THE IMPACT OF DENOMINATION: DIFFERENCES IN THE ISRAEL-RELATED OPINIONS OF AMERICAN RABBIS AND JEWISH COMMUNAL WORKERS

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Jewish professional communal leaders differ from the Jewish public in that they are more Jewishly knowledgeable, involved, and committed. This study reports on survey data collected in 1987 from these leaders — American rabbis and Jewish communal workers — subdivided along denominational lines. It confirms the near demise of any distinctive position of communal workers and underlines the importance of denominational or religious identity as a variable in predicting attitudes toward Israel. Analyzed areas of behavior include frequency of travel to Israel and contact with Israelis. Attitudes investigated dealt with Zionist commitment, Israeli foreign policy and political personalities, the acceptability of public criticism of Israel, and religious pluralism. Generally, rabbis' views were more ideological, pronounced, and extreme than those of communal workers, while communal workers' opinions tended to the dovish or hawkish extremes more often than the corresponding denominational segment of the Jewish public. Thus, Orthodox rabbis are more hawkish than Orthodox communal workers who are in turn more hawkish than the Orthodox public. Similarly, among Conservative and Reform, the rabbis are more dovish than the communal workers who are in turn more dovish than their public.

A substantial survey research literature has documented significant differences in attitudes toward Israel among Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and "Just Jewish" Jews (Cohen 1987, 1989). In very broad terms, the research demonstrates clear signs of what may be called a denominational gradient: on average, the Orthodox rank highest on several measures of Israel commitment; at the other extreme are the Reform and non-denominational Jews who score the lowest; and between the two poles are situated the Conservative Jews. The denominational gradient extends to areas other than pro-Israel involvement and commitment alone. Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and non-denominational Jews display a similar ordering with respect to several "hawk-dove" items, those survey questions that measure attitudes toward aspects of the Israeli-Arab conflict. On these sorts of questions, the Orthodox are clearly the most hawkish. They most often oppose compromise or negotiations with the Arabs, and most strenuously object to

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turn, often claim that the leadership is out of touch with the laity. For our purposes, both claims are testimony to the same inference: leadership and laity (or elites and publics) within denominations may well differ on a number of issues, including Israel. On a certain level, denominational leaders feel with some justice that surveys of the attitudes of the laity partially mis-state or mis-represent what they regard as the true stance of their denomination (by which they normally mean the stance of rabbis and other Jewish communal professionals).

To complete the portrait in our understanding of how the various denominations relate to Israel, then, we need to go beyond the Jewish rank-and-file. We need to examine the views of the leaders in these movements. Denominational elites differ from the Jewish public in that they are more Jewishly knowledgeable, involved and committed. In addition, leaders figure to be more knowledgeable about and committed to the particular philosophies of their denominations.

Because, on average, leaders are more committed to Jewish life than the Jewish public, they ought to be more attached to and knowledgeable about Israel. Since they are also more committed to their respective denominational communities, denominational differences over Israeli policies and American Jewry's relationship with Israel ought to be more pronounced among leaders than among the rank-and-file. In other words, Jewish leaders ought to think, feel, and behave like leaders everywhere. Generally, leaders are more informed, ideological, opinionated, internally consistent, and polarized than their constituencies. Accordingly, this study examines attitudes toward Israel among professional communal leaders, sub-divided along denominational lines. It reports on survey data collected in 1987 from American rabbis and Jewish communal workers.

Our initial reasons for undertaking the survey were not primarily to explore denominational differences. Rather, it was only after analyzing the data that we were moved to do so. We originally felt that comparing attitudes of rabbis to communal workers would be easily done. As we examined the data, it became clear to us that the attitudes of communal workers could not be discretely identified as was the case when comparing Orthodox rabbis to Conservative and Reform rabbis. We speculate that in time past this would not have been the case. We think it fair to say that communal workers a generation ago collectively held points of view sometimes at variance with rabbis because the workers were primarily secular and part of the political left. Many were assimilationist or what might better be classified as universalist in their outlook. Yet another sub-group, while highly secular, were devoted Zionists and Jewish culturalists. In any event, communal workers of a bygone era probably differed from rabbis in many cases more than they differed among themselves.

This study confirms the near demise of any distinctive and

workers, especially those in more subordinate positions). Their median age is 45; almost all (87 percent) are married; most earn between $30,000 and $60,000. Politically they are well to the liberal side of both the American and the American Jewish center. Most describe themselves as liberal (55 percent) or radical (3 percent), and hardly any (11 percent) as conservative, with the rest — about one-third (31 percent) — in the "middle of the road." Three-quarters identify as Democrats and only 4 percent as Republicans. (These proportions are far less Republican than in the wider Jewish public as reported in the 1986 National Survey of American Jews [Cohen 1987], the source used throughout this paper to characterize the American Jewish public.) Among these rabbis and communal professionals, 75 percent said they voted for Mondale in 1984 and 21 percent for Reagan (these figures are only slightly more pro-Mondale than the Jewish public).

The specific frequencies reported below should be viewed with some caution. The actual levels in the universes from which they were drawn (e.g., all Reform rabbis) may well differ. In particular, we can be sure that we reached hardly any Orthodox rabbis from the most traditional communities. Whereas we ought to be very reticent about generalizing from the specific sample frequencies to the larger populations, we feel more confident about projecting the inter-denominational relationships, that is, the patterns and differences among denominational leaders. Most of the inferences and conclusions below are broadly drawn from very clear and substantial empirical relationships in the data and are supported by our "side knowledge," the insights we have acquired during years of personal interaction with rabbis and communal workers. Thus, reasonable amounts of random error or systematic bias in our data should not invalidate the substantive conclusions we advance below.

