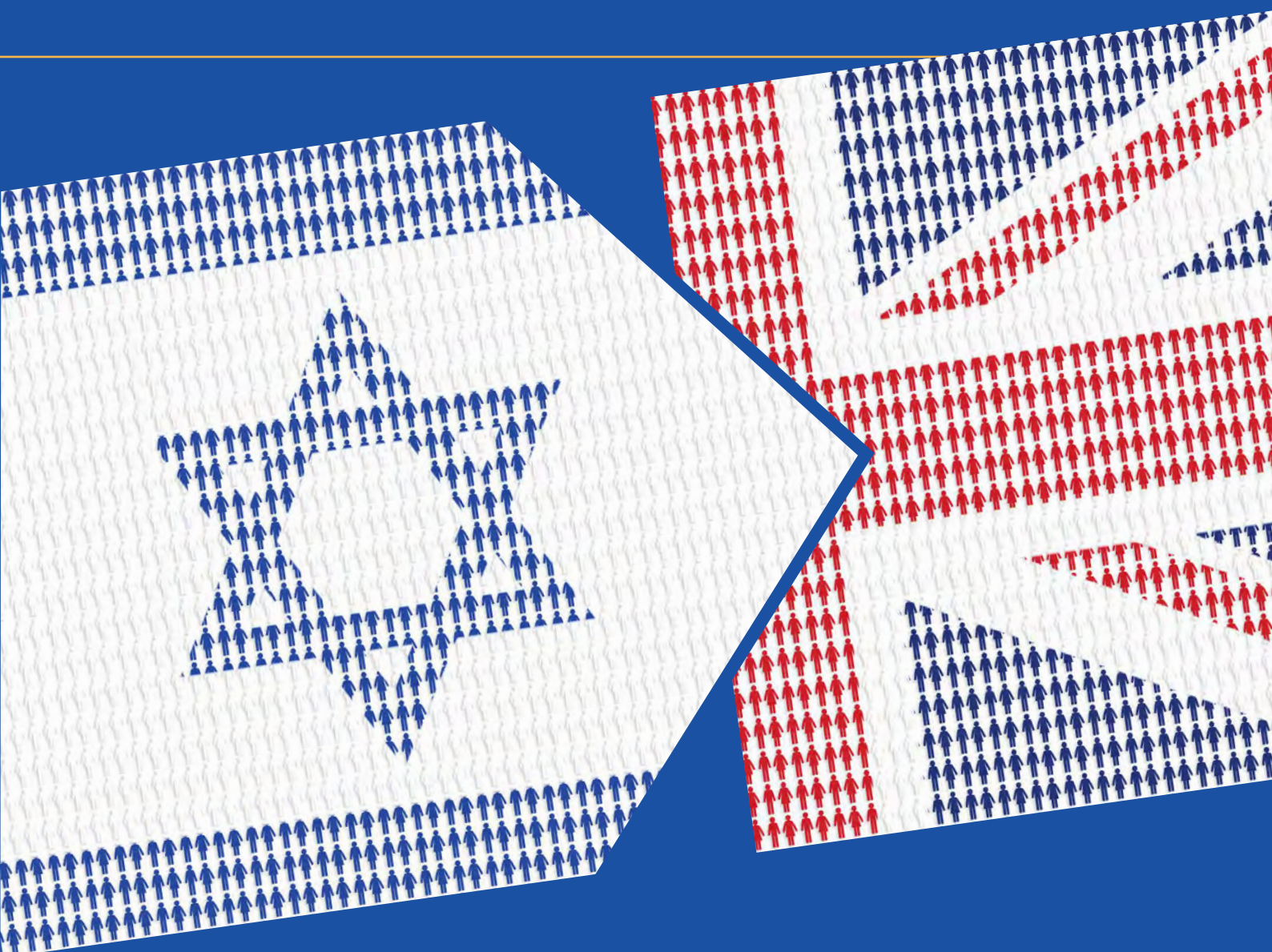


# Britain's Israeli diaspora

A demographic portrait

David Graham



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

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## Key findings

This study reveals that in each year of the first decade of the millennium, one and a half times as many Israelis migrated to Britain as British people emigrated to Israel.

Jewish Israelis constitute 6% of the UK's Jewish population.

In 2011, Britain's Israeli diaspora consisted of 23,221 people of whom:

- 73% are Jewish by religion or by ethnicity
- 16% are 'religious nones'—neither identifying as Jewish nor declaring a non-Jewish religion
- 9% are not Jewish (mainly Christian)
- Up to 16% are *haredi* (strictly Orthodox)
- 11% have lived in the UK for less than one year; 39% have lived in the UK for more than twenty years
- 98% live in England and Wales; 60% live in London (GLA boundaries); 21% live in the Borough of Barnet

Of the 16,870 Jewish Israelis in Britain:<sup>1</sup>

- 20% are 'Israeli-Israelis'—Israel-born with sole Israel citizenship
- 21% are 'Israeli-Brits'—Israel-born with dual Israel/British citizenship
- 23% are 'British-Israelis'—dual Israel/British citizens born outside Israel (mainly in the UK)





## Introduction

One of the central axioms of Zionism—the idea that the Jewish People has the right to national self-determination in its ancestral homeland—has always been for Jews to move to Israel. In many respects, it has been profoundly successful: the global Jewish picture shows continual demographic growth in Israel alongside decline more or less everywhere else.<sup>2</sup> Yet there are exceptions to this trend. In examining the best data we have ever had on Israelis in the UK, this report finds that for every two Jews migrating to Israel (making *aliyah*), three Israelis move to Britain. Indeed, this net migratory dividend for Britain's Jewish community arguably contributed towards the stable demographic picture of the UK's Jewish population between 2001 and 2011.

This is one of several important revelations about Britain's Israeli diaspora—a group consisting of both Israel-born migrants and dual Israeli citizens born in Britain and elsewhere. The data in this report form part of JPR's ongoing effort to analyse the results of Britain's 2011 Census, and they reveal, for the first time, robust estimates of the size of Britain's Israeli diaspora, its migratory history, demographic and identity makeup and its socio-economic position.

There are many ways in which a person could identify as Israeli. One may be born in Israel, or identify through one's parentage or ancestry, and one may become an Israeli as a result of legislation—most notably Israel's Law of Return.<sup>3</sup> One may choose to identify as an Israeli for political, religious or cultural reasons. Sociologists might therefore argue that *Israeliness* is an ultimately subjective and conditional identity trait.<sup>4</sup> Put simply, what counts as Israeli to one

person may not count as Israeli to another. Yet the beauty of using data from a census to examine the Israeli population of the UK—which is what this study does—is that it allows us to sidestep these issues; people can decide for themselves how they want to self-define, and in that sense it is a highly democratic instrument which delivers robust, empirical data.

In the past, attempts to measure Jewish migratory flows between Britain and Israel have been hampered by inadequate data.<sup>5</sup> Even deriving approximate estimates of the size of Britain's Israeli diaspora has proven to be frustratingly difficult.<sup>6</sup> This empirical lacuna has invited politically expedient, but more often, unscientific or wild speculation about the size and makeup of this population.<sup>7</sup>

*Israeli migration represents a demographic dividend for Britain's Jewish community*

One of the most important messages to emerge from these new data is that we cannot meaningfully speak of 'Britain's Israelis' without acknowledging that this population is made up of a variegated collection of sub-groups, each differing in terms of age structure, migratory history, country of birth, and even main language spoken. In that regard, it undermines the commonly-held notion of a single, homogenous Israeli population living in Britain. The term *sabra* is used by Israelis to describe someone who was born in Israel. But not all sabras living in Britain are alike: some are young, recently-arrived migrants; others are older, socially established dual citizens with British-born families; yet others may have left Israel at such a young age they barely recall living in the country. And, of course, there are many Israelis who were not even born in Israel. Ultimately, no single definition of 'Israeli' can satisfactorily sum up the kaleidoscopic complexity we find in these new data.

The reason we have these new figures at all is because of the inclusion of a series of questions about identity and migration—some of which have

been asked before, some of which are brand new—in Britain's 2011 Census. As a result, we now have more information about Israelis living here than ever before, thereby allowing us to examine this population in unprecedented demographic detail.

