

# European Jewish identity: Mosaic or monolith?

An empirical assessment of eight European countries

David Graham



The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)** is a London-based independent research organisation, consultancy and think-tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in the United Kingdom and across Europe by conducting research and informing policy development in dialogue with those best placed to positively influence Jewish life.

## **Author**

**Dr David Graham** is a Senior Research Fellow at JPR and Honorary Associate at the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, University of Sydney. He has written extensively about Jewish identity and demography, specialising particularly in the Jewish populations of Britain and Australia. He has published widely for academic, professional and general interest audiences both nationally and internationally and was recently instrumental in running the highly successful Gen17 Australian Jewish Community Survey. He has authored seminal reports on Jewish identity and Jewish life in both the UK and Australia, including the initial findings from the UK 2013 National Jewish Community Survey and the Gen17 Australian Jewish Community Survey. He has also worked extensively on data from the UK 2011 Census and the Australian 2011 Census. He holds a Masters in Statistics and Social Research from City University, London and a DPhil in geography from the University of Oxford.

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## Foreword

The relative lack of social research on Jews in Europe – certainly when contrasted with social research on Jews in the United States or Israel – is most easily explained by numerical realities: about 85% of the global Jewish population today lives in either the US or Israel, compared to only about 10% in Europe. Times have changed dramatically: just a century and half ago, an estimated 90% of world Jewry lived in Europe, broadly understood, but Europe’s Jewish population has declined rapidly since, most notably because over half of European Jewry was murdered in the Holocaust, but also because many others migrated elsewhere, particularly from eastern Europe to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and from the former Soviet Union to Israel in the 1990s. Yet over a million Jews remain in Europe, most notably in France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Hungary, and many other countries retain small Jewish communities of a few tens of thousands or lower. The small numbers in many places make quantitative research challenging – simply building a large enough sample is beset with difficulties in many cases – and the alternative of treating European Jews as a singular group for research purposes is complicated by the numerous distinctions that exist between communities, not least linguistic ones. So it is no small achievement to investigate European Jewish identity in the way this report does; indeed, this is arguably the most comprehensive study of the topic ever attempted.

It was rendered possible by the work of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the agency within the European Union responsible for gathering data on hate crime and discrimination against minorities living within EU Member States. Its first ever study of Jews, conducted in 2012, created what is almost certainly the largest dataset of European Jews ever constructed, although it may be bettered shortly by a repeat study scheduled to go into the field in mid-2018. Whilst the 2012 FRA study was concerned with antisemitism, it also gathered a significant amount of data about the Jewish identities of respondents as a by-product of that work, and this report draws on those data for its insights. In so doing, it allows us to paint a unique portrait of European Jews today, and indeed, to compare them to Jews elsewhere.

Studying contemporary European Jews is important for several reasons. Jews are arguably Europe’s most longstanding minority, so any investigation into how comfortable they feel in Europe is likely to reveal much about Europe’s various models of integration and acceptance of diversity. Indeed, investigating the strength of their Jewishness shines a particular light on these issues – minority groups typically seek both to become part of wider society and to maintain their own cultural traditions and practices, so the question of how Jews are doing on both of these fronts reveals much about the extent to which Europe today is fertile territory for contemporary Jewish life and, by extension, the flourishing of other minority groups. Moreover, in the context of the drive for greater European unification, examining Jews from different countries sheds light on the similarities and differences that exist between them – in the terms used here, are they a monolithic group and, if so, is there a distinctive European flavour to that, or are they more of a mosaic, marked by Jewish and national differences that indicate rather low levels of commonality?

These questions are important to the Institute for Jewish Policy Research because they help us to observe how Jewishness is affected by wider society, and how

Jews fit into contemporary European contexts, both of which are essential issues for Jews living in Europe today. Our growing body of work on these issues is collectively designed to enable all those concerned with the maintenance and development of Jewish life in Europe to determine how best to facilitate that – how to create Jewish activities that help European Jews find meaning in their culture and tradition, and how to help build a European context in which diversity is respected and welcomed, and where all minorities are able to contribute their particularities to the greater common good.

Jonathan Boyd  
Executive Director

## Introduction

**Mosaic** ► adjective of or associated with Moses. From French *mosaïque* or modern Latin *Mosaicus*

**mosaic** ► noun ■ a combination of diverse elements forming a more or less coherent whole

**monolith** ► noun 1 a large single upright block of stone, especially one shaped into or serving as a pillar or monument  
2 a large, impersonal political, corporate, or social structure regarded as intractably indivisible and uniform

Source: *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* 1998, Oxford University Press.

### A European Jewish identity?

One of the most striking aspects of what might loosely be called *Jewishness* is that many Jews feel a sense of connection to other Jews in far off places, even to those who have lived apart for generations and are separated by national borders and common languages. For example, data from a recent survey of European Jewish leaders indicate that despite hailing from 29 different European countries, analysts observed the respondents' clear belief in a shared common bond between European Jewish communities and a conviction that there is something unique about European Jewry.<sup>1</sup> Such uniqueness can only be grounded in a common sense of Jewish identity and raises an important question, one that has been asked repeatedly in Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall: is there more to this Jewish commonality than an imagined community and identity?

A quantitative, empirical assessment of European Jewish identity, as presented here, allows us to try and identify both what, if anything, may unite these Jews as a single monolithic group, and further, investigate what uniquely differentiates European Jews from other Jewish blocs elsewhere. Since Jewish identity is predictive of Jewish behaviour, especially religious and communal behaviour, any ability to encapsulate

1 JDC International Centre for Community Development (2016) *Third Survey of European Jewish Leaders and Opinion Formers*, p.23, Figure 7, p.24. Additional analysis by the author shows that 96% agree *European Jewry has unique and valuable perspectives to share with the rest of World Jewry*, 90% agree *European Jews have a special responsibility towards one another*, and 86% agree *It is very important to strengthen relationships between Jews living in different parts of Europe*. (N=274) 2015 data supplied by Barry Kosmin and JDC International Centre for Community Development (personal communication, May 2017).

*European Jewishness* in a meaningful, reliable and repeatable way could elicit important data that might contribute towards region-wide communal planning and policy development.

A useful starting point is to ask what it means for identity to have a European flavour, or to be labelled 'European'? In culinary terms, there may be nothing more British than fish and chips, more French than champagne, or more Jewish than matzah balls, but what foods are quintessentially European? Ostensibly, Europe is distinctive with respect to its geography, history and politics, but for many, European uniqueness can be flippantly summed up by the culturally kitsch Eurovision Song Contest. Yet even this most European of European cultural celebrations includes within its remit Russia, Turkey and Israel. Indeed, since 2015, Australia has taken part. One could also point to sport to see that the boundaries of Europe's premier international football competitions are almost as fuzzy. All this prompts a further question, where does the European end and the non-European begin?

Similarly, in Jewish terms, it is challenging to identify a uniquely European experience that all European Jews can claim as their own, or that is particular to European Jews alone. To take three of the most prominent examples—the *haskala*, the Holocaust and Communism—none stands up to scrutiny. The *haskala* (the Jewish enlightenment) started in Europe, but affected different European communities in different ways and its impact was felt far beyond Europe's geographical boundaries. The Holocaust happened in Europe, but affected different European communities in vastly different ways: for example, whereas Poland's Jewish population was largely decimated, in the UK the community remained largely untouched. Today, survivors and their descendants are

scattered across the globe, with the result that the Holocaust cannot be sensibly considered a uniquely European memory. Indeed, Holocaust commemoration has become a central facet of Jewish identity worldwide regardless of personal memory or background. And finally, communism, which had a devastating effect on several European Jewish communities, had little or no bearing on many others. Nor was it limited to Europe; its impact reached far beyond, touching countries and Jewish communities with no European association. So, whilst each of these events has shaped European Jewry in fundamental ways, European Jews cannot claim them as their unique historical experiences, any more than they share a uniquely European cultural background or food.

Lacking a singular historical commonality, is there a unique sense of shared destiny in Europe given that Europe's Jews are indelibly part of the European integrationist project? In other words, whilst their future is ultimately tied up with their 'host' societies', is it also tied up with the broader political unification project that the European Union symbolises? Even supposing this does elicit some commonly felt sense of destiny, it is again complicated by the fact that not all European countries are part of the unification programme (Norway, Switzerland, Russia) and, of course, even those that are can leave it (UK).

This leads us to consider something else that may be fundamentally unique to European Jews and their identity—infrastructure. Unlike in the United States or Israel, the world's two largest Jewish population centres, Europe's Jewish population is not coterminous with a single nation state. In both Israel and the US there are common Jewish institutions (governmental bodies in Israel, and federations and religious movements in the US), as well as collective approaches to Jewish political and communal representation. But the European experience is fundamentally different in this respect. The European Union does not represent European Jews, and although Jews in Europe can claim some pan-European bodies and initiatives, there is nothing in Europe that approaches the representational power and influence their American and Israeli coreligionists enjoy from such political and communal organisational structures. This distinction between population and nation state is therefore crucial when considering any notions of *European*

Jewish identity. Even so, while this multi-national component constitutes a uniquely European Jewish experience (at least when compared with the US and Israel—though not when contrasted with South America, for example) it is hardly a satisfying encapsulation of European Jewishness.

So, whilst it may be tempting, especially for Jewish leaders, to homogenise Europe, the reality is not so simple. There is considerable diversity and little or no framework around which a 'European Jewishness' can coalesce. Fundamentally, European Jews live in different countries, are immersed in different cultures, speak different languages, adhere to different legal codes and are subject to different political systems. Moreover, each European nation state and society approaches Jews and its relationship with 'its Jews' in unique ways, with some being considerably more welcoming and integrationist than others. Further, feelings of acceptance and national solidarity go hand in hand with each community's unique historical experience of each country. For some, such as the UK, most of the present community can trace its roots back several generations, but for others, such as Germany, the majority are either migrants or the children of migrants. As Jonathan Webber has commented, "As far as European Jews are concerned, easy generalisations are hard to come by."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, some commentators have argued that European Jews are less likely to resemble one another than they are to resemble the wider populations of the countries in which they live. Webber, for example, has claimed that "Jewish identities have always been dependent on the changing political structures and local attitudes of their host society."<sup>3</sup> Charles Liebman similarly argued that in Europe "in no instance does one find patterns of behaviour among Jews that differ markedly from patterns found in the general society."<sup>4</sup> Yet, without empirical data these contentions are very hard to prove. Is a defining

2 Webber, J. (ed.) (1994). *Jewish identities in the New Europe*. London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, p.6.

3 Ibid., p.9.

4 Liebman C.S. (2003). 'Jewish identity in Transition: Transformation or Attenuation?' Chapter 16 in Gitelman Z., Kosmin B. and Kovács A. (2003). *New Jewish Identities: Contemporary Europe and Beyond*. CEU Press, p.343.



feature of European Jews that their similarities lie less in their connections to one another, and more in their connections to their respective national populations?

If this is the case, we have a paradox. According to Webber, Europe's Jews are both "a series of locally defined peoples" and "a single people, with a common destiny, common identity and sense of purpose."<sup>5</sup> Such framing means that Jews see themselves as part of a *Jewish* collective at the same time as being part of, and embraced by, a series of independent nation states. Thus, whilst possibly claiming a common Jewish identity, they must simultaneously define themselves *contextually*, be it in Sweden (where *shechita* is prohibited), Britain (where Jewish schooling is state subsidised), France (where the concept of a Jewish people is 'unconstitutional'), or Italy (where membership of the Jewish community is enshrined in law.)<sup>6</sup> Each Jewish community must confront its own national situation on the unique terms presented to it. The fact that Jewish schooling is free in Britain is of no relevance to Jewish education in France. That *shechita* is proscribed in Sweden does not impact the availability of kosher meat in Italy. Yet Jewish education is no less important to French Jews and *kashrut* no less important to Swedish Jews.

Or is it? A key aim of this study is to unravel some of these complex relations and establish the significance, or otherwise, of national context with respect to local Jewish identity. The temptation to homogenise Europeans is pervasive and one can forgive Europe's Jewish leadership for believing in a shared European Jewish identity, if not destiny or history. Moreover, and importantly, such claims can be tested empirically to assess the extent to which they might be justified. For example, by juxtaposing the identity of European Jews with the identity of American or Israeli Jews, we can try to see what, if any, European distinctiveness arises. Further, we can examine Jewish identity in Europe on a country by country basis and discover what unites and what differentiates these

Jewish populations. Therefore, in the first section of this analysis we examine three regionally-specific datasets, one from each of America, Israel and Europe. Whilst there are some important methodological considerations that limit the extent to which comparisons can be drawn with this data (discussed below), we find that in some, but not all, respects, European Jewishness lies somewhere in between America and Israel. This section is followed by an assessment of the European dataset itself. However, first we explain the significance of having this dataset at all and detail why it represents a groundbreaking moment in the examination of European Jewish identity.

### A brief history of the study of European Jewish identity

Empirically grounded studies of European Jewry are few and far between, and one need not be a social scientist to understand why. Obtaining robust data on Jews is notoriously challenging in the best of circumstances, such as when the target population is well understood, readily accessible and speaks a common language.<sup>7</sup> The social and linguistic assortment that comprises Europe's Jewish population makes carrying out a national survey more complex by an order of magnitude. Indeed, it has long been assumed that the task was prohibitively expensive.<sup>8</sup> Even so, this report has not sprung out of nowhere and it is, in part, a result of the gradual maturation of the scientific study of European Jewry over the last generation or so, particularly following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent moves towards greater European integration marked, perhaps most notably, by the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993.

Initial attempts to understand Jewish identity in the newly unified Europe necessarily took the form of country-specific studies or more often, historical thought-pieces, occasionally gathered together into compendium sets offering what the Swedes might have called a *smörgåsbord*. One of these early *smörgåsbords* was devoted to *Jewish identities in the New Europe*, published in the tumult following the fall of the Berlin Wall. At the time, many scholars were questioning what this

5 Webber, *op. cit.*, p.7.

6 A legal arrangement exists in Italy between the Jewish community and the state by which Jews may freely affiliate. See further: DellaPergola S. and Staetsky L. D. (2015). *From Old and New Directions, Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among Jews in Italy*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

7 Hartman, H. (2016). Editor's introduction to the special issue on community studies, *Contemporary Jewry* 36:285-288.

8 Liebman *op. cit.*, p.342.



‘New Europe’ might mean for the identities of the Jews living there. However, this work is primarily a collection of opinion pieces with scant reference to, let alone use of, empirical data on Jewish identity, the book’s title notwithstanding.<sup>9</sup> In that sense, this early example achieved little more than a journalistic summary of Jewish identity, albeit underscored by a well-informed historical contextualisation. Yet without data, the idea of describing European Jewish identity through robust comparisons between different European countries is little more than just that – an idea.

Another work emerging in this period addressed Jewish identity only tangentially but was more data-oriented in doing so. In contrast to *New Europe*, Bernard Wasserstein presented a very different, and rather pessimistic, assessment of European Jewry. This too was mostly grounded in historical terms but did draw on demography in a somewhat abrupt and brief concluding set of afterthoughts. For Wasserstein, European Jewry had no future at all. “For the great majority of European Jews,” he commented, “particularly those living in the open societies of the west, where liberal values inevitably tend to draw them into an assimilative vortex, the prospects for collective survival are dim. [...] Demographic, social, religious, and cultural trends over the past half-century point inexorably towards the dissolution of the Diaspora, at any rate in Europe.”<sup>10</sup> But despite Wasserstein’s vehement claims, very little empirical data, and virtually none relating to Jewish identity, were drawn upon.

What was missing in the scholarship was an empirical basis of assessment, a fact recognised by the late American/Israeli scholar, Charles Liebman. Summing up another smörgåsbord of papers—*New Jewish identities: contemporary Europe and beyond*—he observed that of the fifteen papers it included, only three were based on data from a sample survey, and all three used

9 Webber, op. cit. Just three out of 24 articles are empirically grounded: Chapter 3 by DellaPergola, S. (‘An overview of the demographic trends of European Jewry’), Chapter 11 by Kovács, A. (‘Changes In Jewish identity in modern Hungary’) and Chapter 16 by Miller, S. H. (‘Religious practice in Jewish identity in a sample of London Jews’).

10 Wasserstein, B. (1996). *Vanishing Diaspora: The Jews in Europe since 1945*. London: Penguin Books, pp.280-82.

the same (British) dataset.<sup>11</sup> Though putting what amounted to a brave face on things, he acknowledged that this particular smörgåsbord was the best that could be created for drawing any kind of coherent picture of European Jewish identity at the time. “More often than not,” Liebman noted, “the authors have combined a variety of research methods. Purists will certainly question the scientific validity of many such studies, first because they are not easily replicable and secondly because they do rely heavily on the judgement of the authors.” He might have added that drawing meaningful comparisons between countries to contextualise the findings and comment on these ‘new Jewish identities’, was all but impossible. Thus, Liebman concluded, “at this stage in the study of Jewish identity, especially in Europe and most especially in Eastern Europe, this is the best that can be done,” accepting that “the nature of our knowledge is somewhat random and the gaps in our knowledge are great.”<sup>12</sup>

The problem was not simply the lack of an empirical bedrock upon which to draw out an analysis but also, almost no coordinated or coherent methodological approach. As the present author commented in 2004, “Demographers, sociologists and historians have each developed their own ways of analysing and summarising Jewish identity. This has produced a bewildering number of approaches with which to measure essentially the same thing [...]. A useful analogy is perhaps the Tower of Babel: with so many different ‘languages’ [being] spoken, it becomes almost impossible to draw up useful comparative conclusions.”<sup>13</sup>

Yet in some important respects, things were already beginning to change methodologically. In 2008, the American Joint Distribution Committee’s International Centre for Community Development (JDC-ICCD) commissioned the polling company, Gallup, to survey ‘Jewish leaders and opinion formers’ in four languages across 31 European countries. Whilst the sample was very small (N=251) and certainly not large enough to

11 Liebman op. cit.

12 Liebman op. cit., pp.342-3.

13 Graham, D. (2004). ‘European Jewish identity at the dawn of the 21st century: A working paper.’ London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.51. Report produced for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Hanadiv Charitable Foundation.

draw international comparisons, it demonstrated the real possibility of obtaining Europe-wide empirical data in a consistent fashion.<sup>14</sup> Presently in its third iteration,<sup>15</sup> this study does not constitute a Jewish population survey and cannot provide data about Jewish life in Europe beyond the opinions expressed by these ‘opinion formers’. Yet in the most recent round, we find some evidence among these leaders of what Anderson might have called an imagined European Jewish community.<sup>16</sup> As noted at the beginning of this introduction, these respondents confidently express a belief in ‘a European Jewish identity,’ as well as a strong desire to strengthen relationships between Europe’s Jewish communities. Moreover, they agree that “European Jewry has unique and valuable perspectives to share with the rest of world Jewry” and that European Jews have a “special responsibility towards one another.”<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, with no other empirical data to hand, one must wonder upon what it is these ‘opinion leaders’ are basing their opinions. Indeed, they themselves acknowledged this fundamental problem: “Most leaders admitted that their familiarity with, or direct knowledge of Jewish communities in other countries and organisations, was weak.”<sup>18</sup>

Another important development that has taken place in the field, and one that Charles Liebman would no doubt have approved, is the regional approach to surveying Jewish identity. Rather than apply the wide-scale, but ultimately attenuated, sampling strategy used in the leaders and opinion formers surveys, regional European studies allow for in-depth analysis, albeit limited to a specific set of countries within Europe that have some commonality. One early example of this was Lars

Dencik’s 1999-2002 study of intermarriage in three Scandinavian countries.<sup>19</sup>

However, the most significant regional study to date was *Identity à la carte* carried out in 2008-09.<sup>20</sup> It, too, was sponsored and managed by the American JDC’s International Centre for Community Development, and included JPR’s current Executive Director, Jonathan Boyd among its coordinators. It was conducted and analysed by the Hungarian social scientist, András Kovács, and arguably marked a step change in the approach taken to surveying European Jews. In many ways, it was a response (however unintentional) to the present author’s earlier charge about the constraining effect of the uncoordinated plethora of approaches being used in the empirical study of Jewish identity in Europe and the negative impact that this was having on advancing progress in the field.<sup>21</sup> The suggested solution would be a “pan-European survey,” of between “five and eight European cities containing significant numbers of Jews and [to] carry out parallel surveys in [each of] them.”<sup>22</sup> Such a survey would, in one stroke, synthesise the multiplicity of approaches that had been used to understand European Jewish identity to date. This is what *Identity à la carte* became.

Focusing on Jews aged 18 to 55 living principally in the capital cities of five East European countries—Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Romania—the same survey instrument was used to gather data on communities which commentators might otherwise have been tempted to broad-brush. The advantages of such an approach compared with what had gone before are immediately obvious when we look at the data. By examining countries side-by-side, we see both variation and commonality in Jewish identity. In this way, a contextualised picture of identity can be developed. To take one example, *Identity à la carte*’s authors were simultaneously able to state that “in all five countries Jewishness tended to manifest itself in the form of ethno-cultural

14 Gallup (2009). The European Jewish leaders and opinion formers survey. Analytical report.

15 JDC International Centre for Community Development (2012). Second survey of European Jewish leaders and opinion formers, 2011; JDC International Centre for Community Development (2016). Third survey of European Jewish leaders and opinion formers, 2015.

16 Anderson, Benedict (1991; originally 1983). *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.

17 JDC International Centre for Community Development (2016), op. cit., p.7., p.24.

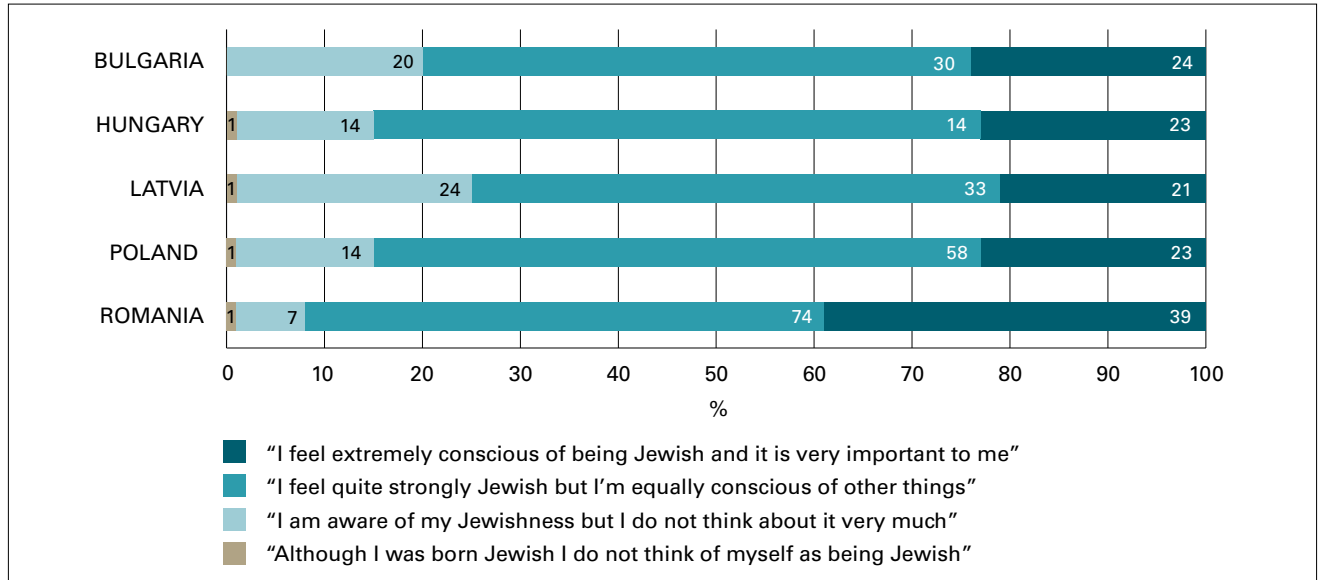
18 Ibid. p.24.

19 Dencik, L. (2003). ‘Kosher and Christmas tree: on marriages between Jews and Non-Jews in Sweden, Finland and Norway.’ Roskilde University, Denmark.

20 JDC International Centre for Community Development (2011). *Identity à la carte: Research on Jewish identities, participation and affiliation in five Eastern European countries*.

21 Graham op. cit., p.13.

22 Graham op. cit., p51

Exhibit from: *Identity à la carte: Perceptions of Jewishness by country (%)*

Source: Kovács, A. (2011) *Identity à la carte*, Figure 16, p.22.

markers rather than observance of religious practices,”<sup>23</sup> but they also noted that Jews in Romania were considerably more likely to exhibit strong Jewish consciousness than Jews living in the other countries whose scores were rather similar on this measure.

Underlining the significance of this project, Barry Kosmin wrote, “The successful completion of this research project can be regarded as a minor academic triumph. It needs to be recognised that this type of multi-national and multi-lingual research is a complicated organisational challenge. In addition, anyone who has tried to survey respondents in small Central and Eastern European Jewish communities knows how difficult it is to get co-operation and usable responses from potential respondents.”<sup>24</sup>

Here then, we see for the first time the emergent possibilities of a multi-national approach to the study of European Jewish identity. Yet regional examples are few and far between in Europe, and it is of little wonder that those surveyed in the Jewish leaders’ study continue to acknowledge that their understanding of other European Jewish communities is limited.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Identity

23 JCD ICCD (2011), *op. cit.*, p.7.

24 Kosmin, B. A. (2011). Chapter 11 ‘Comments on JDC Identity à la carte Report by academic advisors), in JCD ICCD (2011), p.42.

25 JCD ICCD (2011), *op. cit.*, p.24.

à la carte must be seen as a prototype of what the 2012 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey has since made a reality—an in-depth, Europe-wide survey of Jewish identity utilising the same questionnaire. FRA 2012 represented the ongoing maturation of a field, taking our ability to explore and understand European Jewish identity to yet another level. Arguably, it is the Internet that has facilitated this possibility by making the ‘prohibitively expensive’ just plain old expensive. But it is also important to recognise that the FRA survey was not initiated by Jewish leaders—European or otherwise. On the contrary, it took an EU agency, with its considerable financial resources, to invest in a large-scale, pan-European study of Jewish people’s perceptions and experiences of antisemitism. Nevertheless, its results are clear. With the genesis of this survey, which included multiple questions on Jewish identity, we have moved well beyond the smörgåsbord approach to understanding European Jews collectively. With the FRA data, we are finally in a position where it is possible to directly contextualise different communities in a meaningful, consistent and transparent way. The 2012 survey demonstrates what can be achieved in the empirical study of European Jewry, making possible the analysis presented in this very report.