The quick pace of developments in the Middle East over the last several years raises the question whether data collected in 1987 bear any relationship to current attitudes. Certainly, the intifada, Palestinian pronouncements, Israeli reactions, the who is a Jew controversy, and related events have had a palpable impact on the opinions of American Jews and their leaders. However, repeated surveys of the American Jewish public during the 1980s document considerable continuity and durability both in the distribution of attitudes toward Israel as well as in their denominational patterns (Cohen 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989). By extension, we contend that even if rabbis and communal professionals have, as a group, changed their level of support for Israel or their positions on war and peace issues since 1987, the direction and size of differences among the major denominations probably have remained largely unchanged.

Another crucial distinction with the Jewish public is found in some unusual patterns in the relationship of Israel travel with denomination. In terms of the three measures of Israel exposure (one-time travel, spending a year or more there, and four-time travel), the communal professionals exhibit the typical denominational gradient; the Orthodox are out in front, the Conservative respondents follow, and the Reform and non-denominational Jews are at the rear. The ordering of denominations certainly parallels that found in the Jewish public, but the gaps between them are much smaller than they are among the Jewish public.

Even more striking deviations from the usual denominational patterns are found among the rabbis. The vast majority of rabbis of all three denominations have been to Israel. With respect to having spent a year in Israel, the denominational contour definitely breaks the usual Orthodox-Conservative-Reform mold. Fully 39 percent of Conservative rabbis in the sample have spent a year in Israel as compared with just 31 percent of Reform rabbis and only 24 percent of Orthodox rabbis. These figures probably reflect the policies of the Jewish Theological Seminary (Conservative) and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Reform) that require their rabbinical students to spend a year of study in Israel. With respect to travel to Israel at least four times in one's life, the rates are highest for the Conservative rabbis (61 percent); they are lower for the Orthodox (54 percent) and Reform (49 percent).

On all three measures of Israel travel, the rabbis of all denominations exceed the communal workers. Among the rabbis, the Conservative clerics outscore their Orthodox and Reform counterparts, reversions of the usual Orthodox-Conservative-Reform rank order found in the Jewish publics.

Contact and Communication with Israelis: Reform Professionals Trail

Our questionnaire posed several questions that may be grouped under the rubric of contact and communication with Israelis. We asked whether the respondents had personal friends and family in Israel, whether they had corresponded with an Israeli in the last year, and whether they had spoken by telephone with someone in Israel during the prior twelve months. In addition, we asked them to rate their own knowledge of Hebrew, a measure of the ability of the rabbis and communal workers to communicate with Israelis.

with Israelis decline as one moves from Orthodox to Conservative to Reform; but the declines are not as severe as among the public.

Since the Orthodox public scores so high on measures of travel, contact and communication, the gap between Orthodox professionals (be they rabbis or communal workers) and the Orthodox laity in terms of familiarity with and commitment to Israel is probably rather small. That is, all the Orthodox — rabbis, communal workers, and laity — tend to have high rates of exposure to Israel by way of travel, friends, family, and ongoing communication.

However, among Conservative and Reform Jews, the comparable gaps between leadership and laity are much more substantial. Conservative and Reform rabbis and communal professionals typically have spent far more time in Israel, developed more ties with family and friends, and have a much better understanding of Hebrew (and, by implication, of other aspects of Israeli society) than have the Conservative and Reform public (even than those who normally join congregations). In other words, most rabbis, whatever their denomination, abide a deep commitment and relatively sophisticated understanding of Israel. In Orthodox congregations, these characteristics are shared by many of the congregants, but in Conservative and especially Reform congregations this is not the case. Orthodox rabbis and congregants have more of a common base of knowledge and commitment for discourse about Israel than do their counterparts in Conservative or Reform congregations.

Whereas most rabbis function in congregations, communal workers serve in a wide variety of settings where the importance of Israel is widely variant. In the fields of Jewish counseling, adoption work, gerontology and medical care the primary concern is the client, while in community centers and YM-YWHA's it is the family or the individual. The communal agenda (including concerns and focus on Israel) is thus often secondary for the workers because of their other concern for the particular clients' well-being.

Conservative Rabbis and the Orthodox are the Strongest Zionists

To most Americans, the term "Zionist" refers to someone deeply committed to Israel (Cohen 1987). To Israelis, it means someone who takes the imperative to make *aliyah* very seriously. In the Israeli sense of the term, very few American Jews qualify as true Zionists (Liebman and Cohen 1990). On recent surveys, less than a quarter of the Jewish public actually call themselves Zionists, about 16 percent agree that they can live a fuller Jewish life in Israel than the United States,

Table 3 is the extraordinarily high level of Zionist commitment among all Jewish professionals, whatever their denomination, when compared with the Jewish public at large. Even Reform communal workers (who score the lowest of all professional-denominational groups) report a strong Zionist inclination about twice as often as the Jewish rank-and-file on other surveys.

These findings have potential programmatic and policy implications to those concerned with promoting *aliyah*. The results point to what may be an untapped pool of potential immigrants. The very high rates of personal sympathy for the Zionist argument generally, and for *aliyah* specifically, among rabbis may come as no great shock to some observers, although the high rates among Conservative rabbis in particular may be seen as somewhat surprising. However, we think it fair to say that those in the *aliyah* promotion business would be very surprised to learn that about half the professionals employees of Jewish agencies have at one point in their lives given some thought to living in Israel. In times past some efforts to encourage *aliyah* from among professionals were undertaken, but hardly any Israel travel or settlement efforts are now directed specifically at this population. From these results, we have a sense that such efforts may well prove productive in terms of stimulating longer term travel and study in Israel or even immigration by Jewish communal professionals.

Orthodox Hawks, Conservative and Reform Doves

We asked several questions bearing upon Israeli foreign policy (see Table 4). A quick scan of the results yields several synthetic conclusions, the most striking of which is that Orthodox rabbis and communal professionals are extremely hawkish when compared with their non-Orthodox counterparts.

