK 28, FSU 53, SA 119, Other 73, Total 765.

The set of Gen08 questions on the advantages and disadvantages of Jewish schools further assists in understanding the deliberations of Israelis when deciding whether or not to send their children to a



Jewish school. Identical to the rest of the survey's participants, "Strengthens Jewish identity" was ranked as the most important reason by the highest number of Israel-born participants. In other words, Israelis who consider fostering Jewish identity through school as the top educational priority for their children would be more inclined to have them attend Jewish schools.

The teaching of Hebrew as an advantage of Jewish schooling was ranked first by the second-largest number of Israeli respondents. The importance Israelis attach to having their children learn Hebrew is evident from this data, specifically when compared to other members of the Jewish community who ranked Hebrew teaching lower, if at all.

Like almost all other Jewish community members, Israelis ranked highest both the cost ("Too expensive; not good value for money") and cultural isolation ("Artificially separates Jews from other Australians") as the weakest features of Jewish schools. Religion (similar to FSU Jews) and an elitist image are also considered significant disadvantages of Jewish schools by Israelis.

One reason for this attitude by secular Israeli emigrants, which surfaces in the material collected for this thesis, is connected to the struggle between seculars and religious observers in Israel over the norms of public sphere behaviour; or, as Agassi describes it, the difference between "a state for the Jews" and "a Jewish state" (Agassi, 1998, p. 471). Rina Cohen identified that secular Israeli emigrants carry with them negative attitudes grown in Israel towards organised religion. As a result, an 'incongruity' emerges between Israelis' ethnic national-cultural identity and the religious one based on diaspora Jews (Canadian, in Cohen's case), which leads to tensions between the two groups (Cohen, 1999, p. 127).

Ben-Porat and Feniger suggest a typology of seculars in Israel. One of the types they label 'principled', and explain that it is "rooted in liberal values and is translated into a series of struggles over civic rights and a desire to separate church and state or to break the Orthodox monopoly on central issues" (Ben-Porat & Feniger, 2009, p. 296). Secular Israelis living abroad may immerse 'principled secularism' versus 'religious coercion' into their deliberations regarding their children's education when abroad. Shalom from Sydney touches on the decision he and his wife made not to send their son to a Jewish school (Moriah College). He makes a direct reference to religious coercion, labelling several religious norms expected from students at the Jewish school as extreme:

Moriah is somewhat extreme, they oblige [putting on] a *Kippah* [yarmulke], a morning prayer every morning and similar things. We rejected this vehemently. I am willing to

have my child go to a Catholic school and not put on a *Kippah* on his head [...] I will not accept this coercion.

(Shalom, 2010)

Similar opinions were voiced by Dafna, who worked in a Jewish school in Sydney. She defines her first impression of the school as “a shock”. Dafna noted that she promised herself she would never send her children to a Jewish school because putting on a *Kippah* seemed “coerced, and not from love” (Dafna, 2010).<sup>171</sup>

Alex from Melbourne also mentions religious coercion, which he remembers from Israel as a trauma, when talking about his children’s education. He states that he considers it important for his children to maintain a Jewish identity of some sort and for that reason he keeps Shabbat at home. At the same time, he goes on to emphasise that a Jewish education is not the same in his view as a religious one, which he recognises as Orthodox:

Despite saying I do [feel it is important to preserve Jewish identity of his children], and when I came here I was looking for ties with Jews and Israelis, etc., still the whole issue of religious coercion, or the... let’s call it a certain “wound” that still sits deep inside. That is why I do not believe that when you live in a Western country you have to take out your children [from society] and you should give them an education which is religious, not just Orthodox.

(Alex, 2011)

## **12.6. Bequeathing ‘Israeliness’ - Identity preservation mechanisms**

In their study on second-generation Israelis in the United States, Yinon Cohen and Yitchak Haberfeld define children under 14 years of age arriving in the United States with their migrant Israeli parents as “the 1.5 generation”, and determine that “the younger the child upon arrival to the United States, the closer she or he is to the second generation”. Being raised and educated outside Israel, these youngsters are greatly exposed to a non-Israeli environment and would tend to incorporate components of it into their identity. The existence and extent of parallel “Israeli identity preservation mechanisms” (Lev Ari, 2008, p. 76) may serve as a balancing factor for maintaining aspects of ‘Israeliness’ in this group. Gold explains that, with regard to their children’s education, Israeli parents are obliged to choose between

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<sup>171</sup> It is interesting to note that later Dafna changed her mind and she now sends her son to a Jewish school. Her decision was made based on an economic reasoning, by the fact that her son had won a scholarship covering school fees (private conversation with the thesis’ author, October 2012).

two 'extrinsically' non-Israeli cultural traditions – Christian/non-Jewish or Jewish Diaspora - and concludes that most 1.5 generation Israelis adopt host Jewish or local identities, while a few will become bi-nationals (Gold, 2002, pp. 210-213).

Alex's testimony on how he keeps Shabbat at home "for the children", reveals one of several mechanisms used by Israeli parents to nurture an Israeli-Jewish identity in their children while living abroad. The first mechanism is based on a belief that maintaining Israeli civil-religion practices and rites in the diaspora cultivates their children's Israeli-Jewish identity. This is practised by noting Jewish holidays and commemorating Israeli national holidays, such as *Yom Hazikaron* (Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror) and *Yom Ha'atzmaut* (Independence Day) at home and/or organised Jewish community events - or, preferably, Israeli-exclusive ones.

Another mechanism sometimes used, in conjunction or separately for the same identity-related purpose, is occasional attendance at Jewish community events and/or synagogues during the holidays. Lastly, there are Israelis who believe that exposing their children to an Israeli social environment on a regular basis also promotes their 'Israeliness'. For that purpose, they often rely on their Israeli friendship networks to enable interaction between their children and the children of other Israeli families.

Gen08 supplies initial evidence to support the existence of these mechanisms in the data about attendance at Jewish activities and functions (

Table 12.8). The data indicates that among the Jewish population of Australia, Israelis exhibit the highest percentages of those who attend *Yom Hazikaron* ceremonies and, to a lesser extent, also *Yom Ha'atzmaut* community events.

Table 12.8

Gen08: Jewish activities and functions attendance - according to country of birth (percentages)

Subject	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
<i>Yom Hashoa</i> (Holocaust memorial day) Commemoration	12.7	18.7	11.1	13.1	18.6	21.2	18.0
<i>Yom Hazikaron</i> (Memorial day) Commemoration	24.4	14.6	13.0	19.0	20.4	17.0	16.6
<i>Yom Ha'atzmaut</i> (Independence day) celebration	25.8	25.9	13.0	27.1	25.7	21.2	24.5
Public lectures on Israel or Jewish issues	27.2	30.9	24.3	31.3	31.9	32.4	30.8
Jewish film festival	16.4	21.1	22.2	29.5	21.2	27.1	22.8
Israeli film festival <sup>172</sup>	33.3	19.3	18.5	29.4	15.5	20.5	21.1
<b>N=</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>1511</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>2904</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Index:  Highest percentage

Note: "Yes" responses to the specific subjects listed under the question: "Over the past twelve months, which of the following Jewish activities or functions have you attended?"

A story in *Eton* directly investigated the question of whether or not Israelis should send their children to Jewish schools. Dana, an Israeli mother from Sydney interviewed for the story, chose to have her children learn in public schools. She elaborates on the rationale for her decision in an explanation that reflects the mechanisms of maintaining Israeli civil religion and inner-Israeli social interaction among children:

Dana is not worried of the possibility that the children would lose their Jewish and Israeli heritage. In public schools in East Sydney there are usually a lot of Jewish pupils, and in addition - Israeli children can meet and get to know each other in the youth movements. "Although we are a secular family", she says, "we will always celebrated *Rosh HaShana* [Jewish New Year's Day], *Hanukkah* and *Pesach* [Passover], and our closest friends here are Israelis".

(Engler, 2005)

Ronny from Melbourne sends his children to a public school and once a week they go to an after-hours program where they learn Hebrew and are taught about Judaism. In his view, practising Judaism at

<sup>172</sup> The high percentage of attendance at the Israeli film festival is related to the attachment to Israel, detailed later on in this chapter.

home is very important and teaching his children about Judaism is relevant for their interaction with society in general.

I think we believe it [Judaism] is something that is home grown. Because you can send them [the children] to a [Jewish] school and not talk to them about *Purim* [a Jewish holiday] at home, and not talk to them [about Judaism] or not do homework with them, and you never know, you expect teachers to do everything [...] It [Judaism] is important! For that reason there is "*Lamdeni*" ["Teach me", a Melbourne after-hour school for Judaism and Hebrew]. I mean, it is important the she [his daughter] would know where she came from, that we are different. But it would not break her if she has Jewish friends or non-Jewish friends.

(Ronny, 2011)

Not all Israelis abstain from sending their children to Jewish schools. Gila, interviewed for the story in *Eton*, sends her daughter, Neta, to a Jewish school. The reason for Gila's choice is not merely academic, although she proudly notes the high level of studies in the private Jewish school in comparison to a public school. More than that, explains Gila, it is a vital step to developing her daughter's Jewish identity, as well as an opportunity to socialise with other Jews. Similar to what Ronny believes, teaching Neta about her Judaism is a way of preparing her for life in the general Australian society.

Gila believes that anyone who sees Judaism, its tradition and heritage as important should send his children to a Jewish school. She is happy that Neta has an opportunity to meet religious and traditional Jews, which she probably would have not come across in Israel and for the fact that she is exposed to another aspect of herself as a Jew [...] "First of all, a person should know who he is, and if he knows that, he can assimilate into a society of non-Jews from a safe and secure position".

(Engler, 2005)

The question remains unanswered at this stage, is whether following Israeli civil religion in a diaspora setting is a viable identity preservation mechanism. Or, as Floman suggests following her study on the Israeli community in the San Francisco bay area, lacking a strong connection to Judaism, "group self-preservation is not an important aim for emigrating Israelis. If that is so, they might disappear as other ethnic groups [now] rooted in the US" (Floman, 2007, p. 225).

## 12.7. Jewish identity of children - *Chabad* and the Israelis in Australia

In the conclusion to their discussion about the social and cultural life of non-Australian born Jews in Australia, Rutland and Gariano state that “[t]he group playing the most important role in terms of all the Russians and the Israelis is *Habad* [sic]” (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 60).

*Chabad*<sup>173</sup> is a one the largest Jewish *Hasidic* movements in the world. It was founded at the end of the seventeenth century by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi. During the second half of the twentieth century the Lubavitch Rabbi, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, made *Chabad* into a powerful force within Judaism. Schneerson, considered by some followers as the *Messiah*, was a charismatic leader and an influential thinker and his philosophy is still taught and followed by the movement’s members. *Chabad* sends emissaries to open and manage synagogues around the world which function as religious, cultural and social centres; and they have great success in outreaching to Israelis abroad under the slogan: “The address for every Jewish issue” (Lazar, 1996).

