

# Jews in Austria

A demographic  
and social portrait

**L. Daniel Staetsky**  
**Sergio DellaPergola**



The **Institute for Jewish Policy Research** is a London-based research organisation, consultancy and think-tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in the United Kingdom and across Europe by conducting research and informing policy development in dialogue with those best placed to positively influence Jewish life. Its European Jewish Demography Unit exists to generate demographic data and analysis to support Jewish community planning and development throughout the continent.

## Authors

**Dr Daniel Staetsky** is a Senior Research Fellow at JPR and Director of its European Jewish Demography Unit. His expertise spans the disciplines of demography, applied statistics and economics, and he is a former researcher and analyst at the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel and at RAND Europe. He holds an MA in demography from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a PhD in social statistics from the University of Southampton. He specialises in Jewish, European, Israeli and Middle Eastern demography. His work in demography has been widely published, and he focuses particularly on the major puzzles of contemporary demography, such as relatively high Jewish longevity, divergence of longevity paths between different Western countries and stagnating fertility in the context of the developing world. He has authored and co-authored thirty-five manuscripts covering the topics of demography, survey methodology, social statistics and the quantitative study of antisemitism.

**Professor Sergio DellaPergola** is Professor Emeritus and former Chairman of the Hebrew University's Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, and Chairman of JPR's European Jewish Demography Unit. Born in Italy 1942, he has lived in Israel since 1966. He has an MA in Political Sciences from the University of Pavia, and a PhD in Social Sciences and Contemporary Jewry from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A specialist in the demography of world Jewry, he has published or edited sixty books and monographs including *Jewish Demographic Policies: Population Trends and Options* (2011) and *Jewish Population and Identity: Concept and Reality* (with Uzi Rebhun, 2018), and over 300 papers on historical demography, the family, international migration, Jewish identification, antisemitism, and projections in the Diaspora and in Israel. He has lectured at over 100 universities and research centres all over the world and was senior policy consultant to the President of Israel, the Israeli Government, the Jerusalem Municipality, and major national and international organisations. A winner of the Marshall Sklare Award for distinguished achievement in the Social Scientific Study of Jewry (1999), and the Michael Landau Prize for Demography and Migration (2013), he is chief editor of *Hagira – Israel Journal of Migration*, member of Yad Vashem's Committee for the Righteous of the Nations, and a Board Member of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

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## / Preface and acknowledgements

Austrian Jewish demography and social statistics have been a weak point of Jewish studies for many years. Whilst the community has worked hard to gather administrative data, not much has been known with certainty by social scientists, and the policy consequences of what was known have not been elaborated. This contrasts with a distant historical past in which the Habsburg Empire, centred in Vienna, developed a wide-ranging, sophisticated statistical system which paid considerable attention to the characteristics and movements of different religious groups, including Jews. This situation was brought to an end with the First World War, although several of the successor states continued collecting information by religion, thus allowing the creation of accurate portraits of their respective Jewish communities. The whole building of empirical knowledge about Jewish populations throughout Central and Eastern Europe was brought down by the Holocaust, when large masses of European Jews were wiped out. In addition, the strong network of institutions that analysed trends and provided services to the Jewish community was destroyed. Perhaps also due to the tragic diminution of the Jewish population at that time, several of the successor states stopped or significantly reduced collecting and analysing data on religious and ethnic composition.

In post-1945 Europe, the study of Jewish demography had to be rebuilt from scratch, with great difficulty, not reaching the level of documentation that had prevailed previously. All this was detrimental to a proper scientific understanding of the essential condition of Jews. The contemporary emphasis on evidence-based policy development, that stands at the heart of all

work undertaken by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR), is a strong call for the upgrade of scientific understanding of the condition of European Jewry.

This publication is one in a series produced by the newly established European Jewish Demography Unit at JPR that was funded by the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe.<sup>1</sup> This report has grown out of a collaboration between numerous data producers – demographers, statisticians and Jewish communal leaders. We received assistance, extraordinary in scope and thoroughness, from Statistik Austria – the Austrian statistical authority, as well as from *Bundesverband der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinden Österreichs* (IKG) – the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities.

Our thanks go to Statistik Austria, and in particular to Adelheid Bauer and Anita Mikulasek, for supplying us with the census and national vital registration data pertaining to religious communities in Austria. We are grateful to IKG for generously sharing its materials with us. In particular, Daniel Brandel (Head of Administration of the Zwi Perez Chajes School), Rabbi Jacob Biderman (Chairman of the Board of Lauder Chabad Campus), Raimund Fastenbauer (former Secretary General for Jewish Affairs), Denise Felberbauer (assistant at the Lauder Chabad school, Vienna), Rabbi Arye Folger (former Chief Rabbi of Vienna), Rabbi Schlomo Hofmeister (Community Rabbi of Vienna), Abram Kihinashvili and Debora Kravtschenko (the assistant and the Head, respectively, of the Service for Members Department, IKG), Benjamin Naegele (current Secretary General for Jewish Affairs) and Amber Weinber (formerly of the Forum against

1 The first paper in the series is: Staetsky, L.D., and DellaPergola, S. 2019. *Why European Jewish Demography? A foundation paper*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, European Jewish Demography Unit.

Antisemitism in Vienna) have put considerable time and effort into supplying us with Jewish communal statistics and explaining the data to us.

We also wish to thank Claudia Reiter, of the Vienna Institute of Demography, and Ramon Bauer, of Statistics Vienna (Dezernat Statistik Wien), for providing orientation in the religious demography of Austria and equipping us with the map of Vienna. We thank Juergen Horschinneg, of the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Research for supplying the data concerning Jewish schools in Vienna. We thank Anne Goujon, also of the Vienna Institute of Demography, and András Kovács (Central European University) for conducting a peer review of this report. Thank you also to the team at JPR – particularly Executive Director Jonathan Boyd and Editorial Manager

Judith Russell – for carefully reviewing and editing the manuscript and contributing their thoughts and ideas at various stages of the process, and to the team at Soapbox for designing the report. Last but by no means least, our thanks to the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe, particularly Sally Berkovic and Daniela Greiber, for believing in the importance of this work, investing in it and being such thoughtful and helpful partners in this endeavour.

Our experience from putting together this publication proves that when there is a convergence of good will, wisdom and adequate documentation, there is a real possibility to develop new insights about contemporary realities.

## / Introduction

A Jewish presence in the territory of what is now Austria dates back to antiquity. Those first Jews could have been single individuals or families, and their stay in Austria may have been transient. The existence of an organised Jewish community in Austria dates to the twelfth century, and has been present ever since – over 900 years of continuous existence. Put into the framework of Jewish history, the beginnings of the Austrian Jewish community can be traced back to when the first commentaries on the Hebrew Bible were being penned by the most revered Jewish exegetes and long before the authoritative code of Jewish law known as the *Shulchan Aruch* was created. Embedded into the framework of world history, the picture is no less impressive: this was the time of the Crusades and quite some time before the existence of America became known to Europeans.

The Austrian Jewish community was born during an era of numerical stagnation of the Jewish population, when the global number of Jews did not exceed two million, probably less than half of the number that existed at the beginning of the Common Era.<sup>2</sup> Some other communities in German-speaking lands also came into existence at around the same time, helping to consolidate the beginnings of Ashkenazi Jewry on European soil. All these communities came into being because of the migration of Jews from southern

areas of France and Italy, which, in turn, received their Jews as a result of earlier migrations from the Middle East. Seen through a contemporary lens, the world of European and Austrian Jewry was numerically very small throughout much of its history. Knowledge of the mechanisms of population growth at that time and place leads to the conclusion that the number of Jews in Austria could have been just in the single thousands up to the second half of the nineteenth century. Quantitative estimates of the number of Jews in Vienna between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, outlined in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, are all in the range of 500–4,000.<sup>3</sup> However, during the early twentieth century the Austrian Jewish population reached its peak in numerical terms: the number of Jews in the First Austrian Republic (1919–1934) fluctuated at around the 200,000 mark and constituted about 3% of the country's total population. Most of the Jews at that point lived in Vienna where their proportion in the total population amounted to 9–11% of all residents.<sup>4</sup>

Austrian Jewry was practically obliterated by the Nazi programme to destroy Jewish life. Following the *Anschluss* (annexation) of Austria to the German Reich, many Jews who could do so chose to emigrate from Austria. The German census conducted in May 1939 found 95,000 Jews in Austria as a whole, down from 191,000

2 The number for the total Jewish population during these times is derived from: DellaPergola, S. 2001. Some fundamentals of Jewish demographic history. *Papers in Jewish Demography* 1997 (Jewish Population Studies 29). Jerusalem: The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

3 The historical overview of Jewish community of Vienna appearing in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 1971, authored by Yomtov Ludwig Bato. See also Rozenblit, M.L., *The Jews of Vienna, 1867–1914: Assimilation and Identity*. Albany: Suny Press, 1983.

4 These estimates are based on the censuses conducted in the early twentieth century. They relate to the period of the First Austrian Republic. See: (1) *American Jewish Yearbook 1937*, section Statistics of Jews, [www.ajcarchives.org/main.php?GroupingId=10069](http://www.ajcarchives.org/main.php?GroupingId=10069), and (2) *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Wien 1930–1935* (p.12), [www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/wbrobv/periodical/titleinfo/2057276](http://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/wbrobv/periodical/titleinfo/2057276).

in 1934.<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that 40,000–65,000 Austrian Jews died in the Holocaust.<sup>6</sup> The first post-war census in Austria, conducted in 1951, documented the presence of about 11,000 Jews.<sup>7</sup> Austrian Jewry has never been a great ‘heavyweight’ in global Jewish demography: around 1934 its share in the world Jewish population was about 1%; by 1939 it had dropped to about 0.5%.<sup>8</sup> Today, it is less than 0.1%. In demographic terms, Austrian Jews have never been a heavyweight in Austria either: their proportion in the total population of Austria was at its highest (about 3%) in 1934, dropped dramatically to 1.4% in 1939, and stood at 0.1% in the early twenty-first century.



**Our aim in this report is to create an up-to-date picture of the present demography of Jews in Austria, as well as their social, political and material conditions, including their Jewish identity**

While the political and organisational history of Austrian Jewry since the Second World War has been well studied, this is not the case concerning the demographic and social developments in this population.<sup>9</sup> Our aim in this report is to create

an up-to-date picture of the present demography of Jews in Austria, as well as their social, political and material conditions, including their Jewish identity. We do so on the basis of three main sources. The first is the Austrian Census conducted in 2001. A question about religion was included in the Austrian Census up to 2001, allowing the straightforward derivation of the socio-demographic characteristics of Jews and other religious groups. After 2001, the collection of data on religion in the census was discontinued. Whilst the data relating to year 2001 are not very up-to-date, some fundamental demographic, social and economic facts are not very dynamic and hold good for a while. Also, some of these data have never been presented and analysed, to our knowledge. Our second source is the records of the Jewish community of Austria which maintains a highly functional membership registration system, allowing an estimation of communal size and certain demographic characteristics. Our third source is a survey of Jews in Austria conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in mid-2018, with a sample of 526 observations.<sup>10</sup> In this report we relate to it as the ‘FRA 2018 survey’ for brevity. The original purpose of the survey was to investigate the experiences and perceptions of antisemitism among Jews, but it included a set of questions on Jewish identity which provide an unprecedented and detailed

- 5 The results of the 1939 German Census and covering the newly acquired Austria are summarised in Blau, B. 1950. The Jewish population of Germany 1939–1945, *Jewish Social Studies* 12 (2): 161–172. The estimate for 1934 can be found in the American Jewish Yearbook 1937, section Statistics of Jews, [www.ajcarchives.org/main.php?GroupingId=10069](http://www.ajcarchives.org/main.php?GroupingId=10069). There is some uncertainty as to the number of Jews in Austria in 1939 simply because the reality in that year was too dynamic to do it justice with a single figure, largely due to the large-scale Jewish emigration from Austria. The 95,000 estimate reported by Bruno Blau refers to the census date of 17 May 1939; the end of year number could already be significantly lower than this. The section of Statistics of Jews in the *American Jewish Yearbook 1942*, as well as J. Lestschinsky (cit.) mention the presence of 60,000 Jews in Austria in 1939, but do not present a date or the method of estimation. This reality should be born in mind but it does not affect the general thrust of the narrative.
- 6 This is an accepted range of estimates featuring in Lestschinsky, J. *Crisis, Catastrophe and Survival: A Jewish Balance sheet, 1914–1948*. New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress, 1948; Dawidowicz, L. 1975. *The war against Jews, 1933–1945*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson; Hilberg, R. 1985. *The destruction of the European Jews*. New York and London: Holmes and Meier. The estimates quoted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem are in this range.
- 7 Source: Statistik Austria. *Bevölkerung nach dem Religionsbekenntnis und Bundesländern 1951 bis 2001. Volkszählungen 1951 bis 2001*. Created on 01.06.2007.
- 8 This calculation has been made on the basis of the estimates of the Jewish population of Austria for 1934 and 1939 and the world Jewish population at that time. The latter figure was obtained from: DellaPergola, S. 1993. Jews in the European community: sociodemographic trends and challenges, *American Jewish Yearbook*, 1993.
- 9 For a broad overview of organisational and political history of Austrian Jews, see: Cohen-Weisz, S. *Jewish Life in Austria and Germany Since 1945: Identity and Communal Reconstruction*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016.
- 10 This sample size is sufficient for most analyses at the level of the whole sample and at times also for the analysis of subsamples. A 4% margin of error applies to this sample size, at the level of the whole sample.

view of the religious and cultural aspects of the Jewish life of Austrian Jews. In addition to these three principal sources, we also draw on some additional ones, all empirical, as and when needed.

On matters pertaining to Jewish demography we draw comparisons between Jews and members of other religious groups in Austria. Austria, alongside the entire Western world, is quickly diversifying in terms of religious and ethnic composition. Specifically, the proportion of Muslims is large and growing in Austria. Many of the features of Muslim populations in the West and in Europe in particular contrast strongly with the features of non-Muslim populations, and so now and again in this publication, we will use Austrian Muslims as an example for comparison. With respect to Jewish identity, we draw

comparisons between Jews in Austria and Jews in other countries of the Jewish Diaspora. In our view, such a comparative approach significantly enhances our understanding of who Austrian Jews are in the family of European and Austrian religious groups and of their contemporary and future demographic and social situation.

In the next sections we begin by presenting a brief overview of the post-war historical demography of Jews in Austria, before moving onto the contemporary demography and socioeconomic conditions of Jews in Austria, as well as demographic projections about the future. The final section is devoted to the Jewish identity of Austrian Jews, before summarising our results and drawing out some possible lessons for policy.

## / Key findings

- Around 2019, the core Jewish population of Austria was estimated to be just above 10,000. The 'core Jewish population' consists of people who would explicitly identify themselves as Jews when asked, for example, in a census or a survey. This is the highest number of Jews observed in Austria since the 1960s.
- According to the Israeli Law of Return – which allows a person to immigrate to Israel and immediately apply for Israeli citizenship – the estimated eligible population might be as high as 20,000 in 2019. The Law of Return applies to Jews, children and grandchildren of Jews, and all respective spouses, regardless of their current Jewish status.
- The core Jewish population constitutes 0.1% in the total population of Austria, a very small group compared to other religious groups. 64% of all Austrians are Roman Catholics, 17% are unaffiliated in religious terms, and 8% are Muslims.
- The Jewish population of Austria is growing and may reach 11,000–12,000 by the mid-2030s.
- About 86% of all Austrian Jews reside in Vienna. Only 19% of all Austrians live in Vienna. The pattern of a super-concentration of Jews in and around the capital city is long-standing in Austrian history.
- The average number of children that a Jewish woman in Austria is expected to have in her lifetime is 2.5, which is higher than the average expected among Austrian women (1.5 children per woman). Strictly Orthodox Jewish women in Austria have 6–7 children per woman, on average, while non-strictly Orthodox Jewish women typically have about 2.
- Migration has been a powerful factor of growth in the Austrian Jewish population. Jews born in Israel constitute about 20% of Jews in Austria today.
- About 78% of Jewish households in Austria are affiliated with the Jewish community through membership of its representative organisation. Compared to other communities around the world, this is a very high level of affiliation.
- About 35% of Jews in Austria identified as 'just Jewish', about 30% as Orthodox or Traditional, 19% as strictly Orthodox and 15% as Reform/Progressive. Austrian Jewry has one of the highest shares of strictly Orthodox Jews among all European Jewish communities.
- Due to their high fertility, the strictly Orthodox represent the main engine of population growth for the Jewish community as a whole. For the same reason, their share is expected to increase significantly in the medium term. It is safe to say that Austrian Jews are on the path towards desecularisation by demography.
- About two thirds (70%) of partnered Austrian Jews have a Jewish partner.
- About 70% of all Jewish children of compulsory school age in Austria attend Jewish schools. While 100% of strictly Orthodox Jews attend Jewish schools, among the non-strictly Orthodox uptake is still significant – about 52%.

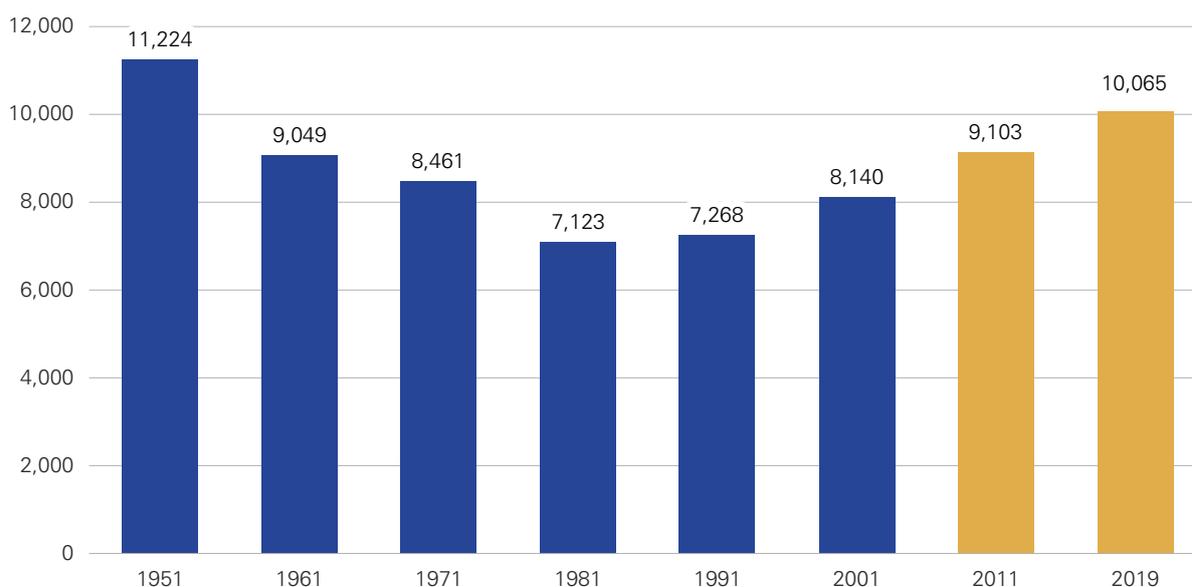
# 1 / Jews in Austria: demographic and socioeconomic realities and trends

## Jewish population size

In 2019 the core Jewish population of Austria, i.e. people who would identify themselves as Jews in a survey or a population census, was estimated at around 10,000. In historical terms, this is the highest number of Jews observed in Austria since the 1960s. During the post-war period the Austrian Jewish population followed a U-shaped numerical trajectory (Figure 1). Between the 1950s and the 1980s it declined by 37%, but after the 1980s the trend reversed and in the next forty years or so the population of Jews in Austria increased by 41%.

Historical estimates of the size of the Jewish population in Austria come from the Austrian Census that used to include a question on religion. The estimates for recent years, namely 2011 and 2019, are based on a combination of sources. The collection of data on religion in the Austrian Census was discontinued after 2001, as part of a wider change in census methodology. Despite this unfortunate development – from the point of view of Jewish demography – not all was lost, and the community of demographers retained some capacity to reconstruct Jewish population numbers

**Figure 1. Jews in Austria: population size, 1951–2019 (number)**



Note: the estimate for 2011 is derived as a mid-point of 2001 and 2019 estimates.

Source for population counts up to and inclusive of 2001: Statistik Austria. *Bevölkerung nach dem Religionsbekenntnis und Bundesländern 1951 bis 2001. Volkszählungen 1951 bis 2001*; Created on 01.06.2007. For 2011 and 2019: authors' estimates, see Appendix 1 for details.

in Austria afterwards. First, the Austrian national system of the registration of births and deaths continued to collect data on religion. Second, the Jewish community of Austria has maintained a highly functional registration system of communal membership which could be used. Finally, the scope of communal affiliation of Austrian Jewry was clarified by the recent FRA survey which included a detailed inquiry of issues pertaining to communal membership and geographical distribution. By triangulating these sources, it was possible to derive up-to-date estimates of the total Jewish population size in Austria.<sup>11</sup>

The largest religious group in Austria is Roman Catholics, amounting to 75% and 64% of all Austrians in 2001 and 2016 respectively. A considerable and growing proportion of people in Austria (12% in 2001 and 17% in 2016) are unaffiliated in religious terms. At present, Muslims are the largest religious minority in Austria, amounting to 8% of the population in 2016; in Vienna, the estimated share of Muslims is 14%. The status of Muslims as the most numerous religious minority in Austria began somewhere between 2001 and 2016; in 2001 Protestants were still the largest religious group after Roman Catholics, at 5%, but by 2016 Muslims held this position.<sup>12</sup> Compared to these groups, the Jewish presence, in proportionate terms, is minuscule and decreased over time: in 1951 Jews constituted 0.16% of the total population of Austria; in 2001 they were 0.1% – obviously, the pace of their numerical development was slower than that of other religious groups in Austria. Today (around 2019), the proportion of Jews in the total population of Austria is no different from 2001.

A Jewish population estimate around 10,000 in 2019, it must be stressed, relates to what is conventionally called the *core Jewish population* (CJP), i.e. Jews who would explicitly identify themselves as such when asked, for example, in a census or a survey, or would be identified as Jews by others who may answer this question on their behalf (e.g. family members) – and who do not belong to another religion. The CJP includes all people who do not identify as Jews in a religious sense, whether or not they are members of an organised Jewish community, but hold a Jewish identity which is mutually exclusive of other religious identities. As shown in Figure 2, expanding the definition to include people who do not self-identify as Jewish but are partly so on the basis of having at least one Jewish parent (even if they practise another religion), raises the estimate for the *Parents Jewish population* (PJP) to 14,000.<sup>13</sup> By also including the non-Jewish members of extant Jewish households, such as non-Jewish spouses or other relatives, the estimated total *Enlarged Jewish Population* (EJP) would amount to 17,000. Finally, according to the Israeli Law of Return – the legal instrument which allows a person to immigrate to Israel and immediately apply for Israeli citizenship – the estimated eligible population (LRP) might be as high as 20,000 in 2019. The Law of Return applies to Jews, children and grandchildren of Jews, and all respective spouses, regardless of their current Jewish status.

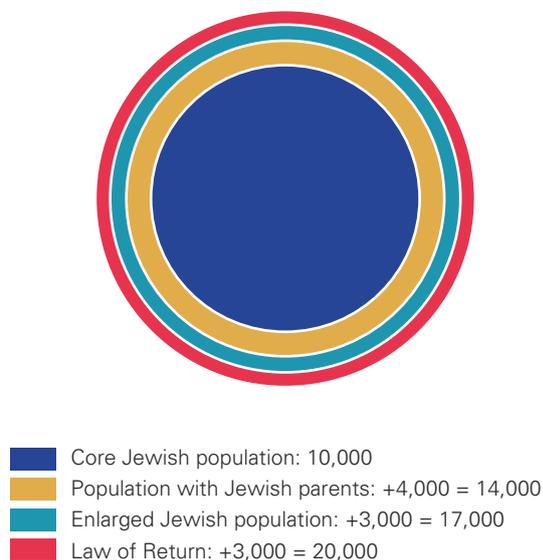
In other words, the more narrowly and conventionally defined core Jewish population is estimated to amount to about half of the broader Law of Return definition. The significant difference is due to the incidence

11 Note that the estimate for 2019 constitutes the central value of an estimated range. See Appendix 1 for details of the derivation. Between 1951–2001, 4%–14% of the Austrian population identified as having no religion or did not state their religion. The reasons for non-identification in religious terms are complex and may reflect a narrow understanding of religion as adherence to certain religious beliefs and practices rather than a broad understanding of religious affiliation as a social group or heritage. Therefore, agnostics, atheists and humanists, for example, are probably over-represented among people without religion or with religion not stated. On the assumption that the proportion of Jews in this group was identical to the proportion of Jews in the population with a religious affiliation, 350–550 Jews could be added to the count of Jews between 1951–1981 and 1,000–1,300 Jews between 1991–2001.

12 Source of estimates: Goujon, A., Jurasszovic, S., and Potancokova, M. 2017. *Religious denominations in Austria: baseline study for 2016-scenarios until 2046*. Vienna Institute of Demography.

13 DellaPergola, S., *World Jewish Population 2019. American Jewish Year Book 2019*, ed. A. Dashefsky and I. Sheskin. Cham: Springer, 2020.

**Figure 2. Estimated Jewish population in Austria according to alternative definitions, 2019**



Source: DellaPergola, S., *World Jewish Population 2019. American Jewish Year Book 2019*, ed. A. Dashefsky and I. Sheskin. Cham: Springer, 2020.

Illustration: circles not proportional to actual size.

of intermarriages performed locally, as well as to the arrival in Austria of immigrant households including non-Jewish members, especially from the Former Soviet Union (see more below). The remainder of this report relates to the core Jewish population.

## Geographical distribution

About 86% of all Austrian Jews reside in Vienna, making it a highly concentrated urban community. About half of the one thousand or so Jews who live outside of Vienna are found in Lower Austria (Niederösterreich), a province surrounding the city of Vienna, and in Upper Austria (Oberösterreich). Yet, each of the remaining six Austrian provinces contains some Jews: Salzburg and Styria contain

100–200 Jews each and Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Kärnten and Burgenland probably contain fewer than 100 Jews each.<sup>14</sup> While the proportion of Jews in the whole population of Austria is very small, about 0.1%, it is somewhat larger in Vienna – about 0.5% of the total population of the city. In social and political terms that would mean that a Jewish presence would inevitably be somewhat more perceptible and visible in Vienna compared to the rest of Austria.

The pattern of a super-concentration of Jews in and around the capital city is long-standing in Austrian history. The available records from the early twentieth century indicate that although the Jewish population then was about twenty times bigger than today, the pattern of dispersion of Jews throughout Austria was very similar to the pattern observed today.<sup>15</sup> In this respect, Austrian Jews exhibit a super-concentration in the capital city, somewhat similar to Jewish population patterns in Hungary or Denmark. In other European countries as well – such as the UK (Greater London), France (Région parisienne), Italy, or Sweden – a majority of Jews live in the capital city and surrounding metropolitan area. Such a tendency to cluster in capital and other large cities evidently reflects the socioeconomic composition of Jewish communities, their higher education, occupational specialisations, and sometimes developed transnational connections. After the Second World War some European governments – such as those in France and especially Germany – adopted settlement policies aimed at dispersing immigrants who applied at the time of the arrival of large-scale Jewish immigration from North Africa and the Former Soviet Union, respectively. However, in the course of time, numerous Jewish migrants were attracted to the capitals' metropolitan areas from other regions of the same country, thereby reinforcing the dominant position of the capital city.