Far more than others, the Orthodox "firmly believe that God promised the entire Land of Israel — including Judea and Samaria — to the Jewish people." For this and related reasons, they are the least likely to endorse an Israeli offer of "territorial compromise in Judea and Samaria...in return for credible guarantees of peace" ("territorial compromise" are code words for the Labor party position, derivative from U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338). Among Conservative and Reform rabbis, support for territorial compromise is three to four times as frequent respectively as among Orthodox rabbis. More than others, the Orthodox are deeply suspicious of the Arabs and the Palestinians. For example, the proportion of Orthodox rabbis who agree that "Israel should not talk with the PLO even if the PLO recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism" exceeds that among Conservative

Reform clergy. On all these attitudes, Orthodox rabbis are more hawkish than the Jewish public, and even more hawkish than the normally hawkish Orthodox rank-and-file.

Whereas substantial majorities of Conservative and Reform rabbis worry that the Israeli occupation of the territories will erode Israel's Jewish, humanitarian, and democratic character, fewer than a fifth of the Orthodox rabbis feel the same way. Whereas hardly any Conservative and Reform rabbis and communal workers feel that Shimon Peres and the Labor party "have been too ready to compromise in dealing with the Jordanians and Palestinians," roughly half of their Orthodox counterparts express this criticism of the Israeli Labor party.

As should be clear from the foregoing, the Conservative and Reform rabbinate is quite dovish. In many ways, these rabbis are more dovish than the American Jewish public generally, and their own congregants specifically. On most hawk-dove items, larger portions of the public provide "not sure" or other equivocal responses than do the rabbis. Moreover, synagogue members tend to be more hawkish or less dovish than non-members of the same denomination. As a result, it is fair to conclude that many rabbis find themselves feeling more critical of hard-line Israeli policies than their congregants.

Generally, rabbis' views are more ideological, pronounced, and extreme than those of the communal workers, while the communal workers' opinions tend to the dovish or hawkish extremes more often than the corresponding denominational segment of the Jewish public. Thus, Orthodox rabbis are more hawkish than Orthodox communal workers who are in turn more hawkish than the Orthodox public. Similarly, among Conservative and Reform communities, the rabbis are more dovish than the communal workers who are in turn more dovish than the Jewish population at large.

Among the Jewish public, a considerable gap separates the moderately dovish Conservative segment from the more staunchly dovish Reform population. Among the rabbis and communal workers, this gap between Conservative and Reform is generally far smaller. Conservative rabbis and communal workers are almost as dovish as their Reform colleagues.

The tendencies outlined above emerge with great clarity in the answers to a series of questions we asked about the acceptability of several proposed resolutions to the Israeli-Arab conflict. The questionnaire presented respondents with eight resolutions ranging from transfer of the Palestinians and Israeli annexation of the territories, at one extreme, to the establishment of an Israeli-Palestinian secular state at the other. They were asked to grade the acceptability of each of these resolutions on a scale from a numerical value of one ("not at all acceptable") to five ("very acceptable"). Hardly any found the secular state acceptable (i.e., answered four or five) and therefore, the results for

Complete autonomy of the Palestinians within the administered territories.
Israel gives most of the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan, except for those areas it needs to protect itself.
Establishment of an independent Palestinian state living peacefully side-by-side with Israel after border modifications to satisfy Israeli security requirements.
Establishment of an independent Palestinian state living peacefully side-by-side with Israel within pre-1967 borders.

In contrast, the Conservative and Reform rabbinates resoundingly reject both transfer and the emergence of a Palestinian state along the old border; they also reject, but by not as great a margin, the idea of annexing the territories while permitting the Arab population to remain in place. However, about half endorse four intermediate resolutions requiring some form of territorial or functional compromise. These are: sharing power with Jordan; complete Palestinian autonomy; return of some land to Jordan; and a peaceful Palestinian state in the territories with border modifications to satisfy Israeli security requirements.

The non-Orthodox communal workers express more ambiguous answer patterns, placing them near the Conservative and Reform rabbis, but not quite as dovish. The workers clearly reject transfer and a Palestinian state without border modifications. Among the Conservative professionals, the two most favored solutions come from opposite ends of Israel's political spectrum: annexation without transfer and a Palestinian state with modified borders. The Reform professionals also seem to prefer these two solutions along with territorial compromise with Jordan. The non-denominational professionals may be the most dovish of all groups in the leadership sample; a majority accept the idea of a Palestinian state with border modification and almost half accept the proposal for Israel to return most of the territories to Jordan.

The reactions to various solutions, while revealing, cannot be interpreted too broadly. These are complicated questions, subsuming numerous assumptions, and assuming great familiarity with Israel's security predicament. For this reason, reactions to leading Israeli political personalities can provide a useful supplement to the complex questions and answers reported above.

We asked respondents whether they had a favorable or unfavorable impression of five well-known Israeli figures (Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin, Yitzhak Shamir, Ariel Sharon, and Meir Kahane). (We also asked about David Levy of the Likud, but learned that many respondents are unfamiliar with the Housing Minister who may be Israel's leading Sephardi vote-getter.) Table 6 presents those reporting a favorable impression of each of the five leaders arrayed graphically from left to right in an order corresponding to their public image on

The reactions of this professional leadership sample to Israeli leaders in many ways reflects both the higher level of familiarity with Israel and the greater hawk/dove extremism among the leaders than among the larger Jewish public. The professionals record fewer equivocal or "no impression" responses than the public (and, as noted, rabbis appear more knowledgeable and opinionated than the communal workers). Moreover, the professionals tend to more sharply differentiate among Israeli political figures than does the public. In the several surveys of the public, many American Jews prefer to report favorable impressions of all Israelis rather than to appear critical of any (Kahane, though, may be the one exception to this rule). As a result, the differences in the Jewish public's reactions to a Shamir and a Peres, though noticeable and consistent with dovish or hawkish views on other questions, are not especially large. However, among the professionals, more are both willing and able to rate Shamir and Peres quite differently. Among the generally hawkish Orthodox rabbis, for example, Shamir's positive ratings exceed those of Peres by 18 percentage points. In contrast, among the generally dovish Reform rabbis, the proportion thinking well of Peres exceeds the comparable number for Shamir by over 60 percentage points.

