Editor's Introduction

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This latest issue of v38 presents us with a wide spectrum of social science approaches across varied geographical contexts. A theme running throughout the original research articles published in this issue is that of Jews' ontological security, or, as our first author, Maryam Dilmaghani, puts it, "an effort to meet the individual's need for a sense of stability and continuity in persons and things." We see how a lack of ontological security affects Jews' homeownership in Canada, the strategies to reach ontological security among second-generation Israeli immigrants to the United States, how British Jews use music in interaction with liturgy to create a new ontological space, how the ontological security of contemporary Croatian Jews is threatened both by external political forces and forces internal to the Croatian Jewish community, and how Jews' perception of the external forces of discrimination against non-Jews affects the ontological security of American Jews.

The first article queries why fewer Jews than non-Jews own homes in Montreal and Toronto and seeks to explain why this pattern persists in the former more than in the latter. While the more common diaspora hypothesis is explored for the differences between Jews and non-Jews, Maryam Dilmaghani highlights the role of ontological security as an explanation. Few would argue that throughout history, Jews have suffered from a lack of ontological security due both to external and internal forces; yet many other factors besides this characteristic are often offered as explanations for the phenomena we observe. This article suggests that we be mindful of the effects that historical circumstances have had upon Jews throughout history, across geographical contexts, and transgenerationally.

One source of such instability is international migration, the focus of our second article. Lilach Lev-Ari and Nir Cohen study acculturation strategies that are used by second-generation Israeli migrants as they seek to regain ontological security, this time in the United States. They too expand on existing models of acculturation to address such processes among second-generation immigrants, offering insights gleaned from their qualitative methods.

Ruth Illman also uses qualitative, ethnographic methodology to study the meaning of changes in the use of music among liberal, progressive Jews in the United

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Kingdom. As she shows, there is a “reflexive turn” (or a “turn within”) that the data reveal, which necessitates taking into account gendered, ethnic, and social forces that intersectional analysis uncovers. Further, the music provides a bridge with tradition that interacts with the language of prayer and liturgy to define a new ontological space for this group of Jews.

In her study of contemporary Croatian Jews and their community life, Nila Hofman addresses what she sees as the attempt to rewrite history and recreate a particular type of Jewish community, as it intersects with the climate of neoliberalism in Croatia, with a resulting threat to the contemporary ontological security of Croatian Jews as Jews. Interviewing key leaders in the Jewish Croatian scene, and mining published artifacts and data, Hofman applies cultural analysis to understand contemporary developments that have dire consequences for individual and collective Jewish identity in this context.

In the last of the original research articles, Jeffrey E. Cohen explores a source of Jews’ ontological insecurity. Stretching our understanding of why American Jews perceive so much antisemitism and discrimination, Cohen suggests that “when Jews perceive high levels of discrimination against non-Jews, they fear that discrimination against non-Jews will spread to Jews.” He uses data from the 2013 Pew Survey of American Jews to test this hypothesis and finds support for it.

We thus see that across varied geographical contexts, a combination of both external and internal forces interact to influence the ontological security of contemporary Jews, and how the lack of ontological security influences their actions and strategies of identity and of action.

We can also see how this theme runs through the book reviews that are published in this issue. A major threat to feminist Jewish “ontological security” has been the challenge feminist women have faced when trying to reconcile their Jewish identity with their radical politics; Phyllis Chesler has recently elaborated on this challenge in her book, *A Politically Incorrect Feminist* (St. Martin’s Press, 2018). In this issue, Tahneer Oksman reviews Joyce Antler’s *Jewish Radical Feminism: Voices from the Women’s Liberation Movement*, which explores the intersection of Jewishness and radical feminist politics and how Jewish identity did (or did not) play a role in the lives of the women active in the movement. Leslie Fishbein reviews Marc Dollinger’s *Black Power, Jewish Politics*, another source both for ontological security and insecurity for Jews, as history unfolds. In this context, Dollinger shows that the interaction with the ontological security of blacks provides an interesting backdrop for historical developments, right up to the present. In the final book review, Stuart Schoenfeld shows how Pomson and Schnoor, in their book on the Jewish family, argue “for a research focus on the role of family systems in [Jewish] identity,” in other words, how the Jewish family provides the context within which we construct ontological security and meaning. One of the forces they describe are “ontogenetic forces,” which intersect with history and generation to shape the family system.

As always, we include research updates and a list of books received.

I’d like to remind you that additional articles are posted online on the Contemporary Jewry website as they are ready for publication.

Finally, I’d like to alert you to the upcoming special issue on methodology, an upcoming special issue on Iberian Jewry, and an upcoming special issue on Judaism

in comparative perspective. And, our latest call for papers is for a special forum for “Analysis and Reflection on the Social Scientific Study of Jewry: The State of our Field and Suggestions for its Future.” Topics for consideration include (but are not limited to) scholarly analysis of our field, both within and outside of the academy, including (but not limited to) analytical arguments about: the causes and consequences of gender imbalances in power, authority and voice (who chooses what to study, how to study it, and what counts as important, as but one set of issues); gender as a focus but no less important issues related to sexual orientation, race/ethnicity/nationality, and/or ability/merit; research ethics (including human subjects issues and whose responsibility this is); empirical data documenting women’s and other minorities’ place within the public sphere (e.g., inequities in pay, prestige, positions); and ethical responses to unethical procedures and/or conduct. While scholarly analysis from both academic and non-academic contexts is preferred, non-traditional formats may be considered as well as shorter-than-average pieces. All submissions are due online by February 1, 2019 and will be peer-reviewed per journal procedure; the forum in its entirety will be reviewed by a small editorial team. For more details, please contact me directly (hartman@rowan.edu).

I hope your reading of this issue provides fodder for your own consideration of Jews’ ontological security and insecurity, its sources and its consequences. Comments welcome!