

Grounding Jewishness:

How attached do Jews feel to Israel, Europe and the countries in which they live?

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The key question

The ethnic and religious composition of populations in the Western world in general, and across Europe in particular, is diversifying rapidly due to high immigration and relatively high fertility rates of immigrants. The question of how to adequately understand the mental and emotional worlds of ethnic and religious groups is of growing importance to analysts and policy makers. Implementing any policies concerning minority groups is impossible without insights into minorities lifestyles, cultural traits and political attitudes.

Jews are not a new European minority – they are one of the more established groups whose presence in Europe goes back over 2,000 years. Still, questions about their ‘loyalty’ to the countries in which they live have long been part of the discourse about them, and often used to stigmatise them. So how attached do Jews feel to the countries in which they live, and indeed to Israel or the European Union? And do these different attachments conflict with each other? In a 2015 survey of British adults, conducted by Populus on behalf of the Parliamentary Council Against Antisemitism, 62% of respondents felt that British Jews are as loyal to Britain as any other citizens, 23% said that British Jews have divided loyalties and are as loyal to Israel as to Britain, and 7% said that British Jews are more loyal to Israel. Which view is nearer the truth?

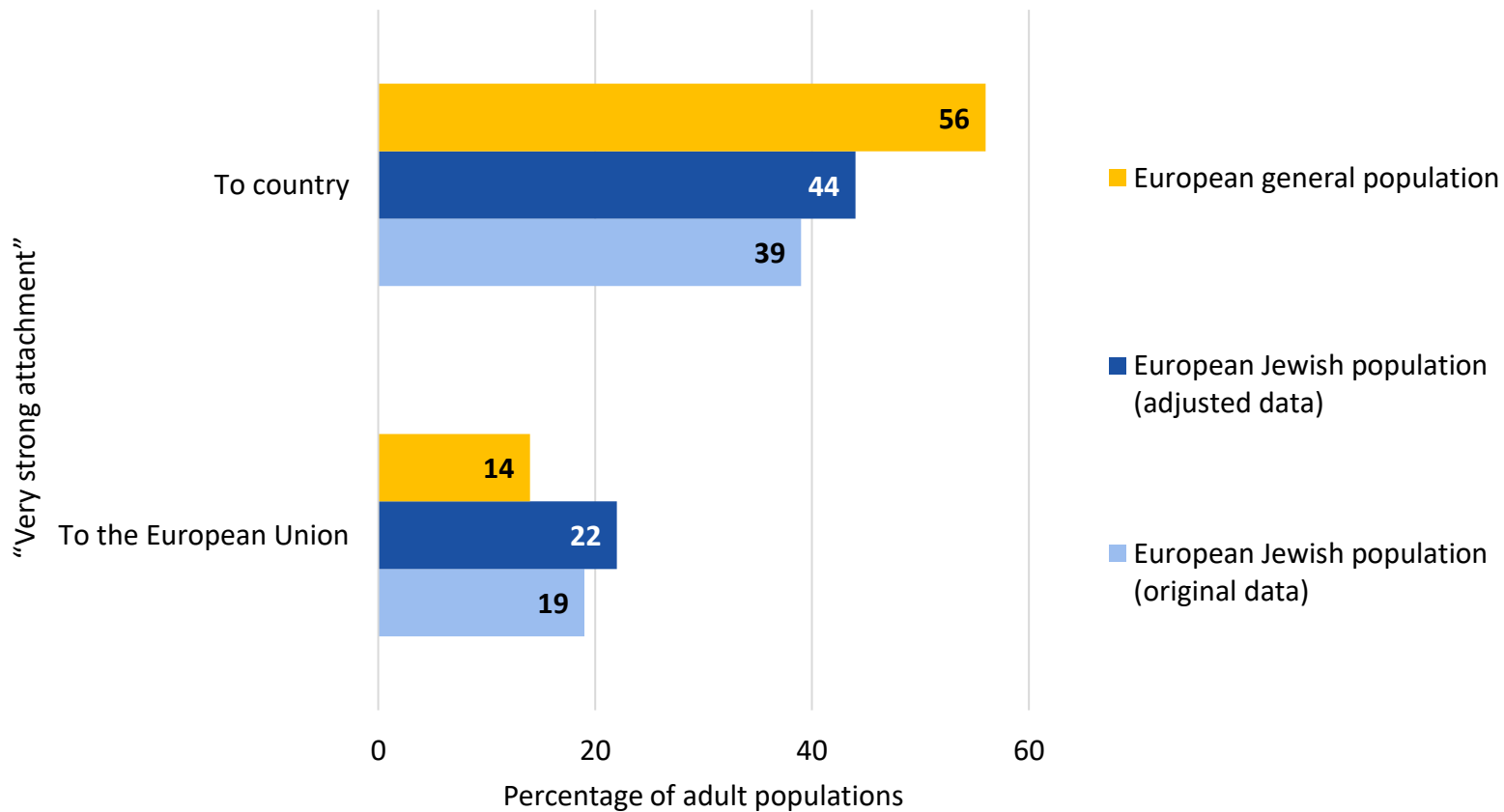
This brief paper mainly draws on data gathered in 2018 for a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey of Jewish people’s perceptions and experiences of anti-Jewish hate crime, discrimination, vandalism and harassment. Undertaken for the FRA by JPR and Ipsos, the survey built the largest sample of European Jews ever created in a social scientific exercise – 16,359 Jews participated from twelve EU Member States which together are home to about 80% of all Jews in Europe. Alongside gathering data about antisemitism, the survey also collected rich information on Jewish identity: the denominational breakdown of European Jews, the foundations of their Jewish identities, the extent of their participation in Jewish rituals and traditions, their Jewish values and priorities, and their levels of attachment to the countries in which they live, to Israel and to the European Union. To compare Jewish people’s attachments to those of non-Jews, we use the 2018 Eurobarometer survey and the 2016-2018 European Social Surveys – these surveys asked questions about attachments to different geopolitical entities in the general population of European countries.