We can now investigate Britain's Israeli diaspora empirically, setting aside myths and conceptions about its size and makeup, revealing it to be an important and multifaceted part of Britain's national and Jewish community.

## The people

### Israeli migration

In the first decade of the millennium, 8,870 migrants moved from Israel to Britain, an average of 865 people per year.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, about 6,400 British emigrants moved in the opposite direction, from Britain to Israel over this period, an average of 582 people per year.<sup>9</sup> The clear implication is that, in an average year, Britain experienced a net gain of 283 migrants from Israel. To put this another way, in the first decade of the millennium, for every two Brits moving to Israel, three Israelis moved to Britain.

*In the first decade of the millennium, for every two Brits moving to Israel, three Israelis moved to Britain*

This is significant not just for what it tells us about British and Israeli migration patterns but also for what it could mean for the demographic outlook of Britain's Jewish population. Specifically, between 2001 and 2011, the number of Jews in Britain increased by 4,555 people, or just 1.7%. In effect, it was essentially stable. Given that Britain's net Israeli migration dividend was around 2,470



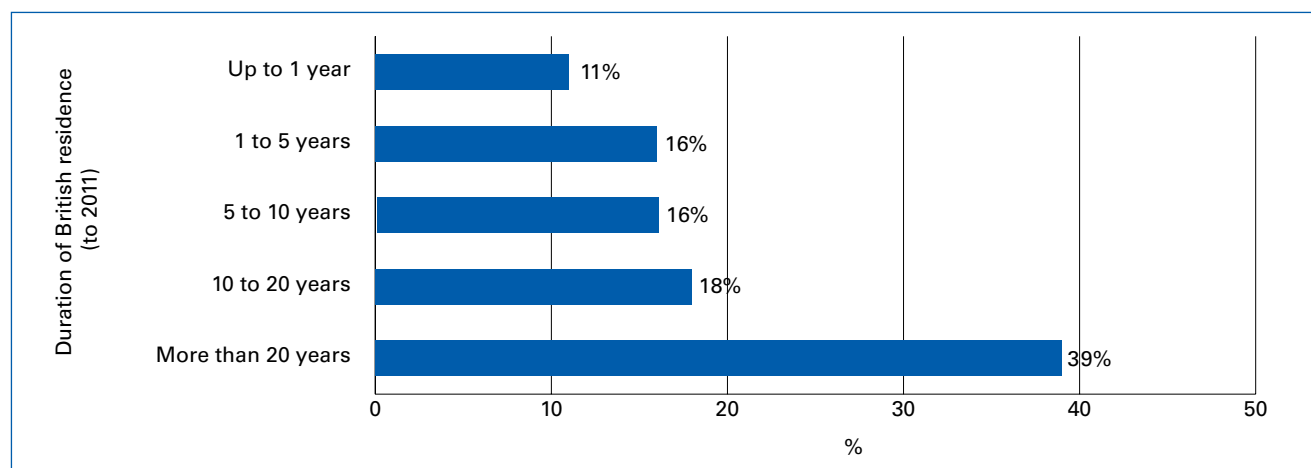
people—i.e. over half of this amount<sup>10</sup>—it is not too farfetched to conclude that, among other factors, Israeli net migration may have contributed to the Jewish demographic stability experienced by Britain over this period.<sup>11</sup>

However, not all of Britain's Israelis are 'new' immigrants. As Figure 1 indicates, two out of five (39%) of those who were born in Israel but now live in the UK have been living in the UK for over twenty years. Only one in ten (11%) is truly a new immigrant, having arrived within a year of the 2011 Census, and two out of five (43%) arrived at some point in the decade prior to the 2011 Census.

### Who are Britain's Israeli migrants?

The varied timing of their arrival in Britain is one of many reasons why the population casually referred to as 'Israeli', is far from completely homogenous. Indeed, the new data reveal multiple subgroups with rather differing profiles. A convenient starting point is to focus on the citizenship of Britain's Israeli diaspora by distinguishing between those with sole Israel

Figure 1. Duration of residence in the UK of the Israel-born population\*



\*Any religion N=14,608.  
Source: ONS 2011 Census table CT0253.

citizenship—the ‘Soles’—and those with dual Israel and British citizenship—the ‘Duals’.<sup>12</sup> A further step is to compare Jewish Israelis with the rest of Britain’s Jewish population who hold no Israel citizenship—the ‘Natives’. In so doing, we find the vast majority of the Duals are well settled in Britain, with just 2% having lived outside the UK in the year before the 2011 Census, the same proportion as the Natives. By contrast, 17% of Soles arrived in Britain within a year of the 2011 Census.<sup>13</sup>

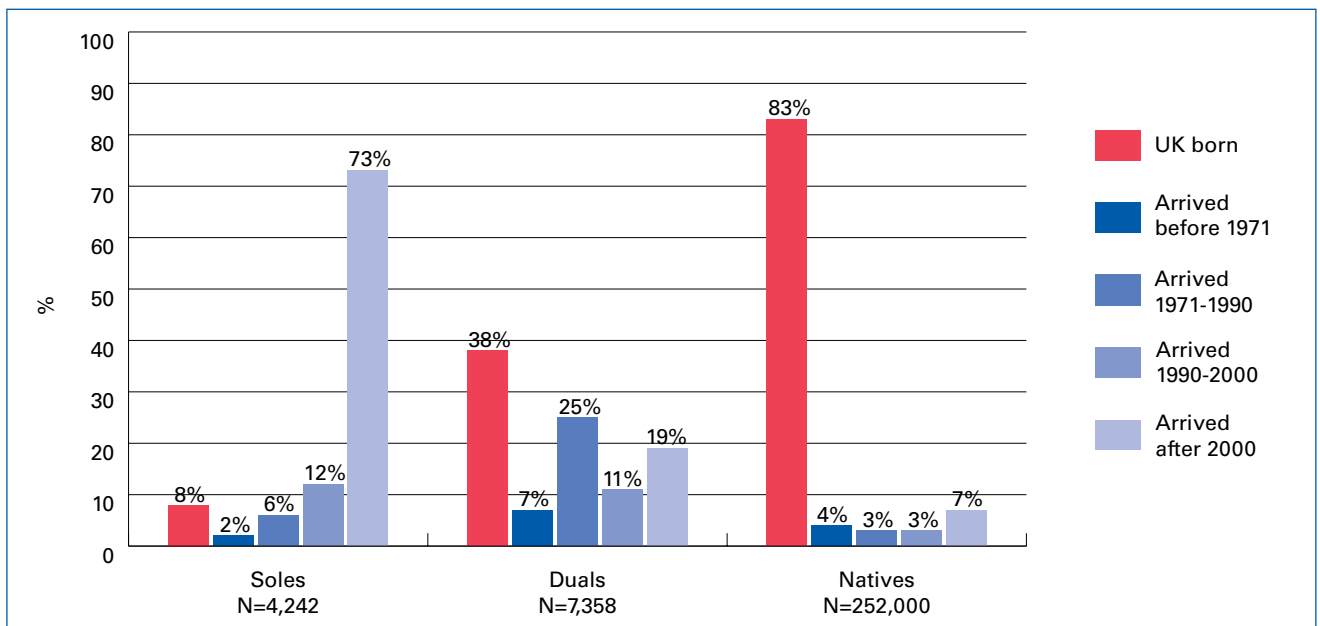
Citizenship type	Definition
Soles	Sole Israel citizenship
Duals	Dual Israel and British citizenship
Natives	Jews with no Israel citizenship

While most, but not all Natives (83%) were born in Britain, Soles present almost the mirror image with a majority (73%) having arrived in the decade up to 2011 (Figure 2). Duals are located between Natives and Soles: two-out of five (38%) Duals were born in Britain, but one out of five (19%) arrived within a decade of the 2011 Census.

