# **Abstract**

This study examines on one hand the influence of political, personal, economic, and familial immigration drivers on the Israelis in Berlin and on the other hand the effect of rising anti-Semitism in Berlin on the Israeli immigrants' motivation to continue living in Berlin.

Israelis have been immigrating to Berlin, since the 1950s. In the beginning, this phenomenon was subject to severe criticism by fellow Israelis and was perceived as a betrayal of the values of Zionism. However, modern Israeli attitudes towards living in Berlin have changed significantly.

From the end of the 1990s until the present day, Israeli immigration to Berlin has increased due to economic, social, cultural, and political changes in Israel and Germany, alongside worldwide globalization processes.

As of June 2020, the exact number of Israelis in Berlin is unknown due to restrictions in collecting statistical data regarding German citizens from different ethnic origins including Israelis that have a second, German, passport.

According to the Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg (Berlin’s official statistical bureau) latest report of 31.12.2018, there are approximately 5,300 Israelis in Berlin, that Number includes only Israelis that are not German citizens and also requested or holding a valid Visa for education or employment purposes.

Since 2010 there has been a strong impetus for Israelis to immigrate to Berlin, due to several factors that will be discussed in this study. However, there is a simultaneous rise in anti-Semitic crimes in Berlin and Germany according to the 2018 annual report of the German interior ministry.

The purpose of this study is to examine the different incentives (economic, political, social-personal, and cultural) that have caused Israelis of different ages, family statuses, educations, and economic levels to move to Berlin, and in what way those motives are affected by the rising anti-Semitism in Germany.

This study has used both quantitative and qualitative methods. A survey was published to Israelis currently living in Berlin, who was contacted through Facebook groups such as “Israelis in Berlin” and “Normal Israelis in Berlin.” These groups include a large number of Israelis who live in Berlin today.

The survey was not published on other social media platforms, such as Instagram or LinkedIn, as they do not include large groups of Israelis in Berlin as Facebook. Also, today Facebook is the most effective social media platform for creating private and public groups. However, Israelis in Berlin that do not use Facebook were not exposed to the survey.

In-depth interviews were conducted with a smaller group of Israelis by video conference tools such as Skype and Zoom.

Analyses of the findings from the survey were completed using statistical tools such as SPSS. The interviews were carried out according to a thematic division.

The findings indicate that Israelis living in Berlin emigrated from Israel for many different reasons. The most dominant incentives were economic and cultural. The research also shows that there is only a slim connection between the Jewish community in Berlin and the Israelis living there. Regarding the effect of the rising anti-Semitism in Germany and Berlin, the research findings indicate that it has little effect on the Israelis living there and only has a minor effect on their desire to leave Berlin.

This research illuminates the complexity of the lives of Israeli immigrants living in Berlin. Their aspiration to belong to the German society in most cases takes precedent over their concern of the apparent rise for anti-Semitic actions and the renewed power of right-wing parties that support anti-immigrant agendas like the Alternative for Germany (AfD).

Despite longing to be a part of the German society, Israelis in Berlin nonetheless maintain a strong connection to Israel, by language, culture, and family connections Israel. Perhaps another reason is that Israel is a true sanctuary if the worst happens again in Germany.

# **1. Introduction**

The roots of the Berlin Jewish community date back to 1295, although all Jews were expelled from the area in 1573, only returning in 1669.[[1]](#footnote-1) From that date on, some Jewish presence has continuously managed to survive in Berlin despite multiple threats to the community's existence, most significantly the Nazi regime's attempt of total extermination. [[2]](#footnote-2) Some community members escaped the horrors of the Holocaust, with around 5000 Jews remaining in Berlin after WWII, a few of whom found their way to Israel, where they became involved in building the Jewish homeland.

Today, some second and third-generation survivors of the Holocaust live in Berlin, having immigrated to Germany from post-World War II Europe during the 1970s.[[3]](#footnote-3) Amongst these immigrants descended from German citizens are Israelisdescended from German Holocaust survivors, who made their homes in Israel after the war. This is attested by these Israeli immigrants having held German passports before their arrival in Berlin as evidence of their ancestry.[[4]](#footnote-4) This is a significant factor when discussing immigration, as Israelis value German passports highly amongst those of other European Union (EU) countries, possibly due to the social benefits German citizens receive. There may, however, be a symbolic reason for this too, as the passports serve as written evidence of the Nazi regime's failure. On a more pragmatic level, it may be that life in Germany is simply an appealing alternative to Israel with its high cost of living.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Pragmatism aside, the question of why Israelis choose to emigrate to Germany, a country that holds a long and painful history for Jews, must still be asked.[[6]](#footnote-6) There is a

particular dissonance when it concerns the children or grandchildren of Holocaust survivors who willingly immigrate to the country where their parents or grandparents were deprived of all human rights, suffered unimaginable horror, and in the best circumstances, were deported. The question becomes even more compelling when considering the reappearance of far-right political parties such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD) established in 2013 and the increasingly extreme anti-Semitic behaviors of many in Germany.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Is it the promise of higher salaries, or perhaps the comfort of higher standards of living, that makes Israelis forget their history and ignore the reappearance of antisemitism and the rapid rise of neo-Nazi far-right parties that are increasingly represented in the Bundestag?

Today, the Jews in Berlin belong to one of two main groups. The first mentioned above is the "local-native" group which includes people who moved to Berlin from different European countries after World War II, mainly from the Soviet Union and their descendants. This is a community numbering approximately 10,800 members, all of whom are Jews living in Berlin and are registered in the "Jewish community of Berlin."This is the largest Jewish community in Germany. According to the research I conducted for my MA thesis, this is the formal Jewish religious community, which is funded by the government and the city of Berlin. The community is identified by its religious affiliation, and it operates, maintains, and safeguards various Jewish institutions, including, for example, well-attended schools and synagogues.

The second group, the "new-immigrants" group, consists of Jews, former Israeli citizens who immigrated to Berlin, who sometimes refer to themselves in different Facebook groups as "Isra-Berliners."According to the latest report of 31.12.2018 of Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg (Berlin's official statistical bureau), there are approximately 5,300 Israelis in Berlin. That number includes only Israelis who are not German citizens and have requested or hold a valid visa for education or employment purposes. As of June 2020, the exact number of Israelis in Berlin is unknown due to restrictions in collecting statistical data regarding German citizens from different ethnic origins, including Israelis with a second German passport. This group is secular in nature, mostly see themselves as individuals rather than as a true community, and makes little use of the formal institutions and services of the Jewish community.

The relationship between these two groups is complex, mainly because of the differences which exist between them, both religious and social in nature. According to interviews with Israelis who live in Berlin, their connection to the local Jewish community is surprisingly minor and based mostly on the local community's connection with the authorities who offer assistance with finding work or receiving a visa. As described by Zachary Johnston, "the Israelis in Berlin are not necessarily immigrants in the classic sense" and may more aptly described as transnationals.[[8]](#footnote-8)Nevertheless, they retain many elements of their Israeli identity, including their Hebrew language and strong connections with Israel, where many still have close family members.

The concept of immigration has altered over the last few decades. On the one hand, immigration has become a central element of international concern, focusing on how to prevent immigration rather than how to facilitate safe immigration. Many European countries have experienced a 'migration crisis' over the past few years as men, women, and children strive to find a better way of life, often at any cost. On the other hand, the growing presence of multi-national conglomerates and increases in international trade agreements, and transnational efforts of economic development have created a new pattern of migration, wherein transnationals may maintain their identification with their original homeland and may also migrate between countries multiple times.[[9]](#footnote-9)

This dissertation will also explore the notion of community. There are many definitions for this word. However, the most relevant description for this study is "A body of men [or women] living in the same locality."[[10]](#footnote-10) This applies to a group whose members have common characteristics, such as country of origin, religion, or pursuit. However, these attributes are not necessarily shared by those among whom they live.[[11]](#footnote-11) The community that this study focuses on is the Israeli community in Berlin. This includes the total number of Israeli Jews who previously lived in Israel, immigrated to Germany, and currently lives in Berlin.

In this study, I will first examine the issue of migration from a specific perspective: that of Israelis who have immigrated to Berlin. Then, focusing on identifying the motives behind their immigration and the distribution of the various motives within the community to answer the question of why Israelis immigrate to Berlin.

I will then examine the Local Jewish Community, focusing on its relationship and points of contact with the Israeli emigrants, trying to answer the question of the connection between these two communities other than their Jewish religion.

It is essential to state that in recent years, mainly since 2010, a severe refugee crisis in Syria has affected the Middle East, including Israel. Germany was also greatly affected, having accepted 750,000 Syrian Muslim refugees since 2015.[[12]](#footnote-12)

This research will not focus directly on the connection between the Israeli and Jewish communities and refugees, yet this may be a topic that will arise during the study.

## Research Question

Migration has long been present in human life, even since homo sapiens formed communities and moved from one hunting ground to another seeking better living conditions.

The notion of Israelis immigrating to Berlin is paradoxical. The concept of Israelis who emigrate to seek a better life is not novel. For example, there are many thriving Israeli communities outside Israel in countries such as the United States[[13]](#footnote-13) and Australia[[14]](#footnote-14).

However, the anomaly lies with Israelis who willingly decide to move to Berlin, the city that was once at the epicenter of the regime that committed the worst genocide against Jews the world has ever seen. Anti-Semitism not only existed in the past but is rising again today as the far-right in Germany strengthens socially and politically. These factors lead to my research question.

When researching this topic, the German Consul in Haifa stated that around 100,000 Israelis have German passports. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Israelis hold passports from other European countries.Migration has long existed in human life, ever since homo sapiens formed communities and moved from one hunting ground to another seeking better living conditions.

While the notion of Israelis immigrating to Berlin is paradoxical because of the city's history, the concept of Israelis who emigrate to seek a better life is not novel. For example, there are many thriving Israeli communities outside Israel in countries such as the United States[[15]](#footnote-15) and Australia[[16]](#footnote-16). The anomaly lies with Israelis who willingly decide to move to Berlin. This city was once at the epicenter of the regime that committed the worst genocide against Jews worldwide. Antisemitism not only existed in the past but is rising again today as the far-right in Germany strengthens socially and politically. These factors lead to my research questions

1. *What is the distribution of the various motivations (economic, cultural, political, educational, and personal reasons) of Israelis for immigrating to Berlin between 2000 and 2019?*
2. *In what way does the rising antisemitism affect the motivations of Israeli emigrants in Berlin to return to Israel?*
3. *How have the religious differences affected the relationship between the Israeli emigrants and the local Jewish community in Berlin?*

## Hypothesis

The findings of this study suggest that some immigration motivations stand out more than others. Throughout the last decade, Berlin has been described in the media as well as in the relevant literature as an affordable, cultural, and modern city to live in - much more so than Tel Aviv or Haifa. Taking into consideration the German government’s emphasis on social welfare and the generous benefits that immigrants received, it was natural to expect that the economic incentive would be the most significant driver of immigration for Israelis who immigrated to Berlin between 2010 - 2019.

Evidently, according to formal German statistics[[17]](#footnote-17) and media reports,[[18]](#footnote-18) anti-Semitic behaviors and sentiments are on the rise in Germany today. If all other immigration motivations were disregarded, the existence of rising anti-Semitism would compel hopeful Israeli immigrants to remain in Israel or choose another place to move to. However, this is not the case. Many layers of contexts must be taken into consideration including the social, economic, cultural, personal, and political situation of Israel, Germany, and specifically Berlin.

It is well known that there is a large gap between the cost of living in Israel and that in Germany, particularly in Berlin. This factor acts as one of the strongest and most compelling forces that has influenced the decision of Israelis to seek a better standard of living elsewhere. The existence of such a stark contrast - that is, the contrast between the cost of living in Israel and Berlin - reveals that the decision of Israelis to immigrate to Berlin does not exist in a cultural or political vacuum, but rather depends on the numerous and nuanced components of an individual living under the wing of a nation, bringing with it all the ensuing political, historical, and cultural complexities. Therefore, it can be assumed that despite rising anti-Semitic sentiments in Berlin, the Israelis who moved to Berlin between 2010 - 2019 persisted due to the lure of economic comfort, which proves to be stronger than the rising of the extreme right wing and anti-Semitism.

# **The methodology of the present study**

This study and the following research focus on Israeli immigrants living in Berlin and is conducted from a sociological perspective and particularly, immigration studies perspective. This research focuses on Berlin, the capital city of Germany, which is home to numerous immigrant populations - among them, a community of Israelis. Although there are Israeli immigrant communities in other German cities such as Frankfurt am Main or Hamburg, the Israeli community in Berlin is undoubtedly composed of the most varied population of Israelis in Germany.

There is a debate among scholars[[19]](#footnote-19) whether the Israelis in Berlin form a community, or perhaps the opposite: they resent it and prefer not to be categorized as such. However, the Israeli community in Berlin prefers to be classified (or not), there are more than twenty (as of July 2020) Facebook groups that connect many Israelis through numerous aspects of their lives. Although a large percentage of the Israelis in Berlin are connected through Facebook groups, these groups are not representative of all Israelis in Berlin and may exclude parts of the population such as

1. Israeli teenagers (14 -18 years old) tend to use other social media platforms such as Instagram.
2. Israelis who dislike Facebook and do not use it at all.

Those two groups are not included in the research survey nor the interviews.

1. **Mixed qualitative and quantitative research method in migration studies**

In the last decade, migration and integration issues have become the core topics for discussion among politicians, scientists, and social researchers. This affects the expansion of research studies on various issues related to migration and integration, and the development of appropriate research methods for these phenomena. The research topic is focused on strategies and approaches that can be used to investigate different aspects related to migration. The most relevant question regarding the method of this research is: which of the appropriate research methods is best to explore the phenomenon of migration?

Definitional paradigmatic and methodological issues continue to be raised when researchers write about mixed methods.[[20]](#footnote-20) When bringing together the benefits of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, mixed-method researchers often claim greater validity of results as a reason for their methodological choices. But without adequate consideration of the issues involved, such validity may be more imagined than real.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Mixed methods[[22]](#footnote-22) are used to enrich the understanding of an experience or issue through the confirmation of conclusions, an extension of knowledge, or by initiating new ways of thinking about the subject of the research.

This study combines both quantitative and qualitative methods.[[23]](#footnote-23) The results of these two methods present several conclusions and prove to be particularly effective in immigration studies as it allows the qualitativetools, such as interviews, to be more focused on the questions that the quantitativemethod, such as surveys, bring up.

While quantitative methods (survey, descriptive statistics, regression) are necessary for analyzing macro and micro-level data (for example demographic aspects of migration flows, stocks, number and percentage of emigrants and immigrants, causes for migration, etc.), a qualitative approach can be a valuable strategy for exploring the life of migrants.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Some qualitative techniques (including a biographical method with variants such as life history and life course method, open interviews, and participant observation) have become increasingly popular in this field. Interestingly, these methods were first used for the research of migration and the study of Polish peasants in Europe and America.

The quantitative method involves a survey questionnaire delivered online by social media to the targeted groups of Israelis living in Berlin, while the qualitative research method involves interviews with Israeli immigrants living in Berlin.

The interviews are to be conducted after receiving the initial results of the survey.

Furthermore, there will be a relevant literature review on the following subjects:

1. The motivations of Israeli immigration to Berlin.
2. The Jewish community in Berlin.
3. The 2011 immigration wave to Germany as a protestation to the cost of living in Israel.
4. The rising of anti-Semitism in Germany as a whole, yet specifically focusing on Berlin, using up to date data (newspapers and statistics from the past five years).
5. **The Research Process**

The survey is the main research method used in this research.[[25]](#footnote-25) The survey focuses on the motives behind immigration and the effect of anti-Semitism on the Israelis in Berlin. It was written and answered in Hebrew to achieve better communication with the research group of Israelis who immigrated to Berlin from Israel.

The Ways of distribution for this survey was the social media groups on Facebook. As of July 2020, there are more than twenty-three Facebook groups[[26]](#footnote-26) for Israelis in Berlin. The groups differ by several members, specific topic or area of interest, and whether it is a closed group that usually requires proof of an address in Berlin or an open and public group.

These groups gather together a significant percentage of the Israelis currently living in Berlin. For example, the largest Facebook group, “Israelis in Berlin,” is a closed group that includes sub-groups of almost 25,000 members (as of July 2020). Smaller numbers are found in many other groups, including “Israeli Students in Berlin,” “Israeli Renters in Berlin,” “Israeli Business in Berlin” and more.

Although Facebook is the dominant social network among the Israelis in Berlin, some groups were not exposed to the distribution of the survey as they do not use Facebook regularly or at all. This may be due to some reasons, including religious or political reasons, or it may include a more mature demographic that prefers to use other methods of communication such as emails.

The total number of questionnaires completed by Israeli Jews living in Berlin is 183. Seven questionnaires were filled in partially and were therefore not used.

The survey focuses on different age groups and was answered by people between 24 - 47 years old. As part of the mixed method, the interviews were also conducted among this age group (25 - 49) to achieve a better correlation with the analysis of the data and to allow for a deeper understanding of the whole picture.

Two age groups were not included in the research: those under 24 and above 49 years of age. Due to this, the representation of the Israelis in Berlin is not a complete representation of all Israeli immigrants. Nonetheless, the selected age group (24 - 49) represents a significant portion of the Israelis immigrants.

The survey was generated in Google Forms and all of the data collected was exported to Excel for the summary and presentation of the data and SPSS (ver 14.0) to find correlations between the different answers.

The demographic data division of the survey respondents (age, gender, etc.) is detailed in appendix No. 3.

**The Interviews**

As a supplement to the survey, ten Israelis who live in Berlin have been interviewed. All the interviewees were asked to take part in the interview free of charge, and none of them completed the survey that was sent via Facebook.

All of the interviewees were asked the same guided questions, and the answers were transcribed in Microsoft Word. The relevant quotes used in this study were translated from Hebrew to English by the author. Due to the Covid-19 quarantine restrictions in both Israel and Germany, the interviews were made via Zoom and similar video conference software.

The interviewees chosen are from different age groups, family statuses, and employment areas.[[27]](#footnote-27)

The following dominant themes were extracted from the interviews:

1. The decision to immigrate to Berlin was based on more than one reason.
2. It is financially easier to live in Berlin than in Israel.
3. There is a perception that anti-Semitic incidents are rising.
4. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing desire to stay in Berlin.

**Description of Interviewees**

All the interviewees are Jewish Israelis who were born and lived in Israel until they immigrated to Berlin. All of them speak Hebrew as their first language. Six of the interviewees are male and four are female.

The age range of the interviewees is from 25 (the youngest) to 49 (the oldest), and they come from various backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses. These interviewees represent only a partial spectrum of the general Israeli population in Berlin, as it does not represent age groups under 24 years old or over 50 years old. However, the age group interviewed appears to be the largest age group.

All the interviewees have academic degrees and hold either a BA, an MA and or a Ph.D., and they all are currently living in Berlin. All of the interviewees asked to remain anonymous, and their names are stated in first letters only.

1. E.B – 43 years old, married, has three children, arrived in Berlin in 2010, works in a university as a professor.
2. A.B – 40 years old, married, has three children, arrived in Berlin in 2010, works as a doctor in a hospital.
3. B.H – 28 years old, single, arrived in Berlin in 2015 after living in Hamburg for one year, is studying for an MA degree in philosophy, and works part-time in a real estate company.
4. S.R – 31 years old, single, arrived in Berlin in 2014, works as a designer.
5. Y.C – 37 years old, divorced, arrived in Berlin in 2018, works as a software programmer.
6. L.G – 25 years old, single, arrived in Berlin in 2019, is studying their first year of a political science MA degree, unemployed.
7. K.A – 49 years old, married, arrived in Berlin in 2014, working partially as a software programmer and a real-estate mediator in an Israeli company that invests in Berlin.
8. N.T – 30 years old, single, arrived in Berlin in 2017, is studying for a veterinarian Ph.D. degree.
9. A.H – 34 years old, married, arrived in Berlin in 2014, unemployed.
10. L.W – 29 years old, single, arrived in Berlin in 2015, works as a tourist guide for Israeli visitors in Berlin.

This study used a systematic process of content analyzing qualitative material results in two major final outputs:

Statistical analysis of the data to retrieve coherent findings regarding the research questions. Using the statistical computerized programs for the survey results and for identifying themes that appear in the results of the survey.[[28]](#footnote-28)

The results of the research from the combined method attempts to provide an accurate picture of the rise of anti-Semitism in Berlin and its effects on the motives of Israeli immigrants living in Berlin. This will provide a direct answer to the research question.