Two processes may be at work here. First, the rabbis have more politically extreme sentiments than their comparable denominational constituencies. Second, rabbis who are doves or hawks are likely to know more and feel more strongly about Israeli political leaders than their political counterparts in the Jewish public at large. They are more able to apply their political inclinations to assessments of Israeli political personalities.

But whatever the causes of the varying reactions to Israeli political leaders, the striking differences between the Orthodox and the others provide yet another example of denominational differences over Israel's security alternatives. The Orthodox are the only group with a sizable reservoir of sympathy for Kahane and Sharon, regarded by many as exponents of extreme right-wing foreign policies. The Orthodox are also the only group to prefer Shamir over both Peres and Rabin. The hawkish tendencies among the Orthodox and the dovish tendencies among the Conservative and Reform are more pronounced among the rabbis than among the communal professionals, but the latter are more ideologically committed and, apparently, well-informed about Israel than are typical American Jews from comparable denominational backgrounds.

ethos of the two movements. Conservative rabbis and communal workers may simply feel more sympathy for the argument that American Jews lack the moral standing to challenge the decisions of the Israeli political system. Conservative Judaism has an elective affinity for making change slowly, for consultation, and for consensus-building. In like fashion, the Reform professional and rabbinic self-image may work in the opposite direction. The Reform ethos places more emphasis on prophet-like behavior in which public moral reproach of Jewish failings is highly valued.

Given the proclivity among communal professionals to seek consensus, this proved to be an intriguing finding. There seems to be no groundswell among communal professionals to back up this opinion with action. Here the realities of job expectations, the roles the professional plays, may be different than the ideas he or she holds privately. We are aware of anecdotal evidence of communal professionals publicly supporting community stances against public criticism participating secretly in "peace"-oriented activities.

Table 7

VIEWS ON CRITICIZING ISRAEL

	Shouldn't Criticize	Too Willing	OK to Speak
Orth rabbi	73	41	42
Cons rabbi	39	60	62
Reform rabbi	15	82	82
Orth profl	52	41	42
Cons profl	31	48	63
Reform profl	16	71	74
Just J profl	13	68	70

KEY:

American Jews should not publicly criticize the government of Israel's policies.

Most American Jewish organizations have been too willing to automatically support the policies of whatever Israeli party happens to be in power.

Jews who are severely critical of Israel should nevertheless be allowed to speak in synagogues and Jewish community centers.

of the following activities do you think would be appropriate ways to express their views?

Write articles or letters for the Israeli press.
Raise money for Israeli movements or political parties.
Write articles or letters for the Anglo-Jewish press.
Write articles or letters for the American press.

The objections to criticism in all four ways generally followed familiar denominational lines among the rabbis, with somewhat inconsistent and more muted patterns among the communal professionals. The Orthodox were most ready to declare each channel of criticism inappropriate, the Reform were the least ready, and the Conservative voiced an intermediate level of objection. This denominational pattern characterizes the rabbis' responses to the questions on writing in all three presses (Israeli, Anglo-Jewish, and American). The pattern appears most vividly with respect to writing articles or letters for the American press. Here objections mount with denominational traditionalism, from 32 percent among Reform rabbis, to 53 percent among the Conservative, and 75 percent among Orthodox rabbis.

Conservative and Reform communal workers object to criticizing Israel in the Israeli and Anglo-Jewish press no less often than their Orthodox colleagues and somewhat more often than their rabbinic counterparts in the parallel denomination. These findings may further reflect the ambivalence which the communal worker often suffers as a result of privately held beliefs and publicly defined and judged job roles. However with respect to criticism in the American press, the communal workers exhibit the familiar denominational pattern.

Orthodox vs. Conservative vs. Reform on Religious Pluralism

The "Who is a Jew" controversy in Israel erupted about a year after our survey was fielded. Nevertheless, the divisions between the Orthodox, on the one hand, and the two other major denominations, on the other, that emerged so clearly in 1988, were apparent in the attitudes expressed on the questionnaire in 1987.

We asked three questions relating to the issue of religious pluralism. One item asked whether respondents agree that "Israel should grant Conservative and Reform rabbis the same status as Orthodox rabbis." Another asked if they concurred with the view that "Orthodox rabbis who refuse to officially cooperate with Conservative and Reform rabbis are right to do so." The third described the different denominational definitions of who is a Jew and asked whether respondents "accept the Reform rabbis' definition of a Jew."

percent of the Conservative rabbinate, and just 7 percent of the Reform rabbis in this sample. The figures among the communal workers follow the same rank order, albeit with a closer correspondence between rabbis and communal workers who are Orthodox and Reform than for those who are Conservative. Many Conservative communal workers part company with their rabbis on the issue of patrilineality. Just 44 percent of them reject patrilineality, far more than the Reform professionals (5 percent), far less than the Orthodox (90 percent), but also far less than the Conservative rabbis (83 percent, as noted above).

The weak correspondence of Conservative rabbis' and communal workers' positions on patrilineality probably derives from the distinctive place of *halakhah* in Conservative ideology. The Jewish Theological Seminary and probably most Conservative rabbis regard a developing *halakhah* as a major tenet of the Conservative Jewish understanding of Judaism (see *Emet v'Emunah*, the "official" statement on the movement's ideology). However, considerable anecdotal evidence suggests that few Conservative Jews outside the immediate orbit of the Seminary, the Camp Ramah system, and the rabbis place as much emphasis on the centrality of *halakhah* as the movement's official spokesmen would like to see. In fact, the Conservative laity largely sides with the Reform position on questions of patrilineality (Cohen 1988b). In contrast, Orthodoxy and Reform experience far, far fewer discrepancies between rabbis and laity over the position of *halakhah*. It is fair to say that most Orthodox lay people agree with their rabbis that *halakhah* (Jewish law) is central to Judaism (Heilman and Cohen 1989); at the other extreme, almost all Reform Jews would agree with their rabbis that ancient Jewish law is a useful resource at best, and an anachronism at worst (e.g., Furman 1987; Meyer 1989).