14 Statistik Austria. *Bevölkerung nach dem Religionsbekenntnis und Bundesländern 1951 bis 2001. Volkszählungen 1951 bis 2001*; Created on 01.06.2007.

15 Sources: (1) *American Jewish Yearbook 1937*, section Statistics of Jews, [www.ajcarchives.org/main.php?GroupingId=10069](http://www.ajcarchives.org/main.php?GroupingId=10069), and (2) *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Wien 1930–1935*, [www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/wbrobv/periodical/titleinfo/2057276](http://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/wbrobv/periodical/titleinfo/2057276).

Table 1 illustrates the provincial distribution of Jews in Austria according to the last available population census (2001); it has, in our view, remained fundamentally unchanged since then. As noted, Jews constituted 0.1% of the total Austrian

population, and indeed of Austrian citizens, but their share among foreign citizens was slightly higher, 0.3% nationally and 0.7% in Vienna. In fact, among Jews in 2001, foreign citizens constituted 25%.

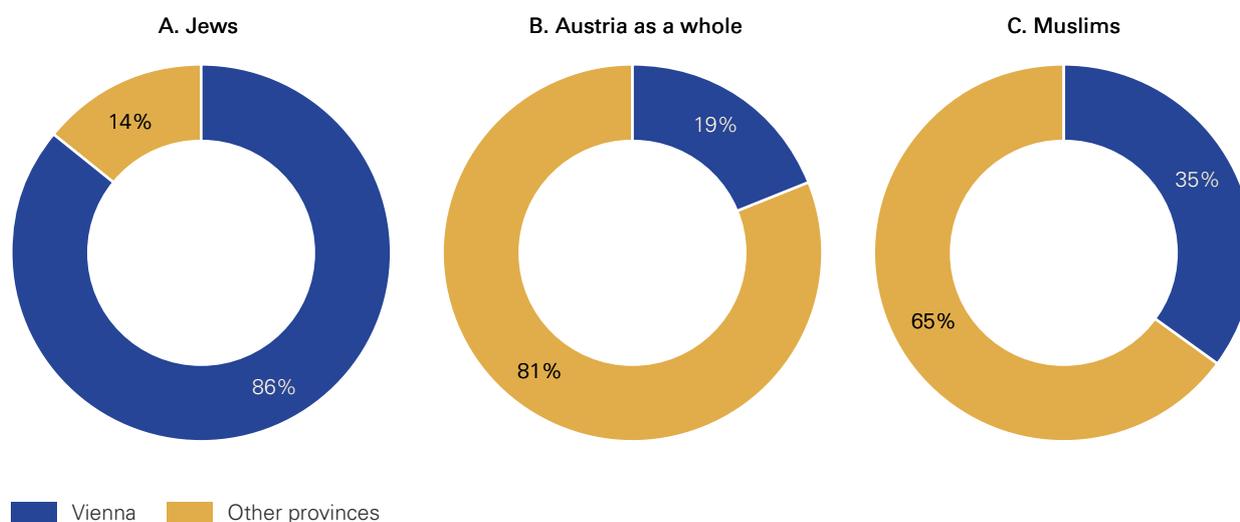
**Table 1. Geographic distribution of the total and Jewish population in Austria, by Federal Länder and citizenship, 2001**

Federal Länder and Capital	Total population	Jewish population	Jews as % of total	Austrian citizens	Jews as % of total	Foreign citizens	Jews as % of total
<b>Total Austria</b>	<b>8,032,926</b>	<b>8,140</b>	<b>0.101</b>	<b>6,112</b>	<b>0.083</b>	<b>2,028</b>	<b>0.285</b>
Burgenland (Eisenstadt)	277,569	33	0.012	27	0.000	6	0.001
Kärnten (Klagenfurt)	559,404	56	0.010	32	0.000	24	0.003
Niederösterreich (St. Pölten)	1,545,804	399	0.026	278	0.004	121	0.017
Oberösterreich (Linz)	1,376,797	216	0.016	105	0.001	111	0.016
Salzburg (Salzburg)	515,327	125	0.024	92	0.001	33	0.005
Steiermark (Graz)	1,183,303	161	0.014	103	0.001	58	0.008
Tyrol (Innsbruck)	673,504	99	0.015	61	0.001	38	0.005
Vorarlberg (Bregenz)	351,095	63	0.018	47	0.001	16	0.002
Wien (Wien)	1,550,123	6,988	0.451	5,367	0.073	1,621	0.228

Note: the names of the regional administrative centres appear in brackets.

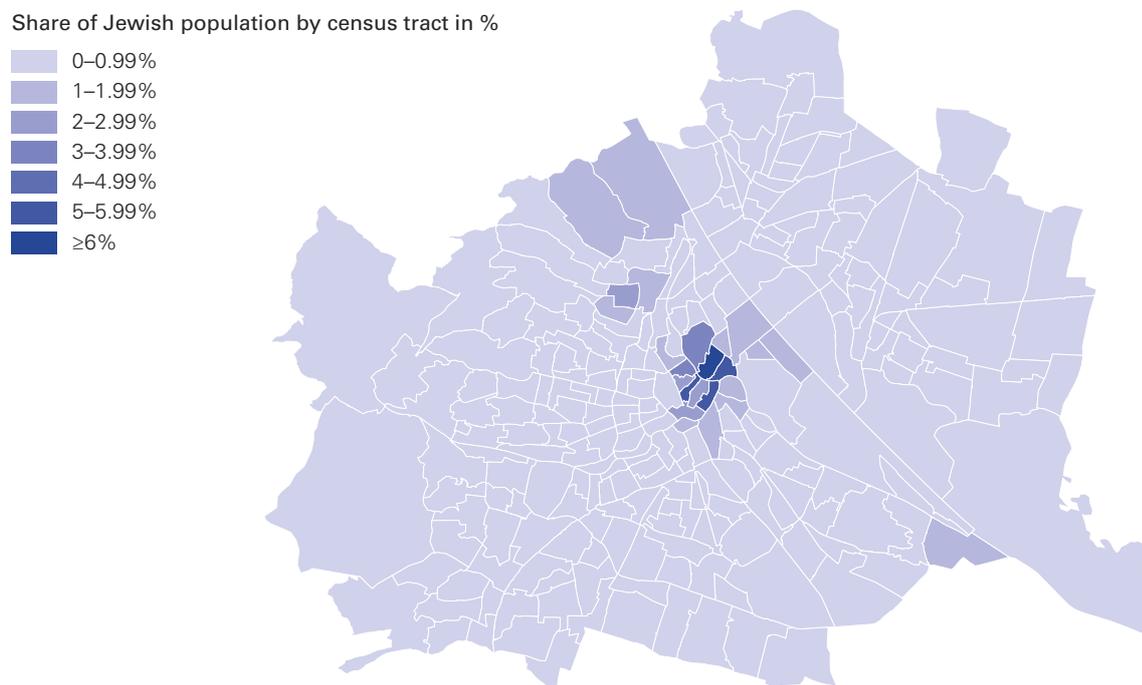
Source: Statistik Austria. Volkszählung 2001: Wohnbevölkerung nach Religion und Staatsangehörigkeit für Bundesländer.

**Figure 3. Geographical dispersion of Jews and others in Austria, 2001, %**



Source: Statistik Austria. *Bevölkerung nach dem Religionsbekenntnis und Bundesländern 1951 bis 2001*. Volkszählungen 1951 bis 2001; Created on 01.06.2007.

## Map 1. Jewish population in Vienna, 2001



Note: the map was prepared by Ramon Bauer (Dezernat Statistik Wien).

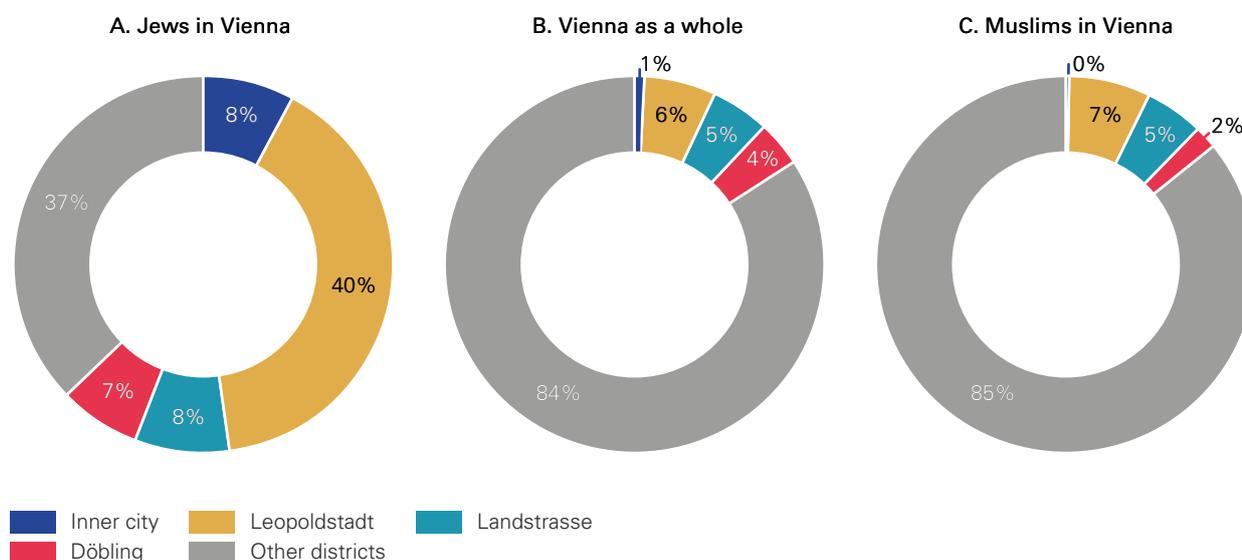
Figure 3 shows that the Jewish geographic distribution pattern stands in strong contrast to the geographic pattern of Austria as a whole. The distribution of the Muslim population in 2001 is represented as well for comparative purposes. Only a minority of the Austrian population as a whole (19%) resided in Vienna, and the same applied to the Muslim population, although in the latter case it was a larger minority (35%). Thus, in geographical residential terms, Jews in Austria are a truly unique religious community.

Within Vienna, the geographical concentration of Jews is also very striking, following longstanding and consistent trends of minority settlement in the capital city.<sup>16</sup> In 2001, over 60% of Jews in Vienna lived in just four of twenty-three districts: the Inner City (Innere Stadt), Leopoldstadt, Landstrasse and Döbling. Indeed, about 40% of Jews in Vienna lived in Leopoldstadt alone.

A high concentration of Jews in Leopoldstadt reaches back to the earliest times of the Jewish presence in Vienna. To highlight the contrast with the pattern of population distribution in Vienna: only about 16% of the total population of Vienna, and a similar proportion of Muslims in Vienna, live in these four districts (Figure 3a). In proportionate terms, Jews constitute about 3% of the population in the Inner City and Leopoldstadt, to be contrasted with 0.5% (the proportion of Jews of the population of Vienna as a whole).

Whilst these figures relate to the situation in 2001, it is unlikely that the fundamental distribution has changed much since then, not least because in 2019 all five Jewish schools in the city, catering to a wide spectrum of Jewish religious observance, were located in the district of Leopoldstadt.

<sup>16</sup> DellaPergola, S., Jewish Urban Ecology in European Cities. In U.O. Schmelz, P. Glikson and S. DellaPergola (eds.), *Papers in Jewish Demography 1985*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1989, 303–336.

**Figure 3a. Geographical dispersion of Jews and others in Vienna, 2001, %**

Source: *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Wien* 2018. Menschen in Wien. 11 Religion.

Residentially, the Jews of Vienna tend to concentrate in the relatively affluent districts of the city, in keeping with their socioeconomic situation (a topic covered in the next section). On average, when described in terms of annual income per employed person, the residents of the districts of Landstrasse, Döbling and especially the Inner City were more affluent



than the city of Vienna as a whole. Leopoldstadt, on the other hand, is a district with a relatively low income compared to the Vienna average.<sup>17</sup> There is a certain duality to the Jewish residential pattern in Vienna – Jews are present both in more affluent and less affluent areas – probably signalling the presence of more affluent and less affluent Jews.

**The occupational pattern of Jews living in the Diaspora is characterised by a very low level, sometimes virtual absence of, manual occupations. Diaspora Jews are an “urban population of traders, entrepreneurs, bankers, financiers, lawyers, physicians and scholars”**

### Educational and occupational structure

The occupational pattern of Jews living in the Diaspora is characterised by a very low level, sometimes virtual absence of, manual occupations. Diaspora Jews are an “urban

<sup>17</sup> Data on annual income by district in Vienna relate to 2016 and were obtained from: *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Wien* 2018. Bezirksporträts – Bezirke 1 – 23. Pearson correlation coefficient between income per head and the proportion of Jews in the population of the district is 0.5 (medium correlation) across all twenty-three districts of Vienna and 0.7 (medium-high correlation) when Leopoldstadt is excluded.

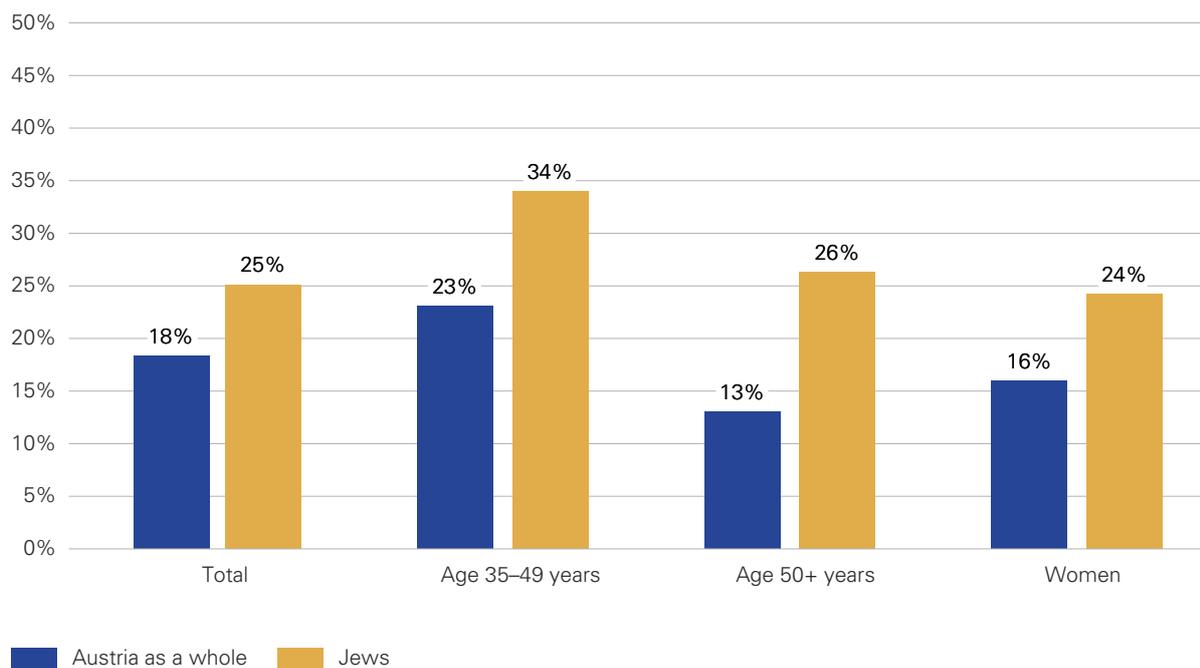
population of traders, entrepreneurs, bankers, financiers, lawyers, physicians and scholars” to quote Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein in their study of the economics of Judaism and the role of education and educational selectivity in the formation of the Jewish people over the centuries.<sup>18</sup> The circumstances of Jews changed considerably across cultures and centuries, but this particular feature – their concentration in specialised occupational and education niches – has been observed in Jewish communities living under a variety of political and economic

conditions, in the United States, United Kingdom, France and the Soviet Union, both today and in the past.<sup>19</sup> The full picture of the evolution of this situation and its driving forces is beyond the scope of this publication, and interested readers can consult significant literature on this topic. It is sufficient to say that Austrian Jews are just one example of this pattern of educational and occupational achievement (Figure 4).

In 2001, a quarter of all Jews had post-secondary or university/college level education, in

18 Botticini, M. and Eckstein, Z. 2012. *The chosen few: how education shaped Jewish history, 70–1492*. Princeton and Oxford:

**Figure 4. Proportion of Jews in Austria with post-secondary and university/college level of education, 2001, %**

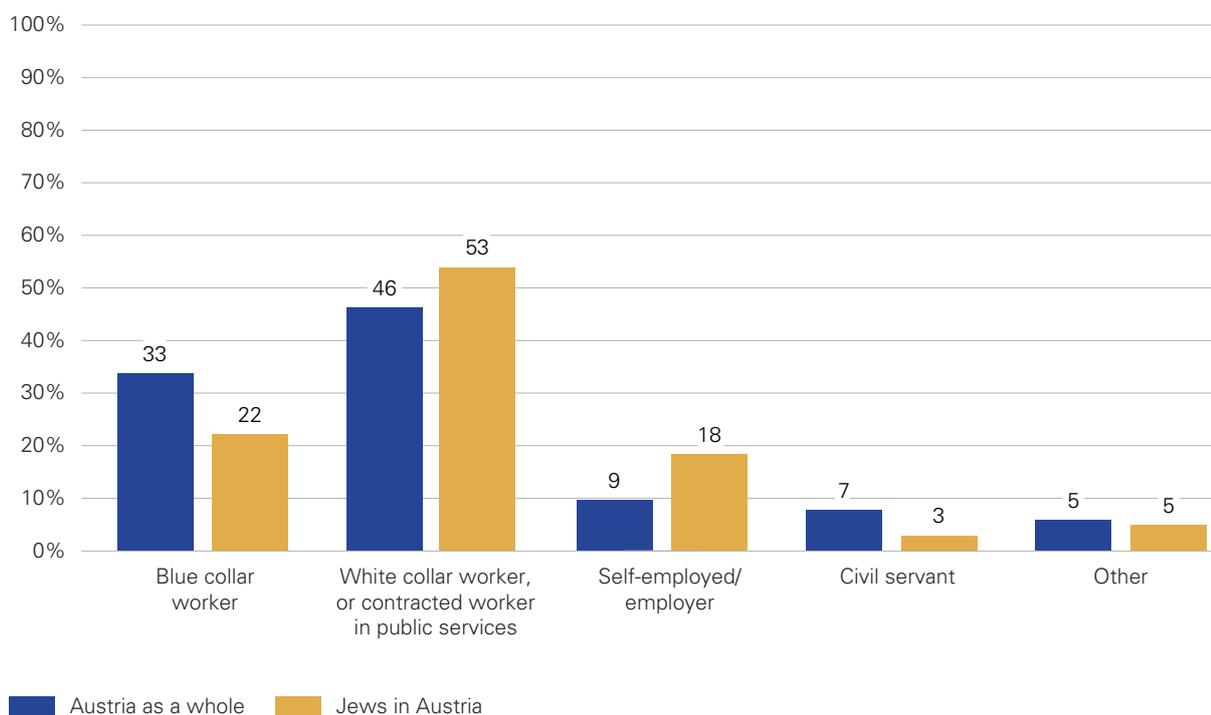


Note: educational distribution is for people aged 16 years and over.

Source: Statistik Austria, census 2001 data received by special request.

Princeton University Press.

19 The interested reader can consult, among other works, the following publications, and references therein: Chiswick, B. 2007. The occupational attainment of American Jewry: 1990–2000, *Contemporary Jewry* 27 (1): 80–111; Graham, D., Schmool, M., Waterman, S. 2007. *Jews in Britain: a snapshot from the 2001 census*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, [www.jpr.org.uk/documents/Jews%20in%20Britain:%20A%20snapshot%20from%20the%202001%20Census.pdf](http://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/Jews%20in%20Britain:%20A%20snapshot%20from%20the%202001%20Census.pdf); Cohen, E.H. 2011. *The Jews in France Today. Identity and Values*. Leiden-Boston: Brill; S. DellaPergola and F.E. Sabatello, The Italian Jewish Population Study, in U.O. Schmelz, P. Glikson, S.J. Gould (eds.) *Studies in Jewish Demography; Survey for 1969–1971*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University; London: Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1975, 53–152; V. Konstantinov, *Changes in Educational and Professional Structure as an Indicator for Socio-Economic Status of Jews in the USSR in Historical Perspective*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2005 (in Hebrew).

**Figure 5. Employment status of Jews and others in Austria, 2001, %**

Note: status in employment is for people aged 15 years and over in the labour force by the International Labour Organisation definition: employed/have a job on census day, including persons on parental leave or other temporary absence from their job on census day, and who work at least one hour per week. Category 'Other' included apprenticeships, freelancing and help with family business.  
Source: Statistik Austria, Census 2001 data received by special request.

contrast to 18% in the population of Austria as a whole. The educational advantage of Jews was especially pronounced among the older segment of the population, though it was clearly seen in the younger segment as well, and equally significant for men and women. It is worth noting that the educational profile of populations can be rather dynamic. The least educated groups are the older generations, and when these generations die off and the younger groups, who often benefit from more education, replace them, the educational profile rises. Thus, we expect the educational level of Jews and non-Jews in Austria in 2019 to be higher than in 2001. Yet, we do not expect the differences between Jews and non-Jews to have changed significantly.

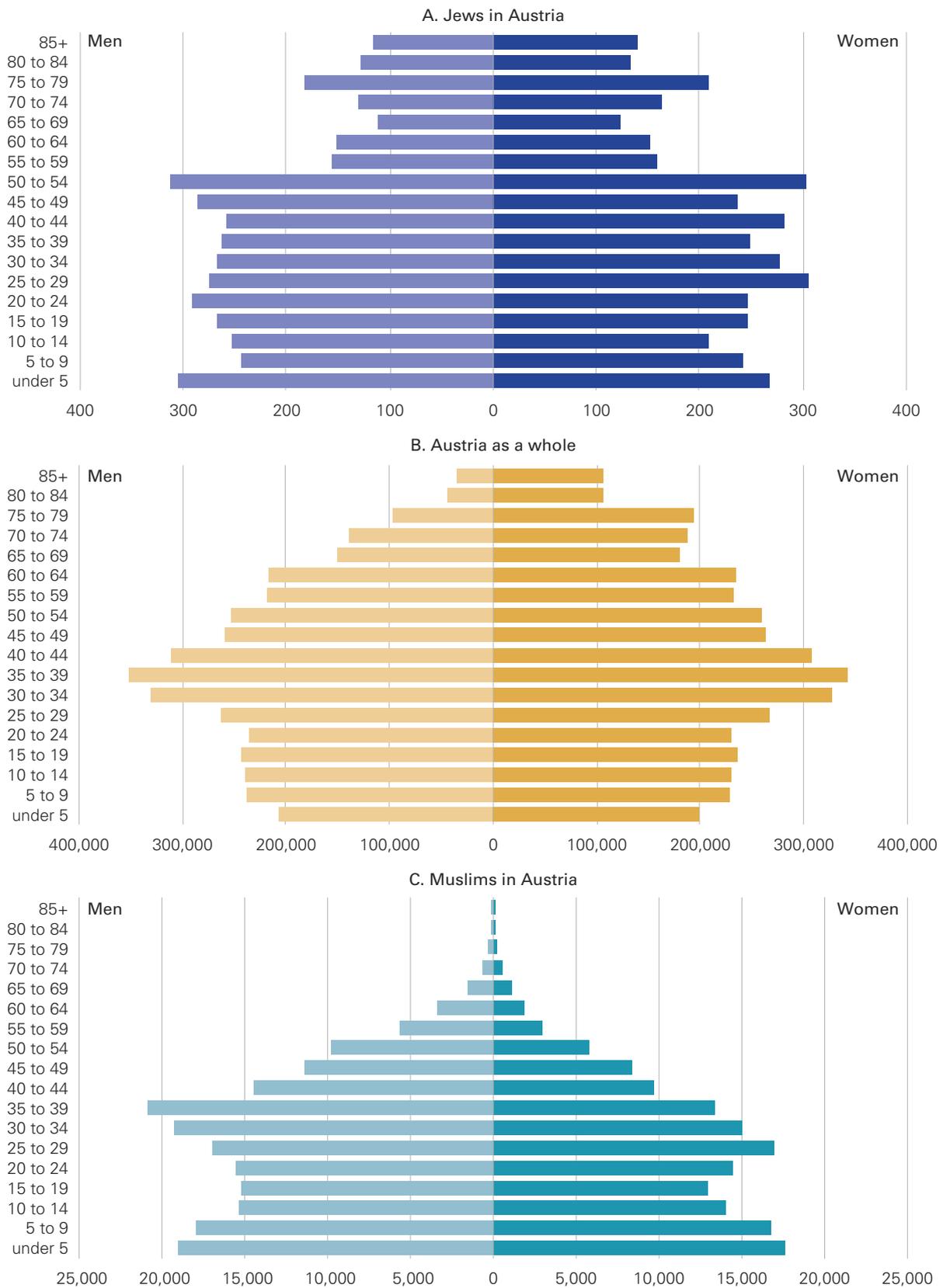
The employment situation of Jews (Figure 5) is in line with educational achievement. The proportions of white-collar workers, and especially the proportion of self-employed among Jews,

were higher than in the total population of Austria. At the same time, Jews had considerably lower involvement with blue-collar occupations and in the civil service. The peculiar socioeconomic structure of the Jewish population has a bearing on its demographic characteristics which are discussed in the following sections.

## Jewish population composition by sex and age

The age and sex composition of the population is a very revealing indicator of an entire host of demographic realities and cultural and economic conditions, as well as a baseline for population prospects. In demographic research, the age and sex composition can be graphically expressed in a population pyramid, which is a convenient way of showing the relationships between age groups and sexes. Figure 6 shows such age pyramids for Jews in Austria, in comparison to the total

**Figure 6. Age compositions of Jews and others in Austria, 2001 (number)**



Source: Statistik Austria, data received by special request.

population of Austria and to Muslims in Austria, according to the 2001 Census.

The Muslim population pyramid in Austria is so instructive that it makes a convenient departure point for explaining how the pyramid should be read (Figure 6, Panel C). The Muslim age composition is rather close to the appearance of a classic age pyramid. In historical populations and among today's less developed countries, the young ages, situated at the bottom, form a broad base, and the old ages, situated at the top, form a 'staircase' structure, indicating that there are diminishing numbers of people with the advancement of age. The broad base accounts for the name of the pyramid and is indicative of a growing population. A broad base means that the generations of children at the bottom are more numerous than the generations of their parents, located approximately in the middle of the pyramid. It also signals high fertility, which is the main engine of population growth. The middle age range shows a bulge, reflecting the immigration of young adults in recent years.

