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Jewish Identity in the Post-Soviet Countries: Parameters, Models and Challenges

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TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY אוניברסיטת תל אביב

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Prof. Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, Dr. Velvl Chernin

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Content

Preface

This is the first comprehensive study in a long time that allows a comparative analysis of the situation in post-Soviet countries. We are confident that these studies will help Jewish associations of Euro-Asia to form an optimal community policy and allow international Jewish structures to get an adequate picture of Jewish life in the region that occupies an important place in the historical memory of Jewish people and that remains a source of mass repatriation to Israel.

The COVID-19 pandemic made Jewish leaders face a big test. Today more than ever, we need far-sighted decisions based not on a fleeting moment but on awareness, clear priorities, and a deep understanding of the situation. Only this way will we be able to overcome all hardships and difficulties – and ensure a dignified future for the Jewish people.

The Euro-Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC) pays special attention to scientific research of the ever-changing circumstances, problems, and challenges on the agenda of Jewish communities and organizations in the Euro-Asian region. Therefore, with special pride we present to you the Jews of Post-Soviet Euro-Asia study carried out on the initiative of the EAJC by the Institute for Euro-Asian Jewish Studies (IEAJI) under the leadership of Chairman of the IEAJI Academic Council Prof. Ze'ev Khanin.

This comprehensive survey of the Jewish population of five countries of the former USSR – Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Kazakhstan – brought about indicative data on the status and development prospects for Jewish life in the post-Soviet space.

Among the most significant conclusions of the study, we must emphasize the understanding of the role of Jewish communities as the main tool for preservation and development of Jewish life in post-Soviet countries. The Euro-Asian Jewish Congress intends to further support and develop Jewish life of the Euro-Asian region and protect the rights and legitimate interests of Jewish communities in government bodies and international organizations.

Based on the analysis of the data collected, we recommend that Jewish leaders and communities in this region draw special attention to the development of online activities and targeted programs for young and middle-aged people, as well as to the importance of Jewish education in shaping one's Jewish identity and to getting Jewish people and their family members, including Israeli citizens who remain unreached but interested, involved in Jewish community life.

We are responsible for the fate of Jewish communities in the Euro-Asian region and together we will outline the future of the Jewish people. With G-d's help, we will succeed!

Dr. Mikhail Mirilashvili, *EAJC President*

Dr. Mark Shabad, *IEAJS President*, *EAJC Vice President*

Dr. Haim Ben Yakov, *EAJC Director General*

Introduction

This monographic essay presents the results of an academic and application analysis of materials from a comprehensive sociological study of the Jewish (in the broadest sense of the word) population of post-Soviet ("Russian-speaking") Euro-Asia a quarter of a century after the collapse of the USSR.

Subject of Research and Target Group Parameters

The study was initiated by the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC) and conducted in the first half of 2019 in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, and in early 2020 in Kazakhstan by the EAJC-founded Institute for Euro-Asian Jewish Studies.

The project aim was to analyze the development of Jewish and other ethnic identities, formation trends of Jewish communities, mechanisms for non-Jews and people of mixed origin to join the Jewish collective, migration dynamics, and the socioeconomic status of different Jewish groups. In addition, research also focused on these groups' attitude to Israel, the place and the role of the Jewish state in the culture, values, and behaviors of these groups. Study has also been done of the dynamics of these processes by comparing its data to a much smaller study conducted by these authors in five cities of Russia and Ukraine in 2004-2005.[1] Results were compared to those of other studies of the same target audience in recent years.

Such information is important for the community policy development of local, umbrella, and international Jewish organizations operating in the former USSR. Negative demographic factors, including the continuing emigration, assimilation, and death rate toping birth rate (mitigated by higher life expectancy than that of their non-Jew-

[1] The research included a quantitative poll of 470 respondents who identify themselves with the Jewish community one way or another in the two capitals (Kiev and Moscow) and three periphery cities (Vladimir, Samara, Zaporozhye) of Russia and Ukraine. We also held an in-depth expert poll of leaders of Jewish organizations, Jewish activists and professionals, and envoys of foreign Jewish organizations working in CIS and Baltic countries. Its results were published in: Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin and Velvl Chernin, Identity, Assimilation and Revival: Ethnic Social Processes among the Jewish Population of the Former Soviet Union (Ramat-Gan: the Rappaport Center for Assimilation Studies and Strengthening of Jewish Vitality, 2007), and Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, "Between Eurasia and Europe: Jewish Community and Identities in Contemporary Russia and Ukraine" in Julius H. Schoeps and Olaf Glukner (eds.) A Road to Nowhere? Jewish Experiences in the Unifying Europe (Laden: Brill, 2011), pp. 63-89

ish fellow citizens), prompted the process of depopulation of the local Jewish population.[2] However, forecasts made at the beginning of the century on the complete disappearance of the Jewish population in the CIS were not confirmed. The phenomenon of "1.5 generation" and the emergence of new subcultures among the Russian-Jewish youth turned out to be a positive contribution to the upkeeping of the Russian-Jewish identity for mid-term and possibly even for the long-term future.[3]

Among other noteworthy trends of recent years is gradual stabilization in the number of post-Soviet Jewish communities in 10-12 major cities with an extensive network of community structures and institutions. Another is the absorption of the non-Jewish component by Russian-Jewish communities within the framework of the "enlarged" Russian-Jewish population. This trend is especially noticeable among people of mixed origin with dual identity and is inherent in representatives of the second, third, and sometimes fourth generation of ethnically heterogeneous families.

The Israeli Law of Return (LOR) provides the right to repatriate not only to pure Jews but also to "half Jews", "quarter Jews" and their non-Jewish spouses. These groups show a clear interest in searching for their (possible) Jewish roots and participating in cultural, educational, academic, memorial, and other Jewish community projects. This also fully applies to non-Jewish spouses since poly-ethnic couples today rarely refuse some form of identification with the Jewish community.

The process of formation of new ethno-civic (or local ethnic) groups of the East European Ashkenazi Jewry ("Ukrainian", "Latvian", "Moldavian", "Russian", etc. Jews) has been running against this background for the last 1.5-2 decades in former USSR regions with a significant concentration and/or high level of cohesion of the Jewish population. Due to natural demographic causes, the share of people of mixed origin in these groups is high, demonstrating a changing balance of identification with the country of residence and the "transnational Russian-Jewish community."[4]

[2] See: Mark Toltz, "A Half Century of Jewish Emigration from the Former Soviet Union". Paper presented at the symposium in honor of Dr. Mark Toltz' Retirement (the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 27 June 2019)

[3] For more details about these processes, see Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, Dina Pisarevskaya, "Jewish Youth of Modern Russia: Ethnonational and Confessional Identity," Jewish University Herald: History. Culture. Civilization (Jerusalem — Moscow), 2013, No 15, pp. 169-197.

[4] More details of this phenomenon, see Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, "Between Eurasia and Europe: Jewish

This process is taking place against the backdrop of actual disintegration (or at least transformation) of the "old" Ashkenazi Jewish sub-ethnos that is losing such ethnocultural attributes as the Yiddish language and folklore created in it, as well as many elements of the traditional Ashkenazi culture of Eastern Europe. These circumstances surround the formation of a new subethnic group of the Jewish people, and its formation is almost complete in the post-Soviet space, in Israel, and in countries of the new Russian-Jewish diaspora. The heritage of East-European Ashkenazi serves as a substrate (including in the form of translations of fiction from Yiddish into Russian) [5] for the culture of the Russian-speaking Jews. Infrastructure is provided by local Jewish groups with a specific communal, subcultural, and ethno-political identity. Parallel processes are also observed in other segments of the transnational Russian-speaking Jewish community outside the post-Soviet Euro-Asia, for example, in "Russian Israel", in the "Russian-Jewish" community of the USA, etc.

Preservation of such identity models certainly contributes to the development of organized Jewish life in Euro-Asia and Eastern Europe. And at the same time, it meets the interests of the Jewish communities of the West, for whom the Russian-speaking Jewry remains almost the last available resource of demographic, cultural, economic, and political developmental "breakthrough".

All of these trends, important for the future of Israel and the Jewish people, have become subject to various applied analyses, including peer review and qualitative research, to observe basic social, cultural, and behavioral models typical of the post-Soviet Jewry at large[6] and its individual segment in particular.[7] Quantitative research to track down the origins, the real extent, and the dynamics of these processes is part of the same trend.

Community and Identities in Contemporary Russia and Ukraine", pp. 63-89

[5] Velvl Chernin, "Borders of Jewish National Collective: East European and Eurasian Context", in V. Chernin and V. (Z.) Khanin, eds., Jews of Europe and Asia: Status, Heritage and Prospects. Institute for Euro-Asian Jewish Studies Yearbook. Vol. 1, 2018-2019/5779 (Herzliya: IEAJS and Institute of Jewish Studies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 2019), pp. 29-39

[6] For example: Mikhail Chlenov, "Peculiarities of Ethnic and Confessional Identification of Russian Jews" in L. Dymerskaya-Tsigelman, ed. Soviet Jews in Transition, No 20-21. Jerusalem, 2002, pp. 254-273 (Hebrew); Betsy Gidwitz, Post-Soviet Jewry: Critical Issues (Jerusalem: JCPA Pub, 1999); Elena Nosenko-Stein, "Pass It to Your Children and Their Children to the Next Generation": Cultural Memory of Russian Jews Nowadays (Moscow: MBA, 2013, Russian)

[7] Elena Nosenko, To Be or to Feel? Main Aspects of Jewish Self-Identification among Descendants of Mixed Marriages in Modern Russia (Moscow: Kraft+, 2004), Russian

There are, however, very few academic works that would be of interest to us in the comparative interregional context. In addition to our 2004-2005 research, they include the first of its sort study of the Jewish population of Moscow, Minsk, and Kiev conducted in 1992 by Robert Brimm and Rosalina Ryvkina,[8] and a comprehensive study of the Jews of Russia and Ukraine carried out in the late 1990s by Zvi Gitelman, Vladimir Chervyakov and Vladimir Shapiro.[9] In addition, there is the 2013 work by Ze'ev Khanin, Dina Pisarevskaya and Alek Epstein based on the comparative analysis of eight 2004-2012 studies, but dedicated only to one, albeit important, category of the researched community – the Jewish youth of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.[10]

And this exhausts the list of comparative studies known to these authors that would analyze sociocultural processes in the Jewish communities of at least two post-Soviet states. To complete the picture, we will mention a number of important quantitative studies of the largest local Jewish communities (that of Moscow and St. Petersburg)[11] as well as the Jewish population of individual countries, in particular, Russia. Among them are the 2010 complex sociological analysis of the Russian Jewry guided by Igor Yakovenko[12] and the 2007-2010 study by Nosenko-Stein in Moscow and four other Russian cities.[13]

[8] See Robert Brimm (with the assistants of R. Ryvkina), Jews of Moscow, Kiev, and Minsk: Identity, Antisemitism, Emigration (New York: State University Press, 1994)

[9] Zvi Gitelman, Vladimir Cherviakov and Vladimir Shapiro, "National Self-Identification of Russian Jews", Diasporas, Moscow, 2000. № 4, pp. 52-86; 2001, №1, pp. 210-244 (Russian); Zvi Gitelman, "Thinking about Being Jewish in Russia and Ukraine", in: Zvi Gitelman, Musya Glants and Marshall I. Goldman (eds.), Jewish Life after the USSR (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003); Gitelman, Cherviakov and Shapiro, "Judaism in National Self-Identification of Russian Jews", Herald of the Jewish University in Moscow [hereafter HJUM], 1994. № 3(7), pp. 121-144.

[10] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, Dina Pisarevskaya and Alek D. Epstein, Jewish Youth in Post-Soviet Countries (Ramat-Gan and Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences [hereafter IOS RAS] and the G. Lookstein Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora of the Bar Ilan University, 2013), in Russian.

[11] Rozalina Ryvkina, Jews of the Post-Soviet Russia: Who are They? (Moscow: URSS, 1996); Ryvkina, How Do Jews Live in Russia? Sociological Analysis of Changes (Moscow: Inst. Of Oriental Studies, the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2005); Vladimir Shapiro, Maria Gerasimova, Irina Nizovtseva, Natalya Syanova, "Jews of St. Petersburg: Ethnic Self-Identification and Participation in Community Life", Diasporas (Moscow), 2006, №3, pp. 95-149, and №4, pp. 169-216 (in Russian)

[12] See results of these studies in: Alexander Osovtsov and Igor Yakovenko, Jewish People in Russia: Who, How and Why Belongs to It (Moscow: Dom Yevreiskoy Knigi [House of Jewish Book], 2011), in Russian

[13] See Elena Nosenko-Stein, ""Own" and "Other's" in Modern Russian City: Jewish Sacral Geography," Anthropological Forum, № 23, 2014, pp. 123-139 (Russian) and Nosenko-Stein, "Pass It to Your Children and Their Children to the Next Generation"

With some exceptions, most of these important academic writings describe the situation in the Jewish communities of post-Soviet countries no later than the end of the 2000s, which leaves new processes typical of the later period out of the applied and academic analysis. Among them are the appearance on the Jewish scene of CIS and Baltic countries of new transregional players such as the Genesis Foundation; Jewish umbrella organizations such as the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, and transcontinental projects as the educational Limmud platform and groups of activists in Israel and countries of the Russian-Jewish diaspora affiliated with it.

Among other trends one may also notice entering in the leadership of Jewish organizations of substantial group of representatives of the post-Soviet generation largely consisting of descendants of mixed marriages, which world-vision is more often dominated by local Jewish identity rather that the "universal" one. Next, a new round of conflicts between former Soviet states that demanded a totally new level of loyalty to their country became another challenge to the collective identity of the post-Soviet Jewry. Among them are the Russia-Georgia war of 2008 and especially the long-standing Russian-Ukrainian conflict that broke out in 2014 and that actively "played" the "Jewish card".[14] Finally, the resent decade witnessed the new rise (especially since 2013-2014) of Jewish emigration from CIS countries, first of all – aliyah to Israel, which replaced nearly a decade of a repatriation decline, whose lowest point was 2008. This trend is once again significantly influencing the socio-demographic and behavioral processes in the post-Soviet Jewish environment.

In this critical period, sociocultural dynamics in the post-Soviet Jewish communities certainly requires a comprehensive quantitative research, first of all, in the comparative inter-regional context. As far as we know however no such studies were carried out in that period. Point measurements similar to the 2018 analysis of Jewish people's perception of the level of anti-Semitism in Russia that was commissioned by RJC to Levada Center and that registered the identity of visitors of

[14] For more details, see Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, Antisemitism and Philo-Semitism in Russia and Ukraine: From Evolution to Revolution. Tel-Aviv: Goldstein Goren Diaspora Research Center, Tel-Aviv University and EAJC Institute for Euro-Asian Jewish Studies. Monograph analytical reports series, Issue No 1 (March 2019)

Jewish events[15] are only a partial solution to the problem, no matter how important they are. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap.

Tasks and Research Methodology

The authors of the study set the following tasks:

- Find out the socio-demographic profile, areas of activity, and geographical spread of the Jewish population of Belarus in comparison with other countries of the former USSR.
- Outline the cultural identity of this community.
- Explore the models of national identity of its members, their attitude to Israel, involvement in the activities of local Jewish organizations and relations with Israeli and international Jewish structures operating in Belarus.
- Analyze the operational and potential social, economic, cultural, and humanitarian needs of this group.
- Identify the potential, interests, and vectors of migration dynamics of people falling under the Law of Return; evaluate the push and pull factors of such migration.
- Identify the socio-economic status of this group in comparison with various segments of the non-Jewish population and understand to what extent this changing ethnic environment can be a potential for Jewish community projects in Israel and the diaspora.
- Analyze the attitude of this group to various options for people of mixed and non-Jewish origins to join the Jewish community – both traditional (giyur and clarification of Jewish roots) and ethnocultural.

To meet these tasks, we conducted the largest possible survey of representatives of the "enlarged Jewish population" 16 years old and older, who live in four countries of the European part of the former USSR today. These are the people who meet the criteria of the Israeli Law of Return: ethnic Jews, descendants of mixed marriages in the second

[15] Lev Gudkov, Natalya Zorkaya, Ekaterina Kochergina, Evgeniya Lyozina. Perception of Anti-Semitism by Jewish Population of Russia: Sociological Research report. Moscow: Levada Center, 2018

and third-generations, non-Jewish spouses of these individuals, fourth generation of mixed marriages, and members of Jewish households who do not meet the LOR criteria but are involved in Jewish community activities.

Since building a representative sample of this population group while taking into account the quantitative and relative share of each of these subgroups is extremely difficult, the study focuses on the qualitative differences between them on issues pertaining to value orientations and their sociocultural and political identifications, as well as the general features and characteristics of the Jewish people (in the broadest sense of the word) in Russia and other post-Soviet countries.

To develop this concept and build the sample, we accepted the hypothesis that 850 thousand to a million people that fall under LOR today live in the four countries of the former USSR, 40%-45% of whom are ethnic Jews (up to one third of the total number – people of monogenic Jewish descent and descendants of mixed marriages with a strong Jewish identity). These people constitute the potential of both Jewish community activities and repatriation to Israel. There are 550 to 600 thousand such people living in Russia today, 35% - 40% of them live in Moscow, 20% in St. Petersburg, and about 40% in provinces; 220 to 270 thousand live in Ukraine, from one fifth to one quarter of whom live in Kiev; 35-45,000 in Belarus, 40%-50% of whom live in Minsk; 15-22 thousand live in Moldova, 60% of whom live in its capital, Chisinau.

The survey was conducted by way of structured personal interviews based on the questionnaire developed by the study initiators and in some cases coordinated with local partners.[16] The sample size in European countries of the former USSR was about 2,200 respondents (2,112 answered all 65 questions of the questionnaire). Of the total number of respondents:

- 890 people lived in Russia (including 360 in Moscow, 200 in St. Petersburg, and the rest in Voronezh, Kazan, Perm, Bryansk, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Birobidzhan, and other cities);
- 880 people lived in Ukraine (including 301 in Kiev, 384 in Odessa and Dnepr, others in Zhitomir, Kremenchug, Poltava, and Mirgorod);

[16] IEAJS' partners in this poll were Levada Center (Moscow), the Ukrainian Institute of Jewish Studies (Kiev), the Ukrainian Tkuma Institute for Holocaust Studies (Dnepr), sociologies invited by the Jewish communities of Odessa, Bryansk, Chisinau, and Minsk, as well as the BISAM — Central Asia Center (Almaty).

- 262 people lived in Belarus (including 150 in Minsk, 30 in Vitebsk, and 82 in other cities of the country);
- 185 people lived in Moldova (97 of them in Chisinau, 88 in Balti, Tiraspol, and Bendery).

In an additional study conducted in Kazakhstan in early 2020 with the use of the same tools adapted to the local realities, another 250 respondents were interviewed. They live in Almaty (97 people), Karaganda (53 people), Pavlodar (50 people), and Shymkent (50 people). All of this makes this survey the most comprehensive study of the post-Soviet Jewish population of the former USSR.

A random quota sample was structured in keeping with the demographic structure of the group's population. The questionnaires collected in each of the post-Soviet countries were proportionally taken into account in the final sample in accordance with their share in the Jewish population of the region. Since there is no accurate data on the age structure of the study group, age quotas in the sample were determined with a slight decrease in the average age for the "enlarged Jewish population" of CIS countries compared to the latest calculations of the core structure of the Jewish population by minimalist demographers. In keeping with this approach, for respondents under 29 years of age, a quota of up to 20% was determined, for the average age of 30-54 years old around 35% was used, and for advanced middle age and 55+ the quota was around 45%.

The second difficult challenge was the division of respondents into the categories of "participants" and "non-affiliated". In this matter, we relied on comparative data from our previous and other studies demonstrating that in large CIS cities with a significant Jewish population and/or cities with a high proportion of Jews in a particular country (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Dnepr, Minsk, and Chisinau) 15%-17% to 25% of Jewish people participate relatively often in the activities of various Jewish organizations. In peripheral cities, this indicator is 30% to 40%. Typically, for young people and for the elderly, this indicator is slightly higher than for the middle-aged people. From 35% to 40%-42% of Jewish people participate in certain events from time to time ("provisionally affiliated", or "contactors").

Based on these data and adjustments for recent years' trends, corresponding sample quotas were determined as follows:

Affiliated respondents — activists of Jewish organizations and frequent attendees of their events in their cities, selected according to lists provided by Jewish organizations: up to 30% of the sample in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kiev; up to 35% in large provincial communities, Chisinau and Minsk, and up to 40%-45% in small provincial Jewish communities.

Unaffiliated respondents — people who are not actively involved in the life of their city communities on a relatively regular basis: up to 70% of the sample in large and capital city communities and about 55-60% in small provincial communities selected by the "snowball method".

An equally difficult issue in this kind of research is the question of the representativeness of the ethno-demographic sample. In our 2019 study, quotas for the selection of respondents were not specifically set. As a result, people of completely or almost completely homogeneous Jewish origin ("100% Jews"), descendants of mixed Jewish-Gentile marriages in the first ("half Jews") and second ("quarter Jews") generations, and members of Jewish families of non-Jewish origin or more distant roots, made up 34%, 24%, 25%, and 17% of the sample, respectively. This is very comparable to the available data, which, unfortunately, is not an absolute guarantee of the correctness of any sample both due to the deliberate approximation of the majority of demographic estimates, and because different sociologists and demographers use different criteria to structure the population of the segment we are interested in.

This can be illustrated by comparing our data with estimates of the Jewish population of post-Soviet countries by prof. Sergio Della Pergola, where he used slightly different socio-demographic criteria. In particular, the terms he used were: an "ethnic core", "individuals with Jewish parents", "an enlarged Jewish population," and "population that meets the criteria of the Israeli LOR", whose share makes up the generally comparable to our 28%, 24%, 22%, and 27%. Note that a similar sampling technique in the past gave a close and, as it turned out during data processing, a sociologically correct result. For instance, in our 2008 study of the Jewish youth, 28% of respondents were also ethnic ("pure") Jews, 45% were descendants of the first generation of mixed marriages, 21% had only one Jewish grandparent, and 6% were non-Jewish spouses. The structure of the random sample in the 2004-2005 study by Khanin and Chernin was also similar. Approximately

the same ethnic structure of immigrants who came to Israel from the CIS in the first decade of the 21st century was shown in the survey of the Russian-language course students preparing for giyur (conversion to Judaism) at the Jerusalem Institute for Jewish Studies.[17]

Another screening criterion is the ethno-demographic and ethno-social structure of the new wave of aliyah to Israel from the former Soviet Union, which in the last five years almost reached mass proportions again and, according to experts, is a representative cross-section of the Jewish population in these countries.[18] As can be seen from Table 4, in 11 out of 16 cases, the ethnic structures of our sample and 2013-2019 aliyah turned out to be close or identical.

Table 1. Ethnic Structure of the Sample vs. Aliyah of 2013-2019

Jewish grandparents	Ukraine		Russia		Belarus		Moldova		Kazakhstan	
	Sample	Aliyah	Sample	Aliyah	Sample	Aliyah	Sample	Aliyah	Sample	Aliyah
3-4	38%	40%	29%	40%	39%	34%	29%	29%	26%	27.5%
2	22%	22%	23%	22%	31%	24%	30%	22%	20%	18.8%
1	20%	21%	34%	18%	22%	23%	18%	23%	46%	19.1%
None	21%	23%	13%	20%	8%	18%	23%	26%	8%	34.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

One should also take into consideration that the Israeli authorities and most of the Jewish communities in the diaspora use the traditional Halacha (Jewish law) criterion in defining one's Jewishness and in their administrative practices. In keeping with this approach, a Jew is a person born of a Jewish mother or someone who has gone through the rite of giyur, which means joining to the Jewish people religiously as well as ethnically. This approach is still less relevant to the Jewish context of the former USSR than to Israel or Jewish communities of the West. Therefore, we deliberately abandoned that criterion in structuring our sample and analyzing the data of our 2004-2005 and 2019 studies.

[17] See: Sabina Lisitsa, Shula Adler. Formation of Strategy of Increasing Ethnocultural Motivation among Repatriates of Mixed and Non-Jewish Origin from FSU in Israel. Research Report, Tel Aviv: PORI Institute, 2007, p. 8 [in Hebrew].

[18] Personal observations and a series of interviews by authors with employees of Israeli embassies, Nativ consuls, envoys of the Jewish Agency, and representatives of other Jewish organizations in CIS countries in 2015-2020.

The authors, however, took into account that, according to statistics, from one third to a half of "half Jews" are usually Jews by Halacha,[19] while among "quarter Jews" the proportion of Halachic Jews is up to 25%. In our 2019 study, too, 48% of "half Jews" and 23% of "quarter Jews" met the Halachic criteria. Thus, about half of our respondents were Halachic Jews, which accurately reflects the overall picture. Considering these data, our sample can also be considered quite representative in the ethno-demographic sense.

In any case, we were interested not so much in the quantitative correlation as in the qualitative differences in issues of identity, value orientations, assimilation, sociocultural, and political identification between different segments of the "enlarged Jewish population" of the former USSR, which was the main goal of this study.

[19] Estimates of ethnic and Halachic structure of the Russian-speaking Jewish community are presented in detail in Ze'ev Khanin. Joining a Jewish Collective: Identity of Russian-Speaking Repatriates of Post-Communist Times. — Jerusalem: Morasha Institute and Harry Triguboff Institute, June 2014 (in Hebrew).

Chapter 1. Ethnic and Political Demography

As is the case with other studies of this kind, the first difficulty in the survey was to determine the demographic framework of the target population of the study group since there is no data on the exact size and structure of the Jewish population of the former Soviet countries. Academic circles and various organizations operating in FSU countries run on different criteria and initial assumptions and therefore come to conflicting conclusions on the size of this group.

Estimates by Demographers

"Minimalists" from the Jerusalem School of Demographers (Mark Toltz and Sergio Della Pergola), who draw their conclusions from extrapolating the data of the last Soviet census of 1989 and two rounds of censuses in post-Soviet countries: in the 2000s and in the 2010s, estimate the size of the "ethnic core" of the Jewish population to be 267.5 thousand people. In this case, we are looking at people of homogeneous Jewish and mixed origins with a stable Jewish identity, although the Jewish (in the broad sense of the word) community is not limited to them. The "outer layer" of this community in the former USSR and other countries is the remaining segments of the so-called "enlarged Jewish population" - a term proposed by a group of American researchers[20] and adapted to the post-Soviet realities by Evgeny Andreev, Alexander Sinelnikov, and Mark Toltz.[21] In addition to ethnic Jews, this category includes people of Jewish and mixed origins, who identified themselves as non-Jews during the census, as well as non-Jewish members of Jewish households.

