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# LONG-TERM TRENDS IN PUBLIC CONCERNS IN TWO SOCIETIES<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Trends in public concerns from the early 1960's to the mid-1970's are compared for Israel and the United States, relating changes in concerns to historical and social change which occurred during the decade in both societies. The analysis is based on open-ended questions regarding views of either personal or nation's future -- hopes and fears for that future -- and a Self-Anchoring Rating Scale, by which the respondent evaluated personal and nation's situation in various time perspectives. The Israeli's future perspective became centered around peace and war, removing other issues to a secondary plane of concern. In contrast, the American became more concerned about social issues. The most striking difference in the evaluations of self and society was that the Israelis revealed in the seventies a personal depressive mood, while the Americans were at that time more pessimistic about their society's situation and future.

The purpose of this paper is to compare public concerns in two societies, Israel and the United States, at two time periods, the early 1960's and the mid-1970's. The basic question asked is: How do different populations react, as evinced in their concerns, to what happened in their lives and country over the course of more than a decade?

The idea of subjective concerns as monitors of social change has received ample attention (Land, 1971; Barnes and Inglehart, 1974; Parke and Seidman, 1978). A general assumption has been that objective change leads to change in subjective indicators (Turner, 1971; Rokeach, 1973; Campbell, 1976); or, following Weberian tradition, a mutual relationship is postulated (Lipset, 1963).

As several authors have noted, comparative studies combining a long-term and cross-cultural perspective are less in evidence (Pierce and Pride, 1972; Rokeach, 1973; Campbell, 1976; Andrews and Inglehart, 1973). This lack is due to, besides limitations of resources, the difficulties involved in capturing macro-social change -- its complexity, extent, and duration, and its relation to the change in individual attitudes (Kats, 1982). In addition, a cross-sectional,

cross-cultural comparison introduces its own source of error and bias: when patterns characterizing a nation as a whole are overaccentuated, variations between relevant segments of the population and their influence on those patterns may be overlooked (Pierce and Pride, 1972; Rodgers and Converse, 1975). Micro-level analysis, on the other hand, may lead to ecological fallacies. Sampling errors and their effect on the interpretation of results may be compounded in cross-cultural research over time, since populations in different societies not only vary as such, but may also change in divergent ways (Duncan, 1975).

Nevertheless, as advocates of the cross-cultural approach to the study of subjective social indicators argue, only cross-cultural research can adequately "reflect the recent economic and social history" (Barnes and Inglehart, 1974) and provide the proper perspective (Pierce and Pride, 1972). Phenomena in different societal systems are comparable when the same operational measures are used -- provided these are valid -- and culture-bound concepts can be distinguished adequately (Andrews and Inglehart, 1979).

The subjective social indicators used in the present study were developed by an adherent of the cross-cultural approach -- Hadley Cantril -- and proved itself appropriate for an overall comparison of public concerns in a wide range of countries. Repeated use of Cantril's method in two focal countries offered an opportunity to study and compare long-term trends in concerns.<sup>2</sup>

The two societies selected for comparison -- Israel and the United States -- are characterized by both similarities and dissimilarities.<sup>3</sup> Of major importance for the topic of this paper is the fact that since the early 1960's, when relative calm seemed to prevail in the world, both countries have gone through "major national events" (Bradburn, 1969: 42 -- war, economic upheaval, social turmoil -- which are likely to cause change in people's concerns, otherwise affected mostly by their more immediate personal life situation.

One of the major assumptions in the analysis of the Israeli data was that the rankorder of importance of concerns would remain relatively stable over time (Antonovsky and Arian, 1972; Rokeach, 1974; Kats, 1982); that only the most salient public issues, those related to major societal problems and change, could be expected to change in accordance with the objective trend (Turner, 1971). When the assumption is extended to a cross-cultural comparison, the hypothesis might be made that the more stable concerns are basic human concerns, which are similar in different societies, while the varying concerns reflect changes in the societal system and in ideologies.

## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SIXTIES

What were the major trends of change in the two countries over this decade which are considered to form a frame of reference against which people's concerns were patterned?

Israel's population increased by about 50% from 1961 to 1974, relatively a much more rapid increase than occurred during the same period in the United States (about 15%). This was due to a high rate of both natural increase and immigration, and accompanied by a rise in the Arab share of the population. Emigration increased as well.

