

Exploring Family as a central theme for the EDJC 2024

"Family" in European Jewish culture is a theme with a range of dimensions and depth. It encompasses the enduring influence of tradition, from biblical narratives of patriarchs and matriarchs to the timeless commandment to "Honour thy father and mother." These traditions continue to shape contemporary family life and family, roles and models, connecting the past to the present.

In today's world, Jewish families face the delicate balance of preserving heritage while adapting to the demands of modern life, the challenging issues of diverse family structures like interfaith marriages, LGBTIQ+ and family dynamics. Moreover, the evolving role of women within Jewish families, transitioning from traditional to more inclusive positions, adds a fascinating dimension to the discussion.

Beyond blood relations, the concept of a "chosen family" and close-knit communities as extended families are vital aspects of European Jewish culture. This dimension also provides an opportunity to reflect on historical events that have profoundly shaped the understanding of family within European Jewish communities, such as the Holocaust and the Jewish diaspora.

Europe's tapestry of Jewish communities, each with its unique traditions and customs, further enriches our exploration of family. The diversity in family rituals and values serves as a testament to the richness of Jewish culture in the region. Understanding generational shifts in how family is perceived and how cultural values are transmitted is essential. How do younger generations interpret and carry forward the traditions of their ancestors while adapting to the contemporary world, how our oldest family members are supported and are part of an educational path for their grandchildren who take on the heritage of the Jewish experience, complex, challenging and fascinating, but often marked by a dramatic recent history.

Looking ahead, we contemplate how the concept of family may evolve within the European Jewish context, addressing emerging dynamics and challenges to ensure the continued strength and relevance of Jewish family life in Europe. This multifaceted theme offers a comprehensive perspective on the significance of "Family" in European Jewish culture, bridging the traditions of the past with the dynamism of the present and future.