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Fear, Fantasy, and Family: Israel's Significance to American Jews

By

Sarah Anne Minkin

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in the

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Dissertation committee:

Professor Raka Ray, Chair

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Abstract

Fear, Fantasy, and Family: Israel's Significance to American Jews

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Raka Ray, Chair

This dissertation investigates the construction and maintenance of ethnic boundaries in the face of contestation over core values. The dynamics of American Jewish communal structures and American Jews' relationships to the state of Israel offer a case study for exploring questions of boundary-maintenance, diasporic nationalism, and the social power of emotion. Specifically, this dissertation asks how, given disagreement and struggle over the ways in which Jewish Americans relate to the state of Israel, Jewish organizations strategize to develop and maintain Jewish community. It argues that dominant American Jewish organizations act like a social movement in mobilizing American Jews to identify with a particular version of the Jewish collective, which contributes to nationalist and political goals. Contestation over the state of Israel is central to the organized Jewish community's efforts to produce and regulate Jewish identity.

Dominant American Jewish organizations seek to shape collective identity in the face of growing challenge by reasserting three key emotional frames through which they promote American Jewish connection to the state of Israel. These frames, which draw from existing cultural understandings, beliefs, and practices, are: a sense of interconnectedness, interdependence, and love, which resembles and reflects the claim that the Jewish nation is family; a sense of the state of Israel as the potential culmination of the most noble of Jewish and liberal values, such that the state represents a collective fantasy of aspirations realized; and the dual sense of both vulnerability and power, as an historically persecuted people with access to substantial political and financial resources. These three main threads – familial love, collective fantasy, and vulnerability and empowerment – form the basis of the emotional disposition the dominant Jewish organizations seek to inculcate.

Using qualitative data gathered through ethnography and content analysis, this dissertation argues that the performance of the prescribed emotional disposition towards the state of Israel facilitates and expresses a sense of belonging to the American Jewish collective. These emotions also operate as a boundary marker, disciplining Jewish identity and variations of belonging to the collective. American Jews who breach the boundaries of the collective through critique of Israeli state policies toward Palestinians face potential marginalization or exclusion. Finally, in looking at the ways in which American Jewish organizations make meaning out of, and regulate relationships with, the state of Israel, this dissertation argues that the collective identity making processes of American Jews have tangible implications in the lives of Jews and Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every June, the Jewish community in the Bay Area gathers as a whole entity, drawing Jews from the north, south and east – from Napa, Palo Alto, Walnut Creek, and all points in between – to San Francisco to enjoy culture, music, and togetherness. Billed as the “largest Jewish gathering in the Pacific Northwest,” the daylong event celebrates the state of Israel with music, food, vendors, and laudatory speeches¹ Tens of thousands of Jews and hundreds of Jewish organizations gather at this event, which is organized by the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation, the largest and most important convener of Jewish life in the Bay Area.

The 2010 “Israel in the Gardens,” as this event is known, hosted not only the festival but also a vigil and counter-vigil, where Bay Area Jews protested against each other’s views on the state of Israel. For the vigil, about 60 people, mostly women, marched in front of the main entrance, carrying signs with slogans including “Another Jew Against Israeli Attacks on Civilians,” “End the Occupation,” and “Jewish-Only Settlements Displace Palestinians.” These vigilers, most of whom were affiliated with a group called “Jewish Voice for Peace” (JVP), marched in silence for an hour. While the organized Jewish community was celebrating Israel, these Jews aimed to register their disapproval of Israeli policy towards Palestinians and the Palestinian Territories in a confrontational but nonviolent manner.

As the vigilers marched, another group of near equal numbers gathered to oppose them, standing a few feet away and holding Israeli flags and signs with slogans such as “Israel: We Stand with You” and “JVP: Providing Political Cover for Anti-Semites.” These counter-protesters, mainly from the group “StandWithUs” (SWU), chanted and yelled at the JVP vigilers, calling them “*bitches*” and “*kapos*,” the name of the Nazi concentration camp prisoners who were forced to collaborate with the Nazis in the camps. One man threatened violence against the JVP vigilers. A few police separated the two demonstrations, occasionally reminding the SWU protesters to keep their distance from the JVP vigilers.

As the vigil and counter-vigil were in front of the main entrance to the Israel celebration, some attendees stopped to observe and many joined the counter-vigil, adding to the shouting and cursing against the critics of Israel. The festival continued without pause, and attendees who were not near that entrance at that time might not have known there was any confrontation at all. This vigil was one of many such encounters I observed in person, in newspapers, and over social media demonstrating the boundaries of belonging and exclusion from Jewish community around the topic of the state of Israel. These encounters reflect the growing contentiousness among American Jews over the topic of Israel and vitriol and public nature of many confrontations.

This dissertation looks at the contestation over American Jews’ relationships with the state of Israel, as framed, maintained, and regulated by the dominant Jewish organizations. Using qualitative research methods, this dissertation uses a sociological lens to investigate the production of collective Jewish identity in relation to the state of Israel. As the extreme responses to the JVP vigil suggest, questions of belonging, affection, loyalty, politics, history, and the proper expression of critique are

¹ <http://www.jewishfed.org/event/israel-gardens-jewish-community-celebration> (Retrieved October 8, 2013).

central to understanding Jewish identity and relationships to the state of Israel. This dissertation focuses on the Bay Area of Northern California from 2009 – 2013.

To return to our opening example, as ethnographic data on the Bay Area Jewish community, this vigil and counter-vigil illustrate a number of community dynamics. There are the insiders and the outsiders: after finishing their vigil, the Jewish Voice for Peace vigilers folded up their signs and left the area, while the StandWithUs counter-vigil returned to the festival, where their organization had a large booth in a prominent position near the entrance. The state of Israel forms the object of affection and celebration in the Bay Area's largest annual gathering and the voice of StandWithUs, the voice of defending the state of Israel, dominates that gathering. Though StandWithUs is small and marginal in comparison with the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation, it operates with the implicit and often explicit backing of the dominant organizations in the organized Jewish community. In addition, where the Jewish Voice for Peace vigilers offered critique of specific Israeli policies, the counter-vigilers responded with general defense of the state of Israel along with accusations and slurs against the Israel critics. With the term "*kapo*" and the notion of providing "cover" for people who hate Jews, the StandWithUs protesters accused the Jewish Voice for Peace vigilers of disloyalty to the Jewish collective. The expression of critique of the state of Israel and the public show of *dis*unity in the Jewish collective leave one vulnerable to questions of loyalty to the collective.

This introduction proceeds as follows: the next few pages provide an in-depth look at boundary making over acceptable and unacceptable speech, using a case study of the criticism Hannah Arendt faced after publication of *Eichmann in Jerusalem: On the Banality of Evil* (1963). This case study operates as something of a parable, offering insight into the language and mechanisms of marginalization and exclusion. Following this discussion of Arendt, the chapter moves into exploring the intersection between nationalism and the sociology of emotions, which are the core theoretical concerns of this dissertation. Then follows an overview on the role and meaning of the state of Israel in American Jewish identity and identification of the key institutional bodies in the Bay Area in the production and contestation over American Jews' relationships to the state of Israel. Following a discussion of the research methodology, this introduction ends with summaries of each chapter.

I. The Case of Hannah Arendt and Insufficient *Abavat Yisrael*, *Love for Israel*

In 1960, the Israeli intelligence services ("The Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations," known as the Mossad) captured former Nazi SS Lieutenant General Adolph Eichmann in Argentina, where he had fled after World War II, and brought him to Israel for trial. Eichmann was a Nazi leader, primarily responsible for organizing the transportation logistics that enabled the Nazis to transport millions of European Jews to death camps. He was charged, tried and found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and hanged.² This trial, held just over 15 years after the Nuremberg trials, garnered extensive international attention. Political philosopher Hannah Arendt, a German Jew and Holocaust refugee, covered the trial, writing a series of articles published first in the *New Yorker* and then adapted and compiled in the book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (first published by Viking Press in 1963 and republished most recently by Penguin Books in 2006).

² Under Israeli law, the death penalty may only be instituted during peacetime for conviction on crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, or crimes against the Jewish People. Eichmann is the only person the state of Israel has executed under civil law.

Arendt's reporting set off a firestorm; "no book within living memory had elicited similar passions" (Elon 2006:93). Leading Jewish organizations launched campaigns against her, an array of intellectuals excoriated her in the Jewish, American, Israeli, and European press (Bachr 2000), and prominent Zionists and Jewish leaders denounced not just the writing but sometimes the writer herself as a "self-hating Jew" (Elon 2006: 100, Zertal 2002) or as having sympathy for Nazism (Zertal 2002: 129). Several of Arendt's personal relationships were strained or broken. Critics made claims that were "often false and repeated," including that Arendt blamed Jewish victims for their own deaths, an accusation that was "even codified in the Encyclopedia Judaica" (Elon: 2006: 94). All in all, Arendt experienced concerted "character smear" (Zertal 2002: 129) and "a kind of excommunication" (Elon 2006: 100) that was so thorough that none of her work was translated into Hebrew, Israel's dominant language, until 2000.

On the face of it, Arendt's critics focused primarily on two of her observations: one, that Eichmann was "not a monster" but rather a normal and obedient bureaucrat; and two, that the leadership of the European Jewish communities largely cooperated with the Nazi Final Solution, when they could have chosen "to do nothing" instead.³ Arendt's critique of the Jewish leadership was not new (Elon 2006, Ascheim 2001, Zertal 2002); questions about their behavior during the Holocaust were already part of public discourse, documented and discussed by historians, Holocaust survivors (Elon 2006, Segev 1993), and in the Israeli courtroom.⁴ Additionally, Arendt did not deny Eichmann's culpability for the murder of millions of Jews but rather questioned the prosecution's claim that he was an essential Nazi leader driven by deep-seated anti-Semitism. While historians have confirmed her assessment of his relative unimportance in the Nazi regime (Lipstadt 2011:163), the discussion over what Arendt called "the banality of evil" continues.

Arendt was also criticized for the way she wrote about the state of Israel, labeled "anti-Israel" and "anti-Zionist" for rejecting the state of Israel's use of the trial as a nationalist banner. Prior to the early 1940s convergence of differing Zionist groups around the ambition to achieve a Jewish state, Arendt had been an active Zionist. She worked with the movement, helping Jews escape Nazi Europe for British Mandate Palestine and advocating a joint Jewish-Arab solution for Palestine, before publicly breaking with it over the decision to pursue a Jewish state, foreseeing the dispossession of Palestinians that would come with it.

Before the Eichmann trial began, a number of intellectuals and journalists suggested that an international tribunal would be a more appropriate courtroom. Israel's founding prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, championed the trial as a message of Jewish power, proclaiming that "only anti-

³ *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Bauer, Penguin Press (2000): 391-396.

⁴ "The Kastner affair," ("Parashat Kastner," in Hebrew, the name indicating a public scandal) refers to a libel suit against a Holocaust survivor who accused a member of the Hungarian Jewish leadership during the Holocaust of collaboration with the Nazis, brought the questions of collaboration versus responsible leadership to the front pages of the Israeli newspapers in the 1950s. Rudolph Katsner negotiated with Adolph Eichmann as a representative of Hungarian Jewry, managing to save hundreds of Hungarian Jews in a deal that remains controversial and contested to this day. Just how contested and complicated these questions of collaboration and negotiation could be was apparent in the long and detailed judicial decision against Kastner and for his accuser, a decision that was later overturned by the Israeli Supreme Court. Kastner was assassinated in 1957, just a few years before the Eichmann trial. See Idith Zertal, 2006. *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* and Tom Segev, 1993. *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*.

Semites or Jews with an inferiority complex” would suggest that Eichmann should be tried before an international court (quoted in Young-Bruehl 1982: 341). Arendt defended Israel’s right to hold the trial, and she also agreed with the decision to execute Eichmann. However, she identified a conflict between the “servants of justice and the servants of Israel” (Young-Bruehl: 340) and her prior public criticism of Zionist hegemony had already placed her outside the boundaries of the Zionist collective.⁵ Indeed, Ben-Gurion said that one of the main messages of the Eichmann trial was “Jews are not sheep to be slaughtered but a people who can hit back” (quoted in Young-Bruehl, 1982:341). Elsewhere, Ben-Gurion spoke of Holocaust survivors as “human dust” and unfit “human material” (cite). Arendt did not see Holocaust victims in this manner. She sided with the regular Jews, the ones who were not prominent or well-connected enough for the possibility of being saved, and she critiqued the Jewish leadership for not sharing what they knew of the death awaiting the Jews so they might be the “sovereign individuals” Arendt saw them as, capable of “thinking for themselves and taking decisions, even if only to the manner and timing of their deaths” (Zertal 2002: 139-140).

Steven Aschheim, an Israeli scholar of German Jewish history, argues “it was precisely [Arendt’s] *involvement*” in the major issues and questions of Jewish life and struggle in the 20th century that “rendered her so threatening;” Arendt had “troubling relevance” (2001: 2; emphasis in original). Israeli historian Idith Zertal argues that the narrative Arendt introduced was so “intolerable” because it “stemmed from within, from within the family...from a Jewish woman who was well acquainted with the Jewish story” (2002: 133-4).

Arendt’s “troubling relevance”: Both insider and outsider

In nearly all of the ongoing inquiry into Arendt’s intellectual contribution (and scholars continue this debate to this day), one particular critique is uniquely cited, singularly among all the attacks Arendt faced over *Eichmann in Jerusalem*: that of Gershom Scholem.⁶ Scholem, a prominent German scholar of Jewish mysticism who settled in British Mandate Palestine, shared intellectual and political interests with Arendt, as well as a mutual admiration and friendship with Walter Benjamin. Scholem originally shared Arendt’s commitment to Arab and Jewish binationalism (Magid 2009); both were active in the Brit Shalom movement, a Zionist effort for coexistence and binationalism. Arendt and Scholem carried on a long intellectual, often affectionate, correspondence that ended after they fell out over her reporting on the Eichmann trial. A closer reading of this exchange offers insight into larger themes relating to Jewish culture, belonging and identity as these emerge from the controversy over and critique of Hannah Arendt.

⁵ Moreover, with his statement, Ben-Gurion presents the state of Israel as the empowered, armed opposite of the victimized, annihilated Jews of Europe, invoking and reiterating the binary construction of Israel/Diaspora; empowered/victimized; militarized/defenseless; masculinized/feminized. Always drafted into this binary are the indigenous Palestinians who form the newer enemy and opposition to the state of Israel, such that the concept of the empowered, armed Jew is set in opposition to both the Nazis in Europe and the indigenous Arabs in British Mandate Palestine (Mayer 2000).

⁶ Their correspondence over the Eichmann trial is repeatedly cited in scholarship on that era, suggesting its continued resonance. Arendt’s response to Scholem has also claimed an important place in her (English-language) archive; her letter to him is one of the few texts from this chapter of her life included in the Penguin edition of her most important works, included in *The Portable Hannah Arendt* (2000, ed. Peter Baehr).

In a 1963 letter to Arendt, Scholem wrote

At each decisive juncture, however, your book speaks only of the *weakness* of the Jewish stance in the world. I am ready enough to admit that weakness; but you put such emphasis upon it that, in my view, your account ceases to be objective and acquires overtones of malice....It is that heartless, frequently almost sneering and malicious tone with which these matters, touching the very quick of our life, are treated in your book to which I take exception.

In the Jewish tradition there is a concept, hard to define and yet concrete enough, which we know as *Ababath Israel*: “Love of the Jewish people...” In you, dear Hannah...I find little trace of this. A discussion such as is attempted in your book would seem to me to require ... the most old-fashioned, the most circumspect, the most exacting treatment possible – precisely because of the feelings aroused by this matter, this matter of the destruction of one-third of our people – and I regard you wholly as a daughter of our people and in no other way.⁷

Scholem voices his disappointment in Arendt in the language of tone, noting, like many others (Elon 2006, Lipstadt 2011, Zertal 2002), Arendt’s insights would have been better served by a more measured and careful approach. He reprimands her for her judgment, air of superiority, and lack of sympathy and generosity. Most importantly, he couches his reprimand in the language of loyalty (Zertal 2002). The notion that Arendt’s disturbing tone represents a lack of “*Abavat Yisrael*”⁸ suggests that having this kind of love for fellow Jews would have ameliorated the judgment and harshness Scholem identifies in Arendt. Scholem suggests that a member of this nation (as the term “daughter of” in Hebrew indicates a female member of the collective) should hold a particular emotional orientation towards her people, and that orientation could, or should, moderate her critique. Indeed, the statement that he “regard[s] [Arendt] wholly as a daughter of our people and in no other way” intimates that he has to assert her membership despite the missing sentiment. While other critics denounced Arendt as a “self-hating Jew” or even a Nazi (Elon 2006, Zertal 2002), Scholem makes clear that he sees her as a full member of the Jewish collectivity. At the same time, his understanding of belonging suggests a different expression of connection to a Jewish collectivity than demonstrated by Arendt. Scholem’s critique is both a reprimand and a diagnosis. If Arendt had shown the right kind of feeling for other Jews, she would have formed her words differently. Notably, Scholem’s accusation that Arendt lacks *Abavat Yisrael* is the most cited portion of his critique of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. This naming of the problem in Arendt’s approach resonates – as both assertion and question - in the continued debate over Arendt’s intellectual contributions.

Arendt’s response: dangerous emotional politics

A close reading of Arendt’s response allows detailed entry into the tensions inherent in being critical of the collective to which one belongs, as well as the specific particularities of Jewish belonging, methods of critique, and specific sensitivities.

⁷ Their correspondence was published in *Encounter*, January 1964. It is available at: <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Encounter-1964jan-00051> (Retrieved March 6, 2013).

⁸ The term *Abavat Yisrael* is “Ahabath Israel” rendered in modern Hebrew. I use it here in place of Scholem’s older construction because of the contemporary resonance and usage of the concept of “love for Israel.”

Arendt responds to Scholem, saying that she finds Scholem's assertion that he sees her "wholly as a daughter of our people and in no other way" to be "puzzling," because, she says, "I have never pretended to be anything else or to be in any other way than I am...it would have been like saying that I was a man and not a woman – that is to say, kind of insane."⁹ She continues, "I know, of course, that there is a "Jewish problem" even on this level, but it has never been my problem – not even in my childhood. I have always regarded my Jewishness as one of the indisputable factual data of my life." Here Arendt acknowledges the political and social dynamics that led many Jews to disassociate themselves from Jewishness – as a strategy for survival or advancement – even as she assertively affirms her Jewish self-identification.

Arendt addresses the question of *Ahavat Yisrael* directly, both by asking Scholem about the genealogy of the term¹⁰ and by asserting:

Never in my life 'loved' any people or collective - neither the German people, nor the French, nor the American, nor the working class or anything of that sort. I indeed love "only" my friends and the only kind of love I know of and believe in is the love of persons. Secondly, this "love of the Jews" would appear to me, since I am myself Jewish, as something rather suspect. I cannot love myself or anything which I know is part and parcel of my own person.

She is not familiar with the concept *Ahavat Yisrael* and she disagrees with its prescription, to which both her political and personal philosophy are opposed. In other words, she objects to the very notion of the nation as a humanized "super-organism;" only human beings are objects of personal affection. She continues:

To clarify this, let me tell you of a conversation I had in Israel with a prominent political personality who was defending the – in my opinion disastrous – non-separation of state and religion in Israel. What he said – I am not sure of the exact words anymore – ran something like this: "You will understand that, as a Socialist, I, of course, do not believe in God; I believe in the Jewish people." I found this a shocking statement and, being too shocked, I did not reply at the time. But I could have answered: the greatness of this people was once that it believed in God, and believed in Him in such a way that its trust and love towards Him was greater than its fear. And now this people believes only in itself? What good can come out of that? – Well, in this sense I do not "love" the Jews, nor do I "believe" in them; I merely belong to them as a matter of course, beyond dispute or argument.

With this example, Arendt articulates the danger in sacralizing the nation as a substitute for the divine. Not only does she personally disagree with the idea that a Jew must "love" fellow Jews *as* Jews, but she thinks that prescribing such a form of belonging is dangerous – "disastrous" – when linked to the structure and powers of a state. Arendt continues, saying:

⁹ Arendt's response to Scholem can be found in *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Bauer, Penguin Press (2000): 391-396. All of the citations of Arendt's writing in this section are taken from this publication.

¹⁰ As she writes, "(Incidentally, I would be very grateful if you could tell me since when this concept has played a role in Judaism, when it was first used in Hebrew language and literature, etc.)"

We could discuss the same issue in political terms; and we should then be driven to a consideration of patriotism. That there can be no patriotism without permanent opposition and criticism is common ground between us.

Here Arendt likens belonging to the Jewish people to citizenship, comparing *Abavat Yisrael* to patriotism. Her criticism of Jewish actions resembles the “loyal opposition” that she believes is essential to politics.

Arendt’s last statement with regard to *Abavat Yisrael* is this:

But I can admit to you something beyond that, namely, that wrong done by my own people naturally grieves me more than wrong done by other peoples. This grief, however, in my opinion, is not for display, even if it should be the innermost motive for certain actions or attitudes. Generally speaking, the role of the “heart” in politics seems to me altogether questionable. You know as well as I how often those who merely report certain unpleasant facts are accused of lack of soul, lack of heart, or lack of what you call *Herzenstakt* [sympathy]. We both know, in other words, how often these emotions are used in order to conceal factual truth.

In this passage, Arendt simultaneously affirms her particular relationship with Jewish people and their actions while refusing to “display” – or perform – that relationship, and especially not as it may relate to politics. Arendt’s response to Scholem makes clear that *Eichmann in Jerusalem* is a political text; that is, for Arendt, discussion of the Holocaust and Israel are not sacred theological matters, as “modern Jewish eschatology” holds (Kelner 2010: xix). Similarly, she recognizes Scholem’s use of *Abavat Yisrael* as similar to other methods to indict a speaker for lack of appropriate emotion. She identifies the use of the language of a heart-based connection (that is, love - “heart,” “soul,” “sympathy”) to obfuscate public discourse and undermine the bearer of “unpleasant facts.” Jewish Israeli historian Idith Zertal argues that in writing about Eichmann, Arendt entered into “the struggle for control of Jewish memory, its language, meaning, bearers, and custodians” taking place in the “complex connection” between “the two central and identity constructing events in the Jewish history of the twentieth century – the destruction of European Jewry and the establishment of the State of Israel” (2002: 128). The exchange between Scholem and Arendt points to this struggle and some points of departure that relate to these central identity-constructing events. First, there is the notion that appropriate feeling towards a collective – love, belonging, sympathy – is expected to moderate behavior and, in particular, to shape or limit particular kinds of speech. This is Scholem’s expectation of Arendt, and the emotional political position she rejects. Second, there is a disagreement over what is sacred and beyond probing or full comprehension and what must be understood and analyzed. For Scholem, “Jewish history was a kind of mystic entity,” of which “analytical and rational examination was sacrilege” (Ibid: 152). Arendt rejected that view not only because she believed Jewish history invited and required rational, critical analysis, but also because she believed the notion that Jewish history is outside of history negatively impacts Jewish behavior (Ibid: 151-2). That is, Arendt did not share Scholem’s approach to the sacred, but she also did not remove herself from the central questions and dilemmas of Jewish history, culture, and values.

Arendt maintained a “natural, unquestionable loyalty to her Jewish selfhood,” an identity she expressed not through membership in clubs or organizations but through her expression of “Jewish sensitivities and commitments” (Zertal 2002: 158). These included care for refugees, both Jewish and non-Jewish, as well as fulfilling an intellectual role of outsidership and independent thought

(Ibid). This perspective and the thinking it enabled, combined with the personal affections and affinities Arendt held, enabled her to see herself as “loyal opposition.” This is the role Arendt saw herself holding with respect to Zionism and the state of Israel. Yet where she believed critique and opposition were a form of belonging and commitment, she found herself criticized, denounced, and attacked by Jewish and Israeli thinkers and leaders.

This case of Hannah Arendt offers an historic antecedent for the discourse around the state of Israel among American Jews today. It is also something of a parable. Deeply concerned with the questions and issues shaping Jewish life and the world-at-large in the 20th century – nationalism, totalitarianism, anti-semitism, evil – and deeply rooted in Jewish experience, Arendt found herself excluded from Jewish communities. She was denounced and ostracized, while her writing was stigmatized. This punishment for speech deemed undesirable by the central institutions of the collective has parallels in today’s boundary-making in Jewish communities over the state of Israel. Similarly, this boundary-making regulates Jewish discussion of nationalism, the behavior of a state, the protection of human and civil rights, and the relationship between an individual and the collective. This dissertation will explore these themes of communal norms, the role of critique, and the disciplining of the critic, through the original data gathered in this research. We turn now to the theoretical underpinnings of this inquiry.

II. The “Feeling Rules” of American Jewish Identification with Israel

In his now classic *Theories of Nationalism*, Anthony Smith (2000) discusses the origins of nationalism and types of modern nations, noting that “the nation is not a fixed, once-for-all state of being, but a moving target” and, therefore, “nationalism...is continually renewed” (13). Nationalism, he tells us, is the ideological movement that aims to create and maintain a nation’s “autonomy, unity and identity” (12). In other words, nationalism is the intentional and ongoing effort to produce the nation as a nation, differentiating it from others (asserting its autonomy), binding it together (ensuring its unity) and developing its unique sense of itself (defining its identity). Nations, like any group (Taylor and Whittier), exist insofar as they differentiate themselves from other groups and articulate a group-specific identity.

Taking ethnic identity as a form of nationalist identity,¹¹ this dissertation investigates the construction and maintenance of ethnic boundaries in the face of contestation over core values. The dynamics of American Jewish communal structures and American Jews’ relationships to the state of Israel offer the case for exploring questions over boundary-maintenance and contestation. Specifically, this dissertation asks how, given contestation over the ways in which Jewish Americans relate to the state of Israel, Jewish organizations strategize to develop and maintain Jewish community.

From a theoretical perspective, this exploration of the effect that relationships to the state of Israel have on the articulation and implementation of Jewish communal boundaries is situated at the intersection of sociological inquiries into the mobilization of individuals into or within values-driven collectives, a topic in which scholars of social movements are particularly interested; and the construction and development of collective identity in ethnic or religious groups, an area in which

¹¹ According to Anthony Smith, members of the ethno-nation, as opposed to the civic nation, share customs and traditions, religion and myths of origin, a sense of shared history and a vernacular language, but not necessarily land. The civic nation, in comparison, is a territorially-based political community (Smith 2000:16).

scholars of nationalism (and diasporism) are focused. Examining scholarship on political mobilization, identity construction, and nationalist projects, this dissertation looks at the role of emotional discourses and practices in identifying and constructing boundaries around collectives, a role that has, as yet, been undeveloped in the sociological literature.

Scholars agree that emotions are important in “every aspect of political action” (Jasper 2011: 285) impacting the goals, means, and vehicles and justifications of political engagement (Jasper 2011). Scholars have looked at the cultivation of affective ties and emotional bonds for the benefit of the nation or state (Berezin 2001) or continued participation in social movements (Gould 2002, 2004, 2009; Jasper 1998, 2011). Scholars have also looked at negative emotions, or emotional stimuli (such as shock), investigating their potential to mobilize populations (Gould 2009) or shore up collective identity and boundaries through identification of and opposition to other groups (Jasper 2011). Emotion operates as a key component of culture. With regard to group identity, people deploy culture “to delineate group boundaries and to signal membership to other group members (DiMaggio 1987), to differentiate themselves from others (Bourdieu 1984; Lamont 1992; Lamont and Fournier 1992; Waters 1990), and to establish and maintain alliances (Barth 1969; Cohen 1974)” (Swidler 2003: 74-5).

Deborah Gould, who has studied the transformation of gay communities through AIDS activism, argues that communities have collective emotional orientations. She calls this orientation “emotional habitus” to describe the “socially constituted, prevailing ways of feeling and emotion, as well as the embodied, axiomatic understandings and norms about feelings and their expressions” within a community (2009:10). With this term, Gould argues that the social science understanding that emotion is socially constructed and culturally specific applies to communities as well as individuals. She argues that communities themselves have hegemonic emotional dispositions that reflect communal norms both in the emotion that is expressed and in the communal interpretation of emotion and its expression. Gould argues that emotions both express and shape social standards, explaining “an emotion...brings a vague bodily intensity or sensation into the realm of cultural meanings and normativity, systems of signification that structure our very feelings” (Ibid: 21).¹² The expression of emotion simultaneously affirms and constructs cultural norms. Dawne Moon (2013) adds to this definition, asserting that people deploy emotions in the process of defining the collective and implementing the “normative requirements” for membership. For collectives, emotions serve as a “medium of...social power,” and in particular for “punitive and disciplinary power,” such that they facilitate “symbolic exclusion” from the collective. Thus communities develop collective ways of feeling and emotion, their “emotional habitus,” and these norms and understandings not only describe communal disposition but also regulate communal boundaries by serving as channels not only for belonging but also for discipline and exclusion.

Recognizing emotions as socially constructed also does not diminish from experiencing them as real, in much the same way that any social category - such as race or gender – is simultaneously constructed and also fully lived as real. Sociologists agree that emotions should be studied as social

¹² Gould explains that “emotion” refers to both affect and emotion, whereas “an” or “the” emotion refers to an “actualized” feeling. In this way, her term “emotional habitus” includes both affect and emotion (2009:22). Affect is often understood as nascent, pre-verbal feeling and emotion as a feeling to which people are able to give more concrete expression. Gould’s “emotional habitus” encapsulates both “unfixed, unstructured” affect and the related but more socially legible emotion.

phenomena (Hochschild 1990; Thoit 1989); emotions are neither spontaneous, precultural, or biological. Bringing a collective lens to the study of emotion makes the cultural embeddedness and social constructedness of emotion more visible. Yet because emotion has long been read as natural or extra-cultural, it has been seen as an expression of truth (Lutz and Abu Lughod 1990), as if it reveals a hidden and true part of the private self (Rosaldo 1984). Again, the collective lens blurs the distinction between public and private and helps illuminate the ways in which an individual's true experience also reflects structural forces.

“Feeling rules” (Hochschild 1990) are one critical way in which power works through emotional expression, norms through which social power works to govern the feeling and expression of appropriate emotions, such that a person expressing emotions, emotions themselves, and the larger society are all interwoven with one another. Through the study of social movements, scholars have looked in particular at the transformation of feeling rules as part of the creation of new versions of collective identity. Insofar as emotion underlies judgment and valuations of right and wrong (Jagger 1989), emotion is a key part of the sense of efficacy and belief in the possibility of change that social movements draw from. Movements engage in emotional normativizing (Gould 2009) as a way to strengthen participants' ties to the collective and the new collective identity. Gould carefully notes that the hegemony of the new emotional expression, the new feeling rules, is never fully complete; it is always happening, even if its visibility fluctuates.

This dissertation argues that the dominant American Jewish organizations, sometimes called the American Jewish Establishment (Goldberg 1996), act like a social movement in their mobilization of American Jews to identify with their version of the Jewish collective, in which strong identification with and advocacy on behalf of the state of Israel are critically important. The dominant Jewish organizations face a loss of hegemony from two simultaneous and interconnected trends: the increase of American Jewish critique of Israeli policy and of the dominant Jewish organizations' continued defense of and advocacy for Israeli policy, on the one hand; and the shrinking numbers of American Jews who affiliate with the traditional organs of the collective, as measured in synagogue membership, Jewish school attendance, and contributions to the Jewish Community Federations and other major Jewish charities (Cohen and Eisen 2000). These two factors are interconnected, as Jews who affiliate with mainstream organizations become socialized into mainstream Jewish culture, including the hegemonic identity promoted by the dominant organizations. In the face of these threatening trends, the dominant organizations work to strengthen their version of collective Jewish identity, in which they remain primary conveners of American Jewish life and American Jewish advocacy for Israel remains among the most urgent and significant community priorities. This dissertation argues that the dominant organizations seek to shape collective identity by reasserting the key emotional frames through which they believe American Jews (and not only Jews) should connect to the state of Israel. These frames draw from existing cultural understandings, beliefs and practices, relying on resonance (Benford and Snow 2000) with American Jewish culture. As such, they normativize the “feeling rules” of American Jewish engagement with the state of Israel.

These resonant emotional frames are the “emotional habitus” of the American Jewish community, for which connecting to the state of Israel operates along three main lines: a sense of interconnectedness, interdependence, and love, which resembles and reflects the claim that the Jewish nation is family; a sense of the state of Israel as the culmination, or potential culmination, of the most noble of Jewish and liberal values, such that the state represents a collective fantasy of aspirations realized; and a sense that the state of Israel represents and provides safety and protection for an historically persecuted people in a dangerous world. These three main threads – a familial

love, a collective fantasy, and the provision of safety in the form of the state – describe the three pillars of emotional connection between American Jews and the state of Israel.

As contestation increases over Israeli policy and American Jewish advocacy for Israeli policy through the vehicles of the dominant organizations, the emotional habitus of the community – never fully hegemonic, always an ongoing project – faces new challenges. In the face of this contestation, the work that the dominant organizations do to reassert their control and centrality becomes more visible and apparent. As the community in question is an ethno-religious community, the question here is not one of citizenship but of belonging. Through a reassertion of the traditional emotional frames of connection to Israel, the dominant Jewish organizations set a standard of belonging to the Jewish collective and, simultaneously, deploy the power of emotions to facilitate marginalization or exclusion from the collective. This dissertation argues that belonging is facilitated through, and expressed by, the performance of the correct emotional bonds with Israel. Through the assertion of feeling rules, the dominant Jewish organizations try to channel those emotions towards their desired institutional and political goals. The empirical data-based chapters will explore these feeling rules at work in more detail, paying attention to the content and expression of each emotion as well as its deployment in reasserting the boundaries around appropriate Jewish behavior.

III. Overview of American Jewish Identity: Israel in American Jewish Culture

According to survey research, the state of Israel is a very significant component of American Jewish identity.¹³ 69% of American Jews surveyed say they are emotionally attached to Israel, and 87% say that “caring about Israel” is an “essential” or “important” part of being Jewish. While Israel was important to American Jews in the 1950s and 1960s, the 1967 war in which Israel defeated its multiple neighbors and captured substantial portions of land from Egypt, Syria and Jordan proved a watershed moment for American Jews (Urofsky 1978; Woocher 1986; Sasson 2014). Following that war, Israel became the uncontested centerpiece of organized American Jewish society (Woocher 1986). It replaced religious observance as American Jews’ central focus, becoming “the core of the religion of American Jews” (Liebman and Cohen 1990: 84). Symbolically and materially, the state of Israel represents concepts that are critically important to American Jews. By the early 20th century, many American Jews were strong Zionists, supporting the different streams of the nationalist movement that mobilized and organized the Jewish settlement in Palestine and grew into the state of Israel. For many American Jews, the state of Israel embodied a safe haven for Jews in need of one as well as an another incarnation of American values (Woocher 1986; Eisen 1986; Urofsky 1986) such as “the promise of American life: freedom, equality, opportunity” (Sarna 1986). In the early 20th century, Louis Brandeis, a U.S. Supreme Court Justice and Zionist leader, promoted the notion that Zionism and Americanism share the central tenets of social justice and democracy. Through this formulation, both Zionism and Americanism could be seen as promoting liberty and social justice, and the categories of conscientious Jew, Zionist, and patriotic American could be overlapping and mutually constitutive (Urofsky 1986; Sarna 1986; Woocher 1986).

American Jews’ support for the state of Israel maintains a collective Jewish identity in two primary ways. First, it links individuals with other Jews around the world and, second, it links them with their history of Jewish persecution and vulnerability. Scholars agree that ties to other Jews around the world are very important to American Jews (Liebman and Cohen 1990; Woocher 1986), and that

¹³ Pew Research Center. “A Portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews.” October 2013. All statistics in this paragraph were published in the Pew Center report.

American Jews link their survival to the survival of Jews elsewhere and to the state of Israel (Sarna 1986).¹⁴ Israel embodies the ideal of Jewish survival in a threatening world; its emergence after the genocide of European Jewry is considered a symbol of Jewish rebirth and survival (Cohen and Eisen 2000; Woocher 1986).

Though migration to Israel is paramount to Zionism in general, American Zionism has developed such that the central commitment of American Zionists is supporting Israel without migrating there, which relatively few American Jews actually do (Woocher 1986, Liebman and Cohen 1990). Support for Israel is “part and parcel” of American Jewish consensus on the meaning of being Jewish (Liebman and Cohen 1990: 84), and American Jews show and facilitate their support for Israel through extensive fundraising for institutions within the state, political lobbying on behalf of American state-support for the Israeli state and military, and educational, social and cultural programs that include solidarity travel to the state. This support is extensive as well as expensive: AIPAC, the central lobby for the state of Israel, holds assets in excess of \$100 million,¹⁵ boasts that more 100,000 “citizens” work with them across the United States,¹⁶ and attracts 14,000 people to its annual conference, including half the members of the U.S. Congress, presidential candidates, top-tier Israeli politicians, and sometimes the United States president (Sasson 2014: 46-49). In 2010, the Jewish Federations of North America, the “single largest organizational vehicle for American Jewish donations to causes” in the state of Israel, allocated nearly \$170 million to the Jewish Agency for Israel, the quasi-governmental Israeli organization that is the primary conduit for philanthropic contributions to Israel (Ibid: 70). That number is less than years past, reflecting both the severe recession that began in 2007 as well as the increase in direct philanthropy to causes in Israel (Ibid). Even as the Federation annual allocations have decreased, “the overall amount of money American Jews give to causes in Israel, however, has actually *increased*,” argues researcher Theodore Sasson, totaling nearly \$1.5 billion in 2010 (Ibid: 62-68; emphasis in original).

Targeting the North American Jewish population, hundreds of millions of philanthropic dollars a year continue to be funneled into building a collective Jewish identity that is defined by a sense of connection to a global entity called the Jewish people and a commitment to the state of Israel as a Jewish state. This is done through Saturday and Sunday schools and summer camps, cultural festivals and political lobbying, weekly newspapers and online magazines, and, especially through the promotion of Birthright Israel, which aims to “strengthen Jewish identity” and “solidarity with Israel” through providing young Jews with free, 10-day trips to Israel.¹⁷ Sponsored by private foundations, the Jewish Federations of North America, and the Israeli government, more than 350,000 young Jews from around the world, the vast majority from North America, have taken part in Birthright trips since they began in 1999. The mission statements of every dominant communal organization in the country, from national organizations like the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and religious councils,¹⁸ to nationally affiliated but locally run Jewish

¹⁴ Sheffer (2003) shows that symbolic and material connections with additional descendants of the same ethno-national group, including those who reside in different states, are a common and indeed central characteristic of ethno-national diaspora behavior.

¹⁵ According to AIPAC's 2011 990 form, the most recent financial forms available through public databases. <http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2012/530/217/2012-530217164-093aa900-9O.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.aipac.org/about/how-we-work> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

¹⁷ <http://www.birtherightisrael.com/TaglitBirthrightIsraelStory/Pages/default.aspx> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

¹⁸ These include representing Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Orthodox and some, but not all, ultra-Orthodox sects (who form a small minority of American Jews).

Federations and Jewish Community Relations Councils, all proclaim their – and by extension, American Jews’ – dedication to a strong and secure Jewish state of Israel.

Yet if 1967 was a watershed year for American Jews with regard to Israel (Woocher 1986), the last few decades have again witnessed changes in American Jews’ relationship with Israel. Multiple scholars write about the ways in which American Jews have become more independent of the dominant organizations, responding to political events – ranging from the 1982 invasion of Lebanon to the first and second Intifadas, to the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza – with criticism of and distance from Israel, along with the creation of smaller organizations that criticize Israeli policy from both the left and the right (Rosenthal 2001, Sheffer 2003). Multiple studies over the last ten years have investigated American Jewish “attachment” to Israel, agreeing that younger generations demonstrate lower levels of attachment than older generations but disagreeing over the causes and implications of this data (Sasson, Phillips, and Wright et al 2012; Cohen and Kelman 2010, 2007).¹⁹ Studies show that younger Jewish generations have less interest in or knowledge of the American Jewish community and are more likely to form families with non-Jews (Cohen and Kelman 2010, 2007), though research suggests that attachment increases over the lifecycle (Sasson et al 2012). These changes, generational and otherwise, have led to a fragmentation among American Jews with regard to Israel and thus present a challenge to the consistency of an Israel-centered collective identity.

These challenges have elicited responses from the dominant Jewish organizations, which serve as collaborators and partners with the state of Israel, both by effect and by intention. The chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the primary institutional link between the state of Israel and the American Jewish community (in the form of Jewish Federations), Natan Sharansky, has noted recently: “*In the past we didn’t need to create commitment to Israel or to the Jewish People – it was there in abundance. Today as we are faced with weakening connections, our challenge is to increase the identification of Jews to their People and to Israel [sic].*”²⁰ His statement affirms that identities and relationships between the state of Israel and the Jewish diaspora are not natural or static but rather subject to the constructed, active, and mobilizing focus of these efforts of this nationalist project.

As the dominant Jewish organizations feel that American Jewish identity is moving away from their vision for it, they have increased their efforts to develop those characteristics of Jewish identity that they wish to see among American Jews. Collective identity is always a work-in-progress, and “contestation and negotiation are standard processes in the construction of identity” (Kanaaneh 2002: 57). The dominant Jewish organizations are vocal about the need to build Israel-centered Jewish identity against the backdrop of “*weakening connections*” and a growing critique of Israel and of Jewish organizations’ advocacy on its behalf. Jewish organizations’ deliberate efforts to construct a particular version of Jewish identity, through mobilizing certain emotional tropes, are more visible and explicit in the context of the growing fragmentation around Israel.

¹⁹ Though “attachment” is the exact term used by researchers and community workers to describe Jewish feelings towards Israel, it is also an amorphous term. This dissertation looks at “attachment” by examining the ways in which Jewish organizations cultivate a specific orientation towards Israel: that Jewishness and dedication to Israel overlap, that Jews and Israel are always under threat and in danger, and that American Jews must should feel a pull to defend Israel.

²⁰ <http://blogs.jta.org/philanthropy/article/2010/04/29/2394579/committee-approves-jewish-agency-move-to-refocus-on-jewish-identity>. (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

This dissertation explores the ways in which the central Jewish organizations articulate, encourage, and promote relationships to the state of Israel among Bay Area Jews. While survey research on American Jews provides copious data suggesting particular attitudes and opinions, surveys cannot explain the meaning behind these opinions, what shapes them, or the processes that people use to engage such complex topics as Israel, Jewishness, and collective identity. Similarly, there is a growing body of literature looking at Israel-centered Jewish identity programs, such as Birthright (Kelner 2010; Saxe and Chazan 2008). These studies are extremely informative regarding the goals and methods of particular programs, and in communicating the values and aims of the broader community standing behind the programs. (Birthright is a particularly important example of a program that represents the values of the broad affiliated community, as it is a collaboration between the Federation system, the Israeli government, and leading private foundations; Hillel, which serves Jewish college students on hundreds of campuses throughout North America, does the bulk of the recruitment for Birthright.) Studies of Israel-travel programs provide invaluable insight into the content of Israel-focused Jewish identity. What they do not address, however, are the ways in which the production of identity parallels the disciplining of those Jews who breach the boundaries of the affiliated community.

Whereas the research on Jewish identity programs offers useful insight and invaluable information on the cultivation of an ethno-religious identity with a national component, this dissertation inquires into the mobilization of that identity towards nationalist (political) goals and argues that contestation over Israel is central to the organized Jewish community's efforts to produce and regulate Jewish identity. That is, this dissertation looks not only at the institutional meaning of Jews' expressions of their "love" for the state of Israel, but also at the implications of that expression of love within the context of contestation over Israeli policy. This wider frame enables analysis of collective identity as political mobilization. In looking at the ways in which American Jewish organizations make meaning out of and regulate relationships with the state of Israel, this dissertation argues that the collective identity making processes of American Jews have tangible implications in the lives of Jews and Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Bay Area: Promise and Threat

The Bay Area hosts a vibrant and large Jewish community, in which the dominant organizations, the San Francisco Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Relations Council, mold and direct the Jewish population in competition with the dual "threats" of an organized left and high intermarriage rates. The Bay Area Jewish population is one of the largest in North America (Chertok, Sasson, and Saxe et al. 2009), and it is growing; a few years younger, on average, than in the rest of the U.S., the Bay Area Jewish population doubled between 1986-2004.²¹ The Bay Area is host to highly developed organized Jewish life, ranging from multiple dayschools, synagogues, and summer camps and cultural programs to extensive social services for the very young, very old, new immigrants and others.²² Though the Bay Area has long had a reputation of being the site of greater intermarriage than on the East Coast (where the majority of U.S. Jews live), the rate there is actually on par with the rest of the country, hovering around 56%.²³

²¹ 2005 Jewish Community Study.

²² These programs are grantees of the San Francisco Jewish Federation.

²³ 2005 Jewish Community Study.

Bay Area Jews consider themselves liberal at a rate just slightly higher than that of the American Jewish population at large. According to the most recent survey of American Jews, 49% of American Jews identify as liberal and 70% lean toward or identify with the Democratic Party (Pew Research Center 2013: 96-7), whereas 51% of Bay Area Jews self-identify as liberal and 72% identify with the Democratic Party (Cohen 2010). Additionally, the Bay Area is home to a smaller proportion of Orthodox Jews²⁴ than other major American cities, thus limiting the impact that this largely politically conservative population (Pew Research Center 2013) may have on the broader Jewish community.

With regard to Israel, the Bay Area is similar to the rest of the U.S. in that the vast majority of Jewish organizations declares an affiliation with Israel and sees Jewish attachment to Israel as a key component of Jewish identity. One element that differentiates the Bay Area from the rest of the country is the longterm existence of an organized, Jewish-identified left that publicly criticizes Israel. While these organizations range from those still generally accepted in the “big tent” of Jewish community,²⁵ to those that are not,²⁶ it is the long-standing presence of an organized opposition with a substantial membership that claims adherence to Jewish values that sets the Bay Area apart.²⁷ In addition, campus activism on the issue of Palestinian rights, especially at University of California, Berkeley, has contributed to the growth of Jewish political engagement from across the political spectrum both on campus and off,²⁸ while drawing national and international attention.²⁹ In the Bay Area, the activist left makes the ongoing contestation over Bay Area Jews’ collective relationship with Israel public and apparent. This contestation thus makes the Bay Area an ideal setting for studying the interrelationship between Jewish collective identity and the state of Israel.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ These include the New Israel Fund (est. 1979), which dispenses some \$30 million a year to minority-rights, women’s equality and other progressive organizations in Israel, and the organization and magazine Tikkun (est. 1986), which aims to promote peace and social justice. Both the New Israel Fund and Tikkun were founded in the Bay Area.

²⁶ These include Jewish Voice for Peace (est. 1996), a national organization founded and based in Oakland that seeks to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

²⁷ Other communities are home to local organizations that are critical of Israel, or to national organizations that promote progressive values in the U.S., but only the Bay Area has spawned multiple national organizations that identify as Jewish while departing from the traditional Jewish community on issues concerning Israel. In addition, Bay Area Palestinian solidarity groups host a substantial percentage of Jewish membership.

²⁸ As campus groups have mobilized both in support of and opposition to initiatives such as divestment from companies profiting off of the Israeli occupation (at UC Berkeley in 2010 and 2013), non-campus groups have gotten involved with campus politics. The majority of off-campus involvement has come from organizations defending Israeli interests and policies, such as StandWithUs. Jewish communal organizations in the Bay Area are invested in defending Israel’s interests on campus, as well; the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council was deeply engaged in supporting and organizing opposition to the 2010 UC Berkeley divestment initiative. In 2011-2012, the San Francisco Jewish Federation gave a grant of more than \$800,000 to the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council earmarked for fighting against divestment initiatives such as the one on Berkeley campus (<http://www.jewishfed.org/content/2011-2012-grants>) which formed nearly 30% of the JCRC’s revenues from grants that year. (<http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2011/941/156/2011-941156335-085858d5-9.pdf>). (URLs retrieved May 8, 2014.)

²⁹ The Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz*, the national Jewish newspaper *The Jewish Daily Forward* (English version), *Al Jazeera*, and *The New York Times* have all covered the struggles among Jews at UC Berkeley over Israel and Palestine.

Significant Jewish organizations

The following section is a short introduction to the organizations that will be discussed in-depth.

The dominant Jewish organizations

This dissertation focuses on two primary organizations: the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties (hereafter the San Francisco Federation or the Federation) and the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties (hereafter JCRC). These are the two primary organizations structuring the Jewish community from the inside and representing it to the broader Bay Area community in which it is located.

The San Francisco Federation is the central fundraising and planning organization for the Bay Area's affiliated Jewish community. It offers itself as the essential communal instrument, such that "with just one contribution, you fund essential services – care for seniors, support for single parent families, resources for children with special needs, programs for new immigrants, thriving community centers, celebrations of arts and culture, strong schools and more," including "support[ing] the Israeli people" and "honor[ing] Jewish values."³⁰ Among the institutions and programs the Federation supports is a broad range of social services, available to people of all faiths and backgrounds within the Bay Area as well as Jewish education, identity, and community building programs, synagogue life, and cultural programs. The Federation funds programs in the state of Israel and that facilitate American Jewish connection to the state of Israel as well as programs in other parts of the world to support vulnerable Jews and nurture Jewish life and culture. To fund all of these projects, the San Francisco Federation spends an annual \$14 – 16 million in grants, has an average of \$500 million in assets, and rests on an endowment fund worth more than \$1 billion dollars.³¹ According to the Federation's annual reports from 2011-2012 and 2013-2014, somewhere between a quarter to nearly a half of annual Federation grants are allocated to organizations in Israel or for education, advocacy, and outreach on the topic of Israel. The Federation also serves as a channel for millions of dollars in donor directed grants to Israel and Israel education and outreach.

The San Francisco Federation is a part of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), comprising one of 153 Jewish community federations in large cities and the 300 smaller "network" organizations in small towns across North America.³² Operating as a "Jewish community chest" (Goldberg 1996: 51), the Jewish federations have collectively raised nearly \$1 billion philanthropic dollars every year in their annual campaigns over the last 25 years, as well as another \$1 – 2.5 billion

³⁰ <http://www.jewishfed.org/be-philanthropist/376/2014-annual-campaign> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

³¹ According to San Francisco Federation 990 Forms and Annual Reports from 2011 - 2014.

<http://www.jewishfed.org/content/2011-2012-grants> and <http://www.jewishfed.org/see-how-we-help-view/489/2013---2014-federation-grants>. (Retrieved May 8, 2014.) In 2009, the Federation gave approximately \$29 million in grants, began the year with more than \$650 million in assets and nearly \$2 billion in the Endowment Fund. The economic downturn that began in 2008 reduced the Federation's wealth and the amount of money raised in the annual campaign.

³² <http://www.jewishfederations.org/about-us.aspx>. (Retrieved May 8, 2014.) Jewish Federations of North America is the newest name given to the partnership between the North American Jewish federations and the U.S. based affiliates for the Federation's overseas philanthropy. (U.S. tax law requires a U.S. based affiliate to control philanthropic allocations overseas.) (Sasson 2014: 63).

annually in endowment funds and donor advised funds (Sasson 2014: 62-3, 180). These philanthropic dollars support Jewish life in North America and outside of it. Though exact numbers are difficult to determine (given reporting requirements and conventions), it seems that the Jewish federations directly contribute an average of 25% of their annual allocations to their overseas partners, 75% of which is sent to the state of Israel (Ibid: 63).³³ Many Federations make specific contributions to programs and organizations their communities support in the state of Israel, but the majority of contributions go to the Federation system's partner in Israel, the Jewish Agency for Israel, equaling about \$200 million dollars per year (Ibid: 64-5).³⁴ These financial details demonstrate the JFNA's substantial investment in the state of Israel.