# **2. Literature review**

2.1 Migration

Immigration continues to be one of the most important political issues in Europe. For voters in many countries, immigration is one of the most pressing challenges facing their country, and parties 'Extreme right' groups opposed to immigration continue to gain support in many countries. This fact takes on new validity when it comes to the issue of Muslim immigration, which is currently on the agenda in many European countries[[29]](#footnote-29).

Different European countries are the ones who want to look for trends that are linked to immigrants who arrive in different countries intending to find a different life for themselves. With a high rate of labor migration to many Western European countries, and ongoing pressure to accept refugees and asylum seekers from war zones around the world, this issue is not expected to lose its importance in the foreseeable future[[30]](#footnote-30).

Population movement from one place to another to bring about an improvement in the standard of living or to obtain new opportunities has existed for hundreds and thousands of years. Towards the end of the 20th century - and the beginning of the 21st century - the phenomenon of immigration is characterized by contours that differ in certain respects from the way it existed in the past, and it was even given a "new name" that focuses on the identity part of the immigrant: "Trans- Nationalism"[[31]](#footnote-31).

The ability of a person to go and seek a different destiny for himself is the one that is seen as a factor that leads to increased immigration processes throughout the entire world. Of course, you can see a larger trend according to which some immigrants come from third world countries to Western countries[[32]](#footnote-32).

According to this description, immigration is explained as a dynamic process in which immigrants maintain a significant connection with their homeland while undergoing absorption processes in the country of immigration. Thus, the immigrants are in contact with the ethnic group to which they belonged in their country of origin, with the same ethnic group scattered in other parts of the world, as well as with the host population in the country of destination7 The development of the media, especially the Internet, and to which they migrated[[33]](#footnote-33).

The openness of the host countries to immigrants without a requirement for their assimilation, resulted in an extraordinary opportunity to try and improve the economic standard of living or open up to new professional opportunities in the host countries. Various immigrants are looking for opportunities to support themselves and their family members in a place that will allow them to do so, in practice[[34]](#footnote-34).

There is a disagreement among the researchers on how to define the Israelis in the various countries and in any case this has an effect on the estimation of the number of Israelis currently living outside the State of Israel. The narrowest definition is that Israeli immigrants are Israeli citizens who lived in Israel in the past only, and/or were born in Israel. Broader definitions also include the third-generation descendants of the Israelis who immigrated, as well as Jewish citizens who hold Israeli citizenship and feel a deep connection to Israel even though they have never lived there[[35]](#footnote-35).

The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) defines an immigrant as a citizen who lived in Israel for at least several months, and then left for more than a year. This definition is based on the UN definitions: "An international immigrant is any person who changes the country used for his or her habitual residence. A long-term immigrant A long-term person is a person who moves to a country that is not used for their normal residence, for a period of time of a year or more. This type of migration is one that expresses a move that is considered more significant in terms of the individual's life sequence[[36]](#footnote-36).

Migration from the country of origin to the country of destination in order to bring about an improvement in the standard of living also led hundreds of thousands of Israelis throughout the years of the State of Israel to immigrate to richer countries. Although immigration from Israel is characterized by phenomena some of which are unique to immigration from Israel, such as the security situation in Israel and the relative negative attitude of society towards immigrants, the phenomenon itself is not unusual[[37]](#footnote-37).

The preferred destination country to which many Israelis have immigrated over the years is without a doubt the USA, which is seen as both richer and more advanced and as providing many and varied opportunities.. Israel is considered a country of immigrants due to this very fact when it receives Jewish immigrants from many countries. This fact led to the theory of the melting pot, for example, a concept according to which the country is a collection of different immigrants from all over the world[[38]](#footnote-38).

According to the cumulative migration balances and the definitions of the Central Bureau of Statistics, from the establishment of the state until the end of 2017, about 732,000 Israelis left and did not return after a stay, however, this estimate also includes those who stayed abroad for a long time a year or more. who died abroad[[39]](#footnote-39).

According to the mortality rates of the Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of Israelis who died abroad is estimated to be between 133 and 171 thousand, so the estimate of the number of Israelis staying abroad at the end of 2017 ranges between 561 and 599 thousand residents. It is important to note that this estimate is not Including children born abroad to Israelis residing there[[40]](#footnote-40).

The definition of immigrants by the Central Bureau of Statistics is considered problematic in two extreme cases: in the first case, these are new immigrants, who after a few months or years decided to leave Israel. Such are, for example, immigrants from the Commonwealth of Nations countries who, after a short period of time in Israel, immigrated to other countries12. In the second case, these are Israelis who stay abroad for a few years, after which they migrate13 Return to Israel, such as academics or workers in the high-tech industry[[41]](#footnote-41).

As mentioned, these populations are also included in the immigration number of the Central Bureau of Statistics. The numbers, therefore, have a limitation when it comes to their ability to tell us the story in its entirety, although it is clear that this is a significant factor that ultimately expresses the trend of immigration, even if not accurately, at the macro level[[42]](#footnote-42).

A particularly important index that must be considered in the discourse dealing with leaving the country isThe "emigration balance", that is, the difference between the number of Israelis leaving for a stay of one year or more abroad and the number of Israelis who returned after a one-year stay. Another important definition of the Central Bureau of Statistics is the "emigration balance rate[[43]](#footnote-43).

The balance of immigration in a certain year divided by the total average population in Israel in that year. This figure enables a comparison between populations of different sizes and helps the quality of the comparison between the phenomenon of immigration from Israel today and the phenomenon in the past, as well as between Israel and other countries[[44]](#footnote-44).

The balance of Israeli immigration in 2017 was negative and stood at 5.8 thousand Israelis. This is the lowest immigration balance observed in Israel since 2010. For comparison, in 2001 and- In 2002, the immigration balance was about 19,000 per year, and since 2008, the immigration balance is no longer in double digits, for the first time since the early 1990s. Since the immigration balances are numerical data and not a relative amount in percentages, the significant decrease in the immigration balance is further intensified due to the increase in the population In Israel, from 4.6 million in 1990 to 8.7 million residents in 2017.

The conclusion from these data is that 2017 (and before it 2016) was almost the best year in terms of immigration data from Israel in the last decades. Immigration from Israel was seen in the past as completely contradicting the ideology the Zionist, and in a certain way even today.

This migration is referred to as "descent", as opposed to "aliyah" which expresses the return to the Land of Israel throughout the generations. For the first time, the concepts of "ascent and descent" in relation to the Land of Israel were mentioned in the stories of Abraham: "And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down from Egypt to live there, because the evil was heavy 2 And also: "And Abram went out of Egypt, he and his wife and all who belonged to him, and Lot went with him 17 years ago, the Negev." Several generations later, when the sons of Jacob came from Egypt to the Land of Israel in order to bury their father, they were called "immigrants".

Later, this terminology took on the meaning of spiritual ascension, as it appears in literature and "the land of Israel is higher" in sayings such as "everything ascends to the land of Israel" of all countries. This fact is one that already appears in the sources, that is, the migration process has a significant root when it comes to the processes that exist at the level of the past. This fact indicates that this is a trend that already existed in past years and for exactly the same reasons. Even in these cases, people moved from place to place in order to support themselves and to try their fate elsewhere[[45]](#footnote-45).

The Zionist movement adopted the term that sees all Jews immigrating to IsraelAn "immigrant" who fulfills a lofty goal, and every emigrant from it as a "descendant", leaves and abandons the Zionist vision, one of whose main goals is Jewish immigration and kibbutzing. The Prime Minister and Kibbutz Galvoit. In an interview in honor of Independence Day in 1976 - as a "fall of the dead", when in the same year in the "Davar" newspaper they accused the Israelis of "running away from the battlefield". Former President Chaim Herzog said in 1984 that "the descent is an expression, as a rule, of society's treatment of the ill that mourns us. This fact does not pertain to an internal Israeli view which can see some of the descendents as expressing the opposition to the Zionist act of immigrating to Israel. This fact is one that expresses an inseparable part From the concept that those coming from Israel are those who express anti-Zionist action and those who oppose the concept of the flourishing of the state and its institutions[[46]](#footnote-46).

## 2.2 Migration of Israeli Jews from Israel

The migration of Jews from Israel to other countries is not a new phenomenon: even before the State of Israel was established in 1948, many Jews left what they called *Eretz Yisrael* (The Land of Israel) when it was still under the Ottoman rule[[47]](#footnote-47) and during the period of the British mandate.[[48]](#footnote-48),[[49]](#footnote-49)Those who left before the establishment of the state were mainly new immigrants who faced great difficulties in acclimatizing themselves to the challenging conditions prevailing in those times. Still, members of the '*Old Yishuv'[[50]](#footnote-50)*whose families had lived in the area for generations of both *Ashkenazi* and *Sephardi* descent also contended with economic hardships, which may have been a significant motivation for leaving.[[51]](#footnote-51)

However, from the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 until the beginning of the twenty-first century, the numbers of Jews who migrated overseas were generally insignificant. They ranged between 0.3 - 0.6 percent of the population.[[52]](#footnote-52)

According to current estimates, approximately 7 - 8 percent of Israelis reside abroad.[[53]](#footnote-53) Compared with other states, this is not an unusual percentage. However, the ideological and social implications of Jewish emigration as perceived in Israel's society have made this subject the focus of highly emotional controversy. The term is given to those who leave '*Yordim,'* meaning those who 'go down, contrasts starkly with the opposite term '*Olim',*those who rise, or ascend, given to those who migrate to the country. While it is possible that in recent years, in line with trends in other countries, attitudes may have changed toward immigrants and those leaving the country.[[54]](#footnote-54),[[55]](#footnote-55)

The research into Israelis immigrating to Berlin can be divided roughly into two time periods that follow in chronological order.

Immigration from Israel, therefore, is seen as something extremely negative and those who lead to see immigrants as a factor that undermines Israeli resilience, harms the demographic struggle and weakens the society that faces many challenges from the outside. Menachem Begin calculated the seriousness of the problem in the military context: "Since the establishment of the state, we have lost four divisions and twelve brigades as a result of a decline[[56]](#footnote-56).

The existential concern of the Jews left behind in Israel, and the concern for the future of the joint national enterprise.

On the other hand, starting from the 1980s, and especially in the last twenty years, it is possible to notice a change in the attitude of society in Israel towards the "descendants", a change that is expressed first of all in the change of terminology. It is no longer about those who come down but those who leave, in immigrants or those who have relocated, a term that expresses the assimilation of global terms into the Israeli discourse[[57]](#footnote-57).

Among parts of Israeli society, the increase in the scope of immigration of a young population is accompanied by a new perception that the "decline" is the realization of the individual's right to take care of his own well-being. This concept was the harbinger of a deeper change in Israeli society which was reflected in the tendency towards individualism and the weakening of the commitment to the values ​​of Zionism[[58]](#footnote-58).

This fact stems from the fact that many years have passed, relatively speaking, since the establishment of the state. Many years have passed since its establishment and therefore the dimension of the importance of the aliya has decreased, certainly in relation to the trend that existed in the past[[59]](#footnote-59).

In recent years, this trend has intensified: on Israeli websites you can notice ads or offers to ease the process of leaving, and of course articles glorifying Israelis who have succeeded overseas and are a source of Israeli pride. Some have claimed that immigration from Israel is proof of the success of Zionism, the legitimacy given to immigration indicates that Israel has become a normal country and immigration from Israel to other Western countries benefits all other countries. Improving one's economic status or self-realization in the fields of academia and culture has become a possibility equivalent to that of life in. This fact was directly related to the fact that it was an action that became perceived as legitimate and as expressing an integral part of a worldwide trend. Being a worldwide trend is what led to the perception of its kosher, that is, the perception that it is permissible to maintain it and it is permissible to perform it as it is[[60]](#footnote-60).

The immigration from Israel has been studied by researchers from various scientific disciplines: political science, economics, sociology, history, demographics and more. This phenomenon increased in the late 1980s following globalization and the signing of the peace agreements in 1993 with Arab countries (Egypt and Jordan)[[61]](#footnote-61).

The agreements led to the lifting of the Arab boycott over the trade relations of many countries in the world with the State of Israel and opened the Israeli economy to the international economy. As a result, a flow of Multinational companies flowed into Israel and Israeli companies entered international markets. This two-way movement affected the employment patterns of many Israelis, especially those with skills, whose employment required international mobility even in the long term[[62]](#footnote-62).

Over the years, immigration from Israel has been viewed negatively by the leaders of the State of Israel and the Israeli public, as well as by central currents of Diaspora Jewry. It was called a 'decline' and was seen as a betrayal of the Zionist idea. An expression of the harsh criticism of immigration from Israel can be heard from the nickname that the then prime minister of Israel, the late Yitzhak Rabin, gave to immigrants from Israel in the seventies: "Fall out of wimps." However, there are researchers who claim that public criticism against immigration from Israel has decreased in recent years and has even gained legitimacy among large sections of the public. This is due to the view of immigration as a legitimate process that originates from globalization that enables relatively easy mobility between countries, combined with an ever-increasing desire for self-realization and escape from the socio-economic reality in Israe[[63]](#footnote-63)l.

Despite the sharp criticism of immigration from Israel by the state and its various institutions, Israeli governments for generations ignored the phenomenon for many years and avoided taking operative steps to deal with it. This was until 2013, when the Israeli government decided to initiate the program to combat the "brain drain" phenomenon (emigration of academics and researchers from Israel through the establishment of the "National Program for the Repatriation of Academics[[64]](#footnote-64).

The studies that examined the phenomenon of immigration from Israel focused on three main axes: the rates of immigration and the characteristics of the immigrants, the reasons for immigration, and the life patterns of the immigrants while emphasizing the issue of national identity. Over the years it was common to define 'immigrant' as 'a person who lives in a country other than his homeland', or one who moved to live in another country permanently'. This definition is subject to controversy due to the constant movement of people between countries, mainly for work and residence purposes[[65]](#footnote-65).

Various studies have shown the complexity of the definition in Israel and its implications for the government bodies' ability to estimate the number of immigrants from Israel: iIn 2011, the number of Israelis living abroad ranged from 226,980 people according to the Ministry of the Interior's data to about 750,000 people according to the estimates of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. whereas according to the Central Bureau of Statistics and the National Insurance Institute their number was more than half a million[[66]](#footnote-66).

None of the agencies, except for the Ministry of Absorption of Aliyah, does not include in its estimates the children born to Israelis abroad, and none of the agencies, except for the Central Bureau of Statistics, know how to reduce from the figure they have the number of Israelis who are no longer alive[[67]](#footnote-67).

Studies that examined the characteristics of immigrants from Israel between 1995 and 2002 found that the tendency to immigrate is higher among the educated (with a bachelor's degree or higher), married and young; compared to the less educated, single and elderly. They also found that the tendency to immigrate is higher among the new immigrants. In a recent study It was further found that in the 2000s - there was a change in the demographic profile of the immigrants from Israel; in the 90s - the migration was the share of families who immigrated for work and studies in order to improve their earning potential and career development, in the 2000s - they were also joined by immigrants who were looking for an escape from livelihood difficulties and the security situation[[68]](#footnote-68).

According to this study, the immigrants were young, single, uneducated, or lacking significant work experience. In the studies examined by Israeli researchers and academics, it was found that there is a high and increasing tendency among this population to immigrate from Israel. It was found that in25% of the Israeli academic faculty members are faculty members at universities abroad compared to 29% in 2013. These data indicate that Israel leads in this field by a considerable margin from other countries[[69]](#footnote-69).

A major factor encouraging immigration from Israel in recent years is the economic policy that has led to the creation of economic gaps between the social strata, and to an increase in poverty rates and the cost of living. Crimea presented in the media showed that a significant part of the Israeli public is considering immigrating from the country due to the high cost of living and the acute housing crisis[[70]](#footnote-70).

Following the social protest in Israel in 2011, many Israelis, especially those who were not satisfied with its results, decided to emigrate from IsraelVarious studies claim that the economic policy in Israel encouraged Israeli academics to look for employment and livelihood opportunities outside the country's borders[[71]](#footnote-71).

Also, this policy brought about a change in the perceptions and attitudes of the Israeli public in general, and the parents of young immigrants in particular, about immigration from Israel, which began to receive public legitimacy. Another factor, arising from the first factor, is the success of Israeli immigrants to integrate into the host countries and to live in a relatively high standard of living and income[[72]](#footnote-72).

Some researchers who examined the phenomenon of immigration from Israel focused on the question of the national identity and lifestyle of the Israeli immigrants. In a study that examined the issue in the United States, it was found that Israeli immigrants adopt the Jewish way of life, which is expressed by keeping kosher and observing the Sabbath and holidays. However, the research findings indicate that the national-cultural identity is somewhat weakened among the younger generation seeking to integrate into the host society[[73]](#footnote-73).

Various studies have shown that most Israeli immigrants succeed in integrating into the local labor market but are less successful in emerging in Canadian society, which resulted in the strengthening of the relationship with the Jewish community. It was found that the Israeli identity of the immigrants remains strong, but the feeling of guilt for leaving the country, a feeling that characterized many immigrants from Israel in the past, is disappearing. According to Harris, immigration from Israel is increasingly being perceived as a legitimate phenomenon among immigrants from Israel[[74]](#footnote-74).

Similar findings were also obtained in other studies. On the other hand, there are studies that show other findings. Other studies, for example, refer to the national identity of Israeli immigrants1 in Europe, in the cities of London and Paris. The researcher found that the Israeli immigrants maintain a transnational identity and even try to preserve this identity among their descendants. However, even in Europe it was found that young immigrants retain less of their Israeli identity[[75]](#footnote-75).

Some of the main reasons for leaving Israel have greatly diminished in importance over the past decades. While Israel fought for its life - literally - in its first two and a half decades, the external threats against it have significantly decreased since the 1970s, after the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and the signing of the peace agreement with Egypt in 1979 (followed by the peace agreement with Jordan in 1994). Life since the establishment of the state brought the country, in the end, into the family of developed countries. Since very little data exists on the scope of immigration from Israel in the past, it is not possible to assess how significant the current immigration rates are in a historical perspective. However, it is possible to reach certain insights about the immigration from the country in the years According to the US Department of Homeland Security, 66,000 Israelis received US citizenship or permanent residency (Green Card) in the decade 1995-2005 (Newsweek, 2018). The number rose to more than 87,000 in the following decade. 2006-2016 On the face of it, the latter number may seem insignificant because it only represents 1.1% of Israel's population during this period[[76]](#footnote-76).

What may be more important than the extent of migration is the direction the numbers point. While Israel's population grew by 24% from the decade of 1995-2005 to the decade of 2006In 2016, the number of Israelis who received American citizenship or a green card increased by 32% .It is interesting to note that Israel was in a severe recession following the Intifada in the second half of the decade, 1995-2005, while the following decade was characterized by relative prosperity. On the other hand, The first decade in the US was relatively good from an economic point of view, while the one that followed included the worst recession the US has experienced since the Great Depression in the 1930s. However, the increase in the number of Israelis immigrating to the United States in the second decade compared to the first decade was one-third higher than the rate of growth in the Israeli population[[77]](#footnote-77) .

Although the immigration numbers are still low relative to Israel's population. But the picture changes quite a bit when you focus on the most educated sections of society, those who keep Israel as part of the first world. More on that later. Just as the total immigration rate does not reflect the full significance of the phenomenon, so too does a look at the total tax burden in the country (measured by total taxes relative to GDP) also give a partial picture, and perhaps even a misleading one. In 1995, the tax burden in Israel was 35.4% of GDP, compared to an average of 33.1% in the OECD countries. By 2017 the picture was reversed: the tax burden in Israel decreased to 32.7% - while in the OECD it increased to 34.2% - of GDP (tax burden in the USA) , which has always been relatively low, rose slightly from 26.5%- in 1995- to 27.1%- of GDP in 2017[[78]](#footnote-78).

In general, income tax and national insurance payments made up 55.4% of all tax payments in Israel, compared to 61.4%- in the USA and 68.8% - on average in the OECD. The comparative picture changes when it comes to the more educated parts of the population - those whom a modern economy needs most, and those whose incomes are relatively high compared to the rest of society. While the two top deciles of income in the OECD paid half of the total payments Income tax and National Insurance (Chart 3), in Israel the top two deciles paid almost two-thirds of the total amount in 2011 (this is the most recent figure that could be obtained). When you focus on income tax alone, the picture of the direct tax burden becomes even more acute[[79]](#footnote-79).