### The FRA 2012 survey

Unlike the Jewish leadership survey and *Identity à la carte*, the FRA 2012 study did

not originate in a European Jewish context. Indeed, the survey was not even focused on the topic of Jewish identity, although that was an important sub-dimension. As mentioned, it originated from within the machinery of the European Union through its Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). The FRA advises EU institutions and Member States on issues related to discrimination, violence and harassment, whether that is based on age, gender, disability or ethnic background and, as such, researches and promotes the rights of vulnerable groups across the EU. This remit led the Agency in 2011 to put to tender a survey to examine Jewish people's perceptions and experiences of antisemitism. This was won by JPR working together with the international research agency, Ipsos. In doing so, JPR argued that it was essential that data on Jewish identity were collected as part of the survey in order to properly understand the relationship between Jewish identity and antisemitism. Thus, the Jewish identity data presented here are almost a by-product of a survey which was carried out for rather different reasons.

Indeed, JPR's research team, which was convened for the purposes of conducting the survey and which included several scholars mentioned in

this review, was very aware of the potential opportunity this endeavour might more generally afford the field of social scientific research into European Jewry. Hence it worked with the FRA to ensure that the research instrument captured detailed information about Jewish identity that was consistent with other Jewish communal surveys. The result is the first truly European-wide Jewish community survey applying a consistent sampling strategy, using the same survey instrument, in multiple languages across multiple countries, all at the same time.<sup>26</sup> It is not only difficult to imagine whether anything like this has been carried out in the past; one cannot seriously imagine how anything like this could have been carried out in the past.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, aside from the significant contribution FRA 2012 has made to combating antisemitism across Europe, it has also enabled us to examine European Jewish identity, and to contextualise it both on a country by country basis and against the major Jewish blocs in America and Israel, helping to drive policy-making forward in its wake. The Jewish leaders and opinion makers noted earlier who had bemoaned their weak knowledge of other European Jewish communities can now begin to fill in the gaps with robust and meaningful information.

26 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2013). *Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. See Methodological Appendix pp.69-75.

27 At the time of writing (2018), JPR and Ipsos MORI had won a second contract to repeat the 2012 study, this time encompassing 13 EU Member States.

## Demographic profile of the European sample

The full sample contains 5,919 Jewish respondents aged 16 and above living in nine European states. Collectively, over one million Jewish people live in these countries or 70% of Europe's estimated 1.4 million Jews (Table 1). However, the population, and therefore the sample, are not evenly distributed across the continent. Almost half the population (47%) lives in France alone and this country was notably under-sampled (20%), whereas the smallest populations were oversampled.<sup>28</sup> Due to the small sample size from Romania (N=67), data for that country are not presented separately in this report, but are included in sample totals and, where relevant, as part of subsets (such as Eastern Europe).

As with most Jewish populations, the sample is highly urbanised, with over half (56%) the respondents living in just six cities/urban regions across Europe: London, Paris, Stockholm, Budapest, Brussels and Rome. Paris and London account for over one in four respondents in the total sample (28%) but almost half (47%) the actual population.<sup>29</sup>

Bearing in mind that respondents are aged 16 years and above, the oldest population is in Latvia (average age of 57 years) and the youngest populations are in Hungary and Germany (both with an average age of 49 years) (Figure 1). Comparisons with UK census data

Table 1. Size of sample relative to core Jewish population by country

Country	FRA sample		Core Jewish population estimate*	
	Number of respondents (age 16 and above)	Proportion of total sample	Number of people (all ages)	Proportion of total population
UK	1,468	25%	291,000	28%
France	1,193	20%	480,000	47%
Sweden	811	14%	15,000	1.5%
Italy	650	11%	28,200	2.7%
Germany	609	10%	119,000	12%
Hungary	529	9%	48,200	5%
Belgium	438	7%	30,000	2.9%
Latvia	154	3%	6,200	0.6%
Romania	67	1%	9,500	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,919</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,027,100</b>	<b>100%</b>

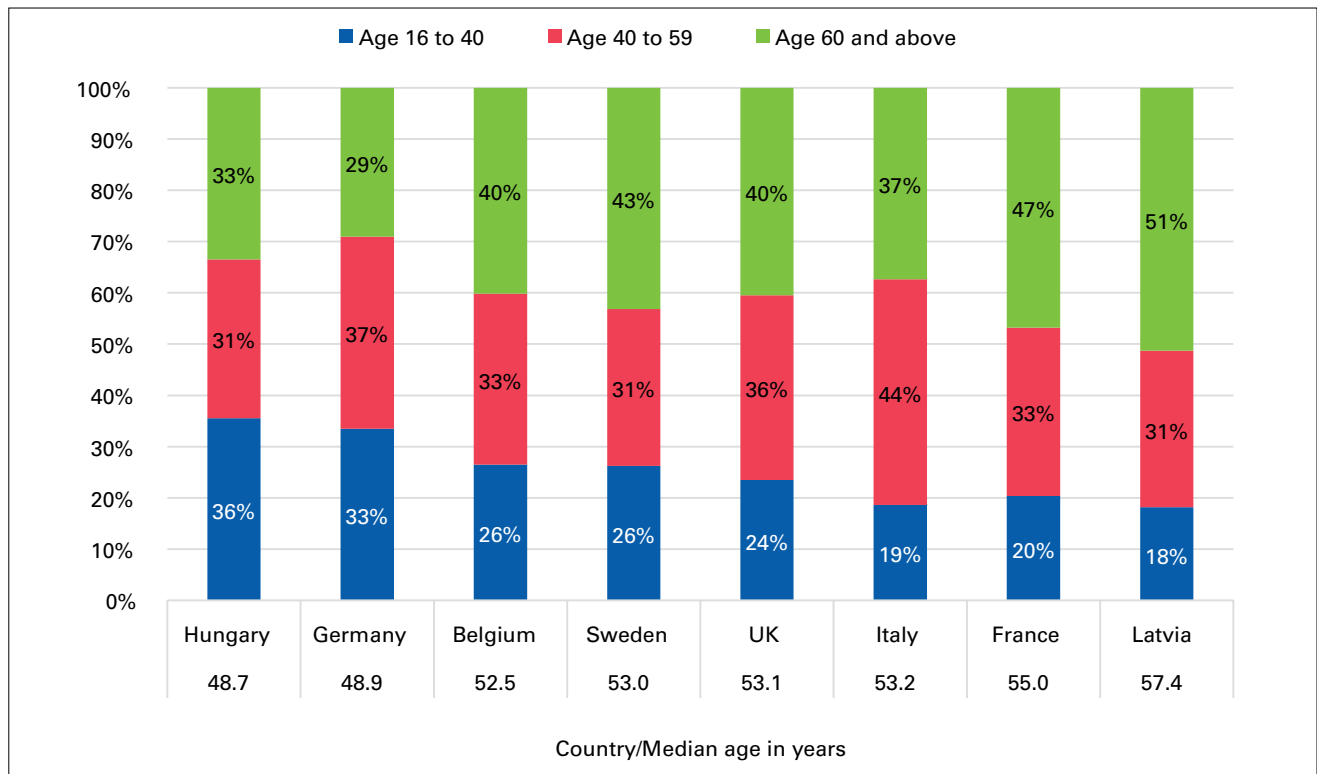
\* The core Jewish population includes those people who, when asked, identify themselves as Jews, or, if the respondent is a different person in the same household, are identified by him/her as Jews; and do not have another religion. This also includes people with Jewish parents who claim no current religious or ethnic identity. Source: Dashefsky A., DellaPergola S., and Sheskin I., 2013, World Jewish Population 2012, Berman Jewish Data Bank, p.60 (report derives from chapter 6 of the 2012 American Jewish Year Book).

28 In an attempt to assess the statistical importance of this skew, weights were applied to the data using World Jewish Population 2012 figures as a baseline. The effect of these weights was to make the sample more religiously engaged overall, though not to a great extent. For example, 'Light candles most Friday nights' rose from 46% to 48%. The greatest difference in absolute and percentage point terms was on

'Keep kosher at home,' which rose from 30% to 37%. Yet even this would not have changed the conclusion of the global contextualisation where weighting was most likely to be statistically relevant. Therefore, it was decided to use unweighted data throughout the analysis.

29 Dashefsky, A., DellaPergola, S., Sheskin, I. (2012). World Jewish Population 2012, p.25.

Figure 1. Age structure by country, ordered by median age\*



\* Average age is estimated based on the mid-point of the 5-year age cohorts used in the questionnaire.

suggest some of these figures may overstate the average age.<sup>30</sup>

It is also apparent that men were oversampled compared with women. Overall, 57% of respondents were male and 43% were female, but given that women generally live longer than men and the sample excludes children under 16, the sample bias towards men is quite substantial. For example, Britain's 2011 Census indicates that 52% of Jews aged 16 and above is female compared with 42% in the UK sample.<sup>31</sup> With the notable exceptions of Sweden (51% female) and Latvia (55% female), more men were sampled in each country than women. In the case of Belgium, the male skew was as high as 64%.

30 The 2011 UK census indicates the FRA sample significantly undersampled younger Jews and oversampled older Jews. The census (age 15 years and above) compared with the sample (age 16 years and above) is as follows: 15-40: 36% v 24%; 40-59: 29% v 36%; 60+: 34% v 40%. (Source: ONS 2011 Census Tables DC2107EW; NRS 2011 Census Tables DC2107SC).

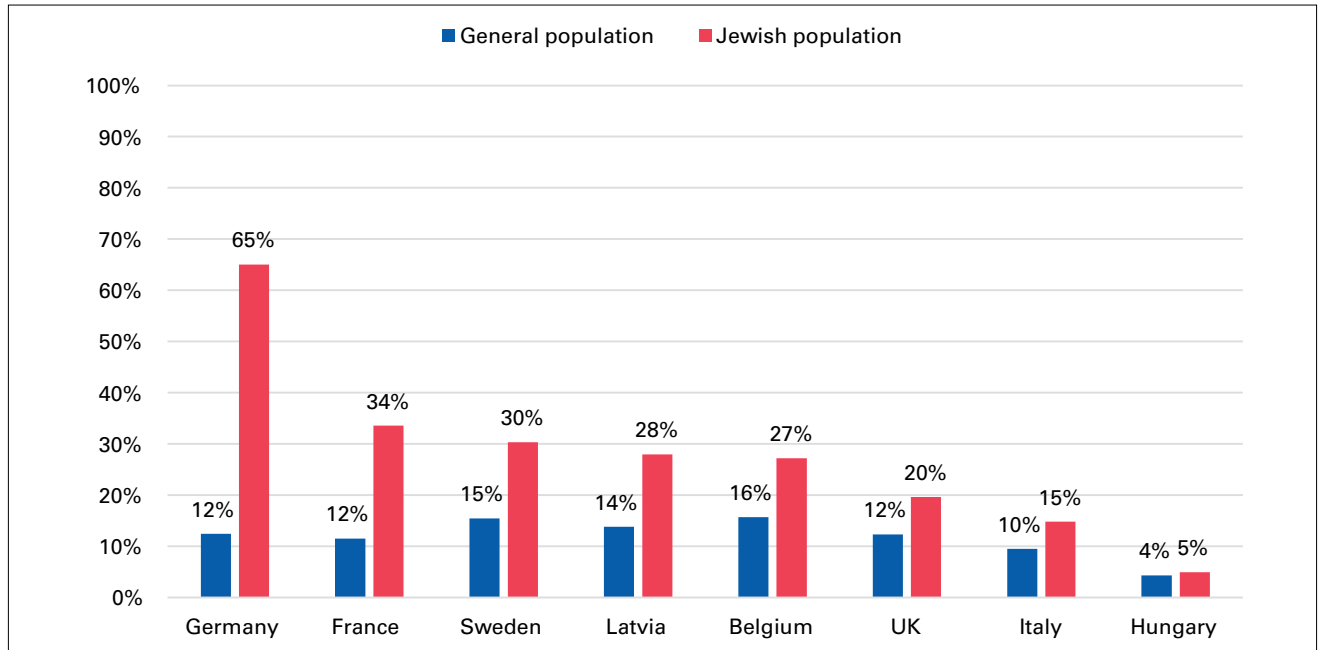
31 Source: ONS 2011 Census Tables DC2107EW, NRS DC2107SC.

When examining the population of a country, it is important to recognise that not everyone will be *from* that country. And whilst migrants invariably take on at least some habits and cultural traits of the 'native' population, it is also the case that the native population itself is changed by the migrants. This is no less true of Jewish populations, if not more so, given that the tumultuous history of the Jews of Europe has been marked by considerable population movement. Furthermore, migration is a zero-sum game: one community's loss is another's gain, so whilst a Jewish community may be 'boosted' by the arrival of migrants, that inevitably means another community has been depleted by the loss.

Historically, much European Jewish migration has been driven by desperation, with Jews fleeing oppression, danger and victimisation, but in more recent times the drivers have tended to be rather more prosaic, such as economic and lifestyle preferences. Whilst many Jews left Europe altogether, the focus here is on those who migrated to or within Europe. Among the general populations of the EU countries in this study, 12% of people (of any age) were born in a different



Figure 2. Foreign-born population by country, general and Jewish population\*



Source for general population: Eurostat 2014. Non-national population by group of citizenship and foreign-born population by country of birth, 1 January 2013 YB14 II.png

\* Note the general figures include all age groups, whereas the sample includes people aged 16 and above

country to the one in which they currently reside. But among Jews in those countries the proportion is more than twice this level (27% for all those aged 16 and above). Evidently, Jews are far more likely to be foreign-born than the general EU populations.<sup>32</sup> This is the case in every country examined, although there is significant variation (Figure 2).<sup>33</sup>

Germany has by far the largest proportionate foreign-born Jewish population in the sample. The FRA data suggest fully two out of three respondents (65%) in Germany were born abroad. Of these, about half (47%) were born in another European country, 13% were born in Israel and over a quarter (28%) were born in Russia or former Soviet countries. The large Russian Jewish population in Germany is a direct result of the Federal Government plan which, in 1991, adopted

a 'quota refugee' policy (the Kontingentflüchtling) aimed at encouraging Jews from the former Soviet Union to migrate there.<sup>34</sup> Whilst a majority of Jews from the FSU chose to emigrate to the US and Israel, many chose to move to Germany instead, often rejecting the option of Israel because they viewed it as "rife with negative features such as violence, insecurity, [a] harsh climate, unemployment and an unwelcoming reception of immigrants,"<sup>35</sup> and seeing Germany, by contrast, as a wealthy, comfortable alternative. Larissa Remmenick characterises Jews who chose to migrate to Germany over Israel as 'pragmatists', compared to those who chose Israel over Germany as 'idealists'.<sup>36</sup> As a result of the government ruling, 220,000 people came to Germany from Russia within the framework of 'Jewish immigration'. About 50 per cent of these people were 'Jewish according to religious criteria', the

32 The fact that children under 16 are not included in the FRA data should not make too much difference since this age group is far less likely to migrate than older age groups.

33 2011 Census data for England and Wales indicate that 19% of Jews were born outside the UK. This compares favourably with the FRA data indicating 20% are foreign-born, thereby providing some additional level of confidence in this set of figures (ONS 2011 Census Table CT0283).

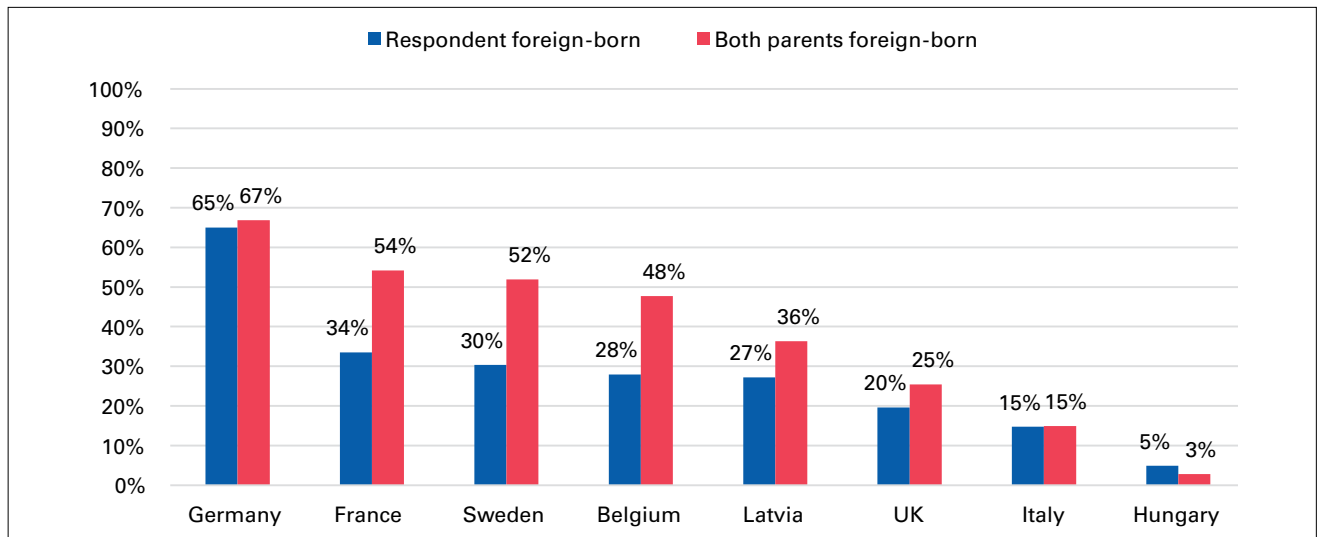
34 Axelrod, T. (2013). Jewish life in Germany: Achievements, challenges and priorities since the collapse of communism. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.10.

35 Remennick, L. (2005) 'Idealists headed to Israel, pragmatics chose Europe. Identity dilemmas and social incorporation among former Soviet Jews who migrated to Germany.' *Immigrants & Minorities*, 23:1, pp.30-58.

36 *Ibid*, pp.45-46.



Figure 3. Proportion of sample that is foreign-born and proportion with two foreign-born parents by country



rest being people of Jewish descent or non-Jewish spouses of Jews.<sup>37</sup>

In proportionate terms, France has the second highest (but surely the largest absolute) foreign-born Jewish population. Here, one in three people (34%) was born outside the country and most of these people (three-quarters) were born outside of Europe (and Israel and the United States) altogether. This is primarily a result of the mass migration of Jews to France towards the end of North African French colonialism, from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria during the 1950s and 1960s. This, as Erik Cohen has put it, 'revitalised' a community that was still recovering from the Holocaust and Nazi occupation.<sup>38</sup> As we shall see, this migration, as well as that to Germany, dramatically shaped the Jewish communities in both countries.

Jewish migrants also constitute a large proportion of Sweden's Jewish population (30%). According to Lars Dencik, this group doubled in size between the Second World War and the year 2000, primarily because of the migration of Holocaust survivors.<sup>39</sup> The large wave of Jewish migration from Poland (c. 2,000) into Sweden in the late

1960s was particularly significant.<sup>40</sup> However, for some countries in this study, migration causes population decline rather than growth, the other side of the zero-sum migration equation. Although not directly measured by the survey, both Latvia and Hungary have experienced significant Jewish population losses as a result of migration, further attesting to the differential impact of migration on each of the countries being examined. In Latvia, Bella Zisere<sup>41</sup> notes significant out-migration, especially to Israel, in the early 1990s after the fall of communism, and in Hungary, András Kovács and Aletta Forrás-Biró note two waves of out-migration, first from 1945 to 1948 and then again from 1956 to 1957, which, together, saw approximately 60,000 to 75,000 Jews leave the country.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, focusing on the birthplace of the respondent may be misleading, especially if the major migratory waves took place over a generation ago. Looking instead at the proportion of respondents with two foreign-born parents, we find that in France and Sweden over half of the population descends directly from foreign stock (54% and 52% respectively) and in Belgium this is

37 Axelrod, op. cit., pp.10-12. Note this policy was tightened in 2005.

38 Cohen, E. H. (2009). The Jews of France at the turn of the third millennium: A sociological and cultural analysis Ibid p.20.

39 Dencik, L. (2003). 'Jewishness in postmodernity: The case of Sweden,' in: Gitleman, et. al., p.80.

40 Dencik, L. (2002). Jewishness in postmodernity: The case of Sweden, Paideia Report, p14

41 Zisere, Bella (2005). 'Jewish community and identity in post-communist Latvia,' European Judaism, Vol. 38, No. 2, Autumn 2005.

42 Kovács, A. and Forrás-Biró, A. (2011). Jewish life in Hungary: Achievements, challenges and priorities since the collapse of communism. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.7.

the case for almost half (48%) of the respondents (Figure 3). By contrast, in the UK and Italy not only are foreign-born respondents relatively rare but so too are respondents with foreign-born parents, indicating that a majority of these Jewish populations has been present in these countries for multiple generations.

Thus, the movement of Jews is not just in to and (predominately) out of Europe, but also between various European countries. Overall, countries

have experienced one of three migratory models: those where the migratory history has been demographically positive (Germany, France, Sweden, Belgium); those where it has been demographically negative (Hungary, Latvia); and those where migration has effectively had a neutral (net-zero) effect (the UK and Italy). These differences inevitably play into the various Jewish landscapes we find today, and contribute towards the rich tapestry of Jewishness found across the continent.

## Section 1: Europe in global context

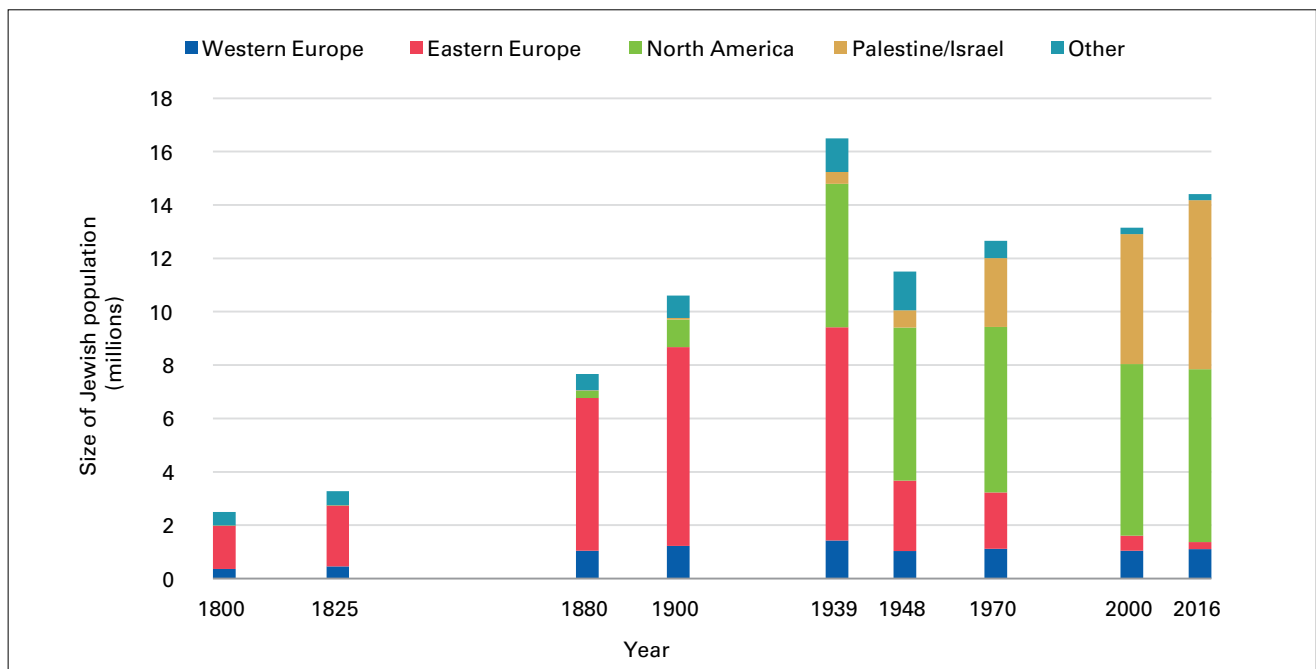
At the dawn of the Second World War, about 60% of the global Jewish population lived in Europe. By the end of the twentieth century, that proportion stood at just 12% and the global picture had changed beyond recognition (Figure 4). Europe had “receded to the margins of the Jewish world”<sup>43</sup> and a new bimodal structure had developed around Israel and the United States.<sup>44</sup> Whilst the demographic picture in Western Europe had been one of relative stability, in Eastern Europe it was one of devastation. The Holocaust, as well as the mass migration of Jews from the former Soviet Union in the decade following the fall of Communism, reduced Eastern European Jewry to barely a shadow of what it had been in 1939.

By 2012, the year in which the FRA survey took place, there were 1.4 million Jews in Europe, including just over one million in the nine countries it surveyed: Belgium, France, Germany,

Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom. By contrast, there were 5.6 million Jews living in Israel and 5.4 million Jews living in the United States.<sup>45</sup> Thus, in drawing comparisons between these three populations, or groupings, we are, in theory, exploring the Jewish identity of a global sample representing 12.4 million Jewish people, or 90% of world Jewry.

Before we examine the data, an important caveat must be acknowledged which limits the extent to which conclusions can be drawn when comparing these datasets. Whilst the American and Israeli surveys were carried out by the same organisation employing stratified random sampling techniques (with telephone interviews in the US and face-to-face interviews in Israel) as well as the same, or very similar, questionnaires, the FRA survey used a totally different sampling methodology due to the impossibility of drawing a random sample.<sup>46</sup>

Figure 4. World Jewish population by major region, 1800 to present



Source: adapted from data provided by Sergio DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Personal Communication, 14.05.2017)

43 Webber, op. cit., p.14.

44 DellaPergola, S. (2000). ‘World Jewish Population,’ American Jewish Committee (AJC).

45 Dashefsky, A., DellaPergola, S., Sheskin, I. (2012). World Jewish Population 2012, p.60. All figures relate to the ‘core’ Jewish population in 2012.