No other organization in the Jewish communal landscape resembles the Federations in terms of drawing a Jewish community together across denominational lines and particularist interests for the sake of creating a geographically-based, but globally-connected, local Jewish collective. Broadly, the Federation offers a kind of skeletal foundation from which the agencies and programs serving area Jews and representing their values draw. The policies, practices, and discourses that stem from the San Francisco Federation and its grantees are the focus of this project precisely because of the Federation's role as community convener across lines of interest and affiliation.³⁵

The second organization upon which this dissertation focuses is the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties (JCRC). The JCRC, a Federation grantee, serves as the public face of the organized Jewish community and partner to the Federation. Calling itself the "central public affairs arm" of the Bay Area Jewish community, the JCRC maintains formal and informal ties to government and non-Jewish communities in the broader Bay Area region.³⁶ Founded in the early 1940s, the San Francisco JCRC is one of the original Jewish community relations councils in the United States. Jewish communities across the United States host more than 120 Jewish community relations

³³ 25% of these funds is channeled to Jewish communities in difficult circumstances throughout the world, primarily through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Founded during World War I to provide emergency assistance to Jews suffering from the war and wartime and post-war Jewish repression, the JDC was a leading organization helping Jewish survivors of the Nazi genocide and continues to provide relief and assistance to Jewish communities worldwide (Goldberg 1996: 106-7).

³⁴ The Jewish Agency for Israel (hereafter JAFI), founded in 1929 as the Zionist government-in-waiting, operates as an Israeli quasi-governmental organization bridging the state of Israel with diaspora organizations. Historically focused on supporting the absorption of Jewish immigrants into Israeli society and promoting Zionist education, JAFI has shifted its emphasis to cultivating Jewish identity (Sasson 2014: 85, 167). As such, it invests in Zionist education and identity programs for Jewish young adults, especially North American Jews.

³⁵ While there are two other Federations in the Bay Area – the Jewish Federation of the Greater East Bay and the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley – the San Francisco Federation serves the largest segment of the Bay Area Jewish population, has the largest budget, endowment, and grants profile, and is most influential in setting the tone for Bay Area Jewish life. For comparison: according to their IRS Form 990s, in 2011, the San Francisco Federation and Endowment Fund reported assets worth nearly \$600 million and grants and program costs of more than \$121 million, whereas the Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley reported assets worth nearly \$25 million and grants and program costs of nearly \$5 million, and the Jewish Federation of the Greater East Bay reported assets worth \$3 million and grants and program costs of less than \$2 million. The San Francisco Jewish Federation is the powerhouse Federation of the Bay Area.

³⁶ <http://www.jcrc.org/aboutjrcr.htm> (Retrieved May 2, 2014.)

councils, united under the umbrella of the Jewish Council on Public Affairs to work on “three interrelated goals”:

1. To safeguard the rights of Jews here and around the world;
2. To dedicate ourselves to the safety and security of the state of Israel;
3. To protect, preserve, and promote a just American society, one that is democratic and pluralistic, one that furthers harmonious interreligious, inter ethnic, interracial and other intergroup relations.³⁷

Towards these ends, the San Francisco JCRC conducts “education and advocacy” with “the broader community, public officials, other faith and ethnic communities, and the media.”³⁸ Representing “member organizations, synagogues, and at-large members”³⁹ and speaking in the name of the organized Jewish community, the JCRC works on political issues including promoting civil and reproductive rights as well as immigrant rights. These are issues that not only appeal to the liberal political orientation of American Jews and, especially, Bay Area Jews, but are also part of a political strategy to build alliances with other communities as a means of generating support for the Jewish community’s particular interests. As one JCRC leader explained in an interview, *“if the Jewish community isn’t addressing immigration issues, that has implications for our relationships with leaders from the Latino community, Asian community, other communities, and absenting ourselves from the table has implications on our ability to address other issues of vital concern, such as on Israel.”*

With regard to Israel, the JCRC serves an educational resource, offering guidance to Jewish and non-Jewish organizations on programming about Israel, working with the media, and launching a dedicated project to investigate school curricula and textbook materials on Israel, Jews, and Judaism. With a dedicated staff position focusing on “Middle East Affairs,” the JCRC also conducts substantial advocacy in the interests of the state of Israel and in collaboration with the Israeli Consulate, ranging from lobbying for increased sanctions on the country of Iran to coordinating efforts to defeat divestment initiatives, such as on college campuses, or counter certain public critics of Israel. The JCRC often collaborates with the Israeli Consulate as well as with prominent Israel-aligned organizations.

Of the prominent Israel-aligned organizations, several are very active in the Bay Area. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), an organization founded to fight anti-Semitism, is very proactive in defending the state of Israel against U.S.-based organized critique and opposition, and often works closely with the JCRC in these efforts. AIPAC, the chief lobbying organization focused on cultivating close ties between the state of Israel and the U.S. government, is also strong in the Bay Area [CITE Rosenbaum]. And StandWithUs, a national group with a strong Bay Area presence, focuses on grassroots engagement with critics of Israel and is often found holding demonstrations against critics of Israeli policy. The JCRC often partners with the ADL and StandWithUs in their efforts to mobilize Bay Area Jews against perceived threats against Israel.

³⁷ http://engage.jewishpublicaffairs.org/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=4147 (Retrieved May 2, 2014.) The Jewish Council on Public Affairs has additional member agencies made up of advocacy organizations, including, among others, the American Jewish Committee and Anti-Defamation League.

³⁸ <http://www.jcrc.org/aboutjcrc.htm> (Retrieved May 2, 2014.)

³⁹ http://www.jcrc.org/about_history.htm. (Retrieved May 2, 2014.) Repeated requests to receive a list of JCRC members were denied.

Both the Federation and the JCRC collaborate with the dedicated Israel advocacy organizations (or near-dedicated, as the ADL has become) in many arenas. On a national level, the Jewish Federations of North America, the Jewish Council on Public Affairs (the umbrella linking the Jewish community relations councils), AIPAC, the ADL, and other organizations are partner members in the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, which is the formal vehicle representing the organized Jewish community to the U.S. government. The Presidents' Conference, as it is known, is known as the "unified voice of the organized Jewish community, especially on issues relating to Israel" (Sasson 2014: 166). While these organizations may have disagreements over specific policies, they are united behind the position that the organized American Jewish community has a responsibility to facilitate a close relationship between the United States government and the state of Israel, as well as to advocate for Israel among the American public and defend the state from perceived threats.⁴⁰

Though this dissertation is interested in the cultivation of relationships with Israel among American Jews, the dedicated Israel advocacy organizations are not the central focus on this inquiry. The people who are drawn to these organizations choose to become engaged around issues relating to the state of Israel. This dissertation is interested in the meanings and practices of engaging with Israel according to the standards and interests of the explicitly community-building and community-convening organizations. That is, this research investigates not just on how Israel-oriented Jewish organizations promote relationships with Israel, but how they do so with the aim of cultivating, and representing, the Jewish community as a whole. Thus, the Federation and JCRC are the primary organizations of this inquiry.

⁴⁰ One place in which the collaboration among these organizations is apparent is with young Jews, especially on college campuses. Campuses are a "battleground" over issues relating to Israel and Palestine, as a 2007 Public Broadcasting System documentary put it. They are the site at which young American Jews are confronted, often for the first time, with Palestinian narratives with regard to Israel and with a growing Palestinian solidarity movement on campuses across North America. The network of American Jewish organizations and the philanthropists who support it have responded to the campus challenge with the investment of substantial resources into countering Palestinian solidarity activism, including by training students to advocate for and defend the state of Israel and pursuing administrative and legal mechanisms to counter or defeat opponents. UC Berkeley, San Francisco State University, and UC Hastings, three Bay Area campuses, have each been the site of fierce debate around issues concerning Israelis and Palestinians, as have other University of California campuses (specifically UC Irvine, UC Santa Cruz, and UC Davis).

Organizations of Contestation

As the dominant organizations struggle to maintain their hegemonic status in Jewish American life, they face increasing competition over the question of who speaks for American Jews with regard to the state of Israel. This dissertation also analyzes a number of those competing voices, of which there are two categories: those whose critique of the hegemonic relationships with the state of Israel does not necessarily lead to their exclusion from the organized Jewish community, and those whose critique nearly always leads to their exclusion. In the former category, there are two primary organizations whose missions and profiles illuminate the work to maintain boundaries around American Jewish community: the New Israel Fund and J Street. In the latter, the dominant organization is called Jewish Voice for Peace.

The first organization, the New Israel Fund, was founded by Bay Area Jews in 1979 in San Francisco to be a philanthropic channel for progressive change in Israel. The New Israel Fund has been largely responsible for seeding and nurturing Israel's progressive civil society sector, which grew exponentially in the 1990s (cite). Though the Federation system sought to limit and control funding appeals for Israel from American Jews (Sasson 2014: 66), the New Israel Fund arose from a desire by American Jewish donors to support causes in Israel more directly aligned with their liberal values. Focused on promoting Israel's democratic character, the NIF channels tens of millions of dollars a year to efforts to achieve political, social, and human rights for Israel's marginalized populations, including Palestinian citizens of Israel, women, and Israel's non-citizen refugee population, as well as effort towards tolerance for religious pluralism. NIF also describes itself as an organization that works to "end the occupation" of the Palestinian Territories, and it funds organizations seeking to do the same, including through efforts to monitor and achieve human rights for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

A second organization that is largely within the "big tent" of the organized Jewish community is J Street, a Washington, DC-based organization founded in 2008 to lobby the United States government for a two-state solution, promoting the belief that the way to ensure Israel's security is through establishing a Palestinian state as its neighbor. In lobbying for this political goal, J Street is accused of putting a particular vision for Israel ahead of their loyalty and commitment to the state. With a multi-million dollar budget, a political action committee to channel funding directly to political candidates, and a campus-organizing wing supporting more than 50 college chapters, J Street has a growing presence in the American and American Jewish political spheres.

While the New Israel Fund and J Street are not the only organizations challenging the dominant Jewish discourse by publicly critiquing Israeli policy, they are, together, the biggest, most prominent, and subsequently the most controversial. Over the last five years, the New Israel Fund has faced an organized campaign to exclude it from organized Jewish life in the United States and to undermine its work and limit its reach in public and political life in Israel. J Street, too, has faced exclusion, marginalization, and smears since its founding. In May 2014, just at the close of this research, J Street was denied entry into the membership of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, the aforementioned organization that serves as the formal, united Jewish voice to the U.S. government. The vote count has been reported, and while the Jewish Council on Public Affairs, the umbrella organization united the Jewish community relations councils and other advocacy

organizations, voted in the affirmative to allow J Street entry, neither AIPAC nor the Jewish Federations of North America did so.⁴¹

The New Israel Fund and J Street seek to offer their critique of Israeli policy from within the boundaries of the organized Jewish community. Many other Jewish critics of Israel do not seek or are not welcome to sit within the boundaries of the Jewish community. This dissertation also considers those Jewish people, organizations, and views that are excluded from the collective, drawing largely from the impact and reach of Jewish Voice for Peace, a national organization based in Oakland, California. Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) is the most prominent critical, specifically American Jewish, voice from outside the boundaries of the Jewish collective. Advocating for human rights, equality, and self-determination for Palestinians and Israelis, JVP supports selective divestment from companies profiting off of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. With an annual budget of nearly \$1 million and more than 30 chapters across the United States, JVP has a substantial media presence and a growing youth wing. Whereas the NIF and J Street strive for acceptance into and cooperation with the mainstream and dominant Jewish organizations, JVP is largely barred from mainstream Jewish community. In the Bay Area, as this dissertation will discuss in detail, the San Francisco Federation imposes restrictions on its grantees that threaten serious consequences if grantees participate in public events alongside JVP.

IV. Methodology

This dissertation is based on data gathered from three primary sources: first, more than 2 years of participant observation research in Jewish community settings in the Bay Area from early 2010 through late 2012; second, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with fourteen key informants and stakeholders; and third, qualitative content analysis of written materials (both print and electronic) from local and national Jewish community organizations as well as relevant media, including local, national, and Jewish and Israeli media outlets. Over the two years of ethnographic research, I held thousands of conversations with hundreds of informants. These conversations influenced the selection of informants for in-depth interviews.

The use of multiple methods supported this frame and enabled such an analysis. A combination of the ethnographic method with the qualitative content analysis allowed for ongoing interplay between discussion of events in the world and the activities, moods, and conversations I observed on the ground. The interviews provided insight into the motivations and value judgments behind the decisions that shaped the events I observed in the ethnography. Together, these multiple methods offered tools for achieving a layered, nuanced analysis of the emotion at play and the mainstream Jewish organizations' mobilization of these emotions in the service of their vision for collective Jewish identity.

Ethnography

Ethnography and, more specifically, participatory observation, grants access to the relational, dynamic and emotional nature of identity, which is never fixed and static but always responsive, reactive, and developing. Ethnographic research methods, therefore, offer the greatest access to the

⁴¹ J.J. Goldberg, "The J Street Vote: Updates and Corrections." *The Jewish Daily Forward*. May 4, 2014. <http://blogs.forward.com/jj-goldberg/197565/the-j-street-vote-updates-and-corrections/> (Retrieved May 6, 2014.)

meanings and mechanisms involved in American Jews' engaging with Israel. Participant observation research allowed me to gain access to the discourses around Israel and around Jewish life for the many what many Bay Area Jews who engage in Jewish culture.

In the field, I sought to understand how the organizers and presenters portrayed Israel and Jewishness and how the participants or audience accepted, rejected, negotiated with, and contested those portrayals. Over two and a half years of participant observation, I conducted informal conversations with hundreds of people, in which I sought to learn what brought them to the events, their relationships to the different organizations, and their view of Jewish community and Jewish relationships with the state of Israel. Participant observation also allowed me to observe the aims and methods of the community organizations in terms of their community-building projects around Jewish community and Israel. On a couple of occasions during question and answer sessions at public events with speakers, I asked a question about Israeli politics. These questions were strategic, in that I hoped to discover possible boundaries in public Jewish discourse around Israel, perhaps by crossing them. At every event, I explained that I was in attendance for research purposes and visibly took fieldnotes when doing so was not disruptive.⁴²

I entered the field as a participant observer and fully embraced both the participation and observation components of that role. As an American Jew, I was especially welcomed in the communal settings, and I found the other participants very receptive to my role as researcher and observer. On occasion, I was also asked if I am Jewish, though more frequently I was treated as if my Jewishness were taken for granted and I was asked more specific questions about my family background or current Jewish practice. As an American Jew who grew up closely affiliated with organized Jewish life, I entered the field familiar with Jewish community structure.

Field sites

I acted as a participant observer at public events and programs focused on Israel, Jewish history and Jewish community. Looking to understand how Israel is constructed in normative Jewish spaces, I primarily chose to attend community events sponsored or created by the San Francisco Jewish Federation and the San Francisco JCRC, as these are the primary convening organizations in the Jewish community of the Bay Area. As the main conveners, they hold events for which no membership or philanthropic promise is required. Thus, with this strategy, I reproduced the average experience of Bay Area Jews, who do not have formal affiliation with or membership in Jewish organizations.⁴³ Following a pilot study in 2009, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork from 2010 through 2012. During this time, I attended nearly half of all Israel-related public events sponsored by the San Francisco Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Relations Council and held in San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland.⁴⁴ These included the major public events connected to Israel, such as public commemorations of Israeli holidays (such as Independence Day) as well as the largest annual gatherings of Bay Area Jews at the annual Israel in the Gardens event, the yearly, Bay Area-wide celebration of Israel, which I attended in 2009, 2010, and 2011, and the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, a Federation grantee (where I attended Israel-related films and observed formal and

⁴² To my recollection, the only time I did not take open fieldnotes was at Holocaust memorial events, when I refrained out of respect for the mourners and commemorators and in accordance with the program.

⁴³ 2005 Jewish Community Study, page 77.

⁴⁴ I also attended a small number of events in the North Bay (Sonoma) and the South Bay (Palo Alto) as points of comparison.

informal programming). At the Federation itself, I participated in the “flagship educational and social program,” a multi-event program over several months. (According to the 2004 Jewish Community Study, the Young Adult Division was cited by most young couples as their point of connection to the Federation and the Jewish Community Centers.⁴⁵) I attended numerous other presentations and gatherings, several of which featured representatives of the Israeli government. In 2010, I attended the General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), a gathering of thousands of professionals, lay leaders, and political figures from the United States, Canada, Israel, and elsewhere; Bay Area leaders sat on several panels at this conference.

In addition to direct Federation and JCRC programs, I also observed at many programs held connected to Federation grantees or JCRC allies, including events hosted or co-sponsored by Israel advocacy organizations such as StandWithUs, the Israeli Consulate, and the Jewish Community Centers in Berkeley, Palo Alto, and San Francisco. These events included multiple Israel advocacy trainings, Israel-solidarity rallies, public educational and political events on Zionism and Israel.

The majority of Bay Area Jews do not belong to synagogues, and thus the events held by the Federation and its allies are more indicative of what greater numbers of Bay Area Jews access. However, one of San Francisco’s most central synagogues, one of the oldest and largest in the region, held a unique course in which I enrolled during my study on the topic of the relationship between the American Jewish community and the state of Israel. Through weekly meetings over three months in the fall of 2010, this course offered insight into how this very prominent institution framed what was termed as the contestation over Israel, younger Jews’ unreliability with regard to their dedication to Israel, and the critical atmosphere of the Bay Area (all themes this dissertation addresses). In addition, the synagogue course revolved around guest lecturers who represented the Bay Area’s leading figures in building mainstream Jewish community around Israel advocacy, education, and culture. While I encountered these individuals and their work repeatedly in many other settings throughout the ethnography (and some agreed to be interviewed for this research, as well), this course provided unique access to these people and their views. In many cases, the multi-hour meetings, the small group, and the sense of familiarity among the co-congregants who formed the bulk of the class allowed for intimacy and greater sharing than in many other settings.

I also attended communal gatherings, including cultural events, Holocaust commemorations, and holiday celebrations that were not necessarily focused on Israel but were co-sponsored by the Federation, Israel advocacy organizations, or the Israeli consulate. These events offered a window into community building that was not directly focused on Israel and thus allowed me to witness the contexts in which conversations about Israel and/or communal boundaries arose in such settings.

Finally, I chose to round out the ethnographic data of mainstream Jewish engagement with data from contesting organizations.⁴⁶ Towards that end, I participated in a number of major events by J Street, including their 2011 annual conference in Washington, DC, as well as regional gatherings. I observed at the New Israel Fund’s annual San Francisco gala on multiple occasions. Lastly, I

⁴⁵ 2005 Jewish Community Study.

⁴⁶ Some might argue that some of the Israel advocacy organizations with which I conducted fieldwork, such as StandWithUs, are extremist and not mainstream. However, they work in close alliance with the JCRC and other mainstream Jewish organizations. While the views they represent may be considered extremist, they are included well within the boundaries of the mainstream, which has shifted to the right as Israeli state policies have become more rightwing.

observed Jewish Voice for Peace on a number of occasions, including at their 2011 national conference, their presence at the 2010 JFNA General Assembly in New Orleans and a number of local events and meetings (including a 2010 meeting disrupted by StandWithUs activists, offering insight into confrontation that can grow out of contestation).

Qualitative content analysis

I conducted archival research of the relevant local, regional, national, and international press as well as the communiqués and correspondence of the relevant local, national, and international Jewish organizations via print, electronic mail, and social media. For each of these two different collections, I gathered and coded all of the texts available from 2009-2012.

Media

The growing contestation over Israel is widely covered in Jewish and Israeli media, and occasionally in local and mainstream American press as well. Analysis of public media pointed to the contours of the public discussion, including the significance of different organizations and stakeholders, the characteristics of public exchange, and the reverberations of organizational and individual statements and actions.

For this project, I collected and coded articles from the relevant Jewish press, including the Bay Area Jewish weekly, *j*, as well as the New York-based, English language version of *The Jewish Daily Forward*, which is considered the national Jewish newspaper.⁴⁷ I read and coded the *JTA* (Jewish Telegraphic Agency), which is the daily Jewish news service, heavily weighted towards covering the interests of the organized Jewish community. I followed online Jewish news portals, including *New Voices*, the Jewish student magazine. All of these media outlets are available online, and I read and coded the articles using a number of software programs, including Zotero. I followed *j*, the Bay Area's Jewish news weekly, both online and in paper form (through a subscription) in order to capture both the online discussion of articles and the advertisements available only in the paper version. The *j*, which claims to have 20,000 subscribers,⁴⁸ is circulated at Jewish Community Centers, synagogues, and other Jewish facilities.

In addition to the explicitly Jewish press, I followed the coverage of the American Jewish community as it reached the non-ethnic press, including the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *New York Times*. I also collected and coded the coverage of the American Jewish community in the English version of the Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz*, which pays critical attention to the American Jewish dynamics surrounding Israel and controversies over its treatment of Palestinians.

⁴⁷ The Forward, as the paper is known, also publishes a Yiddish edition of the newspaper, called Forverts. (The newspaper was published in Yiddish only from 1897-1983. <http://forward.com/about/history/> Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

⁴⁸ <http://www.jweekly.com/page/about/> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

Organizational correspondence

Analysis of communiqués from the many institutions I followed – including the Jewish Federations of San Francisco and the East Bay, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and a variety of dedicated Israel advocacy or protest organizations – enabled me to follow the trajectories of these organizations’ actions, decisions, and interactions with respect to Jewish engagement with the state of Israel.

Sources include communiqués – newsletters, articles, email updates, action alerts, and Facebook and Twitter posts - from the dominant local organizations: San Francisco Jewish Federation, the East Bay Jewish Federation, the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco; and their national partners, including the Jewish Federations of North America and the Jewish Council on Public Affairs; from Israel advocacy organizations aligned with the Israeli government, including AIPAC, StandWithUs, BluestarPR, Friends of the IDF; liberal Zionist Israel engagement and advocacy organizations, including J Street, the New Israel Fund, Rabbis for Human Rights, Americans for Peace Now; and critical Jewish anti-occupation organizations, including Jewish Voice for Peace and the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network.⁴⁹

Semi-structured, open-ended interviews

I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with senior professionals, lay leadership, and other key informants from the Bay Area Jewish community. I conducted fourteen formal interviews, ranging in length from two to three hours. Each interviewee permitted me to record the interviews, and I promised anonymity to each informant.⁵⁰ I conducted follow-up interviews with two of the most senior leaders in order to clarify my understanding and extend my analysis as my knowledge base grew.

In the interviews, I focused on gathering narratives, both personal and collective, that informants use to explain developments and decisions relating to Israel. Each of the key organizational figures I interviewed (totaling 10) is a person with whom I was already familiar through their work and views; I had seen them speak in public (often in both large gatherings and smaller, more intimate settings), read their work and analyses, and attended their organization’s programs. In most cases, I had approached the informant at public events and introduced myself and my research before contacting him or her for a private interview.

With key organizational figures, interviews explored organizational dynamics and decision-making and went in-depth into a number of specific cases or incidents of controversy. In the interviews, informants articulated their perspectives regarding the goals, strategies, and motivations of the

⁴⁹ I also followed communiqués – reports, updates, analysis, mobilization requests (action alerts), and social media posts from Israeli anti-occupation groups and non-Jewish groups critical of Israeli policy. These materials have largely fallen outside of the scope of this research.

⁵⁰ I only attribute quotations directly to named individuals when the quotation comes from a public event (or document) or when I received express permission for attribution. Also, at certain moments during a couple of the interviews, interviewees asked me to turn off the recording. When the recording was turned off, these interviewees spoke of issues they believed were particularly sensitive, primarily pertaining to individuals with great influence in the community, largely through financial (philanthropic) platforms. Following the interviews, I took fieldnotes on the unrecorded statements.

different impacting institutions and stakeholders (including the Israeli government, Palestinian rights activists, and local philanthropists) and discussed their perceptions of the threats and opportunities they faced. In addition to organizational and intellectual leadership, I also interviewed several youth leaders who were engaged with mainstream Jewish organizations and found themselves in conflict with the decisions and actions of those organizations.

Because I sought to use these interviews to fill in gaps in my understanding and knowledge base and not as the primary source of data for this dissertation, I chose to limit the number of interviewees to those people who were in a position, and were willing, to provide key information and insight. In addition to the interviews, I deliberately conducted open-ended, focused conversations with several other critical stakeholders. I did not record those conversations but wrote detailed fieldnotes on them, capturing the bulk of what was said. These conversations influenced my choice of interview subjects and helped shape the interview questions I developed.

V. Chapter Summaries

The dissertation proceeds as follows:

Chapter 1, “We are Family: Love for Israel and the Limits of Loyalty,” discusses the dual concepts of Jews as family and the obligation of love for Israel, which are intertwined in the construct of the ideal American Jewish relationship with Israel. The key emotional expression of this construct is *Abavat Yisrael*, love for fellow Jews, a concept deeply implanted in Jewish culture and evident in ancient and modern texts alike. While *Abavat Yisrael* has always indicated love for the Jewish collectivity, in the last few decades this relationship to the ethnos has been transposed onto the state. This concept of love for family translates into a sense of mutual responsibility for and loyalty to other Jews and to the state of Israel. Using data from ethnographic, interview, and qualitative content analysis research, this chapter will demonstrate the ways in which the dominant Jewish organizations in the Bay Area perpetuate the imperative of love, loyalty, and responsibility for the state of Israel. In the face of increasing contestation over Israel among American Jews, the rules over how one expresses contestation – that is, how one disagrees with the family – further illustrate the logic of familial love and its boundaries.

While the metaphor of family serves as the blueprint of Jewish collective connection to Israel, the limits of familial connection also shape the communal boundaries. This connection undergirds the expectation that the love bond for the state, in the form of loyalty, is a paramount Jewish. Contestation around Israeli policy and American Jews’ proper relationships to Israel may thus be read as indicating an absence of love for and loyalty to Israel, and may lead to stigmatization, marginalization, and exclusion for those seen as not demonstrating sufficient love or loyalty to the state or the Jewish collective. The Hannah Arendt section belongs in this chapter – not in the introduction.

Chapter 2, “The Fantasized State,” investigates how dominant Jewish organizations use the fantasy of the “love of Israel” to cultivate attachment to the state of Israel. Arguing that fantasies embody collective ideals and aspirations that are necessary for collective mobilization, this chapter will also address the limits of fantasy. Fantasies represent ideals and values, while reality is, by definition, more complicated. Because fantasy is central to the mobilizing process, the mobilizing organizations – the dominant Jewish organizations – seek to guard these fantasies against threats or intrusion. This chapter argues that cultivating the attachment to the idealized state of Israel leads to avoiding,

minimizing, denying, or marginalizing ideas that challenge the idealized state of Israel in general, and the fantasy of Israeli democracy, in particular. These challenging ideas that starkly challenge the fantasy that American Jews have of Israel arise most prominently in connection with critiques of Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza. In response, the dominant Bay Area Jewish organizations (especially the San Francisco Federation and the Jewish Community Relations Council) have adopted practices and policies that minimize the appearance of conflict.

Chapter 3, "Fear and Vulnerability: the Need and Source for Power" takes up the themes of Jewish fear and Jewish empowerment. First looking at Jewish political empowerment and communal organizing as a response to fears of disappearance, this chapter explores the content of Jewish fear from both external and internal threats, including perceived threats to the state of Israel and the perceived threat of young Jews distancing themselves from Israel and from Jewish life, in particular through intermarriage. After this discussion, the second half of the chapter looks at the ways in which these discourses of fear serve as a source of Jewish power. Facing internally, discourses of Jewish fear serve as a measure of Jewish unity, such that the proper expression of fear is taken as a sign of belonging, and its lack may invite sanction. Facing perceived external threats, the dominant Jewish organizations deploy the language of Jewish vulnerability as a political tool. As a whole, this chapter seeks to untangle and examine the threads tying Jewish fear and vulnerability to the expressions of Jewish power that act in the name of defending and protecting the Jewish community and Israel. In so doing, this chapter discusses different valences of collective fears, looking at the ways in which fear transmits and constructs collective memory and identity; the ways in which fear is a political tool; and the ways in which fear is used, and resisted, as a focal point in the construction of Jewish identity.

The *Conclusion* revisits the themes discussed in this introduction, looking again at American Jews' emotional habitus and at how the behavior of different Jewish organizations structures and regulates American Jewish collective identity. The conclusion also addresses directions for further research.

Finally, an *Epilogue* looks at the phenomenon of young American Jews pushing back against the efforts to socialize them into the hegemonic relationships with the state of Israel. Fearing that young people are moving further and further away from mainstream, institutional Judaism, the dominant Jewish organizations have targeted young Jews for identity-building projects such as Birthright, and also invest substantial resources into developing young Jews as Israel advocates on campuses and off. Throughout this ethnography, I witnessed different instances in which young Jews rejected some of the claims and demands they felt Jewish leadership was placing upon them. Through efforts both spontaneous and organized, young American Jews are identifying the elements of the hegemonic Jewish relationships with Israel that they reject and articulating their re-interpreted versions of Jewish culture and values.

CHAPTER 2

WE ARE FAMILY: LOVE FOR ISRAEL AND THE LIMITS OF LOYALTY

In the fall of 2010, the Israeli Consul General was a guest speaker in an adult education course in a San Francisco synagogue. A congregant told him she wanted to discuss with “*my relationship with the state of Israel.*” The Consul General interrupted her, saying “*I have a problem with your grammar. We are one. Half here, half there.*”⁵¹ The Consul General’s words echoed those of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, when he told a room full of thousands of American and other Jewish professionals, lay leaders, and students, “*Israel is our home. It has always been our home. It will always be our home!... Israel must always, always be a place that each and every one of you can call home.*”⁵²

One of the most fundamental tenets of Jewish life and the Jewish national construct is the idea that Jews are a people, a nation, sharing not just a religion but also common origin myths, language, and ties to an ancestral land (Smith 2010). The myths of Jewish origins are the basis of the notion that Jews are one family: these narratives trace the religion and its adherents (and its subjects, during the ancient Israelite times) to common patriarchs so that “even today, Jews still consider themselves descendants of one common father” (Kimmerling 2001: 17). While that common father is Abraham, the name “Israel” comes from his grandson Jacob, who was given the name “Israel” after wrestling with an angel of God (Genesis 32: 24-28). Jacob’s descendants were the “Children of Israel” who, the mythology tells, were enslaved by the Egyptians and led to freedom by Moses. These Children of Israel (Israelites, or Hebrews, as they have also been called) conquered Canaan, establishing kingdoms and cultivating ties to that land even after being repeatedly conquered and exiled. The notion that Jews share the same ancestors has proven captivating to many researchers, who have conducted countless studies to discover common genetic material linking Jews from different parts of the world to provide a scientific basis for this sense of shared history and identity (Kimmerling 2001:17). While genetic linkages and bloodlines interest many lay people and scholars, it is the metaphor of a family that is the pervasive construct describing the foundational connection among Jews around the world.

The key emotional expression of this connection is *Ahavat Yisrael*, love for fellow Jews, a concept deeply implanted in Jewish culture and evident in ancient and modern texts alike.⁵³ While *Ahavat Yisrael* has always indicated love for the Jewish collectivity, in the last few decades this relationship to the ethnos has been transposed onto the state. The concept of love for family translates into a sense of mutual responsibility for and loyalty to other Jews and to the state of Israel. Using data from ethnographic, interview, and qualitative content analysis research, this chapter will demonstrate the

⁵¹ Participant observation fieldnotes from San Francisco synagogue, October 2010.

⁵² At the 2010 Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly, the annual gathering of thousands of Jewish professionals and lay leaders representing international, national and local organizations from across the continent. In New Orleans, Louisiana, on November 8, 2010.

⁵³ Ahavat Yisrael, love for fellow Jews, is one of the mitzvot, commandments, that stems from the Torah (the Hebrew Bible). The imperative to love fellow Jews is found not only in biblical literature but also in the rabbinic literature of the Middle Ages up through the modern era (Weiss 2002: 19-21). At least one prominent 21st century American rabbi, the senior rabbi of a large New York congregation and founder of a leading rabbinical school, explains the Ahavat Yisrael commandment as stemming directly from familial love, because “Am Yisrael (the People of Israel) is my family...As I love my inner family unconditionally...so I love my larger family Am Yisrael” (Weiss 2001: 19-21).

ways in which the dominant Jewish organizations in the Bay Area perpetuate the imperative of love, loyalty, and responsibility for Israel, which are components of this metaphorical system. In the face of increasing contestation over Israel among American Jews, the rules over how one expresses contestation – that is, how one disagrees with the family – further illustrate the logic of familial love and its boundaries.

I. The Sociology of Love and Nation

Scholars regularly employ the concept of family to describe nations (Anderson 1983, 1991). While some see the nation as a literal “natural extension of family and kinship relations” (Yuval-Davis 1997:15), others note that “the tribe and the [ancient] city were no more than an extension of the family” (Renan 2010: 15). Conventional language reiterates these bonds and offers the metaphors of a national “home” in the mother- or father-land.⁵⁴ Whether the family unit as foundational to the nation is read literally or figuratively, it sits at the core of theorizing about nations. Benedict Anderson (1991), godfather to contemporary scholarship on nations, maintains that people perceive the nation and the family in a similar manner, seeing both as non-chosen entities into which a person is born (1991: 142). Anderson does not argue that nations rest on blood ties, like families, but rather the opposite: it is the imagined connections, generated through language, culture, ideology, and the somewhat arbitrary nature of where one is born, that unites the nation (Ibid: 145). To the native, the national bond seems entirely natural; indeed, for a non-native to join the nation, they undergo a process of “naturalization,” a word that points simultaneously to the constructedness of the nation as well as the ubiquity of the idea of its naturalness (as Anderson points out; Ibid: 145).

The construct of the nation, then, rests on the idea that it is a natural grouping, based on the most fundamental of human collectives, the family. Affiliation with the nation, as with the family, is taken for granted; as cultural theorist Ann Swidler puts it, “most of life is unexamined, although [it is] a rich set of cultural traditions” (2001: 5). Yet for cultural theorists, there exists an imperative to interrogate cultural assumptions and social traditions, in order to explore “the discursive possibilities in a given social world” which “constrai[n] meaning” in that world “by constructing the categories through which people perceive themselves and others or simply by limiting what can be thought and said” (Ibid: 6). In probing different aspects of American Jews’ relationships with the state of Israel, this dissertation explores the different discursive possibilities available within the Jewish and American social worlds. Drawing from Swidler’s interest in constraints and limits, this inquiry also looks at the avenues of meaning that the discursive possibilities open up, recognizing culture as having both repressive and productive qualities. This chapter looks at the meanings of the familial metaphor of the nation and the affective bonds linking people to their family/nation, unpacking the intersection of two primary strands of meaning-making: the family structure and the affective bonds linking family/nation member to each other and to the larger collective.

The relationship of “nation” to “state” is not simple, as demonstrated in the concept of “the nation-state,” which erroneously “assumes complete correspondence between the boundaries of the nation and the boundaries of those who live in a specific state,” though the world is full of peoples living in states in which they do not feel themselves a part of the nation, or peoples spread among several states, or stateless peoples (Yuval-Davis 1997: 11). In the Jewish context, the line between nation and state has been blurred since the establishment of the state of Israel. In Judaism, “Israel” has historically indicated the nation as a transnational, trans-territorial community. Yet as the Zionist

⁵⁴ Diasporic peoples also see themselves as sharing a common homeland (Cohen 1997: 26).

movement adopted Jewish religious symbols and affiliations in its endeavor to attract a critical mass of Jews to its national project, the state that emerged from the movement, called Israel, became the recipient of religious and ethnic forms of attachment (Kimmerling 2001: 189-192). Thus while discussions of the Jewish nation automatically includes the state of Israel, it is important to note that this overlap stems from conscious decisions on the part of the nationalist movement (Kimmerling 2001) and their integration into American Jewish culture. This integration has been so successful that the Jewish Federation system, the dominant leadership in the American Jewish community, espouses the phrase “We [the Jewish people] are one, in Israel and around the world” (cited in Boyarin and Boyarin 2002: 31),⁵⁵ indicating the significance of the state in the conception of Jewish collectivity. The dominant Jewish American organizations blur any distinction between belonging to the Jewish collective (the ethnos) and attachment and affiliation with Israel (the state), uniting both under the nation(al) label.

“A sense of belonging is a basic human need,” Jasper notes (2011: 290), and emotions are at the core of any connection to a larger collective. For the national collective, a sense of love is central to the idea of belonging. Anderson notes that “nations inspire love,” and relates the love of nation to the love of family, deploying the nation-as-family metaphor as an answer to the puzzle of people’s willingness to sacrifice themselves for the collective (1991: 141-145). Naming “patriotism” as “political love,” political theorist Mabel Berezin (2001: 86) writes of the “felt identity” of the national subject, arguing that the feeling of love is at the heart of belonging to the national collective. Yet this feeling is not automatic, she explains; the state engages in deliberate efforts to mobilize this type of affection in order to unite the populace around its national identity (instead of other, competing identities). Berezin’s work on fascist Italy looks at the state’s deliberate use of the familial metaphor of the nation to generate love – and therefore willingness to sacrifice – for the nation.

While social scientists are not in agreement over whether or not love is an emotion (Felmlee and Sprecher 2006), they agree that people in general believe that love is indeed an emotion and also experience that generates and involves multiple emotional states (Ibid: 391). Most of the research on love looks at the experience of intimate, romantic love (Felmlee and Sprecher 2006; Swidler 2001; Sternberg 1999), investigating the subject through research on individuals and their individual relationships. This research offers insights that are useful when applied to an inquiry of love towards a collective, not an individual. Social scientists largely differentiate between two kinds of romantic love: one based on, or expressing, a sense of commitment (Sternberg 1999; Swidler 2001; Jasper 2011) and obligation (Felmlee and Sprecher 2006: 399, citing Bellah et al 1985); and the other representing a kind of passion (Swidler 2001; Felmlee and Sprecher 2006: 404), which relates to fantasy (Giddens 1992) and attraction (Felmlee and Sprecher 2006: 395). So, too, in a sociological inquiry into the concept of love for nation, there exists a divide between the kind of love that expresses and embodies an obligation to the collective and a kind of “falling in love” that relates more closely to fantasies about the love object. This dissertation argues that the emotional intersection between the metaphors of family as nation, on the one hand, and love for nation, on the

⁵⁵ Melvin Urofsky observes that the “We are One!” slogan was adopted by the United Jewish Appeal, a precursor to the Jewish Federations of North America, in 1975 as a response to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3379, which found Zionism to be a form of racial discrimination (1978: 444). Seeing the UN resolution as unfairly targeting and degrading Jewish nationalism, this dominant American Jewish organization responded with a redoubled expression of solidarity and unity with the state of Israel. Similarly, during the second Intifada (2000-2005), the slogan “wherever we stand, we stand with Israel” became popular in mainstream Jewish spaces and promoted by Jewish Federations across North America (Sasson 2014).

other, is a kind of familial love for nation (which includes love for the state). This love expresses the fulfillment of familial obligation, rather than the more passionate, fantasy-oriented love. (This second kind of love will be explored in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.) This love, which is a kind of “affective commitmen[t],” is a “stable, long-term emotio[n],” is a form of loyalty and attachment (Jasper 2011: 287).

Whereas scholars studying love look at the practices and narratives people use around nurturing a committed relationship (Swidler 2001; Felmlee and Sprecher 2006), Berezin (2001) looks at the state’s use of family to mobilize love for and identification with the state over any competing identity. Berezin’s work points to the centrality of the experience of love in collective identities and collective solidarities; drawing from Berezin (2001), Jasper points to love as an example of a “reciprocal emotion,” an emotion members of a group feel for each other, which serves to strengthen the group as a collective (2011: 294). What is missing from these inquiries into the role of love in collective solidarities, and particularly the concept of love of nation, is the way in which this affective bond not only facilitates and embodies attachment but also serves as a measure of appropriate attachment and membership in the collective. That is, the performance of love for the nation becomes a measure of appropriate attachment to the nation. The family metaphor for nation illuminates this aspect of how love works within collective identity.

Though classical scholars of nationalism, including Anderson, do not bring critical analysis to the institution of family or its implications for the nation, feminist scholars have thoroughly and extensively debunked any assumption of the neutrality of the concept of family. As family is inherently a gendered institution, constructed along and perpetuating particular gender roles, feminist scholars have interrogated the ways in which nationalist mobilization promotes particular gender roles or ideologies, looking at gender and the biological and cultural reproduction of the nation (Yuval-Davis 1997; Kanaaneh 2002), the state’s use of family planning policy to promote particular racial (and gendered) agendas (Teo 2009; Heng and Devan 1992; Kanaaneh 2002; Yuval-Davis 1997), and the ways in which gendered ideals of family underlie citizenship and other markers of national belonging (Auslander 2001). In her work on the changes over time in citizenship laws in Germany and France (and in particular the granting of women’s suffrage), Leora Auslander argues that the relationship between a state and its citizens is underscored by affection and loyalty for the state, which is nurtured and cultivated differently in each country according to the different gendered understandings of national identity, the structure of the state, and the reproduction of culture.⁵⁶

Auslander’s work is instructive for this research on American Jews in that she argues that the production of national identity by the state rests on particular visions of family, and that affective ties – love – for family are both the model and the vehicle for developing love for the state. These norms and understandings underlie a system of rights and laws, becoming implicated in the denial or provision of rights to a sector of the population (women, in Auslander’s cases). Similarly, among

⁵⁶ Auslander’s argument: because German society operated according to a sense of natural, genetically transmitted Germanness that relied on affective ties to both parents and to one’s town and region, women as citizens didn’t threaten the German state, and Germany granted women suffrage decades before women in France achieved it. In France, contrary to Germany, national culture was seen as something one might choose to assimilate into, and thus something to be learned from an early age; thus the domestic sphere – the domain of women, where women taught their children love for the other mother, the state – needed protection from the male-identified structure of the state, and women’s suffrage was seen as upsetting that balance.

American Jews, a logic of familial love describes the dominant references to relationships with Israel, whereby the idea that Jews are family and Jews love Israel serve as central vehicles for expressing the collective ideal. Moreover, this case is unique in that it pertains to the production of love for a state that is not the residence of the community being socialized into these affective bonds, nor is it the territory to which most American Jews trace their ancestry. Rather, it is the homeland to which the Jewish diaspora's primary ties have long been "commemorative" (Boyarin and Boyarin 2002: 11), now transformed into the political entity of a state. Diaspora Jews are a part of the state of Israel's official constituency: in 1950, Israel passed a "Basic Law" (the legal construct in Israel closest to a constitution) offering every Jew the right to immigrate to Israel and gain citizenship (Kimmerling 2001). The inclusion of diaspora Jews within the construct of Israel's citizenry points to hegemony of Jewish nationhood and Israel's claim to be the national home for the Jewish people (Ibid). The limited citizenship rights of native-born non-Jews (ibid) further emphasize the claim that measures of belonging to the Jewish nation have material as well as metaphorical implications.⁵⁷

Feminist insights into the metaphor of family prove useful in untangling the threads of meaning in the logic of familial love. Barrie Thorne (1982) writes of the language used to describe "the family" as "a firm, unchanging entity" that is both "a specific household arrangement *and*...an ideology" (4). The ideology in this arrangement is found in the mapping of specific roles among people, places, and feelings. For "the family," the traditional arrangement refers to "'a collectivity of specific persons (presumably...relations) associated with specific spaces ('the home'), and specific affective bonds ('love')" (Ibid). The attendant ideology "infuse[s]" this arrangement with ideas of "proper" roles – the male breadwinner, the caregiving and economically-dependent wife and mother – and sees these roles as "natural, biological, or 'functional' in a timeless way" (Ibid: 2-4). Through this ideology, a structural arrangement that promotes male dominance and female subordination is made to seem natural, necessary, and desirable for the functioning of a society.

This feminist critique of the ideology of the family applies to the use of the family metaphor to understand and describe the nation. Thorne's description of the family ideology parallels the construct of the nation, in which a particular collectivity (the national family) shares a territory (the homeland) and relates to each other with the specified affective emotions (love). For the nation, as in "the family," the ideology brings assumptions about proper behavior and proper roles, which are made to seem as natural as the love one is assumed to feel for parents, children, or the greater nation.

II. The Jewish Family

This chapter explores the ways in which this idea of familial connection animates American Jewish links to the state of Israel and describes the ideal expressions of support for the state. While the metaphor of family serves as the blueprint of Jewish collective connection to Israel, the limits of familial connection also shape the communal boundaries. The notion of familial links to Israel describes the positive connection to the state and also shapes the edges and limits of what is considered an acceptable connection.

⁵⁷ This metaphorical system is multi-layered. In Hebrew, Palestinians are often referred to as the "cousins" of the Jewish people (b'nai dodeinu). The family metaphor thus includes Palestinians as both familial insiders but outside of the nuclear Jewish family.

Jews have historically seen themselves as part of a larger, extended Jewish family (cite). The Zionists who settled in Palestine and built the settlements and institutions that became the state of Israel were part of that family, and the establishment of the state in the shadow of the Holocaust became a focal point for Jewish connectivity. Over the past several decades, as the links between American Jewish organizations and the state of Israel have become more programmatic and institutionalized (Kelner 2010; Berman 2010, 2008; Goldman 2009), the metaphor of family has been used and exaggerated as a central concept in promoting American Jewish connectedness to the state of Israel. While many Jewish people have biological (kinship) ties across the globe (due to migration), this dissertation is less concerned with blood ties and more interested in the dominant metaphor of family. This metaphor works on the level of nation and state, framing the Jewish people as one family and the state as a central part of that family. This dissertation argues that this metaphor shapes the beliefs, values, and practices of American Jews vis-à-vis Israel, creating boundaries and consequences for behavior seen as non-familial.

Deborah Gould (2009) discusses the “emotional habitus” of a community, describing the hegemonic collective emotional disposition. Where family serves as a central metaphor [belief], the dominant application [behavior] of that metaphor is obligation; this is the “proper” behavior that follows from the proper feeling of affection within the hegemonic familial model (Thorne 1982). It is the rabbinic imperative still in use today, that “all of Israel (the Jewish people) is responsible for one another.”⁵⁸ Animating this building block of Jewish community is the affect of love. *Abavat Yisrael*, love for Israel, has animated Jewish ethics, art and culture for millennia. Emerging as a communal value in the Jewish diaspora, the importance of *Abavat Yisrael* arose out of the dangers to an oppressed and dispersed minority population united by the study of the Hebrew Bible (the Torah) and the sense of mutual responsibility.⁵⁹ Though Jewish communities in the United States have become less observant of religious practice (Cohen and Eisen 2000), this imperative of interdependence and *Abavat Yisrael* still remains strong. While throughout Jewish history the concept referred to the Jewish collective (the transnational Jewish diaspora), the state of Israel (*Yisrael* in Hebrew) used that sentiment to mobilize familial love for the political and institutional entity of the state. In the United States, scholars argue that Israel has replaced the religious character at the center of American Jewish life (Liebman and Cohen 1990; Eisen 1986).⁶⁰

⁵⁸ The Hebrew phrase is Kol Yisrael arevim zeh la'zeh. “Israel” refers to the nation Israel, a synonym for the Jewish people. The Hebrew word here translated as “responsible” (“arevim”) carries a legal connotation, such that the sentence may also be translated as “All of Israel is a surety for each other.” This phrase originates in the Babylonian Talmud, the summary of Jewish law and philosophy compiled during the 3rd to 5th centuries CE (Tractate Shavuot, 39a). Historically, Jewish communities provided financial and other assistance to other Jewish communities, including collateral and ransom for kidnapped Jews. Contemporary fundraising campaigns for Jews in difficult circumstances around the globe often invoke the historical antecedent of Jews supporting Jews in other communities and countries.

⁵⁹ Chana Kronfeld, personal communication, April 2014.

⁶⁰ Others argue that the Holocaust is at the center of American Jewish collective identity and collective memory (which is core to identity) (See Wolf 2002 for discussion of American Jewish collective identity and the Holocaust). Indeed, the most recent survey research on American Jews, conducted by the Pew Research Center, found that the single factor most surveyed Jews believe is “essential to being Jewish” is “remembering the Holocaust;” some 73% of American Jews hold that view (Pew Research Center 2013: 55). I would argue that the Holocaust and Israel are mutually constitutive factors in American Jewish identity, as the dominant framing offers the history of Jewish persecution, including the Nazi Holocaust, as the justification for the need for a Jewish state and Jewish army (Zertal 2005). The newest survey on Jewish life in the United States found that 73% of American Jews believe that remembering the Holocaust is “essential to their sense of

The dual concepts of Jews as family and the obligation of love for Israel are intertwined in the construct of the ideal American Jewish relationship with Israel. As these religious and civic precepts are applied to a political construct (the state), they become politically implicated. The logic of familial love operates as a prescription for support for the state of Israel. The Israeli government and the American Jewish organizational leadership mobilize support for the state within the framework of this logic, which they also use to discipline Jewish relationships with the state of Israel. This logic shapes the collective disposition. Thus it shapes what is considered both internal to and external from the collective, as both the internal and the external are vital to the construction of collective identification. The logic of familial love for Israel forms the content of the internal character of the collective as well as the limits of the collective.

The logic of familial love structures the boundaries of the collective as the Jewish organizational leadership promulgates this logic as discourse and policy. The performance of love for Israel illustrates the ways in which the broader concept of love for Israel is mobilized through the metaphors of Jews as family and Israel as home and through the expectations of dedication to, loyalty, and affection for the state. This performance has a number of characteristics: first is the expectation that *love* for Israel motivate advocacy on behalf of the state; and second, that the *expression* of the love bond for the state – in the form of loyalty - is paramount. Contestation around Israeli policy and American Jews' proper relationships to Israel may thus be read as indicating an absence of love for and loyalty to Israel.

A. Jews are a Family and Israel is their Home

Every year, representatives from the major and minor Jewish community organizations gather for an annual summit, a “General Assembly,” convening over the major issues on the Jewish communal agenda. Under the aegis of the Jewish Federations of North America, participants come from across the United States, Canada, Israel, and Jewish communities in other countries. Government representatives from Israel and the United States address the crowd of thousands. In 2010, the year I attended, American Vice President Joe Biden, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Israeli opposition leader Tzipi Livni addressed the gathered thousands in a hotel in downtown New Orleans, Louisiana. In one afternoon session, more than a hundred people – Jewish communal professionals, lay leaders, volunteers, and students – sat in a hotel meeting room listening to a panel speak about the Jewish Agency for Israel, the “preeminent vehicle” for Jews outside of Israel, and especially in America, to contribute money to the state of Israel (Sasson 2014: 64). During the question and answer period, a neatly dressed young man addressed the crowd. What he said, and the responses in the room, encapsulate the construct of the interconnected global Jewish family whose shared home is the state of Israel, for which all Jews are responsible.

Standing at the microphone in the middle of the room, facing the panel on the dais, the young man introduced himself as Vladimir, from Israel. He explained that he had made *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) from Russia without his parents, joining the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). He told the crowd that the Jewish Agency brought the mothers of lone soldiers to Israel to visit their enlisted children, saying

Jewishness.” At the same time, 69% of American Jews report that they are “somewhat” or “very” attached to the state of Israel (Pew Research Center 2013:13).

No matter how strong you are, you miss your mother sometimes. When my commander said my mother was coming, I had tears in my eyes, and my Jewish mother, you can imagine. And when other lone soldiers heard I was coming to the G[eneral] A[ssembly], they asked me to thank these people...thank you in the name of the brave lone Jewish soldiers who protect the Jewish people, and whose mothers have a chance to come...

Vladimir embodies the network linking American Jews, Israel, and a global Jewish community. He receives material support from organized American Jewish communities via the Jewish Agency, which, together with the Israeli government and the IDF, developed a mechanism to support (and therefore encourage) young soldiers who immigrate without their parents. Through the “Lone Soldier Fund,” the Jewish Agency helps immigrant soldiers acclimate to their new home by matching them with adoptive Israeli families and facilitating visits with their parents. This partnership among the Israeli government, the IDF, the Jewish Agency, American Jewish funders, and the young Jews from around the world who move to Israel and serve in the Israeli army embodies the ideal that Jews are interdependent, Israel is their national home, and the IDF “*protect[s] the Jewish people*” as a whole. Moreover, this vignette illustrates the contemporary enactment of the traditional metaphor by which the Jewish collective was the wife of God; in the contemporary enactment, the Jewish collective remains the traditional partner, but the role of God has been replaced by the state (and army), which serves as the protective patriarch.⁶¹

Vladimir’s gratitude was warmly received in that hotel meeting room; GA attendees responded with loud applause and I witnessed many attendees wiping tears from their eyes. Responding to his comments, the female moderator thanked him “*as a Jewish mother.*” As Vladimir said – “*my Jewish mother, you can imagine,*” and the moderator did; whether in Russia, Israel, or the United States, the “*Jewish mother*” in that room is one who loves and supports her child regardless of his choices. The shared maternal image is in part of the larger construct of family that serves as a basis for the hegemonic ideal of Jewish connectivity.