Duals comprise an altogether more complicated subgroup with three main types. First, they include Israel-born British-naturalised migrants, a majority of whom have been living in Britain for at least ten years. Second, they include British-born children of naturalised Israeli migrants with Israeli citizenship through descent. Third, they include British-born adults who migrated to Israel (made aliyah), acquired Israel citizenship and who have subsequently returned to live in Britain.<sup>14</sup>

The differences between these groups are largely down to their unique migratory histories. Having arrived in the UK earlier, Duals are far more demographically similar to Natives and, presumably, more socially integrated, whereas Soles are new migrants in the traditional mould. They are substantially younger than the other groups, with an average age of 34 years compared with 39 years for Duals and 42 years for Natives.<sup>15</sup> That is because Soles represent a significant and relatively recent movement of Israelis to Britain. The majority is aged predominantly in peak family formation years, from their mid-twenties to their mid-forties (Figure 3). By contrast, a very high proportion of Natives are aged 60 and above, a cohort that is rare among Soles.

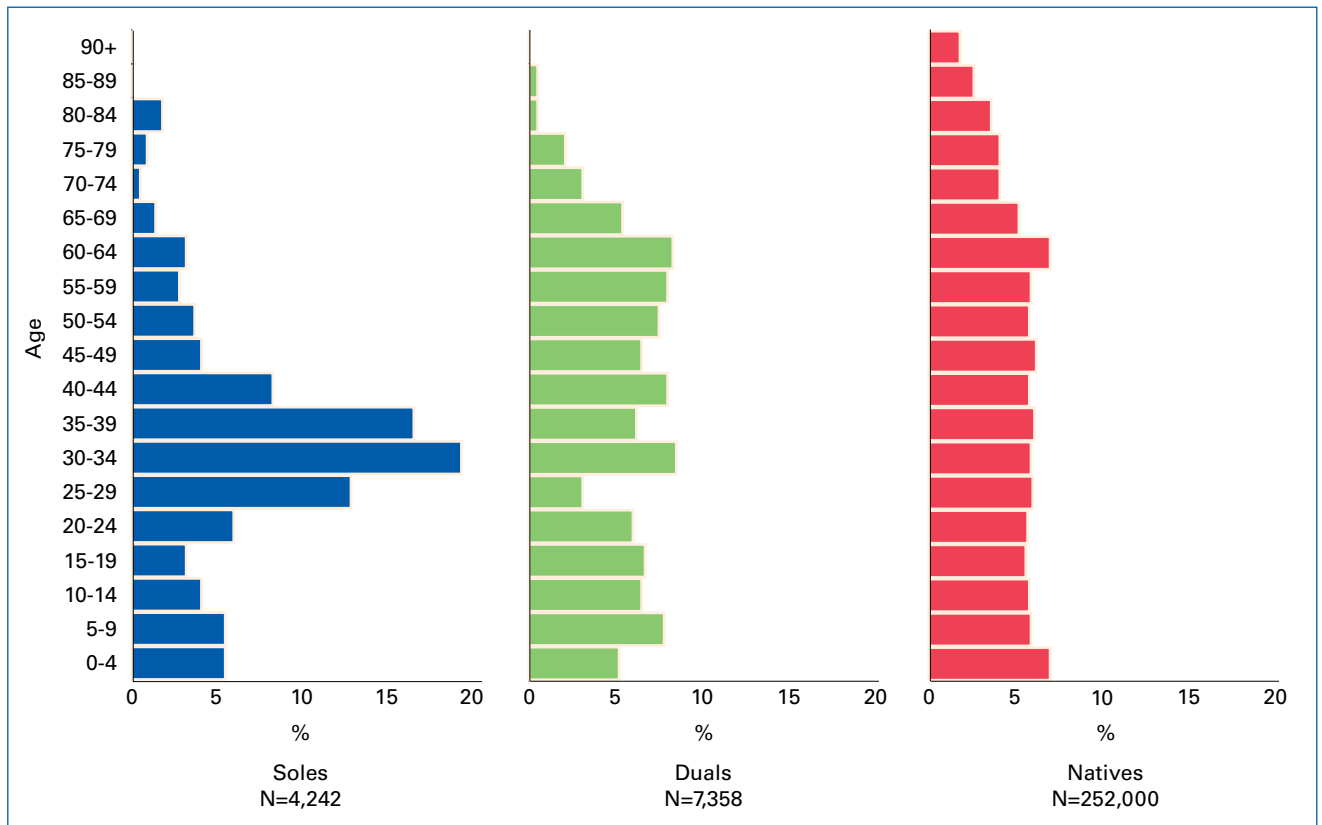
Figure 2. Jews living in England and Wales by type of citizenship\* and year of arrival in the UK, 2011



\* Sole: Israel citizenship only; Dual: Israel and British citizenship; Native: no Israel citizenship  
 Source: ONS 2011 Census SAR data (see Appendix); ONS 2011 Census tables CT0392, CT0284, KS209 (original).



Figure 3. Age structure of Britain's Jewish population without Israel citizenship, compared with those who have sole Israel citizenship or dual Israel/British citizenship



\* Sole: Israeli citizenship only; Dual: Israel and British citizenship; Native: no Israel citizenship  
 Source: ONS 2011 Census SAR data (see Appendix); ONS 2011 Census tables CT0392, CT0284, KS209 (original).

*Differences between these Israeli sub-groups are largely down to their unique migratory histories*

(45% Duals v 44% Natives) and just as likely to be single and never-married (41% Duals v 42% Natives). Yet in other ways, Duals represent a midway population—they are more likely to have dependent children (49% Duals v 43% Natives), and interestingly, are more likely to be

The implications of this substantial age gap are easy enough to imagine. Young populations are more likely to form families and have children, which is precisely what we see here. Soles are far more likely than Natives to be currently married (58% Soles v 44% Natives) and to have dependent children (58% Soles v 43% Natives).<sup>16</sup> As such, Soles are a potential rejuvenating force within Britain's demographically ageing Jewish population.

Duals, on the other hand, are far more similar to Natives. They are just as likely to be married

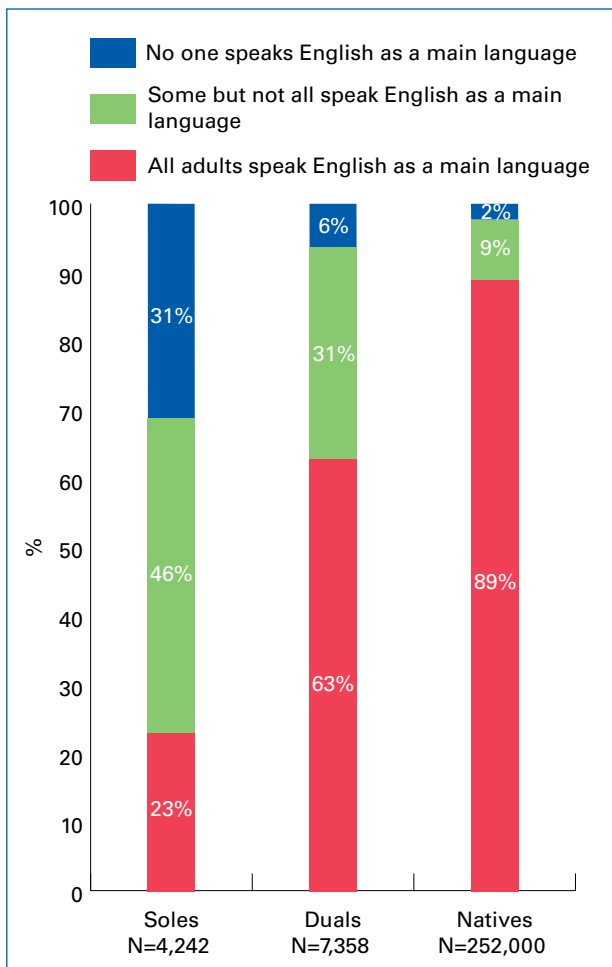


divorced (11% Duals v 7% Natives), which could, speculatively, reflect potential difficulties faced by people in trans-cultural partnerships.<sup>17</sup>

At home, whilst English is the main language for almost all (95%) Natives, this is the case for only 29% of Soles.<sup>18</sup> Almost one in three (31%) Soles lives in households where no one speaks English as a main language compared with just 6% of Duals, attesting to the more integrated status of this middle group (Figure 4).