In both countries the decade was dominated by war. In Israel, the wars of 1967 and 1973 added new dimensions -- occupied territories, terrorism -- to already existing defense problems, and they overshadowed other international developments of importance. Opposite Israel's military power, there emerged the economic and political power of the neighboring Arab countries, the growing importance of the PLO. America in the 1960's was dominated by its involvement in Vietnam, which not only had a traumatic impact internally, but also changed the position of the United States on the international scene. Shortly before the second survey was conducted, the Middle East crisis introduced the oil embargo and the subsequent energy crisis.

Politically in Israel, the decade of the 1960's has been characterized as one of "dynamic conservatism" (Eisenstadt, 1977; Ellemers, 1981) with continuation of political leadership and institutions. Yet it was a period in which the national consensus seemed to erode: rivalries and conflicts arose within parties; new leadership emerged (Elazar, 1973). In America, the political climate became one of increasing "issue awareness" (Abramowitz, 1980), dissent and protest by groups seeking equality in the Great Society, with descent into rioting and political assassination (Watts and Free, 1978). Closer to the second survey, the political corruption of Watergate brought disillusionment, and changed the relation of the people to its leadership.

Although Israel remained economically far behind the United States, which in the sixties reached an unknown affluence and technological development (Campbell, Converse and Rodgers, 1976), its economy took large leaps ahead and its standard of living increased accordingly.<sup>5</sup> Except for 1965-67, unemployment remained relatively low. At the same time the inflation rate reached new proportions toward the second survey and other economic problems emerged.<sup>6</sup> Material aspirations rose but income gaps widened. In America, the steady growth in affluence and welfare halted toward the end of the sixties, and serious problems of inflation and unemployment arose for parts of the population.<sup>7</sup>

Socially, the sixties were for Israel a period of consolidation and further development. But, more troublesome trends also appeared; problems of the environment, crime, or drugs were less widespread than in the United States but felt more in the smaller country (Greenberg, 1979). Questions of Jewish and Israeli identity were brought into focus by such events as the Eichmann trial and the aftermath of the Arab wars (Antonovsky and Arian, 1972; Eisenstadt, 1977). The pioneering Zionist-socialist ideology seemed on the retreat, replaced by a present-oriented, competitive materialism and a self-confident belief in Israel's power that was seriously challenged only by the October War. A declining work ethic, combined with a deterioration in labor relations, in interpersonal relations, and in public morality, were other social trends (Greenberg, 1979; Keren and Goldberg, 1980). The years brought increasing differentiation and stratified pluralism to Israeli society, notwithstanding the unifying effects of war. The rising standard of living served not only to create aspirations but to make inequalities more sharply felt (Cohen, 1980; Deshen, 1980; Smoohah and Peres, 1980). America in the 1960's experienced a decade of "civil rights movement, social experimentation and criticism" (Simon, 1974). Welfare programs and revolutionary changes in the position of groups such as Blacks and women, proved to be insufficient and created, as in Israel, discontent and frustration. These and other disturbing and divisive social problems of the post-industrial society, like alienation or invasion of privacy, affected the self-image of the American, as well as trust in the leadership (Watts and Free, 1978; Abramowitz, 1980).

#### METHOD

The indicators employed in the study are those developed in the early 1960's in an international study by Hadley Cantril. In order to measure subjective perceptions of the "reality world," Cantril asked his respondents two basic sets of questions. The first set consisted of open-ended questions asking the respondent to describe in as much detail as possible his personal situation and that of his country in ideal circumstances.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, he had to relate to the worst imaginable situation. In the second set, the respondent was to consider the extreme situations he had described as ends of an 11-point "ladder" ranging from 10 to 0, the so-called "Self-Anchoring Striving Scale," and to rank self and country on this scale. This ranking had to be done for three points in time: five years before the<sup>9</sup> interview, at the time of the interview, and five years in the future. Thus, feelings of optimism<sup>10</sup> or pessimism, progress or frustration, were able to be measured.

