

CSZ Israel Survey
Results – Initial Presentation

December 15, 2009

Agenda

- Intro
- Who responded?
- Connection and experience with Israel
- How we identify and what we support in principle
- Perceived obstacles to peace
- On how CSZ should articulate policy around Israel
- Subject matters and organizations we might organize around
- Other reactions
- Discussion

Intro

- Research objectives, among our members:
 - Better understand our personal connection with Israel
 - Understand how similar/far apart we are in, and the range of attitudes and perspectives on the subject
 - Given that we have decided to engage as a congregation on the subject of Israel, where are places we might start the conversation? Where is there common ground and where is there resistance or polarization?
- Great response! 52%
- Lots of data, lots of insights
 - Numbers are subject to interpretation, but they don't lie...
- Numbers can help us understand:
 - Where is there openness to discussion and engagement? What is the 'common ground' opportunity to engage on the subject?
 - What are they offended by,, or resistant to?

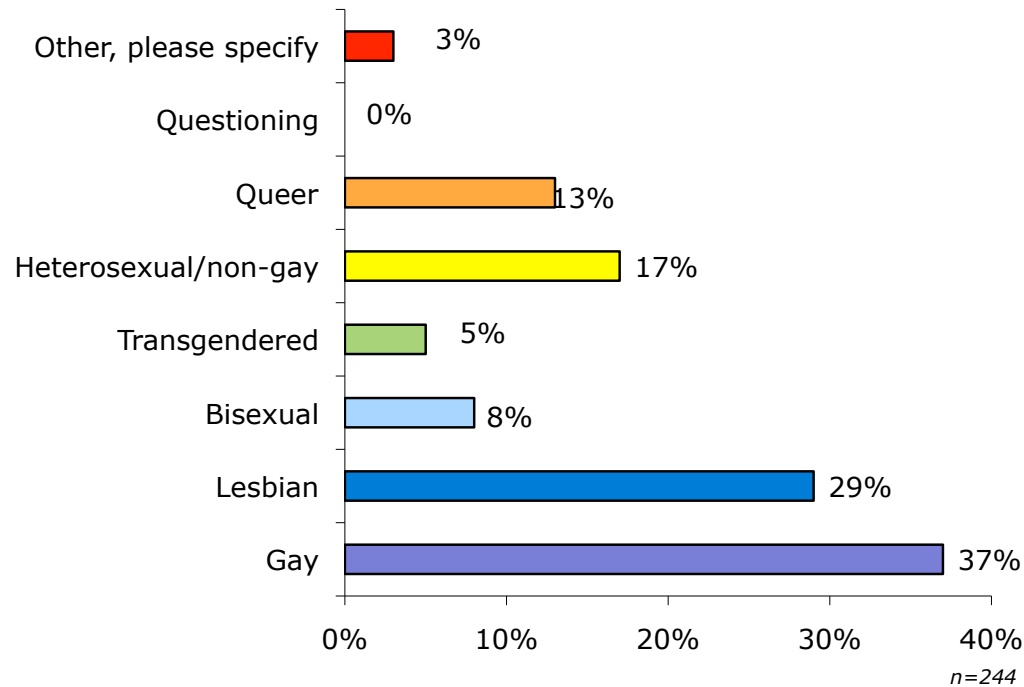
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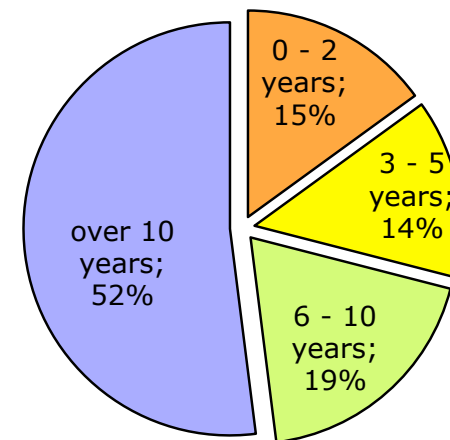
Who Responded?

- Out of 467 email invitations sent , 244 responded to the survey
 - A 52% response rate → high interest in the subject matter
- Respondent composition is a good reflection of our congregational demographics

29. I identify as:

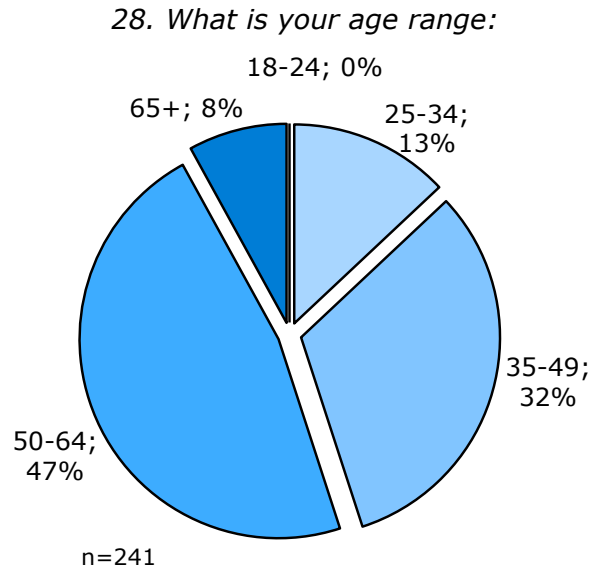


33. How many years have you been a member of Sha'ar Zahav?

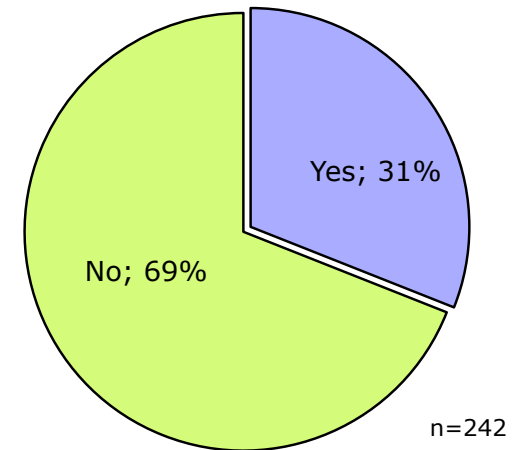


Who Responded?

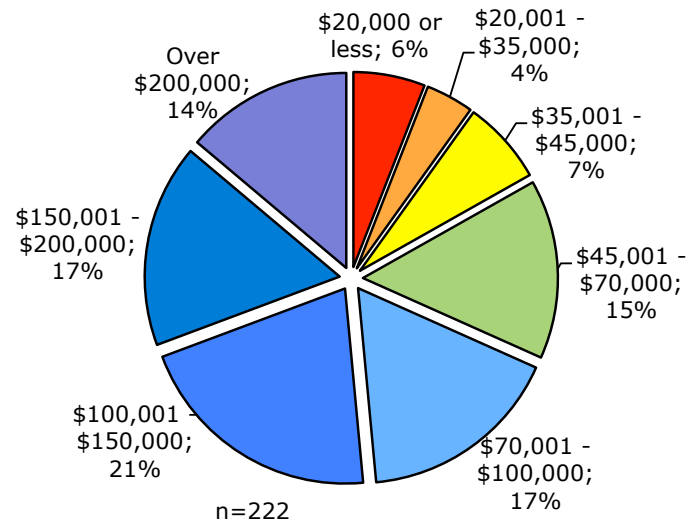
- Respondent composition is a good reflection of our congregational demographics



31. Are you raising children (under age of 18) in your household?



32. The gross annual income of my household is:



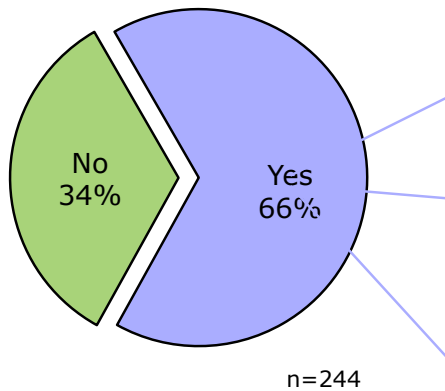
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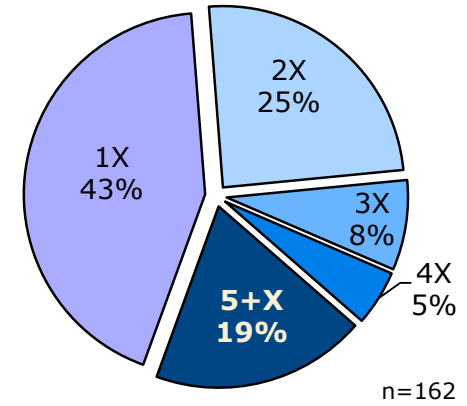
A significant portion of congregants have been to Israel

- 2/3 of congregants have visited Israel
- Of those who have visited Israel, most have done so more than once, while 1/6th have participated in a congregational trip, and over 1/4th have lived for an extended period of time

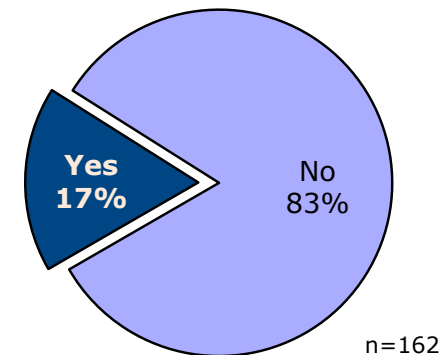
1. Have you visited Israel in your lifetime?



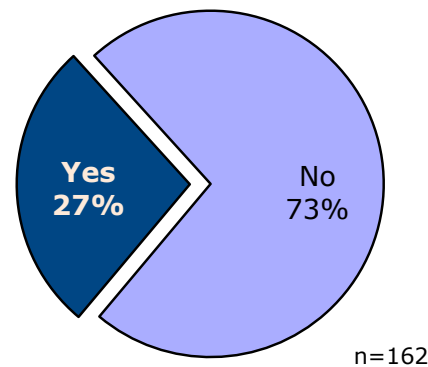
2. How many times have you visited Israel?