Detailed analysis of the Jewish identities of Europe’s Jews can be found in the JPR European Jewish Demography report, *The Jewish identities of European Jews: Why, what and how?* written by leading Jewish demographers, Professor Sergio DellaPergola and Dr Daniel Staetsky. This paper is a subset of that report, and highlights key findings within it to help explore our central question: how attached are European Jews to the countries in which they live, to Israel and to the European Union, and how do they compare to other Europeans in this respect? This paper contains the latest empirical evidence.

The policy problem

How attached do European Jews feel to the countries in which they live? Or the European Union? And are their loyalties ‘divided’ in some way – between their home country and Israel? Answering these types of questions helps us to see how integrated European Jews feel today, and bring some empiricism to the antisemitic claim that Jews don’t fully ‘belong.’ Of course, it is not only Jews who face this type of accusation – as Europe and the West diversify through immigration, it is a common trope heard against multiple minorities.

A lower proportion of Jews feel ‘very strongly attached’ to their home countries than the general population, but a higher proportion of Jews feel ‘very strongly attached’ to the EU



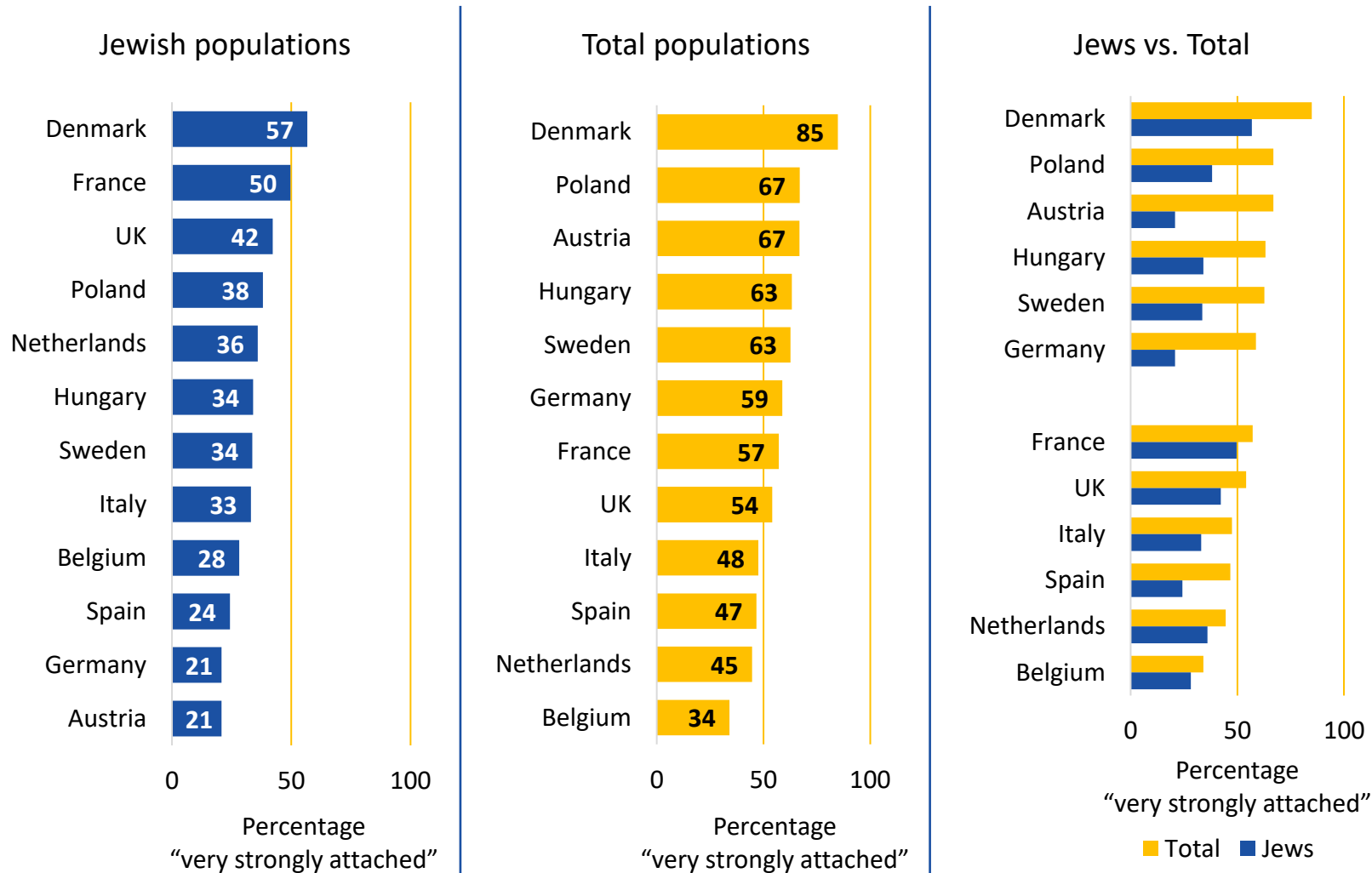
Note: Questions on attachment were asked slightly differently in the 2018 FRA survey (Jews) and the Eurobarometer survey (non-Jews). The adjusted version of the degree of attachment for Jews takes this into account making Jews and non-Jews more comparable.