The present analysis bases itself on data from two Israeli and two American surveys which used these two sets of questions. The surveys

in each country were conducted at similar periods. In Israel a national survey was conducted for Cantril by the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research at the end of 1961 - beginning 1962 (Antonovsky and Arian, 1972). There were 1,170 respondents. At the beginning of 1975, a replication of that study was made among an urban sample of 531 persons. This number corresponded with the 1,179 respondents in the first sample who lived in the same cities.<sup>11</sup> The American data have been reproduced from Watts and Free, State of the Nation III, which<sup>12</sup> reports on a series of national surveys using Cantril's questions. For present purposes, data for 1964 and 1974 are compared; these are based on surveys conducted, respectively, by the Institute for International Social Research and Potomac Associates.

Although the survey questions were translated into Hebrew for the Israeli studies, and Israeli respondents mentioned some specific topics, Cantril's original coding scheme was generally applicable without arousing special reliability problems. Intercoder reliability at the two stages was, respectively, 95% and 84% (Antonovsky and Arian, 1972; Kats, 1982).

#### FINDINGS

Generally, the Israeli respondents revealed a downward trend in the mentioning of personal hopes: a more limited range of hopes<sup>13</sup> was mentioned, and the percentage expressing each hope decreased. "Immediate" issues like standard of living, one's own health, happy family life, and children's prospects, remained highly ranked on the list, but the dominant hope became the wish for peace. Except for the hope for a decrease in army service -- extensive after the war period -- no new issue came to the fore (Table 1).

The personal hopes of the American generally increased; however, although the three major aspirations of the 1960's -- standard of living, children's future, and personal health -- retained their primary importance, they also declined in salience, as they did in Israel. In fact, on these<sup>14</sup> issues the personal concerns of Israelis and Americans converged.

There is another difference between the personal aspirations of Israelis and Americans. The former concentrated on a happy family life and on peace; the latter contended with a new set of social issues: the hope for economic stability, more honest government, more social justice, less crime and violence, and more international cooperation. These issues, much less or not at all mentioned by Israelis, probably reflect America's social unrest, reactions to Watergate, and a concern about the nation's position in the world.

Table 1. Personal Hopes, Israel and U.S.A., by Period  
(Percentage mentioning topic)\*

Topic Mentioned	N =	Israel		U.S.A.	
		1962 (779)	1975 (531)	1964	1974
Aspirations for children		48 %	19 %	35 %	24 %
Higher or decent standard of living		46	25	40	29
Personal health		33	22	29	28
House, apartment		31	14	12	11
General concerns for family, relatives		28	6	**	7
Family health		26	10	25	11
Leisure, recreation, travel		24	7	5	9
Happy family life		23	21	18	15
Good job, congenial work		19	8	9	11
Modern conveniences		19	**	-	-
Employment		15	**	8	6
Peace		14	36	17	16
Self-improvement		14	9	-	-
Having own business		9	**	-	-
Freedom from debt		8	**	-	-
Being a normal, decent person		7	**	-	-
Job providing self-development		7	-	-	-
Happy old age		6	**	8	8
Success in one's work		**	8	**	5
Peace of mind, emotional maturity		**	7	9	9
Having wealth		**	5	5	8
Economic stability, no inflation		**	5	**	15
Less army service		-	9	-	-
Better world, international cooperation		**	**	**	8
Better, more honest government/politics		-	-	**	10
Social justice, elimination of discrimination		-	-	**	7
Safety from crime and violence		-	-	**	6
Personal ethical/religious problems		-	-	6	5
Christian revival		-	-	**	5

\* The Israeli data for 1962 are based on an urban subsample, comparable to the 1975 urban sample; source: Israel Institute of Applied Social Research. Tables from Kats (1982) are reprinted with permission of Tavistock Publications. The data for the U.S.A. are based on national samples; source: Institute for International Social Research, 1964; Potomac Associates, 1974; and reprinted, from Watts and Free (1978), with permission of Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Company. For the Israeli data a difference of at least 9% between periods was statistically significant (difference between proportions)

\*\* Mentioned by less than five per cent

Table 2. Personal Fears, Israel and U.S.A., by Period  
(Percentage mentioning topic)

