Jewish Federations of North America

The Peoplehood Paradigm • Part Two

The Bilateral Relationship Between American and Israel Jews

Findings from two parallel surveys of American and Israeli Jews



The Jewish Peoplehood Paradigm builds directly on the rise in peoplehood we found in Part One

Purpose of This Research

- Identify where American and Israeli Jewish communities are aligned and where they differ
- Create a foundation for more empathetic conversations and stronger relationships

Our Foundation: Strong, Rising Peoplehood

- American and Israeli Jews increasingly see one another as family or community
- Both affirm that Jews everywhere share a common fate and must act accordingly

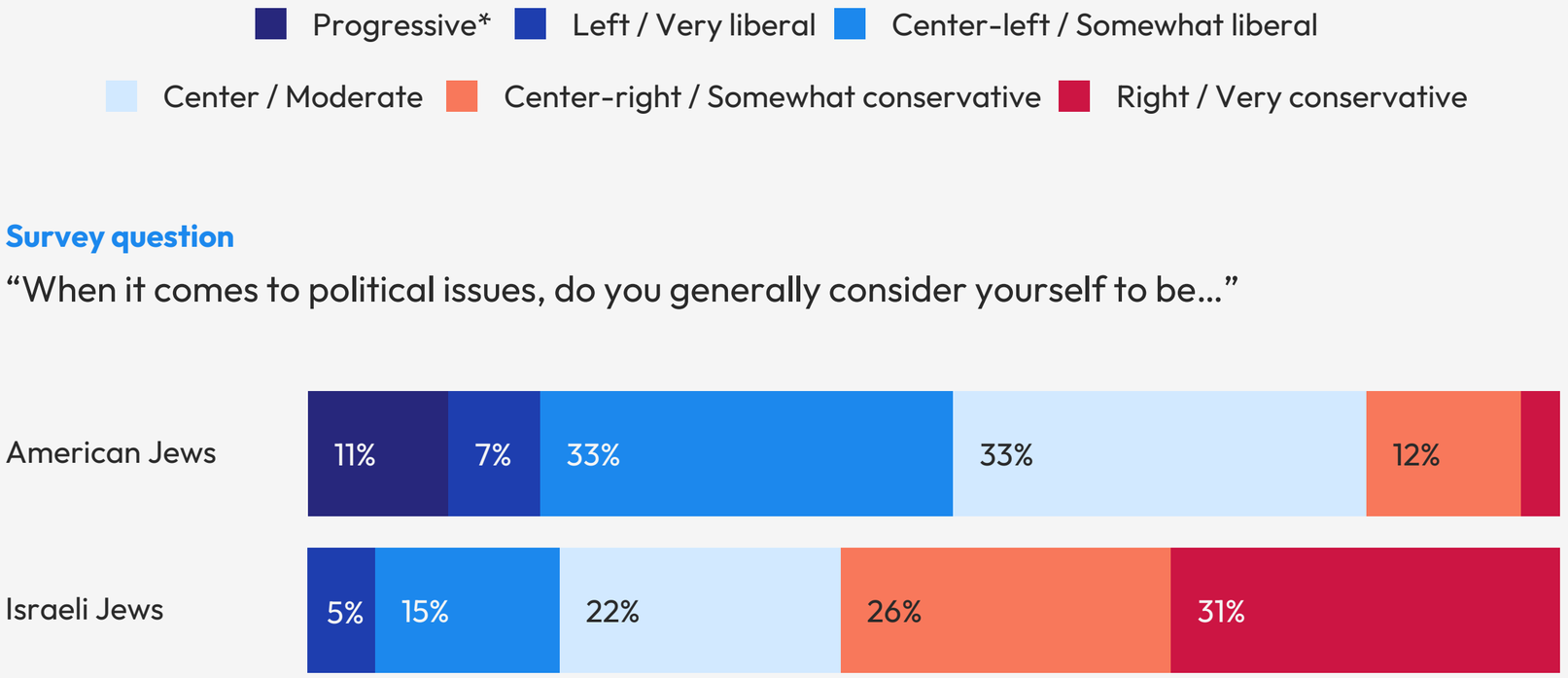
This piece looks at where American and Israeli Jews see things differently, and why that difference exists.

Where we divide isn’t national. It’s ideological.

- On most of the questions where American and Israeli Jews disagree, **the real fault line is political ideology** , not which country someone lives in.
- Jews on the left in America and Jews on the left in Israel see these issues in strikingly similar ways. The same holds true on the right.
- What differs between the two countries isn’t the views themselves. It’s the proportions: the majority of American Jews lean left; the majority of Israeli Jews lean right.
- Across every ideology, Jews affirm responsibility for one another.

The task ahead isn’t to erase these divides. It’s to build connection across both: within each country, and between them.

American and Israeli Jews sit on the same ideological spectrum, leaning in opposite directions.

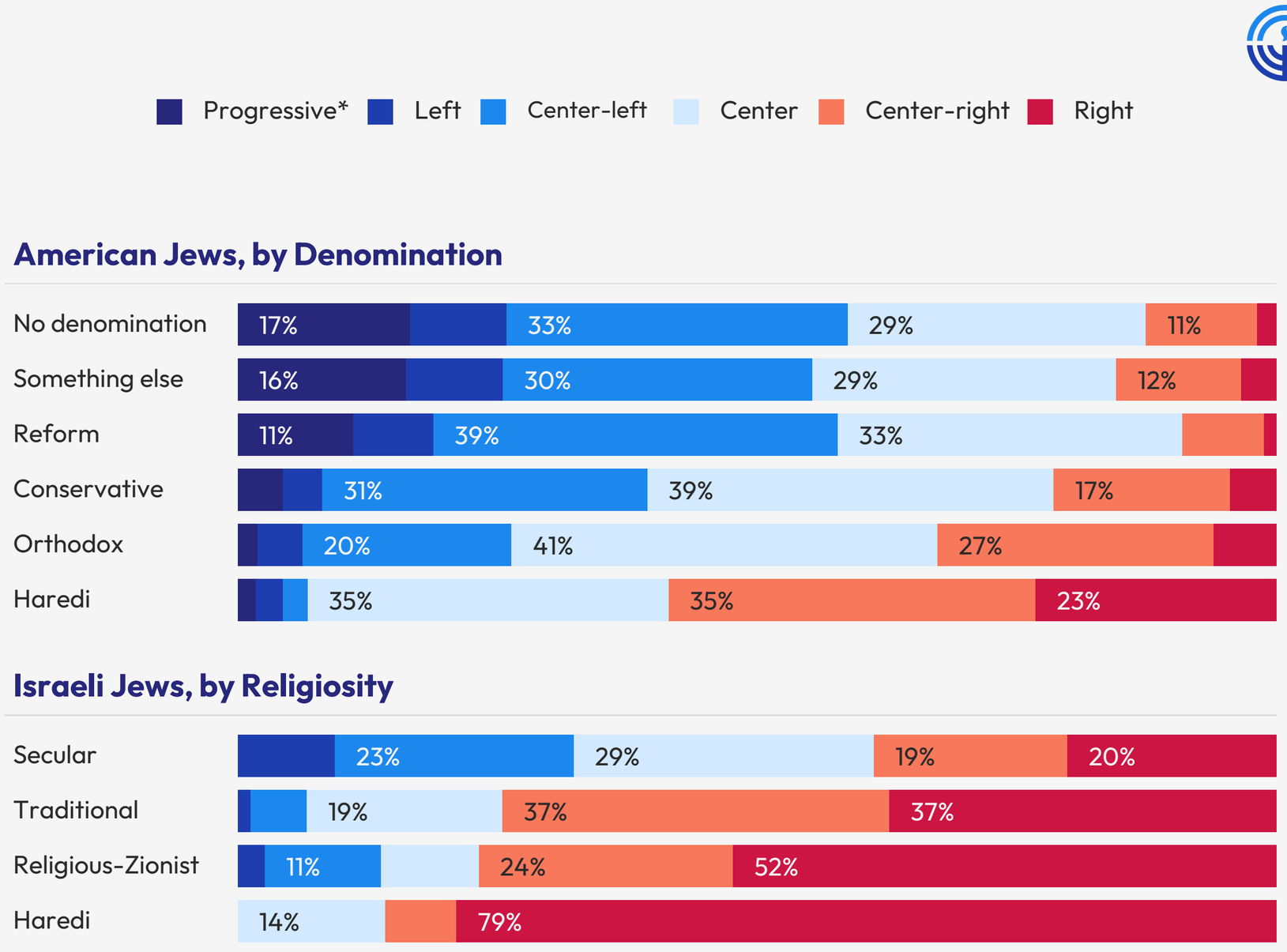


*Progressive was offered to American respondents only. The remaining slides use the left-hand descriptor for each category (Left, Center-left, Center, Center-right, Right).