Key insights

European Jews, like Europeans in general, feel more attached to the countries in which they live than they do to the European Union.

Among both groups, levels of ‘very strong’ attachment to country are far from universal, although they are somewhat more common among the general population than the Jewish one. By contrast, levels of very strong attachment to the EU are higher among Jews than others, although the differences are fairly small.

Attachment levels to countries are higher among total populations than Jews, although the differences are small in several places



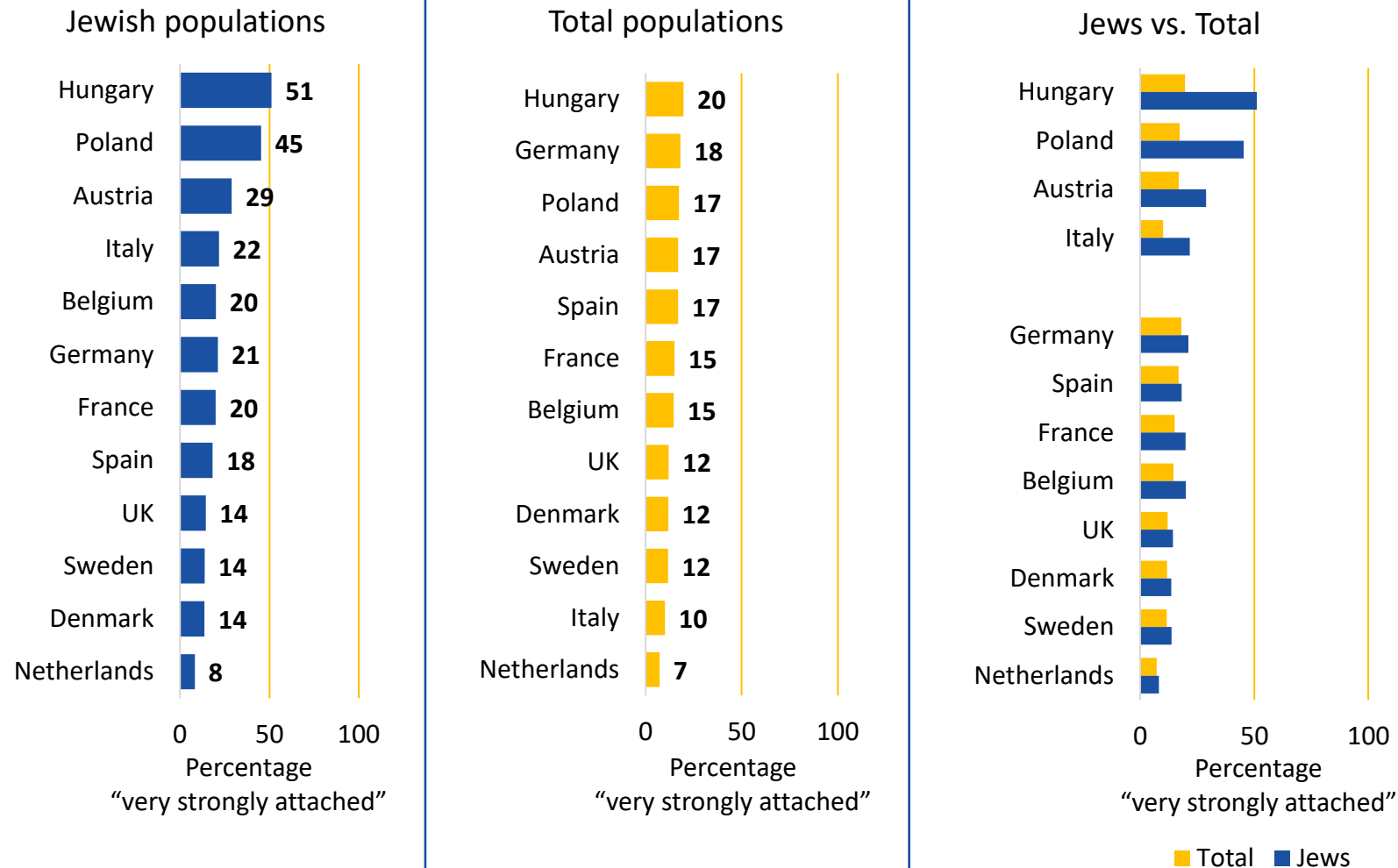
Note: Data for non-Jews in this instance comes from the 2018 Eurobarometer survey.