The pyramid for the total population of Austria is very different (Figure 6, Panel B). Its base is visibly narrower than its middle, and its general appearance is no longer that of a proper pyramid. This is a textbook example of a population with low fertility, captured at a very advanced stage of demographic transition. A population possessing such a pyramid cannot grow without the external addition of people through immigration or an increase in fertility; people at the base are not numerous enough to replace their parents in the years to come. The name of the pyramid – 'contracting' – reflects that. Such pyramids are characteristic of several Western populations.

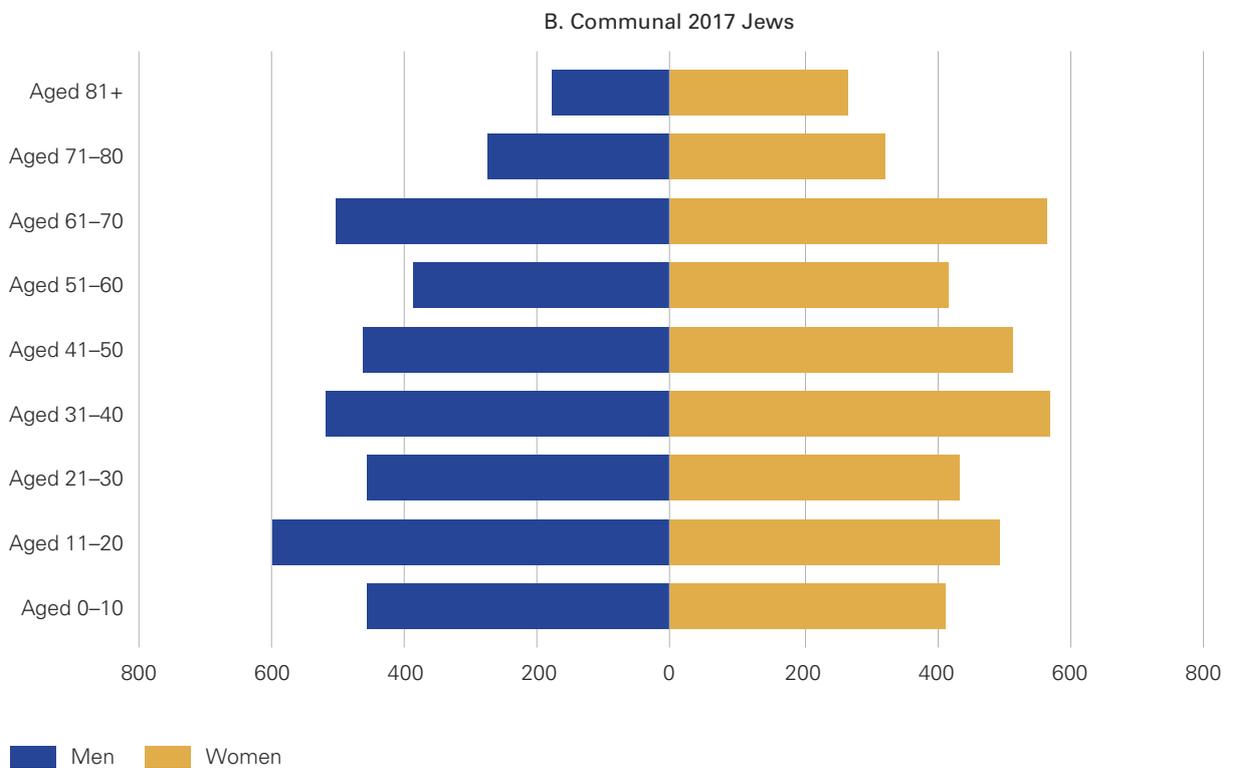
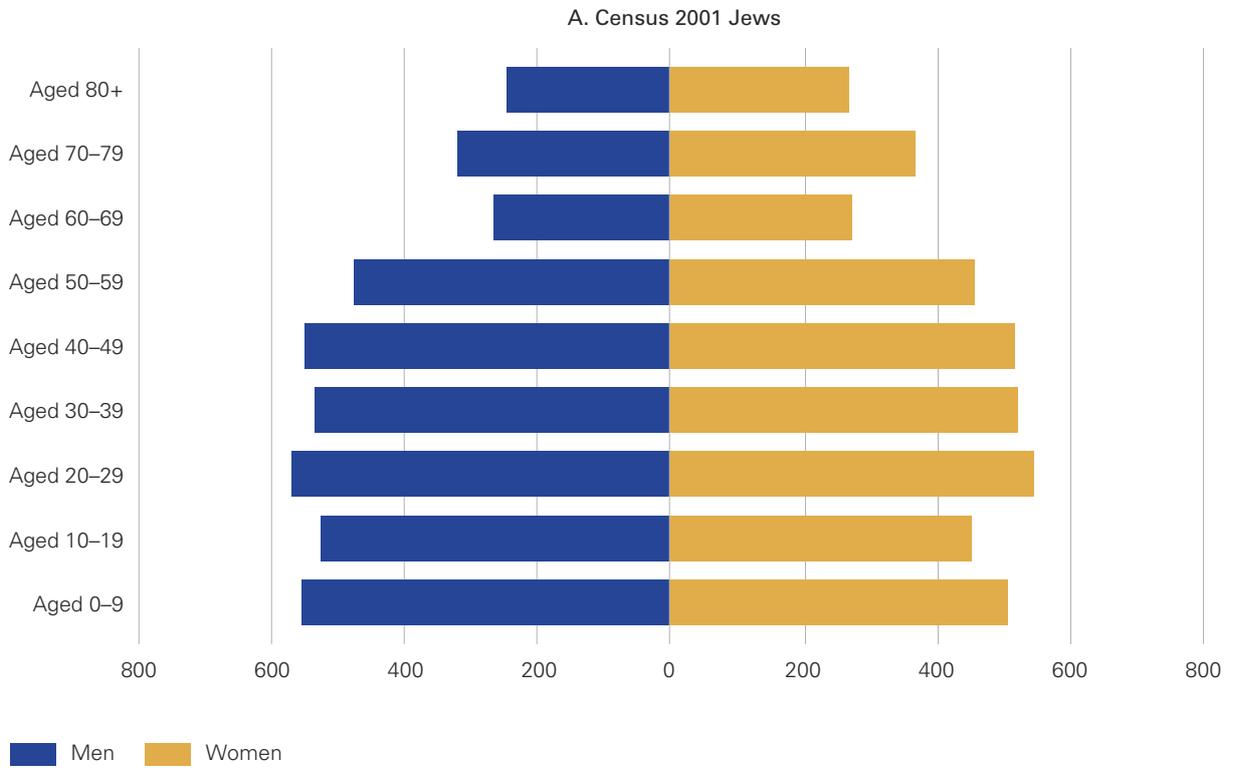
The Jewish age pyramid in 2001 (Figure 6, Panel A) has its own peculiarities. Its base and its middle are rectangular, and the very bottom is broadening very slightly. The top part, reflecting

older ages, is much wider than in the other two examples. Judging by these data, the Jewish population of Austria cannot grow vigorously like the Muslim population, but neither is it destined to decline without immigration like the total Austrian population. Jews in Austria look like a population that is capable of *maintaining* its size in the short term. The main force that accounts for this reality is fertility. However, the large shares of those aged over 55, and especially of those aged 75 and over, foreshadow a high number of deaths which is bound to curtail Jewish population growth.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in the Austrian Jewish population pyramid we see clear signs both of an aged population and above average fertility. The population's demographic prospects will be shaped by the balance between mortality and fertility; we will return to this later in the report. Before we do that, however, let us examine the policy meaning of the age structure documented, and the developments in this structure over time.

In 2001, 19% of Jews in Austria and 17% of all Austrians were children (in the age group 0–14 years), and similar proportions were aged 65 years and over. In both populations, adults aged 15–64 years – i.e. people who are at the stage of education, training or employment – dominated numerically, and they constituted 63% and 68%, respectively. By contrast, 30% of Austrian Muslims were in the age group 0–14 years and only 1% were aged 65 years and over. The age and sex structures of the Jewish and the total Austrian populations were found to be different in some ways and similar in other ways. Both are late outcomes of the demographic transition that evolved after many years of falling fertility and falling mortality and the ensuing ageing of the population. The recently emerging differences in fertility levels, which are apparent in the pyramid structure, cannot instantly change this fundamental demographic profile in the short to medium term. However, the fact that the Jewish population, in contrast to the

20 This is not to suggest that Jews in Austria have high mortality, when mortality is defined as the probability/risk of death. In fact, there are indications that Jews in Austria, and other places in the West, have low mortality, as will be presented shortly. This is to say that, in an aged population, i.e. a population with a significant number of elderly people, the number of deaths is expected to be relatively high compared to the number of births, as a 'normal' feature. This situation can develop under conditions of low mortality.

**Figure 7. Jewish population by age: Austrian Census (2001) versus Jewish Community 2017 (number)**



Source: Census 2001 data: Statistik Austria, data received by special request. Source for communal membership counts: Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities.

surrounding non-Jewish population of Austria, shows a recovering birth rate, should be of great interest to Jewish communal policy makers for whom Jewish education and continuity are high on the agenda.

Figure 7 compares the older Jewish age composition found in 2001 Census data with more recent figures from Jewish community records (2017).

The two age pyramids share many similarities, but there are also important differences. These differences are explained in part by the time elapsed between the two observations, and in part by the different nature of population coverage by the two sources. The child base of the more recent Jewish communal pyramid appears quite a bit narrower, while the process of ageing of the older cohorts is more pronounced. The reason for the narrower base of the communal pyramid is incomplete reporting of young children in the communal database from which the pyramid is derived. This is a rather common feature of administrative sources where reporting procedures are not supported by legally binding regulations and depend largely on the good will of members of the community. In the absence of clear incentives, parents often delay the registration of new-born children in the communal database, waiting instead for when such incentives arise, e.g. demand for communal services (nursery places etc.) at a later point in the couples' and child's lives. However, at any given time, the number of young children in the database may still be lower than it is in reality.<sup>21</sup> Thus the difference in the size of the age groups at the very bottom of the pyramids in 2001 and 2017 should not be interpreted as indicative of falling fertility.

On the other hand, the greater numerical presence of people aged 61–70 years in 2017 compared to 2001 is real. A wide 'shelf' of 61–70 years old in 2017 (birth cohorts of 1947–1956) is a relic of the post-war baby boom when fertility temporarily

rose to compensate for the unusually low fertility of wartime. The presence of such large ageing cohorts is a significant mechanism of the ageing of Austrian Jews. This is not a unique feature of Austrian Jews; this phenomenon of the post-war baby boom sending a lasting echo through the population structure is present in the British Jewish population and indeed other European populations.<sup>22</sup> The advancement of such a large group of people towards older ages is an indisputable factor of population ageing, even in the presence of high fertility. In the policy domain, it may express itself in a sudden increase in demand for communal services directed at the elderly.

## Dependency ratios

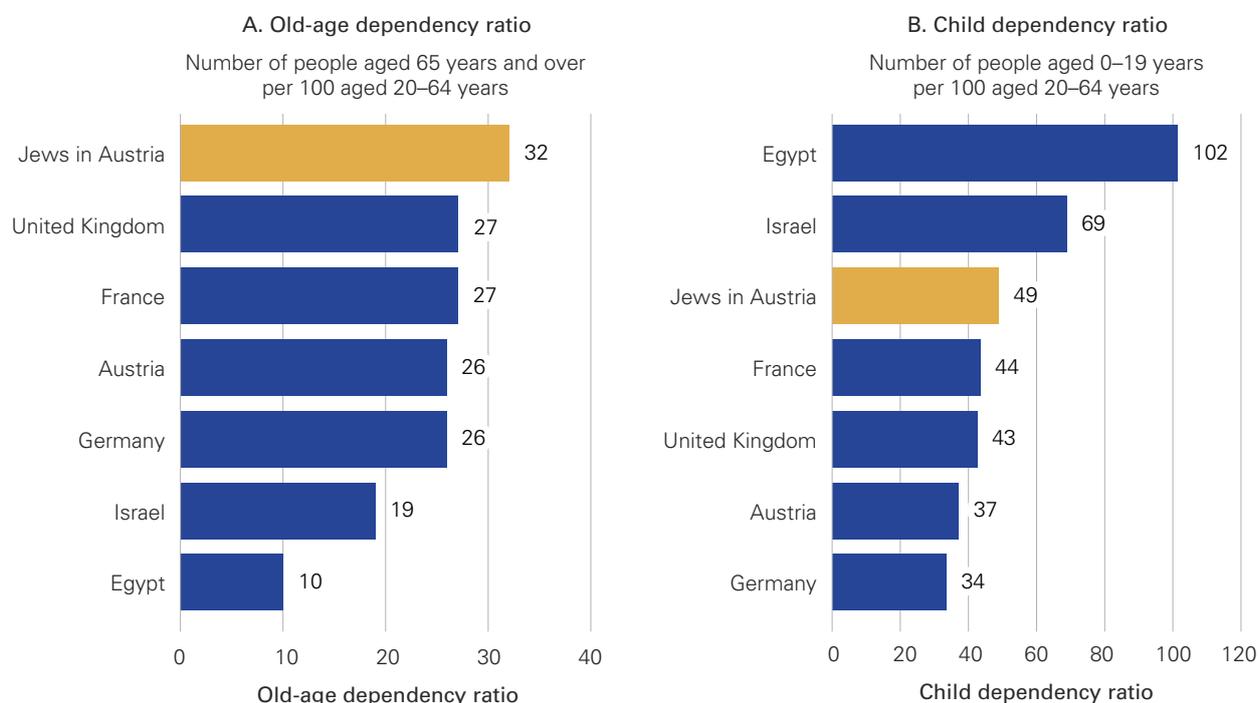
There are many aspects of the social and economic life of communities that are shaped by its age composition. Populations with large and equal shares of the very young and the elderly experience high 'dependency ratios' – i.e. the ratio between those in a population who are dependent (e.g. children and the elderly) and those who are economically productive (i.e. in work). In populations with high dependency ratios, a sizeable share of people consumes resources, typically in the form of services such as child care, education, health and care for the elderly, while they do not yet, or no longer, generate resources. On the other hand, the segment of population that belongs to the labour force and is generating income is relatively small. A deficit of resources does not inevitably follow high dependency ratios; rather, high dependency ratios are a risk factor predisposing to the deficit.

In Figure 8 we present two types of dependency ratios for Austrian Jews alongside a selection of other populations. The first is the 'old-age dependency ratio' expressing the number of people aged 65 years and over, on the assumption that a majority of these people no longer work, to

21 See Appendix 2 for details of the estimation of 'missing children'.

22 See, for example, Staetsky, L. Daniel and Boyd, J. 2015. *Strictly Orthodox Rising: What the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=2514>.

**Figure 8. Old-age and child dependency ratios among Jews in Austria and a selection of national populations, around 2001**



Source: Statistik Austria, data received by special request. For all countries other than Austria: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, custom data acquired via website.

100 people aged 20–64 years, on the assumption that the majority in the latter group is engaged in productive economic activity. The second ratio is the ‘child dependency ratio’ expressing the number of people aged 0–19 years, most of whom do not work, to 100 people aged 20–64 years.

The situation of Austrian Jews is interesting. Their levels of old-age dependency (Panel A) are more significant than the levels seen in many Western countries, and they are very far from low-income countries, represented here by Egypt, and also from Israel, a high-income country with high fertility. At the same time, Jews in Austria are at the higher end of Western child dependency ratios (Panel B), though much lower than Israel and Egypt. If we add together the two dependency ratios, Jews in Austria have a much higher burden (81% of working age population) than Austria as a whole (63%), and in fact they

surpass all other Western populations. However, Israel has a higher dependency ratio (88%) and Egypt an even higher one (112%).

Are high dependency ratios a problem? There is no definitive answer to this question. First of all, age dependency ratios do not possess meaningful cut-off points which could be used for benchmarking and policy development. To put it differently, there is not a level of age dependency that can be understood unambiguously as particularly challenging in relation to government or communal expenditure. Second, a lot depends on the exact mode of the allocation of social and economic resources towards the dependent groups and the extent to which the dependent groups are really dependent, i.e. entirely inactive economically. In this context it is worth noting the increasing trend of post-retirement employment across Western Europe, and in particular, the fact that one in ten people aged 65–69 years

in Austria was employed in 2011.<sup>23</sup> With further increases in life expectancy and improvements in population health at advanced ages, this situation is likely to continue into the future.

However, the implication of relatively high old-age and child dependency for the Jewish community is that the cost of services is quite high in terms of the economic resources that can be expected to be available. Painful decisions may be required when it comes to the allocation of limited resources to Jewish community services – for example, the extent to which available funds should be allocated to the younger age segment (Jewish education) or to the older age segment (care for the elderly). Thus, in highlighting the high dependency of the Jewish population in Austria, or anywhere, we do not issue a specific warning but raise a discussion point that will, hopefully, lead to more informed policy discussions.

23 Eurofound (2012) *Income from work after retirement in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

## 2 / Why has the Austrian Jewish population shrunk and grown?

So far, one of the findings of this report is that the Jewish population in Austria has started to grow again after a prolonged period of decline. In this section we take a closer look at the factors that could have generated the growth.

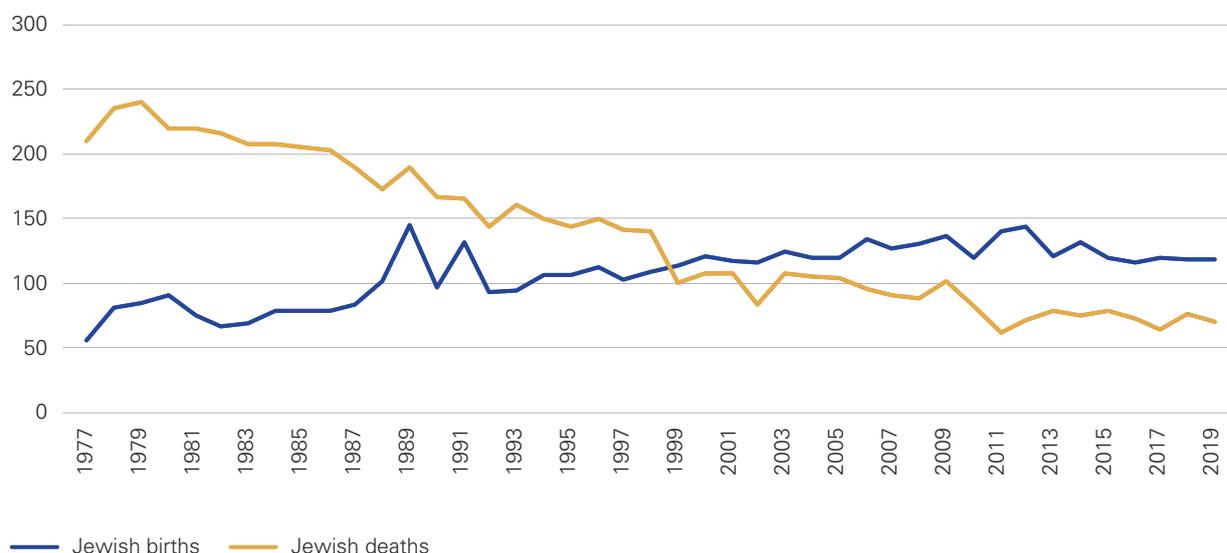
### The balance of births and deaths

Why did the number of Jews in Austria decline prior to 1981 and why has it increased since? First, before the beginning of the twenty-first century the number of deaths in the Austrian Jewish

community exceeded the number of births, and this alone could have been sufficient to generate numerical decline, unless the loss was offset by the immigration of Jews to Austria from elsewhere. Around the year 2000 the trend reversed, and the number of Jewish births started to exceed the number of deaths, i.e. the balance of births and deaths became positive. This could have been sufficient to generate population growth (Figure 9).

It is impossible, on the basis of this observation alone, to establish the exact cause of the reversal in the demographic patterns of Austrian Jews.

**Figure 9. Jews in Austria: births and deaths (number)**



Sources: (1) for Jewish births – Statistik Austria, data received by special request. (2) for Jewish deaths – Statistik Austria, data received by special request (up to year 2013, inclusive); from year 2014 onwards, an estimation based on the counts of deaths registered in the communal database of Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities.

Note: (1) the figure for 1985 is a mean value of years 1984 and 1986; the decision to adopt a mean of two surrounding years was made due to data irregularities in 1985. (2) Jewish births are defined as births to Jewish mothers and Jewish deaths are deaths to the deceased declared as Jewish by those reporting religion on their behalf. (3) The number of births for years 2016–2019 was not known at the time of production of this report; the average number of births taking place in 2016–2017 was adopted for these years. (4) Following the introduction of a new electronic vital events register in late 2014, all national vital events statistics displayed a larger proportion of no religious affiliation and unknown religious affiliation deaths; Jewish deaths statistics looked especially unreliable; as a result, the decision was made to rely on Jewish communal figures instead, thus from 2014 onwards the number of deaths is reconstructed using Jewish communal statistics.

The number of births could have increased because women started having more children, or because the number of women of childbearing age increased, i.e. the age composition temporarily became more favourable, or as a result of both of these factors. The number of deaths could have decreased because the longevity of Austrian Jews improved or because the number of elderly declined or stalled, or both. Without additional information it is impossible to pinpoint the exact reasons. However, even with this imperfect knowledge, the overall meaning of the development is clear. Between the early 1980s and the turn of the century, the natural increase (i.e. the balance of births and deaths) of Austrian Jews was negative, yet the population size grew, strongly suggesting that immigration played a role. Since 2000, in contrast to previous years, natural balance became a factor of growth in the Austrian Jewish population. The role of immigration in this period is not entirely clear – a point to which we will return.

With respect to the development in the balance of births and deaths since 2000 and its striking reversal from negative to positive, there is a noteworthy parallel between Jews in Austria and Jews in the UK. A rather similar reversal of the balance of births and deaths took place in the British Jewish population at about the same time.<sup>24</sup> The growth in the proportion of strictly Orthodox Jews, a segment known for extraordinarily high fertility by Western standards, is a well-documented fact in the British context; its contribution to the increase in births, decrease in deaths and the transition of the balance of

births and deaths from negative to positive is absolutely clear. Our exploration of Jewish communal statistics in Austria suggests that the share of the strictly Orthodox population may be significant in Austria as well, and so the gradual increase in the proportion of the strictly Orthodox is a good candidate explanation for the emerging preponderance of births over deaths among Jews in Austria as well.<sup>25</sup> We will expand on this point in the following sections.

Our last point in relation to the balance of births and deaths is a comparative one. It is remarkable that the trend in the balance among Jews differs so significantly from the trend shown by the total population of Austria (Figure 10). Since the late 1970s, the numbers of births and deaths in Austria were very close to each other, with the exception of a decade between the late 1980s and the late 1990s, so whatever growth the Austrian population had at that time must have owed a great deal to immigration (Figure 10, Panel A).<sup>26</sup> Further, the predominantly Christian or Christian-heritage population of Austria has had a negative balance of births and deaths since the late 1990s. This becomes clear when Austrian Muslim births and deaths are taken out of the picture (Figure 10, Panel C). Muslims in Austria have a positive balance of births and death over the period shown, including an impressive net natural increase of over 10,000 in 2017 (Figure 10, Panel B). Thus, in the recent period, the Austrian balance of births and deaths might owe very significantly to the contribution of the Muslim population with its strongly positive balance.<sup>27</sup> To sum up, the strongest point of contrast

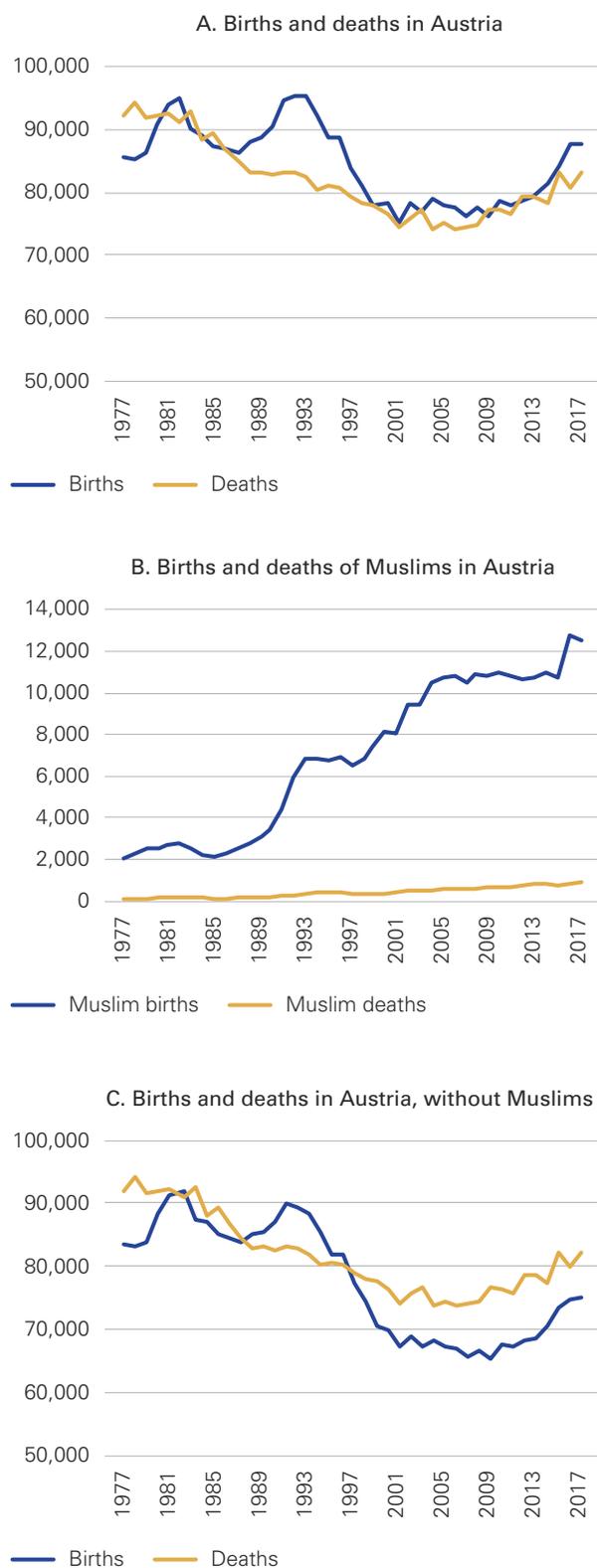
24 Casale Mashiah, D. 2018. *Vital statistics of the UK Jewish population: births and deaths*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.18, <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=3551>.

25 'Haredi', meaning 'fearful' or 'in awe of God', is another term used to describe this population and we use these terms interchangeably here.

26 Indeed, an inspection of population trends in Austria as a whole clarifies that between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s Austria's population hardly grew; the resumption of growth in the late 1980s until the mid-1990s and especially since 2000 onwards was due to a strongly positive immigration balance following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the war in Yugoslavia. These descriptions are based on population trends charted by the statistical yearbook of Statistik Austria: Statistik Austria. 2018. *Demographisches Jahrbuch*. A commentary produced by Statistik Austria on population trends is also of interest: [www.statistik.at/web\\_en/statistics/PeopleSociety/population/population\\_stock\\_and\\_population\\_change/total\\_population\\_annual\\_average/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/PeopleSociety/population/population_stock_and_population_change/total_population_annual_average/index.html).