There are several *Chabad* centres and synagogues in Australia which are successful in attracting many Israelis who participate in their religious and social activities and send their children to their various educational projects (kindergartens, schools, holiday programs). Their success among secular Israelis is especially surprising; these would probably not attend a synagogue or a *Chabad* branch in Israel, but do so when abroad. Analysing the testimonies and reflections of Israelis in Australia about their experiences with local *Chabad* houses may offer an explanation for this phenomenon.

The first reason is cultural. Staffed by Hebrew-speaking Rabbis, some of whom are emissaries from Israel, *Chabad* seems to successfully market itself as a synagogue for Israelis abroad, not just in Australia. Israelis in Australia also describe *Chabad* as non-coercive religiously, the ‘smiling face’ of Orthodox Judaism. *Chabad* houses are scattered in various countries around the world and are considered home to young Israeli backpackers, for a variety of social, religious and day-to-day needs whilst travelling and even in the case of emergencies.<sup>174</sup> It is also a preferred venue for many Israeli

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<sup>173</sup> *Chabad* חב"ד is an acronym for *Chochmah, Binah, Da'at* (דעת, בינה, חכמה) - Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge.

<sup>174</sup> Stories in the Israeli media, in backpacker’s social networks and other sources describe *Chabad* houses worldwide in a positive manner. See, for example, Gidi Boker, “איפה חוגגים ברחבי העולם? ליל סדר בחו"ל: (Seder night abroad: where to celebrate around the world), [nrg.co.il](http://www.nrg.co.il), March 25, 2010 (<http://www.nrg.co.il/online/55/ART2/082/431.html>, accessed: July 12, 2012); or the successful television series about *Chabad* Shlichim to Kathmandu - about the series: “Shluchim Are Stars of TV Drama”, <http://www.collive.com>, May 19, 2012, ([http://www.collive.com/show\\_news.rtx?id=20072&alias=shluchim-are-stars-of-tv-drama](http://www.collive.com/show_news.rtx?id=20072&alias=shluchim-are-stars-of-tv-drama), accessed: July 12, 2012).

families who attend holiday celebrations at *Chabad* houses in Melbourne, Sydney and Byron Bay, and in other Israeli communities abroad (Berman, 2006).

The second explanation for *Chabad's* appeal among Israelis concerns identity. The movement offers an educational dimension to its activities, which touches on the issue of Jewish identity of Israeli children. *Chabad* succeeds in attracting Israeli families who send their children to participate in *Chabad's* 'Israeli-style' holiday celebrations and/or be educated in their kindergartens and schools. For some Israeli parents, *Chabad* events and educational ventures constitute what Kama and Malka define as 'identity prosthesis' when they discuss the consumption of Israeli media by Israeli emigrants (Malka & Kama, 27 June, 2012, p. 14). In this case, the *Chabad* 'prosthesis' is perceived by Israelis as supportive in the fostering of Israeli-style Jewish identity for their children, not for the emigrants themselves.

A notable example for the marketing success of *Chabad* among Israelis in Australia is the *Hamerkaz Shelanu* (Our Centre). Affiliated with *Chabad*, it is recognised as 'the Israeli synagogue' of Melbourne. Established in 1998, it is managed and run by Belgium-born Rabbi Motti Liberov, a fluent Hebrew speaker, and his wife Dina. According to Liberov, hundreds of Israeli families are on the centre's email list as regular members. Jewish holiday events organised by *Hamerkaz Shelanu*, for example on *Chanukah*, *Purim* and *Rosh HaShanna*, are attended by a few thousand visitors, many of whom are Israelis. According to its website, *Hamerkaz Shelanu* offers a variety of Israeli-related religious, social and educational activities:

[Hamerkaz Shelanu is a] dynamic community and education centre, serving the Israeli and wider Jewish community of Victoria 24/7 [...] Hamerkaz Shelanu is a home away from home, filled with a Jewish soul and an Israeli spirit [...] For some it's the "Israeli shule", to others their child's Hebrew school (*Lamdeni*) ["Teach me"].

(Liberow, n.d.)

Following her first, negative interaction with an Australian synagogue, Hallely Kimchi chooses to go to "*Hamerkaz Shelanu*" at *Yom Kippur*. This time her feelings are different:

We opened the doors and recognized nearly half of the congregants with the hope that we would soon get to know the other half. And we felt a little bit more at home.

(Kimchi, 2006, p. 90)

David from Adelaide explains *Chabad's* success with Israelis in Australia by describing their tolerance towards Israelis of all denominations:



*Chabad* here succeeds in making Israelis feel welcome, that they are welcomed there, unrelated to how much of a believer they are, [or] how much they attend [a synagogue].

(David, 2010)

The testimony of Shimrit from Byron Bay combines several explanations for *Chabad's* popularity among Ausraelis. She points to what she understands as the movement's non-coercive attitude. She also refers to *Chabad* as an answer to her need to introduce Jewish holidays to her children:

I mean for me living in Israel I wouldn't just search [for] somebody religious, but here the *Chabad*, it's like they're trying to bring the community, the Israeli community, they don't try to make you religious so you let them approach you and talk to them because they do the gathering and then you know that: "Oh, *Pesach* is coming, *Hanukkah* is coming. I don't have to worry what we're going to do". For the kids, there's something to go and show them and then you end up talking to the Rabbi and his wife, and she's so nice I find her so nice, she does those classes, we go together.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

Not all Israelis view *Chabad* favourably. Nir, who also lives in Byron Bay, for example, believes *Chabad* are acting as Jewish missionaries trying to 'convert' secular Israelis to Orthodoxy:

I see *Chabad* as a group, yes they're very nice, very welcoming and it must be very interesting lessons, but their core is to bring people who left Judaism back into Judaism. That's their main core, giving *Suffganiot* (*Hanukkah* doughnuts)... It's only, you know, a prop basically. And for some people it works, for some people it doesn't. And they choose their representatives pretty wisely, nice people, smiling and... I've been there once because people told me "you know you should come, lots of Israelis". It's not talking [appealing] to me.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

The opening of a new *Chabad* kindergarten in Melbourne led to a heated discussion in the *Tapuz* online community for Israelis in Australia (Tapuz, n.d., p. July 2009). Opponents and proponents of *Chabad* and its relations with the Israeli community in Australia raised emotionally-charged arguments to support their case, in a debate that became so intense that the moderators of the forum decided later on to delete all of its messages. Several participants blamed *Chabad* for being an extremist and messianic cult, deceiving not only innocent young Israelis travelling the world but also unsuspecting secular Israeli parents abroad, making them and their children 'return' to Orthodox Judaism (*Chazara Bitshuva*) by being friendly and hospitable and putting emphasis on Hebrew teaching in their kindergartens and

schools. Others explained that attending *Chabad* synagogues is "a price" they pay for not living in the Jewish state: "I left the state of Israel but not the Jewish people. And from my point of view, exposure to *Chabad* is better than non-exposure to Judaism".

## 12.8. The Ethnolinguistic vitality of Hebrew

Calhoun points to the role of a common language as part of nationalism:

Language figures in at least three different ways in accounts of nationalism. First, it is a central part of the claim that nationhood is rooted in ethnicity. This leads to attempts to show the historic depth and distinctiveness of languages. Second, shared language is a condition (or at least a facilitator) of claimed national community regardless of whether it is ancient or distinctive [...] Third, opposition to linguistic variation is a key way in which nationalists in power attempt to make the nation fit the state.

(Calhoun, 1993, p. 226)

In a diasporic setting, the national language of an ethnic group may become a cultural feature of a minority group. Ethnolinguistic-vitality theory constitutes a framework for analysing social aspects of minority group languages. One model (Giles, et al., 1977) evaluates ethnolinguistic vitality as affected by different factors such as demography, social circumstance and language or group status:

A group's strengths and weaknesses in each of these domains could be assessed so as to provide a rough classification of ethnolinguistic groups as having low, medium, or high vitality. It is argued that low vitality groups are most likely to go through linguistic assimilation and 'cease to exist as a distinctive collectivity'. On the other hand, the high vitality groups are likely to maintain their language and distinctive cultural traits in multilingual settings.

(Yagmur, 2011, p. 112)

The question presenting itself in the context of diasporic Israelis is about the ethnolinguistic vitality of Hebrew, the Israeli national language. The modern form of the Hebrew language<sup>175</sup> is the Israeli national language, which is a product of a Zionist project in the second half of the nineteenth century. At the same time, as Avni emotionally claims:

More than just its instrumental value as a language of communication, Hebrew is perceived as that which encodes Jewishness, reveals divinity, and is endowed with a

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<sup>175</sup> Israeli-born linguist, Prof. Ghil'ad Zuckermann claims that the language of Israeli is actually not Hebrew but a new language '*Israelit*' (Israeli language) with Hebrew being one of its sources, but not the only one. See: Zuckermann, Ghil'ad. *Israelit Safa Yafa* (Israeli - A Beautiful Language) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2008).

capacity to transcend Jewish ethnic, national, and racial difference in ways that no other language can.

(Avni, 2012, p. 172)<sup>176</sup>

For Israelis abroad, preserving the vitality of Hebrew within the group seems a pivotal feature of maintaining their 'Israeliness'. Rebhun and Popko note the high percentage of Israelis abroad with a mastery of Hebrew as "central to their personal identity". It is also evidence of their ability to consume information about Israel and enjoy Israeli culture in Hebrew, as well as maintain ties with other Israelis in Israel and abroad (Rebhun & Popko, 2010, p. 34).

Evidence from sources of this study indicates self-perceived, high, ethnolinguistic vitality among Israelis in Australia. This perception is reflected in the importance they attach to Hebrew in the context of their identity and, moreover, as a legacy passed on to the next generation. To this end, Israelis invest special efforts to develop and/or maintain spoken, read and written Hebrew among their offspring.

In the past, Hebrew ethnolinguistic vitality among Israelis in Australia may have been much lower, as the 1987 study by McNamara suggests. In the conclusions of his survey among sixty Melbourne-based Israelis, McNamara stated decisively that, "[t]he linguistic consequences of the new situation [in which] the Israelis find themselves [in a diaspora] are complex, but are likely to point in one direction: language shift to English". Hebrew at that time, claims McNamara, had "a lower status than English as a vernacular language in the Jewish community"; teaching it in Jewish schools was seen as "a low-status project". Thus, "passing on a separate Hebrew-speaking Israeli identity [to children] is problematic" (McNamara, 1987, pp. 225-226).

But in 2005, Rutland and Gariano reached a very different conclusion. They noted that reading and speaking Hebrew at home and with friends is a popular method used by Israelis to maintain their Israeli culture abroad. "Language maintenance for Israelis in Australia is active", they concluded, and stated that "The Hebrew language can, therefore, be an important factor in identity maintenance" (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, pp. 23-24, 39).