Because income inequality in Israel It is one of the highest in the developed world, half of the country's population is so poor that it did not even reach the lowest tax bracket and did not pay income tax at all in 2017. At the other end of the income spectrum, the top two deciles paid 92% of Israel's total income tax. While the share paid by the top two deciles of income is relatively high in both Israel and the US compared to the OECD, the 92 percent paid by the top 20 percent of the Israeli population is still significantly higher than the 83 percent borne by the top two deciles

Israel The top two income deciles The five lowest income deciles Income deciles 6-8 Israel Israel www.shoresh.institute 4 Institute for Economic-Social Research The top income in the United States in 2015. This is a number that Israel reached to it as early as 2000 and since then it has been steadily climbing upwards. In fact, the gap between the income tax burden on the top two deciles in Israel and the US is even more pronounced. While the income tax paid by the top 20 percent in the US was 6.6% of GDP, the amount paid by the top two deciles in Israel reached 10.7% of GDP. For perspective, the annual income of an average breadwinner from the ninth decile In Israel it was $62,500 in 2017 - an income that would have lowered it by two deciles - to the seventh decile - if this amount had been earned in the USA in 2015[[80]](#footnote-80).

The main factor affecting wages is labor productivity, measured as GDP per working hour. The relationship between wages and labor productivity in the countries of-OECD is shown in diagram 5. The highest labor productivity does not necessarily guarantee the highest wages, as can be seen from the example of Ireland. But in a country that generally does not manage to produce much per hour, the average wage cannot be high. In general, the lower the labor productivity in a country, the lower the average wage in that country, with a correlation coefficient of 0.87 for OECD countries. Labor productivity in Israel is lower than in most OECD countries. As a result, the average salary in Israel is also low[[81]](#footnote-81).

While the high-tech sector in Israel is one of the leaders in the developed world, the country is flooded with people with relatively poor levels of knowledge and skill, and its infrastructure is also poor. The average reading, writing and quantitative thinking abilities among Israelis between the ages of 16 and 64 are among the lowest in the developed world. When it comes to Israel's transportation infrastructure, the number of vehicles per kilometer of road is almost three times higher than the average of small European countries (Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland), even though the number of vehicles per capita in Israel is 40% lower than the average in these countries[[82]](#footnote-82).

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The Israeli bureaucracy is one of the most oppressive among developed countriesand is a significant hindering factor for doing business. Even more problematic is the direction in which the State of Israel is moving. The congestion on its roads, which equaled the average of small European countries in 1970, has increased more than fivefold since then Almost a fifth of the children in Israel attend ultra-orthodox schools, with the vast majority of boys not studying core studies beyond the eighth grade[[84]](#footnote-84).

In addition to the ultra-Orthodox and Arab children, there is also an extensive periphery - geographically and socially - where many non-Orthodox Jews live who receive an inferior level of education. In other words, about half of Israel's children, those who mainly belong to the most rapidly growing parts of the population, receive an education at a much lower level than is common in the developed world[[85]](#footnote-85).

Not only is labor productivity low in Israel, but the average annual growth rate of labor productivity since 1974 is almost half a percentage point lower than that of the 7 countriesG- which lead the developed world (inset diagram in diagram 6). The cumulative effect of this gap in the rate of growth is expressed in the gap in labor productivity that has increased more than threefold since 1974 (diagram 6). As the gap between the wages that the educated Israelis can afford increases srael Annual growth rates 1974 -2017 Annual growth rates 1974-2017 1.25% Israel 1.69% G7 1.25% Israel 1.25% Israel 1.69% G7 www.shoresh.institute 6 Institute for Economic and Social Research and the most skilled to earn abroad and what they earn in Israel, the greater the incentive to leave the country[[86]](#footnote-86).

In addition to the incentive to immigrate on the part of labor productivity in Israel - and its accompanying effects on wages - which is receding more and more (in relative terms) from the leading countries, the cost of living also makes life in the country more and more difficult. The price of the consumption basket of an average household in Israel is 28% higher than the price in the USA and 66% of the OECD average

In this context, one of the biggest concerns of young Israeli families is housing prices. The number of years an Israeli must work in order to purchase an apartment is unusually high compared to other developed countries. Dividing the median apartment price by the median annual disposable income of a family gives an idea of ​​how heavy the burden of purchasing an apartment in Israel is. Two cities in Israel, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, included among the five most expensive cities in the developed world. Since wages vary significantly with education, wage gaps between countries are affected by differences in education levels within countries[[87]](#footnote-87).

For example, the higher the level of education, the greater the wage gap between the United States and Israel. While the wage gap between high school graduates in the US and Israel is 22% greater than the gap between those who did not graduate high school in the two countries, the wage gap between those with a degree First, 95% greater - and the wage gap between those with a master's degree or higher is greater by 150% - in sister words, the gaps between the United States and Israel in terms of a person's ability to consume and save increase the higher their education - with all that this implies regarding the incentive to leave among the most educated in Israel[[88]](#footnote-88).

Not only is the net outflow increasing, a closer examination of the high departure rates of academics suggests an even more dire situation. The higher the quality of the higher education institution, the higher the immigration rate of its graduates. At the bottom of the academic ladder in Israel are the teaching colleges. In order to give a sense of the quality gaps between the higher education institutions, the average psychometric score of the students in teaching colleges was 487 in 2015 - below more than 60% of all examinees. The average psychometric score of students in the general colleges was 523 this year, which means 7% more than the average score of the students in the teaching colleges[[89]](#footnote-89).

The highest psychometric scores were among university students, with an average of 623, which is 19% higher than the average score of college students.. It turns out that among the academics in the fields of social sciences and the humanities, 1.8% of the graduates of the teaching colleges left Israel. The emigration rate rises to 4.1%- among the graduates of the general colleges, and to 6.7%- among the graduates of the social sciences and the humanities in the universities[[90]](#footnote-90).

Israel's economic engine fed mainly by the technical fields, which highlights the challenge created by the immigration rates among exact science and engineering graduates. A larger share of science and engineering degree holders from general colleges (these fields of study are not taught in teaching colleges) immigrated from Israel (5.2%) compared to the proportion of immigrants with A degree in the social sciences and humanities (4.1%). The highest rate of immigration of those with a degree in science and engineering (9.2%) is among university graduates, and these are the most essential people for the future of the Israeli economy.

The number of medical degree graduates(as a percentage of the population) in Israel was the lowest of all OECD countries in 2016. The severe lack of national resources directed to the training of 2 doctors in Israel led to a jump in the share of Israelis studying medicine abroad. A decade ago, in 2008, the number of Israelis who received a degree in medicine was Abroad about 37% of all Israelis who received a medical degree in Israel. In the years that passed until 2017, their share rose to 52% - when so many Israelis study medicine abroad, it is not surprising that many of them choose to live and practice the profession abroad after Completion of their studies[[91]](#footnote-91).

The number of Israeli doctors in the United States, for example, is in fourth place among all countries of origin. But while the population aged 25 and over (from which the doctors come) stands at 45.7 million in the United Kingdom, 26.0 million in Canada and 65.7 million in Mexico (three The only countries with more doctors in the US than Israel (the population aged 25 and over in Israel was only 4.8 million, orders of magnitude lower than in the other countries. In fact, the total number of Israeli doctors in OECD countries outside of Israel constituted 9.8% of all doctors in Israel in 2006-) Chart 13). This share rose to 14% - by 2016. One of the results of the low number of medical graduates in Israel and the growing number of doctors[[92]](#footnote-92).

Israelis who are abroad is a significant aging of the doctors in Israel (Ben-David, 2019b). In 2014- In 2017, the share of doctors under the age of 35 in the OECD countries was 16% (a third larger than in Israel (12%). At the other end of the age spectrum, only 7% of the doctors in the OECD were between the ages of 65-74 compared to 16 % of the doctors in Israel. While there are almost no doctors aged 75 or older practicing in the OECD (only 1%), 10% of all doctors in Israel are at least 2 years old.

All labor productivity in Israel is retreating (in relative terms) from the leading developed countries, as the burden of the income tax falls more and more on the most educated parts of the population, and as prices in Israel are higher relative to other developed countries, Israel's ability to keep its most skilled workers is diminishing. While the overall rates of immigration from among the population in Israel are still relatively low, the share that the departure takes from the most educated sections of society - those essential to maintaining Israel's position in the developed world - is not without consequences[[93]](#footnote-93).

Moreover, the rate of departure of Israelis with an academic degree has been increasing in recent years. It is especially high among those whom Israel needs most, from engineers with the best training, through doctors, to the academic researchers who are so necessary to ensure the country's place - and the future generations of students - at the cutting edge of technology and knowledge[[94]](#footnote-94).

The departure rates of those with the highest education, out of those who still remain in Israel, have already reached double-digit percentages. In light of the scope, depth and trends of immigration from Israel, a serious solution to the problem requires much more than the ineffective measures, focused on symptomatic treatment, that have been taken so far[[95]](#footnote-95).

A turnaround is required in the national priorities that determine the state's budgetary agenda. Providing the necessary tools (for example, education) and the necessary conditions (for example, infrastructure) to much larger parts of the population will not only lower the poverty rates, which are among the highest in the developed world, but will also increase the country's economic growth rate. Maximizing the potential of much larger segments of the talented and brilliant Israelis the most - of all population groups in the country - will increase production productivity, allow the national economic engine to run with more of its existing cylinders, and will raise the entire economy to a new level and a much steeper growth path[[96]](#footnote-96).

This will not only keep the Israelis in the country, but may even begin to attract back those who left Big cities are a popular and preferred immigration destination for immigrants looking for job opportunities, not standing out as a foreigner and an exception, and connection to immigrants from their country of origin. Migration studies are currently focused on the urban space, because the majority of dealing with the phenomenon of migration takes place at the city level and not at the state level[[97]](#footnote-97).

Until the year 2000, Germany's immigration policy stated that "Germany is not a country of immigration". The treatment of the immigrants to it, and especially the foreign workers, was as those who are there for a fixed period of time. However, the decline of its population and its aging led to a re-examination of this policy and the determination that "Germany needs immigrantsAccording to the International Migration Report of the United Nations (Report Migration International), in 2011 Germany is in second place after the United States in terms of the number of immigrants living there - 11 million. The city of Berlin, the regenerating capital of Germany and the second largest city in Europe, is a major destination for immigrants of various nationalities - about one million residents with a background of immigration live there out of approximately 3.4 million residents.

Berlin has positioned itself as a cosmopolitan city ("world city") that fosters culture and art and a willingness to accept immigrants. An expression of the encouragement of immigration, and especially of Jews, can be found in a large investment in the rebuilding of the Jewish community in the city, as part of the process of encouraging Jews from the former Soviet Union to settle in Germany and become citizens The state. Another characteristic of Berlin, which encourages the flow of immigrants, is that it is a large city where the cost of living is relatively low compared to what is common in Germany and Western Europe in general. These characteristics have made Berlin a major immigration destination in recent years for a significant number of Israeli immigrants to Germany, who have even begun to live a community life there[[98]](#footnote-98).

A significant migration of Israelis to Berlin is a relatively new phenomenon that intensified following the social protest of 2011. It also received lively public discussion at the end of 2014 following the "Milky Protest" which created a great media resonance, due to the disparity in the cost of living between Berlin and Israel[[99]](#footnote-99).

At its center was the comparison of the price of the Israeli milk delicacy "Milky" with its much cheaper German counterpart. Following the lively discussion of the phenomenon, a Facebook group called "Olim to Berlin" was opened which called on people to move to Berlin due to the high cost of living in Israel. This call also received stormy reactions on social networks and the established media and further focused public attention on the immigration of Israelis to Berlin. So far, the migration of Israelis to Berlin has received little research attention.

### 2.1.1The Jewish community in Germany between 1970-1989

For this study, I will only be looking at the migration periods to Berlin from the 1970s. This does not mean that Israelis were not migrating to Germany before the 1970s. However, we only have anecdotal information[[100]](#footnote-100) of a handful of such migrants to both East and West Germany from 1962 – 1970. Their numbers were tiny, primarily due to the aftershock of the Holocaust. Moreover, until 1962, traveling to Germany was illegal for Israelis without specific permission from the Interior Affairs Ministry. Most of the people who were granted this permission were diplomats and businessmen. Furthermore, as noted by Michael Wolffsohn, all Jewish communities across Germany were tiny from 1945 – 1990, with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in East Germany had become almost "*judenrein*". [[101]](#footnote-101)

A few Israelis began to move to Berlin in the early 1970s, but until the 1990s, the numbers remained low. There is almost no data on the Israelis in Berlin between the 1970s and the 1990s, nor is there any data on this as a research topic. It is possible that the very idea of Israelis migrating to Berlin was too emotionally charged and filled with internal contradictions to attract research attention.During that time, it was rare to hear Hebrew in the streets; the only representation of Israel was through the Jewish community. [[102]](#footnote-102)

Dani Krantz offers fascinating insights into the characteristics of Jews living in Berlin and across Germany from three groups: the descendants of German Jews, Russian Jews, and displaced persons (DPs) from eastern Europe who began immigrating to Germany in large numbers during the 1990s; and Israeli Jews who started arriving there in large numbers during the 2000s.[[103]](#footnote-103) Her presentation of the worlds of selected characters sheds light on how they experience their Jewishness in their various identities. It also explores their motives behind choosing to migrate to Germany[[104]](#footnote-104). This corresponds with the dominant perspective of migration studies of this era, which raises the question,"Why do people move from one place to another and ignore later phenomena such as globalization?" However, this does not relate specifically to Israelis in Berlin but rather to the Jewish community in Berlin through a post-Holocaust lens. Consequently, most of the academic research in this area is focused on German Jewish communities and their relations with the state of Israel rather than on Israelis who live in Berlin or Germany.

### 2.1.2Israelis arriving in Berlin from 1990 to 2019

The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the changes it triggered may be the key to changes inmigration after this point. This was a time of significant shifts in transnational relations, with changes in worldview correlating with the changes in the domestic lives of Israelis and their perspectives.

Somewhere between 1990 and early 2000, the floodgates broke open. This was also the dawn of the media revolution with the gradual rise in accessibility to the Internet. Online magazines flourished, along with chat groups and Facebook groups, which brought more Israelis to Berlin alongside other social media platforms. As this phenomenon gained momentum, the Jewish communities in Berlin attracted more attention than ever before. Several books [[105]](#footnote-105) and dozens of articles (including academic papers) were published in mainstream media discussing the complexity of Israelis living in Berlin. Films, television programs, and radio reports dissected the topic. Academic research started to focus on the Israeli citizens in Berlin, rather than solely focusing on the Jews that lived in the city, attempting to comprehend the reasons for their immigration and attraction to Berlin.[[106]](#footnote-106)

As pointed out by Johnston, the migration of some Israelis to Berlin may be regarded as transnationalism rather than traditional immigration.[[107]](#footnote-107) Towards the end of the twentieth century, transnationalism became a growing trend whereby migrants maintained closer contacts with their countries of origin. This phenomenon was partially related to the development of transnational corporations whose employees may be expected to work in any part of the world. This is closely related to the concept of globalism and the increasing degree of globalism seen in globalization, whereby networks of economic, cultural, and political practices developed throughout the globe.[[108]](#footnote-108) Transnationalism and globalization have been furthered by advances in technology and communications and by global economic development and trade agreements between nations. Transnationalism may entail a situation wherein the loyalty of migrants to a culture or religion competes with their devotion to any one nation. The Israelis following this pattern when moving to Berlin may be viewed as continuing older Jewish as some elements of transnationalism has been present for many centuries Jewish world, with multiple identities across the diaspora that have characterized Jewish collective life.[[109]](#footnote-109) However, since the last decades of the 20th century, the world in general and the Jewish worldhave been less constrained by the limiting factors of time and space, with technology increasing the speed and frequency of cross-border connections.[[110]](#footnote-110) Some Israelis leaving Israel in the 21st century may be regarded as part of a global trend, with the rapidly developing communications technologies of the 21st century bringing about the de-territorialization of economic and political structures.[[111]](#footnote-111) Therefore, transnationalism may be seen as strongly contrasting with nationalism. [[112]](#footnote-112) It is interesting to note, therefore, that the migration of Israeli Jews to Berlin around the close of the 20th century and the start of the new millennium corresponded with a resurfacing of nationalism in Israel following a slight decline in patriotism.

A suitable starting point in studying transnational migration is the question,"What is globalized migration?"

Globalization, characterized by accelerated worldwide interconnectedness, has linked people across borders and is changing the pattern of migration. [[113]](#footnote-113) It has also been assumed that there have been increased migration rates over the last fifty years, with migrants traveling longer distances. However, this has been contested, with increasingly complex patterns not necessarily accompanied by increased volume.[[114]](#footnote-114) The diverse expressions of transnationalism accompanying globalization further complicate migration patterns[[115]](#footnote-115). The growth and omniscience of electronic communication allow individuals and communities to participate in the global market, presenting new opportunities for people to align their values with belief systems outside their immediate social environments.

Technological advancements such as global mass media, accessible international connectivity enabled by the Internet, and modern international air transportation fostered the emergence of complex cross-border identities. The present research also revealed that the most predominant way for Israelis in Berlin to connect is through Facebook groups, the combination of which have more than 20,000 registered members.

Some scholars claim that the waves of immigration to Berlin have been different in almost every decade,[[116]](#footnote-116) with motivations for immigration changing from personal and social reasons to economic incentives (as seen in 2000) and considerations of welfare (in 2011).

Other scholars insist that Berlin will always remain the worst place on Earth for Jews and that the growth of antisemitism will tear the masks of the "real" Germans.[[117]](#footnote-117)

Most books and articles dealing with the topic of Israelis in Berlin tend to be personal accounts of experiences and opinions rather than research based on data. This is the case with the three most seminal books regarding the lives of Israelis in Berlin, which have been dubbed the 'big three': *Israelis in Berlin* by Fania Oz-Salzberger (2001); *Germany at Odds: A Contemporary Testimony* by Eldad Beck (2015); and *Israelis in Berlin: Community in the Making* by ShokiStauber (2017).

However, a recent scholarly article by Uzi Rebhun, Dani Krantz and Heinz Sünker (2015) analyses a survey of Israelis living in Berlin. [[118]](#footnote-118) The extensive research of these scholars is also being published in 2022 in a book focussing on the characteristics of Israelis in contemporary Germany.[[119]](#footnote-119) Their research has revealed that the typical characteristics of Israelis in Berlin are that they are agnostic, politically positioned left, and usually have a bachelor's degree or more advanced academic degrees.

Most of the Israelis living in Berlin moved there with the support of their families as their motivation revolves around their aspirations to improve their careers or acquire cheaper education than they could in Israel, where the cost of living is still rising rapidly.

This rise in the cost of living in Israel may be connected to some extent, at least to a period of rapid globalization that occurred during the 1990s.[[120]](#footnote-120) One of the outcomes of this process was accelerated privatization and individualization of society, which further undermined the strength of Zionism as a collective force.

## 2.2 Current Contexts Israel-Berlin 2010-2019

According to Zachary Johnston,[[121]](#footnote-121) the waves of Israelis immigrating to Berlin each had different characteristics, decade by decade. Still, in general, those Israelis who came to Berlin before the year 2000 appear to have assimilated into Berlin's culture. Most seem to have been attracted to live in what was then 'trendy West Berlin': the swinging SoHo of the city in Kreuzberg and Schöneberg before the Berlin Wall came down. Its residents were artists, actors, and social misfits (not unlike today).[[122]](#footnote-122)

Today, many Israelis have settled in East Berlin neighborhoods such as Friedrichshain, Prenzlauer Berg, and Mitte (although the old West Berlin is still represented by a large population of Israelis living in Kreuzberg and Charlottenburg). However, Israelis initially generally maintained a low profile. Filmmaker Zachary Johnston reported that he was aware of Israelis living in Berlin up until 2010 and could "spy a poster for an event hosted by Israelis. A blue Star of David would catch your eye, attached to a window or lamppost."[[123]](#footnote-123)

A significant change took place from 2011 onwards, with the impact of social media when 'Israelis in Berlin' became a Facebook sensation. There are currently over 17,000 active Israeli Facebook members in Berlin. This forum allows Israelis to prepare for their move to Berlin and even helps many decide to move.