27 The picture of Muslim deaths in Austria might be incomplete due to the suspected existence of the 'salmon effect', i.e. the departure of the foreign-born elderly Muslims to their countries of origin (e.g. Turkey) where they die, with their deaths unreported to the Austrian vital registration system. The scope of this phenomenon is impossible to estimate at present. Yet, the balance of births and deaths among Muslims would remain strongly positive even if 50% of deaths escape registration. Thus, our conclusion concerning the substantial, perhaps decisive, role of Muslims in shaping natural growth in Austria holds good.

**Figure 10. Balance of births and deaths in Austria (number)**



Source: Statistik Austria, data received by special request.

between the Jewish population of Austria and the total Austrian population, and especially its non-Muslim component, is that, over time, the balance of Jewish births and deaths became decisively conducive to population growth, whilst nothing of this kind happened to the Austrian population as a whole.

## Population reproduction

The intensity of population growth or decline is determined to a very significant extent by processes of reproduction – simply put, the average number of children women have in their lifetime – and by population health, which determines the average length of life. The average number of children Jewish women have in their lifetime, also known as the total fertility rate (TFR), is presented in Figure 11, where it is compared to the TFR for the general population of Austria, the population of Vienna and the Muslim population. We use the city of Vienna as a comparator because the social and cultural forces operating in a capital city, and shaping its fertility among other things, may differ from the forces that shape the rest of the country, and a large majority of Jews in Austria live in Vienna. Our first estimate of the Jewish TFR is based on the 2001 Austrian Census, and it is 2.01 children per woman. Our latest estimate is for 2016–2017 (2.5 children per woman) and is based on a combination of sources including the Census, vital statistics and Austrian Jewish communal statistics.<sup>28</sup>

Around 2017, the Austrian Jewish level of fertility is (1) above the level conventionally understood as necessary for a population to reproduce itself (which is about 2.1 children per woman); (2) about 60% higher than the TFR of the Austrian population as a whole and higher than the TFR of Vienna; and (3) above the level exhibited by the Austrian Muslim population (2.2). The crossover of Jewish and Muslim fertility in Austria took place, in our assessment, during the first decade of the twenty-first century. To our knowledge, this is

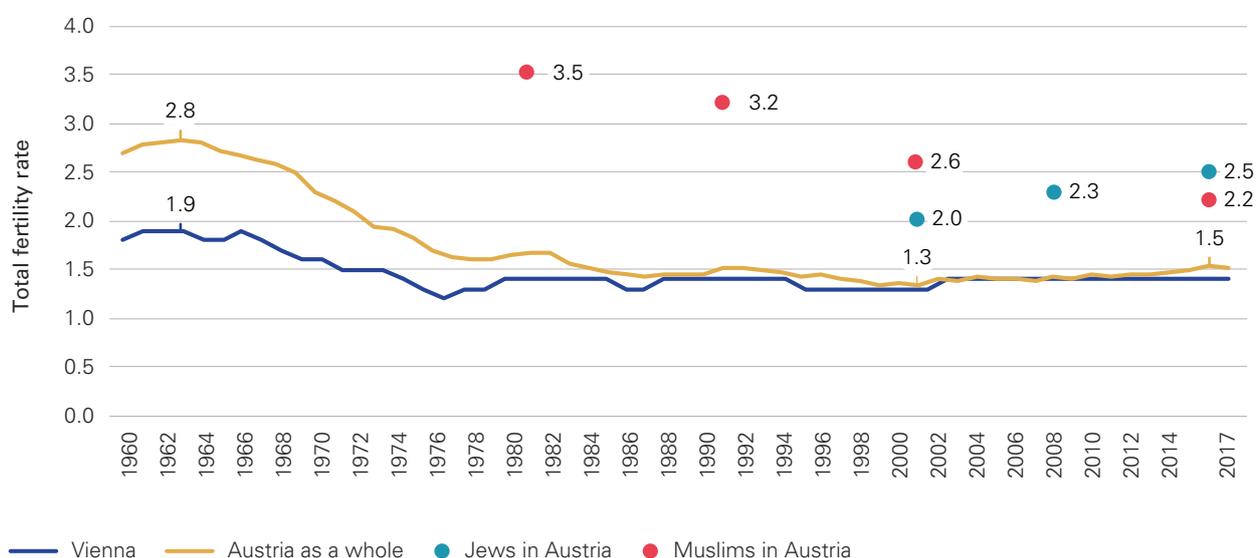
28 A detailed description of the method of fertility estimation can be obtained in Appendix 2.

one of the first observations of this kind in Jewish demography.<sup>29</sup>

In Austria, the levels necessary for population replacement were last observed in the early 1970s: Austria reached the level of the so-called 'lowest low' fertility, i.e. levels of fertility at or below 1.3 children per woman, at around the turn of the twenty-first century. Austrian fertility recovered somewhat to the level of 1.5 children per woman more recently, just

like fertility recovered in many other European countries at the same time. Some of the reasons behind the recovery are well-known: in many countries it is a result of the recuperation of births previously postponed by women until a later stage in life; in a way, today's higher fertility is meant to compensate for previously low fertility.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, even after the recovery, Austria is still among the countries with the lowest fertility, both on the European stage and globally.<sup>31</sup>

**Figure 11. Total fertility rate: Austria as a whole, the city of Vienna, Jews and Muslims in Austria**



Sources: TFR of Austria as a whole: Human Fertility Database (<https://www.humanfertility.org/cgi-bin/main.php>); TFR of Vienna: Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Wien 2018. Menschen in Wien. 5 Bevölkerung; TFR for Jews in Austria: authors' estimates. TFR for Muslims in Austria: for years 1981–1991 the figures are averages of estimates appearing in (1) Goujon, A. and Bauer, R. 2015. Demographic forces shaping the religious landscape of Vienna, in Brunn, D. (ed.) *The changing world religion map*. Dordrecht: Springer Science+ Business Media, and (2) Saunders, D. 2012. *The myth of the Muslim tide*. Toronto: Knopf Canada. TFR of Muslims in Austria around 2001: authors' estimates. TFR of Muslims in Austria around 2016 is sourced from: Pew Research Center 2017. *Europe's growing Muslim population*.

29 Convergence of fertility of Jews and Muslims in Austria has been observed earlier. See Goujon, A. and Bauer, R. 2015. Demographic forces shaping the religious landscape of Vienna, in Brunn, D. (ed.) *The changing world religion map*. Dordrecht: Springer Science+ Business Media. In Israel in 2018 the Jewish TFR was 3.17 versus a Muslim TFR of 3.20, and if the converging trend observed in previous years were to continue, parity would soon be achieved. See Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 70. Jerusalem, 2019, Table 2.41. Unlike total fertility rates, birth rates continued to be significantly higher among Muslims at that time.

30 This is well documented in Hoorens, S., Clift, J., Staetsky, L., Janta, B., Diepiveen, S., Morgan Jones, M., Grant, J. 2011. *Low fertility in Europe: is there still reason to worry?* RAND Europe, [www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1080.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1080.html). It is also known that Western societies have been diversifying quickly. The acquisition of new subgroups characterised by high fertility (eg Muslims) may have impacted on levels of fertility in low-fertility countries driving it upwards over time. This possibility has not been sufficiently explored in the literature, to our knowledge.

31 The development of the condition of the 'lowest low' fertility and the recovery from it are traced in: Goldstein, R., Sobotka, T. and Jasilioniene, A. 2009. The end of "lowest-low" fertility? *Population and Development Review* 35 (4): 663–699; Sobotka, T. 2009. European fertility trends and prospects, UN/POP/EGM-FERT/2009/01.

The estimation of Jewish fertility in Austria brings a significant and novel insight, both from the point of view of Austrian Jewish demography which we understand today better than ever before, but also from the point of view of Jewish demography as a field of knowledge. The most recent developments in Jewish fertility in the Diaspora are considerably less clear than historical developments. Between the mid-twentieth century and the present, in some Jewish Diaspora communities with good quality data (e.g. the USA and the Soviet Union), fertility appeared to be below the level required for population reproduction, which is 2.1 children per woman.<sup>32</sup> In other places, such as France and the United Kingdom, the most recent measurements indicate the presence of fertility at or above 2.1 – a situation conducive to population growth.<sup>33</sup> It is now becoming clear that Austrian Jews constitute another such case of higher – by contemporary Western standards – and rising fertility.

In the UK, high Jewish fertility is due to a significant strictly Orthodox Jewish presence<sup>34</sup> and there is a question as to the extent this applies to Jews in Austria. Up to this point, the presence of a strictly Orthodox (*haredi*) Jewish element in Austria has not been quantified in the scientific literature. Later in this report we present our formal assessments of this matter. In the meantime, we can illustrate the possible impact of the *haredi* presence on the fertility of Jews in Austria by combining the well documented estimates of strictly Orthodox Jewish fertility (total fertility rate of 6–7 children

per woman) with the different proportions of strictly Orthodox, observed in other places in the Jewish Diaspora. Such an exercise confirms that the decisively above-replacement fertility of Jews in Austria is likely to be an outcome of the strictly Orthodox presence. With strictly Orthodox TFR being at the level of 6–7 children per woman, a total TFR of 2.5 becomes possible if 6%–9% of adult Austrian Jews were strictly Orthodox (a range of proportions of the strictly Orthodox observed in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Israel) and the rest of the Jewish population had fertility at 2.1–2.2 children per woman.<sup>35</sup> If, on the other hand, the share of strictly Orthodox Jews among adult Jews approaches 11%, as we suggest below, a TFR of the non-strictly Orthodox component would stand at 2.0 children per woman, still higher than the level of fertility of non-Jews in Austria but somewhat below the replacement level. In sum, no matter the assumptions, we cannot escape the conclusion that the strictly Orthodox strongly contribute to the reality of the high fertility of Jews in Austria.

Can fertility levels serve as a guarantee of Jewish continuity? Not necessarily, and this is a supremely important point to understand, both for researchers and for communal policy makers. It is best understood with reference to historical demography. Before the Industrial Revolution, with its modernisation of life and demographic transition, fertility used to be very high, yet the population did not grow much (or even at all) because of high mortality levels. In those days,

32 See, for example: (1) DellaPergola, S. 1980. Patterns of American Jewish fertility, *Demography* 17 (3): 261–273; (2) Tolts, M. 1997. Demographic trends among Jews in three Slavic republics of the former USSR: a comparative analysis, in S. DellaPergola and J. Even (eds.), *Papers in Jewish Demography 1993*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University; (3) Cohen, S., Ukeles, J., and Miller, R. 2012. *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011*. Comprehensive Report. UJA-Federation of New York. <http://d4ovttrzyow8g.cloudfront.net/494344.pdf>.

33 See (1) Bensimon, D. and DellaPergola, S. 1986. *La population juive de France: Socio-démographie et identité* (Jewish Population Studies no. 17). Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Paris: The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, and (2) Cohen, E.H. 2009. *The Jews of France at the turn of the third millennium: a sociological and cultural analysis*. The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research and Strengthening Jewish Vitality. Bar Ilan University, (3) Staetsky, L.D. and Boyd, J. *Strictly Orthodox rising: what the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=2514>.

34 The illustration of this fact is present in: Staetsky, L. Daniel and Boyd, J. 2015. *Strictly Orthodox Rising: What the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=2514>.

35 The source for the proportion of the strictly Orthodox in adult population of Jews in the United States of America: Pews Research Centre. 2013. *A portrait of Jewish Americans. Findings from the Pew Research Center survey of U.S. Jews*, p.48. [www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/](http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/).

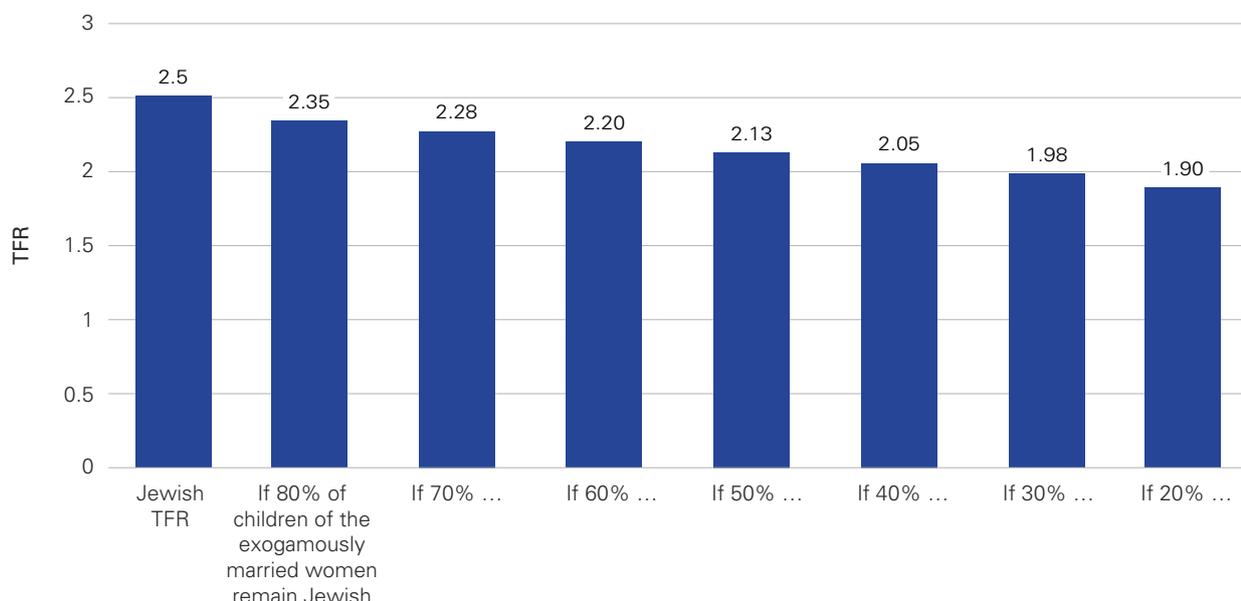
fertility used to be at a level of 5–6 children per woman, and yet even that level was often insufficient to generate numerical stability, let alone population growth. Mortality was so high that it did not allow for any ‘surplus’ in people to lead to growth.<sup>36</sup>

By contrast, today Jewish mortality is very low, yet the role mortality once played in preventing population growth has been replaced by assimilation. The possible effects of assimilation on the Jewish TFR are shown below (Figure 12), using data on endogamous partnerships (i.e. partnerships between two Jews) and exogamous partnerships (i.e. partnerships between a Jew and a non-Jew) as a proxy. Austrian Census data tell us that about 70% of all Jewish women were in endogamous marriages in 2001.<sup>37</sup> We can assume, for simplicity, that all children born into such partnerships will be brought up as Jewish. This, however, cannot be assumed with respect to Jewish women married to non-Jewish men, or to Jewish men married

to non-Jewish women, i.e. those involved in exogamous partnerships. Only a proportion of their children will be raised as Jewish – an assertion well-grounded in research on the transmission of Jewishness. Figure 12 shows the consequences of this, and specifically the consequences of the different levels of ‘transmission of Jewishness’ by exogamously married women.

The total fertility rate adjusted for the partial ‘transmission of Jewishness’, also known as *the effective Jewish TFR*, is something that has been proposed to illustrate the level of fertility realistically needed for population replacement given the existing realities of assimilation.<sup>38</sup> The TFR of 2.5 children per woman is the effective Jewish TFR on the assumption that all children born to Jewish women retain their Jewishness in adulthood. This, of course, is not the case, and Figure 12 shows other scenarios that assume that only a certain proportion of children born to Jewish women married to non-Jewish men

**Figure 12. Impact of assimilation on the Jewish total fertility rate in Austria, under different assumptions**



Sources: TFR for Jews in Austria: authors’ estimates.

36 A good illustration of the scenarios of population growth, given the levels of fertility and mortality, is provided by Livi-Bacci, M. 1992. *A concise history of world population*. Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell.

37 The 2018 FRA Austrian survey produced a similar figure.

38 The method of calculating the effective Jewish TFR was proposed by Dr Mark Tolts, its implementation can be found in: Tolts M. 1996. Estimate of the ‘Effectively Jewish’ Total Fertility Rate,” in DellaPergola S., Tolts M. and Rebhun U. *World and Regional Jewish Population Projections: Russian Republic, 1994–2019 (Interim Report)*. Jerusalem: The A. Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

will retain their Jewishness. It is easy to see that the above replacement levels of fertility are only preserved if about 50% of children born to exogamously married women remain Jewish. At lower levels of 'transmission of Jewishness' effective Jewish TFR is at a level that is not conducive to population replacement.

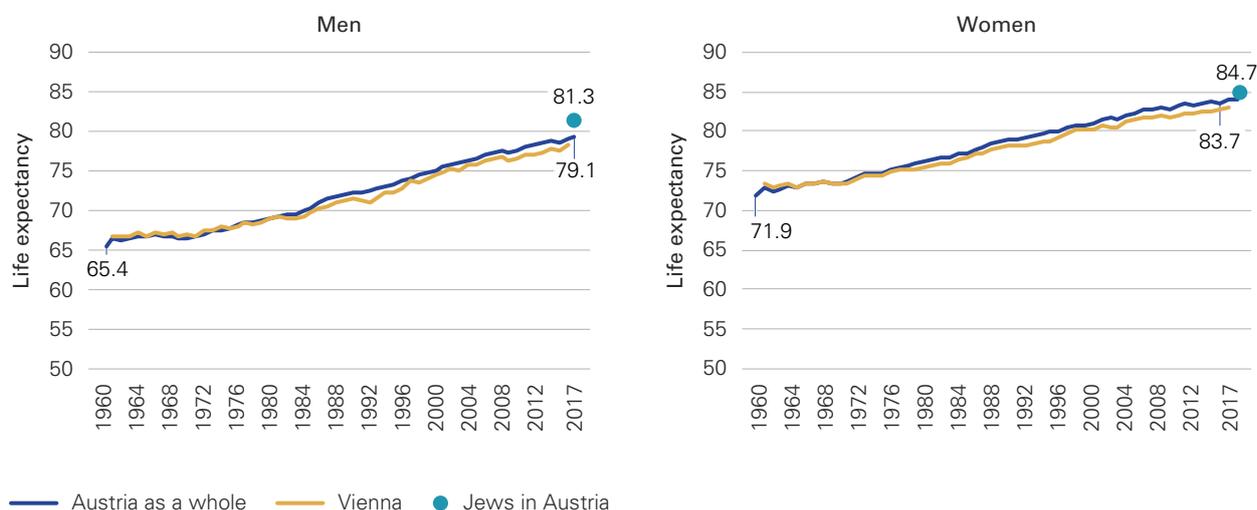
This is not a statement regarding the demographic future of Jews in Austria but an exercise clarifying the meaning of replacement level fertility in the context of Jewish demography. Should the proportion of strictly Orthodox Jews increase – a likely scenario in our view – the fertility of Jews in Austria in general is bound to increase, while the scope of intermarriage is bound to decrease. If, for example, the total fertility rate of Jews in Austria increases to 2.7 children per woman, a highly possible scenario, even with 30% of women being in exogamous partnerships and more than a half of their children not being

brought up Jewish, fertility will still be sufficient for population replacement.

## Health and mortality levels

As previously noted, longevity is an indicator of population health, i.e. the average length of life and the timing of deaths reflect the quality of life. The available data allow us to conclude that Jews in Austria live somewhat longer than non-Jews. The number of Jewish deaths recorded in the Austrian vital registration system and by Jewish communal statistics suggests that Jews in Austria possess levels of longevity very similar to the Jewish population of Israel. This means that if a Jewish man in Austria lived according to the longevity schedule of Israeli Jews in 2016, he could be expected to live 81.3 years, on average. For an Austrian Jewish woman, the corresponding figure would be 84.7 years (Figure 13).<sup>39</sup> Both

**Figure 13. Life expectancy at birth: Austria as a whole, the city of Vienna and Jews in Austria**



Sources: Life expectancy of Austria as a whole and other European countries: Human Mortality Database. (<https://mortality.org/>); life expectancy of Vienna: *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Wien* 2018. Menschen in Wien. 5 Bevölkerung. Life expectancy for Jews in Austria: authors' estimates.

39 This conclusion has been reached by applying age-specific death rates of Israeli Jews for 2016 to the age distribution of the members of the Jewish community of Austria in mid-2017. The number of resultant deaths matched the actual number of deaths that occurred in the Austrian Jewish community almost exactly. We do not suspect any significant underreporting of deaths in the Austrian Jewish communal register. We feel confident in our assessment that the mortality of Austrian Jews is close to the mortality of Jews in Israel due to a very considerable similarity of the Jewish mortality patterns across the globe. More on that matter can be found in: Staetsky, L. D. and Hinde, A. 2015. Jewish mortality reconsidered, *Journal of Biosocial Science* 47 (3): 376–401. Source for the age-specific death rates of Israeli Jews is: Statistical Abstract of Israel, available at [https://old.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnatonenew\\_site.htm](https://old.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnatonenew_site.htm).

Jewish men and Jewish women in Austria live longer than their Austrian and Viennese counterparts, and for Jewish men the longevity advantage is greater (around two years) than for Jewish women (about one year).

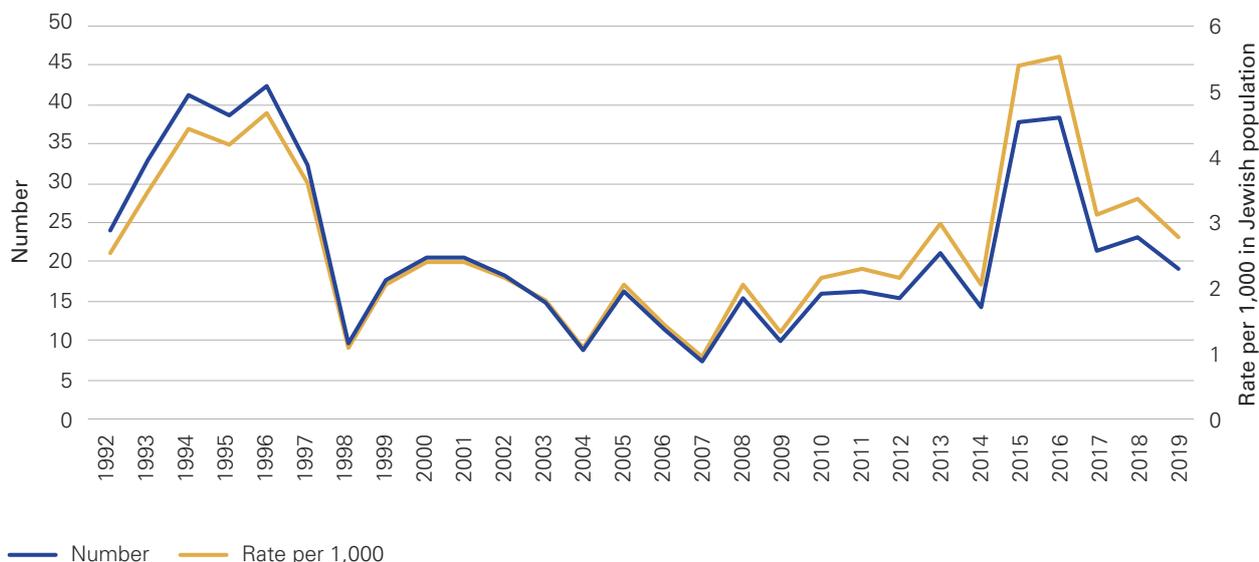
Jews across the Diaspora display greater longevity compared to the non-Jews surrounding them. This has been true both historically and in more recent times. The longevity advantage of Jews is partly explained by their social class (reflected, for example, by a higher level of education compared to the non-Jewish population) and partly by the characteristics of Jewish culture. While the full picture of the reasons behind the longevity advantage of Jews is outside the scope of this work, it is worth noting that Jews, and especially Jewish males, have been shown to display an especially low level of destructive health habits (such as antisocial behaviour, heavy drinking and smoking) and a heightened attention to health matters. This combination of preventive and proactive measures in relation to health problems translates

into greater Jewish longevity, and the most important and novel observation here is that the Jews of Austria seem to follow the broader pattern of Jewish mortality observed in Israel, the USA, UK, Canada, Russia and other countries where the measurement of Jewish mortality has been possible.<sup>40</sup>

## International migration

The trend in the migration balance of Austrian Jews is much less clear and harder to trace. Full information on migration flows of Jews in and out of Austria is simply not available. Of all flows, namely all types of migratory moves of Austrian Jews out of Austria and other Jews into Austria, we only have reasonably good documentation on *aliyah* (i.e. migration of Jews from Austria to Israel). The *aliyah* figures, available from the early 1990s, indicate that, on average, 22 Jews from Austria left for Israel per year. In most years, that would be equivalent to 1–3 per 1,000 Jews in Austria (Figure 14). The significance of

**Figure 14. Migration from Austria to Israel, 1992–2017**



Note: Austria as the last country of residence.

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel. Statistical Abstract of Israel and Monthly Bulletin of Statistics.

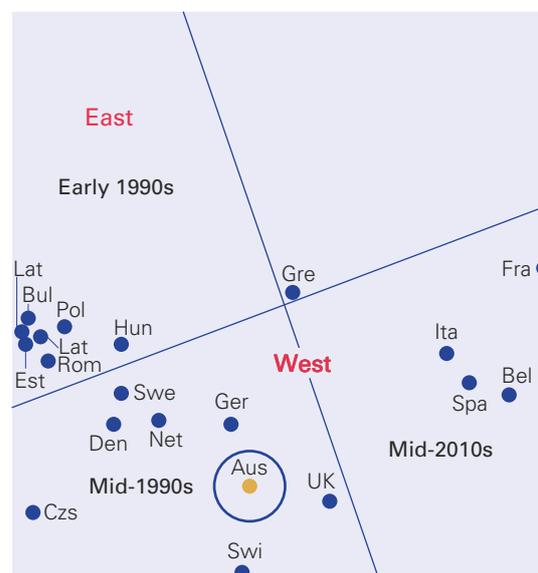
40 A comprehensive treatment of the subject of Jewish longevity is available from: (1) Staetsky, L. D. and Hinde, A. 2015. Jewish mortality reconsidered, *Journal of Biosocial Science* 47 (3): 376–401; (2) Staetsky, L. 2011. Mortality of British Jews at the turn of the 20th century, *European Journal of Population* 27: 361–385; (3) Staetsky, L. D. 2009. Unusually small sex differentials in mortality of Israeli Jews: what does the structure of causes of death tell us? *Demographic Research* 20 (article 11): 209–252.

this level of *aliyah* can only be seen by drawing comparisons with other countries.