The question of patrilineality is a quintessential halakhic question. Rejection of the Reform position signifies acceptance of traditional Jewish law; conversely, acceptance of the Reform position points to rejection of *halakhah*. The correspondence on this question between rabbis and communal workers who are Orthodox or who are Reform and the discrepancy between the two Conservative groups are but emblematic of the congruence or discrepancy in the three movements between rabbis and laity on the centrality of *halakhah*.

Whereas on most Israel-related issues the key cleavage divides the Orthodox from the Conservative and Reform, it is clear that on religious pluralism issues the lines of division are more complex. Conservative rabbis in particular are torn in different directions, sometimes pulled in one direction by their congregants and in another by their commitment to Jewish law. On some issues they line up with their Reform colleagues, but on those directly related to patrilineality (and presumably other personal status questions) they side with the

Jewish motivations draw young Jews to the field of communal service and cause them to remain in the field, divisions prompted by Judaic ideological differences will emerge among communal professionals. They may not be as pronounced as they are in the rabbinate, but they will be operative and visible nonetheless.

Note

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public criticism of Israel as well. The Reform and non-denominational are the most dovish on these issues; and Conservative Jews, although located somewhere between the hawkish Orthodox and dovish Reform Jews, usually lie somewhat closer to the Reform-dovish end of the spectrum than to the Orthodox-hawkish pole.

Survey data that are limited to the American Jewish rank-and-file can by their very nature present only a partial picture of how the major denominational movements view Israel. The key problem with these data is that respondents qualify as Orthodox, Conservative or Reform simply by checking off a single box on the questionnaire. They need claim no synagogue affiliation, personal commitment, or familiarity with the denominations' understanding of Judaism. As a result, many so-called members of the denominations do not even belong to a synagogue of that denomination, or any other, for that matter.

Related to this phenomenon is the further complication that Jewish involvement varies directly with denominational traditionalism. One need not be an exponent of Orthodoxy or a derider of Reform to state a very commonplace observation of American Jewish life; to wit, those in the larger Jewish public who identify with more traditional denominations (e.g., Orthodoxy rather than Reform) tend to be more Jewishly involved. On most conventional measures of Jewish involvement, Orthodox Jews typically outscore Conservative Jews, and proportionally more Conservative Jews rank higher than Reform Jews. One simple statistic illustrates the point. Synagogue membership is valued by all three major movements and serves as a denominationally neutral standard of involvement. On all Jewish population studies of any sizable community, synagogue membership is most frequent among the Orthodox, less frequent among Conservative Jews, and least frequent among the Reform (see, for example, Axelrod et al 1967; Fowler 1977; Yancey and Goldstein 1984; Ritterband and Cohen 1984; Wertheimer 1989). This familiar pattern means that more of those who call themselves Reform bear only a tenuous relationship with their ostensible denomination than do those who call themselves Conservative and those who identify as Orthodox. One consequence of this state of affairs is to confound the interpretation of data showing low levels of Israel involvement among Reform Jews (Cohen 1988c). If fewer Reform Jews are Jewishly involved, then the Reform Jews' lack of involvement with Israel (or their dovishness) may partially reflect the weakness of their average Jewish commitment rather than the influence of Reform Judaism per se. (A similar, though less strongly stated argument can be made for rank-and-file Conservative Jews.)

Leaders of all three major denominational movements have repeatedly expressed the view (often privately) that their laity is out of step with the leadership, failing to measure up to the higher standards of Jewish commitment demanded by the leaders. Lay members, in

identifiable position of communal workers as communal workers. It underlines the importance of denominational or religious identity as a very important variable in predicting attitudes toward Israel, and it confirms the high degree of identification of communal workers with the various Jewish religious strands, or denominations as we call them.

In our early analyses, we explored the magnitude of distinctions among Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis and communal workers. Generally, these differences were more substantial and more frequent than were those associated with other axes of social differentiation (e.g., gender, income, type of graduate training, seniority, occupational title and type of agency). As a result, for us, the denominational distinctions were the most intriguing and most engaging.

The Data

In the summer of 1987, we mailed surveys to 1,500 rabbis and 500 Jewish communal professionals about a variety of issues, many of which pertained to Israel and how American Jews ought to relate to Israel. The surveys were mailed by the A.B. Data Corporation of Milwaukee to samples drawn from lists of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis and members of the Conference of Jewish Communal Service. We received 297 usable questionnaires from rabbis; of these 85 identified as Orthodox, 102 as Conservative, and 110 as Reform. We received 327 usable questionnaires from the communal workers; of these 50 identified as Orthodox, 112 as Conservative, 118 as Reform, and 47 as Just Jewish. The total sample size is 624.

The vast majority of rabbis in our sample serve in congregational pulpits, and of these, the vast majority lead synagogues affiliated with the denomination with which they identify. The communal workers hold positions of varying degrees of seniority including line workers, supervisors, associate directors, and executive directors as well as some Jewish school principals and Jewish education bureau personnel. They work for a wide variety of agencies, including federations, Jewish community centers, community relations agencies, and Jewish family services.

The respondents report that they have been working in their current professions for a median of fourteen years, in their current agency for a median of eight years, and in their current positions for a median of six years. Almost all hold graduate degrees. Most communal workers hold MSW or other advanced human service degrees, and of these, over a third graduated from a graduate program under specifically Jewish auspices.

Almost four-fifths (79 percent) are men (the proportion of males is much higher among the rabbis and much lower among the communal

Travel to Israel

The surveys of the American Jewish public report that about one-third (or more) of American Jews have been to Israel and about 12-13 percent have been there twice. Denomination is strongly associated with these rates. Almost 60 percent of Orthodox Jews have been to Israel as compared with about 38 percent of Conservative Jews and just a quarter of Reform and non-denominational Jews. The proportions who have traveled to Israel two or more times is even more sharply linked to denomination. Here, the gap between Orthodox (34 percent) and Conservative (13 percent) rates and between Conservative and Reform (7 percent) rates is (proportionally) larger than that for one-time travel.