Soles are also highly educated. A majority (63%) of those aged in their thirties has at least degree level qualifications, the same likelihood as the Natives, and substantially more likely than the general British population (40%).<sup>19</sup>

Figure 4. Does anyone in your household speak English as a main language? Jews by citizenship,\* England and Wales, 2011



\* Sole: Israel citizenship only; Dual: Israel and British citizenship; Native: no Israel citizenship  
 Source: ONS 2011 Census SAR data (see Appendix); ONS 2011 Census tables CT0392, CT0284, KS209 (original).



Overall, and reflecting their younger age structure, Soles are more likely to be students (18% Soles v 10% Natives) and less likely to be retired (10% Soles v 23% Natives). Yet they are equally likely to be employed (43% Soles v 40% Natives) and no more likely to be self-employed (16% Soles v 16% Natives). This is still substantially higher than the general level of self-employment in Britain, which is 9%.

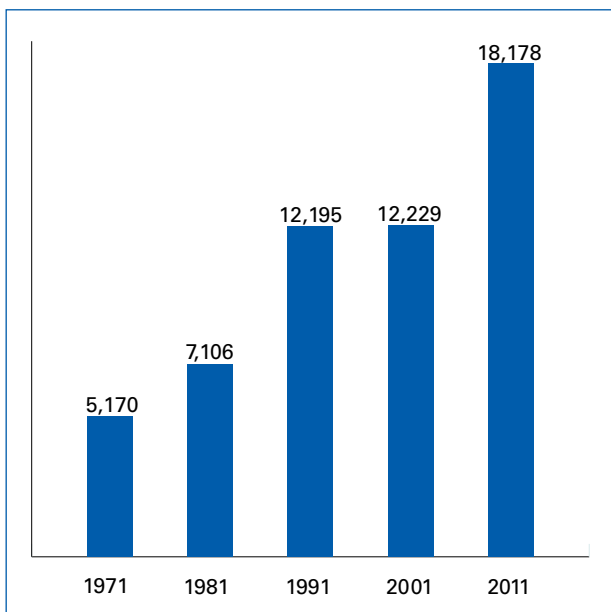
*Jews with sole Israel citizenship are a potential boon to Britain's native Jewish community*

In sum, Duals represent a well-integrated, Israeli sub-group living side by side with native Brits. They contrast with Soles who, whilst less integrated, present a potential boon. They are young, well educated and employed. Given the net positive inflow of Israelis to Britain, it would not stretch the imagination too far to suggest this group could play a role in the demographic rejuvenation of the native Jewish community, at least to some extent. Clearly, on this evidence, Soles not only benefit Britain's Jewish community numerically but they represent a potential financial and leadership resource pool as well.

## Israelis by numbers

Historically, 2011 was not only a landmark year in terms of data about Israelis living in Britain, but it also marked a new highpoint in the size of Britain's Israeli diaspora. We know this because we benefit from country of birth census records dating back forty years. These show that after flattening out during the 1990s, a significant migratory surge appears to have occurred in the 2000s (Figure 5). Though we lack direct migratory measurements from earlier censuses, such as figures for year of arrival, the evidence suggests

Figure 5. Size of population with country of birth Israel, 1971 to 2011, any religion, Great Britain\*



\* Data relate to England, Scotland and Wales  
 Sources: 1971 and 1981 from p9 in Kosmin, BA and S Waterman (1985) "Britain and Israel: Reciprocal flows of Jewish migrants" The Jewish Quarterly 31(4) pp7-11; 1991 ONS (NOMIS Web accessed 25 March 2013); 2001 ONS Census Table C0414, NRS 2001 Census, Country of Birth Israel, Current Religion; 2011 ONS Census Table QS213EW and NRS 2011 Census table AT003

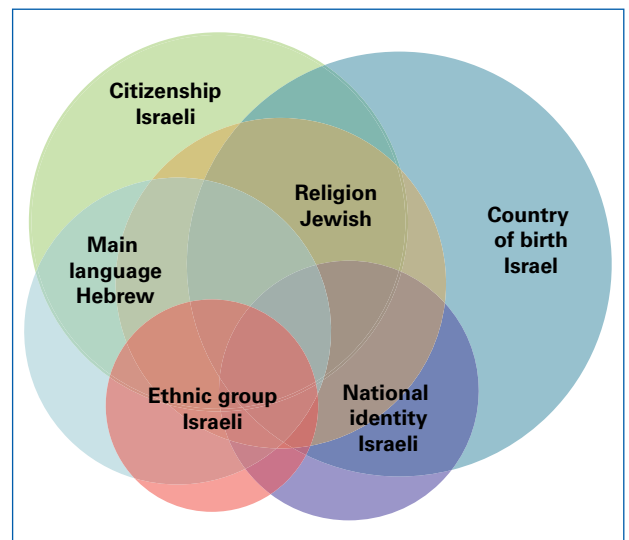
that Britain has experienced a large influx of Israelis in recent years. The expatriate Israel-born population living in Britain is now by far the largest on record, totalling 18,178 people in 2011, 49% more than in 2001 and implying a very rapid average net increase of around 4% per year over the decade.

However, in and of themselves, data about country of birth provide us with a limited picture. As we have already seen here, data about citizenship alone, introduced for the first time in the 2011

*The expatriate Israel-born population living in Britain is by far the largest on record totalling 18,178 people in 2011*

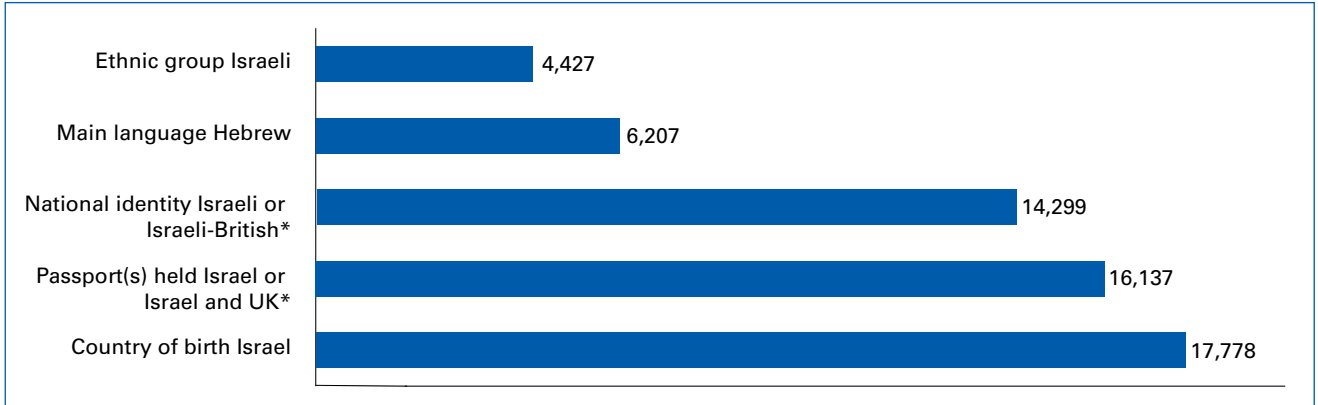
Census, paint a far richer portrait of diaspora Israelis than has been previously possible. And in fact, the 2011 Census contained a whole battery of questions on both identity and migration, several for the first time. Crucially from our perspective, it included four different ways for people to identify as Israeli: country of birth, citizenship, ethnic group, and national identity, as well as a fifth identifier based on main language (i.e. Hebrew).<sup>20</sup> Adding religion (Jewish or otherwise) to this mix exposes a kaleidoscopic array of Israeli sub-groups, or 'Israelinesses' (Diagram 1). Such a wealth of data offers us all sorts of pathways towards understanding Israelis and, indeed, Israeliness in Britain.