In previous research two contemporary patterns of *aliyah* have been identified from Western European countries: the pattern observed in France, Belgium, Italy and Spain – of very high, even extraordinarily high viewed in its historical perspective, recent *aliyah*; and the pattern followed by Germany, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries – of relatively high *aliyah* in the 1990s but not more recently. Austrian levels and trends of *aliyah* fit in between these two patterns. A peak occurred in the mid-1990s, when 30–40 Jewish people from Austria went to live in Israel each year. However, a later peak in 2015–2016 is also noticeable (at the same level approximately as in the mid-1990s), always remembering that we are speaking of quite modest numbers.<sup>41</sup>

A comparative outlook synthesising annual *aliyah* patterns from twenty European Union countries plus Switzerland appears in Figure 15. Structural Similarity Analysis (SSA) is used to uncover broad patterns underlying the raw data on the number of immigrants by year and country of origin. SSA calculates the correlations between countries based on the respective annual series and translates the higher or lower correlations into smaller or larger distances on a map.<sup>42</sup> The data used to prepare this comparison are annual immigration records for 1990 to 2014. Distances between the points on the map, each representing one country, reflect similarity (or dissimilarity) in the scale of yearly *aliyah*. The map distinguishes various areas across Europe according to the prevailing timing of immigration

**Figure 15. Similarity Structure Analysis (SSA) of migration to Israel from 20 European Union countries plus Switzerland, 1990–2014**



Source: DellaPergola, forthcoming. Jewish Demography in the European Union – Virtuous and Vicious Paths. In H. Fireberg, O. Gloeckner and M. Zoufala (eds.) *Being Jewish in Twenty-First Century Central Europe* Berlin: De Gruyter. Number based on *aliyah* figures collected by the Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel.

to Israel. Austria is outlined in the figure by a circle and its annual variation appears quite similar to that of Germany and the United Kingdom.

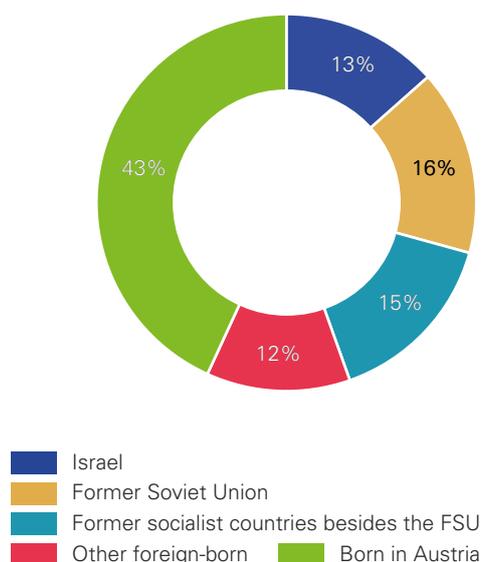
Given that the data on other migration flows of Jews (from Austria to destinations other than Israel, and from the entire world to Austria) are not available, it is instructive to look at migration stocks. Inspection of migration stocks, i.e. the proportion of foreign-born among the Jews in

41 See Staetsky, L. D. 2017. *Are Jews leaving Europe?* London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=3081>, for Western patterns of contemporary *aliyah*; S. DellaPergola, forthcoming. Jewish Demography in the European Union – Virtuous and Vicious Paths. In D. Porat and M. Zoufala (eds.) *Being Jewish in Central Europe Today*. Berlin: De Gruyter. Also, previous research revealed that in some Western countries, namely France and the UK, *aliyah* to Israel was connected to the economic fortunes of the country of origin and the economic situation in Israel. Generally, a worsening of the economic situation in the country of origin and an improvement of the economic situation in Israel were associated with a greater propensity for migration. In the case of Austria, we did not identify such regularities in a clear strong form, at least in the period covered by this investigation, which was limited in time (1992–2017) compared to other cases investigated in the past (1948–2015). Equally, we did not identify any connection with indicators of political stability in Austria (these indicators are available from the Worldwide Governance Indicators project at <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>).

42 Guttman, L. 1968. A general nonmetric technique for finding the smallest coordinate space for a configuration of points. *Psychometrika*, 33, 469–506; Amar, R., and Levy, S. 2014. SSA-Similarity Structure Analysis. In *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Wellbeing Research*, ed. A.C. Michalos, 6306–6313. Dordrecht: Springer.

Austria at a point in time, can provide some indirect insight into this issue. At the time of the last Census (2001), 57% of Jews living in Austria were born outside of Austria. For comparison, the equivalent proportion in the total population of Austria, in itself one of the European countries with a relatively large foreign-born element to its population, was 12.4% at that time.<sup>43</sup> Among the foreign-born in the Jewish population, about one quarter originated in the countries of the Former Soviet Union, another quarter or so in former socialist countries besides the FSU, and another quarter in Israel (Figure 16).

**Figure 16. Jews in Austria in 2001, by country of birth, %**



Note: figures may not sum up to 100% due to rounding.  
Source: Statistik Austria, census 2001 data received by special request.

With such a significant proportion of Jews in Austria originating abroad and in particular in

the former socialist countries, it is reasonable to assume that this state of affairs reflects a recent positive migration balance, i.e. that Jewish migration positively contributed to Jewish population growth in Austria in the 1980s and the 1990s, just like migration contributed to population growth in Austria as a whole at the same time. It is possible that in the new millennium the situation for Jews changed: i.e. the migration wave prompted by the political collapse in communist countries exhausted itself, and alternative sources of migration, e.g. migration from the Middle East, did not develop to the extent seen in relation to Austria as a whole. Ultimately, it is difficult to establish with any degree of precision the extent of differences between the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

More recent data suggest three important insights into the picture of migration and its relationship with the natural change. First, over time, migration stocks in the Jewish population of Austria might have declined in proportionate terms. A recent survey of Austrian Jews indicated that, in 2018, the majority of Austrian Jews (58%) was Austrian-born, unlike in 2001, when the Austrian-born were a minority (43%).<sup>44</sup> This suggests that the role of migration in population growth of Jews in Austria might have declined compared to the 1990s.<sup>45</sup>

Second, migration still plays a significant role vis-à-vis the growth of the Austrian Jewish population in the twenty-first century, even if this role has been diminishing. We estimate the current size of the Austria Jewish population to be at around 10,065, up from 8,140 at the time of the last traditional census in 2001. This is a growth of about 1,900 since 2001.

43 See Population Census Datasets resource, maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/products/dyb/dybcensusdata/>. Comparison of Austria with other European countries concerning the numerical volume of the foreign-born is available from: Vasileva, K. 2011. Population and Social Conditions. EUROSTAT Statistics in Focus, 34/2011, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3433488/5579176/KS-SF-11-034-EN.PDF>.

44 The more recent estimate is derived from the survey of Jews in Austria undertaken in 2018 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA 2018).

45 In absolute terms, the number of migrants, or volume of net migration, may or may not have changed. Purely arithmetically, a decline in proportion of the foreign-born in a population could stem from the decline in migration balance but also from the increase in natural balance, or from both these factors operating simultaneously. Note also, that the margin of error in the survey is about 4% and a degree of selectivity in the survey cannot be ruled out.

The difference between births and deaths (i.e. the natural change) of Austrian Jews in 2002–2019 stood at about 750 persons. Thus, in that period, over 1,000 people (about 60% of the net growth) must have been added to the Austrian Jewish population through migration. Thus, in the early twenty-first century, migration could be a less significant contributor to the overall growth compared to the 1990s – when, as the data above suggest, it may have been the only source of growth – yet it is still a powerful complementary factor of growth in the Austrian Jewish population.

Third, since 2001, the number of Jews born in Israel and the proportion of this group among Austrian Jews, grew a little but did not change dramatically. At the time of the last conventional census in Austria, in 2001, the proportion of Jewish Israelis stood at 13%–17%, and their number was in the range of 1,059–1,476.<sup>46</sup> We estimate, on the basis of the Austrian Population register, that in 2011 and 2019, the numbers of Jews born in Israel were about 1,800 to 2,000 (rounded numbers) respectively, about 20% of all Jews in Austria.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the stock of Jews born in Israel grew by about 400 persons since 2001. Thus, migration from Israel constitutes a substantial part of the net migration of Jews to Austria: about 40%.

## Future population trajectory and composition: growth?

At present it looks as if the level of Jewish fertility in Austria may be conducive to the stability of its population size or even some degree of population growth. In fact, we have shown that since 2001 there have been more births than deaths in the Jewish population of Austria – a situation that is a rather unambiguous signal that some degree

of population growth is underway and that it is not migration-induced. Is there a guarantee of growth for the Austrian Jewish population in the long-term if this level of fertility persists? Ultimately, there is no way to answer the question satisfactorily without taking into account the fertility levels found today, future developments of fertility and some additional factors. We would emphasise here that the numerical fate of populations is determined by fertility, longevity, migration and age structure simultaneously. With respect to ethnic and religious minorities, assimilation also plays a role.



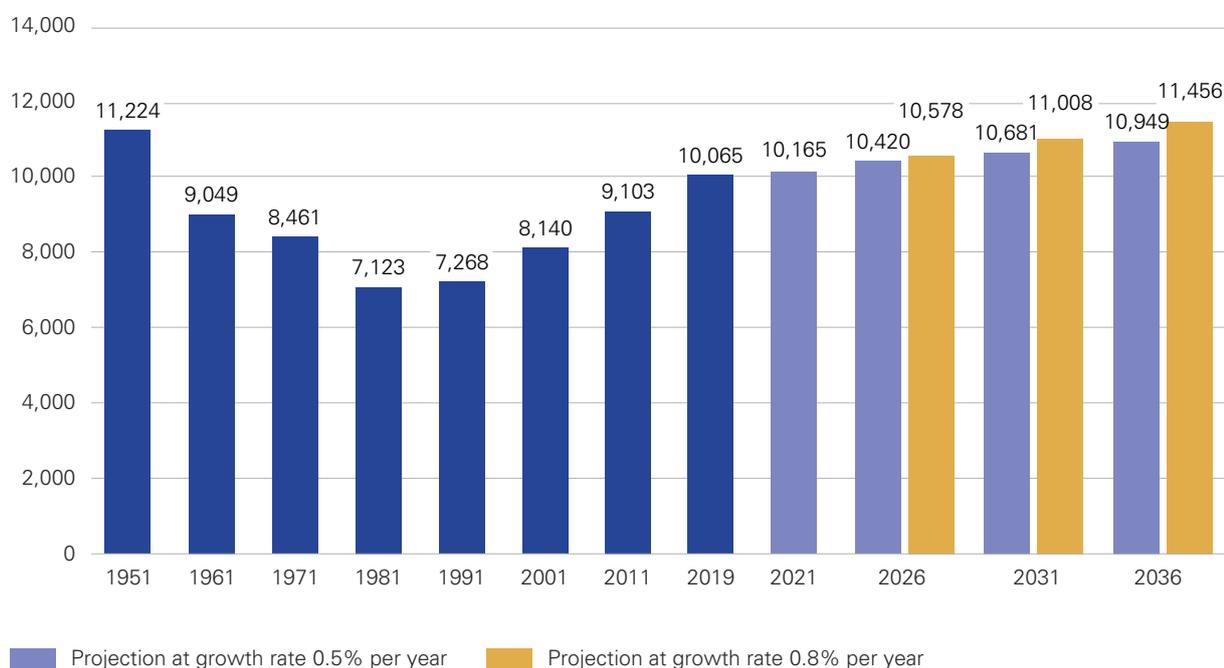
**The numerical fate of populations is determined by fertility, longevity, migration and age structure simultaneously. With respect to ethnic and religious minorities, assimilation also plays a role**

Below we present a medium-term projection of Jewish population numbers in Austria which takes into account *all* mentioned components *except* migration (Figure 17). Due to a lack of data, the projection assumes a zero migration balance, which means that, whatever the levels of in and out migration among Jews in Austria are, these two streams balance each other completely. We are only confident enough to project the numbers up to 2036, given that predicting cultural and political realities at a greater distance in time has proved rather difficult in the past. Our first projection is built on the application of the levels of natural growth most recently observed among Jews in Austria – about 0.5% per year – beyond 2019. The level of 0.5% annual population growth is close to the level observed in the population of Austria and indeed across Western and Northern

46 In Figure 16 the quoted proportion is 13% but this relates only to persons born in Israel who unambiguously identified as Jewish (1,059) in the Census. If we add to this group Israelis who did not identify as Jewish but who did not declare any other religion and those without religious affiliation, the number rises to 1,476 and the proportion rises to 17%.

47 We arrive at these numbers by assuming that the proportions of Jews, unambiguous non-Jews (e.g. Muslims and Christians) and people without religion or of unknown religion among Israelis in 2011 and 2019 are similar to the proportions observed in 2001. The overall numbers of Israelis of all religions in 2011 and 2019 are 2,049 and 2,222, respectively. These were received from Statistik Austria, on request.

**Figure 17. Jews in Austria: past and current population size and projection into the future (number)**



Source for population counts up to and inclusive of 2001: Statistik Austria. *Bevölkerung nach dem Religionsbekenntnis und Bundesländern 1951 bis 2001. Volkszählungen 1951 bis 2001*; Created on 01.06.2007. 2011–2019: authors' estimates. 2021 onwards: authors' projection.

Europe in the early twenty-first century. This rate is considerably higher than in Eastern and Southern Europe, where current and projected rates of growth are lower than 0.5% and even negative at times.<sup>48</sup> Our second projection applies a 0.8% rate of annual population growth after 2021; this level is likely to be observed if the fertility of Jews in Austria increases further to correspond to the TFR of 2.6 children per woman and remains at this level till 2036.<sup>49</sup>

We predict that the next seventeen years or so are likely to witness a slow growth in Jewish population numbers, provided, of course, that

migration does not behave in a totally atypical way, i.e. does not suddenly bring thousands of Jews to Austria or take thousands of Jews out of Austria. Growing at 0.5% per year, in 2036, just as a result of natural growth, the Jewish population of Austria is expected to reach close to the 11,000 mark, the highest level since the early 1960s. From 2021–2036 each year is expected to bring about 50 additional people to the Jewish population, and each five years about 250–270 people will be added. Growing at 0.8% per year, the Jewish population size in 2036 is going over the 11,000 mark (11,456), but still rather close to the first projection (10,949).

48 Even though in Austria and all over Northern and Western Europe migration serves as an engine of growth, the projection here is just on the basis of the natural balance. Source of data for European rates of growth: World Population Prospects 2019. <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.

49 0.5% is an average rate of natural growth observed in 2017–2019. See Appendix 3 for the full picture of the rates on natural growth among Jews in Austria. We also attempted to project the Austrian Jewish population into 2036 using a 2001 age and sex structure as a base and applying to this structure: (1) Jewish births from the national vital events statistics for 2001–2026 and the fertility schedule reflecting TFR of 2.6 from 2026 onwards, with age distribution of births found in the Austrian population; (2) the Israeli Jewish mortality schedule, assuming that between 2016 (last year for which Israeli deaths rates are known) and 2036 the mortality will decline at the same pace as in 2001–2016; (3) a zero migration balance. This method produced a rate of natural growth of 0.8% between 2021 and 2036.

The proportion of Jews in the total population of Austria is not bound to change from what it is today and is likely to remain at about 0.1% in 2036. However, the religious composition of Austria is projected to change: the share of the Christian population is expected to decline and, depending on the scale of immigration into Austria, the share of the Muslim population is expected to increase to 11–17% of the total

population of the country. On the assumption that most Jews will continue to reside in Vienna, it would be meaningful to provide some projections for Vienna as well: in 2036 the Jewish population of Vienna is likely to constitute about 0.5% of the city's population, a figure very similar to its current share. However, these Jews will live in a city in which 20–26% of the residents are Muslim, as compared to today's 16% or so.<sup>50</sup>

50 A projection of the total population of Austria as well as its religious composition serving as a basis for these calculations can be found in: Goujon, A., Jurasszovic, S., and Potancokova, M. 2017. *Religious denominations in Austria: baseline study for 2016-scenarios until 2046*. Vienna Institute of Demography.

## 3 / Jewish identity: some fundamentals

We now turn to an evaluation of some of the main features of Jewish identity in Austria, based on Jewish community data and on a selection of findings from the online survey undertaken in 2018 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).<sup>51</sup> The survey sample of Austrian Jews used here for analysis includes 526 observations. On matters pertaining to Jewish identity, systematic comparisons are made between the Jewish population in Austria and four large Jewish populations for which reliable data exist: Israel, the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom. Data on these countries originate from surveys of Jewish identity conducted in 2013–2018 or from the national census. From time to time, when the availability of the data permits, we expand the comparative framework to include other countries (e.g. France, Australia and Hungary). Such a comparative approach significantly enhances the picture of Jewish identity in Austria. Our analysis reveals not just how Jews in Austria understand and express their Jewish identity, but where and how they fit into the global family of Jewish populations and especially in relation to the larger and better documented ones.

The FRA survey in 2018 relied on a method known as convenience sampling. In practice, this meant that the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities (IKG) and some other Jewish organisations in Austria were asked to invite all Jews on their databases to take the survey. Unlike random sampling, convenience sampling

of Jewish organisational lists cannot guarantee that every Jewish adult would have an equal probability of being included in the survey. Random sampling, the scientific golden standard, could not be implemented among Jews in Austria for the simple reason that a prerequisite for such sampling is a comprehensive sampling frame, i.e. a master list of all adult Jews in Austria. Communal surveys, such as the FRA 2018 survey, tend to attract a larger proportion of Jews closely involved in Jewish communal life than would be the case with random sampling of the Jewish population.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, the online data collection method used in the survey meant that strictly Orthodox Jews, a segment of the Jewish population possessing lower rates of Internet use, are likely to be underrepresented as well. In view of this, it is safest to relate to the results arising from the FRA 2018 survey as reflective of the views of communally-connected Jews who are not strictly Orthodox, rather than of the entire Jewish population.

In this report, we use the results from the FRA 2018 survey selectively, always remembering their strengths and weaknesses. We integrate these results with the data from communal statistics, specifically, the statistical records of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities and Jewish schools in Vienna. These sources, used in combination, allow the reconstruction of Jewish identity patterns of Austrian Jews in a way that no single source can render.

51 Methodological information about the survey can be found in: FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2018. *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

52 This conclusion is supported by earlier methodological work on the FRA surveys of Jews in Europe that showed some degree of selectivity (towards stronger Jewish identity) in Jewish communal surveys compared to Jewish population surveys. This work has set clear parameters of the usability of Jewish identity indicators and other variables derived from the surveys of Jews obtained by convenience sampling. See Staetsky, L. Daniel. 2019. Can convenience samples be trusted? Lessons from the survey of Jews in Europe, 2012. *Contemporary Jewry* 39 (1): 115–153.

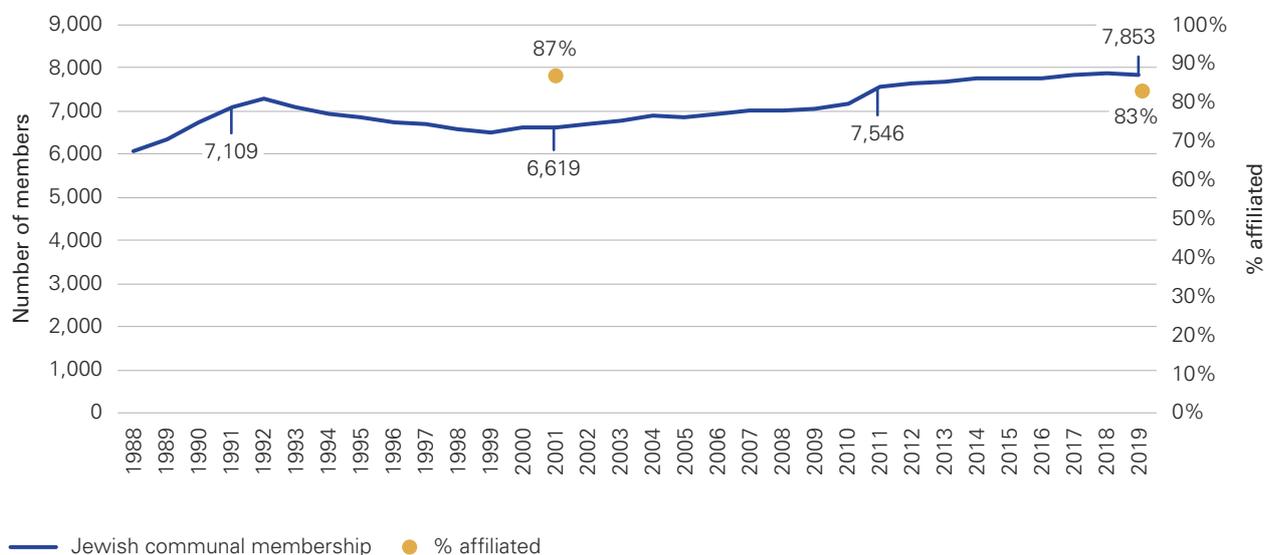
## Communal affiliation

In the middle of 2019, the communal database of the body representing the Jewish community of Austria, the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities (IKG), contained records of 7,853 individuals (Figure 18). The database includes all Jews who register with IKG regardless of their level of religiosity or adherence to different religious streams, e.g. secular, Orthodox, strictly Orthodox, Reform. The only membership criterion implemented by the IKG is Jewishness, as defined in accordance with Jewish law (*halacha*) – i.e. being an offspring of a Jewish mother or a convert to Judaism according to Jewish law. Evidently, there has been an increase in the absolute number of members: a 30% increase from the date when records began (1988), and a 19% increase since the beginning of the twenty-first century (2001). The corresponding levels of increase in the total number of Jews in Austria were 40% and 24%, i.e. the increase

in membership was on a more modest scale compared to the increase in Jewish population.

Affiliation with the Jewish community through membership of its representative organisation used to be nearly universal in the early 1990s. It was about 87% in 2001 and, in our estimation, may have slipped a little further to 83% by 2019. It is important to emphasise here that there is a degree of uncertainty in relation to the trend in the level of affiliation after 2001. The sources used to produce these estimates are good but not perfect. Due to the imperfections, we adopt a cautious approach and tend to consider the affiliation levels in Austria in the early twenty-first century to be ‘above 80%’; the decline in the level of affiliation during this period is possible but not certain.<sup>53</sup> We estimate that the household level of affiliation (i.e. the percentage of Jewish households, as opposed to individuals, affiliated

**Figure 18. Membership of the Jewish community in Austria**

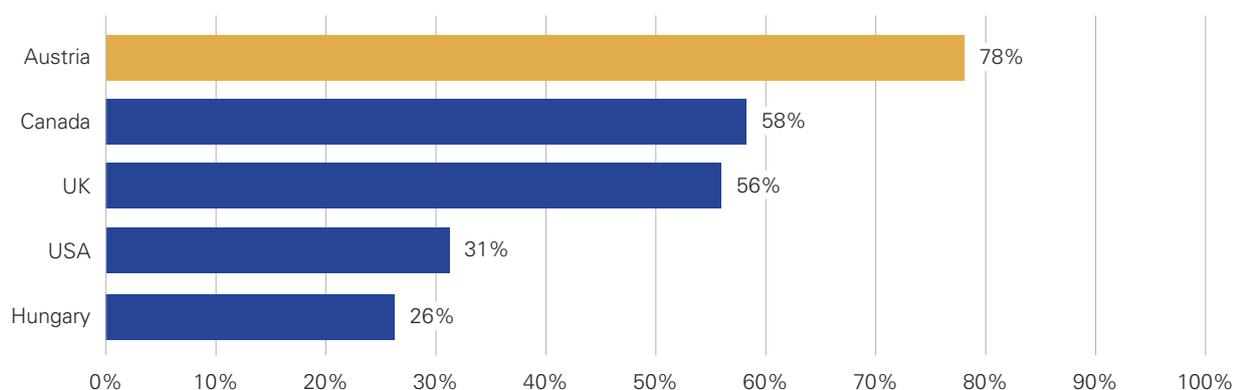


Note: (1) communal membership figures relate to the regions of Vienna, Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria and Styria; (2) the affiliation level has been derived on the basis of the communal membership figures by adjusting them to take into account their partial geographic coverage. See Appendix 1 for details.

Source of communal membership counts: Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities; source of affiliation levels: authors' calculations.

<sup>53</sup> The estimate of the affiliation level in 2001 is based on the census count of Jews in that year; should there be even a slight undercount of Jews in the census (e.g. 3% or so), that would have resulted in an overestimation of the percentage of affiliated Jews in 2001 and, subsequently, a false, or exaggerated, impression of decline in the level of affiliation between 2001 and 2019.

**Figure 19. Household affiliation to the organised Jewish community in Austria, in comparison to selected Jewish populations, %**



Note: in Canada and the USA the estimates are derived from surveys of adult Jews (based on the question regarding synagogue membership); in the UK the estimates are based on a survey of the synagogues (based on the questions regarding the number of member households) and counts of Jewish households derived from the census; in Hungary the estimate is derived from a survey of adult Jews (based on the question on membership in a religious Jewish community), and it is likely to represent the top boundary of affiliation. Sources: (1) Austria-authors' calculations on the basis of the FRA 2018 survey, administrative records of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities and Jewish schools in Vienna; (2) Canada: Brym, R., Neuman, J., and Lenton, R. 2019. *2018 survey of Jews in Canada*, p.24; (3) Hungary: Kovács, A. and Barna, I. 2018. *Zsidok es zsidóság magyarországon 2017-ben. Egy zsidológiai kutatás eredményei*. Budapest: Szombat, p.181; (4) UK: Casale Mashiah, D. and Boyd, J. 2017. *Synagogue membership in the United Kingdom in 2016*, London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.8; (5) USA: Pew Research Center. 2013. *A portrait of Jewish Americans*, p.60.

to the organised Jewish community) among Jews in Austria is 78%.