Key insights

The gap between Jews and non-Jews with respect to “very strong attachment” to the countries in which they live, is large in some countries (Scandinavian, Central and Eastern Europe and Germany), while in other countries it is rather small (Western and Southern Europe).

Levels of Jewish attachment to country strongly correlate with the pattern exhibited by the general population. Jews with low levels of attachment live in countries where such levels of attachment in the population as a whole are rather low too.

Attachment levels to the EU are higher among Jews than the total populations, and are particularly strong in Central-Eastern Europe



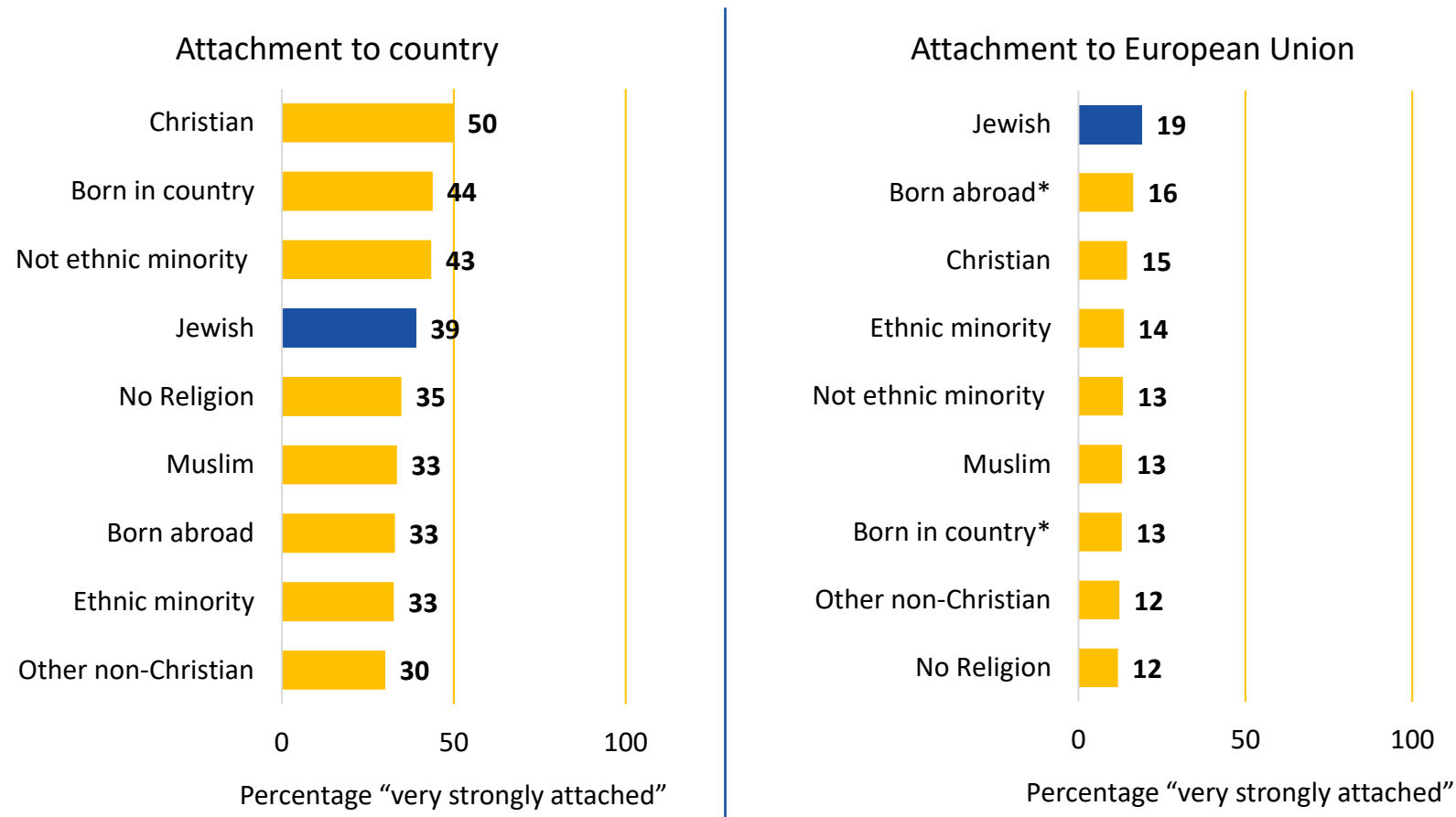
Note: Data for non-Jews in this instance comes from the 2018 Eurobarometer survey.