In contrast, the travel-to-Israel patterns of rabbis and communal workers depart dramatically from those of the larger Jewish public. The most striking difference is that more professional leaders have been to Israel more often and for longer periods of time. Roughly two-thirds of the communal workers and five-sixths of the rabbis have been to Israel, proportions far higher than among the American Jewish rank-and-file. The differences with the public are even more striking for some other measures of exposure to Israel. In comparison with very few American Jews, from 11 to 18 percent of the communal workers and about a third of the rabbis have spent a year in Israel at some point in their lives. Moreover, most of the rabbis and about a third of the communal workers have traveled to Israel on at least four occasions (in comparison with our estimate of no more than 6 percent of the American Jewish public). Clearly, professional Jewish leaders have had a greater opportunity to come to learn about and develop a commitment to Israeli society than have all but a few American Jews.

Table 1

TRAVEL TO ISRAEL

	Been to Israel	Spent Year+	4+ Times in Israel
Orth rabbi	81	24	54
Cons rabbi	89	39	61
Reform rabbi	82	31	49
Orth profl	76	18	40
Cons profl	66	13	37
Reform profl	59	11	23
Just J profl	57	16	28

Table 2

CONTACT WITH ISRAELIS

	Friends in Israel	Family in Israel	Wrote Israeli	Called Israel	Nearly Fluent
Orth rabbi	97	81	92	67	86
Cons rabbi	95	73	85	58	86
Reform rabbi	83	52	68	39	51
Orth profl	88	66	90	66	50
Cons profl	77	60	71	54	27
Reform profl	60	40	48	26	12
Just J profl	70	59	64	47	21

KEY:
Do you have any personal friends in Israel?
Do you have any family in Israel?
Within the last 12 months, have you corresponded with anyone you know in Israel?
Within the last 12 months, have you spoken by telephone with someone living in Israel?
How well do you understand spoken Hebrew?

Needless to say, the rates on all these measures vastly exceed those for the Jewish public at large. For example, about 90 percent of the rabbis and about two-thirds of the communal workers have personal friends in Israel (as compared with just 30 percent of the American Jewish public); most of the rabbis and about half the communal workers have spoken by telephone with someone in Israel in the prior twelve months (versus just 10 percent in the public). The self-ratings of Hebrew fluency are particularly indicative of rabbis' and communal workers' familiarity with Israel. The Orthodox and Conservative rabbis claim the highest rates of fluency or near fluency (86 percent for both groups); they are followed by Reform rabbis and Orthodox communal workers (about 50 percent), who are, in turn, followed by all the non-Orthodox workers with rates of 12-27 percent. These rates compare with a minuscule 4 percent in the American Jewish rank-and-file.

Among the public, for the items in Table 2, the Orthodox dramatically outscore Conservative Jews, and the latter somewhat exceed Reform and non-denominational Jews. Among the professional leaders (rabbis or not), denominational variations follow the usual pattern, but they are not as powerful as among the public. That is, among rabbis and among communal workers, most measures of contact and communication

and about the same number admit to ever having given serious consideration to settling in Israel (Cohen 1987, 1989).

Among rabbis and communal workers, the proportions evincing Zionist commitment by calling oneself a Zionist, by seeing a fuller Jewish life in Israel, or by having considered *aliyah* are far higher (see Table 3). Within denominations, rabbis score higher than communal workers. Consistent with the standard denominational gradient, the differences between the Orthodox and Reform are rather striking, while Conservative rabbis and professionals score at levels intermediate between their respective Orthodox and Reform colleagues.

The figures for having considered living in Israel illustrate these points. Among rabbis, they range from 87 percent for the Orthodox, to 72 percent among Conservative rabbis, and just 45 percent for the Reform rabbinate. Illustrative of the gap between rabbis and communal workers from the same denomination is the difference between Conservative rabbis (72 percent) and Conservative communal workers (53 percent). Generalizing from the items in the table, we can say that the three groups with the highest rates of Israeli-style Zionist commitment are Orthodox rabbis, Orthodox communal workers, and Conservative rabbis.

Table 3

ZIONIST COMMITMENT

	Zionist	Fuller Jewish Life	Considered Aliyah
Orth rabbi	81	69	87
Cons rabbi	92	49	72
Reform rabbi	84	18	45
Orth profl	77	58	72
Cons profl	79	34	53
Reform profl	61	14	36
Just J profl	60	26	46

KEY:
Do you consider yourself a Zionist?
I feel I can live a fuller Jewish life in Israel than in the U.S.
Have you ever seriously considered living in Israel?

But even though these three are the most Zionist groups in the leadership sample, the most striking feature of the result reported in

Table 4

HAWK-DOVE VIEWS

	God Promised	Terr'l Comprom	No PLO Talks	Can't Trust	Pales. Homeland	Erode Democ	Erode Jewish	Peres Too Soft
Orth rabbi	91	20	45	66	8	18	18	55
Cons rabbi	37	69	11	30	46	67	55	8
Reform rabbi	7	80	17	23	50	75	65	2
Orth profl	76	24	32	60	15	27	23	46
Cons profl	26	55	18	34	32	50	41	11
Reform profl	12	56	13	24	45	49	41	4
Just J profl	9	62	11	32	57	57	48	4

KEY:

I firmly believe that God promised the entire Land of Israel — including Judea and Samaria — to the Jewish people.

Israel should offer the Arabs territorial compromise in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) in return for credible guarantees of peace.

Israel should not talk with the PLO even if the PLO recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism.

You can never trust the Arabs to make a real peace with Israel.

Palestinians have a right to a homeland on the West Bank and Gaza, so long as it does not threaten Israel.

Continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank will erode Israel's democratic character.

Continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank will erode Israel's Jewish character.

Shimon Peres and his Labor party have been too ready to compromise in dealing with the Jordanians and Palestinians.

rabbis by more than four to one. Two-thirds of the Orthodox rabbis believe that "You can never trust the Arabs to make a real peace with Israel," more than twice as many as among Conservative and Reform rabbis. Hardly any (8 percent) of the Orthodox rabbis support the idea that Palestinians have a right to a homeland as long as it does not threaten Israel, as compared with about half the Conservative and

this question are excluded from Table 5; but the seven other resolutions garnered some support.

Table 5 presents the proportions who found each solution acceptable, as indicated by assigning a score of four or five. Those who were not sure (more frequent among the communal workers than the rabbis), as well as those responding with answers of one, two and three, are classified as rejecting the proposed resolution.

As Table 5 makes clear, the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox have very different ideas as to how Israel can achieve peace and security. Among the Orthodox, the two most widely accepted ideas entail Israeli annexation of Judea, Samaria and Gaza. One variation includes the transfer of Palestinian population to Arab states; the other (slightly more acceptable to the Orthodox) allows the local Arabs to continue living in the territories. No more than a fifth of the Orthodox find acceptable any of the other solutions, all of which entail some degree of Arab governance in the territories, ranging from Jordanian-Israeli power-sharing to a Palestinian state without border modifications in the pre-1967 boundary.

Table 5

ACCEPTABILITY OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE CONFLICT

Acceptable:	Transfer Arabs	Annex Terr.	Shared Rule	Autonomy for Palest	Terr'l Comprom	State–New Border	State–'67 Border
Orth rabbi	49	56	18	20	13	16	2
Cons rabbi	11	30	50	46	50	53	11
Reform rabbi	9	21	48	47	53	61	16
Orth profl	42	70	9	13	16	22	10
Cons profl	24	46	40	33	35	47	12
Reform profl	14	48	39	28	44	52	11
Just J profl	9	23	27	30	46	57	21

KEY:
How acceptable to you are each of the following conditions for peaceful relations between the Palestinians and the Israelis?

Israel annexes Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip and transfers the Palestinian population to other Arab states.

Israel annexes Judea, Samaria and Gaza but lets the local Arabs continue living there.

Israel and Jordan share ruling the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel's political spectrum. (Those respondents classified as lacking a favorable impression included those who had an unfavorable impression, had no impression, or were unsure either of the personality or their impression. Accordingly, communal workers — who, as we have seen, have had less exposure to Israel — report lower levels of favorable impressions than their denominational counterparts largely because more workers lack a clear impression of leading Israeli politicians.)

Consistent with the findings presented earlier, the major cleavage is between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox. In contrast with Conservative and Reform counterparts, Orthodox rabbis and communal workers differ in several key respects. Among the Orthodox, Yitzhak Shamir is the most popular of the five Israelis. Among the others, Shimon Peres is the most popular, with Yitzhak Rabin a close second; in all non-Orthodox groups, both Peres and Rabin are far more favorably received than Shamir.

Table 6

FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS OF SELECTED ISRAELI LEADERS

	S. Peres	Y. Rabin	Y. Shamir	A. Sharon	M. Kahane
Orth rabbi	63	70	81	53	45
Cons rabbi	95	93	54	16	2
Reform rabbi	93	83	31	6	3
Orth profl	61	56	78	38	20
Cons profl	89	87	61	23	4
Reform profl	88	82	50	16	1
Just J profl	87	72	43	11	2

The Orthodox and others also differ dramatically in their assessments of Ariel Sharon and Meir Kahane. The gaps are especially wide among the rabbis where 53 percent of the Orthodox think well of Sharon as compared with just 16 percent of the Conservative rabbis and 6 percent of their Reform colleagues. The differences are even greater for Meir Kahane. Only 3 percent of Reform rabbis and 2 percent of Conservative rabbis say they are favorably impressed with the Brooklyn-born JDL founder who has been widely seen in Israel as espousing racist and anti-democratic sentiments. In contrast, Kahane records favorable impressions among 45 percent of the Orthodox rabbis and 20 percent of the Orthodox communal workers.

Should American Jews Criticize Israel? Yes, Maybe, and No

Not only do American Jewish communal professionals disagree over Israeli foreign policies and political leaders, they also disagree in predictable ways over whether that debate should be aired in public. Opponents of public criticism of Israeli policies by American Jews believe such criticism inevitably serves to delegitimate Israel and weaken its political position in the United States, thereby threatening its support by the American government. Defenders of such criticism claim it is both a reflection of and an impetus to a serious commitment to Israel on the part of American Jews; they also claim that criticism helps maintain the credibility of Israel's advocates when they fight for American diplomatic, economic, and military support.

Usually, those who endorse hawkish Israeli foreign policies tend to oppose public criticism, while the doves tend to defend it. Accordingly, it comes as no surprise to learn that the Orthodox, especially the rabbis (who are more hawkish than the Orthodox communal workers), vigorously oppose public criticism of Israeli policies by American Jews. At the other extreme are the Reform rabbis and communal professionals who just as staunchly support such criticism.

Illustrative of these denominational differences are the responses of the rabbis to the agree-disagree question stating: "American Jews should not publicly criticize the government of Israel's policies." As many as 73 percent of the Orthodox agree as against only 15 percent of the Reform clergy. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of these findings is the ambiguous and perhaps ambivalent position of the Conservative respondents. Among both rabbis and communal professionals, the Conservative leaders' answers fall roughly halfway between those of the "sha-shtill" Orthodox and the "let-it-all-hang-out" Reform. The paradox here is that the results reported earlier portrayed the Conservative leaders as almost as dovish as the Reform, and certainly very distant from the hawkishness of the Orthodox. Nevertheless, the Conservative professionals, who are largely doves on Israel security matters, are divided (and perhaps conflicted) about whether the views they hold ought to be expressed publicly.