46 See FRA (2013), op. cit., pp.69-70 for a detailed description of the methodological approach taken to this study.

The European survey was based on an open web approach and was targeted at people who were already on lists held by Jewish organisations and other relevant outlets. Such an approach cannot produce a random sample and is likely to sample a narrower and more engaged Jewish population than either of the Pew studies. Comparisons are further complicated by the fact that Jewish identity questions in the FRA questionnaire were included based on previous work carried out in Europe, and although comparisons can be drawn with the US and Israel material, differences in the wording and formatting of questions mean that any conclusions drawn are ultimately tentative. Where applicable, these differences are indicated in the notes to each comparative chart presented. Nevertheless, all three studies were quantitative and several identity questions do overlap, presenting an intriguing opportunity to draw meaningful comparisons that, whilst tentative, are scientifically reasonable and valuable, not least because such an exercise has not been possible at all in the past.

### **Jewish identity in Europe, Israel and the United States compared**

Jewish identity is a personal, subjective and socially defined attribute which can be characterised both quantitatively and qualitatively. Here the focus is firmly quantitative, not least because of the advantages it affords in terms of investigations based on national, continental and global scales. We can use statistics to characterise the complexities and subtleties of Jewish identity, and, in the present example, investigate whether there is something uniquely European about the identity of Europe's Jews. To do so, it is necessary not only to identify similarities between them in order to characterise that identity (as is the focus of Section 2), but also to demonstrate whether, and how, it is distinctive from Jewish identities beyond Europe. Both tasks are extremely challenging and the majority of this report is devoted to the former, i.e. the examination of Jewish identity between different European communities.

However, we also have an opportunity to address the latter, i.e. to contrast Europe, the bloc, with other Jewish blocs in Israel and the United States. This is empirically possible due to two contemporaneous surveys, both carried out by the Pew Research Center,<sup>47</sup> presenting unparalleled

circumstances to globally contextualise European Jewish identity.

The key question is, what, if anything, can be discerned that is distinctively 'European' about Jewish identity in Europe when compared with other significant Jewish blocs? To investigate this question, we start with four indicators of Jewish practice: attendance at a Passover seder, synagogue attendance, Friday night (Sabbath) candle lighting, and keeping kosher at home (Figure 5).<sup>48</sup>

Two points stand out: first, taking the data at face value (see important caveats above), a consistent pattern is exhibited whereby Jews in Israel are more likely to observe each of the four practices than European and American Jews, and Jews in the United States are the least likely to observe each of the practices. Europe lies somewhere in between these two major blocs, sometimes closer to Israel (synagogue attendance and candle lighting) and sometimes closer to America (Passover seder attendance and keeping kosher). Second, and statistically more compelling, the ordering of the four Jewish behavioural traits is similar, though not identical, in each bloc. For example, Passover seder is the most commonly observed practice and weekly synagogue attendance is the least commonly observed practice in each bloc. In other words, patterns of Jewish practice appear to be similar across each bloc but the intensity of observance varies considerably. In summary, there is some tentative evidence here that Jewish behaviour exhibits a consistent global pattern, but that Jews in Israel are more observant, Jews in the US are less observant, and Jews in Europe are somewhere between these two poles.

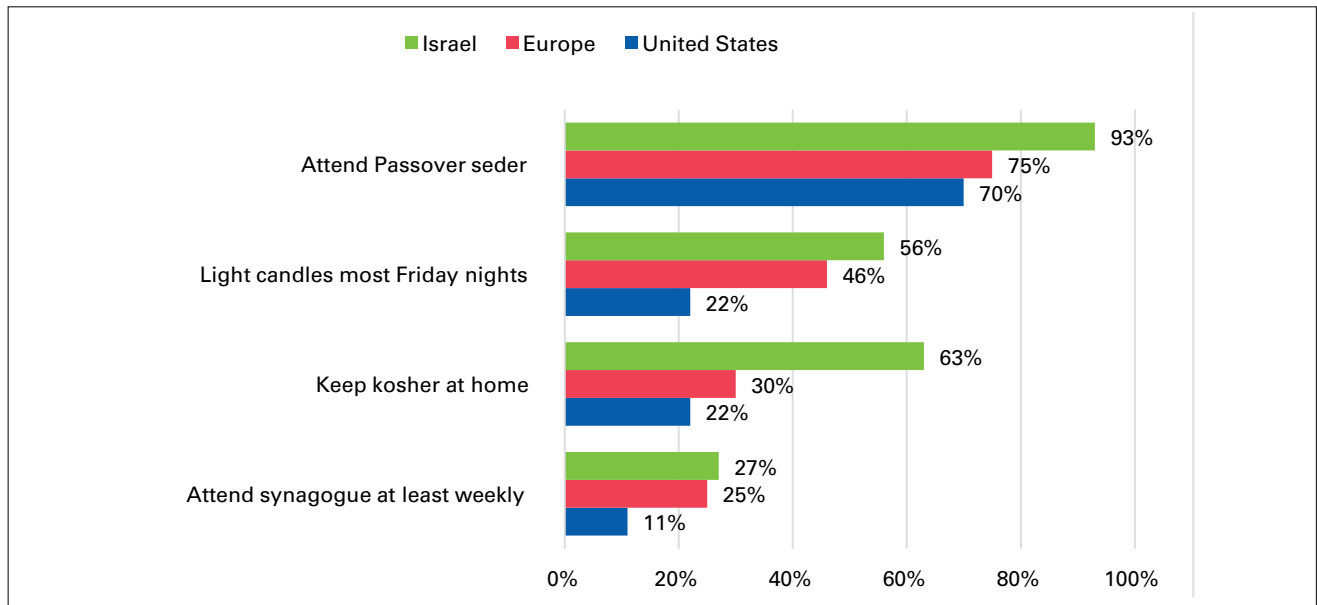
It is tempting to consider why we might see these patterns. We find that Passover seder participation is almost universal in Israel, whereas Europe is closer to the United States by this measure. This

*Survey of U.S. Jews*; Pew Research Center (2016), *Israel's religiously divided society*.

48 A Passover seder is a festive meal and associated rituals observed by many Jews during the festival of Passover (Pesach), typically celebrated in the home; on Shabbat (the Sabbath), candles are traditionally lit at its commencement just before sunset on Friday evenings; the term 'kosher' refers to Jewish dietary laws, such as the prohibition against eating certain types of animal and the separation of dairy and meat products.

47 Pew Research Center (2013). *A Portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center*

Figure 5. Comparison of various indicators of Jewish practice in Europe, Israel and the United States\*



\*Notes on question wording: Pew (US) “Last Passover, did you hold or attend a seder (SAY-der), or not?” p.182; FRA (Europe) “Which of the following Jewish practices, if any, do you personally observe? Attend Passover Seder most or all years”; Pew (Israel) “Attended Seder last Passover” p.110; Pew (US) “Aside from special occasions like weddings, funerals and bar mitzvahs (MITS-vas), how often do you attend Jewish religious services at a synagogue, temple, minyan (MIN-yin) or Havurah (hah-vu-RAH)? More than once a week, Once a week, p.178; FRA (Europe) “Which of the following Jewish practices, if any, do you personally observe? Attend synagogue weekly or more often”; Pew (Israel) “Attend synagogue weekly or more.” p.26; Pew (US) “Do you keep kosher in your home, or not?” p.182; FRA (Europe) “Which of the following Jewish practices, if any, do you personally observe? Eat only kosher meat at home”; Pew (Israel) “% of Israeli Jews who say they keep kosher in their home” p.106; Pew (US) “How often, if at all, does anyone in your household light Sabbath candles on Friday night? Always (every week), Usually, p.181; FRA “Which of the following Jewish practices, if any, do you personally observe? Light candles most Friday nights”; Pew (Israel) “Always/usually light the Sabbath candles” p.104. Source: Pew (US) 2013, pp.178, 181, 182; Pew (Israel) 2016, pp.26, 104, 106, 110.

is also the case with keeping kosher at home, where, again, Israel is far out in front. It could be argued that, in both cases, the Jewish state impacts identity more directly, potentially skewing the data—Passover becomes a national holiday and most supermarkets/butchers are kosher, if not by licence then by default. But when personal choice plays a greater role—in terms of synagogue attendance and the religious ritual of Friday night (Sabbath) candle lighting—Europe’s greater level of Jewish commitment shines through and it moves closer to Israel than to the US. The conclusion may be tentative but on average, this evidence suggests that Jews in the US arguably lag behind the rest of the world in terms of their commitment to Jewish practice.

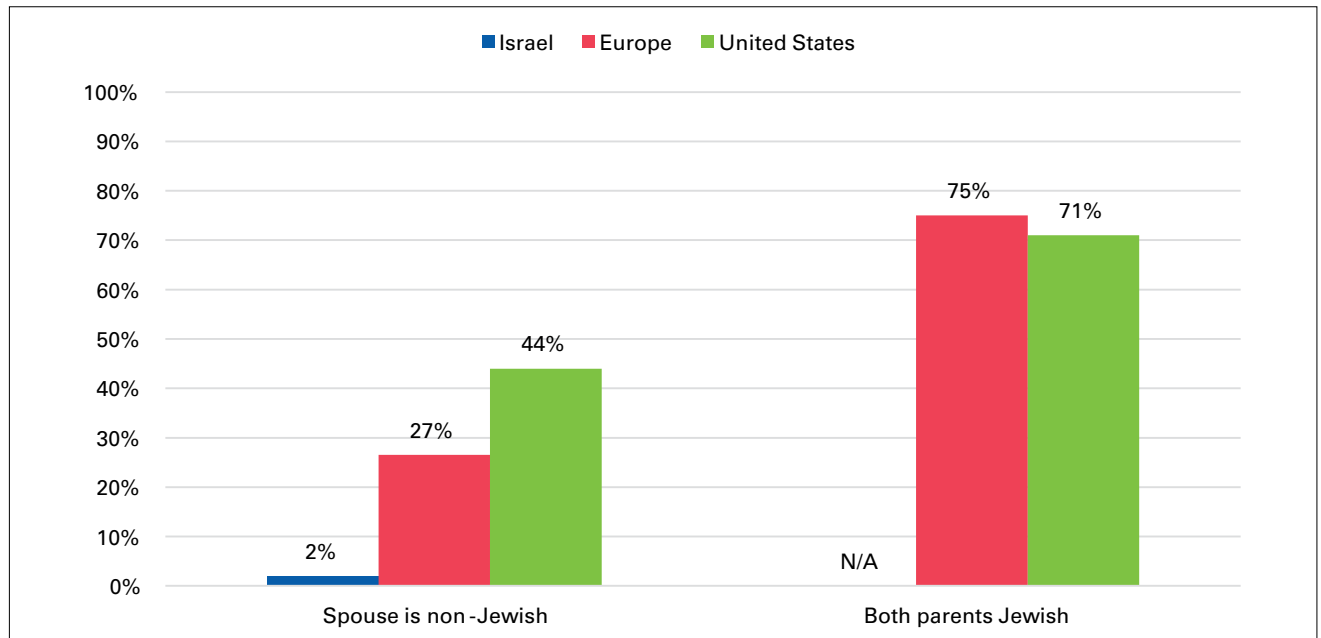
As with kosher food, so too with marriage partners. Inter-marriage between Jews and non-Jews is, unsurprisingly, very rare in Israel, whereas FRA data indicate 27% of currently married European respondents have a non-Jewish spouse, compared with 44% of American respondents (Figure 6). Thus, putting Israel aside, the data indicate that inter-marriage is far more prevalent

in the United States than in Europe. Whilst it is entirely possible that the nature of sampling in the FRA study suppresses the true level of inter-marriage in Europe, census data from the UK (the second largest European sample) strongly suggest that levels there are indeed far below those in the US.<sup>49</sup> Despite this, separate data (not available from Israel) indicate that European Jews were only slightly more likely than their American counterparts to report having two Jewish parents.

The three datasets also present an opportunity to compare Jewish beliefs across the three populations. We are able to examine attitudes towards Holocaust remembrance, upholding moral and ethical behaviour and supporting Israel (Figure 7). As with the behavioural indicators (Figure 5), the relative item ordering of these ethnocentric indicators within each bloc is the same: Holocaust remembrance first, followed

49 See Graham, D. (2016). *Jews in couples: Marriage, inter-marriage, cohabitation and divorce in Britain*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, pp.15-18.

Figure 6. Prevalence of intermarriage and Jewish parentage in Europe, Israel and the United States\*



\*Question wording: FRA “Which of the following categories BEST describes you and your family? Jewish by birth”; Pew (US only\*) “Thinking about your parents, which if either of them were Jewish – your mother, your father, both your mother and father, or neither your mother nor your father?” p.184.

Source: Pew US pp.9,184; Pew 2016 pp.210

by ethical behaviour and lastly, supporting Israel. We therefore see again that patterns of Jewish identity are repeated globally, but as with Jewish behaviour, there are differences in the levels of intensity with which each of these attitudinal items are held. However, in contrast to Jewish practice, where Israel was the more ‘observant’ bloc, Jews in Israel score more *weakly* than Jews in the two Diaspora blocs on these ethnocentric indicators.

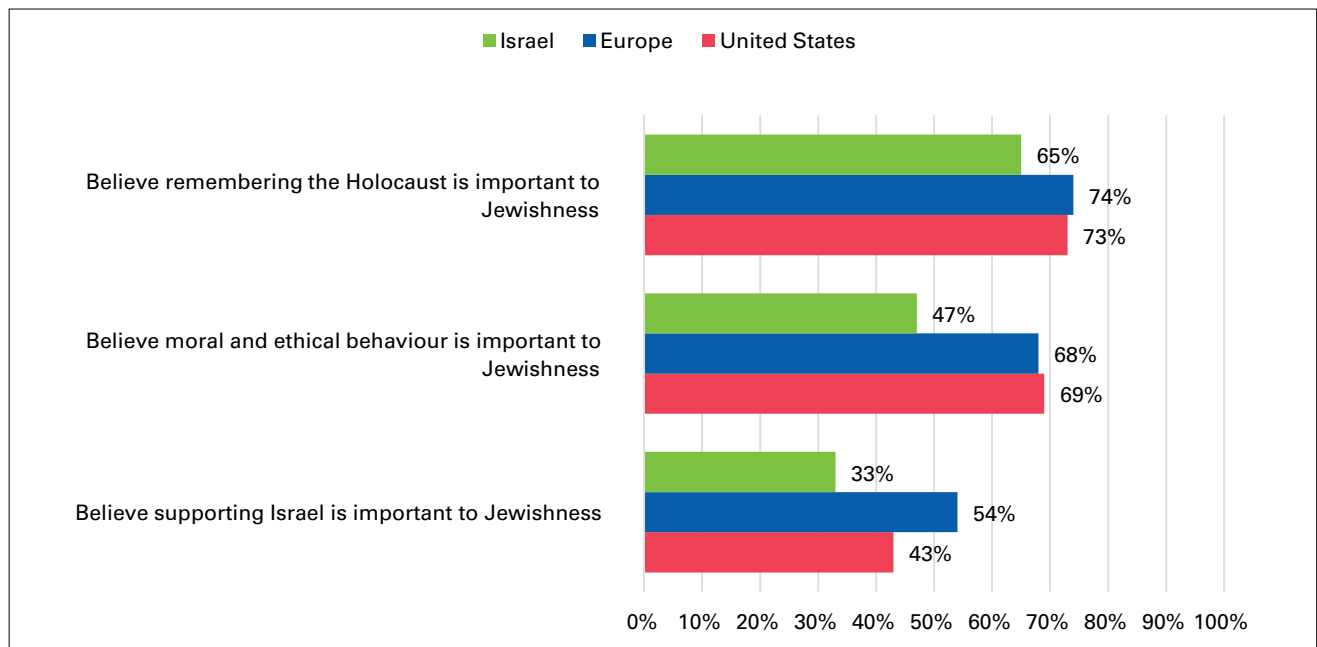
In terms of Holocaust remembrance, Europe and the United States stand shoulder to shoulder, with Israel being somewhat adrift. As discussed in the introduction to this report, the Holocaust cannot be claimed as a uniquely European Jewish memory; rather, it has become a central facet of Jewish identity for all Jews everywhere and here we see some empirical data underpinning this assessment. Although statistically the difference is modest, it is notable that Holocaust remembrance seems stronger in the Diaspora than in Israel. Given that Israel has the largest population of Holocaust survivors, the world’s most important Holocaust museum and research centre (*Yad Vashem*), and a longstanding annual national day of commemoration (*Yom HaShoah*) enshrined in Israeli law, we might have expected the reverse

to be the case. The data cannot tell us why, but speculatively, it may reflect a defensive posture on the part of the Diaspora, whereby Holocaust remembrance is more likely to be denigrated or downplayed than in Israel, with the result that its significance is enhanced in the eyes of Diaspora Jews.

The same pattern is evident with respect to belief in the importance of ‘moral and ethical’ behaviour to Jewishness. Europe and America are very similar in this respect and Israel is positioned far behind. Although the data are again unable to explain why, this may reflect fundamental differences in the way Jewish identity is constructed in Israel versus the Diaspora. Jewishness in Israel is inevitably informed by national identity (like Britishness is for British people) and as such, it is less likely to incorporate particular value systems in the way that religious and ethnic identities tend to do.

Finally, all three groupings view ‘supporting Israel’ as the least important of these three attitudinal ethnocentric markers that can be directly compared. What is most notable is that Israeli respondents were by far the *least* likely to believe that supporting Israel was

Figure 7. Comparison of Jewish beliefs about the Holocaust, ethical behaviour and the significance of Israel in Europe, Israel and the United States



Notes: Pew (US) "Please tell me how important each of the following is to what BEING JEWISH means to you. Caring about Israel, % reporting Essential part of what BEING JEWISH means to you, p.169, FRA "How important, if at all, are the following items to your sense of Jewish identity? Supporting Israel, % reporting Very important; Pew (Israel) "% of Jews who say ... Living in Israel is an Essential part of what BEING JEWISH means to you" p.62; Pew (US) "Please tell me how important each of the following is to what BEING JEWISH means to you. Leading an ethical and moral life, % reporting Essential part of what BEING JEWISH means to you p.167; FRA "How important, if at all, are the following items to your sense of Jewish identity? Strong moral and ethical behaviour, % reporting Very important; Pew (Israel) "% of Jews who say ... Leading an ethical and moral life is an essential part of what it means to be Jewish, p.62; Pew (US) "Please tell me how important each of the following is to what BEING JEWISH means to you. Remembering the Holocaust, % reporting Essential part of what BEING JEWISH means to you, p.167; FRA "How important, if at all, are the following items to your sense of Jewish identity? Remembering the Holocaust, % reporting Very important; Pew (Israel) % of Jews who say ... Remembering the Holocaust is an essential part of what it means to be Jewish p.62. Source: Pew US pp.167,169; Pew 2016 pp.62

an important aspect of their Jewish identity, despite the fact that most Israelis have lived in the Jewish State for much, if not all of their lives, and served in the Israel Defence Forces. It is also apparent how much stronger attachment to Israel is to Europeans than to Americans (see also Figure 8 on visits to Israel). There is much to untangle here. First, it appears that the notion of supporting Israel as a Jewish imperative is understood differently in Israel than in the Diaspora. In the United States and Europe, support for Israel features as a central component of Jewish identity for many to be sure, more so in Europe than the US. But in Israel, it is likely that 'support' is simply taken as a given: all nation states assume the loyalty of their citizens and support of the nation is a central aspect of national identity. In Israel, where the vast majority of citizens spend time serving in the army, 'support' is implicit and only a relatively small proportion appears to endow that feeling with any peculiar Jewish significance.

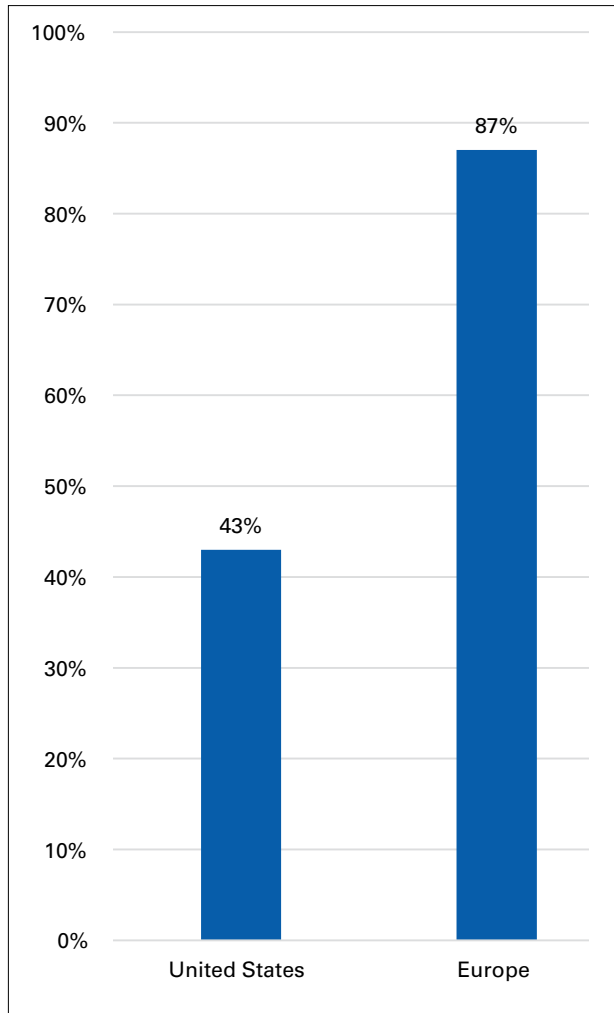
Evidence is presented later in this analysis (see Figure 18) suggesting that the more favourable the ambient, or general political position is towards Israel, the lower it ranks on local Jewish identity radars. To put this another way round, the more hostile the atmosphere towards Israel, the more defensive the Jewish position. Given that, geopolitically, the United States tends towards a more pro-Israeli position than most European states (and the European Union itself), the difference may also be reflective of such distinct ambient cultures.<sup>50</sup>

Greater European Jewish support for Israel is also reflected in the final example, focused on visits to Israel. Here we see America trailing far behind Europe (Figure 8). Whilst this difference may be a function of distance, this cannot be the only

50 This psychological angle would also relate to the upsurge in Jewish support for Israel following the 1967 Six Day War when Israel's very existence was threatened.



Figure 8. Proportion of Jews who have ever visited Israel: the United States compared with Europe



Source: US: Pew 2013 op cit. p175

reason, as the very high visiting rates among Jews from Australia and New Zealand attest.<sup>51</sup>

Before attempting some concluding points, we should not underestimate the immensity of the preceding section. Never before has it been possible to draw these types of comparisons providing contextualisation of Jewish identity on a global basis. Covering 90% of world Jewry we have reached a point in the scholarly

51 Surveys indicate that over three-quarters of New Zealand Jews and 92% of Australian Jews have visited Israel. See: B'nai B'rith (2011). 'Changing Jewry: A survey of the New Zealand Jewish community,' pp.40-41; Graham, D. and Markus, A. (2018). Gen17 Australia's Jewish Community Survey: Preliminary findings. JCA and Monash University, p.60.

assessment of Jewish identity where it is possible to examine the topic on a truly global scale. That said, and as highlighted from the outset, there are some serious caveats to acknowledge when interpreting these data side-by-side. The FRA dataset was necessarily based on a convenience sample, whereas the US and Israel surveys used probabilistic sampling techniques. To that end, the unweighted FRA sample likely includes a lower proportion of the less engaged Jewish population than either of the Israeli or American samples. In effect, this would act to make the European bloc appear to be more Jewishly engaged than either of the other two blocs.

Even so, what do we find?

The principal aim of this exercise has been to use the power of global contextualisation to establish whether or not Europe exhibits something about its Jewish identity that can be identified as being distinctively European. Whilst recognising the statistical fragility of the comparisons, this brief analysis of ten indicators does demonstrate several distinctive traits, though not necessarily a European flavoured Jewish identity. First, both intuitively and now, evidentially, it is clear Israel is different. Compared with both Europe and the US, its status as a Jewish state massively changes the dynamic interplay between ethno-religious and national identity. Compared with the Diaspora it is more religious in terms of ritual practice and appears to trade ethnocentric Jewish traits for nationalistic ones. Only an international comparison of this kind could empirically confirm this. But second, we also see that 'the Diaspora' is not a homogenous Jewish ocean surrounding island Israel. Whilst there are some identificational similarities within the Diaspora, there are also important differences between European and American Jewry. On some ethnocentric variables (Holocaust commemoration, importance of ethical behaviour), little separates the levels of Jewish validation found on either side of the Atlantic, but with respect to other ethnocentric items, such as intermarriage and attachment to Israel, a gulf opens up between the two blocs. Further, regarding matters of Jewish practice and behaviour, Europe appears to be further from America and closer to Israel.

Thus, to the extent that we can meaningfully compare Europe with Israel and the United States

at all, and taking the data at face value, we do seem to find fundamental differences. European Jewry neither mirrors American nor Israeli Jewry but rather is its own thing. But what is that ‘thing’ and does it amount to a collective *European* flavour of Jewishness? Is it that European Jewishness is simply one that has not been modified by Israeli nationalism or American individualism? And even if that is the case, how does this make it *European*, rather than just an ‘identity other than...’? Moreover, is it meaningful to treat European Jewry as monolithic, to broad-brush such a complex social landscape, comprised of a mosaic

of Jewish communities that may be as varied and differentiated as the languages each speaks?

To even begin to answer these questions, it is necessary to characterise Jewish identity across Europe in such a way that accounts for its complexity. In the remainder of this report it is possible to use the FRA dataset to draw direct comparisons between eight European Jewish communities and reflect on their ethnic, cultural and religious differences and commonalities in an effort to discover whether a deeper, collective sense of European Jewish identity exists.