3. Have you participated in a past CSZ trip to Israel?

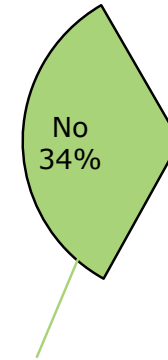


4. Have you ever lived in Israel for 3 months or longer?

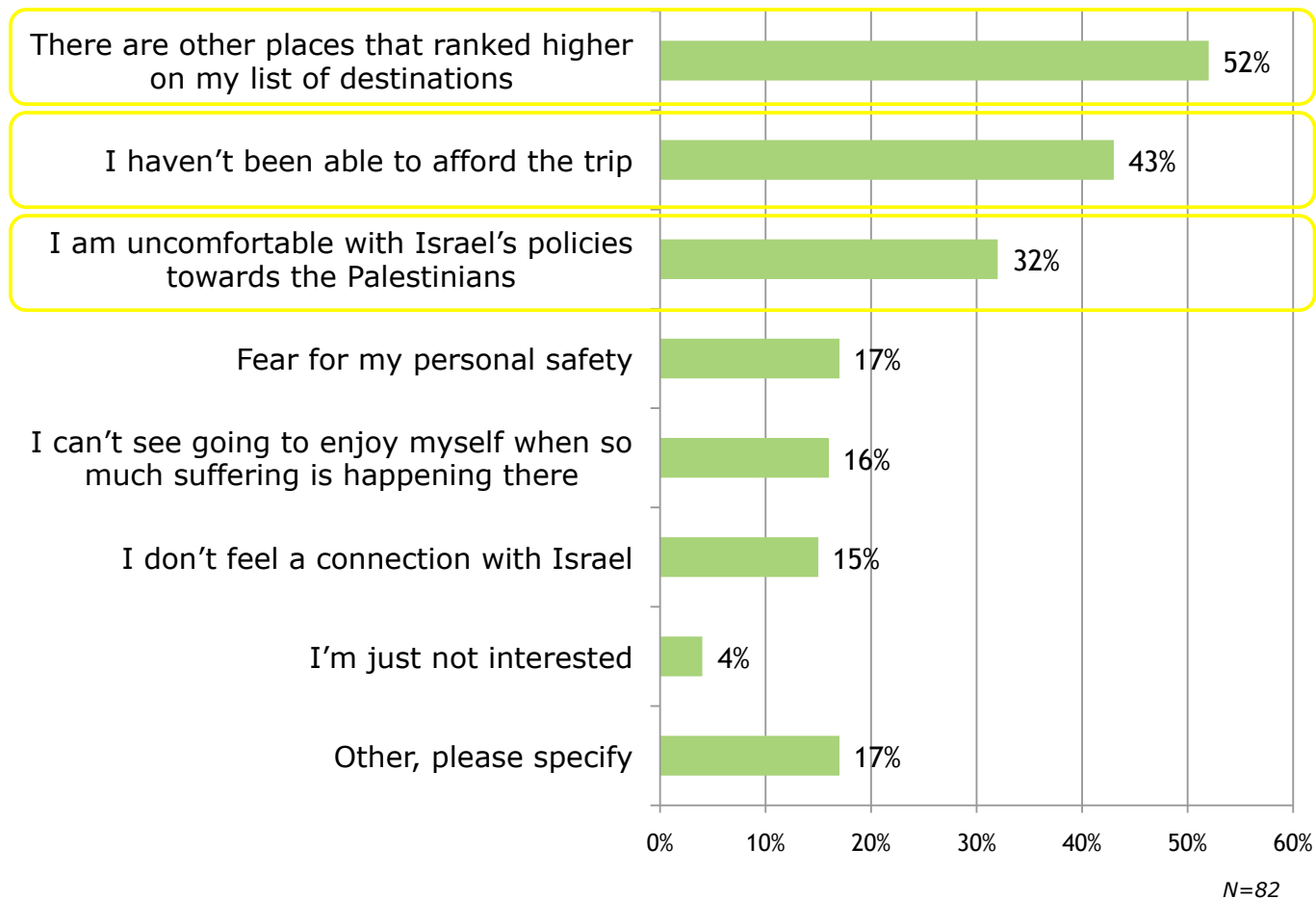


For those who have not, a range of reasons...

- For those who have not visited, Israel doesn't rank high on the priority list for many,
- Many cite economic reasons
- One in 10 members have avoided Israel because of Israeli policy toward Palestinians



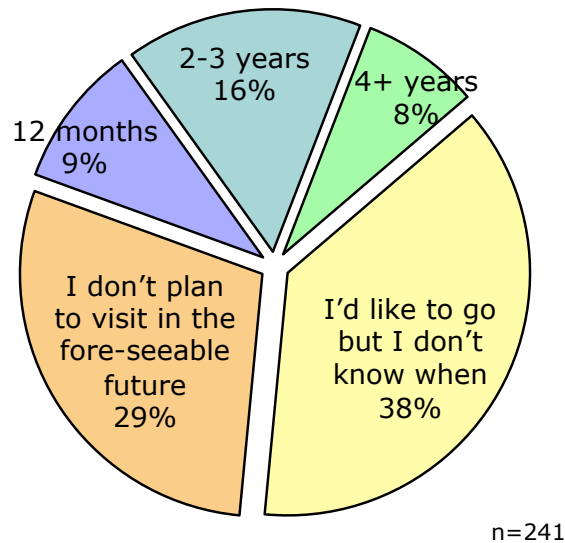
5. Please select the statement(s) that describe(s) why you have not visited Israel (check all that apply):



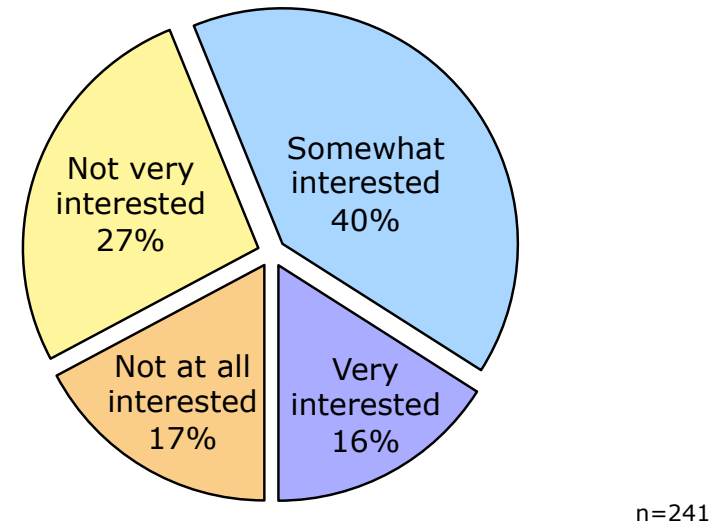
Most congregants intend to visit Israel, and there is measurable interest in a congregational trip

- 70 percent of congregants anticipate a future trip to Israel, and 1/4th of members plan to visit within the next 3 years
- 2/3 of the congregation do not have defined plans to visit
- Over half of our members have at least some interest in a congregational trip to Israel , and 1/8 are very interested

6. Do you plan to visit Israel in the next:



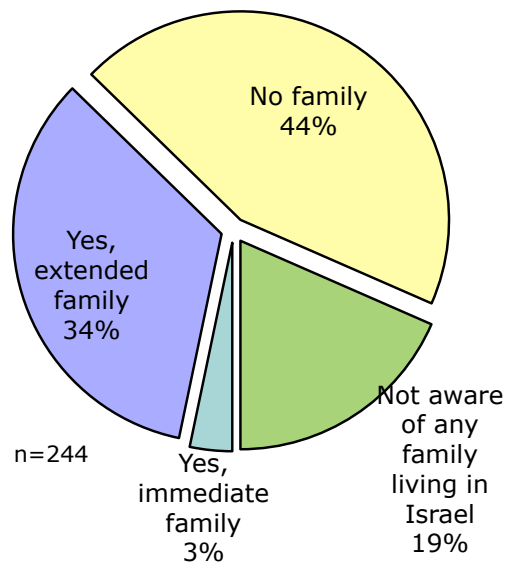
7. Please indicated your degree of interest in a future Congregational trip to Israel:



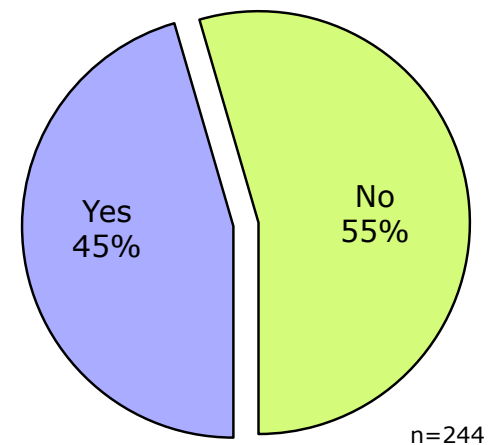
People are more likely to identify personal friends than family living in Israel

- Over one in three congregants have family living in Israel
- Nearly half of respondents identified personal friends living in Israel

8. Do you have relatives living in Israel?



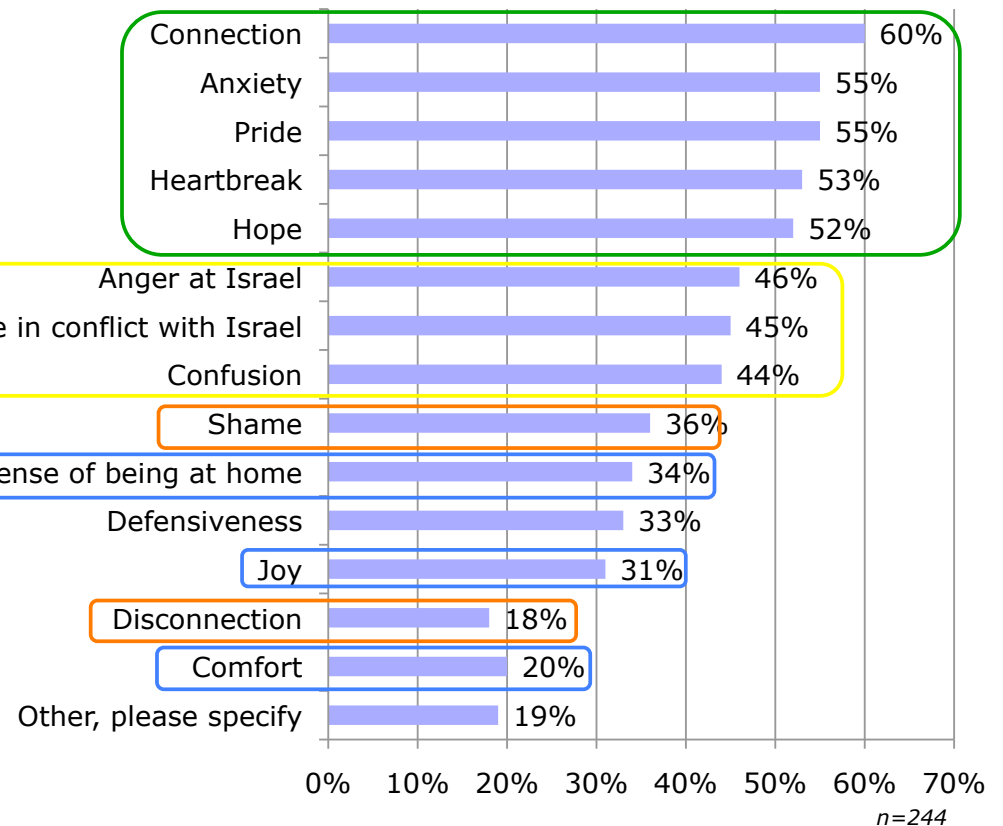
9. Do you have personal friends living in Israel?