In this ideal, Jews are connected to one another through their love for fellow Jews – their family – and for Israel, their home. The love is visible in the form of mutual responsibility, on the one hand, and loyalty to the state of Israel, on the other. This construct resembles the “monolithic family” of which Thorne writes (1982), in which the construct of “family” carries an attendant ideology by which “family” means sharing a home, expressing affection, and keeping to the set, proper roles each member holds. The next few pages will explore this monolithic view of Jewish community through the expressions of mutual responsibility and loyalty for Israel.

B. Mutual Responsibility

“All Israel is responsible for one another,” says the ubiquitous maxim. (Sarna 1986: xvi). Scholars of American Jewish life note that ties to Jews around the world are very important to American Jews, as Jews share a sense of history and kinship with each other despite holding other group identities, such as different nationalities (Liebman and Cohen 1990). Israel is at the center of this responsibility; in the American Jewish narrative, the “fate” of American Jews “rests” on Israel (Ibid: 64). This kinship includes a sense of mutual responsibility, defined as “care, compulsion, obligation, permanence” which extends to building and supporting social service organizations to take care of fellow Jews (Ibid: 17) as well as to support for the state, including its military. The institutional

⁶¹ Chana Kronfeld offered this insight. Personal communication, April 2014.

center of Jewish American life, the Jewish Federation system, has long used the tagline “We are One” (Urofsky 1978), reminding Jews of their connection and obligation to other Jews as they sought donations to support Jewish life in the U.S., Israel and around the world.⁶² Similarly, the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) uses the maxim “All of Israel is responsible for One Another” in their statement of core values, referring to their commitment to Jews around the world, and especially to the state of Israel.⁶³ As they say,

Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh La Zeh, All in the House of Israel are Responsible for One Another – Continuously organizing the Jewish community to come to the aid of Jews in need of support at home, in Israel, and around the world. Working toward a secure and vibrant Israel by promoting a strong America/Israel relationship based on the recognition of the State of Israel as the pluralistic, democratic, historical, cultural, religious, and national homeland of the Jewish people.

For the JCRC, supporting the Jewish homeland from America is an inherent element of being in the “House of Israel” – the Jewish family, the Jewish people. The JCRC frames their obligations towards Israel in the language of collective interdependence, noting American Jews’ unique role to play in terms of the “America/Israel relationship.” As the organization that represents itself as speaking for the Jewish consensus in the Bay Area, this statement of values reiterates the hegemony of the logic of familial love for Israel.

C. “Keep it in the family”

“*Working toward a secure and vibrant Israel by promoting a strong America/Israel relationship*” – these are the words of San Francisco’s JCRC, echoing the other major Jewish organizations (Goldberg 1996; Sasson) and reiterating the proper role for the American branch of the Jewish family. From the late 1960s through the mid 1990s, American Jewish institutions largely spoke with one voice in their advocacy for Israel (Goldberg 1996; Rosenthal 2001). Over the last two decades, some Jewish organizations have granted space to new questions over Israeli history and policy, and new Jewish channels have emerged for publicly challenging Israeli policy (Sasson 2014, 2010; Rosenthal 2001). In the seeking of space within Jewish settings to discuss challenges relating to Israel, questions over the expressions of loyalty to Israel – as a form of love – emerge. One measure of familial love is staying loyal to the boundaries of the family by keeping troubles private within the family (Thorne 1982).

A prohibition against exposing questions and criticisms of Israel outside of the boundaries of Jewish community is pervasive throughout the Jewish communal world. Yet boundaries are inherently unstable – as this dissertation attests – and questions arise about what one can say about Israel, to whom, and where. In the words of a college student, who rose during a panel at the 2010 Jewish Federations of North America’s General Assembly to say

⁶² According to promotional materials for the Jewish Federations of North America (the JFNA, the most recent name for the Federation system), “Connecting our global Jewish family” is as much an end unto itself as is providing “Social services in Israel” and “Rescuing and protecting the vulnerable” Jews. “Connecting” speaks both to the JFNA’s activities and the resonance of this frame for fundraising. (2010 pamphlet).

⁶³ www.jcrc.org/about_mission.htm (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

I can be critical of Israel with my Jewish friends but not with my non-Jewish friends. It feels like airing dirty laundry. Their loyalty is not in the same place as mine. Do you have advice for me? I want to be a critical thinker.

This student articulates the values of the multiple social worlds in which she operates. Living in a society in which Jews mix socially with non-Jews, learning on a campus in which “critical think[ing]” is valued, the salient and meaningful division arises in the question of loyalty: the student assumes the loyalty of Jews to Israel and the absence of such affection from non-Jews. This student articulates a tension between “airing dirty laundry in public” and the social and intellectual worlds in which she is enmeshed. The assumption of Jewish loyalty to Israel makes criticism acceptable; non-Jews are inherently outside of the family structure and the expectation of affective bonds.

The paradigm of Jewish loyalty to Israel is the political manifestation of the logic of familial love, and taboos on exposure in public affirm the imperative to differentiate between insiders and outsiders, between the loyal and the suspect. Yet the need for the taboo suggests that its violation is common enough to require a prohibition. In the American Jewish community, the very act of articulating an insider/outsider division suggests that the division is not already obvious; there is blurriness between insiders and outsiders and acceptable and unacceptable speech. Jewish community professionals continually reassert this division. The director of the Boston Jewish Federation (called Combined Jewish Philanthropies) says his Federation abides by a policy of “keeping criticism [of Israel] for private discussions.”⁶⁴ The San Francisco Jewish Federation’s Guidelines for grantees on Israel (discussed in detail below) allow for “private meetings” on topics and with participants who would be barred from public programs. As a senior Jewish Community Relations Council professional explained,

A large segment of the Jewish community leadership [in the Bay Area is] comfortable...articulating private concerns about various Israeli government policies and at the same time very concerned about...public criticism. It’s that old question of airing dirty laundry in public.”

That “*old question*” is about exposing flaws and inviting others, outsiders, to see something that might reflect negatively on one’s group, one’s family. Laundry is shared at home; the word indicates the backstage, private realm, connoting intimacy and suggesting that Israel’s “dirty laundry” is a private Jewish story. It is the story of those who share the home. As such, the dirty laundry idiom reasserts the frame through which the claims of non-Jews (and particularly Palestinians) are by definition extraneous to the primary discussion of Israel. And, for Jews, anxieties and taboos around “airing dirty laundry” reflect concerns over committing an act (including of speech) that might violate the chief organizing principle of American Jewish communal life, which calls on Jews to bolster the state of Israel in community-approved ways.

D. The Jewish American Home: “The Big Tent”

At the 2010 JFNA General Assembly, Israeli politician (and current government minister) Tzipi Livni told the gathered crowd that what was acceptable was “*Criticism that comes from love – like a family. Israel is a family. Part of this big family of world Jewry.*” Her words resonated with many in the crowd of community professionals and lay leaders. Inside the Jewish communal world, as

⁶⁴ <http://forward.com/articles/145828/how-big-is-jewish-tent-on-israel/> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

community-oriented American Jews raise concerns over Israeli policy more vocally than in the past, community leaders have repeatedly turned to the metaphor of family for guidance. A symbol for a home has become the primary analogy for the expansive and inclusive community, one that lives in a “big tent.”⁶⁵ Articles titled “Just Who’s Inside the Big Tent?”⁶⁶ and “How Big is the Jewish ‘Tent’ on Israel?”⁶⁷, among others, assert that Jewish communities across the continent struggle with conflicting perspectives with regard to Israel, whether in the form of controversy over hosting speakers or in allowing certain organizations to participate in community-wide events.⁶⁸ As journalist Nathan Guttman put it in the nationally-distributed *Forward* newspaper in November 2011, “The question of how big the Jewish tent can be when it comes to Israel is one of the thorniest ones that American Jews deal with.”⁶⁹ The political content of the “big tent” also reflects the logic of familial love in that the guiding premise is close alignment with the state of Israel rather than other religious or cultural values. That is, the communal boundary is drawn around proper orientations towards the state of Israel rather than, say, religious practice. Many Jewish leaders speak in a language of inclusivity and many also speak of “red lines;” these two go hand-in-hand, as it is behind the red-line boundary that many communities speak in a language of inclusion. The logic of familial love guides the placement of the red-line boundaries; airing dirty laundry threatens to place one outside the communal tent (as discussed in detail below).

E. Codifying Love and Loyalty: The San Francisco Jewish Federation Case Study

The unique dynamics of the Bay Area reflect the greater visibility and audibility of Jewish critique of Israel. Jewish communal leadership speaks of the need to build an inclusive community around the centrality of Israel’s importance, reiterating the familial frame of love and loyalty to the state. Echoing the “big tent” language, a senior Jewish leader in the Bay Area spoke of the Bay Area Jewish leadership’s challenge to “*think about how broad that tent can be without collapsing.*” That is, which ideas, actions, thinkers, and actors belong in the Big Tent? As families and national communities are organized around their affective bonds – love and loyalty – then the development of visible questioning or criticism points to the possibility of disloyalty, of non-love, for the collective. In the face of this challenge, the Federation and JCRC leadership are making the feeling rules – for love and loyalty – more explicit.

In the Bay Area, the logic of familial love has been institutionalized as policy in the form of guidelines, established by the San Francisco Jewish Federation and implemented by the Federation and the Jewish Community Relations Council, that formally limit inclusion in the Jewish community

⁶⁵ The idea of tent as home invokes the Jewish origin myths, as the original patriarch, Abraham, and his descendants were desert dwellers who lived in tents. Reference to the Jewish tent is thus not only a mirror of broader political speech (in which different communities are described as gathering under different tents) but also a reaffirmation of the nation-ness of Jews.

⁶⁶ Gary Rosenblatt, Editor of *The Jewish Week*, 11/08/2011.

http://www.thejewishweek.com/editorial_opinion/gary_rosenblatt/just_whos_inside_big_tent (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

⁶⁷ <http://forward.com/articles/145828/how-big-is-jewish-tent-on-israel/> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

⁶⁸ While some Jewish leaders speak in a language of inclusivity, others speak of red lines. The most common “red line” articulates a barrier against the “delegitimization” or “undermining the legitimacy” of Israel, a broad category of threat against which the JFNA, JCPA (National JCRC umbrella organization) and Israeli government launched a joint multi-million dollar campaign. The section on ‘fear’ will address the issue of delegitimization in more depth.

⁶⁹ <http://forward.com/articles/145828/how-big-is-jewish-tent-on-israel/> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

according to orientations towards Israel. Thus far, this chapter has looked at the ways in which the discourse of love for Israel describes a kind of familial bond among Jews for the state of Israel, exploring how the discourse of this familial love is also used to frame obligations between Jews and the state of Israel. The San Francisco Jewish Federation Guidelines are also interpretable within the logic of familial love, as the love bond translates into a form of patriotic loyalty that carries obligations and also metes out penalties.

In 2009, the contestation over how Bay Area Jews and Jewish organizations handle critique of Israeli policies boiled over into the public sphere. Whereas Bay Area Jews regularly experienced bitter, contentious, divisive struggles over Israel in various pockets – such as within synagogues, where committees fought over Israel and rabbis stayed away from the topic – the 2009 controversy surrounding the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (SFJFF) and consequently the San Francisco Jewish Federation quickly came to represent the struggle across the entire community. The Jewish Film Festival, a Federation grantee, screened a documentary film, *Rachel*, which investigates the circumstances surrounding the death of a young American woman, Rachel Corrie, in Gaza. Promoting the film as “a dispassionate but devastating essay,”⁷⁰ the Film Festival invited Corrie’s mother, Cindy Corrie, a subject in the documentary, to speak at the San Francisco screening. The Film Festival also chose co-sponsoring organizations for this film that fell outside of the communal boundaries; neither of film’s two co-sponsors, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) or American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is within the “big tent” of the organized Jewish community.⁷¹ The co-sponsorship and Corrie’s mother’s planned appearance set off criticism and protest which began weeks before the Festival and lasted for months afterwards, and catalyzed a process that fundamentally altered the Jewish community in the Bay Area. Federation donors came out strongly against the Festival and against the San Francisco Federation – a Festival funder – for not reining in their grantee.

As the communal fund, the Federation became the primary point of public pressure and, in response, created grantee guidelines concerning Israel. These guidelines seek to ensure that the Jewish Federation and its agencies do not support – that is, do not sanction as *part* of the Jewish community – any person or organization who represents a particularly disfavored view on Israel. As such, these guidelines articulate the expected behaviors and orientations of Federation grantees (who are, then, sanctioned members of the community). The Guidelines thus represent a clear effort to make feeling rules around Israel explicit.

The San Francisco Jewish Federation Guidelines

Published in 2010, the Federation’s “Policy on Israel-Related Programming by its Grantees”⁷² – known as “the guidelines” – delineate the boundaries of acceptable engagement with Israel for Federation grantees and set a tone for the larger community, as well. These guidelines form a symbolic boundary between what is acceptable under the aegis of the organized Jewish community

⁷⁰ San Francisco Jewish Film Festival Program, 2009. <http://fest.sfjff.org/film/detail?id=4732> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

⁷¹ The SFJFF had co-sponsored films with JVP and the AFSC in prior years, as well. Both are outsider organizations. The AFSC is not a Jewish organization, and JVP is explicitly marginalized and excluded from organized Jewish community in the Bay Area over their political positions, as will be explored in more detail below.

⁷² <http://sfjcf.wordpress.com/2010/02/18/policy/> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

and what is not. These are funding guidelines, specifying the activities and engagement that the Jewish Community Federation will and will not fund. As the dominant collective organization of the Bay Area Jewish community and the central community convener, the Federation's funding rules identify which ideas and which people are welcome in the collective Jewish home and which are not. Additionally, the guidelines impose punitive consequences for grantees (who are the figurative family members) who associate with ideas and people whom the Federation has placed out of the bounds of Jewish community. These consequences reaffirm the logic by which loyalty to the family, to the insiders, is privileged above other values and is measurable through rejection of and distancing from those people and ideas deemed outside the family fold.

According to the guidelines, the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation “does not fund organizations that through their mission, activities or partnerships:

endorse or promote anti-Semitism, other forms of bigotry, violence or other extremist views; actively seek to proselytize Jews away from Judaism; or advocate for, or endorse, undermining the legitimacy of Israel as a secure, independent, democratic Jewish state, including through participation in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, in whole or in part.”

According to the guidelines, the unifying platform of an acceptable relationship to Israel is “*support for Israel as a Jewish and democratic state*” and rejection of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. A leading political movement of Palestinian civil society and its allies, BDS calls advocates for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel to achieve three aims: the end Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, an end to discrimination against Palestinian inside of Israel, and the right of return for Palestinians (cite). One of the guideline's architects explained that they aim to clarify “*the distinction between legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy and the efforts of delegitimizing Israel.*” The guidelines identify the BDS movement as a “*delegitimizing*” effort.

Programs that are “*generally in accord*” with the guidelines are as follows:

Dialogue groups (i.e. non-public exchanges) (emphasis added)

Private meetings (emphasis added)

Presentations on topics other than the Middle East and Israel, that are not used to promote a BDS agenda or provide a forum for leaders of groups that espouse views inconsistent with JCF's core values

Presentations by organizations or individuals that are critical of particular Israeli government policies but are supportive of Israel's right to exist as a secure independent Jewish democratic state and that do not espouse views inconsistent with this policy. (emphasis added)

Panel discussions, speaker series intended for the same audience, cultural presentations, or educational programs portraying a range of diverse perspectives that, on balance, are consistent with JCF's core values

Programs that are open to the community and welcome attendees regardless of their individual views

Participation in broad-based community coalitions on non-Israel-related issues provided that the coalitions do not become vehicles for undermining the legitimacy of Israel

Artistic presentations (displays, exhibits, films, performances) that may include critical perspectives of Jewish life or Israel and that, on balance, are consistent with JCF's core values

Through this list, the “feeling rules” become apparent within the funding rules. The logic of familial love, which emphasizes loyalty to the collective and differentiation between insiders and outsiders, is at the foundation of these guidelines. First, the Federation asserts the importance of the public/private divide. The guidelines do not regulate private meetings or “non-public exchanges.” In allowing for “dialogue,” they permit private association with people who hold views with which the grantees are forbidden from publicly associating. This differentiation points to one of the underlying assumptions of the Guidelines: that even if a grantee holds an acceptable view on Israel, the grantee – and the larger collective, represented by the Federation – are sullied or undermined by public association with a forbidden view. On the public/private distinction, one of the guidelines chief architects explained in an interview “*first and foremost what it speaks to is the issue of airing dirty laundry in public.*” Again, dirty laundry – criticism of the state of Israel – may be accepted within private spaces, but, in keeping with the logic of familial love, a Federation grantee (an insider in the Jewish community) will not oppose the family in public. This public/private divide reiterates the Federation’s expectation for community members, which is that they will show appropriate love and loyalty for the state and the Jewish collective in public. The divide also shows the Federation’s desire to control critique of Israel by limiting it to expression within the privacy of the Jewish community.

According to the guidelines, public programs must be “*consistent with JCF’s core values*” but can feature a range of views. Criticism of Israel is acceptable as long as it is criticism “*of particular Israeli government policies but [represents an overall view that is] supportive of Israel’s right to exist as a secure independent Jewish democratic state.*” This concept -- “*Israel’s right to exist as a secure, independent Jewish democratic state*” – forms the content of JCF’s understanding of support for Israel. Although in some circles this concept of the “Jewish and democratic state” is fraught with contradiction and highly debated in academic, political and public (media) spheres,⁷³ here, the San Francisco Federation elides the debate over the concept and insists that the only acceptable view within its parameters affirms Israel’s “*right*” to be both Jewish and democratic. As such, it is an ideological pledge imposed upon those who would want to be a part of organized Jewish community in the Bay Area. As the Federation guidelines make explicit the feeling rules in the community, they also show the political implications for the expected loyalty to the collective.

⁷³ For example, see Kimmerling 2001; Yiftachel 1999; Shafir and Peled 2002; Honig-Parnass 2011; Robinson 2013.

The guidelines continue, stating that programs that are “*not consistent*” with the guidelines are as follows:

Panel discussions, speakers series, cultural, artistic or educational programs that as an overall experience – i.e. based on the entire body of work – endorse or prominently promote the BDS movement or positions that undermine the legitimacy of the State of Israel
Individual programs that endorse the BDS movement or positions that undermine the legitimacy of the State of Israel
Co-sponsorship or co-presentations of public programs on Middle East issues with supporters of the BDS movement or others who undermine the legitimacy of the State of Israel

This list of what programs are not allowed to do makes clear that any type of endorsement, promotion or support for BDS (“*in whole or in part,*” as stated above) is out of bounds for Federation grantees. The Federation will neither sanction nor tolerate programs or projects that they see as “*undermin[ing] the legitimacy of the State of Israel.*” What constitutes such undermining⁷⁴ is a topic of discussion and disagreement among Jewish and Israeli leadership.

In addition to forbidding programs, the Guidelines also address individuals who advocate beyond-the-pale positions. The third excluded program is

Co-sponsorship or co-presentations of public programs on Middle East issues with supporters of the BDS movement or others who undermine the legitimacy of the State of Israel

With this plank, the Guidelines not only forbid co-sponsorship of events that “*endorse*” BDS, but also restrict Federation grantees from participating in a program at which BDS supporters, and others “*who undermine the legitimacy*” of Israel, may offer their views on the Middle East. It also limits BDS advocates and others whose views on Israel are considered “*delegitimizing*” from participating in events along with Federation grantees. In this way, this plank formally limits the range of views that may be aired at any event co-sponsored by a Federation grantee while also limiting Federation grantees’ participation in events, even without organizational co-sponsorship.

For instance, because the Palestinian Right of Return is a central platform in Palestinian politics, advocated by grassroots groups as well as in the Palestinian Authority’s official negotiating positions with Israel, this plank effectively bars Federation grantees from co-sponsoring a public program with Right of Return-supporting Palestinian organization *as well as* the participation of a Federation

⁷⁴ The Reut Institute, a leading thinktank focusing on “delegitimization” in collaboration with the Israeli government and American Jewish institutions, cites San Francisco’s Guidelines as a model for other communities. Reut defines delegitimization as working for “negation of Israel’s right to exist or of the right of the Jewish people to self determination.” Reut considers it “delegitimizing” to advocate for full equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel or for the right of Palestinians to return to the homes in Israel from which they were expelled. (Reut Institute. Building a Political Firewall Against Israel’s Delegitimization: Conceptual Framework. March 2010. <http://reut-institute.org/data/uploads/PDFVer/20100310%20Delegitimacy%20Eng.pdf>, page 11; Retrieved May 11, 2014). Through the lens of the logic of familial love, offering Palestinians full rights or access to land and homes threatens Jewish sovereignty over the home, the state of Israel.

grantee on a public panel together with a representative of Palestinian organizations.⁷⁵ Or, for instance, a Jewish campus group, with funding from Federation (through Hillel), may want to build relationships with groups from across the political spectrum, yet find themselves prevented from doing so by these restrictions.⁷⁶ This plank disallows any Federation grantee from joining in an event at which certain views will be aired. Additionally, this plank restricts the topic on which certain people may speak in Federation-sponsored spaces.⁷⁷

On the face of it, what the Guidelines do is to what the Reut Institute advises: establish “red lines” between “acceptable” critique of Israel and the “delegitimization” of Israel and to “drive a wedge” between Israel’s supporters and opponents. The Guidelines expand the parameters of the “big tent” such that it includes Israel’s supporters who may also critique the state. The logic of the “big tent” follows the logic of familial love for Israel, in which the kin relationship is represented through loyalty to the family, and loyalty finds expression in abiding by the family rules. In the Bay Area, the collective/other or family/outsider divide was codified into actual prohibition that forms a boundary around which projects, organizations, and individuals will be sanctioned by the dominant leadership of the Jewish community and which will be rejected. According to the Guidelines, it is public events that require regulation and restriction; private events are not threatening in the way that public events are. This distinction maps onto the logic of familial love, in that there is more room for disagreement within closed confines of “family,” but the sharing of the same sentiments in public is taken to pose a threat to the family, to the collective.

III. Family Disagreements: Inclusion and Exclusion

We’re all family. Israel is the home of the Jewish people. Sometimes Israel is annoying, like family is annoying. To the younger members of the audience, aren’t your parents sometimes annoying? And to the older, aren’t your children sometimes annoying? We’re family. At the end of the day, there’s only one Israel.

⁷⁵ The implementation of the Guidelines rests on Federation and JCRC leadership, who may choose to enforce or relax the guidelines. My analysis of the Guidelines is based on the written document as well as interviews with key stakeholders, including Federation and JCRC staff as well as Federation grantees whose scope of work has been affected by the guidelines.

⁷⁶ Hillel International, which oversees the more than 550 campus Hillels, established its own guidelines for Israel programming. The Hillel guidelines are similar to the San Francisco Federation’s guidelines. <http://www.hillel.org/jewish/hillel-israel/hillel-israel-guidelines> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

⁷⁷ One of the senior executives responsible for enforcing the guidelines, Ari Schwartz, said in an interview that the guidelines had been amended such that “co-presentations” with BDS supporters were permitted as long as the overall thrust of the program was not in support of BDS. Schwartz did not supply me with the amended text (despite repeated requests) and could not explain why the website on which the guidelines are posted did not include the amendment. However, the data collection process included collecting numerous stories of programs canceled and speakers avoided even if they did not technically violate the guidelines. Indeed, senior JCRC leadership explained that the JCRC counsels current and potential Federation grantees to avoid particular programs and people regardless of the technical violation of the guidelines. Interviews and conversations with Federation grantees confirmed that they make programmatic choices to avoid even the “shadow” of the guidelines, (such as refusing to share a stage to a Jewish BDS supporter for an event not focused on the Middle East). This aspect of guideline implementation affirms the deep divide and anxieties around the different between insiders and outsiders.

I heard these words at an “Israel Advocacy Training” where a speaker brought by the Israeli Embassy from Israel for a U.S. tour, worked with a group of about 50 Bay Area Jews on best practices for advocating for Israel and countering critics.⁷⁸ Even if Israel troubles a person by being “*annoying*” in some way, it remains “*family*,” the “*only one Israel*” is the only home for the Jewish family. The trainer, a favored spokesperson⁷⁹ of the Israeli government and American Jewish organizations, here offers the logic of familial love as the blueprint for criticism of the state of Israel. In disagreeing with the state, the most important factor for a Jew to consider is their status of belonging to the Jewish family, whose home is the state of Israel. The trainer echoes the words that Tzipi Livni, Israeli political leader (and current government minister), offered to the Jewish American audience gathered at the 2010 JFNA General Assembly. What is acceptable, she said, is “*criticism that comes from love – like a family. Israel is a family. Part of this big family of world Jewry.*”

What does “*criticism that comes from love*” look like? This section explores the ways in which the logic of familial love structures the acceptable forms of disagreement with the state of Israel. The two primary routes for acceptable disagreement are the continued affirmation of love for – and therefore loyalty to – the state of Israel, and consistent distancing of oneself from those people and ideas that have been branded non-loving and disloyal.

A. Conditional Inclusion: the importance of “from a place of love”

In 2010, the JCRC launched a community-wide initiative to improve how Jews speak to each other about Israel, aiming to “elevate the level of discourse in the Jewish community” and support an “inclusive Jewish community.”⁸⁰ For the launch of the “Year of Civil Discourse,” as the program was named, the Bay Area Jewish newspaper, the *j*, published a pastoral letter⁸¹ on the topic “Listening and Speaking Respectfully about Israel.” More than 150 Bay Area rabbis (more than 75% of the rabbis in the Northern California Board of Rabbis⁸²) signed on to this letter, the heart of which is as follows:

We have been bound together by *ahavat Yisrael*, our love for our people and the State of Israel. In appreciation of our differences we have also valued *Machloket*, argument. It is part of our DNA. Filled with passion and conviction, however, the tenor of our arguments has sometimes caused us to descend into intra-Jewish anger, hatred and even violence. Our

⁷⁸ The event is just one example of an ongoing partnership between the state of Israel and Jewish organizations; the trainer’s Bay Area events were co-sponsored by the Israeli Consulate together with the Jewish Community Relations Council, the San Francisco Jewish Federation, the Hillel house on a number of college campuses, and the Israel advocacy groups StandWithUs and Bluestar PR.

⁷⁹ The trainer specializes in “public diplomacy” for Israel, for which he has “trained a new generation of Israeli diplomats and spokespeople” and also become “a favored speaker for Jewish Federations” as well as a “welcomed guest at many Christian friends of Israel organizations,” according to his website. His website claims that he trains tens of thousands of people a year in “public diplomacy” for Israel. Throughout this ethnography, I repeatedly heard reference to him and his trainings from young American Jews who are a part of Israel advocacy efforts (including just through engagement with campus Hillel) and Jewish Agency representatives in the United States. (<http://awesomeseminars.weebly.com/more-about-neil1.html>; Retrieved September 18, 2013.)

⁸⁰ Quotes taken from “About the Year of Civil Discourse” page on the JCRC website: http://www.jcrc.org/ycd_about.htm. (Retrieved June 20, 2013.)

⁸¹ <http://www.jcrc.org/downloads/ycd/BoardofRabbisAd2010.pdf>. (Retrieved June 20, 2013.)

⁸² Which says more than 200 rabbis are members: <http://www.norcalrabbis.org/>. (Retrieved May 8, 2014.)

Sages labeled these eruptions *sinat chinam*, “causeless hatred” and concluded that they have only led to catastrophe. ...

Today, in debating issues and policies relating to Israel, we risk tearing the fabric of our own community. We believe that our multiple points of view stem from the same source: an unbreakable bond with our people and with Israel. ...

We rabbis represent a very wide spectrum of perspectives, and we differ in many ways including our positions on various Israeli governmental policies. However, just as we stand together in support of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state living in peace and security with its neighbors, so, too, on our commitment to treating one another with decency and to engaging in respectful dialogue do we speak in one voice....

We ask that all individuals, groups, and communities pledge to open their hearts to healthy, respectful dialogue based upon our love for our people and for the State of Israel.

In making their case for how and why Jews should treat each other with more respect and civility, the rabbis affirm the political translation of “*Ahavat Yisrael*” into a concept that refers to the modern state as well as the ancient people. They reiterate the framework of the family connection in asserting that Jews are bonded not only through that emotional orientation but also through “*our DNA*,” the genetic make-up that links this nation (as a family). While “*argument*” has a place in Jewish life, it also has a limit, and the rabbis draw that limit at the “*unbreakable bond with our people and with Israel*.” The core of that bond is love, and asserting this love is also the antidote to the “*causeless hatred*” that carries the collective historical memory of devolving into “*catastrophe*.” In making this argument, the rabbis are strengthening the foundation of Jewish connectedness and community by articulating that love connects Jews to one another and to the state. They are simultaneously stating what is outside of the bounds of Jewish community as they envision it. What is outside of the bounds is what is non-love, which is statements made or ways of engaging Israel that do not choose to fit within the “love for Israel” framework.

The Federation’s guidelines are an attempt to set policy according to this vision of a shared bond of “*love for our people and the State of Israel*.” As Ari Schwartz, a senior JCRC executive, explained, establishing the guidelines

has calmed the community down. It has really restored that distinction between legitimate criticism of Israeli government policy and the efforts of delegitimizing Israel and it has helped ensure that lively debate and discourse could continue to take place you within the organized Jewish community.

In his view, the guidelines have clarified the views and platforms that Jewish community members may hold. Yet though he sees these new rules of engagement as clarifying the communal (family) boundaries, leading community members disagreed. Just a few weeks after the guidelines were published, a group of prominent Bay Area Jews (professors, rabbis, non-profit directors, among others) bought space in the (only) national Jewish newspaper, *the Forward*, in which they argued against the guidelines.⁸³

⁸³ Signatories include highly esteemed professors of Jewish history and culture, Hebrew, Yiddish and rabbinic literature, and Talmud; professors with endowed professorships at Stanford University, UC Davis and UC

The Guidelines, they wrote, “*limit debate, threaten dissent, and establish for the first time a litmus test for loyalty to Israel.*” The guidelines “*set a dangerous precedent*” for Jewish communities across the country; they “*curtail freedom of speech and artistic expression by declaring certain opinions and organizations out of bounds*” and “*will have a chilling effect on the entire spectrum of community institutions, including educational, service, social justice and arts organizations.*” The threat of the Guidelines is in the “*vague and open-ended*” language describing excluded organizations, which is how the signatories describe the drawing of a boundary against those that (in the Guideline’s words) “*advocate for or endorse undermining the legitimacy of Israel as a democratic Jewish state.*” Barring grantees from co-presentations and co-sponsorships with individuals and organizations deemed “*out of bounds*” is yet “*more egregious.*” Additionally, the Guidelines “*limit American Jewish exposure to the range of art, literature, scholarship and political discourse that exists in Israel*” and “*will encourage self-censorship*” in organizations and individuals who fear concrete repercussions for the positions they hold regarding this “*fateful debate over the future of Israeli democracy and the occupation of Palestinian lands.*”

These leading thinkers find the guidelines damaging to the Bay Area Jewish community and a dangerous precedent for any Jewish community. The guidelines limit debate to a narrow range – more narrow than the debate that takes place in Israel – and instill fear and anxiety among Federation grantees across the full range of Federation-supported services, from social welfare to the arts, over speech around Israel. The fears these leaders articulate in their *Forward* ad have become reality in the Bay Area. Speakers have hesitated to join panels for fear of repercussions⁸⁴ or been disinvited for reasons they attribute to the guidelines;⁸⁵ organizations have canceled events⁸⁶ or tailored them to fit within the guidelines.⁸⁷ Certain views and organizations are thus excluded from the discourse and many others find themselves on shaky ground, often pragmatically choosing silence over the potential consequences of open speech.

These are the dynamics perpetuated and codified in the Guidelines: Jews may disagree with one another over Israel, but disagreement can result in approbation, marginalization, and exclusion. What, then, are the rules of disagreement?

Berkeley, and current and past chairs of the History department and Jewish Studies Programs at these schools; national luminary award-winning poet Adrienne Rich; and additional rabbis, teachers, poets and filmmakers. Full list here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/30649075/Forward-Ad-Prominent-Bay-Area-Jews-Warn-About-SF-Jewish-Federation-Guidelines-4-10>. The full ad is included as Appendix A.

⁸⁴ I have heard a number of reports from scholars and activists who hesitated or refused to participate in public events around Israel for fear of endangering their sources of funding. One example for which I received permission to report is a panel on Queer Views of Occupation, organized by Jay Michaelson as part of a wider Bay Area gathering. A number of scholars refused to participate in the panel so as to not endanger their fellowships, which are managed through the San Francisco Jewish Federation.

⁸⁵ A number of scholars and activists who support “selective boycott” of the occupation (and not full boycott of the state of Israel) reported removal without explanation from presentations to which they’d been invited.

⁸⁶ SFJFF no longer co-sponsors films with JVP or the AFSC; the Jewish Community Library canceled a planned event when a BDS activist was scheduled to participate in it though the event was not focused on Israel; The SFJCC already implements similar guidelines, thereby disallowing JVP from use of its space.

⁸⁷ In interviews, the JCRC staff was clear about their role in assisting organizations to conduct a “risk-benefit analysis” with regard to potential programs. Leaders of Federation grantees spoke of carefully weighing their program choices according to the potential repercussions of the guidelines.

The logic of familial love lays out the blueprint for tolerable disagreement over the state of Israel. The two primary routes for acceptable disagreement are the continued affirmation of love for – and therefore loyalty to – the state of Israel, and consistent distancing of oneself from those people and ideas that have been branded non-loving and disloyal.

B. Conditional Inclusion: Critique from Love

American Jewish organizations that push for liberal or progressive change in Israel regularly use the language of love and the logic of familial love to frame their message. The language of love offers multiple advantages, in that it resonates with an American Jewish public and acts as a defense against the attacks that progressives face for their calls on Israel to change its behavior.

As community-oriented American Jews raise concerns over Israeli policy more vocally than in the past, the symbol of a “big tent” has become the primary analogy for the expansive and inclusive community.⁸⁸ Articles titled “Just Who’s Inside the Big Tent?”⁸⁹ and “How Big is the Jewish ‘Tent’ on Israel?”⁹⁰, among others, assert that Jewish communities across the continent struggle with conflicting perspectives with regard to Israel, whether in the form of controversy over hosting speakers or in allowing certain organizations to participate in community-wide events.⁹¹ It is alignment with the state of Israel, rather than other religious or cultural values, that give shape to the political content of the Big Tent.

It is important to note that criticism of Israel carries repercussions and loving critics operate in an environment of attack, reprimand, marginalization and the threat of exclusion. (Critics who are seen as outside of the tent, such as non-Zionist Jewish groups, are already excluded.) This environment is both local and transnational; critics may find themselves excluded from local programs⁹² and also

⁸⁸ The idea of tent as home invokes the Jewish origin myths, as the original patriarch, Abraham, and his descendants were desert dwellers who lived in tents. Reference to the Jewish tent is thus not only a mirror of broader political speech (in which difference communities are described as gathering under different tents) but also a reaffirmation of the nation-ness of Jews.

⁸⁹ Gary Rosenblatt, Editor of *The Jewish Week*, 11/08/2011. http://www.thejewishweek.com/editorial_opinion/gary_rosenblatt/just_whos_inside_big_tent (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

⁹⁰ <http://forward.com/articles/145828/how-big-is-jewish-tent-on-israel/> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

⁹¹ While some Jewish leaders speak in a language of inclusivity, others speak of red lines. The most common “red line” articulates a barrier against the “delegitimization” or “undermining the legitimacy” of Israel, a broad category of threat against which the JFNA, JCPA (National JCRC umbrella organization) and Israeli government launched a joint multi-million dollar campaign. The section on ‘fear’ will address the issue of delegitimization in more depth.

⁹² In 2010, a synagogue in Newton, Massachusetts famously canceled an event with Jeremy Ben Ami of J Street, forcing him to relocate to a church. (<http://forward.com/articles/148405/j-street-accepted-in-some-not-all-cities/?p=all>; retrieved May 9, 2014.) In the mid 2000s, the Jewish community of Atlanta, Georgia, prevented a local rabbi from hosting the executive director of a progressive Israeli organization called Rabbis for Human Rights (also a rabbi himself) at a local synagogue; that event, too, found hospitality in a church. In 2012, the Jewish Book Festival of Atlanta, Georgia, canceled a long-scheduled event with Peter Beinart, co-sponsored by J Street, citing complaints from members of the Atlanta Jewish Community Center. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/14/us/uproar-after-atlanta-jewish-book-festival-cancels-peter-beinart-talk.html>; retrieved May 9, 2014.)

denounced from inside of Israel.⁹³ The intersections of efforts to shut down debate and dissent in both the American Jewish community and Israel illustrate the looming state power behind the hegemonic prohibitions against dissent, offering another layer of insight into the anxieties over the expression of dissent, both from the perspective of the critic and of the guardians of the collective. At the same time, the interconnection between the Israeli state's reactions to "disloyalty" and the dominant American Jewish organizations closing ranks against critique of Israel reinforces the idea of a global Jewish entity in which American Jews see their fight against inappropriate critique of Israel as contributing to the state's battle for "security."

The New Israel Fund's Executive Director, Daniel Sokatch, is one of the central leaders of progressive advocacy among American Jews. Sokatch, whom a journalist called "the prototypical liberal progressive Jewish professional,"⁹⁴ went from being executive director of a small, progressive Jewish organization focused on domestic politics to being the executive director of the San Francisco Jewish Federation for just over one year before moving to the New Israel Fund. An article that Sokatch describes as accurate⁹⁵ says that at the Federation, "*Sokatch took a battering over Israel,*" where he "*found a real sticking point and rigidity*" because Sokatch's vision of "*a broad tent to discuss and address Israel-related issues*" was more expansive, including more liberal viewpoints, than the Federation "*typically embraces.*"⁹⁶

Leaving the Federation after the SFJFF event, Sokatch moved to the New Israel Fund, an organization founded in the late 1970s by San Franciscan Jews, to promote democracy and civil rights in Israel in the face of ongoing inequalities. Founded to expand engagement with Israel beyond the traditional boundaries of blanket support, its very existence critiques the status quo. The New Israel Fund's progressive change work in Israel and outreach among diaspora Jews, particularly

⁹³ J Street, the Washington, DC-based "pro-Israel, pro-peace" group that lobbies for a two state solution, has been prohibited from Jewish settings in a number of cities, and also the subject of hearings in the Israeli Parliament (Knesset), which debated "whether the group is anti-Israel." (<http://www.jta.org/2011/03/24/news-opinion/united-states/knesset-j-street-hearing-inappropriate-some-jewish-groups-say>) (<http://www.jpost.com/Video-Articles/Video/Raucous-Knesset-committee-debates-J-Street>) (URLs retrieved May 9, 2014.) The New Israel Fund, the dominant organization funding progressive causes inside of Israel, has faced sharp attack in the United States and, especially, in Israel, where a small fascistic group, with support from Parliament members and American Christian Zionists, launched a campaign against it. Its grantees have also been the target of anti-democratic legislation, such as bills aimed at defunding Israel's vibrant civil society sector or limiting free speech by cracking down on protests and punishing certain commemorations of Palestinian history. (Over the last several years, the Israeli Knesset has debated a number of non-democratic initiatives, and passed a few, that limit free speech and critique of the state. For more on these initiatives, see the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. <http://www.acri.org.il>. One of the bills would limit foreign funding of Israeli NGOs as a way to impede Israel's vibrant civil society sector. Public demonstrations have also faced illegal crackdown from authorities, and the so-called "Nakba Law," passed in 2011, imposes the threat of economic sanctions on state-funded entities, such as schools, that mark the Nakba, or "catastrophe" that befell the Palestinian people with the establishment of the state of Israel (in which more than 700,000 Palestinians were exiled from their homes).

⁹⁴ <http://www.jta.org/2009/09/18/fundermentalist/sokatch-speaks-to-the-fundermentalist-about-his-move-and-the-federation-system> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

⁹⁵ Personal communication.

⁹⁶ <http://www.jta.org/2009/09/18/fundermentalist/sokatch-speaks-to-the-fundermentalist-about-his-move-and-the-federation-system#ixzz2fpgjmKmD> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

in the United States, situate it as a prime example of an organization occupying a liminal space in which their inclusion within a broad communal tent comes under attack.

In 2012, Sokatch published an article entitled “Silence Amid a Famously Garrulous People,”⁹⁷ in which he describes the “*lovers of Israel*” who support a “*lovingly critical*” relationship between American Jews and the state of Israel and yet suffer a “*culture of cautious self-censorship*” that “*is pervasive – and detrimental.*” Sokatch argues that the Jewish consensus at the core of the “big tent” has long rested on “*adher[ing] to the official line*” from the Israeli government. With this statement, he affirms the link not just between American Jews and Israel but more pointedly between American Jewish communities – the “big tent” – and the positions the Israeli government promotes. In referencing the “*disagreements between Israel and the United States,*” Sokatch points to Israel’s ongoing military occupation of Palestinian territories, and specifically the continued expansion of Israeli settlements (Jewish colonies) in the occupied West Bank. Sokatch makes clear that the aim of the American Jews he describes is to figure out “*how best to engage with and support Israel.*” This population – “*many in the largely liberal American Jewish community*” – struggles with serving two seemingly opposing goals: being loyal to the Jewish collective and thus avoiding “*the dangers of a damaged consensus*” and airing disagreements with Israeli policy for the sake of supporting Israel. Sokatch posits many of the most engaged and thoughtful Jews – leaders in Jewish organizations, congregational rabbis – choose to remain silent, privileging the kind of loyalty that obligates acquiescence for the sake of collective “unity” over other values. That is the political version of *Ahavat Yisrael*.

What of those who do speak up, though? What of those who air critique of the state while claiming a space within the boundaries of the collective, as Sokatch describes those who would disagree with the Israeli government in an effort to “*engage with and support Israel*”? This kind of critique that both “wrestles and hugs” (cite) occupies a liminal space on the boundaries of the big tent. The dominant voices and organizations in this category describe themselves as “liberal Zionists” and speak of themselves as supporting the state of Israel but (and by) opposing Israel’s occupation of the West Bank. They frame their advocacy for an end to the occupation, and for greater rights for the Palestinian minority inside of Israel and other reforms, in the language of love for Israel.⁹⁸ There are several such organizations that follow this model; this dissertation looks at the two dominant ones, the New Israel Fund and J Street.

The organization Sokatch leads, the New Israel Fund, sees declarations of love, affection and commitment to Israel as concomitant with the agenda for change. The NIF mission statement declares “*Our supporters love Israel, and see it clearly as striving for an ideal not yet attained.*” The New Israel

⁹⁷ <http://shma.com/2012/11/silence-amid-a-famously-garrulous-people/> (Retrieved May 9, 2014.)

⁹⁸ One might argue that the frame of love shapes not just the expression of dissent but also the formulation of its content. The logic of love for Israel not only influences the way an organization must present itself and police its own discourse or behavior, but also shapes the core of the analysis and vision of what is possible. That is, when the starting point of analysis is whether X or Y is “good for Israel,” then that analysis is limited to serving the needs of that collective. It is an engagement with the self rather than with the Other; the role of the Other in such an equation is to ameliorate or illuminate facets of the self. (For example, when the detention of a five year old Palestinian child in the West Bank for stone-throwing shows up on in the newspaper, the “good for Israel” view sees that as a bad thing either because it shows Israel in a bad light or because the occupation is “rotting the core” of the country; neither view describes the arrest as a bad thing unto itself.)

Fund (NIF) sees its mission as helping the country attain that ideal.⁹⁹ When, in 2011, rightwing activists tried to prevent the New Israel Fund and other liberal Jewish organizations from participating in the largest celebration of Israel in the city of New York, the NIF's Chief Operating Officer co-authored an article entitled "Marching For Israel, With Love And Criticism,"¹⁰⁰ defending the place of left-wing Jews in a community-wide gathering. In this case, the declaration of love is a shield against those who would push the NIF out of the communal space. As critics of Israel, the NIF occupies a more liminal space, wherein they are required to consistently prove their loyalty to the state of Israel and to the Jewish collective. The language of love and connection does this work, as the NIF Chief Operating Officer put it in this article:

We criticize not because Israel doesn't have enough internal or external critics, or because it needs people who live thousands of miles away voicing an opinion on what sort of character its society should have. We do it because we love and are connected to Israel, and because as Jews we feel a sense of shared responsibility for the fate of the Jewish state. This love requires us to speak up when Israel seems to be out of line with the values we share.

In this case, the language of love is used not to just to excuse critique but also to justify it, in a manner that echoes the maxim that "all Israel is responsible for one another."

J Street, another organization on the edges of the organized Jewish community, uses similar language. Founded in 2008 to advocate and lobby for a two-state solution and, in so doing, directly undermine AIPAC, the dominant organization in the Israel Lobby,¹⁰¹ articulates their critique of Israeli policy as an expression of love. As J Street founder Jeremy Ben Ami recently wrote,

I think that the people of Israel would benefit greatly if there were far more discussion in Israel not about our right to dissent, but about the fundamental point we are making – namely, that there is no military solution to this underlying political conflict and that the future of Israel as a Jewish, democratic nation is deeply at risk without a political solution. Saying that – and fighting for it – even in time of war, is expressing the strongest and deepest love for the state and people of Israel that I can possibly muster.¹⁰²

Through these justifications (declarations), these organizations attempt to make clear that they are committed *first and foremost* to the state. Their critique, they contend, stems from their loyal, loving obligation to the state. As such, their use of the language of love for Israel works as defense, aiming to ward off the accusations of disloyalty. On occasion, the "defense as offense" strategy is explicit, as in this blurb that the prominent journalists and liberal intellectual Peter Beinart provided for Jeremy Ben Ami's book:

⁹⁹ The ideal they envision: "The New Israel Fund (NIF) helps Israel live up to its founders' vision of a state that ensures complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants. Our aim is to advance liberal democracy, including freedom of speech and minority rights, and to fight inequality, injustice, and extremism that diminish Israel." <http://www.nif.org/about> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹⁰⁰ http://www.thejewishweek.com/editorial_opinion/opinion/marching_israel_love_and_criticism (Retrieved May 11, 2014).

¹⁰¹ The "Israel Lobby" is "a loose coalition of individuals and groups that seeks to influence American foreign policy in ways that will benefit Israel" (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007: viii).

¹⁰² <http://www.thejewishweek.com/features/iengage/point-counter-point-yossi-klein-halevi-4> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

A New Voice for Israel is a gripping family story, a shrewd analysis of American and Mideast politics and a rousing call to action. Most of all it is a book animated by a deep love of Israel. I defy anyone to read it with an open mind and believe otherwise.¹⁰³

As Beinart says, “most of all” – that is, more than anything else – this “new voice for Israel” stems from “deep love.” In formulating his endorsement of the book in this way, Beinart seems to claim that the most important facet of dissent is its expression of love and loyalty.¹⁰⁴

The use of the language of “love for Israel” becomes a key to unlocking the space within the organized Jewish community for this critique to be voiced and these individuals and organizations to gain recognition as full members of organized Jewish community. Such recognition is tenuous and inconsistent; the NIF, J Street and Peter Beinart, among other “liberal Zionist” voices, all regularly face organized criticism, character assassination and exclusion from Jewish community spaces across North America and in Israel. At the same time, they and their supporters form the core of critics whom the “big tent” metaphor aims to include. The centrality of their discourse of love for Israel affirms that their loyalty is first and foremost to the state of Israel, and they frame any criticism of the state in the context of that love and loyalty.¹⁰⁵

C. Loving Israel is not enough: The Distancing Imperative

The second mechanism with which critics of Israel try to maintain their place inside the Big Tent of Jewish community is through distancing themselves from people and ideas that are outside of the community boundaries. Couching criticism of Israel within the language of love for Israel is not sufficient to protect a critic’s place within Jewish communal boundaries. The critic must also distance themselves from ideas and people deemed too critical – too disloyal – to the state of Israel, or else pay a price for not doing so.

When these loyal critics wish to speak to Jewish audiences and Jewish spaces, controversy often arises. When Peter Beinart’s book tour brought him to the Bay Area in 2012, he spoke without incident at the San Francisco Jewish Community Center. Yet his East Bay event was canceled after the domino effect of a series of decisions led Beinart to withdraw from his own event. A closer look at the cancellation of the East Bay event illustrates the ways in which the framework of loving Israel offers conditional tickets of entry into the organized Jewish community. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement has become the tripwire; how a critic relates to the BDS movement marks whether they are included within or excluded from the broader Jewish collective.

¹⁰³ <http://www.amazon.com/New-Voice-Israel-Fighting-Survival/dp/B0085SLK5I> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹⁰⁴ None of this analysis undermines or challenges the authenticity of the language of love for those who claim it. Rather, this analysis is interested in the ways in which the use of the language of love animates, enables and modifies engagement with Israel.

¹⁰⁵ Thus the ongoing assault on these people’s performance of loyalty to the collective indicates the vitriol with which those who do not perform such loyalty face. The latter half of this chapter will address those outside the love performative big tent.

Close up on the Distancing Imperative: Beinart in the East Bay

In Berkeley, a new employee of the Jewish Community Center of the East Bay, hoped to use Peter Beinart's book tour as an opportunity to bridge communal divides around Israel and asked Jewish Voice for Peace – a group held outside of communal boundaries – to co-sponsor.¹⁰⁶ In making this decision, the JCC risked a sizable annual contribution from one of their major donors,¹⁰⁷ which imposes a set of guidelines on their grantees similar to the SF Jewish Federation's guidelines. (Not a grantee of the SF Jewish Federation, the Berkeley JCC did not fear violating their guidelines.¹⁰⁸) Federation donors launched an effort against the JCC sponsoring the event, and the JCC withdrew.¹⁰⁹ Beinart then withdrew as well, canceling the event.

This campaign labeled Beinart out-of-bounds for the Jewish community by linking him to the BDS movement. Beinart is vulnerable to attacks that base his guilt on association with public criticism of Israel. Indeed, he explained his withdrawal from the event to a journalist in this way:

When there were no sponsors who were Zionist and anti-full BDS, I pulled out. I did that sadly—cause I agree with JVP on the awfulness of the occupation—but given my strong opposition to BDS targeting all of Israel, it didn't make sense for me to speak to a forum in which there was not one anti-BDS organization sponsoring.¹¹⁰

Beinart made the decision that he could not lend his name to an event without Zionist or anti-BDS co-sponsors. Though Beinart speaks in the language of love for Israel¹¹¹ and writes of his opposition to the BDS movement as a whole, he is also obligated to consistently distance himself from that movement. He walks a tight rope. His self-positioning, which illustrates the importance for Israel critics of distancing themselves from the “wrong” views (which are represented by the idea of the “BDS movement”), is sufficient for the San Francisco Federation, which allowed him to be hosted at the San Francisco JCC. And yet the cancelation of his East Bay event illustrates the effectiveness of “guilt by association” in expelling or marginalizing certain views or people from within the Jewish community. That is, Beinart was forced to protect himself from the potential stigma of appearing to side with outsiders against the community.

¹⁰⁶ This new employee was socialized in American Jewish institutions, including his UC campus Hillel, and represents the newer generation of young Jews challenge the communal boundaries. (The epilogue addresses the phenomenon of young Jews objecting to the reproduction of communal boundaries around Israel.) Personal correspondence with the now-former JCC employee.

¹⁰⁷ Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture.

¹⁰⁸ The Guidelines represent the crystallization of efforts that are occurring in private foundations as well as campus Hillels.

¹⁰⁹ The JCC claimed that they withdrew when they discovered that a founding Board member of Jewish Voice for Peace was asked to moderate the event. Yet the publicity materials promoting the event, which named the co-sponsors as well as the moderator, had been hanging up around Berkeley for weeks before the JCC withdrew.

¹¹⁰ <http://maxblumenthal.com/2012/03/after-banning-beinart-east-bay-jewish-federation-leader-vows-to-kill-muslims/> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹¹¹ See, for example, his May 18, 2010 article entitled “Love Israel? Criticize It” <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2010/05/19/peter-beinart-love-israel-criticize-it.html> (Retrieved May 11, 2014).