## Section 2: Jewish identity within Europe: mosaic or monolith?

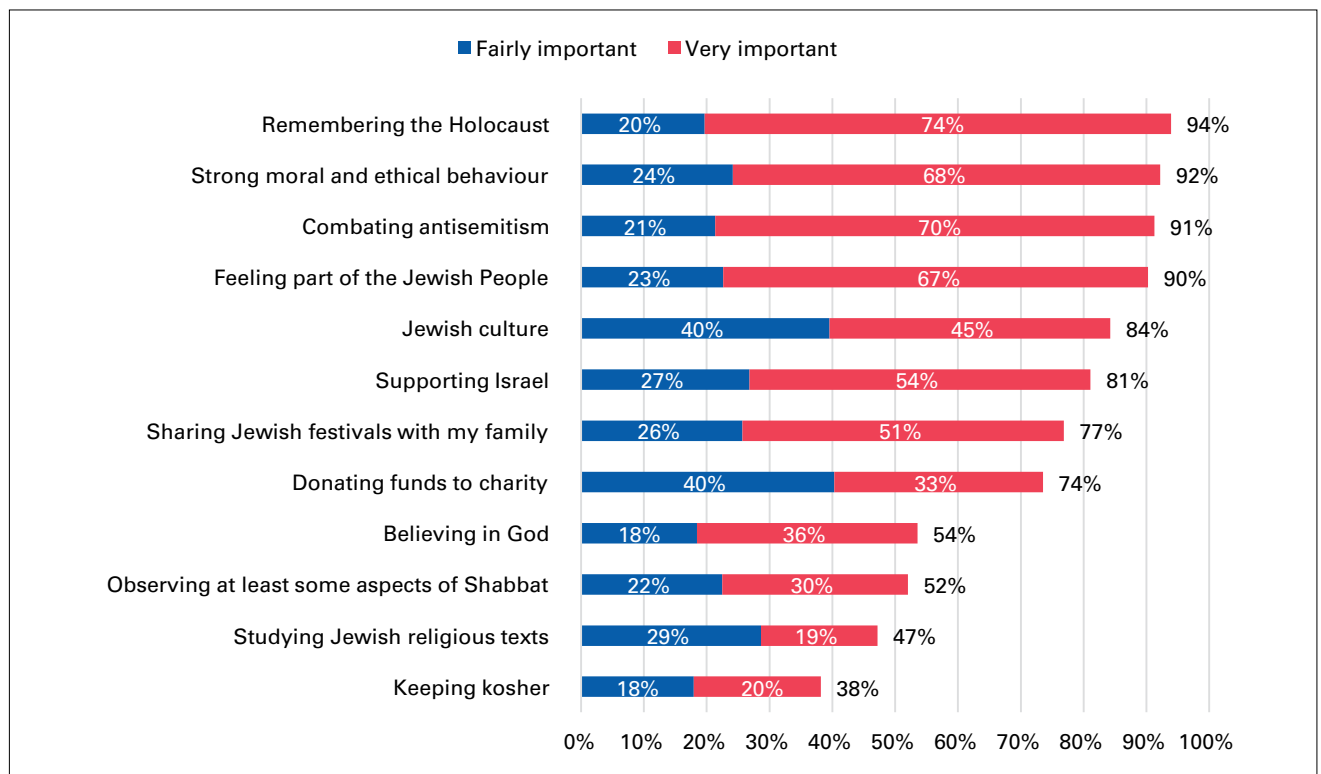
### Jewish beliefs

There is a long tradition in quantitative studies of Jewish identity of not only asking respondents about what aspects of Jewish ritual they observe and to what extent, but also what aspects of Jewishness matter to them most or, in the words of Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, their ‘image of the good Jew.’<sup>52</sup> For example, do they believe that ritual observance matters more than visiting Israel or donating to charity? Such measures are not intended to establish levels of belonging (membership) or behaviour (practice), which are typically asked separately, but rather of belief, as in what do Jewish people believe to be most important to them about being Jewish. By examining these data, we can build a picture of Jewish identity of different subgroups, such as

men versus women, older versus younger, and one country versus another.

In essence, we are trying to establish what the key Jewish identity characteristics of each community are, and how they compare. To do this, respondents were presented with a set of twelve Jewish identity markers and asked how important or unimportant each one was to their own sense of Jewishness. Overall, Europe’s Jews place ‘Remembering the Holocaust’ ahead of all other aspects of Jewish identity examined, with almost all (94%) saying it is important, and three out of four (74%) saying it is ‘Very important’ (Figure 9). Perhaps we ought not to be surprised that Jews living on the continent of the Holocaust should place the memory of that horror above all

Figure 9. “How important, if at all, are the following items to your sense of Jewish identity?”



52 One of the earliest studies to take this approach was Sklare and Greenblum’s study of Jews in 1950s American suburbia (Sklare, M. and Greenblum, J. (1967). Jewish identity on the suburban frontier: A

study of group survival in the open society.’ The Lakeville Studies, Volume 1. New York: Basic Books Inc, Table 10-1, p.322.

other aspects of Jewishness. But, as we have seen, this is not a uniquely European position since it is similarly important to American (Figure 7) and indeed, Australian Jews.<sup>53</sup>

Overall, the items most commonly identified as being important, and therefore, most unifying, tend to be of a more ethnocentric than religious bent, e.g. *Remembering the Holocaust*, *Strong moral and ethical behaviour*, *Combating antisemitism*, and *Feeling part of the Jewish People*. By contrast, *Believing in God*, *Observing Shabbat* (the Sabbath), *Studying Jewish religious texts*, and *Keeping kosher*, are least likely to be considered important.

Clear differences are evident by age, whereby ethnocentric markers tend to be more important the older respondents are, whereas religious items are more important the younger respondents are (Figure 10). For example, *Remembering the Holocaust* is ‘Very important’ to 87% of respondents aged 80 years and above but to only 64% of those in their thirties. And whilst 28% of under 30 year-olds say *Keeping kosher* is very important, this is the case for just 15% of those aged 80 years and above.

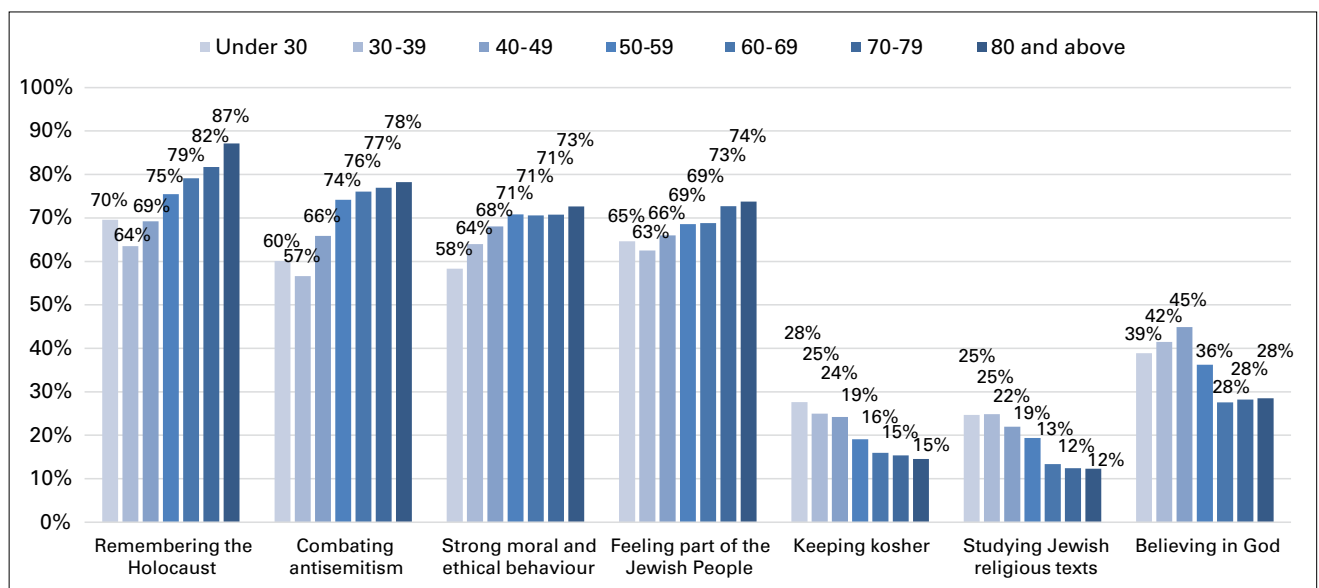
These differences raise potentially important questions about future trends depending on

whether these are generational (imprinted) or cohort (changeable) phenomena. Will stronger religiosity among the young become weaker as they age and gradually be substituted by the ethnocentric concerns their parents have (a cohort phenomenon), or will the young carry their stronger Jewish religiosity forward as they age to the detriment of ethnocentrism (a generational phenomenon)? Only time will tell.

The data can also be used to compare East and West Europe. In so doing, we find that the West exhibits a higher score on every item, and so is more Jewishly engaged on every item, with one notable exception: ‘Jewish culture.’ On this marker the East is ahead by one percentage point (45% West v 46% East), no difference in statistical terms (Figure 11). Yet despite this predominant East/West dichotomy, it is also notable that the difference is one of degree rather than kind, since the ordering of the markers is similar in both regions. For example, the same four items top both lists and the same three items appear at the bottom of both lists.

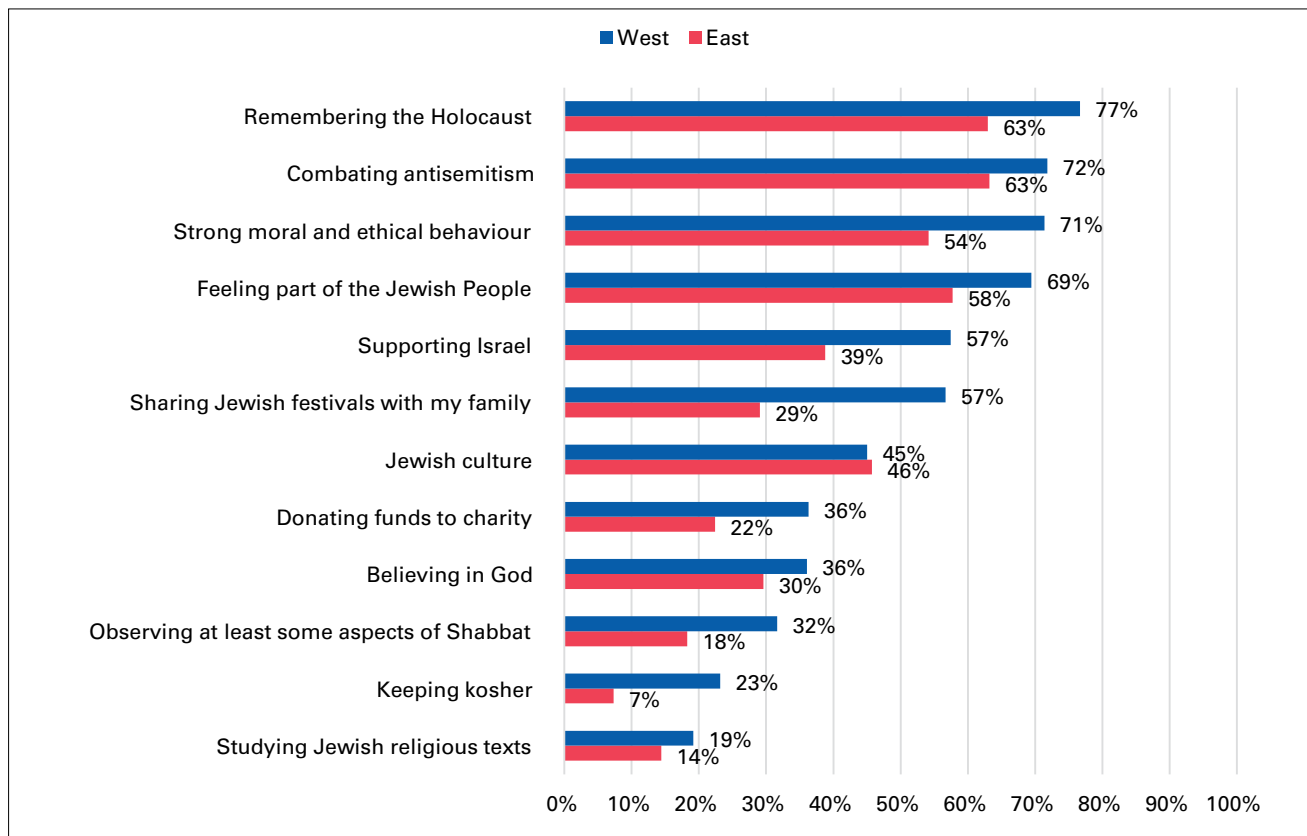
Examining the main differences between East and West either proportionately or absolutely, we see that in terms of absolute percentage differences, the two largest gaps are ‘Sharing Jewish festivals with my family’ (28 percentage

Figure 10. “How important, if at all, are the following items to your sense of Jewish identity?” by age (selected variables)\*



\* Bars show the proportion of respondents in each country reporting ‘Very important’

Figure 11 “How important, if at all, are the following items to your sense of Jewish identity?”, East v West Europe\*



\* Bars show the proportion of respondents in each country reporting ‘Very important’; East = Hungary, Latvia and Romania; West = Belgium, France, Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom. Note that Germany is not included here because although it is geographically western, a large proportion of its Jewish population hails from the east, complicating its east/west categorisation.

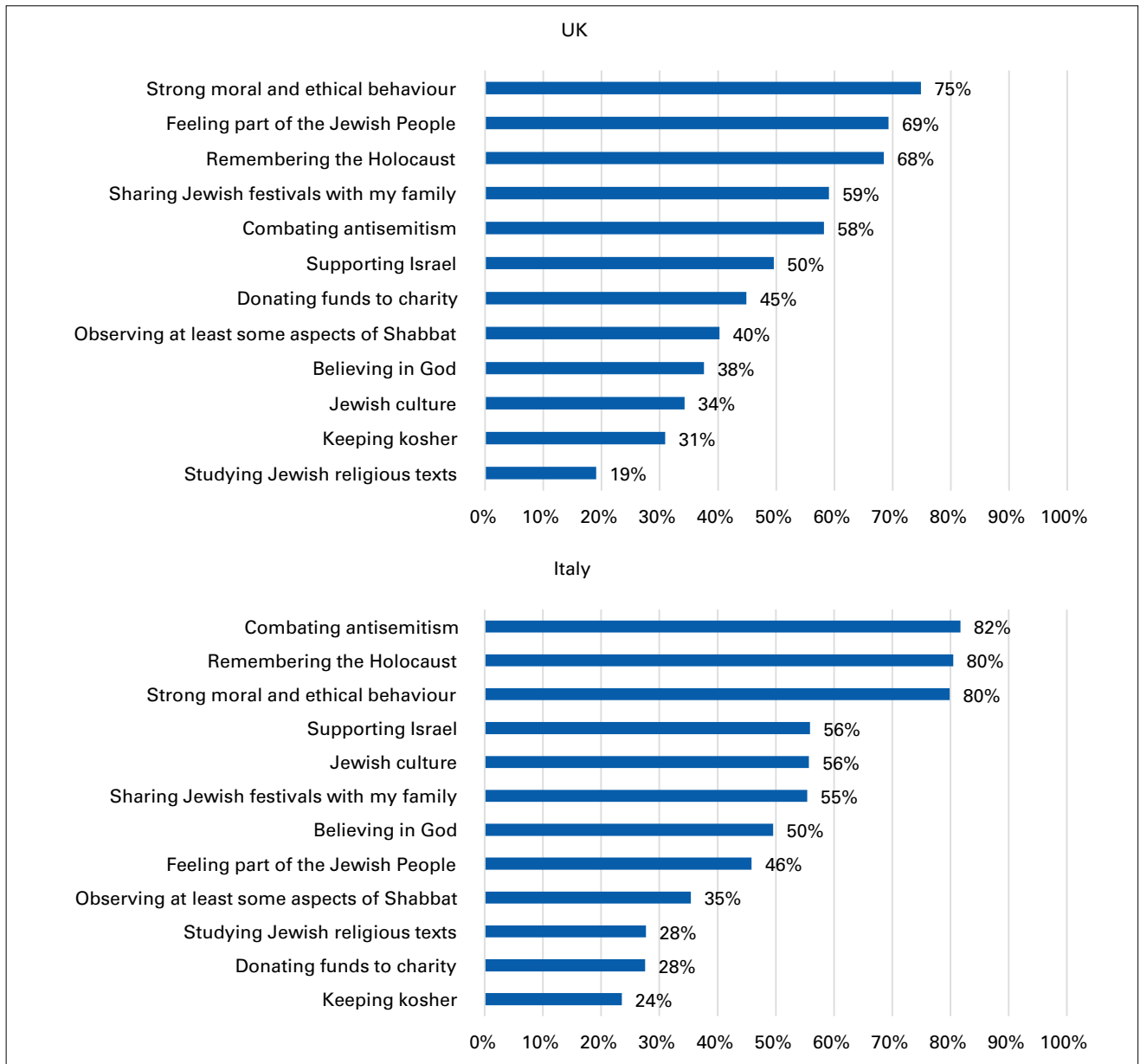
point difference) and ‘Supporting Israel’ (19 percentage point difference). In proportionate terms the largest gap is for ‘Keeping kosher’ (where the West is 3.2 times more likely to say this is very important than the East) followed by ‘Sharing Jewish festivals with my family’ (the West is 1.9 times higher than the East). Such findings should be viewed in a historical context. Speaking about the Latvian Jewish experience under communism, Bella Zisere argues that of those who have remained in the country (i.e. not emigrated), younger Jews grew up “in total ignorance of their religion” and that “after decades of complete ignorance of all [other] religions and virulent state atheism, most Latvian Jews do not consider Judaism a core element of their ethnic identity”, a phenomenon that she claims is relevant to all the countries of the former Soviet Union.<sup>54</sup> Under the Soviet regime Jews in Latvia were considered a

separate nationality, so that “being Jewish implies, above all, ‘belonging to the Jewish people’” and less about religious or cultural commitment.<sup>55</sup> On a country by country basis it is notable how the *ordering* of these various markers of Jewish identity is reproduced and on this measure at least, we would characterise European Jewry as more monolith than mosaic. Thus, despite their unique histories, national cultures and languages, in all eight countries *Remembering the Holocaust* and/or *Feeling part of the Jewish People* appear in the top two items and in six out of the eight countries the same four items appear at the top of each list: *Remembering the Holocaust*, *Combating antisemitism*, *Strong moral and ethical behaviour*, and *Feeling part of the Jewish People*. And seven out of the eight countries placed the same two items—*Studying Jewish religious texts* and *Keeping kosher*—at the bottom of the list. The exception is Italy and to a lesser extent, the UK.

54 Zisere, Bella (2005). ‘Jewish community and identity in post-communist Latvia.’ *European Judaism*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Autumn 2005, p.87.

55 Ibid. p.91.

Figure 12. “How important, if at all, are the following items to your sense of Jewish identity?”, UK and Italy\*



\* Bars show the proportion of respondents in each country reporting ‘Very important’

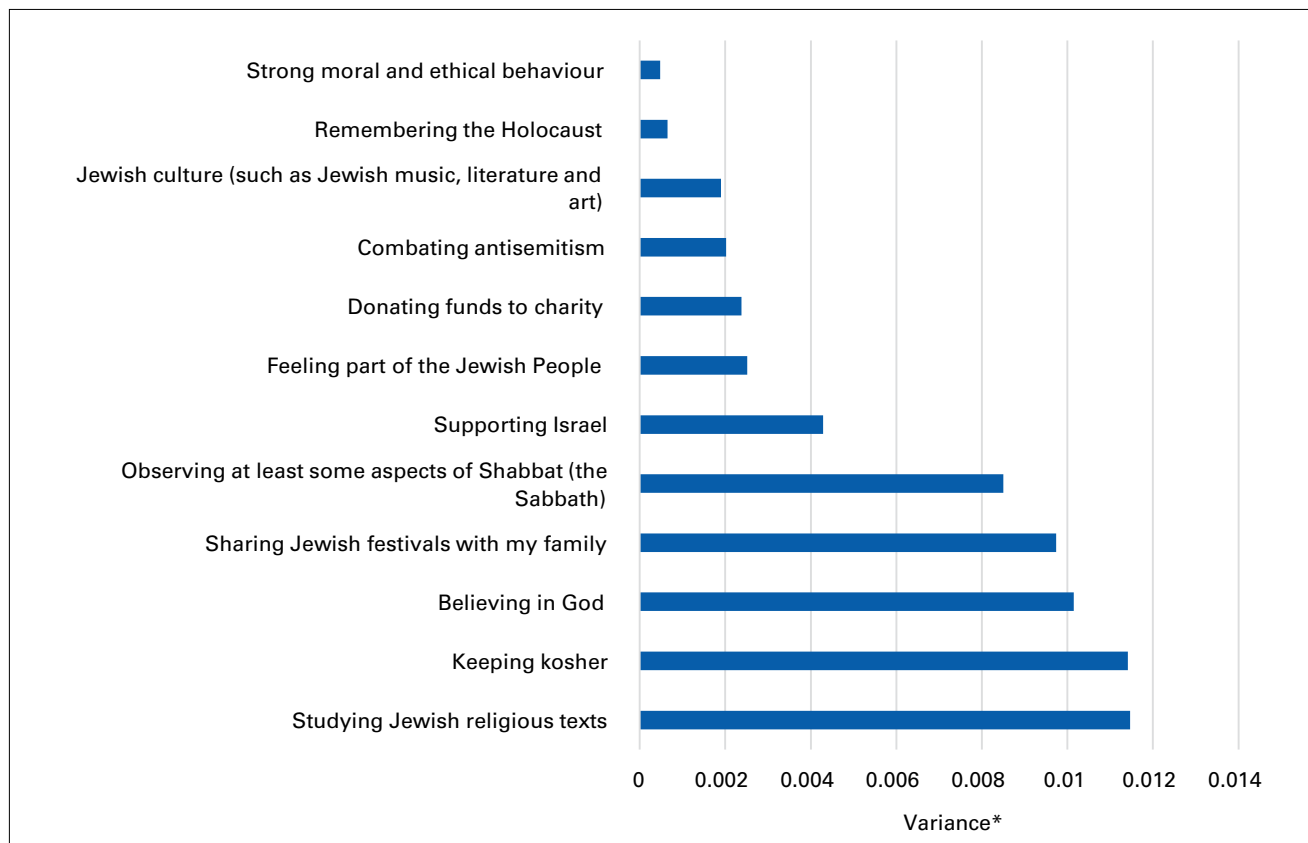
This suggests that the conceptualisation of Jewish identity is quite consistent across Europe, at least in terms of attitudinal priorities. Given the diverse histories and extant ambient cultures, this was by no means a given result and does provide some support for the notion of a common Jewish identity transcending national European boundaries. Of course, whether it is uniquely European is a separate matter.

That said, it is apposite to consider why Italy and the UK might stand out in this respect. In Britain, Combating antisemitism was given a

much lower ranking than elsewhere—relegated to fifth position after Sharing Jewish festivals with my family—although here the explanation may be simple (Figure 12). It is likely to reflect the fact that British Jews experience lower levels of antisemitism than their continental cousins, as revealed by FRA data and detailed elsewhere<sup>56</sup> (see also Figure 16, below). However, an altogether different explanation is required for Italy’s exceptionalism. Here we see Feeling part of the Jewish People relegated to eighth position, with

56 FRA (2013), op. cit., Figure 1, p.16.

Figure 13. Variance between country totals for each Jewish identity marker for all those reporting Very important or Fairly important\*



\* In response to the question “How important, if at all, are the following items to your sense of Jewish identity?”; in statistics, variance is the average variation of scores from the mean score.

less than half (46%) of the Italian respondents considering it to be ‘Very Important,’ compared with 68% on average. At the other end of the spectrum, as noted, we also find a surprising difference with Italians placing Donating funds to charity second from last place, just before Keeping kosher (Figure 12). This does suggest that the construction of Jewish identity in Italy is rather distinct, at least when compared with these other European countries.

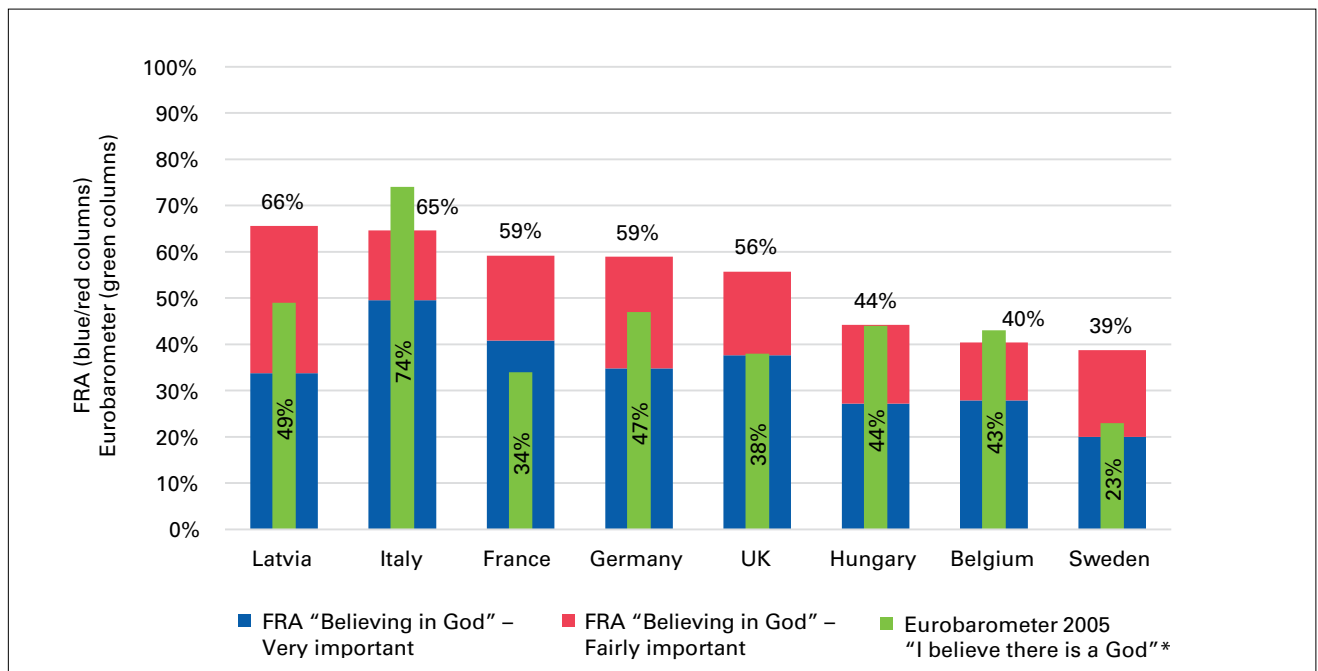
One of the central advantages of the FRA dataset is that comparisons of Jewish identity can be drawn on a country by country basis. What then does this tell us about the unity, or otherwise, of Jewish identity across Europe? It is possible to take a statistically rigorous approach to assessing how separate or similar the countries are to each other on a marker by marker basis. This can be done by calculating the variance of the importance scores (either Very or Fairly) produced in each of the eight countries for each

marker. Variance is simply a measure of the spread of a set of scores. High variance reflects a wider range of scores in relative terms and so in this case indicates separateness, i.e. the mosaic model. Low variance, on the other hand, suggests little spread in the scores, reflecting closer agreement between countries – in other words, the monolithic model.