Emotions are mixed and people are often torn

- Most congregants have mixed emotions, ranging from 'Connection' (60%) and 'Pride' (55%) to 'Anxiety' (55%), 'Heartbreak' (53%) and 'Hope' (52%)
- Anger – both at Israel and at those in conflict with Israel – along with Confusion is common
- 1/3 of respondents feel 'Shame' (36%), while nearly 1/5 feel 'Disconnection'
- Between 1/5 and 1/3 of respondents feel 'A sense of and being at home', 'Joy' and 'Comfort'

10. When you think of Israel, what feelings come up for you? (Check all that apply)



Other responses:

'Sadness'

'Concern' (for wellbeing)

'Resignation'/'Frustration'

'Orthodox have too much power'

'Anger at/Frustration with Israeli gov't'

'Terror'

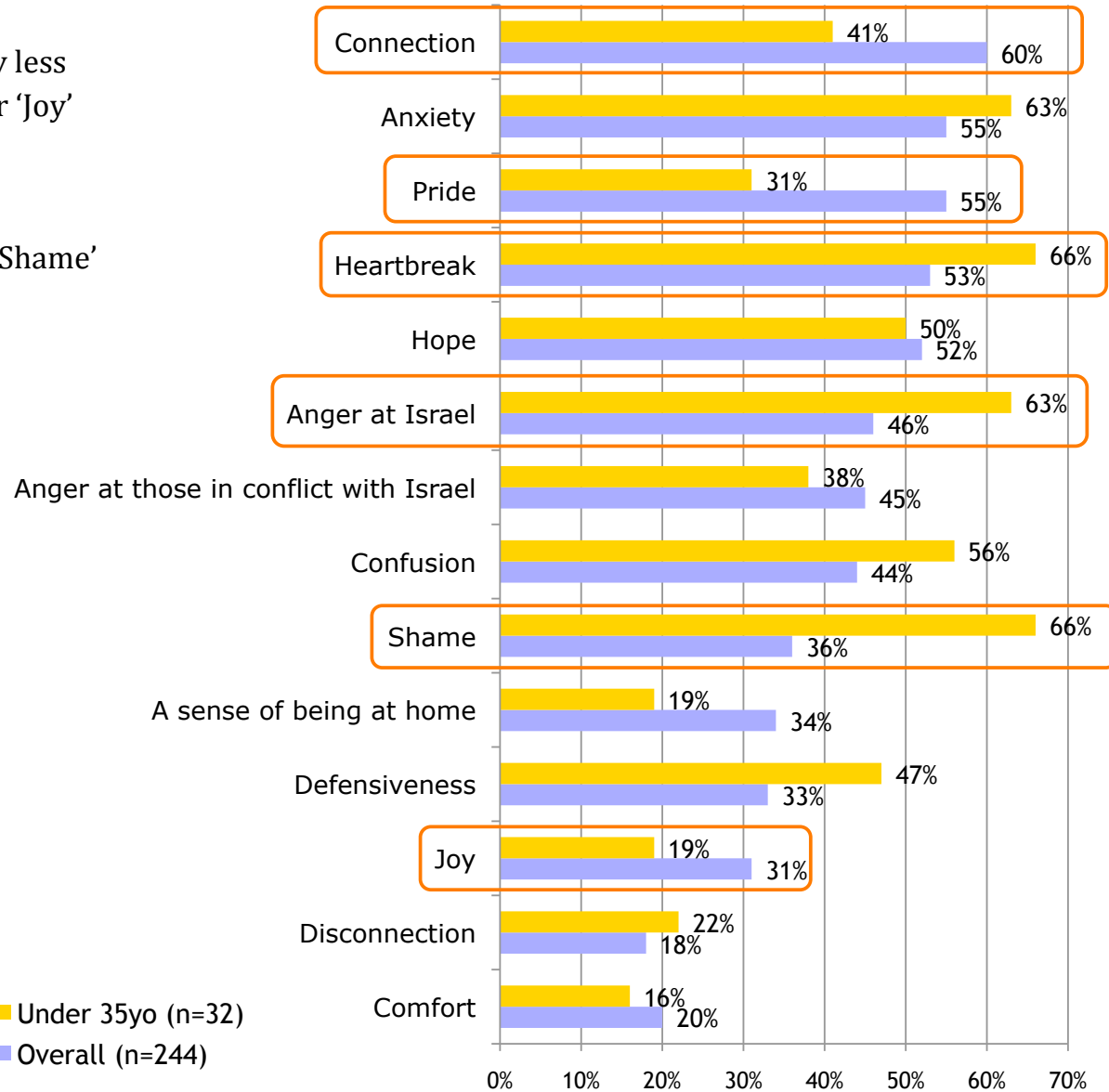
'Fear'

'Longing' (for the way it was/should be)

Younger members have a weaker and less positive connection with Israel

10. When you think of Israel, what feelings come up for you? (Check all that apply)

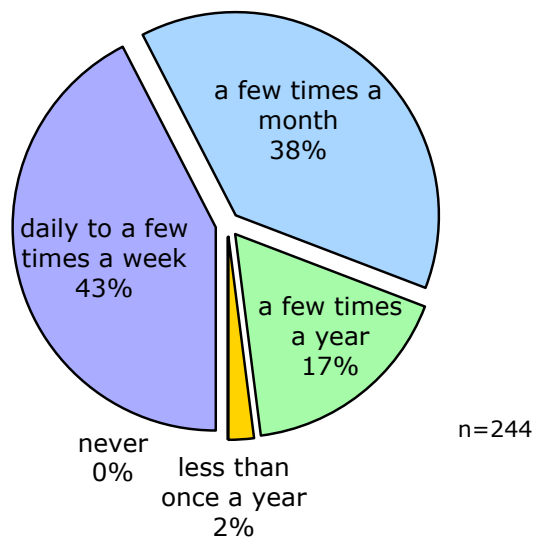
- Members under 35 are significantly less likely to feel 'Connection', 'Pride', or 'Joy'
- They are also more likely to feel 'Heartbreak', 'Anger at Israel', and 'Shame'



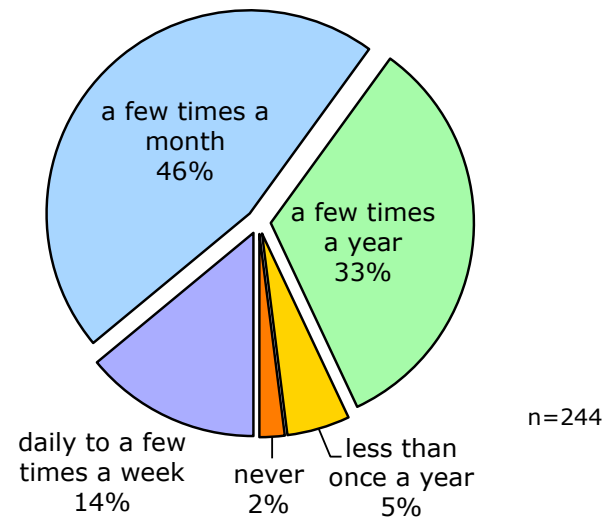
Most congregants engage on the subject of Israel on a regular basis...

- 81% engage in reading or watching several times a month or more frequently
- 60% discuss it at least a few times a month or more, but 40% seldom discuss it

11. How often do you engage in reading, watching or listening to something related to Israel?



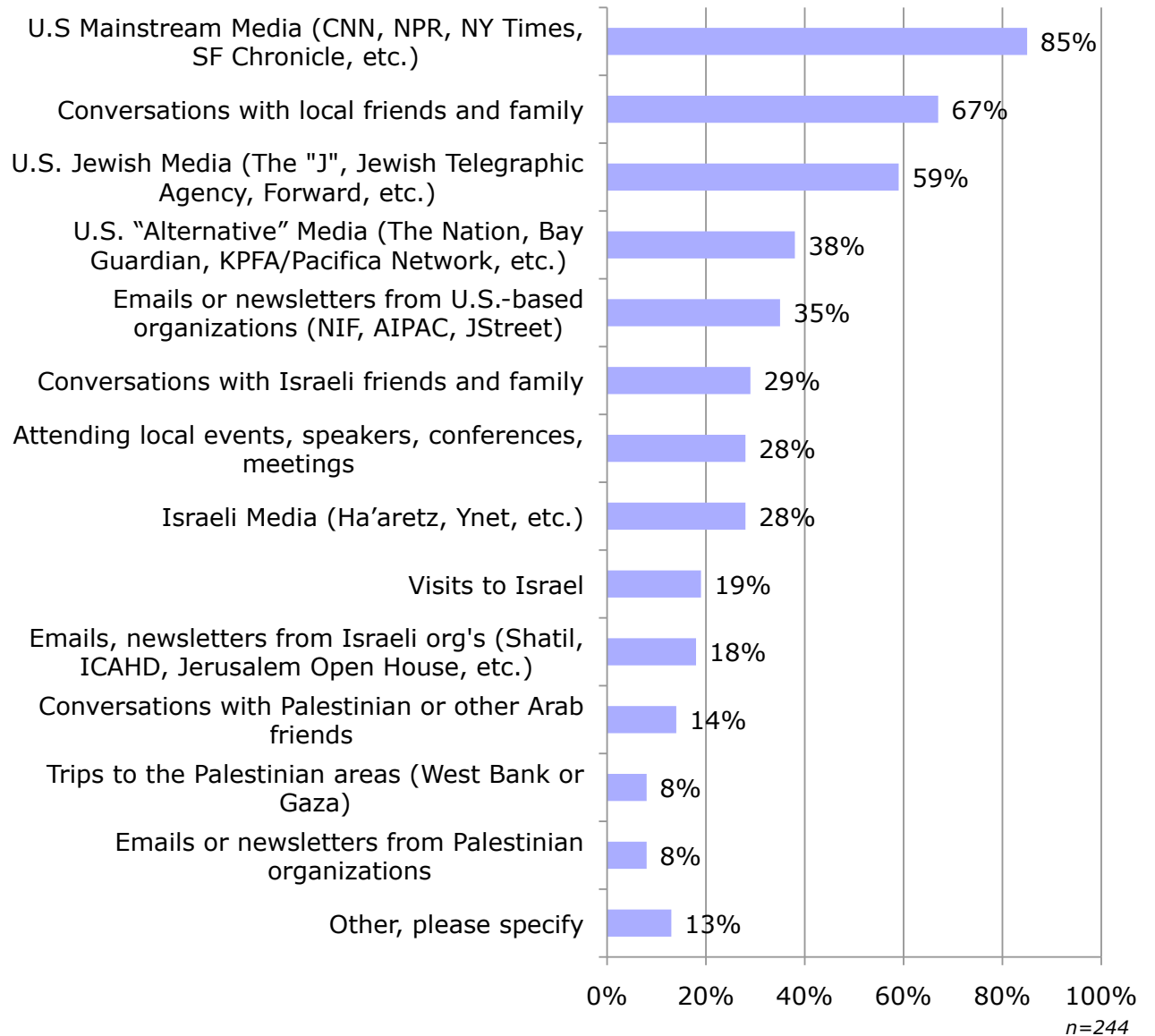
12. How often do you have conversations with friends, children or other relatives about Israel?