Diagram 1. Diagrammatic representation of the array of Israeli sub-groups potentially captured by the 2011 Census (not to scale)



Although the data on country of birth cover a large proportion of all 'potential Israelis' in Britain's census, they are by no means the only expression of Israeliness. As we have shown, citizenship muddies these waters considerably. Soles might be the most stereotypical Israelis, but not all Soles are necessarily Jewish, and indeed, not all Soles were even born in Israel or speak Hebrew. To begin unravelling the confusing

Figure 6. Israelis by identity type, any religion, England and Wales, 2011 (note these categories are not independent)



\* Data on dual citizenship were used to derive part of the National Identity total of 14,299 Israelis; UK passport data include 39 responses with dual Israel and Irish passports (and no UK passport).  
 Source: ONS tables CT0289, CT0284/CT0451, CT0284/CT0451, CT0282, CT0286, QS204, CT0287, CT0275

array of Israeli potentiality, we start by looking at how many people responded to each of the five questions in the 2011 Census in which it was possible to express some form of Israeli identity (Figure 6).

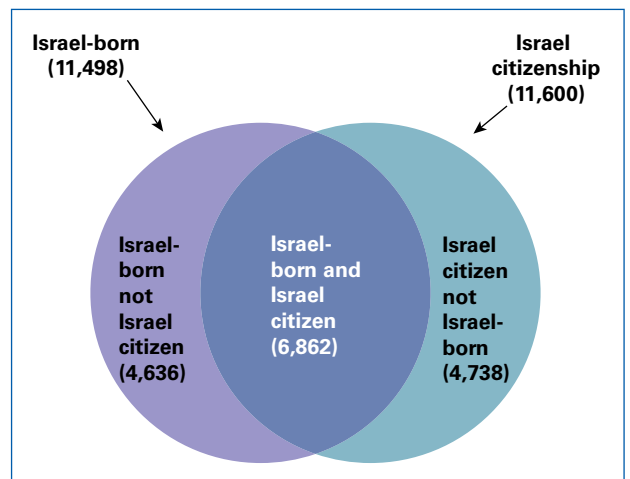
The first new thing we discover is that the country of birth does indeed represent the single largest category—17,778 people reported being born in Israel (not including a further 469 recorded as living in Scotland and Northern Ireland (see Figure 5 above)). The next largest category is Israeli by citizenship—16,137 people hold Israeli passports either solely (Soles) or jointly (Duals).

However, in trying to determine how many Israelis there are in Britain, we need to assess the extent to which these categories *overlap* with one another, i.e. we cannot simply add up all the totals in Figure 6 to determine the population size. To demonstrate the point, we will focus on the overlap between the two largest categories: those born in Israel, and those who hold Israeli passports. As regards the Jewish Israeli population, we find the size of each group is actually quite similar, with 11,498 Israel-born Jews and 11,600 Jewish Israel citizens. However, though

comparable in size, there are only 6,862 Jews who are both Israel-born and Israel citizens (Diagram 2). In other words, the overlap between birth and citizenship reveals three subgroups, totalling 16,236 Jewish Israelis living in Britain.

Given that citizenship can be held solely or jointly (see “Who are Britain’s Israeli migrants?” p.5 above), this overlap reveals some interesting points about the makeup of Britain’s Jewish Israeli population. Three out of ten (29%) citizens of Israel living in Britain were not born in Israel, and while most of these were born in the UK, Israel’s complex immigration story means that

Diagram 2. Diagrammatic representation of the relationship between the Israel-born and Israel citizenship groups, Jews living in England and Wales\* (not to scale)



*There are 16,236 Jewish Israelis by birth and/or citizenship living in Britain*

\*Not to scale; includes 26 people with Ireland and Israel passports  
 Source: ONS 2011 Census tables CT0284 and CT0392



some will have been born in third countries such as Germany, France and the United States. Surprisingly, just two out of ten (21%) Jewish Israelis are stereotypical 'Israeli-Israeli' immigrants, i.e. both born in Israel and sole Israeli citizens.<sup>21</sup> In fact there are almost 500 more Israeli citizens who were not born in Israel than these 'Israeli-Israelis'.

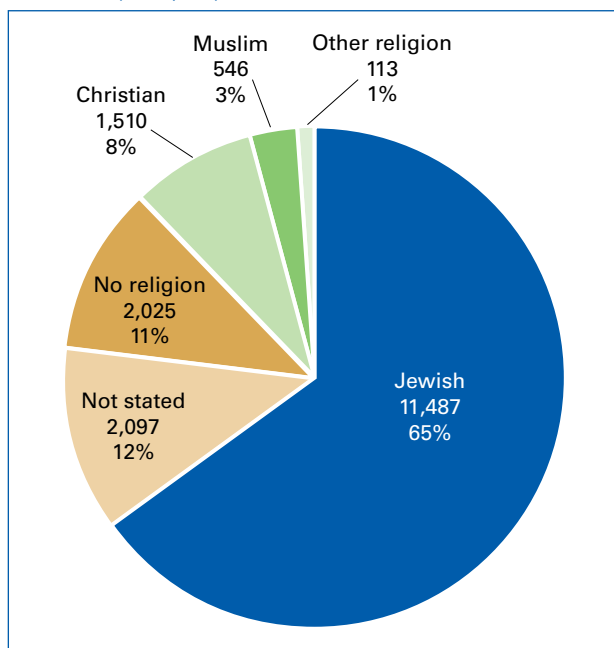
### Israelis by religion

Of course, not all Israelis are Jewish and not all Israeli Jews declared their religion as Jewish in the census. This adds yet another layer of intricacy to Britain's Israeli kaleidoscope. In fact, only two out of three (65%) people born in Israel reported being Jewish (Figure 7). That means that 6,291 did not. However, they are not necessarily all non-Jews. Whilst one third of this sub-group did report a non-Jewish religion (mainly Christian), a further third reported 'No Religion' and the final third chose not to respond at all to the census's voluntary question on religion (i.e. they are 'Not

Stated'). These two latter groups amount to 4,122 Israel-born people and are referred to here as 'religious nones'; they constitute almost one in four (23%) of the Israel-born population.<sup>22</sup> Compared with Britain's general population, Israelis were more secretive than secular about their religious identity: i.e. they were more likely not to state a religion at all, and less likely to state 'No Religion' in the census.<sup>23</sup> Yet even in the census we find that at least some of these Israeli religious nones consider themselves to be Jewish, since 10% recorded their ethnic group as Jewish.<sup>24</sup> The proportion of the remainder who would consider themselves Jewish in other contexts, or who would be considered Jewish by others, cannot be gleaned from the census data directly.<sup>25</sup> The important point to note is that many of these religious nones may well participate in Jewish communal activities or send their children to Jewish schools.<sup>26</sup>

*Almost a quarter of Britain's Israel-born diaspora are 'religious nones', neither declaring a Jewish nor a non-Jewish religious identification in the census*

Figure 7. Country of birth Israel by religion, 2011, England and Wales (N=17,778)



Source: ONS 2011 CensusTable CT0289

Even so, the census data do offer us indirect evidence in support of the suggestion that most of the Israel-born group is in some way Jewishly connected. First, the Israel-born population lives more or less in the same places, and in a similarly high density, as Britain's Jewish population. For example, 60% of the Israel-born live in London (GLA boundaries) compared with 57% of Jews. The main differences between the natives and the immigrants are localised. With the exception of Barnet (home to 20% of Jews and 21% of Israel-born), the migrant population is considerably underrepresented in the outer-suburban districts of London and adjacent Hertfordshire. For example, 13% of Jews live in either Hertsmere, Harrow or Redbridge, compared with just 4% of Israel-born, who are more likely than native Jews to live in inner London areas such as Camden and Hackney.<sup>27</sup>

The second clue geography presents us with about the religious identity of the Israeli population in the UK relates to strictly Orthodox or haredi Jews. Since most haredim in Britain live in a small number of clearly delineated areas separate from the majority Jewish population, we can approximate how many Israelis are likely to be haredi. Almost one in five (19%) people born in Israel live in 'haredi local authorities' i.e. areas in which the majority of haredim live and in which relatively few non-haredi Jews live.<sup>28</sup> This compares with 13% of the British Jewish population as a whole, suggesting that proportionately, Israelis may actually be more haredi than Jews generally. Additional detailed geographical data on Hebrew speakers (which include a higher proportion of Jews (79%) than people born in Israel (65%)), also indicate that between 12% and 16% live in haredi areas, depending on how conservatively we choose to draw the neighbourhood boundaries.<sup>29</sup> By contrast, in Israel, at least 10% of the population is haredi.<sup>30</sup> Thus, it would seem that Israelis in Britain are more likely than both British Jews and Jews in Israel to be haredi.