In Figure 13 we see the lowest variance in the scores occurs with respect to the most Jewishly ethnocentric items, whereas the highest variance occurs on the most religious items. In other words, European Jews are most united, or most monolithic, when it comes to aspects of Jewish identity that are more universally human in nature (and are reflected in wider society) such as upholding ethical behaviour, remembering past tragedies (the Holocaust), valuing culture, combating racism (antisemitism). The communities are less united in terms of more Jewishly specific markers, such as Jewish practice



Figure 14. Proportion saying 'Believing in God' is a 'Very important' or 'Fairly important' aspect of Jewish identity compared with Eurobarometer data about belief in God, by country



\* Social Values, Science and Technology (2005) Eurobarometer p.9.

and religious ritual. Thus, none of *Studying Jewish religious texts, keeping kosher* and *believing in God* is considered that important by most people in any of the eight countries, meaning that these items exhibit the widest levels of disunity across Europe, redolent of the mosaic model. So whilst the ordering may be monolithic (see above) and some of the more universal ethnocultural items tend towards a more monolithic model, that is not the case for all, and especially religious, markers, where the mosaic model is more applicable.

In the remainder of this section, we explore certain of these markers in more depth in order to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of Jewish identity when we compare each of these eight European countries.

We start with 'belief in God,' a marker that we have just seen matches the mosaic model across Europe. As such, a wide range of responses is exhibited across the different communities on this marker, from Latvia and Italy, where up to 66% of respondents believe this is an important aspect of Jewish identity, to Sweden and Belgium where 40% or fewer do so. Taking this one step further, it can be used to test another theory about European Jews—that the mosaic is the product of the immersive and unique experience of each

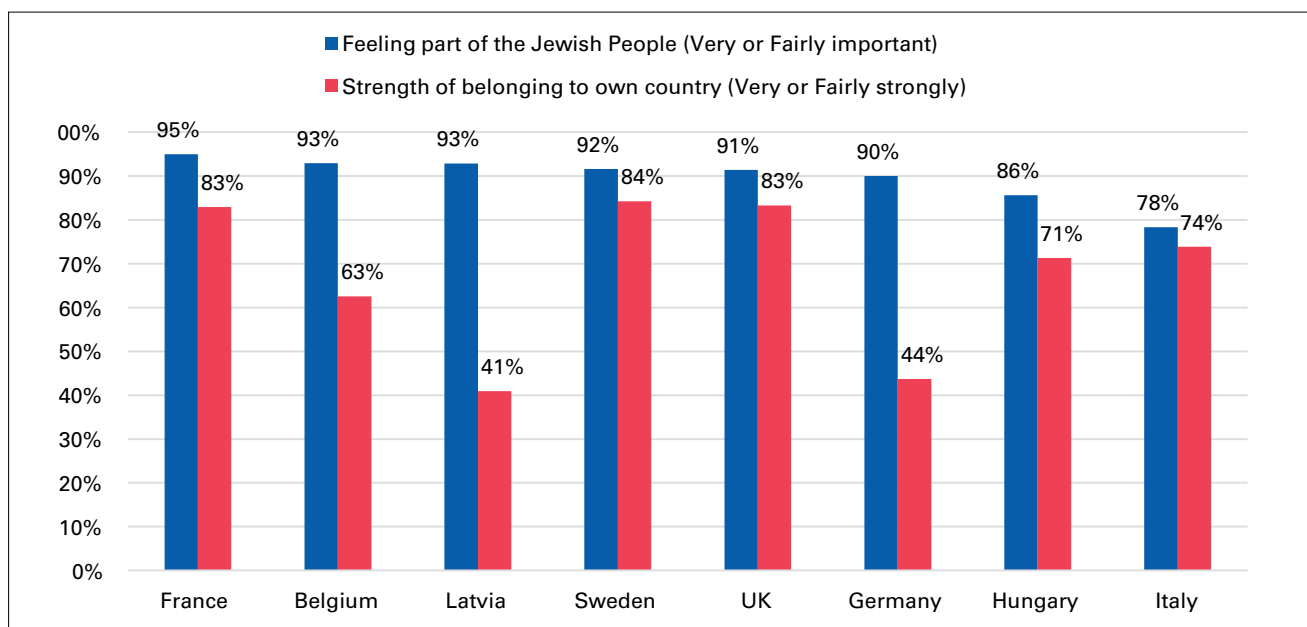
community living within its ambient society.<sup>57</sup> It is possible to compare data from Eurobarometer in response to the question, 'do you believe there is a God?' (asked of the general population of each country), with the FRA data on the importance of belief in God to Jewish identity. Though the questions asked are not exactly replicated, it is nevertheless possible to gain some level of insight, by comparing the ranking of countries in the Eurobarometer data with the ranking of countries in the FRA data. This can be achieved by simply overlaying the two sets of data to see if there is any sort of correlative pattern.

Thus, we might expect belief in God, however measured, to be low in the Scandinavian countries where secular values are prevalent<sup>58</sup> and in post-communist societies where religion was sidelined for decades. On the other hand, one might expect it to be higher in a country such as Italy which hosts the Vatican. The outcome of the comparison is shown in Figure 14. Note that because the two questions are different, the relative heights of the columns between the two datasets are of far less interest than the relative heights within each

57 Graham, D. (2014), p.22; Liebman (2003), op cit. p.343.

58 Dencik, L. (2005), p.47. 'Jewishness in postmodernity: The case of Sweden.'

Figure 15. Proportion saying 'Feeling part of the Jewish people' = Very important and 'Please tell us how strongly you feel you belong to [Country] = Very strongly, by country



dataset. Thus, with the exceptions of Sweden and, to a lesser extent, Italy, where there may be some evidence of an ambient influence, it is difficult to see a broader pattern emerging. For example, whilst French Jews place a relatively high importance on belief in God relative to other Jewish communities, this is not the case for French society at large which, relative to the other European countries, is rather unlikely to express belief in God. Whilst this cannot be conclusive evidence (the same question would need to be asked in both surveys), this comparison nevertheless reveals, at best, weak evidence in support of the ambient hypothesis overall, although the cases of Italy and Sweden do suggest it cannot be completely ruled out, at least with respect to belief in God.

As noted, the concept of Jewish Peoplehood is one of the stronger unifying features of Jewish identity in Europe, with 90% saying this is important (68% saying it is 'Very important') to their Jewish identity (Figure 9). Based on 'Very important' scores, the feeling is strongest in France at 82% and weakest in Italy where this is the case for less than half of the respondents (46%), although even here more than three-quarters say it is at least 'Fairly important' (Figure 15). The result for France, which was also the only country to rank this item in first place, is especially noteworthy given that under Consistorial Judaism "The

concept of a Jewish people is unconstitutional."<sup>59</sup> In other words, Jewish Peoplehood in France is not 'officially' supposed to exist. The low result for Italy is also reflected in the fact that this item was ranked eighth out of twelve, further evidence of a relatively weak concept of Jewish Peoplehood among Italian Jews. As we explore later, this may be related to the rather unique ethnic makeup of Italian Jewry (see section on 'Ethnicity, parentage and intermarriage' below).

The FRA survey also asked how strongly respondents feel they belong to the country in which they live, offering an opportunity to contrast Jewish belonging with national belonging. In the UK and Sweden we see an indication that Jews feel connected in both contexts, whereas in Germany and Latvia the difference is stark (Figure 15). The distance is widest in Germany, presumably because of the large proportion of immigrants in that Jewish population, and in Latvia, where it is likely to be related to the fact that the country only gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

An alternative approach to exploring this relationship is through John Berry's four strategies

59 Trigano, S. (2007). 'French Jewry: The end of a model of Jewish identity.' *Covenant*, p.3.

Table 2. Jewish acculturation models adapting the Berry typology\*

	Marginalisation Jewish people –ve Wider society –ve	Separation/ Segregation Jewish people +ve Wider society –ve	Assimilation Jewish people –ve Wider society +ve	Integration Jewish people +ve Wider society +ve	Total
Belgium	2%	33%	4%	61%	100%
France	1%	15%	4%	80%	100%
Germany	4%	50%	4%	42%	100%
Hungary	3%	25%	11%	62%	100%
Italy	5%	20%	15%	60%	100%
Latvia	4%	52%	2%	43%	100%
Sweden	1%	14%	7%	78%	100%
UK	2%	15%	6%	77%	100%

\* Key - Jewish people: 'How important, if at all, are the following items to your sense of Jewish identity? Feeling part of the Jewish People': Important = positive, unimportant = negative; Wider society: 'Please tell us how strongly you feel you belong to [your country]': Very or Fairly strongly = positive, Not very or Not at all strongly = negative. The highest scores for each country are shown in yellow.

of acculturation.<sup>60</sup> This posits a tension between the maintenance of cultural attachment against the need and desire of ethnic subgroups to integrate with wider society. In Table 2, we apply the typology to the present example and find that the integration model—i.e. feeling a sense of closeness to both the Jewish people and general society—is the most prevalent in all but two countries. This is most likely to be the case in France, Sweden and the UK. A model of separation/segregation is the second most prevalent, i.e. a feeling of closeness to the Jewish people but greater distance to local wider society, and this is most prevalent in Germany and Latvia and, to a lesser extent, in Belgium.<sup>61</sup>

### Antisemitism and Jewish identity

Earlier it was suggested that the reason UK respondents placed *Combating antisemitism* relatively low down on the list of attitudinal Jewish identity markers (ranked fifth out of twelve items, see Figure 12) was because

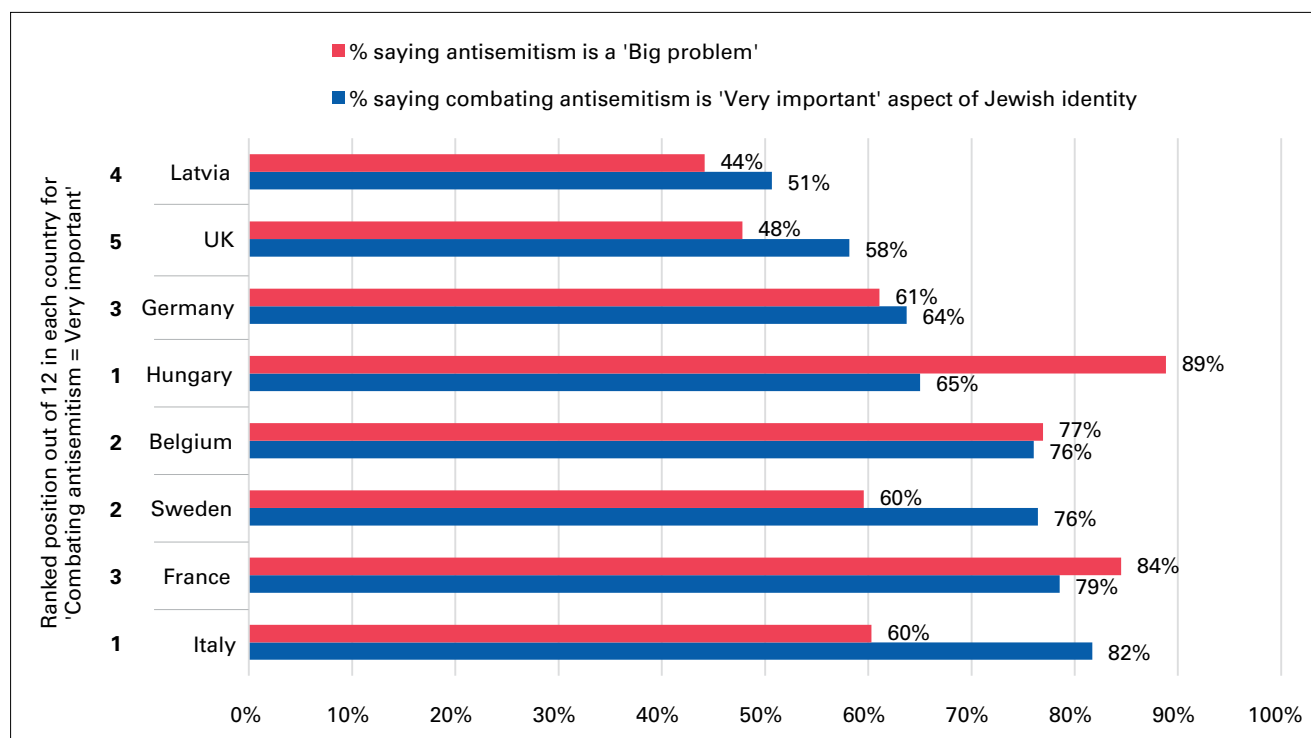
60 Berry, John W. (1997). 'Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation'. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, pp.5-34. See also JPR/Ipsos MORI (2012), 'Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among Jews in selected EU Member States,' pp.21-2 (unpublished research monograph).

61 Unfortunately, the 2012 FRA survey did not also investigate the extent to which Jews feel a connection to 'Europe,' so we have no way of making an assessment on this dimension. However, the forthcoming FRA survey, scheduled to go into the field in 2018, will be gathering data on that topic.

antisemitism is simply not seen as being as big a problem in that country: 58% of British respondents said it was a 'Very important' aspect of their identity, rather lower than the Europe-wide average of 70%. In the UK, just under half (48%) of all respondents view antisemitism as a 'Big problem', less than in all other countries except Latvia (44%), with the European average being 65%. This suggests that a relationship exists between how problematic people perceive antisemitism to be in their country and the prominence they afford combating it in terms of their Jewish identity. However, we find that this relationship, such as it exists, is rather weak (Pearson correlation coefficient .33, Figure 16). For example, in Hungary, where more people than in any other country see antisemitism as being a 'Big problem,' relatively few ascribe combating it as an important aspect of Jewish identity, but in Sweden and Italy the reverse is true—relatively few respondents in these countries view antisemitism as a 'Big problem' but high proportions nevertheless ascribe combating it great importance to Jewish identity. What is going on?

One key problem here is the interpretation of absolute percentages in the graph. For example, Jewish identity in Hungary is relatively weak overall, a result of years of communist religious oppression, and hence, "the central element of [Jewish] identity appears to be a historical memory of persecution and of Jewish

Figure 16. Relationship between the importance ascribed to 'combating antisemitism' and how big a problem antisemitism is viewed as being



forebears.”<sup>62</sup> Thus, the absolute percentages scored for Jewish identity in Hungary are relatively low. Yet Combating antisemitism was placed at the top of the Hungarian list of twelve attitudinal traits (Rank=1), perhaps because, as Kovács and Forrás-Biró have argued, “the waves of antisemitism that oscillate from time to time in Hungary often lead to an intensification of people’s Jewish identity.”<sup>63</sup> So, far from being an unimportant facet of Jewish identity in Hungary, antisemitism is actually formative. Hence, Figure 16 also shows the ranking given to the importance of combating antisemitism in each country (see numbers down left-hand side by each country label), revealing a stronger, but still complex relationship. In this respect Hungary is placed alongside Italy, where this is also the top ranked item.

### Attachment to Israel

For many Jews, Israel, the Jewish State, is central to Jewish identity, whether for Zionist and/or for religious reasons. So it is important to understand

the extent to which Israel features in the identity of Europe’s Jews, as well as the extent of the personal connections they have with Israel. To place this in context, Europeans, unlike the rest of Jews in the Diaspora, are not only physically close to Israel, but in several contexts—such as football and television song contests—Israel is even embraced as being part of Europe. Meanwhile, especially in the United States, there has been much debate about ‘distancing’, the gradual uncoupling of connections, feelings and attachments of especially younger and non-Orthodox Jews from Israel.<sup>64</sup> We showed earlier that European Jews are more likely to have visited Israel than US Jews (Figure 8).

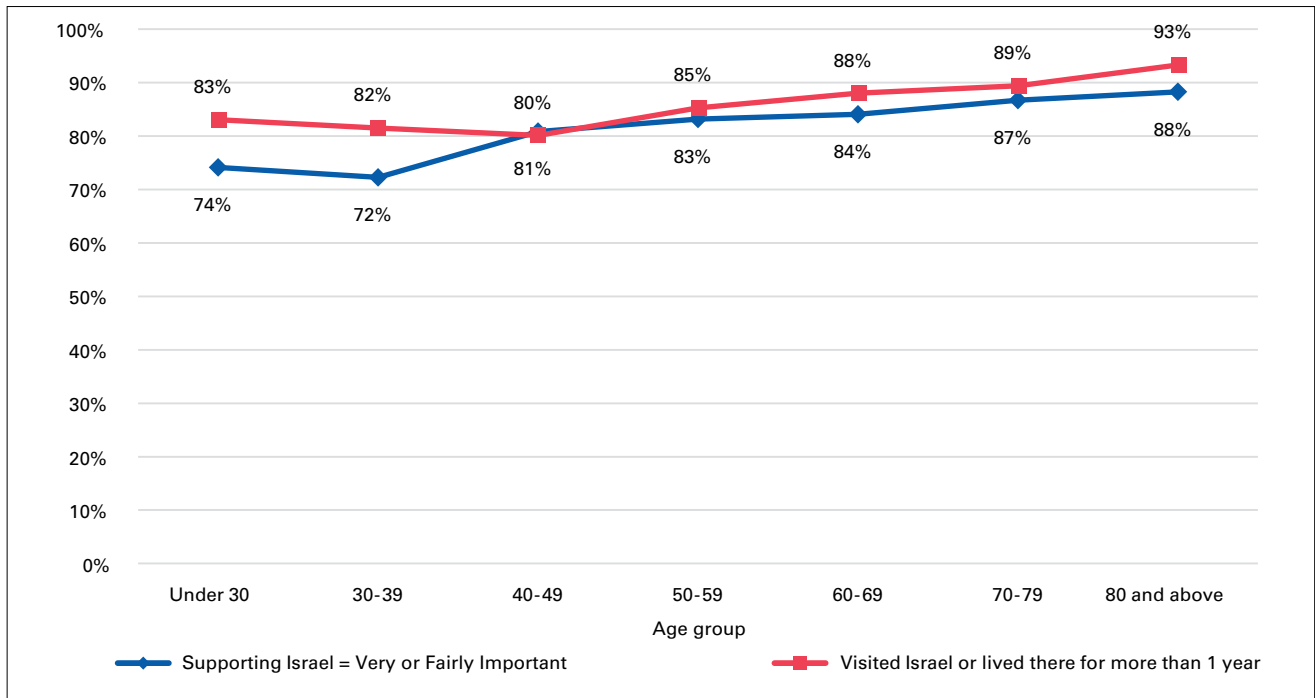
Most (81%) European Jewish respondents said that *Supporting Israel* was important (Very or Fairly) to their Jewish identity, not quite as high a percentage as some ethnocentric variables, but considerably higher than many religious items (Figure 9). When we examine the data by age (excluding those who were born in Israel), we find

62 Kovács and Forrás-Biró (2011), op cit., p.7; Kovács, A. (2004). Jews and Jewry in contemporary Hungary: results of a sociological survey. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.22 and p.44.

63 Kovács and Forrás-Biró (2011), op cit., p.48.

64 Cohen, S. M. and Kelman, A. Y. (2007). Beyond distancing: Young adult American Jews and their alienation from Israel. A special edition of Contemporary Jewry (2010:30) was also devoted to this issue.

Figure 17. Importance of supporting and visiting Israel by age\*



\* Respondents were asked: How important, if at all, is supporting Israel to your sense of Jewish identity?

that the older respondents are, the more likely they are to be supportive of Israel (Figure 17). We also see a corresponding relationship in terms of having visited (or lived in) Israel, with the exception of people aged under 40 years old.

On a country by country basis, monolithic trends can be seen in terms of the importance of supporting Israel to Jewish identity, at least for six of the eight countries (Figure 18). But there are arguably two outliers, France and Hungary. At 90%, the French are notably stronger in this respect than the next most supportive group, the Belgians at 83%. And at 66%, the Hungarians are notably weaker in this respect than the next group, the British at 77%.

In one sense, the French result is surprising since, theoretically, the Republic ‘demands’ loyalty to the French State alone, and French-Jewish identification with a second state (e.g. Israel) could be construed as dual loyalty and thus deviant or controversial.<sup>65</sup> But other surveys confirm this finding that ‘the Jews of France in general have strong ties to Israel’ and that a ‘significant portion

of French Jewry expresses uncertainty that the future of their families will be in France.’<sup>66</sup>

Whilst higher French scores may be related to current fears of antisemitism,<sup>67</sup> the weaker results for east European countries are presumably a historical artefact. In Latvia, Zisere suggests that the early 1990s saw considerable migration out of the country, much of it to Israel, which removed the most Zionist section of that population. Further, despite relatively strong feelings of Jewish Peoplehood, Zisere concurs that “the mobilisation of the Jewish community on the question of supporting Israel is not a manifest phenomenon in today’s Latvia”.<sup>68</sup> But the low scores for Hungary contradict findings elsewhere suggesting that “Three-quarters of the respondents demonstrate a strong emotional identification with Israel. The Jewish state is important to them, they are proud of it, and they feel that the existence of Israel

66 Note the FRA survey predates the Hypercacher terrorist attack in Paris on 9th January 2015. Cohen, E. H. (2009), op. cit., pp.124-125.

67 FRA (2013), op. cit., p.37, Figure 16.

68 Zisere (2005), op. cit., p.91. See also JDC ICCD (2016), op. cit., p.24, indicating that divisiveness over Israel is felt far more by Jewish leaders in the west than in the east of Europe.

