

- The recent Pew study of American Jews found that about 70% of Jews feel a strong or some emotional attachment to Israel. Another recent study found that 70% of American Jews strongly or somewhat agree with the statement: “Caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew.”
- In recent years, criticism of Israel has become more acceptable, and the regional reality does not grant Israel immunity from criticism. Diaspora Jews feel confident in the right to have a voice in Israel’s Jewish matters, but less so when it comes to foreign and defense policy, and most Israelis believe that World Jewry makes a better case for attempting to influence Israel on matters related to Judaism than on matters directly related to foreign affairs and security.
- Jews in communities around the world agree that Israel should be more inclusive and pluralistic about its Judaism. They agree that Israel’s Orthodox monopoly is undemocratic, and limits the full participation of all Jews in the life of the Jewish state. To Diaspora Jews, not being inclusive and tolerant of other types of Judaism makes Israel less ‘democratic.’
- A clear, cross-denominational majority of Jews express dissatisfaction with Israel’s the relationship of religion and state in Israel, with Israel’s rabbinate, and with Israel’s marriage and conversion laws. Israelis share Diaspora Jews’ unfavorable view of how state-religion affairs are handled in Israel. A recent poll found that 76% of Israelis are dissatisfied with the government’s handling of religious affairs in Israel.
- Jews around the world would like to be consulted by Israel on matters of importance to them, and many of them believe that these consultations should have more impact on Israel’s policies, and most Israelis Jews believe that Israel’s future largely depends on the Diaspora. 70% of Israelis agree that the Knesset should consider the Diaspora when deliberating on legislation like ‘who is a Jew’.
- The desire to free Shabbat of government involvement was based in part on the assumption that it erodes rather than strengthens the power of Shabbat. A majority of World Jewry believes that Israel could support institutions and programs that aim to assist Israelis with practicing their Jewishness, but the support should be available to all streams of Judaism and also to religiously neutral “civic alternatives”.
- The ‘Jewish and democratic’ formula is embraced by virtually all parties to the debate. Assertions that Israel should be ‘only Jewish’ or ‘only democratic’ are outside the consensus view of Diaspora Jews. If Israel wants to be ‘Jewish and democratic’ in a way that speaks to non-Israeli Jews, it needs to modify its understanding of what being ‘Jewish’ means to many millions of Jews today – and find a way to be more inclusive of them.
- The ambiguity inherent in the precise definition of ‘Jewish and democratic’ is perceived by many as an advantage as it makes it possible to maintain partnership and avoid factionalism and division.