Most importantly, this Facebook group 'Israelis in Berlin' provides a single place where Israelis, and by default Jews, can navigate life in the German capital with a familiar and 'safe' place to refer to (the group is private). As more Israelis moved to Berlin, nightclubs with Israeli orientation became regular venues for drinking and dancing. In addition, boroughs such as Prenzlauer Berg, Mitte, and Kreuzberg began to pop up hummus restaurants with unabashed Israeli themes and menus.

In 2015, a study by ShukiStauber indicated that three primary waves of Israeli immigration to Berlin had taken place.[[124]](#footnote-124)

The first wave is defined as continuing until 2000 and was characterized as the 'romantic' wave of immigration. The second wave occurred during the twenty-first century's first decade and was described as the 'social-political' migration wave. Finally, the third wave occurred around 2015 and was characterized as the 'economic' immigration wave. The study also indicated that four main factors influenced Israelis when deciding to migrate to berlin. These were: personal dissatisfaction with the individual's life in Israel, whether stemming from social, political, or economic factors; the opportunity for personal and career development; a relationship with a German national and finally, the low cost of living in Berlin.

Today, almost twenty Facebook groups deal with various issues that concern the Israelis in Berlin and provide a virtual meeting place for them. 'Israelis in Berlin' is the largest group, but other groups such as 'Normal Israelis in Berlin' and 'Our Berlin' have significant numbers of members.

Many Israelis searching for meaning in their lives have made their own contributions to Berlin's culture with art, music, and food, and their presence has heralded a new era in the Israeli-Berlin relationship. Nowadays, Hebrew can often be heard on the streets or while waiting at a U-Bahn-Station. Berlin is also attracting many young Israelis who simply wish to leave Israel for a while to experience life elsewhere. They may stay in Berlin or use it as a convenient gateway from where they can explore the rest of the world. Thus, the Israeli community of Berlin can be defined as a community in progress. The state of Israel is also showing buds of change in its attitude toward migrants. A manifestation of this can be seen in the willingness of the Israeli Embassy in Berlin to establish ties with the Israeli community there.

The exact number of Israelis in Berlin today remains unknown. Formal data refers to about 5,000 people, but because many Israelis in Berlin also hold German citizenship, they are not counted in the formal data. As a result, it appears that the most accurate number of the population is given by Tal Alon, editor of the Israeli magazine *Spitz*, who claims that the number is closer to 7,500.

### 2.2.1Current antisemitism in Berlin

One factor that could conceivably influence the choices of Israelis when considering living in Berlin is the number and severity of antisemitic acts reported in the city. Antisemitism is defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) as "a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and their property and toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities"[[125]](#footnote-125).

In recent years levels of antisemitism have increased across Europe, including Germany in general and Berlin in particular.[[126]](#footnote-126) The rise in antisemitism in Berlin had been noticed to the degree that in January 2015, the "Association for a Democratic Culture in Berlin (VDK e.V.) established the "Department for Research and Information on Antisemitism" (RIAS Berlin).[[127]](#footnote-127)

When describing the antisemitism in Berlin today, the most common point of reference is the events that led to the Jewish Holocaust, the daily acts of violence against Jews that accumulated into something unimaginable. However, a more fair comparison is that of the antisemitism that took place during the 1920s in Germany. For example, the largest outbreak of anti-Jewish violence during the Weimar Republic's rule was the Scheunenviertelriots. These events peaked on November 5, 1923, during the Ruhr crisis. Extreme inflation caused unemployed workers to rage in the Scheunenviertel-Berlin Jewish Quarter. While only one Jewish resident was killed, many were injured, and shops and homes were vandalized and looted. The violence extended beyond this neighborhood, with attacks on shops in other parts of Berlin too. Almost 100 years after these events, the atrocities continue. In August 2019, graves of Jewish soldiers killed in WWI were defaced in a large Jewish cemetery. Later that month, a Jewish woman in Berlin received a letter containing ashes. In 2019, the federal government in Berlin took the initiative to put together a local plan to combat anti-Semitic hatred at a local level also indicates the gravity of the situation regarding antisemitism in Berlin. [[128]](#footnote-128) Berlin's antisemitism commissioner, Lorenz Korgel, who was appointed in May 2019, warned that Jews who wear a kippah in public could experience frequent attacks.

One case that attracted media attention was the severe bullying of a Jewish boy in a public High School in 2017. The boy was tormented by students of Arab and Turkish descent, with an older boy choking him until he lost consciousness. Gideon Joffe, chairman of Berlin's Jewish community, said that one-third of the Berlin Jewish High School pupils had suffered harassment when attending non-Jewish public schools. "In 2019, our high school is full of Jewish refugees." He claimed that the perpetrators are often the children of Muslim immigrants. In September 2016, a 23-year-old Syrian armed with a knife stormed the guard at Berlin's largest synagogue on Oranienburger street. According to witnesses, he shouted "AllaAkbar" and "F\*\*k Israel." The attacker has since been released, and his whereabouts are unknown.[[129]](#footnote-129)

In the summer of 2019, there were two antisemitic attacks against Rabbis in Berlin. In July 2019, Berlin's Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal was spat at and insulted by Arabs on his way home from the synagogue with his son. The following month, Rabbi Jan Aaron Hammel was aggressively shoved, spat upon, and verbally abused in Arabic. Rabbi Hammel was severely injured and was sent to the hospital. He needed crutches when being released. These followed the 2012 incident when Rabbi Daniel Alter was severely beaten on a Berlin Street by four young people assumed to be Arabs, in the presence of his seven-year-old daughter.

In 2020, German authorities recorded 2,351 antisemitic crimes. This is a 16% increase in reported cases from the previous year, and it is estimated that the number of unreported instances was maybe three times as high. In 2018 RIAS had recorded 1,083 anti-Semitic incidents, a rise since the 951 recorded in 2017. However, as in the statistics from 2020, the reported cases are only a fraction of the total, as many incidents go unreported. Also, RIAS Berlin recorded 46 anti-Semitic threats in 2018 – an increase of 77 percent compared to the previous year.

Although the current study relates to Israeli migration to Berlin from 2000 to 2019, some of the processes associated with antisemitism in Berlin have been seen more clearly during the time of the pandemic from the end of 2019 to 2022. For example, in a recently released report covering the first six months of 2021, RIAS reported recording more antisemitic events than in any similar period since the organization's establishment. Furthermore, 211 antisemitic incidents were recorded in May alone, which is more than had been noted in any month previously.

There has been a rise in reports of antisemitic behavior in Berlin and across Germany since an attack on the Halle Synagogue on Yom Kippur 2019, with antisemitism having intensified further since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.[[130]](#footnote-130)Moreover, there appears to be a pattern whereby increases in incidents of antisemitism are associated with external factors, such as the Gaza protests of 2014, anti-Israel protests in May 2021, and demonstrations protesting against policies put in place to combat Covid-19 known as Querdenken demonstrations.

One element involved in antisemitism has been a plethora of conspiracy theories, such as those expressed in the fictional publication "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."[[131]](#footnote-131) One aspect of the 'rehabilitation' of antisemitism is through endorsing personalities who promoted antisemitism and disseminated conspiracy theories against Jews. For example, in 2009, the Berlin University of Applied Science, founded in 1971, was renamed after Christian Peter Wilhelm Beuth (1781-1853), a Prussian statesman and virulent anti-Semite. He called for the murder of Jews and, inter alia, embraced blood libel accusations.

This process has also been seen in recent years, with antisemitic tropes being involved in many conspiracy theories disseminated since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Old libels have been revived, with Jews being blamed for the spread of the Covid-19 virus. RIAS reported a drastic increase in antisemitic myths at this time, with right-wing communities involving anti-Jewish sentiment in their conspiracy theories regarding the inception of the pandemic.[[132]](#footnote-132) In August 2020, the Berlin Jewish community protested the open antisemitism at a Berlin coronavirus protest attended by over 20,000 people calling for an end to restrictions associated with the struggle to contain the virus. [[133]](#footnote-133) The rally was supported by neo-Nazi groups who openly displayed antisemitic slogans.

The political spectrum to which most anti-Semitic threats are attributed is right-wing extremism: 17 out of the 46 threats made (or 37 percent) in 2018 came from people with a far-right background. Threats from people with an Islamist background were also common, with 15 percent of the threats belonging to this demographic. It is striking that compared to other types of anti-Semitic incidents, a disproportionate number of threats came from the district of Neukölln - three of which were motivated by left-wing anti-imperialists and two by the far-right.

While many antisemitic incidents in Berlin are related to those on the far-right, there is also a dominant trend whereby intense anti-Israel hatred and intense antisemitic hatred go hand in hand. Monika Schwarz-Friesel has described thisas 'the Israelization of antisemitism,' which she describes as 'the most dominant manifestation of Judaism today[[134]](#footnote-134). While discussing antisemitism on the world wide web (referred to as Antisemitism 2.0), Schwarz-Frieselcites many cases in the real world. For example, the German music industry awarded a prize to rappers who included lines mocking Auschwitz victims and the text "Make another holocaust come again, come on with the Molotov," with the lines being accepted as expressing artistic freedom.[[135]](#footnote-135) The Palestinian-led *Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions* movement (BDS) against Israel, which has wide support amongst left-wing circles, is evident across Europe. BDS activists have interrupted speeches by Israelis at universities throughout Europe, including Berlin. On September 25, 2019, a pro-Palestinian demonstration occurred at the Brandenburger Gate. Only a few hours before, Berlin's Senator of the Interior, Andreas Geisel (SPD), prohibited the participation of two rappers, Shadi al Bourini and Shadi al-Najja, whose songs included the lines: "Burn Tel Aviv down, we want to burn Tel Aviv down" and, about Jews: "I want to trample you under my feet."

At a Berlin demonstration in 2017, placards were carried demanding the destruction of Israel, and an Israeli flag was set on fire, an incident that attracted international attention. Furthermore, the march held on Al-Quds Day, which calls for the destruction of Israel, was an annual event in Berlin from 1996 - 2019. These marches, which take place in various cities worldwide, are internationally associated with Iran and Hezbollah. There is also a mosque of sympathizers with Hezbollah. For many years the German government refused to outlaw local branches of this genocidal terrorist organization and to ban the marches which call for the destruction of Israel.[[136]](#footnote-136) However, in 2016 Berlin officially barred Al-Quds Day demonstrators from carrying Hezbollah flags carrying an image of an assault weapon. In 2020 the march was canceled due to Covid-19; in 2021, the Al-Quds Day march was finally banned in Berlin.[[137]](#footnote-137)

The official view supported by RIAS nevertheless assessed that the main perpetrators of anti-Semitic incidents in Berlin were German and did not come from the 300,000 large Muslim community. RIAS did, however, add that 49 percent of the perpetrators are "unknown." Geisel (SPD) has promised to improve scrutiny on the motives behind anti-Semitic offenses, saying,"It is unjustifiable to ascribe a motive of right-wing extremism to every one of these unsolved crimes."

Anti-Semitic incidents are only part of Berlin's antisemitism. The Berlin Monitor (2019) conducted a research project on antisemitism in Berlin, providing insights into the city's inhabitants and their connection to spreading anti-Semitic attitudes.[[138]](#footnote-138) The Monitor found that antisemitism linked to Israel was thriving in Berlin. Twenty-eight percent of inhabitants with no migrant background regarded the establishment of Israel as a bad idea, and 35 percent viewed the behavior of Israelis as comparable to that of the Nazis under Hitler's regime. Up to 55 percent of Berliners with a migrant background agreed with these statements.

In this atmosphere, wherein hatred toward Israel is widespread, the Jewish Museum in Berlin has been severely criticized for lending a hand to several anti-Israel programs over the years. Ultimately, these events led to the resignation of director Professor Peter Schäfer in June 2019. Though he was a renowned scholar, he lacked the managerial capacities required to prevent multiple scandals.

Another issue regarding the perpetuation of antisemitism is the attitude of the local government. Mayor Michael Müller (SPD) has declined publicly oppose high-profile anti-Israel events in Berlin. However, he was criticized when he received the Mayor of Tehran. The same attitude was seen when Berlin State Secretary for Federal Affairs Sawsan Chebli (SPD), who was the initiator of the Berlin Senate's Working Circle to combat antisemitism, shared the podium with a Jewish pro-BDS supporter at an event in Berlin in June 2019.

Finally, there is the hypocritical attitude of the German government, which is housed in Berlin. President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) showed contradictory behavior when he visited Rabbi Teichtal after being attacked, yet later praised the Iranian government, which is well known for speaking openly about genocide against Israel. The contradictions do not end here. FM Heiko Maas (SPD) attended a solidarity prayer service with Rabbi Teichtal at a synagogue in Berlin. Yet, under his authority, Germany supported many anti-Israel resolutions at the UN General Assembly.

Furthermore, the anti-Israeli deputy FM Niels Annen (SPD) paid a congratulatory visit to the Iranian embassy in Berlin to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Islamic revolution of 1979. The former Chancellor Angela Merkel, a Christian democrat, regularly spoke out against antisemitism – but her asylum policy brought hundreds of thousands of anti-Semites from Muslim countries into Germany. She also expressed solidarity with anti-Semitic democrat American Congress members Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. In Berlin, there are three active anti-Semite commissioners. Yet,suppose hypocrisy is prominent at the highest levels in the municipality and government. In that case, one can only wonder at the prospects for Germany's fight against antisemitism in its classic or anti-Israel forms.[[139]](#footnote-139)

Notwithstanding attempts to counter antisemitism in Berlin, each month still brings other scandals. For example, in December 2019, a conference of Hamas supporters took place in Germany's capital, the city where Hitler and his associates planned genocide against the Jews. The meeting was called 'The Palestinians in Europe and the UNRWA.' In the past, its organizers were linked to Hamas by German intelligence services. Regardless of this troubling connection, the city of Berlin, governed by an alliance of left-wing parties, allowed the event to occur. However, this was not the first event of this type that the government of Berlin to allowed to take place. On October 3, 2014, about 1000 people marched in Berlin with the slogan 'We are for Germany.' The Jewish Forum for Democracy and anti-Semitism (JFDA) published a video showing a march of neo-Nazis. One man shouted, "Never again, Israel." There were also calls for a thousand-year battle about the thousand years that Hitler's Third Reich was supposed to exist. It is deeply troubling to observe that in the 21st century, Jews in Germany are still taunted and harassed regularly by the far right. This daily discrimination sets the stage for violence against Jewish people. Annette Seidel-Arpaci, head of the RIAS in Bavaria, speaks of a "frightening amount of everyday antisemitism." It occurs on the street, in the beer gardens, and neighbourhoods. According to RIAS, the perpetrators include Palestinian, anti-Israeli activists, anti-Semitic boycott groups, and radical left elements. Still, most perpetrators are, by no means, far-right extremists. "And you don't have to look very far to the right to find antisemitism," says Bianca Klose, the head of the Association for Democratic Culture in Berlin, RIAS' parent organization. "It's enough to look at the center of society."[[140]](#footnote-140)

Almost 77 years after the end of the Holocaust, Jews, when celebrating Yom Kippur in a synagogue, fear for their lives. Anti-Semitic statements one would expect neo-Nazis or the far right to utter are now said by supposedly ordinary, upstanding citizens. As a result, hatred is spreading in Germany. This resurgence of antisemitism in Germany and across Europe is thought by some to reflect a deeply rooted antisemitism that is integral to European culture. [[141]](#footnote-141) In 2002 the UK Chief Rabbi made the alarming observation that in certain European circles,"nobody will ever forgive the Jews for the Holocaust."[[142]](#footnote-142) The demonization of Jews is spreading, along with the irrational hate based on the idea that the Jews are the root of all evil.

*Figure.1 – Violent anti-Semitic acts registered with the police in Germany 2001-2018*



Various studies sought to show the settlement of Israelis in Germany in recent years. Germany, in practice, gradually developed according to the concept of the promised state for many Israelis. This is especially a layer of educated Israelis, with degrees, who wanted to find a comfortable life for themselves. The move to Germany includes two aspects. The first aspect includes a perception of pressure and difficulty in the State of Israel. The second aspect concerns the perception of life in Germany as someone who will be good to them, as someone who can allow them to live as they deserve to live[[143]](#footnote-143).

The guiding concept of the Israelis who moved to Germany is that there is no significant anti-Semitism in Germany, i.e. it is relatively easy to move there. However, the reality actually showed otherwise when in many cases different Israelis experienced a lot of anti-Semitism in these places as well. Germany, on the other hand, is a European country where, as a rule, you can find less anti-Semitism compared to other European countries. In general, this is a country that remembers the events of the Holocaust and regrets them[[144]](#footnote-144).

However, it is mainly a perception of the government and this perception does not always permeate the average German citizen. This fact is what led to the fact that there were quite a few cases in which anti-Semitism was revealed against Israelis who moved to Germany. Also, there is evidence of negative experiences of Israelis who moved to Germany. In a significant part of the cases, we are talking about Israelis whose grandparents were Holocaust survivors. In other words, this is an educated class, usually, whose origin is also German or half-German[[145]](#footnote-145).

The decision to move to Germany was made by these Israelis, but you can see how the Holocaust experience they grew up with and the stories their relatives told about certain places in Germany lead some of them to a real sense of trauma. The premise in this regard is that it is a process that is more indicative of the difficulty of these immigrants in Israel. The latter are willing to move to another destination, even if they have many difficulties with it, provided they do not stay in the State of Israel[[146]](#footnote-146).

### 2.2.2 Additional hostilities toward Jews in Germany

Antisemitic acts in Germany are not limited to Berlin. Rabbis have also been repeatedly attacked or spat on in other towns such as Munich and Hamburg. In Cologne, a local rabbi stopped taking public transportation because he could no longer stand the constant hostilities.

In mid-July 2017 in Freiburg, a 61-year-old man verbally accosted the head of the local Jewish community, yelling, "Are we here in Germany or Jewland?" And "I'm not surprised Hitler gassed you, you idiots." Unfortunately, such expressions of hatred are far from being isolated cases.

In May 2018, in the city of Hemmingen, near Hannover, an elderly Jewish couple found an incendiary device on their welcome mat one morning and the word "Jew" spray-painted red on their front door. Two months later, a Jewish driver wearing a kippah was driving through Berlin when he was called a "dirty Jew" and spat at by a man who passed by. In Bamberg, the spray-painted words "Don't buy from Jews" were left for months on the side of a bridge. Anger and violence against Jews have become such a common occurrence that Germany as a society urgently needs to do some soul-searching. "Has Germany Forgotten the Lessons of the Nazis?" asked an editorial written by Paul Hockenos, published on April 15, 2019, in the New York Times. Hockenos cites the rise in popularity of the far-right AfD party and the statistic that 40% of Germans agree with blaming Jews for Israel's policies. The American news organization also published a lengthy feature in May 2018 about the "New German antisemitism."

Despite rising antisemitism, most Jews do not want to leave Germany. Indeed, the number of Jews who immigrate to the country vastly outnumbers those who reject it. Yet, many find the situation depressing and increasingly threatening. In 2018, the European Union released a study in which researchers spoke with Jews across Europe.[[147]](#footnote-147) Over one-third of the respondents reported they had considered leaving Europe. Eighty-nine percent of those who were interviewed said antisemitism had grown considerably in their country since 2013. In Germany, 85 percent of responders said antisemitism is a pressing problem. France is the only European country where this figure is higher: almost all Jewish respondents in France claimed to have been the target of hostile attitudes.

The German office of interior affairs published its constitution report for 2018, with specific data on politically motivated crime. The Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA), which reflected the office of interior affairs data, registered a total of 36,062 politically motivated offenses in 2018 – a drop of 8.7 percent compared to the previous year (2017: 39,505).

At first glance, those reading this report might conclude that there is a significant drop in political crime. However, it is mentioned in the report that while the overall number of right-wing extremist offenses registered in 2018 fell by 0.3 percent compared to 2017, the number of violent crimes committed by right-wing extremists rose by 3.2 percent. Among these violent crimes, all cases of attempted homicide (six in total) were motivated by xenophobia. In addition, the number of xenophobic offenses resulting in body injury rose by 7 percent, and the number of extremist offenses, categorized as "politically and foreign ideology motivated crime," came to 1,928. This sharp rise of 62.4 percent was mainly attributable to nationwide protests.