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<sup>176</sup> Avni's claim about the power of Hebrew to "transcend" Jewish difference is in question with regards to the interaction between Israelis abroad and diaspora Jews. Israelis may point to a lack of Hebrew mastery among local Jews, especially when reading from the Bible, as a factor which differentiates between the two groups; or as evidence of an inability to truly attach to Israel and/or to fully comprehend Jewish culture. For a discussion about the relationship between Israelis and Jews in Australia, see chapter 11 "Interaction with the Australian Jewish Community" of this thesis.

Currently, Hebrew is maintained by most Israelis as the language spoken at home. According the 2006 census data, 7,568 Australian residents speak Hebrew at home, half of them (3,576, 47.3 per cent) are Israel-born (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Gen08 offers a deeper insight into Hebrew at home. Close to two thirds of Israel-born respondents (72.5 per cent; 282 of 389 respondents) noted they speak Hebrew with the family at home, most of them (68.1 per cent, 192 respondents) ranked it as the language most spoken at their household (Anon., 2008-2009, p. Unpublished data).

Outside the home environment, Hebrew is taught in Australia at Jewish schools, in private ventures and community-based organisations. The different Hebrew teaching projects compete to attract young students, many of whom are of Israeli parentage.<sup>177</sup> Israelis, mostly women, take an active and leading role within these institutes as teachers or administrators, or as private Hebrew teachers.

The issue of teaching Hebrew was a focus of heated discussions within *Tapuz* and resurfaced numerous times in the testimonies of Israelis in Australia. Israelis tell of maintaining Hebrew vivacity at home by speaking exclusively Hebrew with the children and with friends and family, both in Australia and in Israel (especially if both parents are mother-tongue Hebrew speakers). Zehavit from Brisbane elaborates:

At our house all the children speak Hebrew - just, only and nothing but [Hebrew]. [...] All the children speak fluent Hebrew [...] It is something which is very important to us [...] I teach them [Hebrew]. We leave notes to each other in Hebrew; write to each other in Hebrew; [My daughter] corresponds in Hebrew with friends and family in Israel.

(Zehavit, 2011)

Dafna from Sydney operates a Hebrew school run from her home as well as a social group for Israeli families. The large majority of her students are Israeli children. She makes a direct connection between the emphasis on activities in Hebrew in both ventures she manages and Israeli culture, which in her view is different from the local Jewish one.

What do we do in our meetings? We read stories in Hebrew, run activities in Hebrew, games, arts and craft – everything, everything in Hebrew! We also endow culture the same way we celebrate it in Israel and not necessarily [...] in its Jewish aspect as being celebrated here in the synagogue.

(Dafna, 2010)

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<sup>177</sup> Examples of Hebrew teaching ventures in Australia in addition to the Jewish schools: The United Jewish Education Board (<http://www.ujeb.org.au/>), Simply Hebrew (<http://simplyhebrew.com.au/>), *Lamdeni* ([http://www.lamdeni.org/Templates/Hebrewschool/article\\_cdo/aid/639997/jewish/About-Lamdeni.htm](http://www.lamdeni.org/Templates/Hebrewschool/article_cdo/aid/639997/jewish/About-Lamdeni.htm)), *Megalim U'Mevalin Belvrit* (exploring and having fun in Hebrew)- School for teaching Hebrew (Sydney).

In addition to the cultural importance of Hebrew as an identity feature, Israelis sometimes present other explanations why teaching Hebrew to their children is of value. David from Adelaide, for example, talks about the cognitive benefits of multilingualism:<sup>178</sup>

First of all, it is important for children to know another language [other than their mother's tongue]. I believe that knowledge of languages is one of the most important areas of knowledge. Language opens thinking directions, it is very important. And what can you do? I can only teach them [the children] Hebrew, I cannot teach them Chinese. Apart from that [...] the language [Hebrew] is part of our civilization, part of being Jews or Israelis.

(David, 2010)

Despite their efforts, Hebrew is not always the dominant language of their offspring. Israelis attest to their children speaking English amongst themselves, especially when they grow up. Shimrit from Byron Bay tried to raise her children as native Hebrew speakers, but she was not successful:

When I came here [to Australia] and I ended up marrying and having kids, I only spoke Hebrew in the beginning. My first boy only spoke Hebrew. Then he started to move to English and then another one... all they speak is English. I gave up, I suddenly realised. I said: "how can I make them speak Hebrew all the time". I speak with my husband sometimes in English; all their friends speak English; I never took them to Israel. So now my kids speak only English.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

There are Israelis who do not insist on Hebrew and put less emphasis on its development in their children. These Israeli parents accept the dominance of Australian-English culture in their children's identity. Shalom from Sydney is representative of this attitude. He emphasises that he renders importance to having his children know about Israel, as his homeland but not theirs; he lets them choose their own everyday language. Shalom also expresses doubts about cultivating Hebrew as the only acceptable culture for his children, which he fears might lead to social marginalism and separatism.

It is important for me to have them [the children] know from where are they in Israel, from where we came in Israel and what Israel has given us, and that's it. The state of Israel for them is my home, not their home [...] By defining a group as Hebrew speakers you automatically alienate half of the children living in Australia. And furthermore [...] it

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<sup>178</sup> About the possible cognitive advantages of multilingualism see, for example, Jasone Cenoz, Fred Genese (eds.), *Beyond Bilingualism: Multilingualism and Multilingual Education* (Multilingual Matters, 1998).

was not our decision. The children just stopped talking Hebrew with us. We tried, insisted a bit, not too much, but at one stage the children [simply] did not speak Hebrew.

(Shalom, 2010)

This *Tapuz* participant identifies language spoken by the children as an important benchmark highlighting the process of cultural attachment to Australia and not to Israel, their parents' culture.

The point [in time] when the child starts talking English with you is a critical crisis point in the life of an immigrant, because it is the first significant point when you realize that your child will truly belong to a different culture than your own, and it doesn't matter how much you 'push' [at him] the language [Hebrew] and culture - he would grow up to be Australian, and not "an Israeli living in Australia" like yourself. Meaning, you are growing in your home a person whose culture is foreign to your own.

(Tapuz, n.d., p. August 2010)

## **12.9. Attachment to Israel**

Attachment to the homeland is not a new or unique phenomenon among immigrants. Fitzgerald claims that "[t]here is nothing inherently 'transnational' about ties that create an imagined community encompassing both here and there, as the same relationship reoccurs within almost any domestic or international migratory context" (Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 8). Regular ongoing interaction and connection of back-and-forth and to-and-from the homeland were recorded, for example, for Dominican (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991) and Asian (Lien, 2010) migrants in the United States and for Greek/Greek Cypriot communities in London and New York City (Georgiou, 2006).

Such interaction is grounded in a sense of attachment to the homeland often fostered in a diasporic environment and cultivated within the diasporic identity. Ang claims that this diasporic identity is a tool to differentiate the emigrant self from the others in the host society, based on the homeland national identity. The result is the emergence of a community that transcends geography and combines diaspora and home society in the minds of the emigrants:

Diasporic nationalism produces an imagined community that is de-territorialised, but that is symbolically bounded nevertheless. Its borders are clearly defined, at least in the imagination, and its actual and potential membership is finite.

(Ang, 2003, p. 145)

The ongoing question of shifts in the attachment to Israel by the Jewish diaspora is sensitive and one which draws considerable attention<sup>179</sup>. For Israelis abroad, studies show that in the United States (Malka & Kama, 27 June, 2012; Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, pp. 127-131) and Europe (Lev Ari, 2008, pp. 65-66) Israelis practice the same pattern of continuous interaction with the Israeli society in different ways, such as in Israeli media consumption or in business ventures based on a strong affiliation with the State of Israel.

Moreover, Israeli emigrants continue to see themselves as important and active players in Israeli society, despite geographical distances and political boundaries. Kama and Malka claim that Israeli society is a “hybrid imagined community” because emigrants continue to perceive themselves as an integral part of the society they left; a sentiment that lingers even after they become citizens of the host country: “Professed ‘Israeliness’ is steady and solid regardless of place of residence” (Malka & Kama, 27 June, 2012, p. 3).

Israelis in Australia follow the same norm: national concomitance to Israel is strongly preserved by Israeli diasporants. Gen08 findings (t in the Jewish community).

Table 12.9) clearly indicate, unsurprisingly, that a large majority of Israelis remain strongly connected to Israel. This affiliation is manifested in many aspects: socially, practically and emotionally. First of all, as can be expected, almost all Israelis have family members and/or close friends living in Israel. Accordingly, when Israel, where their family and friends live, is perceived to be in danger, their reaction is emotionally stronger than most of the rest of the Australian Jewish population (except for FSU Jews<sup>180</sup>).

A large majority of Israelis (85.1 per cent, the highest within the Jewish community) regard themselves as Zionists despite their emigration from Israel. This percentage is similar to parallel data (84 per cent) recorded in a recent survey in Israel among Israeli Jews (The Israel Democracy Institute and The AVI CHAI Israel Foundation, 2011, p. 69). Close to two-thirds of Israel-born respondents (58.4 per cent, highest in the Jewish community) declared that they would live in Israel (or return to it, in their case) if they had not chosen to live in Australia. Caution in over-interpretation of this data is necessary. This,

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<sup>179</sup> For a discussion about connectedness to Israel among diaspora Jews from a comparative point of view, see: (Markus, 2011).

<sup>180</sup> The high percentage of FSU Jews reporting expressions of anxiety if they sense Israel is in danger may be a result of having relatives living in Israel and/or due to antisemitism and persecution in their FSU homelands and thus they view Israel as a refuge for Jews in such a scenario.

because it may be a case of self-reporting bias,<sup>181</sup> where some Israelis think they are expected to wish for their return, following the ‘myth of return’ associated with the *Yordim* culture.<sup>182</sup>

Finally, Israelis are the most up-to-date with events in Israel or related to Israel in the Australian Jewish community and possibly in all of Australia.<sup>183</sup> Attending an Israeli film (when available during the Israeli film festival) is one popular way for Israelis to interact with current Israeli culture (one-third of Israel-born respondents noted going to the Israeli film festival, the highest in the Jewish community).