[20] Steven Goldstein, "Profile of American Jewry: Insides from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey", American Jewish Yearbook, 1991, Vol. 92, 1992, pp. 77-173. Barry Kosmin, Sidney Goldstein, Joseph Waksberg, Nava Lerer, Ariela Keysar and Jeffrey Shechner, Highlights of the 1990 CYF National Jewish Population Survey. N.Y: Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (CJF), 1991. 1991) http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=13841; Theoretical aspects of the "enlarged Jewish population" concept were also examined in, Sergio Della Pergola, "Modern Jewish Demography", in J. Wertheimer (ed.), The Modern Jewish Experience (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 275-290

[21] See: Alexander Sinelnikov, "Some Demographic Aftermath of Jewish Assimilation in USSR," MJUH, No 1 (5)1994, pp. 95; Mark Toltz, "Contemporary Trends in Family Formation among the Jews in Russia", in: Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe, N° 2, 2006, pp. 5-23.

The continuing negative demographic processes (death rate exceeding birth rate), as well as assimilation and emigration, in researchers' opinion, have different effects on the number of the "ethnic core" and the "enlarged Jewish population" in CIS countries. The share of mixed marriages (for example, in Russia, according to the 2015 micro census, 72% of families are created by Jewish men and 53% by Jewish women) [22] is clearly higher in younger cohorts. Therefore the effect of depopulation on the reduction of the second ("enlarged") group has not been as great as its effect on the reduction of the "ethnic core"; while mixed marriages erode the "ethnic core" and lead to an increase in the non-Jewish component of the "enlarged population" and slow down its decline.

According to an authoritative opinion of Mark Toltz, on the eve of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, "enlarged Jewish population" amounted to 2,170,000. Of these, 910,000 were living in the Russian Federation, 660,000 in Ukraine, 155,000 in Belarus, and 445,000 in other regions of the USSR. By the end of the century, this population declined down to 1,030,000, primarily due to emigration. However, while the ethnic core of the Jewish population of the former Soviet Union decreased almost three times (from 1,480,000 in 1989 to 544,000 in 1999) over a decade, the "non-Jewish" component of the enlarged population decreased 1.5 times – from 690,000 to 486,000. This decline was almost entirely due to emigration. The total number of the over-a-million "enlarged population" has only halved, unlike the triple-reduced ethnic "core".[23] The same demographic trends affected the Jewish population in the next decade, therefore the ratio of "enlarged population" to its "ethnic core" in 1999 was already 1.9:1, and in 2010 – around 2.1-2.2:1.[24]

In Ukraine, at the time of the last census in 2001, the number of "declared" Jews was 103,600. The new census planned for 2013 did not take place but, according to different estimates, the ethnic core of

[22] See: Population of Russia, 2016. Twenty-fourth Annual Demographic Report. — M., Higher School of Economics publishers, 2018, pp. 173 and 176.

[23] See: Mark Toltz, "Demography of the Jews in the Former Soviet Union", in Ya'acov Ro'i and Zvi Gitelman, eds., Revolution, Repression and Revival: Soviet and Post-Soviet Jewish Experience (Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), pp. 283-311.

[24] Mark Toltz, "Post-Soviet Jewish Diaspora: Latest Evaluations"// Migration in Russia: 2000-2012. Anthology, ed. I. Ivanova (Moscow: Russian, International Affairs Council — Spetskniga, 2013), v. 1, part 2, pp. 568-588.

the Jewish community of Ukraine at the beginning of the decade was about 75 to 85 thousand. Minimalist evaluations of the "enlarged population" ranged from 160 to 170 thousand. If one follows this method, the "enlarged Jewish population" in Belarus was estimated at 40,000 people and in Moldova 12-15 thousand people, and so on.

Continued assimilation and emigration that intensified radically in 2013-2014 primarily through aliyah to Israel continues to determine the socio-demographic face of the "Jewish" communities of FSU countries in recent years. This includes further erosion of the "ethnic core" (from 200,000 in 2010 to 186,000 in 2016 in Russia, from 70 to 56 thousand over the same period in Ukraine, from 28 to 13 thousand in Belarus, and from 5 to less than 3 thousand in Moldova). According to refined estimates published by Della Pergola in 2019, the number of Jews living in FSU countries (excluding the Baltic states) at the beginning of 2018 and at the turn of 2018-2019 was 267.5 and 247 thousand, respectively. Relevant estimates for Russia, Ukraine, Asian countries of the former USSR, Belarus, and Moldova were reduced from 179.5, 56, 18, 10.4, and 3.5 thousand people at the beginning of 2018 to, respectively, 172, 50, 16, 9.5, and 2 thousand people a year later. [25]

At the same time, it was due to mixed marriages, which supplemented the Jewish community's "cloud" with new groups of mixed and non-Jewish origins, that the total number of the "enlarged Jewish population" has not decreased so dramatically. Moreover, judging by Della Pergola's calculations, in two regions of the former USSR — Russia and post-Soviet Asian countries — this population even grew compared to last year's estimates, and in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova it remained at the same level despite the decrease in the "ethnic core". The decline in the "ethnic core" might also be slowed down by emigration-increased interest in Jewish activities among many members of Jewish households of mixed and non-Jewish origins with a previously absent or unstable Jewish identity.

Finally, one should remember that emigration today is not a road "in one direction." Over the past 30 years, there have been a certain number of people among the repatriates from the former USSR (by our estimates, up to 10-15 thousand people in some years) that di-

[25] Sergio Della Pergola. "World Jewish Population, 2018", in Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin, eds., The American Jewish Yearbook, 2018, Volume 118 (2018) (Dordrecht: Springer), pp. 361-452.

vide their lives between Israel and one of the CIS countries. Bypassing the emigration statistics, these people are usually also left out of the census data of the post-Soviet countries. A separate case is those 15-20 thousand out of almost 90 thousand post-Soviet repatriates of the last 5-6 years who either returned from Israel to their countries of origin (some almost immediately after emigration) or shuttle between the two countries[26] and therefore are often counted both as citizens of Israel and as residents of CIS countries.

To summarize: at the end of the last decade, the "minimalists" of the Jerusalem school, based on the latest censuses, estimated the total number of the post-Soviet Jewry, whose median age is drawing to 56-58 years and most of whom are in mixed marriages, at 325-326 thousand persons,[27] which is the minimum point of reference for supporters of all demographic approaches.

Taking into account the demographic balance of subsequent years and the 2.2 expansion coefficient for the Jewish population in CIS countries, they estimate the current size of the "enlarged Jewish population" to be over 650 thousand people.[28] In addition to members of the "ethnic core" of the population, it also includes more than 170 thousand people of homogeneous ethnic Jewish origin and Halachic Jews who do not identify themselves as Jews. (Apparently, among these are tens of thousands of those unaccounted for in the latest post-Soviet censuses of 2002-2011.) Also do not forget the 180 thousand members of "Jewish" households of mixed and non-Jewish origins. The total number of people of Jewish and non-Jewish descent living in the former USSR (excluding the Baltic countries) who met LOR criteria at the beginning of 2019 was, according to the same estimates, 890-900 thousand people. They present the potential for "Jewish" emigration and for Jewish community activities.

[26] Data of Ministry of Aliyah and Integration of Israel, September 2019

[27] See: Mark Toltz, "Post-Soviet Jewish Demographic Dynamics: An Analysis of Recent Data". Paper presented at the 16th World Congress of Jewish Studies (Jerusalem, July 28 — August 1, 2013) [Revised as of October 9, 2018].

[28] Sergio Della Pergola. "World Jewish Population, 2018", in Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin, eds. The American Jewish Yearbook, 2018, Volume 118 (2018) (Dordrecht: Springer) pp. 361-452.

Table 1.1. Estimation of Total Jewish Population in FSU Countries Outside of EU (as of January 1, 2019)

Categories of "Jewish" population	European part of FSU	Asian part of FSU	Total
Ethnic core *	233,500	16,000	249,000
People with Jewish parents **	440,700	27,200	467,900
"Enlarged Jewish Population" ***	612,500	38,600	651,100
Population meeting the LOR criteria ****	844,000	53,300	897,300

* All people of homogeneous Jewish and mixed origins who identify themselves as Jews

** The sum of the "core" and people of homogeneous Jewish and mixed origins who do not identify themselves as Jews

*** The sum of members of "Jewish" households of Jewish and non-Jewish origins

**** People of Jewish and non-Jewish descent entitled to Israeli citizenship under the Law on Return

Over 90% of people of Jewish and non-Jewish origins that meet the criteria of the Israeli Law of Return (over 840,000 people) live today in the four post-Soviet countries, where this study was conducted, and around another 6% live in the countries of the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, where its second phase is currently underway. In early 2020, a survey using the same methodology was conducted in Kazakhstan and its results were taken into account in the relevant sections of this publication.

Table 1.2. Estimation of Jewish Population of Post-Soviet Countries where Survey was Conducted as part of this Study[29]

Categories of the "Jewish" population	Russia	Ukraine	Moldova	Belarus	FSU-Asia
General population	146,800,000	42,300,000	3,600,000	9,500,000	88,000,000
Ethnic core of the Jewish population	**172,000**	**50,000**	**2,000**	**9,500**	**16,000**
Jews per 1 thousand inhabitants	1.17	1.18	0.56	1.0	0.18
People with Jewish parents	320,000	97,000	5,700	18,000	27,200

[29] Sergio Della Pergola, "World Jewish Population, 2018", p.53

"Enlarged Jewish population"	440,000	140,000	7,500	25,000	38,600
Population by LOR criteria	**600,000**	**200,000**	**11,000**	**33,000**	**53,300**
% of all Jews of post-Soviet Euro-Asia	65%	23%	2%	4%	6%

Assessments by Community Leaders and Experts

Note also that not all experts, in particular not all community leaders in the former Soviet Union, support the "minimalist" approach of Israeli demographers. Many believe that the ratio of the "ethnic core" to the "enlarged Jewish population" that includes people of mixed origin and non-Jewish family members is 1:3 or even 1:4. For example, Council member and Vice President of the Federal Jewish National Cultural Autonomy public organization, linguist and anthropologist, Professor Mikhail Chlenov told us in an interview that the average ratio of the "enlarged population" to the "ethnic core" is different in different parts of Russia (according to him, "in the Amur region it will be different from Dagestan"). As a result, Chlenov estimates the number of the "Russian Jewry" to be 600-700 thousand, and if we include Israelis living in Russia, "even closer to 700-800 thousand".

Even larger was the estimate by Rabbi Dovid Karpov of the Moscow Chabad congregation. According to him, Moscow alone is home to approximately half a million "Halachic Jews and those who feel Jewish", while in the country at large there are "about 1-1.5 million, according to the same principle." Chief Rabbi of Russia Adolf Shayevich, recognized by the Confederation of Jewish Religious Organizations and Communities of Russia (CJROCR), counted about 250-300 thousand Halachic Jews in Moscow and about a million throughout the whole Russian Federation on the basis of "information from Sochnut and Joint". A representative of another Jewish religious association – FJOR – Borukh Gorin, who once declared that out of all the estimates ("from 230 thousand to 10 million Jews"), the most probable figure was one million people,[30] gave us a somewhat more conservative estimate in a conversation in 2015: "According to what I see and hear, 450-500,000 people who consider themselves Jewish live in Moscow. Approximate-

[30] Quote from: "How Many Jews are there in Russia?" Demoskop Weekly № 175 — 176, October 25 — November 7, 2004

ly another 250 thousand live [elsewhere] in Russia, so there is a total of about 750 thousand people in the country."

Finally, Moscow sociologist and demographer, former head of the program of the Jewish people study at RSUH, Mark Kupovetsky, said that in his opinion, no less than two million Jews and people of mixed origin lived in Russia in the late 1990s, and at least a million Jews live in the Russian Federation today. In general, this was the range for evaluations by several dozen Russian-Jewish community thought leaders polled by Ze'ev Khanin, Elina Bardach-Yalov, and Dmitry Kurs with the use of in-depth personal interviews during the 2015 research initiated by the Genesis Foundation. Most of these respondents, including leaders of main umbrella and regional organizations, heads of community structures, influential experts and senior employees of Russian-Jewish communities of the former Soviet Union, were convinced that the Jewish population of Russia ranges from "600-700,000 to a little over a million", including "half Jews and other people with the right of return".[31]

Experts use this model to estimate the size of the Jewish population in other countries of the former USSR. The only exception was executive director of the Riga community, Gita Umanovskaya, who based her opinion on the official Latvian registration and thus estimated the "ethnic core" of the Jews in Latvia "as of 1 January 2015" to be about 9,000 people, which together with "non-Jews who fall under the Israeli Law of Return, make up about 15,000 people," which is consistent with the minimalist demographers' estimations.

And on the contrary, former rector of the Jewish University of Minsk and one of the former leaders of the local Jewish community, Zelik Pinhasik, believes the "official" statistics of 30,000 Jewish (in the broad sense) people in Belarus is severely underestimated. On the basis of the "semi-legal census" that Pinhasik as a professional sociologist carried out together with his wife in the early 2000s, he believes the number of people falling under the Israeli Law of Return to be 150 thousand. If a decrease in this group over the next decade was in proportion to the twofold decrease in the Jewish "ethnic core" recorded in the 2009

[31] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin and Elina Bardach-Yalova, "Effectiveness and Public Perception of Genesis Philanthropy Group in Strengthening National Identity of Russian-Speaking Jews". Preliminary sociological study report. Jerusalem — Tel Aviv, October 2015

census, today's "enlarged Jewish population" of Belarus would make at least 75-80 thousand people.

In the early 21st century, local Jewish leaders and experts estimated the number of people falling under the Israeli LOR in Moldova to be 50,000, including 30,000 people with a stable Jewish identity, about 10,000 "partial Jews" and Jews with a lost or incomplete identity, and 10,000 non-Jewish members of Jewish families. However, they predicted that by the beginning of this decade, the size of this community will be reduced to 30,000 people, which coincides with the current estimates of the local Jewish leaders.[32]

Similarly, when talking about the "Jewish community" of Ukraine, experts believed that the local "enlarged population's" ratio to the core is not 2.2:1 as Toltz and Della Pergola believe, but at least 4:1 or 5:1. Head of the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine, Josef Zissels, told us that "should Ukraine have a census today (in 2015), 75 to 80 thousand people would identify themselves as Jews. As a rule, these are people whose both parents are Jewish. This is part of the mentality. According to the Halachic standards, there are 150-160 thousand [Jews] in Ukraine. And according to the Law of Return – no less than 300 thousand". This number was presented in the Community Report of the Ukrainian branch of the Confederation of General Zionists to the 37th Zionist Congress.[33] Approximately the same estimation of the size of the Jewish community of Ukraine "in an extremely broad sense" – 300 to 400 thousand people (including 50-90 thousand in Kiev, 45-60 thousand in Dnepr, and 30-50 thousand in Odessa) – was supplied by almost every thought leader we interviewed.

As you can see, all the post-Soviet Jewish leaders and activists' estimates of the size of the Jewish population of their countries are at least four times higher than the "core" calculated by demographers and two-three times higher than the "cloud" of the enlarged Jewish population. What causes this discrepancy? Most of our sources attribute this to imperfections in census methodologies. This opinion is supported, among other experts, by Director of the Moscow SEFER Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization Viktoria Mochalova and

[32] http://igpi.ru/monitoring/jewish_world/investigations/1084459783.html

[33] Community report of the Ukrainian branch of the Confederation of General Zionists prepared for the 37th Zionist Congress. Kiev: October, 2015 http://vaadua.org/evreyskaya-obshchina-ukrainy-na-fone-rossiyskoy-agressii-i-svyazannogo-s-voynoy-ekonomicheskogo

ethnographer, Professor of the European University of St. Petersburg Valery Dymshits. According to the latter, "250 thousand for Russia at large is absolutely the lowest bar... the upper border is twice as high." President of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia (FJC), Alexander Boroda, and Director of the Ukrainian Jewish Student Hillel Club, Yosef (Osik) Akselrud, explained this problem by the reluctance of "descendants of mixed marriages and members of all-generations-Jewish families to admit their Jewish origin in such polls". This however does not stop them from participating in Jewish community projects. As a result, Boroda estimated the number of Jews in Russia to be one million people,[34] and his Ukrainian colleagues speak about "approximately 300-400 thousand people who have the right of return".

Other leaders and experts, such as RJC President Yuri Kanner, propose to base their estimations not on demographic calculations, but on the "Jewish identity" declared during opinion polls. As part of one of such surveys, 2% of Moscow respondents declared themselves Jewish. This way, the number of the Jewish population in Moscow is estimated to be 240 thousand. Based on this methodology, Kanner estimates the number of people self-identifying as Jews in Russia to be 700-750 thousand ("roughly one half of them are Halachic Jews"), one third of whom live in Moscow. According to him, "no less than one million people in Russia have the right of return to Israel," and they are concentrated mainly in Moscow and St. Petersburg, million-plus cities, and in the towns of the former "Pale," for example, in Bryansk ("with approximately 7,000 registered Jews"), Smolensk, Rostov, etc. Many people of this category live in "regions that are more or less favorable from the climate and economic perspectives." They include Crimea, which is home to about 15,000 Jews, according to Kanner, Caucasian Mineral Waters, and the Moscow region.

On the other hand, head of the Department of Jewish Studies of the Moscow State University, Professor Arkady Kovelman, admits that "the census was not done very diligently," therefore "the real number of Jews in Russia is somewhat larger than those 156,000 that were registered in the 2010 census." Nevertheless, he does not believe it feasible to rely on self-identification of respondents no matter how representative the polls. According to Kovelman, "[people's] self-awareness

[34] http://www.aif.ru/dontknows/actual/skolko_v_rossii_evreev

changes, in the future those who do not consider themselves Jewish today can [view themselves as such], and tomorrow three million can declare themselves Jewish. These are historical speculations."

But social psychologist Eliezer (Albert) Feldman perhaps has gone the furthest in his assessments after suggesting that the Jewish community of Ukraine be considered the core consisting of those with the right of return to Israel. This includes Jews and their close relatives, who, in his opinion, make up "no more than 250 thousand all over Ukraine". To them Feldman wants to add a second "cloud" consisting of "sympathizers with the Jewish people with some Jewish roots". Putting these two "clouds" together, the expert estimated the size of the "enlarged Jewish community of Ukraine" at about 5 million people. But he noted that the size of the community in the usual sense of the word is 250-270 thousand people.

Feldman is clearly not alone in this broad vision. Russian researchers from the Kordonsky laboratory at the Moscow School of Economics, Chernov, and their co-authors, tried to estimate the number of Jews in the Jewish Autonomous Region of Russia, while clearly bearing in mind the situation in the country as a whole. They considered not only the formally registering (or, as they are called, "ethno-social") criteria of Jewishness, but also self-identification and other restrictive census features as "completely insufficient sources for determining the number of the Jews". That is why there are more people related to Jewry in the Jewish Autonomous Region (and, as seen from the context, in Russia and the CIS as a whole), in their opinion, than [the number of the] self-identified Jews.[35]

Jewish and Near-Jewish Environment

Such cases usually focus not on demography as such, but on other subjects – to an even lesser degree on political interests of the post-Soviet Jewish leaders most often mentioned in this regard, although they are definitely part of it. Just as Valery Dymshits quite frankly said, "When different organizations say that millions of [Jews] live in Russia, they simply want to increase their funding." On the other hand,

[35] Semion Kordonsky, Michail Chernov, Olga Molyarenko, Yrii Plusnin. "Ethno-social Potential of the Territory: A Special Case of Jewish Autonomous Region," Ideas and Ideals, 2018, № 4, Vol. 1, pp. 105-135. (Russian)

there is a real phenomenon of the shaping of a "near-Jewish" community and cultural environment, a type of subculture.

Its agents are:

- activities of foreign and local Jewish organizations;
- a sharp increase in the status of the post-Soviet Jewish community due to changes in the sociopolitical situation at the end of the Soviet era and following it;
- opportunities to emigrate to more prosperous (in different meanings of the word) countries granted by one's Jewishness – after a decline in emigration at the beginning of the century, this topic became relevant again in the second half of this decade.

Nikolai Propirny, former editor-in-chief of a number of Jewish media and later deputy head of the Department of Public Relations of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, observes that if instead of the Halachic approach we follow the "Russian formula of "a Jew is someone who agrees to be one", then we will find several hundred thousand people in Moscow alone." And in Russia, the number of those who "remember their Jewish roots one way or another can get up to several million." ("Those ready to come to a Jewish event, those invited to synagogue celebrations are much less. But if something happens in Russia, they will become quite a lot... However, this is a "sponge" that can decrease and increase. People can be Jewish when it's comfortable and interesting and move away from it if they become uncomfortable and uninterested.")

Indeed, many people of mixed origin and non-Jewish members of Jewish families in modern Eastern Europe tend to keep in touch with Jewish communities and to obtain educational, informational, cultural, and social services. According to President of the Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy of St. Petersburg, Director of the Adain Lo Jewish Educational Center, Eugenia Lvova, "there are a lot of people with Jewish roots to whom [often in ordinary life] it does not mean anything, but under certain conditions their Jewishness may play a role". Chief Rabbi of Russia according to CJROCR Adolf Shayevich is even more determined: "I travel a lot around communities. In September, I have Russian mothers lining up here. Jewish dads do not even show up. And mothers come, 'I want my child to attend a Jewish school only.' And they do not mean Sunday schools, but full-time day schools."

The post-Soviet situation, says Josef Zissels, might be "pushing many people of mixed origin to seek their national and religious roots, not only for emigration or getting assistance, but also to find a new mental balance by restoring a renewed system of traditional values".[36] Eliezer Feldman also followed this logic when he described the community of millions of "sympathizers with the Jewish people" he discovered in Ukraine as a group whose members "also belong to the [Jewish] community... They willingly attend Jewish events, come to the synagogue, know holiday dates." But since they possess only some elements of the Jewish identity, they "understand poorly why they are Jews" and do not see Israel as a "second Motherland". Frequently they "constitute the periphery of Jewish communities where there are no more Jews left. They gather around a Jewish entity or an event. To arise and not to disintegrate later... Crystallizations appear around "performances". A postmodernist situation."

A special model of this process is, in some researchers' opinion, the situation in the Jewish Autonomous Region of Russia, where the remaining (almost "relic") part of the titular national administrative unit is drawn into the near-Jewish environment by the general population of various ethnic origins. "The constructed Jewish Soviet culture, viewed with absolutely no enthusiasm in any other region of the USSR, turns out to be the "folk culture" here, and Jews – an ethnic society [i.e., an ethnic group with a certain socio-legal status], just like other ethnic societies of this country", says Blacher.

"The rights and the status of the Jewish ethnic society in the JAR came close to the rights of other ethnic autonomies of the RSFSR: an ethnic representation in the government, presence of "local cadres" among the leadership and intelligentsia, media and institutions of culture in the national language. But since the local personnel (with nationality fixed in their passport) was not too many... any resident of the region becomes a carrier of the special ("Jewish") status. But even after the collapse of the Soviet power, when it would make no sense to preserve the Soviet construct, it performed a rather significant function... a protective layer for the local community retaining its orientation at network interactions and autarchy."[37]

[36] Joseph Zissels, "The Welfare Policy and Social Security in Post-Communist Jewish Communities: the Case of Ukraine", in Vladimir Khanin (Ed.) Jewish Politics and Community-Building in the Former Soviet Union (Special issue of Jewish Political Studies Review, Vol. 14, Nos. 1-2, 2002)

[37] Leonid Blacher, "Who are the "Hymies?" Ideas and Ideals, No 4(38), Vol. 1, 2018, pp. 172-186.

As a result, Board Chairman of the Russian Fund for Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Traditions, Education and Science, Mikhail Chernov, noted in correspondence with this author, "there really is a certain [quasi-Jewish] community there. Everything is very evaluative, but [it can make up] half or more of the [170 thousand population] of the region, and this even applies to visitors," even though Jews, according to various estimates, range from 1,000 to 5,000 in the region. Our source believes that the point at issue is not belonging to a community in the classical sense of the word – even among the Jews only a few sense such connection – but rather the ownership of the "Jewish" (no matter how it is understood) culture ("in its urban Birobidzhan version"), the culture and the heritage of the region, those of its elements that are considered Jewish, often mistakenly. Thus, the identification factor, according to Chernov, "is not the titular nation, but the titular culture, and, oddly enough, Israel is also present in all of this."[38]

Apparently, this view allowed former RJC President, Professor of IAAS at MSU, Yevgeny Satanovsky, to insist that "the number of Jews in the broad sense, regardless of who in their family is Jewish, makes up more than 1.5 million in Moscow city and the Moscow region, and from 2.5 to 3 million in the Russian Federation. These are people with some relation to the Jewish people, and this may interest them."

All of this provides additional legitimacy to the position of the majority of local Jewish leaders who make these individuals their "target groups" of community activities, which applies to everyone falling under the Israeli Law of Return and sometimes – those beyond it (the fourth generation of mixed families). As Akselrud and Executive Director of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress, Eduard Dolinsky, said, "We still work with them. To us, they are community members. We are not even talking about the affiliated. The community is scattered throughout the country, around many cities."

So, while agreeing with the ambiguity of the purely demographic estimates, most community leaders and experts are likely to operate highly exaggerated data. Nevertheless, if we abandon the maximalist demographic speculations, which can neither be confirmed nor disproved, "Jewish activities" (in any sense of the word) do not only make

[38] Received by FB on January 24, 2020.

the content of life, but actually define the framework of the FSU Jewish collective. Contrary to the family, whose role has been declining in the last decades, these activities are now a major factor in Jewish identity reproduction and a channel that different groups previously not identifying themselves with the Jewish community can now use to join the Jewish collective, especially in recent years.

Chapter 2. Jewish Identity

What Does It Mean to Be a Jew in Post-Soviet Euro-Asia?