Political Identity

In both communities, political ideology and religious affiliation are closely correlated.

From here, each issue follows the same pattern: what the left believes, what the right believes, and how the different mix of left and right in each country adds up to the overall difference between American and Israeli Jews.



Responsibility •
By Political Identity

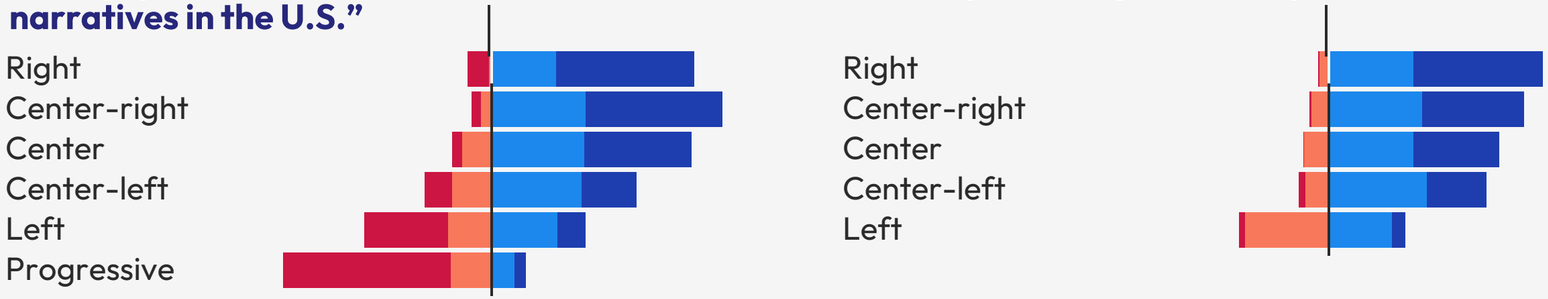
On how far American responsibility to Israel extends, the right in each country leans toward more, the left toward less.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree

American Jews

Israeli Jews

Survey question: "American Jewish communities have a responsibility to actively counter anti-Israel narratives in the U.S."



Survey question: "American Jews have an obligation to lobby the U.S. government in support of Israel."



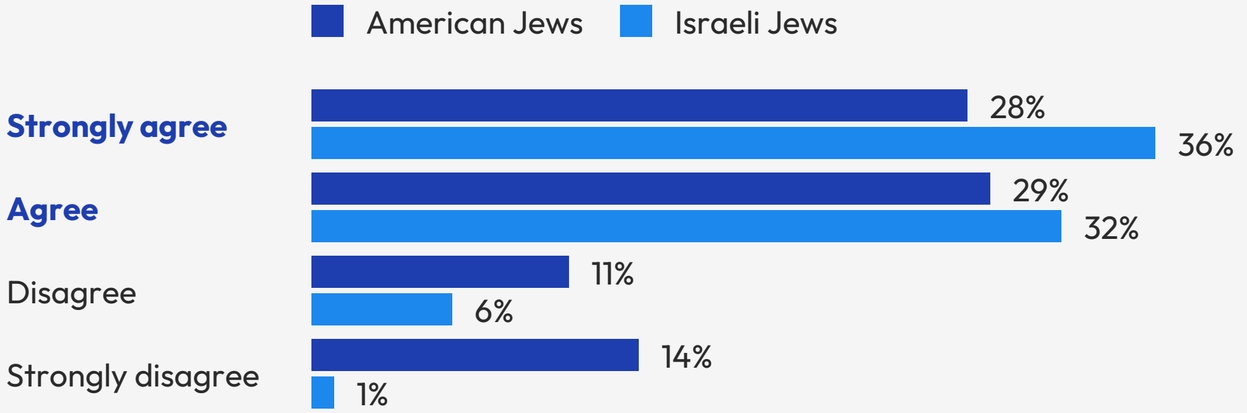
Due to each community's political lean, Israelis show greater agreement than Americans on both measures of US Jewish responsibility to Israel.

Survey question

"American Jewish communities have a responsibility to actively counter anti-Israel narratives in the U.S."

57% of American Jews agree

68% of Israeli Jews agree

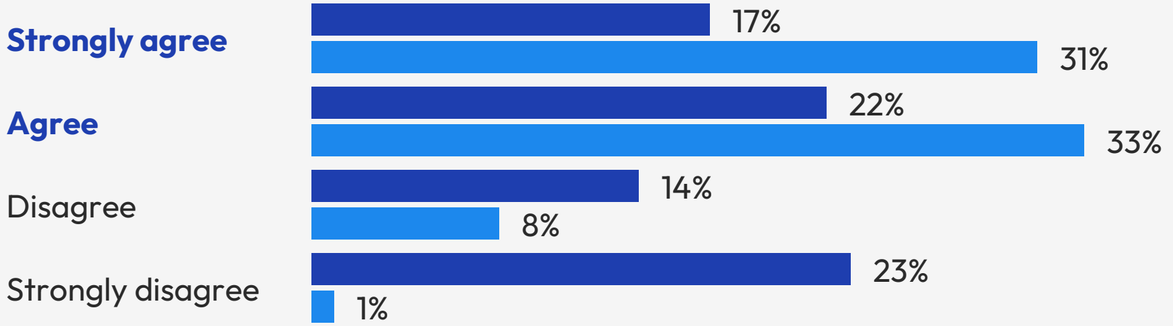


Survey question

"American Jews have an obligation to lobby the U.S. government in support of Israel."