The nuances of Beinart's Bay Area events point to the balance of power in this landscape of community boundaries and contestation over the appropriate ways to engage with the state of Israel. Under these circumstances, the presence of strong public criticism puts the critic at the outer edge – on the boundary – of the community, regardless of how deeply insider they may see themselves and how involved they may be in other aspects of Jewish life. The burden is upon the critic to prove that their allegiance to Jewish community is stronger than their criticism of the state of Israel. To do so, they must put distance between themselves and that which is rejected. What is rejected is what Israeli and North American Jewish leaders have named “delegitimization” and “delegitimizers.” They identify this phenomenon in two refusals: the refusal to proclaim allegiance to / affinity with the idea of Israel as the Jewish state, and the refusal to denounce the BDS movement. The San Francisco Guidelines represent the rules of the Bay Area but also the expectation that runs throughout North America, as seen formally in the guidelines that Hillel enacted and in the statements and actions of the national umbrella organizations of the JCPA (JCRC nationally) and the Jewish Federations of North America.

Distancing as Organizational Strategy

Distancing means attempting to draw clear lines between the entity seeking acceptance and the stigmatized speech or action that threatens its tentative place. J Street and the New Israel Fund have been required to prove their distance from the rejected, stigmatized BDS movement. Watchdog groups and rightwing activists keep track of relationships and associations among critics of Israel, especially the New Israel Fund, issuing press releases and reports, placing media articles, and launching campaigns in efforts to undermine critics of Israel. One place in which these efforts have shown success is in pressuring the liberal Zionist organizations, which occupy this liminal space, into clearly and explicitly distancing themselves from Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions strategies. J Street, which takes a stand for broad, open community discussions¹¹², has had mixed results in its own fights for inclusion within the mainstream Jewish tent. Rejected from its membership bid for the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the American Jewish community's “primary umbrella group on Israel,”¹¹³ J Street has been found both acceptance and rejection from local Jewish Community Relations Councils in several cities.¹¹⁴ J Street engages with BDS in that vein: arguing that “open, vibrant debate about Israel within the American Jewish community is vital to the health of the Jewish community”¹¹⁵ while explicitly stating their opposition to BDS, such as in a policy statement entitled “J Street Clearly Opposes BDS.”¹¹⁶

J Street's dance with communal inclusion and marginalization illustrate the strategy of reiterating Jewish community bonds, on the one hand, while rejecting that which is seen as beyond the pale for not privileging Jewish Israeli interests over Palestinian interests, on the other. As the following

¹¹² http://jstreet.org/blog/post/opening-up-our-community_1 (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹¹³ <http://forward.com/articles/197189/j-street-backed-by-major-groups-but-will-it-get-in/>. For more on the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, see J.J. Goldberg, 1996. *Jewish Power: Inside the American Jewish Establishment*.

¹¹⁴ Including San Francisco; <http://www.jta.org/2013/09/24/news-opinion/politics/j-street-confests-double-message-back-two-states-and-weve-arrived> (Retrieved May 11, 2014). J Street has been accepted as a member on the Boston and Baltimore JCRCs, rejected from Denver. As of this writing, they have not been accepted into the San Francisco JCRC.

¹¹⁵ http://jstreet.org/blog/post/opening-up-our-community_1 (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹¹⁶ http://jstreet.org/blog/post/j-street-clearly-opposes-bds_1 (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

examples of J Street's navigations of BDS stigma show, J Street uses the stigma around BDS to show that their loyalties are, first and foremost, to Jews and the state of Israel, and they use distancing (i.e. refusal to debate Palestinians on BDS) to reiterate that the conversations of interest to them are internal to the Jewish community. This navigation has, thus far, allowed J Street to successfully argue for inclusion within Jewish communal boundaries.¹¹⁷

One example of J Street's successful dance is their continued affiliation with Peter Beinart, including inviting him to headline their 2012 conference, even after Beinart issued a call for boycott of settlement products, which J Street opposes. (As discussed above, Beinart supports settlement boycott while rejecting the broader BDS movement; it is support for the BDS movement that forms the red line.) Jeremy Ben-Ami, executive director of J Street, gave a series of interviews in which he lauded Beinart's analysis of the political dynamics surrounding Israel, Palestine and American Jews while rejecting Beinart's call for settlement boycott.¹¹⁸ Ben-Ami argued against putting "negative pressure" on Israelis through boycott, saying

I think that the way that Israelis will feel comfortable making the compromises and the sacrifices--and Israel as a whole, not just the settlers --is when they really feel that not only American Jews, but the United States, is going to be there for them.

His justification points to another aspect of the application of *Ahavat Yisrael*, wherein American Jews have a responsibility to demonstrate that they – and their country with all of its political and economic power – will "*be there*" for Israel.

One year prior to the pressure Beinart's "Zionist BDS" put on J Street, they were embroiled in another controversy around BDS. In 2011, J Street invited Rebecca Vilkomerson, executive director of Jewish Voice for Peace, an organization that supports the BDS movement, to speak on a panel on at their national conference. The other panelists represented Jewish liberal Zionist organizations (and one journalist) that all publicly oppose BDS. Heavily criticized for offering Vilkomerson a stage, J Street reiterated their commitment to open dialogue and argued that "she was invited...so that conference attendees who might be 'tempted' to embrace BDS will think otherwise after they see its moral and tactical failings exposed in debate."¹¹⁹ With JVP, J Street uses public engagement to establish distance. J Street stretches beyond the mainstream boundaries by including JVP, and its support for BDS, at their table, but they are careful to make clear that they reject BDS and prefer to limit conversations on strategy and tactics to Jews only.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ "Barry Shrage, the president of Boston's Combined Jewish Philanthropies, said that the Boston umbrella group decided that because J Street opposes the BDS movement, and because it supports a Jewish democracy in the state of Israel it deserved a seat at the table."

<http://forward.com/articles/148405/j-street-accepted-in-some-not-all-cities/?p=all#ixzz2ggGvKJRY> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹¹⁸ <http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/94534/beinart-advocates-partial-boycott> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)
<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/03/an-interview-with-jeremy-ben-ami-on-settlements-beinart-obama-the-whole-nine-yards/254918/> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹¹⁹ <http://mondoweiss.net/2011/02/j-street-says-it-invited-boycott-advocate-to-its-conference-so-as-to-pillory-her.html> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹²⁰ <http://mondoweiss.net/2011/04/ben-ami-said-he-wanted-to-keep-boycott-debate-communal-palestinians-need-not-apply.html> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.) Before the 2011 conference, JVP's Rebecca Vilkomerson wrote to Jeremy Ben-Ami that "it is essentially important that this discussion not just be an intra-Jewish affair," and invited him to debate one of the Palestinian leaders of the Palestinian-led BDS

Numerous examples of other organizations and public figures carefully distancing themselves from the BDS movement attest to the imperative of *not* casting opposition to the occupation as solidarity with the Palestinian led BDS movement. In February 2011, Meretz USA (a U.S. based organization supporting a two-state solution) released a statement titled “Buy Israel – Don’t Buy the Settlements (They’re not the Same).”¹²¹ In it they explained that “based on our love of Israel, and our sincere, abiding and growing concern for the State of Israel’s secure and democratic future,” they support a number of targeted forms of boycott of the settlements. These include the boycott of the theater and university in the West Bank settlement of Ariel. And at the same time, they “disagree with calls to boycott, divest from or sanction Israel proper (within the Green Line), which we believe are misguided and ineffective.” For that reason, they “denounce the use of BDS whenever employed as a tactic to bring an end to the State of Israel.”

Meretz USA’s statement illustrates how to assert love while offering criticism; denunciation of the BDS movement is central to that strategy. In an interview with senior JCRC executive Ari Schwartz, he explained that this is an approach that the San Francisco JCRC would accept. (Indeed, while the San Francisco Federation Guidelines prohibit grantees from “supporting the BDS movement in whole or in part,” some supporters of boycotting the occupation have been allowed to speak at the San Francisco JCC.¹²²) Most important to Schwartz is the “*distinction between ... the BDS movement and individual efforts to encourage people*” to boycott goods produced in the West Bank.¹²³ For him, as for others in his structural position of setting and enforcing communal boundaries, the insider/outsider divide is meaningful, and public action needs to be explicitly opposed to the BDS movement in order to not be part of the BDS movement by default. His ideas are directly linked to the central themes running throughout the area of enforcement of the logic of familial love. The public/private divide, often discussed in the folk terms of “airing dirty laundry,” describes the basic construction of a collective that is separate from and must guard itself through preserving its good name among an external Other, which is, in this case, Palestinians and the BDS movement. At the same time, turning political speech into organized political action that is at odds with the larger nationalist, expansionist narrative automatically puts a person into the category of potential traitor or betrayer. Thus an organized boycott is seen as more dangerous than an individual boycott.

movement in a different setting. Ben-Ami replied that “given J Street’s mission within the Jewish community,” he was more inclined “to do such discussions with others in the Jewish community such as yourself.” The debate of interest to J Street is “how we run our communal conversations around these difficult questions.” (<http://maxblumenthal.com/2011/04/j-streets-ben-ami-our-discussion-on-bds-must-stay-within-the-jewish-community/> Retrieved May 11, 2014.) J Street’s focus is the American Jewish conversation and their preference is to keep discussion of “strategies for ending the conflict” to a Jewish audience.

¹²¹ <http://meretzusa.org/buy-israel-%E2%80%93-don%E2%80%99t-buy-settlements-they%E2%80%99re-not-same> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹²² Including Peter Beinart and Bradley Burston, who have written in support of artists and actors boycotting a theater in the Jewish settlement of Ariel in the West Bank. See Bradley Burston’s September 29, 2010 article in *Ha’aretz* entitled “A Special Place in Hell / Confessions of an Anti-Settler Bigot.” <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/a-special-place-in-hell/a-special-place-in-hell-confessions-of-an-israeli-anti-settler-bigot-1.316325> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹²³ This form of boycott refers to goods produced by Israeli and international firms in the West Bank, not to Palestinian goods.

Moreover, the BDS movement is led by Palestinians, and *not* distancing oneself from the movement is read as *not* distancing oneself from Palestinians and – thus – choosing to turn away from Jews. That many Jewish BDS supporters, including prominent Jewish organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace, define their political work as *solidarity* with Palestinians,¹²⁴ rejecting the binary of Jews *or* Palestinians, is read as further proof that support for BDS is a turn away from Jews and Israel.

The price of dissent comes in the form of tenuous positioning within the Jewish collective, including vulnerability to denunciation (from community leaders, in the press, and sometimes from the Israeli Knesset) and possible exclusion from community spaces. Those critics who intend to keep their place within the formal community must continuously prove and defend their place in the collective, through ongoing demonstration of their love for the state. They frame their criticism as a form of love and reiterate their support for the state of Israel in spite of – or as an expression of – their criticism of certain aspects of Israeli policy or history. Yet the evidence suggests that these affirmative proclamations are not always sufficient for ensuring access to the “big tent.” Instead, it seems, the effect of dissent is such that the stigma of disloyalty sticks to the critic despite their positive declarations of belonging and love; this stigma lasts until the critic denounces the rejected form of criticism and places distance between themselves and those who are seen as clearly outside the tent. The BDS movement, initiated and led by Palestinians for whom loyalty to Israel is not a part of their national agenda, has emerged as the dominant undertaking from which Jewish would-be loyalists must distance themselves. As the examples of MeretzUSA, Peter Beinart, and J Street show, establishing distance matters.

D. Outside the Home: Exclusion

The basic structure is binary and oppositional: Jews or Palestinians, insider or outsider, loyalty or hostility. Yet what about those Jews who criticize Israel without asserting their love for the state or Jews above other commitments? The following vignette offers insight into the dynamics surrounding this expression of criticism.

At the 2010 Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly, in a panel focused on “the delegitimization of Israel,” a twenty-something year old man stood up during the question and answer period and said

My name is Ran, I’m an Israeli student in the U.S., that is the place from which I’m speaking. I want to have a sincere conversation. Two things you’ve said put me in an uneasy position. There is a disconnect between Israel’s policies on the ground and its international standing. But white phosphorous in Gaza, the separation wall, Israel’s confiscation of land and building settlements...Israel silences people like myself with the loyalty oath...Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu have called Israel an apartheid state. What does this mean for us, when people on the ground say that? And Joe Biden arrives and Israel announces that it’s building 1600 settlements. Second, young Jews are withering away – we’ve been raised with universal values, but we’re asked not to hold those values with regard to Israel.

The panelists’ responses were revealing. The first to respond were the two Israelis on the panel, and each drew sharp lines around acceptable and unacceptable speech. The first to respond, a

¹²⁴ Jewish Voice for Peace Statement on BDS, 2011. <http://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/content/jvp-issues> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

representative of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, rejected Ran's statement and denounced him as an unreliable informant, saying "[the] *Apartheid [accusation] is total bunk...your presentation was biased.*" The audience applauded his response. The second respondent was an "Israel Fellow," a representative of the Jewish Agency, at a college Hillel (Jewish campus center). This Israel Fellow offered Ran, the college student, some advice: "*If you're concerned with the way we bring Israel into the world...I would say to be critical and loving.*" He continued, "*If you love Israel, your criticism is healthy. If you don't, revoke your citizenship.*" While the Israel Fellow affirmed that disagreement over policy is acceptable ("*you disagree...vote*"), his version of dissent has a limit: "*love.*" This formulation reflects the function of patriotic love in a security state as Iris Marion Young (2003) describes it, wherein citizens facing an external threat "imagine ourselves a single body enclosed on and loving itself," united "in grateful love of country" (9). In the security state paradigm, "dissent is dangerous." But the presence of love – articulated love – would render the same critique that Ran offered "healthy" for this society. Articulating love, then, affirms the critic's bond and commitment to the larger collective and changes the tenor of the critique.

The Americans on the panel, one of whom works with the local Bay Area JCRC and the other with the national JCRC umbrella organization (called the JCPA, the Jewish Council on Public Affairs), seemed to offer a greater sense of expansiveness and nuance in their remarks. The JCPA representative offered Ran a reprimand and a piece of advice, saying "*If you'd started off by describing your love for Israel...it'd have been a different conversation...going for attack just puts people on the attack.*" With this statement, he pairs together the absent affirmation of love for Israel with "*going for attack.*" This statement links the *absence* of an affirmation of love for Israel with an attack on the community.

The other American, Beth, is a senior employee of the San Francisco JCRC who worked closely with Bay Area college students on their Israel advocacy. She told Ran "*I resent that Israeli students come to campus to play out their issues. How is a divestment resolution at UC-Berkeley going to bring peace to Israel?*" One of the nuances of the discourse of love for Israel is not just that one's loyalty to Israel is primary but also that this loyalty indicates a circumscribed, ritualized consideration of Israel's treatment of Palestinians. In her remarks, Beth affirmed this frame. Where Ran spoke of "*white phosphorous in Gaza, the separation wall, Israel's confiscation of land and building settlements,*" and "*a disconnect between Israel's policies on the ground and its international standing,*" Beth gleaned "*peace for Israel.*" That is, Ran's statement describing conditions faced by Palestinians registered as the platform of "peace for Israel" and not as matters to be addressed directly. Moreover, in referring to Ran's statement as "*play[ing] out [Israeli students'] issues,*" Beth suggests that there is a difference between the interests of American and Israeli Jews. Though Ran believes that "*young Jews*" are raised with the same "*universal values,*" Beth seems to argue that the American Jewish task is to advocate for peace, which she sees as separate from, and opposed to, the (Israeli) interest in challenging Israeli treatment of Palestinians. While Beth did not speak specifically of the imperative to demonstrate love for Israel, she does demonstrate the speech rules around Israel, by which direct criticism of the Israeli government falls outside the bounds of American Jews' prescribed relationship with Israel. Ran's concerns, according to Beth, are contrary to the interests of American Jews.

This vignette illustrates the critical role that demonstrations of love for the state of Israel play in the context of criticism of the Israeli government. The repeated reprimands for the absence of a proclamation of love for Israel demonstrate that formal bonds or proclamations of "sincer[ity]" do not suffice; when criticism of Israel is articulated, it must be accompanied by expressions of "love for Israel" or the speaker can face repercussions such as denunciation (by the Israeli Foreign Ministry representative), exclusion (by the Israel Fellow), and suspicion (by the JCPA

representative). Had Ran proclaimed his love for Israel, he would have been in a different category; “it [would] have been a different conversation.”

Ran, the Israeli college student, attended the JFNA General Assembly with a group of young people organized and sponsored by Jewish Voice for Peace, the Oakland, California-based national anti-occupation organization. (He did not identify himself as such in the session.¹²⁵) His statement and treatment in the General Assembly panel are emblematic of the treatment of Jews from this group, and others, whose public criticism of Israel places is seen as going against the hegemonic rules of engagement. These Jews are accused of insufficient loyalty to their own group.¹²⁶

The logic of familial love is at the core of this accusation and the kind of stigmatization that accompanies it. Ideas and speakers are marginalized and excluded from Jewish spaces, narrowing the expanse of discourse – and making it so that insisting on open discourse and discussion, as J Street does, is itself a counter-hegemonic effort.

Thus far, this chapter has looked at the ways in which the logic of familial love for Israel shapes which speech and which speakers are allowed within “the big tent” and what speech puts one into the liminal space of the insider/outsider boundary. The same logic also shapes those who are pushed, or who choose to situate themselves, outside of the boundaries of traditional community. The next section will look at how that logic works on the ground as “love for Israel” becomes the shorthand for a standard of loyalty to the dominant Jewish leadership’s vision for American Jewish engagement with Israel. In the Bay Area, the same two primary criteria for inclusion remain/are declaring allegiance to the “legitimacy of the state of Israel as a Jewish democratic state” and denouncing the BDS movement. As we saw in the discussion of conditional inclusion, those Jews who wish to remain within the Jewish collective but also critique the state of Israel must regularly proclaim their allegiance to the state and their distance from BDS. Remaining within the collective, they speak within the resonate frames (Benford and Snow 2000) of the collective.

Yet some Jews choose not to use these resonant frames and choose not to speak in the pervasive language of love, either rejecting the language entirely or reinterpreting it. When faced with the challenges of “guilt by association” for their relationships to the BDS movement, some Jews do not seek to create distance between themselves and BDS proponents. The following section will look at the disciplining of these Jews through exclusion, reprimand, and denunciation.

¹²⁵ Ran was one of the protesters who interrupted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s address to the General Assembly with a protest against Israeli policy. Organized by Jewish Voice for Peace, these young protesters were bodily removed from the venue.

¹²⁶ It is possible to argue that the extreme right is criticized for what is read as excessive loyalty to their group in the form of extreme nationalism. I emphasize “extreme,” because the mainstream, dominant paradigm is rightwing, in that nationalism and Jewish privilege are the status quo (wherein basic inequalities between Jew and non-Jew are the foundation of Israeli law and Jewish Americans’ privileged connections to Israel). The extreme right refers to those people who actively campaign for and promote more active dispossession and marginalization of Palestinians than the status quo perpetuates.

Silencing and Marginalizing critics: the “Self-hating Jew” Accusation

“The haters are here. The haters are coming.” I asked, “what groups are they?” She said “Jewish Voice for Hamas.”

- *From fieldnotes; exchange with Amy, member of StandWithUs*

The quote above comes from ethnographic data collected at Israel in the Gardens in 2010. The speaker was an activist with the Israel advocacy group StandWithUs, and she was referring to the local chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace, the anti-occupation group that was holding a vigil outside of the Gardens’ Mission Street entrance. There is pervasive use of the term “hate” to describe Jews whose critique of Israeli policy places them literally outside of the collective. As the language of love for Israel asserts a familial bond between Jews and Israel and loyalty to the state, the absence of that language of love combined with the presence of criticism of Israel regularly leads to accusations of “self-hatred.” When particular forms of criticism of Israel are interpreted as a hatred of *self*, the *self* in question is seen as a stable, bounded form of identity and the primary affiliation of the identity-holder. For the identity-holder, certain standards of behavior and speech are expected as a member of the collective, and breaching these standards is often read as betrayal to the collective. One interviewee, a progressive who has worked in both liberal and mainstream Jewish organizations, summarized the reaction Jewish critics of Israeli policy often receive from mainstream Jews, saying

I don’t accept it, you just told me that MASA¹²⁷ is going to the settlements? I don’t accept it. There’s something wrong with your facts. You’re a propagandist, you’re anti-semitic, or you’re a self-hater, or you’re just plain wrong.

In other words, the response to unwelcome information with regard to Jewish and Israeli institutional support for the Israeli occupation is to shun, stigmatize, and marginalize the speaker.

In general, voicing criticism of Israel within the framework of love and loyalty is grudgingly accepted within the boundaries of organized Jewish community. Jews who criticize Israel from within the collective do face accusations of “self-hatred,” but mitigate these claims by demonstrating appropriate love for Israel and following the distancing imperative. These two shields largely protect the internal critics in the liminal space of criticism within the bounds of the collective.

Voicing criticism of Israel from outside of the liminal space poses a different problem for the Jewish collective. While some ultra-Orthodox Jewish groups embrace explicit and emphatic anti-Zionism as a religious position, these groups are largely marginal, barely considered members of the American Jewish community (cite), and their opinions easily categorized and dismissed as religio-fundamentalist (cite). For the rest of the Jewish population, the act of claiming the mantle of Jewish identity while criticizing Israel outside the accepted framework is seen as a betrayal of the collective. As the accepted framework is love, acting outside of that framework is read as hatred.

The “self-hating” label points to the assumption among institutionally-affiliated Jews that Jews hold certain beliefs and exhibit particular behavior, and to be otherwise suggests that a person is either not a Jew or is choosing to violate Jewish mores out of spite. Jewish behavior that is read as

¹²⁷ MASA is post-Birthright program for young Diaspora Jews, bringing them to Israel for longterm stays. Founded by the Jewish Agency for Israel, it is funded by the Israeli government and the Jewish Federations of North America (Sasson 2014).

threatening Jews *as* Jews invokes the specter of the external enemy, committed to oppressing and marginalizing Jews, seen as part of a longer history of a collective Jewish history of persecution.¹²⁸ According to this logic, the leap from Jews criticizing Israel to Jews hating Israel is not very great. Indeed, receiving the label of “self-hatred” is exceedingly common among people who voice public criticism of the state of Israel. The self-hating Jew label is the most common shorthand for calling a Jew a traitor to and enemy of the Jewish people; oftentimes it is also paired with being called a Nazi or Kapo (Jews who were forced to assist Nazis in concentration camps), or Hamas. Such equations continuously reiterate the insider/outsider binary of Israel discourse, in which the outsider is never neutral but rather a threatening enemy of the state of Israel and the Jewish collective, even if that outsider is a Jew.¹²⁹

Oftentimes, the people making these claims of self-hatred and betrayal are considered on the rightwing edge of the Jewish community. While their rhetoric and confrontational tactics¹³⁰ may put them at the rightwing edge of the Jewish community, they are prominent partners of the Federation, JCRC and JFNA more broadly. The organization that most captures these politics is StandWithUs, a national organization that is preeminent among Israel advocates in the community, honored by the Israeli government (cite), featured speakers at communal events and celebrated as Israel defenders throughout North America. In the Bay Area, StandWithUs core and affiliated activists regularly dismiss leftwing activists as “self-hating.”

At an Israel advocacy training early one spring morning, a local StandWithUs activist told me

All the anti-Israel organizations, their spokespeople are Jewish ... Jewish Voice for Peace, Women in Black, these people are obsessed with being anti-Israel. Obsessed with hating Israel... Jewish Voice for Peace marches with flags with swastikas in the middle instead of Jewish stars.

I could not find any external corroboration for the SWU activist’s accusation, though I heard that accusation repeatedly from multiple StandWithUs members. Jewish Voice for Peace activists and staff emphatically deny ever marching with or near any flag or poster displaying a swastika. However, the accusation itself serves to illustrate the links these activists make between, on the one hand, self-identified Jewish criticism of Israel that does not express the appropriate forms of love for Israel and, on the other hand, genocidal hatred toward Jews. Similarly, on multiple occasions StandWithUs activists called Jewish Voice for Peace “Jewish Voice for Hamas,” thus tying the leftist group to an organization known for the use of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians (Shlaim 2001).

¹²⁸ Jewish safety and persecution are dominant themes of Jewish collectivity, and the boundaries formed around the Jewish collective refer to the safety or insecurity of the Jewish collective.

¹²⁹ I heard these slurs consistently in collecting this data. They have also shown up in print, such as in the interview Jeffrey Goldberg conducted with Jeffrey Weisenfeld, the CUNY trustee who campaigned against CUNY awarding an honorary degree to Tony Kushner. An Israeli academic has written about what he calls “Nazi Gotcha,” wherein center- and right-wing actors label leftwing activists “Nazis” as a way to disqualify their critique (<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/08/04/1002819/-Antisemitism-and-Political-Blogging-Personal-Reflections>; Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹³⁰ Which include, on occasion, physical violence or the threats of physical violence. I witnessed both during the course of my fieldwork.

Within the mindset that the StandWithUs activists represent, the self-identified Jewishness of these Israel critics does not offer a buffer against accusations of anti-semitism. The Jewishness is often questioned or denied, such as in writings referring to the “presumed Jewishness”¹³¹ of JVP activists, as a kind of justification for their perceived self-hatred. For instance, at the same StandWithUs Israel advocacy day, another StandWithUs advocate, Susan, spoke to me about Marcia Freedman, a former member of the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament). Freedman, who divides her time between Berkeley and Israel, was also founding executive director of the American Jewish peace organization Brit Tzedek v’Shalom, a precursor to J Street. Susan told me that Marcia Freedman “*hates Israel so much.*” I asked, “doesn’t she lives there part-time?” Susan answered, “*it doesn’t matter! She hates it! She’s obsessed with hating it! ... I went to a workshop on internalized anti-semitism and that’s really a way to understand these people.*”

In this mindset, living in Israel – actually belonging to the Israeli collective – is not a substitute for holding the correct viewpoint toward Israeli policies and politics. This mindset was apparent in the exchange described above at JFNA General Assembly panel, during which the Israel Fellow working at U.S. universities told the Israeli student, Ran, that “*If you love Israel, your criticism is healthy. If you don’t, revoke your citizenship.*” In these instances, the formal channels of belonging to the Jewish or Israeli collective are less important than abiding by the speech rules of demonstrating appropriate love and fealty to the state. While the state of Israel has formal methods of inclusion and exclusion through the granting and denial of citizenship, StandWithUs operates here as a symbolic gatekeeper around the larger Jewish collective. In this dynamic, the underlying assumption is the logic of familial love, in which the bonds among Jews and between Jews and the state of Israel are being primary, unbreakable, and obligatory. It is therefore in keeping with this dynamic that the Jews who choose to speak about Israel from outside of that framework are accused of betraying their people by hating them.

Not all forms of criticism of Israel are seen as hatred, but when criticism is labeled as “betrayal,” the door to accusations of hatred and enmity are opened. For instance, Jewish Voice for Peace and affiliated activists are often accused of anti-Semitism.¹³² These accusations reaffirm the underlying assumptions of familial love beneath Jewish connectedness and the short leap from being challenged as a critic of Israel to being attacked as an enemy of the Jewish people.

Allies and bedfellows

If one method of undermining or symbolically excluding certain Jewish critics of Israel takes aim at the expression – or lack thereof – of “love” through accusations of self-hatred, another method works through accusations concerning loyalty. The data suggest that Jewish critics of Israel are policed according to signs of their affiliation with people and groups who are seen as dangerous

¹³¹ <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-voice-for-peace-chief-threatened-over-pro-palestinian-campaign-1.341779> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹³² During the controversy surrounding the 2009 San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, two of the premiere private Jewish foundations in the region (Koret and Taube), which annually contribute millions of dollars to Jewish causes through the San Francisco Federation, called JVP “virulently anti-Israel, anti-Semitic” and questioned future funding for the Film Festival. <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/39307/a-message-from-the-s.f.-jewish-film-festival-about-rachel-screening/> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

critics or enemies of Israel.¹³³ This policing takes a number of forms, from accusations and intimidation to establishing formal policy barring certain associations.

As the logic of familial love entails devotion to Israel as one's family, being seen as associated with or allied with people outside of the family can be seen as a breach of the familial bond. This logic operates on a personal as well as a policy level and suggests a kind of contagion that occurs through certain forms of contact with people and views considered beyond the pale. History is a useful guide, here; the trajectory of the first organized group of American Jews to publicly oppose Israel's treatment of Palestinians, Breira,¹³⁴ is further evidence that dissenters may challenge many norms, but to be seen as allied with Jews' "enemies" is considered a real violation for which one must be cast out of the collective.¹³⁵ Steven Rosenthal (2001) argues that enacting public critique was Breira's "real 'sin,'" for "destroying the illusion of unity that mainstream organizations had labored so mightily to build" (37). I argue that mainstream organizations do indeed strive for and vociferously guard the sheen of Jewish unity, but violations of that projected unity vary in levels of severity. Public critique of Israel is one way of violating unity and being painted with the brush of association with the enemy is another. These two often work together to police the boundaries of the Jewish collective. A few data points will illuminate this process as it currently operates in the Bay Area.

¹³³ Because the dedication to Israel is the unifying value, affiliations with non-Jews who share or support the Israel advocacy agenda is not labeled as a threat to the Jewish collective. The arbiter is not Jewishness but rather relationship towards Israel advocacy.

¹³⁴ "Breira" means "alternative" in Hebrew and was a play on the ubiquitous phrase and conventional wisdom that "ain breira," "there is no alternative" to the political and military circumstances in which Israel was embroiled.

¹³⁵ In the early 1970s, a group of deeply engaged, insider Jews, including many prominent rabbis, educators and professionals working within the dominant Jewish organizations (including the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, and Federations across the country), came together to form the group Breira, which spoke of, and out of, its support for Israel while calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state (something Israel's leading political parties and politicians opposed at that time) and, even more controversially, for the Israeli government to negotiate with the PLO.

Breira gained extensive media coverage and was "grudgingly tolerated during its first three years of existence" (Waxman 2013); the group seemed perched to achieve the aim they articulate in their mission statement, to "legitimize dissent within the American Jewish community" (Rosenthal 2001: 36). Then everything changed. Dov Waxman (2013) writes:

It was not until a newspaper article revealed that two of [Breira's] members had been a part of an American Jewish delegation...that had secretly met in November 1976 with two Palestinians who had close ties to the PLO (this was when the Israeli and American governments refused to speak with the PLO) that Breira became the target of a "vicious campaign" against it by right-wing groups...It was accused of being anti-Israel, and depicted as a group of Israel-bashing, PLO-supporting Jews.

The campaign was effective. Breira's members "were denounced as traitors and shunned" (Waxman). Breira members who were employed by Jewish organizations faced threats to their jobs and some rabbis were fired; local Jewish Federations removed Breira members from their boards (Waxman, Rosenthal). The group disbanded soon thereafter. Breira's trajectory suggests an elasticity, at least in the 1970s, in what Jewish political positions Jewish insiders could advocate without serious repercussion. The hammer came down on them when they came to be identified with Palestinians, who were, by definition seen as the opponents, and enemies, of the Jews.

Every year, the San Francisco Bureau of Jewish Education (now called JewishLearningWorks) organizes multiple day or evening-long gatherings throughout the Bay Area to celebrate adult education through hosting many workshops and talks in one large communal setting. These “Feast(s) of Jewish Learning” are centerpieces on the communal calendar, where they showcase the wealth of teachers and range of interests in the Bay Area Jewish community. In 2009, less than 48 hours before the Feast was to begin, the Palo Alto Feast of Jewish Learning canceled a scheduled workshop entitled “Peace With Justice: Views from the Israeli and Jewish American Peace Movements,” which was to include a number of scholars and activists. (I was scheduled to participate and report on my M.A. research on Israeli conscientious objectors and draft resisters.) The chairperson of the event, Rabbi Ari Cartun of Palo Alto, wrote to the participants to cancel, explaining that disagreements over the peace movements would disrupt the “unity” that is core to this communal convening. For the sake of unity – that is, for the sake of keeping the family together and at peace with itself – the rabbi canceled this workshop.

In subsequent exchanges, however, he explained that he canceled the workshop because of his feelings about Jewish Voice for Peace, a group with which a number of panelists were associated. In a later email, titled “*The Company We Keep*,” the rabbi wrote about the objection to this group, saying that “one of the main reasons opposition to Jewish Voice for Peace [was] generated” were photos of JVP activists marching in a multi-group protest against Operation Cast Lead (the 2008/9 IDF operation in Gaza) at which a number of protesters from other groups, not JVP, held stridently anti-Israel and anti-Zionist signs. The rabbi wrote, “If Jewish Voice for Peace really wants to be a part of the Jewish discussion on Israel, it has to explain why it marched with people” such as these. For the rabbi, JVP’s choice to participate in this march links them with those who express hate against the Jewish state and, in some cases, against Jews as a whole. In questioning “*the company we keep*,” the rabbi questioned JVP’s judgment in participating in that rally and also the organized Jewish community’s judgment were they to allow JVP to participate in their “Night of Jewish Unity.” For the rabbi and the institutions he represented, JVP’s affiliation through protest with the anti-Israel elements put JVP on the outside of the organized Jewish community.

Accusations arise with suspicions of identification with Palestinians –the group that is the defining Other to Jews’ privilege in the land of Israel.¹³⁶ In discussing dissenting Jews, the communal

¹³⁶ Accusations may also arise from suspicions of affiliation with Jews who hold the “wrong” politics, that is, those politics that are too closely associated with Palestinians. Additionally, this kind of policing also takes place on the ground among would-be peers. I personally experienced this personal form of policing while conducting ethnographic research at the Israel in the Gardens festival described above. While I observed the vigil and counter-protest, I saw many people I knew in both camps and greeted them all. At one point, towards the end of the vigil, I found myself standing among the counter-protesters. A StandWithUs activist with whom I’d spent a day of Israel advocacy just a few weeks prior, and who had asked me about my organizational affiliations when we met that first time, stood beside me waving an Israeli flag. After I greeted her, she asked me a series of questions, one after the other, in a combative tone. First: “are you pro-Israel?” I answered, “I’m not on either side. I’m doing research.” She said, “I know you’re doing research. Are you with JVP?” I said no. She immediately followed up, “Do you believe in Israel’s right to exist?” I asked why she would ask me such a question. She answered that she had seen me greet people among the vigilers. That is, I showed friendliness towards some members of Jewish Voice for Peace and Bay Area Women in Black, ergo, in her eyes I opened myself to questions regarding my views on Israel’s “right to exist.”

representatives primarily focus on their alliances with Palestinian activists and Palestinian rights activists. This focus suggests the importance of reasserting the boundary between appropriate and inappropriate relationships with the very Other whose otherness defines Israel.

Deborah of the JCRC/Federation stated that she would not excommunicate or deny the Jewish affiliation of Jews whose public criticism of Israel goes beyond the pale of acceptability within the Jewish community. Though she believes in and professionally enforces the Jewish Federation guidelines that explicitly exclude a BDS supporter from being a presenter at Federation-sponsored events on Israel, she was clear to note that

So my feeling about BDS is that somebody who supports BDS and advocates for it, I still see them as a Jew. I do still sit [with them] at the Passover and Shabbat table. This is all of us. We're one family. I wouldn't deny Judaism or Jewish peoplehood or Jewish expression of BDS to those people who believe in BDS. But I do expect to have a reasonable conversation about who their allies are ... I don't mean to have us v. them language ... I would expect Jewish proponents of BDS to be honest and precise and accurate about who their bedfellows are and around their intention around BDS and I think that the whitewashing around BDS is at best ignorant and at worst untruthful and dishonest.

This statement offers a view into the gray area of breaching the collective boundaries. By asserting that she “*still see[s] BDS-supporting Jew “as a Jew,”*” Deborah affirms through refutation the argument that supporting BDS puts a person’s Jewishness in question. Instead, she points to the threat posed by the BDS “*bedfellows*” and “*whitewashing*” of BDS. That is, she affirms the Jewishness of the BDS supporter and the familial links between Jews but notes the danger of those whom she sees as their allies.

Similarly, a specialist in communication who works closely with the dominant Jewish organizations spoke about Jewish Voice for Peace in this way:

Part of the intention of the Guidelines was to draw that line [against JVP]. There’s a lot of resentment within the mainstream community against JVP. They see JVP as giving cover, giving Jewish cover, to true enemies of Israel.

“*Giving Jewish cover to true enemies of Israel*” – that is the crime of JVP, according to this informant. The crime is in the affiliation and association; it is choosing the enemy over one’s own collective. As Ari

I have heard countless similar stories from other people who find themselves being called to task for crossing a communal boundary. For instance, a Jewish UC Berkeley student spoke of the 2010 divestment hearings on campus, at which the supporters and opponents of divestment sat on different sides of the room. This student writes “I was sitting in the aisle. I didn’t publicly show my side in the [hearing]. I was told later that members of Tikvah [one of the Zionist groups on campus and divestment opponents] said that I “couldn’t be trusted because I was sitting on the wrong side.” I was also called a self-hating Jew for this [sitting in the aisle].”

That level of suspicion is particularly characteristic of Israel-aligned activists who hold political positions more extreme than the mainstream, dominant institutions. These activists are also more likely to question the Jewishness of activists or organizations they oppose; it is not uncommon to hear these gatekeepers speak of the “self-identified” Jewish activists on the left, or, in writing, put quotation marks around the word Jewish in describing these activists. In my experience, these rightwing activists are often affiliated with StandWithUs.

Schwartz of the JCRC/Federation put it, “*I don’t have time to document every thing that organization does; I just know the number of times that I’ve seen their name side by side with organizations that really challenge Israel’s legitimacy.*” Schwartz does not claim that JVP itself challenges Israel’s legitimacy, but its association with these organizations is deeply problematic. That is, JVP violates the rule of putting the familial ties to other Jews ahead of other values. Similarly, an Anti-Defamation League spokesperson, discussing JVP’s placement on the ADL’s “Top 10 List of Anti-Israel organizations” for a number of years, said that while he would not necessarily call JVP “an anti-semitic group,” he “do[es] believe that they offer a degree of aid and comfort to some of those groups.”¹³⁷

For Ari, the most convincing, meaningful political statement is the question of with which groups an organization aligns itself.

If a group consistently aligns itself with other groups that seek the destruction or to delegitimize Israel, then I think that speaks for itself. . . . the mere fact of claiming to be a part of the selective divestment is not itself proof that somebody’s not part of the [global BDS] movement. We look at behavior.

Ari asserts that ultimate judgment of whether an organized effort to oppose Israeli policy through boycott is a part of the “delegitimization” of Israel rests with his organization, not necessarily with the organization in question’s stated objectives and aims. As his organization is responsible for enforcing the collective boundaries of the Bay Area Jewish community, Schwartz’s perspective reiterates the liminal space in which Jewish critics of Israeli policy find themselves. When associating with groups or individuals who support BDS can easily earn one the label of “self-hater” or “delegitimizing,” the critical effect of the distancing imperative becomes apparent. For Jews who want to stay within the boundaries of the Big Tent, distancing is required. For Jews who choose not to distance themselves, exclusion, marginalization, and denunciation are the price.

Chapter Conclusion

Nearly thirty years after Gershom Scholem criticized Hannah Arendt for lacking *Ahavat Yisrael*, the actor Richard Dreyfuss was invited to speak at a fundraiser for an Israeli museum, where he criticized Jewish defensiveness to criticism of Israel and Israeli policy. Journalist J.J. Goldberg relates that Dreyfuss spoke from his own experience, as he had been “physically assaulted in 1987 after addressing a rally for the Israeli peace movement” (1996: 69). Dreyfuss was criticized after his speech, including by Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, who responded to Dreyfuss’ statement by invoking the concept of *Ahavat Yisrael*. Wiesel said, “the role of a Jew is to be with our people. *Ahavat Yisrael* means that when Israel needs us, we must be there” (Ibid: 70).

The criticism of Arendt and Dreyfuss illustrate my research findings. This chapter explored the meaning and implications of the metaphor of “family” as it relates to American Jews’ relationships to the state of Israel. The metaphor of family is not new in Jewish history, in which familial bonds, commitments, and affections have long described relations inside the Jewish collective. What is unique is the transference of these ties and feelings to the body of the state. As such, the feeling of “love for Israel,” *Ahavat Yisrael*, a long treasured Jewish value, now has a political valence in the

¹³⁷ http://www.salon.com/2013/10/22/anti_defamation_league_slams_jewish_groups_for_israel_criticism/ (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

form of loyalty to the state of Israel. As a form of political loyalty to a state, “love for Israel,” through the logic of familial love, becomes a kind of communal gate-keeper, as the right emotional expression is a mark of belonging and its absence cause for marginalization or exclusion. The logic of familial love guides the dominant Jewish organizations as they set boundaries around acceptable and unacceptable critique of Israel. This chapter argued that critique of Israel results in either conditional inclusion or exclusion from the Jewish family, as regulated by the dominant Jewish organizations. To achieve inclusion, critique must be framed within the logic of love for the state, and the critic must distance his or herself (or one’s organization) from the appearance of collaboration with non-lovers of Israel. Failure to do so earns a critic fuller exclusion from the regulated Jewish collective, as well, often, the label of being a “self-hating Jew.”

CHAPTER 3

FANTASIZING ISRAEL: LOVING THE IDEALIZED STATE

More than a year into the ethnography I conducted on Israel's meaning to Bay Area Jews, I sat down for an interview with a Jewish educator and rabbi, a long-time Bay Area resident known for commitment to Jewish culture and innovation in Jewish practice. He spoke about leading a delegation of Bay Area Jews to Israel, saying "they fell in love" with Israel. With what, I asked. His answer:

They fell in love with a vision of a reality that isn't yet...A reality of a place that is governed by *just* political action, that is ecologically sound, in which people care about each other, and an institution that stands to show the world how things could be different, politically...I think that's what they fall in love with. And the connection actually, the other part of it was a connection with the fact that this land has a history dating back to the Bible. And hopes and dreams [that] were biblical [and] that could be realized in a modern state.

What is Israel, in this educator's telling? It is a fantasy, a "vision" or some thing that does not yet exist: a liberal's dream society, based on ideals of interdependence and environmental stewardship, representing values that the majority of American Jews say they hold. It fulfills the social justice imperatives of the Hebrew prophets, codified in the Hebrew Bible, passed down with reverence over millennia, read in synagogues every Saturday. These imperatives offer standards of justice and right living, rules and guidance in caring for people, animals and the planet. In "*show[ing] the world how things could be different,*" the state of Israel can fulfill the biblical (prophetic) imperative for Jews to be "a light unto the nations" (Isaiah, 41-42, 49); in the modern state, the ancient yearning for and instructions on justice and righteousness can be enacted through Jewish sovereignty. As this rabbi sees it, the role of American Jews is to fall in love with this vision: to cling to it, to commit to its well-being, to participate in its enactment in the world. That is: to imagine Israel as a moral state and the culmination of thousands of years of religious pining for both sovereignty and justice.

That the educator described this form of connection and commitment in terms of "falling in love" is neither arbitrary nor incidental. Rather, it reflects the language and dynamics of the love relationship between Jews and God and Jews and the Land of Israel that is rife throughout Jewish text and tradition. "Falling in love" is different than the "familial love" that links Jews to one another. Whereas familial love is a bond of interdependence and shared history that suggests the idea of a trans-historical and transnational Jewish people, *falling in love* points to an erotic bond made up of devotion and fantasy. Whereas the metaphor of familial love describes the underlying emotional connective tissue of a community, the idea of falling in love suggests the dreams of what that community might become in the world: dreams of fulfillment, transformation, and the cultivation and realization of desire. In the case of the state of Israel, the state represents a collection of fantasies and projection, ranging from links to a mythologized collective past in which *Eretz Yisrael*, the land of Israel, became the ancient Jewish people's homeland, to the valorization of Israel's political structure as the modern embodiment of Jewish ethics.

It is exceedingly common to hear a person described themselves or others in the community as "a lover of Israel," "passionate about Israel," or as "passionate Israel supporters." Jews have characterized their connections to the land of Israel in these passionate and romantic terms for generations. One of the earliest and most prominent Zionist groups, founded in Eastern Europe in the late 1870s, called itself "Lovers of Zion" (Sachar 2006). Similar to the incorporation of Jewish

religious symbols into the state's official symbols, the concept of the "Israel lover" who yearns for Israel has also been appropriated from traditional texts and applied to the individual's relationship to the state. These "religious sentiment, symbols, and values" (Kimmerling 2001) of loving and longing, rooted in the religious rituals and narratives that continuously reinforce the "the peculiar destiny of a nation that for most of its history was either en route to its land or in exile from it" (Schweid 1987: 535), serve to transfer to the state the wonder and enchantment that the religious foundation generates.

This chapter investigates how dominant Jewish organizations use the fantasy of the "passionate lover" to cultivate attachment to the state of Israel. Arguing that fantasies embody collective ideals and aspirations that are necessary for collective mobilization, this chapter will also address the limits of fantasy. Fantasies represent ideals and values, while reality is, by definition, more complicated. Because fantasy is central to the mobilizing process, the mobilizing organizations – the dominant Jewish organizations – seek to guard these fantasies against threats or intrusion.

There are many ways to look at how these fantasies – the state of Israel as the modern home of the ancient people and the embodiment of certain social justice values – play out in Jewish communities. One might look at products of Jewish American culture, such as the work of Philip Roth, in which Jewish virility and empowerment can only be realized in Israel or the Israeli, while American Jewish protagonists remain wracked by nerves and anxieties (Biale 1992). One might look at the curricula for Israel education programs in major synagogues or Jewish schools or Israel education in American Jewish summer camps (Rudow 2012; Vos 2013, 2011), or the publications and sermons of leading rabbis, or the multiple studies conducted on Birthright and its effects (Kelner 2010; Saxe and Chazan 2008; Sax, Leonard, Phillips et al 2010, 2009; et al.; Habib 2004). Unlike those studies, which look at specific containers to study the transmission of identity, this dissertation investigates how communal infrastructure produces and enforces particular notions of collective identity. Towards that end, data for this chapter come from a number of sources, including ethnographic fieldwork in the Bay Area, interviews with key informants, and content analysis of organizational publications. The data largely focus on educational or communication methods and priorities, while also looking critically at rules and engagement around fundraising for Israel.

I. The National Fantasy

The sense of "nationhood" rests on an "imagined community," formed around shared history, territory, culture, and destiny (Anderson 1991; Smith 2010), which are expressed in and shaped by national symbols, practices, and beliefs. To call these shared concepts "fantasy" is not to deny their truthfulness but rather to emphasize the interpretive processes and active imagining that is central to defining, forming, and mobilizing the nation. Collective identity is not a static, stable category which one passively assumes or inherits but rather a dynamic project that calls upon ongoing practices and rituals (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Fantasies are a part of that living dynamic, in that they represent the aspirations that the collective holds for itself as a collective. In this way, they generate affiliation and mobilize attachment to the collective.

The "imagined state" refers to the "discursive construction of the state in public culture" (Gupta 1995). It is the symbolic representation of the state in the popular imagination, in conversation, in the many daily interactions through which state institutions touch everyday lives. The imagined state has many valences, not exclusively positive or negative, as people differently situated vis-à-vis the state hold different constructions of it. The state enters into the lives of its citizens in multiple, sometimes conflicting ways, and the state itself is not one cohesive whole (Ibid).

The imagined state and imagined community of the nation overlap in diasporic communities. The symbolic elements of belonging shape meaning-making and daily interactions whether or not the state-of-origin's institutions touch everyday lives. Institutions representing the state or the diasporic collective employ symbols and representations of belonging in order to mobilize community members towards different ends (such as financially supporting the country of origin), and these symbolic elements mediate feelings of attachment or disassociation to the country of origin and diasporic home.

American Jews are not the Israeli diaspora, and state institutions do not necessarily touch American Jews' daily lives. Yet the state of Israel asserts that American Jews belong to the state, through institutional practices such as the Law of Return¹³⁸ as well as the discourses claiming Israel as homeland to all Jews and the Israeli government as the leadership of the global Jewish people (Kimmerling 2001). The dominant American Jewish organizations, too, promote the narrative by which the modern state of Israel is the homeland to Jews everywhere. This narrative relies upon fantasies of the imagined state, and places that state centrally within the construct of the Jewish collective.

Fantasy is core to many conceptions of the State of Israel, which is often referred to as a “magical” or “a miracle.” The “Prayer for the State of Israel,” written in Israel in 1948 and recited weekly by Jews around the world, refers to the state as the “dawn of our redemption.”¹³⁹ As the forerunner of Jewish religious deliverance, the state is a necessary and integral part of the messianic fantasies of the Jews (Kimmerling 2001), as well as the Evangelical Christians (Goldman 2009).

In the ongoing project of connecting American Jews to Israel, two fantasies stand out: (1) that ancient Israel is linked to the contemporary state, such that American Jews who draw upon the former will have a connection to the latter; and (2) that Israel is the “only Western democracy” in the Middle East, and as such it embodies political and social values important to American Jews (and Americans more generally). These fantasies are *aspirational*, in that they articulate a vision of the nation at its most ideal and aim to cultivate attachment in line with this vision.¹⁴⁰

In exploring how dominant Jewish organizations use these fantasies to build affective ties between American Jews and Israel, I also identify how they defend these fantasies. In looking at the ways in which fantasies generate both attachment and defense, I argue that fantasies both mobilize and inhibit the nationalist project. In making this argument, this inquiry address the idea that emotion has either a positive or a negative effect on mobilization, thus complicating the conception of affiliative emotions (Jasper 2011) and taking up Jasper's critique that social movement scholars do not sufficiently attend to emotion and affect that interrupts, rather than encourages, mobilization.

¹³⁸ By which any Jew is eligible to become a citizen of Israel.

¹³⁹ The prayer is standardized and found in prayer books in most Jewish denominations.

¹⁴⁰ These two fantasies are two of the most prominent, but not the only, fantasies that dominant Jewish organizations use to motivate Jews' attachment to the state of Israel. I focus on these two for their preeminent impact in the setting of boundaries around Jewish community and Jewish advocacy on behalf of the state of Israel. (An example of another nationalist fantasy includes the gendered and erotically charged fantasies about the state of Israel. Zionism itself – in its project as well as its end goal – aimed to transform the diaspora Jew – for centuries seen as passive, weak, vulnerable and therefore feminized – into the strong, sensual new Hebrew man, was capable of defending himself, his land, and his family (Biale 1992; Boyarin 1997; Mayer 2000). This chapter focuses on the fantasies about Israel deployed by the dominant Jewish organizations, and therefore does not explore the way gender flows through and shapes these fantasies.)

A. Shared Origins: American Jews as part of Israel's constituency

You know, I have such a love for the Jewish people and a love for what Judaism means to me...for me, Israel is a manifestation of a people's yearning for four thousand years...when I'm in Israel, it feels like the center of the world to me. I feel a gravitational pull. When I'm in Jerusalem, it feels like the world is echoing around me.

- Jessica, senior Jewish Community Relations Council executive. Interview data.

The belief in a shared homeland and common origins is central to the narrative of the Jewish nation. As Eliezer Schweid put it, "The land of Israel, as national heritage and holy land, has played a singular and central role in the history of the Jewish people and in the formation of its culture and religion" (Schweid 1987: 535). The paradigmatic – although not wholly uncontested – Jewish belief holds that over the last 2000 years, as exile became the dominant Jewish experience, "ritual patterns were created that perpetuated the memory of the land of Israel and endowed it with supreme symbolic significance" (ibid: 538). In the collective imagination of exiled Jews, the land underwent "mythologization," "spiritualization," and "idealization" (Ibid). "For most of the [Jewish] people, the land of Israel became an imagined place that was the focus of emotion, speculation, and ritual" (Ibid). Cohen and Liebman, preeminent sociologists of American Jewish life, argue that "'Israel' is a symbol with a functional significance" for American Jews; "most American Jews," they explain, "care deeply" about the state of Israel but "are ignorant of even the most rudimentary features of Israeli life" (1990: 83-4). Jessica, the JCRC executive, hints at this kind of wonder-filled connection in describing her love for the Jewish people and religion and the feeling of care for the state reflects her love for Jewish people and religion.

Nationalist projects call upon origin stories, offer nationalist interpretations of time and historical trajectories, and portray the national project as the true, authentic representation of the collective's ideals and identity (Smith, Anderson, cite). Nationalism relies upon and promotes symbols. The Jewish nationalist project offers the frame – the fantasy – in which the state represents the ultimate symbol of Jewish collectivity, achievement, and authenticity. As Jessica explains, "*four thousand years*" of "*yearning*" are answered in the state of Israel and, through the state, she finds herself a part of something monumental: "*the center of the world.*"

The centrality of the land to the religion and culture were a fortuitous resource to the Zionist movement and the government of Israel.¹⁴¹ Lifting the name (which Anthony Smith (2010) argues is the first and most important nationalist symbol), as well as other key symbols such as primary language, flag, and calendar from the Jewish religion, the state of Israel positioned itself as the continuation and culmination of Jewish history.¹⁴² It is particularly relevant in the ongoing project of cultivating attachment among diaspora Jews, co-religionists who are not citizens of the state but can be tied to it through religious, ethnic, and nationalist ties.