65 Cohen, E. H. (2009), op. cit., p.23 and p.67.

Figure 18. How important, if at all, is Supporting Israel to your sense of Jewish identity?, by country

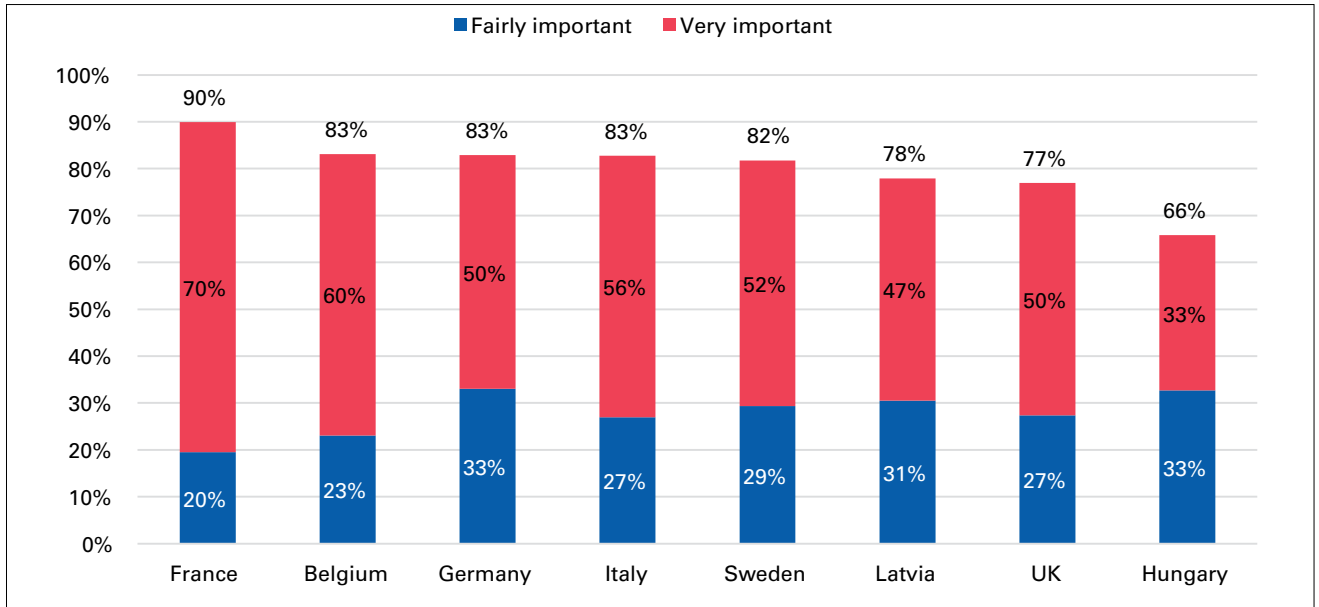
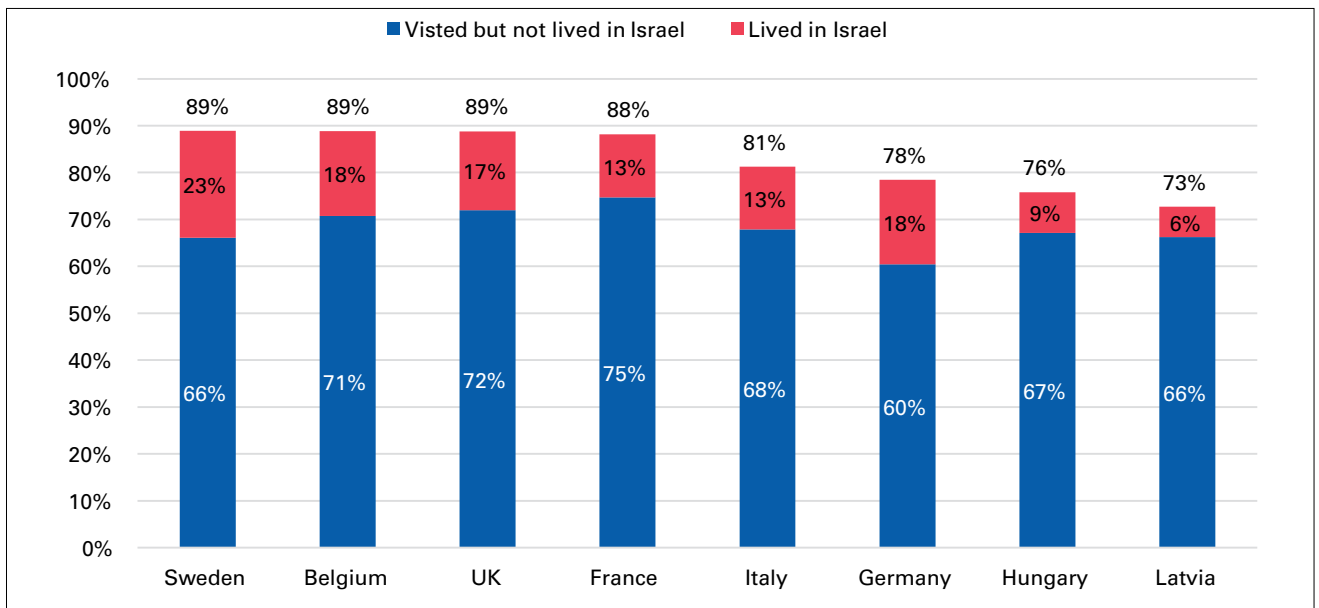


Figure 19. Proportion of respondents who have visited Israel (only) or lived in Israel for more than one year, by country\*



\* Excluding respondents who were born in Israel

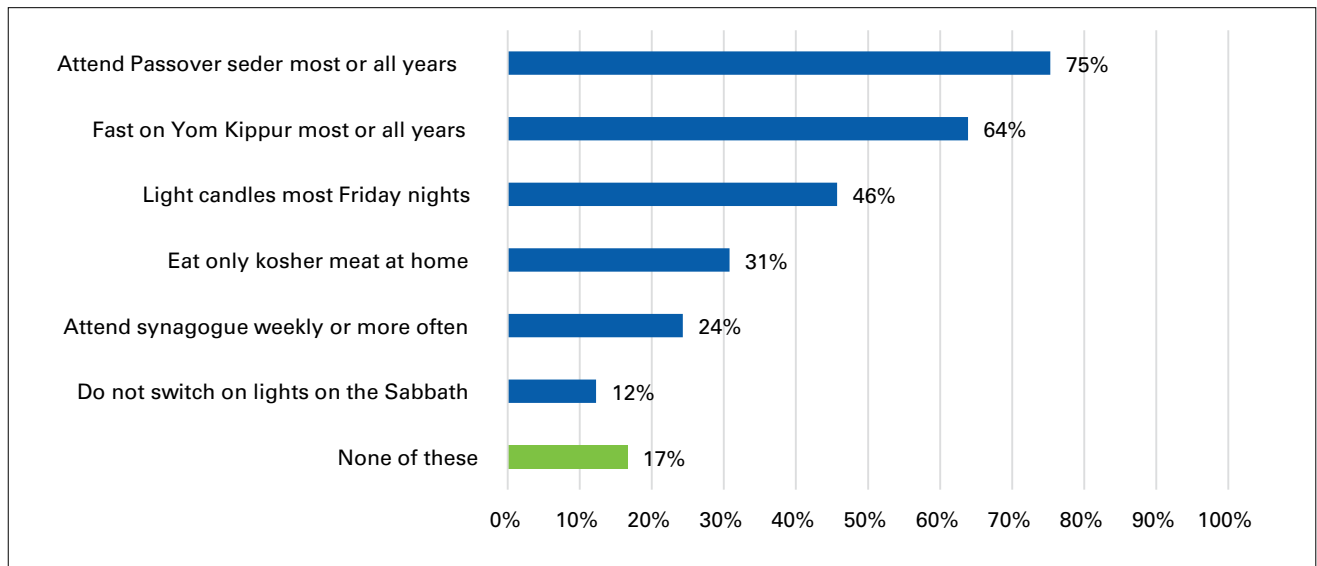
represents security for Jews.”<sup>69</sup> As we saw, in the FRA data, just two-thirds of the Hungarian sample consider supporting Israel to be an important part of their Jewish identity, and this is the lowest proportion found among any of the Jewish populations investigated.

East-West differences also emerge in another measure of attachment: whether or not

respondents have visited or lived in Israel. Overall, a clear majority of (non-Israel born) respondents in Europe have visited Israel or lived there for more than one year (87%). In other words, just 13% said they had never been to Israel. The lowest levels are found among Hungarian and Latvian respondents, where around one quarter have never visited (Figure 19), which accords with the above findings. Statistically, almost nothing separates the four top countries (Sweden, Belgium, the UK and France) in this respect, though it is perhaps

69 Kovács (2004), op. cit., p.44.

Figure 20. Observance of Jewish ritual practices, all countries



\* excluding respondents who were born in Israel

surprising that Sweden comes out ‘on top’ here, albeit fractionally. Jews in Sweden are more likely than Jews of any of the other countries to have lived in Israel (for more than one year), with almost a quarter (23%) having done so. Yet Swedish respondents hitherto have appeared to be rather weakly Jewishly engaged when contrasted with other European Jewish populations.

Whilst we may conclude that, for historical reasons, the Jews of Eastern Europe exhibit a relatively weak attachment to Israel, it is only weak in relation to the very strong attachments seen in Western Europe. No one European country can claim to be the most attached to Israel based on this basket of measures. If anything, this indicates that, especially in Western Europe, there is relatively little to separate the countries overall in this regard—i.e. their pro-Israel stance is fairly uniform when compared to other measures of Jewish identity and attachment assessed in this paper. In terms of Israel attachment, Western Europe is monolithic and distinct from Eastern Europe.

### Jewish practice and ritual observance

Despite its ethno-cultural dimensions, religious practice remains a central pillar of Jewish identity. Accordingly, respondents were asked about six different Jewish ritual practices and whether or not they observed them. Numerous studies have found that ritual observance strongly predicts

not just Jewish behaviour more generally but also Jewish feelings, affiliations and social connections.

The most commonly observed Jewish ritual practice is attendance at a Passover (*Pesach*) seder. The study found that three out of four respondents across Europe (75%) *Attend Passover seder most or all years* (Figure 20). More demanding practices (in terms of time or imposition on personal freedoms), are less commonly observed.

A contextualisation of religious practice can be achieved by summing the total number of practices each respondent carried out to produce a scale of observance. In doing so we can see that the observance of Jewish ritual practice is age sensitive. The younger the respondents are, the more practices they report doing (Figure 21). A key question arising is whether this reflects a permanent change (i.e. that the younger generation is more observant and will remain so as they age) or rather, a reflection of generational or lifecycle change whereby people become less observant as they get older? For example, how observant were respondents’ parents when they were young compared with their observance levels later in life? Alas, the data do not tell us.

Using this summed scale of observance, we can also contextualise religious practice on a country by country basis. On average, respondents observe between two and three items (x 2.5) but in the UK



Figure 21. Observance of Jewish ritual practice, by age, all countries

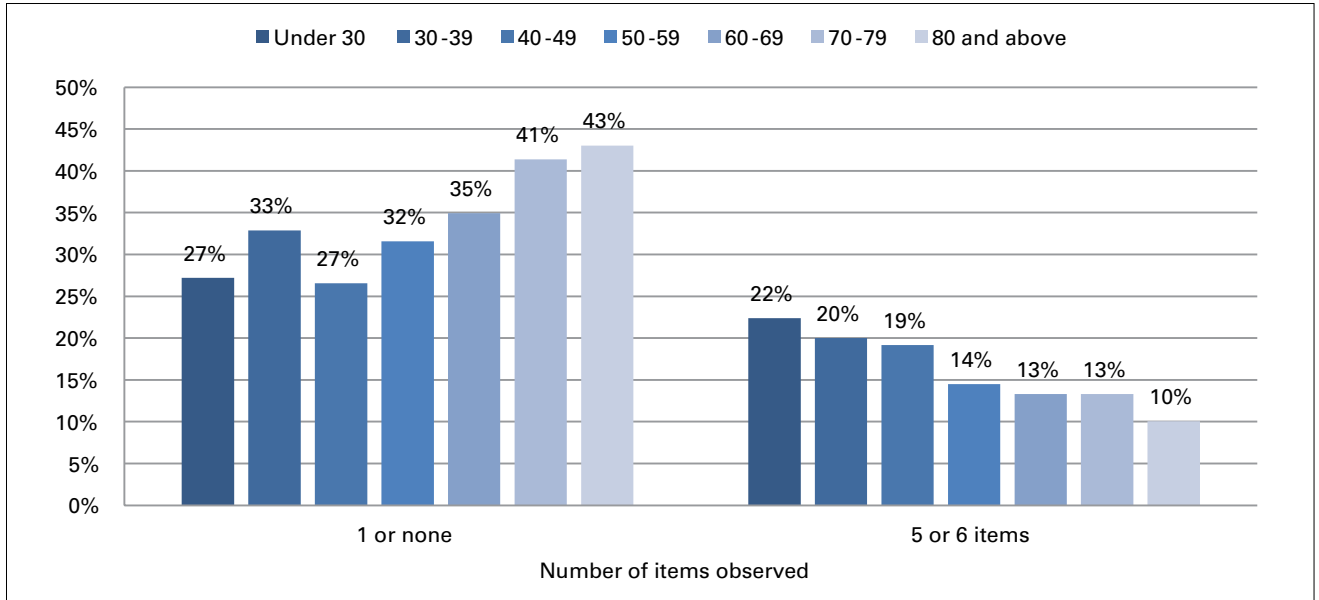
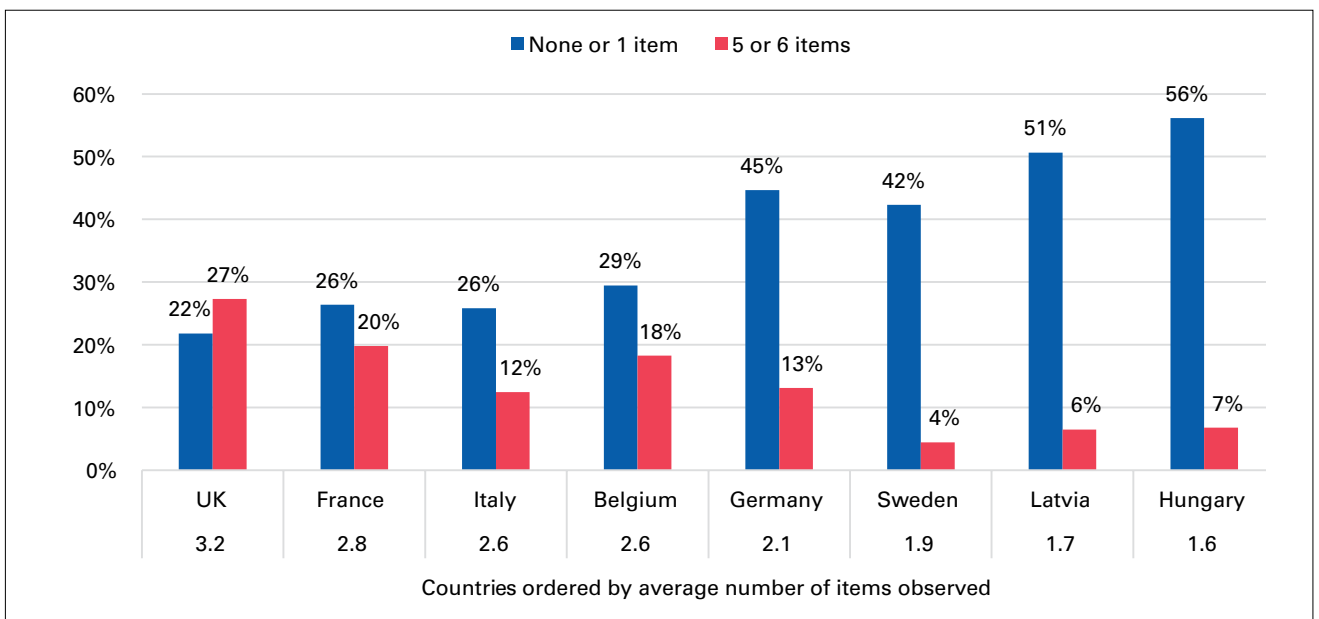


Figure 22. Jewish ritual practice, proportions observing 0 or 1 item and 5 or 6 items, by country, ordered by average number of items mentioned

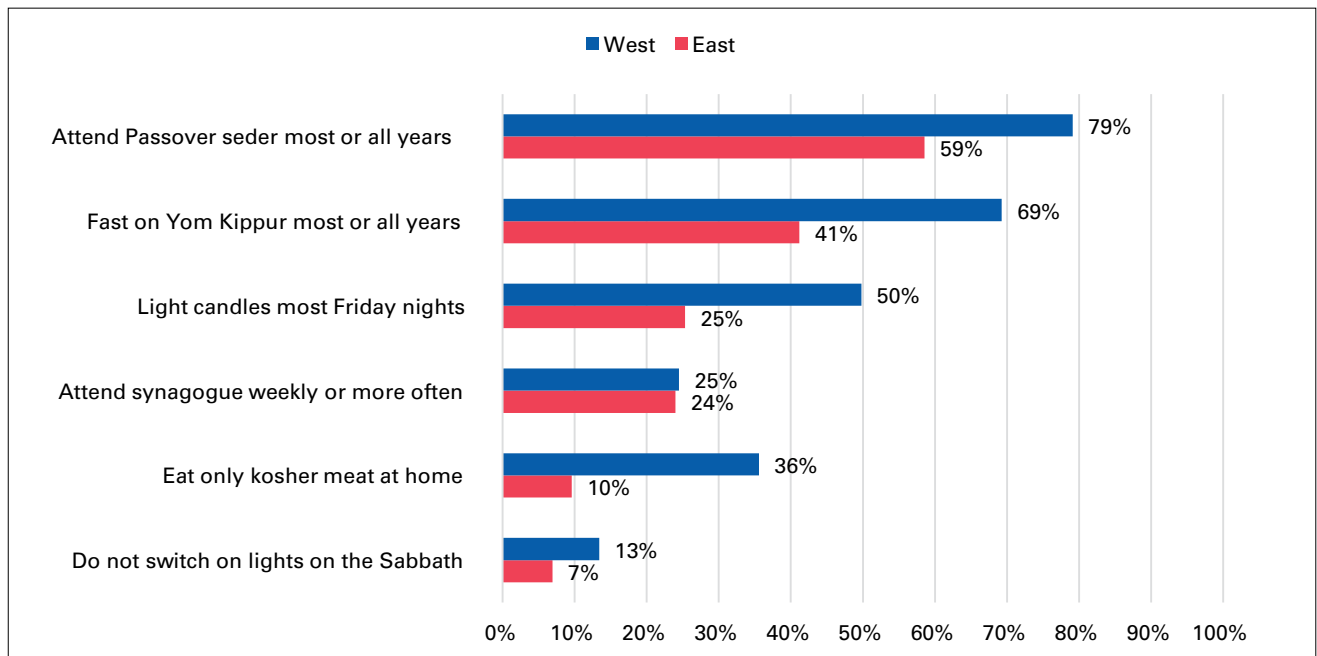


respondents observe at least three items (x 3.2), whereas in Sweden, Latvia and Hungary they observe fewer than two items on average (Figure 22, horizontal axis).

Overall, we see a mosaic pattern across Europe. No country exhibits the same or similar patterns of observance. The UK is the only country where respondents are more likely to observe five or more items than one or no items. It is also notable that very few people in Sweden, Latvia

or Hungary observe five or six items and in the two East European countries over half of the respondents observe one or no items. Belgium also stands out here since, in relative terms, a high proportion (18%) observes five or six items compared with the proportion (29%) that observes one or no items. This may reflect religious segmentations within the country. In Belgium the Jewish population is largely bi-nodal, based in Brussels and Antwerp which, although just 45 kilometres away from each other, are worlds apart

Figure 23. Observance of Jewish ritual practices, Eastern v Western Europe



\* East = Hungary, Latvia, Romania; West = Belgium, France, Italy, Sweden, UK (data exclude Germany)

in terms of religious observance. In Antwerp there is a large haredi (strictly Orthodox) presence, so respondents there are more likely to observe each of the six practices than the more secular Jews of Brussels, in most cases by a considerable margin.<sup>70</sup>

This graph also points to an East-West division with respect to Jewish practice. Indeed, further analysis shows that on every item, ritual observance is more prevalent in Western than Eastern Europe, in five of the six cases to a large degree (Figure 23). This is despite the relative ordering of the items being similar in the East and the West.

However, one item stands out where there is virtually no difference between East and West: 'Attend synagogue weekly or more often'. That is puzzling for several reasons, not least because it is the second most demanding item (see Figure 20) so we might have expected it to be observed less frequently in the East. Also, of all the practices investigated, synagogue attendance is the

70 In Antwerp respondents were nearly six times as likely to keep kosher (61% v 11%) and twice as likely to light Friday night candles (77% v 37%). Only Passover shows similarity (89% v 75%). Antwerp N=100, Brussels N=238. There are no reliable figures to indicate if the Brussels Jewish population is more than twice as large as the Antwerp population.

most public and presumably therefore the most susceptible to state control. As Zisere notes, under communism Jews attending synagogue in Latvia risked losing social or economic privileges, and "Most Latvian Jews admit that they rarely go to the synagogue."<sup>71</sup> Similarly, in 2004 in Hungary, although Kovács noted that "among the youngest sector of the sample, there has been an apparent reversal of the pattern of secularization ..."<sup>72</sup> (see Figure 21) overall he found that "The rate of those who never attended synagogue, even on important religious festivals, was very high, amounting to nearly two-thirds of the whole sample."<sup>73</sup> Whether this is a quirk of the data from these Eastern countries or a change in behaviour in more recent years or some other explanation, cannot be determined here.

### **Shabbat (Sabbath) observance**

An alternative approach to examining these data is to ask whether professed attitudes align with actual practice. Here we focus on rituals associated with Shabbat (Sabbath) observance, since this presents a set of practices that vary by level of demand, but are less likely to be affected by issues that cannot be easily controlled for (i.e.

71 Zisere (2005), p.87, p.88.

72 Kovács (2004), p.22.

73 Ibid., p.22.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients (r) relating to Sabbath observance

	“Observing at least some aspects of Shabbat (the Sabbath)” = very/fairly important	Light candles most Friday nights	Attend synagogue weekly or more often
Do not switch on lights on the Sabbath	.37	.31	.45
Attend synagogue weekly or more often	.49	.39	–
Light candles most Friday nights	.60	–	–

All coefficients are significant at 99%, N=5,903

the availability of kosher food). We find that, with respect to Shabbat, attitudes are indeed closely related to practice (Table 3). For example, saying that observing Shabbat is important correlates very strongly with lighting Shabbat candles most Friday nights ( $r=.60$ ). Similarly, the practices themselves also correlate, so avoidance of the use of electric lights correlates strongly with synagogue attendance ( $r=.45$ ) (Table 3).

Hence, we might expect that in countries where a higher proportion of respondents say Shabbat observance is important to them, there would be a correspondingly high level of observance. Further, we might also expect that the levels are commensurate, i.e. the practices also correlate, as in Table 3. But despite what looks superficially like a close relationship, there is a considerable level of complexity in the data on a country by country basis, shown graphically in Figure 24.

Attitudes align with practice in some countries but not in others. For example, measured in proportionate terms, in four countries (UK, France, Belgium, Sweden), saying Shabbat observance is important is matched by the likelihood of lighting candles on Friday night. But this is not the case in three countries (Italy, Germany, Latvia) where a far smaller proportion light candles than say Shabbat observance is important. Such cognitive dissonance suggests, at the very least, that the meaning attached to the ritual of Shabbat candle lighting is viewed rather differently between these two groups of countries.

This same dissonance between attitudes and practice is also exhibited in terms of the two more

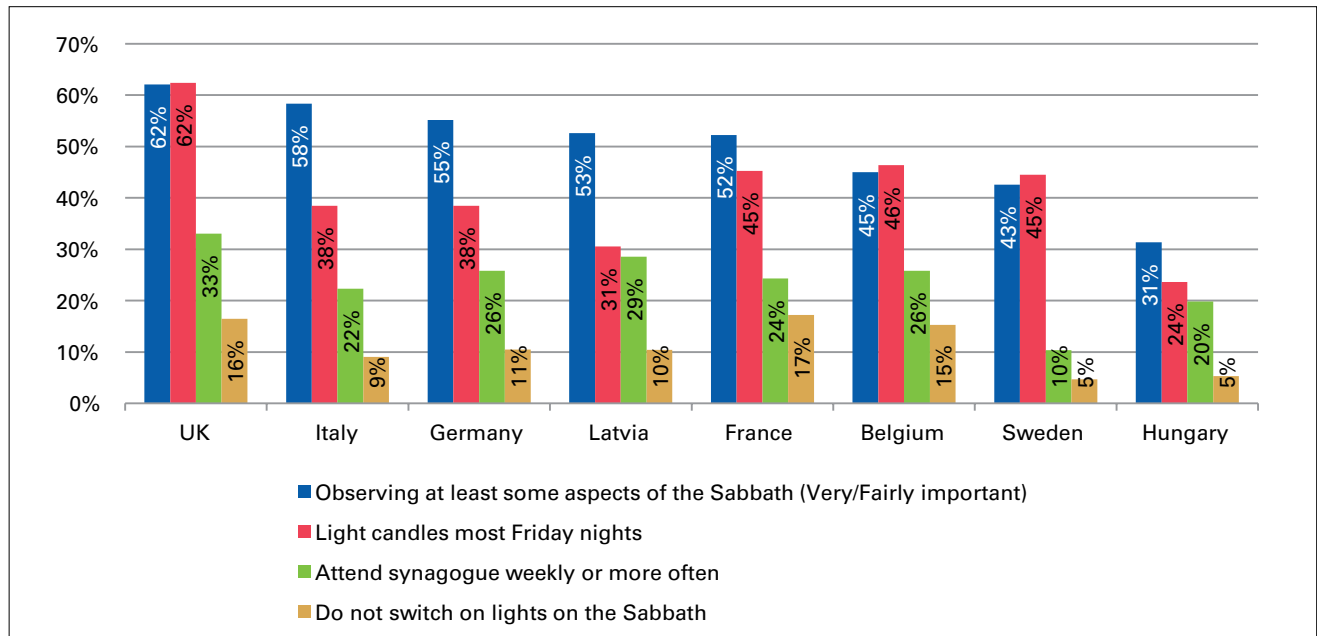
demanding Shabbat rituals: weekly synagogue attendance and the avoidance of the use of light switches on Shabbat.<sup>74</sup> In Italy and Sweden, as well as in Germany and France, there is a relatively wide discrepancy between saying Shabbat observance is important and attending synagogue weekly. But elsewhere, synagogue attendance seems to be more widespread than attitudes imply, particularly in Hungary, but also in Belgium, Latvia and the UK. Similarly, regarding the use of electricity on Shabbat, attitudes in Belgium, France and the UK more closely align with observance, but in Sweden, Italy and Hungary observance is far lower than attitudes imply.

Neither are there strong relationships between the different rituals themselves. For example, in the UK, about half as many Jews attend synagogue weekly as light candles weekly. However, in Sweden, the gap is more than four times larger, and in Latvia and Hungary there is almost no proportionate difference. In Latvia, France and Belgium, the avoidance of using electricity on Shabbat is high relative to synagogue attendance, but in Sweden, Hungary and Italy it is relatively low.

Moreover, other than Italy and Germany, where attitudes and observance closely coincide, in all other cases where similar proportions say that Shabbat observance is important, such as in France and Latvia or Belgium and Sweden, we see rather different patterns of practice. Apparently, what people mean when they say

<sup>74</sup> Under Jewish law, one is prohibited from using electricity on Shabbat. The avoidance of the use of light switches was used in this study as a proxy for measuring whether or not respondents abide by this prohibition.

Figure 24. Attitudes and practices with respect to Sabbath observance by country



something like ‘Shabbat observance is important to my Jewish identity’ varies from country to country, even when this is expressed by similar proportions of Jews, as in Belgium and Sweden. **And here we are getting to the crux of the matter with respect to our discussion of European Jewish identity. On the surface, there is a superficial monolithic look and feel to Jewish identity across Europe, but as we look more and more deeply into the data, at the actual beliefs, belongings and behaviours of European Jews, we see a picture that looks far more mosaic-like.**

If this relatively narrow marker of Jewish identity elicits such variation, indeed, greater variation than there are countries in the survey, how much greater is the variation likely to be when we examine the whole gamut of Jewish identity? This strongly suggests we cannot broad-brush European Jewish identity, at least in this regard.