39% of American Jews agree

64% of Israeli Jews agree

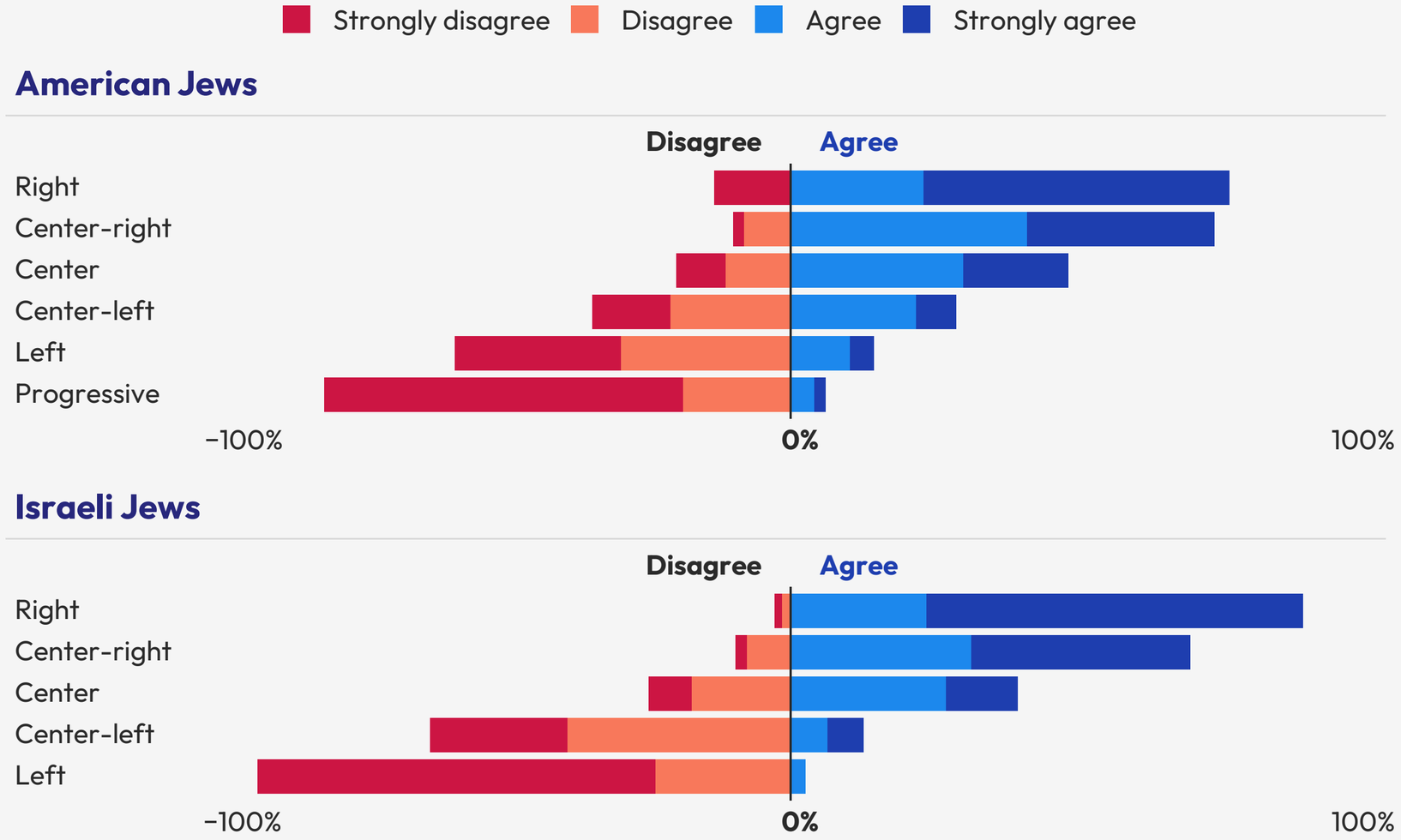


Security and Peace • By Political Identity

On the issue of control over the West Bank/ Judea & Samaria, the right agrees Israel can remain a democracy; the left disagrees.

Survey question

"Israel can remain a democracy while maintaining control over the West Bank."



*Because English and Hebrew discussions differ, the American survey used "the West Bank" and the Israeli survey used "Judea and Samaria."

Consistent with that ideological split, Israeli Jews are more likely than Americans to agree that Israel can remain a democracy while maintaining control of the West Bank/ Judea & Samaria.

Survey question

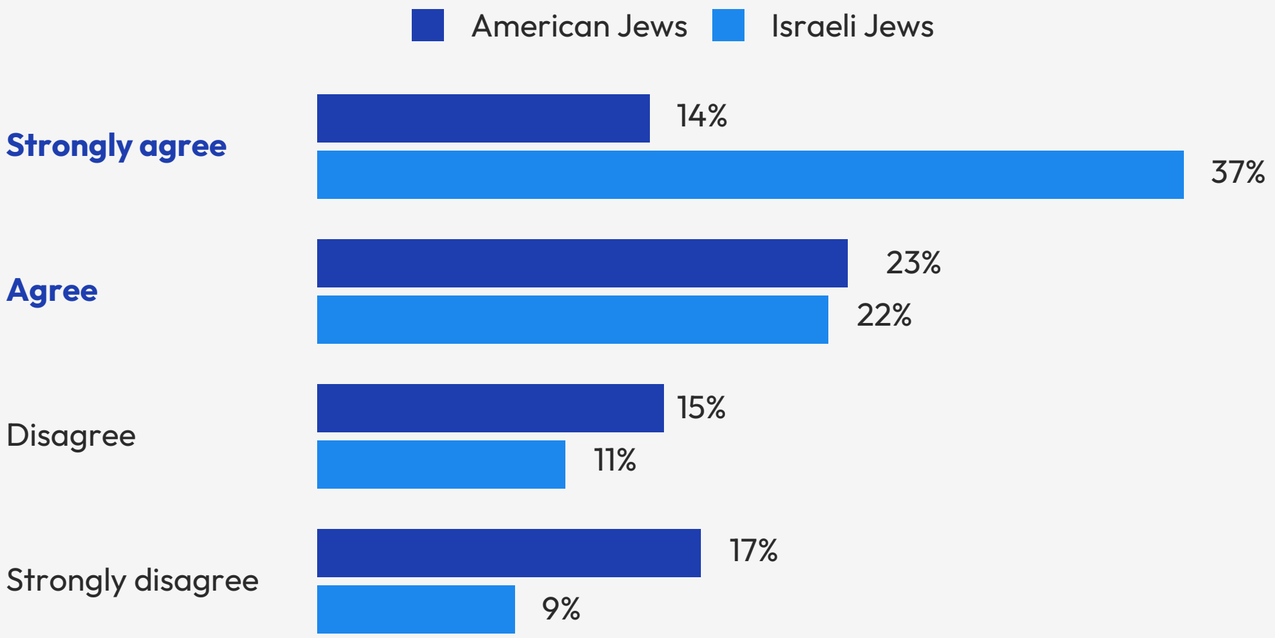
“Israel can remain a democracy while maintaining control over the West Bank.”

37%

of American Jews agree

60%

of Israeli Jews agree

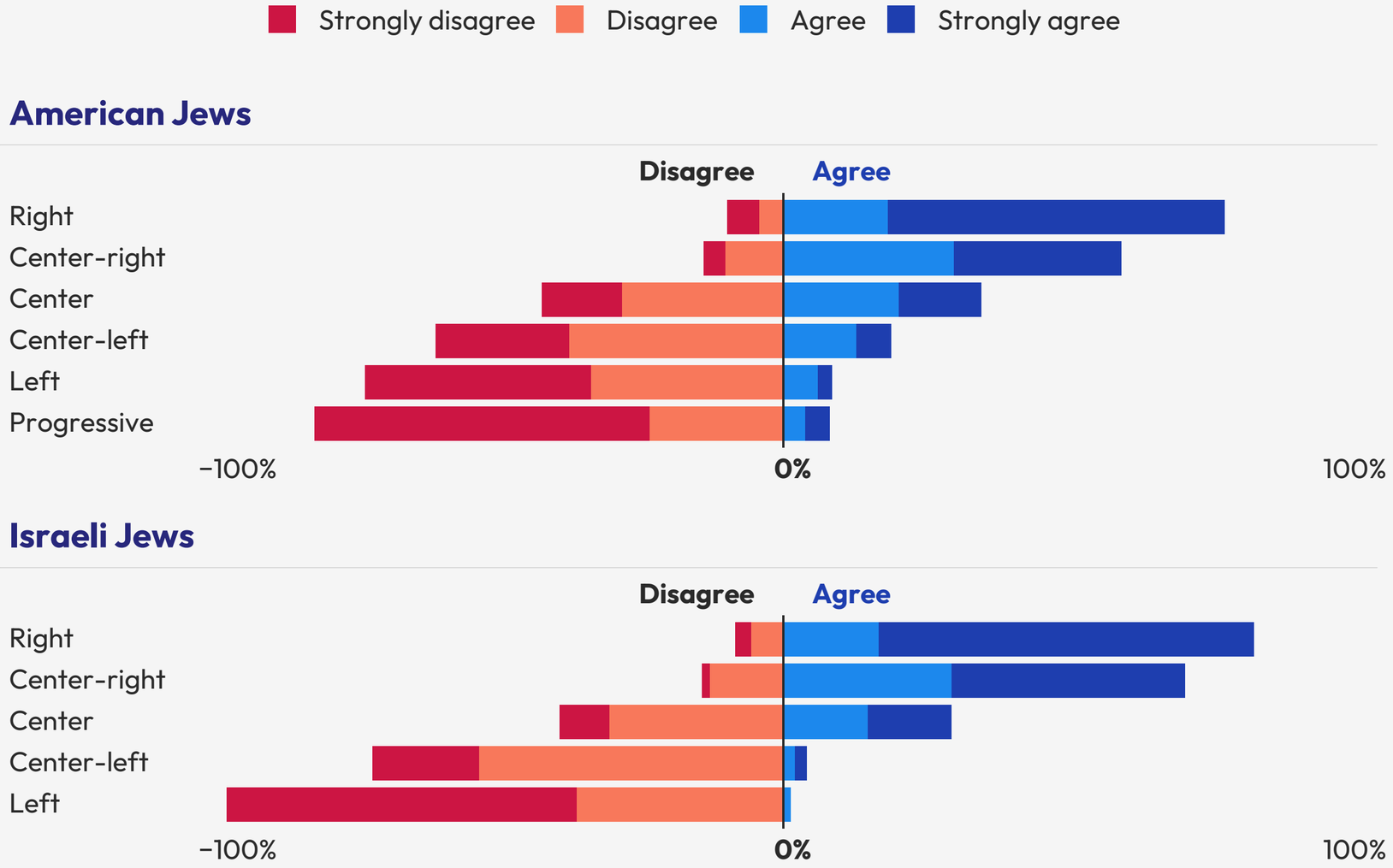


Security and Peace • By Political Identity

On the issue of whether Israeli security and Palestinian statehood are incompatible, the right agrees and the left disagrees.