It has already been proven that Jewish identity in the former USSR is primarily ethnic.[39] It got established on a secular basis, when all external manifestations of Jewish self-identification were almost completely suppressed. At the same time, the acculturation of Soviet Jews in the Russian sociocultural environment did not lead to their massive departure from Jewry, but rather to the formation of a special type of the Soviet Jewish identity, which continued in the post-Soviet era both in the regions of the former USSR and in the countries of the "new Russian Jewish diaspora." Other identity models (for example, religious) take a very modest place in the collective identification of Soviet and post-Soviet Jewry and are significantly inferior to the ethno-national dimensions of this phenomenon.[40] (The only exception here were small subethnic groups of Georgian, Bukhara and, to a lesser extent, Mountain Jews). All the above also applies to the mixed-origin part of the "Jewish community" of the CIS.[41]

Stability of this phenomenon is confirmed by the comparison of the data of our current research in five post-Soviet countries with our much smaller study in 2004-2005 in five cities of Russia and Ukraine.[42] In both cases, respondents answered the question of what it means, in their view, to be a Jew. They had to choose no more than 3-4 of the 14 parameters on the scale of value priorities. Nine of these 14 param-

[39] Zvi Gitelman, Valery Chervyakov and Valery Shapiro, "National Identity of Russian Jews. 1997-1998 Sociological Research Materials", Diasporas, 2000, № 4, pp. 52-86; 2001, №1, pp. 210-244 (Russian); Rozalina Ryvkina, How Do Jews Live in Russia. A Sociological Analysis of Changes Moscow: IOS RAS, 2005), pp. 65, 69-70 (Russian); Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin and Dina Pisarevskaya, "Jewish Youth of Modern-Day Russia: Ethno-National and Confessional Identity", Hebrew University Herald [hereafter MJUH], Jerusalem — Moscow, 2014, №15, pp. 169-200 (Russian); Alexander Osovtsov, Igor Yakovenko, Jewish People in Russia: Who, How and Why is Part of It (Moscow: Jewish Book House, 2011), Russian

[40] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, "Religious Identity of Repatriates from FSU in Israel", State, Religion, church in Russia and Abroad, 2015, № 3 (33), pp. 255-290 (Russian); Elena Nosenko-Stein, "Judaism, Orthodox Christianity or "secular religion"? The Choice of Russian Jews", Diasporas, №2 (2009), pp. 6-40 (Russian)

[41] Elena Nosenko, To Be or to Feel?" Aspects of Jewish Identification Formation among Descendants of Mixed Marriages in Modern Russia (Moscow: IOS RAS — "Kraft+", 2004), Russian

[42] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin and Velvl Chernin, Identity, Assimilation and Revival: Ethnic Social Processes among the Jewish Population of the Former Soviet Union (Ramat-Gan: the Rappaport Center for Assimilation Studies and Strengthening of Jewish Vitality, 2007)

eters eventually took identical places in the ranking of respondents' priorities, although the proportion of respondents who chose certain answers in 2019 was significantly lower than in 2004-2005. This can be explained by a much larger sample in terms of the number of respondents and the geographical coverage of the second study, and, even more likely, by a change in the ethnic structure and sociopolitical context of "Jewish communities" and the diversification of their values.

Table 2.1. Parameters of Belonging to Jewish people: Comparison of 2004/05 and 2019 Studies

What does it mean to be a Jew today?	2004-2005		2019	
	Rating	%%	Rating	%%
To feel belonging to Jewish people	1	73.5	1	72%
To be proud of Jewish history and culture	2	64.9	2	58%
To know and speak Yiddish, Jewish languages of Bukhara, Mountain, and other Jews of the diaspora	14	14.7	14	5%
To know and use Hebrew	9	28.6	11-12	11%
To have Jewish parents	4	42.8	4	33%
To have a Jewish spouse	12	23.3	11-12	11%
To observe religious commandments, attend synagogue	10	27.7	7	16%
To keep Jewish customs, traditions, and culture	3	58.1	3	38%
To try to obtain and give children Jewish education	11	26.5	9-10	13%
To be a patriot of the Jewish state	6	40.1	9-10	13%
To participate in Jewish community life	8	34.8	5	22%
To fight anti-Semitism	7	35.7	6	17%
To help your fellow Jews	5	41.3	8	15%
To live in Israel	13	18.9	13	7%
Total		100%		100%
	470		2,112	

One way or another, the respondents of both polls placed ethnic and cultural values connected with national self-identity in the first three

places — "the feeling of belonging to the people" (73.5% and 72%), "pride in Jewish culture" (65% and 58%), and "the need to keep Jewish traditions, customs, and culture" (58% and 38%). The fourth place in the ranking was also ethnic, in this case the ethnogenetic moment "to have Jewish parents" (42.8% and 33% of respondents, respectively, believed so).

Meanwhile, having a Jewish spouse placed only 12th both in the 2005 and 2019 rating, and the share of those who marked it among top priorities decreased 2.5 times over the past 15 years. Only about one quarter of respondents in 2005 and respectively 16% and 13% in 2019 believed that to be a Jew means "keep mitzvot (religious commandments), go to the synagogue" and "seek to obtain and to give children Jewish education". Knowledge of Hebrew placed, respectively, 9th and 11th on the scale, and knowledge of Yiddish and other languages of the Jewish diaspora placed 14th (last) in both rankings. There was no significant difference between age categories on these issues, except that respondents older than 61 more often marked ethno-genetic, and younger ones – ethnocultural factors.

Table 2.2 Factors of Jewishness/Age of Respondents

What does it mean to be a Jew today?	Total	Age, years			
		Up to 25	26-40	41-60	61+
To feel belonging to Jewish people	72%	72%	73%	69%	75%
To be proud of Jewish history and culture	58%	55%	57%	59%	60%
To know and speak Yiddish, Jewish languages of Bukhara, Mountain, and other Jews of the diaspora	5%	5%	4%	4%	7%
To know and use Hebrew	11%	14%	12%	14%	6%
To have Jewish parents	33%	27%	31%	32%	39%
To have a Jewish spouse	11%	6%	12%	9%	14%
To observe religious commandments, attend synagogue	16%	17%	18%	16%	15%
To keep Jewish customs, traditions, and culture	38%	39%	42%	39%	32%
To try to obtain and give children Jewish education	13%	14%	15%	14%	9%

To be a patriot of the Jewish state	13%	12%	12%	11%	15%
To participate in Jewish community life	22%	22%	19%	18%	27%
To fight Anti-Semitism	17%	15%	14%	17%	22%
To help your fellow Jews	15%	13%	10%	12%	22%
To live in Israel	7%	6%	10%	8%	4%
Another answer	0%	1%	-	1%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	346	485	645	585

In light of the fact that Jewish people demonstrated similar priorities in the first post-Soviet decade,[43] we must recognize the unchanging conclusion we made 15 years ago. In identifying the "enlarged Jewish population" (including in the Soviet times), a significant gap remained between the symbolic nature of ethno-genetic and ethnocultural values and their practical implementation in everyday life. Today Jewish initiatives perform the function of the material framework necessary to maintain one's Jewish identity in the absence of official anti-Semitism and the previously authorities-imposed Jewish status of an "ethnic society".

Our polls showed that second on the scale (5-8 places) were values of national and community activism: "helping your fellow Jews" (41.3% and 15%), "fighting anti-Semitism" (35.7% and 17%), and "participation in community life" (34.8% and 22%). These figures are comparable to the share of respondents who take regular part in Jewish events. Apparently, this framework has to be kept in mind when talking about cultural identification processes in groups of different ethnic and mixed origins inside the "enlarged Jewish population".

Ethnicity and Identity

The importance of ethnogenesis also manifests itself in correlation between ethnic origin and self-awareness of members of the "enlarged

[43] See, for instance: Vladimir Khanin, "Social Consciousness and Identity of Ukrainian Jewry: the Case of Dnieper region", Contemporary Jewry (New York), Vol. 19 (1998), No. 1, pp. 120-150; Zvi Gitelman, Valery Chervyakov and Valery Shapiro, National Self-Consciousness of Russian Jews. 1997-1998 Sociological Research Materials", Diasporas, 2000, № 4, pp. 52-86; 2001, №1, pp. 210-244.

Jewish population" in FSU countries. For example, studies conducted around the turn of the 1980s-1990s noted differences between ethnic ("pure") Jews with a sufficiently stable Jewish identity and descendants of mixed marriages. The latter often declared their non-Jewish identity, falling into the category of "fully assimilated" persons.[44] These developments were reflected in a series of surveys and qualitative studies conducted in the first decade of the 21st century. Thus, Elazar Leshem, Vera Rivkin, and Ze'ev Khanin independently came to the same conclusion: respondents' Jewish identity depends on the homogeneity of their ethnic origin. In the beginning of the century, this identity was demonstrated by over 80% of ethnic ("pure") Jews, about 50% of the first-generation descendants of mixed marriages, and no more than 25% of the third generation of mixed families and non-Jewish spouses of all three categories of Jews and their descendants.[45]

Our 2019 study demonstrates that this trend continues today. At the same time, a relatively large sample made it possible to consider some other factors as well. For example, it showed that a stable Jewish identity was more often observed among residents of provincial cities than among Jews and members of their families living in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the capitals. However, homogeneity of one's Jewish origin remains the main factor.

In this case, we deliberately refused to use the criterion of religion, for it is not entirely relevant to the post-Soviet space (unlike for Israel and the Jewish diaspora in the West). Both our and almost all other studies we know confirm that the situation of the Soviet period, when most Jews did not even know the word Halacha or the Halachic definition of a Jew as a person born only to a Jewish mother or even grandmother on the maternal side, but not on the paternal side, is still relevant today.

[44] Zvi Gitelman, "The evolution of Jewish culture and identity in the Soviet Union", in Ya'acov Ro'i and Avi Bekker (Eds.), Jewish Culture and Identity in the Soviet Union (New York: Univ. press, 1991), pp. 3-24; Mordehay Altshuler, Soviet Jewry since the Second World War. Population and Social Structure (New York et al.: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 236; and Robert J. Brym, The Jews of Moscow, Kiev, and Minsk (London: McMillan, 1994), pp. 19-16

[45] Elazar Leshem, Survey of participants in the project "Jewish Self-Identification — first stage in CIS", Jerusalem, Jewish Agency for Israel, August 2002 (in Hebrew); Rozalina Ryvkina, How Do Jews Live in Russia. A Sociological Analysis of Changes (Moscow: IOS RAS, 2005), pp. 65, 69-70; Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin and Dina Pisarevskaya, "Jewish Youth of Modern-Day Russia: Ethno-National and Confessional Identity", Hebrew University Herald, 2013, №15, c.169-197

This way, we chose our analysis criterion to be the number of respondents' Jewish grandparents in both lines. Four groups of respondents ranged in accordance with this principle are: "100% Jews" (with at least three Jewish grandparents[46]); "half Jews" (two Jewish grandparents), "quarter Jews" (one Jewish grandparent), and people of non-Jewish or very distant Jewish origin (fourth generation of mixed families), making up 34%, 24%, 25%, and 17% of our sample, respectively.

A total of 85% of fully Jewish respondents declared their Jewish feeling was unconditional, as did over 60% of "half Jews", 38% of "quarter Jews," and less than a third of people without Jewish roots. Compared to other groups, the proportion of those who admitted their Jewish feeling awakens "only in certain circumstances" is higher among "half Jews" and "quarter Jews" (respectively, around one third and over one third). Finally, the relative majority of non-Jewish members of Jewish families (31%, which is three times higher than the sample average) insisted they had no Jewish feeling at all. This subgroup and "quarter Jews" had the highest proportion of those who never considered this question.

Table 2.3. Relationship between Respondents' Ethnic Origin and Jewish Identity

Do you feel Jewish?	Total	Number of Jewish grandparents			
		3-4	2	1	None
Yes, absolutely	58%	85%	61%	38%	29%
Not always, depends on circumstances	23%	10%	28%	35%	22%
No	10%	2%	5%	12%	31%
Never thought about it	8%	2%	5%	15%	14%
Did not answer	1%	1%	2%	0%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	717	509	536	350

[46] This group also includes people of completely non-Jewish origin who had giyur (conversion to Judaism), i.e., joined the Jewish people in the ethnic sense as well. But we found only a handful of such respondents in our sample.

As one can see, real processes characteristic of the "enlarged Jewish population" of the post-Soviet countries are not limited to a simple and clearly defined dichotomy of "Jews/Gentiles", nor are they reduced to the embracing or rejection of primitive "assimilation", which is confirmed by studies of different years. Back in 2005, Rosalina Ryvkina identified four social types of Russian Jews. The first of them is the "non-Jewish" ("Russian") type of ethnic identity, typical of people who never considered themselves Jewish and who knew nothing about the Jewish religion and culture. The second type is "internationalist" and it includes people who do not wish to demonstrate their "Jewish status" but who do not deny their Jewish roots. Two other Ryvkina's types are "ambivalent" (or "dual") – people who "feel" alternatively Jewish or Russian, and a "new Jewish" type of self-identification as an alternative to the traditional pre-revolution and Soviet Jewish identity.[47]

On the other hand, Moscow social anthropologist Elena Nosenko-Stein offered a "synthetic" scheme that included five types of self-identification of the Russian population that meets the criteria of the Israeli Law of Return. 1. Traditional ethnocultural self-identification that preserves the remaining elements of traditional Eastern Ashkenazi culture (in its Yiddish and Russian-language versions). 2. The "non-Jewish" type observed in people who do not consider themselves Jewish and are fully accultured, usually into the Russian culture. 3. The negative type of cultural self-identification, whose carriers usually do not want their "Jewish status", although they do not deny it, viewing it almost exclusively through the prism of negative experience (anti-Semitism). 4. The "ambivalent," or "dual," type whose carriers "feel" Jewish or Russian depending on the circumstances. 5. The "new Jewish" type of self-identification, more common among young people (including those with distant Jewish roots) who seek "to be Jews" by studying Jewish tradition and, in some cases, by joining various Jewish organizations.[48]

Culture-Identifying Groups

An analysis of this phenomenon certainly requires a much finer culture-identifying structuring of the "enlarged Jewish population" than

[47] See: Rozalina Ryvkina, How Do Jews Live in Russia? – pp. 54.

[48] Elena Nosenko-Stein, "Pass It to Your Children and Their Children to the Next Generation..." pp. 64-70

a simple comparison of its "Jewish", "half-Jewish", "quarter-Jewish" and "non-Jewish" components. As we have shown in a previous study, the "ethnic core" and ethnically mixed representatives of the "enlarged Jewish community" in the CIS (and partly in the "new Russian-Jewish diaspora" beyond) find themselves in more complex relationships than believed earlier, and ethnocultural and identification boundaries run within these communities rather than between them. Upon closer examination, one will notice that the strengthening of traditional and formation of new models of Jewish identity takes place within the framework of demarcation between the "culture-identifying communities" that cover every part of the "enlarged Jewish population" of post-Soviet countries.

This understanding allowed us to outline four cultural identity groups within the purview of the "organized Jewish community" (in the broadest sense of the word) and its nearest and farthest peripheries[49]:

1. "Jewish universalists" – carriers of the "general Jewish" identity with a strong national component; they usually believe that "Jews of the world are all one nation."
2. "Ethnic Jews" – carriers of a new ethno-civic Jewish identity, identifying themselves as "Russian (or Ukrainian, Belorussian, etc.) Jews," a relatively high percentage of whom believe that "Russian (Ukrainian, etc.") Jews have more in common with ethnic Russians (Ukrainians, etc.) than with Jews living in other countries."
3. Carriers of dual identity, who identify themselves both as Russians (Ukrainians, Belarusians, etc.) and Jews: a phenomenon that was perceived as an oxymoron in Soviet times but got established in the post-modernist atmosphere of the post-Soviet societies.
4. "Non-Jews" – non-Jewish spouses of Jews and assimilated descendants of Jews, carriers of any non-Jewish identity, who by virtue of origin sometimes become objects of attention from Jewish organizations and therefore in some cases realize their belonging, if not to Jewish as the ethnic group, then at least to the organized Jewish community.

[49] Khanin and Chernin, Identity, Assimilation and Revival, p.78-80

In the past and nowadays, these groups (whose weight in our 2019 study made up 21%, 33%, 18%, and 25%, respectively) reflect the real structure of the "enlarged Jewish population" of the former USSR.[50] This structure has its parallels in Israel and other countries of the Russian-Jewish diaspora.[51] (For example, in Israel, according to the 2017 data, 36.9% of repatriates from the former USSR considered themselves "simply Jewish Israeli", 31.1% considered themselves "Russian-speaking Jews"; 13.7% considered themselves "Russian, Ukrainian, etc. and Jewish at the same time", 1.7% considered themselves "only Russian or representative of another non-Jewish nationality", and 16.6% responded that they are "simply a human being").[52]

Each of these groups contains certain subcategories with their own nuances of cultural identifications, whose ratio has undergone a certain evolution over the past few years. In FSU countries, this process is most noticeable in the fourth, "non-Jewish," category that has, in addition to carriers of the actual Russian, Ukrainian or other non-Jewish identity, a "citizens of the world" subgroup, whose representatives declare their lack of belonging to any ethnic group. Researchers have observed this subcategory before. In particular, about 10% of respondents in a survey of student youth of Jewish (including mixed) origin in the CIS countries, conducted by Alec D. Epstein in 2008, responded to the question of identification by choosing the option "I do not believe nationality is important". Given the limited nature of his sample and the absence of this answer option in other surveys of this group, Epstein considered it premature to draw conclusions on the propor-

[50] In our 2019 survey, 47 respondents (a little over 2.2% of the sample) marked the "Other" option. Although this fits the acceptable borders of statistical minimum in applied sociology, the significant variety of the "Other" options does not make it possible to view this group as an independent identification category.

[51] Sam Kliger, "Russian Jews and Russian Israelis in USA and their Attitude to the State of Israel", Diasporas, 2014, №1. — pp. 67-90; Rina Cohen, "Layered Identities: Jews from the Former Soviet Union in Toronto", in Olaf Gloekner, Evgenia Garbolevsly and Sabine von Mering (Eds.), Russian-Jewish Emigrants after the Cold War: Perspectives from Germany, Israel, Canada and the United States (Boston: Center for German and European Studies, Brandeis University, 2006), pp. 57-68; Yaacov Glikman, "Russian Jews in Canada: threat to identity or promise of renewal?", in H. Adelman and J. Simpson (eds), Multiculturalism, Jews and Identities in Canada (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1996), pp. 192-218.

[52] The research conducted according to methodology and research tools developed by Ze'ev Khanin, included personal interviews of 950 respondents who came to Israel in 1989-2017. The respondents were selected by the quota random sampling method in keeping with the basic socio-demographic characteristics of the target population: sex, age, time spent in Israel, and place of residence (region) calculated on the basis of statistical data from the Central Statistical Bureau and the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration of Israel.

tion of ideological cosmopolitans among post-Soviet Jewish youth and Jews in general at that time.[53]

Judging by our 2019 study, this process has developed a lot both among already mature young people and in other socio-demographic categories of the "enlarged Jewish population". For instance, respondents who chose the answer "just human, nationality does not matter" made up almost 4/5 of "non-Jews" and 20% of the whole sample, which, according to our observations, reflects the general trend of recent years. And yet, "cosmopolitans" differ less from ethnic non-Jews than from carriers of Jewish ethno-civic and dual Jewish-Gentile identifications in most comparable parameters.

Representatives of all categories, according to this study, are clearly spread out onto successive stages of sociological scales by at least two parameters. First, the share of those who supported the notion that "Jews of the world are all one nation" (77% of "Jewish universalists" and only 32% of "non-Jews" supported this idea) decreased consistently from category to category. At the same time, the percentage of those who supported the idea that "Ukrainian, Russian, etc. Jews have more in common with ethnic Ukrainians, Russians, etc. than with Jews living in other countries," grew from 8% to 29%, while the share of those who found it difficult to answer this question grew from 13% to 35%.

Secondly, as can be seen from the table below, there is a correlation between belonging to one of the cultural-identification categories and the respondents' degree of Jewish identification. For instance, almost all the "universalist Jews" and ¾ of "ethno-civic Jews" defined their Jewish identity as "unconditional". The relative majority of the other two groups – around one half of "postmodernists" (i.e., carriers of a dual Jewish-Gentile identity) and one third of "cosmopolitans", on the contrary, stated that their Jewish identity was conditionally situational in nature. The percentage of those who do not think much about their Jewish identity among "cosmopolitans" was 2.5-8 times higher than in any other category (there were none among "universalist" Jews). Finally, 77% (7.5-8 times more than the sample average) of respondents that felt they belonged to a non-Jewish ethnic group declared they had no Jewish identity.

[53] See: Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, Dina Pisarevskaya and Alek D. Epstein, Jewish Youth in Post-Soviet Countries, pp. 40-41

Table 2.4. Level of Jewish Feeling among Representatives of Various Cultural Identification Categories of Respondents

Feeling Jewish	Total	Ethnic identity (consider themselves):					
		Jewish	Russian/ other Jew	Both Russian / etc. and Jewish	Non-Jews	"Cosmo-politan"	Other
Yes, absolutely	58%	96%	75%	44%	4%	18%	47%
Depends on circumstances	23%	2%	19%	47%	8%	33%	15%
No	10%	1%	2%	2%	77%	22%	13%
Never thought about it	8%	0%	3%	6%	10%	25%	13%
Did not answer	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	452	692	389	116	416	47

This picture allows us to talk about how the categories we outlined correspond to real sociocultural processes in this environment. An additional argument is how this case shows a direct connection between belonging to a cultural identification group and the ethnic background of respondents. For example, in the 2008 survey conducted by Ze'ev Khanin with the help of Eliezer Feldman in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Samara, 86.8% of those born into families with both Jewish parents regarded themselves "Jews only", 9.6% those born into mixed families with only one Jewish parent and almost none of descendants of third-generation mixed marriages and non-Jewish spouses of all categories. On the other hand, 78.7% of descendants of first-generation mixed marriages insisted on their ethno-civic Jewish identity while defining themselves as "Russian Jews", and over 84% of those with Jewish grandparents insisted on dual identity while defining themselves as "both Russian and Jewish." 7.7% of respondents chose non-Jewish national identity. Meanwhile, results obtained by Alec D. Epstein in his survey of students in Russia and Ukraine turned out quite close to ours: 34.8% defined themselves as "Jews only", 26.3% insisted on their ethno-civic (Russian-Jewish) identity, almost 22% claimed to belong to both ethnic communities, and almost 7% considered themselves only

Russians or Ukrainians. The remaining 10% said they "do not believe nationality is important".[54]

In general, we found the same similarities, although in somewhat more complex combinations in the present study of 2018-2019. Almost equal shares of people of homogeneous Jewish descent defined themselves as "universalist Jews" and "ethno-civic Jews". A relative majority of "half Jews" also chose a new ethno-civic Jewish identity, but their share of carriers of the dual Jewish-Gentile identity is relatively high.

A similar pattern, but with a significantly lower share of ethno-civic "Jews of the countries of residence," is characteristic of "quarter Jews." Finally, those who indicated they did not have any Jewish identity still dominated among respondents without Jewish roots. At the same time, two thirds of representatives of this subgroup that made this declaration (37% of its total number) preferred to define themselves as "citizens of the world" ("without any nationality") - and this is an obvious trend of recent years. Only a third (16%) declared themselves carriers of the Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, or other non-Jewish identities.

Table 2.5. Relation between Respondents' Ethnic Origin and Cultural Identification

Cultural identification categories	Number of Jewish grandparents			
	3-4	2	1	None
"Universalist Jews"	37%	19%	10%	11%
Russian, Ukrainian, etc. Jews	40%	37%	28%	19%
Both Russian/another and Jewish at the same time	12%	25%	25%	12%
Ethnic Gentiles	0%	3%	8%	16%
Simply human	9%	15%	27%	37%
Hard to say	0%	1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	0%	2%
No answer	0%	0%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	717	509	536	350

[54] For more details on these and other surveys of those years, see: Khanin, Pisarevskaya and Epstein, Jewish Youth in Post-Soviet Countries, pp. 32-47 (especially pp. 39-46)

On the other hand, almost 60% of universal Jewish identity carriers, over 40% of ethno-political Jewish identity carriers, one fifth of "post-modernists," and only 3% of "non-Jewish" identity carriers are 100% Jewish. "Half Jews" were made up of 20% of universal Jewish identity carriers, slightly more than 25% of ethnopolitical, a third of "postmodernist," and 13% of "non-Jewish" identity carriers. "Quarter Jews" included 12% and 20%, respectively, of the two former and more than one third of the two latter identification categories. Respondents with no Jewish grandparents included 8% of Jewish "universalists" (among them a significant proportion of descendants of mixed marriages in the fourth generation and non-Jewish family members that are deeply integrated into Jewish activities, as well as those who have passed giyur), a tenth of "ethno-civic Jews" and "postmodernists," and almost half of respondents of non-Jewish ethnic identification.

Table 2.6. Correlation between Respondents' Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Origin

Jewish grandparents	Total	Ethnic identity					
		Simply Jewish	Russian/ etc. Jew	Both Russian/ etc. and Jewish	Non-Jew	"Cosmo-politan"	Other
3-4	34%	59%	42%	22%	3%	15%	19%
2	24%	21%	27%	33%	13%	18%	26%
1	25%	12%	22%	35%	36%	35%	17%
None	17%	8%	10%	11%	48%	31%	38%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	452	692	389	116	416	47

A study of FSU olim in Israel conducted in March 2017 shows a nearly identical layout, with the only difference being that the Halachic norm (to consider "Jews by mother" only the 100% Jews and "Jews by father" – not Jewish at all) got embraced by Russian-speaking Israelis. But in general, it is obvious that this is a phenomenon typical of the entire "global Russian-Jewish community."

Nevertheless, despite its critical importance, ethnic origin only partially explains the difference between cultural identification groups on

issues of identity, values, sociocultural, and political identification. One should also take into account the social environment, family atmosphere, education, familiarization with Jewish heritage, the influence of community structures and, last but not least, the general cultural and sociopolitical context of the city, region, and country of respondents' residence. In their answers to the question of where and under what circumstances the respondents felt their Jewishness, universal Jewish identity carriers mentioned family ("family traditions and atmosphere") 1.5 times more often than the sample average. For this group, institutionalization is also important: going to a Jewish school, learning about a Jewish ritual in the synagogue, activities of the Jewish community, etc.