It is clear from this data that crimes based on antisemitism, racism, or hatred of immigrants are rising rapidly.

In conclusion, when asking ourselves if antisemitism is on the rise, the answer is a resounding yes. Perhaps the more crucial question to ask is whether there is a new form of antisemitism or considering a more comprehensive definition of antisemitism. Rather than limiting the definition of antisemitism to extreme acts of violence against Jews, this definition should also include the insidious, everyday hate crimes that Jews face daily. This concept no doubt requires further research.

### 2.2.3Relevant changes in the Israeli political atmosphere

On March 31, 2009, the Knesset approved the appointment of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister, despite Kadima having won slightly more votes than Netanyahu's Likud. Netanyahu's government took office the following day, on April 1, 2009.

Netanyahu remained in office as prime minister of Israel from 2009 until June 13, 2021, when Naftali Bennett replaced him. The latter took office after receiving support from a broad-based coalition government. The unprecedented period with the same politician holding the head of government for over 12 years allowed Netanyahu to move the country toward his own social and political agendas. Hence, Netanyahu's time in power represented a shift towards increasingly nationalistic and capitalist values. This shift in the political balance led to two significant developments that acted as catalysts for Israelis, who later migrated to Berlin.

The first significant change was the shift from a peaceful agenda led by Ehud Barak and the center-left parties, which sought to freeze the Israel-Palestine relationship as an official agenda. The reasons for the current state of the Israel-Palestine conflict are various and widely researched. One cannot point the finger at a particular side of the conflict as the one to blame. The most important thing to understand is that the chance for peace was out of reach under Netanyahu's premiership. This research shows thatmost of the Israelis in Berlin are associated with centre-left political parties, not with right-wing parties such as the 'Likud,' Netanyahu's party.

For many Israelis, the continued conflict equates to a loss of hope for a better place to raise their children and the reality of forever being a minority outnumbered by enemy countries and populations. This agenda has caused many left-leaning Israelis to lose hope that there will ever be peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

The second significant change is an economic change that started long before 2009.

Israel has transformed from a welfare-oriented, semi-socialist country to a capitalist entity. The privatization of government companies, reduction of pensions in the name of efficiency, problems in the housing market that prevent young couples from purchasing their own house, and many more socially detrimental changes were supported by Netanyahu's regime.

Netanyahu's administration and the many changes it implemented caused extreme frustration in many Israelis, eventually reaching a peak. Around 2011, thousands of Israelis demonstrated against the cost of living in Israel. This was another major incentive for Israelis to move to Berlin, where the cost of living was relatively cheap. There, one can support their family with income from almost any job and generous financial support from the German government.

It can be said with certainty that the two most imperative reasons that compelled Israelis to migrate to Berlin were the cost of living in Israel and their lack of hope for peace. Both of these issues arose from Netanyahu's leadership.

## 2.3Berlin as an attractive destination for Israeli Immigrants

"Why should Israelis move to Berlin?" is a post in the Facebook group 'Olim Le Berlin' that encourages Israelis to leave Israel and move to Berlin. In this post, there are thousands of responses and opinions about the reasons to pack your belongings and catch a plane to Berlin. Better sooner than later.

Four main reasons make Berlin an attractive destination for Israeli immigrants, including Germany's location in Central Europe and its geographical proximity to Israel, the economic comfort felt there, an open and welcoming atmosphere, and a comfortable urban environment. These factors will presently be explored in depth.

Many Israelis feel that the allure of Israel is decreasing while Berlin's appeal continues to rise. The Israelis that move to Berlin do so for practical reasons, yet they maintain a strong affinity with Israel. Their best friends are Israelis. Therefore, they need to keep in touch with the Israeli culture and the Hebrew language.

In the past, having a dual connection between these two countries would have been seen as contradictory. But Israelis who previously opposed relations between Israel and Germany because of their past histories have gradually reduced their opposition as the animosity between the two countries lessens.

Nowadays, the Israeli public is much more tolerant of emigrants from Israel. Even the mildly derogatory term '*yordim*', which means one who leaves Israel, is being used less to describe Israelis living in Berlin. This also may be due to the fact that a substantial portion of emigration from Israel to Germany is temporary. Not "descending" permanently from the country (as the word '*yordim*' is translated to), but rather traveling, exploring for a few years, and in many cases, returning to Israel.

Today, there is less criticism toward those who leave the country. Moreover, as Israeli society has become more globalized and established in global affairs, there is more tolerance and acceptance of the phenomenon.

The German government, too, is satisfied with the increased presence of Israelis in Berlin and finds that it is helpful to their image. Thus, attempts are being made to strengthen the unique relations between Germany and Israel. Nonetheless, emigration from Israel to Berlin has received exaggerated coverage by the media because of the countries' unprecedented connection through past events.

The number of Israeli immigrants to English-speaking countries is negligible compared to Israeli immigration to Germany. The media coverage of Israeli immigration to Berlin (mainly from 2004 to 2011) helped to expose this trend and popularize it. However, today the media no longer prioritizes covering the phenomenon of Israelis immigrating to Berlin because it is no longer new or unique.

Immigration from Israel is now a typical migration pattern that is part of the phenomenon of globalization. However, peripheral emigration from Israel is relatively low compared to other Western countries. This is surprising, considering the geopolitical circumstances of the state of Israel. On the other hand, it is appropriate to examine the characteristics of human capital leaving Israel, especially the properties of those who do not return.

In two waves, most Israeli immigrants arrived in Berlin after the year 2000. The first wave also called the 'political wave,'[[148]](#footnote-148) (occurred during the twenty-first century's first decade.

One reason contributing to this wave of immigration was the political and security instability that Israelis felt in the early 2000s, which was compounded by the second Intifada of 2000, a Palestinian uprising against Israel. This event was distressing for Israelis but did not act as the sole impetus behind the political wave of immigration to Berlin: it added to the growing list of reasons to move to Berlin.

Aside from the adversities in Israel that encouraged Israelis to leave Israel, from the early 2000s, other factors came into play that presented Berlin as an alluring immigration destination. One of these was the perception of Berlin as a popular tourist destination with attractive tour packages in the early 2000s. After Israeli tourism companies exhausted tourist destinations like Prague and Budapest, they found Berlin a new and enticing destination. In addition, these tourism companies exposed the Israeli public to Berlin and its unique identity, which included Berlin's architecture, the site of the fallen Berlin Wall, Berlin's newly constructed city areas, and the transfer of the Bundestag and parts of the German government from Bonn to Berlin.

The location of Berlin helped enhance its perception as an attractive destination. Berlin is very accessible from Israel and is reached by short, inexpensive flights. This is especially suitable for young Israelis who prefer to be close to family and friends in Israel. Berlin's location in Central Europe also allows uncomplicated movement throughout the mainland. While Germany is connected to many surrounding countries by trains, buses, flights, and cars, Israel is only accessible by flight. Germany's ease of mobility between countries is undoubtedly attractive to Israelis, who are used to being geographically isolated.

An additional factor was the increasing international interest in Berlin's real estate. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, large building areas in the center were released, and entrepreneurs worldwide came to participate in constructing a new Berlin - including Israelis. This, combined with the economic comfort of life in Berlin and its convenient urban environment. Berlin, one of the world's most developed cities, has a low cost of living. Even though prices are rising gradually, they are still considered relatively cheap. Also, Germany has a generous social system that is widely available to those who decide to bind their fate with the country. It even includes free tertiary education. An example of the discrepancy in the cost of living between Israel and Germany can be seen in two areas: the cost of tertiary education and the cost of sending children to kindergarten. Both of these expenses are considerably expensive in Israel, while those living in Germany do not pay for either of these services. Berlin is generally perceived as a pleasant city to live in. It has extensive public areas, an efficient public transport system, and highly developed cultural and city services. Its acceptance culture has created a space where anyone can find their niche represented. These factors tend to be an improved model of Israel's current state.

Israelis were also attracted to Berlin by the perceived accepting environment in the city. Germans are well-known forwelcoming immigrants, as the world has seen particularly over the past few years. This welcome extends to Israeli immigrants and can be seen as part of the healing process as Germany seeks to mend past injustices and rehabilitate the country's global image. Moreover, the local Israeli community helps integrate the new Israeli immigrants. Some of the interviewees expressly stated that an essential component in their decision to move to Berlin was the presence of friends who helped them during the first stages of assimilation. In addition, their friends and the Israeli community supported many new Israeli immigrants when dealing with bureaucratic systems and work arrangements.

The final reason presented here was a move made by the EU, which indirectly brought Israelis to Berlin. When the European Union enlarged in the twenty-first century's first decade, many European countries allowed foreigners to claim new passports through their fathers' heritage (Right of the Fathers). This was initiated partly to entice foreigners to immigrate to the EU if they wished to.

When researching this topic, the German Consul in Haifa stated that around 100,000 Israelis have German passports. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Israelis hold passports from other European countries.Migration has long existed in human life, ever since homo sapiens formed communities and moved from one hunting ground to another seeking better living conditions.

While the notion of Israelis immigrating to Berlin is paradoxical because of the city's history, the concept of Israelis who emigrate to seek a better life is not novel. For example, there are many thriving Israeli communities outside Israel in countries such as the United States[[149]](#footnote-149) and Australia[[150]](#footnote-150). The anomaly lies with Israelis who willingly decide to move to Berlin. This city was once at the epicenter of the regime that committed the worst genocide against Jews worldwide. Antisemitism not only existed in the past but is rising again today as the far-right in Germany strengthens socially and politically. These factors lead to my research questions

1. *What is the distribution of the various motivations (economic, cultural, political, educational, and personal reasons) of Israelis for immigrating to Berlin between 2000 and 2019?*
2. *In what way does the rising antisemitism affect the motivations of Israeli emigrants in Berlin to return to Israel?*
3. *How have the religious differences affected the relationship between the Israeli emigrants and the local Jewish community in Berlin?*

The findings of this study suggest that some immigration motivations are more prominent than others. Throughout the last decade, Berlin has been described in the media as well as in the relevant literature as an affordable, cultural, and modern city to live in – with the cost of living being much lower than in Tel Aviv or Haifa and salaries higher. Considering the German government's emphasis on social welfare and the generous benefits that immigrants received, it was natural to expect that the economic incentive would be the most significant driver of immigration for Israelis who immigrated to Berlin between 2010 - 2019.

Evidently, according to formal German statistics[[151]](#footnote-151) and media reports,[[152]](#footnote-152) anti-Semitic behaviors and sentiments are on the rise in Germany today. If all other immigration motivations were disregarded, the existence of rising antisemitism would compel hopeful Israeli immigrants to remain in Israel or choose another place to move to. However, this is not the case. Many contexts must be considered, including the social, economic, cultural, personal, and political situation of Israel, Germany, and, specifically, Berlin.

It is well known that there is a large gap between the cost of living in Israel and that in Germany, particularly in Berlin. This factor acts as one of the most substantial and most compelling forces that have influenced the decision of Israelis to seek a better standard of living elsewhere. The existence of such a stark contrast - that is, the distinction between the cost of living in Israel and Berlin - reveals that the decision of Israelis to immigrate to Berlin does not exist in a cultural or political vacuum but rather depends on the numerous and nuanced components of an individual living under the wing of a nation, bringing with it all the ensuing political, historical, and cultural complexities. Therefore, it can be assumed that despite rising anti-Semitic sentiments in Berlin, the Israelis who moved to Berlin between 2000 - 2019 persisted due to the lure of economic comfort, which proved to be stronger than the rising of extreme right-wing and antisemitism.This research focuses on Israeli immigrants living in Berlin and is conducted from a social perspective.

This study combines both quantitative and qualitative methods of gathering data.[[153]](#footnote-153) The types of data generated by these two methods complement each other and prove to be particularly effective in immigration studies. Qualitativetools, such as interviews, can generate rich descriptions focusing on detailed questions, which add details to the overall picture generated by quantitativemethods, such as surveys.

While quantitative methods based on surveys, descriptive statistics, regression analysis, etc., are necessary for analyzing macro and micro level data (for example, demographic aspects of migration flows, stocks, number and percentage of emigrants and immigrants, causes for migration, etc.), a qualitative approach can be a valuable strategy for exploring the life of migrants.[[154]](#footnote-154)

Some qualitative techniques (including a biographical method with variants such as life history and life course method, open interviews, and participant observation) have become increasingly popular in this field.

The quantitative part of the study involves an opinion survey that will be delivered online, by social media, to the targeted groups of Israelis living in Berlin.

The qualitative part will involve interviews with Israeli immigrants living in Berlin and leading members of the local Jewish community, also independent observations on the connection between the two communities.

**Findings**

In this chapter, I will present an in-depth analysis of the Israeli immigrants' motivations to immigrate to Berlin and the effect of several factors that enhanced their decision to return to Israel.

The data presented is composed of both the online survey results as well as the interviews conducted with Israeli immigrants living in Berlin.

First of all, regarding the demographic distribution of the research participants, according to the data found there are 542 men and 515 women, with 37.3 percent and 35.4 percent of the research participants. The rest did not answer this part and indicated that they did not want to describe their gender. Also, the most common age group was the youngest age group in the study, 21 to 30 with 627 participants who made up 43.2 percent of all study participants. The second most common group was the 31 to 40 age group with 390 participants and 26.8 percent of all study participants. It can be learned from this that most of the participants are young. Also, most of the participants had an additional passport, with the most common passport being a German passport with 597 participants who made up 41.1 percent of all study participants. Finally, the majority of study participants were single with 650 participants representing 44.7 percent of all study participants. This fact is consistent with the finding that most of the study participants are young.

The findings part is for those who want to focus specifically on the answers that came up from the research participants about the three different research questions that came up in this study after the literature review part. The part of the findings is the one who asks to answer each of the questions according to the order of their appearance. The first question that came up is what is the distribution of the different motives, from different points of view, of Israelis to immigrate to Berlin in the years examined in this study?

**financial reason**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2% | Not interested in answering |
| 44% | Agree |
| 17% | Moderately agree |
| 21% | Agree slightly |
| 16% | Strongly agree |

As can be seen here, only 16 percent of the research participants do not agree at all with the statement that they immigrated to Germany for an economic reason. On the other hand, almost a similar percentage, 13 percent of the participants, strongly agrees with this claim. The most common answer in the answers is "agree" which received 37 percent, that is, over a third of the total research participants. This fact indicates that the economic aspect was a major factor in immigration.

**personal reason**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 19% | Not interested in answering |
| 9% | Agree |
| 29% | Moderately agree |
| 18% | Agree slightly |
| 9% | Strongly agree |
| 16% | I don’t agree at all |

The trend here is quite mixed. The most common answer here is moderately agree. It can be said that there is a degree of agreement that personal reasons led to immigration, but it is not a very dominant factor.

**political reason**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 8% | Not interested in answering |
| 31% | Agree |
| 22% | Moderately agree |
| 14% | Agree slightly |
| 19% | Strongly agree |
| 14% | I don’t agree at all |

Here the trend is very clear. Only 8 percent answered that they do not agree at all. Most of the respondents with 31 percent of the total answers answered the answer agree and 19 percent even strongly agreed with this claim. There is no doubt that the political aspect had a significant impact on the desire to immigrate.

**cultural reason**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 3% | Not interested in answering |
| 53% | Agree |
| 18% | Moderately agree |
| 4% | Agree slightly |
| 22% | Strongly agree |

Here too the trend is very clear. In fact, this is the aspect that has so far been seen to have the greatest impact on the desire to immigrate to Germany on the part of the research participants. As you can see, there was not one participant who answered that he did not agree that he immigrated to Germany for a cultural reason. Over half of the participants answered yes and almost a quarter of the participants, with 22 percent, strongly agreed with this statement.

**family reason**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 24% | Not interested in answering |
| 19% | Agree |
| 18% | Moderately agree |
| 18% | Agree slightly |
| 2% | Strongly agree |
| 19% | I don’t agree at all |

Here the trend is clearly mixed. The fact that the most frequent answer expressed the fact that the research participants do not want to answer, with 24 percent of the total answers, is who stands on its own. It is evident that this is a complex issue for the immigrants. 19 percent did not agree at all with the claim here. On the other hand, 19 percent strongly agreed. It is evident that there is a real variety of feelings here on the part of the research participants, some of whom saw emigration to Germany as one that would lead to family consolidation, but it seems that others did not think so and immigrated there for completely different reasons, such as the cultural reason.

**academic reason**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 7% | Not interested in answering |
| 23% | Agree |
| 10% | Moderately agree |
| 26% | Agree slightly |
| 2% | Strongly agree |
| 32% | I don’t agree at all |

Here, too, the trend is quite clear. It is evident that an academic reason is not one of the significant reasons that led as a trend to immigrate to Germany. 32 percent of the participants, with the most frequent answer, do not agree with this statement at all. This, in addition to another 26 percent of the participants who agree to this to a small extent. This is almost 60 percent for both answers together. On the other hand, only 2 percent strongly agree with this statement.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | financial reason | personal reason | political reason | cultural reason | family reason | academic reason |
| financial reason | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| personal reason | -0.120 | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| political reason | 0.011 | 0.195 | 1 |  |  |  |
| cultural reason | 0.185 | 0.340 | 0.3584 | 1 |  |  |
| family reason | -0.0663 | 0.1169 | 0.1736 | 0.1404 | 1 |  |
| academic reason | -0.0291 | 0.2553 | 0.2360 | 0.2896 | 0.0791 | 1 |

In order to look for connections within the various reasons presented to the research participants as reasons for moving, a test was conducted to find correlations between each reason and other reasons that were examined together with it. The results are shown in the matrix above. As you can see the significant connection obtained is the connection between a cultural reason and a personal reason and a political reason. In both cases it is a correlation of 0.34 and 0.35, respectively, with a positive relationship direction in each case. The cultural aspect is related to the personal and political aspect and it is a set of factors that were found to have influenced the immigrants to leave the State of Israel.

The second research question I raised was in what way does rising anti-Semitism affect the motivation of Israeli immigrants in Berlin to return to Israel?

This question was examined by three different questions that were in the questionnaire, questions that referred to the factor of exposure to violence on an anti-Semitic basis, exposure to violence on the basis of being Israeli and a significant strengthening of the extreme right in Germany. All three of these cases are, of course, cases that express anti-Semitism in Germany and the effect it has on the immigrants' motivation to return to Israel.

Now, a table of all the sayings in order to get a general picture will lead to the following result:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 27% | dont know |
| 24% | not true |
| 6% | refuse to answer |
| 43% | true |

It can be seen that 43 percent of the answers, with the most frequent answer, was correct. On the other hand, only 24 percent answered this question incorrectly and 27 percent did not know what to answer. In other words, almost half of the participants claimed that they feel the anti-Semitism and it definitely makes them think to rise. The fact that almost half of the participants feel this way brings up the fact, first of all, that anti-Semitism is definitely on the rise in Germany during the test period according to the subjective opinion of the research participants, and that a significant number of them are motivated to return to Israel because of this fact.

In order to see what are the reasons that can lead to the desire of immigrants to leave Israel - return to Israel, it is necessary to examine the various connections within the various reasons they were asked about as factors that have changed since the move. The results of the internal correlation between these variables can be seen in the matrix below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *economic* | socialinvolcment | *promotion* | *family* | *education* | *peace* | *culture* | security |
| economic | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| socialinvolcment | 0.2614867 | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| promotion | 0.19015396 | 0.14841804 | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| family | 0.2738936 | 0.50651361 | 0.02108024 | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| education | 0.23516177 | 0.14836686 | 0.12790406 | 0.35522616 | 1 |  |  |  |
| peace | 0.24098166 | 0.39999324 | 0.37042051 | 0.40226598 | 0.21754356 | 1 |  |  |
| culture | 0.16262491 | 0.2730028 | 0.2813467 | 0.34676421 | 0.27089094 | 0.40888098 | 1 |  |
| security | 0.11634474 | 0.23047623 | 0.21841379 | 0.16501974 | 0.28753131 | 0.38648712 | 0.13621871 | 1 |

As can be seen from the matrix, there is a significant relationship between the family aspect that has changed positively and an increase in the level of social welfare as well with a correlation of 0.506. It can be seen that there is a significant improvement that participants feel in this regard after moving to Germany, that is, a process that affected them both at the level of the family unit and at the level of the environment, a process that is related to each other. It is also possible to see a significant relationship between culture and well-being, with a correlation of 0.4. Peace and family were also found to be related to each other with a correlation of 0.4 as well. This fact indicates that the concept of mental well-being is the one that is linked to the aspect that is also related to the family and its way of dealing with the transition on the part of the research participants.