Topic Mentioned	N =	<u>Israel</u>		<u>U.S.A.</u>	
		<u>1962</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1974</u>
Personal ill-health		42 %	20 %	25 %	25 %
Lower, inadequate standard of living		35	20	19	16
Ill-health family		30	11	27	12
War		28	38	29	18
Dependence on others, old age, loneliness		20	6	6	*
Unemployment		17	10	14	12
Children (inadequate opportunities)		14	*	10	10
General concerns for family, relatives		11	*	-	-
Unhappy family life		10	5	8	*
Uncongenial work		5	*	-	-
Economic instability, inflation		*	9	*	26
Specific impact of war, terrorism		-	8	-	-
Army service		-	6	-	-
Social decay, moral disintegration		*	*	*	9
Lack of freedom (of speech)		*	*	6	6
Lack of integrity in government/politics		-	*	*	5
Crime		-	-	*	9

\* Mentioned by less than 5 per cent

Personal fears, too, were mentioned less frequently by Israelis in 1975 than in 1962 (Table 2). Only war-related worries became more salient: the fear of war, its specific impact, terrorist attacks, and prolonged army service. These concerns drove others deeper into the background. Nevertheless, as with hopes, the most salient of the personal fears -- ill health and a lower standard of living -- remained highest in rank-order after the fear of war. The economic concerns of Israelis received a different nuance: the fear of economic instability became more pronounced, a rather obvious consequent of the inflation rate of that time. Inflation seemed to have affected the American more immediately, however; for him it became a major concern, ranking first with ill-health.<sup>15</sup> Yet, despite large-scale unemployment in America in the early 1970's personal fear of unemployment of the American exhibited stability over the decade. Watts and Free (1978) attributed this to the fact that unemployment hit only specific groups in the population.



Reflecting personal hopes, social issues became more prominent in the personal fears of Americans. In Israel these issues were mentioned by very few. Only in the two major fears of ill health and decline in the standard of living did the Israeli resemble the American in the mid-seventies. As for other personal fears, the percentages in 1975 were even lower for Israelis than for Americans, a reversal of the 1962 situation, when Israelis expressed more fears.

The greatest contrast between Israel and the United States was in national hopes: a drastic reduction in Israel; an increase in the United States (Table 3).

Peace (in Israel, usually meaning peace with the Arab countries) remained the foremost national hope of the majority of Israelis. In the States, peace was also the highest ranking issue; but it declined in importance from 51% to 27% and, despite Vietnam, was of much less national salience than it was in Israel. This Israeli concern for peace removed most of the national issues from the mind, as it did on the personal level, except for the hope for a higher standard of living. The latter and the hope for economic stability replaced a concern for productivity and technological advance, which had been prominent issues in Israel in the early sixties. Furthermore, only some concern about immigration, public morality, and national unity retained their salience among Israelis. The first indicated perhaps a worry about the decline in immigration; the last seemed to reflect discontent and doubts of the period after the October War.

In the United States peace and a higher standard of living ranked in 1964 as high in importance as they did in Israel. These two concerns were followed in rank order by the hope for employment and the elimination of discrimination, issues of relevance at the time. In 1974, when the Vietnam war had ended, as had Watergate, the American had become more preoccupied with domestic issues. Not only did integrity in politics and inflation rank highest among national hopes, but generally -- in contrast to Israel -- social issues gained in salience: social responsibility, efficiency in government, law and order, democracy in government, public health, ecology. The American clearly held more aspirations for his society than did the Israeli, who wanted above all to be left in peace.

Although the October War had somehow lowered the expectation among Israelis that a new war would erupt soon -- the fear of war with the Arabs decreased from 50% to 8% -- it left at least two immediate national fears: of the destruction of the State (mentioned by 17%) and the burden of continuing army service. Otherwise only the two economic issues, of inflation and an inadequate standard of living, retained a certain salience as national fear. No further internal

Table 3. National Hopes, Israel and U.S.A., by Period  
(Percentage mentioning topic)