How does the affiliation of Jews to the organised Jewish community in Austria compare to other Jewish populations? In Figure 19, the household level of affiliation in Austria is set out in comparison to similarly defined levels of affiliation in selected Jewish populations.<sup>54</sup>

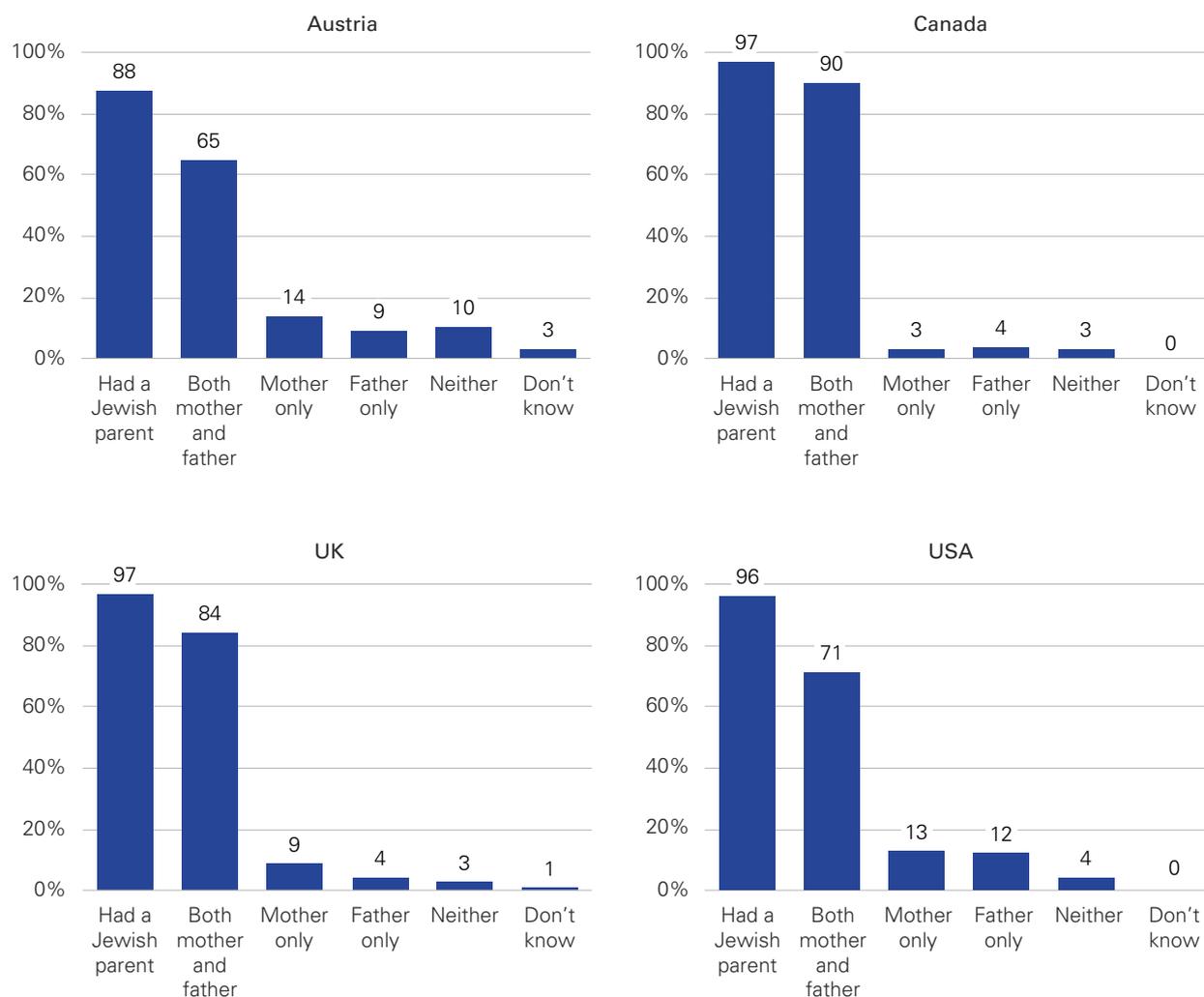
The Austrian affiliation level is high. It is higher than the levels observed not only in Hungary and the USA, both Jewish populations with a low level of affiliation, but also in Canada and the United Kingdom, where the levels of affiliation are considered high.

## Jewish parents

Asking about parents, namely whether one or both of them are Jewish, has become a usual way in which surveys of Jewish identity address the issue of 'retrospective continuity'. Simply put: do the Jews of today derive from the Jews of yesterday, and to what extent? Is the presence of newcomers to the Jewish people and religion high or low? Undoubtedly, cultures and religions change and today's Jews whose parents are Jewish are not exact cultural and religious replicas of their parents. Still, children tend to resemble their parents, physically, psychologically and culturally, and so the question 'who are the parents of today's Jews?'

54 Direct affiliation to the central representative body is rare in Jewish communities across the Diaspora; the more usual way to maintain communal affiliation for an individual or a family is to affiliate to/become a member of a synagogue or a local community. Synagogues or local communities may then choose to affiliate to an umbrella body but an individual membership of such an umbrella body is mediated by a synagogue/community. It is in this way precisely that the affiliation is established (and subsequently quantified) in the American, British and Canadian Jewish populations, for example. Surveys of Jewish identity in these countries typically ask whether or not an adult respondent, representing a single household, is a member of/affiliated to a synagogue. The resultant metric is the level of a household, not an individual, affiliation. The household level of affiliation (i.e. the percentage of Jewish households affiliated to the organised Jewish community) is better aligned with the affiliation realities of the adult population. It is not impacted by the higher tendency of large (strictly Orthodox) households with many children to affiliate to the organised Jewish community compared to smaller, non-strictly Orthodox households.

**Figure 20. Jewish parents: Jews in Austria in comparison to selected Jewish populations in the West, %**



Sources: (1) Austria: authors' calculations on the basis of the FRA 2018 survey and (for weighting purposes) the administrative records of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities and Jewish schools in Vienna; (2) Canada: Brym, R., Neuman, J., and Lenton, R. 2019. *2018 survey of Jews in Canada*, p.33; (3) UK: authors' calculations on the basis of the FRA 2018 survey (weighted to adjust to the known benchmarks with respect to age, sex, religiosity and communal affiliation); (4) USA: Pew Research Center. 2013. *A portrait of Jewish Americans*, p.65.

is another way of asking 'to what extent the Jews of today resemble the Jews of yesterday?' If a high proportion of Jews today have Jewish parents, it can be understood as an indicator of the continuity of Jewish identity and practice, at a population level.

An absolute majority of Austrian Jews (88%) has at least one Jewish parent, and for 65% both parents are Jewish. The latter figure, in particular, is close to the level exhibited by the American

Jewish population (71%), but lower than that of the Jewish populations of Canada and the United Kingdom, where it is in the range of 84%–90% (Figure 20).

According to the widest consensus among Jews of different religious streams, people born to a Jewish mother are 'unambiguously Jewish'. Orthodox Jews, Reform/Progressive Jews and completely secular Jews agree with respect to the matrilineal transmission of Jewishness.

They differ, however, on the status of patrilineal transmission, with some non-Orthodox Jews maintaining that it is as valid as matrilineal transmission, a view which Orthodox Judaism opposes. The proportion of ‘unambiguously Jewish’ Jews in Austria (79%, a sum of 65% with both parents Jewish and 14% with mother only Jewish) is also closer to the American level (84%) than to the levels observed in Canada and the UK (93%).



### **The presence of converts (about 14%) is a more significant phenomenon in Austria, compared to Canada, UK or the USA, where it is in single digits**

The scope of conversion to Judaism was another topic explored by the FRA survey (not shown graphically). The survey found that the presence of converts (about 14%) is a more significant phenomenon in Austria, compared to Canada, UK or the USA, where it is in single digits. Converts to Judaism are a non-homogeneous group that includes people without any previous connection to Jewish religion and culture whose decision to become Jewish has been shaped purely by personal developments (e.g. marriage to a Jewish individual and/or emergent interest in Jewish religion, culture and history) as well as people with distant Jewish ancestry whose conversion is often understood by them and others as ‘returning’ to Jewishness. A majority

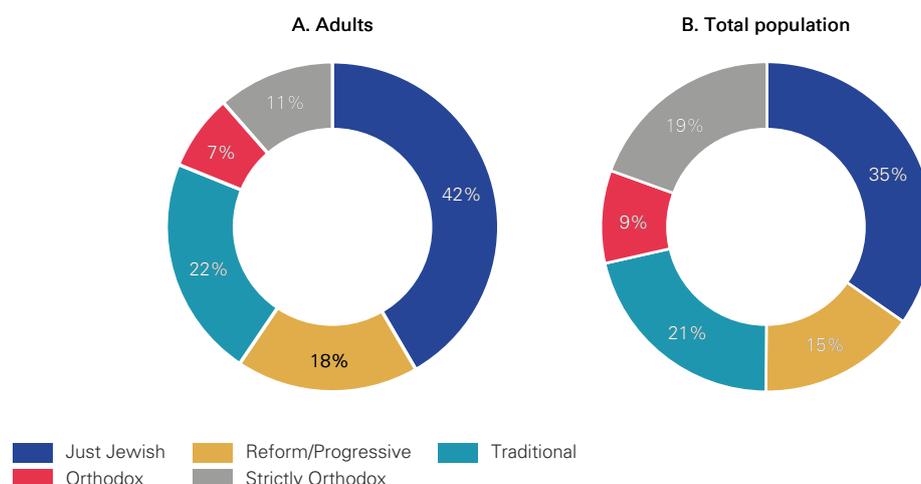
of converts to Judaism in Austria reported that neither of their parents was Jewish, but the survey did not explore the more distant origins of the respondents.

## **Religious self-definition**

The FRA survey respondents in Austria were offered a well-established list of categories of Jewish identity and asked to self-identify according to that list. We combined the survey picture of Jewish identity with the administrative data shared with us by the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities and Jewish schools in Austria. Such an integrated impression is presented in Figure 21.<sup>55</sup>

The composition of the adult segment among Jews in Austria (Panel A of Figure 21), is a good reflection of *current* sociopolitical realities. The established self-identification of adult Austrian Jews in Jewish religious terms reveals no clear majority group. The largest group (42%) consists of people who self-define as ‘Just Jewish’, e.g. Jews in no particular Jewish denominational category. About 30% self-defines either as Traditional (22%) or Orthodox (7%). The former are people who are likely to follow some but possibly not all Jewish practices, and who are likely to do so for reasons that have something to do with cultural preservation and continuity rather than with strong religious belief. The latter are likely to follow all Jewish rituals and practices meticulously. Nearly one-fifth self-defines as Reform/Progressive. About one in ten (11%)

55 The online data collection method used in the survey meant that strictly Orthodox Jews, a segment of the Jewish population possessing lower rates of Internet use, are likely to be underrepresented. Thus, the estimation of the number of strictly Orthodox was based not on the FRA 2018 survey but on the number of children of compulsory school age (6–14 years) in strictly Orthodox Jewish schools in Austria. This was done on the assumption that all strictly Orthodox Jewish children attend strictly Orthodox Jewish schools. In the strictly Orthodox Jewish population of Israel and the United Kingdom children aged 6–14 years constitute 21% of the total. Using 21% as a multiplier we estimated the total number of the strictly Orthodox Jews in Austria as being around 2,000 (or about 400 households, given that the average household size of strictly Orthodox Jews is about 5). The remaining, non-strictly Orthodox Jewish population, around 8,000, was then redistributed between Jewish identity categories (Just Jewish, Reform/Progressive, Traditional, Orthodox) according to the results of the FRA survey. Information on the age distribution of the population of strictly Orthodox Jews was extracted from the following sources: (1) Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research. 2019. *Jerusalem Statistical Yearbook*, <https://jerusalemresearch.org.il/en/yearbook/#/265>, (2) Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel. 2015. *Health and social profile of the localities in Israel, 2005–2009*, Publication Number 1580, [https://old.cbs.gov.il/webpub/pub/text\\_page.html?publ=105&CYear=2009&CMonth=12](https://old.cbs.gov.il/webpub/pub/text_page.html?publ=105&CYear=2009&CMonth=12), (3) Staetsky, L. Daniel and Boyd, J. 2015. *Strictly Orthodox Rising: What the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=2514>.

**Figure 21. Self-described identity of Jewish population in Austria, 2018, %**

Note: only a small proportion (5%) could not find a suitable label to define themselves from the existing labels. A similarly small proportion indicated that they understood themselves to be mixed, i.e. both Jewish and another religion. These categories are included in the 'Just Jewish' category.

Source: the FRA 2018 survey, administrative records of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities and Jewish schools in Vienna.

is strictly Orthodox, people with the highest levels of dedication to Jewish religious practice and generally a very intense religious life.

Orthodox – and particularly strictly Orthodox – Jews have a larger number of children compared to other types of Jews. Strictly Orthodox households have about five individuals living within them (adults and children), on average, while the average of other Jewish households is mostly two to four individuals. Consequently, the real proportion of strictly Orthodox Jews in each population, i.e. the proportion taking into account children as well as adults, is greater than it is among adults, as Panel B of Figure 21 shows. At the level of the total population, the strictly Orthodox constitute 19% of Jews in Austria. Further, at the level of the total population, the most religious groups are more numerically prominent than they are among the adults: the strictly Orthodox and Orthodox together constitute 18% of all adult Jews, but 28% of the total population of Austrian Jews.

The religious composition of the total population, in contrast to adults only, is a better reflection

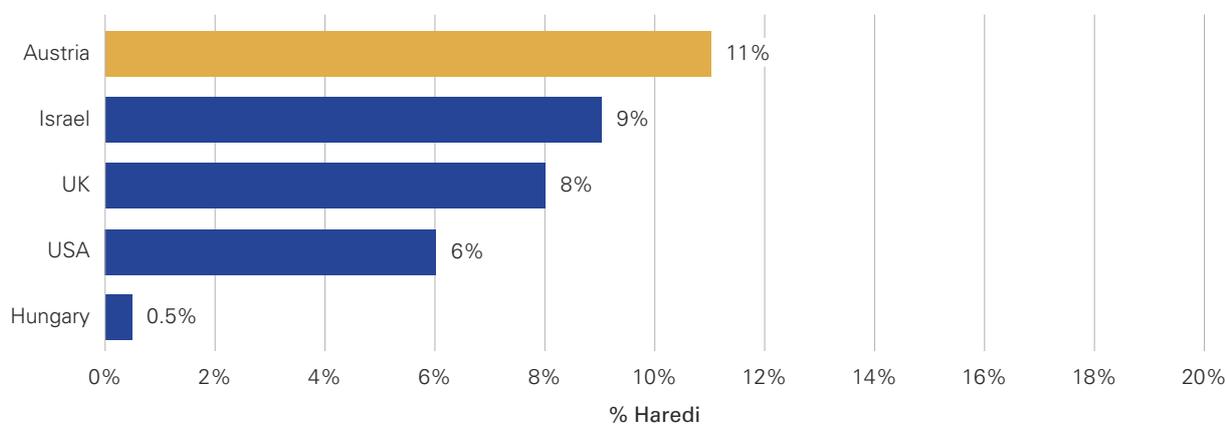
of the sociopolitical realities of the future.

The children of today are the adults of tomorrow. Given that the fertility of the strictly Orthodox segment of the Jewish population is much higher than the fertility of the non-Orthodox component, a growing share and, potentially, a majority status, of the strictly Orthodox among Jews in Austria is clearly on the horizon during the twenty-first century. Figure 22 compares the proportions of the strictly Orthodox in Austria to selected Jewish populations elsewhere.

It appears that the Austrian Jewish population is amongst those in which the percentage of the strictly Orthodox (11%) is highest. It is almost twice as high as in the USA (6%) and at least twenty times higher than in the neighbouring Hungary. In Europe, Austria is one of a few countries in which there is a significant strictly Orthodox Jewish presence, alongside the UK (8%) and Belgium (where no reliable quantification can be made at this time, but where the strictly Orthodox presence is known to be significant).

In all countries shown, strictly Orthodox Jews are, unambiguously, a minority when it comes

**Figure 22. Percentage of strictly Orthodox among adult Jews in Austria, in comparison to selected Jewish populations**



Sources: (1) Austria: authors' calculations on the basis of the FRA 2018 survey, administrative records of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities and Jewish schools in Vienna; (2) USA: Pew Research Center. 2013. *A portrait of Jewish Americans*, p.48; (3) UK: Casale Mashiah, D. and Boyd, J. 2017. *Synagogue membership in the United Kingdom in 2016*, London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.12; (4) Israel: Pew Research Center. 2016. *Israel's religiously divided society*, p.7.; (5) Hungary: Kovács, A. and Barna, I. 2018. *Zsidók es zsidóság Magyarországon 2017-ben. Egy zöszociológiai kutatás eredményei*. Budapest: Szombat, and personal communication with András Kovács, 18/02/2020.

to the religious composition of the adult Jewish population. However, it would be misguided to relate to their presence as negligible both in the demographic and social sense because their fertility and rates of growth are so high. The fact that strictly Orthodox Jews are a small minority of the adults (or even the total Jewish population of a given country) masks a reality in which their proportion among children is much more significant. The example of the UK, where the demography of strictly Orthodox Jews has been well studied, is instructive: alongside the seemingly low percentage of strictly Orthodox Jews in the adult Jewish population (about 8%), their proportion among Jewish children aged 0–4 years is in excess of 30% today and is projected to rise to 50% around 2030.<sup>56</sup> We do not have the necessary data to make a similar illustration specific to Austria, but, given the observed percentage of the strictly Orthodox there and the basic similarity of the demographic characteristics of all strictly Orthodox communities across the globe, it is safe to assume that Austrian Jews,

just like British Jews, are on the path towards desecularisation by demography.

### **Just Jewish, Traditional, Progressive, Orthodox: what lies behind the labels?**

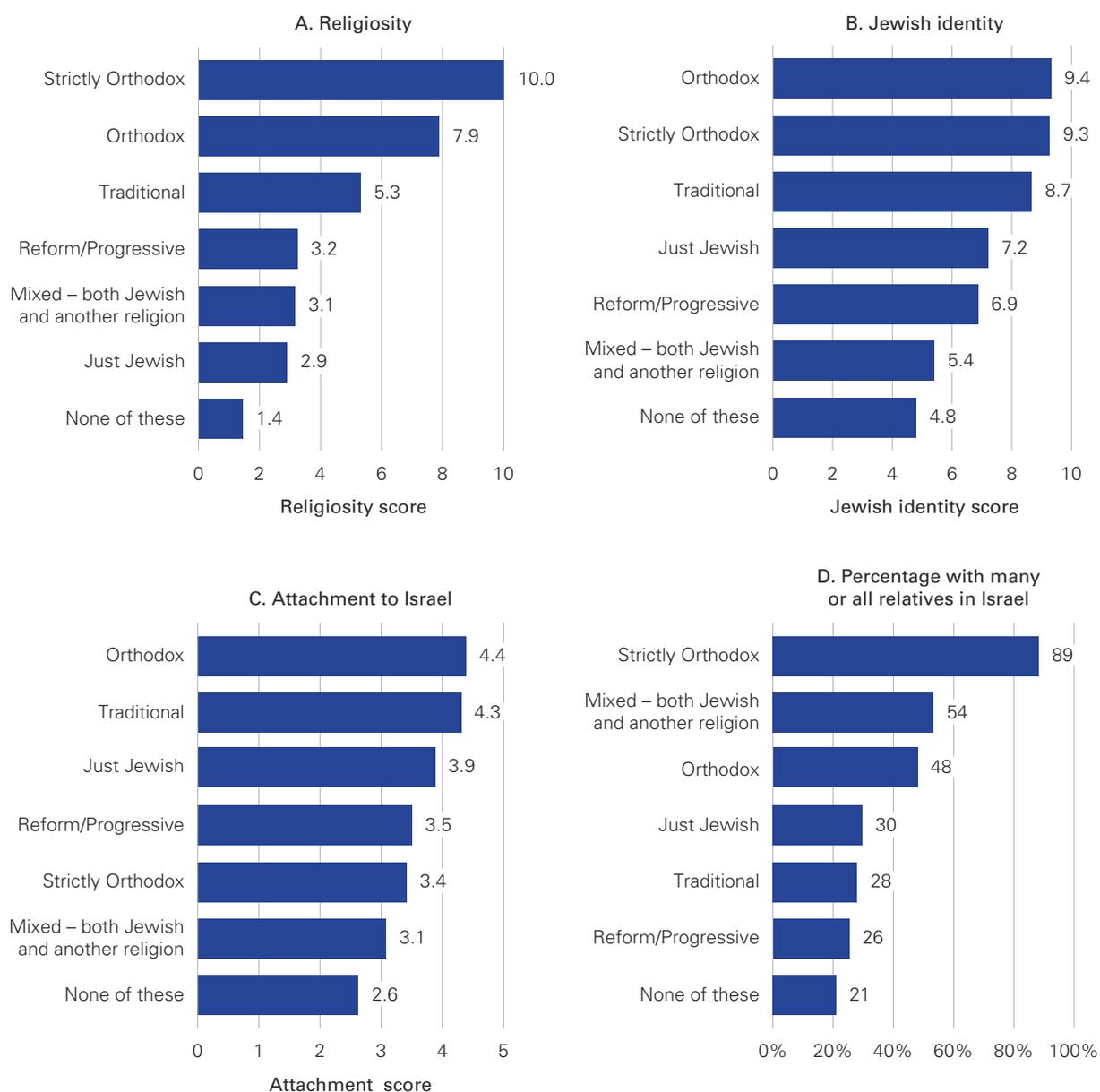
The typology of Jewish identity, as explained above, has been developed by sociologists of Jews and is well understood, as demonstrated by the low percentage of Jews in the FRA survey who found it difficult to choose from the proposed list of labels. Only a small proportion in the FRA survey in Austria (5%) could not find a suitable label by which to define themselves and chose 'None of these' as a response category. This typology is conventionally understood as being reflective of the degree of religiosity of respondents and, albeit more ambiguously, of Jewish identity in a broader sense. However, until recently, there has been little by way of empirical support for this point.

<sup>56</sup> See Staetsky, L. D. and Boyd, J. 2015. *Strictly Orthodox Rising: What the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research. <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=2514>.

Cross-referencing the picture of self-definition with the degree of self-described religiosity and strength of Jewish identity provides such support. The respondents to the FRA 2018 survey were asked how religious they were on a scale of one to ten, with ten being very religious, as well as how strong their Jewish identity was, also on

a scale of one to ten, with ten being very strong. The FRA survey also explored the nature of their connection to Israel, asking the respondents how attached they felt to Israel (on a scale of one to five, with five being very strongly attached) and whether they had family or relatives living in Israel (Figure 23).

**Figure 23. Religiosity, Jewish identity and connection to Israel among Jews in Austria, 2018**



Note: groups sizes are: Just Jewish-186, Traditional-136, Reform/Progressive-98, Orthodox-49, strictly Orthodox-8, Mixed-20, None of these-28.

Source: 2018 FRA survey.

The self-described strictly Orthodox and Orthodox, as expected, are the most religious groups, and they are followed by the Traditional at some distance. These three categories (strictly Orthodox, Orthodox and Traditional) are also leading in terms of Jewish identity. The group self-defining as 'Just Jewish' is among the least religious, yet the strength of Jewish identity of this group locates it close to Traditional and in the middle of the list of categories. It is interesting to observe that attachment to Israel presents a different ranking compared to religiosity and Jewish identity: here the groups with the greatest attachment to Israel are the Orthodox, Traditional and Just Jewish, whereas the strictly Orthodox are situated towards the bottom of the list. However, when it comes to the percentage of people with many or all relatives and family in Israel, the strictly Orthodox appear as a group with the largest proportion of people in this situation, followed by Mixed and Orthodox.



**Attachment to Israel presents a different ranking compared to religiosity and Jewish identity: here the groups with the greatest attachment to Israel are the Orthodox, Traditional and Just Jewish, whereas the strictly Orthodox are situated towards the bottom of the list**

The FRA survey, on which these calculations are based, underrepresents strictly Orthodox Jews, so the percentages for this group rely on a small number of cases (eight, to be precise). It is important to remember this limitation in interpreting the figures. Such a low number of cases lends instability and an inherent uncertainty

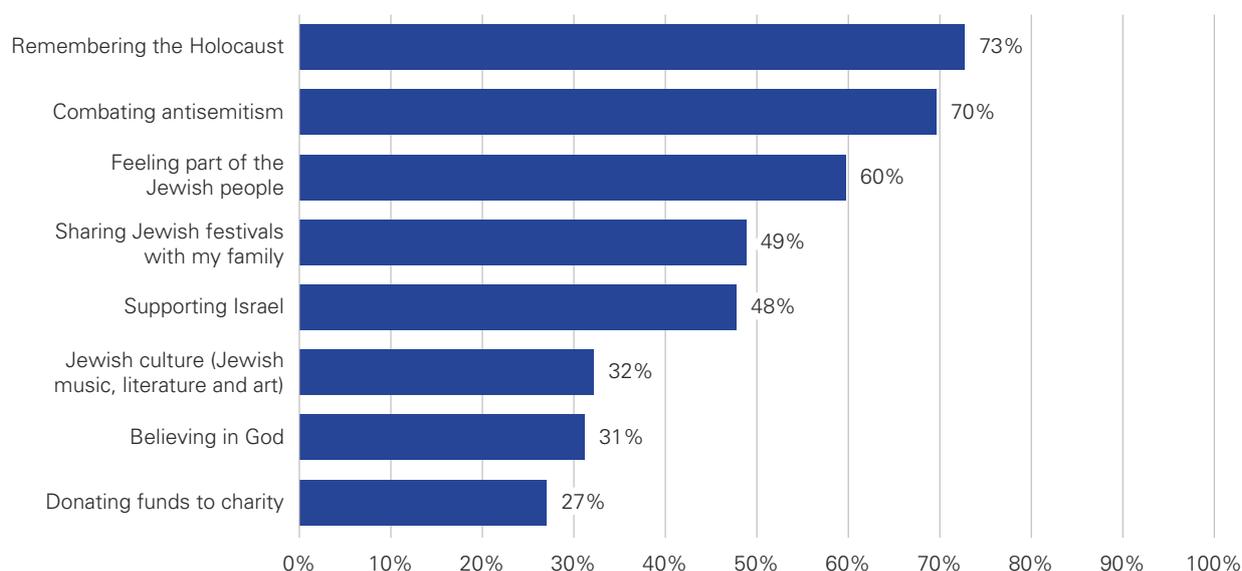
to the estimates; nevertheless, finding the strictly Orthodox *consistently* to be the most religious group with significant familial connections in Israel yet relatively less attached to Israel is noteworthy. It resembles the findings of other surveys of Jewish populations, namely in the USA and Israel, where strictly Orthodox Jews feature as people whose Jewish identity is less Israel-focused and least Zionist relative to other Jewish groups, and to other ritual-normative modes of expression of Jewish identification.<sup>57</sup>

## What is important for Austrian Jewish identity?

The FRA 2018 survey also invited respondents to consider the extent to which eight different concepts, behaviours and beliefs – some related to Jewish religion and others to Jewish culture and history – were important to their sense of Jewish identity (Figure 24). It is worth noting that the priorities reflect the state of mind of non-strictly Orthodox Jews, as they were significantly overrepresented in the FRA survey. Notwithstanding this caveat, the picture of priorities remains informative – after all, the non-strictly Orthodox are the majority among Jews in Austria.<sup>58</sup> The top items perceived by the majority of non-Strictly Orthodox respondents as the most important for their sense of Jewish identity are 'Remembering the Holocaust,' 'Combating antisemitism' and 'Feeling part of the Jewish people' – all non-religious themes. Belief in God is situated towards the bottom and is deemed very important by 31%, a figure lower than the combined proportion of strictly Orthodox, Orthodox and Traditional Jews in the adult Jewish population of Austria (40%). Supporting Israel is in the middle of the hierarchy of priorities, flanked by the Holocaust at the top and matters of religious faith at the bottom.

57 For a comparison with the USA see: Pew Research Center. 2013. *A portrait of Jewish Americans*, pp.81–85. For a comparison with Israel: Pew Research Center. 2016. *Israel's religiously divided society*, p.150.

58 Strictly Orthodox Jews in Austria constitute about 11% of its adult Jewish population. This numerical power is, simultaneously, a signal of profound advancing cultural transformation (towards greater religiosity) and insufficiently strong numerical weight to decisively shape the picture of identity priorities at present. In earlier analyses in this chapter, the results were adjusted to reflect the realistic numerical weight of the strictly Orthodox; such adjustment was not possible in relation to the priorities, and so these results should be taken as a reflection of the non-strictly Orthodox component of Austrian Jews.

**Figure 24. Items very important for Austrian Jewish identity, %**

Source: FRA 2018 survey.