Survey question

"Israeli security and Palestinian statehood are fundamentally incompatible goals."



In line with that same divide, Israeli Jews are more likely than Americans to agree that Israeli security and Palestinian statehood are fundamentally incompatible goals.

Survey question

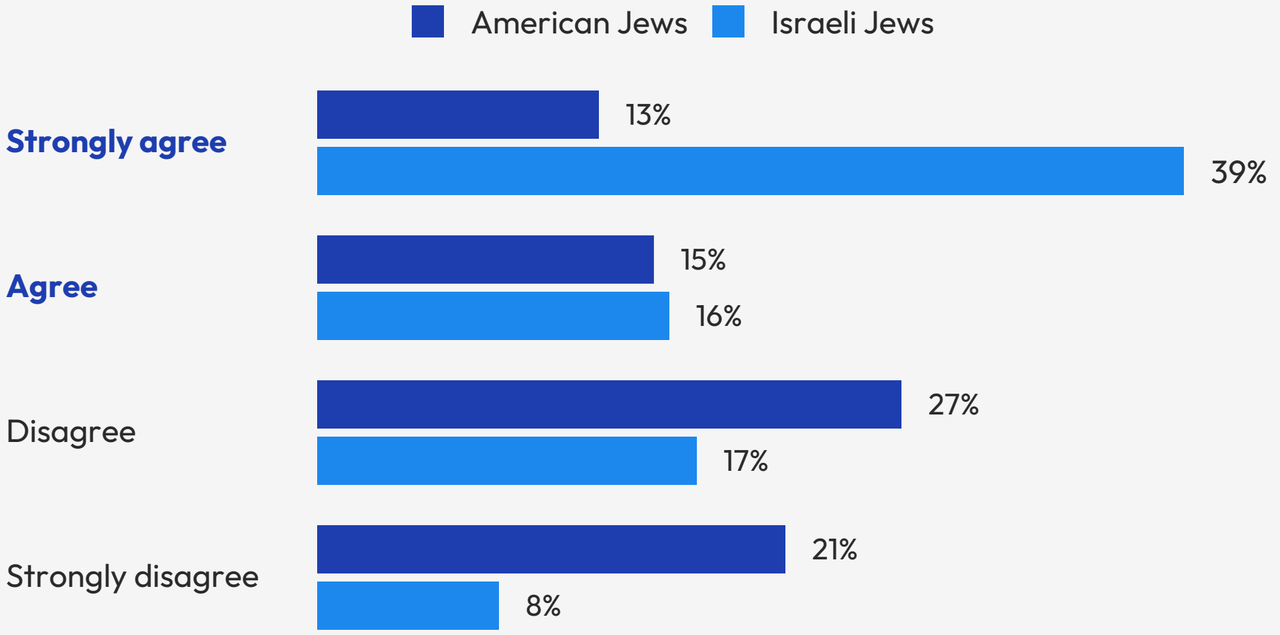
“Israeli security and Palestinian statehood are fundamentally incompatible goals.”

28%

of American Jews agree

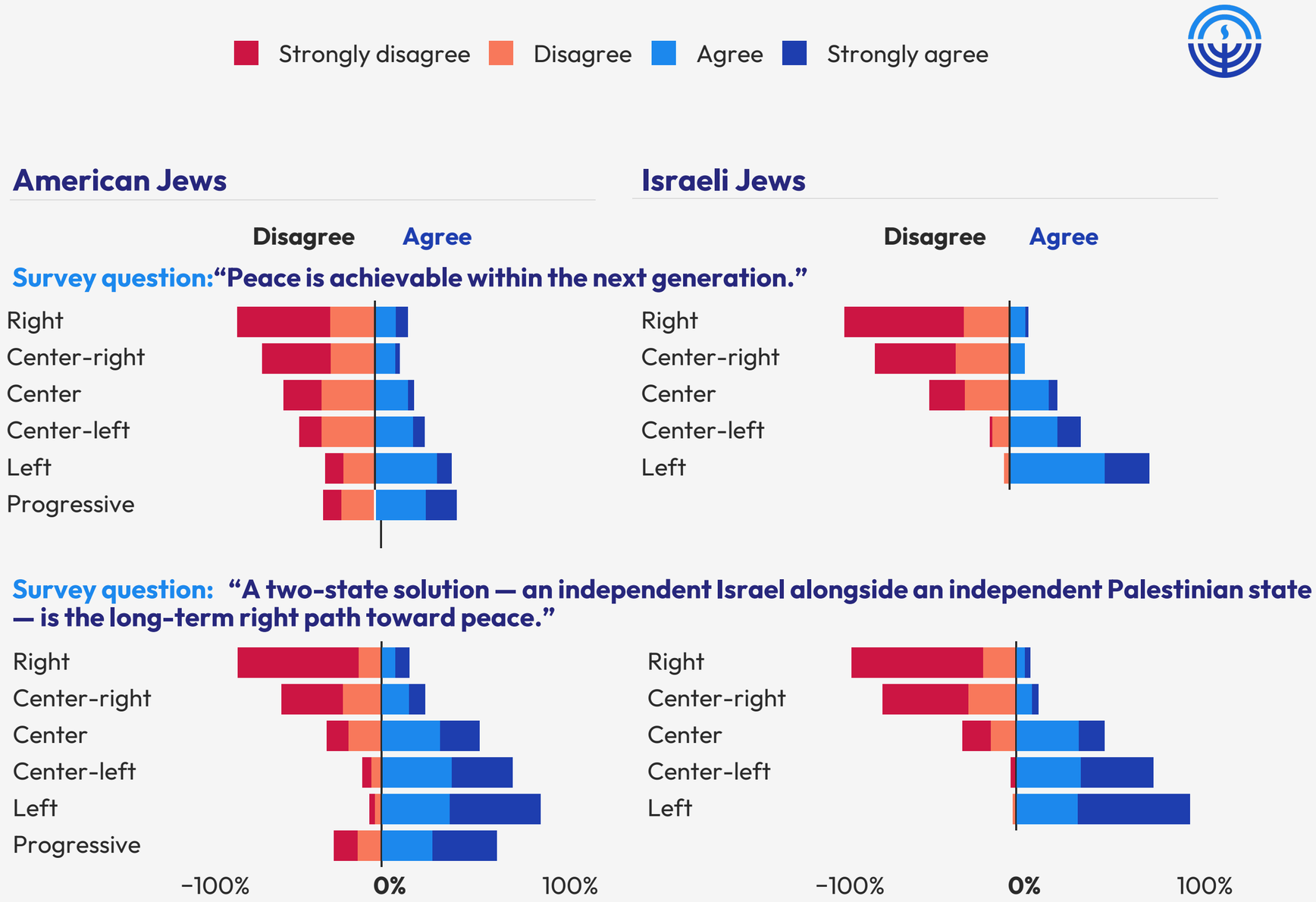
55%

of Israeli Jews agree



Security and Peace • By Political Identity

On questions related to peace, the left is more likely to agree and the right more likely to disagree.



Reflecting that same political divide, Americans are more hopeful than Israelis on both questions of peace, even though few on either side think peace is close.

Survey question

“Peace is achievable within the next generation.”

23% of American Jews agree

16% of Israeli Jews agree

Survey question

“A two-state solution is the long-term right path toward peace.”