Topic Mentioned	N =	Israel		U.S.A.	
		1962 (779)	1975 (531)	1964	1974
Peace		74 %	72 %	51 %	27 %
Productivity, technological advance		48	7	-	-
Population, immigration		36	12	-	-
Decent, higher standard of living		33	23	28	11
Economic stability, no inflation		19	15	5	24
National independence, economic self-sufficiency		19	8	*	6
Increased exports		17	-	-	-
Political stability, national unity		14	11	9	15
Military strength		14	5	-	-
Employment		12	*	15	10
Change in electoral system		11	*	-	-
Elimination of discrimination		10	5	15	*
General education		10	*	-	-
Cultural standards		9	*	-	-
Public morality		8	11	10	10
Adequate housing		8	*	-	-
Free secondary education		7	*	-	-
Status of nation		6	*	-	-
International cooperation, better world		6	*	6	*
Social responsibility, common good		6	*	*	5
Interpersonal relations		*	6	-	-
Efficient government		*	5	*	11
Integrity in government/politics		*	*	*	25
Law and order		*	*	*	11
More democratic, representative government		*	*	*	5
Public health		*	*	*	5
Improved ecology		-	*	*	5
Change of presidents		-	-	*	12

\* Mentioned by less than 5 per cent

issues seemed of importance to the Israeli public (Table 4).

The American pattern bears witness to the internal troubles and the energy crisis that the United States as a whole had experienced by the second survey. War, which in 1964 was of major importance as

Table 4. National Fears, Israel and U.S.A., by Period  
(Percentage mentioning topic)

Topic Mentioned	N =	<u>Israel</u>		<u>U.S.A.</u>	
		<u>1962</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1974</u>
		(779)	(531)		
War		80 %	46 %	50 %	24 %
Lower, inadequate standard of living		17	14	*	6
Economic instability, inflation		13	15	13	28
Political instability, national disunity		11	9	8	12
Increased taxes		10	*	-	-
Population, lack of immigration		9	7	-	-
Low productivity		8	*	-	-
Unemployment		7	5	6	*
Materialism		5	*	-	-
Army service		*	10	-	-
Lack of public morality		*	5	6	6
Isolation from other nations		*	5	-	-
Dishonesty in government/politics		*	*	*	8
Loss of democratic government		*	*	5	7
Inefficient government		*	*	*	5
Communism		*	-	22	8
Destruction of state		-	17	-	-
Too centralized, powerful government		-	-	8	*
Threat of communist power		-	-	7	5
Lack of law and order		-	-	5	13
Pollution		-	-	*	6
Food shortages		-	-	*	6

\* Mentioned by less than 5 per cent

in Israel, now ranked only second after the economic worry of inflation. The Cold War had ended; fear of communism, second in importance in 1964, lost most of its salience. Reflecting national hopes and in contrast to Israel, the worry over internal political and social conditions, even though mentioned by a minority, has increased or, at least, not declined in salience.

The reflection of these trends in concerns from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies in the average ladder ratings -- the views of past, present and future of self and nation -- shows the differences in outlook between the Israeli and the American in yet another way (Table 5 and Figure 1).

Table 5. Mean Ladder Ratings, Israel and U.S.A., by Period\*

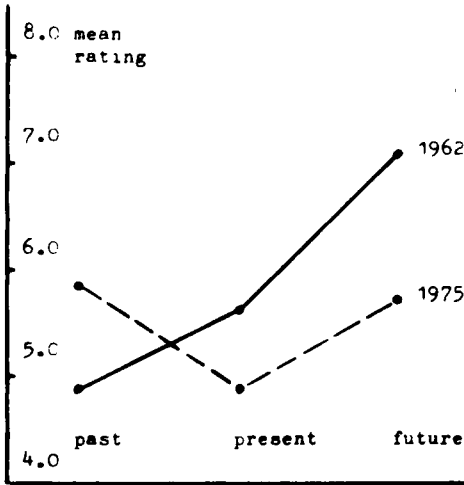
		Past	Present	Future	Past to Present	Present to Future
<u>Personal</u>						
Israel	1962	4.8	5.5	7.0	+ 0.7	+ 1.5**
	1975	5.7	4.8	5.6	- 0.9	+ 0.8
U.S.A.	1964	6.0	6.9	7.9	+ 0.9	+ 1.0
	1974	5.5	6.6	7.4	+ 1.1	+ 0.8
<u>National</u>						
Israel	1962	4.0	5.6	7.5	+ 1.6	+ 1.9
	1975	5.7	5.6	7.5	- 0.1	+ 1.9
U.S.A.	1964	6.1	6.5	7.7	+ 0.4	+ 1.2
	1974	6.3	4.8	5.8	- 1.5	+ 1.0