The matrix below shows the relationship between the various reasons that test participants give to return to Israel and leave Germany. As you can see, there is a strong correlation of 0.66 between violence experienced by the participants of the extreme right-wing test in Germany and their desire to return to another country. This fact clearly shows the connections between the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany and the violence they experience. These two factors together are the ones that express a significant factor that makes the research participants want to move to another country.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *professional* | *financial* | *violence* | *violenceis.* | *rightpolitics* | personally | *study* |
| professional | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| financial | 0.24182281 | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| violence | -0.0161501 | -0.0164177 | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| violenceis. | 0.36079401 | 0.23126841 | -0.361199 | 1 |  |  |  |
| rightpolitics | -0.0762121 | -0.1944011 | 0.66889173 | -0.443677 | 1 |  |  |
| personally | 0.07606391 | 0.22816018 | 0.03940206 | 0.03666127 | 0.00276309 | 1 |  |
| study | 0.2588845 | 0.03087204 | 0.24896885 | -0.0162289 | 0.23972374 | -0.0720894 | 1 |

From the code table it is possible to see relationships between reasons leading to a possible departure of test participants from Germany. On the other hand, one can see that there are also opposing forces, opposing reasons for the desire of many participants not to leave Germany, despite the difficulties that exist there. The results can be seen in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | prices | *politics* | religion | democracy | personal |
| prices | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| politics | 0.64927198 | 1 |  |  |  |
| religion | 0.7619248 | 0.89306678 | 1 |  |  |
| democracy | 0.66305913 | 0.74995104 | 0.83478948 | 1 |  |
| personal | 0.82626739 | 0.70763487 | 0.82675514 | 0.77037976 | 1 |

As you can see, there is a significant, strong correlation between all the reasons that can lead Israelis not to leave Germany despite the difficulties there. It can be seen that the prices are related to the political aspect with a correlation of 0.64. Also, the religious aspect is an influential factor when it is linked to high prices in Israel as well as to the political situation of the rise of the right in Israel. The correlations here are 0.76 and 0.89. Also, the democratic situation is the one that is found to be strongly related to the high price level in Israel, to the political level as well as to the religious level with correlations of 0.66, 0.74 and 0.83.

Personal reasons were also strongly associated with other reasons, especially with the reason of high prices in the State of Israel and religion with correlations of 0.82 in both cases. This fact indicates several reasons that exist regarding the reluctance of Israeli immigrants to leave Germany.

The third and final research question was how did the religious differences affect the relationship between the Israeli immigrants and the local Jewish community in Berlin?

First, the questionnaire did not include a specific reference to the study participants' perception that there is indeed a religious difference between them and the local Jewish community in Berlin.

Our premise is that such differences do exist and that all the research participants are also those who hold this exact view. The ability to examine the impact of religious differences, therefore, is dependent on examining the number of times the parties interact. This aspect is the one who can express the relationship between the parties, as can be seen in the graph below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 18% | dailyandcontinuos |
| 27% | notintrestedinanswering |
| 31% | severaltimes a week |
| 14% | lessthanonce a week |
| 10% | onceortwice a week |

It can be seen that the interaction between the two groups is very common among the majority of the study participants. 18% answered that there is a daily and continuous relationship and 31 percent of the research participants, with the most frequent answer, answered that it is several times a week and not in isolated cases where the percentages were low.

In order to see if there are differences between the Israeli community in Germany and the local community, various relationships between services that the research participants testified they received on a regular basis were also examined.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | religion | job | visa | education | culture |
| religion | 1 |  |  |  |  |
| job | 0.74873288 | 1 |  |  |  |
| visa | 0.76615398 | 0.77813394 | 1 |  |  |
| education | 0.82926913 | 0.85205502 | 0.88844598 | 1 |  |
| culture | 0.76914491 | 0.82506863 | 0.89978217 | 0.92435647 | 1 |

As can be seen, there is a significant relationship between the various services that the research participants testified that they receive on various topics from the local German community. In every relationship examined, as can be seen in the matrix, there is a relationship of high intensity. The relationship with the highest strength is between cultural services and educational services, with a correlation of 0.92. This fact is the one that directly testifies that despite the difficulties the research participants have with aspects of the rise of the right in Germany, they feel that they are receiving different services at the same time, services that can certainly explain the reluctance of many of them to return to Israel.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | financial reason | personal reason | political reason | cultural reason | family reason | academic reason |
| ashk. | 1.692 | 2.107 | 2.859 | 3.803 | 1.859 | 2.188 |
| ashk. And miz. | 1.541 | 2.097 | 2.893 | 3.825 | 1.874 | 2.188 |
| no comment | 1.391 | 2.199 | 4.658 | 3.692 | 1.835 | 2.128 |
| miz. | 1.449 | 1.865 | 2.449 | 3.685 | 1.652 | 2.270 |

Another thing that was examined during the research is the effect of the origin, divided by Mizrahi and Ashkenazi and the reason for the migration. As you can see in the table below, the averages of the answers were calculated according to exactly these groups. In addition, it was calculated between the groups whether there is a significant difference between them and this according to the anova test. In the end it can be seen that there are differences in the average values, but in the context of no reason related to the difference between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi. In the end, this division had no effect and did not lead to differences.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | financial reason | personal reason | political reason | cultural reason | family reason | academic reason |
| 2000 | 28 | 47 | 101 | 105 | 28 | 63 |
| 2001 | 58 | 66 | 138 | 150 | 45 | 80 |
| 2002 | 34 | 51 | 98 | 104 | 60 | 52 |
| 2003 | 26 | 40 | 88 | 99 | 31 | 66 |
| 2004 | 37 | 69 | 121 | 143 | 40 | 87 |
| 2005 | 40 | 86 | 80 | 109 | 54 | 77 |
| 2006 | 19 | 53 | 70 | 66 | 30 | 50 |
| 2007 | 18 | 43 | 64 | 68 | 22 | 46 |
| 2008 | 29 | 46 | 89 | 104 | 50 | 71 |
| 2009 | 28 | 57 | 104 | 108 | 26 | 73 |
| 2010 | 355 | 280 | 324 | 658 | 419 | 382 |
| 2011 | 418 | 520 | 864 | 907 | 495 | 579 |
| 2012 | 44 | 92 | 132 | 160 | 80 | 86 |
| 2013 | 108 | 62 | 99 | 108 | 33 | 67 |
| 2014 | 242 | 358 | 546 | 597 | 285 | 322 |
| 2015 | 100 | 219 | 260 | 329 | 173 | 154 |
| 2016 | 32 | 62 | 86 | 96 | 39 | 59 |
| 2017 | 102 | 110 | 227 | 211 | 124 | 113 |
| 2018 | 124 | 134 | 278 | 305 | 156 | 155 |
| 2019 | 73 | 141 | 181 | 198 | 86 | 119 |
| 2020 | 71 | 131 | 175 | 239 | 105 | 109 |
| 2021 | 48 | 127 | 139 | 163 | 74 | 87 |

In addition, the study also examined the reasons for emigrating to Germany by year. As can be seen throughout the years under review, the values are quite the same from year to year, with a significant exception in this regard, which is the year 2011. The values appearing in the table express the sum of answers, that is, the sum of the degree of agreement with the reason for immigration in each case. It can be seen that for all reasons this year the amount was significantly higher than other years. This year was the year of the great housing protest. It seems that this year caused many people to break away from the situation in Israel and move to Germany to find a better future for them there.

**Motivational motivations among Israeli immigrants in Berlin**

First, I examine why Israelis move to Berlin, what are the drivers for immigrating to Berlin, and what is the distribution according to the different types of drivers.

The main driver for immigration I focused on in my study was the following, *economic* (e.g. income increment, better standard of living, cheaper expenses, etc.), *cultural* (e.g. visiting places of culture, attending acts, plays, etc., experiencing more polite behavior, less street noise, etc.), *political* (e.g. disagreeing with the political balance in Israel, losing fate in politicians and the political system, scruple regarding Israeli foreign or domestic policy), *personal* (e.g. more liberal attitude towards gay life, having a German partner, non-belonging feeling), *academic* (e.g. acquiring education in German institutions) and *familial* (e.g. having a German partner, striving for a better life for children, joining a family member living in Berlin)

## Descriptive statistics: Push-pull motives for migration

The survey data shows that there is not one single motive for immigration and that the decision to emigrate from Israel to Berlin is a blend of motives which include political, economic, familial, cultural, academic, and personal reasons.

The findings show that the drivers are connected between them hence can be collated into groups.

Table 5.1 shows the distribution of immigration drivers among Israelis immigrating to Berlin between the years 2010-2019.

First, one can observe that on a scale from 1 to 5, the most significant driver for immigration is the economic one (=3.79), while the cultural driver is second (=3.49) and the political third (=3.04). Familial reasons are the least salient (=1.81). Explain a little what each driver includes. E.g. “While the economic driver refers to x, the cultural pertains to reasons.

Table 5.1 – The salience of drivers for Immigrating to Berlin (N=683)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mean | Reason for Immigration |
| 3.79 | Economic |
| 3.49 | Cultural |
| 3.09 | Political |
| 2.57 | Personal |
| 2.24 | Academic |
| 1.81 | Familial |

The interviewees also support the categorization of economic, cultural, and political factors as the most salient immigration drivers to Berlin. Interviewee S.R said:

*“To be honest, it was mainly about money. We all have German passports and we wanted to have a chance to live an easier life. In Israel, I earned 12,000 NIS (New Israelis Shekels) and I couldn’t afford to pay for anything besides rent and food. Here in Berlin, I earn half of it (about 1,500 Euros) and I can afford a lot of things I avoided in Israel. The second reason is the political issue in Israel, we've just lost all hope that the left will regain its political power.”*

Interviewee K.A said:

*“Why did I immigrate to Berlin? That is a tough question. I don’t think there is one reason. I believe I wanted something else for my children, a more European culture. I had to get away from the Israeli mentality, the noise, the pushing. I wanted something else. I would be a hypocrite if I say that this is the only reason. The fact that I could live almost two years without working and getting government aid was a huge part of my decision to leave Israel.”*

While the economic, cultural, and political are the most salient drivers in general, differences do exist between men (69 respondents in total) and women (85 respondents in total). Table 5.2 shows the distribution of immigration drivers by gender, as a percentage of each group, the most significant differences are in the personal motive (50.2 percent of the male respondents and only 37.6 percent of the female respondents) and the cultural driver (71.7 percent of the female respondents and only 50.2 percent of the male respondents).

Table 5.2: Immigration drivers, by Gender (N=691)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Academic | Cultural | Family | Personal | Political | Economic |  |
| 27.5% | 50.2% | 23.1% | 50.2% | 53.6% | 73.9% | Male |
| 36.4% | 71.7% | 23.5% | 37.6% | 58.8% | 82.3% | Female |

* 1. **Cost of living protests in Israel and the immigration to Berlin**

Germany is well-known for its strong economy, high standards of living, and its government's agenda of social benefits and financial support. Israel might be perceived as somewhat inverse to Berlin, with a low average income and a conservative right-wing government. It seems that these contrary situations do not go unnoticed in Israel; occasionally, the Israeli media publishes an article about “the ease of life” in Berlin. bringing up the difficult economic situation and hardships of life in Israel.

The contrasting economic situations of Israel and Berlin reached a pinnacle during protests against the cost of living in Israel: The “Milky” Protest (2014) (coined after a famous Israeli yogurt) that was focused on the difference between the cost of living in Israeli and Germany, and the Yellow Vest Protest (2018) that had a more general call for corporations to lower the prices.

The 2014 protest brought, for the first time, the issue of immigration to Berlin to the foreground of the Israeli consciousness, various Facebook groups accompanied the protest, emphasizing the price differences between Berlin and Israel.

Evidently, after the 2014 protest, some products prices were lowered, especially the famous "Milky" yogurt, none the less in 2018 another cost of living protest breached, this time it did not concentrate on a specific product or a certain attractive and cheap destination as in 2014, but rather a general cry out for the lowering of the cost of living in Israel.

Some interviewees concurred that their opinions on emigration changed along with the occurrence of these protests, K.A said:

*"The first time I imagined the two words "Berlin" and "immigration" together was in 2014, when I saw in the media that a "Milky" that costs in Israel around 4 shekels costs only 2 in Berlin, that was the first time I thought I should use my EU passport to try and immigrate, a year later I landed in Berlin"*

*E.B also said:*

*"In 2018, shortly after the "Yellow vests" protest began, an Israeli friend called me and asked how Berlin is and how are the prices of products, I answered that Israel is probably one of the most expensive places I know and here it is much cheaper, Now, a little more than a year after, we are neighbors in Berlin…"*

B.N stated that:

*“I arrived in Berlin because of the Milky protest. I understood that in Israel, the big corporations are exploiting us and that I must move to another place if I want to have a good life. It was easier than I thought, luckily. I had an EU passport and at the end of 2014, I left Israel. The Germans were very welcoming, and I received financial aid. Not long after my arrival, I started my MA degree in Berlin, and it is free of charge”.*

Interviewee B.H said:

*“The money here is a big thing. I have a lot of Israeli friends here in Berlin, each one has their reasons why they came here but all of them are pleased with the low cost of living. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been able to stay here for long.”*

N.T said in his interview:

*“In Berlin, you cannot get rich from getting government subsidies or unemployment allowance, but you can live and that is the major difference between Germany and Israel. That is what causes people here to live without stress, and that is why you can get addicted to that comfort.”*

As shown in figure 5.1, indeed the economic driver was dominant in the years of 2014 (13.8 percent of the total immigration motives and 2015 (11.8 percent) and in the years 2018 (10.5 percent) and 2019 (13.2 percent), this link connects between the protests and the economic immigration driver came up as a dominant issue in the interviews.

Figure 5.1: Fluctuations and dominance of the economic driver according to the year of immigration

* 1. **Similar characteristics of different immigration drivers**

In the study, Israeli immigrants were asked to choose the main reason that compelled them to immigrate to Berlin (with the option to choose more than one reason). All the respondents in the survey picked more than one reason; most gave two, three, or even four reasons. The salient reasons for immigration are widely varied yet examining correlations between the different motivations reveals that some are connected stronger than others.

Table 5.3. shows that the immigration drivers can be categorized into three main groups: political-cultural drivers; personal-familial drivers; and the third group with somewhat of a weak correlation yet nonetheless significant, economic-academic drivers.

Table 5.3: Correlation between immigration drivers (Pearson correlation)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Immigration for Economic reasons | Immigration for Political reasons | Immigration for Personal reasons |  |
| .13 | .06 | **.32\*\*** | Immigration for Family reasons |
| .12 | **.72\*\*** | -.05 | Immigration for Cultural reasons |
| **.16\*** | .01 | -.02 | Immigration for Academic reasons |

*Legend explaining asterisks \*, \*\**

* + 1. **Cultural-Political motives for migration**

Data show that respondents who immigrated due to the political situation in Israel were more interested in adopting the German or European culture and were less concerned with the economic aspects of their move to Berlin.

L.W reflected this view in his interview:

*“I did not come to Berlin to make money. If I had wanted something like that I would have immigrated to the USA. Here in Berlin, I found the perfect combination of rich history and culture and not being robbed by the government.”*

K.A also reiterated this idea:

*“…Some Israelis came to Berlin because they felt a better connection to the European culture. I believe those are the same people that are located on the far-left side of the political map and that couldn’t find a place in the current right dominant political atmosphere in Israel.”*

While there is a common perception, especially in recent years, that it is financially easier to live in Berlin, the economic driver is the least significant factor for the cultural-political group when deciding to emigrate to Berlin.

B.H stated in his interview:

*“I became tired of the political issues in Israel. I felt that there was no future and I wanted something else. Although I had a very good job, something was missing… I think that in Israel I went to the theater once a year. Here (in Berlin) I go with my wife twice a month. I have a lot of friends here in Berlin and we hang out just for fun, I didn’t have it in Israel.”*

Similarly, A.B states:

*“It is not the money. Everyone thinks that we left because it is cheaper here. Israel is indeed much more expensive than Berlin but if this was the only thing, we would return after a year or two. We are staying because people here let you live your life and do not stick their noses in your personal life. The Germans are very polite, maybe even too polite…”*

C.G said:

*“I seek culture, and here in Berlin, I found the possibility to consume culture almost daily. I am beginning to work in a museum alongside my philosophy degree, so for me, that was the main reason to move… the second reason might be that I do not believe in the Likud [Israeli ruling right-wing party] regime. I think they are corrupt and that they are anti-peace oriented… maybe if the political balance changes and I could find a job in an Israeli museum I will come back, but I doubt it will happen”*

These three statements are an attestation for the close connection between cultural and political drivers for Israelis to migrate to Berlin. Respondents driven by these reasons seem to share the need for a more cultural focused place of living, not only in means of museums per capita but also a more polite behavior and at the same time disapprove of the political situation and right-wing rule in Israel that is perceived as less striving for peace.

* + 1. ***Familial-Personal drivers***

A familial-personal driver group is a second group that exhibits a strong connection between its two immigration drivers. The elements of family and personal life are inherently intertwined, so it is natural that as immigration drivers, these factors are linked.

This case is supported for example by B.N’s interview:

*"My wife is German, and now we live in Berlin. You can say I moved to Berlin because of my wife, the other option was to live in Israel, and I don’t think she will like the Israeli temper…"*

The connection between family and personal immigration driver is also related to the rather liberal nature of Berlin, its cultural diversity, and also its big gay community. This statement is supported in some of the interviewees, S.R said:

*"I moved to Berlin because it is easier for me as a gay person. In Israel I come from a small place and (I felt?) my options were moving to Tel Aviv or Berlin. I chose Berlin and after 3 years here I think I did the right choice especially if I want a family and children"*

E.B added:

*"In some places in Israel it is a big deal if you are gay, in Berlin it is sometimes better to be gay, all the best parties are gay-oriented, I have many Israeli friends that live in Berlin today and they are gay, I call Berlin – a gay heaven"*

It is important to state that familial motivations are also connected to economic aspects, as reflected in the interview with B.H:

*“I came to Berlin with two children and now I have three. Whenever I speak with my family, I cannot imagine living in Israel because of financial reasons. I just would not earn enough to live. Here I have time for my family, and I can earn enough.”*

Every family in Germany is paid child support, which is an enticing form of economic assistance, as explained by N.T in her interview.

*“I receive 600 Euros for child support: this is a huge help for us. When we first arrived in Berlin, thanks to the child support payments, I was able to stay at home and take care of my children for two years.”*

* + 1. **Academic-Economic immigration group**

The immigrants who referred to education as their main reason for immigration to Berlin have a more distinct motivation than the other groups. The education driver is rarely coupled with other reasons for immigration and tends to stand alone. But the quote below shows that it is coupled with economic considerations. This is reflected in many of the interviews conducted.

For example, H.A said in his interview:

*“I came to Berlin to learn and to save money, they have good universities, and it is free of charge. I have been here for four years and I am finishing my MA. It looks like I will also do my Ph.D. here. I can say that this is a very good destination for students."*

Age is often a defining factor in the group focusing on education. Much of this group consists of younger people (under 30) who moved to Berlin to acquire state-funded education Berlin.

Table 5.4 shows the distribution of age among Israelis immigrating to Berlin for academic reasons between the years 2010-2019.

First, one can observe that on a scale from 1 to 5, the age group for which the academic immigration driver is the most salient is the youngest one (21-30) (=3.26), followed by the mid-age group (=1.81) and the 41+ age group is third (=1.56).

Table 5.4: Academic Immigration motives, by Age (N=618)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mean | Age |
| 3.26 | Between 21-30 |
| 1.81 | Between 31-40 |
| 1.56 | Above 41 |

Support for this finding can be found in A.B’s interview:

*“Studying in Berlin was a great option for me. I had a German passport and I registered for a BA in design. It was free of charge. I didn't have any other reason to come to Berlin. At first, I was sure that after my graduation I will be returning to Israel, but I decided to continue my studies for the MA degree and now I don’t think I will ever leave Berlin.”*

The economic benefits for students in Germany seem to play a major role in their decision to immigrate and to later stay in Germany.