This pattern is strikingly similar to those captured by identity surveys of American, Canadian and British Jews. Among American Jews, 73% said remembering the Holocaust was an essential part of being Jewish, while 43% said this about caring for Israel and just 19% said this about observing Jewish law.<sup>59</sup> For Jews in Canada, who were asked the same questions, 69% said that remembering the Holocaust was essential, 43% – caring about Israel, and 22% – observing Jewish law.<sup>60</sup> For British Jews, the respective figures are 60%, 39% and 28% (specifically in relation to keeping kosher).<sup>61</sup> In Israel, the pattern is, perhaps understandably, somewhat different: remembering the Holocaust was still at the very top, with 65% of Israeli Jews saying it was essential, while *living* in Israel was considered as essential (33%) as observing Jewish law (35%).<sup>62</sup> Thus, Austrian Jews fit into the existing Diaspora pattern of Jewish identity priorities. A high degree of importance for Holocaust remembrance is shared among Jews all around the world. As to the relevance of Israel in Jewish identity,

comparisons between Israel and the Diaspora can be somewhat compromised since, in Israel, the question was about *living* in Israel, while in diaspora communities it was about *caring about* or *supporting Israel*.

Looking at these priorities through a different lens, we can see which are held together and which are separate, as well as which are sectoral (i.e. specific to a certain subgroup of Jews) and which are shared by all. This can be seen in Figure 25, which graphically displays the closeness and distance between the eight different priorities. The map represents a ‘Similarity Structure Analysis’ (SSA) based on computing correlation coefficients between all eight ‘priority’ variables covered in the 2018 FRA survey.<sup>63</sup> Variables that elicited similar answers appear as closer points to each other on the map, whereas variables that elicited dissonant answers appear as more distant points from each other. The map does not reflect the intensity or frequency of the different indicators, but rather

59 Pew Research Center. 2013. *A portrait of Jewish Americans*, p.55.

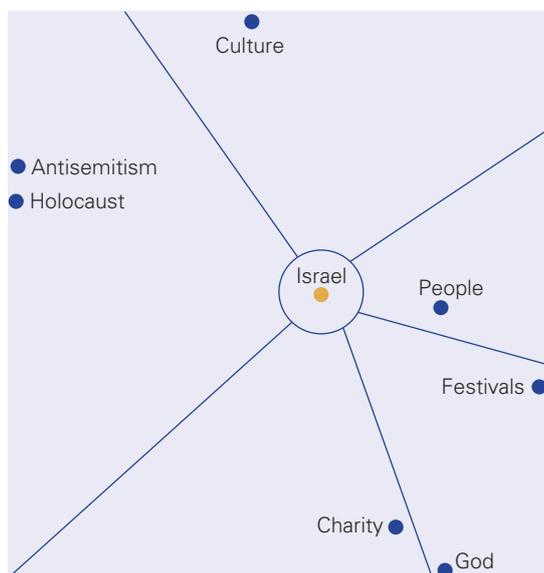
60 Brym, R., Neuman, J., and Lenton, R. 2019. *2018 survey of Jews in Canada*, p.18.

61 Graham, D., Staetsky, L.D. and Boyd, J. 2014. *Jewish in the United Kingdom in 2013: preliminary findings from the National Jewish Community Survey*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.13.

62 Pew Research Center. 2016. *Israel’s religiously divided society*, p.62.

63 See footnote 42.

**Figure 25. Similarity Structure Analysis (SSA) of eight indicators of Jewish identification among respondents to FRA survey, Austria, 2018**



Source: FRA 2018 survey.

portrays the overall structure and coherence of the topics as judged by respondents.

The total space can be clearly partitioned into six domains. The different priority domains create a circular display: starting from the top and proceeding clockwise, we recognise the importance for personal Jewish identity of (1) Jewish culture (including the arts); (2) Jewish peoplehood; (3) Jewish religious observance (including believing in God and celebrating the main Jewish festivals, which also involves participation in Jewish family life); (4) Jewish philanthropy and charity (also involving Jewish community membership and voluntarism); and (5) the memory of the Shoah (Holocaust), strictly associated with fighting antisemitism. At the centre of the configuration we find the domain of supporting Israel. The centrality of this domain of Jewish identification means that concern

for Israel is shared by different sectors of the Jewish community, whose reciprocal links are not necessarily very strong: those who are closer to a normative/traditional mode of identification and are attached to the organised Jewish community (God and charity, in the bottom part of the map), *and* those who are closer to a more secular outlook and display a cultural, ethnic and civic sense of attachment to Judaism (combating antisemitism, remembering the Holocaust and Jewish culture, in the upper part of the map). It can be assumed that the central perception of Israel as a consensual Jewish identity indicator has increased in recent years, as the consequence of the perception of a rise in the type of antisemitism that involves delegitimisation of the Jewish State (see below).

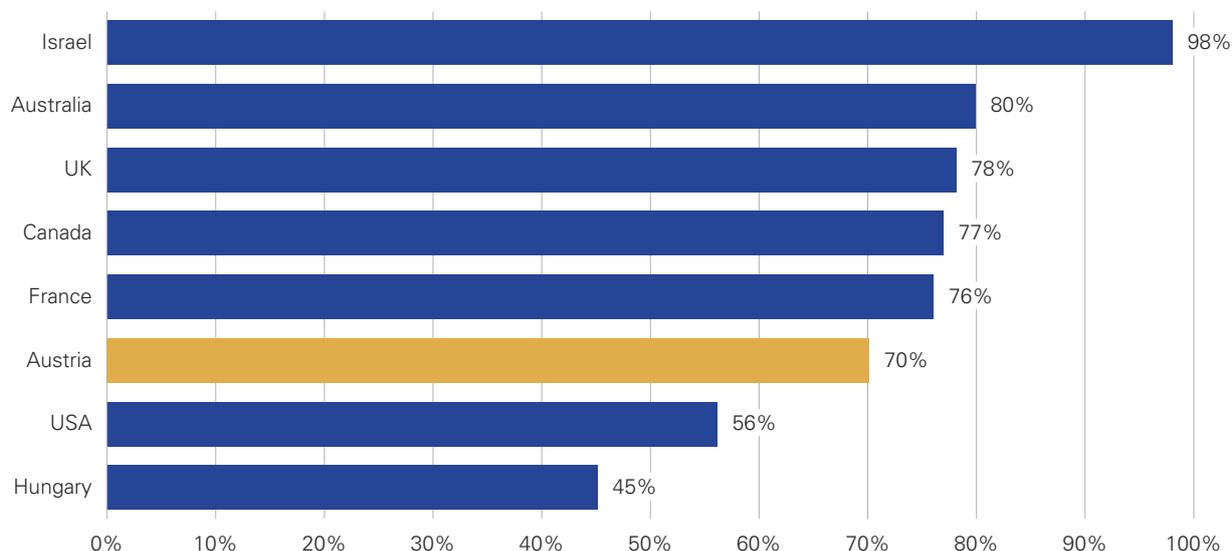
## Intermarriage

About two thirds (70%) of partnered Austrian Jews (i.e. those who are married or in registered partnerships) are endogamous, i.e. have a Jewish partner. This proportion is somewhat lower than among Israeli, French, Canadian, British and Australian Jews but considerably higher than among American and Hungarian Jews (Figure 26).

According to the 2001 Austrian Census, the proportion of Austrian Jews in partnerships with other Jews stood at 68% at that time.<sup>64</sup> Intermarriages were notoriously high in the previous generation. In Vienna, where the majority of the Austrian Jewish population was concentrated between 1946 and 1968, the percentage of Jewish grooms marrying a non-Jewish bride ranged from 53% to 67%; the percentage of Jewish brides marrying a non-Jewish groom ranged from 26% to 34%; and on average for the two sexes, the percentage of Jews marrying a non-Jewish spouse ranged from 40% to 51%. The resulting percentage of mixed couples out of all couples with at least one

64 Census 2001 data received from Statistik Austria by a special request.

**Figure 26. Proportion of persons with Jewish partner/spouse among Jews in Austria and selected countries, 2018, %**



Note: in Austria the figures relate to married and those in registered partnerships; in the USA and Israel – to those married and in intact marriages; in Canada – to those married or in common law; in Hungary – to those married or in a partnership; in the UK, France, and Australia – to those married. Cohabitation is excluded from these figures, with the exception of Canada and Hungary.

Sources: (1) Austria: authors' calculations on the basis of the FRA 2018 survey and (for weighting purposes) administrative records of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities and Jewish schools in Vienna; (2) Israel: Pew Research Center. 2016. *Israel's religiously divided society*, p.60; (3) Australia: Graham, D. 2014. *The Jewish population of Australia: key findings from the 2011 Census*. JCA, p.19; (4) UK: Graham, D. 2016. *Jews in couples: marriage, intermarriage, cohabitation and divorce in Britain*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.12; (5) Canada: Brym, R., Neuman, J., and Lenton, R. 2019. *2018 survey of Jews in Canada*, p.39; (6) France: Cohen, E. 2015. *Jews in France today: identity and values*. Leiden: Brill, p.102; (7) USA: Pew Research Center. 2013. *A portrait of Jewish Americans*, p.35; (8) Hungary: Kovács, A. and Barna, I. 2018. *Zsidok es zsidóság magyarországon 2017-ben. Egy zszociologiai kutatás eredményei*. Budapest: Szombat, p.42.

Jewish spouse ranged from 60% to 72%.<sup>65</sup> The historical trend in intermarriage in the Austrian Jewish population demonstrates a reduction in intermarriage between the mid-twentieth and the early twenty-first century.

What accounts for this development? There are three possible explanations. The first is a compositional one: Orthodox Jews gradually became a larger proportion of the community as a whole simply because Orthodox Jews have higher fertility rates; thus, the younger generation consists of the offspring of Orthodox Jews

and is more Orthodox in its behaviour. These dynamics have previously been documented in the UK and the USA.<sup>66</sup> The second explanation is selectivity. It is possible that the non-strictly Orthodox Jewish segment captured by the FRA survey, on which these analyses are based, is a more traditional subset of the Austrian Jewish population as whole. One expression of this would be a relatively low level of intermarriage. A third explanation may be that the reality of delayed marriage among non-strictly Orthodox Jews artificially reduces the rate of intermarriage at present. More religious Jews,

65 Statistisches Amt der Stadt Wien, *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Wien*, annual publication. See also DellaPergola, S. 1972. *Jewish and Mixed Marriages in Milan, 1901–1968; with an Appendix: Frequency of Mixed Marriages among Diaspora Jews*. Jerusalem, The Hebrew University, Jewish Population Studies, 3, 166 p.

66 See, for example: (1) Staetsky, L. D. and Boyd, J. 2015. *Strictly Orthodox Rising: what the demography of British Jews tell us about the future of the community*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=2514>; and (2) Pew Research Center. 2013. *A portrait of Jewish Americans: findings from a Pew Research Center survey of U.S. Jews*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, [www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/](http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/).

on the other hand, marry earlier and therefore contribute to the appearance of a relatively low level of intermarriage. Thus the intermarriage rate may still increase among those within the younger generation who are still unmarried – when they eventually choose to marry.<sup>67</sup>

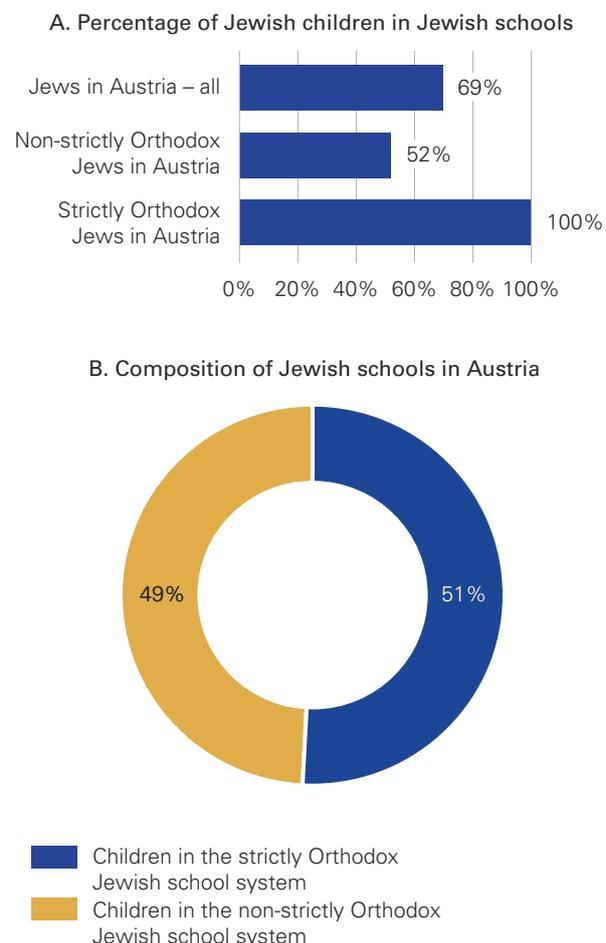
It is not possible, at this point in time, to adjudicate between these alternative explanations, and the truth is probably a combination of all of them. We are inclined to see a compositional change as a development of major importance, highly consequential for the future. Given the differences in fertility between strictly Orthodox and non-strictly Orthodox Jews and the expected increase in the absolute and relative weight of the former component in the Jewish population of Austria, many demographic indices are expected to reflect this change. An increase or at least stabilisation in endogamy, i.e. the marriage of Jews to Jews, is one such index. A future increase in the endogamy of Jews in Austria is likely even if the level of endogamy of non-strictly Orthodox eventually decreases.

## Jewish schools

Five Jewish schools operate in Austria, all located in Vienna. All five schools are day schools offering a combination of standard secular curriculum and Jewish religious and cultural studies, although the proportion of the secular and religious components differ, depending on the nature of the school.

Zwi Perez Chajes school, under the auspices of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities, and the Lauder Chabad school cater largely, though not exclusively, for the non-strictly Orthodox Jewish population. Both schools are coeducational and operate early childhood educational facilities (kindergartens and nurseries) as well as post-compulsory facilities (upper secondary school). Zwi Peres Chajes and Lauder Chabad school combined accommodate about 540 children at the primary and secondary

**Figure 27. Uptake of Jewish schools by Jewish children and composition of Jewish schools in Austria, circa 2019**



Note: the estimates reflect the situation at ages 6/7 years to 14/15 years (compulsory school age in Austria). Source: authors' calculations on the basis of the data on Jewish births in the Austrian vital registration system, administrative records of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities and Jewish schools in Vienna.

levels of education, of whom about 430 are in the age range of compulsory education. Under the Austrian educational system, nine years of education (from the age of 6/7 years to 14/15 years, i.e. the primary and the lower secondary level) are compulsory for all. There are three strictly Orthodox Jewish schools – Machsikei Hadas Boys, Machsikei Hadas Girls and Agudas Israel school. These schools also

67 DellaPergola, S. 2009. Jewish Out-Marriage: A Global Perspective. In Sh. Reinharz, S. DellaPergola, (eds.) *Jewish Intermarriage around the World*. New Brunswick-London: Transaction, 13–39.

maintain early childhood educational facilities that are coeducational, in addition to single sex primary and secondary educational facilities. The strictly Orthodox school system, in its entirety, accommodates about 360 children in the age range of compulsory education.



**About 70% of all Jewish children of compulsory school age attend Jewish schools. 100% of strictly Orthodox Jews, in Austria and elsewhere, attend Jewish schools that cater for the particular cultural and religious requirements of this population**

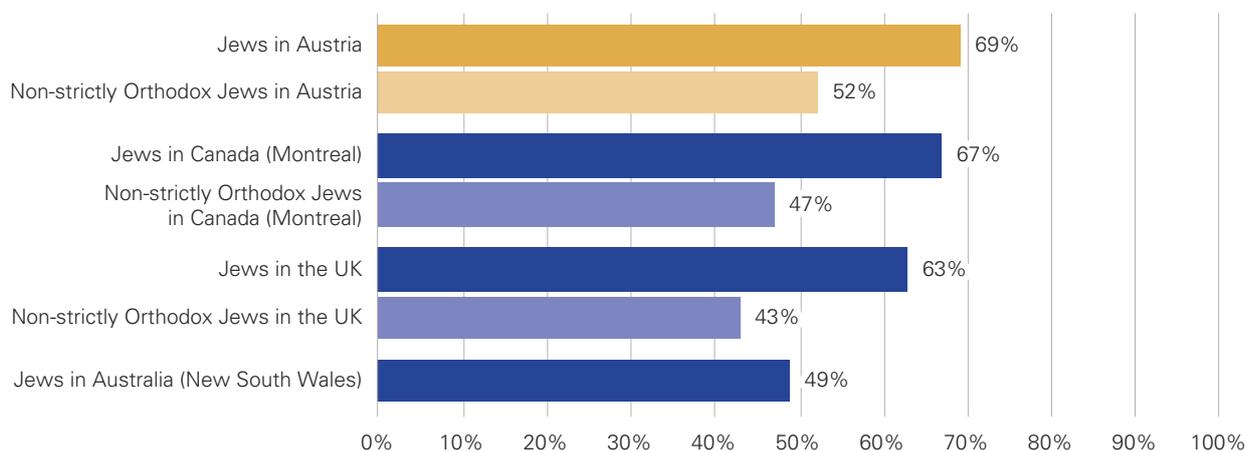
The situation of Jewish schools in Austria is summarised in Figure 27. About 70% of all Jewish children of compulsory school age attend

Jewish schools. 100% of strictly Orthodox Jews, in Austria and elsewhere, attend Jewish schools that cater for the particular cultural and religious requirements of this population. Among the non-strictly Orthodox in Austria, the uptake of Jewish schools is still significant, with over 52% of children of compulsory school age attending Jewish schools. Strictly Orthodox children form a slight majority in the population of Jewish children of compulsory age educated in Jewish schools in Austria.

Figure 28 illustrates how Jews in Austria compare to Jews in other countries concerning the uptake of Jewish schools. The uptake in Austria is at a broadly comparable level to Canada (Montreal) and the United Kingdom – 60%–70% of all Jewish children, and 43%–52% of non-strictly Orthodox children.

It is noteworthy that in the UK and Canada (Montreal), two Jewish populations with

**Figure 28. Uptake of Jewish schools by Jewish children in Austria and selected Jewish populations, %**



Note: in Austria, the estimates reflect the situation at ages 6/7 years to 14/15 years (mandatory schools age in Austria); in relation to other countries, an attempt has been made to present the estimates that are maximally comparable to the Austrian estimates: in the UK the figures relate to children aged 4–17 years, in Canada – to children aged 6–12 years (elementary school), in Australia – to children aged 5 to 12 years (primary school).

Sources: (1) Austria – authors’ calculations on the basis of the data on Jewish births in the Austrian vital registration system, administrative records of the Federation of Austrian Jewish Communities and Jewish schools in Vienna; (2) Canada – figures for Canada have been sent to the authors by Charles Shahr, Chief Researcher for Federation CJA, and they are estimates based on the Census data and statistics on Jewish schools; (3) UK – Staetsky, L. D. and Boyd, J. 2016. *The rise and rise of Jewish schools in the United Kingdom: numbers, trends and policy issues*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, p.11; (4) Australia (state of New South Wales, a home to 41% of the Australian Jewish population) – Graham, D. 2014. *The Jewish population of New South Wales. Key findings from the 2001 Census*. JCA, p.43.

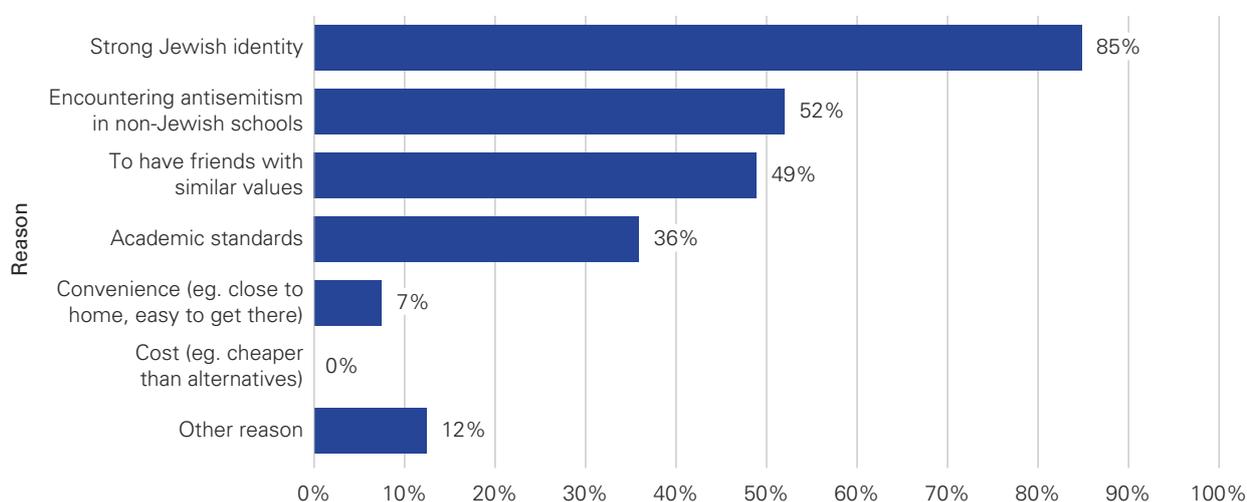
a significant strictly Orthodox presence, especially among children, the strictly Orthodox form a majority of 55%–57% among Jewish children attending Jewish schools (not shown graphically).<sup>68</sup>

The reasons why Austrian parents choose to send their children to a Jewish school or not are outlined in Figure 29. In reviewing the findings, one should bear in mind that the entire Austrian sample of the FRA survey is 526 cases, of which only 150 are parents or guardians of children currently attending school. 66 of these reported that their school-age children attended a Jewish school; 75 said they attended non-Jewish schools; and 9 said they had children in both. All parents were asked about their reasons for sending their children to the school of their choice. Due to low numbers there is a limit to how detailed the exploration of reasons could be, yet some insights are possible.

Among those with children in a Jewish school (Figure 29), the most common reason given for that decision was to help their children to develop a strong Jewish identity (85%). About 50% mentioned their desire that their children have friends with similar values, and a similar proportion said that they feared that their children might experience antisemitism in a non-Jewish school. Almost 40% indicated that academic standards played a role. Issues such as convenience and cost did not seem to be particularly important for most (Figure 29).<sup>69</sup>

The rationale behind the decisions taken by parents who send their children to non-Jewish schools are very different (Figure 30). They are driven by academic standards and convenience, as well as a notable desire to educate their children in an environment which is not exclusively Jewish. Vanishingly few are concerned that their decision might make their children vulnerable to

**Figure 29. Reasons for choosing a Jewish school for their children, as reported by parents in the Austrian Jewish community, %**



Source: 2018 FRA survey. N=75.

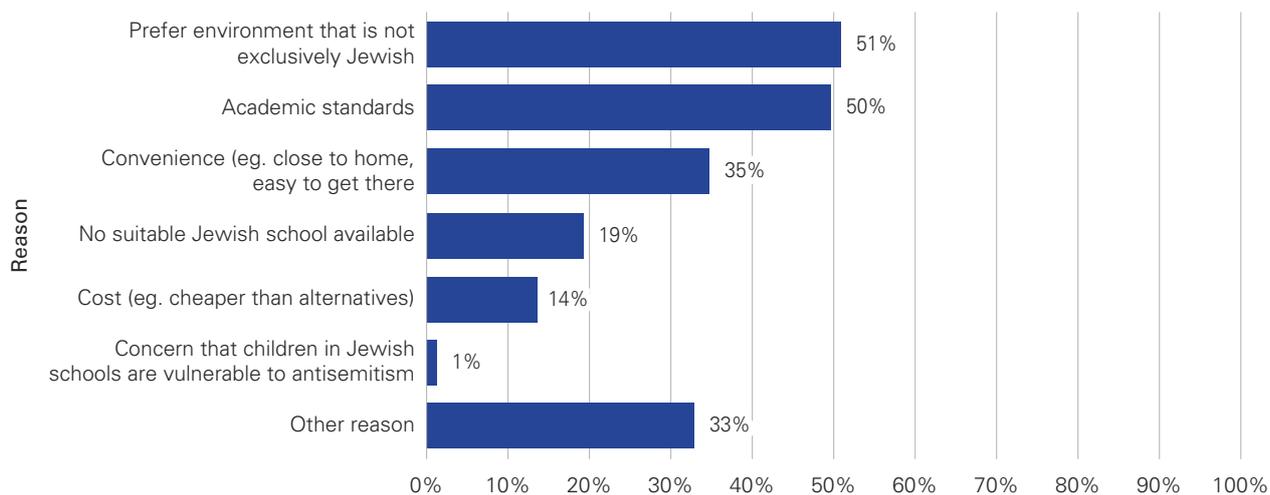
68 The estimate for the UK is for years 2014/15 and it relates to children aged 4–17 years, see Staetsky, L. D. and Boyd, J. 2016. *The rise and rise of Jewish schools in the United Kingdom: numbers, trends and policy issues*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research. [www.jpr.org.uk/documents/The\\_rise\\_and\\_rise\\_of\\_Jewish\\_schools\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom.pdf](http://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/The_rise_and_rise_of_Jewish_schools_in_the_United_Kingdom.pdf), p.11. The estimate for Canada is for 2011 and relates to elementary schooling (age 6–12 years); it has been calculated on the basis of data sent by Charles Shahar, Chief Researcher for Federation CJA.

69 These responses represent the views of parents and guardians with children in the non-strictly Orthodox Jewish schools in Austria. These schools can be defined as private. Tuition costs in these schools would fall on the low side of the spectrum of the non-Jewish private schools in Austria; bursaries may be available.

antisemitism, and only about one in five indicated that they might have chosen a Jewish school had the option been available. Cost was more

of a concern for this group than for those with children in Jewish schools, but was nevertheless a minority issue (14%).

**Figure 30. Reasons for choosing a non-Jewish school for their children, as reported by parents in the Austrian Jewish community, %**



Source: 2018 FRA survey. N=84.

## / Concluding remarks

The aim of this report is to present **an innovative demographic, socioeconomic and cultural portrait of Jews in Austria**. Compared with previously existing information, we have been able to greatly increase the scope and depth of our understanding of the Jewish community and of its immediate environment. To do this we benefited from three main sources of data, entirely new or largely unexplored so far: from the Austrian state, from the Jewish community and from the 2018 FRA survey of Jews in twelve European Union countries.

Jews in Austria live in a country located at the intersection between Western Europe and what, until the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, was the geopolitical domain ruled by the Soviet Union and its allies. Austrian Jewry was tragically hit by the Shoah and the surviving remnant lived at the edge, if not at the margins, of the sociopolitical West for a long time after the Second World War. However, particularly after joining the EU in 1995, Austria gradually improved its standing among the more developed and affluent western societies. In 2017 it was ranked twentieth worldwide on the Human Development Index (HDI), a measure based on each country's levels of health, education and income.<sup>70</sup> By way of comparison, Switzerland was ranked 2nd, Germany 5th, the USA 13th, the UK 14th, Israel 22nd, and France 24th. This means that according to leading social indicators, **Austria was an attractive place in which to live, so Jews (and others) already living there would likely exhibit a high propensity to remain, and Jews (and others) living elsewhere would likely regard it as an**

**attractive migratory destination**. Importantly, Austria's proximity to Eastern Europe made it an important logistical stopping-off point for the first large waves of Jewish migrants from the (former) Soviet Union headed to Israel, some of whom elected to remain in the country. Moreover, Jews from Eastern European countries bordering Austria were also attracted there, due to the more favourable conditions. **In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Austria was ranked 61st out of 102 countries according to an index of antisemitic perceptions and attitudes among the general population – a rather moderate level. Austria was clearly below the European average concerning both perceptions of the level of antisemitism in the country among Jews, and actual experiences of antisemitic harassment.**<sup>71</sup> Jews are known to move in response to social and political unrest and sharp rises in antisemitism. However, the levels of Jewish migration out of Austria have not revealed patterns typical of such unwholesome political developments. We recommend that both levels of Jewish migration and levels of antisemitism in Austria are closely monitored in the future.