...and rely on a number of sources for information

13. Where do you seek out information on Israel? (Check all that apply)

- People most often rely on mainstream media, their one-on-one discussions, and Jewish media for information
- Many also rely on and alternative media, direct mail/ emails from US-based organizations, and Israeli media



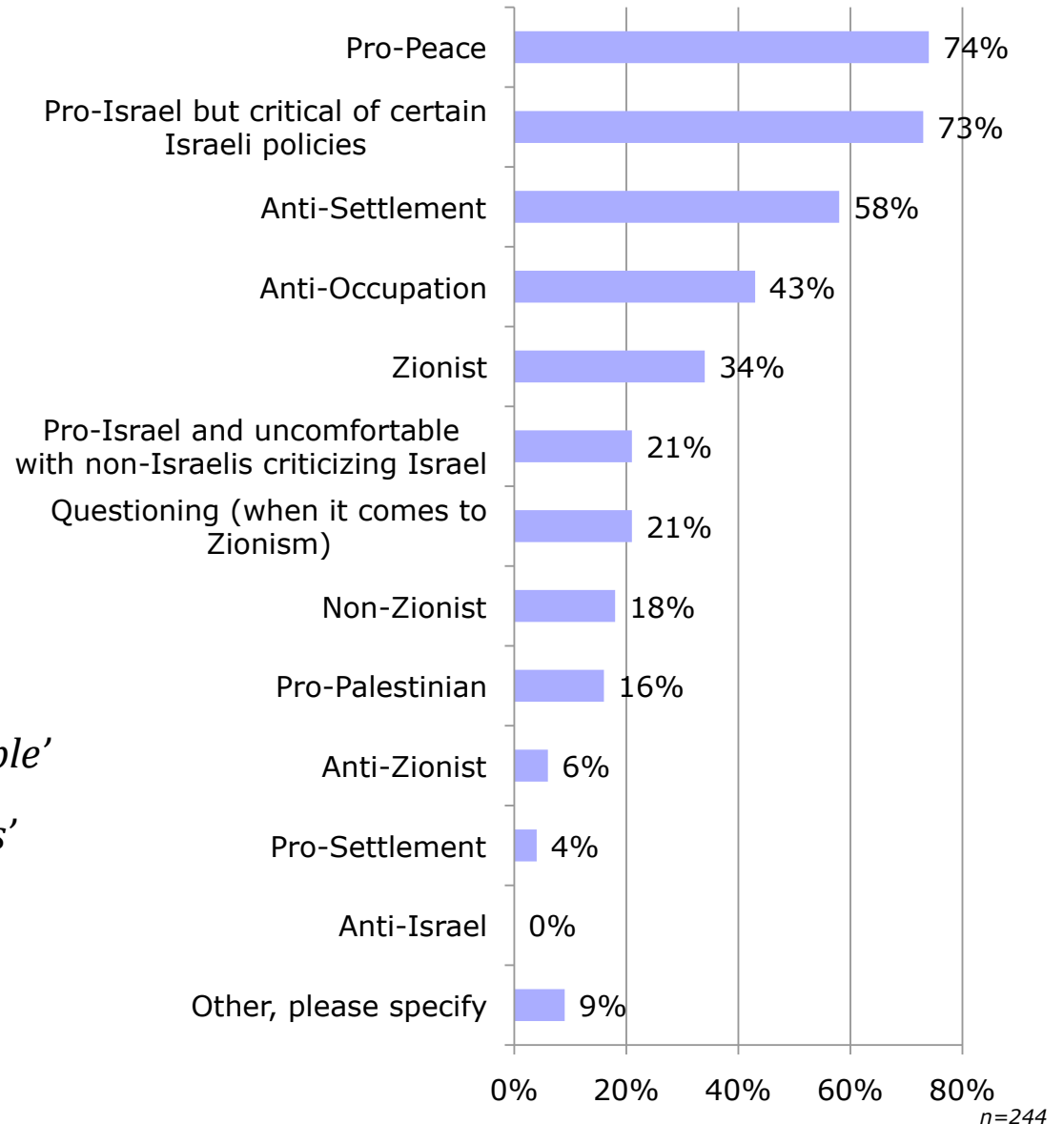
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We are largely a Pro-Peace, pro-Israel congregation critical of governmental policy

15. Which of the following terms would you use to identify yourself? (Check all that apply)

- Nearly 3 out of 4 identify as 'pro-peace', and 'pro-Israel but critical of certain policies'
- Most are 'Anti Settlement'
- Many are 'Anti Occupation'
- One in three identify as 'Zionist', while around 1/5th are 'Questioning' or 'non-Zionist'
- One in 5 identify as 'Pro-Israel and uncomfortable with non-Israelis criticizing'
- One in 6 identify as 'Pro-Palestinian'
- One in 20 identify as 'Anti-Zionist'



Other responses:

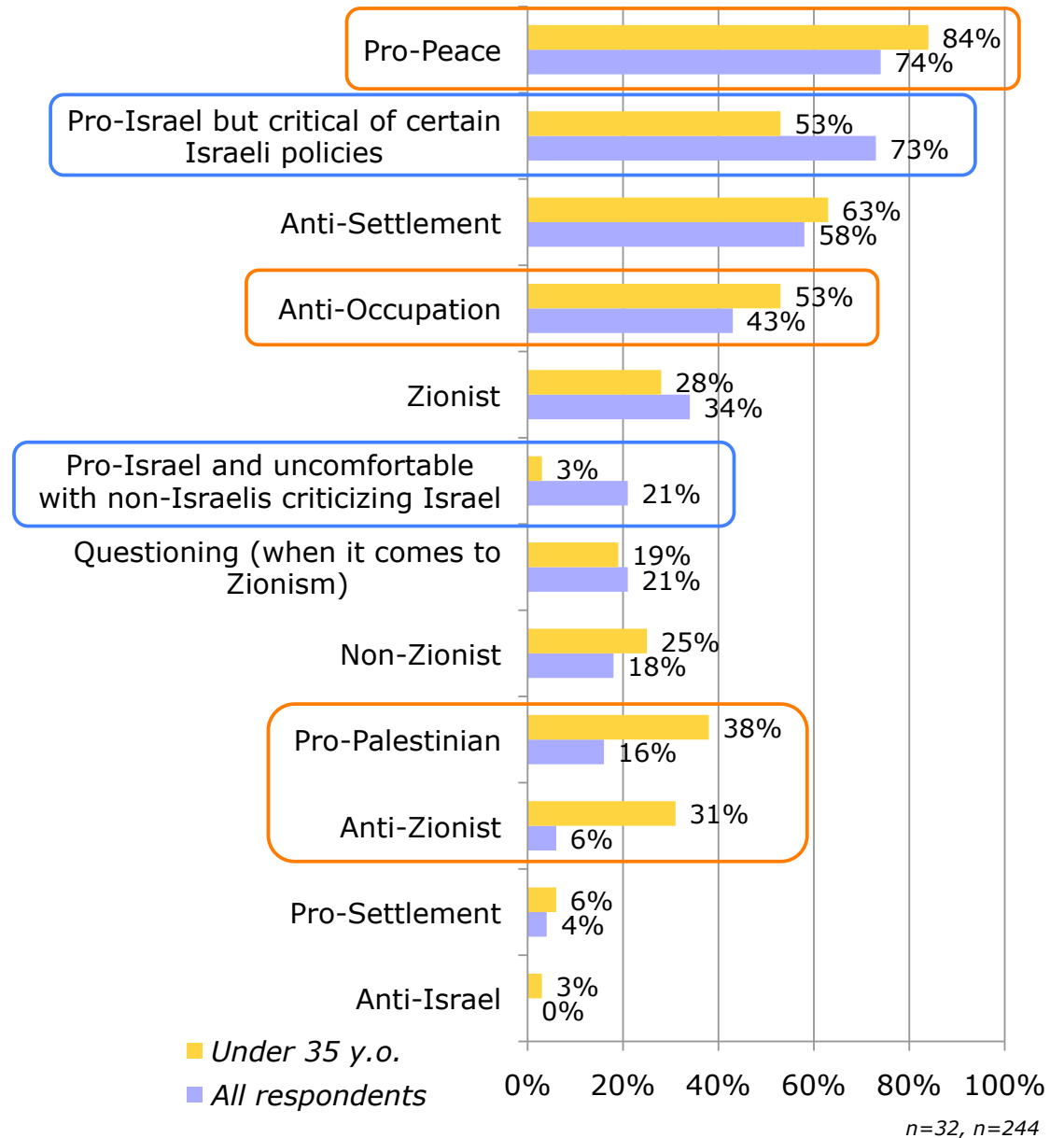
'Pro-Peace but I don't believe it's possible'