### ***Kashrut (kosher) observance***

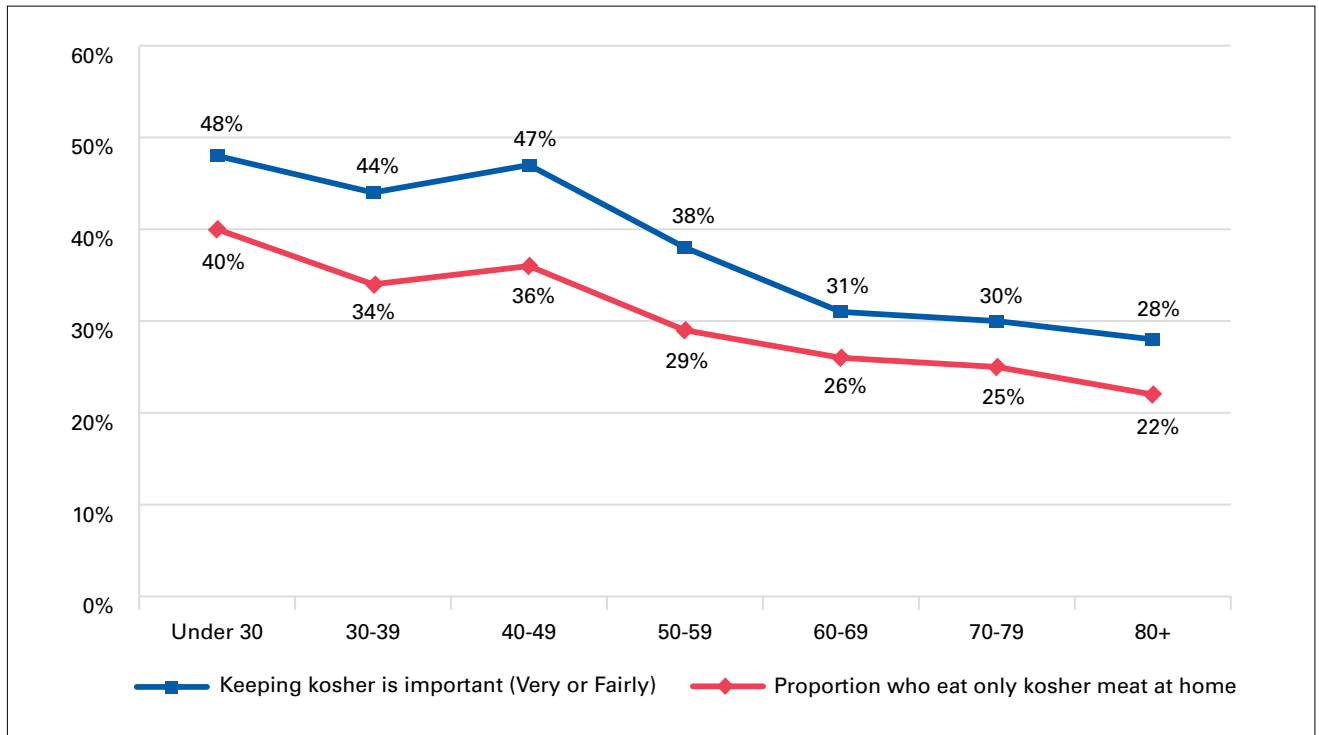
A key aspect of Jewish practice is observance of the laws of kashrut or, more colloquially, keeping kosher. This is an important signifier of Jewish commitment that encroaches into a broader discourse surrounding the acceptability of ritualistic animal slaughter (known as *shechita* in Judaism). To this extent, ‘keeping kosher’—measured here in terms of eating only kosher

meat at home<sup>75</sup> — is a less ‘democratic’ measure of Jewish identity than say, Shabbat observance (discussed in the previous section) since it is a function not only of religiosity (preference) but also availability (opportunity), dependent on the laws and cultural norms of each country. At the time the FRA survey was carried out (September 2012), only in Sweden was shechita proscribed.<sup>76</sup> Although imports of kosher meat are permitted there, Dencik has argued that this highlights a contradiction in Sweden, whereby Jews are simultaneously welcomed and recognised as a ‘national minority’, but denied the opportunity to follow this cultural practice

75 Studies have found that Jews are more likely to observe kashrut in the home than outside it. For example, JPR’s 2013 National Jewish Community Survey study of the UK found that 48% buy kosher meat for the home but only 36% eat kosher meat outside the home. The FRA survey did not ask about vegetarianism but the NJCS data revealed 10% of respondents were vegetarian and buy no meat for the home. Graham, D., Staetsky, L. D. and Boyd, J. (2014). Jews in the United Kingdom in 2013: Preliminary findings from the National Jewish Community Survey. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.7. Data on vegetarianism unpublished calculations by the author.

76 Shechita has since been outlawed in the Southern Belgium region of Wallonia (2017) <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/belgian-region-walloon-bans-kosher-halal-meat-islam-jewish-a7723451.html>.

Figure 25. Proportion who eat only kosher meat at home and attitudes to keeping kosher by age



due to state intervention.<sup>77</sup> In one other country of relevance here, Latvia, shechita is permitted, but its legal acceptability was only recently reinstated.<sup>78</sup> Almost one in three (30%) of Jews across Europe reported that they only eat kosher meat at home and this was more likely to be the case for younger than older respondents (Figure 25). This relationship is not entirely smooth since the trend reverses among people in their forties, perhaps related to lifecycle circumstances. (Jewish practices are often stimulated by the arrival of children, so we might expect unmarried young adults living independently to be less likely to

purchase kosher meat.) The relationship also correlates closely with attitudes, including the ‘blip’ in the forties.

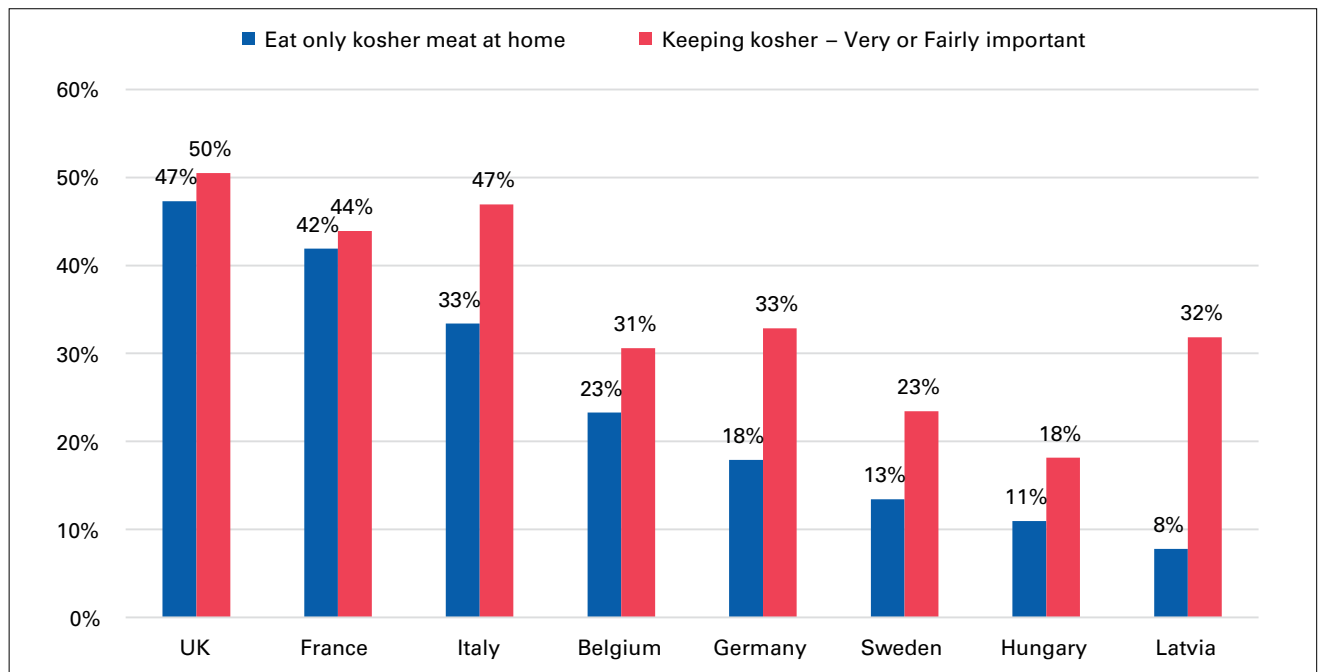
On a country by country basis we find a very wide variation in kashrut observance. In Britain, where almost half (47%) of respondents reported eating only kosher meat at home, Jews were six times more likely to observe this practice than Jews in Latvia (Figure 26). Note that Jews in both Hungary and Latvia are less likely to observe kashrut than Jews in Sweden where shechita is outlawed.

Comparing attitudes towards kashrut with observance of it we do not see such a close correspondence noted with respect to age (Figure 25). Whilst Jews in Britain are the most likely to consider ‘Keeping kosher’ to be an important aspect of their Jewish identity, it is Jews in Hungary, and not Latvia, who are the least likely to do so (Figure 26). Despite Latvia’s very low level of observance (8%), Jews here are four times more likely to consider keeping kosher to be important — a seeming contradiction which is perhaps related to the history of shechita in that country noted above. Similarly, Italian, German and Swedish respondents are also far more likely to believe in the importance of kashrut than to actually observe it in practice.

77 Dencik, L. (2003). ‘Jewishness in postmodernity: The case of Sweden,’ Chapter 5 in Gitelman, Z. et. al., op. cit. p.81. It is also outlawed in Norway and Switzerland (p.102, footnote 16) and in Denmark, all countries not included in the survey.

78 A review of the law suggests that in the nine countries examined in the survey, shechita (ritual slaughter according to Jewish law) is only outlawed in Sweden. In Latvia, ritual slaughter for religious purposes was legalised in 2009 <http://halalfocus.net/latvia-halal-slaughter-legalised/> and [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation/?doc=18316&ins\\_print](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation/?doc=18316&ins_print). See also ‘Religious slaughter of animals in the EU’, Library of the European Parliament 15/11/2012; and Ferrari, S. and Bottoni, R. (2010). Legislation regarding religious slaughter in the EU member, candidate and associated countries.

Figure 26. Proportion of respondents who only eat kosher meat at home compared with the proportion who say keeping kosher is an important aspect of their Jewish identity, by country



One point common to all countries is that the importance placed upon kashrut observance is greater than actual behaviour. Only in Britain and France does it appear that attitudes and observance correspond in this respect (Figure 26). Whilst this discrepancy may well be related to the opportunity to purchase kosher meat (as well as its affordability), it is also likely that the concept of kashrut matters more to Jews than actual practice. An equivalent example was seen above with respect to Shabbat observance (Figure 24). Finally, it cannot be assumed that the dissonance between attitudes towards kashrut and behaviour is especially European, despite being common to all these countries.

Finally, the survey also asked respondents how problematic they would find it, as Jews, if shechita was prohibited in their country. Again, a very wide response range is revealed, with the French being 2.6 times as likely as Latvians to view a ban as being problematic (70% versus 27% respectively).

Thus, on the marker of kashrut, whilst the dissonance between belief and behaviour is consistent across Europe, not only is this unlikely to be a uniquely European trait but it is also the only aspect of kashrut observance and belief that is remotely monolithic. In all substantive respects, respondents' attitudes and behaviours on this

aspect of Jewish identity diverge widely, creating a complex mosaic of Jewish identity.

### Jewish schooling

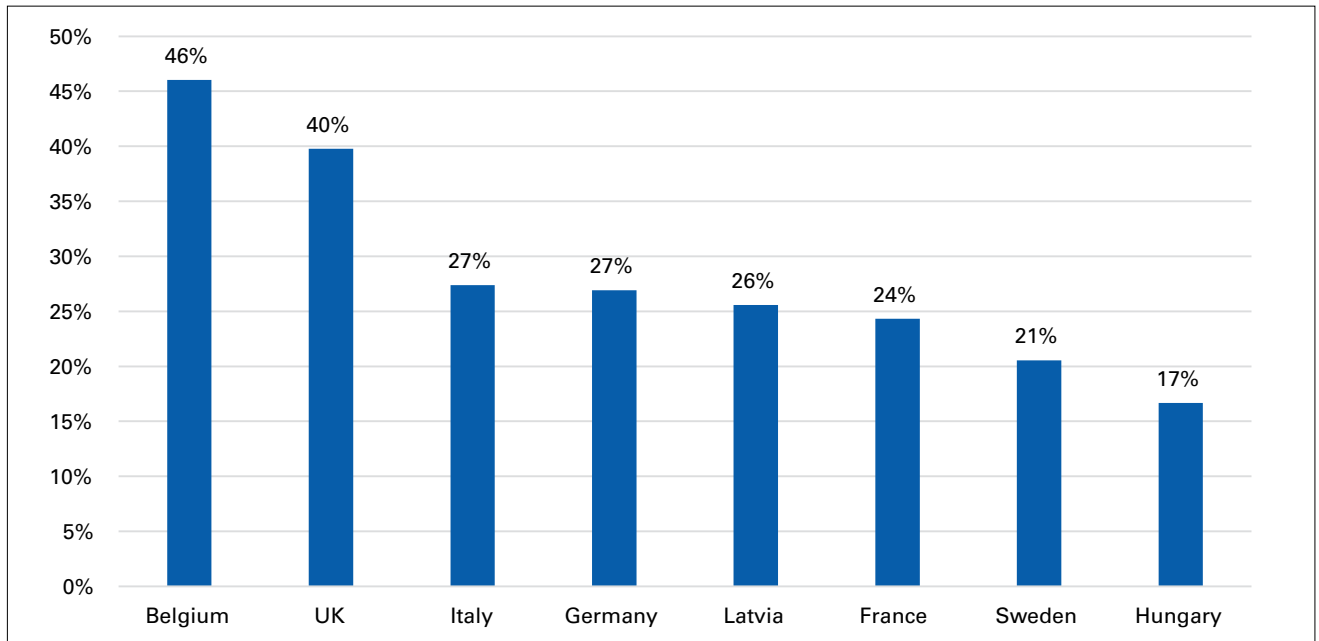
The decision to send a child to a Jewish school is based on multiple factors, not least a commitment on the part of the parents to broaden their child's Jewish education and deepen their Jewish social embeddedness. However, as with the purchasing of kosher meat (see previous section) the preference to do so is not necessarily matched by the opportunity (availability) or ability (cost). Only in Britain is the cost of Jewish schooling paid for by the state in many cases, whereas in France, for example, Jewish schools require fees to be paid.<sup>79</sup>

Among respondents aged 20-54 years old and who have children,<sup>80</sup> three out of ten (30%) send their

<sup>79</sup> Staetsky, L. D. and Boyd, J. (2017). Will my child get a place? An assessment of supply and demand of Jewish secondary school places in London and surrounding areas. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.4; IFOP (2015), Enquête auprès des juifs de France, p.81.

<sup>80</sup> Note the survey asked whether respondents had children or grandchildren of school age and did not distinguish between these two possibilities. In the forthcoming 2018 FRA survey there will be a greater emphasis on understanding parental attitudes towards Jewish schooling.

Figure 27. Proportion with children currently attending a Jewish school or kindergarten among respondents aged 20 to 54 with children, by country



child to a Jewish school or Jewish kindergarten. However, there is a wide discrepancy by country on this measure, with the highest prevalence among Belgian respondents (46%), which is almost three times higher than in Hungary (17%) (Figure 27). Both Belgium and the UK exhibit levels that are notably higher than all the other countries. In the British case this is presumably because of the absence of cost, but this cannot explain the Belgian position.

Yet again, one cannot escape the conclusion that preference towards Jewish schooling in Europe, like preference for kosher meat, exhibits a mosaic rather than a monolithic pattern.

## Ethnicity, parentage and intermarriage

### *Ancestry: Ashkenazi v Sephardi background*

Traditionally, Jews claim two culturally distinct types of background based largely on geographical heritage: Ashkenazim, originating from Northern and Eastern Europe, and Sephardim, from the Iberian Peninsula. Accordingly, the Ashkenazi/Sephardi mix found across Europe is a result of historical Jewish migratory behaviour. In Europe, a majority of respondents, almost two out of three, self-identify as Ashkenazi (64%) and under one in five (18%) self-identify as Sephardi (Figure 28).

A further 18% claim either a mixed or another ancestry, or else did not know.

However, this pattern is not what we see on a country by country basis, since the Ashkenazi/Sephardi distribution across Europe is uneven. Ashkenazim form majorities in all countries except France and Italy, and in two places (the UK and Sweden) they account for more than eight out of ten Jews (Figure 29). But in France and Italy there is a greater ethno-cultural mix, with Sephardim constituting a plurality, though not a majority.

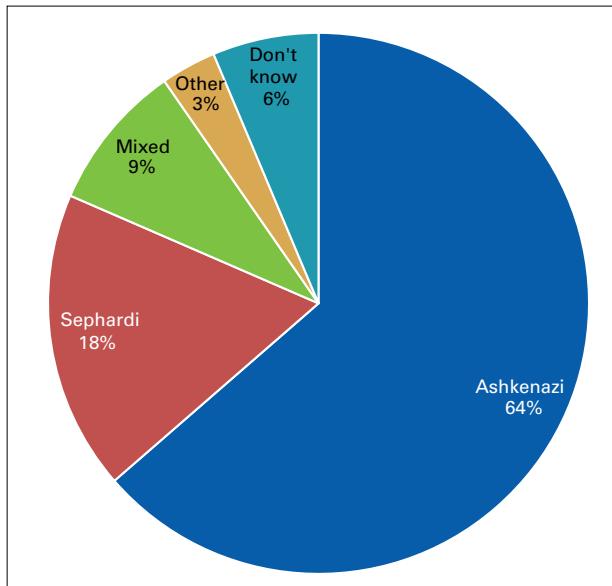
France is known to have one of, if not the largest Sephardi community in the Diaspora,<sup>81</sup> and almost half of French respondents in the FRA 2012 survey identified as Sephardi (48%),<sup>82</sup> a result of Jewish migration from North Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. In Italy, the relatively large Sephardi presence is partially a result of migration—in this case from Libya in 1967, Iran in 1978 and 1997—and the considerable proportion of those identifying as ‘other’ probably reflects a historical quirk, since the ancestral origins of some of today’s Italian Jews pre-dates the rise of the Sephardi/

81 Cohen, E. H. (2009), *op. cit.*, p.15.

82 Another study indicated 41% self-identified as Sephardi, 26% as Ashkenazi, 14% as mixed and 19% Prefer not to say (IFOP (2015), *op. cit.*, p.18.)



Figure 28. Jewish ethnicity for all respondents who are 'Jewish by birth'



Ashkenazi division, and thus they see themselves not as Ashkenazi or Sephardi, but rather as Italian (Italiani or Italkim).<sup>83</sup> Indeed, Italy has the largest proportion of 'other' ancestral groups.

It is also noteworthy that in Latvia and Hungary, whilst majority Ashkenazi communities, more than one in five respondents said they did not know what their Jewish ethnicity was, perhaps indicating that in these two countries, the Ashkenazi/Sephardi distinction may not be quite as meaningful or that it has been forgotten. As Zisere notes, "after decades of complete ignorance of all religions and virulent state atheism, most Latvian Jews do not consider Judaism a core element of their ethnic identity ... This phenomenon is not exclusively Latvian, but concerns all the countries of the former Soviet Union."<sup>84</sup>

### Once again the findings highlight variation reflective of a mosaic with Europe's Jewish population resisting attempts to be

83 DellaPergola, S. and Staetsky, L. D. (2015). From old and new directions: Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among Jews in Italy. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research. The authors speculate that "many respondents may have chosen the closer of the two main alternatives – in this case Sephardi." See pp.13-14.

84 Zisere (2005), op. cit., p.87.

meaningfully homogenised, this time along ethno-racial lines.

### Jewish parentage

Whilst Judaism signifies a religious identity, it is also an inherently ethnic identity, since the normative (Orthodox) interpretation of Jewish law (*halacha*) states that Jewishness is passed down matrilineally—from mother to child. In this sense Judaism departs sharply from Christianity, since it has no ceremonial or confessional requirement for identification. And although conversion of non-Jews to Judaism is permitted, it is not actively encouraged, although reformist branches of Judaism do take more flexible approaches to both descent (patrilineality being accepted in some cases) and conversion (requirements being rather more lenient).

Almost nine out of ten respondents (87%) reported being Jewish by birth, but 9% said they had converted to Judaism (the remainder said something else<sup>85</sup>). In reflection of the matrilineal rule, women are more likely to have converted to Judaism than men (11% versus 8% respectively) (i.e. in normative Orthodoxy, the children of an intermarried Jewish man are not considered Jewish unless his non-Jewish partner previously converted, unlike the children of intermarried Jewish women). This may also reflect the greater inclination of women generally to hold a religious identity than men.<sup>86</sup> Finally, while most (78%) converts have no Jewish parents, among those that do we also see the impact of the matrilineal rule —among converts with one Jewish parent, this was almost four times more likely to be a father than a mother.

85 Overall 5% of respondents reported 'Other' (i.e. that they were 'Not Jewish' (by birth or conversion) or 'Don't know'). This is because the screening process asked people if they identified as Jewish 'in any way' – a deliberately broad definition. Nevertheless, 65 of these respondents (1.1% of the sample) also reported that neither of their parents was Jewish so they may be considered 'Jews by choice.'

86 For example, in England and Wales in 2011, 28% of men identified with 'No religion' compared with 22% of women (ONS 2011 Census Table DC2107). See also Stark, R., (2002), 'Physiology and Faith: Addressing the "universal" gender difference in religious commitment,' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41 (3) 495-507.

Figure 29. Jewish ethnicity for all respondents who are 'Jewish by birth', by country

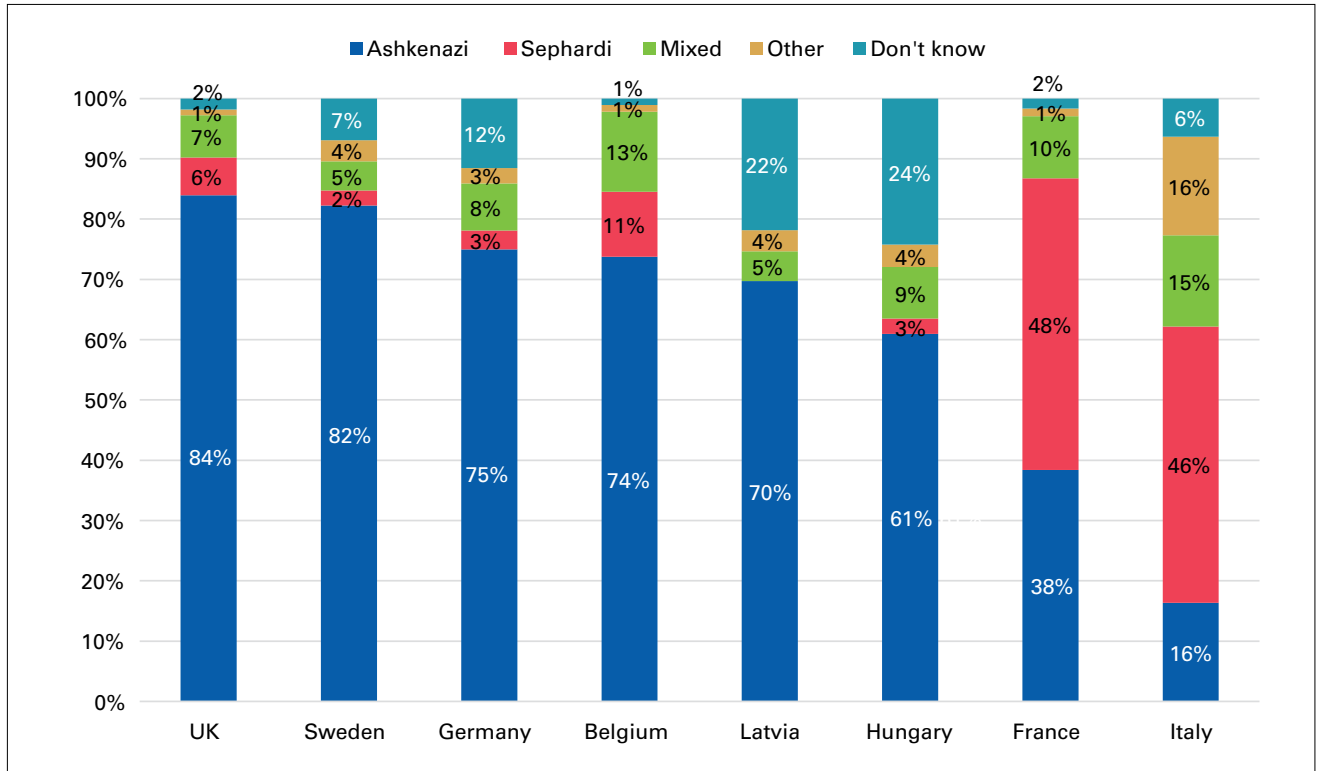
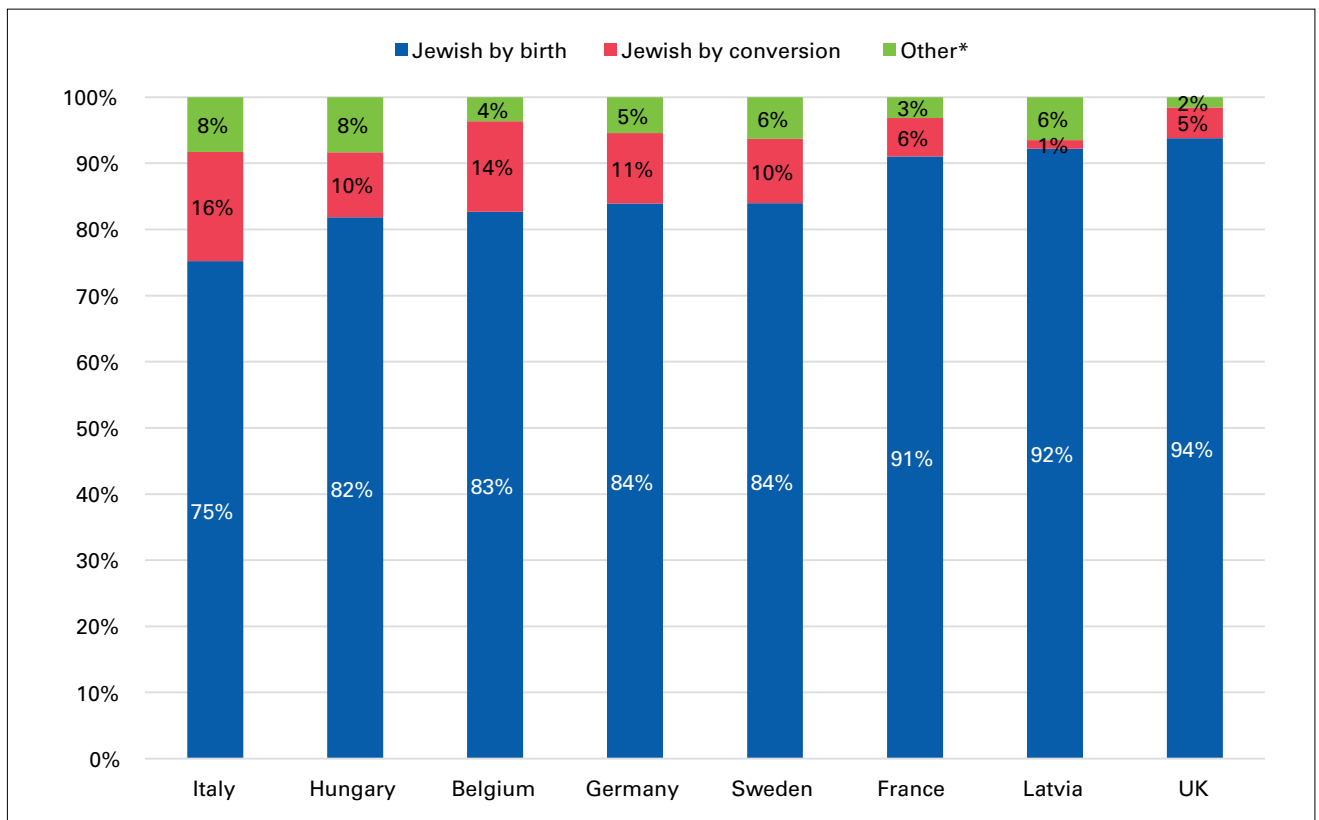
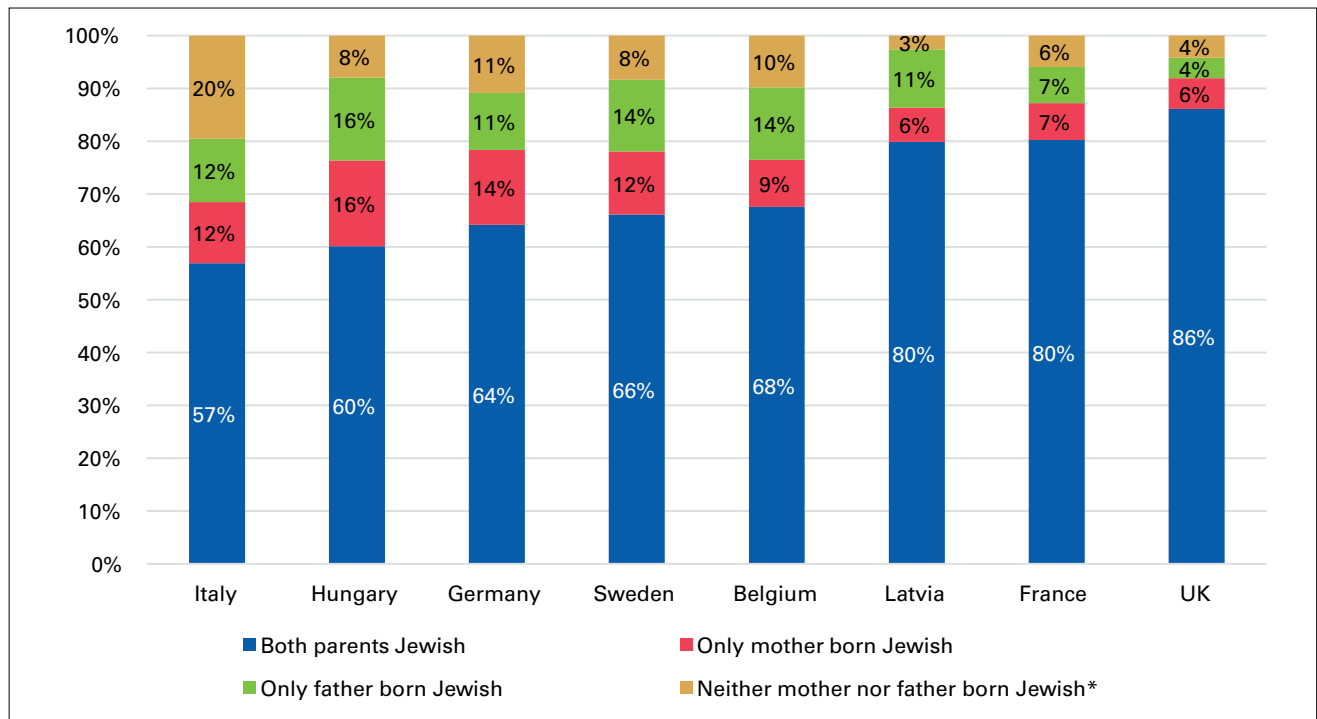