Carriers of Jewish ethno-civic identity and dual Jewish-Gentile identity also mentioned family experience, although less frequently than "universalists." Most frequently they mentioned social environment ("thanks to friends and surroundings") and an awoken interest in Jewish history, traditions, and culture. In addition, ethno-civic Jews remembered their anti-Semitic environment more often ("half Jews by father", who are disproportionately represented in this subgroup, view this phenomenon especially painfully), and, consequently, their interest in the Holocaust of European Jewry. Dual identity carriers focused on their interest in the Jewish "accent" in music, theater, and films, as well as tourist and educational or personal trips to Israel, meaning that they felt Jewish when they found themselves "in the right place at the right time".

Finally, almost 70% of those who declared their non-Jewish ethnic identity confirmed their lack of any Jewish feeling. (Our previous researches offered the question of what makes them feel as Jewish group members). In this case, representatives of the "non-Jewish" subgroup (half of which had Jewish roots and more than a third were "quarter Jews") most often chose the option "because my spouse is Jewish."

Let us look at a certain difference between "citizens of the world" and respondents who declared their other, non-Jewish, ethnic identity. A relative majority (almost a third) also admitted they had no Jewish feeling, but they are half of the "non-Jewish" subgroup. Additionally, in comparison with "non-Jews," "cosmopolitans" mentioned family traditions and the atmosphere five times more often, events of the Jewish community almost three times more often, and trip(s) to Israel more

than three times more often. All of this allows us to believe "citizens of the world" are not completely lost to the Jewish people. This is especially true since this subgroup turned out to contain 15% of descendants of homogeneous Jewish marriages, 18% of "half Jews," and 35% of "quarter Jews" – in other words, about one-third of "citizens of the world" are Halachic Jews.

Table 2.7. Ways to Acquire Jewish Feelings among Members of Cultural Identification Categories of Respondents

Ways to acquire the Jewish feeling	Total	Ethnic identity				
		Simply Jewish	Russian/ etc. Jew	Both Russian/etc. and Jewish	Non-Jew	"Cosmopolitan"
In family (family traditions and atmosphere)	50%	77%	56%	51%	5%	24%
Through friends, communications zone	24%	26%	27%	30%	10%	18%
Through Jewish music, songs, plays, films	11%	10%	12%	17%	3%	9%
At a Jewish school	7%	13%	7%	4%	1%	4%
At events of the city Jewish community	26%	31%	31%	24%	7%	19%
In synagogue (or a similar place)	13%	26%	13%	9%	1%	4%
Through interest in Jewish history, tradition, culture	27%	26%	29%	29%	16%	23%
I was not allowed to forget about this by my anti-Semitic environment	9%	8%	14%	8%	2%	5%
Holocaust of European Jewry during the Second World War	14%	11%	16%	15%	11%	13%
Due to interest in Israel, solidarity with the Jewish state	11%	12%	13%	11%	3%	10%
Through a trip to Israel – tourist, educational, business, or visit	14%	15%	13%	21%	4%	13%
Nothing special, my Jewish feeling came to me on its own	8%	7%	9%	11%	-	9%
I have no particular Jewish feeling	12%	0%	2%	5%	68%	31%
No answer / other answer	3%	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	452	692	389	116	416

Local and Universal Jewish Model in CIS Countries

Leshem's and Ryvkina's methods of calculating the ratio of carriers of different types of stable and "blurred" Jewish identities among the Jewish (in the broadest sense of the word) population in our and other research show that it had been roughly 60:40 for years. In this study, the ratio of 55% to 45% between carriers of a stable Jewish and a "blurred" or non-Jewish identity in the "enlarged Jewish population" also corresponded to this picture. However, the ratio of specific identification subgroups within these categories as compared to the first years after the collapse of the USSR gradually changed. For instance, among carriers of an unstable Jewish identity (18%), the share of those for whom the Russian identity was not the only alternative to belonging to the Jewish ethnic group increased slightly (compared to a study 15 years ago). And in the group of predominantly non-Jewish ethnic identity (25%), the share of "cosmopolitans" had been growing all these years and is now five times higher than the share of those with non-Jewish ethnicity.

On the other hand, among people with a stable Jewish identity, the process is underway of weakening the universal and strengthening the local Jewish identity. In fact, in the new century (especially in the last decade), this process has significantly accelerated. A similar trend was observed in the course of our survey of Jews in Russia and Ukraine in 2004-2005.[55] In Ze'ev Khanin's 2008 study of the Jewish youth of Moscow, St. Petersburg and Samara, despite this category's higher proportion of people of mixed origin, a similar process was observed: 32.5% of respondents identified themselves as "Jews only," 36% declared they are of an ethno-civic ("Russian Jews") identity, almost 24% insisted on belonging to both ethnic communities, and about 8% considered themselves to be "Russian only". Epstein, Pisarevskaya and Khanin, summing up a series of monitoring surveys of participants of 2004-2012 Jewish youth projects, also concluded that, in spite of the differences in the wording, the dominant identity for years combined a Jewish component with the national and cultural self-awareness of the ethnic majority of the community Jews are part of.[56]

[55] Khanin and Chernin, Identity, Assimilation and Revival, 80

[56] Khanin, Pisarevskaya and Epstein, Jewish Youth in Post-Soviet Countries, pp. 37-38

As our 2019 study confirmed on a more extensive empirical material, this trend is not accidental: there were 1.5 more "ethno-civic" Jews in our sample than "universalists" (respectively 33% and 21%). In fact, almost two decades ago, several researchers put forward the idea of such ethnic-political groups being formed in some republics of the USSR (they called them "subethnic"), such as "Russian Jews"[57] and "Ukrainian Jews"[58], although at that moment, it was a question of historical and cultural premises of such a phenomenon or searching for individual intellectuals. Now, judging from the big picture we have, the process has moved on to a qualitatively new level.

In the past, the local Jewish identity was largely admitted to by young people, among whom a relatively high proportion are people of mixed origin. Their share has not declined (in our current study, "quarter Jews" made up 41% of young people under the age of 25, a third of 26-40-year-olds, slightly more than a quarter of 41-60-year-olds, and only one tenth of those of older age) and today it has become almost mainstream. In any case, the proportion of those who chose this option among ethnically mixed young people and in the 61+ cohort (for the most part consisting of respondents of homogeneous Jewish origin) turned out to be almost identical and in both cases higher than the sample average.

Table 2. 8. Age of Respondents in Accordance with Their Ethnic Identity

Ethnocultural identity (how they feel)	Total	Age			
		16- 25	26-40	41-60	61+
Simply Jewish	21%	18%	21%	20%	24%
Russian/Ukrainian, etc. Jews	31%	36%	29%	30%	38%
Both Russian/another and Jewish at the same time	18%	18%	21%	19%	17%
Only Russian/member of other non-Jewish ethnicity	5%	4%	6%	8%	3%
Simply human being	20%	21%	20%	22%	17%
Difficult to say/other/no answer	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Total%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total, N	2,112	346	485	645	585

[57] Natalia Yukhnyova, "Between Traditionalism and Assimilation (an Attempt to Explain the Phenomenon of Russian Jewry)", Diasporas, № 1, 1999, pp. 160-178

[58] Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, The Anti-Imperial Choice: the Making of the Ukrainian Jew (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009)

This phenomenon is certainly no reason to revive the classic Ashkenazi ethnic groups of the "Pale" era or the Soviet-style Jewish national territorial autonomy of the 1920s. The first category might only include a few neo-traditional communities of former villages in Ukraine and Belarus[59] that survive only due to charity. They have partially preserved spoken Yiddish that an average of 5% of the sample can speak and another 11% can understand. The second model today can be found only in the Jewish Autonomous Region of the Russian Federation. It is a phenomenon where a territorial model of Jewish self-government exists at the level of an abstract symbol, although perhaps slightly more than just a historical curiosity.[60]

This is a sociological phenomenon of structuring fundamentally new Ashkenazi subethnic communities in the European countries of the former USSR with the relatively demographically and symbolically significant Jewish population (primarily Russia and Ukraine). Communities of this kind are very close to each other in cultural and linguistic terms. They cannot be called subethnic groups, unlike Georgian, Mountain, Bukhara and, with some reservations, Russian-speaking Jews. Differences between them come down mainly to their civic and political loyalty, which is why we propose to designate these new communities as "ethno-civic groups." In this sense, the situation in the CIS differs from the situation in countries of post-Soviet Jewish emigration (Israel, USA, Canada, Germany, etc.). In these countries, on the one hand, the identity of a "Jew of the country of origin" is preserved, and in Israel it even gets stronger the longer the person stays there. On the other hand, there is an obvious process of erasing the regional differences between the first, "1.5", and sometimes even the second generations of Ashkenazi immigrants from the former Soviet Union and their integration in the local "Russian" (or Russian-Jewish) communities.[61]

[59] See: Jeffrey Veidlinger, In the Shadow of the Shtetl (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013).

[60] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, "To Be Jewish in the Jewish Autonomous Region: Sociological Aspects," Euro-Asian Jewish Policy Papers, No 28 (17 December 2019), https://institute.eajc.org/eajpp-28/

[61] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, Joining the Jewish Collective: Formalizing the Jewish Status of Repatriates from the Former USSR of non-Jewish and Mixed Origin in Israel. Jerusalem: Morasha Institute and The Harry Triguboff Institute, May 2014

Table 2.9. Comparison of Ethnic Identities of Russian-Speaking Israelis and CIS Jews

Feeling	"Russian Israel"			CIS	
	Survey, year:			Europe*	Asia**
	2009	2013	2017	2018-19	2020
Simply Jewish	53.5%	44%	36.9%	21%	16%
Russian-speaking Jew, representative of the country's Jewish community	28.6%	28%	31.1%	31%	31%
Both Russian (or Ukrainian, etc.) and Jewish	7.8%	10%	13.7%	18%	11%
Only Russian/another ethnicity	6.7%	4%	1.7%	5%	6%
Simply human being/other	3.4%	14%	16.6%	20%	36%

* Survey in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova
** Survey in Kazakhstan

So, we are talking primarily about the Jewish diaspora phenomenon, whose existence in the post-Soviet space is obvious to us in light of the data above. And in this we disagree with researchers who deny the formation of various ethno-civic, most often Russian-speaking Ashkenazi groups both within the borders of the newly independent states and in the post-Soviet space as a whole. Which usually comes from these authors' belief that Jews in general are not a single ethnic group. (Ethnographer, culturologist and linguist, Prof. Mikhail Chlenov, for instance, supports this opinion and determines the Jewry as a "civilization")[62].

It seems this particular approach makes Elena Nosenko-Stein conclude that "people of Jewish origin living in post-Soviet Russia and beyond, in the post-Soviet space, have turned from a diaspora group (or a set of such groups) into an ethnic community." And in this capacity they form a part of the "Russian people".[63] But she simultaneously in-

[62] Mikhail Chlenov, "Jewry in System of Civilizations (problem presentation)", Diasporas (Moscow),1999, № 1. — pp. 34-56

[63] Elena Nosenko-Stein "Jews in Modern World: Diaspora, Confessional Minority, Ethnic Group?" in Y. Lubimov, ed., Works of the Institute for Oriental Studies, RAS. Issue 3: Culture and Politics: Interaction Problems (Moscow: IOS RAS, 2017), Russian

sists that the "mainstream" Jewish identification in the former USSR is situational in nature, which, following her logic, means that this group has no stable physical borders.

Other scholars do not deny the existence of such new groups, but the question of which community they are part of — predominantly Jewish or non-Jewish — remains disputable to them. For instance, Natalia Yukhneva[64], a long-time opponent of Elena Nosenko, believed the community of Russian Jews to be a subethnic group within the Russian ethnic group that Jews, in her opinion, share a common culture with. (And to those criticizing the artificiality of such a structure, she correctly noted that in the context of building "Soviet socialist nations" in Central Asia, Russian Jews do not look like the most "made-up" community.)[65]

It seems, nevertheless, that the data we have collected allow a different interpretation of this process. The proportion of our survey respondents in the five countries of the former Soviet Union who fully supported the 2019 assertion that "Jews of the world are all one nation" was 1.5 times lower than 15 years ago (58% and 79.3%). At the same time, the percentage of those who are absolutely sure that "Russian/other Jews have more in common with ethnic Russians or Ukrainians than with Jews living in other countries" grew less rapidly – from about a third to almost 40%. Together with those who partially agreed with these statements, 82% and 75% of 2019 respondents shared the belief that "Jews of the world are all one nation" and that local Jews have more in common with their non-Jewish counterparts in their countries of residence. Both statements show the dominant version of identification really shifting towards the local Jewish identity, but no longer excluding each other: the first alternative is an indicator of ethnicity, the second of its cultural content.

[64] On the essence of disagreements between these researchers, see: Nosenko-Stein, "In search for Self: Jewish Identity Study", New Literary Review, March 2014, № 127, https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/novoe_literaturnoe_obozrenie/127_nlo_3_2014/article/10985/

[65] Natalia Yukhnyova, "Russian Jews in Russia and Israel", Neva, N.9, 2008

Table 2.10. Comparison of Universal and Local Elements of Jewish Identification of CIS Jews in 2004-2005 and 2018-2019

Opinion:	Jews of the world are all one nation	Russian (other) Jews have more in common with ethnic Russians (Ukrainians, etc.) than with Jews of other countries of the world
2004 - 2005		
That is right	79.3	32.1
2019		
That is right	58%	39%
Partly so	24%	36%
No	8%	12%
Do not know	10%	13%
Total	100%	100%

If to these we add answers from respondents who, for technical reasons, were offered a linear opposition to each of the statements rather than a scale of answers (a total of 865 of them), then an equally interesting picture emerges. Confronted with an ethnic choice, 57% of our respondents chose in favor of the common Jewish ethnic group and only 20% in favor of the host countries' nations: Russians, Ukrainians, Moldavians, etc. (21% found it difficult to answer, the rest suggested another option).[66] In this case, there was no significant difference between "pure Jews" and "half Jews", only among "quarter Jews" were there noticeably more than average supporters of the second version or those who found it difficult to answer the question.

But among respondents in the conditional group of "non-Jews," there were noticeably more supporters of the first, "global Jewish," version than in any other category and in the sample average. And this is an indicator of the process direction. Moreover, motivation does not matter; it does not matter whether these people are aware of a clear line between ethnic groups or, on the contrary, being non-Jewish spouses of Jews or the fourth generation of mixed families involved in Jewish

[66] Similar data was obtained by the Levada Center. In 2018, the share of Russia's Jews who believed that "all the Jewish people, even those living in different countries, are all part of one nation" made up 49%. 39% of respondent shared the view that "Jewish people living in one or neighboring or culturally close countries are similar but Jews who live in different parts of the world are different". (Gudkov and others, Perception of Anti-Semitism by Jewish Population of Russia, 2018, p. 62)

community life, they emphasize the Jewish status of the community they want to belong to.

Table 2.11. Comparison of Ethnicity and Respondents' Perceptions of Processes in the Jewish World

Opinions:	Total	Number of Jewish grandparents			
		3-4	2	1	None
Jews of the world are all one nation	57%	59%	59%	48%	64%
Russians (Ukrainian, etc.) Jews have more in common with ethnic Russians (Ukrainians, etc.) than with Jews of other countries of the world	20%	19%	21%	25%	12%
Hard to say	21%	19%	19%	26%	24%
Another opinion	1%	2%	2%	1%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In light of these data, it would be logical to assume that the new Jewish ethno-civic groups taking shape in the countries of the former USSR are, above all, part of the Jewish nation by joining it either directly or (more often) through one of its segments, in this case - Russian-Jewish. In the first years after the collapse of the USSR, the borders of the core of this segment largely coincided with the borders of the post-Soviet Jewish community that existed back at the turn of the millennium. Today, the situation looks different. According to 2019 data, from over a quarter to one third of those polled in former republics of the European part of the former USSR identify themselves with the "titular" Jewish community of their countries. It means that they identify themselves with the ethno-civic groups of "Russian", "Ukrainian", "Moldovan," or "Belarus" Jews. Moreover, only 5-6% of respondents chose the option of "Russian Jew", which in this context meant belonging to the community of "Jews of the USSR/CIS," in the three European republics outside the Russian Federation.

Table 2.12. Models of Ethnic Identity of Members of the "Enlarged Jewish Population" in Five CIS Countries, according to this survey

What do you consider yourself first of all	Russia	Ukraine	Belarus	Moldova	Kazakhstan
Simply Jewish	16%	22%	20%	43%	16%
A Russian Jew	26%	6%	6%	5%	18%
A Ukrainian, Belarusian, etc. Jew	2%	29%	27%	32%	13%
Both ethnic Russian/etc. and Jewish	22%	16%	24%	9%	11%
Simply human or a member of a non-Jewish ethnic group	31%	24%	22%	10%	42%
Other or hard to say	2%	3%	-	1%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Experience of Kazakhstan and Moldova

A separate case is Kazakhstan, where the "Russian Jew" option was chosen by 18% and "Kazakhstani Jew by a mere 13% of respondents. This phenomenon is partly due to the fact that local, mainly Ashkenazi, Jews who came to Kazakhstan during the Second World War and later, look to Russia as their cultural metropolis. The choice of such identification may be an Ashkenazi alternative to the local Bukharian Jewish identity (a large community of Bukhara Jews used to live in Shymkent, Taraz and Kazalinsk in southern Kazakhstan). This group is apparently viewed as "Kazakhstani Jews." Note, however, that such self-identification is twice as popular among respondents in Karaganda, while in Shymkent, which once used to be the place of the main concentration of Bukhara Jews in Kazakhstan, this parameter turned out to be even slightly lower than in the sample average. Therefore, this assumption needs further analysis.

Table 2.13 Correlation of Ethnic Origin and Ethnic Identity of Members of "Enlarged Jewish Population" of Kazakhstan, 2020

What do you consider yourself first of all	Total Kazakhstan	Number of Jewish grandparents			
		3-4	2	1	None
Simply Jewish	16%	45%	12%	3%	-
A Russian Jew	18%	13%	20%	23%	-

A Kazakhstani Jew	13%	14%	16%	14%	-
Both ethnic Russian/etc. and Jewish	11%	9%	12%	14%	-
A member of a non-Jewish ethnic group	6%	2%	2%	7%	26%
Simply human	36%	17%	39%	39%	74%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	250	64	51	116	19

But it is clear even from these data that Ashkenazi Jews of Kazakhstan do not feel they belong to their country's indigenous nationality, unlike the Jews in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, and embraced a "Kazakhstani" civic identity.[67] Meanwhile, they realize their lack of identification combinations with local ethnocultural groups – neither with the Muslim ethnic group of Kazakhs, nor with the "fourth zhuz," i.e., ethnic Slavs, who are losing their influence upon authorities and are experiencing the strengthening of the cultural and linguistic aspects of this phenomenon.[68] It is no accident that the share of those who reported their mixed Jewish-Gentile identity in Kazakhstan was 1.5-2.5 times smaller than that of the Jews in the post-Soviet Slavic countries of Euro-Asia. Meanwhile, carriers of the non-Jewish identity among members of Jewish families in Kazakhstan made up 1.5 times as many as in Russia, twice as many as in Ukraine and Belarus, and four times as many as in Moldova.

However, in Kazakhstan, just like in other regions of the former USSR, people make their "non-Jewish" choice in favor of the "cosmopolitan" rather than any other ethnic identity: the ratio of these two non-Jewish sub-models averaged 6:1. An exception was the category of people without Jewish roots, a quarter of whom declared their non-Jewish (most often Slavic) ethnic identity, with no carriers of a stable or blurred Jewish identity among them. The share of "cosmopolitans" in this group was only three times, rather than six, higher than the share of ethnic non-Jews.

[67] See: Leonid Gurevich and Kirill Kartashov, "Key Factors and Peculiarities of the Identity of Jews of Kazakhstan (from results of a special sociological survey)," in V. Chernin and Z. Khanin, eds. Jews of Europe and Asia: Status, Heritage and Prospects. Scientific and Publicist Almanac (Yearbook) of the Institute of Euro-Asian Jewish Studies, v. 2, 2019-2020/5780. (Jerusalem and Herzliya: IEAJS and Institute of Jewish Studies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 2020), Russian, in print

[68] Tolganiy Umbetaliyeva, "Values of Inclusion and Issues of Discrimination," in L. Gurevich and R. Kaplan, eds., Values of Kazakhstani Society in Sociological Dimension (Almaty: DELUXE Printery TOO Publishers, 2020), p. 93 (Russian)

Moldova's own specificity was found, too: this was the only country where the share of supporters of "universal" and "local" Jewish identities was comparable. The share of carriers of non-Jewish identity turned out to be lower than anywhere else in the CIS. This anomaly can be explained by the technical complexity of organizing a representative survey under conditions of significant mobility of the population (including its Jewish part) in an economically underprivileged country divided by an old conflict. The phenomenon is also facilitated by the high proportion of the small Jewish population "under the radar" of local Jewish organizations.[69]

Both in Moldova and Kazakhstan, we are facing a demographically weak community whose aspirations are focused externally: in Kazakhstan, in the direction of Russia, and in Moldova in the direction of Israel and the EU (which explains the higher proportion of supporters of Russian-Jewish identification in the first case and "commonly Jewish" in the second). Characteristically, both Moldova and Kazakhstan have a disproportionate number of respondents convinced of the existence of a "transnational Russian-Jewish diaspora" that members of these communities are closely involved in. If it turns out that with all the local specifics, something similar happens in other communities on the periphery of the Russian-Jewish world – for example, in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia or, say, South Africa – this will not come as a surprise. In any case, these are peripheral ethnocultural models.

The Phenomenon of Transnational Identity of Post-Soviet Jewry

Note that the emergence of a transnational Russian-Jewish phenomenon was one of the reactions to the erosion of the community of "FSU Jews" and the strengthening of the local Jewish identity. This phenomenon highlighted not the "Moscow" option of the collective identity of these groups, but the supranational "Russian-speaking" Jewish community, whose members reside today in fifty countries on five continents. We believe it incorrect to view this community as a separate ethnic group – either Jewish as do, for example, Nosenko-Stein and Larissa Remennik[70], or as a branch of the Russian (without any quo-

[69] See, for instance, Dmitry Shevelev, "To Discussion on Jewish Autonomy in Post-Soviet Moldova", Jews of Europe and Asia, v. 1, 2018-2019/5779, pp. 84 – 94.

[70] See: Larissa Remennick, "Transnational lifestyles among Russian-speaking Israelis: A follow-up study", Global networks, 2013. Vol. 13, № 8, pp. 1-20

tation marks) ethnic world in line with the new Israeli post-Zionist sociologists.[71]

Almost 60% of Jews and their families in post-Soviet Euro-Asia believe in the viability of this phenomenon long or medium-term, according to our 2019 data. Moreover, there was almost no essential difference on this issue between the age groups of Jews of different post-Soviet countries, with the exception of the above-mentioned peculiarities in Moldova and Kazakhstan. Just as there was no difference between individuals of homogeneous or mixed and non-Jewish origin (except that the proportion of respondents who found it difficult to answer this question was proportional to the homogeneity of the Jewish origin).

Table 2.14. Conviction of CIS Jews of Existence of Phenomenon of Transnational Russian-Jewish Diaspora/Age

Categories	What do you think of this phenomenon?				
	Invention of interested parties	Long-term phenomenon	One-generation phenomenon	Do not know / not interested	Total
Total	**13%**	**30%**	**27%**	**31%**	**100%**
Ethnic origin (N of Jewish grandparents)					
3-4	17%	32%	27%	24%	100%
2	11%	32%	26%	31%	100%
1	9%	28%	31%	32%	100%
None	12%	28%	23%	36%	100%
Country					
Russia	11%	27%	32%	29%	100%
Ukraine	16%	23%	27%	34%	100%
Belarus	14%	24%	30%	33%	100%
Moldova	2%	82%	2%	14%	100%
Kazakhstan	15%	48%	20%	17%	100%
Age					
16-25	13%	30%	27%	31%	100%
26-40	8%	29%	29%	33%	100%
41-60	10%	32%	25%	33%	100%
61+	17%	30%	26%	27%	100%

[71] Majid Ibrahim Al-Haj, The Russians in Israel: A New Ethnic Group in a Tribal Society (London: Routledge, 2019)

A practical reflection of this transnational vision can be intensive, face to face or virtual contacts with friends and relatives abroad. But again, there were no differences on this issue between age cohorts, which indicates that the diaspora has acquired some characteristics, we shall call them a "multi-generational dispersed family-network community" united by a system of personal ties, first-circle relatives (parents, children, grandchildren, nephews, etc.), and close friends living in different countries.

In fact, more than a quarter of respondents informed us of having such relatives and friends in one foreign country, almost 40% having such contacts in two or three countries, and a fifth in four or more countries of the world. (This parameter was used to outline the cohort of the youngest representatives of the "enlarged Jewish population", which is generally characterized by increased migration dynamics.) Only 14% of respondents reported that they did not have close friends or relatives (Jews and their families) abroad. Moreover, in Moldova, 75% of respondents have friends and close relatives in more than three countries, and there was simply no one who did not have such contacts abroad.

Table 2.15. Prevalence of Trans-State Social-Family Ties of FSU Jews/Age of Respondents

Number of countries abroad, where respondent has close relatives and friends	Total	Age			
		16-25	26-40	41-60	61+
In one foreign country	**27%**	20%	26%	24%	32%
In two-three countries	**39%**	43%	34%	41%	40%
In more than three countries	**21%**	26%	23%	23%	15%
None	**14%**	10%	16%	12%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Respectively, 12% and around one fifth of respondents see their friends and relatives abroad regularly or occasionally, while half of the total number of respondents (almost 60% of those with friends and relatives abroad) reported that they "see each other infrequently, but are constantly in touch by phone, mail, or through social networks". Members of large Jewish communities of megacities and million-plus cities of the former USSR demonstrate increased involvement in the

network of transnational Russian-Jewish relations. It was to these large industrial, cultural, and financial centers that the Jewish population migrated from provincial cities throughout the post-Soviet era, and these Jews are still characterized by higher professional, social, and migration mobility. There is also a noticeable number of trans-migrants in these communities: people who returned after several years of life in Israel, the USA or Europe, or those who divide their time between the countries. For example, 5-7% of our respondents in each of these cities had or have Israeli citizenship.