'This space is too small for my thoughts'

Younger members are more Pro-Peace and less Zionist

- Members under 35 years old are:
 - More likely to identify as 'Pro-Peace', 'Anti-Occupation', 'Pro-Palestinian' and 'Anti-Zionist'
 - Less likely to be 'Pro-Israel'
- A significant number of our members under 35 identify as 'Anti-Zionist'

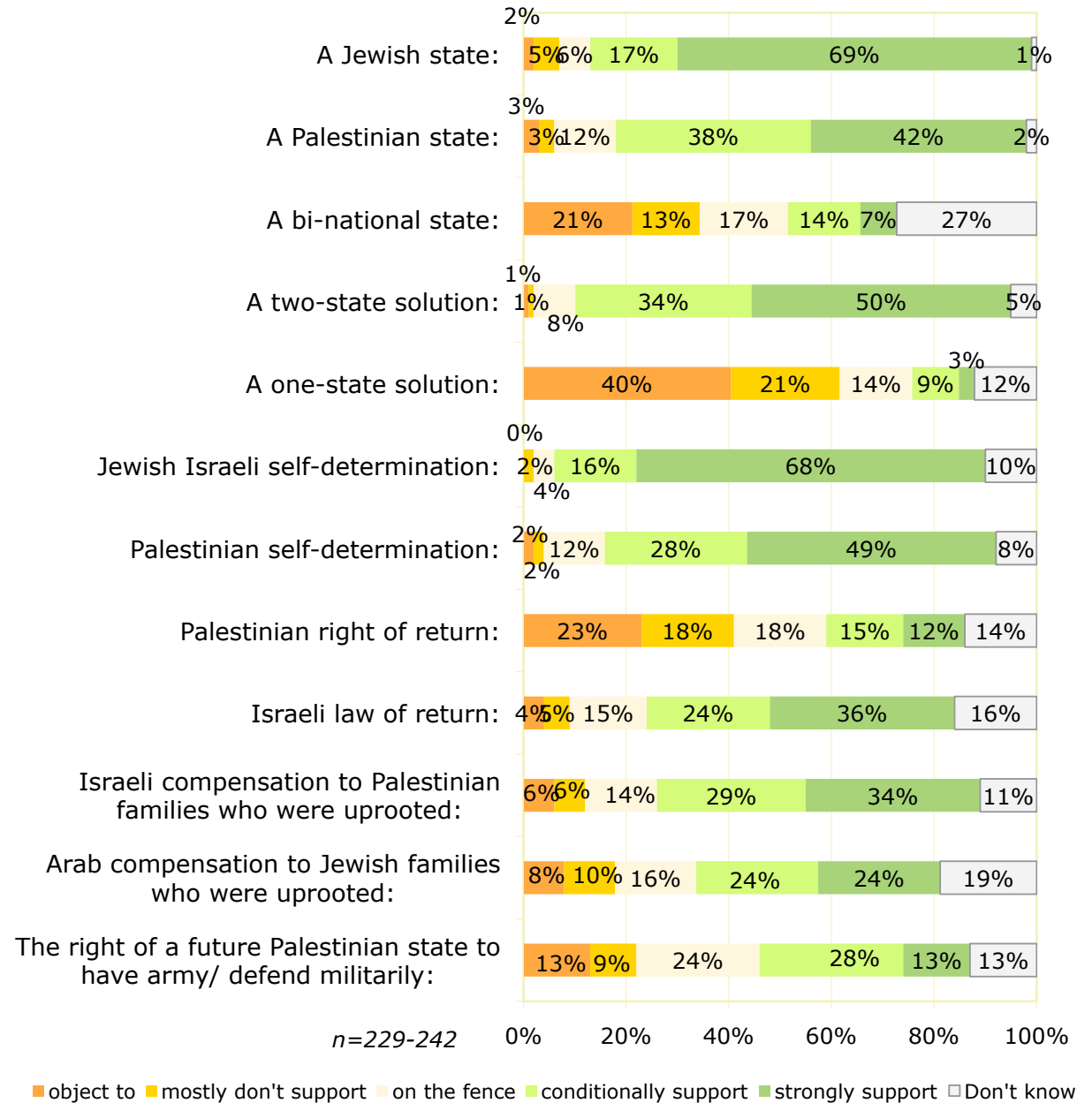
15. Which of the following terms would you use to identify yourself? (Check all that apply)



On statehood, self-determination, and national rights

- The overwhelming majority supports a Jewish state, and most strongly so
- Congregants are also overwhelmingly supportive of a Palestinian state as part of a two-state solution
- There is measurable objection to a one-state solution, and confusion around the concept of a bi-national state
- While the plurality does not support Palestinian right of return, views are mixed here
- Most support some kind of Israeli compensation to Palestinian refugees, while nearly half support Arab compensation to Jewish families

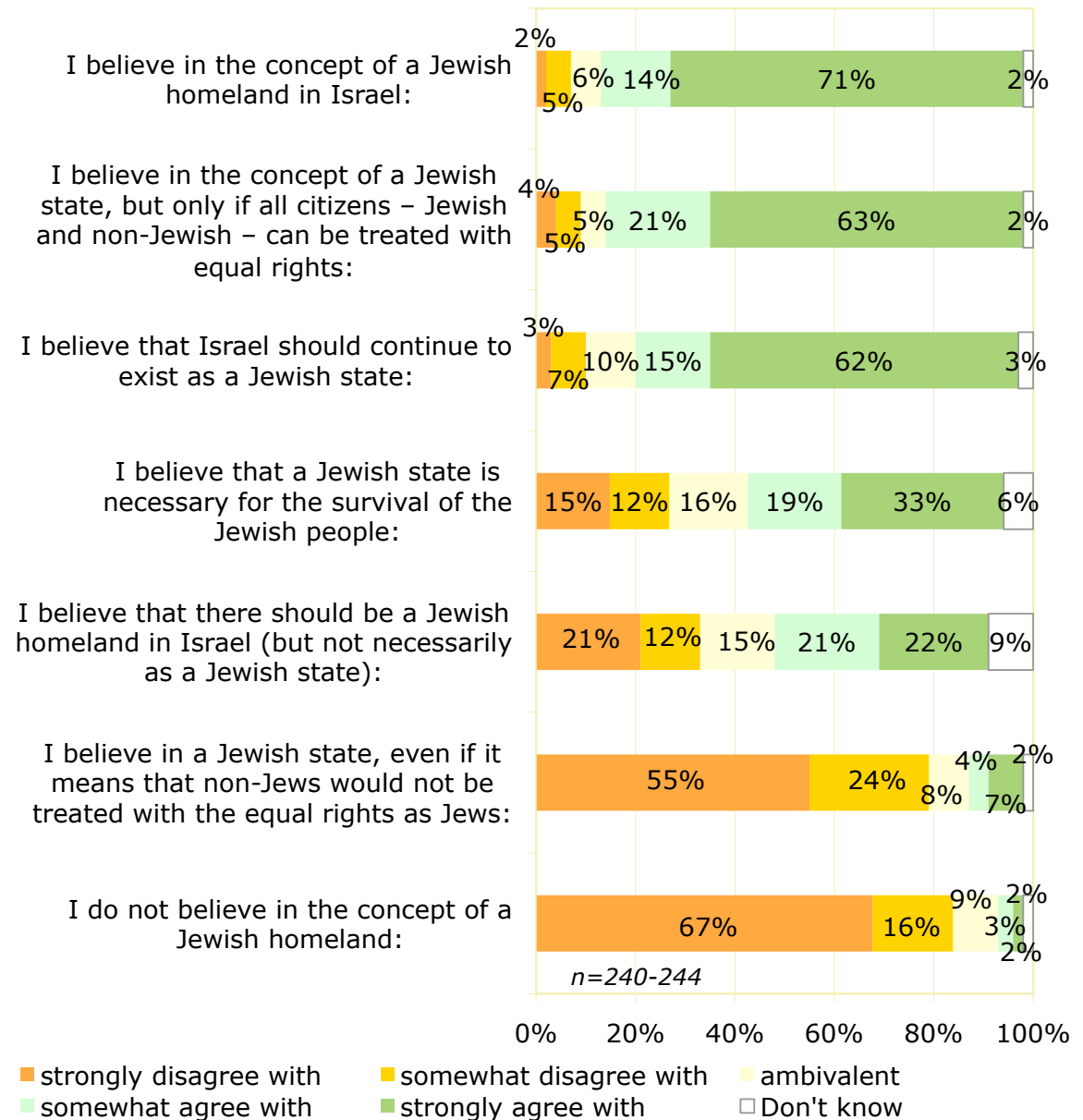
16. Please indicate the extent to which you support the following:



Regarding a Jewish homeland and statehood...

18. Thinking about Israel as a Jewish homeland – and without getting into exact borders – please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

- People overwhelmingly support the notion of a Jewish homeland in Israel
- But there is a lot of unease when it comes to inequalities between Jews and non-Jews
- Views are mixed on whether a Jewish state is necessary for survival of the Jewish people



On statehood, self-determination, and national rights

Other responses covered a wide spectrum of positions:

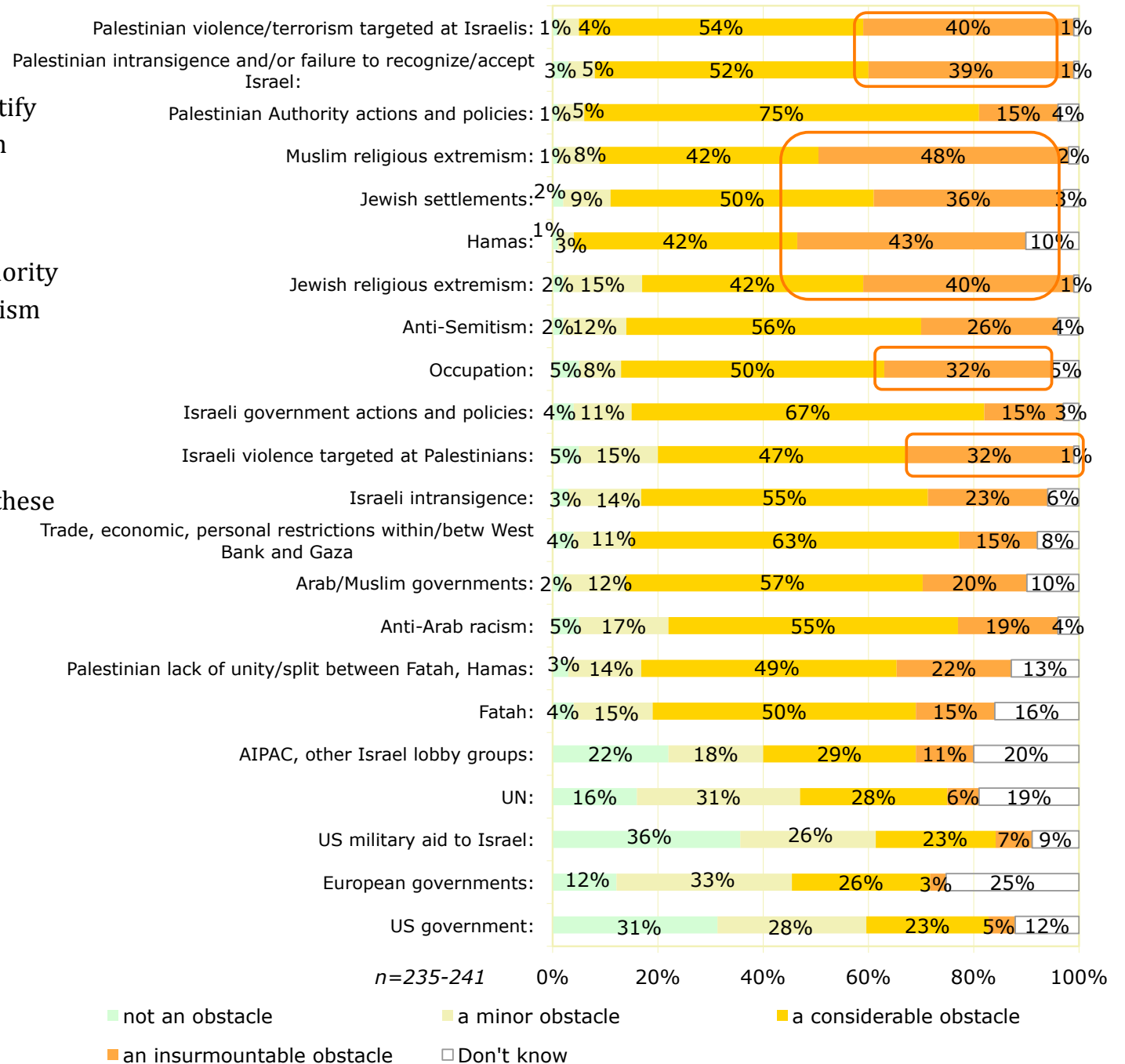
“It is absurd to be asking these questions! Israel is a fact. It is a Jewish, democratic state. It exists. The fact that the world continues to force Israel to justify its existence at every turn is infuriating...”

“I can't think of a way to have a just Jewish state in practice without doing violence to the rights and lives of Palestinians.”

17. Please rate the following in terms of what degree they represent obstacles to achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace:

Obstacles to Peace

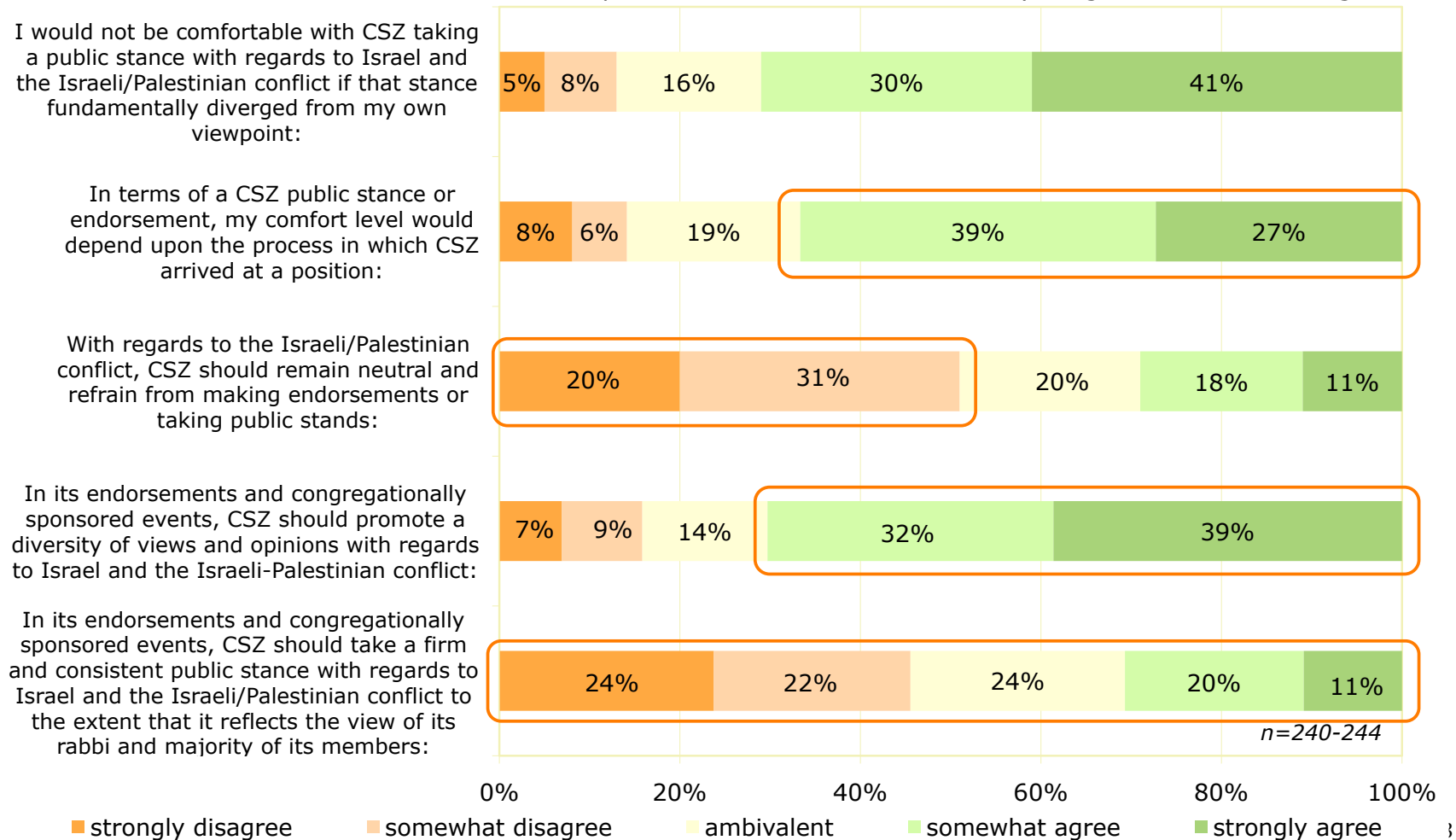
- People overwhelmingly identify obstacles on the part of both Israelis and Palestinians
- Violence, government/ authority policy, and religious extremism – on both sides – as well as Jewish settlements and occupation were most often identified as obstacles
 - Many people consider these insurmountable



On how CSZ should articulate policy around Israel

- Most believe CSZ should promote a diversity of views
- Members are mixed on the idea of CSZ taking a firm/consistent stance, with the plurality uncomfortable with this notion, but a slight majority would rather not us be mute on the subject
- Process – if we went there – would be important

21. Thinking of how Sha'ar Zahav as a Congregation might take public positions on Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following:



On how CSZ should articulate policy around Israel – Other responses

Policy may affect membership decision for certain individuals:

“...If CSZ took a pro Israeli stance, I may actually withdraw my membership (which I did once before years ago after the rabbi's holy day sermon)...”

“csz should strongly support Israel. If csz did not support Israel, we would leave the congregation.”

“I think it's ridiculous to remain neutral on such a important Jewish issue, and shows lack of courage...”

Some disappointment with a perceived policy:

“The truth is, that Sha'ar Zahav takes a stand on Zionism all the time. The status quo, in our prayer book, in our services, and in our events is Zionism, even though certainly a note of criticism is injected...”

“Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is too ambivalent regarding Israel. It is a lukewarm if not hostile congregation to the Jewish Homeland. It would be better if CSZ made no public statements regarding Israel, because they are always so qualified by CSZ's political correctness as to be meaningless and really hostile to Israel.”

On how CSZ should articulate policy around Israel – Other responses

On whether/how CSZ takes a stance or position:

“This isn't our place. Our place is to help inform the public on queer/jewish issues, not on other political things. Taking public positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict won't help keep our shul together but will drive us apart.”

“I think it's ridiculous to remain neutral on such a important Jewish issue, and shows lack of courage.”