The cultivation of those ties is visible in the excerpt below, from a public advocacy training session in which an Israeli trained an American audience on methods for representing and defending Israel in public. Flown in from Israel by the Israeli government, and hosted by the San Francisco Jewish

¹⁴¹ The employ of Jewish traditions around Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel) was a tool that became available upon the decisions by which the Jewish national project was launched in the land of Israel.

¹⁴² In so doing, the Zionist movement also reframed Jewish history, creating a coherent trajectory that seemed to lead logically towards the goal of the establishment of the state of Israel (Zerubavel 1995: 15-17).

Federation, The San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council, Berkeley Hillel, and StandWithUs, the trainer described traveling to San Francisco from Berkeley and sitting in traffic on the Bay Bridge. He said,

In Israel, when there's traffic, when you finally creep up and find the source of the traffic jam, it's seven to eight Ultra Orthodox men standing over a big hole and peering down into it, and on a good day they've found a synagogue that's thousands of years old and on a bad day they've found Jewish graves and they can't be moved and they're thinking about how to build a bridge around them. Because Am Yisrael [the nation of Israel] and Eretz Yisrael [the land of Israel] have very deep connections.”

As the crowd laughed, the speaker offered ties between Jews and the land of Israel, turning the mundane - the daily commute - into the sacred - the ancient synagogue or cemetery. In so doing, he collapsed time, bringing the temporal sphere into the nationalist frame, and linking Jews in San Francisco to both their ancient origins in the land of Israel and their old-new homeland in the state of Israel.¹⁴³

One portion of the data for this ethnography comes from a synagogue course entitled “Assessing the Israel and American Jewish Community Relationship.” Held weekly for three months at one of San Francisco's oldest and biggest Reform synagogues, course participants consistently spoke of their “passion” for the state of Israel. Among the featured speakers were several leading professional educators who create Israel curriculum and guide teachers and students through programs aimed to cultivate an attachment to Israel. One of the educators, Molly, specializes in art education, which she uses throughout Jewish day schools and other Jewish programs in the Bay Area.

Molly began by introducing a medieval Hebrew poem (in translation) from Yehuda Halevi, the great 11th century Spanish Jewish physician and poet, whose contributions to Jewish culture include this line describing the emotional longing a diaspora Jew has for Israel: “My heart is in the East / But the rest of me far in the West ... Gladly I'd leave / All the best of grand Spain / For one glimpse of Jerusalem's dust (Halkin 2010: 115). Molly related this 11th century text to the Israeli national anthem, which includes this lyric, “And onward, towards the ends of the East/an eye gazes toward Zion.” Using the Halevi poem to assert that Jews have been “*looking towards Zion since the time of the first dispersal*,” that is, since the first exile of Jews from the land of Israel (in 586 B.C.E.), Molly contended that Jews' desire for Zion predates the state of Israel. For Molly, the Israeli national anthem is one more piece of evidence of the Jewish people's age-old longing for the land of Israel. In this narrative, contemporary Jewish nationalism is on a linear continuum with medieval religious longing.

Molly continued,

The eye, the heart, the mind – they all look towards Zion. Do you feel that tie, that thread, that thread that connects us?...I certainly feel connected. I am here and there. I am always here and there. Are you also here and there?

¹⁴³ This narrative is also set up against two constitutive foils: diasporic Jewish life, which is less meaningful by definition since traffic problems do not invoke ancient Jewish culture; and Palestinians, whose indigenous status the Israeli archaeological project seeks to contest by uncovering and asserting an ancient Jewish presence (Abu El Haj 2001; Kimmerling 2001).

Speaking of “*the thread that connects us*,” Molly described a collective link to the past that she identified in the level of the individual at present. “*The eye, the heart, the mind*” that look towards Zion are the Jewish eye, heart, and mind, a collective body and spirit linking the people to their mythic homeland. At the same time, she asserted her feeling of personal connection and affirmed that connection from a diasporic perch. To this educator, the Jewish experience does not require one to move to the land of Israel (as Yehuda Halevi did at the end of his life, but as none of the course participants planned to do), but rather to be “*always here and there*.” To gaze towards Israel and long for it describes the Jewish diasporic experience: in this fantasy, connection to Israel arises from a historical and inherited emotional landscape of longing and attachment.

After many participants discussed their feelings of being both “*here and there*,” Molly continued,

There’s a thread of connection throughout the centuries from there to here, do you feel, are your hearts and eyes turned towards Israel, its past and present. When you open the newspaper in the morning, do you look for news on Israel? Today in the *New York Times*, I can tell you that the first thing about Israel was on page 10. I can tell you, much better than when it’s on page 1!

From the ancient longing to the morning newspaper: the educator here offers a textbook description of what connects members of a nation to each other (Anderson) In this diasporic nation, the global newspaper (*The New York Times*) connects the cosmopolitan reader to the world – and the Jew to Israel. The link is two-fold: it is the ancient emotional love connection, with “*hearts and eyes turned*,” and also the worry and concern about what the morning news might bring (and relief when Israel does not make the front-page news). American Jews are not being asked to move to Israel or even consume Israeli news in order to be part of the transnational community connected “*throughout the centuries from there to here*.” This educational program illustrates what historian Arie Dubnov calls “the illusion of undisturbed historical continuity” (2012: 213).

The traditional Zionist paradigm sees Jewish life in binary terms: either survival, strength, and revival through the national project, or assimilation and disappearance in “exile.” (Indeed, the common Hebrew term for Jewish communities outside of Israel is “exile,” not “diaspora.”) Even as this paradigm is under increasing challenge (Dubnov 2012), its imprint remains. It is visible in the hierarchy that situates Jewish authenticity within the nation-state project (Liebman and Cohen 1990: 8). For the organizers of the American Jewish community, the concept of Israel offers an antidote to the threat of Jews assimilating into majority culture. This frame guides the thinking behind many Jewish identity-building programs, such as Birthright (Kelner 2010: xix-xx). It also travels discursively. At times, this hierarchy is expressed implicitly: a story about a traffic jam illustrates Jews’ historical claim to the land of Israel. Other times, the hierarchy is expressed more explicitly.

In the synagogue course I observed, Molly introduced the class to an Israeli pop musician, who had turned away from his rigidly secularist past towards a new exploration of Jewish identity. (The album was being promoted as part of a Jewish Agency for Israel-funded project to build American Jewish identity through contact with Israeli culture.¹⁴⁴) One of the course participants, a woman in her 70s, seemed unmoved by Molly’s excited explanation of the religious symbols in the music, saying, dismissively, “*this is folk music, music of the people. We had folk music in the ‘60s, in the 70s. It’s just Israeli folk music.*” The synagogue rabbi, who convened the course, leading the course answered her, saying

¹⁴⁴ <http://makomisrael.org/> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

“yes, but in Israel, the folk music is rooted in the Tanach [the Hebrew bible’s Hebrew name]. Am v’tarbut [nation and culture], the people and the culture, you go back and forth.”

One might argue that much of American folk music is also rooted in the Bible and represents a secular treatment in which religious heritage is drawn upon as a cultural resource. What this exchange reveals is the rabbi’s orientation, in which Israeli culture holds the greatest potential for Jewish cultural realization because the Hebrew language always contains Jewish cultural, religious and historical meaning and memory. Only through Hebrew, and therefore through Israeli culture, can Jews “*go back and forth*” between “*the people*” – presumably all Jews – and “*the culture*,” authentic Jewish culture. In Israel, the rabbi claims, even pop culture is authentically Jewish. The rabbi, an American who tends an American congregation, does not dismiss or denigrate all diasporic Jewish life. Rather, he sidelines it in his elevation of Hebrew culture.

These identity-building efforts aim to inscribe a bond with the state within the dominant construction of Jewish identity. Retelling the story of Jewish origins and ancient Jewishness as reaching its culmination in the national “rebirth” in the state of Israel makes the state imperative for the continuation and growth of Jewish culture. This identitarian and cultural argument has political implications: where Jewish identity is built around the state of Israel, American Jews become more invested in supporting the State of Israel.

The Zionist movement constructed an imaginary bridge between ancient and modern Jewish people, and contemporary Jewish leadership in the United States continues to build Jewish identity around that structure. This national fantasy appeals to not only Jews, but also Christians whose Zionism is deeply interrelated to that of Jews (Goldman 2009). Sociologist Baruch Kimmerling argues that the Zionist movement adopted Jewish religious symbols in order to “obtain the political support of others” (Kimmerling 2001: 204). Religious language and symbols impart another-worldly aspect of the state. For many American Jews and Christians, a Jewish “return to Zion” represents a divine intervention in the world (Goldman 2009: 36-37). Indeed, based on the “the biblically influenced perception that Palestine ‘belonged’ to the Jewish people,” Christians (largely, but not only, Protestants) have long held “strong sympathy” for Zionism (Goldman 2009: 22).

Poll after poll has found that Americans sympathize with Israelis over Palestinians,¹⁴⁵ and a 2005 Pew Research Center survey found that more than a fifth of Americans cite their “religious beliefs” as the reason for their sympathetic preference of Israelis over Palestinians.¹⁴⁶ These polling numbers

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/161387/americans-sympathies-israel-match-time-high.aspx> (Retrieved May 11, 2014).

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.pewresearch.org/2006/05/09/the-problem-of-american-exceptionalism/>. Indeed, a 2003 Pew Research Center survey of Americans’ beliefs found that “36% of U.S. adults expressed the belief that [the] creation of the state of Israel is a step toward the Second Coming of Jesus.”¹⁴⁶ The same survey found that “fully 44% of Americans expressed their belief that God gave the land that is now Israel to the Jewish people.” (<http://www.pewresearch.org/2006/07/19/the-us-publics-proisrael-history/>) While this number may not seem exceptionally high, it is much higher than the reported religious influence over any other foreign policy issue in the Pew study, including opinions on the Iraq war and prevention of genocide, and is comparable to the reported influence of religious beliefs over domestic issues, including human cloning, physician-assisted suicide, and gay marriage. (<http://www.pewresearch.org/2006/05/09/the-problem-of-american-exceptionalism/>). This suggests the significance of Israel as a domestic political issue. Its salience among Christians, and especially evangelicals, is readily apparent in their dedicated Zionism. For evangelicals, the idea “that scriptures are true” continues to be “the bedrock of evangelical support for the State of Israel” (ibid: 30). This evangelical belief and its political expression is a further demonstration of the impact of the

illustrate both the significance of religious belief in shaping the American public's general orientation towards Israel while also indicating what that belief entails: the establishment of Israel is a part of a divine plan and a precursor towards ushering in the Messianic age.¹⁴⁷ These beliefs have direct political implications. Historians agree that "among the deciding factors" in President Harry Truman's decision to immediately grant Israel diplomatic recognition, "was Truman's sincere belief in the accuracy and historicity of biblical narrative and prophecy" (Goldman 2009:27) and, therefore, in the nationalist frame by which the modern state revived the ancient people's presence in their homeland.¹⁴⁸ President Eisenhower, too, also "thought of Israel in biblical terms" (Ibid: 28). While the biblical fantasies do not fully explain political support for Israel, they offer insight into this consequential orientation that sees the Jewish presence in Israel in biblical terms.¹⁴⁹

Jewish nationalist fantasy in contemporary politics. Evangelical politicians insist upon their "love" for Israel (as Sarah Palin did in 2008 and Rick Perry in 2012), linking that affection with support for Jewish sovereignty. (URLs retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹⁴⁷ The mixing of God and politics with regard to Israel is not new. Middle East scholar Shalom Goldman writes "In the view of many in the Christian West, Palestine was understood to be "empty," and this emptiness should be filled by Jews, the descendants of the land's ancient biblical inhabitants....The phrase "a land without a people for a people without a land" conveyed this view in a very concise and pithy manner. The idea was first promoted by Christians." (2009:22).

¹⁴⁸ By 1948, 80% of the American public supported the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine (Ibid: 27).

¹⁴⁹ One of the nationalist fantasies of the state of Israel is its embodiment of the idea of Jewish survival in a threatening world; its emergence after the genocide of European Jewry is considered a symbol of Jewish rebirth and survival (Cohen and Eisen 2000, Woocher 1986). The State of Israel presents itself as the logical answer to the problem of absent Jewish self-determination, which manifested most dramatically in the Nazi genocide: initially, "Zionism emphasized the uniqueness of the "Jewish problem," anti-Semitism, persecutions, and later the Holocaust, and presented itself as the sole realistic and moral solution to these" (Kimmerling 2001: 186). The movement saw the Jewish "return to Zion" as "correcting a cosmic injustice that had lasted for thousands of years" (Kimmerling 2001: 186) naturalizing the link between the history of Jewish persecution and the establishment of the state. Kimmerling (2001) observes that the Law of Return, which promises citizenship to every Jew, does not use a traditional Jewish legal (halakhic) definition, but "more or less in accordance with the broader definition of [Jews that was expressed in] the Nazi Nuremberg Laws." He explains, "the logic underlying this was internally consistent and justified, as these laws were intended to enable the granting of citizenship to almost everyone who suffered persecution as a Jew, mainly during the Holocaust and World War II" (183-4).

There is a leap between justifying a sanctuary from persecution and legitimizing a particular form of statehood. (Indeed, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, Zionists argued over the political form that the Jewish homeland might aspire to included a binational state, a federation, a commonwealth and a Jewish sovereign state.) Once the state was established in 1948, "as Idith Zertal and other historians have shown, the narrative links have been forged time and time again such that any 'reasonable' person now believes that the Nazi genocide against the Jews mandated the founding of the State of Israel" (Butler 2012: 25). In this "reasonable" view, then, the Nazi Holocaust always stands in the background of the state's actions, including the occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Reflecting the widespread use of the term "Auschwitz borders" to describe the 1949 armistice line dividing Israel from the West Bank, Zertal (2005: 7) argues that

The representation of Israel's international border – particularly since the 1967 war and the widespread Jewish settlement in the occupied territories – in terms of the Holocaust have contributed to the expansion and justification of the Israeli occupation of a land inhabited by another people.

(See footnote 272 for further discussion of the political use of the term "Auschwitz borders.")

This section has looked at the promotion of a particular version of Jewish continuity by which the state embodies ancient and modern yearnings and dreams. This idea of Jewish continuity implicates Jews outside of Israel in the nationalist movement. It also motivates political support for the state of Israel among Christians. Yet the fantasy of ancient and authentic Jewish revival in Israel is not limited to the idea of the Jewish state. Rather, the fantasy extends to a particular vision of a state: a moral state, seen to embody ancient Jewish values of justice in the modern infrastructure of democracy. The following section will attend to that fantasy and its use by dominant Jewish organizations to cultivate attachment to Israel.

B. The Idealized State: Israel as a liberal democracy

American Jews are a largely liberal group (Liebman and Cohen 1990; Pew Research Center 2013); the most recent survey research on American Jews shows that liberals outnumber conservatives two-to-one (Pew Research Center 2013: 96). Among American Jews, conservatism runs deep only among Orthodox (and ultra-Orthodox) Jews (Ibid: 97-98), and Orthodox Jews are less present in the Bay Area than in other major American metropolitan centers.¹⁵⁰

Some scholars claim that American Jews believe that liberal values are inherent within Judaism and that supporting humanitarian causes and helping the underprivileged are what it means to be a good Jew (Liebman and Cohen 1990: 96). Some argue that central values in Jewish life include the belief in freedom, equality, opportunity, pluralism and ethnic diversity (Sarna 1986); and the righteousness of fighting for the oppressed (Liebman and Cohen 1990: 14-16). Others argue that Jewish liberalism is a reflection of the radical Russian Jewish politics held by many Jewish immigrants at the turn of the 20th century (Goldberg 1996: 26). These beliefs animate American Jewish fantasies about the state of Israel. American Jewish support for the Zionist enterprise has long stemmed from “the ‘social democratic factor,’” which relies on “envisioning the State as being especially progressive and enlightened, akin to the American dream,” argues Allon Gal (2010: 63). This vision of a progressive, egalitarian Israel draws from “unbroken ancient traditions derived from the great prophets’ teachings,” such that the modern democratic state is a “revival” of Jewish political values (ibid). In this formation, Israel’s claim to democracy is an affirmation of the frame that links it to ancient Jewish culture and an active bond with American Jews, the largest, wealthiest, and most politically significant part of the Jewish diaspora. For American Jews, the perceived democratic character of the state of Israel is an “application and extension” of both Judaism and American ideals of liberty and social justice (Woocher 1986: 30).¹⁵¹

With a pride that is both ethnic and nationalistic, the dominant American Jewish organizations proudly proclaim Israel as “America’s closest ally in the Middle East” and “the only democracy in the Middle East,” thereby implying that Israel shares and embodies the same or similar democratic values as the United States, and drawing a sharp – although often unspoken – contrast between Israel and its Arab neighbors in the region. This democracy narrative promotes Israel to a broader American audience, and situates Israel as the brother nation to the U.S.: Israel’s democratic character makes it not just like the United State, but distinctly unlike the rest of the Middle East. This alignment of origin and nature, and the casting of Israel’s neighbors as “other,” justifies American political and military support for Israel for more than strategic purposes. American Jewish

¹⁵⁰ The 2005 Jewish Community Study found that Orthodox Jews made up only 3% of the Bay Area’s Jewish population, a number held steady between 1986 and 2004.

¹⁵¹ Indeed, the claim of building a democratic society strongly contributed to building American Jewish support for the Zionist movement (Urofsky 1986).

organizations promote the Israeli democracy narrative as part of their strategy to build and maintain support for Israel. “The consensus to promote Israel as an enlightened democratic country” is “interwoven” in all of the goals (Gal 2010: 71) of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, the coalition formed in 1953 to interface with the American executive branch of government as one united Jewish voice (Goldberg 1996). In the Bay Area, the San Francisco JCRC’s “Core Values” statement includes “promoting a strong America/Israel relationship based on the recognition of the State of Israel as the *pluralistic, democratic*, historical, cultural, religious, and national homeland of the Jewish people” (italics added).¹⁵²

The fantasy that Israeli democracy is “just like ours” is a prominent part of the message that dominant American Jews organizations use it to cultivate attachment to and support for the state of Israel, both from an internal Jewish audience (imagined community) as well as the broader American (and Western) political audience. The ways in which Israel is or is not a democracy (and to what extent) are significant for how they relate to the American Jewish fantasy around Israeli democracy. Thus, for the purposes of this research, it is significant to look at the ways in which the dominant Jewish organizations address challenges to the narrative of Israeli democracy, rather than enter into the arguments over the ways in which Israel does and does not live up to its claims of democracy.¹⁵³

The Liberal Bay Area

Just as in the Jewish establishment organizations across the United States, the Bay Area’s dominant Jewish organizations deploy the vision of Israel as a democracy for advocacy in the U.S. political system and as defense against criticism of Israel. Yet the Bay Area is unique in its faithfulness to a liberal vision for the state of Israel. Both the Federation and the JCRC emphasize that their support for Israel includes “strengthening Israel’s already vigorous democratic institutions”¹⁵⁴ through concern for Israel’s religious and economically marginalized populations. The San Francisco Federation sees itself as particularly unique among Federations in its manner of promoting Bay Area liberal values in Israel. In 1984, the San Francisco Federation opened its own office in Israel, choosing to manage a percentage of its Israel allocations directly instead of through the Jewish Agency for Israel, the quasi-governmental Israeli agency through which Federations channel their contributions to Israel. The San Francisco Federation’s narrative around the opening of this office in Israel was summed up by a Federation staffer, Rachel, in a presentation at a Federation Young Adult Division event I attended, at which she said:

25 years ago, the San Francisco Federation was the first Federation to invest directly in Israel. We hired an Israeli professional and created our own board. Now we give \$3 million a year to projects in Israel, programs we choose with the Israelis based on our shared values. Our goal is to make a democratic, just, and pluralistic Israel.

Following this explanation, Rachel presented three Federation grantees: an educational program serving pre-school age children in Palestinian communities inside of Israel; a program promoting business training among marginalized Jewish populations (in particular, Ethiopian Jews); and a

¹⁵² http://jcrc.org/about_mission.htm. (Retrieved 3/14/2014.)

¹⁵³ Although beyond the scope of this inquiry, many political and legal theorists, sociologists and other scholars have examined the accuracy of likening the nature and practice of Israeli democracy to that of the United States, particularly in light of Israel’s ethno-religious commitments to Jews. For more, see Kimmerling 2001; Yiftachel 1999; Shafir and Peled 2002; Honig-Parnass 2011; Robinson 2013.

¹⁵⁴ http://jcrc.org/israel_mep.htm (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

project promoting religious pluralism among Israeli Jews. These projects, particularly the education and business training programs, aim to address inequalities and imbalances of power within Israeli society by expanding access to opportunity to marginalized populations.¹⁵⁵ These are the programs the Federation chooses to highlight in a presentation to young donors, expecting young Bay Area Jews to find resonance in these efforts to overcome racial and ethnic gaps through investment in education.

I heard this description of the logic behind the San Francisco Federation's decision to open its own office as well as mention of Federation grants to organizations serving Palestinian citizens of Israel on several other occasions, including in other ethnographic observations and in interviews with Federation and JCRC staff members. One senior staff member explained that the San Francisco Federation "*bucked the trend*" and decided to allocate their funds directly "*because we want our funding to reflect some of our core values, and that includes around the issues of equal opportunity for all of Israel's citizens.*" The dominant narrative among Federation and JCRC staff is that the Bay Area supports Israel through traditional channels and also ensures that the liberalism held dear by Bay Area Jews is represented more directly in the San Francisco Federation's investments in (via contributions to) Israel. This philanthropic strategy reflects the motivational aspects of the Israeli democracy narrative: the Federation asks its donors to give money to help strengthen Israeli democracy – an appeal to their shared liberal social values that are (ostensibly) reflected in the Israeli democracy – which also increases the donor's connection to the Federation as the collective fundraising organization that represents and reflects their love for justice, as well as Israel.

The JCRC positions itself in a way that reflects similar priorities. Its most recent published document addressing Israeli and Palestinian diplomatic relationships includes a statement of consensus around JCRC support for "the civil, economic and social rights of all Israelis, including its Arab citizens." The JCRC notes

for many years, the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Federation has been in the forefront [of funding programs] aimed at bridging the gaps between Israeli Jewish and Arabs by deepening Israeli democracy and pluralism.... through such efforts, we support Israel's commitment to maintain a strong vibrant democracy."¹⁵⁶

For the JCRC, as for the Federation, investment in Israel's marginalized populations is an investment in "Israeli democracy." The JCRC's statement also argues "No other state in the Middle East grants and protects such freedoms to its minority citizens."¹⁵⁷ Through this sentence, the JCRC reaffirms the frame by which discussion of Israeli democracy and pluralism situates Israel as the reflection of American democratic values, which are not shared by other Middle Eastern countries.

These positions illustrate the importance of the narrative of Israeli pluralism and egalitarianism to the JCRC and the Federation. For them, Israeli democracy is both fact and ideal. American Jewish organizations, carrying the view that American Jews' multi-generation experience in a pluralistic society has enabled them to pursue personal and collective interests (cite), offer the view that

¹⁵⁵ Palestinian communities in Israel are among the poorest communities in the country, with a vastly underfunded educational system (Muslim and Christian Arabs have a separate educational system from the Jewish Israeli educational system).

¹⁵⁶ http://jcrc.org/israel_mep.htm (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

American Jews have both the responsibility and the know-how to strengthen Israel's democratic features. For them, Israeli democracy is a reality but also an aspiration that requires investment and protection.

Towards the end of protecting the democracy narrative, the third plank of the San Francisco Jewish Federation funding guidelines bars support for organizations that “advocate for, or endorse, undermining the legitimacy¹⁵⁸ of Israel as a secure independent, democratic Jewish state.”¹⁵⁹ The inclusion of “democratic” in this policy formulation reaffirms the significance of this characterization of the state – it is equally as important as “independent” and “Jewish” – and suggests the threat posed when the Israeli democracy narrative might be undermined or delegitimized. This expression of a communal boundary that must be maintained – e.g. this community does not support groups who undermine the legitimacy of Israel as a democracy – underscores the fantasy nature of the American Jewish organizational discourse around Israeli democracy.

In the next section of this chapter, I argue that that cultivating the attachment to the idealized state of Israel leads to avoiding, minimizing, denying, or marginalizing *ideas* that challenge the idealized state of Israel in general, and the fantasy of Israeli democracy, in particular. These “challenging ideas” that starkly challenge the fantasy that American Jews have of Israel arise most prominently in connection with critiques of Israeli policies in the West Bank and Gaza. In response, the dominant Bay Area Jewish organizations (especially the San Francisco Federation and the JCRC) have adopted practices and policies that minimize the appearance of conflict.

II. Averting Conflict and Cultivating Ignorance

The nationalist movement's fantasy abounds in the descriptions of the collective's political form. The imagined community as one extended family, for instance, offers a fantasy of interconnectedness and invokes bonds of affection (love) and interdependence; nationalist movements use the metaphor of family to mobilize and direct the political engagement of a broad imagined community (Berezin 2001; Hunt 1992; Nira Yuval Davis 2008 [1997]). As this chapter and the last one have shown, the dominant Jewish organizations enact and employ the metaphor of family and fantasy of ancient kinship as a means of generating and developing Jewish attachment to the state of Israel. The idea that Israel is a liberal democratic state also serves as a mobilizing fantasy. This fantasy points to the importance of Israel as a symbol for American Jews, who have historically mediated the threat that the establishment of a formal Jewish homeland posed for Jews who did not want to emigrate from the United States by promoting that homeland as an outpost of the fantasy of American ideals – democracy, pluralism, equality of opportunity (Urofsky 1986).

In the Bay Area, the Federation and JCRC's support for efforts to decrease discrimination against Israel's Palestinian citizens is framed in language that calls to attachment to parallels between progressive vision for the United States and progressive vision for Israel. The liberal democratic fantasy holds that minority rights are a work-in-progress, such that advocating for those rights can

¹⁵⁸ Chapter 4, on Vulnerability and Power, addresses the concept of “delegitimizing” Israel.

¹⁵⁹ <http://sfjcf.wordpress.com/2010/02/18/policy/> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

be (and, in this case, is) read as strengthening the political infrastructure as a whole.¹⁶⁰ Thus the Federation and JCRC may advocate for greater opportunities for Israel's Palestinian citizens as an act of support and investment in the state of Israel and its political institutions.

This paradigm is challenged by the illiberal phenomenon of Israel's occupation of the West Bank.¹⁶¹ Whereas Jewish organizations rationalize Jewish privilege inside the state of Israel as the (desired) consequence of a state with a Jewish majority population, the profile of Jewish domination over Palestinians in the West Bank is not a similar source of agreement among American Jews. There is little agreement among American Jews regarding the Israeli presence in the West Bank. Some of this lack of agreement reflects the discursive complications that mark the Israeli presence, including contradictory signals from the Israeli government, which states its commitment to the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank while simultaneously investing in the expansion of the extensive infrastructure of Jewish colonization of the West Bank. American Jewish organizations, reflecting official Israeli positions, largely assert support for the "two state solution," including AIPAC, the leading political advocacy organization for Israel in Washington (Sasson 2014: 37). At the same time, many American Jewish organizations support ongoing Jewish colonization of the West Bank, often through advocating support for or impeding criticism of it.

In the course of collecting data for this dissertation, a pattern emerged around the ways in which the Federation and JCRC responded to challenges over their implicit or explicit support for the Israeli occupation enterprise. The nationalist fantasy holds that Israel is a democratic state, supported in this aspiration by American Jews and, in particular, the Bay Area Jewish community, for whom equal opportunity and pluralism represent cherished values. When confronted with the contradictions between liberal ideals and support for the explicitly non-democratic occupation enterprise, the Federation and JCRC responded with avoidance. The rest of this chapter explores these efforts at avoidance in three key areas: fundraising guidelines, educational programs, and a rightwing boundary for the community.

¹⁶⁰ In their *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled (2002) offer an instructive discussion of competing discourses on citizenship and the model of the "incorporation regime" that enables new groups to be added to the state with differing levels of rights and obligations (1-22).

¹⁶¹ In 1967, during the "Six Day War," Israel captured the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. Israel annexed the Golan Heights and parts of East Jerusalem, and returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt within the framework of the Camp David Accords. Beginning in 1968, Israel moved Israeli citizens into the West Bank and Gaza, establishing Jewish colonies. Israel withdrew the Jewish colonists (called "settlers") from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and withdrew its military to the perimeter of the Strip (including the imposition of a naval blockade). The West Bank, including East Jerusalem, holds hundreds of Jewish colonies that are home to more than 515,000 Jewish settlers as well as more than 2.6 million Palestinians (according to <http://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics> and <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html>; URLs retrieved May 12, 2014). Though the Gaza Strip and Golan Heights are also under Israeli military occupation, both of these territories have different statuses than the West Bank: the Golan Heights was annexed by Israel in 1981 in an act that "constituted a violation of the principles of international law, of Resolution 242, of the Israeli-Syrian disengagement of forces agreement of May 1974, and of the Camp David Accords (Shlaim 2001: 393.) In Gaza, Israel withdrew its civilian (settler) population from the Gaza Strip in 2005 but retains control over Gaza's sea and air space, border crossings, and population registry (http://www.btselem.org/topic/gaza_strip; retrieved May 12, 2014).

A. Allocating Communal Resources: Funding Occupation

Many scholars have explored American Jewish philanthropic patterns, emphasizing the religious origins of the Jewish practice of contributing funds and resources for people in need (Waxman 2010) and for Jewish communities in Israel (Gal 2010; Waxman 2010). “Within the realm of avenues for fulfilling one’s religious and communal obligations of philanthropy, giving to Israel has long played a special role,” argues sociologist Chaim Waxman (2010: 83), such that American Jewish contributions to the state of Israel fit within a longer pattern of Jewish support for Jewish life in the land of Israel. Funding the state of Israel is a sign of the “essential transnational quality of diaspora-homeland relations,” (Dubnov 2011) and the key mechanism for “manufacturing national bonds” and generating attachment and a sense of belonging to the national project (Vos 2013, 2011). Transnational fundraising also pertains to the central symbols of the nation and the national project. If sacrifice is a key measure of belonging to an imagined community (Anderson 1991), then Jewish American philanthropy to Israel may serve as an indication of Jewish American commitment to the state of Israel. This measure has been historically true: American Jews have a pattern of surpassing fundraising goals during wartimes in Israel (Waxman 2010; Rosenthal 2001), and never more so than during the 1967 war, when American Jewish organizations suspended fundraising for their own domestic purposes in order to focus communal resources on Israel (Waxman 2010).

Jewish Federations (more than 150 across North America) raise money to meet local needs, to support Jews in other parts of the world, and to support Israel. The Jewish Federations’ primary partner in Israel is the Jewish Agency for Israel, a quasi-governmental Israeli organization that supports social services in Israel and, increasingly, programs to cultivate American Jewish attachment to Israel. The Jewish Agency, like the majority of Israeli institutions, participates in the colonization effort by supporting Jewish-only institutions and infrastructure in the West Bank.¹⁶²

The San Francisco Jewish Federation has made a number of decisions to assert its independence from other collective funding organizations. According to San Francisco Federation staff people, the Federation does not make direct grants to Jewish colonies in the West Bank.¹⁶³ Informants suggested that the Federation’s decision to open its own office in Israel in 1984 was informed by the desire to avoid funding Jewish settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.¹⁶⁴ In addition, in 2008, the SF Federation decided to end the practice of funneling the bulk of its Israel allocations through the Jewish Agency for Israel and instead invited the Jewish Agency to apply for funding for specific

¹⁶² While the Jewish Agency, which historically supported Jewish immigration and absorption in the state of Israel, is legally precluded from assisting Jewish immigrants settle the West Bank (Sasson 2014: 188 ftnt 47), they have provided support to Jewish-only programs in the West Bank in a number of ways, primarily as pass-through grants.

¹⁶³ No written materials were available to confirm this statement, though none contradicted it, either.

¹⁶⁴ The San Francisco Federation has taken other proactive positions in opposition to rightwing Israeli policies. George Gruen (2000) writes

In March 1997, the San Francisco Jewish Federation decided in a symbolic move to deduct \$1 million from its allocation to the UJA* “because of Israel’s right wing political and religious policies.” Instead, it planned to give \$500,000 to local Jewish causes and earmarked another \$500,000 directly for Israeli projects that promoted Arab-Jewish understanding and religious pluralism.

“UJA” is the United Jewish Appeal, which was the name of the umbrella philanthropic organization that existed from 1939-1999, when it merged with the Council of Jewish Federations and United Israel Appeal to form one organization called United Jewish Communities. The United Jewish Communities changed its name to the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) in 2009. <http://www.jta.org/2009/06/09/life-religion/ujc-to-change-name> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

projects, “*like any other grantee*,” as one informant put it. Informants suggested that opposition to the Jewish Agency’s ongoing participation in the Israeli colonial project in the West Bank was a factor in the decision to restructure the San Francisco Federation’s relationship with the Jewish Agency. In these decisions, the Federation represented the views of a majority of its constituency. The most recent survey data, from a 2010 survey sponsored by the San Francisco Jewish Federation, finds that a majority believes that “Israel should stop expanding settlements on the West Bank” (Cohen 2010).¹⁶⁵

Although the Federation no longer offers direct grants in support of the Jewish colonizing enterprise, they do enable donors to direct funding to these causes through “Donor Advised Funds,” through which donors use the Federation’s Endowment Fund (the JCEF) as a conduit for contributing to a range of charities.¹⁶⁶ The JCEF maintains an index of the “more than 7,000 organizations [that] are on our list of approved public charities.”¹⁶⁷ This list includes a number of direct funding conduits to West Bank settlements, including American “Friends of” organizations that support specific settlements (including Ariel and Hebron¹⁶⁸), the One Israel Fund, and the Central Fund of Israel.¹⁶⁹ Thus, through the JCEF, the Federation is a conduit for funding Jewish expansion on the West Bank.

¹⁶⁵ This survey, conducted by sociologist Steven M. Cohen under the auspices of the San Francisco Federation, polled readers of the *j*, the Bay Area’s Jewish weekly newspaper. The *j* is provided free of charge at many Federation-supported agencies. Its readership is skewed towards the Bay Area Jews who regularly use Federation agencies or committed subscribers (an overlapping population). The data thus reveals the opinions of Jews who see themselves as more deeply a part of the Bay Area Jewish community than other, more general polls would reveal.

¹⁶⁶ The Donor Advised Funds are administered through the Jewish Community Endowment Fund, which is a part of the Federation that manages the grants. The Endowment Fund allows donors to contribute to the charities of their choice, explaining that donors “can recommend grants to a full range of charitable organizations in the Jewish and general communities.” <http://www.jewishfed.org/dafs> (Retrieved August 1, 2013.)

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.jewishfed.org/dafs>. (Retrieved August 1, 2013.)

¹⁶⁸ The settlement of Ariel is considered one of the central obstacles to the achievement of an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The Jewish settlements in Hebron are considered among the most provocative in the West Bank, consisting of a number of buildings occupied by Jews in the midst of the fourth largest Palestinian city on the West Bank.

¹⁶⁹ The list (which may be incomplete, as the full funding spectrum of all 7,000+ organizations on the approved charities list is beyond this author’s capacity to verify): American Friends of Ariel, American Friends of Bat Ayin Yeshiva, American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva Center, American Friends of Beit Orot, Central Fund of Israel, Friends of the College of Judea and Samaria, Inc., Hebron Fund, One Israel Fund/Yesha Heartland Campaign. On these organizations’ support for settlements, see this 2010 New York Times article, “Tax-Exempt Funds Aid Settlements in the West Bank,” (http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/06/world/middleeast/06settle.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0; retrieved May 12, 2014); as well as reporting from journalist Uri Blau (<http://ethics.harvard.edu/lab/blog/349-from-new-york-to-hebron>; retrieved May 12, 2014); and on the blog Mondoweiss.net, which includes multiple reports about the Central Fund of Israel.

Some of these funds’ websites clearly explain their scope of work. For example, the “One Israel Fund is dedicated to supporting the welfare and safety of the men, women and children of Judea and Samara as well as rebuilding the lives of the Jewish people impacted by the Gaza evacuation. These 300,000+ people are the vanguard of Israel’s security and sovereignty as a Jewish state.” <http://www.oneisraelfund.org/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014).

In 2010, when the San Francisco Jewish Federation established their funding Guidelines (discussed in Chapter 2), they removed a number of 501(c)3 organizations from their list of approved charities, purportedly for violating the Guidelines. The organizations that were removed were all left-wing organizations, barred from receiving funding via the Federation's Endowment Fund, seemingly for "undermining the legitimacy of the state of Israel." Organizations that were barred include Jewish Voice for Peace, the American Friends Service Committee, Global Exchange, the Institute for Policy Studies, Madre, and the National Lawyers Guild.¹⁷⁰

At the same time, the organizations that offer direct support to Jewish colonies in the West Bank remained on the Endowment Fund's approved charities list. When Bay Area Jews criticized the Federation for enabling funding for the occupation enterprise, the Federation demurred, averting public conflict and avoiding addressing their decision head-on. Rachel Biale, an Israeli-American educator, author, and community organizer, repeatedly contacted senior Federation leadership, asking them to remove the settlement-supporting organizations from the list of approved charities. When they did not, she spoke about the issue publicly, writing a letter in the local Jewish newspaper¹⁷¹ and on a national Jewish news site.¹⁷² Biale argued

The Federation guidelines on Israel-related programs passed last February proscribe organizations that "undermine" Israel as a "democratic Jewish state." Yet, if these organizations committed to keeping the Occupied Territories get their way, Israel will be neither majority Jewish nor democratic....The Jewish community needs to wake up to the danger posed by these organizations using our communal institutions to promote the settlements and sustain the Occupation.

The Federation removed the list of approved charities from its website, and refused to confirm whether the settlement-supporting organization was still on the list. The Federation's refusal to publicly address questions over its facilitation of support for the Israeli occupation enterprise through the JCEF reflects the choice to continue funding the Jewish Agency but to not make direct grants to projects in the Occupied Territories. The Federation thereby refrains from directly funding the occupation enterprise, yet it remains a conduit for such funding through the Jewish Agency and potentially through the Endowment Fund. The Federation's choices reveal its preference for avoiding confrontation over its support for the Israeli occupation and suggest that such aversion is connected to the Federation's position as the dominant communal organization. In the name or function of representing the community, the Federation avoids interpreting support for the Israeli occupation as an act that undermines Israeli democracy. Instead, it affirms that institutional support for the occupation is consistent with the broader communal orientation.

Similarly, in interviews with Federation and JCRC leaders, I consistently asked if they saw a potential conflict between the third plank of the Guidelines – support for Israel as a "democratic Jewish state," and advocacy for continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank, including for the expansion of Jewish settlements. Nearly every informant avoided the question, saying they could not comment and instructing me to ask a more senior staff person. The most senior staff person who did address

¹⁷⁰ Recall that the list from which these organizations were removed is a list of approved charities to which donors may send contributions through "donor advised funds;" this is not a list of the organizations that the Federation supports directly through its allocation process.

¹⁷¹ <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/58568/letters-0708/> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

¹⁷² <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/32915/academic-question> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

this potential conflict, Ari Schwartz, answered with a question: “*Who advocates for the expansion of settlements?*” He continued,

Does it mean that they are ultimately not prepared to give up those settlements? If what they’re advocating for is the expansion of settlements and then to deny Palestinians the right to citizenship in some future Palestinian state I think that would be seriously problematic.

Schwartz’s comment illustrates the paradigm by which the occupation continues under a political rationalization as “temporary”¹⁷³ and by which expanded settlements will coexist with any future two-state solution (Shlaim 2001; Honig-Parnass 2011). This paradigm finds expression not only in Schwartz’s words but also as policy. The Guidelines suggest that anyone who focuses on occupation as central to understanding Israel’s political structure is outside of the communal consensus; the guidelines marginalize the many scholars, journalists, and civil society actors who draw attention to the Israeli government’s undemocratic policies and violations of Palestinian human rights. In this way, the Federation comes to protect the status of continued occupation while marginalizing Jewish public opposition to it. The fantasy of democratic Israel receives protection, while the voices that complicate or challenge this vision are ignored, avoided, or disqualified as merely an effort to “delegitimize” or undermine the State of Israel.

B. Circumvention for the Sake of Fantasy

The ways in which San Francisco Federation decisions around fundraising and communal support for Israel simultaneously promote liberal and illiberal goals illustrates one way in which the fantasy of a liberal Israel is both vulnerable and durable. As discussed above, the San Francisco Federation refuses to directly address the way in which its support for Israel’s occupation project is at odds with its own democratic values, as well as those it believes are part of the state of Israel. Dominant Jewish organizations face another challenge to its ideological integrity from formerly extremist nationalist (cite) politicians, and positions, which have become state policy in Israel in recent years. This section explores the way these Jewish organizations attempt to normalize or minimize this extremism when engaging with American Jews. Discourse around Avigdor Lieberman, Israel’s Minister of Foreign Affairs (2009-2012; 2013-present), most clearly illustrates these efforts.

Avigdor Lieberman, head of the nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel is our Home) party, is one of the most public faces of Israel’s “new radical Right.” (Pedahzur 2012). Lieberman’s electoral platform, like the movement he comes from, “seeks to enhance the ethnic discrimination of non-Jewish minorities [and] to undermine the remnants of the liberal democratic foundations of the state” through legislation that limits Israeli civil society (Ibid). Lieberman has gained attention for his call to expand Jewish colonization of the West Bank, and potentially deprive citizenship from current Palestinian citizens. The latter position, in particular, violates liberal conceptions of citizenship (Shafir and Peled 2002: 92).

Lieberman’s ascension to a prominent position in the second administration of Benjamin Netanyahu (2009) led a small number of Jewish organizations – including J Street¹⁷⁴ and the American Jewish

¹⁷³ Legal scholar George Bisharat refers to the unresolved, indeterminate nature of life under occupation as “a state of ‘permanent impermanence’” (1989).

¹⁷⁴ <http://jstreet.org/blog/post/On-shared-values-and-Avigdor-Lieberman> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

Committee¹⁷⁵ - to speak out against the policies and values he represents. Most of the dominant Jewish organizations, however, embarked upon “a campaign ... in the pro-Israel leadership to redefine Lieberman as something of a misunderstood moderate,” as journalist James Besser put it in New York’s “The Jewish Week.”¹⁷⁶ In the course of conducting this dissertation research, I observed a number of instances in which Bay Area Jewish leaders were confronted with specific questions concerning the intersection between the Jewish Federation’s values concerning Israel – as expressed by the Guidelines – and the values Lieberman represents. In these instances, the Jewish leaders sought to minimize the appearance of contradictions between Jewish community values and Lieberman’s values.¹⁷⁷

The JCRC and Federation see themselves as organizations that promote liberal values and reject blatant violations of civil rights. They are proud of their objections to the politics of Meir Kahane¹⁷⁸ in the 1980s,¹⁷⁹ and describe the Federation funding Guidelines as intending to “*cut off the hard right*,” in the words of one informant. Multiple Federation and JCRC informants explained that the hard right is made up of the “*Kabanists*,” “*anybody that supports transfer*”¹⁸⁰ of Palestinians from their homes, as Meir Kahane advocated. Most senior JCRC and Federation staff people interviewed for this dissertation declined to discuss Lieberman and the ways in which his platform violates Federation Guidelines. One senior staff person who was willing to discuss him revealed the conundrum Lieberman poses to dominant Jewish organizations and the strategies by which they try to solve this potential problem.

This senior staff member, Eli, explained that the Federation Guidelines intend to exclude “*Kabanists - people who talk about throwing Arabs out of Israel and support the transfer concept*.” During the interview, Eli referred to Lieberman as a “*fascist*,” and said that Lieberman’s ascent “*portends I think a crisis in American Jewish – Israeli relations*,” because “*you have a prime minister [Netanyahu] who is kind of Kabanist-light*.” He referred to proposed anti-democratic, anti-Arab legislation in the Knesset spearheaded by Lieberman’s party, saying “*it’s very racist*” and “*it’s giving permission to Kabanists everywhere*.” The

¹⁷⁵ <http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=7oJILSPwFfJSG&b=8479733&ct=12481473> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

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http://www.thejewishweek.com/blogs/political_insider/jewish_leader_breaks_colleagues_takes_sharp_look_avidor_lieberman (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

¹⁷⁷ I also observed a number of instances in which informants expressed enthusiastic support for Lieberman and his policy proposals. Among the organizational leadership, however, I found positions on Lieberman to be more circumspect.

¹⁷⁸ Meir Kahane was a radical nationalist politician and member of the Israeli Knesset who advocated the removal of Palestinians from the land of Israel. His party was banned from the Knesset for incitement to racism in 1988. (Sachar 1996: 929).

¹⁷⁹ When Kahane visited San Francisco in the 1980s, he was not allowed to enter the Federation building. According to the JCRC informant who shared this story, the then-director of the JCRC, Earl Raab, chose to meet with Kahane outside of the building so as to not “give him the status of being in the Federation,” telling Kahane that his racism was not welcome in the San Francisco Jewish community. Jewish organizations demonstrated against Kahane, protesting his advocacy of Palestinian expulsion, and JCRC issued “a statement opposing his visit and rejecting his perspectives which ‘aside from being self-destructive, [are] repugnant to Jewish law, tradition, ethics, morality and the democratic values inherent in both the American Bill of Rights and Israel’s declaration of independence, which accords freedom and equality of citizenship to all people, regardless of race and religion.’” (http://www.olioarts.com/clients/jcrc/stage/about_history_1980s.htm)

¹⁸⁰ “Transfer” refers to a policy proposal to exile Palestinian citizens from their homes and/or to deprive them of their Israeli citizenship. (Reinhart 2002: 202-3).

Lieberman appointment “*is a tough one*” for American Jewish communities. Yet when asked specifically if the Guidelines would affect whether the Federation or JCRC, or a Federation grantee, could host Lieberman in the Bay Area, Eli equivocated. He said,

That’s an incredibly thorny issue. That takes a rather sophisticated analysis, knowing that he’s largely cut off from the PMO [Prime Minister’s Office], that his policy is not the Israeli government’s policy.

On the one hand, Eli sees Lieberman’s agenda as racist and as shaping the Israeli government and Netanyahu administration overall. Netanyahu himself, Eli says, is “Kahanist-light.” Yet when asked to take a concrete position on Bay Area Jewish institutions’ actual relationship with Lieberman, Eli demurred. He referred to micropolitics of relations between the prime minister’s office and the foreign ministry, shifting the frame away from Lieberman’s objectionable policy proposals. While he may call Lieberman a fascist, whether or not such politics put him outside of the communal boundaries requires “sophisticated analysis” and specialized knowledge of Israeli politics.¹⁸¹ That is, the Kahanism Eli identified in Lieberman’s politics is no longer sufficiently clear.

The Israeli Consul General during the period of this research was Akiva Tor, a man spoken of with fondness and affection across the Jewish political spectrum. An affable man and active member of his orthodox synagogue in Oakland whose children attended the local Jewish day schools, he participated in events with groups ranging from StandWithUs to the New Israel Fund. Tor publicly defended Lieberman’s more extreme policy proposals, as I observed at a San Francisco Federation event one evening. His defense points to the framework in which the aim of cultivating Jewish attachment to Israel finds expression in the minimization of ideas and values that seem blatantly outside the norm.

At a gathering with about 80 Bay Area Jews aged 25-45 at the San Francisco Federation, Tor was asked a question about Lieberman’s rise to Foreign Minister and its impact on American Jews’ relationships to Israel. The question cited a poll released by J Street¹⁸² finding that 40% of American Jews under the age of 30, and 30% of Jews overall, felt “more distanced from Israel” with Lieberman’s promotion to foreign minister. Asked to respond to these predictions, Tor replied

Lieberman is not a fascist racist. He is an Israeli politician of the Russian flavor. He speaks, campaigns, and has a website of a flavor that happens in Russia today. He’s not only threatening the Arab sector but also Haredim [the Ultra Orthodox]...He also supports a Palestinian state...Two years down the line, we might have a united Palestinian leadership and be deep in negotiations. Can you imagine we have to evacuate Ariel,¹⁸³ a city of 10,000

¹⁸¹ Eli’s language is also politically revealing. By saying “PMO” rather than “the prime minister’s office,” Eli uses an acronym that serves as a kind of gatekeeper, suggesting the difference between those in the know (who understand the acronym) and those outsiders. The use of specialized language with reference to government offices evokes a kind of closeness to political authority (Cohn 1987). While Lieberman’s politics may be outside the communal norm of opposing explicit racism, his political position might supercede that value. While the dominant American Jewish organizations have confronted the Israeli government over the government’s orientation toward non-Orthodox Judaism, taking a position against the Israeli government over their orientation towards Palestinians may seem too much a threat to the organizations’ value of transnational Jewish unity.

¹⁸² <http://jstreet.org/blog/post/j-street-releases-new-poll-american-jewish-community> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

¹⁸³ A Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

people, or Ma'ale Adumim,¹⁸⁴ a city of 30,000, and people say, why should we keep the southern Galilee,¹⁸⁵ with non-loyal citizens?

In this answer, Tor offers several routes which minimize the ethno-racial nature of Lieberman's threat to Palestinian citizens of Israel. He normalizes Lieberman by suggesting his politics are similar to those of other politicians in Russia and reduces the threat to Palestinian citizens by suggesting they are not Lieberman's only target. In mentioning Lieberman's spoken support for a Palestinian state, Tor suggests that Lieberman recognizes the Palestinian national cause. Yet in the last line of his reply, Tor restates the proposal to deprive a disfavored minority population of their citizenship, which is a form of "transfer" – the exact policy that multiple JCRC and Federation informants named as a violation of the Federation Guidelines.

Consuls General garner American support for Israel, including (but not limited to) mobilizing American Jewish advocacy for Israel. Tor repeatedly told the gathered crowd that they could help Israel in many ways, including by joining in public relations ("hasbara") efforts. He lauded the work of local groups like BluestarPR, whose posters showing positive images of Israeli society decorated the room that night, and asked the crowd to join in existing efforts or come up with their own ideas for how to help Israel. His response to the question on Lieberman was diplomatic and strategic.

It was also an answer very different from what he said to me semi-privately about Lieberman. Earlier that evening, the Federation staffer in charge of the program introduced me to Tor. I explained that I am a graduate student conducting ethnographic research on American Jews' relationships to Israel and that I would be taking notes while he spoke. During the event, Tor received a number of questions concerning Israeli public relations, and the question on Lieberman and the J Street poll was mine. After he finished speaking and as he was leaving the room, Tor recognized me and observed that I was the researcher and the person who had asked about Lieberman. As Tor spoke to me in English, I responded in Hebrew. Tor immediately switched to Hebrew and asked who I was; I told him I was a doctoral student ("*doktorantit*"). Unprovoked, Tor began speaking about Lieberman in Hebrew, saying "*I don't know what we'll do with it. I don't know why Netanyahu is doing it or why Lieberman is taking that position on himself. It'll be a disaster.*"¹⁸⁶

In English, Tor prepared the crowd to advocate for Israel appropriately through minimizing Lieberman's extremism and normalizing his plan to transfer Palestinian citizens out of the state. In Hebrew, when he thought he was dealing with a fellow citizen¹⁸⁷ whose connection to Israel was already ensured, Tor was able to drop the mask of protection for Lieberman. His Hebrew answer reveals his belief that Lieberman's political orientation is too extreme for the political position he achieved, and his tenure as head of the foreign ministry "*will be a disaster*" for diplomacy.

¹⁸⁴ A Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

¹⁸⁵ A region inside of Israel heavily populated by Palestinian citizens of Israel.

¹⁸⁶ My translation.

¹⁸⁷ Tor made it clear that he thought I was Israeli when I met him again at another community event a few months later and we spoke in Hebrew. He recognized me immediately, said he had been thinking about my question and told me that "only Israelis" are interested in questions about Lieberman. When I told him that I am not Israeli and offered an apology if I had given him a false impression, he told me he had just given me the biggest compliment in the world. I include this exchange because it reveals the operation of the hierarchy by which the state of Israel and Israeliness are superior to American Jewish life (similar to the discussion of Israeli folk music, above).