Table 12.9

Gen08 - Features of connectivity to Israel: responses according to country of birth (percentages)

Subject	Response	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
Keeping up with events in Israel	A lot/To quite a large extent	72.2	59.2	61.8	64.4	55.6	71.8	62.5
Family in Israel	Yes	94.1	73.0	64.8	78.1	76.9	69.7	74.2
Close friends in Israel	Yes	84.6	50.2	39.8	68.5	50.8	55.4	54.2
Zionism	Yes (Consider myself Zionist)	85.1	79.6	76.5	66.5	84.4	81.9	80.1
If not in Australia, I would live	Israel	58.4	34.0	23.1	32.7	24.5	34.8	33.7
When Israel is in danger	My reaction is so strong, almost as if my life was in danger	28.8	16.9	12.7	32.1	16.7	25.1	20.1
Israeli film festival <sup>1</sup>	Yes (attend)	33.3	19.3	18.5	29.4	15.5	20.5	21.1
	N=	389	2738	323	393	861	1135	5841
	<sup>1</sup> N=	213	1511	108	252	226	595	2904

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

Index:  Highest percentage  Second highest percentage

Evidence of the features of connectivity to Israel was also noted in interviews conducted for this study. Ronny, for example, who immigrated to Australia with his family when he was a teenager, testifies that he still reads news related to Israel. He explains his emotional response following negative events in

<sup>181</sup> For a detailed discussion about bias due to self-reporting, see chapter 5 “Methodology - Research strategy and sources” of this thesis.

<sup>182</sup> For a detailed discussion about the ‘myth of return’ in Israeli *Yordim* culture, see subchapter 8.3 “Understanding the new approach8.3” of this thesis.

<sup>183</sup> Israelis use mostly Israeli sources for information about Israel, as detailed in subchapter 10.1 “Concepts of community” of this thesis.



Israel by his affiliation to other Jews and to Israel and in light of his own emigration, still referring to Israel as his own country:

It hurts, it upsets. Because if it had happened in another country, I wouldn't have found it interesting. But if it happens in our country, and because it is happening to a Jew and it is from Israel [then] it reminds you how much better life is here. And it is sad to hear that it is happening [there].

(Ronny, 2011)

Some Israelis seek ways to detach themselves from this emotional connection that may not always be easy to bear, especially in light of bad news from Israel. "I have manoeuvred myself to a very comfortable place", says one Israeli, "I read news from Israel and say to myself: this does not trouble me too much as I am living here in Australia. When I read Australian news I am also calm, as I say to myself – I am not an Australian, I am an Israeli".<sup>184</sup>

Advocacy for Israel is an option used by diaspora Jews to direct their emotional ties to Israel into action on behalf of the State of Israel.<sup>185</sup> It can be defined as "the collection of political and educational activities at the school, campus, community, and formal political levels designed to increase the support by Diaspora Jews, their co-citizens, and their governments for Israel, including support for most of Israel's policies, and an opposition to outright critique of those policies" (Sucharov, 2011, p. 362).

Some Israelis are active in advocating for their homeland through existing organisations. Only a few members of the Jewish community are active in advocacy for Israel, according to Gen08 data. Among those, when compared according to country of birth, Israeli proportionately rank first (24 out of 332 Israel-born respondents, 7.2 per cent). However, most of such advocacy for Israel is un-institutionalised, informal and accidental. Being approached about Israel or hearing criticism voiced about Israel by an Australian is a typical scenario where Israelis find themselves reacting emotionally, in standing up for Israel or explaining its policies. This happened, for example, to Shimrit from Byron Bay. Accusations against Israel by locals evoked an emotional response:

Totally 'pressed my buttons' when they do that. Yeah. These hippie people when they stand in the market and they are all talking about energy and stuff, "where you from,

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<sup>184</sup> Private conversation with the author, December 2010, Melbourne.

<sup>185</sup> Examples of diaspora Jewish advocacy organisations: Stand With US (<http://www.standwithus.com/>); The Anti-Defamation League (<http://www.adl.org/>); and Israel advocacy network of the State Zionist Council of Victoria ([http://www.zcv.org.au/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=section&id=6&Itemid=8](http://www.zcv.org.au/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=6&Itemid=8))

Israel? Oh why do you do this to these poor Arabs"? And I say straight away "You and your energy and how do you talk. Go", you know.

(Byron Bay Focus Group, 2010)

According to several testimonies of Israelis in Australia, tenure seems to have a positive effect on the tendency and willingness to 'defend' Israel and its policies, when needed. This, even in cases where emigration was motivated (among other reasons) by negative feelings about Israel, its policies, society or future. Tommy from Sydney recalls that when he immigrated he was filled with anger and guilt about Israel. He was highly critical of Israel's policies, its culture and a variety of other issues. However, as time passed, his views about Israel mellowed. "Today I look at Israel with a kind of forgiveness, an understanding", he notes (Tommy, 2010).

Similarly, David from Adelaide claims that he is much "more of a patriot" today than he was when he left Israel. Despite being critical of Israel on some issues, David admits that he is most likely to defend Israel's position if asked about it:

I have criticism about Israel, harsh ones. But today I also understand the other side [...] I more moderate in that sense. Usually I will not be very active in support of Israel. But if I am asked a question, I would eventually present Israel's side, which is what can we do, right, in most cases.

(David, 2010)

In the mind of the emigrant, the perception of the homeland can be a product of nostalgia frozen at the time of immigration. This idea was presented by American historian and political theorist Louis Hartz in his 1964 book "The Founding of New Societies", which introduced the theory of 'fragment societies'. He argued that colonial societies such as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand originated as fragments of the larger European society and that these societies have remained marked throughout their history by the conditions of their origin. These societies, claimed Hartz, froze the class structure and resulted in ideological immobility which rested on perceptions prevalent in the mother country at the time of emigration, without going through the developments that were occurring later on in Europe (Kloppenber, 2010).

Hartz's theory resounds in Zehavit's testimony when she acknowledges that her perception of the homeland is probably different from today's Israel:

I claim that for Israelis there is something called evolution. An evolution of 'Israeliness'. When a person leaves Israel, Israel continues its evolutionary process [and changes]. But the person [the emigrant] remains stuck at the same spot in which he had left. For example, I, Zehavit, left in 1994 [...] my 'Israeliness' is still 1994. When I come to Israel, it is a different place [then what I left behind].

(Zehavit, 2011)

## **13. Conclusion – The diasporic identity of ‘Ausraelis’**

### **13.1. Aims**

At the beginning of the twenty-first century there is a cluster of Israeli emigrants gathered on Australian shores. In this thesis, features of the diasporic identity of this group, the ‘Ausraelis’, are examined. The main areas analysed in this context are the experiences of Ausraelis as immigrants; their inner-group interactions; and their relationship with Australian Jewry, on both a personal and institutional level. Also studied are the processes of recalibrating national and religious identity in the setting of Australian society. The aim is to map the major elements involved in the construction of Ausraeli identity. This, in order to provide an Australian model and typology of Israeli-diasporant identity based on existing models and types established for Israelis in the United States.

### **13.2. Key findings**

#### **Do Ausraelis constitute a diaspora?**

Israelis abroad have been recognised as a diaspora in their own right since the end of the last century (Cohen, 2009; DellaPergola, 2009). Israelis in Australia can be considered as part of the global Israeli diaspora. Several important characteristics of this group correspond with main components of a diaspora, as put forward by leading theorists in the field such as Safran, Robin Cohen and Tölölyan.

Israelis in Australia maintain continuous and ongoing ties, affiliations and attachments to the motherland, which constitute transnational diasporic activities. The complete set of these actions and perceptions is a core component in the collective identity of Israeli diasporants in Australia. For example, three quarter of Ausraelis keep up with events in Israel on a daily basis; most of whom (six out of ten) use Israeli news sources for that purpose. Twenty-first century means of communication technology and transportation enable the preservation of relationships with family and friends in Israel on a daily basis, as well as periodic visits to Israel.

Most Israelis in Australia voluntarily position themselves at the edges of the host society. Most remain reserved about adopting the culture of the Australian nation state as a prime feature of their identity. This attitude is echoed in a relatively low feeling of affiliation to Australia as expressed by a relatively weak sense of belonging (only 17.6 per cent of Ausraelis express “very strong sense of belonging” to Australia) and relatively low satisfaction with life compared with life in Israel (only 19.6 of Ausraelis note being “much more satisfied” in Australia as compared to Israel).

Ausraelis further distance and self-marginalise themselves vis-à-vis their religious group with an estimated half (50 per cent) categorised as peripheral members of the Australian Jewish community. At least in practice, Ausraelis reject being openly identified as part of the Jewish diaspora. Although not completely separatist in nature, by the positioning of group members in relation to 'the other', this interaction with the Jewish community and Australian society contributes to Israeli inner-ethnic self-consciousness.

### **What kind of diaspora is the Ausraeli one?**

The Ausraeli diaspora can be categorised based on typologies of diasporas suggested by leading scholars reviewed in this thesis.<sup>186</sup>

Sheffer classified Israeli diasporas in general as 'incipient ethno-national diasporas' (as opposed to 'historic diasporas' and 'new diasporas') because of the lack of institutionalism and networking between diasporic Israeli communities, as well as absence of transnational diasporic political activity (Sheffer, 1998, p. xxxi). The Ausraeli diaspora fits Sheffer's definition, with almost no community organisations, let alone political ones with ties to other Israeli communities abroad.<sup>187</sup>

The Israeli diaspora in Australia can also be considered to foster an 'exilic nationalism'. In this type of diasporic identity, as defined by Tölöyan, the homeland remains the centre of identity for the ethnic emigrant group (Tölöyan, 2010, pp. 36, 39). Accordingly, Ausraelis' 'exilic nationalism' is evident from their view of Israel as 'the authority' of their identity. For example, the homeland's ethno-national language, Hebrew, is retained and actively bequeathed to the next generation. Ideologically, despite being mostly immigrants of choice who have voluntarily left Israel, a considerable majority of Israelis in Australia (85 per cent) describe themselves as Zionists. They express deep feelings of empathy and solidarity with Israel; and they defend its policies when they feel it is being unfairly criticised or misunderstood by others. The 'myth of return', the fantasy of resettling in the motherland, lives on mostly among older emigrants (*Yordim*) and, although rejected by others, it is still present within the internal discourse of the Israeli émigrés in Australia. This is reflected for instance in the almost sixty per cent of Israelis stating that if they had to choose a place to reside in other than Australia, they would have preferred to live in Israel. Transnational activity conducted by Ausraelis – visiting, investing or

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<sup>186</sup> For a historical review of typologies and definitions of diasporas see subchapter 2.2 "The study of diasporas" of this thesis.

<sup>187</sup> Recently, in May 2011, the author of this study was one of the founding members of 'AIA -The Association of Israelis in Australia'. This body was formed to function as an umbrella organisation for Israelis in Australia.

'returning' to the 'solid' homeland – is considered, based on Safran's continuum of transnational diasporic actions (Safran, 2009) as typical of the closest diasporic relations with the homeland by an ethnic group.