Also, the question of whether Israelis’ decision to move to Berlin was in any way deterred by the history of Jews in Berlin, whether it was a consideration in the decision to migrate examined in the study.

Table 5.5 shows that the history of the Jews in Berlin had little to do with the decision to immigrate to Germany. 82.7 percent of the Israelis immigrating to Berlin disregarded or only slightly considered the grim history of Jews in Germany and Berlin as the center of the former Nazi regime, in their decision to move to Berlin. Only 7.7 percent of the respondents stated that the Jewish historical events were a matter they took into significant consideration.

Table 5.5: Jewish history events as a consideration in the immigration decision (N=156)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Percent | History of Jews in Berlin as a consideration in the decision to migrate |
| 61.5 | Not a consideration |
| 21.2 | Slight consideration |
| 9.6 | Moderate consideration |
| 5.1 | Significant consideration |
| 2.6 | The most significant consideration |

## Expectations from immigration to Berlin

Immigrating to Berlin is a life-changing experience, it may be for the better or the worse, just as any significant change in one’s life might be.

There are several categories in which this change is reflected among the Israeli immigrants, Table 5.6 shows that Israeli immigrants find life in Berlin to be an improvement in almost all aspects. As shown in the table, 83.7 percent of the Israeli immigrants stated that the economic well-being is the most dominant area that changed for the better, followed by 82.6 percent that reported a change for the better in the peace of mind as a result of moving to Berlin, third is the cultural consumption that 65.8 percent of the Israelis in Berlin felt that changed for the better.

Regarding the improvement in economic well-being, it is important to state that there almost no change in actual income for the Israeli immigrant after moving to Berlin[[155]](#footnote-155) and the change in economic well-being is probably due to the lower prices of commodities in Berlin.

As can be observed in the table, 57.1 percent of the Israelis stated that their academic achievements remained the same after they immigrated to Berlin, followed by 42.8 percent that felt no change in the family formation.

Interestingly, the relative number of Israelis that report that they experienced a change for the worse after moving to Berlin is quite small, yet 21.4 percent answered that their social involvement changed for the worse, followed by 17.2 percent in family formation. A possible explanation is the alleged more individualistic society of Israelis in Berlin that causes some of them to feel a lesser connection to the community they are living in, a connection that in Israel is usually quite significant.

As possible support to that argument, only 28.2 percent of the responders reported that the agreement that most of the friends in Berlin are mostly Israelis, more evidence for the relatively high negative change in social involvement can be found in B.H interview:

*"Berlin is great. The only thing that was quite hard for me when I first arrived was the lack of friends, In Israel, you meet people very fast and everybody has something in common, the army, schools, same life experience. Here it is different' Israelis tend to keep a distance from one another. I don’t know why maybe it has something do du with lack of a real community"*

*Table 5.6: Satisfaction from immigrating to Berlin (N=154), in percentages*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Change for the better | Remains the same | Change for the worse | Type of change from the move to Berlin |
| **83.7** | 13 | 3.3 | Economic well-being |
| **82.6** | 11.6 | 5.8 | Peace of mind |
| 65.8 | 23.3 | 10.9 | Culture consumption |
| 61.8 | 29.8 | 8.4 | Personal security |
| 56.3 | 28.7 | 15 | Work related |
| 40 | 42.8 | 17.2 | Family formation |
| 39 | 39.6 | 21.4 | Social involvement |
| 39 | 57.1 | 3.9 | Academic achievements |

Testimony for the change in the peace of mind can be found in K.A’s Interview

*“Before I moved to Berlin, some friends that used to live in Berlin told me that the shock from the move to the city will be the lack of Israeli stress. When I moved to Berlin, I had some expectations, you know, fewer expenses, more culture, but the real and perceptible change was to experience peace of mind, it was amazing”*

To examine whether there is a connection between the immigration drivers and the reality the Israeli immigrants face after immigrating in terms of perceived change to various life aspects, a set of correlation analyses was carried out. The results are presented in Table 5.7 below. As can be seen in the table, there are significant correlations between several of the immigration drivers and their ‘corresponding’ area of change.

As shown in Table 5.7 the academic driver is significantly correlated to the reported positive change in academic achievements (r=0.53) as well as to work-related improvements (r=0.21) The family driver and positive change in family formation are also significantly correlated (r=0.38) as well as with a positive change in personal security (r=0.19). The third is a correlation of 0.37 between the economic driver and positive change in economic well-being and 0.24 in work-related issues as a result of moving to Berlin.

One exception to the positive correlations between immigration drivers and life changes is a negative correlation of -0.20 between the personal immigration driver and the academic achievement, meaning that those who immigrated for personal reasons reported fewer academic achievements than in Israel**.**

Testimonies for the correlation between the immigration drivers and the change in the emigrant's life can be found in most of the interviews as most of the interviewees reported a positive change after immigrating to Berlin.

An example of the connection between the academic immigration driver and the positive change in academic achievements as well as in work can be found in A.H’s interview:

*“In Israel, I could barely complete my BA degree, it was so hard to work and study., In Berlin, I got a full scholarship, and my grades are great, I could have never gotten such grades in Israel, I also found work quite easily, I think that in general moving to Berlin was a very good thing for me”*

Table 5.7: Correlations between immigration drivers and changes from moving to Berlin

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Academic | Family | Personal | Economic | Cultural | Change |
| Driver |
|  | .19\* |  |  | .33\*\* | Personal security |
| .21\* |  |  | .24\*\* |  | Work-related |
|  |  |  | .19\* | .33\*\* | Peace of mind |
| .53\*\* |  | -.20\* |  |  | Academic achievements |
|  |  |  | .37\*\* | .24\*\* | Economic well-being |
|  |  |  | .26\*\* | .17\* | Culture consumption |
|  | .38\*\* |  |  |  | Family formation |

Legend explaining asterisks \*, \*\*

Positive changes also reflected in E.B’s interview:

*“When we arrived in Berlin in 2011, I was sure that after graduation I would return home to Israel, Now, after 8 years I can tell that my life has changed for the better in so many areas – economically, work, much lower level of stress and everyday worries, even our family bond is stronger here. I didn’t expect all of this to happen back in 2011”*

*N.Y* stated*:*

*"I moved to Berlin because I wanted a more cultural and calmer place to start a family, I am not saying that everything in Berlin is 100% and there are things about the German state of mind that are still hard for me, but I can say that I consume more culture and maybe more important for me – I enjoy a peace of mind that is rare to find in Israel, maybe only on vacations"*

T.A also reported a connection between the economic immigration driver and the positive change in that area:

*"Has my life changed after moving to Berlin you ask… well in one short answer, YES. And I think you will hear this from every Israeli here in Berlin, I wanted a better place to work and to make money and I found it here, in Berlin. I am living today off a salary of 3500 euro per month and I can afford a house, a BMW, and well-being that I could not get in Israel for twice the money"*

The fact that the Israelis see an improvement in various aspects of life is also reflected in the question of whether Berlin is a preferred destination. As shown in figure 5.2 82.5 percent of the Israelis think that Berlin is the preferred destination for Israeli immigrants

Figure 5.2: Is Berlin the preferred destination for Israeli immigrants

Berlin as a preferred destination is found in K.W's interview:

*"I think I have quite a good perspective about places you can find a lot of Israelis abroad. Berlin is my third destination. I can tell you without hesitation that in my mind this is the best place for Israeli immigrants because it combines so many advantages in everyday life that we are all struggled within Israel, money, culture, politics, stress and many more”.*

## Rise in anti-Semitism and the motivation of Israelis to stay in Berlin

As stated in chapter 3, in the past few years, there has been a rise in anti-Semitism in Germany, expressed publicly through anti-Semitic hate crimes and sentiments, which have been reported throughout popular German media and social networks[[156]](#footnote-156), Anti-Semitic crimes have increased[[157]](#footnote-157) each year since 2015 in Germany. According to the latest report by the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), 2019 saw the highest number of such police-recorded crimes since the country started recording them in 2001[[158]](#footnote-158). A measurable and significant rise of anti-Semitic speech has been manifested in right-wing political parties such as the AfD, which are gaining popularity and power. This unprecedented rise of anti-Semitism in Berlin too[[159]](#footnote-159)could potentially have a dramatic impact on the Jewish population living there.

* 1. **The perception of a rise in anti-Semitism in Germany**

As presented in table 5.8 below, 41.7 percent of Israelis living in Berlin agree that anti-Semitism has been on the rise in Germany during recent years. A minority of 13.5 percent believe that this is not true, and 44.8 percent are unsure whether anti-Semitism is rising or not. This large discrepancy in perceptions of anti-Semitism demonstrates that the answer is not as concise as previously thought.

Table 5.8 - The distribution of answers to the question “There is a perception that Anti-Semitism in Germany has been on the rise in recent years. Do you agree?” (N=155),   
in percent

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Anti-Semitism rising in Germany | |
| Agree | 41.7 |
| Disagree | 13.5 |
| Do not know | 44.8 |

Showcasing the lack of personal exposure to anti-Semitism in Berlin, K.A stated:

*“I heard many of my friends in Israel talking about anti-Semitism in Germany and that it is spreading and that I shouldn’t speak Hebrew on the streets. When I arrived in Berlin, I did not see anything that resembles anti-Jewish actions. Maybe some of the older Germans do not like immigrants, but it has nothing to do with anti-Semitism.”*

Y.C reinforced this perspective in his interview, saying:

*“I have been living in Berlin for almost two years and I haven't seen any anti-Semitic acts or any kind of violence. I perceive Berlin as a very safe place, much safer than many areas in Israel. I have noticed that every incident that takes place in Germany that involves Jews in some way, or another is loudly echoed in the German media. This might be the reason for the feeling that anti-Semitism is rising. To be honest I just don’t know.”*

* 1. **Exposure to anti-Semitic acts in Berlin**

In terms of experiencing firsthand anti-Semitic acts, Figure 5.3 shows that only 16 percent of the respondents declared that they had been exposed to anti-Semitism of any form since moving to Berlin.

It can be surmised that if anti-Semitism is indeed on the rise, as reported in the media, it would be reflected in the personal experiences of Israelis who live in Berlin.

This is not the case and a possible explanation can be found in A.B’s interview:

*“There is a rise in the German negative attitudes against immigrants and the Israelis are immigrants. I do not think it is something that is directed against Jews. I know that Muslim immigrants are exposed to violence as well. I think that someone in the Jewish community has an interest in over-report those incidents. I was never attacked, and I have been living in Berlin since 2010.”*

Figure 5.3 - Distribution of answers to the question “Have you been exposed to any form of anti-Semitic violence since you moved to Berlin?”

* 1. **Possible anti-Israel sentiment equate with anti-Semitism in Berlin**

Some people do not differentiate between acts of anti-Semitism and anti-Israeli policy, creating a perception of rising anti-Semitism that is exaggerated or untrue - and often exacerbated by the media.

According to this study, as shown in table 5.9 only 19.2 percent of respondents answered that they agree that those who object to Israeli policy act violently against Israelis in Germany. 36.5 percent do not agree, and the majority (44.2 percent) is unsure.

The division of the answers above is similar to the answers regarding the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany. There are many respondents who do not know whether anti-Semitism is rising. One could assume that they simply are not bothered by anti-Semitism and therefore its apparent rise does not impact them.

Table 5.9 - The distribution of answers to the question “Do you agree that individuals and organizations that oppose Israeli policies act violently against Israelis in Germany?”,  
 in percent

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Anti-Semitism Rising in Germany | |
| Agree | 41.7 |
| Disagree | 13.5 |
| Do not know | 44.8 |

Some evidence to this claim can be found in L.W’s interview:

*“I don’t think the Israelis in Berlin are interested in anti-Semitism. I know I am not. I do not believe the Germans today are against us or hate the Jews, and if there is a crazy minority that does, I just don't care. I live my life here and I am happy. Maybe someone should check whether the Israeli policy is the reason for all the problems with the other immigrant communities here, but again I don’t care.”*

K.A expanded on this point in his interview:

*“Anti-Semitism is a complicated issue. I do not think the problem is with the Germans in Berlin - not even with the supporters of the AfD. I think the problem is that we are connected to the problematic agenda of the Israeli government. I must say that I feel completely safe in Berlin. I don’t know about other places in Germany, but Berlin is super safe for me and for everyone I know.”*

As shown in Figure 5.4 there is 16 percent of the Israeli immigrants were personally exposed to violence due to their identification as Israelis, added to the 28.2 percent that was not personally exposed, yet no other Israeli immigrants were exposed to violence only because they are from Israel. These are substantial numbers since they show that almost every second Israeli in Berlin was exposed to some kind of violence due to being identified as Israeli[[160]](#footnote-160).

Figure 5.4 - The distribution of answers to the question “Have you been personally exposed to any violence due to your Israeli identity?”

This data suggests that although the levels of violence are generally low, there are differences between the perception of an anti-Israeli agenda and anti-Semitism rise. While 41.7 percent agree that anti-Semitism is rising, only 19.2 percent agree that anti-Israeli acts are rising. Non the less the violence that follows such acts is much more salient when it comes to anti-Israeli acts, 44.2 percent were exposed or know someone that was exposed to violence due to being Israeli.

It is reasonable to conclude that the Israelis in Berlin do not perceive anti-Semitism or anti-Israeli acts as a major threat, furthermore, acts of violence against Israelis in Berlin are relatively rare. Although anti-Israeli acts of violence carried out by individuals or organizations are more common according to the data, it has little effect on the Israelis living in Berlin, who perpetuate the idea of Berlin as a safe place for Israelis.

Indeed, as shown in figure 5.5, the change in personal security following the move to Berlin is positive: 62.2 percent of the Israelis report that their feeling of personal security has improved as a result of the move to Berlin, and only 8.3 percent report it has changed for the worse.

Figure 5.5: The change in personal security as a result of moving to Berlin

This belief is reflected in the interviews which indicate that Israeli immigrants feel safer in Berlin than they do in Israel.

Y.C said:

*"Do I feel safe in Berlin? Very much! Even safer than in Israel. I sometimes see BDS demonstrations around the university, usually after military action in Gaza or Syria but usually, it is very calm and peaceful for me here"*

L.G added:

*"I thought that anti-Semitism will be an issue here in Berlin, actually it is not. I was a little afraid of the so-called “new anti-Semitism”*[[161]](#footnote-161) *and the AfD gaining power, but after some time in Berlin, I can tell you that it is not so relevant for me. I guess living in Israel made me a little indifferent towards people that dislike Jews or Israelis. Regarding anti-Israel acts, I think there is a rise and you hear more about attacks and incidents, but they are mostly verbal and not physical attacks.*

## Motives for return migration to Israel

The final issue considered in the survey is the willingness of the respondents to return to Israel.

As shown in figure 5.6, 52.3 percent of the Israelis in Berlin state that they are not considering returning to Israel.

If Israeli immigrants give up their Israeli citizenship upon entering Germany (typically, to avoid paying two sets of taxes), they are entitled to regain their Israeli citizenship automatically when re-entering Israel. This ease of entry into the country means that the decision to immigrate overseas is not an irreversible one.

Currently, though, it appears that many Israelis in Berlin are not interested in returning to the Jewish homeland, suggesting that life is more satisfying for many in Berlin.

Figure 5.6: The answers to the question - are you considering returning to Israel (N=155)

Repetitive to above and contradicts H.W.'s quote below.

In his interview, H.W said:

*“Israel was my home and I loved it very much, but I understood that I can’t make a living there, so I moved to Berlin seven years ago. Now, this is my home. I know it sounds weird, but it is true. I speak German, have German friends, Germany and the city of Berlin supported me financially so I could start a family. It does not get any more home than that. I will always love Israel, but to be honest I don’t feel at home there anymore.”*

N.Y said in her interview:

*“When I will return to Israel, you ask... Well, the answer will sound bad for an Israeli – I will never return to Israel. In 2014, I understood that those who have money in Israel can live there but those who are poor should seek another place. I think Israel will always be there for me, but this is my home now.”*

K.A also emphasized the economic aspect and stated:

*“…I am not afraid, actually it is safer here than in Israel. The only thing that could get me to return to Israel is if I lose my job or will run out of money, other than that I don’t think I will return.”*

E.B focused on the government support he is receiving as the main reason for not returning to Israel:

*“…The media caused everyone to believe that the Jews are suffering in Berlin because of an anti-Semitic wave or rise. This is not true. Our life here is good. The Germans are doing more for the Israelis here than the Israeli government does in Israel, so you understand why I don’t see any option for returning.”*

Other Israelis, 47.7 percent, did not rule out the possibility of returning to Israel, as shown in figure 5.6 above.

It is thus relevant to consider which factors could motivate Israeli immigrants to leave Berlin and return to Israel As shown in table 5.10, personal reasons (e.g. family, children, health, etc.) are the most salient reasons mentioned for returning (47.3 percent) followed by, both anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic violence, with 35.5 percent each and third is work-related reasons with 32.8 percent supporting this reason as a motive for returning to Israel.

Reference to the personal reason may be found in L.W interview:

"*The only real thing that will cause me to leave Berlin back to Israel is a personal reason, it generally means one out of two scenarios, the first is that one of my family members falls ill, and the second is if my children will grow up and will be joining the IDF. Other than that, I really cannot see any other reason."*

Also, in B.H interview:

*"Am I considering returning to Israel?, well, leaving Berlin is not an option, yet in 7 years my daughter will turn 18 and she will have to decide whether to join the IDF or not, I think that now we as a family will be forced to think about returning to Israel."*

Interestingly explains why the least significant reason is an adverse change in the social benefits granted by the German government, only 2.6 percent stated that they will leave Berlin for that reason.

*Table 5.10: Distribution of the reasons for returning to Israel*[[162]](#footnote-162)*(N=155), in percent*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Percent | Reason for returning to Israel |
| 47.3 | personal reasons |
| 35.5 | anti-Semitic violence |
| 35.5 | anti-Israeli violence |
| 32.8 | work-related reasons |
| 31.5 | far-right strengthening |
| 21 | visa end |
| 9.2 | graduation |
| 2.6 | an adverse change in social benefits |

The personal issue perhaps may not very surprising, for many Israelis. The fact that they have children might motivate them to return to Israel, sometimes it is their wish that the children grow as “Israelis”, sometimes it is the importance of family connections and in a later phase it is the mandatory army service which they do not want their children to grow up without them being present in the country. Some support for this argument can be found in S.R’s interview:

“*Returning to Israel is a sensitive point… when my first child was born I knew that at some point we will have to return, we try to postpone it as much as we can but it is clear that he will have to serve in the army like we did and I can't imagine living in Berlin while my son is on the army in Israel, so yes, we will return.*

Another reason mentioned by the respondents as a possible driver to return to Israel is work-related. In K.W’s Interview this is mentioned, in connection to the initial driver to migrate in the first place:

*“It is money. A job and money brought me here and if I will get a better job offer, in terms of income or benefits, I will go somewhere else, even return to Israel. Other than that, I don’t want to leave. All my friends are here.”*

The data may explain why the Israelis in Berlin maintain their desire to stay in Berlin despite the rise in anti-Semitism or the strengthening of the far right. It seems that these occurrences have not yet reached the point of justifying leaving Germany and returning to Israel.

Support for this argument can be found in T. A’s interview, he said:

*“Berlin is everything I expected and more. I don’t think I will ever leave… I do not feel anti-Semitism. Well, I know it is there and from time to time I hear about incidents, but it feels so far from me and my friends, so I don’t think it is an issue in Berlin. Maybe in other places in Germany, it is worse.”*

To sum up, in this chapter I set out to investigate why Israelis immigrate to Berlin, I assayed what are the dominant motives for immigration and its distribution among the Israeli immigrants. I also addressed the post-immigration period and looked into how the move to Berlin changed different aspects of life for them.

In addition, I examined what are the possible reasons for those immigrants returning to Israel and particularly, in what way anti-Semitism and anti-Israel acts affect the motivation to return to Israel.

The study revealed the diversity of reasons that causes Israelis to immigrate to Berlin, stressing the economic and cultural reasons, furthermore, it came clear that the decision to immigrate was mostly followed by a reported positive change, thus indicating that the immigration to Berlin may be perceived as successful.

As regarding the significance of anti-Semitism rise, it is not a negligible issue, yet it appears less dominant in the Israelis everyday life and is less dominant in their considerations for returning to Israel, trailing behind personal reasons.