Tor's selective responses highlight the difference between the information and analysis made available to American Jews versus (seeming) Israelis. He demonstrated that the formal ties between the Consulate and the Federation include a focus on cultivating American Jews' sense of connection to and responsibility for Israel. In the case of Israel's extreme nationalist foreign minister, the goal of cultivating American Jewish engagement shaped a response that minimized the minister's extremism and nationalism. Moreover, this response not only legitimized Lieberman as a political leader but also laundered an extremist political proposal, making it more acceptable for wider use.

C. Connection to the Land: Maps

The previous sections looked at how the central Jewish convening organizations in the Bay Area draws lines around the fantasy of a democratic Israel, marking the edges of communal engagement according to the imperative of protecting and promoting that fantasy. This next section explores another area in which communal boundaries are drawn around cultivating attachment to the symbol of Israel. Building relationships with an idealized symbol holds implications for the political realities of the modern state. This complication is especially visible in the way maps are used in Bay Area Jewish synagogues and classrooms.

It is unusual to enter a Jewish space in the Bay Area without encountering a map of Israel. They hang at Israel in the Gardens on the booth belonging to Brandeis Hillel Day School, the San Francisco Jewish day school serving a broad range of the community, and the booth of the Tzofim, the Israeli Scouts. They hang on the walls of the classrooms at the biggest reform synagogue in San Francisco. At the synagogue where a 5' tall laminated map hung on the wall, handheld maps made of clay – presumably by young students – decorated the rooms. They are contained within the logos of major Jewish organizations, such as the Jewish National Fund, whose brochures or tell-tale blue collection boxes are visible in many Jewish spaces.

Maps are a critical tool in the construction of a nation and its homeland. As “attempts to order reality,” maps offer the nationalist vision of what territory the homeland contains and, therefore, what territory the self-directed, self-realizing nation may claim (Shelef 2010: 25). Moreover, maps are a popular tool, imprinting the vision of the homeland into the collective imagination. Benedict Anderson calls this function the “map-as-logo,” wherein the “infinitely reproduce[d]” map – visible everywhere from “posters” and “letterheads” to textbook covers” and “hotel walls” – becomes “instantly recognizable, everywhere visible...penetrat[ing] deep into the popular imagination” (1991: 175). The Israeli map operates as a “map-as-logo,” visible in Jewish spaces throughout the Bay Area, offering instantaneous links between the viewer in a San Francisco synagogue and the national Jewish project in the state of Israel. The question logically presents itself: what is the map of Israel so ubiquitous in Jewish spaces?

Political maps of the state of Israel, such as those published by the CIA World Factbook¹⁸⁸ or National Geographic¹⁸⁹ delineate the 1949 armistice lines that show the state of Israel separate from the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and West Bank. Yet unlike those maps, most of the maps hanging on the walls in Jewish classrooms throughout the Bay Area do not feature those armistice lines. The vast majority of these maps do not show the political borders of the country as recognized in

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

¹⁸⁹ <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/countries/israel-map/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

international treaty. Rather, these maps show the current expansionist view of Israel,¹⁹⁰ called “Greater Israel” or “whole land of Israel,” in which the country’s western border is the Mediterranean Sea, the northern border Lebanon and Syria, southern border the (Egyptian) Sinai Peninsula, and the eastern border is the Jordan River (on the east side of which is the Kingdom of Jordan). Only a small minority of the maps in Jewish spaces delineate the borders of the Gaza Strip or the West Bank. (Nor do the maps delineate the Golan Heights, which was captured by Israel in 1967 and annexed in 1981). That is, these maps represent the vision of the Greater Israel movement as the standard map of Israel.¹⁹¹

The expanded borders on display in these widely promulgated maps serves a nationalist function. First, the use of a map that shows a more biblically-inspired vision of the Land of Israel elides the difference between the ancient land of the biblical promise and the modern state. In so doing, it reiterates a link between the religious history and the current nationalist movement (Kimmerling 2001). Second, the map operates as a nationalist tool geared to cultivate attachment to the national symbol, rather than transmitting concrete information for navigation and knowledge-building.

Over the course of collecting dissertation data, I participated in educational workshops and conducted interviews with a number of the leading community (as opposed to academic) educators¹⁹² who oversee, design programs for, and teach about Israel in the Bay Area. No educator I met agreed with the use of these maps, yet not one resisted their use, either. Repeatedly, the educators explained that though the Greater Israel maps are “*problematic*” and “*contentious*,” they do not feel they are in a position to challenge their use.

One educator, who designs curriculum used in many young adult and adult settings, tries to avoid confronting the problem of the maps. I attended a class he taught, in which he used the Israeli Declaration of Independence as the basis of a lesson offered in a classroom with many Greater Israel maps on the wall. In our extensive post-class conversation, the educator told me that because maps are controversial, he prefers to teach without referring to a map at all. Yet teaching about Israel in a room full of maps without addressing their form is a kind of evasion or acquiescence. Such a choice projects agreement.

¹⁹⁰ In his 2010 book, Nadav Shelef argues “Israeli nationalisms – whose territory and membership appear to be written in stone, the first biblically defined and the second ethnically circumscribed – experienced analogous transformations.” In his exploration of the evolution of the homeland maps according to three different forms of Israeli nationalism (Labor Zionism, Revisionist Zionism, and Religious Zionism), Shelef illustrates evolving visions for homeland and imagined community. Each of the three Israeli nationalisms originally put forth maps envisioning a homeland that contained present day Israel, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, and parts of Lebanon (and, for Religious Zionism, including Syria and parts of Iraq and Turkey). As of 2005, the Labor Zionist movement puts forth a map of Israel according to the 1949 armistice boundaries (thereby excluding the West Bank, Gaza, and Golan Heights). The other two Zionisms promote what is called the “whole land of Israel,” which includes Israel within the armistice lines along with the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights. (2010: 5).

¹⁹¹ These maps without the West Bank and Gaza are also ubiquitous as tourist maps. One informant told me about an organized trip to Israel that his daughter took, on which the tour company gave her the same map without West Bank and Gaza. I also received the same map from a major Israeli car rental company (Eldan) when I rented a car in Tel Aviv in 2011.

¹⁹² These include professionals at the Bureau of Jewish Education (a Federation-affiliated agency now called Jewish Learning Works) and the San Francisco Federation’s Israel Center.

Similarly, another leading educator spoke of an extensive educational project he co-created with a private foundation that invests millions of dollars into Israel education for American Jews, describing the multi-year effort that brought together educators from Jewish schools across the Bay Area (including reform, conservative, orthodox and pluralist schools) and included a trip to Israel for more than 70 educators. This educator, Joel, believes that the maps in use are “*a problem*” because they “*reinforce this sense*” that “[*the land is*] *all ours.*” Young people, he said, “*have no clue that this isn’t all ours, or even that it’s disputed.*” With this statement, Joel articulates his view that the map perpetuates a sense of ownership over the land, with American Jews included among the constituency represented by the image of Greater Israel. This sense of ownership is problematic, he explains, because there are competing claims to the land: either it does not all belong to Jews or, at the least, is “*disputed.*”

Despite voicing his objections to the maps in an interview, Joel did not ensure that the comprehensive Israel education training program he co-created would use an accurate political map of Israel. “*I have to pick my battles,*” he explained; “*We can’t go in there and say, you have to do it this way.*” In this dynamic, presenting an accurate map is seen as a battle, because the fantasy-aspirational-extremist political map is the status quo. Arguing for the use of the accurate map is seen as provocative and imposing (“*you have to do it this way*”). Here, the expansionist view becomes the norm, and challenging that norm is read as causing problems or starting a “battle.” Joel describes himself as a supporter of the establishment of a Palestinian state on the currently occupied West Bank. Yet his choice to avoid contention or struggle perpetuates the continued use of the Greater Israel maps. The educational tools prepare students to see the biblical Land of Israel as the modern day state of Israel and to absorb the political agenda of the Greater Israel (settler) movement as their own (Rudow 2012). As the Israeli government pursues ongoing expansion of occupation infrastructure and Jewish settlements, these Greater Israel maps connect American Jews with this political vision.

By using the Greater Israel map and naming the complete, undifferentiated land of Israel as the state of Israel, these ubiquitous maps naturalize the Greater Israel vision. They remove the aspirational aspect from the Greater Israel agenda by presenting that vision as the reality. One effect this choice has is a cultivated ignorance around Israeli geography. Over the course of the ethnography, I encountered a teacher at one of the local Jewish day schools, who remarked on the absence of political boundaries in the maps at her school in this way, saying

The maps we teach the kids about Israel include all of it – the West Bank and Gaza, too. And beyond anything political, my question is, how are we preparing them to be citizens of the world? We could say that we want the West Bank and Gaza to be part of Israel and this is how we want to get there, but that’s not what we’re showing them.¹⁹³

In other words, the teacher said, the map of the Greater Land of Israel could be a legitimate educational tool if the school intended to use them to teach students about the aspirational view of Israel, in which “*we want the West Bank and Gaza to be part of Israel.*” This teacher echoes Joel’s lament that students who use these maps are left with “*no clue...that it’s disputed [land].*”

¹⁹³ I asked this teacher whether she had inquired about the use of these maps at her school. After explaining that she was junior in her position and could not go against the “hierarchy” by asking, she remarked “you know even just to ask a question gets you called a heretic.” Her comment reiterates the dynamic by which those who draw attention to contradictions within institutional approaches to Israel are marginalized or excluded, or believe that they will be.

As the educators make clear, in the case of these maps (at least), averting conflict takes priority. A consequence of this choice is the acquiescence to or active support of a right-wing political vision that erases Palestinian and other claims to this territory. For those young Jews educated within Jewish institutions, this choice interferes with the development of their capacity to comprehend both geography and contemporary political dynamics. Though the educators disagreed with these maps on political and educational grounds, their choice to avoid contesting the maps further reaffirms that the status quo in Bay Area Jewish institutions is support for the policies and vision of an expansionist Israel.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the dominant organizations and the leading educators who work with them cultivate American Jewish attachment to the fantasy of Israel, the imagined state that represents the fulfillment of ancient longings and contemporary political sensibilities. When faced with certain realities of Israeli policy, such as settlement expansion in the West Bank, they make choices to avoid direct confrontation over their participation in that system. In so doing, the status quo of American Jewish institutional support for Israeli expansionist policies and nationalist narrative continues unimpeded.

For participants in American Jewish life, the contradictions between wanting to support the state of Israel and finding themselves in support of the occupation can be confusing. One interviewee, Joshua, a keen observer of American Jewish life and a progressive known for supporting organizations working to end the Israeli occupation, described American Jews as experiencing “*cognitive dissonance*.” Cognitive dissonance refers to holding contradictory values or beliefs simultaneously. In this observer’s telling, American Jews want to be devoted to the state of Israel and are often troubled by certain Israeli policies, such as settlement construction. Indeed, the most recent survey of American Jews found that 44% believe that settlement growth hurts Israeli security, and 44% believe the Israeli government is insincere in its efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution with the Palestinians (Pew Research Center 2013.) Yet even though a large portion of American Jews is troubled by these policies, they participate in them, knowingly or unknowingly, through participating in mainstream Jewish life and contributing to the Jewish Federation.

CHAPTER 4

FEAR AND VULNERABILITY: THE NEED AND SOURCE FOR POWER

A few years ago, the Pacific Northwest Regional Director for AIPAC, Zack Bodner, spoke on an afternoon panel, open to the public, at the Jewish Community High School by the Bay, San Francisco's Jewish high school. Entitled "Zionism Now! Four leaders speak on the present and future of Zionism," the panel featured leaders of Israel-defense organization (AIPAC, BluestarPR) along with two Zionist writers. Panelists' ages ranged from 20s to early 60s. The Jewish Federation system was well-represented: the moderator is on staff at the Jewish Federation in Oakland and the Jewish high school is a San Francisco Jewish Federation grantee. In front of a 50 person audience, panelists spoke on topics ranging from their personal relationships to Zionism to the role of youth in today's Zionism. During the Q&A, a middle aged man with a gray beard stood up and said

We are facing a historical moment in which the whole people are endangered. It's a genocidal anti-Israel. It's time to organize. There is cowardice among the organized community. We need marches, we need martial arts, we need preparation and self-defense. Martial arts. The marching spirit. We're facing a genocidal enemy. A second Holocaust is on the horizon!

One might read in the questioner's statement a reflection of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's repeated¹⁹⁴ proclamation that the danger Iran poses to Israel is equal to Hitler in 1938: that is, this is the moment just before the launch of genocidal plans. Contrary to the man's alarmist statement, Zack Bodner, the AIPAC representative, responded without emotion, confirming the threats by listing them while simultaneously emphasizing the significance and influence of Jewish political power. Bodner said

Yea, I appreciate the question. Iran, denying the Holocaust, planning to wipe Israel off the map, and their proxies are on the border in the form of Hezbollah and Hamas. But there is a silver lining. This president takes meetings... There's a brand new Congress that just voted 100% to express solidarity with Israel.

Bodner told a story about President Franklin Roosevelt walking out the back door to avoid a meeting with representatives of Jewish organizations during World War II. Drawing a contrast between Jewish political ineffectiveness during the Holocaust and Jewish political influence now, Bodner highlighted the seed of past trauma and failure in the growth of Jewish political efficacy. While not matching the bearded man's alarmism, Bodner affirmed his message of grave danger facing the Jewish people. Where the man said "*a genocidal enemy*" and a "*second Holocaust*," Bodner named the threat specifically. The prime minister of Israel, the representative from AIPAC and this Bay Area Jew all articulated the threat posed by "*genocidal*" Iran with its "*plans to wipe Israel off the map*" directly or through its "*proxies*" on Israel's northern and southern borders. In the face of this threat, Bodner posited the United States as Israel's protector and American Jews facilitating that protection through ensuring the U.S. – Israel political relationship.

¹⁹⁴ Repeated on many occasions, but first spoken at speech to the annual gathering of Jewish organizations, hosted by the Jewish Federations of North America (then called United Jewish Communities), in 2006. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/netanyahu-it-s-1938-and-iran-is-germany-ahmadinejad-is-preparing-another-holocaust-1.205137> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

The man in the audience responded to Bodner, saying

You're talking about grassstops. What about grass bottoms? We have Jewish Voice for [Peace] here, the Fed[eration] has 500-600 million in coffers, what about counter demonstrations, saying 'you're not marching down the street'? The swastika has become a legitimate symbol now!

This exchange represents two perspectives on Jewish power and powerlessness. Convinced that forces are arrayed against Jews in Israel and in the U.S., the audience member accused the dominant Jewish organizations of not sufficiently defending the Jewish community. In addition, he names a local Jewish organization, Jewish Voice for Peace, as an ally of the "genocidal enemy," suggesting that the organized Jewish community (and the wealthy Federation) needs to organize against threats both external and internal. His perspective is an extreme version of what several informants titled the "annihilationist" view. The "annihilationist" view identifies threats against Jews by their most extreme.

There was another view present on the panel that day. Ariel Be'ery, a 20-something Israeli American Zionist activist and self-described leftist who publishes a Zionist magazine, said

Israel is strong, and the Israeli army is strong. Israel is standing on its own. The question is, how can we make something better of ourselves. There's this back and forth, of feeling like victims or feeling guilty of being oppressors; no one is going to be annihilating us, there's no second Holocaust coming, sorry. We have to get over the fear and do more with what we have. We have a whole world to be a part of.

Ariel contradicted both the AIPAC representative and the audience member by asserting "*there's no second Holocaust?*" and claimed that the dominant question Zionists must face is "*how can we make something better of ourselves.*" That is, how can those who love Israel "*do more with what we have.*" While Ariel spoke, the bearded man in the audience interrupted to yell "*you're condescending,*" responding to this contrary view with an attempt to undermine the speaker. It is significant that Ariel is in his twenties; he represents a younger view of Israel and Jewish life, one that does not necessarily accept on faith the fearful views of Israel and Jewish life. This exchange represents a shifting dynamic apparent in American Jewish life, in which many younger people do not perform the fearfulness that older people expect of them. Many older Jews and Jewish organizations see this shifting dynamic as a threat to Jews and Israel in and of itself.

This chapter takes up these themes of Jewish fear and Jewish empowerment, or the "dualism of power and powerlessness" that American Jews experience in the United States, where they are "close to the corridors of power, but...also a minority" and in relationship to Israel, which "is seen as both a small, threatened state standing for centuries of Jewish vulnerability and, conversely, as a regional military and economic power" (Biale, Galchinsky, and Heschel 1998: 5). This chapter looks at Jewish political empowerment and communal organizing as a response to fears of disappearance, exploring the content of Jewish fear from both external and internal threats. After this discussion, the second section looks at the ways in which these discourses of fear serve as a source of Jewish power. When facing perceived external threats, the dominant Jewish organizations deploy the language of Jewish vulnerability as a political tool. This section also addresses the ways in which Jewish fear serves as a measure of Jewish unity, such that the expression of fear is taken as a sign of belonging. Those Jews who do not display sufficient expressions of Jewish fear face sanction.

As a whole, this chapter seeks to untangle and examine the threads tying Jewish fear and vulnerability to the expressions of Jewish power that act in the name of defending and protecting the Jewish community and Israel. In so doing, this chapter discusses different valences of collective fears, looking at the ways in which fear transmits and constructs collective memory and identity; the ways in which fear is a political tool; and the ways in which fear is used, and resisted, as a focal point in the construction of Jewish identity.

I. On Jewish Fear

The dominant paradigm of Jewish vulnerability is of a post World War II transition from powerlessness to empowerment. Before and during World War II, Jews had no state of their own to which to escape en masse, and the “popular consensus” in the United States is that the United States failed to act when it could have, through immigration reform or military intervention, to save Jews (Novick 1999: 47-8). The establishment of the state of Israel and its subsequent military victories, along with the growth and organization of American Jewish political influence, represent post-war Jewish empowerment (Woocher 1986; Goldberg 1996; Urofsky 1986; Sasson 2014). These dual currents of power and vulnerability are retold and reinforced through Jewish practices and cultural rituals.

Anxieties over disappearance – whether through annihilation or by fading away – are at the core of collective Jewish identity. Starting in the 1970s (after the eruption of Israel fervor after the 1967 war), surveys on American Jews have regularly asked some variation of the question “If Israel were to disappear I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest personal tragedies of my life” (Sasson 2014: 28). This question serves as a measurement of attachment to Israel, affirming the notion of a shared fate between Jews and Israel, the assumption of a personal nature of collective identity, and the basic notion and expectation of Israel’s precariousness. The vast majority of American Jews, over long periods of measurement, agree with the statement (Ibid); the most recent poll of Bay Area Jews, based on readers of the Bay Area Jewish newspaper, found that 86% agree (24% just plain agree and 62% strongly agree) (Cohen 2010). The statement itself reflects, and simultaneously constructs, the dominant paradigm of deep personal attachment to a gravely vulnerable state as a characteristic of American Jewish identity. These concepts – American Jewish attachment and Israeli vulnerability – have been historical twins.

The survey questions hypothesizing Israel’s disappearance refer to the country’s “existential threats” which represent the perception of ongoing dangers facing the country. These dangers include external military threats (historically from Arab neighbors and currently from Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah) as well as the articulation of a threat in the form of Palestinian population increase.¹⁹⁵ As the survey questions indicate, Israel’s fate is presumed to affect Jews everywhere. As Israel has been “perceived as the bulwark of Jewish survival in the second half of the twentieth century” (Cohen and Eisen 2000: 143), threats to Israel are conventionally understood as threats to Jews everywhere. American Jews’ relationships to Israel are especially valuable to the state, as American Jews have long played the “key role in ensuring that the state [of Israel] had the wherewithal to perform that function [of ensuring Jewish survival]” (ibid).

¹⁹⁵ The state of Israel frames population growth among its Palestinian citizens as a “demographic threat” to the state and has constructed a range of laws and policies to protect and promote a majority Jewish citizenship (Kanaaneh 2002: 28-56). A related issue that the Israeli state identifies as a threat is the Palestinian insistence on the right to return to their homes inside of Israel.

A. Fear and Identity

The notion that Jewish survival is in question is a central theme in Jewish collective identity. It draws from the “lachrymose theory” (Baron 1928), which holds that Jewish history is the story of thousands of years of oppression and exclusion. Historian Salo Baron effectively challenged this historical orientation in his landmark 1928 essay. Yet it remains alive in the discursive practices that constitute American Jewish identity.

As collective memory is central to the ongoing construction of collective identity (Olick 1999), the memory of past persecution shapes the understanding of present emancipation. Some scholars focus on the Holocaust as the dominant basis of American Jewish identity (Wolf 2002, Biale 1986), while others scholars see American Jewish civil religion in American Jews support for and celebration of Israel, focusing on Israel as the symbol of Jewish rebirth after the Holocaust (Cohen and Eisen 2000, Woocher 1986). Both of these versions of American Jewish civil religion reinscribe the notion of a threatening world that is dangerous to Jews *qua* Jews. In the case of Jewish identity, the themes of vulnerability, threat and new routes for exerting control over Jewish fate form the central themes of collective memory and identity.

The state of Israel represents the idea of collective control over Jewish fate, a concept developed by Zionists in response to Jewish exclusion and persecution in pre-Holocaust Europe and affirmed and enhanced by the state following the Nazi genocide (Woocher 1986; Urofsky 1986). As such, whether American Jewish collective identity is more focused on Israel or the Holocaust, the Holocaust has been central to American Jews’ collective understanding of what it means to be Jewish (Pew Research Center 2013). In his discussion of Jewish identity, historian David Biale (1986) argues that this focus results in “the perpetuation of a nation of victimhood” which creates “a curious paradox, given that Jews today constitute a relatively strong and powerful ethnic group in the United States” (192). I argue that this paradox of amassing power is central to American Jewish collective identity, in which victimhood and vulnerability feed the maintenance of communities of strength (both in Israel and in the United States). The strength of these two collectives (economic, political and cultural in the United States; economic, political, militarily and culturally in Israel) always refers back to and reaffirms the continuity of Jewish vulnerability, such that the fact of strength, in being a bulwark of Jewish security, is a reminder of Jewish vulnerability.

During wars and other perceived times of crisis, American Jews have historically rallied in support of Israel (Rosenthal 2001; Liebman and Cohen 1990). Defending Israel against its identified external threats has become part and parcel of the agendas of the dominant American Jewish organizations. By and large, the dominant Jewish organizations identify two main sources of threat to Israel: the “existential threats” facing the state (in the form of external militaries and militias as well as Palestinian population growth) and the potential loss of support for Israel in the United States (Sasson 2014). Just as Israelis defend themselves through military means, American Jewish organizations fight for Israel on the battleground of public opinion. While a small number of American Jews volunteer for the Israeli military (and are largely lauded for it, as demonstrated by the affirmative articles about them in local newspapers), American Jews primarily defend Israel through political and public relations efforts.

American Jews have developed a number of “Israel defense” organizations (Goldberg 1996) that are dedicated to advocating for Israel in many arenas, such as with the U.S. government (AIPAC, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations) or on college campuses (StandWithUs) and the media (CAMERA). The community-building organizations are also focused on defending

and advocating for Israel. For instance, the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council supports and encourages Bay Area Jews to speak out for Israel through multiple channels, such as by “becom[ing] an Israel Ambassador in your community” (“JCRC will provide you with talking points about Israel”), joining the JCRC’s “Rapid Response Team” to “monitor” and “respond” to media for “anti-Israel bias.”¹⁹⁶ JCRC encourages Bay Area Jews to “find out what” their children “are learning” in school; “what textbooks are they using? What guest speakers and films are coming to their classrooms?” The JCRC will “intercede with administration and teachers,” “provide support and coaching to parents,” and prepare young people for “handling anti-Israel and anti-Semitic sentiments” on college campuses.¹⁹⁷ In addition, Jewish identity-building programs, such as Birthright (the largest, most ambitious Jewish identity-building program) cultivate new generations of Israel supporters who may be mobilized for advocacy on behalf of the state (Kelner 2010: 43).

Holocaust in the background

While working to protect or defend Jews from vulnerability (including defending Israel) tops the agendas of Jewish advocacy organizations (like AIPAC, the AJC, JCPA), the sophistication and breadth of this advocacy represents Jewish power and achievement in the United States (Goldberg 1996). One characteristic of this advocacy is that it often invokes the history of Jewish persecution, either implicitly or explicitly. For instance, American Jewish political investment in strengthening democratic institutions and civil rights includes within it a focus on protecting the rights of minorities, which achieves protection for American Jews while strengthening a system of protected rights for other minority groups (Liebman and Cohen 1990: 102-105, 109-110). This connection is clear in the list the JCRC’s executive director provided when listing the few “issues on which there really is no disagreement” among the San Francisco JCRC’s constituency: “Israel, hate violence, anti-semitism.” This is an example of the centrality of bigotry, and protection from it, both specifically for Jews and for other minority or marginalized groups.

Rabbi Doug Kahn, the Executive Director of the San Francisco JCRC, tells a story about how the Jewish Community Relations Councils, focused on representing the Jewish communities of certain areas with one public voice, came to be. In his narrative,

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, one of the lessons derived from the American Jewish community in terms of its self critique of what went fatally wrong in terms of the American Jewish response to the Holocaust, is that whatever American Jewish organizations did, they did in a very disorganized way, often working at cross-purposes with each other. And whatever political influence or strength could have been mustered was largely diluted by that ineffectual response. And the decision to create JCRCs, and ours was one of the first twelve in the country and now there are one hundred twenty-four, was part of the result of the determination that we should literally *never again* be in a situation where we can’t try to develop consensus on the key issues of vital importance to our community and then represent those views through an education and advocacy program. I take very seriously our mandate in terms of understanding it in terms of the lessons of what went fatally wrong in terms of the American Jewish response during the Holocaust.

In this narrative, American Jews failed the Jews of Europe by ineffectively organizing their political strength. The narrative reaffirms a view of the United States as the superpower capable of stopping

¹⁹⁶ http://jcrc.org/israel_takeaction_yourhelp.htm (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

the Nazis as well as strongly influenced by special interest lobbying that can impact political decisions. It also explicitly juxtaposes contemporary Jewish political efficacy against a Holocaust in which six million Jews were murdered; whereas the term “never again” commonly refers to the Nazi genocide, here Rabbi Kahn uses it to refer to American Jews’ level of political (dis)organization. In this narrative, the inability to prevent the Nazi Holocaust serves as the background against which Jewish communities organize their public face, and the main lesson Rabbi Kahn (and, presumably, JCRCs across the country) derive from it is the critical need to “*develop consensus on the key issues of vital importance to our community.*” Developing and representing consensus are the antidotes to inefficacy during the Holocaust. In a public presentation on the JCRC’s work, Rabbi Kahn paraphrased Rabbi Irving Greenberg, a preeminent American Modern Orthodox rabbi and educator, as saying that “Jewish power may be difficult morally, but the lack of Jewish power is entirely immoral.” As Rabbi Greenberg put it,¹⁹⁸

Power corrupts. But there is no other morally tolerable choice. The alternative is death. This is the lesson that the Jewish people learned from the Holocaust.

Expressions of Jewish power reflect not the “lesson” that Jews must have power but rather the use of the perception of ongoing Jewish vulnerability as a source for that power. To Rabbi Kahn, a narrative about a lack of community consensus hearkens back to a genocide unanswered, insufficiently opposed. In this way, dissent and Jewish criticism of dominant organizations can weaken the community organizations, leaving Jews unable to respond to devastating threats.

B. Named External Threats

American Jews have traditionally rallied around Israel during wartime (Waxman 2010; Rosenfeld 2001), and the dominant organizations speak of their commitment to working for Israel’s “security.” Through the early 1990s, the dominant American Jewish organizations were united in both their “consensus-oriented political advocacy” and “deference to Israeli political authorities in...policies on war and peace” (Sasson 2014: 4). Though the last twenty years have seen that consensus fracture around disagreements over negotiations with Palestinians (Sasson 2014), the dominant public Jewish voices remain united in their advocacy for American commitment to Israel’s security. The United States government makes very clear pronouncements regarding its commitment to Israel’s security, such as this one by Vice President Joseph Biden at the 2010 Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly:

The ties between our countries are literally, literally unbreakable...when it comes to Israel’s security, there can be virtually no daylight, no daylight between the United States and Israel, under any circumstances.¹⁹⁹

He received wide applause for that statement, and for his continuing remarks about the United States’ commitment to ensuring that Iran does not develop nuclear weapons. American Jewish organizations have echoed this position. The community organizations, including the San Francisco JCRC²⁰⁰ and the national umbrella organization over JCRCs, the Jewish Council on Public Affairs,

¹⁹⁸ “The Ethics of Jewish Power,” (<http://rabbiirvinggreenberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/The-Ethics-of-Jewish-Powerb.pdf>) (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/11/12/remarks-vice-president-jewish-federation-north-american-general-assembly> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁰⁰ http://jcrc.org/downloads/consensusstatements/5.8.07_JCRC_CS_Weapons.pdf (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

wrote policy statements (in 2007) calling for the prevention of a nuclear-armed Iran and the mobilization of efforts by broad coalitions to “utilize all diplomatic and economic measures necessary” to achieve that goal.²⁰¹ The advocacy takes place on diplomatic levels and involves representatives of the Israeli foreign ministry, such as the Consul General, who explained his job to a group of young Jews as “primarily political,” and “here in California, primarily to get the implementation of the divest Iran law.”²⁰² The mobilization is also community-focused. The San Francisco JCRC sends out email updates about developments in the diplomatic and policy sphere regarding Iran.²⁰³ AIPAC, the lobbying organization, is focused on Iran, and conducts outreach with Jews in many ways, including at large communal gatherings like Israel in the Gardens. At one Israel in the Gardens I attended, the AIPAC volunteer with whom I spoke explained the organization as “Israel’s security lobby,” making sure “the U.S. government stays committed to Israel’s security.” One manner in which AIPAC raised awareness of the threat from Iran was a poster entitled “Iranian missile threat” showing a map with Iran in the center and a red ring around it showing the reach of its missiles, from the eastern Mediterranean (covering Israel) to Russia to Somalia. The poster hung at the AIPAC booth just under a hand-made poster announcing “Face Painting for Kids.” The juxtaposition of the family-attracting poster and the poster on the Iranian threat illustrate the integration of the sense of Iranian danger and Israeli vulnerability into the pleasures and celebrations of a community festival.

The Newest Threat: “Delegitimization”

At the 2010 Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly, Vice President Biden also spoke about another threat facing Israel. He said,

There’s a worldwide campaign going on in some quarters to de-legitimize Israel. We’ve seen it before we continue to see it, attempts to single out Israel for criticism or deny it the right to self-defense like all other nations have ... the Jewish Federations’ recent initiative to counter de-legitimization attempts through Israel Action Network is so important and so appreciated by the President and me.

The “de-legitimization” to which Vice President Biden referred is what the Israeli government, together with leading American Jewish institutions, sees as a growing, concerted effort to undermine the state through means other than military. The efforts to “delegitimize” are a “negation of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state or of the right of the Jewish people to self determination,”²⁰⁴ according to one of the main intellectual bodies behind the fight against it. What distinguishes the idea of “delegitimization” is the idea that it is a total threat against Israel. As the San Francisco JCRC spokesperson put it on a panel at the Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly:

This is not about boycott. It’s about destroying Israel, bringing Israel down. At its core. Supporters are pawns in that game... This is a movement that is anti-peace, anti-

²⁰¹ <http://www.jewishpublicaffairs.org/www.e-guana.net/organizations/org/Iran-final.pdf>

²⁰² This law, passed in 2010, limits contracts public entities in the state of California may enter into with companies that have a specified amount of business in the Iranian energy or financial sector. <http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/pd/poliproc/Iran%20Contracting%20Act%20List.pdf>

²⁰³ Such as on November 26, 2013 (email update with analysis); October 7, 2010 (public event); and June 10, 2010 (action alert).

²⁰⁴ Reut Institute. Building a Political Firewall Against Israel’s Delegitimization: Conceptual Framework. March 2010. <http://reut-institute.org/data/uploads/PDFVer/20100310%20Delegitimacy%20Eng.pdf>, page 11. (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

dialogue...These are extremists. The movement is full of hate, full of perpetuating the conflict. It's not going to bring peace.

As one of the senior Israeli Foreign Ministry representatives told the crowd at the 2010 General Assembly, delegitimization is

Threatening not only Israeli interests but Jewish interests. It's an assault on central elements of Jewish identity in the modern world. Israel is a central part of Jewish identity...if Israel is an illegitimate state, a moral albatross, then support for Israel is also illegitimate.

A representative of the Jewish Federation of Chicago put it this way, "*When Israel is delegitimize, so are we. It is our historic connection to the land.*"

To fight delegitimization, the Jewish Federations of North America and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (the national umbrella organization for the Jewish Community Relations Councils) created a joint initiative called the Israel Action Network. Launched at the 2010 JFNA General Assembly, this multi-million dollar project focuses on "educat[ing], organiz[ing] and mobiliz[ing] the organized North American Jewish community to counter these [delegitimization] assaults." As in other instances, the dominant Jewish organizations cooperate and collaborate in order to meet this newly identified threat with a united front.

C. Internal Threats: Young People

This section looks at the communal framing through which young Jews pose an internal threat to Jewish community and to support for Israel. This threat is read in their perceived distance from the Jewish community's commitment to Israel either through being less affiliated with Jewish institutions than their elders or through marrying non-Jews. In the course of conducting field research, I observed ongoing lamenting over young people's perceived lack of commitment to Israel, which was attributed to their misapprehension of the state's strength. The traditional view, which older people often offered to young people, holds that Israel is vulnerable and Jews must defend it. Therefore, young people who distance themselves from the state, or who criticize it, do not understand the state's vulnerability. Throughout the course of collecting field data, I observed countless instances of young people being reprimanded for not understanding Israel's true precarious status. These reprimands illustrate the perceived utility of threat in building Jewish attachment to the state.

Another consistent theme with regard to young people is the threat of intermarriage, a widely established trend in American Jewish life (Berman 2010; Saxe, Phillips, Sasson et al 2010). Though many Jewish institutions formally aim to welcome intermarried families, there is an undercurrent of stigmatization towards intermarriage as another act that underappreciates the dangers facing Jews. In addition, the largest Jewish identity building projects for young people (Birthright and the follow-up program, Masa), tie appropriate relationships with Israel and in-marriage together as key, interrelated factors in Jewish identity (Saxe, Phillips, Sasson et al 2010).

Young People: Distanced?

One of the livelier debates among social scientists studying American Jews focuses on young adult attachment to Israel and Jewish institutions. A 2007 study based on a national survey claimed that younger Jews are more distanced from Israel than older Jews, attributing this phenomenon largely to the effects of Jewish out-marriage and to young Jews not having the same memories of Jews and

Israel in danger and, consequently, not seeing Israel in the same light (Cohen and Kelman 2010: 2-3). This study became extremely influential, though it is highly contested. While additional research confirms that younger Jews exhibit less attachment to Israel, those lower numbers have held steady for the last two decades (Sasson 2014: 139), suggesting a different trend than the one Cohen and Kelman identified. Theodore Sasson, a sociologist whose research is central to countering the “distancing” hypothesis, argues that the research on Jewish attachment to Israel does not show “decreasing attachment across the generations,” as Cohen and Kelman posit, but rather “increasing attachment over the life course” (Ibid: 7). One possible explanation for the trend of increased attachment with age is that “maturing Jews” become more “embedded in Jewish communal life” (Ibid: 140). This argument demonstrates the assumed effect that Jewish community organizations can have in cultivating and socializing Jews into particular relationships with the state of Israel.

The most recently published survey research on American Jews, by the Pew Research Center, reflects the findings of both Sasson and Cohen and Kelman. Table 1, below, shows the most recent survey research measuring American Jewish attachment to Israel. Overall, 69% of American Jews say they are emotionally attached to Israel, with 30% claiming to be “very attached” and 39% “somewhat attached.”²⁰⁵ Yet a generational difference exists. While 79% of Jews aged 65 and older and 75% of Jews aged 50-64 report attachment to Israel, only 60% of Jews aged 18-29, and 61% of Jews aged 30-49, report attachment to Israel. Just as significantly, the number of Jews in their 20s, 30s and 40s who report being “not very attached” or “not at all attached” to Israel is nearly double the number of Jews aged 65 and older who see themselves as not very or not at all attached to Israel.

Table 1: American Jewish Attachment to Israel, Pew Research Center data, 2013

	Very attached to Israel	Somewhat attached	Not very attached	Not at all attached
18-29 years old	25	35	27	11
30-49 years old	25	36	29	10
50-64 years old	32	42	18	7
65 and older	38	41	14	7

Another question in the Pew survey aims to offer nuance in the measurement of Israel’s role in American Jewish identity. This question asks whether “caring about Israel” is an “essential part of being Jewish,” important but not essential,” or “not important” to being Jewish. Generational differences were again evident in this measurement, as Table 2 shows:

²⁰⁵ Pew Research Center. “A Portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews.” October 2013. All statistics in this paragraph were published in this Pew Center report.

Table 2: Caring for Israel an Essential Part of Being Jewish, Pew Research Center data, 2013

	Caring for Israel is essential to being Jewish	Important but not essential	Not important
18-29 years old	32%	49%	19%
30-49 years old	38%	48%	14%
50-64 years old	47%	43%	10%
65 and older	53%	39%	7%

As this table shows, the vast majority of Jews report that caring about Israel is important or essential to what it means to them to be Jewish. Yet the degree to which this care is important – where it is “essential” rather than not essential – is significantly higher among Jews aged 50 and older. Equally as telling are the reported figures of those Jews for whom caring about Israel is *not* important to their Jewish identity; Jews under 50, and especially Jews under 30, report far higher percentages of this kind of dis-attachment from Israel and from the traditional American Jewish responsibility to care for the state.

Reflecting the unknown in their findings, Pew says

It is hard to know whether these age differences suggest that U.S. Jews’ attachment to Israel will weaken over time. If younger Jews retain their lower levels of attachment to Israel, then overall attachment to Israel may weaken over time. Alternatively, if Jews become more attached to Israel as they get older, then attachment to Israel overall could hold steady or even grow in strength.

Despite the inconclusive nature of the research, the Cohen-Kelman hypothesis that young Jews are more distanced from Israel is the one that has taken hold in the popular imagination, in addition to generating substantial academic and media interest (Sasson 2014: 8). The popularity of the distancing hypothesis is affirmed in the Jewish institutional focus on young adults, evident in the millions of philanthropic dollars dedicated to cultivating Jewish identity among young adults (Sasson 2014). The distancing hypothesis is also commonly shared in collective Jewish spaces, used as a form of alarm about the state of American Jewish culture. While collecting data for this dissertation, I heard the distancing hypothesis cited by name many times. For instance, the regional director of AIPAC cited it at a speaking event, noting

Ari Kelman and Steven M. Cohen’s *Beyond Distancing* study asks this question: ‘If Israel was destroyed today, would it be a personal tragedy?’ More than half of those under 30 said “no.” It’s amazing.

“It’s amazing” – that is, it is alarming that Israel’s destruction would not be a personal tragedy to more than half of those surveyed under the age of thirty. (While nearly 80% of Jews over the age of 65 reported “Israel’s destruction would be a personal tragedy,” just under 50% of Jews under the age of 35 said the same thing. Cohen and Kelman, 2007: 9.) At another event, a JCRC spokesperson included data from Cohen and Kelman’s survey as a means of arguing the problematic trajectory of support for Israel, and several Jewish professionals referred to it in interviews.

“No one younger than I am remembers”

A San Francisco rabbi, not yet 40 himself, organized a synagogue course on Israel and the American Jewish community and invited Ari Kelman to address the class while suggesting “Beyond Distancing” as course reading. The regular course participants, about fifteen people in all, represented an age range of thirty to eighty. While many of the sites I observed were multi-generational, the synagogue course, by virtue of meeting once a week for nine weeks, offered the opportunity to observe cross-generational interactions in the most sustained way. The first guest speaker on the opening night introduced the “*fact*” that “*young Jews are moving further and further from Israel,*” and the organizing rabbi repeatedly referred to his “*loneliness in [his] generation*” on account of his deep attachment to Israel. The idea of a generational divide in relationships with Israel came up in every session; older course participants lamented “*the problem with the young people,*” as one put it. One older woman in the synagogue course commented

My grandchildren ... They know they’re Jewish but they don’t feel the pull, the pull to Israel, like I feel. I remember reading [the news], and my grandchildren don’t. It’s like Jerusalem, I remember when I couldn’t go into parts of Jerusalem because I was Jewish.”

This woman suggests an implicit relationship between feeling a strong “*pull to Israel*” and her recollections of years ago, of following Israel through the news and visiting Jerusalem when the eastern part of the city, including the Old City and its Jewish holy site, were under Jordanian sovereignty. Her mention of the news reflects the assumption that news consumption offers insight into one’s level of attachment; surveys on Jewish attachment to Israel ask about the news about Israel informants’ consume, and young Jews have been found to consume less (Cohen and Kelman 2007).

The alarm of distanced young Jews is also an indictment of young Jews for misunderstanding the meaning and measure of what older generations take as the truth regarding Jewish vulnerability in Israel. The younger generation has “no memory of Arab armies amassed on Israel’s border,” as Peter Beinart²⁰⁶ put it in his groundbreaking *New York Review of Books* article about young American Jews’ changing relationships with Israel. Having “no memory” of those armies translates into a different relationship with Israel’s vulnerability and its power, Beinart claims. Cohen and Kelman claim that

members of the oldest generation of American Jews, born before World War II, may be highly attached to Israel in part because they can remember the Holocaust...[for] their children, the Baby Boomers, memories of the Six Day War and the ensuing period of pro-Israel mobilization have created strong feelings of attachment. Many members of these two

²⁰⁶ Beinart, Peter. 2010. “The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment.” *New York Review of Books*. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/jun/10/failure-american-jewish-establishment/?pagination=false>. Retrieved August 13, 2013.

generations see Israel as ... a society that has successfully withstood mortal threats from malevolent, hostile and fanatical enemies. But the same cannot be said for younger Jews. (2007: 2-3).

These more academic claims were borne out in ethnographic research; for instance, as this man put it one night in the San Francisco synagogue:

I'm 40 and people younger than I am don't have any memory of Israel being in danger...I remember the 1991 war when Israelis had to put on masks. No one younger than I am remembers that.

The theory operates such that younger Jews, by having no "*memory of Israel being in danger*," do not recognize its inherent vulnerability or their responsibility towards the state. Similarly, the assumption holds that young Jews' temporal distance from the Holocaust means that they also do not understand the depth of Jewish vulnerability in the world and the state of Israel's role in keeping Jews safe. On multiple occasions, I witnessed older Jews reprimand younger Jews for "forgetting their history." One exchange, also during the synagogue course, was particularly telling. On the night when the Consul General spoke to the group, a thirty-something year old man brought up the issue of gender-segregated busses in Israel.²⁰⁷ An older course participant spoke next, answering the younger man with anger, saying

"All you born post 1973, you don't know the state like we knew the state, where it was all about the state surviving, and you have all of this security, and you don't fear that you'll wake up when you're fifty and the state will have ceased to exist. So you can think about these issues [like gender segregation], which are really secondary issues."

The Consul General and the rabbi both concurred, saying, "*well said*." The younger man responded: "*I agree, I'm concerned about survival, and I think you should be covered at the Kotel and Mea Shearim.*"²⁰⁸

According to the older man, Israel's survival should be the first concern of any Jew of any generation, and any issues not directly connected to survival should take a backseat. He interprets the younger man's criticism of gender discrimination in the state as misplaced and indulgent and reflecting the skewed perspective of a generation that has not seen the state in danger. In this formulation, without having witnessed or experienced a vulnerable, endangered Israel, one does not have the authority by which to offer a critical word about Israeli behavior.

²⁰⁷ Since the late 1990s, a number of inter- and intra-city busses serving a majority ultra-Orthodox Jewish population have allowed or enforced gender segregation on the busses, requiring women to sit in the back of the bus. These busses are run by public bus companies. In 2011, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled against gender segregation. In the past few years, there have been a number of reported incidents in which women have been harassed or assaulted for refusing to move to the back of the bus. (<http://www.irac.org/IssuePapers.aspx>; retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁰⁸ The "Kotel," a remnant of the ancient high Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, is "the most sacred [Jewish] religious site in Israel" and has also "assumed a highly national significance" (Zerubavel 1995:133). Mea Shearim is a Jewish neighborhood in West Jerusalem whose residents are ultra-Orthodox and follow strict religious dictates concerning personal modesty. Being "covered" refers to the style of dress of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox women, who cover arms and legs. For a discussion of the imposition of Orthodox practices in public spaces in Israel, and the violent repercussions women can face for not acquiescing, see Susan Sered, *What Makes Women Sick: Maternity, Modesty, and Militarism in Israeli Society*, 2000, especially Chapter 5.

Additionally, this analysis of ‘security first, society second’ reflects the general paradigm of Israeli militarism, in which security concerns take precedence in the allocation of state and civil society resources (Kimmerling 2001). This kind of either/or – security or society - has historically been invoked in Israel specifically to weaken or marginalize feminist efforts to challenge gender discrimination.²⁰⁹ It is notable that this same paradigm is at work in this San Francisco synagogue, where the status of women operates as a stand-in for a competition over which Jew cares more about Israel. The younger man was reprimanded for suggesting that forcing women to sit in the back of public busses is problematic; he tried to recover his status by volunteering that women should cover their bodies in certain public spaces in accordance with Orthodox tradition. Voicing support for control over women’s bodies (and, by extension, for a religious system that sees women’s bodies as sites of danger and contagion) becomes a currency in the diasporic competition over performing the appropriate emotional orientation towards the homeland. In a parallel manner, the state focuses on “security” as the diaspora should fear for and ensure the state’s safety and defer to the government (even as the government defers to religious authorities).

In the same conversation in the synagogue that night, a different older man also responded to the younger man’s criticism of gender-segregated busses, saying

We’re the generation of John Lennon’s imagine. Pluralistic. Utopia. Your generation: Israel is a ladder into Jewish identity. Mine: that’s all we talked about, what we could do – send money, send things, visit. Your generation doesn’t see that. The new Israel is modern. The people are modern. The first time I went, you couldn’t even buy a pair of blue jeans. Now, Tel Aviv has French boutiques. It’s a successful country!

The second older man who spoke referenced the country’s material culture as the marker of its strength and level of establishment, arguing that young people were not familiar with a poorer, less developed Israel. His generation focused on how to help – “send money, send things, visit” – whereas younger Jews see a country with “French boutiques.” Again, the comparison is used to show the generational difference in views of Israel. This man argues that the younger generation was not familiar with a weaker and struggling Israel – a more vulnerable Israel – and therefore was not invested in caring for it with the same urgency (“*it’s all we talked about*”) as his generation.

The utility of threat

In another setting, a Jewish educator spoke of his teenage son and noted how his son’s attachment to Israel had grown during the second Intifada, when Israel experienced repeated attacks on civilians, including bombings on busses and in restaurants. The educator joked “*suicide bombings are good for Jewish identity.*” Similarly, a professional Israel defender (who runs an organization dedicated to Israeli PR in the U.S.) speaks of how “*a little bit of anti-semitism is a good thing. It gets us to fight back.*” In the San Francisco synagogue course, one participant unpacked the theory a little further, saying

The younger generation doesn’t have a link to Israel, they take it for granted, they’ve never seen Israel face any sort of existential threat of total destruction. My generation, at least we had Soviet Jewry, the crisis. At least we had that to give us Jewish identity.

²⁰⁹ See Nahla Abdo and Ronit Lentin, *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation*, 2002; Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 1997; Ayala Emmett, *Our Sisters’ Promised Land: Women, Politics, and Israeli-Palestinian Coexistence*, 2003.

In this man's worldview, a "*link to Israel*" means not "*take[ing] it for granted*," which one would not do if one had witnessed Israel "*face...threat of total destruction*" as, the theory goes, the older generations had. By immediately referring to the "*Soviet Jewry...crisis*,"²¹⁰ he reaffirms the paradigm in which American Jews gain "Jewish identity" through organizing collectively to help Jews in need/in danger in other parts of the world. In this view, Jewish vulnerability offers American Jews a pathway towards Jewish identity.

The hypothesis in operation is that exposure to a vulnerable Israel cultivates a stronger link to and sense of responsibility towards Israel. Embedded in that hypothesis is the assumption that Israel's vulnerability is a manifestation of Jewish vulnerability in the world. The parallel assumption is that exposure to a vulnerable Israel is a source not only of attachment to Israel but also of Jewish identity as a whole (and that these two are deeply intertwined). These assumptions are prevalent in the literature on distancing, which contains assumptions about a supposedly natural relationship between temporal distance and emotional distance from traumatic events (Cohen and Kelman 2007). The basic argument in this hypothesis is that Israel is fundamentally vulnerable and young Jews do not see that vulnerability and are therefore not as "attached" to Israel as older generations. Similarly, they do not experience Jewish vulnerability in the same ways that older generations did and therefore are also less likely to be engaged with Jewish institutions. At its core, this argument sees Jewish vulnerability as *inherent* to Israel and to Jewish identity.

The distancing hypothesis does not claim that all American Jews are distanced from Israel; it actually claims the opposite, showing that the majority of American Jews continue to be deeply attached to Israel. These fieldwork examples are also not intended to make a claim about how all American Jews of various generations feel about Israel.²¹¹ Rather, this discussion looks at the ways in which these discourses on distancing and the generational divide operate on the ground in the Bay Area. What emerges from a closer look at the discourses at work is the reassertion of Israel's vulnerability as a means of disciplining American Jews to put Israel's "survival" first; that is, to reaffirm Israel's security narrative, which justifies its expression of power.

Indeed, scholarship on identity-building programs with young Jews shows similar findings. In her research on Israel education at a Reform Jewish summer camp in the Bay Area, Zoe Rudow

²¹⁰ From the 1960s through the 1980s, American Jews mobilized and developed political power unprecedented in the American Jewish community to advocate on behalf of Soviet Jews facing terrible repression in the Soviet Union, resulting in the issue becoming significant to both Congress and the White House. For more on this struggle, see Gal Beckerman, 2010, *When They Come for Us, We'll Be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry*.

In an interview, a senior JCRC staff person spoke of the Soviet Jewry movement, saying that it "was also seen largely as an opportunity to sort of go back and engage the community on behalf of oppressed Jews in a way that hadn't happened clearly during the Holocaust." This formulation reiterates the centrality of the Holocaust as an organizing principle in Jewish institutional life. In that, it offers the dual challenge / themes of organized American Jewish culture: oppression and threat are central to the Jewish experience in the world, and American Jews, who are neither oppressed nor threatened, are obligated to act on behalf of endangered Jews. That obligation relies upon a sense of sharing in the threat that other Jews face, making the notion of threat central to the definitional construct of Jewish identity.

²¹¹ Indeed, there may have been people in the room during these discussions who disagreed with the speakers. During the many instances in the course when the issue of younger generations' supposed distance from Israel came up, the only people who discussed it confirmed the theory. Other course participants under the age of 40 who did not volunteer their opinions or impressions were not asked to share them, either. The theory was thus left unchallenged.

describes the use of “reenactments” of historical events as a powerful educational tool deployed to enable “campers to experience and feel the emotions and ideologies associated with specific events” (Rudow 2012: 62). Over the course of many years, the camp used programs in which campers “commemorated the Holocaust by reenacting Jews escaping from Europe and their journey to Israel.” Rudow quotes a counselor describing a program she participated in as a camper (in the same camp).

We were supposed to be escaping the Nazis and ... the staff members were supposed to be Nazis that were trying to get us, I think if they got you, they threw you in the dining hall to wait out the rest of the program. And the goal was to get ... down to the *bimah* lawn. The *bimah* lawn was the safety spot. Once we got to the *bimah* lawn there was Israeli dancing and *Hatikvah* and it became an Israel experience.

The counselor recalled “being terrified” while running from the Nazi-acting counselors and, later, “dancing and celebrating with Israeli counselors dressed in their IDF outfits” upon arrival in the “safety spot” of the *bimah* lawn. Rudow explains that “the *bimah* lawn” was both the “geographic center” of camp and also the “symbolic center,” positing, “by mapping Israel onto the most central and significant part of camp, the program created a direct link between Israel, safety, and home.”²¹² Rudow describes additional programs, including some focusing on the illegal immigration into Mandate Palestine in the late 1940s, that aim to create a setting of danger and vulnerability in the diaspora and safety and empowerment in Israel.