\* Based on the Self Anchoring Scale

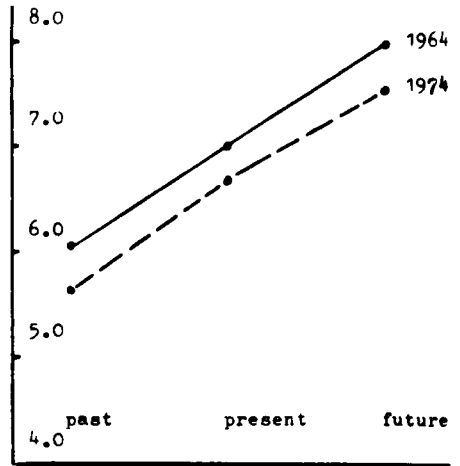
\*\* A difference of 1.0 in a rating was considered statistically significant for the Israeli data (difference between means, Kats, 1982), of 0.6 for the American data (Watts and Free, 1978)

Both personal and national ladder ratings in the early sixties showed an upward trend over time: the present was considered better than the past, and expectations were even higher for the future. Generally, the ratings for Israelis on both ladders, were below the level of those for Americans. On the personal level, the slope from past to future was somewhat more even for Americans than for Israelis. In the national ratings, Israelis revealed a stronger optimism: the slope for Israelis was straightlined and steeper than for Americans. Israelis in the early 1960's, then, viewed their past -- perhaps realistically so -- relatively low compared to Americans; but having experienced rapid progress toward the present, they tended to project this evaluation onto an optimistic view of the future, in which, potentially, much could still be realized (Antonovsky and Arian, 1972). The Israeli respondents tended to view their personal past in a better light than that of their country, and the present about the same; but the national future looked rosier than their own. For the Americans, the opposite was true: they considered their own past worse off than their country's, but both their personal present and future better off.

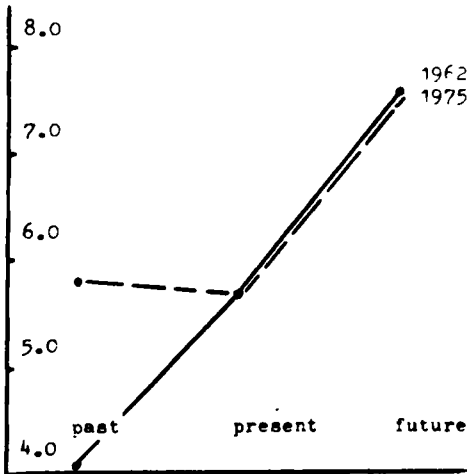
The mid-seventies see a turn in the tide. The mood in Israel had



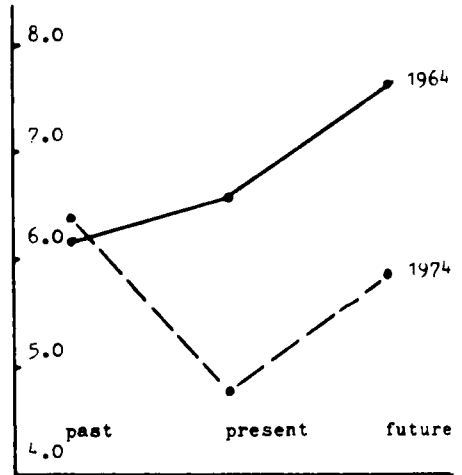
PERSONAL RATINGS - ISRAEL



PERSONAL RATINGS - U.S.A.



NATIONAL RATINGS - ISRAEL



NATIONAL RATINGS - U.S.A.

Figure 1. Trends in mean ladder ratings, 1960's and 1970's, Israel and U.S.A. (Sources: Institute for International Social Research, 1964; Potomac Associates, 1974; Israel Institute of Applied Social Research 1962, 1975)

become depressed; in particular, the personal present was seen as more negative than in the past. Hope in the future was not lost; people still expected improvement, personally and nationally. On the personal level, however, their future aspirations were lower than in 1962. Remarkable enough, the national present was ranked about the same as in the past. Regarding the national future, the Israelis remained as optimistic in 1975 as they were in 1962.