Table 2.16. Presence of Close Relatives and Friends Abroad, in accordance with Type of Community in European Part of FSU

Number of countries	Total	Ukraine			Russia		Belarus	
		Kiev	Odessa and Dnepr	Small towns	Moscow and St. Petersburg	Province	Minsk	Province
In one country	25%	21%	33%	34%	15%	49%	17%	46%
In two-three countries	39%	47%	36%	41%	51%	27%	36%	34%
In more than 3	21%	24%	11%	7%	18%	6%	39%	4%
None	14%	7%	20%	18%	17%	1 8%	7%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	301	384	179	560	241	150	112

This is most likely true for Asian countries as well. For example, in Kazakhstan, where the proportion of respondents with close friends and relatives abroad exceeded 80% (three quarters of them in two or more countries), most respondents were living in the country's largest city (and the "old capital"), Almaty. It had the highest proportion of respondents (65%) in virtual contact (by phone, mail, email, social networks) with their foreign friends and family members. While in the provincial Shymkent, only 40% practice this form of communication. Apparently, therefore the percentage of respondents who regularly meet with their foreign family members "offline" was 1.5 times higher than average.

Table 2.17. Transnational Ties of Jews of Kazakhstan

	Total	Jewish communities of Kazakhstan			
		Almaty	Karaganda	Pavlodar	Shymkent
Close relatives and friends outside the respondent's country of residence					
In one country	23%	14%	34%	16%	36%
In two-three countries	53%	65%	51%	44%	40%
In more than three	6%	7%	4%	8%	2%
None	18%	13%	11%	32%	22%
Ways of communication					
Meet regularly	8%	9%	2%	6%	12%
In constant contact by mail, phone, e-mail	55%	65%	60%	52%	32%
Occasional contacts	12%	8%	9%	4%	28%
Almost none	8%	4%	17%	6%	6%
No relatives or friends abroad	18%	13%	11%	32%	22%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	250	97	53	50	50

Survey data show that this extensive system of relations involves almost all segments of the FSU "enlarged Jewish population" in an almost equal measure, regardless of age and homogeneity of Jewish origin. Some difference exists only among those who have no friends or relatives abroad. The proportion of "quarter Jews" who declared so turned out to be twice as high as that of "half Jews" and three times higher than among the "100% Jews". At the same time, respondents with more distant or absent Jewish roots chose this answer 1.5 times less often than "quarter Jews" (17% and 21%, respectively). The remaining 83% in this "non-Jewish" subgroup might have meant relatives of their Jewish spouses or long-standing friends from Jewish youth camps and other community projects.

Table 2.18. Transnational Interactions of FSU Jews/ Respondents' Age and Ethnicity

Intensity of communication with relatives abroad	Total	Age				Number of Jewish grandparents			
		16-25	26-40	41-60	61+	3-4	2	1	None
Meet regularly	12%	12%	11%	12%	14%	16%	11%	9%	12%
In constant contact by e-mail, phone, etc.	49%	54%	48%	48%	49%	55%	51%	43%	41%
Occasional contacts	19%	19%	20%	23%	16%	17%	19%	20%	22%
Almost none	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	3%	6%	6%	7%
No relatives or friends abroad	13%	10%	15%	11%	14%	7%	11%	21%	17%
No answer	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,096	344	481	639	582	713	503	533	347

This means that the Jewish element is the key to the whole scheme, just look at the direct relationship between the intensity of contacts and the respondents' belonging to the culture identification groups of the Jewish and near-Jewish population of post-Soviet Euro-Asia and its "far abroad ".

Table 2.19. Transnational Interaction of FSU Jews/Culture Identification Categories

Intensity of communication with relatives abroad	Total	Ethnic identity				
		Stable Jewish		Mixed	Non-Jewish	
		Jews	Ethno-civic Jews	Both Jewish and other	Ethnic Gentiles	"Cosmo-polites"
Meet regularly	12%	20%	12%	8%	4%	11%
In constant contact by mail, phone, e-mail	49%	53%	54%	50%	29%	40%
Occasional contacts	19%	16%	18%	20%	29%	20%
Almost none	5%	3%	5%	6%	10%	6%
No relatives or friends abroad or did not answer	14%	7%	10%	15%	27%	22%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,096	450	688	387	113	411

All of this supports the Russian-Jewish element of collective identification, while simultaneously defining the material framework of the Russian-Jewish sub-ethnos. This conclusion, in our opinion, is true regardless of the causal nature of these connections: whether Jewish identification motivates these contacts, or, on the contrary, their connections reproduce specific identification, or we are dealing with two opposite trends.

Israeli Factor in Post-Soviet Jewish Identity

Basic social communication networks, according to our and other studies, are focused on the State of Israel where most respondents have close family members and friends. Israel is the undisputed center of the transnational Russian-Jewish diaspora, which is most clearly manifested in regions with their sociocultural dynamics of local communities oriented mainly "outside". For example, in Kazakhstan, 42% of respondents have close friends and relatives in Russia, 28% in the US, 27% in Germany, and 7% in other European countries. 14% of respondents have friends in Canada, 10% in Ukraine, 5% in other CIS countries (Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova), and 2% in Australia. But Israel was way ahead of all of them – it was mentioned by 78% of Kazakhstani Jews who reported having friends and relatives abroad.

In general, the same processes are also characteristic of the European republics of the former USSR: according to our study, 52% of respondents (more than 60% of those with relatives abroad) have close relatives in Israel. Moreover, this factor is directly proportional to the homogeneity of the ethnic origin of respondents: three quarters of "100% Jews" and over 50% of "half Jews" have close friends and relatives in Israel, as well as a third of "quarter Jews" and people without Jewish roots.

Table 2.20. Close Relatives in Israel / Age of Respondents

Presence of close relatives in Israel	Total	Number of Jewish grandparents			
		3-4	2	1	None
Yes	52%	74%	53%	34%	34%
No	45%	25%	45%	63%	63%
Did not answer	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	100%

It is equally important that 55% of our respondents from European countries of the CIS have visited Israel themselves (two-thirds of them 1-3 times, and a third many times). Another 5% spent a certain period of their lives in Israel (lived, worked, and/or studied there). Some said they live there now and are temporarily staying in the CIS for work or personal reasons, and almost twice as many young respondents under 25 had experience of long-term residence in Israel as the sample average. The existing picture is a common phenomenon for the Russian-Jewish diaspora. An example is the second largest Russian-Jewish community in the United States: according to Director of the Euro-Asian Department of the American Jewish Committee, sociologist Dr. Sam Kliger, more than 50% of Russian-speaking immigrants living there have visited Israel at least once and have many relatives and friends there. Meanwhile, almost 60% of American Jews have never been to Israel, and 75% have no family in this country.[72] Kazakhstan became an exception to the rule because 68% of its respondents have never been to Israel, although the proportion of its citizens living and studying there (8%) was even higher than in other CIS countries.

About half of respondents in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova named Israel's Jewish character (46%) and the fact that it is an "economically developed state that gives good opportunities in life" (56%) among Israel's most attractive features. The first option was more often chosen by people of homogeneous Jewish origin and of older age; the second – by respondents of mixed and non-Jewish origin and younger people under 40. No surprise that the relevance of Israel primarily as a Jewish state clearly correlated with the mentality of culture identification groups: this view was supported by three quarters of carriers of the "universal" Jewish identity, half of the "ethno-civic" Jews, 40% of "postmodernists," a quarter of "cosmopolitans," and 16% of "ethnic non-Jews". The "economic" approach was inversely proportional to the sustainability of Jewish identification in members of these groups (43%, 55%, 62%, 63%, and 66%, respectively).

[72] "The fact that many have relatives and friends in Israel," says Kliger, "makes the majority of Russian-speaking emigrants, not even necessarily [Halachic] Jews, view Israel as the focus of their Jewish and, paradoxically, even American identity; their attitude to it has a special emotional connotation". Quote by Kliger, "Between America, Israel and Russia: a Sociocultural and Political Portrait of the Russian-Speaking Diaspora in New York," Diasporas (Moscow), 2014, № 1-2, pp. 74 (in Russ)

The question in the questionnaire was formulated in such a way that its answer options were not mutually exclusive, and that is how respondents perceived it. And in fact, an unusually high proportion (about 10%) of respondents used the open answer option specifying that Israel is close to them as both a Jewish country and a state that ensures the welfare of its citizens. Only 4% of respondents believed "this country has nothing attractive about it" or found it hard to answer the question.

Table 2.21. Opinions on Preservation or Measurement of Jewish Character of Israel by Representatives of Culture Identification Categories of FSU Jews

Should Israel abandon its Jewish character?	Total	Ethnic identity					
		Jew	Russian/ other Jew	Both Russian/ etc. and Jewish	Gentile	"Cosmopolitan"	Other
No way	41%	66%	44%	33%	21%	22%	34%
It must remain Jewish, but I understand those who want changes	27%	17%	32%	32%	24%	29%	11%
I do not care	7%	3%	5%	8%	22%	11%	13%
I am for the "state for all citizens"	9%	4%	8%	12%	16%	14%	15%
Difficult to answer	15%	10%	11%	15%	17%	25%	28%
Another answer	0%	0%	0%	--	--	0%	--
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	452	692	389	116	416	47

Israel indeed was and remains the most important factor in the personal, cultural, and ethno-national identity of Jews in the former Soviet Union. Thus, the hypothetical possibility of Israel denouncing its Jewish character won the support of a mere 9% of respondents, with 7% saying they were not interested in this problem. 2/3 of carriers of the "universal" Jewish identity, over 40% of ethno-civic Jews, 1/3 of those with Jewish-Gentile identity, and 20% of non-Jews strongly rejected this idea. "Ethno-civic" Jews and "postmodernists" (often with non-Jewish family members) expressed the strongest desire to preserve Israel as a Jewish state with simultaneous understanding of the motives of those demanding changes to its status. Members of the non-Jewish

culture identification category were twice as likely as the sample average to have Israel as a "state for all citizens since the time of national states has allegedly passed," and three times more often say they are not interested in this topic.

Similarly, the more stable the Jewish identity, the stronger the connection with Israel, and vice versa. These studies make it clear that solidarity with the Jewish state and willingness, if necessary, "to give it a shoulder" are characteristic of over 90% of carriers of the "universal" Jewish identity, 3/4 of carriers of the ethno-civic Jewish identity, and the sample average (69%) share of dual Jewish-Gentile identity carriers. About a half and one fifth of respondents in two subgroups of the non-Jewish category: "cosmopolitans" and "ethnic non-Jews" showed unconditional solidarity with the Jewish state.

Table 2.22. Solidarity with Israel among Representatives of Culture Identification categories of FSU Jews

Ethnic identity	Solidarity with Israel			Total
	Yes	No	Hard to say	
Jewish	91%	1%	8%	**100%**
Ethno-civic Jewish	76%	3%	21%	**100%**
Jewish and other	69%	5%	26%	**100%**
Ethnic Gentile	21%	30%	49%	**100%**
"Cosmopolitan"	49%	11%	41%	**100%**
Total	**69%**	**6%**	**25%**	**100%**

The study reaffirmed the phenomenon we noted 15 years ago: identification with Israel correlates to respondents' patriotism in their countries of residence.[73]

With the abolition of state-sanctioned anti-Semitism (that in Soviet times included official anti-Zionism) and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the former Soviet Union and the State of Israel, the dilemma of the Soviet Jewry – solidarity with Israel (which meant disloyalty to the Soviet Union) or declaring support to anti-Zionism or non-Zionism – has lost its relevance. We believe that the problem of choosing between the local national patriotism and pro-Israeli senti-

[73] Khanin, "Between Eurasia and Europe"

ments that existed 15-20 years ago is just as irrelevant: today, these elements of post-Soviet Jewish identity no longer contradict each other.

In this survey, 20% of respondents named Israel or both Israel and the country of their residence as the "country closest to them". Even more vividly this tendency manifested itself in answers to the question of "Jewish patriotism": 25% believe that a Jew is to be first of all a patriot of his country of residence; 50% of the country of residence and of Israel, and 16% of Israel. Just like in the past, these views correlate with the level of ethnic homogeneity and the type of Jewish and other identities. Differences in age and other socio-demographic groups were insignificant.

Table 2.23. Ethnic Background and Civic Patriotism in FSU Jews' Discourse

Which country's patriot should a Jew be?		Number of Jewish grandparents			
	Total	3-4	2	1	None
First of all, the country of residence	24%	23%	28%	23%	19%
Country of residence and Israel	48%	54%	44%	42%	50%
First of all, Israel	16%	13%	19%	17%	18%
Hard to say	11%	9%	8%	19%	12%
Another opinion	1%	1%	2%	-	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	865	279	253	206	127

Table 2.24. Opinions on Civil Patriotism of Representatives of Culture Identification Categories of FSU Jews

Which country's patriot should a Jew be?	Total	Ethnic identity				
		Stable Jewish		Mixed	Non-Jewish	
		Jews	Ethno-civic Jews	Both Jewish and other	Ethnic Gentiles	"Cosmo-politans"
The country of residence	24%	11%	23%	29%	42%	36%
Country of residence and Israel	48%	50%	55%	47%	29%	32%
First of all, Israel	16%	33%	13%	9%	13%	5%
Hard to say	11%	5%	8%	12%	16%	26%
Another opinion	1%	1%	1%	3%	-	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

As we can see, a "poly-loyal" model has been established in the countries of the former Soviet Union, similar to the model adopted in democratic countries of the West.

***

Summarizing this chapter, we would like to note that the identity of the mainstream "enlarged Jewish population" of the former USSR is a complex set – a synthesis or a symbiosis of elements, with the Jewish element being the basic one. Even if one accepts the "Jews by nationality (origin), Russians in culture" construct popular among postmodernist sociologists, such a scheme gets realized within the Jewish rather than Slavic or other ethnic or civic collective.

Chapter 3. "Traditional" and "Secular" Cultural Identity and Identification of Jews in Post-Soviet Euro-Asia

The Russian-Jewish Ashkenazi sub-ethnos has a number of specific cultural attributes. These attributes are filled with Jewish content of various sources, from the residues of the East-European Ashkenazi traditions and Soviet Jewish culture to the trends borrowed first of all from Israel and to a lesser extent from the Western cultures.

Communication Models and Ethnopolitical Symbols

The functioning of this Jewish social complex is not interfered with by the fact that its culture is developing primarily in Russian. A number of researchers even believe that the Russian language in this case does not play the role of a "foreign" or borrowed platform, but in a sense plays the role of an "ethnolect" of the Russian-Jewish sub-ethnos.[74]

However, Jewish languages – Yiddish and Hebrew – constituted a considerable layer of the East-European Jewish sociocultural complex for decades. Not only (and eventually even less) as a means of communication within the Jewish community, they were an important ethno-national and even ethnopolitical symbol. In the course of construction of Jewish community institutions in the countries of the former USSR, both Jewish languages were left outside of any significant everyday use due to the extremely small number of Jews who would have demanded it. Thus, the share of those who called Yiddish their native language in post-Soviet censuses has been constantly declining. In Russia, for example, it declined from 8.9% in 1989 to 5.1% in 2010, and in Ukraine, from 7% in 1989 to 3.1% in 2001. Approximately the same picture we saw in our 2019 research. Only 5% of respondents said

[74] See: Anna Verschik, "Jewish Russian and the field of ethnolect study", Language in Society Vol 36, Issue 2 (April 2007), pp. 213-232

they speak Yiddish fluently or conversationally, and another 11% said they understand this language a little. In Ukraine, the share of such people totaled 20%, in Russia it was 11% (Moscow Levada Center's 2018 poll found 16% of Yiddish speakers)[75]; in Moldova 22% of such respondents were found, and in Belarus the share was 14%.

Table 3.1. P Parameters of Yiddish Fluency in European Countries of FSU

Knowledge of Yiddish, Jewish Mountain, Bukhara, and other diaspora languages	Total	Jews of these countries			
		Ukraine	Russia	Moldova	Belarus
Fluent	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Can speak	4%	6%	2%	3%	2%
Understand spoken language	11%	12%	8%	19%	10%
Know a few words and phrases	22%	28%	19%	6%	22%
Don't know at all	62%	52%	70%	71%	65%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	864	801	185	262

Hebrew, at least at the conversational level, is spoken by 11% of respondents who meet the criteria of the Israeli Law on Return, and another 15% are able to understand this language (in general, almost the same third made up the share of Jewish respondents familiar with Hebrew to some extent in the Levada Center survey). So, the situation with Hebrew looks better in comparison with Yiddish, but not good enough to expect any competition with the Russian language or even with languages of the titular nations of the post-Soviet republics. The reason lies not in the inefficiency of the Hebrew teaching system that Israel and local Jewish organizations invest significant resources into, but in the orientation of this system at potential emigrants and the lack of motivation for the remaining students to use the language seriously.

On the other hand, both Hebrew and Yiddish remained symbols of ethnocultural and national-political identity at the level of mass consciousness all those years. This, in particular, was seen from the survey of the Jewish population in several cities of Eastern Ukraine conducted

[75] [L. Gudkov] Perception of Anti-Semitism by Jewish Population of Russia. Sociological Research Report. Moscow, Yuri Levada Analytical Center, 2018, pp. 78

in the fall of 1993, i.e., at the end of the first wave of mass emigration from the former USSR. In choosing the language Jewish people should speak (respondents could select any number of options), 54% chose Hebrew, 19% Yiddish, 69% deemed it sufficient to "speak the language of the country of residence." At the same time, only 10% of respondents believed that belonging to a nation is determined by the ability to "think and speak its language," while 39% believed that a deep knowledge of national language is absolutely unnecessary for high national self-awareness (44% agreed with both judgments).[76] In other words, it was already clear back then that "Yiddish vs. Hebrew" discussions were moving into an abstract and symbolic plane.

This conclusion was confirmed in subsequent years. Both in our 2004-2005 survey in Russia and Ukraine and in the new study of the "enlarged Jewish population" of four countries of the European part of the former USSR, Hebrew fluency took 9th and 11th places, while Yiddish or any other Jewish diaspora language fluency in both cases took the 14th (last) place in the ranking. At the same time, the share of "Jewish universalists" among those aware of the importance of preserving Yiddish was from 1.5 to three times higher than in other categories of culture identifying categories. This does not come as a surprise, since most "Jewish universalists" are people of homogeneous Jewish origin, whose Jewish identity includes a more solid layer of residual or "newfound" components of traditional Ashkenazi culture than in other groups. But for members of the two "non-Jewish" categories Israel is just such a component along with attributes of its culture, including Hebrew.

[76] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, "Social Consciousness and Identity of Ukrainian Jewry: The Case of Dnieper region", Contemporary Jewry (New York), Vol. 19 (1998), No 1, pp. 120-150

Table 3.2. Value of Hebrew and Yiddish Fluency in Accordance with Culture Identification of Respondents and Their Ethnic Origin (%%)

	Being Jewish means	
	Know and use Yiddish/ another language of the Jewish diaspora	Know and use Hebrew
Total	5	11
Culture Identification Categories		
Jewish "universalists"	9	14
Russian, Ukrainian, etc. Jews	3	8
Both Russian/another and Jewish at the same time	5	9
Ethnic Gentiles	6	17
Simply human	3	13
Ethnic origin (number of Jewish grandparents)		
3-4	7	7
2	3	12
1	5	15
None	3	14

Meanwhile, language fluency in itself is not the ultimate factor in one's choice. The level of Yiddish fluency among carriers of the universal Jewish identity in the latest study has radically decreased compared to the previous survey (the percentage of those who speak the language fluently or conversationally has halved; the percentage of people who can understand it has remained the same, but those who know individual words and phrases or do not speak the language at all in 2019 was 1.5-2 times higher than in 2004-2005). This leads us to the conclusion that today, just like 15 and 25 years ago, what respondents found important was not so much the practical use of a particular language but its value as a symbol of their belonging to the "core" or the "periphery" of the Jewish community. The very same culture of the Russian-Jewish Ashkenazi sub-ethnos developed mostly in the Russian language, while the communicative role of Jewish languages occupies a marginal place in it.

Table 3.3. Yiddish Fluency in Russia and Ukraine – Comparison of 2004-2005 and 2019 Studies

Level of fluency	Year	Survey	Total	Ethnic identity					
				Stable Jewish		Mixed	Non-Jewish		
				Jews	Ethno-civic	Both Jews and other	Ethnic Gentiles	"Cos-mopoli-tans"	Other
Fluent	2005	R+U*	**6.3%**	**13.3%**	**2.5%**	**5.5%**	**0**	**xxx**	x
	2019	R**	1%	2%	2%	1%	-	1%	-
		U***	2%	5%	1%	1%	-	1%	-
Conversa-tional	2005	R+U	**13.9**	**23.5%**	**10.1%**	**9.1%**	**0**	**xxx**	x
	2019	R	2%	12%	1%	2%	-	-	-
		U	6%	13%	6%	3%	-	2%	5%
Understand spoken language	2005	R+U	**19.9%**	**18.4%**	**9.1%**	**16.4**	**0**	**xxx**	x
	2019	R	8%	15%	8%	11%	-	2%	5%
		U	12%	18%	13%	11%	-	9%	9%
Know a few words and phrases	2005	R+U	**21.8%**	**18.4%**	**0%**	**20**	**33.3**	**xxx**	x
	2019	R	19%	22%	24%	22%	8%	13%	14%
		U	28%	28%	33%	29%	13%	21%	23%
Do not know at all	2005	R + U	**38.2%**	**26.5%**	**13.9%**	**49.1**	**66.7**	**xxx**	x
	2019	R	70%	49%	65%	64%	92%	85%	81%
		U	52%	35%	48%	56%	88%	68%	64%
Total			100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Research in Russia and Ukraine, 2004-05 / **Survey in Russia, 2019 / ***Survey in Ukraine, 2019

Language Markers of Jewish Identity

The topic of two Jewish languages, one of which has almost lost and another has not yet acquired real communicative functions outside of Israel, could be closed, if not for two circumstances. First is the further development of a relatively new tendency of religious and secular "neo-Yiddishism"[77] as a unique model of Jewish identity. This tendency can be compared to the "Yugntruf" ("Youth for Yiddish" – secular patriotism of the diaspora, whose symbol is the Yiddish culture[78]),

[77] The term "new-Yiddishism" was introduced by Velvl Chernin in his preface to Michoel Felsesnbaum's book "Shabesdikeh shvebelech" (Tel Aviv, 2004, in Yiddish); Russian translation: Saturday Matches, Moscow, 2006.

[78] See: Tatjana Soldat-Jaffe, Twenty-First Century Yiddishism: Language, Identity, and the New Jewish Studies (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012): 67-70. Research associate of the Jewish Studies Center of

which emerged in the United States in 1964 and then in some other countries of the West. The emergence of this trend in the post-Soviet space was recorded back in the middle of the last decade.[79]

This model is mainly spread in CIS capital cities among representatives of the European intelligentsia of the middle-age and especially younger generations, including those of mixed origin. These people consciously decided on a systematic study of Yiddish in adulthood, ascribing an important identification role to the language and its culture. Ethnographer, Professor Valery Dymshits notes that the emergence of this phenomenon has become a form of protest against the officialdom of institutional Jewish infrastructure: Yiddish has become a banner and center of crystallization of Jewish identity for yet too few, mostly younger, groups. "Yiddish," prof. Dymshits believes, "has not (and is unlikely to) become their language of daily communication, but it has sure become a major symbolic value, like a cultural code. The new "Yiddish community", not to count small groups that study this language, is taking shape around two centers: Klezmer music and the Internet."[80] An increased interest in Yiddish among the Jewish youth of Moscow in search of their ethnic and cultural roots was also observed in the course of the 2010-2011 survey by social anthropologist D. Pisarevskaya.[81]

Another factor is a fairly wide familiarization of the enlarged Jewish population of the former Soviet Union with basic Hebrew; it covered 55% of our 2019 respondents. Of these, less than one fifth (10% of the total number of respondents) studied Hebrew "on their own", almost 25% mastered this language at a Sochnut or an Israeli Embassy Ulpan class, a little more than 10% in a Jewish day school, about 6% in the

the Michigan University, Eli Rosenblatt, defines this movement as "an apolitical organization, but it is steeped in Yiddishism, an ideology formed in the 19th century that sought to identify Jews not exclusively by land or religion but by the Yiddish language, as well. The organization is not associated with the left". Quote by: Eli Rosenblatt, "Yiddishists: The Next Generation Takes the Reins", Forward, Feb 20, 2008, https://forward.com/articles/12717/yiddishists-the-next-generation-takes-the-reins/

[79] Velvl Chernin, "Major Patterns of Jewish Identity in the Former Soviet Union", in Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, et al (eds.), Constructing the National Identity: Jewish Education in Russia Twenty Years after the End of the Cold War (Jerusalem — Ramat-Gan: The Lookstein Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, Bar-Ilan University, 2008), pp. 37-61

[80] Valery Dymshits, "Yiddish in Post-Soviet Space", in Yearbook of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, 5767 (2006/07) (Kiev: Duh i Litera, 2007), pp. 128-129

[81] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin and Dina Pisarevskaya, "Jewish Youth of Modern-Day Russia: Ethno-National and Confessional Identity", Hebrew University Herald (Jerusalem — Moscow), 2014, №15. — pp. 169-200.

Jewish Sunday school, another 12% in Joint-sponsored Hesed community centers, a Jewish religious community or within community programs. 9% of respondents (or 17% of those who studied Hebrew) are familiar with Hebrew because they spent some time in Israel. Only a quarter of Jewish "universalists" never studied Hebrew at all, neither did slightly over 40% of "ethno-civic Jews", half of respondents with mixed or "universal" identification, and three quarters of non-Jews.

Table 3.4. Experience in Hebrew Learning in accordance with Respondents' Culture Identification

Did you study Hebrew, and if so, how?	Total	Identity				
		Jewish	Russian/ other Jew	Both Russian/ etc. and Jewish	Gentile	"Cosmo-politan"
Independently	10%	13%	10%	12%	4%	7%
At Sochnut or ICC Ulpan class	13%	16%	15%	11%	4%	8%
In Jewish day school	6%	10%	7%	3%	3%	3%
At Jewish Sunday School	3%	5%	3%	2%	1%	2%
At a Hesed Center, religious or other community program	7%	12%	7%	6%	-	5%
Lived in Israel for a while	9%	12%	9%	9%	3%	8%
Other	11%	11%	9%	9%	10%	16%
Did not study this language	45%	27%	43%	51%	74%	53%
Studied at university	0%	0%	0%	1%	-	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

This pattern seems to work by age as well. In Ze'ev Khanin's study back in 2008, Hebrew was studied to some degree by over 90% of young Jews living in Russia with a "universal Jewish" identity, by more than 65% of "ethnic" ("Russian") Jews, and by 36% of those with dual self-identification (simultaneously Jewish and Russian).[82] Our 2019 study helped us add the above-mentioned educational platforms to this pattern. And so, the proportion of young people aged 16-25 studying Hebrew in Jewish day schools (21%) turned out to be three

[82] Khanin and Pisarevskaya, "Jewish Youth of Modern Russia"

times higher, the percentage of fluent Hebrew speakers or those with conversational Hebrew turned out twice as high, and the number of those who never studied Hebrew was 1.5 times lower than the sample average.