These programs point to a unique paradox among American Jews, in which the threat that is seen as so central to Jewish identity is absent in the lives of American Jews. Danger must be “reenacted,” created artificially in order to facilitate the appropriate identity construction. These programs, and the ways in which the “distancing hypothesis” has become conventional wisdom, allow for the surfacing of a more explicit discussion over the role of collective memory in the production of collective identity. Collective memory is a social construction (Wolf 2002) that reflects competition among groups to shape culture and identity in the present (Olick 1999; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991; Wolf 2002); the construction of collective memory “reveals much about the present milieu, the contemporary sense of identity... Memory is about the present, or, more precisely, it is about a particular way of imagining and representing the present by turning attention towards the past” (Stier 1996:10, cited in Wolf 2002:193). While Jewish collective memory is not “monolithic” (Wolf 2002: 192), there does seem to be evidence of agreement among scholars and practitioners about the relationship between Jewish vulnerability and Jewish identity: the more a person is exposed to vulnerability that is specifically Jewish, the more they feel attached to Jewish identity and, within that scope, to Israel.

²¹² “Bimah” is a Hebrew word for raised platform and is most commonly used in the United States to refer to the stage/platform in many synagogues on which the Holy Ark (cabinet) containing the Torah scroll sits and from which religious services are led. It is, thus, at the heart of Jewish religious practice. In her research, Rudow discusses the use of Hebrew to designate space in the summer camp, where the Hebrew words include both direct translations (such as “dining hall”) as well as Zionist labels (such as calling an area of camp “the kibbutz” and another “the Golan,” after the Golan Heights). Rudow argues that the use of Hebrew facilitates “a blurring between Hebrew, Israel, and Judaism” that “disciplines” the campers into Jewish nationalism (Rudow 2012:17).

D. Internal Threats: Inter-marriage and Threat to Israel

In early 2009 I was part of an audience in San Francisco listening to the Israeli Consul General for the Pacific Northwest, Akiva Tor. The audience consisted of about 70 American Jews in their 20s and 30s, mostly professionals, mostly unpartnered. Tor spoke about his favorite things to do in Israel, including his favorite place for a hike, to eat out, and to go on a date. During the question and answer period, he was asked what organizations are the most anti-Israel. Tor told the questioner that as a diplomat he couldn't "critique regimes." He then said, "*The number one threat is the assimilation of American Jews. Not more anywhere than the Bay Area.*" With this statement, Tor posited that the choices American Jews make in their personal lives endanger the state of Israel; indeed, these choices are the most significant threat to the state of Israel.

Assimilation comes in many forms, most of which are not only accepted but celebrated by the vast majority of American Jews (such as sharing language, dress, and many customs and beliefs with other Americans) (Hyman 1995). The most controversial form of assimilation is intermarriage, widely perceived by Jewish leaders, both professional and lay, as a grave threat to Jewish life and culture and therefore highly stigmatized (Corwin 2010; Cohen 2006). One of the most influential scholars of American Jewry, Steven Cohen, attributes the perceived new distancing of young Jews from Israel to the effects of Jews marrying non-Jews (Cohen and Kelman 2010; 2007). Inter-married Jews and their children report feeling less attached to Israel than in-married Jews and their children,²¹³ and inter-married families also participate less in Jewish communal organizations and activities than in-married families (Cohen 2006).

Cohen explains the link between intermarriage and distance from Israel: intermarriage reflects and promotes departure from all manner of Jewish ethnic 'groupiness,' of which Israel attachment is part."²¹⁴ The notion that intermarriage threatens Jews and Israel is well established in sociological scholarship on Jews, which is widely reported in the Jewish media and shared among Jewish elites; the link has become conventional wisdom. According to the most recent public survey of Bay Area Jews, carried out on behalf of the Jewish Community Federation and completed in 2004, "because so many Jews of interfaith parents are in the youngest age category, overall attachment to Israel is on the decline."²¹⁵ Though the majority of all Jews claim attachment to Israel, the study and its Federation sponsors cast not only assimilation but specifically intermarriage as a threat to the close relationship between Bay Area Jews and the state of Israel. The empirical data suggests that stigmatizing intermarriage and promoting Jewish in-marriage are tactics in a larger effort by the dominant Jewish organizations to cultivate Jewish attachment to Israel.²¹⁶

²¹³ National Jewish Population Survey 2000-1.

²¹⁴ http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/21/the_special_relationship?page=0,1. (Retrieved 1/19/11.)

²¹⁵ Jewish Community Study, 2004, 111. The survey states that children of intermarried parents are less likely to describe themselves as emotionally attached to Israel than the children of two Jewish parents (62% compared to 80%).

²¹⁶To be clear, this chapter does not argue that Jewish organizations fight intermarriage for the sake of the state of Israel alone. Rather than catalog the ways in which the dominant Jewish organizations address intermarriage, this chapter looks at efforts to fight intermarriage as a tactic that the organizations use in their larger effort to create Israel-connected Jews. For more on American Jews and intermarriage, see Lila Berman Corwin (2008, 2010).

To be clear, this argument refers less to the treatment of intermarried people in the full range of Jewish institutions and more to the discourse around intermarriage itself, which includes education against it to young or un-partnered Jews. Though many Jewish organizations, including non-orthodox synagogues, have express policies welcoming the intermarried, these same organizations view intermarriage as a “significant challenge” to Jewish life and strive promote in-marriage as the preferable choice (Cohen 2006). In this way, even those who engage intermarried people stigmatize the intermarriage choice.

As the dominant Jewish organizations aim to create a Jewish identity that revolves around a distinct closeness to and dependence on the state of Israel, they work through the creation of norms and practices that produce that identity as a way of life. One of the primary arenas for shaping lives is through prescriptions for family life, and particularly for romantic partnership in the form of marriage. Family structure and reproductive choices are critical components of both nation- and state-building (Yuval-Davis 2008 [1997]; Kanaaneh 2002), with states and ethnic groups promoting endogamy or exogamy for the greater welfare of the group. As such their use among Jews in the United States (Corwin 2008, 2010; Cohen 2006) and in Israel (Kahn 2000; Enloe 2000; Yuval-Davis 2008[1997]; Kanaaneh 2002) has been long observed and subject to scholarly attention. What is unique and noteworthy is the active, deliberate linking between family structure among Jews in the United States and their assigned obligations to the state of Israel.

The focus on creating connections to Israel as central to the Jewish identity project has coincided with the growth of Israel-centered efforts to counter the growth of out-marriage among Jews. As concern over out-marriage grew in the 1960s, Jewish institutions began to act “in loco parentis,” bypassing parents they viewed as failing to prevent intermarriage and intervening with summer camps and other programs aimed at building strong Jewish identities that would withstand the growing intermarriage trend (Corwin Berman 2010: 102-3). Israel travel developed as part of this phenomenon, and by the 2000s became the dominant Jewish identity-building project for young Jews, primarily in the form of Birthright, the philanthropic phenomenon that has sent more than 250,000 mainly North American Jews to Israel since it was founded in 1999. Researchers who study Birthright claim that Birthright participants are far more likely to marry Jews than non-Birthright participants (Saxe, Phillips and Sasson 2010, 2009). In Birthright, a joint project of North American Jewish philanthropists, the Jewish Federations of North America, and the Israeli government, the goals of preventing intermarriage and building Israel-focused Jews come together.

Family Ties: Jewish Identity, Israel, and Threats to the Jews

In mid-2009, the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office and the Jewish Agency debuted an advertisement on Israeli television,²¹⁷ as part of a project with a program called Masa that promotes long-term (often year long) trips to Israel for young Jews.²¹⁸ (The Jewish Agency’s primary funder is the Jewish Federations of North America.) The advertisement shows fliers with names and faces of young people, like “missing persons” fliers, affixed in public, urban places – a train station, a telephone poll - while a somber voiceover in Hebrew explains, “more than 50 percent of young people outside of Israel assimilate and are lost to us.” The fliers are primarily in English (with a couple in Russian), naming missing people with stereotypical American Jewish names like “Joel Fine” and “Josh Feldman,” showing that the population under discussion is American Jews. In using the 50 percent

²¹⁷ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPYGdgIxIe4&feature=player_embedded (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²¹⁸ Widely promoted on college campuses, Masa is a joint Israeli government – Jewish Agency organization, also supported by the Jewish Federation system. It was created in 2003.

figure, the advertisement was clearly referring to the rate of intermarriage, and not to other processes of assimilation,²¹⁹ such as adopting the host society's cultural patterns or entering the host society's dominant institutions.²²⁰ The voiceover continues, requesting that Israelis who know Jews abroad get in touch with Masa and "together, we'll strengthen their bond to Israel so that we don't lose them." The ad frames intermarriage as an abductor who kidnaps young Jews, and Masa as the rescuer who saves them. The Masa slogan at the end of the ad reads "Masa: one year in Israel, life-long love." Ostensibly, the life-long love is for Israel, but it might just as well be for the Jewish partner every Jew should have.

The Masa program is billed as the post-Birthright program for young Jews who want to return to Israel for a substantial length of time after completing Birthright, the ten day, all expenses paid trip to Israel for Jews age 18-26.²²¹ Using travel to Israel as an intervention into diaspora Jewish identity (Kelner 2010), established by Jewish philanthropists, the Jewish Federations of North America and the Israeli government, Birthright is a highly coordinated²²² response to concerns over loss of Jewish identity in the diaspora, with an annual budget of \$80-100 million.²²³ Birthright connects the dots of Jewish identity. As scholars who study Birthright put it,

The trips, both covertly and overtly, create links between the major threats to Jewish existence in recent decades – the Holocaust, the Arab-Israeli conflict, assimilation, and intermarriage – and Israel as a response to these threats. (Saxe and Chazan 2008: 49).

Since it was established fifteen years ago, more than 350,000 young Jews from all over the world have been on Birthright trips; the vast majority of these youth are from North America.²²⁴ Over the past several years, the San Francisco Jewish Federation has allocated more than \$300,000 annually to Birthright, with additional gifts to the different campus Hillels throughout the Bay Area that recruit students for Birthright trips. Private foundations added to that sum, funding the participation of hundreds of local young people in the program that year.²²⁵

²¹⁹ In his classic text, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, Milton Gordon (1964) organizes and analyzes different stages of assimilation, of which intermarriage is a key component. In her discussion of assimilation, which draws on Gordon's analysis, Paula Hyman (1995) notes "The end point of assimilation is the dissolution of the minority by biological merger with the majority through intermarriage" (13).

²²⁰ Adopting the host society's cultural patterns and entering its dominant institutions, which are considered positive developments, are widespread practices that would not require a government-driven campaign.

²²¹ <http://www.birtherightisrael.com/TaglitBirthrightIsraelStory/Pages/default.aspx> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²²² Birthright is extensively promoted by many Jewish organizations, including Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, which recruits for the program on college campuses. According to extensive coverage in Jewish media as well as personal observations made at the 2010 Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly (November 2010, New Orleans), funding and promoting Birthright is considered one of the top priorities for Jewish philanthropy.

²²³ http://www.jewishjournal.com/articles/item/birtheright_launches_50m_campaign_cuts_trips_20090211/ (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²²⁴ <http://www.birtherightisrael.com/TaglitBirthrightIsraelStory/Pages/Our-Achievements.aspx>. (Retrieved April 27, 2014.)

²²⁵ Figures drawn from the 990 forms of the San Francisco Jewish Federation, as well as the Jewish Community Federation of the East Bay, which allocated \$35,000 to Birthright in 2011, as well as additional sums to Berkeley Hillel for Birthright participants. Local support for Birthright has been covered in the local

Research assessing Birthright, funded by some of the same foundations that fund the Birthright program, established that Birthright alumni are far more likely to marry Jews or to believe that marrying a Jew is important than young Jews who do not participate in the program (Saxe, Phillips and Sasson 2010, 2009). While fear of assimilation inspired the creation of the program, its effectiveness as a kind of inoculation against intermarriage is being touted as its primary, statistically proven effect. In the words of intermarriage scholar Lila Berman Corwin (2010), “Birthright, like other organized tours to Israel, may also function as a *shadchan*, or matchmaker” for its young travelers (104).²²⁶ Indeed, “Birthrate” has become a nickname for the program.²²⁷ As someone from the Consular office joked one night at an event I attended in San Francisco, Birthright is the “*cure for everything, from intermarriage to global warming.*”

Birthright is widely seen as meeting the multiple and overlapping needs of both Israel and the United States by creating a new cadre of young Jews who are less likely to intermarry and more likely to identify with the Israeli nation-state, having undergone the “political socialization” (Kelner 2010: xx) of the program. At the 2010 General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America, an annual gathering of thousands of Jewish communal professionals and lay leaders from around the world, Birthright was touted as an “*engine*” that drives ongoing Jewish attachment and travel to Israel. At a panel about the Jewish Agency, the organization’s Director General cited statistics showing how Birthright was feeding the Masa program, for which young diaspora Jews are subsidized to live in Israel for an extended period of time. His collaborator, the Jewish Agency’s CEO, backed him up, saying “*the recent studies by Steve[n] Cohen and the Avichai Foundation show that these experiences lead to leadership. We need to build a leadership core among young people.*” He cited a report showing that 90% of young Jewish leaders spent at least four months in Israel. Jewish organizations in both Israel and North America are actively creating the Jewish subjects to carry out the work of strengthening the Israeli state.

Birthright illustrates the linkage between a feeling of attachment to Israel and the use of attachment as an impetus to advocate for the state. Shaul Kelner (2010), who has conducted extensive research on Birthright since it began, notes the political implications of Birthright tours, explaining that

The start of the second intifada in September 2000 led to a new framing of the program’s purposes. Motivated originally by concerns over weakening Jewish identity in diaspora, Taglit²²⁸ increasingly came to be spoken of as a means of fostering political support for Israel in its intensifying conflict with the Palestinians (43).

In this way, the Israel-centered Jewish identity that this program, and through it the Israeli state and dominant Jewish organizations behind it, aims to create is not a passive, consumerist sense of

Jewish newspaper. <http://www.jweekly.com/includes/print/59239/article/waitlists-hinder-birthright-goal-of-giving-free-israel-trips/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²²⁶ Corwin’s (2010) use of the word *shadchan*, which means matchmaker in both Hebrew and Yiddish, reflects the use of shared language to unify ethnic community. It also illustrates one of the points of her article, which is that institutions (funded by Jews) have stepped into roles previously held by parents (such a matchmaker). Corwin argues that Jewish institutions, including organized Israel travel programs, stepped in to remedy the problem of intermarriage, which Jewish leadership thought parents were not doing enough to fight.

²²⁷ As cited in the documentary film *Between Two Worlds* by Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman, 2011. I have also heard a Hebrew nickname for the program, whose official Hebrew name is “Taglit.” The nickname is “Shaglit,” which roughly translates into “sexfest.”

²²⁸ Taglit is the Hebrew name for Birthright.

identity but rather an active, advocacy-focused identity. This advocacy is specific and bounded. Birthright rejected a potential trip-organizing partnership with J Street U, the campus-based wing of the organization J Street.²²⁹ However, Birthright has run trips sponsored by AIPAC and StandWithUs.²³⁰ On the last day of the 2010 General Assembly, Charles Bronfman, the founding philanthropist of Birthright, gave a presentation about the program. Among other things, he noted “on campuses and off, 50% of those doing the legitimizing are Birthright alums.” Bronfman directly compared Birthright alumni to the “delegitimizers” who are read as a grave threat to Israel.

The Stigmatization of Mixed Marriage

My fieldwork attests that the leadership of dominant Jewish organizations promotes the imperative to marry Jewish and perpetuates, either implicitly or explicitly, the stigmatization of mixed marriages. Though many outreach programs to intermarried families exist and there is increasing discussion over the imperative to cultivate intermarried families’ connections to Jewish organizations, these do not nullify the active promotion of in-marriage and stigmatization of out-marriage.

One central component of my fieldwork was the premier program of the Federation’s Young Adult Division, a multi-event series aimed at professionals in their 20s and 30s. With nearly 90 participants and roughly even numbers of men and women, the series was simultaneously an entre into the organized Jewish community and a singles event, as I learned from numerous women who suggested I retire to the bar with the rest of the participants following the program, week after week, because “*that’s where the real mingling happens,*” as one put it. On the first night of the program, I learned that non-Jews, including non-Jewish partners of Jewish attendees, were not allowed to participate in the program, thus effectively ensuring that Jews mingled only with other Jews. Israel was a constant theme: it was celebrated in wall decorations, noted regularly as a high priority issue for the Federation, integrated as a topic into every event in the series, and the single focus of one full event. Its importance was reiterated by participants, as well; on the first night of the program, we were split into small groups and given an ice-breaker, part of which was answering the question “what I like about being Jewish.” Several of the people in the small group I observed answered that they liked to travel to Israel. Later, when the group talked about Jewish values, Israel was included in the list.

Simultaneously, intermarriage was a dominant subject. During the first evening of the series, we listened to a talk by a local social scientist, during which he explained that three factors form group identity: blood (genealogy), behavior (rituals and practices), and beliefs. He asked the group about each of these factors, eliciting answers for what made up Jewish beliefs, behavior and blood. When he raised the issue of blood, he touched on the sensitive topic of Jewish descent. According to traditional Jewish law, Jewishness is passed on through matrilineal descent. In the last few decades, the Reform²³¹ and Reconstructionist²³² movements have formally recognized patrilineal descent as well, while Orthodox and Conservative Judaism have not.

²²⁹ <http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishNews/Article.aspx?id=206732> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²³⁰ http://www.standwithus.com/app/inews/view_n.asp?ID=828 (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²³¹ The majority of American Jews who belong to synagogues belong to Reform synagogues. (National Jewish Population Survey 2000-1, p. 7.)

²³² Reconstructionist movements recognize patrilineal descent with caveats: the parents must commit to raising the children as Jewish, must circumcise boys, and children must fulfill the requirements of becoming a bar or bat mitzvah or confirmation. (“Resolution on Patrilineal Descent,” *The Reconstructionist*, Volume 34, No. 8, May 31, 1968. <http://www.jewishrecon.org/resource/resolution-regarding-children-mixed-marriages> (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

When he raised the issue of “blood,” the social scientist asked “according to blood, who is a Jew?” No one responded. From my fieldnotes:

After a moment, the social scientist said, who in here was born to Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers? A number of people raised their hands. Not that many, probably a handful, at least as far as I could see. Someone in the back said, “Please leave,” in a joking voice.

Hundreds of thousands of people are descended from Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers, and many of these identify as Jews. Yet they are vulnerable to being pointed out and, as I observed at the Federation event, symbolically cast out. In the event at the Jewish Community Federation that night, none of the organizers, who represented the established, centralized Jewish community, intervened, defended the children of intermarriage, or suggested that joking about asking them to leave was unacceptable.

It is possible that joking about a sensitive topic can be a device to include rather than exclude, similar to how people may tease their friends or peers in a way that they would not interact with a stranger. After a subsequent Club Fed event, I had a long conversation with one of the few participants born to a non-Jewish mother, during which she brought up this interaction from the first night. She told me that she believed that the person who said “*please leave*” did not have malicious intent and was simply trying “*to break the tension*.” But, she said, the statement bothered her, as did the very question of “Who is a Jew.” Her discomfort, as well as her observation of “tension” that needed to be broken, indicate how the children of intermarried parents both illustrate and test the boundaries of Jewish collectivity. That intermarriage is discussed as actually dangerous and threatening to Jewish people becomes clear in the next excerpt from my fieldnotes.

Following the social scientist’s talk on the first evening of the series, participants were given a set of questions to discuss in small groups, with a member of the organizing committee facilitating the discussion. The questions made clear that issues of in- and out-marriage are critical to this community; one of the first questions was whether participants intended to marry a Jew. Following is an excerpt of my fieldnotes from that conversation in my small group, which comprised six people. One, Michael, was a participant in his twenties, a recent college graduate who works in hi-tech. Another, Molly, who also works in hi-tech, was a member of the organizing committee for this event series and facilitated the conversation.

Michael said that if he had children with a non-Jewish woman, his children would be Jewish.

Molly said: “Your mother has to be Jewish, or else you convert; otherwise, you’re not a Jew. Religion is a commitment to the future, to the next 400 years. It’s not just about us. Holocaust deaths were because they were Jewish. We lost people in my family. Don’t spit on their deaths.”

Michael said: “It’s hard to have a conversation with the term ‘spitting on Holocaust deaths.’”

Molly said: “Then you can’t handle the conversation.”

Later in the evening, the small groups rejoined each other for a large group discussion, part of which focused on reasons to find a Jewish spouse. One woman, also a member of Federation leadership, said “*marrying Jewish keeps the people going...if you don’t, you’re killing off the people.*”

According to these women's logic, the genocide of European Jews justifies the imperative that Jewish men marry Jewish women who will bear children who are Jewish under Orthodox and Conservative rabbinic law. Each individual Jew is accountable to the Jewish collective because of the Nazi genocide. This association is very similar to the images presented in the television advertisement by Masa that showed intermarried young people as "missing persons": intermarriage is "killing off the people," and, therefore, threatening Israel. While neither Molly nor the other woman brought up Israel in their defense of in-marriage, the act of obliging Jews to produce Jewish survival through deliberate practices of reproduction implicitly invokes Israel, which embodies the ideal of Jewish survival in a threatening world and is considered *the* symbol of Jewish rebirth after the Holocaust (Woocher 1986). In a discussion on Jewish reproduction for the sake of saving the Jewish people from destruction, a reference to one indicates the other.

These field observations show the linkage between threats to Jewish life: Jewish disappearance because of the Holocaust and Jewish disappearance because of intermarriage, either because of the loss of Jews in number or because the loss of Jewish support for Israel endangers Israel. The fear is that if American Jews intermarry, Jews could disappear. And if Jews disappear, then Israel, and Jews around the world, are threatened. This is the master narrative that links the individual American Jewish person to the state of Israel. This link is animated by stigma: in both of the examples above, the leadership (both lay and scholarly) asked pointed questions about intermarriage, and their questions repeatedly provoked answers that stigmatized intermarriage and attempted to shame those who would consider it.

II. Fear and Power

Jewish fears also serve as a source and measure of Jewish unity, such that the expression of fear for Jews can be a sign of belonging to the Jewish collective. This section contains two discussions: first, a look at internal Jewish discussion of fear and second, a discussion of the deployment of Jewish vulnerability as a means of defending Israel and Jews and advancing specific political interests.

A. Facing Inward: Fear as Unifier

The expression of fear for the Jewish collective serves as criteria for acceptability within Jewish community. The expression of fear operates as a sign of Jewish authenticity and commitment to other Jews. Within this paradigm, the idea of Jewish unity stands as protection to the threats facing the Jewish collective. This section below looks at the nuanced co-articulations of fear and unity. Through this co-construction, political positions that articulate fear from external threat are taken as more Jewish and become the positions of a united community. Ambivalence is subsumed into unity, and Jews who exhibit too little fear of external enemies face marginalization for breaking this feeling rule.

Prophets and Guardians: Fear unites

In 2002, on the night that the synagogue has its highest attendance,²³³ a rabbi at an East Bay synagogue gave a sermon about how his community speaks about Israel. The membership of his Jewish renewal synagogue includes many peace activists and Jews with leftist views on Israel, and the second Intifada (which began in 2000) led to intense division and polarization among his community, which the rabbi addressed in his sermon. He said:

I think that there are two general tendencies around Israel in the Jewish community. I'm going to give these tendencies labels, and giving labels gets me a little worried, I really want stress that each of us contains some combination of these tendencies, so please bear with me and don't take this too literally.

There are those for whom issues of justice are a bit more paramount, who are concerned about the injustice and the violence suffered by people with less power, in this situation, the Palestinians. These folks largely identify these concerns with the ultimate values of our Jewish heritage. For convenience, I will call this tendency the "Prophets" for short. The Prophets ask: "If I am only for myself, what am I?"

And then there [are] the folks for whom the oppression suffered by the Jewish people in a hostile world is paramount, and Israel represents our haven to them. These folks identify these concerns with the survival of the Jewish people. For convenience, I will call this tendency the "Guardians." The Guardians ask: "If I am not for myself, who will be?"²³⁴

When we are at a point of starting to become polarized in discussion, Guardians hear Prophets talking about justice and the Guardians think, "Where is their love of Israel? Where is their concern for the Jewish people?" And when Prophets listen to Guardians talking about security for Israel or questioning Palestinian goals, Prophets think, "Where is their concern for justice and for Jewish values?"

In his sermon, Rabbi Cooper notes that both "prophets" and "guardians" are focused on the place of Jewish life in the world, through concerns about the continuity of Jewish ethical aspirations, on the one hand, and Jewish physical communities, on the other. Both views reflect commitments to and investments in Jewish survival. In claiming "each of us contains some combination of these tendencies," Rabbi Cooper invites his congregation to see themselves and their fellow congregants in what he identifies as the broad range of Jewish approaches to Israel. He suggests they see themselves implicated in all of the questions that each side asks. His framework suggests that Jews need to stretch themselves to see and understand their fellow Jews' concerns and fears.

Rabbi Cooper's "Guardian" and "Prophet" categories have become folk categories often used as shorthand for referring to people holding opposing views on primary Jewish values, whether "security" or "justice." Both "guardians" and "prophets" are considered insiders within the boundaries of Jewish community; these terms are not synonymous with "insider" and "outsider." Both the prophet and guardian categories can contain fringe members who express the category in a more extreme, essentialized way. The boundary-making works in such a way that the more extreme

²³³ Kol Nidre, the evening that begins Yom Kippur.

²³⁴ The quotes come from Hillel the Elder, a 1st century BC rabbi in Jerusalem and one of the most important figures in Jewish history and culture, who said "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not know, when?"

representatives of the Guardian category are excluded from Jewish community only in rare circumstances, while more extreme representatives of the Prophet category are more regularly and purposefully excluded. While the folk categories of Prophet and Guardian refer to community insiders, in practice the Guardian category operates as a more secure, enmeshed insider group.

The Guardian and Prophet model and imperative were incorporated into projects initiated to enable Bay Area Jews to speak to each other across their political divides. The most prominent of these projects, the “Year of Civil Discourse,” is a joint JCRC and San Francisco Federation project dedicated to increasing “civil discourse” among Bay Area Jews in their engagement around Israel. This project was launched after the 2009 Jewish Film Festival controversy brought communal acrimony to the surface. Coming not long after the Federation established their Guidelines, the Year of Civil Discourse was a sort of companion project. While the Guidelines established the boundaries around the community, the Year of Civil Discourse aimed to assist those inside the community relate to each other across their differences. This project did not aim to reach excluded, outsider Jews (such as Jewish Voice for Peace) but rather to reconcile members of the same smaller subcommunities, such as synagogues, who struggled to speak to each other about Israel.

Year of Civil Discourse webpages (hosted on the JCRC website) quote David Cooper in explaining that “Among Jews there are two major tendencies in regard to our relationship with Israel, and perhaps each of us reflects both to some degree...the ‘prophet tendency’...and the ‘guardian’ tendency.” The introduction to the project explains that it “envisions an inclusive Jewish community where people from across the political spectrum can come together.”²³⁵

The co-chair of Northern California Board of Rabbis’ Task Force on Civil Discourse, Rabbi Sheldon Lewis, introduced the Year of Civil Discourse in an op-ed²³⁶ in the regional Jewish paper, explaining

The key idea in our Year of Civil Discourse is not that we relinquish our deeply held positions, work for them with any less energy or argue them with any less passion. Rather, it is that we engage each other with respect, open ourselves to hearing the other, assume that the other is very worthy of our attention, imagine that what we share in concern for the State of Israel burns with no less intensity within the other than within ourselves.

Rabbi Cooper’s model of prophets and guardians offers legitimacy for different foci of concern within a larger container of commitment to Jewish life and tradition. Rabbi Lewis reiterates this model in affirming that transforming “deeply held positions” is not the purpose of the civil discourse project, which instead aims to build respectful engagement among Jews who hold different political positions. What they share, at their core – if they can only “imagine” it – is intense “concern for the State of Israel.” “Concern” indicates both a personal tie or relationship as well as a sense of apprehension or worry. That is, “concern” for Israel represents both *Ahavat Yisrael* and a sense of fear, instability, and vulnerability with regard to the state. According to the community leadership dedicated to communal discourse, the “Guardian” voice, the one that sees Israel as a haven for Jews in a hostile world, is central to the definition of the bond that unites Jews across political perspectives.

²³⁵ <http://www.jcrc.org/ycd.htm> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²³⁶ <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/61301/no-room-for-nastiness-in-year-of-civil-discourse/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

Indeed, interviews with senior professionals working on the JCRC and Federation's multiple efforts to bring the Jewish community together – through the Year of Civil Discourse and the Federation's Guidelines - affirmed the centrality of shared expressions of fear and concern for Israel in shaping communal connections toward Israel. Laura, a veteran of projects that seek to help Jews reach across polarized divides over Israel, suggested that the “prophet” and “guardian” perspectives are just “*different definitions of how people see survival.*” She suggested that Jewish communities “*ha[ve] always had*” this bipolar model, which addresses the all-encompassing questions of survival in a hostile world.

Israel has always had its prophets who have pointed out what's wrong and its guardians who protect it – the guardians are the people who you would think of as the rightwing and the prophets are the ones who are pointing out what Israel's doing wrong...The guardians can be really ethnocentric...the prophets can be over idealistic and naive. It's just a model that has gained tremendous acceptance in the community...I have not found a group that doesn't see this [model] as resonating.

Later in the interview, in response to a question about how she thinks Jews define who is in the Jewish community and who is outside of it, Laura answered with reference to Jewish persecution, saying

There's a reflexive limbic mode – into survival mode – for good reasons, for very solid reasons. Those wounds were there. I think the defense against feeling that vulnerability, against holding that vulnerability, of feeling really scared or just vulnerable, physically vulnerable, culturally vulnerable, religiously vulnerable, just defaults into a defense mechanism that I see as the ‘if you don't see it my way then we'll all die,’ syndrome. I think it actually corresponds to a time when we were in shtetls²³⁷ and we really did have to convince the whole community to do something or we would die... And I see that being played out across the whole political spectrum.

For Laura, both “prophets” and “guardians” are focused on questions of Jewish survival, both responding to traumas past with a mindset forged – evolved – from generations of persecution. Her physiological explanation aims to explain the vitriol, passion and urgency rife in American Jewish debate over Israel, in which, she claims, past lessons taught Jews that the cost of disunity is death. The intensity of this fear leads to the “*‘if you don't see it my way then we'll all die' syndrome,*” a view Laura identifies as present “*across the whole political spectrum.*” The idea that Jews think they face imminent devastation anchors Laura's understanding of Jewish discourse around Israel. Laura occasionally spoke of the prophet and guardian positions as “*fluid identities,*” – thus reflecting Rabbi Cooper's view – and noted that “*some of us have more one than the other, depending on who we're talking to.*” Fluidity is influenced by audience; in the interview, Laura referenced conversations with left-wing Jews in which she found herself holding a more Guardian position because she did not trust that the left-wing Jewish audience was sufficiently concerned about Jewish safety. Laura also noted that Jews struggle listening to each other, and even more so when engaging with Palestinians, because “*when violence is going on and when you're triggered and when you have 2000 years of persecution and violence is going on, you're triggered.*” That is, Laura collapses a lachrymose theory of Jewish history (Baron 1928) into a mythical description of the present in Israel, all of which she uses to explain how American Jewish politics are centered on fears over Jewish vulnerability.

²³⁷ Small town or village in Central or Eastern Europe. Many American Jews trace their ancestry to Eastern Europe.

Deborah, a senior JCRC/Federation staff person, spoke about the “Open Letter to all Jewish Communities” in the *Forward* newspaper in which leading Bay Area Jewish intellectuals decried the San Francisco Jewish Federation’s Guidelines as a “litmus test for loyalty to Israel.”²³⁸ She said

I personally don’t see the guidelines as a litmus test. I think I’m privileged to not see them that way, though. I have close proximity to Federation, I know these people, I know that they have the same fears about Israel. I know that their politics are represented by the people who signed onto that letter [in the *Forward*].

The scholars, artists and community leaders who signed the letter in the *Forward* argue that the Guidelines “limit debate, threat dissent” and do “grave damage to the vibrancy of the American Jewish community.” Noting that the Guidelines bar grantees from co-sponsorship and co-presentations on the Middle East with individuals and organizations that “undermine the legitimacy of the State of Israel,” the signatories take issue with the on-the-ground implications for a policy based on so vague a term. They argue “the organizations the Federation excludes under these very vague guidelines” will therefore “be determined by the politics of the person or persons charged with making the decision.” Deborah affirms the powerful advisory role of her organization when she refers to “*all these people who call on a weekly basis.*” Yet her defense of the guidelines rests on her assertion of similarity and shared values between the signers of the *Forward* letter and the leadership at the Federation/JCRC. As she says, Federation/JCRC leadership shares “*politics?*” with people who signed the letter, and she “*know[s] that they have the same fears about Israel.*” These fears unite. Deborah believes that her proximity to Federation leadership allows her to see that those who enforce the guidelines and those who oppose them share the same values, and therefore the opponents should recognize that the Guidelines “*may be a failure of creativity,*” as she put it, but are not, as the *Forward* letter claims, a “litmus test of loyalty.”²³⁹

At the close of a long interview with Eli, a senior JCRC executive who works closely with Laura and Deborah in engaging Jews from across the Bay Area, I asked if there was anything else Eli wanted to add. He said,

Hmm. What else can I say? I fear for Israel’s future, of course. I wouldn’t be Jewish if I didn’t.

Just after I turned off the recorder at the end of the formal interview, Eli elaborated on the different types of fear that animate Bay Area Jewish politics. He spoke of the “*annihilationist fears?*” that describe Jews across the political spectrum, claiming that members of both StandWithUs and Jewish Voice for Peace have them, and “*to some extent, I do, also.*” “Annihilation” is fear of the decimation of the entire people; these fears are projected onto relationships with and advocacy about Israel. Eli explained that these different groups “*just do something different with?*” their fears, transforming them into a very different approach to politics. Jewish Voice for Peace members, he said, “*need to show their*

²³⁸ Text of the Open Letter is included as Appendix A.

²³⁹ Also on unity: Laura’s formulation of Jewish history sees disunity as leaving Jews vulnerable to severe harm and death. The logical conclusion of this version of history is the need for unity as a form of defense. We see the call for unity echoed in statements by extreme nationalist leaders, such as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu telling thousands of Jewish leaders (at the 2010 JFNA General Assembly), “My friends, our unity is a critical foundation of our collective strength. The more we speak with one voice, the more that voice will be heard.” We also see it echoed in the claims of “consensus,” by the dominant Jewish organizations (and especially the JCRC).

non-Jewish neighbors and colleagues that they don't agree with these policies of Israel" as part of how they deal with their annihilationist fears. That is, in Eli's telling, Jewish Voice for Peace members are primarily concerned with how they appear to non-Jews (thus reaffirming the assertion in chapter 2 that appearing more committed to non-Jews is an expression of disloyalty to Jews and thus places one outside the communal boundaries). For Eli, JVP's annihilationist fears are outweighed by their anxieties over how they appear to others. Their Jewish-only fears are not dominant, and that places JVP in the position of holding *too little fear* for inclusion within the boundaries of the Jewish community.

Whereas JVP represents people who are condemned for expressing too little fear in their political expression, some members of StandWithUs represent the position of those who hold too much fear. Eli talked about them as having "*really intense annihilation issues. They have a lot of fear of annihilation.*" Yet he also said that "*some of these people are certifiable...I wouldn't want to be in a room alone with them. Paranoia, Schizophrenia, they are just really above and beyond.*"

Eli's apprehension about StandWithUs was similarly reflected in other interviews. Behind the scenes, in private, leadership in the JCRC/Federation express anxieties and concerns over the behavior of StandWithUs members, several of whom have been implicated in violence against political opponents. Laura explained that "*the violence on the street ... it's actually a fringe part of StandWithUs doing that ... but they [StandWithUs] don't stop it.*" Eli told me that he had spoken with the people involved in some of the violence, but clarified that he had spoken with them "*off the record.*" Publicly, the organizations continue to be linked and allied with each other, often co-sponsoring events together.

Indeed, the political orientation that emphasizes the centrality of fear and vulnerability dominates American Jewish discourse. It manifests in multiple ways, largely through the dominance of a politics that emphasizes threats against Israel as a continuation of historical anti-semitism, which it often interprets as ahistoric, eternal hatred of Jews, and it battles against criticism of Israel, silencing dissent as much as possible. It also emphasizes the importance of a united Jewish voice, citing the need for Jews to have and project strength and security through a united front.

Ambivalence yields to unity

Privately, JCRC executives and other top personnel in the organized Jewish leadership may lament the implications of these fear politics, as above in the discussion of those who hold too much fear. However, publicly, these are the politics that the JCRC embraces and uses in its representation of Jewish collective interests to a broader public. While the next section of this chapter will look the JCRC's expressions of fear and vulnerability as a form of politics, this section looks at the relationship between a rightwing public voice and ambivalence around the costs of that voice.

For instance, Deborah, a senior JCRC/Federation professional, named what she said was a deep concern in the Bay Area:

Why is the right allowed in this community and the left isn't? Why is the right safer, and by extension more Jewish, than the left?

Answering her own question, Deborah brought up J Street as an example of how the community might be changing. "*People in our community are thirsting for this,*" she said of J Street. Since J Street's emergence, she said, "*I don't know that it's still the case that the community shuts off discourse when it comes to settlements.*" She continued,

Not on the record attributable: my own feeling of having gone through my own very personal sense of affiliation with Israel advocacy orgs is that I wish J Street weren't necessary. I wish AIPAC had done a better job of being democratic. I believe in the value and impact of a unified strategy and a unified approach. And I believe strongly that the way you get there is by engaging everybody at the table and finding out what that unified voice should be.

Here, Deborah shares her personal struggle between two potentially conflicting values: the Jewish community holding “*a unified strategy and a unified approach*” with regard to Israel, on the one hand, and open and critical discussion of Israeli settlements, on the other. It is significant that Deborah asked that this statement be “not on the record attributable,” because the entire interview was conducted under the premise (and promise) of anonymity.²⁴⁰ Deborah’s reiteration of the privacy of this statement reflects concerns about the sensitivity of her statement. Her concerns may reflect anxieties over criticizing AIPAC so explicitly. They may also indicate anxieties over her stated preference for communal unity when the organization for which she works asserts the space for (“legitimate”) criticism of the state of Israel. In the balance of forces that Deborah describes, discussion of settlements from a critical perspective is growing in the Jewish community, as demonstrated by the increasing acceptability of J Street. Though she believes that the emergence of J Street is an important phenomenon, it also deeply pains the parts of her that prefers, above all else, a unified Jewish community. Indeed, my follow-up question to Deborah was to ask “where are you now?” in terms of her feelings about Israel advocacy. She began to cry, saying she is

Heartbroken. It hits close to home. I'm heartbroken...I didn't live through the important defensive wars that I understand have had such an impact on the political will of so many Jews. For me, Israel is a manifestation of a people's yearning for four thousand years. And it's a manifestation of a need for a safe haven. But I kind of go a step further in my own philosophy in that the reason why we need a safe haven is that we value life. And I'm heartbroken because ultimately I don't know that land is worth another life. Jewish or Palestinian. And if life and survival is the ultimate goal, like, what's the point?

Deborah frames her attachment to Israel in terms of ancient Jewish links (“*a people's yearning for four thousand years*”) and more contemporary Jewish persecution (“*a need for a safe haven*”). In keeping with the conventional interpretation of generational relationships with Israel, she connects her cohort – not “liv[ing] through Israel's defensive wars” – to the political questions she is willing to ask or, more explicitly, to the “political will of so many Jews” that she doesn't hold. She sees a direct connection between the generations that witnessed a more vulnerable Israel, Israel being therefore more “integral” to their Jewish identity, and a more narrow political space. She seems to believe that older Jews do not have the same political space she has, and the space she can access – that they, in their age and reactivity, cannot - allows her to question whether holding land is more valuable than protecting human life. Deborah shares her difficulties over what she sees as dueling values: safety or land, people or territory. Just as significantly, Deborah equates Palestinian and Jewish life, which is unusual in this discourse.

Yet she suffers for asking this question; she mentions her broken heart three times in these few sentences and cried throughout. Her emotional expression suggests the difficulty of offering a view that is counter to the dominant position represented by the Israeli government and, reflexively, Jewish leadership that supports the Israeli government, in which holding onto the Land of Israel is a

²⁴⁰ Like all interviewees, Deborah signed a consent form agreeing to be interviewed.

supreme value. Deborah's suffering represents the emotional and psychological challenge of articulating this view in which Palestinian life holds potentially determinative value, within the Jewish community in which she is an active member. For Deborah, the existence of J Street already threatens her deeply-held preference for communal unity. The positions that she finds so heartbreaking to articulate – the suggestion (not assertion) that life, including Palestinian life, may matter more than land – are positions that fall outside of the lines of unity that she believes her community holds. Yet unity is a deeply held value, as well, and represents security in the face of ongoing threats to the Jewish collective.

Eli, Deborah's JCRC colleague, also spoke of some behind-the-scenes struggles with the public voice of his community. He articulated a strongly anti-occupation view during an interview, saying

The way that the settler movement and the government has gone about it over the last 40 years has been morally indefensible, in terms of land confiscations and enforcing an occupation on the population... We're talking about a very large number of people, with their own national identity, who've made it very clear that they don't want Israel to be ruling over their lives... I oppose people moving into the West Bank, quite frankly, and have for many many years.

At the same time, he said he was not able to speak out against the occupation within his professional role at the JCRC.

No, I can't [speak out against the occupation]. The JCRC is a consensus organization. The history goes back to the post-Holocaust era with some of American Jewry's seminal thinkers who were trying to figure out what happened on the American Jewish side, why did we fail to convince the US government to bomb the camps or bomb the railroad tracks or to take in more refugees. Where did we fail in the 1930s or 40s as a community. It came up in the analysis that it wasn't because of American Jews didn't do anything, we were trying, we were doing a lot, but we were working at cross purposes and sending different messages to the U.S. government, especially once the war started. ... And what was needed [after the war] was a body that will build consensus among all these factions, especially in the shock of the Holocaust and then with Israel's birth or rebirth. There was a real sense of needing a consensus voice. So that's what we do. The JCRC is a consensus. We have people in the JCRC, you know, the staff has a wide range of views, but certainly in the body itself, American Jews are widely divided on specific policies regarding Israel. And you know we have leftists and we have rightists and we have centrists. And most of the body feels that criticizing Israel is not the right thing to do... And for me it's been hard, you know, I've been dealing with the reality of my own convictions versus that of a large part of the body here.

Similar to Deborah's discussion of unity, Eli speaks of the importance of communal consensus, framing it in terms of the Jewish community's failure to effectively intercede for the sake of European Jewry during the Holocaust. In this formulation, consensus is imperative in the work for Jewish protection and survival in a hostile world. For that reason, Eli works to promote the consensus and not represent his own views of the immorality of occupation.

Yet he also spoke – off the record, once the microphone was turned off – of the marginalization of anti-occupation voices within Bay Area Jewish community spaces. After he spoke of the extremism of StandWithUs members with their “*intense annihilation issues*,” Eli asserted that the phenomenon of extremists having substantial influence “*is actually a problem all over the place*.” He offered an anecdote

from his synagogue, which set up an Israel Action Committee (IAC) after the outbreak of the second Intifada. He said that initially the IAC “*was made up of all sorts of people,*” but

Before too long, it was made up of only rightwingers. I asked a friend why he wasn’t involved with it anymore, and he said, “I love Israel, but I’m against the occupation. And they wouldn’t have me on the Israel Action Committee.” ... The JCRC also became unwelcome at this Israel Action Committee. This is the Israel Action Committee in my synagogue and the JCRC is not welcome because the JCRC does not support the occupation.

What Deborah and Eli both described is ambiguity and ambivalence behind the façade of acquiescence to consensus. Both also described a status quo in which articulating views contrary to the positions held by the Israeli government is cause for pain or struggle, or simply against the rules of consensus. Underneath this focus on consensus is a fear of Jewish vulnerability, a vulnerability that would go unprotected if not for an organized, unified Jewish front defending Jewish interests in the public sphere. Whereas Deborah and Eli both expressed ambivalent personal views that are subsumed under the umbrella of consensus, they work within an organization that has made deliberate, active decisions to marginalize, or exclude Jews whose views they reject within the consensus. Deborah and Eli both also make clear that it is the positions that challenge continued or expanded Jewish sovereignty over Palestinians that are considered outside the boundary of the communal consensus.

Marginalization of Jews who show too little fear

In the Bay Area, the Federation Guidelines create the semblance of communal unity, not only through guiding funding allocations but also through rules around which political positions may be voiced in programs in which their grantees participate. The Guidelines state that “Co-sponsorship or co-presentations of public programs on Middle East issues with supporters of the BDS movement”²⁴¹ fall outside of the boundaries of the Guidelines. As the Bay Area Jewish newspaper put it in an editorial “fully endors[ing] the new Federation policy,”

The policy particularly fingers those that endorse the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement (BDS), one of the more insidious weapons that Israeli government opponents²⁴² wielded in recent years. Grantees co-sponsoring or co-presenting Middle East-related programs with BDS supporters would violate the policy. ... Not a single community penny should support any speaker or event with a pro-BDS perspective.”²⁴³

The Guidelines form the boundaries that support and promote communal unity, primarily through barring views they find unacceptable, along with the people who hold them. One prominent community activist and cultural worker, a signatory to the *Forward* letter opposing the Guidelines, put it this way, saying that with the Guidelines, the Federation

²⁴¹ <http://thedailykibitzer.com/2010/02/18/policy/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁴² It is notable that the *j* editorial staff articulates the BDS movement as opposing the Israeli “government,” not the state of Israel. Their staunch opposition to BDS, and advocacy of closing communal gates to BDS supporters, suggests that support for government policies is inherent within their advocacy on behalf of the state.

²⁴³ <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/41463/federations-new-funding-guidelines-should-please-everyone> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

Drew the line and decided who was actually *in* their community, and now they can talk about oneness and dialogue all they want ... “we are one,” except for those Jews we cut off.

The imposition of “unity” requires establishing borders and boundaries around the united entity. The Bay Area has become a model of the formal establishment of barriers against allowing BDS supporters to enter or remain within the organized Jewish community. Performance of an appropriate form of fear for Israel and for Jews is at the center of that boundary-making.

The barring of BDS supporters relates to “*those fundamental questions about allies and bedfellows,*” as JCRC executive Deborah put it, saying

What I fear about selective divestment in the territories is that, well, it comes down to those fundamental questions about allies and bedfellows. I have no problem with it politically. It’s a pragmatic thing. I’ve watched the videos and read the text of the BDS organizers, and if I trusted that their intention was not the dissolution of a Jewish state but the creation of something positive, as opposed to the destruction of something that I see as positive, I would have no problem with it. I might actually be the first person to line up for it. [But] I know that’s not the end goal.

The tactic is not the problem for Deborah; her perception of the “*end goal*” of the BDS organizers is, and for that reason she cannot support selective divestment tactics that she would otherwise find acceptable. Laura spoke about the BDS movement leadership similarly in explaining the marginalization and exclusion of Jews who support some forms of BDS (represented in her narrative by JVP).

Part of the intention of the Guidelines was to draw that line [against JVP]. There’s a lot of resentment within the mainstream community against JVP. They see JVP as giving Jewish cover to true enemies of Israel... There’s a very real concern that JVP is giving cover to the really ugly parts of the BDS movement because they’re able to say, hey, we’ve got Jews. People are very angry about that.

If JVP “*giv[es] Jewish cover*” to “*true enemies of Israel,*” then it does more than not demonstrate love and loyalty for Israel; it either does not agree that these “enemies” are indeed “enemies,” or it actively supports and advances Israel’s “enemies.” Either way, it does not demonstrate the united opposition to Israel’s enemies that the rest of the organized Jewish community does. Through not recognizing Israel’s enemies appropriately, JVP does not demonstrate a shared sense of Israel’s vulnerability and Jewish fear around that vulnerability. In consequence, it is marginalized, denounced, and excluded from the Jewish community as organized and envisioned by dominant Jewish organizations.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ While the dominant Jewish organizations exclude and denigrate Jewish Voice for Peace, some of those organizations’ frontline partners have used physically or verbally confrontational tactics, including violence, against JVP. At the 2010 Israel in the Gardens, StandWithUs activists yelled insults at the Jewish Voice for Peace and Bay Area Women in Black vigilers. One activist threatened bodily harm. At a JVP monthly membership meeting in November 2010, StandWithUs activists interrupted, preventing the meeting from taking place. One StandWithUs activist used pepper spray against two Jewish Voice for Peace members. (The StandWithUs activist said she used the toxic substance in self-defense; the JVP members say they did not provoke the attack.) Following this confrontation, I spoke with leaders of the StandWithUs chapter. One of the leaders (a man who has represented the organization in public on many occasions) told me “This is about Jewish self determination. If the occupation were to end tomorrow and there were a Palestinian state next to

The exclusion of JVP illustrates that the dominant Jewish organizations use fear to represent the Jewish community to itself in addition to outsiders. To outsiders, the dominant Jewish organizations present Jewish fear and historical victimization as the reason to act according to Jewish preferences. In internal Jewish discourse, the articulation of Jewish fear operates largely as a marker of holding appropriate priorities and concerns for the Jewish people and the state of Israel. Fear manifests politically as a push for unity. That structure offers support of the policies of the Israeli government, such that the dominant Jewish organizations express Jewish unity through marginalizing criticism of the Israeli occupation, both within and outside of the Jewish community.

B. Facing Outward: Vulnerability as Political Resource

Jewish fears act as a resource for the development and expression of Jewish power. When facing perceived external threats, dominant Jewish organizations deploy the language of Jewish vulnerability as a political tool, rooting defense of Israel and Jewish community in the looming nightmare of Jewish powerlessness. While there are rare acts of violence against American Jews and defenders of Israel, the vast majority of events that inspire American Jewish defense of Israel are rhetorical. Since 2006, the JCRC has mobilized or assisted campaigns around murals, university conferences and student government initiatives, a children's art museum, bus advertisements, and public school textbooks. In each of these cases, the identified "threat" was symbolic. The JCRC, often together with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and other major Jewish organizations, claimed to speak on behalf of the Bay Area Jewish community as a whole and succeeded in changing the situations to which they objected. The evidence below consists of close readings of the JCRC and ADL's language in defining and responding to these perceived threats in three local incidents over the last few years. The language highlights the narrative of Jewish victimization and vulnerability and points to the use of the language of powerlessness as a resource for power.

The Blurring of Speech and Threat: The San Francisco State University Edward Said Mural

In 2006, the JCRC objected to images in a student-proposed mural at San Francisco State University. The proposed mural, planned by the General Union of Palestinian Students, was to honor Professor Edward Said and depict images of Palestinian culture, including an olive tree, traditional dancing, and buildings and phrases illustrating Palestinian links to both the homeland and the diaspora, such as the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and the Golden Gate Bridge, representing the geographic and cultural span of Palestinian culture and community. The JCRC's intervention resulted in changes to the mural, which the JCRC cites among the many accomplishments they describe in their historical timeline, noting that the mural was "inaugurated with the crucial revisions the JCRC asked for."²⁴⁵

The JCRC cited two images in the proposed mural as "explicitly offensive." These images were "Handala," the iconic cartoon image of a refugee child, barefoot and in tattered clothing, meant to invoke the centrality of and resistance to exile among Palestinians, and the image of an old-fashioned key.²⁴⁶ The mural's proposed Handala held a fountain pen in his right hand, pointing to a

the Jewish state of Israel, [JVP] wouldn't support it." To this man, JVP's position is unlike other anti-occupation groups. He said, "we would never do this to J Street or APN [Americans for Peace Now]." To him, JVP does not sufficiently defend or affirm the state of Israel, and its anti-occupation activism works too much in favor of Palestinians and too little in favor of Jews.