Key insights

Levels of attachment to the EU are substantially lower than levels of attachment to country, for Jews and non-Jews alike. And again as with attachment to country, attachment to the EU among Jews is strongly correlated with the pattern exhibited by the general population.

In many instances – particularly in Western Europe and Scandinavia – differences between Jews and others is negligible. But there are striking contrasts elsewhere, notably Hungary and Poland.

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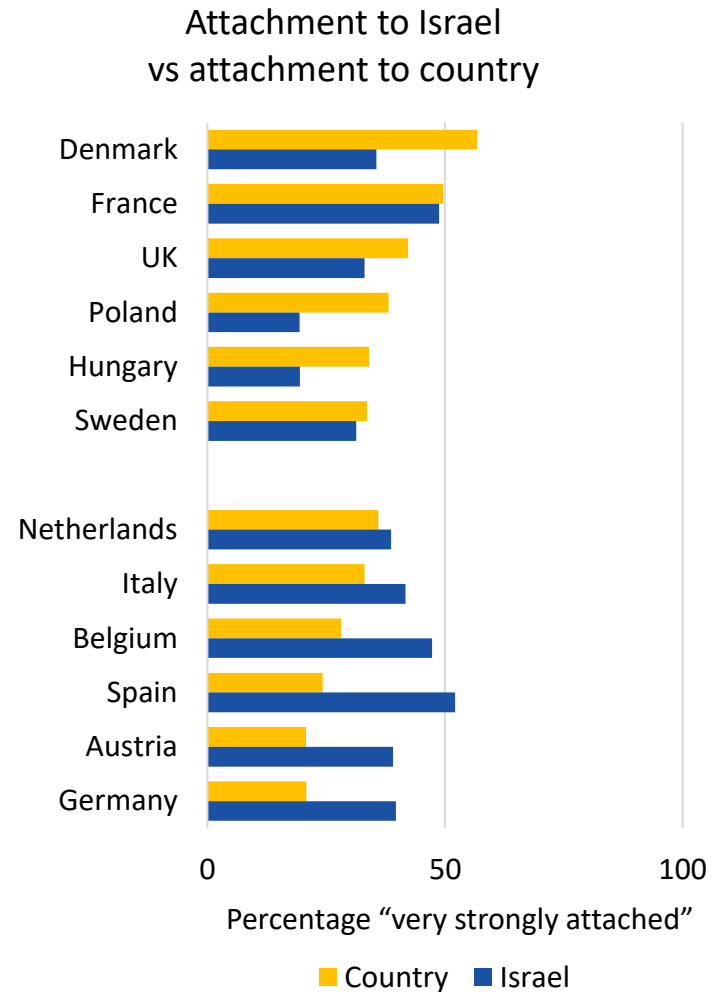
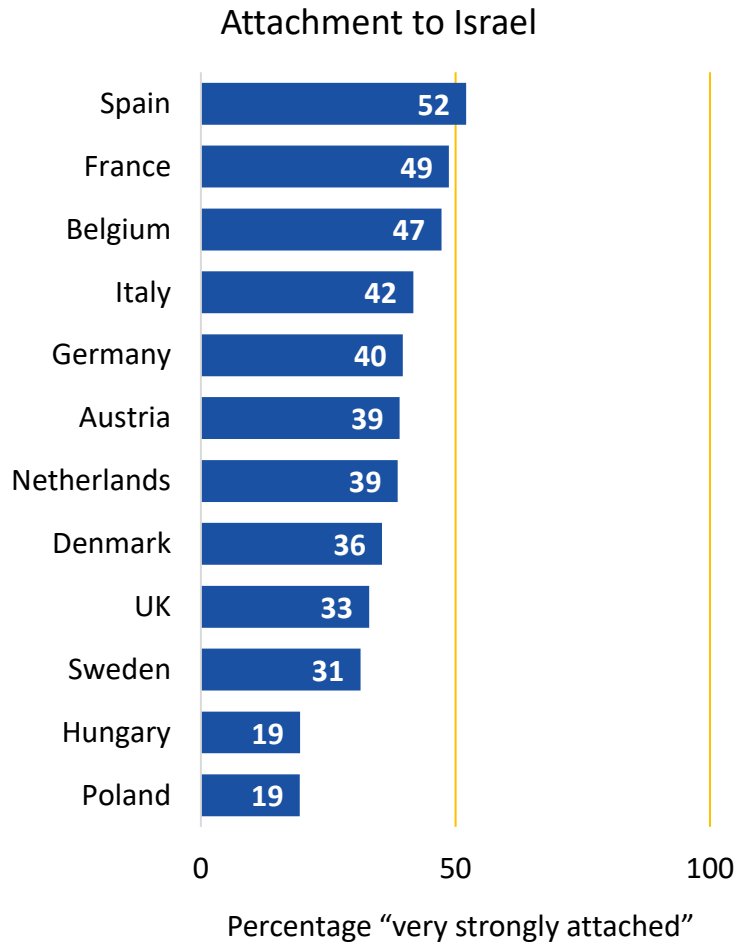
Note: Data for all non-Jewish groups are from the European Social Survey (ESS), as Eurobarometer does not include these. The question on attachment was asked differently in the 2018 FRA survey (Jews) and the ESS (non-Jews). In the latter, the original scale is 0 (weakest attachment) to 10 (strongest attachment); the category of 'very strongly attached' comprises those who scored 9-10.