For the first time in all the years of our studies, we found people in this and the next age subgroups who studied Hebrew within the system of Jewish school and university education. Meanwhile, representatives of the 61+ age cohort chose the "other" option (i.e., various opportunities outside the standard language-learning systems) twice as often as the sample average. In the same subgroup (where people of full Jewish origin make up the absolute majority and double the share of the sample average), a relatively larger number have never studied Hebrew. Otherwise, the differences between age groups were insignificant.

Table 3.5. Experience in Hebrew Learning According to Respondents' Age

Did you study Hebrew, and if so, how?	Total	Age			
		Up to 25	26-40	41-60	61+
Independently	10%	10%	9%	11%	10%
At Sochnut or ICC Ulpan class	13%	14%	18%	14%	5%
In Jewish day school	6%	21%	7%	2%	0%
At Jewish Sunday School	3%	4%	5%	3%	2%
At a Hesed Center, religious or other community program	7%	8%	6%	8%	7%
Lived in Israel for a while	9%	13%	9%	9%	8%
Other	11%	6%	7%	11%	18%
Did not study this language	45%	29%	41%	48%	52%
Studied at university	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	346	485	645	585

At first glance, the situation is simple: Yiddish is a priority in identification-behavioral patterns of the older generation, while Hebrew is a priority among young people. However, our studies lead us to a slightly different conclusion: Hebrew does not fill the gap left by Yiddish in the language system of symbols today but joins it in a kind of a language symbiosis.

Just as expected, Yiddish fluency at different levels was proportional to the ethnicity of respondents, but a significant number of "non-Jews" who reported the knowledge of individual words and phrases in Yiddish is truly interesting. Obviously, respondents without Jewish roots borrowed this knowledge from their Jewish spouses and their parents, and descendants of the fourth generation of mixed marriages – from more distant ancestors (great-grandparents), from family folklore, etc.

Table 3.6. Self-Assessment of Yiddish Language Proficiency according to Respondents' Ethnic Origin

Knowledge of Yiddish	Total	Number of Jewish grandparents			
		3-4	2	1	None
Fluent	1%	4%	-	1%	0%
Able to speak	4%	7%	3%	1%	3%
Able to understand	11%	18%	9%	7%	6%
Know single words and phrases	22%	28%	22%	18%	15%
Don't know at all	62%	43%	66%	74%	77%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	717	509	536	350

Religious Identity and Religious Cultural Tradition

An almost complete suppression of the "institutionalized Judaism", among other external manifestations of traditional Jewish identification, did not mean the elimination of Jewish identity of FSU Jews, but the formation of a unique type of it. A 2019 study showed that even today, the role of Judaism in the ethnicity identification complex of post-Soviet Jews and members of their families remains limited. Differences in the stability of Jewish identity between the categories of "confidently religious", "confidently non-religious," and those who doubt their religiosity, are noticeable, but not so much as to add the level of religiosity to the main factors shaping respondents' ethnic consciousness.

Table 3.7. Religious Identity and Stability of Respondents' Jewish Feeling

Feeling Jewish	All	Consider themselves religious people		
		Yes	No	Hard to say
Completely	58%	69%	52%	57%
Depending on the situation	23%	15%	26%	25%
No	10%	10%	12%	6%
Never thought about it	8%	4%	9%	9%
No answer	1%	1%	1%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	568	1,017	527

An opposite process is most likely taking place here: the stability of a Jewish or other identity in an atmosphere of ideological search prompted many Jews and their family members to fill this niche, including by the religious component. This is especially so since we cannot speak of complete disappearance of the Jewish religion from the sociocultural landscape of the Soviet Jewry. While within the secular ethnic awareness framework, Jewish and another (Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc.) identity were perceived as mutually exclusive, the "Judaism-Christianity" (or other religions) opposition was not as clear. Although tradition had formed a negative attitude toward "converts," public opinion usually did not push them out of the Jewish milieu in most secularized Jewish families or families integrated into the Russian or, to a lesser extent, other ethnic cultures.

Today, religious identity is a considerable (and according to some observations, even increasing) component of the Russian-Jewish identification. However, it is still significantly inferior in its influence on the ethno-national component[83] and covers the peripheral zones of collective self-consciousness of post-Soviet Jewish communities. This is a new personal choice that does not always follow religious commandments in their traditional Orthodox (or other) form, but rather a "religious commitment" in the broadest sense of the word. [84]

[83] Nosenko-Stein, "Pass It to Your Children and Their Children to the Next Generation", 2013; Elena Nosenko-Stein, "Introduction," in T. Karasova, E. Nosenko-Stein, ed. Remember the Past for the Future: Jewish Identification and Collective Memory (Moscow: IOS RAS, 2014), Russian; Vladimir Khanin, "Social Consciousness and Identity of Ukrainian Jewry: the Case of the Dnepr Region", Contemporary Jewry, New York, Vol. 19 (1998), pp. 120-150

[84] See: for instance: Marina Sapritskaya, "From Hebrews to Jews: Turning to Faith or Coming Back to It?"

This trend, after a noticeable revival of interest in Judaism and religion in general during the perestroika years, demonstrated further stability. This conclusion is true both for the ethnic core and for the periphery of the "enlarged population" of post-Soviet Jews in the diaspora and in Israel.[85] Only 23% of our 2004-2005 study respondents in Russia and Ukraine stated that they are religious, 46.5% answered this question in the negative, and just over 30% were undecided. Fifteen years later, the situation is practically the same: 27% declared themselves religious, 48% "secular," and a quarter could not answer the question. Accordingly, only about a quarter of participants in the survey 15 years ago felt that being Jewish means "to observe religious commandments and attend the synagogue" and placed this factor 10th out of 14 positions on the scale of priorities. This is very close to data of other researchers.[86] In our 2019 survey, this parameter moved from 10th to the 7th place, but the percentage of those for whom keeping religious commandments was one of the main criteria of being Jewish was significantly lower than a decade and a half ago (16% and 27%, respectively). This is consistent with the lack of noticeable age differences among respondents on this issue.

Table 3.8. Religious Identity of Different Age Groups

Consider themselves religious people	Age				
	Total	16-25	26-40	41-60	61+
Yes	27%	21%	28%	28%	28%
No	48%	52%	48%	47%	49%
Hard to say	25%	27%	24%	26%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	346	485	645	585

In the current study, we were interested not so much in the level of religiosity of the organized "Jewish community" as in its identification

State, Religion, Church in Russia and Abroad, 2015, № 3 (33), pp. 224-254; Nosenko-Stein, Reformed Judaism in Russia: Does It Have a Future? (Moscow: NEOLIT, 2020), pp. 55-59 (Russian).

[85] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, "Religious Identity of Repatriates from FSU in Israel", State, Religion, Church in Russia and Abroad, 2015, № 3 (33). — pp. 255-290

[86] See: Osovtsov, Yakovenko, Jewish People in Russia, pp. 44-46; Rozalina Ryvkina, How Do Jews Live in Russia. A Sociological Analysis of Changes (Moscow: IOS RAS, 2005), Russian; Zvi Gitelman, "Thinking about Being Jewish in Russia and Ukraine", in: Zvi Gitelman, Musya Glants and Marshall I. Goldman (eds.), Jewish Life after the USSR (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003) pp. 49-60

with Judaism or another religion as an indicator of the religious component dynamics of that "symbolic ethnicity", i.e., preservation, transformation and loss of national identity. For this reason, the question was formulated in a somewhat different way: what religion (regardless of the level of personal religiosity) do respondents consider theirs? In 2004-2005, about 60% named Judaism, in 2019, the same answer was given by 43% of respondents. It does not necessarily mean conversion from Judaism to another system of religious and cultural values: the share of those who identified with Christianity (or another religion) or simultaneously with Judaism and Christianity changed little – such respondents made up, respectively, over a quarter and just under a third of those polled. Growth was noticeable in the category of consistent atheists: in 2004-2005, they made up 14.5%, and 15 years later 22%, which makes a third and a half of our "non-religious" respondents.

Also note that the comprehensive study of 2019-2020 enabled us to examine these trends in the regional context as well. And so, in areas of Russia's dominant cultural influence (in Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan), the proportion of those who named Judaism their religion (from one third to 40%) was lower than the sample average, while in Ukraine, it was 1.5 times and in Moldova more than twice higher than in Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Most of those responding as "Christians" were again found in Russia and Kazakhstan, consistent atheists in Russia and Belarus, while Jews of Ukraine and Moldova along with their family members more often chose the "both Judaism and Christianity" option.

Table 3.9. Comparison of Identification with FSU Respondents' Religious and Cultural Tradition

Religion that respondents consider theirs	Russia and Ukraine 2004-05	European communities of the FSU, 2019					Asian communities
		Total	Ukraine	Russia	Moldova	Belarus	Kazakhstan
Judaism	**59.7%**	**43%**	47%	33%	79%	38%	33%
Christianity	**4.3%**	**16%**	10%	27%	2%	11%	42%
Both equally	**21.2%**	**14%**	15%	11%	16%	20%	9%
Another (Islam, Buddhism, etc.)	**0.3%**	**1%**	2%	0%	-	2%	3%
None	**14.5%**	**22%**	19%	27%	2%	27%	13%
No answer	-	**3%**	6%	1%	1%	2%	
Total		**100%**	100%	100%	100%	100%	
	470	2,112	864	801	185	262	250

A difference in cultural and value motives, rather than just demarcation, between "Russian Christians" and "Jewish followers of Judaism" is seen from the absence of a noticeable correlation between ethnic origin and the level of religiosity (except that the percentage of the non-religious is slightly higher in the "quarter-Jewish" group, where the proportion of youth under 25 is 1.5 times higher than in the sample average).

Table 3.10. Religious Identity and Identification with Religious and Cultural Tradition in accordance with Respondents' Ethnic Origin

	Number of Jewish grandparents				
	Total	**3-4**	**2**	**1**	**None**
Consider themselves religious					
Yes	27%	28%	27%	23%	30%
No	48%	49%	46%	54%	41%
Hard to say	25%	23%	28%	23%	28%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
What religion do you consider "yours"?					
Judaism	43%	66%	43%	25%	27%
Christianity	16%	3%	11%	24%	35%
Both equally	14%	10%	18%	16%	15%
Another (Islam, Buddhism, etc.)	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
None	22%	17%	23%	31%	16%
No answer	3%	3%	3%	2%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	717	509	536	350

Differences between culture identification groups turned out to be very significant in this matter. The percentage of those who considered Christianity or simultaneously Judaism and Christianity "their religion" was small (about 8% and 6%, respectively) among carriers of a stable Jewish identity, about one third in the "ethno-civic" subgroup in 2004-2005, and about a quarter in 2019. (Over the past 15 years, the percentage of "Christians" in this subgroup has slightly grown, but the share of supporters of mixed religious-cultural identities has almost halved. Apparently, for the "ethno-civic" Jews who have been acculturated and integrated into the local society, the choice between Jewish

and [Russian or Christian] Orthodox civilizations becomes more and more symbolic every year rather than substantial.)

But the proportion of those who see both Judaism and Christianity as "their religion" (and their cultures) among those who described themselves as "Jews and representatives of another nationality" was expectedly greater than in other categories in 2019 as in previous years. This proportion was 1.5 times more than among "ethno-civic" Jews and "citizens of the world" and, correspondingly, 4-6 times more than in the extreme categories of the identification scale – "universal" Jews and ethnic non-Jews. You may recall that representatives of the second and especially third generations of mixed marriages, who made up one third and over 40% of our youth sample, dominate the category of carriers of dual Jewish-Gentile ethnic identity. (Apparently, it remains the same in the general population that meets LOR criteria.)

Table 3.11. Comparison of Religious, Cultural, and Culture-Identifying Belonging of Participants in 2004-2005 and 2019 Surveys

What religion do you consider "yours"?	Total	Ethnic identity				
		Stable Jewish		Mixed	Non-Jewish	
		Jews	Ethno-civic	Both Jewish and other	Ethnic Gentiles	"Cosmopolitans"
Research in Russia and Ukraine, 2004-05						
Judaism	**59.7%**	84.5	55.7	32.8	0.0	
Christianity	**4.3%**	1.9	3.2	6.9	50.0	
Both equally	**21.2%**	6.8	28.5%	29.3	0.0	
Another	0.3%	1.0	0	0	-	
None	**14.5%**	5.8	12.7	31.0	50.0	
All	**100**	100	100	100	100	
Research in European countries of the former USSR, 2019						
Judaism	**43%**	84%	51%	26%	3%	14%
Christianity	**16%**	2%	9%	16%	62%	30%
Both equally	**14%**	4%	15%	25%	6%	18%
Another	**1%**	-	1%	2%	2%	1%
None	**22%**	8%	20%	26%	26%	33%
Pantheism	**0%**	0%	0%	1%	-	-
No answer	**3%**	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%
Total	**100%**	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	452	692	389	116	416

Finally, as follows from Table 3.13, a group of "non-Jews," some of whom are involved in the activities of Jewish communities, unequivocally demonstrated an absence of any dilemma in choosing between national and cultural loyalty. For them, it is exclusively a matter of faith, which in 2004-2005 divided these respondents equally between the followers of Christianity and atheists. Fifteen years later, this situation is characteristic of "cosmopolitans," while in the category of "ethnic non-Jews," this ratio comprised 62% to 26%. In other categories in both surveys, the share of "Christians" and "atheists" was inversely proportional to the level of stability of their Jewish identity.

To sum up all that has been said, the level of religiosity can be compared to the cultural-religious affiliation of respondents. Two-thirds of religious respondents named Judaism their religion and a quarter named Christianity (another 1% chose "another religion"). Among those who found it difficult to determine their attitude to religion, the share of "Jews" and "Christians" was 1.5 (44%) and two (12%) times smaller. But in the same category, the relative majority (24% compared to 10% among religious and 12% among secular) named both religions as theirs. Among non-religious, almost a third named Judaism their religion, 14% named Christianity, but the largest in this category was the share of "consistent atheists" (38%). We believe we can conclude that for religious respondents, the choice of "their" religion is identical to the choice of religious belief; for the secular, it is a choice of a culture and value model, and for those who find it difficult to answer this question, it is a symbiosis of both factors.

Table 3.12. Religiosity and Religious-Cultural Choice

What religion do you consider "yours"?	Consider themselves religious people			
	Total (100%)	**Yes (27%)**	**Hard to say (25%)**	**No (48%)**
Judaism	**43%**	64%	44%	32%
Christianity	**16%**	23%	12%	14%
Both equally	**14%**	10%	24%	12%
None	**22%**	1%	13%	38%
Other	**1%**	1%	-	3%
Total	**100%**	100%	100%	100%

How does this religious-cultural identity manifest itself practically? The proportion of more or less regular synagogue-attending respondents (i.e., regularly or on Shabbats) was small – 15%. (This is one of the few questions on the questionnaire, the answers to which showed a noticeable gender difference: the share of men among regular attendees is much higher than that of women – 11% vs. 7%.) In any case, the proportion of active synagogue attendees is four times lower than the percentage of those who declared their "certain" Jewish identification, and this once again confirms that the core of post-Soviet Jewish identity lies in sociocultural factors other than religion or behavior. Approximately the same proportion of respondents attend the synagogue on Jewish holidays, more than a quarter attend "from time to time" (i.e., several times a year), and more than 40% do not attend it at all or (erroneously) claim that there is no synagogue in their city.

It is not surprising that among respondents who describe themselves as religious, the frequency of regular synagogue attendance is higher than the sample average by 2.5 times and the frequency of Shabbat attendance is two times higher. The percentage of those who do not attend the synagogue or minyans at all (21%) was comparable to the share of religious respondents who named their religion Christianity rather than Judaism (23%). And another interesting thing: there were significantly more "religious" respondents who participated in Jewish prayers and ceremonies (75%) with varying frequency than those who named as Judaism their religion (64%). No less interesting is that among synagogue attendees we see 65% of respondents that found it difficult to answer the question of their religion (12% of them attended the synagogue relatively regularly and 17% on holidays). And finally, almost a third of confidently non-religious respondents take part in religious synagogue events from time to time.

Table 3.13. Correlation between Respondents' Level of Religiosity and Their Synagogue Attendance

How often do you attend the synagogue?	Total	Consider themselves religious		
		Yes	No	Hard to say
Regularly	9%	22%	3%	7%
On Shabbats	6%	11%	3%	5%
On holidays	16%	27%	10%	17%

Occasionally	27%	15%	29%	36%
Do not attend at all	36%	21%	47%	30%
I believe there is no synagogue in my city	5%	2%	7%	3%
No answer	1%	2%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	568	1,017	527

So, the conclusion we made 15 years ago is still relevant today: public religious worship, including synagogue attendance, is first of all a communal socializing factor rather than a religious criterion. In this context, "family" format is important: the share of people with no Jewish roots, for the most part spouses of Jews who regularly attend the synagogue (17%), turned out lower than among respondents of full Jewish origin (21%), but was also 1.5 times higher than among "half Jews" (10%) and 2.5 times higher than among "quarter- Jews" (7%).

As far as Jewish holidays and memorial days are concerned, 70% of respondents celebrate them always or often; the same percentage buys Passover matzah (one of the few elements of tradition that was preserved in many Jewish families in Soviet times). 54% of the polled always or occasionally participate in the ceremony of lighting Hanukkah candles, and 52% take part in the Passover Seder. Meanwhile, 37% always or sometimes build or visit tabernacles (sukkahs) on Sukkot; 42% light Shabbat candles; 38% fully or partially observe Shabbat; 35% fast on Yom Kippur; and 29% observe kashrut. In other words, respondents are much more active in participating in public ceremonies than in observing Jewish traditions personally.

Table 3.14. Participation in Religious Ceremonies and Observance of Jewish Holidays and Memorial Days

Jewish ceremonies	Keep Jewish Holidays	Fast on Yom Kippur	Buy matzah for Passover	Light Shabbat candles
Completely/always	23%	16%	41%	17%
Partially/sometimes	47%	19%	29%	27%
Never	24%	57%	26%	49%
Hard to say	5%	8%	5%	8%

Jewish ceremonies	Keep Shabbat	Observe kashrut	Light Hanukkah candles	Participate in Passover Seder
Completely/always	12%	8%	27%	25%
Partially/sometimes	26%	21%	27%	27%
Never	53%	60%	40%	41%
Hard to say	9%	10%	7%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100	100%

Table 3.15. Participation in Public and Private Jewish ceremonies depending on Respondents' Age and Ethnicity

Jewish ceremonies	All	Age				Number of Jewish grandparents			
		16- 25	26-40	41-60	61+	3-4	2	1	None
Keep Jewish Holidays									
Completely/ always	23%	30%	20%	20%	25%	32%	21%	16%	19%
Partially/ sometimes	47%	46%	47%	47%	50%	52%	54%	41%	39%
Never	24%	21%	28%	29%	18%	11%	22%	39%	32%
Hard to say	5%	3%	5%	3%	7%	5%	3%	4%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Fast on Yom Kippur									
Completely/ always	16%	17%	17%	15%	15%	25%	15%	8%	11%
Partially/ sometimes	19%	22%	20%	16%	18%	19%	22%	15%	18%
Never	57%	57%	57%	64%	52%	46%	58%	71%	57%
Hard to say	8%	4%	6%	5%	15%	10%	6%	6%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Quite predictably, the proportion of religious respondents who always celebrate Jewish holidays was twice as high as the sample average (41% and 23%). But if one adds respondents participating in ceremonies from time to time, then activity of members of the other two categories – secular and those who found it difficult to define their level of religiosity – was quite high (respectively, 61% and 75% in comparison with 88% of the "religious"). However, demarcation becomes clearer when it comes to non-public observance of religious commandments,

such as fasting on Yom Kippur: 60% of the religious observe it regularly or periodically (approximately the same number of respondents in this subcategory mention Judaism as their religion), along with only 19% of the secular and 35% of those who are unsure of their religious feelings.

Table 3.16. Participation in Public and Private Jewish Ceremonies depending on Respondents' Religiosity

Jewish tradition	All	Do you consider yourself religious?		
		Yes	No	Difficult to say
Keep Jewish Holidays				
Completely/always	23%	41%	15%	19%
Partially/sometimes	47%	41%	46%	56%
Never	24%	14%	33%	18%
Hard to say	5%	3%	6%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Fast on Yom Kippur				
Completely/always	16%	32%	8%	13%
Partially/sometimes	19%	28%	11%	22%
Never	57%	34%	71%	55%
Hard to say	8%	6%	9%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,089	565	1,009	515

No less obvious is the place of religious traditions in different culture identification categories. The share of those who fast (always or occasionally) on Yom Kippur among respondents who feel "only Jewish" is very high – over 62% in 2004- 2005 and 60% in the current study. And neither the former nor the latter had any "non-Jews" who would fast on Yom Kippur – an absence of the Jewish religious component in their "community identification" is quite stable. In both cases, the share of fasting respondents in the sample at large turned out to be 1.5 times higher than the share of people who identified themselves as "religious".

Table 3.17. Participating in Public and Private Jewish Ceremonies depending on Respondents' Culture-Identification Belonging

Jewish tradition		Ethnic identity				
	Total	Jewish	Russian/ other Jew	Both Russian/ etc. and Jewish	Gentile	"Cosmopolitan"
Keep Jewish holidays						
Completely/ always	23%	46%	26%	13%	1%	9%
Partially/ sometimes	47%	45%	54%	57%	21%	39%
Never	24%	5%	16%	25%	74%	46%
Hard to say	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Fast on Yom Kippur						
Completely/ always	16%	36%	17%	6%	-	5%
Partially/ sometimes	19%	24%	23%	20%	-	9%
Never	57%	32%	52%	67%	91%	75%
Hard to say	8%	8%	9%	6%	9%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

At least three competing and partially interacting models of attitude to religion are present in the Jewish community of the FSU today. The first is a "classical" (neo-traditionalist) view of the Jewry as an ethnic or communal-denominational community. Logically, Judaism as religion becomes the core of its Jewish identity, and religious institutions become the foundation of this community. Neither "atheists" nor, especially, followers of other religions can be part of it. The second model is based on the Soviet-shaped secular notion of Jews as a "national" (of ethnic status) group. Jewish religion here plays the role of a positive ethnic symbol that is however deactivated for everyday life. The third, "postmodern" model, on the contrary, considers multiculturalism, mixed ethnicity, and diversified religiosity as an acceptable and, in a sense, desirable element of Jewish (including community) life.

All these models and their corresponding trends can contribute to the processes of ethnic consolidation and assimilation of the post-Soviet Jewry.

"Secular" Culture of Euro-Asian Jews

The Russian-Jewish cultural space is by no means limited to a reincarnation of, or rather the emergence of, a new religious Jewish culture. Over the past 30-40 years, its "secular" version has developed in the territory of the former USSR, whose content is also under a lot of discussion. Speaking of "secular Jewish culture," one should take into account the layer of original cultural phenomena that has developed in the past 30-35 years although its roots are often found in previous eras. This layer is comprised of multiple mass media, Jewish publications and literature about Jews theater, music, cinema, and museums. And, of course, educational, and scientific institutions, to be discussed in the next chapter.

A whole number of Jewish periodicals are published in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Minsk, Vitebsk, and other cities today, and there are several publishers of Jewish literature and books about the Jewish people whose significance goes beyond the limits of their respective countries and sometimes even the whole former Soviet Union.[87]

Among them are St. Petersburg's People of the Book in the World of Books magazine, Moscow's Lechaim magazine, Kyiv's Egupets almanac, Vitebsk's Mishpoha magazine and Kiev's Hadashot monthly. Some periodicals are partially sponsored by regional authorities, mostly in localities where Jews are the titular nation. For example, the Birobidzhaner Stern weekly (the world's only printed secular newspaper with materials in Yiddish) and the "scientific and literary" annual almanac Birobidzhan[88] in the Jewish Autonomous Region of the Russian Federation. The world's only periodical in the Jewish Mountain language, Vatan weekly, is published in Derbent, the capital of Dagestan. One should also remember the influence of Israel-published Russian-Jewish periodicals on the post-Soviet audience.

Due to the relatively low prices and cooperation with Israeli experts, most of the major Russian-Jewish publishing projects are realized in the former Soviet Union, their products spreading out to countries with notable Russian-speaking Jewish population. Standing out among

[87] For more details, see: Velvl Chernin, "State of Jewish Periodicals and Book Publishing in FSU", EA Jewish Policy Papers (No 33), 20 April 2020

[88] "Historical and Cultural Heritage of Jewish Autonomous Region": http://nasledie-eao.ru/services/kyltyra/literary-anthologies/almanac-birobidzhan.php

these are the Moscow Knizhniki (Scribes) publishing house, the Moscow-Jerusalem Bridges of Culture/Gesharim, the Kiev Duh i Litera publishers, the Birobidzhan publishing house, and the fundamental publishing project Complete Works of Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky organized in Moscow and Minsk by the recently deceased Israeli citizen Felix Dector.

The last professional Jewish theater, Shalom (Moscow), claims to be a successor to the famous Moscow State Jewish Theater (GOSET) directed by Solomon Mikhoels[89]. In reality, Shalom has long since stopped performing in Yiddish and a lot of its repertoire has nothing to do with the Jewish culture, plus its artistic level is often criticized. But a lot of Jewish communities have amateur theaters and pop groups which, without pretending to be professional, introduce Jewish people (in the broadest sense of the word) to the elements of their national culture: traditional Eastern Europe Ashkenazi and modern Israeli. Purim-spiels became a unique form of amateur theater and pop art. This tradition was lost in the 20th century in the overwhelming majority of Ashkenazi communities of the diaspora and Israel, but was revived in the USSR by activists of the informal Zionist movement of the 1970s[90] with Russian as their main language, and has found continuation at a number of international festivals. Today's Purim-spiel tradition continues in international festivals (Purim-Spiel in Vitebsk, an international festival of Jewish culture in Birobidzhan, etc.). The same can be said about the Klezfest[91] tradition of klezmer music that came to the post-Soviet space from the USA in the late 1990s and rethought and actualized Ashkenazi folk arts.