**Discussion**

This study wished to examine the motivations of Israelis to immigrate to Berlin and remain there and to better understand the effects of an apparent rise in anti-Semitism in Germany on these motivations as well as the decision to return to Israel.

The study was based on a mixed-methods methodology – its data collection included an online survey and personal in-depth interviews which aimed to shed light on the reasons why Israeli immigrants felt the need to leave Israel, the changes as a result of moving to Berlin, and what might be the motivations for returning to Israel.

Given the complex nature of this phenomenon - Israelis (mostly Jewish) immigrating to Berlin, the former Nazi regime capital, there were some unanticipated findings, which will be discussed below.

***First***, data show that the grim history of Berlin seems to be quite a negligible issue for the Israeli immigrants, as more than 80 percent testify that the historic events during the Third Reich were not a consideration in the decision to immigrate, or at most a slight one.

When trying to find possible explanations to such a finding, the common phrase in Hebrew arises "time heals all wounds", perhaps the perspective of more than 75 years since the holocaust and the slow disappearance of the survivor's generation provide a way to better understand this finding.

***Second*,** one of the most dominant and recurring findings was the respondents’ relating the migration to Berlin to their economic situation. The economic factor proved to be the main reason for Israelis immigrating to Berlin. As previously discussed, there is a stark contrast between the cost of living in Israel and Germany. This has been highlighted by the 2014 and 2018 protests that took place in Israel concerning the high cost of living in the country

Inversely, Israeli immigrants have experienced a different situation in Berlin, where a lower cost of living and financial support from the government make the act of living a comfortable life seem easier than it is in Israel.

The second dominant immigration driver is the cultural one, data which is perhaps not surprising as Berlin is an important European capital that invests enormous funds in culture-related issues, in sharp contrast to Israel.

Some interviewees revealed a more nuanced analysis as to what 'culture' might mean for Israelis; not only the number of museums per capita or the percentage of artists in the general population but rather a more behavioral related matter of politeness and being considerate in the public space or even the noise level in everyday life.

In recent literature, it is suggested that economic and political factors are the main drivers for migration from the Mediterranean countries.[[163]](#footnote-163) Indeed, the third most significant immigration driver to Berlin is the political one.

A possible explanation for the dominance of the political immigration driver is the Israeli political system which is, in the last decade, dominated by a right-wing agenda, while most of the Israeli immigrants stated that they are located in the left and center-left wings, perhaps the alienation felt by left-wing supporters in a country that follows a right-wing agenda for a substantial period and with no current prospect for change to that hegemony can be assumed to push these individuals to seek a more politically “suitable” place that supports their views.

***Third*,** the study argues that the immigration drivers to Berlin cluster into three groups: cultural-political, familial-personal, and economic-academic; each sharing related motives and allowing to identify different types of immigrants.

The distribution of the immigration drivers into groups might provide a better understanding of the basic and most fundamental reasons for Israeli’s immigration to Berlin, the cultural-political group expresses the will to replace the Israeli atmosphere in a more European, cultural one, it seems that the feelings of dissatisfaction from the life in Israel are more dominant and loudly expressed in this group.

The economic-academic group perhaps can provide a peek at some of the results of the German social policy, the free academic studies, and the relatively low cost of living are attracting a larger portion of young Israelis who allegedly share the will to benefit from these conditions that do not exist in Israel. Interestingly, a great portion of this group members according to this study does not consider returning to Israel.

The familial-personal group is more diverse, although sharing some differences, most of the immigrants belonging to this group share the will for a better life for themselves or their family, this reason is not a unique or a distinguishing reason for Israeli immigration, on the contrary, it might be a common reason for global immigration.

When examining the immigration drivers by gender, data show that the cultural driver is more female dominant while the personal driver is more male dominant. This latter finding may be explained by the relativity large gay community in Berlin that, as testified in the interviews, offers a more liberal environment for Israeli gay people, unlike some places in Israel that might be less open to a gay way of life[[164]](#footnote-164).

Another question examined in the study is whether the immigration process was ‘successful’; i.e. did the Israeli immigrants perceive the outcomes of migrating to Berlin in a positive light. Data show that the Israeli immigrants perceive the changes in different aspects of life following the move to Berlin as almost entirely positive and, in some cases beyond one's expectations.

Economic wellbeing, peace of mind, and cultural consumption are the leading areas of life that Israelis report that have improved as a result of moving to Berlin. Sense of personal security also was reported as an improved aspect of life. Moreover, economic stability appeared to be the main factor bringing a sense of peace of mind which evidently could not be achieved in Israel. This element strongly affected many respondents and allowed them to focus on other areas of their lives, such as cultural exploration and spending more time with their families. As a result, the majority of the Israeli immigrants living in Berlin claim to “feel at home” in Berlin and do not consider returning to Israel.

The positive changes in life as a result of moving to Berlin might explain the somewhat surprising fact that, despite Germany’s history regarding Jews, Israelis can adopt Berlin as their new, permanent home.

To conclude, Israeli immigration to Berlin can be argued to be a successful migration. When examining the changes reported it is clear that the Israeli immigrants experienced positive outcomes in terms of peace of mind, personal security, economic prospects, academic achievements, and family life. A negligible change for the worse was reported by the Israeli immigrants. Hence, one of the conclusions of the study is that the immigration of Israelis to Berlin can be treated as immigration that its main goals were achieved.

***Fourth***, while it is generally perceived that anti-Semitism is rising after years of lying dormant in Europe and Germany in particular (an opinion aided by the media), the majority of respondents reported that they had never personally experienced anti-Semitism while living in Berlin.

A possible explanation might be due to the city's characteristics. This study shows that despite anti-Semitism, Islamic immigration, and the rise of right-wing parties - all of which were assumed to negatively affect the desire of Israelis to emigrate to Berlin - had, in fact, very little impact on them. The interviewees conveyed much more concern about everyday issues such as study, work, livelihood, and their families than being troubled by fear of rising anti-Semitism.

Interestingly, when examining the findings regarding the immigrant's reasons to return to Israel, the rise of anti-Semitism and anti-Semitism violence is not as dominant reason as expected the most significant motivation for returning to Israel are personal reasons, in this sense, the Israelis in Berlin are not different from other immigrants[[165]](#footnote-165).

However, while many Israeli immigrants have adopted Berlin as their new home, the Israeli community has not integrated with the local Jewish community in Berlin. This finding was somewhat surprising and perhaps presents an area fit for future study. One may assume that the shared pain of their past, and the current pain of suffering from anti-Semitism, would bind Berlin’s Jewish community with the Israeli community. However, this does not seem to be the case.

Moreover, in other major Israeli immigrants’ communities such as in the US[[166]](#footnote-166), there is a much stronger connection between the Israelis and the Jews that live in the diaspora, the reasons for the unique Israeli-Jew relationship in Berlin is yet to be uncovered.

Yet what comes through clearly in the interviews is that Berlin is painted as a welcoming city to all immigrants which are reflected in the city’s multicultural atmosphere and progressiveness. These two elements are perhaps what many Israelis were eagerly seeking. The open-minded environment, economic security, the German social system, and the growing community of Israelis who live permanently in Berlin (which is currently around 6,000), help to make Israeli immigrants feel at home in the city.

So, can we call Berlin the new home for Israelis, perhaps the complexity of this question is reflected in B.H's interview:

*"Berlin is now my home, not because I don’t feel Israeli, quite the opposite, I am Israeli and I love Israel, none the less I am also Berliner, you might say I am "an Isra-Berliner" a mix of two"*

# **Conclusion**

Israelis have been immigrating to Berlin since the 70s'. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the numbers of Israeli emigrants in Berlin increased quite rapidly. The purpose of this study was to illuminate the subject of Israelis who immigrated to Berlin during the last decade and offer a better understanding of their motivation for immigration and the effect of rising anti-Semitism on the motivations of those immigrants to stay in Berlin.

This, to provide a better understanding regarding the reasons that attract Israelis to Berlin and how dominant is the anti-Semitism rise in the future possibility of returning to Israel.

1. **Key findings**

Given the complex history of Germany and Jews, the decision to move from Israel, the homeland of the Jews, to Berlin, the former Nazi-regime capital, must be a difficult decision to make. Yet this grim past seems to have little effect on the decision to immigrate to Berlin.

The decision to immigrate is influenced by several factors. The survey and interviews conducted revealed that economic motivation is the main driver of emigration to Berlin, among other significant drivers. This is due to the stark differences in the cost of living in the two countries.

Other significant immigration drivers include family, cultural and political areas. The vast majority of respondents reported that their peace of mind improved substantially since moving to Berlin, despite the apparent rise in anti-Semitism.

According to the data collected, almost half of the Israelis living in Berlin will not consider returning to Israel. This reveals that although anti-Semitism may be increasing, it has little effect on the Israelis living in Berlin and their considerations of returning to Israel. It was particularly interesting to see how the allegedly significant rise in anti-Semitism reported by the media in Germany, seems to be less influential for Israelis living in Berlin. This finding begs the question: are the Israelis in Berlin feel safe there? According to many, the answer is yes.

Another key finding is the presumed successfulness of the immigration to Berlin, most of the Israeli respondents and interviewees in this study reported a change for the better in vast aspects of their everyday lives.

Maybe the immediate conclusion is that Israel itself is pushing away its citizens to more enabling places, both economically and politically, or is it something else? The strong correlation between the “cost of living” protests in Israel and the rise in the significance of the economic motivation to immigrate supports this argument.

1. **Limitations of the study**

In this study some limitations should be noted, First I focused only on a specific time period (2010-2019), although the immigration from Israel to Berlin is a much longer phenomenon, tough my focus on the last decade proved as interesting and reviling, future studies may include a wider period and provide a better understanding of the Israeli immigration to Berlin.

Second, the study survey included a slightly higher percentage of female respondents which could lead to a possible bias, it should be mentioned, that there was an equal balance of male and female interviewees.

Third, the advertising of the survey only through Facebook might bias the data towards certain demographics and perhaps ignored Israeli immigrants who do not use that specific social network, especially young immigrants who tend to use other social networks such as Instagram, etc.

1. **Contribution to knowledge**

This study expands the basis of knowledge about Israelis in Berlin, as such, it can be reviewed from multiple disciplines. First, it presents a detailed portrait of an understudied segment of the Jewish general population in Berlin, from a German perspective, this thesis can be revisited as a study into an ethnonational minority or a small immigrant's group drivers for immigration, thus understanding better the motivations to live in Germany's capital, Berlin.

From a methodological perspective, this thesis introduces a somehow different approach into the studies of Israeli immigration by integrating multiple sources, qualitative and quantitative data, analyzing this mixture of data collected offers possibly a more complete understanding regarding the reasons for Israeli migration to Germany as well as globally.

1. **Future studies**

In terms of investigating an Israeli immigration phenomenon, the theoretical filed of immigration is massive and it is developing rapidly, existing studies that deal with Israeli immigration to countries and places other than Berlin and even immigration to Berlin of other ethnic-religious groups such as Israelis that are Muslims or Christians might provide more insights and a better way to understand the Israeli immigration to Berlin.

Berlin hosts a variated local Jew community that coexist alongside the Israelis, some findings during this study indicated that there is a complex relationship between those groups, leading to little cooperation. Examining this connection between the Israelis and the Jews in Berlin might offer a better understanding regarding the Jewish diaspora in Berlin.

## Appendices

## Appendix 1 – The questionnaire

The survey was divided into two parts, the first one included the questions regarding Israeli immigration, and the second one focused on demographics regarding the respondents. It is important to notice that in the very beginning of the first part two more questions were asked, "When did you arrive in Berlin after 2010 and "Is your life center located in Berlin". This two-question helped define better the study population.

*The survey – Part I:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Lowest scale | Highest scale |
| היגרתי לברלין בעיקר מסיבות כלכליות-תעסוקתיות | לא מסכים כלל (1) | מסכים מאוד (5) |
| היגרתי לברלין בעיקר בשל המצב הפוליטי בישראל |  |  |
| היגרתי לגרמניה בעיקר מסיבות אישיות או תרבותיות |  |  |
| אני מרגיש שייך/שייכת לקהילה הישראלית )ישראלים לשעבר( בברלין |  |  |
| היגרתי לגרמניה מסיבות תרבותיות או חברתיות |  |  |
| לתחושתי מאז הגעתי לגרמניה ביטויי האנטישמיות בעלייה |  |  |
| מצבי הכלכלי השתפר מאז שהגעתי לברלין |  |  |
| צריכת התרבות שלי עלתה מאד שהגעתי לברלין |  |  |
| הפליטים הסורים מהווים איום על הקהילה הישראלית בברלין |  |  |
| הפליטים הסורים תופסים עבודות של ישראלים בברלין |  |  |
| אם הימין הקיצוני בגרמניה ייכנס לממשלה אשקול לעזוב את גרמניה |  |  |
| במידה והתמיכה הסוציאלית מגרמניה תופסק לחלוטין אחזור לישראל |  |  |
| בהינתן התגברות האנטישמיות בגרמניה אחזור לישראל |  |  |
| האם התנאים הסוציאליים תורמים להגירה לברלין |  |  |
| ברלין היא העיר המועדפת למהגרים מכל העולם |  |  |
| ברלין היא העיר המועדפת למהגרים מישראל |  |  |
| בהינתן גידול באוכלוסיית הפליטים הסורים בברלין אחזור לישראל |  |  |
| האם תשקול לחזור לישראל בשל הקצנה במצב הפוליטי בגרמניה |  |  |
| אשקול לחזור לישראל באם אחווה אלימות על בסיס אנטישמי באופן ישיר |  |  |
| המצב הפוליטי בישראל בשנים האחרונות גרם לי להגר לגרמניה |  |  |
| אם המצב הפוליטי בישראל ישתנה אעזוב את גרמניה |  |  |
| האם תשקול לחזור לישראל בשל גידול באוכלוסיית הפליטים הסורים |  |  |
| בברלין יותר קל כלכלית לחיות מאשר בישראל |  |  |
| נחשפתי באופן אישי לאלימות אנטישמית מאז הגירתי לגרמניה | בכלל לא (1) | מספר רב של פעמים (5) |
| נחשפתי באופן עקיף - דרך חברים, מכרים, משפחה, לאלימות אנטישמית מאז הגירתי לגרמניה |  |  |
| אני מקבל/מקבלת שירותים כלשהם מהקהילה היהודית בברלין | בכלל לא (1) | באופן רציף (5) |
| הסיוע הכלכלי שקיבלתי מגרמניה הקל על קליטתי במדינה | בכלל לא (1) | במידה רבה מאוד (5) |
| אנטישמיות בגרמניה משפיעה על החלטתי להמשיך לגור בברלין | בכלל לא (1) | משפיעה מאוד (5) |
| האם ישנם פליטים סורים בקרבת מקום מגוריך | אין בכלל (1) | הרבה מאוד (5) |
| האם ההיסטוריה היהודית בגרמניה היוותה שיקול שלילי בהחלטה לעבור לברלין | לא היווה שיקול (1) | השיקול המשמעותי ביותר (5) |
| ?כיצד אתה מתאר את הרגשתך למגורים בברלין בהתייחס להיסטוריה היהודית במקום | נוחה מאוד (1) | לא נוחה כלל (5) |

Also, demographic questions were asked to better understand the results, parameters such as gender, age, second nationality, family status, education, household income, religiousness, and political affiliation. The data regarding the demographics are detailed in appendix 3.

## Appendix 2 – List of Facebook groups used to distribute the survey

The survey was distributed via the following Facebook groups

1. Israelis in Berlin
2. Normal Israelis in Berlin
3. גרמניה עם ילדים
4. ברלין – מידע שימושי
5. - ברלין שלי My Berlin
6. Berlin for Israelis
7. ברלין זה כאן
8. סטודנטים ישראלים בברלין
9. Berlin – טיפים והמלצות
10. דירות מאוזן לפה בברלין
11. מטיילים בברלין
12. - משרות בעברית בברליןHebrew speaking jobs in Berlin
13. Housing by word and mouth Berlin
14. ישראלים ואוכל בברלין
15. ברלין מידע
16. ברלין למתקדמים
17. קהילת חי ברלין
18. מיטיבי לסת ברלין
19. קבוצת הגירה נבונה לברלין
20. ללמוד גרמנית בברלין
21. ברלין עדכונים בזמן אמת!
22. ישראלים בגרמניה
23. לקנות דירה בברלין
24. סטודנטים וסטודנטיות בברלין

## Appendix 3 – The survey respondents demographic

Gender

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Male | 69 |
| Female | 85 |

Age

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Between age 21-30 | 51 |
| Between age 31-40 | 64 |
| Between age 41-50 | 34 |
| Above age 50 | 6 |

Family status

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Single | 75 |
| Married | 66 |
| Divorcee | 9 |

Education

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| High school graduate | 32 |
| BA degree | 80 |
| MA degree | 31 |
| Ph.D. degree | 8 |

Second citizenships

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Israeli citizenship only | 72 |
| German citizenship | 26 |
| Other European citizenship | 49 |
| Other non-European citizenship | 5 |

The average income in Israel

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Under 5,000 NIS | 29 |
| Between 5,001-8,000 NIS | 50 |
| Between 8,001 – 12,000 NIS | 39 |
| Between 12,001-16,000 NIS | 15 |
| Between 16,001-25,000 NIS | 8 |
| Over 25,000 NIS | 8 |

The average income in Berlin

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Under 5,000 NIS | 32 |
| Between 5,001-8,000 NIS | 33 |
| Between 8,001 – 12,000 NIS | 33 |
| Between 12,001-16,000 NIS | 27 |
| Between 16,001-25,000 NIS | 11 |
| Over 25,000 NIS | 9 |

Nationality

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Jewish | 132 |
| Christion | 2 |
| Muslim | 1 |
| Other | 11 |

Number of people in the family

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 person | 56 |
| 2 persons | 53 |
| 3 persons | 16 |
| 4 person | 12 |
| 5 and above persons | 11 |

Religiosity

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Secular | 139 |
| Traditional | 6 |
| Religious | 1 |

Political affiliation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Left | 75 |
| Center-left | 36 |
| Center-right | 19 |
| Right | 2 |

## Appendix 4 – The Interview guided lines

The following questions were presented to the Interviewees during the interview:

כל ראיון מתחיל בהכרות הדדית ושיח קצר על מהות העבודה ומטרות הריאיון (שאלת המחקר לתזה, שמות המרואיינים לא יפורסמו אלא בראשי תיבות, ציפייה לשיח פתוח וכנה)

**שאלות**

1. האם תוכל/י לספר לי מתי הגעתם לברלין ומדוע? (לדוגמא: מסיבות כלכליות, פוליטיות, חברתיות, אישיות, לימודים או כל דבר אחר)
2. כיצד תוכל/י לתאר את תהליך הקליטה וההתאקלמות בברלין, האם נעזרתם בישראלים אחרים? או בשירותי הקהילה היהודית? (האם תוכלו להרחיב על המצב הנוכחי)
3. יש שמגדירים את הישראלים בברלין כקהילה לכל דבר, חלק חושבים שזו קהילה בפייסבוק ו אחרים חושבים שאין בכלל קהילה – מה דעתך?
4. כיצד תוכלו לתאר את החיים בברלין היום? האם אתם מרגישים שינוי מאז הגעתכם? (האם מרגישים עלייה כלשהי באנטישמיות).
5. האם נחשפתם לאלימות כלשהי בשל היותכם ישראלים או יהודים ואם כן על ידי איזה סוג אוכלוסייה (ניאו נאצים, מהגרים, פלסטינאים, אירופאיים) – האם תוכלו לתאר את המקרה (ככל שהיה או ששמעתם עליו)
6. האם אתם שוקלים לחזור לישראל? ואם כן מדוע? (למשל: ילדים, עבודה, אנטישמיות, מיצוי, אכזבה מאורח החיים וכדומה)
7. מהי לדעתכם הבעיה הגדולה ביותר של הישראלים בברלין?
8. האם תמליצו לחבר קרוב או בן משפחה להגר לברלין?

בסיום – פרטים אישיים (גיל, מקום מגורים, מצב משפחתי, תעסוקה, השכלה)

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appendix

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Correlations** | | | | |
|  | | | v1 | v2 |
| Spearman's rho | v1 | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .507\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .028 |
| N | 446 | 446 |
| v2 | Correlation Coefficient | .507\* | 1.000 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .028 | . |
| N | 1328 | 1328 |

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