* Born abroad/born in country – born outside/inside the country in which respondents currently reside. All respondents currently live in one of the twelve countries participating in the study – see slide 10 'About the data'.

Key insights

In general, minority groups in Europe feel slightly less attached to the countries in which they live than the Christian majorities or the total populations born in each country, but the differences are small. Jews feel very similar levels of attachment to their home countries as the general population does as a whole. Yet Jews stand out a little with regard to attachment to the EU. Again the differences are small, but a higher proportions of Jews feel very strongly attached than any other group examined.

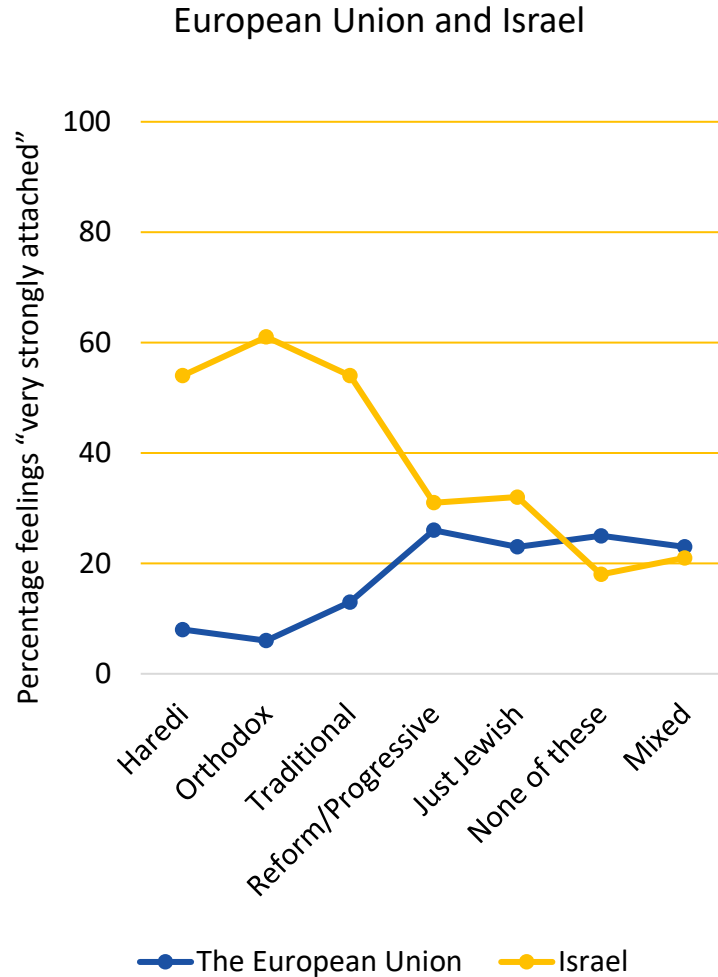
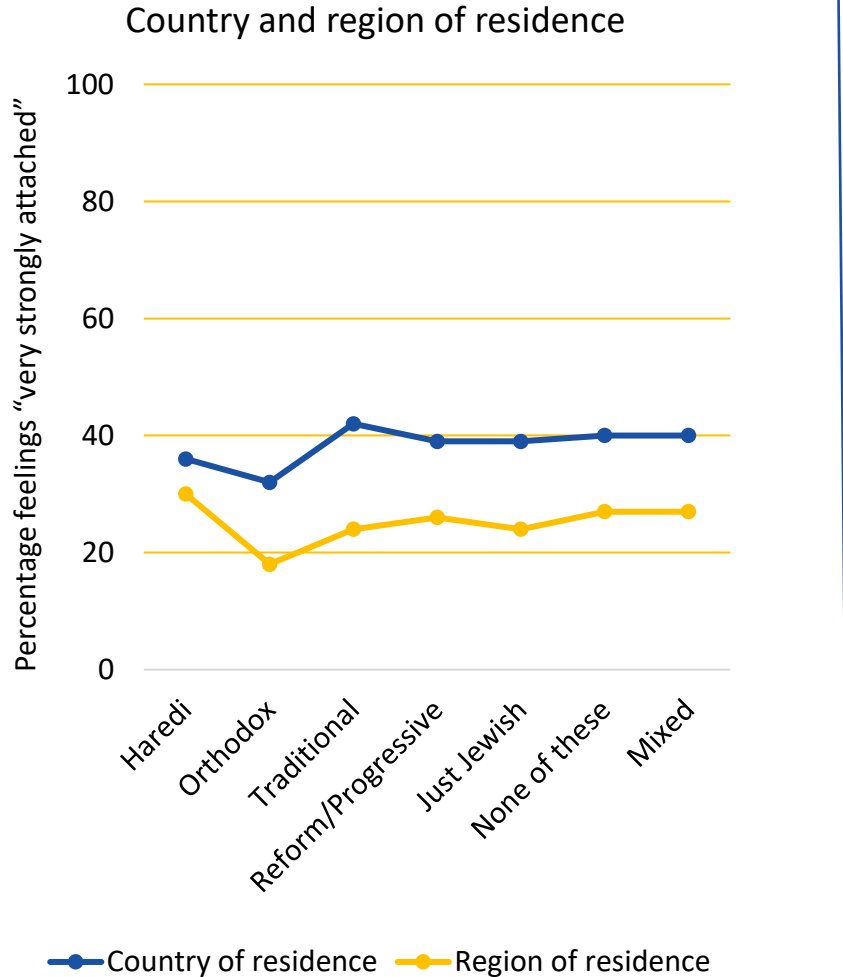
In some places, Jews feel more attached to Israel than to the countries in which they live, but in others, the opposite is the case.



Key insights

Do European Jews feel more attached to Israel than to the countries in which they live? Sometimes yes, sometimes no. In five countries (Germany, Austria, Spain, Belgium and Italy), slightly higher proportions of Jews are attached to Israel than to their home countries, perhaps because high proportions of Jews in some of these countries are recent immigrants. But in four others (Denmark, Hungary, Poland and the UK), the opposite is the case. In France, the Netherlands and Sweden, levels of attachment to country and Israel are almost identical.

Different denominations are indistinguishable in their attachments to country or region, but differ with respect to attachment to Israel or the EU



Key insights

All Jewish groups feel similarly attached to their countries and regions of residence. The strongest levels of attachment to Israel can be observed among the more religiously observant (Haredi; Orthodox; Traditional), but these groups show relatively weak levels of attachment to the EU. The Reform/Progressive, 'Just Jewish' and 'Mixed' groups have lower, but non-negligible levels of attachment to Israel; their levels of attachment to the EU are on the same level as their attachments to Israel and considerably higher than among the more religiously observant.