50% of American Jews agree

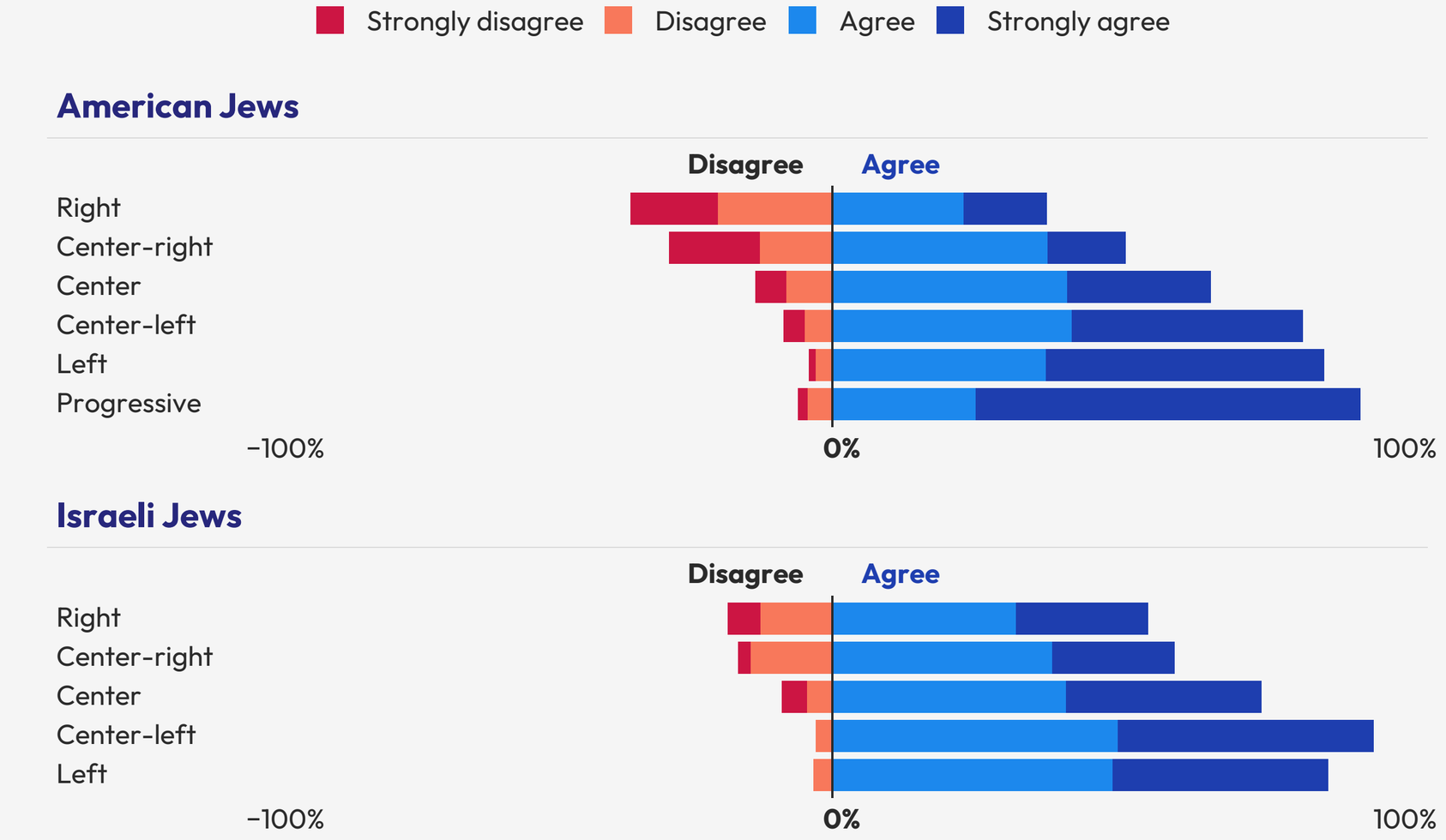
24% of Israeli Jews agree

Responsibility • By Political Identity

Overall, Israeli and American Jews agree that Israeli policies affect US Jewish safety, but the right is more likely to disagree.

Survey question

"Some Israeli government policies directly affect the physical safety of Jewish communities in the United States."



Despite real ideological division within each country, large majorities of American and Israeli Jews agree that Israeli policies have real consequences for U.S. Jews.

Survey question

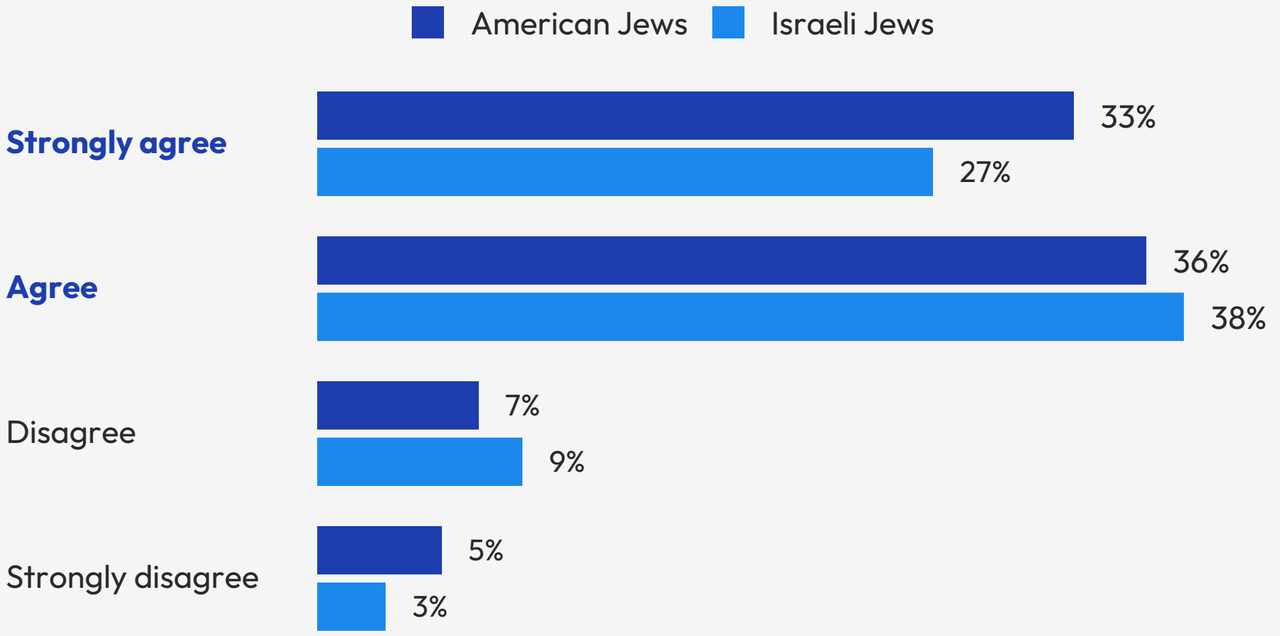
“Some Israeli government policies directly affect the physical safety of Jewish communities in the United States.”

70%

of American Jews agree

65%

of Israeli Jews agree





Regardless of political ideology, most Israelis and Americans agree that Israeli decision-makers should consider American Jews

73% of American Jews believe that Israeli decision-makers should consider them on one or more issues.

77% of Israeli Jews believe that Israeli decision-makers should consider American Jews on one or more issues.

Many factors, not just political ideology, shape which issues they think American Jews should be considered on.

We looked at two categories: Jewish identity and conflict and security.

Survey question

"Some of Israel's actions have an impact on American Jews in some way. In which areas, if any, should Israeli decision-makers consider the impact o
American Jews before acting?"