A separate typology relates to Israeli communities abroad. The thesis reviewed three models based on Israeli communities in the United States: 'weak', 'traditional' and 'in-between'.<sup>188</sup> From this perspective, the Israeli community in Australia is closest to the 'in-between' model. It is based on locality, mainly in Melbourne and, to a lesser extent, in Sydney as well. Inner-group ties are 'strong' and close; and supportive social networks are being operated with relative success by dedicated social hubs. Distance from Israel, geographically and psychologically, increases feelings of detachment for Israelis in Australia from familiar social settings experienced in the homeland. As a result, co-ethnic interaction is actively sought (64.6 per cent of Ausraelis speak Hebrew with friends; 35.5 feel more at ease with other Israelis), encouraged and nurtured in a search for a 'replacement family' modus operandi.

### **What is the influence of the immigration experience?**

Two findings stand out with regards to the influence of the immigration experience on Ausraeli diasporism.

The first is a contribution to the debate among scholars surrounding the major reasons for emigration from Israel. At the centre of this discussion is disagreement about whether economic factors or security considerations weigh most in the decision-making process of Israelis considering emigration.<sup>189</sup> Evidence collected for this study on the push and pull factors for emigration of Israelis to Australia may present a possible resolution to this divergence of opinions.

For Ausraelis, a shift can be detected in the reasons given for leaving Israel and choosing Australia as an immigration destination. Up until the turn of century, familial ties ('came with parents' and 'join family, relatives') were the main push and pull factors for emigration noted by Israelis in Australia. Since the year 2000 views on the economy (negative in Israel, positive in Australia) and security-related issues ('War and terrorism' and 'safe environment') have been indicated in similar percentages by Ausraelis as immigration push and pull factors.

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<sup>188</sup> For a discussion on the three models of Israeli communities in the United States see subchapter 10.210.2 "Characteristics of the Israeli community in Australia" of this thesis.

<sup>189</sup> This debate is most clearly reflected in the discussion between DellaPergola (DellaPergola, Winter 2011) on the one hand, stating that the economy is the most influential for emigration from Israel; and Lustick (Lustick, Fall 2008) claiming security is more a powerful factor at this stage.

Following these findings, it may be assumed that Ausraelis attach importance to the combined influence of these factors. The negative implications of the constant security instability on Israel's economy (for example, the cost of wars and the army's budget) coupled with the intense lifestyle in Israel (as reflected in pressure, army reserve service or high taxes) are noted as the main factors for recent emigration from Israel.

The second conclusion relates to a shift in the immigration experience as a factor in the construction of an Israeli diasporic identity. In the past *Yordim* culture, Israeli emigrants were considered social deviants and were mostly disapproved of by both Israeli society and local Jewish communities abroad. Israeli diasporic existence itself was rejected and thus the emergence of a joint diasporic consciousness among Israeli emigrants was not possible.

As noted in the previous paragraphs, since then an Israeli diaspora has been formed, identified and recognised as such. The characteristics of the Ausraeli 'desperate' group, discovered in this thesis, can be understood as the total opposite of past *Yordim* diasporic behaviours. The 'desperate' not only accept their life away from Israel, they actually embrace it as a positive development for themselves personally and possibly for the future of the Jewish people in general. Thus, whilst most Israelis in Australia continue to foster 'exilic nationalism', the critical attitude of the 'desperate' towards Israel's society and their perception of themselves as different from those 'left behind' may be the seeds for the construction of a diasporic identity. This identity may be more independent of 'the motherland', even a confrontational one (Israeli diasporants as opposed to – and not part of – Israelis in Israel).

### **How much are Ausraelis acculturated and/or assimilated into Australian society?**

Examining various possible indicators of acculturation of Israeli emigrants in Australia leads to mixed results. On the one hand, the majority of Israelis in Australia are acculturated. This is evident from the fact that the majority endure immigration-related difficulties which are relatively high (when compared to most other segments of the Jewish population in Australia) as well as enduring an adjustment period before becoming economically-successful Australian citizens. As skilled migrants with good mastery of English, Israeli emigrants enjoy a relatively high starting point in their acculturation into the Australian society and economy. The end result is that most Israelis voice satisfaction with life in Australia and a sense of belonging to their new country.

On the other hand, a comparative analysis reveals that the level of acculturation of Israelis is possibly the lowest in the Jewish community. A relatively large section of the Israeli population of Australia,

although probably not the majority, express views that indicate indecisiveness about their willingness to acculturate. The thesis discusses a model for evaluating assimilation of immigrants which examines the attitudes towards assimilation, feeling of social acceptance or rejection; economic and social achievements in the host country; and willingness to leave the ethnic enclave (Nesdale & Mak, 2000, p. 485).<sup>190</sup> Based on this model, identification of Israeli émigrés with their new country of Australia is weaker than that of other segments of the Australian Jewish community.

The findings in this chapter also support to the assumption that Israeli emigrants fit Gans's view (Gans, 1997, p. 877) that acculturation outpaces assimilation and that many Israelis in Australia accommodate without being assimilated (Gibson, 1988). Evidence for this was found in the relatively high proportion of Israeli emigrants indicating indecisiveness about their ties to the new country, as is reflected in their 'neutral' responses to questions about sense of belonging and feelings of satisfaction with Australia.

### **What is the Ausraeli 'Israeliness' and Jewishness?**

The national identity of Israelis – otherwise known as 'Israeliness' – as examined in this thesis in the context of Australian diasporism, is dynamically realigned and reshaped. Faced for the first time with a minority status in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society, Israelis in Australia look for methods to reconcile diasporic realities with the core elements embedded in their Israeli identity.

Jewish identification of most Israelis in Australia is one of the lowest within the Jewish community (second maybe only to FSU Jews). This is as a result of several factors. First, most of the emigrants to Australia are secular 'Jewish-Israelis', who consider the national component of their identity to be more significant than the religious one. Gen08 researchers established that in the Australian Jewish population, Jewish identification of seculars is the lowest when compared to other religious groups in the community. Second, secular Israelis often carry residues of the inherent tensions between religion and state from Israel. Consequently, they may tend to reject organised Australian Judaism because they identify it as similar to (or even part of) the Israeli religious establishment that they disagree with.

Moreover, perceptions of Jewishness are the background to an inner conflict experienced by Israelis in the Australian diaspora with regards to the place of Judaism in their national identity. Living without the state-managed religion that they are used to from Israel, diasporant Israelis find themselves in need of revisiting the definitions of the Jewish component in their 'Israeliness' in ethnic terms, for themselves

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<sup>190</sup> The discussion on the model presented by Nesdale and Mak in subchapter 9.4 "Identification with Australia" of this thesis.



and, more importantly, for their children. This process results in most cases with the rediscovery of the centrality of the Jewish element within 'Israeliness', along with the importance of Hebrew, the national Israeli language, as pillars of their national identity.

Israelis in Australia hold onto 'Israeliness' and work to pass it on to the next generation. Although no longer living in the State of Israel, they continue to practice Israeli civil religion as they experienced it in their homeland. In practice, this means selectively maintaining specific Jewish practices at home and in the religious organisations they recognise as affiliated with Israeli-style Judaism, most notably the *Chabad* movement. Other aspects of Israeli civil religion, such as commemorating Israeli national holidays and teaching the children Hebrew, are also observed.

### **What is the influence of tenure? 'Veterans' and 'newcomers'**

Previous studies (Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010; Rebhun & Popko, 2010) amongst Israeli diasporants suggest tenure to be a factor which negatively influences Israeli identity on the one hand, but is also a positive element with regards to ties with peer-ethnic group members. The influence of tenure (time since emigration) on Jewishness and level of interaction with the local Jewish community, according to these studies, is generally positive – although also dependent on socio-economic characteristics.

In various sections of the current study, the possible impact of tenure was examined, taking into account the period of emigration to Australia (before 1980, 1980 to 1999 and 2000 to 2008). The findings suggest a more complex interpretation of the impact of tenure on the Israeliness and Jewishness of Israeli diasporants.

With regard to their Jewish identification, Israeli diasporants in Australia can be divided into two groups according to the year of arrival, with 1980 being the dividing line. 'Newcomers' is a collective name for two groups of Israeli emigrants to Australia from 1980 onwards: 'older newcomers' – those who arrived between 1980 and 1999; and the 'latest newcomers' who have emigrated since the year 2000. The 'newcomers' and, specifically, to a greater extent 'the latest newcomers', exhibit different characteristics with regards to their Israeli and Jewish identity than do their 'veteran' predecessors.

One feature which distinguishes 'older newcomers' and 'latest newcomers' from the 'veterans' is the cultivation of more-developed inner-ethnic group ties with fellow Israeli diasporants by 'newcomers'. This is evident, for example, in the dramatic difference in the percentage of Ausraelis who noted feeling more at ease with other Ausraelis (close to ten per cent for 'veterans' as opposed to forty per cent for

‘older newcomers’ and more than fifty per cent for ‘latest newcomers’) and speaking Hebrew with most friends (approximately forty per cent for ‘veterans’ as opposed to approximately sixty five per cent and eighty five per cent for ‘older newcomers’ and ‘latest newcomers’ respectively).

Another characteristic of the ‘newcomers’ is that they are much less connected to the Jewish community than the ‘veterans’. Close to a half (forty five per cent) of ‘latest newcomers’ attest to hardly feeling connected to Jewish communal life; this is almost three times more than the parallel data for ‘veterans’ (eighteen per cent). This relatively negative relationship with the Jewish community is also a result of the religious profile of the emigrants. Since 1980 seculars have constituted the biggest group within Israeli emigrants to Australia (more than forty per cent) and a majority since the year 2000 (two thirds). As a result, meeting Jews in synagogues occurs with much less frequency, as most ‘newcomers’ only attend synagogues on special occasions; a third of all ‘latest newcomers’ hardly attend a synagogue at all.

Vis-à-vis the Australian society, tenure was found to be a predictor of assimilation, as reflected in receiving citizenship (three-quarters of Ausraelis are holders of an Australian passport) and attesting to a greater sense of belonging (three times higher percentages of ‘veterans’ and ‘older newcomers’ than ‘latest newcomers’ declaring a strong sense of belonging to Australia).

The conclusion of this analysis is that tenure alone does not provide a complete explanation for the difference between the emigrant populations in their Jewishness and interaction with the Jewish community. Instead, in order to fully understand this issue, the history of emigration from Israel and related changes within Israeli society should be reviewed.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis<sup>191</sup>, since the 1980s Israeli society and governmental policy has gone through a gradual shift, of moving away from the rejection of emigrants towards an acceptance (although not legitimization) of emigration as a natural phenomenon. At the same time, privatisation and globalisation of the Israeli market, as well as the introduction of technological developments in transportation and communication and internal debates about the nature of Zionism in light of geopolitical changes, have eased ideological restrictions and alleviated practical difficulties for those aspiring to emigrate.

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<sup>191</sup> See the chapter 3 “Literature review: The study of Israeli émigré” of this thesis.