European Jews: attachments demystified

This report aims to clarify and demystify Jewish emotional and political attachments. Jews, and members of other ethnic and religious groups, are at times charged with having divided loyalties or exclusive loyalties to countries other than those in which they currently reside. These attitudes are quite common: about quarter of all adults in Britain think that British Jews have divided loyalties between Britain and Israel and 7% think that British Jews are more loyal to Israel than to Britain. Is that true? The problem with the dual loyalties claim is not that it is fundamentally false, but rather that it is often laced with prejudice, lacks nuance and ignores the broader context.

This paper shows that strong levels of attachment to one's home country are far from a given among Europeans in general – only a weak majority of Europeans report this sentiment. It is stronger in Eastern Europe, though still far from universal, as well as in Denmark and Austria, but in some parts of Western Europe, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, only a minority feels strongly attached. Levels of attachment to country are generally lower among European Jews, although not dramatically so – indeed, in many places, including the UK and France (home to Europe's two largest Jewish populations), there is hardly any difference at all between Jews and non-Jews. That said, in Eastern Europe, where national levels of attachment are very strong, Jewish levels of attachment to country are considerably lower. But there is little uniquely Jewish about any of this: all ethnic and religious minorities feel weaker levels of attachment to the countries in which they live compared to the populations as a whole, and the Christian majorities.

Where does Israel fit in this picture? Levels of attachment to Israel among Jews vary – they are relatively high in Spain and France, and rather low in Eastern Europe (e.g. Hungary and Poland). Eastern Europe is remarkable insofar as Jewish people's attachment to the countries in which they live is relatively low, and the alternative locale of connection for them is not so much Israel, but the European Union. And in general the picture is mixed: in five of twelve countries analysed here, higher proportions of Jews feel “very strongly attached” to Israel than to their home countries, but in the other seven, either the opposite is the case or there is no significant difference between their feelings of attachment either way.

Critically, advanced analysis shows that attachment to Israel among European Jews appears to have no bearing on their other attachments, be they to country, region, or the EU. In particular, having a strong level of attachment to Israel does not entail having a weak attachment to other entities, and vice versa. Attachments to Israel and to one's home country are found to be neither competing nor complementary; rather, they tend to co-exist in European Jews and are unrelated to each other.

Key insights

In some countries, higher proportions of Jews feel more strongly attached to those countries than they do to Israel. In others, the opposite is the case; in still others, there is no discernible difference. Critically, the various attachments they have to one place have no bearing on their attachments to another – rather they coexist, and neither compete with, nor complement one another. Understanding this about Jews, and indeed other minorities, is one small way to help resolve any political tensions that exist between Europe's majority populations and their minorities.

About the data

The data in this report come from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2018 survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU. Fieldwork was conducted online by Ipsos in May and June 2018. Advice on questionnaire development, access to Jewish communities and information on Jewish demography and social statistics necessary for survey distribution and calibration were supplied by JPR.

To be eligible to participate in the survey, respondents were required to self-identify as Jewish, and confirm that they were aged 16 or above, and lived in an EU Member State covered by the survey (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom). The online questionnaire was available in 13 languages. The final dataset contains 16,359 responses. The largest samples were obtained from the UK (4,728) and France (3,864), the two countries with the largest Jewish populations in Europe. Samples of over 1,000 respondents were obtained in Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. Elsewhere, they were in the range of 400-800. The total sample contains about 2% of the total number of Jews in the countries covered by the survey – a very high proportion. In some countries (eg., Poland and Denmark) about 9% of all Jews took part; in others (eg., France, Hungary and Germany), about 1% did – still considered high by existing standards in the survey industry.

The data were gathered by targeting the membership and subscriber lists of a carefully-selected cross-section of Jewish organisations across Europe, and the subsequent referral of the survey by respondents to their Jewish relatives, friends, acquaintances and colleagues. This generated a convenience sample, the representativeness of which was assessed by comparing the distributions of selected socio-demographic variables in the sample with external sources (eg., census data, surveys, community statistics), including geography, gender, age and communal affiliation. After initial assessment and comparison with the benchmarks, weights were created and applied in order to redress the sample for over- or under-representation of certain subgroups among Jews.

The data for this study are based primarily on respondents' answers to the following question: "People may feel different levels of attachment to their region, to the country where they live, or to the European Union. On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 equals "not at all attached" and 5 "very strongly attached", to what extent do you feel attached to each of the following?" [Country; Region; European Union; Israel].

Further details of the methodology can be found in: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2019. *Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States*. Technical Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

About the data

The data in this report come from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2018 survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the European Union, which was undertaken for the FRA by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research and Ipsos.

The survey was the largest ever conducted among European Jews, and has played a key role in understanding and combating antisemitism in Europe.



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