The personal ratings of Americans in 1974 followed parallel trends to those in 1964, only at a lower level. Americans showed no drop in their evaluation of the present as had the Israelis. For the Americans, that happened nationally: the present was clearly evaluated lower than in the past; but, although the future was again rated higher, the level of 1974 fell under that of 1964. National present and future, in contrast to the sixties, were also ranked far below personal present and future.

Finally, comparing the Israeli of the mid-seventies with the American of that period: the former saw his personal present and future clearly at a lower level. The American, by contrast, ranked his nation's present, and even more so its future, lower. The American had become as pessimistic about the present and future of the nation as the Israeli had become about personal life.

#### DISCUSSION

Public opinion is difficult to link directly and causally to events. Yet the results of the surveys reported here suggest a response to events preceding the surveys in both countries, as well as to some of the basic trends which developed in their economic, political and social life. This response is revealed most clearly in the changing patterns of concerns of major salience. Of course, answers to open-ended questions, in particular, tend to follow normative issues of concern, the "headlines."

Such possible bias in the data, however, does not explain all of the difference between the two countries. A variety of generalized characteristics of the Israelis have been advanced to explain why they remained occupied with the down-to-earth daily problems of personal health, family, and economic situation and seemingly left unattended many social issues that one might have expected to bother them. These characteristics, which existed in 1962, but seemingly became more prominent in 1975, included complacency, narrowness of scope, provincialism, and lack of social consciousness or responsibility (Antonovsky and Arian, 1972; Eisenstadt, 1977; Greenberg, 1979). It has also been suggested that these attitudes may reflect a defensive or hardening reaction, a way of coping with the stresses under which the Israeli constantly lives (Rokeach, 1973); or, that the Israelis concentrate on the basic concerns

because the problems of their country are too large and complex to comprehend, and as such are for the government to come to grips with, not for them.

The difference with the Israelis on this plane can be exaggerated; however, the Americans show themselves in this and other studies to be relatively more socially concerned. This is seen as being due to their more activist, participatory orientation, to a confidence in their ability and responsibility to influence and change their government and environment, and to a tendency to criticize (Abramowitz, 1980).

If the personal optimism of the American can be understood by a generally adequate life situation, despite problems (Watts and Free, 1978), then the national optimism of the Israeli, given the situation in 1974, raises more questions than does the personal pessimism. Does the national optimism express loyalty to country -- not allowing the Israelis mentally to be as pessimistic as they are about their personal life? Or is a traditional Jewish cultural trait being expressed here: hope for better times, which remained alive throughout the centuries, not for the person, but for the people?

The Israelis' national image, central symbol of identity, and their aspirations, have always been extended to utopian dimensions in order to enable them to live in a world of uncertainty (Jacob, 1974; Eisenstadt, 1977; Greenberg, 1979). The symbol is related to a belief in the impossible, the miracle. The Israelis can imagine many bad things to happen to them personally, but they cannot afford to be doubtful about their country, the only thing which keeps them standing in a hostile world. Being doubtful for the Israeli does not mean doubting the things the American does; it means fear for the existence of Israel itself. The Americans may have been shocked by objective occurrences; but despite the manifestation and extent of economic and social problems, their basic existence was not felt threatened, the way it was for the Israelis. Thus the Americans may seem gloomy when asked about their country; personally, though, not too much has changed.

At the outset of this paper, it was postulated that, in both the United States and Israel, socially responsive concerns would change according to the social change experienced, while more general human concerns would remain more nearly constant. The data revealed a complex response, in both the changing salience of concerns and the personal and national evaluation of reality. On some issues, Israelis seem to have progressed along the line of development suggested by Cantril (1965), their concerns converging toward those in the more mature American society, which has reached a stage of questioning the achieved. Otherwise, events and developments seem to have led to some directional change, partially confirming the general hypothesis. Though

differently expressed, each country displayed a mood of depression at the time of the 1970's surveys.

The years since then have brought a drastic change in the political constellation of both countries, a new war. The extent to which these and other changes are a consequence of the concerns expressed, and possibly are remolding the public's hopes and fears, is a topic for further research.

#### NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> For analyses of trends in public concerns in each country, see, for example, for Israel: Antonovsky and Arian, 1972; Jacob, 1974; Greenberg, 1979; Kats, 1982; for the United States: Simon, 1974; Campbell, Converse and Rodgers, 1976; Watts and Free, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> Spechler (1980) argues that a vast country like the United States, with abundant human and natural resources, cannot be compared with a small, isolated country that lacks these assets. Cantril (1965) thought of the United States as a well-developed, mature society, while Israel was on its way to becoming a Western-modelled society, "headed in the same direction but at a slower pace" (Greenberg, 1979). In the latter's view the United States form a major model for Israel, and Israelis tend to stress similarity in problems and values.

<sup>4</sup> Cantril (1965: 43) classified the United States in the early sixties as a well-developed, industrialized society, with an unequalled standard of living and further expansion in health, education and culture. Israel, at the time, he considered as having a high standard of living, rapidly developing further. For recent reviews on developments, see, on Israel: Greenberg, 1979; Keren and Goldberg, 1980; Spechler, 1980; on America: Watts and Free, 1978; Abramowitz, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> Until 1973 the Gross Domestic Product growth rate was high compared to other industrialized countries, including the U.S.A.; Private consumption showed an 8.7% annual increase (Antonovsky and



Arian, 1972).

<sup>6</sup> After 1973 the increase in GDP dropped. Labor costs as well as government expenditure increased, the balance of international currency was negative (Spechler, 1980).

<sup>7</sup> In 1974 the per capita Gross National Product declined for the first time, inflation reached 22%, the dollar was devaluated, and millions of people faced unemployment (Watts and Free, 1978). The Israeli's real income may have lagged behind that of the American worker, but he still enjoyed employment security and a range of social benefits. In contrast to the United States, family life remained "stable and intensive" (Greenberg, 1979: 77).

<sup>8</sup> Sample question: "All of us want certain things out of life. When you think about what really matters in your own life, what are your wishes and hopes for the future? In other words, if you imagine your future in the best possible light, what would your life look like then, if you are to be happy?"

<sup>9</sup> Sample question: "Here is a picture of a ladder. Suppose we say that the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom represents the worst possible life for you; where on the ladder do you feel you personally stand at the present time?"

<sup>10</sup> Though criticism has been raised about the validity and reliability of these questions, they have proven to be sensitive indicators of concerns that are of general salience for the public, and as such they have been used repeatedly (Watts and Free, 1978; Kats, 1982).

<sup>11</sup> The first was a multi-stage national sample of Jewish citizens, aged 18 and over, drawn from the voting registers; the 1975 study was a systematic random sample, drawn from postal zipcode lists and based on sampling within household units of Jewish citizens aged 20 and over. The second sample had slightly younger, more Israeli born, and higher educated respondents, reflecting population changes, but was otherwise comparable.

<sup>12</sup> Data regarding sample size in the American surveys could not be obtained. Usually national samples ranged between 1100 and 1600.

<sup>13</sup> Generally, in 1962 the Israeli had on the average "many more things to say" than did the American (Antonovsky and Arian, 1972: 13), and was more hopeful -- a function of national hopes. Though differences in coding operations were not excluded, the authors offered three other

explanations: the verbosity of the Israeli people, the plethora of events experienced by the young nation, and a stronger identification by the Israeli with the nation than by the American. By 1974-75 the concerns of the Israeli had become more limited, in both volume and range, whereas those of the American had increased to the extent that they now exceeded somewhat those of the Israeli. A partial explanation may be that in Israel in 1975, the pertinent questions were part of a larger omnibus survey, which may have suppressed details in the answers. The changing picture, however, seems rather to be a function of less optimistic views held by the Israelis in 1975. Though Israeli respondents still expressed more hopes than fears, these hopes had been reduced in scope. In contrast, Americans mentioned more hopes than they had earlier.

<sup>14</sup> Watts and Free (1978: 173) explain the decline in importance of a higher standard of living by a partial fulfillment of aspirations, yet a repression of hope through failure to advance. The decrease in concerns for family and children is attributed to frustrations over the young.

<sup>15</sup> A reason for this may be that Israeli government policy has kept unemployment at a low rate and at the same time has adjusted wages to the pace of inflation. Neither is the case in America.

<sup>16</sup> As later surveys revealed (Watts and Free, 1978: 206), this national ebb in America was not a passing mood.

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