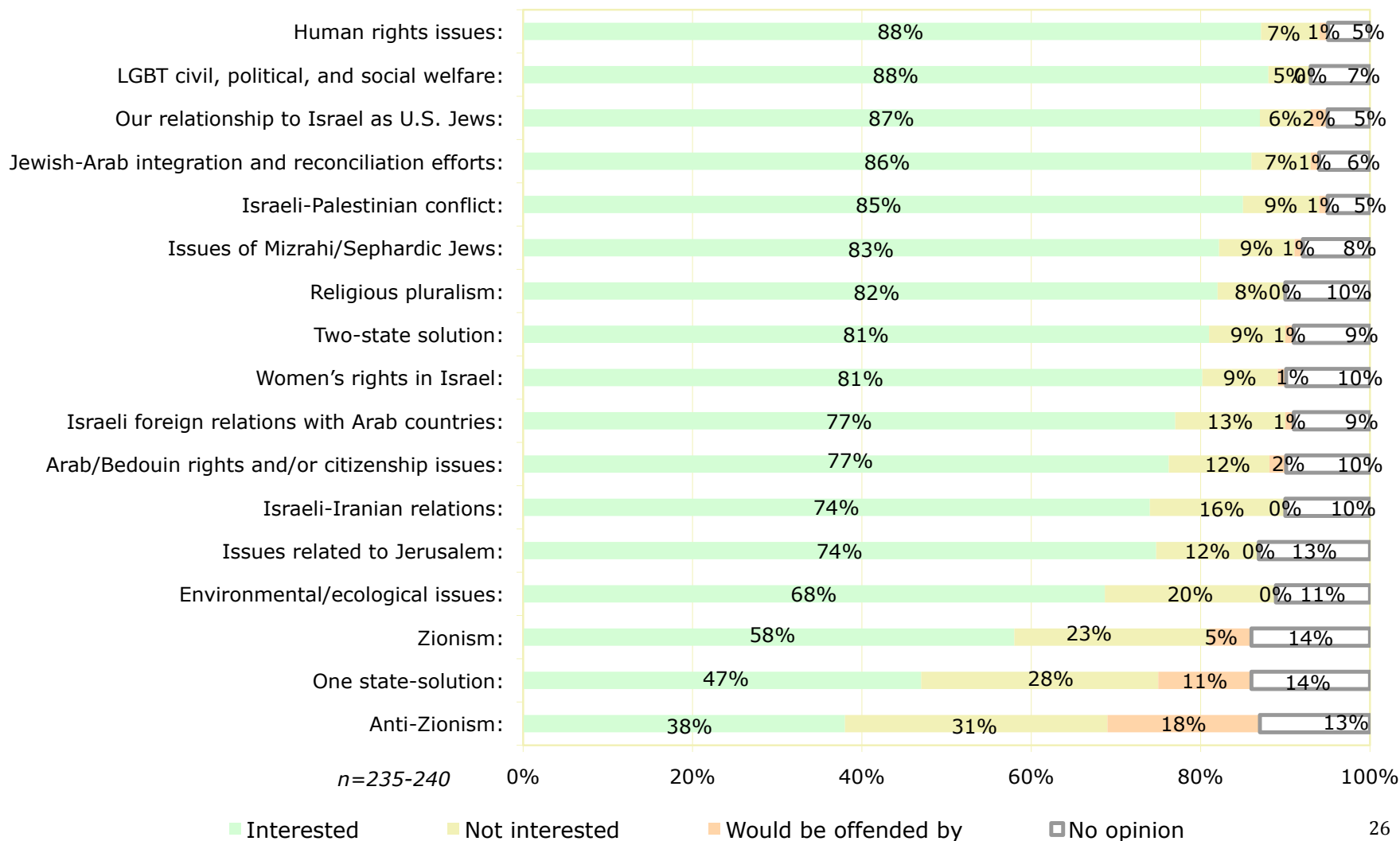
“Let's not get too much like the Berkeley City Counsel--debating foreign policy while the streets are full of potholes.”

“I think CSZ does not need to find and express a consistent majority view, nor does it need to promote a diversity of views. It does need to provide some leadership and it can do that best by education and by acknowledging that not everyone agrees - not promote diversity, but do acknowledge diversity. I don't think it helps to remain neutral when ethical issues are raised: why have a religion then?”

In terms of how we might engage, Human/Civil Rights top the list, as does the discussion of how we as US Jews relate to Israel

- Strong interest in engaging with Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Measurable resistance on the topic of Anti-Zionism and a one-state solution

23. Please rate your interest with respect to Sha'ar Zahav facilitating discussions on the following subjects as they pertain to Israel:



We are largely unfamiliar with US organizational missions or policies around Israel

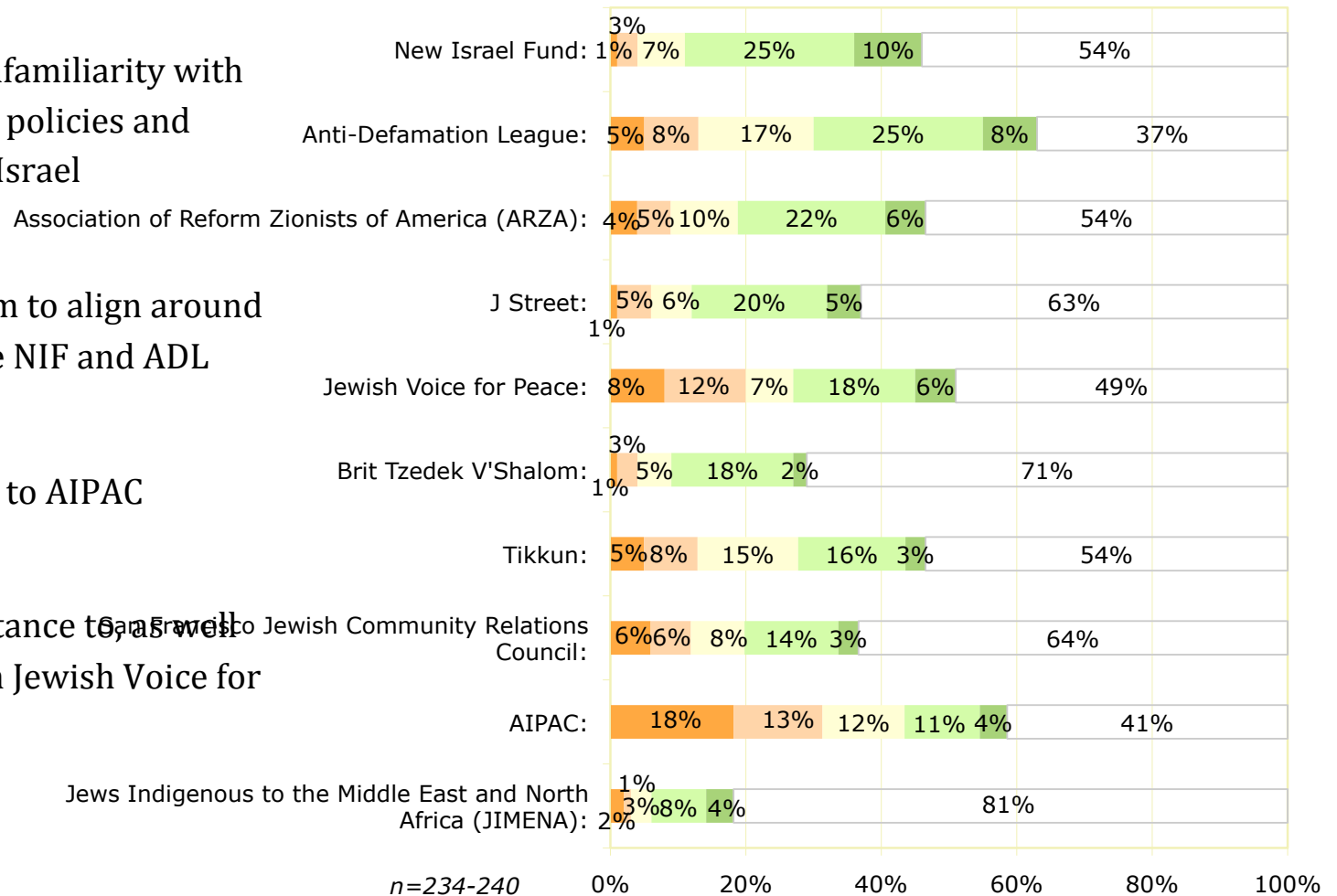
24. Please indicate to what extent the positions of the following organizations align with your political views with respect to Israel and/or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

- High degree of unfamiliarity with US organizations' policies and missions around Israel

- The plurality seem to align around organizations like NIF and ADL

- Strong resistance to AIPAC

- Measurable resistance to AIPAC as well as alignment with Jewish Voice for Peace

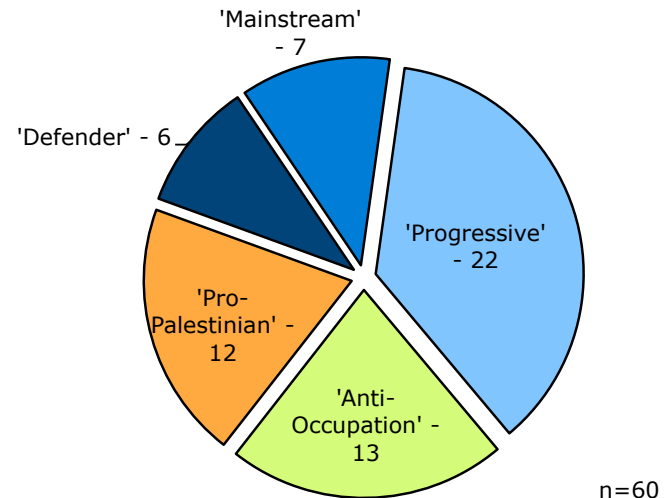


■ diametrically opposed to my views ■ mostly differs from my views
■ ambivalent or inconsistent w/my views ■ mostly aligns w/my views
■ completely aligns w/my views Insufficient knowledge

Other mentions of organizations

- We grouped write-ins by political leaning:
 - 'Defenders' – ADL, AIPAC, CAMERA, Honest Reporting, Stand with Us
 - 'Mainstream' – American Jewish League, Birthright, BlueStar PR, Hadassah, Israel Center of the SFJCF, JTA, JNF, MEMRI
 - 'Progressive' – ARZA, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, J Street, Jerusalem Open House, NIF, World Union for Progressive Judaism
 - 'Anti-Occupation' – Combatants for Peace, Jewish Voice for Peace, OneVoice, Machsom Watch, Peace Now, Rabbis for Human Rights, US Campaign to End the Occupation
 - 'Pro-Palestinian' – Birthright Unplugged, ICAHD, Int'l Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, MECA, Students for Justice in Palestine