A special place belongs to the Jewish films shot in the FSU, Holocaust being one of the central themes in them. Despite the fact that the definition of Jewish cinema is somewhat vague, one cannot ignore this factor in Jewish cultural life. For instance, the annual Moscow Jewish Film Festival founded in 2015 presents mainly films shot in Israel, the USA, and Western European countries, but every year it welcomes

[89] Alexander Cherno, "History of Moscow Jewish Drama Troupe", Yiddishland, N 6, Tel Aviv, 2020, pp. 67-86 (in Yiddish)

[90] For more details on Purim-spiels, see: Rita Genzeleva, "Purim Laughter of Soviet Jews. Purim-Spiels of the 1970-1980s", Lechaim, 2009, N 3. E-version: https://lechaim.ru/ARHIV/203/genzeleva.htm#_ftnref1

[91] For more details, see: Psoy Korolenko and Dina Gidon, "Non-Local Connection, Lechaim, 2007, N 5. E-version: https://lechaim.ru/ARHIV/181/korolenko.htm

Russian films or films from other post-Soviet states (Ukraine, Belarus, or Latvia).

A whole number of Jewish Museums operate in the FSU representing Jewish collective memory and national identity in a multicultural post-Soviet community[92]. Some of the most significant are the private Moscow Museum of Jewish History in Russia opened in 2011; the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow founded in 2012 at the initiative of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia; and the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum, which opened its doors in 1989 in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. There is also the David Baazov Museum of History of Jews of Georgia opened in Tbilisi by the decision of the Government of Georgia in 1992 as a successor to the 1932-1951 Jewish Historic-Ethnographic Museum of Georgia. It is also important to remember the Jewish funds at the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg, at the Russian National Library in Moscow, and many small Jewish museums and Jewish sections in general museums in about two dozen cities of Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Latvia, and other countries.

How high is the demand for these cultural projects among post-Soviet Jews in their attempts to fill the gaps in their cultural heritage? At first glance, our data shows that the situation looks fine: 17% of respondents regularly read books by Jewish authors on Jewish subjects and another 48% do so "from time to time". About 60% attend Jewish theaters and concerts regularly or from time to time. And only one third and 40% of respondents, respectively, either admitted that they were not at all interested in Jewish books or performances "with a Jewish accent", or found it hard to answer this question, perhaps because they did not quite understand which publications or shows fall into the definition of "Jewish".

This picture however looks less optimistic if one analyzes it in the context of respondents' identification. Interest in Jewish literature among those of stable Jewish identity was 1.5 times higher than the sample average; among respondents with "blurred" Jewish identity this interest stayed approximately the same, and among those with non-Jewish identity it was 1.5 times lower than average. Directly pro-

[92] Maria Kaspina, "Jewish Museums in Modern World and in Post-Soviet Space", Jews of Europe and Asia: Status, Heritage and Prospects. V.1 — pp. 165-169

portional to ethnic identity of respondents was also their attendance of Jewish theaters and concerts, as well as their familiarity with Jewish periodicals.

Table 3.18. Interest of Culture Identification Group Members in Jewish Media, Publications and Performing Arts

How often do you do these activities?	Total	Ethnic identity					
		Jew	Russian / other Jew	Both Russian/ etc. and Jewish	Gentile	"Cosmo-politan"	Other
Read books by Jewish authors							
Regularly	17%	28%	19%	13%	5%	9%	19%
Seldom	48%	52%	51%	51%	33%	39%	40%
Almost never	29%	14%	22%	32%	60%	45%	32%
Hard to say	6%	6%	8%	4%	2%	7%	9%
All	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Attend Jewish theaters and concerts							
Regularly	13%	26%	12%	14%	3%	5%	9%
Seldom	47%	52%	50%	49%	26%	41%	32%
Almost never	35%	18%	33%	33%	67%	48%	43%
Hard to say	5%	4%	5%	4%	3%	6%	17%
All	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Read the Jewish press							
Regularly	19%	35%	20%	14%	3%	9%	23%
Seldom	32%	38%	36%	34%	9%	23%	15%
Almost never	43%	23%	36%	48%	84%	62%	49%
Hard to say	6%	5%	7%	4%	4%	6%	13%
All	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	2,112	452	692	389	116	416	47

Equally direct was the relationship between the level of homogeneity of Jewish origin and respondents' interest in the indicated cultural phenomena. For this reason, the future of Jewish civic culture in the CIS looks vague, because the younger the members of the local "enlarged Jewish population," the higher the proportion of descendants of mixed marriages in the second, third, and in some places fourth generation is among them. So, they and their non-Jewish spouses constitute a growing segment of Jewish communities today.

Table 3.19. Popularity of Jewish Publications and Arts in Relation to Ethnic Origin of Respondents

How often do you do these activities?	Total	Number of Jewish grandparents			
		3-4	2	1	None
Read books by Jewish authors					
Regularly	17%	23%	18%	10%	13%
Seldom	48%	52%	50%	44%	41%
Almost never	29%	17%	27%	43%	36%
Hard to say	6%	7%	5%	3%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Read the Jewish press					
Regularly	19%	29%	18%	10%	14%
Seldom	32%	36%	35%	26%	26%
Almost never	43%	29%	42%	61%	48%
Hard to say	6%	6%	5%	3%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Attend Jewish theaters and concerts					
Regularly	13%	20%	12%	8%	9%
Seldom	47%	50%	50%	43%	41%
Almost never	35%	24%	34%	47%	39%
Hard to say	5%	5%	4%	2%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	717	509	536	350

However, there was no significant difference between age groups in the context of interest in books by Jewish writers and/or on Jewish subjects, except for the 61+ category, whose representatives reported slightly more often than the sample average that they regularly read such literature. The same category attends Jewish performances noticeably more often (twice as often as young people). However, in other age groups, respondents who constantly or sometimes attend Jewish performances or concerts make up from over 50% to 60%. We can conclude that identity and interest in Jewish texts is a two-way road. (No wonder almost 13% of our respondents reported that they gained their Jewish feeling through acquaintance with Jewish works of art.) This gives book publishers, theater workers and community leaders who view culture as a tool for strengthening the Jewish identity the right for cautious optimism.

The situation with the Jewish press looks somewhat different: only one fifth of respondents read it regularly. Almost a third of respondents do so "from time to time". But while readers of books and attendees of theater performances and concerts can be listed among permanent consumers, the real audience of periodicals are always regular readers. However, even this is not the main problem: while maintaining the same ratio as in relation to books, the difference in various age categories' interest in the Jewish media is much more pronounced. The older generation reads them twice as actively as young and young middle-aged people under 40, and 1.5 times more actively than 41-60-year-olds. So, newspapers and magazines are of interest to the older generation, while younger Jews and their family members, just like their non-Jewish peers, go to social networks and media. However, a drop in demand for Jewish periodicals is not expected in the near (and probably even medium-term) future.

Table 3.20. Popularity of Jewish Publications and Performing Arts Depending on Respondents' Gender and Age

How often do you do these activities?	Total	Gender		Age			
		Husband	Wife	16- 25	26-40	41-60	61+
Read books by Jewish authors							
Regularly	17%	18%	17%	16%	15%	16%	20%
Seldom	48%	47%	49%	48%	47%	49%	49%
Almost never	29%	31%	28%	34%	35%	30%	20%
Hard to say	6%	4%	7%	2%	4%	4%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Read the Jewish press							
Regularly	19%	21%	18%	14%	14%	18%	27%
Seldom	32%	33%	31%	32%	33%	29%	34%
Almost never	43%	43%	44%	53%	49%	48%	29%
Hard to say	6%	4%	7%	1%	3%	6%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Attend Jewish theaters and concerts							
Regularly	13%	13%	14%	9%	13%	11%	17%
Seldom	47%	45%	48%	43%	44%	49%	49%
Almost never	35%	39%	32%	47%	39%	36%	24%
Hard to say	5%	4%	6%	0%	4%	3%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	847	1,185	346	485	645	585

Chapter 4. Jewish Future of Post-Soviet Euro-Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

According to our research, the existence of a specific Jewish identity of the Russian-Jewish Ashkenazi subethnic group is an obvious fact. Can we argue that the development vector of this identification model is centripetal, i.e., aimed at gradual assimilation of its actual Jewish components among the periphery of the "enlarged" Jewish population? Or, on the contrary, will the instability, ambivalence, and the situational nature of the Jewish and quasi-Jewish identification, typical of this periphery, capture or is it already capturing its "ethnic core"?

The answer to this question depends on three circumstances: the influence of the sociocultural environment — family, friends, and the everyday circle of members of the "enlarged Jewish population"; their involvement in the spheres of influence of community organizations that strengthen Jewish practices and identity models; and personal interest in passing these models on to future generations.

Personal Space and Social Environment

On the first point, the situation is not very encouraging: the environment of the vast majority of our respondents is substantially ethnically mixed, and over the past decade and a half this trend has only intensified. Thus, the proportion of respondents whose close friends are all or almost all Jewish ranged from just over a quarter for people of fully Jewish descent and 13% for "half Jews" to 10% for "quarter Jews" and ethnic non-Jews. But the sample's largest (48%) share were those who have approximately equally divided Jews and non-Jews in their immediate environment. And this share was approximately the same in all groups of respondents ranked according to their ethnic origin.

Table 4.1. Ethnic Environment of Respondents according to Their Ethnic Origin

What is the ethnicity of your closest friends?	2004	2019	Number of Jewish grandparents			
	All	All	3-4	2	1	None
Mostly Jews	30%	16%	26%	13%	10%	11%
Mostly non-Jews	9%	21%	13%	23%	27%	22%
Both, approximately equally divided	60%	48%	52%	50%	43%	42%
Never asked about friends' ethnicity	-	12%	5%	11%	16%	20%
Hard to say	1%	4%	3%	3%	4%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	470	2,112	717	509	536	350

Another challenge to the Jewish future is the increasingly neutral attitude to the ethnic origin of one's marriage partner,[93] including, even especially, among pure Jews[94] in the post-Soviet Jewish environment. And this is the case despite the residual negative attitude to mixed marriages still prevalent in the Jewish family tradition.[95] Our 2019 study showed, however, that the picture is not so simple. On the one hand, the trend has the exact opposite vector: the proportion of opponents of mixed marriages among "pure Jews" is twice as high as the sample average, while the proportion of supporters of such marriages and those who consider marriage to a Jew a desirable but not essential requirement was inversely proportional to the homogeneity of Jewish origin.

Table 4.2. Attitude to Mixed Marriages according to Respondents' Ethnic Origin

Attitude to Jewish-Gentile mixed marriages	Total	Number of Jewish grandparents			
		3-4	2	1	None
Positive	35%	26%	33%	39%	50%
Negative	11%	21%	8%	5%	6%

[93] Alexander Sinelnikov, "Some Demographic Results of Assimilation of Jews in USSR", Herald of Jewish University in Moscow, № 1 (5) 1994, pp. 95; Rozalina Ryvkina, How Do Jews Live in Russia

[94] Gitelman, Chervyakov and Shapiro, "National Self-Awareness of Russian Jews", Diasporas. Moscow, 2000. № 4. — pp. 72-75

[95] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin and Velvl Chernin, Identity, Assimilation and Revival

Irrelevant	25%	19%	27%	33%	24%
Would prefer a homogeneous Jewish marriage, but it is nonessential	22%	27%	26%	17%	15%
Hard to say	6%	6%	6%	7%	5%
All	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	717	509	536	350

On the other hand, only half of our family respondents of fully Jewish origin are part of mono-ethnic Jewish marriages, which is less than 20% of all marriages in the sample.

Table 4.3. Ethnic Structure of Respondents' Marriages

Who is Jewish in the spouse's family?	**All**	**Number of Jewish grandparents**			
		3-4	**2**	**1**	**None**
Both parents: all/**married**	22%	38%/**47.5%**	12%/**19%**	7%/**11%**	26%/**33%**
Only father	7%	5%	7%	5%	13%
Only mother	8%	8%	7%	6%	12%
One of father's parents	3%	1%	3%	4%	7%
One of mother's parents	4%	3%	4%	5%	7%
None: all/**married**	28%	25%/**31.5%**	31%/**50%**	35%/**57%**	18%/**22.5%**
Single	26%	17%	36%	37%	15%
No answer	3%	3%	2%	2%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,107	716	506	535	350

In light of these data, it is no wonder that only a little more than 10% of respondents view mixed marriages unambiguously negatively and another 22% prefer homogeneous marriage but consider it not too crucial these days. 25% of respondents do not consider this issue important, and 35% (a relative majority) clearly favor mixed marriages.

Even among "universalist Jews", a relative majority (33%) chose the "neutral-negative" answer: "It is desirable that Jews would marry representatives of their ethnicity, but it is not essential." This answer clearly reflects the understanding of the post-Soviet context by carriers

of the most stable Jewish identity. Among them, however, the proportion (28%) of those with negative views of mixed marriages was higher than in any other category, and the smallest (18%) proportion of those approving this practice.

In other categories, proponents of mixed marriages constituted a proportionately growing relative majority, which was absolute among ethnic non-Jews. At the same time, a positive or indifferent attitude to them turned out to be inversely proportional to the hierarchy of Jewish identities. Compared to a survey of 15 years ago, the proportion of respondents with a positive or neutral attitude to mixed marriages has increased in all cultural and identification categories, with the exception of carriers of a dual ethnic identity where it remained virtually unchanged.

All this evidence seemingly pointing to the inflation of Jewish identity is contrary to the conclusion on the predominantly Jewish nature of the identity of the majority of the FSU Jewish population. However, contrary to both Jewish sentiments in the Soviet era and the traditional Halachic approach, the current attitude towards mixed marriages is not a reliable marker of assimilation. At the same time, the proportion of those who view mixed marriages neutrally among carriers of non-Jewish identities is decreasing, adding to the supporters of such unions and demonstrating the tendency of dissolvement in the "enlarged Jewish community".

Table 4.4. Attitude to Mixed Marriages in accordance with Respondents' Ethnic Identity, 2019 (with results of the 2004-2005 study in parentheses)

Attitude to Jewish-Gentile mixed marriages	Ethnic identity					
	Total	Stable Jewish		Mixed	Non-Jewish	
		Jews	Ethno-civic	Both Jewish and other	"Cosmo-politan"	Ethnic non-Jews and others
Positive	35%	18% (6)	35% (15)	41% (43)	45%	51% (33)
Negative	11%	28% (40)	12% (11)	4% (5)	2%	1% (0)
Irrelevant	25%	15% (10)	21% (20)	29% (28)	37%	37% (67)
Prefer Jewish marriage, but it is not essential	22%	33% (44)	26% (55)	21% (23)	9%	7% (0)

Hard to say	6%	6%	5%	5%	8%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	452	692	389	416	116

Nevertheless, other trends should be considered. The younger the respondents, the higher the chance that their marriage is mixed or completely non-Jewish. This is true for age cohorts of 26 years and older, but the share of young people under 25 who married non-Jews was identical to that among 61+ respondents. The closest communication circle for young and young middle-aged people (26-40 years old) is quarter-Gentiles (more than in two other age groups). But it still includes a solid Jewish component, since it consists of 14% of ethnic Jews (this proportion is only higher in the oldest age cohort) and 44% of Jews and non-Jews equally. Finally, the proportion of those who support mixed marriages in two younger cohorts (28% each) was lower than among people of advanced middle and older age (38% and 43%, respectively). In addition, among those who do not consider this a matter of principle but who still prefer marriages with representatives of their ethnicity are respondents younger than 40+.

Table 4.5. Ethnic Structure of Respondents' Personal Space/Age

Who is Jewish in your spouse's family?		**Total**	**Age**			
			16- 25	**26-40**	**41- 60**	**61+**
Both parents		22%	4%	12%	23%	39%
Only father		7%	1%	7%	10%	7%
Only mother		8%	3%	9%	8%	10%
One of father's parents		3%	2%	5%	4%	2%
One of mother's parents		4%	2%	7%	4%	4%
None	Of all respondents	28%	6%	31%	36%	29%
	Of married respondents	39%	32%	45%	42%	33%
Single		26%	78%	30%	13%	7%
No answer		3%	3%	1%	2%	4%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Ethnicity of closest friends						
Mostly Jews		16%	14%	14%	14%	21%
Mostly non-Jews		21%	25%	26%	22%	12%

Both, approximately equally divided	48%	44%	44%	47%	54%
Never asked about friends' ethnicity	12%	14%	12%	14%	9%
Hard to say	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	346	485	645	585

In one sense, these data support the position of experts who long ago noticed what they believe to be a positive tendency among people of mixed origin searching for marital partners inside rather than outside the "enlarged Jewish population". Such marriages, being "mixed" from the formal demographic point of view, do not lead to further erosion of Jewish identity, these researchers believe.[96]

These people's interaction platforms – youth clubs, community centers, educational institutions, etc. – have been in operation in the former USSR for more than 30 years. They seem to be fairly "aggressive" in switching some of the "valency" of the individual's inner circle of communication, regardless of one's original identity. This fully explains the phenomenon observed by Gitelman, Chervyakov and Shapiro 20 years ago in their study of Jews in Russia and Ukraine. They revealed a significant group of mostly young respondents whose ethnic self-identity was not inherited. These people declared themselves Jewish despite the fact that none of their parents considered themselves Jewish.[97]

The conclusion drawn from our data is this: ethnic origin is a factor affecting both self-awareness and the choice of friends and spouses, while friendly environment helps strengthen or weaken one's ethnic identity model.

[96] Eugene Satanovsky, "Reconstructing the Jewish Life in the Post-Communist World", in Vladimir Khanin (ed) Jewish Politics and Community-Building in the Former Soviet Union (Special issue of Jewish Political Studies Review, Vol. 14, Nos. 1-2, 2002)

[97] Gitelman, Chervyakov and Shapiro, "National Self-Awareness of Russian Jews", pp. 74

Table 4.6. Ethnic Structure of Respondents' Personal Space/Ethnic Identity

	Total	Ethnic identity				
		Jewish	Russian/ etc. Jew	Both Russian/etc. and Jewish	"Cosmo-politan"	Russian/another ethnic group
What is the ethnicity of your closest friends?						
Mostly Jews	16%	36%	17%	10%	5%	1%
Mostly non-Jews	21%	10%	17%	25%	28%	42%
Both, approximately equally divided	48%	50%	56%	50%	35%	27%
Don't know, never asked	12%	2%	7%	11%	26%	27%
Hard to say	4%	3%	3%	3%	7%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Who is Jewish in your spouse's family?						
Both parents	22%	32%	23%	17%	17%	12%
Only father or mother	15%	13%	13%	14%	18%	23%
One of grandparents	7%	6%	6%	9%	10%	8%
None	28%	22%	28%	32%	26%	38%
Single	26%	25%	27%	27%	28%	19%
Did not answer	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,107	452	689	387	416	116

Embracing and Transmitting Jewish Heritage

How stable is this picture though? In part, this point is clarified by the assessment of the respondents' desire to raise their children and grandchildren with a Jewish identity. This desire was manifested in direct relation to the respondents' ethnic origin (58% in "pure" Jews, 43% of "half Jews," and less than a third of "quarter Jews"). Non-Jews stood out of this pattern, mostly spouses of Jewish people. They considered it important that their children identified as Jewish more often than "quarter Jews".

Table 4.7. Significance of Transmission of Jewish Feeling in accordance with Ethnic Origin

It is important that (future) children and grandchildren feel Jewish	All	Number of Jewish grandparents			
		3-4	2	1	None
Yes	43%	58%	43%	29%	31%
No	29%	17%	27%	43%	36%
Hard to say	28%	25%	30%	28%	33%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	717	509	536	350

However, just as with our previous study, the most noticeable in this context were the differences between culture identification groups. Thus, the question of "Is it important for you that your children and grandchildren be Jewish?" almost 80% of "universalist Jews", a half of "ethno-civic Jews", a third of carriers of the "postmodern" (Jewish-Gentile) identity, 14% of the "citizens of the world," and only 5% of non-Jews involved in the community answered positively. The absence of this importance is inversely proportional to the "intensity" of Jewish identity. Therefore, only 7% of "universalist Jews" are indifferent to whether their children/grandchildren remain Jewish; while such indifference is typical for a fifth of ethno-civic Jews and, respectively, for 73% and 50% of respondents from two subgroups with non-Jewish identity.

It is also important to understand motivations of respondents who found it difficult to answer this seemingly simple question. We believe that the relatively low proportion of those who choose this option among "universalist Jews" indicates significant ethnic ex-patriotism in their self-awareness. Representatives of two "non-Jewish" categories, where a third of "cosmopolitans" and more than a fifth of "ethnic non-Jews" found it difficult to answer this question, showed a contradictory desire to preserve their non-Jewish identity, while being part of the Jewish community. Carriers of the "ethno-civic" and dual (Jewish and "other") identities, whose share of those who found it difficult to answer this question was also about a third, were guided by different considerations: for the latter from among two different ethnic groups, this reaction seems natural, while "ethno-civic" ("Russian", "Ukrainian",

etc.) Jews face the dilemma of full integration into the local post-Soviet nations while maintaining their own ethnocultural identity.

Table 4.8. Importance of (Future) Children and Grandchildren Being Jewish

Important	Year of study	Total	Ethnic identity				
			Jewish	Russian/ etc. Jew	Both Russian/etc. and Jewish	Russian/ another ethnic group	"Cosmo-politan"
Yes	2019	43%	76%	50%	34%	5%	14%
	2004-05	59%	82%	58%	29%	0	
No	2019	29%	7%	19%	35%	73%	50%
	2004-06	12%	2%	11%	26%	50	-
Hard to say	2019	28%	17%	30%	31%	22%	36%
	2004-05	30%	16%	3 2%	45%	50	-
Total	%%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	N	2,112	452	692	389	116	416

Status and Role of Jewish Education

The data we collected confirm conclusions of other publications that with a rising share of descendants of mixed marriages, family is no longer a guarantee of stability in the assimilation of Jewish identity in the Russian-speaking Jewish communities of the diaspora, although it remains an important factor in it. And its function as a channel for transmitting Jewish ethnocultural practices decreases.

An alternative platform for it are Jewish educational structures that Jewish revival in the former USSR started with. Our past studies observed the dependence of respondents' ethnic identity on the degree of their involvement in Jewish educational structures.[98] The importance of this resource for the future of local Jewish communities is obvious. At first glance, there is a very well-developed system of Jewish education in the post-Soviet space – from kindergartens to universities. This system developed in the first decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union and reached its maximum at the beginning of the new century.

[98] Khanin, Pisarevskaya and Epstein, Jewish Youth, pp. 46-47

Signs of the system crisis emerged at the beginning of this decade with the cessation of mass aliyah to Israel and the inflation of the "transitional school" idea to prepare students not so much for life in the host country as for repatriation and continuing education in Hebrew. It was also caused by the gap between the increasing needs of CIS Jewish schools and financial capacities of mainly foreign sponsors. Finally, an important factor was the drop in the number of students in most formal Jewish educational structures.[99]

For instance, there were 87 schools in the most wide-spread post-Soviet Jewish school network of Or Avner, subordinate to the Chabad movement in 2003.[100] In subsequent years, negative demographic trends (reduction in absolute numbers and the aging of Jewish population in post-Soviet states) as well as Chabad's commitment to defining Jews strictly by Halacha, led to a reduction in enrollment and the total number of the network's schools. (When local rabbis and Or Avner school principals showed flexibility in this matter, they were able not only to keep their schools open, but also to give the whole "enlarged Jewish population" access to Jewish education.)

Nevertheless, despite the reduction in Jewish educational institutions in the post-Soviet space, Jewish day schools operate in almost every city of the CIS with significant Jewish population. Based on information from the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia[101] and our field observations, there are 13 primary and secondary schools of the Or Avner network and five schools of the ORT system in the Russian Federation today. In addition, 13 Jewish schools or Jewish classes in Russian schools that are not part of these networks operate in eight cities of Russia. The pre-school and informal system of Jewish education in the Russian Federation includes Jewish kindergartens or Jewish groups in Russian kindergartens and Jewish Sunday schools in dozens of cities. Further, the school subject Fundamentals of Jewish Culture has been officially approved by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and is currently taught to Jewish students of Russian schools at their parents' choice.

[99] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, "Identity Paradoxes: Sociocultural Prospects of Development of Jewish Education System in FSU Countries", Jews in Post-Soviet Countries: Identity and Education (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Israel and the Open University of Israel, 2008), pp. 57-82

[100] S[ofia] Fuxon, "There are More Jewish Schools and Kindergartens", Lechaim, 2003, N 11. https://lechaim.ru/ARHIV/139/11.htm (Russian)

[101] https://feor.ru/organizations/#obrazovatelnie-uchrezhdeniya

In Ukraine, which is another country with significant Jewish population, before the onset of the severe military-political crisis of 2014, Or Avner schools operated in 21 cities.[102] Since then, the situation has somewhat changed, which does not mean that Jewish education in Ukraine has become inaccessible. According to the latest data from the Vaad (Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities) of Ukraine, there are 35 Jewish day schools of various networks, 12 Jewish kindergartens, and about 50 Jewish Sunday schools operating in the country[103]. Other former Soviet republics have their own structures as well: two secular, one religious, and several Sunday schools operate in Belarus, two Jewish ORT lyceums, a state-supported Jewish kindergarten, and two Jewish Sunday schools operate in Moldova. An Or Avner school in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, teaches all subjects in Georgian. The ORT-sponsored Sholem Aleichem Jewish gymnasium in Vilnius teaches in Lithuanian, the secular Dubnov Jewish high school in Riga teaches in Russian and Latvian, a secular Jewish high school in Tallinn teaches in Russian, and a religious Jewish school in Baku teaches in Russian and Azerbaijani languages, etc.

The big picture is complemented by Jewish universities operating in Russia and Ukraine, including the Beit Chana International Humanitarian Pedagogical Institute in Dnepr that prepares teachers for Jewish schools, and the Moscow Maimonides State Classical Academy. In addition, departments of Jewish Studies in the universities of Moscow, Kiev, and St. Petersburg train highly qualified specialists in Jewish disciplines, who actively cooperate with Israeli (and less often with American) academic institutions. In active cooperation with Israeli researchers and the SEFER Center for Jewish University Teaching of Jewish Civilization that was opened in Moscow in 1994, more than six thousand people have taken part in various programs over the years.