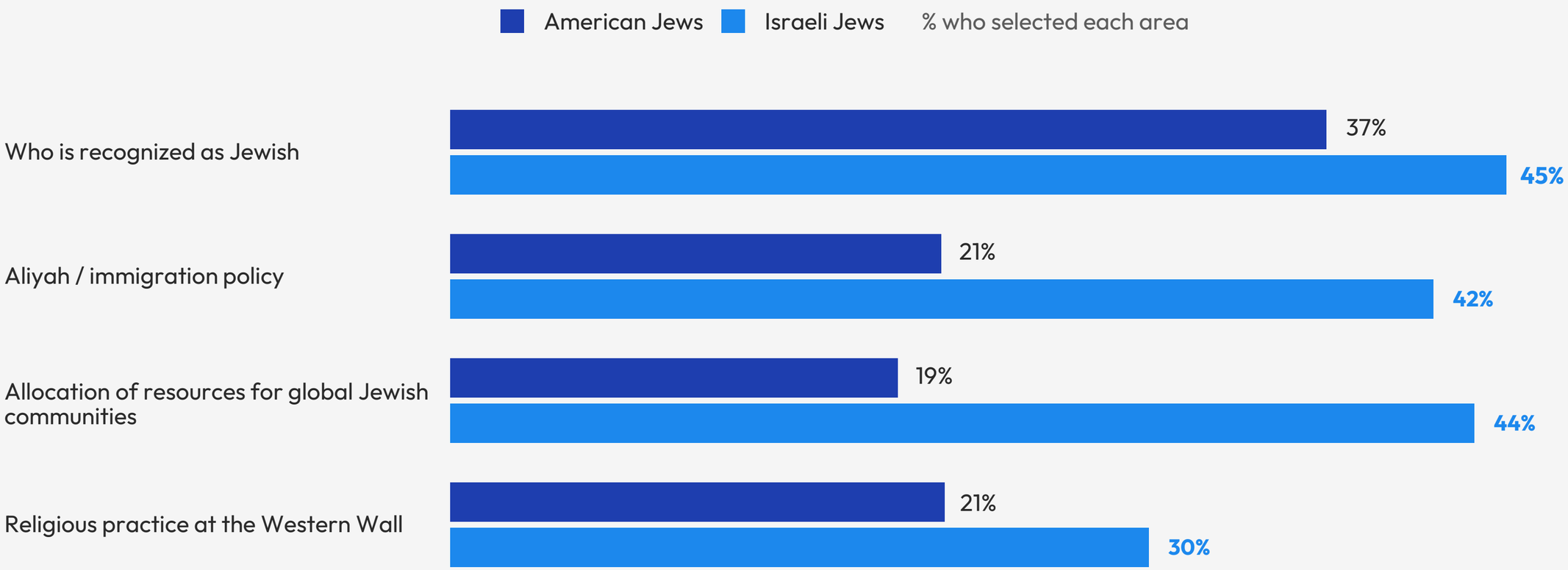
Jewish Identity Areas

1. Who is recognized as Jewish
2. Aliyah and immigration policy
3. Allocation of resources for global Jewish communities
4. Religious practice at the Western Wall

Conflict and Security Areas

1. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict
2. Policies impacting Israel's democratic character
3. Israel's policies in the West Bank / Judea and Samaria*
4. Normalization with neighboring Arab countries

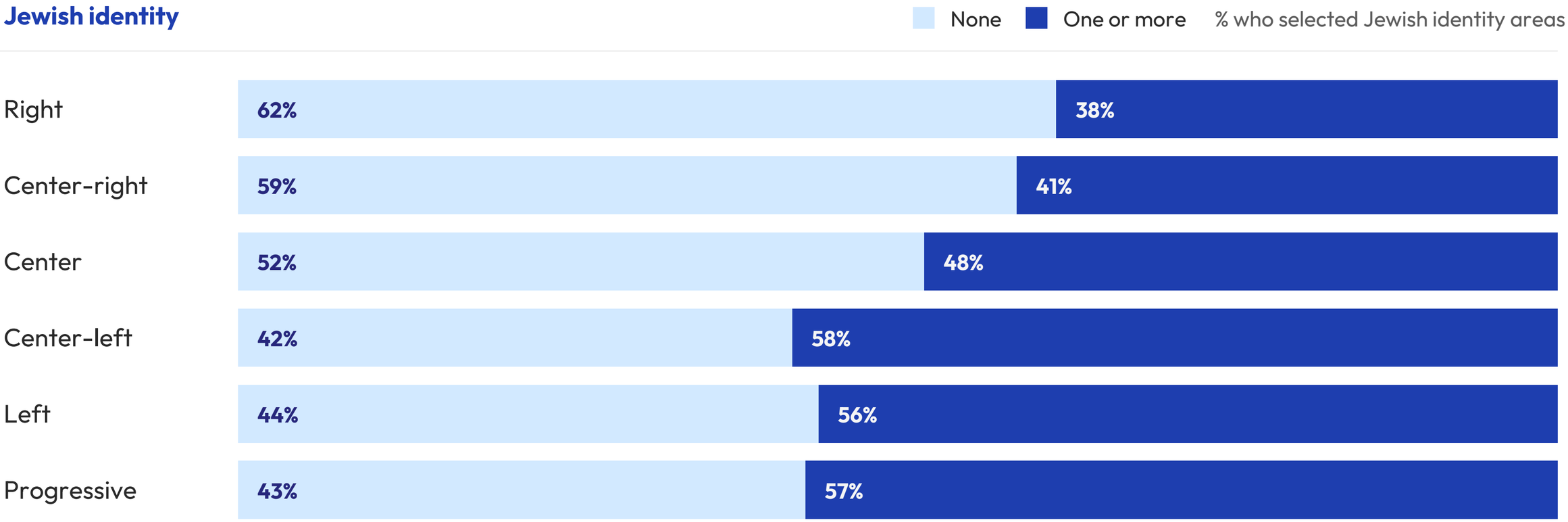
On issues of Jewish identity, Israelis see more relevance for American consideration than Americans claim for themselves.



For American Jews, political ideology matters less on issues of Jewish identit than engagement in Jewish life.

American Jews

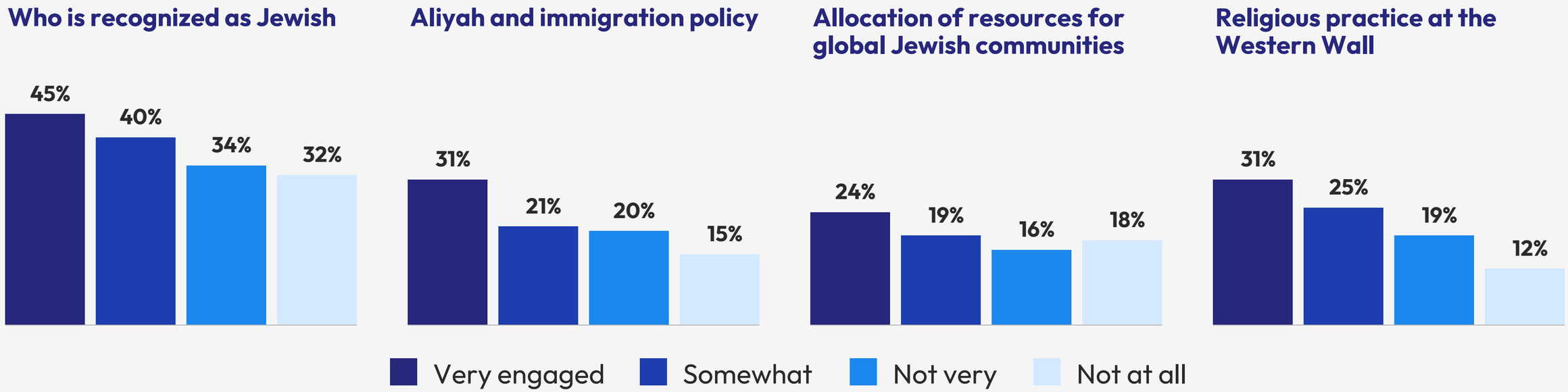
Jewish identity



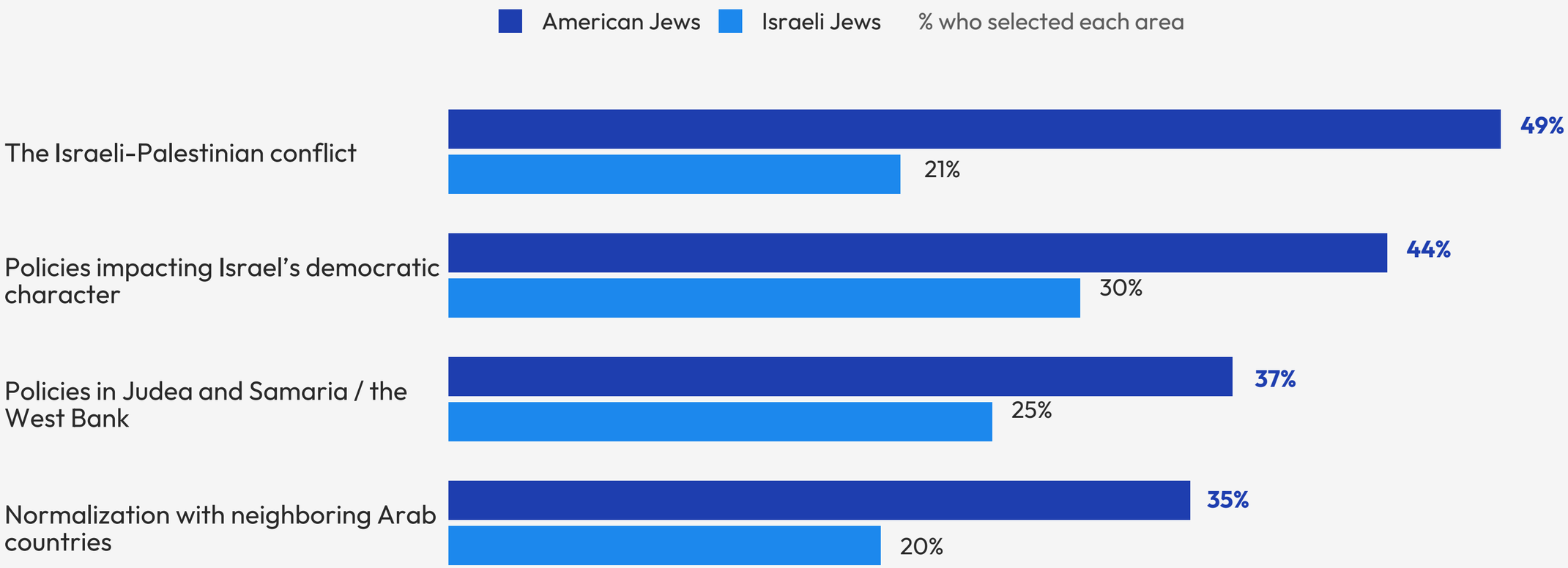
Engagement in American Jewish life closely tracks with American Jews' desi to be considered on issues of Jewish identity in Israel.