The result has been a change in the profile of Israeli emigrants, some of whom choose Australia as their immigration destination. The new profile is of Israelis who come from the middle class and above: secular, educated and situated at the centre of Israel's social, economic and political map. As skilled migrants, almost free from feelings of *Yordim*-related guilt and shame, they are able to cultivate normal and healthy interaction with other Israeli emigrants in their places of dwelling. At the same time, in view of the existing Jewish community institutes in Australia and the lack of a diasporic mentality or feeling of being under threat (only ten per cent of 'latest newcomers' see anti-Semitism as a serious problem in Australia), the 'newcomers' rarely see a need to exert any effort into building their own community institutes. Instead, for support and interaction they rely on networking, either non-formal friendship-based or on online social (and professional) platforms (Tapuz, Facebook and LinkedIn, for example).

Secularism, cultural differences and perceptions (or misperceptions) of diaspora Jews (as weaker in character for not living in Israel; as rich and condescending; and as superficial in their Jewishness) dictate a generally negative interaction with the Jewish community on an institutional level. This is reflected in low-level participation in the community's activities (almost half of 'older newcomers' never attend community functions) and in low levels of attendance at synagogues (as noted earlier in this chapter). The secular Jewishness of the 'newcomers' is perceived as the practising of the Israeli rituals of national civil religion at home; while the 'veterans', being more traditional, follow appropriately traditional patterns of Jewish diasporic life (most notably by regularly attending synagogue).

### **What is the influence of the factor 'age at emigration to Australia'?**

Another factor examined in this study was the possible implication of age on arrival in Australia (divided into age groups: 0-18 years; 19-29 years; and 30 years or older) on the diasporic identity of Israeli émigrés. Recent studies on the Israeli emigrant population in other places suggest that higher age at emigration is likely to be a negative influence on the emigrant's Jewish identification; while it is most likely to have a positive effect on the long-term Israeliness component in his identity (Rebhun & Popko, 2010; Lev Ari, 2008).

The findings of this thesis support this conclusion. Emigrating as adults (age 19 and above) was found to correlate with feeling less connected to the Jewish community and with lower rates of Jewish identification (for example feeling Jewish and attending synagogue) as well as with being mostly secular. It also imparted a lesser sense of belonging to the new country (Australia) and greater connectivity to peer-national Israeli emigrants and to Israel itself.

A methodological factor intervenes when explaining these findings. Almost all data on non-adults originated from the Gen08 survey.<sup>192</sup> Specifically, one third of the survey's respondents were Israel-born who had arrived when they were 18 years old or older; all of whom had emigrated before the year 2000, two-thirds of them before 1980. Therefore, examining age when emigrating corresponded with period of emigration to Australia. This means their parents are part of the 'veterans' group – those who immigrated with their children to Australia before the year 2000. As such, these parents were more likely to feel greater Jewish identification and less secular affiliation; and thus were more inclined to send their offspring to Jewish schools to maintain and strengthen the children's Jewish identity. Moreover, Jewish schools in Australia enjoy the reputation of being of a higher academic level and more prestigious than those in the public system. Evidence from 'veteran' Israeli emigrants suggests that this perception was also a reason for sending offspring to Jewish schools. It seems, however, that nowadays a growing number of Israelis, as well as Australian Jews, send their children to Australian public schools. Also, 'newcomer' Israeli emigrants were found to be less likely to send their children to local Jewish education institutes, mainly for financial reasons and because of the schools' image as being elitist and lacking in values important to Israelis.

The conclusion of this analysis is that 'period of emigration' is a more significant factor than 'age on arrival' with regards to the Jewish and Israeli diasporic identity of Israeli emigrants in Australia.

### **Why do Israelis and FSU-born Jews in Australia share a negative attitude towards the Jewish community?**

Findings in this study suggest that Israelis are second only to FSU-born Jews in their negative attitude towards the Australian-Jewish community. This attitude is manifested in the relatively large proportion of 'peripherals' in the Jewish community in both groups (fifty per cent for Ausraelis, sixty per cent for FSU Jews); reflecting low identification with the Jewish community, as well as a reduced sense of belonging to it (thirty per cent of Ausraelis and thirty five per cent of FSU Jews indicating not being connected to the Jewish community) and low attendance at community functions (third of Ausraelis and close to half of FSU Jews rarely go to Jewish community functions). Similarities between Israelis and FSU-born in Australia are also found in the difficulty in making Jewish friends (third of Ausraelis and half of FSU Jews note some difficulty in that regard), as well as the self-attested feelings of both groups (twenty per cent for Ausraelis and thirty per cent for FSU Jews) regarding discrimination against them by the Jewish community.

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<sup>192</sup> The only exception was the interviewee Ronny, who arrived in Australia from Israel at the age of 14.

A similarity in the religious profile of Israelis and FSU-born partially explains their shared views and lack of interaction with the Jewish community. Most significant is the fact that the non-religious (seculars) constitute the majority within these groups (close to forty per cent in both cases). Accordingly, Israelis are second only to FSU-born Jews in exhibiting the lowest rates in the Jewish community of regular synagogue attendance, of keeping *Kosher* and of fasting at *Yom Kippur*. Both groups also attest to a relatively weak sense of being Jewish and to attaching less significance to Jewish social life when compared to the rest of the Jewish community.

There are other shared characteristics. First, both Israelis and FSU-born populations originate from non-Anglo Saxon cultures and have their own discrete national languages (Hebrew for Israelis, Russian dialects for FSU-born) that are maintained within their respective ethnic communities. Thus, unlike members of the Australian Jewish community from the UK, South Africa or the United States, language and culture become not only a buffer against but also a barrier to social integration into the Jewish community for Israelis and FSU-born.

Another common aspect of the respective cultures of Israelis and FSU-born concerns the relationship with authority. Jewish community institutes and leadership can be grasped as a form of authority in general or a religious one specifically. But, in the respective countries of origin (Israel and the various FSU republics) there exists a culture of challenging or feeling suspicion towards authority. For FSU-born Jews, this attitude may be a result of historically-rooted hostility and distrust towards the government, fostered over years of lack of religious freedom for the Jews during the Soviet period. For Israelis, it is generally an inherited cultural attitude of disrespect and constant questioning of authority; and, specifically, animosity among seculars towards religious institutes as a result of the ongoing struggle between the religious and seculars in Israel.<sup>193</sup>

### **13.3. Typology of Israeli diasporants in Australia**

The diasporic identity of Israelis in Australia can be categorised based on a typology borrowed from the four prototypes of Israeli diasporants in the United States, as identified by Lev Ari and Rebhun. The prototypes are situated on the continuum between separatism and assimilation with regard to each social sphere: Israeli, American-Israeli, American-Jewish and American (Lev Ari & Rebhun, 2010, p. 143).

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<sup>193</sup> On the lack of respect for authority in Israeli culture, see for example: Yair 2011.

Accordingly, in the Australian setting, the prototypes can be defined as: 'Israeli', 'Australian-Israeli', 'Australian-Jewish' and 'Australian'. The difference between these prototypes is the focal point of their identity: homeland nationality for 'Israeli'; Australian ethnic for 'Australian-Israeli'; religious diasporic for 'Australian-Jewish'; and host-land nationality for 'Australian'.

The conclusion of this study is that the type of diasporic identity of Israeli emigrants in Australia is dependent on period of emigration. Currently the most common type among Israeli emigrants in Australia is 'Israeli' for the 'newcomers', with Jewishness practiced as a secular-based civil religion; while for the 'veteran' emigrants a fifth prototype (not mentioned by Lev Ari and Rebhun) needs to be introduced – 'Jewish-Israeli'. This prototype emphasises homeland nationality along with a traditional religious component; and both elements carry similar weight. In fact, it is the diasporic parallel of the 'Jewish-Israeli' type defined by Kopelowitz and Rosenberg for Israelis living in Israel.<sup>194</sup>

The local national Australian component is relatively weak within the identity of Israeli émigrés in Australia.<sup>195</sup> Identification with Australian nationality and a sense of belonging is prevalent among Ausraelis. However, they continue to see themselves much more as Israelis than Australians (if at all), somewhat as outsiders to the host society.

### **13.4. The social space of Ausraelis**

After reviewing the findings of this study it is possible to produce a model of the social space of Israelis in Australia (Figure 13.1). This Australian model is based on the model laid out for Israelis in the United States by the *Reut* institute.<sup>196</sup> Interactions within the social space of Israeli emigrants in Australia are significant participants in the construction process of their diasporic identity. Other important forces that contribute to this process are socio-economic factors; personal events and features; and circumstances of emigration.

In the Australian model, the ongoing and constant contact within a defined social space between three main identity-laden elements – national Israeli, religious Jewish and host-land Australian – dynamically constructs the diasporic identity of Israeli emigrants in Australia. This social space is stretched along three axes representing the spheres of interaction experienced by Ausraelis – with other Israeli

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<sup>194</sup> See sub chapter 12.1 "The Jewish component of 'Israeliness'" of this thesis.

<sup>195</sup> Unlike the parallel American identity component in Lev Ari and Rebhun's study which is integrated into the diasporic identity of Israelis in the United States.

<sup>196</sup> On the *Reut* model see subchapter 2.4 "Understanding Israeli diasporic identity2.4" of this thesis.

diasporants (the Israeli axis), vis-à-vis the Jewish community (the Jewish axis) and the wider Australian society (the Australian axis). The intensity and nature of interaction of Israeli diasporants with each of the elements ranges between a minimum (zero) to a maximum scale. The three axes meet at the zero point to create a three-dimensional social space.