*Britain's diaspora Israelis are more likely than both British Jews and Jews in Israel to be strictly Orthodox (haredi)*

### How many Israelis live in Britain?

The census did not set out to enumerate Israelis. The data we have are a by-product of a tool designed primarily to inform governmental resource allocation. Yet, in gaining access to them, we have acquired by far the most accurate set of data on Israelis in Britain that is currently available or likely to be available in the immediate future. The census conveniently allows us to sidestep definitional issues by presenting clear, well delineated, options for the people themselves to identify with. In this way it is a highly democratic exercise eliciting the most empirically robust data we have ever had on this topic.



Nevertheless, in examining the data, it becomes clear just how complex it is to estimate the size of the Israeli population in Britain and why it has eluded scholars in the past. Israel's contemporary demographic migratory story<sup>31</sup> has delivered a kaleidoscopic array of differing Israeli attributions (Diagram 1, p.9). Yet in spite of this, and because of the census's democratic approach, we now have a robust basis from which to derive population estimates.

*There were at least 23,221 Israelis living in the UK in 2011, of whom 16,870 are Jewish by religion and/or ethnicity and 3,702 are religious nones*

In examining these data, we have identified 23,221 Israelis living in the UK (Table 1). As we have shown, this is a rather variegated population: not all of these people were born in Israel, not all hold Israel citizenship, not all are Jewish, and relatively few speak Hebrew as their principal language, but they do all have two important things in common: one way or another, they self-identified as Israeli in the 2011 census and they all reside in the UK.<sup>32</sup>

Given this information, what proportion of Britain's Jewish population is Israeli? If we limit the definition of 'Israeli' to people born in Israel, Israelis constitute, at a minimum, 4.3% of the national Jewish population. However, they could constitute as much as 5.9% if we choose to

Table 1. Minimum size of the UK's Israeli population, by religion and type of identity, 2011

Country of residence	Religion, if any	Type of Israel identity	Number of people	Source	
England and Wales	Jewish by religion	Israel-born, Israel citizen <sup>a</sup>	6,862	ONS CT0283, CT0284, CT0392	
		Israel citizen not Israel-born <sup>a</sup>	4,738		
		Israel-born not a citizen	4,636		
			Israel-born (short-term resident <sup>b</sup> )	225	ONS CT0290
		Jewish ethnicity (religious nones <sup>c</sup> )	Israel-born	420	ONS CT0289
		No Religion <sup>c</sup>	Israel-born	3,702	ONS CT0289
	Not Jewish	Israel-born	2,169	ONS CT0289	
Other UK	Any religion	Israel-born (Scotland)	400	NRS AT003	
		Israel passport (Northern Ireland)	69	NISRA QS206NI	
<b>Grand total</b>			<b>23,221</b>		

a) Includes a small number of people with dual Irish and Israel passports; b) short-term residents are those staying in the UK for three or more, but less than 12, months; c) includes only people of No religion or Not stated religion.

assume all Israel-born religious nones are in some way Jewish. Importantly, irrespective of how we approach it, this still represents a significant increase since 2001, when the equivalent range was 2.7% to 3.7%.<sup>33</sup> However, broadening the definition to include Israel citizens who were not born in Israel (shown in Table 1), indicates there are 16,870 Jewish Israelis in the UK. Given that 269,568 Jews were enumerated in the 2011 Census, this suggests that 6.3% of Jews in the UK are Israeli.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, since 23,221 is a minimum figure, who might not be included and how many more Israelis might there be, if any? There are potentially two ways in which some Israelis may be missing from this total, although neither is likely to be that large. The first includes anyone who reported an Israeli identity in the 2011 Census but who falls outside the parameters set by Table 1. This mainly comprises Israelis by ethnic group, nationality or main language (Hebrew) but who were neither born in Israel nor hold Israeli citizenship.<sup>35</sup> Overall, we do not believe this constitutes a particularly large number of people. For example, there will be relatively few Israelis whose main language is Hebrew but who were neither born in Israel nor hold Israel citizenship. The same goes for the numbers of people whose national identity or ethnic group is Israeli, but who were not born in Israel nor hold Israel citizenship.<sup>36</sup> There will

*In 2011 Jewish Israelis constituted 6% of Britain's Jewish population, a greater proportion than they did in 2001*

also be a number of non-Jews and religious nones who hold Israel citizenship but who were not born in Israel, but estimates suggest this group amounts to about 1,300 people, at most.<sup>37</sup>

Whilst these data can be obtained, at least theoretically, the second potential gap includes Israelis who did not respond Israeli (by whichever route) to the 2011 Census, as well as Israelis who did not respond to the census at all.<sup>38</sup> Census non-response rates have been calculated by the Office for National Statistics for each question and region of the country. Taking the non-response rate for 'non-UK born' people living in Barnet—which was 10%—as a crude proxy for overall Israeli non-response, we can estimate the potential undercount.<sup>39</sup> So, if 23,221 would be 90% of the total, this gives an adjusted total, accounting for non-response, of 25,744 Israelis in Great Britain by any religion.

## Britain's Israeli diaspora—some discussion points

### Who is Israeli?

It is apparent that there is no archetypal Israeli in Britain; rather, there is a wide array of people who fall within the general rubric *Israeli*. We have seen differences in terms of place of birth, type of citizenship or citizenships held, national identity, migratory history, parentage (ethnicity), main language spoken, and religious identification. We find that the stereotypical, born-and-bred, accented Israeli with sole Israel citizenship is actually a relative rarity within Britain's Israeli diaspora. One is actually more likely to meet an Israeli with British and Israel citizenship and who was not born in Israel. Understanding this tremendous diversity may be an important first step on the path to developing actionable policy targeted at the Israeli diaspora.

*The accented, stereotypical Israeli-Israeli with sole Israel citizenship is a relative rarity within Britain's Israeli diaspora*

### Negating the Jewish diaspora?

The finding that one and a half times as many Israelis migrate to Britain as Brits migrate to Israel, raises some important questions about Zionism in the modern age. Classical Zionism included the concept of *shlilat ha-golah*—negation of the diaspora—which conceptualises the Jewish diaspora as being physically precarious and spiritually abject. Classical Zionism also called for *kibbutz ha-galuyot*—the ingathering of the exiles—the strongly desired migratory flow from the Jewish diaspora to Israel through *aliyah* (ascending). Within this framework, movement away from Israel was labelled *yeridah* (descending) and viewed negatively. On a global scale, post-Holocaust patterns of Jewish migration have very much followed these principles: whereas one in five Jews globally lived in Israel in 1970, today more than two out of five do so.<sup>40</sup>

Yet, these new British data, albeit constituting a tiny part of the worldwide picture, indicate there are exceptions to the global trends. A softening of classical Zionist sentiment, alongside increased freedom of movement, particularly for those holding European Union passports, may be attracting Jews away from Israel in search of new opportunities, at a greater rate than Israel is able to attract immigrants from Western countries. Whilst Israel's population continues to grow, close monitoring of migration away from the country may be an increasingly important task.

### An Israeli brain drain?

It is important not least because the Israelis living in Britain are highly educated. Indeed, one Dutch study has found migrant Israelis to be better educated than Israelis in Israel.<sup>41</sup> To some extent this represents evidence of a brain drain, although the numbers involved are small relative to the Israeli population as a whole. Yet Britain and the Netherlands are by no means the only Western countries benefiting from a well-educated, net Israeli migration. A similar situation is arguably in evidence in Australia, and untested claims indicate that much the same phenomenon may also be occurring with the United States and Germany.<sup>42</sup> The cumulative effect of all this net negative movement is surely problematic from Israel's point of view.<sup>43</sup>

*Britain's net migratory gain from Israel—around 2,500 in ten years—represents a demographic dividend for the UK's Jewish community*

### Jewish demographic dividend?

Britain's net migratory gain from Israel—around 2,500 in ten years—represents a demographic dividend for the UK's Jewish community. These migrants are young and in their peak family formation years. While some are haredi, most are 'mainstream', and probably secular, Jews. The significance of this can be seen in the data: the number of recently arrived Israelis living in Britain in early 2011 was larger than



the increase in Britain's Jewish population over the previous decade. A similar point has been made in the aforementioned Dutch study about an Israeli demographic dividend for the Netherlands' Jewish community.<sup>44</sup> Viewed from the perspective of Britain's Jewish community, this is a largely positive story. The Israeli diaspora comes as a welcome injection of vibrancy and growth to a community that has, until recently, suffered from a dearth of good demographic news.