²⁴⁵ http://www.jcrc.org/about_history_2000s.htm (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

²⁴⁶ <http://www.handala.org/handala/index.html> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

scroll reading “I am from here, I am from there,” in Arabic (mirroring the same phrases in English on the left side of the mural). (These phrases are lifted from a poem that Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish wrote for Said in 2003 and reaffirm the Diasporic identity and links of the Palestinian collective.) In Handala’s left hand was an old-fashioned key, made of the letters for the word “return” in Arabic. The key is a common Palestinian symbol, again referencing Palestinian exile from their homeland and homes to which many still hold keys (Najjar 2007). The overall image invokes the notion of refugees returning to their homes; as a political position, the “right of return” is one of the central demands / characteristics of the realization of Palestinian collective rights (Najjar 2007).²⁴⁷ The JCRC describes these images as the “the anti-Semitic handala key, signifying the Right of Return, and the destruction of Israel.”²⁴⁸

Together with the campus Hillel, the JCRC approached the president of the university with concerns about the mural. The president rejected the original proposed plan of the mural, eventually agreeing to the mural once the image of Handala, with his pen and key, were removed.²⁴⁹ In an op-ed in the regional Jewish newspaper, the JCRC’s executive director and president lauded the university president’s decision, saying that his “censure” was “keeping Jews safe” and noting that he had been “accessible and responsive [to] Jewish students, Hillel, and the broader Jewish community” about the mural.²⁵⁰ In his objection to the original mural plan, the president wrote that

The proposed mural runs counter to values that we hope have taken deep root at San Francisco State, among them, pride in one’s own culture expressed without hostility or denigration of another.²⁵¹

In their opposition to the mural, the JCRC defends the state of Israel and Bay Area by rejecting the representation of Palestinian refugee experience and rights, which are core to Palestinian collective identity (Abu-Lughod and Sa’di 2007; Khalidi 1997). In doing so, the JCRC adopts the positions of the state of Israel and the majority of Jewish Israeli society; as social scientists Yoav Peled and Nadim Rouhana explain, “the right of return, more than any other issue, touches, for each side, on the essence of its history since the conflict began, and on its prospects for the future” (2004: 317). The JCRC rejects the premise of Palestinian refugee rights, describing them as “the purported...’right of return,’” with both the use word ‘purported’ and the quotations marks indicating the JCRC’s dismissal of this narrative. They claim that the Palestinian right of return is equal to “the concomitant destruction of the state of Israel.”²⁵² Similarly, the JCRC interprets Handala’s fountain pen as a sword, assigning violent intent where it was not immediately or obviously apparent.²⁵³ The JCRC supports its interpretive claims by explaining

²⁴⁷ Photo of proposed mural (which was made into a poster) here:

<http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/edward-said-mural-original> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

²⁴⁸ http://www.jcrc.org/about_history_2000s.htm (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

²⁴⁹ <http://xpress.sfsu.edu/archives/news/009515.html>. Photo of the mural as executed is here:

<http://www.palestineposterproject.org/poster/edward-said-mural-final> (Retrieved May 11, 2014.)

²⁵⁰ <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/30509/sfsu-president-keeping-jews-safe-with-mural-censure/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁵¹ <http://xpress.sfsu.edu/archives/news/006524.html> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁵² <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/30509/sfsu-president-keeping-jews-safe-with-mural-censure/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁵³ Dr. Faye Oweis, one of the lead artists on the SFSU mural, wrote an analysis of the use of symbols in the work of Naji Al-Ali, Handala’s creator. In Al-Ali’s drawings, he writes, “The pen becomes a sword that can cut through the microphones stands of the official Arab radio stations. The pen changes to become a candle

Yitzhak Santis, JCRC's Middle East Affairs Director, did invaluable research on the significance of these two symbols and why they would, as permanent fixtures on the side of a public building, send a chilling message to Jewish students and all on campus who support Israel's rights.²⁵⁴

Claiming expert knowledge on these symbols, the JCRC reads extremist political intent and sees a threat to Jewish students. The JCRC further argues that these symbols are forms of prejudice and inherently anti-semitic, writing “the Palestinian key is more than just a key, just as a conical hat on the top of a man dressed in white robes is more than just a hat.”²⁵⁵ In comparing a symbol of Palestinian refugee rights to the Klu Klux Klan, the white supremacist group known for its use of violence and intimidation against African Americans and Jews, among others,²⁵⁶ the JCRC frames Palestinian culture and political claims as stemming from anti-Semitism and inherently violent.

This view, which collapses the expression of Palestinian identity with violence and race-hatred, closes off the possibility of viewing Palestinian self-expression as anything other than threatening to Jews. It also collapses physical and rhetorical violence, and, within the category of rhetoric, fails to distinguish between actual threats of violence and speech that is interpreted as violent. That is, it fails to distinguish between speech such as “Destroy Israel, Kill Israelis” and “I support the Palestinian right of return,” seeing both as deadly threats against the state. This view sets up the construct in which the expression of Palestinian rights or desire for self-determination is by definition a threat to the state of Israel and, by extension, to Jews. At the same time, discursive space for assessing political will and desires, as well as the differences between real and perceived threats, is closed off. Framing the expression of Palestinian political will as a sign of eternal, unending and violent anti-Semitism leaves no space for engaging with that political will. Thus the rendition of a pen in a mural cannot be read as the exchange of sword for pen – of violence for rhetoric – but rather must be recast as a sword and therefore dangerously violent in and of itself.

Mapping the Threat: The H.O.M.E.Y. mural in the Mission neighborhood

Just a few months after the controversy at SFSU, the JCRC objected to images in another San Francisco mural. Again, they read Palestinian symbols as threatening total destruction of the state of Israel and danger towards Jews, and deploy language of Jewish vulnerability, trauma and lack of safety in their public objection. In so doing, they construct a defense, fear-oriented public representation of the Jewish community, aligning themselves with the more rightwing perspectives in both American Jewish and Israeli discourse around Israel.

that represents hope for the future, a future of freedom, democracy and human rights.” (<http://www.oweis.com/handala-exhibit.pdf>, page 13; retrieved May 12, 2014). In this interpretation, the pen is primarily poised to strike against authoritarian regimes and their media control, protesting against the abandonment of Palestinian refugees by Arab leadership. As Oweis writes, Handala’s “role in the cartoons was also to expose the brutality of the oppressor, whether it was the Israeli occupation, the dictatorship of the Arab regimes, or the hypocrisy of the Palestinian leadership.” (pages 10-11). Handala represents an insistence upon the rights of the most dispossessed and marginalized.

²⁵⁴ <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/30509/sfsu-president-keeping-jews-safe-with-mural-censure/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-files/ideology/ku-klux-klan> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

In this case, an organization that uses arts as part of a larger program of youth development and violence prevention among youth of color²⁵⁷ created a mural entitled “Solidarity: Breaking Down Barriers.” The mural, located in San Francisco’s Mission district, primarily focused on images and issues directly concerning Latino youth. Anna Maria Morrison, reporter for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, described the mural in this way

Taking unity as a starting point, the artists began by brainstorming about the influences that divide people, communities, and cultures: everything from national boundaries to gang-affiliated colors. No national flags appear in the 100-foot-long painting. The United States–Mexico border wall figures prominently, snaking through the background of the mural’s central panels, but it’s juxtaposed with portrayals of intra- and interethnic alliance in the foreground.²⁵⁸

One part of the mural addressed Israel and Palestine. Anna Maria Morrison writes

One controversial panel on its far right-hand side threatened to overshadow the entire project. It’s a portrayal of Palestinians garbed in traditional Arab kaffiyeh head scarves breaking through a concrete wall — ostensibly the Israeli West Bank security barrier. The image fits into a third-world rights vignette expressing solidarity with indigenous groups and colonized peoples.²⁵⁹

The original image, visible here,²⁶⁰ portrays a concrete surface mapped with names of countries and lands that have faced colonizing forces, including Ohlone, Vietnam, Iraq, Haiti, and Palestine. A hole in the wall in the shape of the map of Israel/Palestine (the size of the Greater Land of Israel) lets in light and air; blue sky is visible through the hole, and sunshine beams from it. Five human figures are portrayed as coming through the wall: a woman in a hijab with a stern expression, hand up, fist closed; a man in a traditional kaffiyeh, holding a banner that says “Our Mission: Self Determination for All!;” a child flashing the peace sign; a teenage boy with a kaffiyeh around his forehead; and, leading the way through the wall, a person whose face and hair is entirely covered by the kaffiyeh, much in the manner of Palestinian resistance figures. Another banner reads “Breaking down borders.”

The JCRC objected to this portion of the mural, which the regional Jewish newspaper described as “a quintet of surly, kaffiyeh-wearing Arab figures bursting through a fissure shaped exactly like the state of Israel.”²⁶¹ The JCRC sent a letter²⁶² to the San Francisco Arts Commission asking that the Arts Commission “insist” on changes in the mural (“that this mural portray non-violent imagery”) or “halt this project, arguing that the image of the security barrier “is exceedingly threatening” and “victimizes Jewish members of the Mission neighborhood.” This language — “threatening,” “victimizes” — echoes the themes of endangerment and lack of safety for Jews on account of particular images of Israel.

²⁵⁷ <http://www.homey-sf.org/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁵⁸ <http://www.sfbg.com/2007/11/28/against-wall?page=0,0> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁵⁹ An image of the mural is here: http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2007/homey_mural.jpg (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁶⁰ http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2007/homey_mural.jpg (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁶¹ <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/33454/web-exclusive-mission-mural-to-tone-down-but-not-remove-pro-palestinian-ima/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁶² Letter: <http://jewishmuralsupport.wordpress.com/2007/09/01/jcrc-letter-to-sf-arts-commission/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

Consistent with their ideology, the JCRC letter speaks of the state of Israel as core to Jewish identity and culture and the symbol and culmination of Jewish struggle against persecution. They write

The breach in the security barrier is in the shape of the map of Israel, apparently meant to represent “all of Palestine.” The implication is a rejection of a peaceful two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. This perspective negates the existence of Israel. Israel represents to the majority of Jews and to our collective identity our people’s quest for self-determination and overcoming oppression and powerlessness.

This argument is particularly illuminating with regard to the logic and assumptions the JCRC employs. The JCRC describes the breach in the concrete wall as the “shape of the map of Israel” with no quotation marks or modifiers, unlike their interpretation of the mural as “apparently” representing ““All of Palestine.”” Here they set up a binary opposition between Israel and Palestine, offering the map of Greater Israel (the rightwing Zionist ideological vision for the state, according to which Israel maintains sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza)²⁶³ as the legitimate, agreed-upon hegemonic map. Based on this foundation, they interpret the breach in the wall as “negat[ing] the existence of Israel,” which is, they argue, a negation of the collective Jewish struggle to “overcome[e] oppression and powerlessness.” The media articles²⁶⁴ about this mural also describe the crack in the wall as being in the shape of the state of Israel, showing the hegemony of this elision between Israel’s political map and the rightwing Zionist claims to Greater Israel. This elision affirms an equation in which a challenge to Jewish sovereignty over Greater Israel represents a challenge to the state as a whole, to the entire Jewish collective, and, specifically, to the Jewish individuals who will be “victimize[d]” by its presence. In this way, a representation of Palestinian claims or culture is read as a direct threat against the security of a Jew in the United States.

The references to the map establish the representation of Palestinian political will as a threat to the entire enterprise of the state of Israel and thus to Jewish collective identity. The hegemonic presentation of the map also erases the borders of the West Bank and Gaza, which will supposedly serve as the foundation for the “peaceful two state solution.” It reflects a larger theme of rendering Palestinian life and culture invisible, which the JCRC’s letter does in a number of places. The JCRC claims that the mural section addressing Israel/Palestine “is the only one that stands out as not being part of the experiences of American minorities in San Francisco,” thus erasing the presence of an estimated 7,000 Arabs in San Francisco (Lopez 2002).²⁶⁵ In language echoing that of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, the JCRC letter defends the Israeli security barrier as saving (“an estimated 2,000”) lives.²⁶⁶ This hypothetical argument stands in opposition to the measurable, and therefore articulable, destruction that this barrier has caused to Palestinian life.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ See Chapter 3 for longer discussion about the role of maps in discourse on the state of Israel.

²⁶⁴ Indeed, one of the j articles about the mural said the breach was “shaped exactly like the state of Israel.” <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/33454/web-exclusive-mission-mural-to-tone-down-but-not-remove-pro-palestinian-ima/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁶⁵ This estimate includes Palestinians and other immigrants and their descendants from North Africa and the Middle East.

²⁶⁶ <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/terrorism/palestinian/pages/saving%20lives-%20israel-s%20anti-terrorist%20fence%20-%20answ.aspx> (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

²⁶⁷ See, for example, this 2012 report, *Arrested Development: The Long Term Impact of Israel's Separation Barrier in the West Bank*, from the Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem (http://www.btselem.org/download/201210_arrested_development_eng.pdf; retrieved May 13, 2014).

The JCRC discussion of the security breach illustrates the deployment of language regarding a global sense of Jewish unsafety. The JCRC argues that the imagery of the barrier breach “victimizes Jewish members of the Mission neighborhood for whom the security barrier has prevented the loss of lives of family and friends in Israel.” That is, the JCRC argues Jews are “victimized” by the symbolic challenge to a structure that the JCRC claims has literally saved the lives of their friends and family. In this, the JCRC not only establishes Israelis as victims of terror and Palestinian aggression but argues that San Francisco’s Jews are victims through their closeness with Israel. The symbolic challenge is equated with acts of physical violence and terror (thereby also erasing the Palestinian victims of actual, physical violence; see above). Because “the image of violently breaking down a security barrier that has saved thousands of lives is exceedingly threatening to our community,” the JCRC lobbied the San Francisco Arts Commission to intervene and force the mural artists to alter their imagery. Following the JCRC and ADL objections, San Francisco froze the artists’ paychecks (effectively halting the project) and a series of meetings were held with the JCRC, the Anti-Defamation League and groups representing or defending the artists.²⁶⁸

A compromise was reached and a number of the images were changed. The leading figure’s face was made visible and rendered as a woman, perhaps to soften or neutralize her leadership in accordance with the gendered view that associates masculinity with the use of militarized violence (Enloe 2000). An olive tree was added, bringing in reference to a traditional symbol of peace, as well as Palestinian ties to the land (Abufarha 2008: 353). A larger sky-scape was added, altering the shape of the crack in the wall such that it no longer represents any map. While the JCRC and ADL lent their agreement to this compromise, they were “not pleased” about it, arguing that the mural remains “polarizing,” “divisive,” and “ostracizing” to Jews.²⁶⁹ The “divisive” accusation is particularly telling, in that it includes within it the assumption that “unity” existed prior to the divisive incident. That is, the use of the term “divisive” blames the muralists, or perhaps Palestinians, for creating disagreement, suggesting that unity over Israeli policies existed prior to this expression of “solidarity” with Palestinians.

During this controversy, the JCRC and the ADL did not represent the Jewish community as a whole, despite their claims to do so. Some Jews spoke out against the efforts of the JCRC and the ADL and on behalf of the HOMEY artists. In one petition circulated on the internet, an ad-hoc Jewish group wrote that they stood “in solidarity, as Jews, with local communities in their struggle for self-determination and their self-expression” and directly rejected the claims of anti-semitism, writing that “nothing in the mural is anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish.”²⁷⁰ Members of Jewish Voice for Peace also wrote a letter to the Arts Commission in which they directly countered the claims of a united Jewish community, saying

As Jews living in San Francisco and other parts of the Bay Area, we wish you to know that the complaints of the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Anti-Defamation League do not reflect our views... We ask you not to accept the opinions of the JCRC and ADL uncritically.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/33454/web-exclusive-mission-mural-to-tone-down-but-not-remove-pro-palestinian-ima/> (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

²⁶⁹ <http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/33454/web-exclusive-mission-mural-to-tone-down-but-not-remove-pro-palestinian-ima/> (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

²⁷⁰ http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/HOMEY_Mural_Support/ (Retrieved April 27, 2014.)

²⁷¹ <http://muzzlewatch.com/2007/09/20/agreement-reached-over-san-francisco-mural-changes-to-image-of-israels-wall/> (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

These explorations of JCRC objections to Palestinian imagery and symbolism illustrate the ways in which the JCRC calls upon Jewish historical persecution as a political resource. They also point to the easy line drawn between the frame of “vulnerability” to rightwing positions. While claiming they represent the will of the organized Jewish community in defending Israel, both of these cases illustrate that the JCRC’s political positions closely resemble rightwing advocacy for a Greater Israel. This orientation includes identifying Palestinian collective representations as threatening to Israel, and Jews, as a whole, as well as the defense of the expansive view of the Israeli map. The security argument for maintaining Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank rests upon claims of Israel’s vulnerability and insecurity without it. Numerous Israeli Prime Ministers, including Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu, have referred to the 1967 boundary between Israel and the West Bank as “Auschwitz borders”²⁷² to which Israel cannot return. American Jewish organizations, such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center,²⁷³ and advocates, such as Alan Dershowitz,²⁷⁴ also deploy this term in their defense of Israel against pressure (such as from the United States) to negotiate with Palestinians on the basis of the 1967 border. The JCRC’s approach thus reflects these entangled threads: the idea that expression of Palestinian identity is an attack on the state of Israel, critique of Israeli occupation policy is also an attack on the state, and both reflect a sense of Jews as permanently under mortal threat.

“Litigating Palestine” Conference at UC Hastings College of Law

In 2011, faculty at the UC Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco and the Trans Arab Research Institute organized a conference focused on the efficacy and potential of legal solutions for achieving Palestinian rights. Conference organizers described the conference’s objective as aiming “to critically evaluate the strategies, limitations, successes and failures of efforts to vindicate Palestinian rights in a variety of different court systems in the United States and abroad.” They noted that the conference had both “practical and academic significance,” starting with the “strategic

²⁷² Proponents of this phrase often cite Abba Eban, former Israeli Foreign Minister, as its originator. According to the New York Times,

That resonant phrase, which suggests that Israelis would face genocide should they withdraw fully from the land they have occupied since the end of the 1967 war, is based on a mangled version of a remark made by the Israeli diplomat Abba Eban in 1969. According to Haaretz, Mr. Eban told the German newsweekly Der Spiegel in that year: “We have openly said that the map will never again be the same as on June 4, 1967. For us, this is a matter of security and of principles. The June map is for us equivalent to insecurity and danger. I do not exaggerate when I say that it has for us something of a memory of Auschwitz.”

Israeli leaders have frequently used some version of this phrase to invoke the existential dread of the Holocaust when pressed to withdraw from the occupied territories as part of a peace agreement. (http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/19/israeli-settlers-reject-the-auschwitz-borders/?_r=0; retrieved October 30, 2013.) Eban referred to “insecurity and danger” as evoking “a memory of Auschwitz.” In contemporary discourse, this “memory” has become, rather, the presumption of imminent danger of genocide. The morphing of Eban’s words into the explicit rightwing position – defense of the map of Greater Israel and a refusal to negotiate based on international agreements – is another example of the drafting of Jewish historic vulnerability into defense of rightwing positions. It is also another indication of the elision between, and indivisibility of, perceived and real threat in public discourse.

²⁷³

<http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lsKWLbPJLnF&b=4441467&ct=10711363#.UnE1upTk9n8> (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

²⁷⁴ <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/honest-broker/> (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

judgments” that “those considering avenues for advancing Palestinian rights” make in terms of investing resources. Of particular interest was the question of “whether law suits make sense as a tool for justice.”²⁷⁵

The organized Jewish communal leadership saw this conference in a different light than the organizers portrayed it. Seeing the conference as “anti-Israel political organizing conference under the guise of legal respectability,”²⁷⁶ the JCRC, together with the ADL and American Jewish Committee, mobilized UC Hastings alumni and others to lobby the UC Hastings administration to distance itself from the conference. In addition to “lots of way behind the scenes calls” and emails, the Jewish communal leadership also held a meeting with the Dean, at which they requested the university “disentangle itself officially from the conference” by, among other things, removing its sponsorship and canceling the Dean’s planned welcome speech. After the UC Hastings Board of Directors held a “closed door, emergency meeting,” the university removed the “UC Hastings name and brand” from the conference and canceled the Dean’s planned welcome speech, thus fulfilling the JCRC’s requests.²⁷⁷ The JCRC also contacted a supporting foundation, which withdrew their support following JCRC intervention. Following these last minute changes, the conference took place as scheduled. Afterwards, nearly all tenured faculty at Hastings signed a letter opposing the administration’s decision to withdraw its sanctioning of the conference.²⁷⁸

In an op-ed, Rabbi Doug Kahn, the executive director of the JCRC, wrote the conference was part of a larger “delegitimization” campaign, arguing that “delegitimization” efforts are “generally not about criticizing specific policies of the Israeli government. They are about seeking a world without Israel.” He continued, “Is there any doubt this movement is not about human rights but about an unshakeable hatred of Israel?”²⁷⁹ Yet what is this “unshakeable hatred” the JCRC identified in the “Litigating Palestine” conference?

The JCRC’s briefing on this event explains that “our predictions of extreme bias and efforts at political organizing” at the conference were borne out. The briefing included a list of “recurring themes” that a conference attendee provided as evidence. The entire list the JCRC provides is as follows:

- Israel’s illegal occupation
- Palestinians as the victims of Israeli aggression
- Israel’s illegal conquest and continued sovereignty over Palestinian land
- Palestinian political disempowerment
- Israel’s perpetration of “state terrorism” against the Palestinians
- Israel’s depiction as a rogue, illegal, oppressive, genocidal state

²⁷⁵ http://tari.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=167&Itemid=89 (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

²⁷⁶ Unless otherwise noted, information on and quotes from the JCRC and organized Jewish communal response to the conference comes from a JCRC newsletter, “Behind the Scenes at JCRC CXXV: A candid frequent briefing by Rabbi Doug Kahn, JCRC Executive Director, for Jewish Community Leadership” from April 4, 2011.

²⁷⁷ <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Hastings-board-pulls-UC-brand-from-rights-meeting-2375234.php> (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ <http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/openforum/article/A-campaign-to-delegitimize-Israel-2373982.php> (Retrieved May 13, 2014.)

What this list suggests is, again, that the Jewish communal leadership reads the articulation of a Palestinian-based claim or narrative with regard to Israeli policy as a threat against the state of Israel. In an interview for this dissertation, JCRC leadership explained that JCRC intervention in an academic institution is extremely rare (“*I could count on one hand the number of times we’ve approached an academic institution and asked for this kind of action*”). This statement and the fact of the JCRC’s intervention attests to the level of threat the JCRC identified in this conference.

III. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter looked at the concepts of Jewish vulnerability and fear from a number of different angles, exploring the meaning and implications of Jewish insecurity for the character and behavior of the dominant American Jewish organizations. In a discussion of the content of Jewish fear, this chapter looked at the theme of the destruction of Jewish life as a constant in organized Jewish life and also as a motivator for Jewish communal mobilization against contemporary threats. These threats include military and discursive threats against Israel as well as the fear that young Jews are distancing themselves from Israel and from Jewish life. Within the Jewish community, holding and expressing fears for Israel operates as a sign of communal membership, and its perceived absence is taken as a sign of chosen estrangement from the Jewish community. Facing the external world, the dominant Jewish organizations can invoke Jewish fears as a means of achieving certain political aims. This chapter has also demonstrated the overlap between expressions of Jewish fear and rightwing defense of the state of Israel, which includes rejection of many forms of popular expression of Palestinian identity.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This dissertation is a study of the intersection between the diaspora of an ethno-religious nation and its relationship to the same nation's national state. It is a study in three interconnected parts: first, it looks at the emotional disposition of the collective – the emotional habitus (Gould 2009) – as it relates to a collective orientation towards the state. Second, it looks at the behavior and choices of the central organizations that convene, represent, and construct the collective in its relationship to the state. And third, it attends to the ways in which these central organizations police the boundaries of the community according to their rules with regard to the state of Israel. These different elements are deeply interrelated, as emotional expression is a cultural phenomenon that is taught, regulated, sanctioned, and condemned with tangible consequences. As this dissertation has demonstrated with regard to the state of Israel, the dominant Jewish organizations seek to socialize American Jews into the normative relationships with the state of Israel, starting from the basis of Jewish connection to the state and American Jewish obligation to support and defend the state through advocacy, political action, and financial contributions. These norms are upheld, imposed, and implemented through a variety of programs, regulations, and restrictions. The bonds of connection and expectation rest upon and operate through emotional channels and discourses, and for that reason this dissertation has focused upon the emotional qualities at work in belonging to the collective, marginalization and exclusion from it, and constructing and maintaining boundaries around it.

This dissertation has argued that the nation has long seen itself as an extended family, placing high value on interdependence and mutual care among family / nation members. Such care and investment in each other has been institutionalized in an extensive network of organizations that form the infrastructure for the human communities that make up the nation and sustain and enliven its traditions, memories, beliefs, and practices. One core element of this nation's culture is the deeply cherished homeland, a memory of the people's collective origins and a symbol of their connection to their god and the promise of a future free of the oppression this nation has long suffered as a persecuted minority. Millennia of commemorative practices, storytelling, ritual, and a reverence for yearning have nurtured these fantasies.

The emergence of the state in the mid 20th century brought into political relief the religious longing, historical connection, and critical need for protection from persecution for a substantial segment of this nation's population. While the emphasis on religious ties to a political structure is not unusual, what is unique in this case of American Jews' relationships to the state of Israel is the cultivation of religious, ethnic, and political connection to a state in which this collective does not live. The state of Israel remains, largely, a symbol and American Jews cultivate their attachment to the state of Israel for the sake of their own diasporic community (Kelner 2010). One senior San Francisco-based rabbi told me, in light of San Franciscan Jews' low rates of religious observance and high rates of intermarriage, Israel "is all they've got." In other words, it is the performing affection for and attachment to the state that makes these Jews Jewish.

Yet the performance and maintenance of these bonds of attachment to the state of Israel through collective Jewish vehicles has real political consequences. With her clear-eyed analysis, Hannah Arendt warned of the ramifications of establishing a specifically Jewish state: it would "produc[e] a new category of refugees," the Palestinians (Arendt 1968 [1951]: 290); the state would rely on foreign powers for protection if they could not achieve peaceful relations with their Arab neighbors,

and as such would appear to be the “tools, the agents of foreign and hostile interests,” which would “inevitably lead to a new wave of Jew-hatred” (Arendt 1945, republished in *The Jewish Writings* 2007: 345); and the lack of peaceful relations with Arab neighbors or equality for all citizens would lead to a state “absorbed with physical self-defense to a degree that would submerge all other interests and activities...political thought would center around military strategy” (Arendt 1948, republished in *The Jewish Writings* 2007: 396). Arendt wrote these words in the 1940s, and her predictions about the state have proven accurate. She also wrote, “every believer in a democratic government knows the importance of a loyal opposition. The tragedy of Jewish politics at this moment is that it is wholly determined by the Jewish Agency [the Israeli government-in-waiting] and that no opposition to it of any significance exists either in Palestine or America” (Ibid: 393).

This dissertation has argued that the American Jewish establishment’s insistence that “wherever we stand, we stand with Israel,” works to limit the potential development of any significant “loyal opposition” from within the Jewish community. It also sustains support for the state of Israel’s systematic privileging of Jews over non-Jews. As that opposition has emerged nevertheless, both from within the organized Jewish community and outside of it, the dominant Jewish organizations invest effort into shutting their doors against the critical questions and debate that a growing number of Jews wants to hold within their communities. Belonging to a collective is at the core of human experience, and the threat of becoming marginalized, stigmatized, or excluded from one’s collective can be enough to silence potential critics. And, yet, despite the American Jewish establishment’s concentrated efforts, the number of critics is increasing, as is public attention to the deliberate silencing and exclusion of Jewish critics of Israeli policy and the Israeli state. As of this writing, in the aftermath of J Street’s failed bid to gain membership in the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, there is new talk about the need to open communal organizations to a fuller range of Jewish voices.²⁸⁰ Similarly, there is a growing movement of college students explicitly rejecting the Israel guidelines imposed by the national organization of campus Hillels restricting their engagement with questions about and criticism of the state of Israel.²⁸¹ What these efforts demonstrate is a pushback against the coercive side of belonging to the organized Jewish community.

Yet as the pushback increases, so too do the efforts to retain control over the boundaries of Jewish discourse around the state of Israel. One progressive Jewish leader, committed both to Jewish community and to fighting publicly for human and civil rights for all people under Israeli authority, recently observed that the Jewish communal tent has “widened considerably” over the last few years. “Thus,” he continued, we see “the increasingly desperate and vituperative attacks to narrow it again.”²⁸² As Israel’s system of ethnic privilege becomes further entrenched through Israeli expansion on the West Bank, and as the popular movements against this systematic discrimination and denial of human rights continue to grow, it seems clear that the American Jewish future will contain more contestation and fragmentation. This study has identified and analyzed the fault lines for those ongoing struggles over belonging, representation, and the ethical obligations this collective has to itself and to others.

²⁸⁰ Such as by the Union for Reform Movement’s response, which explicitly states that “We will no longer acquiesce to simply maintaining the facade that the Conference of Presidents represents or reflects the views of all of American Jewry.”

http://urj.org/about/union/pr/2014/?syspage=article&item_id=111640 (Retrieved May 6, 2014).

²⁸¹ <http://www.openhillel.org/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

²⁸² Personal communication, May 2014.

A future research agenda could take up many questions raised in this dissertation. Among them would be to attend to the many individuals within the dominant Jewish organization who do not necessarily agree with their organization's policies but yet uphold them. One may ask empirical questions about consequences for speaking out, the building of alliances, and the identification of pressure points: at what times and in what ways does the boundary-making fail to work, both for representatives of dominant organizations and for rank-and-file members of the Jewish community? Additionally, the dominant organizations overlap and often collaborate with state agencies and thus exclusion and marginalization in one's local community may have consequences backed by state power, such as refusal of entry into Israel (as has happened to many activists and some public figures) or investigative hearings by the Israeli Knesset (as were conducted about J Street). What are the ties between American Jewish organizations and the disciplinary arms of the Israeli state, and how do these relate to the U.S. security state?

This dissertation did not attend specifically to the ways in which Palestinians and other Arabs are talked about inside of these Jewish communal spaces nor to their absence in presenting their own narratives. Future research should attend to the silences in Jewish spaces and the silencing of Palestinian perspectives within Jewish discourse.

Theoretical questions with regard to identities, belonging, and relationships to the Other may also be explored through questions of which issues and discussions are controversial and which are allowed; at this moment, there is growing attention paid to the marginalization of Jewish critics of Israel, but little to the absence of Palestinian voices or narratives from Jewish discourse around the state. There is much left to investigate with regard to the sociology of emotions, as well. This dissertation looked at the valences of particular emotion-based links between a collective and a state but did not address whether and how political orientations intersect with the experience of these emotional norms. In what ways do moral values and political orientation shape one's experience of emotion and of the feeling rules that sanction, condemn, and regulate emotional expression? This dissertation's epilogue explores young Jews' remaking of their socialization into Jewish community and their rejection of the politics of fear. A future research project might seek to understand what resources these young people call upon to enable them to reinterpret these core concepts of Jewish identity and attempt to reshape their Jewish community.

It is my hope that this dissertation may serve as a stepping stone to further inquiries on the ways in which dominant communal bodies police discourse and discussion, marginalizing and silencing critics of Israel's system of ethnic privilege. Currently, mainstream cultivation of American Jewish attachment to Israel reaffirms this system. At the same time, the default version of mainstream Jewish support for the state of Israel, both through advocacy and financial contributions, strengthens Israel's colonial project on the West Bank. The ongoing efforts to limit and close off debate over Israeli policy and American Jewish relationships to the state of Israel prevent the American Jewish community from fully wrestling with their culpability for the discriminatory and unjust consequences of their engagement with the idea and the state of Israel. It is my hope that this research will help open up the American Jewish conversation and contribute to a meaningful reckoning.

EPILOGUE

YOUNG PEOPLE RESPOND: RESISTANCE AND REINTERPRETATION

Many young Jews have pushed back at the expectations that they become properly socialized into the paradigm of articulated threats and a sense of permanent vulnerability for Israel and for Jews. Throughout the course of gathering data for this dissertation, I observed many instances in which young Jews rejected the dominant framing of Jewish history, fear, safety, and the explanations of Jewish and Israeli power within those frames. These young people did not necessarily reject the idea of feeling or having fear for Israel, but they resisted the demands that they express their connections to Israel within the hegemonic framework and slogans provided by the dominant Jewish organizations.

Alison Jaggar (1986) writes of “outlaw emotions,” which are “distinguished by their incompatibility with the dominant perceptions and values” (160). The very existence of these emotions demonstrates that “feeling rules” (Hochschild 1990) are not fully hegemonic, as people do not always feel or express the acceptable emotions. “Outlaw” emotions, specifically, refer to emotions that may be “politically and epistemologically subversive,” and are often felt by “subordinated individuals” for whom the dominant emotional frame extracts a high cost (Jaggar 1986: 160). For young Jews, the dominant emotional frame is one in which Jewish vulnerability requires Jewish power and justifies demands for Jewish unity. Struggles over the meaning of Jewish unity are particularly acute on college campuses, where Hillel, the organization of Jewish campus life, imposes guidelines that prohibit certain views and orientations towards Israel from being welcome inside of Hillel.²⁸³ Throughout my fieldwork, I argue that young people’s resistance against the dominant frames works through three primary reframing acts: first, claiming space for their existence separate from the dominant frame; second, rejecting the expectations placed upon them; and third, asserting the new frame, the “outlaw” frame, which reinterprets the lessons of Jewish history and demands for Jewish power.

1. Claiming space

In every setting in which young people pushed back against the statements and analysis offered by the dominant Jewish organizations and other Jews who represent those views, these young people first named their connection to Jewish life before they entered into their question or analysis. In each case, they claimed a connection to Judaism, Jewish community, or Israel – and often all three – before offering a point counter to the dominant frame. In so doing, these young people assert that they are insiders to this community and try to claim a space within the communal conversation for their perspective.

²⁸³ <http://www.hillel.org/jewish/hillel-israel/hillel-israel-guidelines>; (Retrieved April 27, 2014.) These guidelines are similar to the San Francisco Federation guidelines, and also draw lines against boycott, divestment, and sanctions. There have been a number of instances in which Jewish Voice for Peace chapters have been rejected from campus Hillels (e.g. Brandeis University) and J Street chapters have been rejected from Hillel bodies (such as the Jewish Student Union at University of California, Berkeley and Boston University). Student-initiated events, such as with Israeli military veterans critical of the occupation, have been barred from Hillel buildings on many campuses across the country or faced extensive restrictions as prerequisite to holding to the event at Hillel. These restrictions are not placed on organizations seeking to bring Israeli soldiers or veterans who do not aim to speak out against the occupation, nor are they placed on most right-wing advocates of continued Israeli occupation.

At a panel on Zionism at the Jewish Community High School by the Bay, a young Jewish woman introduced herself by saying “I’m an undergrad at Stanford, I’m Israeli, and I’m a Zionist.” She first established her Jewish and Zionist credentials before she engaged with the speakers and challenged their discourse on criticism of Israel. She said,

One thing that’s going on here is a conflation of terms. Anti-Gaza war, anti-Zionist, anti-Israel, anti-occupation; we have to distinguish between these and not use them interchangeably...I challenge the speakers to define anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism. Maybe the question on campus is really, was the Gaza war the best action for Israel to take, and not, does Israel have the right to exist.”

For this student, distinguishing between labels for criticism of Israel is necessary for talking about Israeli policy, and questioning Israeli policy does not equal challenging the country’s existence. Here, the student asks for a careful analysis instead of a totalizing one.

At another panel, this one at the Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly in 2010, a man in his early 30s stood up during the question and answer period and said “*I’m a young, progressive Jew and I advocate for Israel.*” He then continued with “*and I strongly oppose the occupation.*” This young man first offered his legitimacy as a Jew dedicated to Israel before including his anti-occupation orientation. When he mentioned the occupation, the moderator interrupted him quickly and pushed him to either ask a question or sit down. The young man continued, saying “*how can I speak to the issues I care about without being called a delegitim�er of Israel?*” His question, like the question of the Stanford student, points to young people rejecting what they see as an either/or frame for criticizing or supporting Israel. The occupation, and Israel’s 2008-9 war in Gaza, raise questions that these young people feel are outside of acceptable frames within the dominant community discourse.

The clearest example of this kind of space claiming comes from a group called “Young, Jewish, and Proud,” which is a youth wing organized by Jewish Voice for Peace. Comprising young people from across North America, Young, Jewish, and Proud (YJP) released a declaration in late 2010, which they called “*a vision of collective identity, purpose and values written by and for young Jews committed to justice in Israel and Palestine.*”²⁸⁴ The very name of this group states their claim within the Jewish community: as Jews and young people, they are proud of their Jewishness and of their activism for justice. The “proud” in their name is a response to the marginalization and exclusion these young Jews face for the views they represent. In the manner of the Stanford student and thirty-something year old progressive Jew, YJP also launched itself by making a claim for its presence in Jewish life. The declaration begins “*We exist. We are everywhere.*” And continues, “*We are your children, your nieces and nephews, your grandchildren...We have family, we build family, we are family.*”²⁸⁵ YJP begins by asserting their presence and their connection to the Jews who will read their declaration. They also lay claim to Jewish identity, by declaring, “*We remember. We remember slavery in Egypt, and we remember hiding our celebrations and rituals...We remember the camps...We remember our ancestors’ suffering and our own.*”²⁸⁶ With these statements, YJP claims the building blocks of Jewish collective memory as it is shared within the dominant frame: starting with the essential story of Jewish nationhood – slavery in and exodus from Egypt – and continuing with the Jewish history of persecution and suffering, from religious practice in medieval Europe to the concentration camps of the Holocaust. Naming these narratives and claiming them personally (“*we remember*”), YJP attempts to assert its claim over Jewish identity.

²⁸⁴ <http://www.youngjewishproud.org/about/> (Retrieved April 27, 2014.)

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

In addition to the memories of suffering, the YJP declaration asserts that these young Jews also “remember the labor movement,” “honor the legacy of radical intellectuals,” and “remember solidarity.”²⁸⁷ These are references to the history of Jewish political activism, which the young people also claim as their collective memory. In doing so, they not only assert their presence but start to reshape the framing of Jewish identity by their most basic articulation of that identity.

2. Rejecting Expectations and rejecting the frame

Another manner in which young people push back at the dominant frame is through an explicit refusal to accept the terms and language that the dominant organizations use to describe threats and boundaries with regard to Israel. The following examples illustrate these points.

One Sunday morning in December 2010, hundreds of Jews from around the Bay Area met in a San Francisco synagogue for a day of “modeling methods on civil discourse on Israel.” Through discussions and guided exercises, participants worked on how to have “a productive conversation” about Israel, including with people whose views differ from one’s own. One of the workshops featured students from a local campus known for its activism on Israel and Palestine. This workshop embodied the dynamics of this moment in Bay Area Jewish culture: a generational divide, the imposition of organizationally-structured external boundaries. These students, who had spent significant amounts of time in Israel (one held Israeli citizenship), were part of a campus group dedicated to supporting civil rights and democratic projects in Israel. Introducing the event, Beth, the JCRC staffperson said,

When I invited these students to speak at this event, Avi asked me what we should speak about and I said, how it feels to be a pro-Israel student on campus, and then added, if you identify yourself that way. Avi answered, what do you mean by pro-Israel? I said, okay, so you don’t see yourself as pro-Israel, do you see yourself as a Zionist? Avi said, what do you mean by that? So I said, “Jewish democratic state?”

Beth relayed this conversation in tone that was both serious and somewhat amused. She tried to concretize the students’ beliefs into already-accepted language; the terms she used are the key words, code words, codified in the Guidelines as appropriate discourse on Israel.²⁸⁸ The students resisted every term.

In an exercise to try to understand the students’ perspectives through existing thought categories, Beth read quotes about Israel from contemporary thinkers and asked the students which thoughts resonated with them. Again, the students resisted. Unable to have the students commit to any familiar frame, Beth asked them if they could “at least” agree on one thing, and asked, “are you afraid of Israel ceasing to exist?” The question posits that Israel is in danger of disappearing and asserts that this danger is cause for fear; the question asks whether or not the questioned person shares that fear. Sharing that fear, and the implicit affirmation of a kind of precariousness to Israel, is the lowest common denominator in discourse on Israel.

Instead of accepting the external label, these young college students led the crowd through an exercise in which participants wrote down their associations – their own definitions – to the terms “Zionist,” “Jewish and democratic,” and “pro-Israel.” Every person had the opportunity to define

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Including their campus grantees.

the term for his or herself, and to see and comment on others' definitions. Instead of operating upon assumptions of shared meaning, these college students demonstrated that these terms hold different meanings for different people, especially along generational lines, and made these differences transparent and present within the classroom.

At least some of the older people in the room were frustrated with the free-wheeling students, and a few of them repeatedly spoke of Israel's vulnerability. One got up in the middle of the session and left the room in a huff after telling the students they were very wrong in their views. Another, a senior professional in an East Bay big-tent organization, gave the students an impassioned and angry lecture about Jewish history and identity and their mistaken approach to it. Following the workshop, when I spoke with him one-on-one, he lamented that "*Israel used to be a source of positive identity and now it's not so people don't want to identify with it. Now it's negative.*" His statement reflects the discourse of anxiety around young Jews and their identification, or lack thereof, with Israel. Yet he offered this statement in response to a workshop in which young Jews were asserting their relationships with Israel, but explicitly resisting the framing that the older generation was giving them.

Another instance of the rejection of the given language is Young, Jewish, and Proud's appropriation of the term "delegitimize." At the 2010 JFNA General Assembly, YJP staged a protest during Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to thousands of attendees. Netanyahu, like Vice President Joe Biden before him, spoke about the growing threat of the delegitimization of Israel. YJP's young members stood up in the arena of Netanyahu's speech and reframed the use of that term, by holding banners with these words and shouting these slogans: "The settlements delegitimize Israel;" "The occupation delegitimizes Israel;" "Silencing dissent delegitimizes Israel;" "The siege on Gaza delegitimizes Israel;" and "The loyalty oath delegitimizes Israel."²⁸⁹ With these slogans, these young people stated their opposition to Israeli policy towards Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and inside of Israel (the reference to the loyalty oath). In addition, they rejected the framing, offered by the Israeli government, the American government, and the dominant Jewish organizations, of a delegitimization movement that includes many forms of Palestinian-rights-focused activism in which these young Jews engage. By using the term "delegitimize" to describe the Israeli government, the young people reject the dominant use of the term but affirm its severity. They affirm that grave dangers exist, and assign their cause to the actions and policies of the Israeli government.

3. Reinterpreting Jewish identity and reclaiming the Jewish collective

Finally, young people articulated their rejection of the dominant frame as specifically Jewish acts that reflect their commitment to Jewish values as they interpret them. For instance, the young man who asked a JFNA panel how he might criticize the occupation without being labeled a delegitimizer explained to me why this term delegitimization is so frustrating to him. He said

I think [the term delegitimization] is like calling someone an anti-semite, right? By calling someone a delegitimizer of Israel, what you're saying is that they have it in for Israel, there's a special interest in defaming the nation and questioning its existence. If I'm saying, I'm really upset about segregated busses in Jerusalem, that's not because I'm interested in the state being destroyed. That's because I'm interested in the state having the values that I see as being my Jewish heritage. What they'll say is that because you're having that conversation

²⁸⁹ <http://mondoweiss.net/2010/11/five-young-jews-disrupt-netanyahu-speech-with-call-for-new-jewish-identity.html>
(Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

in public where goyim can see you, what you're really trying to do is pass support on to the terrorists who want to destroy the country!

“Goyim,” a term originally Hebrew but widely used in its Yiddish pronunciation (as here), refers to non-Jews as a broad category; the “goyim” are those whom Jews are *not*. Here, this young man affirms the dominance of the public/private divide (of the “don’t air dirty laundry” imperative) out of a sense that public criticism of Israel endangers the state. Noting the existence of that fear, he rejects it. For this young man, criticizing Israel’s behavior reflects his care and commitment for the state and for his Jewish heritage.

Similarly, Young, Jewish, and Proud offered a protest outlet against Israeli policies towards Palestinians and the dominant Jewish organizations’ participation in supporting what YJP sees as injustice. In so doing, they made a claim for a vision of Jewish community based on the values they articulated in their declaration. These include “we won’t be won over by free vacations” in a reference to Birthright and other identity-building projects that provide free travel to Israel. “*We will grieve the lies we’ve swallowed,*” a rejection of their socialization by dominant Jewish organizations. And “*we commit to equality, solidarity, and integrity...we seek...dignity for all people,*” as an expression of commitment to Jews and Palestinians, equally.²⁹⁰ One element of the protest that stood out in data was the interaction between articulating these ideals and navigating relationships with family. At a Jewish Voice for Peace membership meeting in November 2010, a Jewish Voice for Peace senior staffperson explained the YJP protest to the crowd gathered in Berkeley. She said

It was an amazing opportunity to bring young people together and give them voice to say what they have to say...their voice is so compelling and so *theirs*. ... this became a lifechanging experience. I’ve heard that from many. And it catalyzed much in the Jewish institutional world. They’ll tell you – from people at every level in the Jewish institutional world, we’ve heard ‘thank you, you’re my hero’ or ‘I don’t quite agree but’ and they want to discuss ... and our people there had family in the room: from 4th grade Hebrew teachers to parents ... there is connectedness and rootedness and the courage and the fear – the real fear – of confronting your family.

According to this account, challenging a prime minister in public seems to be less of a challenge than facing one’s family. Indeed, one of the disrupters, an Israeli-American, did an interview with Israeli radio following the protest. The radio announcer asked this young man, “how can you protest the prime minister abroad? It’s airing dirty laundry.” More pointedly, the announcer said, “and what about your family? What do they say about what you did?” This question points to the frame by which protesting against Israel is akin to going against one’s family.

At that November 2010 JVP membership meeting, a number of StandWithUs activists interrupted and prevented the meeting from continuing. Standing in the middle of the room, they read speeches and gave lectures about Israel and its righteousness. After listening to a white-haired, middle aged StandWithUs disrupter speak, a young YJP activist, a Bay Area resident, said “*I felt like I was at my family dinner table there; it was a little startling for me to hear my father speaking here.*” The man of whom he spoke is not his actual father, but the man’s views on Israel resemble those of this YJPer’s father, and the tone the man took in reprimanding these YJPers felt familiar, as well. The YJPer then continued, saying “*we’re doing this because we are young Jews. It’s a really powerful moment for me. This is a*

²⁹⁰ <http://www.youngjewishproud.org/about/> (Retrieved May 12, 2014.)

Jewish journey I can claim.” For this young person, naming and rejecting the father figure was an element of making space for building the protest movement of which he is a part. Moreover, YJP is not only a gathering for protesting against Israeli policies towards Palestinians. It is also a “Jewish journey,” one that is personal and also a part of an organized effort to create a new collective based on asserting a claim to Jewish identity and Jewish community.

Conclusion

Alison Jaggar (1986) posits that “outlaw emotions” may be the “first indications” that something is wrong with the “accepted understandings of how things are” (161). As such, they may endanger the status quo, just as these young Jews do with their new articulation of Jewish identity. Jaggar notes that while individuals experiencing oppositional emotional impulses may feel “confused” or question their own sanity, the external validation of these emotions in the form of others who share them can lead to the creation of a new subculture (160). Not all outlaw emotions form the basis for a desired new community, she notes; not all alternatives are preferable to the status quo. Rather, in keeping with her opposition to sexism, racism, and other forms of discrimination and oppression, Jaggar suggests that the emotions to trust are the ones “characteristic of a society in which all humans...thrive” or “are conducive to establishing such a society” (161).

In the examples above, young Jews from across the United States reject the given assumption that a Jew should hear criticism of the state of Israel with an extra ear for a hidden call for its destruction, as the young Stanford student did when she suggested that campus debates over Israeli military action were just what they portended to be, rather than covering for questions over Israel’s “*right to exist.*” These young Jews reject the given notion that expression of Palestinian identity and Palestinian grievances against Israel are inherently, automatically opposed to Jewish identity, Jewish self-expression, and the safety and security of Jews both inside and outside the state of Israel, as the Young, Jewish, and Proud group proclaim in their founding declaration. Rather, these young Jews demonstrate that they are inheritors of an Arendtian tradition: considering themselves fully a part of the Jewish people, recipients of Jewish culture and memory, they neither accept nor reproduce the dominant political categories as these relate to their Jewish identities. Insofar as mainstream Jewish organizations continue to invest in producing, controlling, and regulating Jewish identity and appropriate orientations towards the state of Israel, and continue to target and focus on young people both on-campus and off, one may predict that the future of the Jewish community in the United States will hold a great deal more contestation and fragmentation.

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APPENDIX A

Advertisement placed in the English version of *The Forward*, the national Jewish newspaper, on April 10, 2010.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL JEWISH COMMUNITIES

Warning!!! We members of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish community are sorry to inform you that our usually liberal community has set a dangerous precedent that may affect the range of American Jewish voices on issues concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The San Francisco Jewish Community Federation recently approved new guidelines on “Israel-Related Programming” that limit debate, threaten dissent, and establish for the first time a litmus test for loyalty to Israel as a condition for funding the organizations it currently supports and others it would consider supporting (<http://sfjcf.wordpress.com/2010/02/18/policy/>).

Are these guidelines coming to your community? Specifically, the guidelines curtail freedom of speech and artistic expression by declaring certain opinions and organizations out of bounds. This policy does grave damage to the vibrancy of the American Jewish community. The language that describes excluded organizations is vague and open-ended—those that “advocate for or endorse undermining the legitimacy of Israel as a democratic Jewish state.”

More egregiously, the guidelines also exclude grantee organizations that co-sponsor or co-present programs on the Middle East with organizations or individuals “who undermine the legitimacy of the State of Israel.” Inevitably, the organizations the Federation excludes under these very vague guidelines will be determined by the politics of the person or persons charged with making the decision.

Despite the guidelines’ repeatedly stated commitment to the values of free and open discussion and diversity, they will have a chilling effect on the entire spectrum of community institutions, including educational, service, social justice and arts organizations. They will also limit American Jewish exposure to the range of art, literature, scholarship, and political discourse that exists in Israel. The guidelines will encourage self-censorship. Organizations will fear losing their funding; individuals will fear losing their jobs.

In the interest of human rights and civil liberties for all people, we strongly advocate for unfettered freedom of speech, open-minded public education, respectful discussion, and willingness to engage in that time-honored Jewish tradition of fruitful debate and meaningful dialogue. The Jewish community is riven by a fateful debate over the future of Israeli democracy and the occupation of Palestinian lands. Attempting to curtail that debate will only drive it into the shadows, where it will become ever more extreme.

The remedy for controversial speech is not silencing. The remedy is more speech.

.....

Professor Robert Alter University of California, Berkeley	Sandra Butler Debra Chasnoff Filmmaker	Ron H. Feldman, PhD Author	Victor Honig Rabbi Burt Jacobson	Naomi Newman Traveling Jewish Theater	Alan Shitow Filmmaker
Professor Deena Aranoff Graduate Theological Union	Kim Chernin Helen S. Cohen Filmmaker	Professor Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert Stanford University	Deborah Kaufman Filmmaker	Rabbi Jonathan Omer-Man Janis Plotkin	Professor Nancy Stoller University of California, Santa Cruz
Robert Arnold Filmmaker	Susie Coliver Rabbi David J. Cooper	Professor Estelle Freedman Stanford University	Professor Ari Y. Kelman University of California, Davis	Professor Alan Ramo Golden Gate University School of Law	Jim Van Buskirk Zoe Weiman-Kelman Graduate student, UC Berkeley
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Claudia Bernard Professor David Biale University of California, Davis	Rabbi Diane Elliot Professor Barbara Epstein University of California, Santa Cruz	Howard Herman Robert Herman	Josh Kornbluth Hannah Kranzberg	Robert Rubin Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights	Professor Steven J. Zipperstein Stanford University
Rachel Biale Chana Bloch Poet & translator	Candace Falk, PhD Emma Goldman Papers	Professor Emily Honig University of California, Santa Cruz	Rabbi Michael Lerner Tikkun Magazine	Cindy Shamban Jewish Voice for Peace	Eleanor Shapiro Professor Vered Karti Shemtov Stanford University
		Lorraine Honig	Professor Lawrence Marshall Stanford University		<i>Affiliations listed for identification purposes only</i>

We who have signed this Open Letter represent a very broad spectrum of opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but we all agree on the vital importance of freedom of expression and open discourse in the Jewish community.