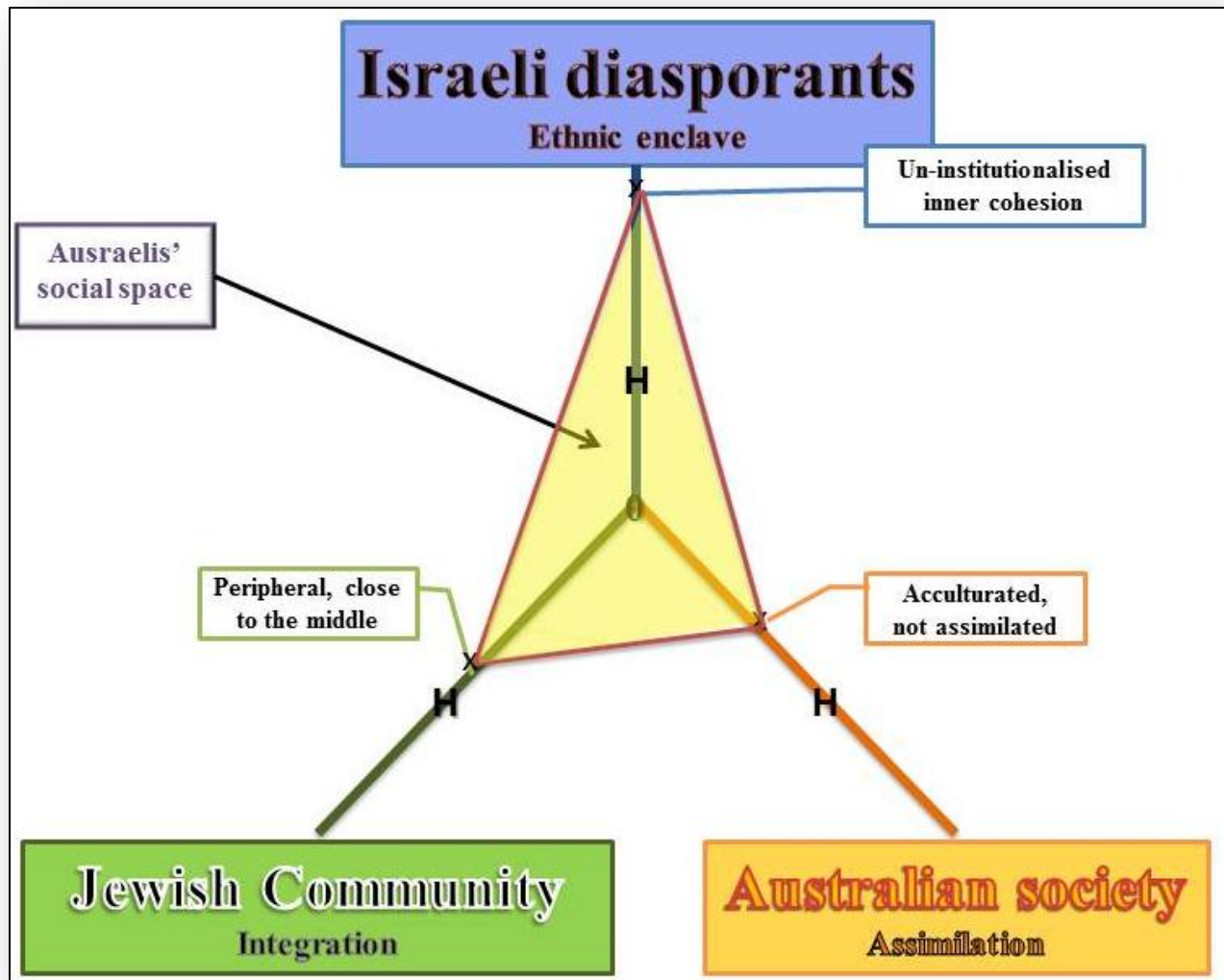
According to this model, Israelis in Australia gravitate between three 'maximum' scenarios of diasporic identity-related social environments. The first maximum scenario is that of belonging to a confined, separatist, ethnic enclave based on nationality; an Israeli ghetto, where social interaction is limited exclusively to encounters with other Ausraelis. In this scenario, homeland nationality is the most dominant and powerful element in the diasporant's identity. The second scenario is that of total integration into the core segment of the local Jewish community, in a process driven to a great extent (although not exclusively) by the superiority of the religious-Jewish component within the diasporants' identity. The third scenario is of assimilation into host-land society, in which adoption of Australian nationality takes precedence above all other aspects in the diasporants' identity.

The findings of this study indicate where to situate the majority of Israelis in Australia on each of the model's axes. On the Israeli axis, most Israelis can be located close to the maximum scenario of an ethnic enclave, in a point on the scale which represents the inner-cohesion of the Israeli community and, at the same time, its lack of institutionalism. On the Jewish axis, it rests slightly below the half-way point (closer to the zero). This point characterises the peripheral (although close to the middle) position of most Israelis in Australia vis-à-vis the local Jewish community.<sup>197</sup> In that regard, the factor of 'period of emigration to Australia' shifts the point of intersection on the Jewish axis scale over the half-way point ('newcomers' are closer to the zero than 'veterans'). Finally, on the Australian axis Israeli diasporants are located just one third of the way, where acculturation occurs but not assimilation.

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<sup>197</sup> In comparison, for FSU Jews in Australia, this point would probably be much closer to the zero.

Figure 13.1  
The social space of Israelis in Australia (Ausraelis)



**Glossary:** H -Half-way point on each axis.



### **13.5. Policy implications**

Past studies about Ausraelis called for “integration” of this segment of the Jewish population in Australia into the greater body of the local Jewish community.<sup>198</sup> If this indeed is an aim of the Australian Jewish community - or of the state of Israel - in light of the findings of this thesis, this aim may need to be reconsidered.

‘Integration’ as goal implies a deterministic conclusion that Ausraelis are destined to be assimilated into the Jewish community, if only the right measures were to be taken. It further implies that Israelis are expected to, or cannot avoid having to in the long run, adopt similar diasporic norms, views and behavioural patterns that may characterise Jewish diaspora structures. Such thinking is in line with Safran’s assertion that “many hostlands fear the existence of a diasporic counter-nationalism that may serve to fragment their own national identity” (Safran, 2004, p. 23). In that sense, a desire to integrate Israelis is characteristic of ‘a state within a state’. Jewish communities may feel threatened by a nationalist Israeli identity as a competing identity to an affiliation with a Jewish community. An alternative policy vis-à-vis the Israeli community could be to initiate a dialogue between the groups in order explore the differences between the two sides and as a recognition of the different characteristics of each community. Such a view was voiced, for example, by the Melbourne-based Israeli scholar, Dr. Dvir Abramovich (Abramovitch, 2006).

Also, the continuous strong affiliation to Israel of Israeli diasporants in Australia may present an opportunity for policy makers. This may be achieved, for example, by introducing new frameworks to harness this connectivity towards constructing a diasporic transnational activity for the benefit of the homeland, Israel.

### **13.6. Contribution to knowledge**

This thesis expands the basis of knowledge about Israelis in Australia. As such, it can be understood and reviewed from multiple disciplines. First, it presents a detailed portrait of an understudied segment of the Jewish community of Australia. From an Australian society perspective, the thesis can be revisited as

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<sup>198</sup> Rutland and Gariano's report on their study devotes a paragraph to this issue headlined “integration of Israelis” (Rutland & Gariano, 2005, p. 20). Gen08 report analysing the implications of the survey’s findings with regards to Jewish continuity talks about “challenges for the Australian Jewish community with regards to optimum integration of Israeli immigrants” (Markus, 2011, p. 41). It may be that using the term ‘integration’ in the two cases was based on the experience of the interaction with FSU Jews, who needed and/or expected various types of assistance from the Jewish community institutions.

a study into a small immigrant group, an ethno-national minority or a religious sub-group. And, it also presents research into a specific part of the general Israeli emigrant population and of the Israeli diaspora world-wide.

From a methodological point of view, this thesis introduces a different approach into the study of diasporas by integrating multiple sources, qualitative and quantitative data, as well as the latest field of inquiry about online social activity. Analysing this mixture of data collected from different social, geographical and virtual localities is possibly a new attitude which could be used in ethnographic studies in general and on the Israeli diaspora specifically.

### **13.7. Future studies**

Three areas have been identified that require further research: recent changes in the demography of Israelis in Australia; the identity of second generation Ausraelis, or ethnic durability; and foreign-born Israelis' diasporic identity.

First, an updated project on the Israeli community of Australia is needed. This thesis utilises, to a great extent, data from the 2006 Australian census. Updated data from the recent 2011 Australian census is now being gradually released. Comparing information gathered from both censuses offers an opportunity for further insight into recent demographic trends and social and economic shifts within the Israeli community of Australia. Such a project has validity within the framework of the Australian Jewish population specifically and as a test case of an Australian ethnic community in general.

The second area is ethnic durability. Continuity of Israeli communities abroad is a question with possible political ramifications on the state of Israel and social implications on the societies of both homeland and host-land. In that context, the sustainability of the Israeli diasporic community in Australia needs to be examined by exploring the identity of the Ausraelis' offspring. In the background, emerging evidence (Lev Ari, 2012) suggests most children of Israeli emigrants move away from the Israeli identity of their parents and assimilate into the local Jewish community or the host-land society.<sup>199</sup> From the perspective

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<sup>199</sup> The scenario of disengagement from Israeli and/or Jewish identity by children of Israeli emigrants is considered a threat by Israeli officials. According to a recent discussion panel about Israelis abroad held at the Jewish Agency in late October 2012: "The Israeli and Jewish identity among children of Israelis [abroad] is weakened over the years, and with it ties to Israel [also weaken]; there is danger of assimilation". Source: The Jewish Agency for Israel-Board of governors, Minutes of the panel on "Task force for Israelis living abroad", Tel Aviv: October 30, 2012 (private email correspondence).

of Australian society, more knowledge could be accumulated from comparing identity shifts of children of Israeli emigrants with parallel processes within other ethnic groups in Australia.

The third area is a study about foreign-born Israelis in Australia. Foreign-born Israelis are an understudied sector of the Israeli emigrant population in general. Available Australian data, most importantly from the Gen08 survey and Australian Censuses in 2006 and 2011, enable approaching this yet-to-be studied subject. Questions of identity, affiliation (is it a sub-group of Israeli emigrants, or a separate ethnic community, or a part of other immigrant groups?) and ties with the Jewish community and Israel are expected to be part of such a project.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix 1 - Estimating Israel-born in relation to the Jewish community segmentation (core-middle-periphery)

The proportion of the segments of the Jewish community - 30 per cent core, 40 per cent middle and 30 per cent periphery – was estimated in the report on Australian-Jewish community continuity based on several indicators derived from the Gen08 data. The core group exhibits “strong Jewish identity, unity and coherence in values and outlook, strong transmission of values across generations”. Within the middle segment of the Jewish community transmission of Jewish identity is “challenged” and “decision-making may occur in the context of values less strongly integrated or conflicting” with Jewish concepts and meanings. For the periphery group transmission of Jewish identity is “minimal” and “decisions are as likely to be made on the basis of a non-Jewish as [of a] Jewish value system”. Further analysis of the periphery group led to the finding that this group accords low priority to Jewish identity; is unconcerned over intermarriage and records relatively high rates of intermarriage; and also expresses lack of interest in attending Jewish functions (Markus, 2011, pp. 69-73).

The key indicators for identifying the core and periphery segments are presented in Table A.1:

Table A.01  
Gen08 - Basis for estimating proportions of community segments

Subject	Question asked	Responses indicative of...	
		Core - 30%	Periphery - 30%
<b>Sense of Jewishness</b>	Which of the following best expresses your sense of being Jewish?	It is a central element of my life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is limited to taking part in some communal or family activities such as a Seder</li> <li>• It is of little importance to me</li> <li>• It is of no importance to me</li> </ul>
<b>Participation</b>	How often do you attend organised Jewish functions (other than religious events) whether social, cultural, educational or other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often</li> <li>• Very regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seldom</li> <li>• Never</li> </ul>
<b>Connectedness</b>	How connected do you feel to Jewish communal life?	To a great extent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only slightly</li> <li>• Not at all</li> </ul>
<b>Synagogue attendance</b>	In the last twelve months, how often did you attend any type of synagogue or organised Jewish religious service?	Attendance of more than once a month	Did not attend at all

The methodology implemented to produce an estimate of the Jewish community segmentation-proportion among Israel-born in Australia is detailed in the following paragraphs. The basis for calculation was the response percentage of the whole community to the key questions (as detailed in Table A.2).