### How engaged are Israelis with Britain's Jewish community?

Bearing in mind that, on the one hand, many Israelis are largely indistinguishable from Jews in Britain (i.e. those who were British born, have British rather than Israeli accents, do not speak Hebrew fluently, and choose to live in the main Jewish suburbs), while, on the other, many other Israelis are new immigrants, to what extent do they participate in, or contribute to, Britain's Jewish society and communal life? Perhaps we can assume that haredi Israelis are fully integrated, at least within the haredi community, but what of other Israelis? This is one area that cannot easily be explained using census data. However, survey data are available which provide some context. The previously referenced Dutch study found that despite having an overwhelmingly secular profile (71% were secular), 41% of Israelis in Holland nevertheless chose to send their children to Jewish schools, despite these being fee-paying.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, recent data from JPR's 2013 National Jewish Community Survey include a small sub-sample of Israel-born Jews, and this also shows that despite most of this group being secular (73%), over half of those with children send them to (mainly free) Jewish schools (53%), thereby displaying almost exactly the same propensity towards Jewish schooling as we find in the native Jewish population (54%).<sup>46</sup>

*Israelis appear to be less engaged overall, though by no means unengaged, in the Jewish community*

However, on other measures, Israelis appear to be rather less engaged: whilst 68% of native respondents are synagogue members, this is the case for just 45% of the Israel-born. Given the high level of secularism among Israelis, this is unsurprising, but levels of engagement with Jewish schools suggest that these may be the primary route through which most Israelis with children are likely to connect to British Jewish communal life. So whilst there will be significant variation within the population, Israelis appear to be less engaged overall, though by no means unengaged, with the Jewish community. Clearly this is an area warranting research.

### What drives Israeli migration?

Finally, there is the important question of what drives Israeli migration? As with data on Israeli engagement with the Jewish community, the census is limited in this respect, but it does provide hints. Given the highly educated profile of the average Israeli migrant, one is tempted to argue that the attractions of Britain's educational and employment opportunities are key. Yet the reality is likely to be more complicated. In addition to Britain's 'pull factors' there are potential 'push factors' from Israel to consider. If the prospects for peace look bleak, or the threat of conflict is high, the incentive to leave presumably increases. Economic factors may also matter—concerns about Israel's rising cost of living led to mass street demonstrations in the summer of 2011.<sup>47</sup>

*A significant amount of international 'mixing and matching' may well be the key migration driver, followed by an intricate mix of economic, security and life-style considerations*

On the other hand, in Britain, apprehension about terrorism and antisemitism, as well as the economic slowdown, are potential deterrents to migration. Of course, in many instances, other, more prosaic factors may ultimately be pivotal, such as the availability of visas and EU passports,

or simply marrying a non-Israeli and choosing to live in the spouse's home country rather than Israel.

Indeed, in the 1996 Dutch study, the authors noted that "choice of partner appears to be the most common motive for [Israelis] coming to Holland, rather than work or political conditions".<sup>48</sup> We know from the census that Israelis in Britain are likely to be partnered, and

survey data suggest that just 9% of partnered Israel-born respondents have a partner who was also Israel-born, suggesting most are partnered to Brits.<sup>49</sup> In other words, a significant amount of international 'mixing and matching' may well be the key migratory driver, followed by an intricate mix of economic, security and life-style considerations, which, together, are currently combining to tip the migration balance away from Israel and towards Britain.

## Appendix

### About the 2011 Census

The 2011 Census was carried out on 27th March 2011 across the UK by three agencies working in parallel. These were the Office for National Statistics (England and Wales) (ONS), National Records of Scotland (NRS), and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Completing the census is compulsory, but the religion question is voluntary. All questions relating to the enumeration of Britain's Israeli population required respondents to write or type in Israel or Hebrew in the appropriate box. The census form used in England can be viewed here (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/the-2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire-content/2011-census-questionnaire-for-england.pdf>).

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Note, on 26th February 2015 ONS published a correction (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/census-products--issues-and-corrections/index.html>) to the published religion data. This slightly increased the size of the Jewish population (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/census-products--issues-and-corrections/religion-correction-factors.xls>) in England and Wales. In this report references to KS209 (updated) relate to this newer figure, whereas KS209 (original) relate to the figures originally published by ONS.

### Commissioned census tables

With a small number of exceptions, data on Israelis were not provided as standard by ONS. Therefore, a large number of tables were specially commissioned at cost by JPR from ONS in order to carry out a thorough analysis.

### Census sample data (SAR)

The 2011 Census Microdata Individual Safeguarded Sample (Regional) data, also known as a Sample of Anonymised Records (SAR), contain anonymised data on 5% of the entire 2011 Census dataset or 2.85 million records in a format that is more analytically versatile and accessible than the enumerated census data.

Although the 2011 SAR contains records on 13,340 Jews by religion, the variable categories it includes are insufficiently detailed to include Israel, necessitating the commissioning of census tables from ONS. However, one variable 'Other passports held' (not including UK and Ireland) contains a category called 'Middle East (Arab League country, Israel, Occupied Palestine, Iran)'. Although Israel is conflated here, cross-tabulating it by religion derives a sample which we can reasonably assume is almost entirely made up of Jews holding Israel passports. For example, census data show there are 33 Jews with sole Iranian citizenship and 34 for the rest of the Middle East (excluding Israel) compared with 4,242 who hold sole Israel passports (ONS 2011 Census Table CT0284). Thus, the SAR data offer a valuable, albeit imperfect, instrument with which to examine the census data on Britain's Jewish Israelis in considerable detail.