The implication of these findings is that some substantial number of Conservative Jews feel privately critical of Israel's hard-line policies but feel it wrong or inappropriate to express that criticism publicly. Two sorts of factors may be at work here. First, from a career point of view, it may be more dangerous for Conservative doves than for Reform critics to speak out. After all, the Conservative public is substantially more hawkish than the Reform rank-and-file. Conservative rhetorical reticence may be the better part of valor; Reform professionals' oratorical bravery may come rather cheaply. Alternatively, the Conservative-Reform differences may be traceable to differences in the

The Limits of Intervention in Israeli Affairs

The opposition to expressing criticism of Israeli policies centers principally on airing criticism in ways that strengthen the hand of Israel's enemies. Opponents of criticism usually suggest that critics try to keep their opinions internal to the Jewish community if not to Israel in particular.

One line of questions documents this sensitivity to the public nature of criticism. We asked respondents to think of "a group of prominent and active American Jews [who] thought the Israeli government was being too conciliatory in its dealings with the Arabs." In other words, the question refers to hawkish American Jewish critics of Israel whose commitment to Jewry is beyond question. For hawks answering this question, the problem is not what these hypothetical Jews would say, or who they are, but how they voiced their views. We then asked whether each of several forums was an appropriate place to express criticism of Israeli policies, even from a hawkish perspective.

The respondents almost unanimously (93 percent) agreed that speaking privately with Israeli officials constituted appropriate behavior. Two-thirds or more endorsed three other vehicles: writing in the Israeli press, writing in the Anglo-Jewish press, and raising money for Israeli political parties. In contrast, when questioned about writing for the American press, a plurality (47 percent) objected.

Table 8

VIEWS ON ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH ISRAEL

Inappropriate:	Israeli Press	$ for Parties	Anglo-Jewish	American Press
Orth rabbi	22	9	33	75
Cons rabbi	14	16	19	53
Reform rabbi	7	8	7	32
Orth profl	14	18	22	68
Cons profl	21	21	21	48
Reform profl	23	27	17	38
Just J profl	11	15	9	17

KEY:
If a group of prominent and active American Jews thought the Israeli government was being too conciliatory in its dealings with the Arabs, which

Table 9

VIEWS ON JEWISH PLURALISM ISSUES

	Equal Rights	Orthodox Right	Reject Patril
Orth rabbi	12	75	98
Cons rabbi	94	7	83
Reform rabbi	96	8	7
Orth profl	28	45	90
Cons profl	92	9	44
Reform profl	96	7	5
Just J profl	87	7	21

KEY:

Israel should grant Conservative and Reform rabbis the same status as Orthodox rabbis.

Orthodox rabbis who refuse to officially cooperate with Conservative and Reform rabbis are right to do so.

Orthodox and Conservative rabbis say that a Jew is someone with a Jewish mother or who converted. Reform rabbis say that a Jew is someone who identifies as a Jew, who had either a Jewish mother or father, or who converted. Do you accept the Reform rabbis' definition of a Jew?

On two of the questions (that regarding equal rabbinic rights in Israel and that regarding Orthodox rabbinic separatism), the Orthodox leaders (both rabbis and communal workers) divide sharply from the Conservative and Reform camps. Among rabbis, the Orthodox overwhelmingly reject equal treatment with non-Orthodox rabbis in Israel and they endorse their colleagues who refuse to cooperate with Conservative and Reform counterparts. On these two issues, Conservative and Reform rabbis almost unanimously take the predictable contrary positions. As might be expected, the Orthodox professionals tend to side with their rabbis on these questions, but their support is far softer, especially with regard to interdenominational rabbinic cooperation. In light of the interdenominational work setting in which many Orthodox communal professionals find themselves, it is not at all illogical to find that only 45 percent endorse their rabbis who refuse to cooperate across denominational lines.

On the question of patrilineality — the distinguishing feature of the Reform definition of Jewish identity — the Conservative rabbis stand with their Orthodox colleagues and against their Reform colleagues. Fully 98 percent of the Orthodox reject patrilineality, as do 83

Orthodox. This situation certainly makes for some interesting coalitions and conflicts in the years ahead.

Summary and Conclusions

Much, though not all, of the findings demonstrated cleavages between the Orthodox on one side, and the Conservative and Reform rabbis and communal workers on the other. This pattern was most pronounced with respect to attitudes toward the Israeli-Arab conflict, criticizing Israel, and matters of religious pluralism other than patrilineality. When measuring Zionist commitment, Conservative leaders stand somewhere between the Orthodox (with very high levels of commitment) and the Reform (with levels of commitment far higher than the public, but still below that of comparable Conservative and Orthodox professionals). In terms of exposure to Israel, the Conservative rabbis show surprising strength and the Orthodox rabbis surprising weakness.

Communal workers largely, but not totally, resemble their rabbinic counterparts from corresponding denominations. In particular, the rabbis seem more informed, ideological, committed, and hence, more divided as well. Nevertheless, the strong denominational divisions among communal workers (most of whom were educated in settings that tend to foster consensus-building and the papering over of heated ideological differences) are striking.

The very emergence of rather strong differences along denominational lines among the communal workers is, in one respect, not all that surprising. It may well derive directly from the Judaicization of the profession over the last two decades (Reisman 1983; Bubis 1970, 1973, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1988). In many ways, since the later 1960s, communal workers more frequently have been coming to their profession out of a sense of Jewish commitment rather than only (or primarily) out of a sense of commitment to human services alone. If specifically Jewish motivations have come to play a more significant role in attracting communal workers (and in sustaining their attachment to the field), it stands to reason that differences in Jewish orientation, as symbolized by denominational affiliation, will increasingly differentiate the communal workers in such attitudes as those related to Israel.

The denomination-linked differences in attitudes toward Israel among rabbis are readily understandable and expected. But similar sorts of differences occur among Jewish communal workers as well. To us, these variations reflect the powerful impact of Jewish identity concerns upon the worldviews of Jewish communal workers. So long as

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