Editor's Introduction to v39, Issues 3–4

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These last two issues wind up our offerings for 2019, a year of transition from three to four issues a year, a year of transitions in editorial staff assisting us at Springer, a year of personal transitions. Transitioning to four issues a year means that accepted submissions will be able to be published more quickly, which is good news for us all. In 2019, it has meant that several manuscripts patiently (and sometimes, rightfully, not so patiently) waiting in the wings for months could finally see print. Hopefully, this process will become even more efficient in 2020.

I want to personally thank each of you who have volunteered your time to review submissions, sometimes through multiple versions. The journal would not be what it is without your peer reviews. In the first issue of 2020, all of you who reviewed this year will be publicly acknowledged. Here's a reminder that we are always on the lookout for new reviewers, so if you would like to be a part of this process, please e-mail me with a brief bio and your main fields of expertise; I'll be happy to add you to our reviewer pool. I also want to thank our main copy editors: Sarah Markowitz, whose diligence and thoroughness catches many muddles and mistakes, and Springer's copy editor Catherine Davis, whose expertise has raised the quality of our publication. Margaret Allen also provided excellent copyediting for some of the manuscripts in the current volume.

Issues 3–4 begin with a Special Forum, "Reflecting on the Social Scientific Study of Jewry—and Beyond" which has been more than a year in the making. The idea for it began as our field of study was rocked by revelations of a pattern of improper sexual conduct on the part of one of our colleagues, which quickly mushroomed into painful critiques not only of interpersonal behavior but of the field's scientific development, analytical and policy emphases. It became clear that the time was ripe for introspection and reform, not only on an interpersonal or institutional level but in terms of methods and foci of inquiry. I assembled an ad hoc editorial team who advised on the call for papers and helped to review the submissions. We decided on a collective introduction and epilogue and deliberately chose not to assign authorship to either of these pieces, because they were truly collaborations of a number of participants. The introduction was written over a period of several months with contributions from the editorial team,

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members of ASSJ (the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry) and other colleagues who had been active in the virtual discussions and publications about these concerns. I wish to thank those on the ad hoc editorial team for their time and energy which contributed invaluable insight and guidance as well as productive collaborative efforts: Joelle Bahloul (Indiana University), Sylvia Barack Fishman (Brandeis University), Shawn Landres (Jumpstart Labs/UCLA), Debra Kaufman (Northeastern University), Judit Bokser Llwera (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Hebrew University), Randal Schnoor (York University), Emily Sigalow (Brandeis University) and Jennifer Thompson (California State University at Northridge).

We follow the Forum with a new policy section, which presents the Reconstructionist Position Paper on Non-Jewish Partner Policy, authored by Rabbi Deborah Waxman, President of Reconstructing Judaism, the central organization of the Reconstructionist movement. This new section will appear from time to time, as the development of new policies is explained in depth. This publication of the position paper does not mean *Contemporary Jewry* or its sponsoring association ASSJ or the publisher endorses the actual policy position, but that we think its development is appropriate food for thought for our readers, who are committed to following developments in contemporary Jewry. We welcome your reactions and comments to the presentation.

Three original research articles follow: Anat Feldman's "Education and Employment among Ultra-Orthodox Women in Israel," which focuses on the Shas Party's reactions to and guidance of its women's participation in higher education and new directions of labor force participation, and as the ultra-Orthodox grapple with changes in the surrounding opportunities and broader society. Also focusing on change among Orthodox women, Rivka Neriya-Ben Shahar's "We Need to Worship Outside of Conventional Boundaries" explores new types of worship that women engage in, and the resulting impacts rippling throughout the community. In "Framing Conflict," Ari Kelman and Ilan Zvi Baron present a case study of a congregation to understand the challenges faced by contemporary American synagogues in terms of talking about Israel. Notably, all three of these articles utilize some form of qualitative research.

Helen Kim, our research editor, provides us with updates both from individual scholars and from research institutes. Daniel Parmer, our book review editor, has arranged for book reviews on two recent publications: Alexander Kaye reviews Simon Rabinovitch's edited volume *Defining Israel: The Jewish State, Democracy, and the Law*, and Hilary Falb Kalisman reviews Michael Brenner's *In Search of Israel: The History of an Idea*. These reviews, presenting some of the controversial issues surrounding the current state of Israel and its establishment, explain some of the challenges that enter into consideration by congregations about whether to air conflicting opinions in their public forums on Israel, as the Kelman and Baron research addresses.

As always, we hope the reading is stimulating and thought-provoking, and we welcome any feedback or comments (hartman@rowan.edu).

Best wishes for a thoughtful, challenging, productive and rewarding 2020.