## Endnotes

- 1 These figures are for England and Wales only but since very few Israelis live in Scotland or Northern Ireland they are effectively UK proportions as well.
- 2 DellaPergola, S. (2015). "World Jewish Population 2014" Berman Jewish DataBank, p.5.
- 3 The Law of Return guarantees the right of any Jewish person and their immediate family to live in Israel and gain Israel citizenship.
- 4 The literature on the topic of identity is vast. One of the more commonly cited texts is Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (1983, Verso London). Others include Anthony D Smith's *National identity* (1991 Penguin Books, London). Richard Alba has also written about the blurred boundaries of identity (see, for example: "Bright vs. blurred boundaries: Second generation assimilation and exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States", Alba, R.D. (2005), *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (1) 20-49).
- 5 See, for example: Schmool, M. (1995). "Israeli born in the 1991 British Census." London: Board of Deputies of British Jews; Schmool, M. and Cohen, F. (1998) p.31; Kosmin, B.A. and Waterman, S. (1985) "Britain and Israel: Reciprocal flows of Jewish migrants", *The Jewish Quarterly* 31(4) pp.7-11.
- 6 Kosmin and Waterman (1985), op. cit.
- 7 Large or exaggerated Israeli population figures are cited habitually, especially in the media, and more often than not, with minimal, if any, attempt to provide sources or evidence for their derivation. For example, the claim that there are "70,000 to 80,000 Israelis in the UK" has been made by Marcus, R., in "Together at Last?" *Jewish News*, 9 July 2015, p.13; a similar claim—that "there are nearly 80,000 Israelis living and working in Britain"—can also be found in Koren, A. "Secular, no community and rejected" *The Jewish Chronicle*, 6 April 2012; and Winograd, Z. "The highs and lows of Israeli life in Britain" *The Jewish Chronicle*, 1 September 2013, refers to London's "50,000-strong Israeli community".
- 8 Source: ONS 2011 Census Table CT0265. A 'migrant' is defined as someone who intends to stay for at least one year. The figures relate to any religion and exclude a very small number who migrated to Scotland. Since the British Census was carried out in March 2011 the period is 10¼ years in length.
- 9 Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel. These data show the estimated number of British born living in Israel at the end of December 2011 who migrated since January 2001. We gratefully acknowledge Marina Sheps, Director of the Migration Division at CBS, for providing us with these figures.
- 10 The difference between 8,870 Israeli arrivals in Britain and 6,400 British arrivals in Israel (see notes 9 and 10).
- 11 Source: ONS 2011 Census tables KS209 (updated) and ONS 2001 table KS07. The proportion of this group that is Jewish is unknown but another, and far more significant factor contributing to Britain's Jewish population stability, has been the rapid growth of the haredi (strictly Orthodox) population in this period. See: Graham, D. (2013) *2011 Census results (England and Wales): A Tale of Two Jewish populations*, London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, and Staetsky, D. and Boyd, J. (2015). *Strictly Orthodox Rising: What the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- 12 Source: ONS 2011 Census table CT0451, England and Wales, any religion. This total includes 39 people with Irish and Israel passports here counted as dual British citizens.
- 13 Source: ONS 2011 Census SAR dataset.
- 14 Staetsky, L.D, Sheps, M. and Boyd, J. (2013). *Immigration from the United Kingdom to Israel*, London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.
- 15 2011 Census data on age at arrival in the UK do exist but have not been commissioned for this report. A 1996 Dutch study found that 60% of foreign born, self-defined Israelis arrived in Holland before turning thirty years old. See: Kooyman, C. and Almagor, J. (1996). *Israelis in Holland: A Socio-demographic study of Israelis and former Israelis in Holland*. Amsterdam: JMW, p.45.
- 16 Source: 2011 Census SAR data.
- 17 Source: 2011 Census SAR data.
- 18 This data source does not allow us to determine which other languages are spoken, though presumably most speak Hebrew (Source: 2011 Census SAR data). Prevalence of Hebrew is examined on page 10 of this report.
- 19 Source: 2011 Census SAR data. Comparing educational attainment data is not straightforward since foreign qualifications may not be directly comparable, and younger people are more likely to have higher level qualifications than older people. A 1996 Dutch study also found diaspora Israelis to be highly educated; indeed they were, on average, better educated than Israelis living in Israel (Kooyman and Almagor, op. cit., pp.49-50).
- 20 Each option required respondents to write or type in "Israel," "Israeli," or, for language, "Hebrew."
- 21 Source: ONS 2011 Census tables CT0392 and CT0284.

- 22 Interpreting what these data mean in terms of Jewish practice and communal engagement is difficult. The 1996 Dutch survey referred to earlier, found that 73% of Israelis in Holland described themselves as secular, and concluded that they have a “weak attachment to Judaism.” (Kooyman and Algamor, op. cit., p.63, p.72). See also “How engaged are Israeli Jews with Britain’s Jewish community?” p.15 in the summary of this report.
- 23 People born in Israel were less likely to respond to the census’s religion question than the general population (12% Israel-born v 7% in general), but also far less likely to report “No Religion” (11% Israel-born v 25% generally). Source: ONS 2011 Census table KS209 (updated) and Table CT0289.
- 24 458 people were born in Israel and reported being Jewish by ethnic group rather than by religion. Of these, 259 reported “No religion” and 161 did not respond to the religion question. Source: ONS 2011 Census table CT0289.
- 25 For example, a person may consider themselves to be culturally Jewish or may simply have chosen not to answer the census’s voluntary religion question. Alternatively, certain quarters such as Orthodox institutions, may consider anyone with Jewish matrilineal heritage to be Jewish through *halacha* (religious law), whether or not the person him or herself does so.
- 26 Kooyman and Algamor, op. cit., p.98.
- 27 Source: ONS 2011 Census tables KS209 (updated) and QS213. All percentages relate to England and Wales.
- 28 The local authorities are Hackney, Haringey, Salford, and Gateshead (see further Vulkan, D. and Graham, D. (2008). *Population Trends among Britain’s Strictly Orthodox Jews*, London: Board of Deputies of British Jews). Country of birth data based on any religion. Source: ONS 2011 Census Table QS213EW.
- 29 This relates to any religion. Note the range depends on whether Golders Green, a religiously mixed ward with a large Jewish population, is included. The haredi wards are New River, Seven Sisters, Springfield, Lordship, Cazenove, Broughton, and Kersal. Source: ONS 2011 Census tables CT0289, QS204 and CT0287.
- 30 Data relate to 2009. Source: Paltiel, A. (2013). “Estimation of the size and vital rates of the haredi (ultra-orthodox) population in Israel for the purpose of long-range population projections.” *Israel Central Bureau of Statistics*, p.12.
- 31 Staetsky et. al. (2013) op. cit., pp.3-4; Kosmin and Waterman (1985), op. cit.
- 32 This means they have lived or intend to live in the UK for at least one year. Note that this total includes 225 short-term Israel-born residents (i.e. those living in the UK for between three and twelve months in total).
- 33 Source: ONS 2011 Census table CT0289; ONS 2001 Census table C0414.
- 34 Source: ONS 2011 Census table KS209 (original).
- 35 For example, of the 4,427 Israelis by ethnic group, most (73%) were born in Israel but 27% (1,186 people) were not. However we could only include these 1,186 additional Israeli ethnics if we know they are not Israel citizens, otherwise we risk double counting. This level of table complexity is beyond the scope of the present analysis. Source: ONS 2011 Census tables CT0275 and CT0289.
- 36 There were 1,186 people, of any religion, with Israeli ethnicity but who were not born in Israel. However, to establish whether these are ‘additional’ Israelis would require access to citizenship data. Given the multiple potential permutations of these types of sub-group, and that each table must be designed and purchased separately, the task rapidly becomes costly and unmanageable.
- 37 There were 4,559 Israel citizens who did not report Jewish (Source: ONS 2011 Census tables CT0284 and CT0451). However, Diagram 2 (p.10) indicates that 29% of Israel citizens living in Britain were not born in Israel. So this may very roughly amount to around 1,300 additional Israelis.
- 38 Kooyman and Algamor, op. cit. have noted in Holland that “most Dutch [born] Jews who return from Israel [to Holland] apparently do not consider themselves Israelis.” (p.40). This raises the issue of over-representation in the census. In other words, not every person in the census data would personally identify as Israeli even if they happened to have an Israeli passport.
- 39 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/2011-census-user-guide/quality-and-methods/quality/quality-measures/response-and-imputation-rates/index.html>.
- 40 20% in 1970 rising to 43% in 2014. DellaPergola (2015), op. cit., p.27.
- 41 Kooyman and Almagor, op. cit. pp.49-50.
- 42 A separate analysis of 2011 Australian census data indicate that there may have been almost five times as many Israeli migrants arriving in Australia as Australians migrating to Israel over the 2000 to 2010 period. The 2011 Australian Census records 3,475 Israeli arrivals in Australia compared with 731 Australian arrivals in Israel. Sources: Statistical Abstract of Israel op. cit. (data include New Zealand); Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census, data extracted online from TableBuilder. Regarding

Germany see: <http://forward.com/news/154277/jews-stream-back-to-germany/>

- 43 DellaPergola, S. (2011). *Jewish Demographic Policies: Population Trends and Options in Israel and in the Diaspora*. Jerusalem: Jewish People Policy Institute.
- 44 Kooyman and Almagor, op. cit. p.25.
- 45 Ibid., p.98.
- 46 JPR's 2013 National Jewish Community Survey (NJCS) contained data on 72 Israel-born respondents. These figures have not been published previously.

For more details about the survey, see: Graham, D., Staetsky, L. and Boyd, J. (2014). *Jews in the United Kingdom in 2013: Preliminary findings from the National Jewish Community Survey*, London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

- 47 BBC News, 2011 "Israelis hold renewed mass protests over living costs" 3 September 2011.
- 48 Kooyman and Almagor, op. cit. p.47.
- 49 NJCS (2013), op. cit. Author's analysis of previously unpublished data.

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