Figure 30. Respondents' Jewish background by country



\* See footnote 85

Figure 31. Religion of respondents' parents by country



\* See footnote 85

Italian respondents were most likely to report being converts to Judaism (16%) and least likely to report being Jewish by birth (57%); Latvian respondents were least likely to be converts (1%) but British respondents were most likely to be born Jews (94%) (Figure 30).

Being born Jewish means different things to different people and not all those who were born Jewish have two Jewish parents. Just under three-quarters of respondents reported that both of their parents were born Jewish (73%) (compared with 87% who reported being Jewish by birth themselves). Italian Jews were the least likely to report having two Jewish parents (57%) and British Jews were the most likely to do so (86%) (Figure 31).

It is interesting to note that in Figure 30 and Figure 31, the two East European countries, Latvia and Hungary, present rather different pictures in this ancestral respect. Whereas Hungary exhibits low levels of respondents with two Jewish parents and relatively high levels of conversion to Judaism, in Latvia the opposite is observed. This again points to the disparate nature of Europe's Jewish population, that even in the East, an often-homogenised sub-

region,<sup>87</sup> important differences arise, in this case, ancestrally.

As with ethnic ancestry, Jewish religious ancestry is also highly varied across Europe, especially with respect to the religion of the respondents' parents.

### Intermarriage

The marriage of Jews to non-Jews — intermarriage — has been well documented in the United States<sup>88</sup> and although reliable data do exist for some European countries, particularly the UK,<sup>89</sup> the gathering of directly comparable data across multiple European borders, as is possible here, may well be unprecedented. Intermarriage is viewed by many Jews with some trepidation, since it is regarded as a symptom of ethnic

<sup>87</sup> Though see JDC International Centre for Community Development (2011), op. cit.

<sup>88</sup> Pew Research Center (2013), op. cit.; Kosmin, B. A., Goldstein, S., Waksberg, J., Lerer, N., Keysar, A., and Scheckner, J. (1991). 'Highlights of the CJF 1990 National Jewish Population Survey,' New York: The Council for Jewish Federations.

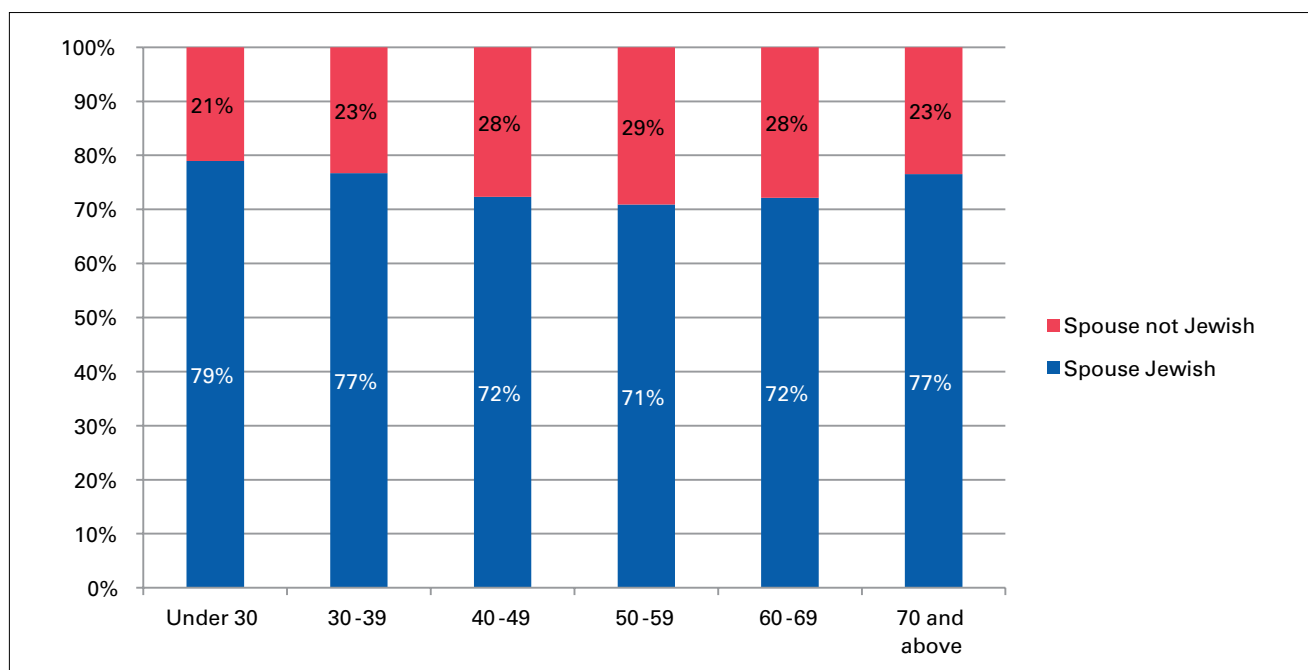
<sup>89</sup> For example, a study by the author of intermarriage in Britain utilising census and survey data. See Graham, D. (2016), *Jews in couples: Marriage, intermarriage, cohabitation and divorce in Britain*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

Table 4. Religion of partner by type of partnership, for all partnered respondents\*

Religion of partner	Married and living with spouse	Cohabiting/ living with your partner	Total
Jewish (by birth or conversion)	73%	38%	67%
Not Jewish	27%	62%	33%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Data exclude responses where partner’s religion was unknown. N=3,728

Figure 32. Prevalence of intermarriage for all married respondents by religion of spouse by age (N=3,167)



erosion posing a threat to Jewish demographic continuity. This is because it can disrupt the intergenerational transmission of Jewish identity, as Sidney Goldstein has argued: “Marriage and the family have been the basic institutions for Judaism, playing a key role in providing for the future, first through reproduction and then by serving as major agents of socialisation and the transmission of values, attitudes, goals and aspirations.”<sup>90</sup> Intermarriage is therefore seen by many as the tangible manifestation of a Jewish identity which is already on a path towards Jewish disconnection, even if it does not result in permanent detachment.

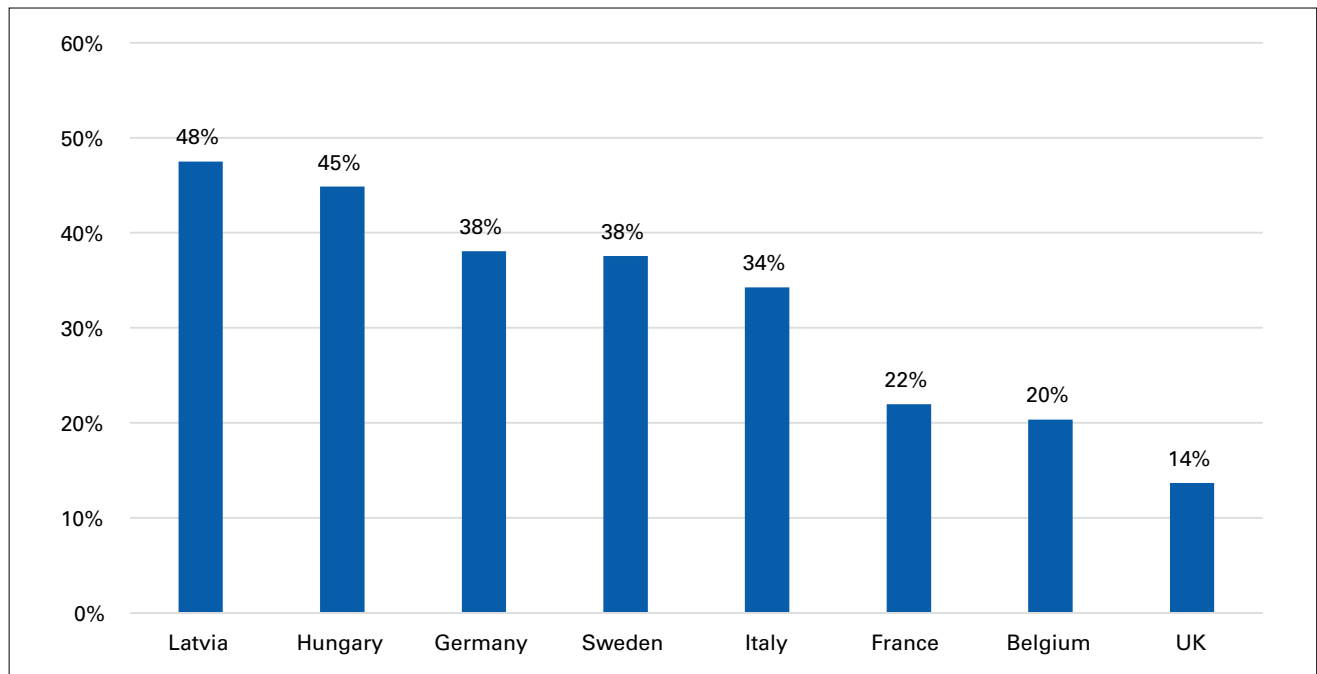
Across Europe, almost three-quarters (73%) of married respondents had a Jewish spouse, while 27% had a non-Jewish spouse (Table 4). However,

other than Jewish background, intermarriage correlates with many different demographic variables, especially partnership type. Of all respondents in partnerships, 15% were cohabiting rather than married, and among this cohabiting group, ‘exogamy’ (non-Jewish partnership) is the norm, being more than twice as likely to occur than among married couples (62% cohabiting v 27% married). This is because cohabitation is usually a less permanent partnership arrangement than marriage, and may reflect a degree of ambivalence on the part of cohabitees about committing to a permanent intermarried union.

Intermarriage patterns are also sensitive to gender and age. Whilst there was only a slight difference among married couples in the prevalence of women to be intermarried compared with men (28% female v 26% male), married men are more than three times as likely to have a wife who converted to Judaism than married women are to have a husband who converted (10% male v

90 Goldstein, S. (1993). ‘Profile of American Jewry: Insights from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey,’ Occasional Papers No. 6, CUNY, New York, p.116.

Figure 33. Proportion of married respondents living with a non-Jewish spouse, by country



3% female). As discussed above, this reflects the role matrilineality plays in Jewish heritage. The prevalence of intermarriage is most common among married respondents in their fifties (29%) and least common among married respondents aged under thirty (21%) (Figure 32), a pattern also revealed in British census data<sup>91</sup> and reflects the demographic reality that religious people are both more likely to marry at younger ages (under 30 years old) than less religious people and more likely to marry Jews.

What does the prevalence of intermarriage look like on a country by country basis? The data reveal wide variation (Figure 33). Prevalence is lowest in the UK at 14%<sup>92</sup> but in Latvia it is more than three times this level, with almost half of the married respondents reporting non-Jewish

spouses (48%).<sup>93</sup> It is notable that France, Belgium and the UK exhibit somewhat lower levels of intermarriage than all the other countries, but equally, that levels are substantially higher in the two East European countries, almost certainly a result of decades of anti-religious policies pursued by communist regimes. This highly differentiated pattern can only be described as a mosaic, a reflection of significant differences in the propensity towards intermarriage across these European countries.

91 Graham, D. (2016). *Jews in couples: Marriage, intermarriage, cohabitation and divorce in Britain*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.18.

92 UK census data from 2011 indicate that 15% of married Jews had a non-Jewish spouse and a further 7% had a spouse with 'No Religion,' frustrating the possibility of direct baseline comparisons (see: Graham (2016), *op. cit.* p.14). However, given that the FRA data have not been weighted to redress likely underrepresentation of less engaged Jews – who are more likely to be intermarried – they probably understate the prevalence of intermarriage in Europe, but especially in Britain.

93 For the purposes of context, other survey data on the prevalence of intermarriage are also available for three of these countries: UK (2013) 23%; France (2009) 24%; Hungary (2004) 49%. (Respectively: Graham, *et. al.* (2014), *op. cit.*, p.19, Table 2; Cohen (2009), *op. cit.*, pp.70-71, Table 20; Kovács (2004), *op. cit.*, p.3 and p.20).

## Concluding thoughts – United in diversity

The FRA survey never set out to answer questions on the topic of European Jewish identity. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that this dataset marks a step change in our ability to empirically address a question that has intrigued scholars of contemporary Jewry and several international Jewish charities since the fall of the Berlin Wall: is there such a thing as European Jewish identity, and if so, what does it look like?

This analysis has tackled the question on two fronts, first by placing a homogenised ‘European’ Jewry in a Jewish global context, against the backdrops of American and Israeli Jewry, and second, by assessing key determinates of Jewish belief, belonging and behaviour across eight European countries in the FRA data. In the global context, whilst some traits, especially behavioural ones, do appear to stand out as being *distinctive* to European Jewry, to claim that they are *distinctively* European remains unproven and, moreover, is probably a step too far. Within Europe, the data direct us to only one conclusion, that European Jewish identity is far more mosaic than monolith, a patchwork of varied Jewish belief systems and behaviours rather than a unique and cohesive expression of Jewishness. Whilst it is true that some aspects of Jewish identity are common to all eight of the countries examined, these traits tend to be somewhat superficial, and upon further examination, they reveal wide variation to be the European Jewish norm. That this is so should not necessarily be surprising, since it is hard enough to identify the essence of ‘European identity,’ certainly not in the same way we might point to French or Italian identity, for example.

In the global context it has been demonstrated that Israel, and not Europe, stands out both religiously, it being consistently more observant but also politically, because Israeli Jewish identity is complicated by the paraphernalia of nation state. But can the same be said for Europe and European Jewry? When the homogenised European bloc is examined against the American and Israeli blocs, some level of European Jewish distinctiveness is revealed—for example, it appears to fall somewhere in-between the American and Israeli cases with respect to Jewish behaviour—but this is not common to all traits measured,

and moreover, even if it were, we would still struggle to meaningfully characterise such Jewish distinctiveness as being essentially *European*.

Within Europe itself, the consistent and perhaps unique finding from this analysis is that there are few consistent findings. Very few Jewish traits were found to be observed across all countries in any kind of consistent way, whether in terms of ordering of priorities or intensity of belief and observance. Therefore, it appears that ultimately, Europe’s uniqueness, its distinctiveness, lies less in any special Jewish characterisation or European essence and more in its geosocial condition, i.e. its very diversity. And even that may not be unique to Europe if, for example, we consider the Americas, or just South America, as contiguous Jewish blocs. Thus, the identification of any essentially European Jewish distinction must go beyond the spatial by recognising that this particular mosaic happens to be located in a space that has, since the 1951 Treaty of Paris, been subject to one of the greatest socio-political integrationist projects of modern times. It is therefore unfortunate that the data do not directly address this socio-political reality, but as discussed below, this does suggest a path for future studies.

The data also allow us to examine, albeit obliquely, another idea about European Jews. This is the notion that local cultural conditioning, the ambience, has a greater impact on identity than Jewish heritage. However intuitive this must seem, it remains conjectural and empirically untested. On some cultural levels it is obviously apparent, and we need look no further than language and accent to identify an ambient effect. However, we can also point to the contrary: the haredim of London, Manchester and Antwerp may well have different accents, but we would stop short of suggesting they had fully absorbed their national cultures. To fully test this idea, we would need parallel data from both Jews and their surrounding populations, something that was not part of the FRA dataset. Yet in at least two examples, some tentative findings did emerge. Comparisons between the importance Jews place on God with independent data on general levels of belief in God in each country, reveal that, with the exceptions of the most God-fearing (Italy) and least God-fearing

(Sweden) societies, a rather weak relationship is observed, suggesting that ambient impact is at least moderated in this regard. A second, albeit more fragmentary, piece of evidence was revealed by the finding that of all the communities studied, French Jews exhibit the strongest feelings of Jewish Peoplehood, despite France being a country where the notion of community itself is considered unconstitutional. So, while intuition suggests that the dominant, ambient, culture takes precedence over Jewish conditioning, we have some embryonic indicators that the relationship may not be so clear cut. This marks another area for future work.

### Contextualising European Jewish identity

As mentioned, the data did show that in some instances, we may characterise European Jewish identity as monolithic, whereby Jewish commonality is in evidence across Europe. In all eight countries consistent patterns emerge in the ordering of certain Jewish identity markers. Hence, in all eight countries, we see very high importance attached to *Remembering the Holocaust* and/or *Feeling part of the Jewish People*; the associated prioritisation of ethnocultural Jewish traits above religious ones; and a ‘contradiction’ between positive attitudes towards key Jewish identity markers and actual levels of observance and behaviour (such as regarding kashrut (keeping kosher) and Shabbat (the Sabbath)). Yet, we cannot conclude that any of this reflects a uniquely *European* Jewish identity since when we place a homogenised Europe alongside Israel and the United States, we see similar patterns across the Jewish world, facets perhaps of a global Jewish identity.

Moreover, this is a rather shallow manifestation of Jewish identity and we need not look much more deeply into the data to see significant and complex diversity. Take the example of Shabbat. Superficially, we see a fairly consistent pattern with the importance of *Observing at least some aspects of Shabbat* placed in either third or fourth position from the bottom of each country’s list of key Jewish markers. And of the three Shabbat rituals examined, the relative ordering of observance is the same from country to country—candle lighting followed by weekly synagogue attendance followed by avoidance of using electricity on Shabbat. Yet, although in

most countries more people are likely to believe in the importance of observing Shabbat than actually observe it—that is not the case in the UK, Belgium or Sweden (where people are more likely to light candles on Friday night than to say Shabbat is important to their Jewish identity). Further, in only two out of eight countries, Italy and Germany, were the proportionate patterns of attitude and behaviour commensurate; in all other cases we see complex variation in attitude and prioritisation of rituals.

It appears then that certain aspects of Shabbat are being ascribed different meanings in different countries. But it has not been the aim of this study to explain whether or why this may be the case, nor to characterise such differences, though such questions are clearly valid and suitable for future work. Rather, the aim has been to assess whether a common European Jewish identity could be located, and although there are some superficial commonalities regarding Shabbat, to conclude that there is a uniform European Jewish approach is to broad-brush European Jewish identity to a dubious degree.

Thus, the central advantage and, indeed, power of the FRA dataset is its ability to provide directly comparable data on Jewish communities living in eight European countries derived from applying the same methodology and same questions all asked at the same time. And just because we have concluded that there is no *European* Jewish identity, or at least no monolithic identity, this does not prevent us from exploring the mosaic of Jewish identity *in Europe*. When we do so, we find the following:

In **Belgium**, the European country most likely to send its children to Jewish schools, we observe a unique polarisation between the observant and non-observant, likely reflecting religious segmentations *within* that population. In **France**, where Jews exhibit the strongest feelings of being *part of the Jewish People* (despite Consistorial Judaism), Jews also have the strongest level of emotional attachment to Israel. More than half have foreign-born parents and almost half the population identifies as Sephardi. **Germany**’s community has the largest proportion of foreign-born Jews and, along with Hungary, the youngest Jewish population. It is in **Hungary** where the greatest relative



weight is placed on *Combating antisemitism* and where the weakest level of support for Israel is exhibited. Hungarian Jews are least likely to send their children to Jewish schools and observe the fewest number of ritual practices. Even so, it is in **Italy** where Jews are least likely to say they feel *part of the Jewish People* and where a relative lack of importance is attached to *Donating funds to charity*, even though Italian Jews attach the greatest importance of all the countries to *Believing in God*. Similar to France, Italy has a proportionately large non-Ashkenazi community, but Italian respondents are least likely to report being Jewish by birth or to have two Jewish parents. The Jews of **Latvia** are the oldest population. They are least likely to have visited Israel and most likely to be intermarried. On the other hand, Latvian Jews are the only group where synagogue attendance is as prevalent as Shabbat candle lighting and relative to their very low level of kashrut observance, Latvian Jews are four times more likely to consider keeping kosher to be important. By contrast, in **Sweden**, Jews are far more likely to light candles than attend synagogue. Here, where a high proportion is Ashkenazi and more than half have foreign-born parents, a very high level of importance is attached to *Combating antisemitism*, despite Swedish Jews being relatively unlikely to experience it. Swedish Jews attach the lowest level of importance of all countries to *Believing in God* but they are most likely to have lived in Israel. The country with the highest proportion of Ashkenazim is the **United Kingdom** but in stark contrast to Sweden, where Jews observe few Jewish practices, British Jews observe the most. They are most likely to eat kosher meat at home and appear to feel the least threatened community in Europe, being least concerned about *Combating antisemitism*. British Jews are the most likely to be Jewish by birth and least likely to be intermarried.

It should be reiterated that unlike previous attempts to describe the intricacies of European Jewish identity, this whirlwind tour of eight countries is brand new, being empirically grounded in statistics that offer the possibility of direct contextualisation, and, in doing so, reveal a Jewish smörgåsbord. The motto of the Europe Union is “United in Diversity” and this also seems to be an apt description of European Jewish identity. But it is not a Jewish description, and, given that, perhaps the more pertinent term with which to characterise *European Jewish identity*, particularly given its Jewish connotations, is *Mosaic*.

### Looking ahead

As revealing as these data undoubtedly are on the topic of European Jewish identity, they nevertheless arose as a by-product of an altogether separate project on antisemitism and, as such, do not enable us to explore the central question as fully as a bespoke survey might otherwise allow. That is because some key questions were not asked in the 2012 FRA survey. Yet some such questions have been asked elsewhere, in particular in the JDC’s Survey of European Jewish Leaders and Opinion Formers,<sup>94</sup> including ones concerning relationships between, and knowledge of, Jews in different parts of Europe and the rest of the Jewish world; feelings of collectiveness and connectedness; affiliation with, and knowledge of, Jewish European institutional structures; and attitudes towards the European integrationist project and the belief in a European and Jewish European commonality or identity. Intriguingly, a follow-up FRA survey is soon to take place and some of these topics will be addressed there.<sup>95</sup> Either way, that survey will include five additional European countries to those examined here, offering the potential to further expand our appreciation of the complexities of European Jewish identity.

94 JDC International Centre for Community Development (2016), op. cit.

95 “Major EU antisemitism survey planned for 2018” <http://fra.europa.eu/en/press-release/2017/major-eu-antisemitism-survey-planned-2018>.

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ORT House, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NE

tel +44 (0)20 7424 9265

e-mail [jpr@jpr.org.uk](mailto:jpr@jpr.org.uk)

website [www.jpr.org.uk](http://www.jpr.org.uk)

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