First, the responses of Gen08 participants according to country of birth were recorded (Table A.2).

**Table A.2**  
Gen08 - Key factors for segment size estimation: Response according to country of birth (Percentages)

Segment	Subject <sup>1</sup>	Response	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
<b>Core</b>	Jewish sense	A central element of my life	18.3	29.7	26.2	15.0	24.5	29.9	27.0
	Attendance	Often/Very regularly	21.0	30.4	28.4	24.7	26.9	40.7	30.8
	Connectedness	To a great extent	11.8	27.5	25.1	10.9	24.4	33.0	25.8
	Synagogue	More than once a month	9.3	24.7	25.2	15.3	32.8	27.1	24.7
<b>Periphery</b>	Jewish sense	Little/No importance/Limited <sup>2</sup>	24.7	16.0	19.8	36.8	15.4	20.6	19.0
	Attendance	Never/Seldom	34.1	26.3	24.1	48.2	27.8	22.6	27.6
	Connectedness	Slightly/Not at all	31.4	18.4	19.5	35.6	17.0	16.7	19.9
	Synagogue	Did not attend at all	15.2	6.9	6.2	19.3	5.3	13.4	9.3
<b>N=</b>			<b>389</b>	<b>2737</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>1135</b>	<b>5839</b>

Source: Gen08: the Australian and New Zealand Jewish Population Study 2008-2009, unpublished data.

**Notes:**

1. For the detailed questions asked for each subject see Table A.1 above.
2. The complete 'Limited' response is "It is limited to taking part in some communal or family activities".

Next, the set of responses according to country of birth and for all Gen08 participants was combined into cases of four vectors, as presented in the following table:

Table A.3  
Vectors assignment

Segment	Country of birth	Case	Case name
Core	Israel	18.3, 21.0, 11.8, 9.3	Core Israel case
	Australia	29.7, 30.4, 27.5, 24.7	Core Australia case
	UK	26.2, 28.4, 25.1, 25.2	Core UK case
	FSU	15.0, 24.7, 10.9, 15.3	Core FSU case
	SA	24.5, 26.9, 24.4, 32.8	Core SA case
	Other	29.9, 40.7, 33.0, 27.1	Core other case
	Total	27.0, 30.8, 25.8, 24.7	Core total case
Periphery	Israel	24.7, 34.1, 31.4, 15.2	Periphery Israel case
	Australia	16.0, 26.3, 18.4, 6.9	Periphery Australia case
	UK	19.8, 24.1, 19.5, 6.2	Periphery UK case
	FSU	36.8, 48.2, 35.6, 19.3	Periphery FSU case
	SA	15.4, 27.8, 17.0, 5.3	Periphery SA case
	Other	20.6, 22.6, 16.7, 13.4	Periphery other case
	Total	19.0, 27.6, 19.9, 9.3	Periphery total case

The assumption is that each case represents the respective estimated size of the segment, core and periphery, in each group according to country of birth. The “core total case”, i.e. the case of the total Gen08 population for the core segment (27.0; 30.8; 25.8; 24.7) is equivalent to the 30 per cent estimated size of the core segments for the entire Jewish community. Similarly, the “periphery total case” (19.0; 27.6; 19.9; 9.3) is equivalent to the 30 per cent estimated size of the periphery segment of the Jewish community.

In other words, the ratio between the “total” cases and the other cases is assumed to be the number by which to multiply the whole community segmentation (30 per cent for core and 30 per cent for periphery) in order to estimate the size of each of these segments per respective group according to country of birth. For Israel-born, the formulas are:

- a. For estimating the percentage range of the core segment among Israel-born:

$$\frac{\text{Israel – born core case}}{\text{Total core case}} \times (30 \text{ per cent core size for the entire Jewish community})$$

- b. For estimating the percentage of the periphery segment among Israel-born:

$$\frac{\text{Israel – born periphery case}}{\text{Total periphery case}} \times (30 \text{ per cent periphery size for the entire Jewish community})$$

The ratio between the country-specific cases and the “total” cases was calculated for each subject vector within the cases. The average of the ratios was regarded as the final result. Hence, the calculation for the core segment of Israel-born was as follows:

The formula  $\frac{\text{Israel-born core case (18.3,21.0,11.8,9.3)}}{\text{Total core case (27.0,30.8,25.8,24.7)}}$  is calculated

- For “Jewish sense” the ratio is the outcome of  $\frac{18.3}{27.0}$  which is 0.7.
- For “Attendance” the ratio is the outcome of  $\frac{21.0}{30.8}$  which is 0.7.
- For “Connectedness” the ratio is the outcome of  $\frac{11.8}{25.8}$  which is 0.5.
- For “Synagogue” the ratio is the outcome of  $\frac{9.3}{24.7}$  which is 0.4.
- The average of these ratios is 0.5.

Thus  $\frac{\text{Israel-born core case}}{\text{Total core case}} = 0.5$

Table A.4, which follows, presents in brief the rest of the calculations for the ratios between the respective vectors and cases for each segment.

Table A.4  
Ratios between each country of birth cases and “total” cases for the core and periphery segments (Numbers)

Segment	Subject <sup>1</sup>	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other
Core	Jewish sense	0.7	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.9	1.1
	Attendance	0.7	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.3
	Connectedness	0.5	1.1	1.0	0.4	0.9	1.3
	Synagogue	0.4	1.0	1.0	0.6	1.3	1.1
Final result	Average	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.6	1.0	1.2
Periphery	Jewish sense	1.3	0.8	1.0	1.9	0.8	1.1
	Attendance	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.7	1.0	0.8
	Connectedness	1.6	0.9	1.0	1.8	0.9	0.8
	Synagogue	1.6	0.7	0.7	2.1	0.6	1.4
Final result	Average	1.4	0.9	0.9	1.9	0.8	1.0

Note: For the detailed questions asked for each subject, see Table 13.1 above.

The next step of the estimation process is to multiply the final result by 30 per cent for the core segment and 30 per cent for the periphery segment. The middle segment is the remaining part, or subtracting the estimated core and periphery percentages from 100 per cent. The results of the estimation process are presented in Table A.5.

**Table A.5**  
Estimated community segments according to country of birth (Percentages)

Segment	Israel	Australia	UK	FSU	SA	Other	Total
<b>Core</b>	16.4	31.1	29.1	18.0	30.4	36.0	30
<b>Middle</b>	40.4	42.9	44.2	25.3	45.2	32.5	40
<b>Periphery</b>	43.1	25.9	26.7	56.7	24.4	31.4	30

Finally, it is assumed that the periphery segment is proportionately larger than indicated by the above calculations. This assumption, of under-counting the number of those who are disconnected from the community, is based on the understanding - as noted in report on Australian-Jewish community continuity - that “a community based survey such as Gen08 will always find it difficult to contact those who have become disconnected from communal life” (Markus, 2011, p. 71). The difference between the estimated 30 per cent periphery segment and the calculated estimation for most groups in the Jewish community according to country of birth (Australian-born, SA-born, UK-born and ‘other’; as presented in Table A.5) is approximately five per cent. In other words, adding five per cent to the calculated periphery segment percentage is used to counter the under-counting of this segment’s members.

Thus, the final estimation of the segmentation of Israel-born should be recalibrated to 15-35-50 per cent corresponding to core-middle-periphery.

## Appendix 2 - Interview documents

### Explanatory Statement

Study title: *The Israeli community in Australia*

Researcher: **Ran Porat** - Ph. D. Student

Department: The Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University

Supervisors:

**Prof. Andrew Markus** - Pratt Foundation Chair of Jewish Civilisation, Monash University

**Prof. Fania Oz-Salzberger** - Leon Leiberman Chair in Modern Israel Studies, Monash university

Contact details

Name	Title	Telephone	Email
Ran Porat	Student Researcher		
Prof. Andrew Markus	Supervisor		
Prof. Fania Oz-Salzberger	Supervisor		
Associate Professor Mark Baker	Director, ACJC		
Dr. Alex Bahar-Fuchs	Psychologist/Counsellor		

### Overview and Purpose

This study examines the reasons for Israeli migration to Australia and the experiences of Israeli migrants in Australia. It is based on census and other demographic data, the Gen08 survey which was conducted between September 2008 and April 2009, Australian publications, and interviews. The study seeks to understand the on-going relationship of Israeli émigrés with Israel, local Jewry and Australian society. It is also concerned with questions of identity and culture.

### Terms and Conditions

Your interview forms an important part of this project. During the interview, which may last up to 2 hours, you will be asked to answer questions relating to your personal experiences. You are free to expand on a topic or to talk about related ideas. If there are any questions you would rather not answer or that you do not feel comfortable answering, please say so and we will immediately move on to the next question or stop the interview, whichever you prefer.

All the information and data will be kept confidential and secure place for at least five years. Only the researcher and his supervisors will have access to this information. The research outcomes and finding will be published in the researcher's doctorate thesis and other relevant academic work. You are free and welcome to provide feedback on your participation by contacting me after the interview. If you have any complaints concerning the way the interview was conducted please contact:

Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)

Building 3e, Room 111, Research Office, Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052

Fax: +61 3 9905 3831

Email: [muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au)

Citing project number: **CF10/2390– 2010001358**

Thank you in advance.





## **Consent Form**

### **Project:** The Israeli Community in Australia

I am aware and understand that my participation in this interview is entirely voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I have read the explanatory statement and I understand the intent and purpose of this research. I am aware that information provided during the interview will be used in the project and other relevant academic work. If, for any reason and at any time, I wish to stop the interview, I may do so without having to supply an explanation.

The data gathered during the interview for this study is confidential with respect to my personal identity unless I specify otherwise. I understand that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any publication and that any publication will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

If after the interview I decide that I would like part of the interview to be deleted from the voice recording and notes made during or after the interview, I merely need to forward a request to the student researcher and my request will be immediately attended to.

If I have any questions about this study or about my rights as a research participant, I am free to contact the student researcher and/or his academic supervisors and/or the relevant university department (details specified in the explanatory statement). I am also aware that I can ask the student researcher for contact details of professional counselling.

This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for his records. I have been offered a copy of this consent form that I may keep for my own reference.

I have read the above form and, with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in today's interview.

Subject to any such conditions as recorded above, I hereby assign the copyright in my contribution to the study author, Ran Porat, and to Monash University.

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped and/or video-taped	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree for the interview transcript and audio file to be retained for at least 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

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Participant Full Name

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Participant Signature

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Date

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Interviewer Full Name

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Interviewer Signature

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Date