Thus, the question of whether the Jewish educational infrastructure in CIS and Baltic countries is able to meet the educational needs of the "core" and "cloud" of Jewish communities in Euro-Asia can be answered positively. But is there a public demand for it?

[102] Data from Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine https://www.fjc.org.ua/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/1131190/jewish/-.htm

[103] Web site of the Vaad of Ukraine: http://vaadua.org/otchety

At first glance, the situation is quite good: more than 40% of our 2019 respondents have some kind of Jewish education. True, different post-Soviet countries have their own peculiarities: in Moldova, this share was twice as high, while in Kazakhstan – twice as low as the sample average. In addition, in half the cases it was non-formal education – community, synagogue or club classes in Judaism and Jewish history, another 13% of respondents obtained knowledge of Jewish disciplines as part of self-education. A mere 7% of respondents could boast of getting education in day or regular Sunday schools that follow formal curricula; 3% had experience in the academic study of Jewish studies; 4% lived and studied in Israel for some time; and 1% went to heders or yeshivas in CIS countries or abroad. It is important that almost 40% of respondents with children and grandchildren sent them to Jewish day or Sunday schools. Such involvement in the system of organized Jewish education in Ukraine and Belarus was higher in the capital cities, while in Russia on the contrary, in the provinces, and in Moldova it was evenly distributed throughout the country.

In comparison to our previous survey, the percentage of people who believe it extremely important for a Jewish person to have a good Jewish education has decreased from 41% to 28% over 15 years, and those who believe that Jewish education has become unnecessary make up almost twice as many as before (13% vs. 7%). However, 47% of respondents compared to a third of respondents in 2004-2005 believed that Jewish people should have at least a general idea of Jewish history, tradition, and culture. Another 11% found it difficult to answer this question, which does not allow us to automatically cross them and their children and grandchildren out as potential clients of Jewish educational institutions. Jewish education was almost the only point of our study where respondents aged 61+ appeared the least enthusiastic. It is all the more surprising, given that this age group has the highest percentage of "100% Jews", among them more supporters of good Jewish education than among "half Jews" and "quarter Jews". Nevertheless, respondents of the older generation believe 1.5 times less often than representatives of younger age cohorts that it is important for every Jewish person to have a good Jewish education. The reason, apparently, lies in the presence or absence of personal experience of involvement with this system.

This assumption was fully confirmed during our survey: only 1% of respondents aged 61+ and 2% of the 41-60-year-olds had gone to a Jewish day or regular Sunday school (17%-18% attended community, synagogue or club classes in Judaism and Jewish history). Meanwhile, there were 10% of such respondents in the early middle age 26-40-year-old cohort, and as many as 25% among the 16-25-year-old youth.

Table 4.9. Presence and Assessment of Importance of Jewish Education in accordance with Respondents' Age

		Age			
	Total	**16-25**	**26-40**	**41-60**	**61+**
Opinion on the importance of Jewish education					
Such education is important for every Jewish person	28%	33%	33%	30%	19%
A general understanding of history and culture is enough	47%	45%	47%	45%	53%
There is no need for such education	13%	15%	13%	14%	11%
Hard to say	11%	7%	7%	11%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Availability and ways of obtaining Jewish education					
Studied/studying at a Jewish day school	7%	25%	10%	2%	1%
Attended/attending Judaism and Jewish history classes in community centers	20%	25%	23%	17%	18%
Studied/studying in an academic Jewish studies program at a university	3%	2%	4%	3%	1%
Lived and studied in Israel	4%	6%	4%	4%	2%
Studied/studying at a heder and/or yeshiva	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Got/getting self-education	13%	10%	14%	15%	11%
No such education	57%	41%	52%	61%	65%
Other	4%	4%	1%	4%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	346	485	645	585

Only 14% of these young people in our 2019 sample were of fully Jewish origin, while one third were "half Jews", more than 40% were

"quarter Jews," and another 12% had distant Jewish roots or were spouses of Jewish people and their descendants. Some of them might have attended Jewish school, especially Sunday Jewish school, "going along for the ride" with their Jewish friends, but family plays the main role in this context. Even more confusing is the fact that both parents of most of these young people are partly or fully non-Jewish in origin.

This paradox has an explanation. The proportion of respondents without Jewish roots (i.e., spouses of Jews and people of mixed origin) who consider good Jewish education to be important was even higher than the percentage of proponents of this view among pure Jews — 34% and 32%, respectively. About 70% of this "non-Jewish" subgroup had children and grandchildren, a third of whom attended Jewish day or Sunday schools (compared with 20% of the children and grandchildren of "quarter Jews", a third of children and grandchildren of "half Jews," and 50% of children and grandchildren of "100%" Jews). Except for this unique fact, which casts doubt on the irreversibility of the assimilation of the FSU Jews, respondents' belief in the importance of Jewish education was proportional to the level of homogeneity of their Jewish origin.

Table 4.10. Presence and Assessment of Importance of Jewish Education in accordance with Respondents' Ethnic Origin

		Number of Jewish grandparents			
	All	**3-4**	**2**	**1**	**None**
How important is Jewish education for Jewish people?					
Such education is important for every Jewish person	**28%**	32%	26%	22%	34%
A general understanding of history and culture is enough	**47%**	48%	53%	48%	39%
There is no need for such education	**13%**	11%	13%	18%	12%
Hard to say	**11%**	10%	8%	13%	15%
Total	**100%**	100%	100%	100%	100%
Do you have a Jewish education?					
Studied/studying at a Jewish day school	**7%**	6%	10%	8%	5%
Attended/attending Judaism and Jewish history classes in community centers	**20%**	26%	21%	13%	17%

Studied/studying in an academic Jewish studies program at a university	**3%**	3%	3%	3%	3%
Lived and studied in Israel	**4%**	4%	4%	3%	3%
Studied/studying at a heder and/or yeshiva	**1%**	1%	1%	1%	0%
Got/getting self-education	**13%**	15%	14%	10%	10%
No Jewish education	**57%**	49%	53%	66%	62%
Another answer	**4%**	3%	3%	2%	6%
Total	**100%**	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	717	509	536	350

In this case, the main factor in respondents' choice remains their ethnocultural identification. The overwhelming part among the carriers of universal Jewish identity today and 15 years ago spoke in favor of compulsory national education for the Jews. This choice might have been dictated by this group's national cultural priorities, which is why, as our past research showed, it was ready to give a Jewish school a chance, despite it often losing in competition with high-quality non-Jewish educational institutions.[104] On the other hand, the idea of obtaining a general idea of Jewish history and culture in 2004-2005 and in 2019 was most popular among carriers of intermediate identity models – "ethno-civic Jews" and "postmodernists."

The same opinion is shared by the relative majority in the "cosmopolitan" (47%) and ethnic non-Jewish (43%) subgroups. Here, the percentage of those convinced there is no need for a Jewish education in general is higher (22% and 34%, respectively). The situation changed from 2004-2005, when representatives of the "non-Jewish" component of the "Jewish communities" were the only ones who did not choose the answer "There is no need for Jewish education", but half of them found it difficult to define their attitude to this subject. Therefore, recognition of the importance of some kind of Jewish education by more than half of "ethnic non-Jews" today can be considered a positive development. In other words, even if they don't need a Jewish school as such, either as a means of national identification or to meet their cultural needs, these groups understand that Jewish education is an immanent part of Jewish community activities, i.e., the environment these people are striving to belong to for a variety of reasons.

[104] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, "Identity Paradoxes"

Table 4.11. Opinions of Respondents of 2004-2005 and 2019 Surveys on Need for Jewish Education in accordance with Their Identification and Cultural Affiliation

Jewish education for Jews:	Year of survey	Total	Identity				
			Jewish	Russian/ etc. Jew	Both Russian/ etc. and Jewish	Russian/ another ethnic group	"Cosmo-politan"
Important for everyone	2019	**28%**	**52%**	**26%**	**22%**	**11%**	**18%**
	2004-2005	41.2%	60.8%	35.8%	25%	16.7%	-
General idea is enough	2019	**47%**	**35%**	**52%**	**57%**	**43%**	**47%**
	2004-2005	33.9%	22.5%	39.5%	38.3%	33%	-
No need	2019	**13%**	**4%**	**10%**	**14%**	**34%**	**22%**
	2004-2005	7.0%	2.9%	9.9%	6.7%	-	-
Hard to answer	2019	**11%**	**9%**	**12%**	**7%**	**12%**	**14%**
	2004-2005	17.9%	13.7%	14.8%	30%	50%	-
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

So, Jewish education is not a panacea for every problem of the "enlarged Jewish population", but it is quite capable of closing the gaps in the mechanism of structuring and transmitting Jewish identity.

Community Resources

Other aspects of Jewish community activism play a significant role as well. From a quarter to almost a third of respondents who took part in our study in Belarus, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan noted that their "Jewish feeling" came to them at Jewish organizations' events as well as due to their interest in Jewish history, traditions, and culture. Both parameters took 2nd and 3rd place in the hierarchy of Jewish identity factors after the "family tradition and atmosphere", and this picture is typical for almost all regions of the former USSR.

Table 4.12. Circumstances of Acquiring a Jewish feeling dependinEg on Respondents' Age

Circumstances of getting a Jewish feeling	Kazakhstan	European part of the former USSR				
		Total	Age			
			16-25	26-40	41-60	61+
In the family (traditions and atmosphere)	48%	50%	45%	43%	49%	61%
Thanks to my environment of friends	15%	24%	28%	23%	20%	28%
At a Jewish school	5%	7%	20%	9%	4%	1%
At Jewish community events	23%	26%	27%	27%	18%	33%
In the synagogue, through acquaintance with Judaism and religious practices	7%	13%	12%	12%	12%	13%
Due to my interest in Jewish history, traditions, and culture	25%	27%	25%	25%	25%	30%

Moreover, this factor manifested itself more prominently in provincial rather than metropolitan cities and large economic centers, which can be viewed as a result of the first decade of Jewish community building in the former USSR. Then, the share of the Jewish (in the broad sense) population in community activities was 10-20% in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk (now Dnepr), and Odessa, and 30% to 40% in middle and small Jewish centers.[105] Today, according to our research, this difference is less pronounced.

The significance of the community factor is obvious: in our study and other studies we are aware of, the level of Jewish identity was directly proportional to involvement in Jewish community activities (and vice versa). For instance, among the carriers of a stable (universalist or ethno-civic) Jewish identity, the share of participants in Jewish structures' activities was 85% and 75% (more than a half and about 40% of which on a regular basis); among carriers of a mixed ethnic identity, about 60% from time to time and about a third regularly; in the "cosmopolitan" cultural and identification group, 26% and 17%, re-

[105] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, "Institutionalization of the Post-Communist Jewish Movement: Organizational Structures, Ruling Elites and Political Conflicts", Jewish Political Studies Review, Vol. 14, Nos. 1-2 (spring 2002), pp. 18-20.

spectively; and in the non-Jewish ethnic group, only 16% participate in community activities, only 3% of which a regular basis. (The proportion of ethnic non-Jews who resolutely do not want to have anything to do with community events was 42% – over five times more than the sample average.)

Nevertheless, these three groups are not lost to Jewish activism: from a quarter to a third in each of them reported that although they do not participate in these activities, they have nothing against it and are ready to consider all offers. It is possible then that it is only a matter of a competent informational campaign, especially since 12% of "cosmopolitans" and 16% of "ethnic non-Jews" are sure there are no community events in their cities or did not hear about the existence of a Jewish community in their town and are out of touch with the real state of affairs. (For example, 25% of this group know nothing about the local Moscow community and its events and 17% of St. Petersburg's community and events, although there are dozens of Jewish organizations in these cities that annually hold hundreds of cultural, educational, social, charitable, and other public events.)

Table 4.13. Participation in Jewish Community Activities in accordance with Respondents' Identification and Cultural Affiliation

Participation in activities of Jewish community in their city	Total	Ethnic identity				
		Jewish	Russian/ etc. Jew	Both Russian/etc. and Jewish	Russian/ another ethnic group	"Cosmopolitan"
Regularly	**33%**	53%	38%	27%	3%	17%
From time to time	**31%**	32%	36%	32%	13%	26%
No, but if invited ready to try	**21%**	10%	18%	24%	26%	32%
I do not participate and do not intend to	**8%**	1%	5%	9%	42%	12%
No such events in our city	**2%**	1%	1%	3%	6%	4%
I know nothing about a Jewish community in my city	**4%**	1%	2%	3%	10%	8%
No answer	**1%**	2%	1%	1%	-	1%
Total	**100%**	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	452	692	389	116	416

The next resource may be some age groups. Our study showed that, compared to other socio-demographic and age cohorts, young people and people of retirement age are more active, while the "middle age – middle class" category devotes less time to community events, for obvious reasons. (The same trend occurred in one of Nosenko-Stein's surveys: among visitors of Jewish organizations, the least representative was the middle-aged group, while the proportion of young and old people, who not only frequented their events but also worked as volunteers in those organizations, was significant).[106] And logically, the most active groups (youth and pensioners) showed unconditional Jewish identity more often than other age segments, while the middle-aged showed situational Jewish identity or lack thereof.

On the other hand, it is the middle-age cohorts that have a high proportion of people who, "if offered", are ready to consider taking part in community activities. In the younger segment (26-40 years old), the proportion of those who owed their "Jewish feeling" to participation in Jewish organizations' activities were equal to the proportion of young people (16-25 years old) who gave the same answer. In other words, representatives of the coveted age category at Jewish events are often those who used to be "interested" and even activists at a younger age, but who for various reasons are not able to spend much time on them now.

Table 4.14. Participation in Jewish Community Activities according to Respondents' Age

Participation in Jewish community activities in their city	All	Age			
		16- 25	26-40	41-60	61+
Regularly	33%	32%	28%	26%	45%
Occasionally	31%	38%	33%	30%	27%
No, but if invited, ready to try	21%	18%	23%	24%	16%
Do not participate and are not going to	8%	7%	8%	12%	6%
I believe there are no such events in my city	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%
I have no idea about the Jewish community	4%	3%	3%	6%	2%
Did not answer	1%	-	0%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	2,112	346	485	645	585

[106] Elena Nosenko-Stein, Reform Judaism in Russia: Does It Have a Future? (M.: NEOLIT, 2020), p. 29

The next resource can be the "lost brothers," namely singles or spouses of non-Jews, who respectively compose 15 and 18% of our interviewees in the category people without Jewish roots, but who see themselves as a part of the "Jewish community". This rather heterogeneous subcommunity made up about 5.5% of the sample and includes different categories of respondents. We can assume that some of them are widowed spouses of Jews or their descendants, who are entitled to repatriation to Israel, and as such – to Jewish community services. Apparently, there are even more descendants of the fourth generation of mixed marriages ("great-grandchildren of Jewish people") who can move to Israel before they come of age (with the right to a step-by-step citizenship procedure) together with their parents who meet the Law of Return criteria. It is difficult to say what the real weight of this subgroup is, given that the quota of their sample in the "snowball" was not set and that almost all of them were interviewed as part of the "affiliated" respondents, whose share in the sample was no more than 35%. In part, they can be judged by the 2003-2019 repatriation to Israel where the "great-grandchildren of Jewish people" made up 5.8%, with a tendency to a further increase over the past five years.

Descendants of the fourth generation of mixed marriages, who, as observations show, demonstrate great interest in participating in Jewish programs,[107] are close to another category of (usually young) people without any Jewish roots, who for various reasons find themselves in the sphere of attraction of Jewish communities.[108] We can assume that both categories, if and when they decide to get married, will look for a spouse in the "enlarged Jewish population" or go through giyur (conversion to Judaism)

Finally, on the periphery of the organized Jewish community is a group of "crypto-Jews" – people searching for their real or imaginary Jewish roots. These individuals insist on their Jewish origin, but for various reasons cannot document it. Their number and relative weight cannot yet be statistically accounted for; but while a couple of years ago they were taken as a curiosity, today this phenomenon is discussed

[107] Materials of the round table discussion of experts of the "Jewish Society of Former USSR and Eurasia: Current Situation, Challenges and Prospects of Development, Tel Aviv University, December 22, 2019", published in Chernin and Khanin, eds. Jews of Europe and Asia 2 (2019-2020/5780)

[108] Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, Elina Bardach-Yalov, "Non-Traditional Ways of Joining Jewish Collective: the FSU Experience", in Tudor Parfitt and Netanel Fisher (Eds.) New Joiners to the Jewish People — Trends and Implications (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016)

quite seriously. Only 5% of our respondents believed this phenomenon is an "urban legend" spread by people interested in it, and 14% did not know anything about it. Meanwhile, 31% believed people with such problems are many although they never met them personally, 40% are familiar with such people, and nearly 10% said they faced this problem themselves (13% among young people under 25 and 15% among people without Jewish roots).

In conclusion, let us look at a significant group of people who at one time moved from Euro-Asia to Israel and then for various (most often personal or professional) reasons "returned" to the regions of their origin or are now living in two (or more) countries. Since the mid-2010s, this group has embraced a large number of Jewish representatives of the middle class, many of whom share their time between Israel (where their families live) and major cities of Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and the Baltic republics where they have professional and business interests.[109] The most realistic estimates of the size of this group are close to 45-50 thousand people. In our study, Israeli passport holders comprised between 5% and 7% of the sample in each of the post-Soviet countries we studied, which when extrapolated to the total number of the "enlarged" Jewish population reaches the figure of 45-47 thousand. Our current and previous studies showed that Israeli "returnees" and "reciprocal" migrants with Israeli passports are younger, more homogeneous in their Jewish origin, are part of a higher share of carriers of unconditional Jewish identification (78% vs. 57%), and celebrate Jewish holidays more actively than those who do not have Israeli citizenship. However, their participation in the events of Jewish communities, although slightly higher than average, is not as high as could have been expected. In any case, they remain a group open to suggestions.

[109] For more details about this phenomenon, see Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin, From Russia to Israel… And Back? Contemporary Transnational Russian Israeli Diaspora. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), forthcoming

Conclusion: Brief Recap

An analysis of IEAJS's comprehensive sociological survey done at the initiative of EAJC and presented in this monograph leads us to a few important conclusions:

- Jews of post-Soviet Eurasia and members of their families are not just a "statistical group", but a dynamic sociocultural community with its own specific Jewish and quasi-Jewish identity. The latter includes numerous spiritual and institutional elements of various origins, but the Jewish element remains its foundation.
- The structure-forming element of this pattern is Jewish (in the ethnic sense) self-awareness rooted in historical memory and social experience, which is the result of the continuity of the remnants of the local Jewish cultural tradition and sociopolitical pressure.
- These processes are taking place against the backdrop of the collapse, or at least transformation, of the subethnic (sometimes the term "ethnolinguistic" is used) group of Ashkenazi Jews. Under such conditions, formation of a new subethnic group of the Jewish people is actually being completed in the post-Soviet countries, Israel, and in the countries of the new Russian-Jewish diaspora. It is a group of Russian-speaking Jews, for whose culture the East European Ashkenazi legacy serves as a substrate. Censuses of population and sociological surveys of the post-Soviet Jewry show a steady decline in the percentage of Jews who speak Yiddish, traditional for East-European Ashkenazi Jews. At the same time, folklore created in this language and many other elements of traditional Ashkenazi culture also became a thing of the past.
- Meanwhile, formation of new local Jewish communities – "Russian Jews", "Ukrainian Jews", etc. that differ from classical subethnic Jewish groups (such as Georgian, Mountain, Bukhara, etc. Jews) continues in the post-Soviet space. New communities

of this kind – we suggest using the definition of "ethno-civic groups" for their description – are very close to each other in terms of cultural and linguistic appearance and differ mainly in models of civic and political loyalty. Their shaping factors are, on the one hand, inflation of the collective identity of the "Soviet Jews" community, mass aliyah and emigration to Western countries, and on the other hand, a relatively stable identification with the transnational Russian-Jewish community, which is covered by a system of relations between Russian-speaking Jews and their families in different states.

- The legacy of the Soviet era steadily preserved by the FSU Jews is the secular nature of their ethnicity – their origin, identity, national language, and other elements of ethnic culture, the first two of which are basic and unconditional, and the second two are relativistic and conditional. Fluency in one or more Jewish language(s) is desirable, but not mandatory, although they continue to play the role of an important ethnic symbol and their choice as such reflects the identification and behavioral patterns of various cultural and socio-demographic groups of the FSU "enlarged Jewish population". (For example, young people and the older generations.)
- In today's postmodern atmosphere and multicultural practice of large industrial and cultural centers, where the majority of Russian-speaking Jews are concentrated, preservation of their stable and specific identity, different from self-identification options in the Jewish communities of Israel and the West, is one of the few alternatives to their assimilation in a non-Jewish environment.
- The role of religion in the post-Soviet Jewish identity remains insignificant, and religious criteria for determining Jewishness, irrelevant in the Soviet times, are still on the periphery of the local Jewish national collective consciousness. Most of its members continue to operate within the concepts of a "100%" (or pure) Jew, "half Jew" (in relation to those who have one Jewish parent), and "quarter Jew" (with only one Jewish grandparent, no matter on which side). A new phenomenon of the post-Soviet era are people of (almost) completely non-Jewish origin – non-Jewish spouses and distant descendants of Jews, who are to different extents aware of their belonging to the Jewish commu-

nity in its broader sense.

- At the same time, a system of Jewish religious communities with synagogues, religious schools and kindergartens was renewed, or rather recreated, in the post-Soviet space. In these communities and educational institutions (with the exception of the relatively small number of unorthodox ones), Jewishness is determined solely on the basis of Halacha (for example, children whose father is the only Jew are not accepted into the Chabad schools but those whose maternal grandmother is the only Jew are accepted).
- This way, the current post-Soviet Jewish identity was formed as a result of interaction between three fundamentally different models: Soviet, Sochnut-style (a broad understanding of "Jewry" in accordance with the Israeli Law on Return criteria), and religious Orthodox. Each of them looks illogical from the other models' point of view, and without a well-thought-out policy it simply cannot but cause misunderstanding, resentment, and conflicts.
- The most important factor in the personal, cultural, and ethno-national identification of Jews of the former USSR was and remains Israel. Most of the social communication networks, connections, and migration plans of the Russian-Jewish diaspora focus on it. The State of Israel's preservation of its Jewish character is supported by the vast majority of respondents of both homogeneous Jewish and mixed origins.
- Respondents' positions on the topics covered in the study (structure of ethnic, religious, and cultural identity; factors awakening the Jewish feeling; parameters of belonging to the Jewish collective; attitude to Israel; anti-Semitism; migration plans, etc.) were a function of various, in some cases socially intersecting demographic factors. Among them were gender, age, country, and type of city of residence, ethnic origin, and economic status of respondents. But no universal pattern was revealed here: differences in answers by various categories of respondents to most of the questions on the questionnaire, when ranked in accordance with these parameters, ranged from significant to slight.
- The only structural parameter with clearly expressed and statistically significant differences in respondents' approaches was their belonging to the four groups that we identified as "Jewish

universalists", "ethnic (ethno-civic) Jews", "postmodernists," and "non-Jews", with the latter divided into carriers of a non-Jewish ethnic identity proper and "citizens of the world," who insisted on their lack of belonging to any ethnic group. It is these groups, whose ratio has changed dramatically over the past decade and a half, that we believe constitute the basic cells of the real culture-identifying structure of the "enlarged Jewish population" of the former USSR. They also have parallels in Israel and other countries of the Russian-Jewish diaspora.

- Meanwhile, the general framework of the local Jewish collective and its transnational diaspora find their tangible embodiment in Jewish community activities.
- This factor is of particular importance, given that in the Russian-speaking Jewish communities of the diaspora, the family, although remaining an important factor in the embracing of Jewish identity, decreases its functioning as a channel for transmitting Jewish ethnocultural practices, giving way to the Jewish educational system and community activism. Our current and other studies have shown that the level of Jewish identity was directly proportional to involvement in Jewish community activities (and vice versa). Compared to other socio-demographic and age cohorts, young people and people of retirement age are more active, while the "middle age – middle class" category devotes less time to such events. On the other hand, it was the middle-age cohorts that had a high proportion of people ready, "if offered," to consider taking part in community activities. Representatives of this age category are often former activists and those who showed "interest" at a younger age but who, for various reasons, are not able to devote much time to community activities now.
- The data we collected demonstrated the obvious dependence of respondents' ethnic identity on the degree of their involvement in the Jewish educational structures. The importance of this factor for the Jewish future of local communities is obvious, and the former Soviet Union countries have a well-developed and accessible system of Jewish education, even if it is currently going through some hard times. It offers different options, from kindergartens, Sunday and secondary schools to heders, yeshivas, and universities.

- Public demand for the services of this system remains moderate, and the percentage of people who believe it extremely important for a Jewish person to have a good Jewish education has significantly decreased over 15 years. However, the overall picture cannot be described as alarming: more than 40% of our 2019 respondents said they had some kind of Jewish education, and almost 40% of respondents with children and grandchildren sent them to Jewish day or Sunday schools.
- We can also see an inverse dependence between the importance of Jewish education and the age of respondents we polled. The fact that young people, among them a particularly high proportion of people of mixed origin, are more active than older people in sharing this idea, is another reason to be more cautious about the conclusion that "the process of ethnic and cultural assimilation of FSU Jews and their families has become irreversible."
- Three categories can be singled out among the undeveloped resources of Jewish community activities. First are people who have no Jewish roots or any direct Jewish relatives, but who consider themselves part of the "Jewish community". Second are "crypto-Jews" who are searching for real or imaginary Jewish roots, insisting on some Jewish origin, but who cannot confirm this with documents. And third is a large group of Russian-speaking Israelis (45-50 thousand people) living in the countries of Euro-Asia today – they are younger, ethnically homogeneous, and more ethnically motivated than most local Jews.
- The far periphery of the Jewish community contains a significant number of non-Jewish sympathizers with the Jewish people, participants in Jewish life, community events, and actions of solidarity with the Jewish state. A special policy must be formed in relation to them.
- The most conservative estimates of the number of target groups in the territory of the former USSR theoretically interested in participating in Jewish programs are about 500,000 people today, two thirds of whom are ethnic Jews and representatives of the first generation of mixed families.

Getting all these people involved in Jewish activities is not an easy challenge for regional and umbrella Jewish organizations, but practice shows that where there are challenges, there are opportunities.

Prof. Vladimir (Ze'ev) Khanin
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Jewish Identity in the Post-Soviet Countries: Parameters, Models and Challenges

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