**We estimate the size of the core Jewish population in Austria today at just above 10,000 (the 24th largest in the world), higher than at any point since the early 1960s. This reflects a slow growth since the early 1980s. In the late twentieth century, the growth stemmed solely from migration; in the early twenty-first century, it resulted from both migration and positive natural growth. Our projections indicate that further**

70 United Nations Development Programme UNDP. 2018. *Human Development Indicators and Indices: 2018 Statistical Update*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

71 ADL – Anti Defamation League. 2014. *ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-semitism*. New York: ADL; FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2018. *Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

**moderate growth is likely all the way up to the mid-2030s.** In the framework of global Jewish demographic patterns, the case of growth as documented here is rare. In recent years, while the Jewish population of Israel grew vigorously and the Jewish population of the United States of America arguably remained stable, most of the rest of the Jewish Diaspora has experienced population decline.<sup>72</sup> The Austrian case is a testimony that the reality of decline in the Diaspora at present is not universal. This is an important finding for policy makers who face decisions about investment in communal structures and for whom information about the numerical future of the community is vital.

Determining whether to expand or develop a particular Jewish school, or to build or upgrade a particular Jewish communal facility, depends heavily on how the future is seen. The findings in this report demonstrate that an in-depth study of the demographic realities of a *particular* community is an absolute prerequisite of informed policy. Country-specific policies cannot be informed by general knowledge at the level of the Diaspora as a whole or at the level of the total population of the same country. Specific uses are best served by specific inquiries and specific conclusions.

On average, and compared to the total population of Austria, **Jews in Austria are more urban, wealthy and healthy. They also have relatively high fertility:** about 2.5 children per woman on average compared to 1.3–1.5 children per woman in Austria as a whole. The findings of greater wealth and health, on average, are not surprising; these features are common among many Jewish Diaspora populations. However, the finding of high fertility is different. This is somewhat unexpected, and an emerging novel feature of Jewish demography that is yet to be analysed in full. In Europe, the number of children per woman declined dramatically in the twentieth

century with increasing proportions of women choosing to postpone motherhood or to remain childless. Jews were a vanguard social group in this respect; their fertility fell earlier than the fertility of other people around them and remained below national levels for several decades.<sup>73</sup> In the early twenty-first century, the number of children per woman in Europe started rising as some of the women who chose to postpone fertility in their youth decided to have children later in life. This process is known as ‘recovery of fertility.’ However, the source of high and, it seems, increasing fertility of Jews in Austria is different. About 10% of the adult Jewish population of Austria is strictly Orthodox. This group possesses very high fertility – a total fertility rate of 6–7 children per woman – and despite their minority status among Austrian Jews, the strictly Orthodox exert a strong effect on the fertility levels of the Jewish population as a whole. Indeed, the effect of this minority group is so strong as to push the overall fertility level of Jews collectively up to 2.5 per woman, even though the total fertility rate (TFR) of the majority *non*-strictly Orthodox sector is 2.0 per woman – higher than the population of Austria as a whole, but lower than necessary for the long-term preservation of the population size. The fertility of strictly Orthodox Jews may remain at the same very high level, yet the fertility of the entire Jewish population in Austria may increase simply because of the increase in the share of the strictly Orthodox.

**Jews in Austria are an aged population, like the total population of Austria. In 2019, about 19% of Jews in Austria were 65 years and over. A similar proportion was aged 0–14 years.** In the next twenty years or so these proportions are not expected to change dramatically. The interesting feature of the Austrian Jewish population at present, which is expected to persist in the medium term, is its high old-age dependency alongside high child dependency. This peculiar situation

72 DellaPergola, S. 2019. World Jewish Population 2018. In A. Dashefsky and I. Sheskin (eds.) *American Jewish Year Book*, 118. Cham, Springer, 2019, 361–449.

73 DellaPergola, S. 1989. Changing Patterns of Jewish Demography in the Modern World. *Studia Rosenthaliana, The Netherlands and Jewish Migration; The Problem of Migration and Jewish Identity*, special issue published together with 23(2), 154–174.

is a result of the comparatively high fertility of Jews in Austria existing alongside a rather aged population structure. The former feature is due to the presence of the strictly Orthodox Jewish population. The latter feature is inherited from earlier times of low fertility that, along with the immigration of young adults, created large cohorts of people who are destined to reach old age in the next two decades or so. To put it differently, the newly observed 'reproductive reversal' of Jews does not translate into a reversal of the ageing process in the short-term of the next twenty years at least. If the current fertility around 2.5 children per woman is sustained over the longer term, then the population structure may eventually become younger. From a policy perspective, this may mean a continuing high need for services targeted at the youngest members of the community but especially at the older members. It is important to remember in this context that the youngest and the oldest population groups among Jews will be marked by different lifestyles and levels of religiosity. It is interesting to note that the Jewish population in the United Kingdom exhibits similar demographic dynamics. Both Jewish populations – the British and the Austrian – are 'transitional' populations in the sense that they are gradually moving from predominantly secular to predominantly religious populations and in their current state, they are neither here nor there, or both here and there. This generates a dual demographic structure and related social phenomena.

Do high fertility and the increasing share of the strictly Orthodox among Jews in Austria guarantee a future Jewish presence? Not necessarily. Given the process of assimilation, even a relatively high Jewish fertility rate is not an absolute guarantee of Jewish physical continuity, because some Jews – especially those born into mixed faith families – may choose to disassociate from Jewishness eventually. The critical question in this context is the scope of intermarriage in future generations. **By examining intermarriage rates over time since the end of the Second World War, we documented a widespread but gradually declining percentage of marriages between Jews and non-Jews. Our data**

**suggest that levels of intermarriage over the past twenty years or so have remained stable, but ultimately, it is difficult to say what the future holds,** not least because some intermarriages may be masked by the growing frequency of cohabitation among the younger generation. However, with the level of intermarriage observed today, the current high levels of fertility are the minimum required for maintaining population size in the long-term. Under such conditions, integrating Jewish children in mixed marriages into Jewish communities is something that ought to be seriously considered by Jewish communal organisations.



**Given the process of assimilation, even a relatively high Jewish fertility rate is not an absolute guarantee of Jewish physical continuity, because some Jews – especially those born into mixed faith families – may choose to disassociate from Jewishness eventually**

Because of the spread of intermarriage in Austria, **the size of the population with Jewish connections** in Austria is much larger than the core Jewish population. **We estimate that the core Jewish population of some 10,000 corresponds to about 20,000 persons eligible for the Law of Return.** Non-Jews with Jewish connections include non-Jewish family members of Jews, children and grandchildren of Jews who are not Jewish themselves, and all their respective spouses, regardless of their current Jewish status. The importance of this figure is hard to underestimate. The 'true' number of Jews is a frequently disputed statistic in both Jewish and non-Jewish politics. We maintain that this dispute is unnecessary. The dynamics of Jewish life are such that there is a significant degree of interaction between the Jewish and non-Jewish populations. We acknowledge this explicitly in presenting the number of Jewish-connected non-Jews living alongside Jews.

**The core definition of ‘who is a Jew?’ is empirically fairly well aligned with the definition applied in Jewish law, although not entirely so.** We rely heavily on this core definition not just because it may potentially obtain a broad consensus across the different streams of Judaism, but mainly because it is ascertainable through existing statistical sources, and it ensures consistency and comparability in measurement. However, we fully understand that different definitions may be needed for different policy purposes. Jewish organisations and communities may cater to the needs not only of Jews but also of people who are partly Jewish, or of non-Jewish family members of Jewish people. In this case, they need to have an insight into the numbers of such people.

**We recommend the adoption of a flexible and pragmatic approach to Jewish statistics.**

This means (1) approaching the relevant number in the array of numbers of people with Jewish connections with a clear sense of purpose and clearly defined uses; and (2) committing to the existing core definition of Jewishness as the baseline, the binding and the most scientifically defensible definition. It is also important to acknowledge the relevance of other definitions – not necessarily of Jews, but of Jewishly-connected people whose needs should be addressed by Jewish communal organisations.

**Jewish identity in Austria, as in most other countries, is expressed in multiple ways.**

While about four-fifths are Jews by birth, the percentage of converts to Judaism is somewhat higher than in other European countries. Among adults, a minority of less than one-fifth describe themselves as strictly Orthodox or Orthodox, a similar proportion is Traditional, while the majority (60%) consider themselves to be Reform/Progressive or ‘Just Jewish.’ However, in the population including children, the share of strictly Orthodox or Orthodox is closer to 30%, while Reform/Progressive or ‘Just Jewish’ together constitute 50%. There is a clear gradient in the intensity of Jewish religious observance and Jewish identity across these various divisions. It is also worth noting that **‘caring for Israel’ is the**

**component of Jewish identity that is more likely than any other element to be shared across groups who may differ regarding other identificational aspects.**

About half of non-strictly Orthodox Jewish children and 100% of strictly Orthodox Jewish children of compulsory school age (6–14 years in Austria) attend Jewish schools. These levels are somewhat higher than in other countries with developed systems of Jewish schools, e.g. Canada (Montreal), United Kingdom and Australia, though not as high as in some Latin American countries. Parents of children in non-strictly Orthodox Jewish schools indicated that the main reason for choosing to send their children there is to help them to develop a strong Jewish identity. However, parents who preferred non-Jewish schools for their children had explicitly different priorities. Given the presence of the strictly Orthodox among the Jewish population of Austria, **Austrian Jewish schools should be ready to absorb a somewhat expanding number of Jewish pupils, in response to the fertility trends discussed in this report. Close attention should be paid to the number of births in the community and the religious composition of the new-born (strictly Orthodox vs non-strictly Orthodox), as babies born today are school entrants six years later. Presently, the vital registration system in Austria allows the identification of Jewish births on an annual basis – a reality from which the Jewish community should benefit. However, it should be remembered that the registration of births by religion is presently imperfect in Austria and special measures ought to be developed to reconstruct a complete count of Jewish births. Demographic methods are available for this purpose and scientific advice should be sought on this matter if a comprehensive policy of monitoring births is to be implemented. Monitoring the number of Jewish births would make it possible for the community to prepare in advance and maintain a sufficient number of school places for future cohorts of pupils.**

Our data show that the number of Jewish children aged 6–14 years in Austria increased rapidly between 2001–2016: by 13% between 2001 and 2006, by 11% between 2006 and 2011 and by 7% between 2011 and 2016. Those involved in school planning in the Austrian Jewish community might wish to reflect on their experience in view of this information. Were birth statistics used in planning for schools? If the answer is ‘yes’ – were they helpful and what questions still remain open? If the answer is ‘no’ – should the school planning bodies consider using such data? Methods to quantify demand for places in Jewish schools have been developed in the UK. This work has significantly reduced the uncertainty on the matter of sufficient supply and the disarray of action that stemmed from the uncertainty.<sup>74</sup> The lessons learnt in the UK from connecting research and community policies might usefully be applied in Austria as well.

All in all, the emerging portrait is of a relatively small but quite stable and established Jewish community. Not forgetting that most Austrian

Jews live in the capital city Vienna, the size of the Jewish population would suggest the need for linkages with other neighbouring or more distant communities in order to increase the critical mass of Jewish participation and institutions. In other words, the Austrian Jewish community should explore how to help build and benefit from Jewish communal activities in the wider Danubian region.

On a concluding research note, the organised Jewish community should be commended on its meticulous administrative bookkeeping and should be encouraged to maintain it at this level. Perhaps some greater effort might be invested by the organised community to monitor the numbers of current marriages and births of Jews. This is particularly relevant at a time when data collection on religion in Austria, at a state level, has been dramatically curtailed with the transition to the new register-based census. Ironically, this has happened as the whole of Austria is diversifying religiously, and when the Jewish community is in a transitional state toward a more visible presence of the strictly Orthodox sector.

74 The following publications document that work: (1) Staetsky, L.D. and Boyd, J. 2017. *Will my child get a place? An assessment of supply and demand of Jewish secondary school places in London and surrounding areas*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, [www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=4851](http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=4851); (2) Staetsky, L. D. 2019. *Projections of demand for places in state-funded mainstream Jewish secondary schools in London*. London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, [www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=16833](http://www.jpr.org.uk/publication?id=16833).

# / Appendices

## Appendix 1. The number of Jews in Austria

### Method 1

One method of obtaining an up-to-date estimate of the number of Jews in Austria is to rely on the previously observed relationship between Jewish communal statistics (the number of Jews who hold official membership of the Jewish community) and the census figures for Austria. Between 1951 and 2001 the Austrian Census included a question on religious affiliation.

In 2001, membership of the Jewish community of Austria (officially, 'Bundesverband der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinden Österreichs', or IKG, Vienna) amounted to 6,619 persons. In terms of geographical coverage, this figure relates to the regions of Vienna, Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria and Styria. The 2001 Austrian Census indicated the presence of 7,637 Jews in these regions and of 8,140 Jews in Austria as a whole. Two lessons follow:

1. Communal membership in Austria in 2001 was at the level of 87% ( $6,619/7,637*100$ );
2. The geographical areas reflected by Jewish membership statistics made available to us represents 94% of all Jews in Austria ( $7,637/8,140*100$ ).

Given that there may be some degree of undercount of Jews in the Census, the real level of affiliation in 2001 could have been somewhat lower than 87%, but we do not suspect there has been a severe undercount, so a gross overestimation of the level of affiliation is unlikely. However, the possibility of the level of affiliation being somewhat lower than indicated is a point to bear in mind in any substantive inquiry into

communal affiliation levels, i.e. when comparing the situation in 2001 to the present situation.

Can it be assumed that these regularities continue to hold? The more recent estimate of the level of affiliation to the Jewish community of Austria is available from the 2018 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey of European Jewish communities, and it stands at 83%, which is somewhat lower than in 2001.

The comparison between this 2018 figure and the 2001 estimate of 87% is not straightforward. The earlier estimate expresses the level of affiliation across all ages (we will call it an individual level), as both the communal membership statistics (numerator) and census counts (denominator) include adults and children. The latter estimate is survey-based and reflects just the adult levels of affiliation, which tend to be lower than the individual level of the same population. This is because a smaller proportion of adults is strictly Orthodox, a population segment with nearly universal affiliation to the organised Jewish community. At the same time, the 2018 FRA survey is suspected of underrepresenting both the strictly Orthodox population and the very secular and Jewishly unengaged population, as Jewish communal surveys often do. These effects may or may not offset each other in their impact on the estimate of the level of affiliation, and we cannot speculate about the net outcome. In the absence of a better insight, we must accept the estimate of 83% as it is.

Further, in the absence of more up-to-date reliable information, we assume an unchanging

geographical distribution. On the basis of these assumptions we can apply two correction factors to the IKG membership figures since 2001: for the uncaptured geographical areas and for the level of affiliation. This produces 10,065 Jews in Austria in 2019 (a rounded figure).

### Method 2

We also tried to reconstruct the current size of the population of Austrian Jews updating the last census figure (2001) with the counts of Jewish births and deaths. Vital registration in Austria still collects data on religion, although their quality has been deteriorating over time as more and more people opt to declare that they have no religion or refuse to answer the question on religion altogether. The religion on birth certificates is that of the mother of the newborn, and the religion on death certificates is that of the deceased as reported by those who fill in the death certificate.

Admittedly, this method cannot account for the impact of migration on Jewish population counts, and there is clear evidence from the 2001 Census that the migration balance was positive throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. Thus, some assumptions had to be made: in particular, we assumed that the post-2001 migration of Jews into Austria was a less significant factor in the population growth than in earlier times. This is on the basis of the observation that the proportion of foreign-born Jews in Austria is likely to have diminished from 57% in 2011 (census-based estimate) to 42% in 2018 (FRA survey-based estimate). Thus, relying on: (1) the 2001 Census counts of Jews in Austria; (2) Jewish births and deaths occurring in Austria after that date; and (3) the assumption of the diminished migration balance, we arrived at a range of estimates between 8,895 and 12,212 for the core Jewish population of Austria in 2019.

**Table A1. Reconstruction of the numbers of Jews in Austria in 2011 and 2019, Method 2**

<b>Panel A. Reconstruction of 1991 and 2001 numbers of Jews in Austria based on a previous census as a departure point and vital statistics in intercensal years</b>							
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E) (B+C-D)	(F)	(G) (F-E)	(H) (G/F*100)
<b>Departure point: Census 1981</b>	<b>Census count</b>	<b>Births 1981–1990</b>	<b>Deaths 1981–1990</b>	<b>Expected in 1991</b>	<b>Reality</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>% gap</b>
	7,123	844	1,857	6,110	7,268	1,158	16
<b>Departure point: Census 1991</b>	<b>Census count</b>	<b>Births 1991–2000</b>	<b>Deaths 1991–2000</b>	<b>Expected in 2001</b>	<b>Reality</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>% gap</b>
	7,268	1,088	1,399	6,957	8,140	1,183	15
<b>Panel B. Reconstruction of 2011 and 2019 numbers of Jews in Austria based on a previous census as a departure point, vital statistics in intercensal years and some assumptions about migration</b>							
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E) (B+C-D)	(F)	(G) (E/0.85)	
<b>Departure point: Census 2001</b>	<b>Census count</b>	<b>Births 2001–2010</b>	<b>Deaths 2001–2010</b>	<b>Expected in 2011</b>	<b>Reality</b>	<b>Simulated on the assumption that the gap is the same as in 1981–2001</b>	
	8,140	1183	909	8,414	unknown	9,899	
<b>Departure point: Simulated 2011 figure</b>	<b>Simulated 2011 figure</b>	<b>Births 2011–2019</b>	<b>Deaths 2011–2019</b>	<b>Expected in 2019</b>	<b>Reality</b>	<b>Simulated on the assumption that the gap is the same as in 1981–2001</b>	
	9,899	1,127	646	10,380	unknown	12,212	

Notes: (1) Estimates of population size in Panel B are for end of year estimates; (2) at the time of the production of these estimates the vital statistics for the years 2018–2019 had not been released by Statistik Austria. It was assumed that the number of births in 2018–2019 was an average of the two preceding years; (3) from 2014 onwards the number of deaths is reconstructed using Jewish communal statistics, as a severe underreporting of Jewish deaths is observed in the national vital registration system.

Our calculations are summarised in Table A1. Panel A presents an attempt to reconstruct Jewish population figures for the years 1991 and 2001 (i.e. those years for which actual census counts exist) on the basis of the estimates from the previous censuses and vital statistics during the intercensal years. Such a reconstruction, as is evident, leads to an underestimation of the Jewish population size compared to the actual census counts. The gap between the real census figure and the would-be Jewish population size figure that is based only on vital statistics is about 15%. This gap is accounted for by the positive migration balance: during the 1980s and the 1990s the Jewish population in Austria received a considerable number of migrants, many of whom originated from the Former Soviet Union.

Panel B shows the extension of the reconstruction onto years 2011 and 2019. The numbers resulting from such a reconstruction (in column E) are not, in our opinion, affected by the underestimation of migration to the same extent as are the equivalent numbers in Panel A. As previously mentioned, migration stocks among the Austrian Jewish population in 2018 were probably smaller than they were in 2001, and the great wave of migration out of the countries of the Former Soviet Union diminished very significantly after the 1990s. In column G we show the consequences of applying the old assumptions regarding the impact of migration. For the year 2019, for example, the number of Jews in Austria based on the last known census figure (2001) and just the vital statistics in the intervening years (i.e. without taking migration into account) is 8,895 (calculated as  $8,140 + 2,310 - 1,555$ ). This number, allowing no positive migration balance whatsoever, is lower than the number produced by Method 1. Assuming that the role of migration in 2001–2019 was similar to the 1980s and the 1990s produces a larger number of 12,212. Whilst 12,212 can be understood as the upper boundary of the range of figures representing the size of the Austrian Jewish population, it is almost certainly an overestimate.

In relation to the size of the Austrian Jewish population around 2019, we come down on

the side of the estimate obtained by Method 1 (around 10,000). Note that this estimate is close to the mid-range of the estimates obtained by Method 2 ( $(8,895 + 12,212) / 2$ ). The fact that the estimates obtained by different methods converge speaks in favour of such a decision, and it is this figure that we use in the main body of the report.

## Appendix 2. Fertility estimation

### Estimation of Jewish fertility based on the age pyramid

The method of fertility estimation presented here is known as the Child-Woman Ratio method (CWR). It utilises the age and sex distribution of the population to estimate the total fertility rate.

The key reference text is:

Dubuc, S. 2009. Application of the Own-Children Method for estimating fertility by ethnic and religious groups in the UK, *Journal of Population Research* 26, DOI 10.1007/s12546-009-9020-7.

In essence,  $TFR^J = TFR^{ALL} * (CWR^J / CWR^{ALL})$ : where the  $TFR^J$  is the TFR of the Jewish population, or any religious group in a general case, the  $TFR^{ALL}$  is the TFR of the total population of a given country, and the  $CWR^J$  and the  $CWR^{ALL}$  are the Child-Woman Ratios of the Jewish and total populations, respectively. The CWR is calculated as a ratio of the number of children aged 0–4 years to the number of women aged 15–49 years (see Dubuc 2009, p.216). The strength of this method is that it relies on population counts by age and sex that can be obtained from the census, surveys or population registration systems, and it does not require information on age-specific fertility rates which are more demanding in terms of the underlying data.

### Census-based estimation of Jewish fertility in Austria

Using the original census data, we found that the TFR of Jews in Austria in 2001 was around 2.3 children per woman. Admittedly, when it comes to ethnic and religious subgroups, the use of the Child-Woman Ratio method is riddled



of Jewish children to 577. Thus, the Jewish CWR for 2011 is 0.31 (577/1,837). When combined with the total Austrian TFR of 1.3 in that year (according to the formula above), it produces an estimate of Jewish TFR at 2.01 children per woman in 2001.

To obtain *a more recent picture* of Jewish fertility in Austria, we made an attempt at re-estimation in the years after the census, still using the CWR method. We reconstructed the Jewish population by age and sex in the years 2006, 2011 and 2016 using the 2001 Census distribution of Jews as a base, assuming the mortality schedule of Israeli Jews and applying the Jewish births obtained from the vital statistics registration system of Austria. Second, we re-estimated the Child-Woman Ratio and the TFR of Austrian Jews. All estimates of the TFR were in the range 2.5–2.7 children per woman. This, in our view, could be an overestimate: this is because we could not account for the possible positive migration of Jewish women into the population of Austria (the denominator of CWR) but the numbers of Jewish births would have included births occurring to these women in Austria. At the same time, we do not expect such migration to increase the number of Jewish women of fertile age very significantly, so the overestimation might be slight. On the side of caution, we suggest that around 2016, the TFR of Jews in Austria was around 2.5 children per woman, which is the lower boundary of the 2.5–2.7 range.

#### Communal records-based estimation of Jewish fertility in Austria

We now turn to our attempt to estimate the Jewish TFR on the basis of Austrian Jewish *communal* data. Our initial experimental

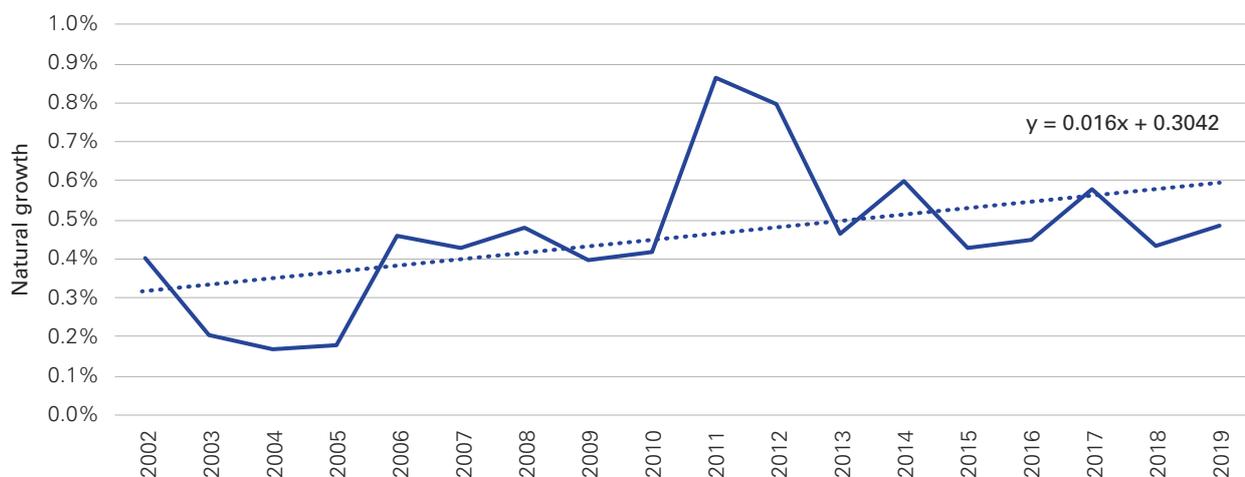
estimate of the Jewish TFR for 2017 (1.6 children per woman) was lower than the estimated level in 2001 but the fact that it was based on communal statistics, rather than the census, strongly suggested to us that this is likely to be a serious underestimation of fertility. It is known from the conversations we held with Jewish communal leaders, that the registration of small children (especially those under age 5) is only partial in Austrian Jewish communal statistics. Further, between 2001 and 2017 the number of births to Jewish mothers in the vital statistics registration system did not decline. Using the counts of Jewish births from the national vital statistics registration system we estimated the number of ‘missing’ children in the communal statistics. It is our view that the number of children aged 0–4 years found within communal records is about 70% of the actual number of Jewish children. Having added the ‘missing children’ to the communal statistics we re-estimated Jewish fertility. This method produced an estimate of 2.3 children per woman, which is close to the 2.5 estimate mentioned in the previous section.

Thus, we treat the TFR in the range of 2.01–2.5 children per woman as a range of estimates of Jewish fertility in Austria in the second decade of the twenty-first century. These insights, taken together, led us to conclude that the TFR of Jews in Austria around 2001 fluctuated around the replacement level, while during the second decade of the twenty-first century it increased towards an above-replacement level.

### Appendix 3. Rates of natural growth of Jews in Austria

Rates of natural growth among Jews in Austria were estimated from the natural balance of Jewish births and Jewish deaths, as registered by the national vital registration system.

**Figure A3. Rates of natural growth of Jews in Austria**



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### **Published by Institute for Jewish Policy Research**

ORT House, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NE

tel +44 (0)20 7424 9265

email [jpr@jpr.org.uk](mailto:jpr@jpr.org.uk)

website [www.jpr.org.uk](http://www.jpr.org.uk)