More engaged Jews prioritize issues of Jewish identity. This likely has to do with their increased awareness and understanding of these issues.

% who selected each area, by engagement



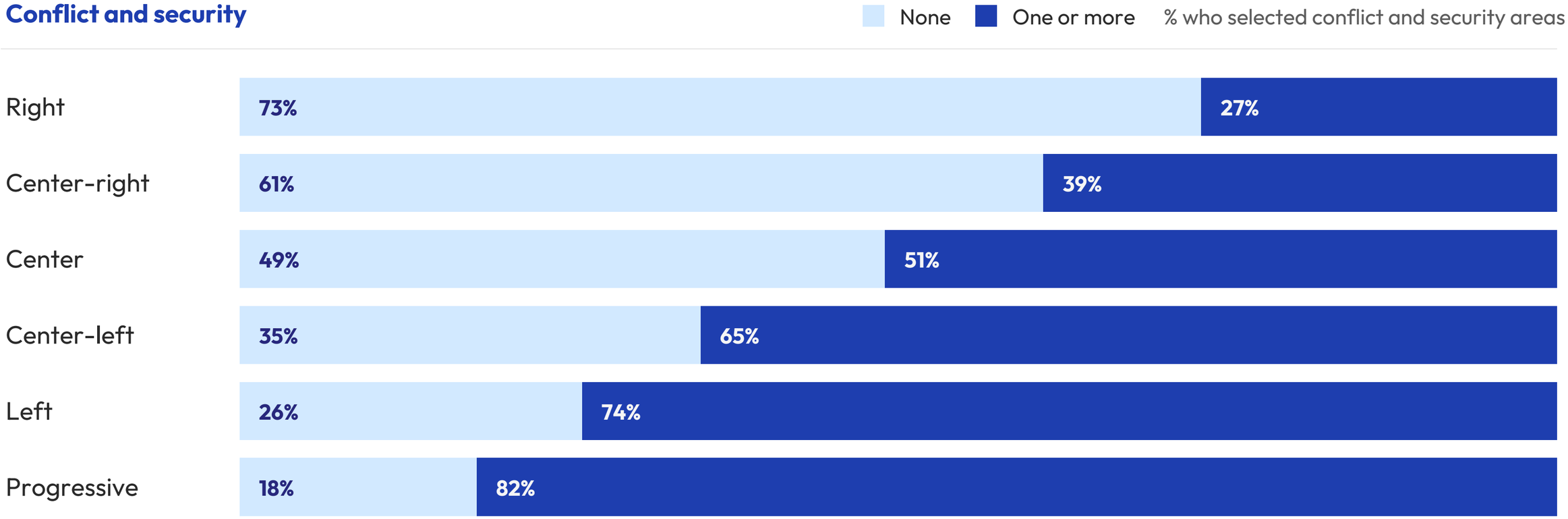
On issues of conflict & security, Americans see more relevance for their own consideration than Israelis grant them.



American Political identity explains more of the difference in desired consideration on issues of conflict and security than on Jewish identity.

American Jews

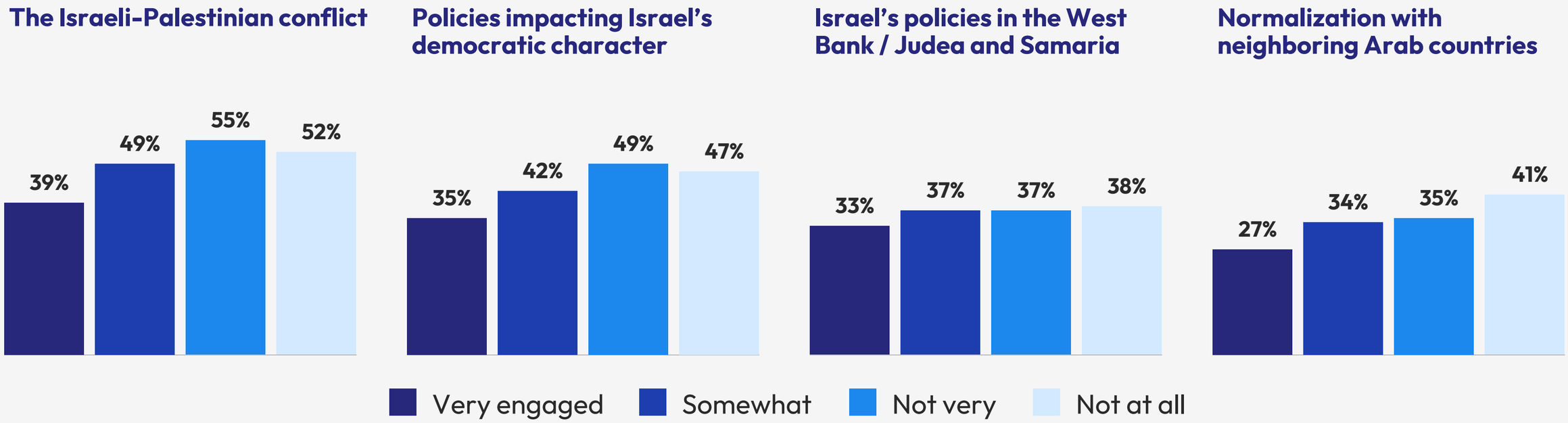
Conflict and security



Less engaged American Jews are more likely to prioritize issues of conflict & security than Jewish identity.

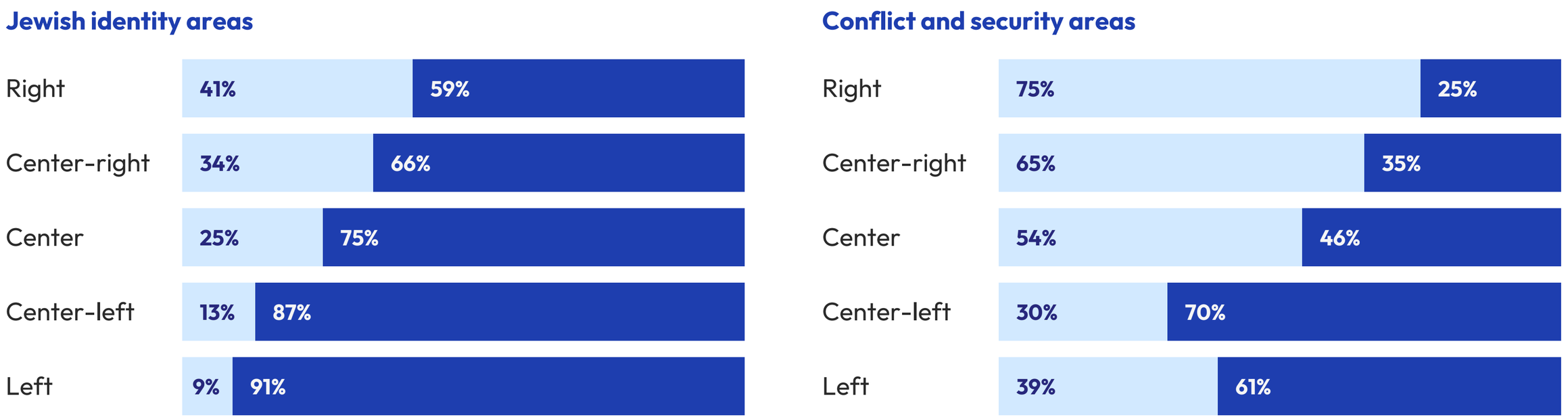
Unlike Jewish identity issues, which require real engagement in Jewish life to encounter at all, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reaches nearly everyon

% who selected each area, by engagement



Israeli Political identity explains some of the difference in desired consideration on both issue areas, but there are other factors at play.