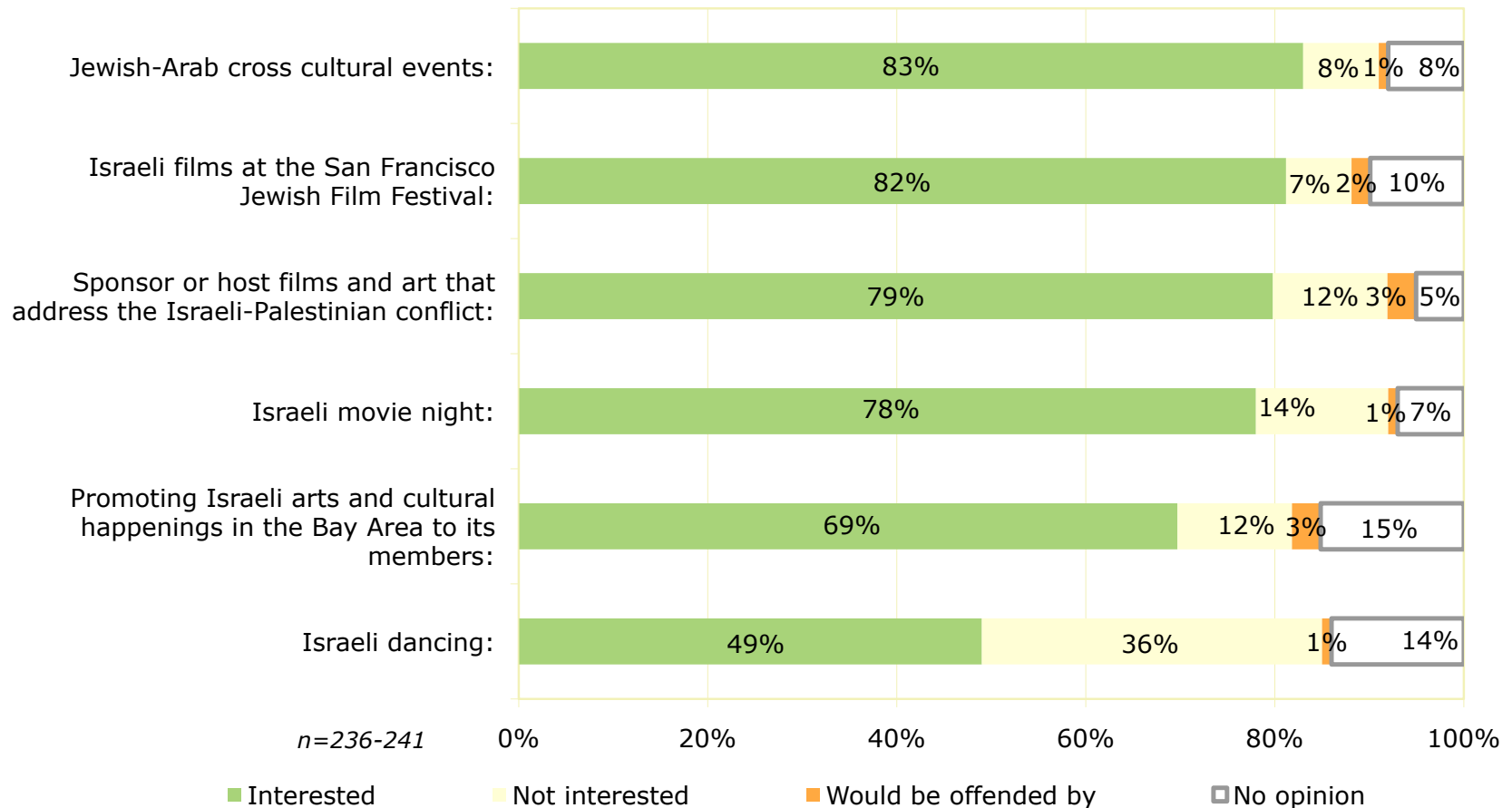
25. Please indicate below any other organization (U.S.-, Israeli-, or Mideast-based) with which you align or support when it comes to Israeli and/or Israeli-Palestinian political issues:



Interest in Israel-related events at Sha'ar Zahav

- People are largely interested in events hosted by CSZ that address both culture and the conflict

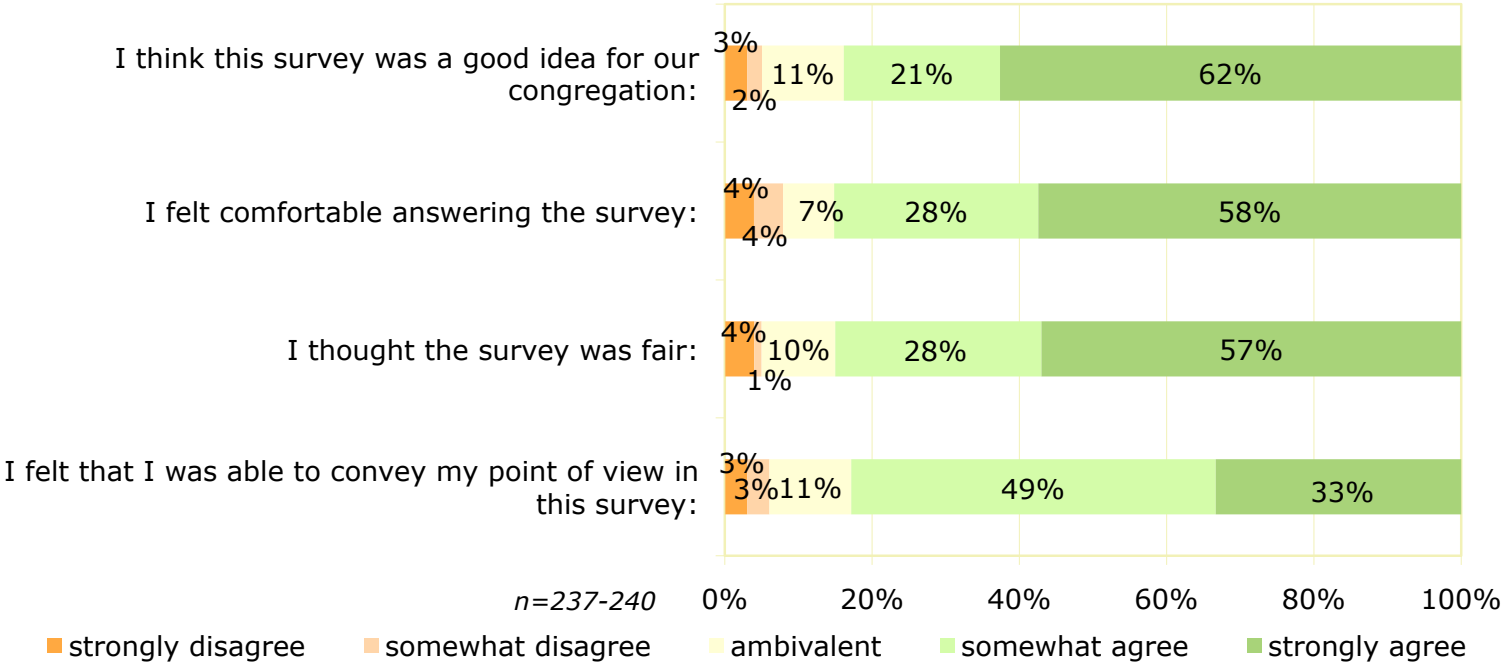
20. Please indicate your personal interest with respect to Sha'ar Zahav hosting or sponsoring activities related to Israeli arts and culture:



The survey experience

- People generally thought the survey was a good idea for our congregation, that they were comfortable answering, and that it was fair

26. Thinking about this survey, please indicate the extent you agree with the following:



The survey experience – Other comments

“My discomfort in the survey was appropriate: these are hard questions...”

“...thanks for taking the time to come to us for our thoughts, views, opinions...”

“these topics are already addressed at BSPM. i think it likely that csz already has an agenda & wants to use this survey to further the preexisting agenda”

“...This survey, whose premise is that Israel's existence is still a fair topic of debate, is yet one more indication to me that I will never feel fully at home at CSZ.”

“...many of these questions were about my relationship with Israel, instead of my relationship with Palestine, which is (frankly) just as compelling and complex...”

“One issue that was missing: the convert and Israel; where are they in the equation, who represents them, and are their concerns important?”

“I'm too verbose for most of the "other" fields in this survey.”

“...Given the limitations of the format, it was well done.”

“...Our opinions are powerful and much of the 'Jewish establishment' is afraid of them. Thank you for going there, and please share with us the complete results.”

Post-Presentation Discussion, p.1

1. Find out all organizations people don't know about, and inform congregants
2. Are respondents reflective of the congregation as a whole? Esp. is portion under 35yo reflective of true age composition?
3. Explore issues between young and old – dialogue
4. See cross-section among e.g., what percentage of those who feel shame have not visited Israel; deeper understanding of cross-tabulation
5. RE: categorization of how people identify – did not reflect nuances of how people identify
6. Many areas of connection to Israel that were missing: Hebrew, liturgy, experiential way of connecting was not solicited
7. Fear of perception of younger population as 'uneducated' – on the contrary...; Interest in how Israel treats non-Jews
8. Many non-political paths to engagement that were surfaced by the survey
9. Include in education things that they don't know about Israel; help people understand how to communicate about and dialogue around the 'tough issues'
10. No one identified as 'anti-Israel'; exploring issues both political and cultural; generational divide is not shocking; there is a clear generational evolution in terms of viewpoint; what does that mean for CSZ as it tries to attract young people

Post-Presentation Discussion, p.2

11. RE: categorization of write-in organizations; need to revisit
12. Amazed at overlap in the write-in reviews; pleased that, at least as phrased, an opportunity to share so much without shaking up our core identities; we are primarily not opposed to one another's views
13. We finally 'located' ourselves, rather than just projecting ourselves; we now have a transparent basis to understand our true range of viewpoints
14. Taking the survey, had high anxiety; but feelings of living in America are equally muddled
15. What wasn't addressed: context behind discussion on a specific context is missing
16. Extraordinary passion and emotion, diversity, and nuance about the issue; if we're really going to try to understand our relationships, those discussions have to occur, and the diversity of opinions is enormous; need to exercise enormous care in allowing everyone to be heard
17. Everyone is approaching with a level of compassion – for both groups of people
18. Can't remember how I answered questions; might change my answer today; I'm a moving target; if we took this in a year, what would happen?
19. If congregation decides to take a stance, concern that it shouldn't be a function of a majority; we should look for what will engender a very strong majority
20. Heavy dependence on what our friends have to say, mainstream media; how can we enhance the flow of information for such a complex subject?

Post-Presentation Discussion, p.3

Next steps/ now what?

1. Survey and the science: deeper dive and interpretation, or does it lead to a deeper survey? How do we understand what's missing from the survey? Doesn't imply that synagogue life is a connection to Israel?
2. Interest in personal histories that inform where we sit; less productive to start in how people identify versus educational dialogue/programming/ emotion sharing/personal history
3. Results on younger population is consistent with Hillel, which has brought a number of organizations to campuses; as we approach a wide spectrum of programming, there will be those outside the community who will be condemnatory of our bringing groups into a synagogue that are beyond a certain level; need the right media communication.
4. Concern that we open ourselves to a 'marketplace of ideas' – potential to create more confusion; versus listening to personal histories which may be more productive.
5. Would like small, consistent groups for dialogue over time; builds trust; plug for art, theater, tv shows as a safe way to introduce viewpoints that are more easily listened to
6. Identify what we really want to accomplish; need to practice dialogue in a very mindful and productive way
7. Can we take inventory of what we've done in the past, what has been the reactions? As a queer synagogue, we can have certain conversations that won't happen elsewhere...