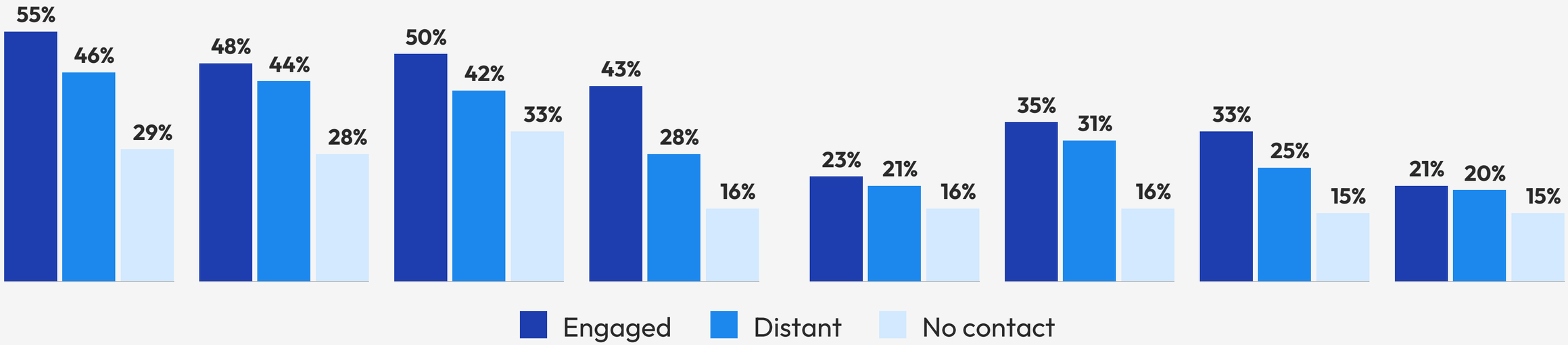
Israeli Jews



In addition, contact with American Jews consistently increases Israelis' desire to have American Jews considered;

By contact with American Jews

% who selected each area



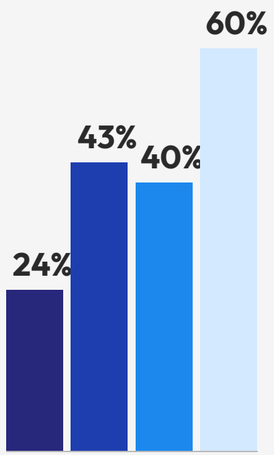
While religiosity shapes which specific issues matter most.

By religiosity

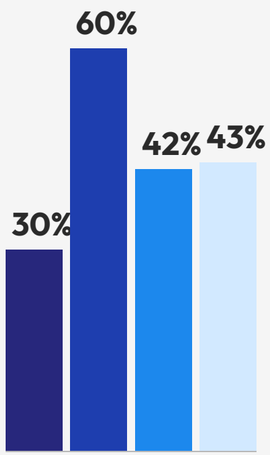
% who selected each area

Jewish identity areas

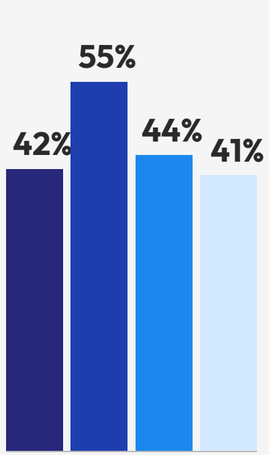
Who is recognized as Jewish



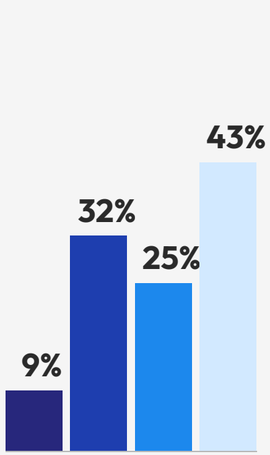
Aliyah and immigration policy



Allocation of resources for global Jewish communities

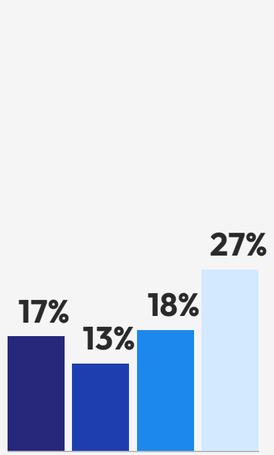


Religious practice at the Western Wall

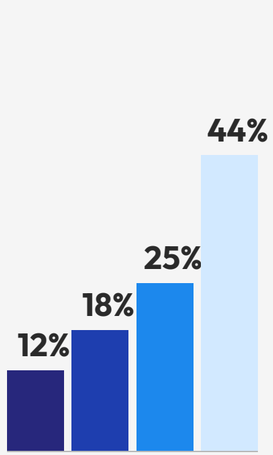


Conflict and security areas

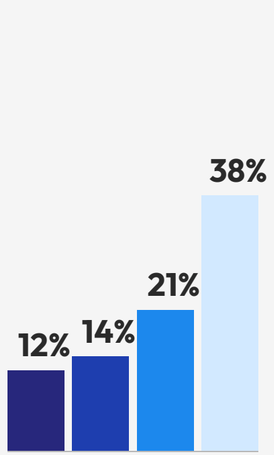
The Israeli-Palestinian conflict



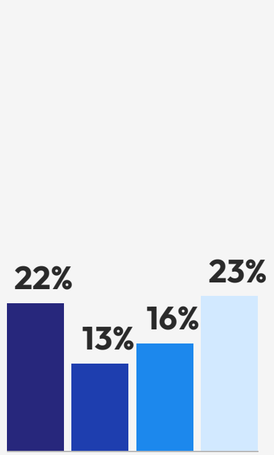
Policies impacting Israel's democratic character



Israel's policies in the West Bank / Judea and Samaria



Normalization with neighboring Arab countries



Haredi | Religious-Zionist | Traditional | Secular

What’s behind different American priorities

From our qualitative open-ended questions with AI probes and analysis. Categories are directional, not exhaustive.

Those Americans who want to be considered on issues of Jewish identity most often cite:

- Recognition as legitimate Jews
- Care for the state of Israel
- Importance of the state of Israel for the Jewish people
- A sense that Israel needs them or holds expectations of them as Jews

Those who want to be considered on issues of conflict & security cite:

- Safety, experienced less as literal personal risk and more as Israeli actions driving antisemitism in America
- Jewish values, both explicit (*tikkun olam* , “never again”) and a more diffuse moral discomfort
- Peoplehood: family, friends, and community in Israel, and care for them
- A sense that the world holds American Jews responsible for Israel
- A feeling that Israel, as “the Jewish state,” speaks for all Jews

Those who do not want to be considered in any areas cite:

- Israel needs to make the best decisions for its own citizens
- Those who want a say in what Israel does should move to Israel
- It isn’t our place to tell another country, even a Jewish one, what to do or say



Key Takeaways

- **American and Israeli Jews feel closer today than they have in years**.
- On most of the questions where we disagree, **the fault line is political ideology over geography.**
- Jews on the left in America and Jews on the left in Israel **see these issues in similar ways**. The same holds true on the right.
- What differs between the two countries isn't the views themselves, it's the political leanings: a majority of **American Jews lean left,** a majority of **Israeli Jews lean right.**
- In addition to ideology, engagement in Jewish life shapes which issues Americans most want considered.
- Across every ideology, **Jews affirm responsibility for one another.**

The opportunity is to understand what's driving our differences, within each country and between them, and to engage in constructive dialogue with the sense of community at the heart of this relationship.