

# Connections and Journeys: Assessing Critical Opportunities for Enhancing Jewish Identity

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A report to the Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal  
UJA-Federation of New York

June, 2000  
(revised September, 2003)

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# Executive Summary

## Connections and Journeys: Assessing Critical Opportunities for Enhancing Jewish Identity

Bethamie Horowitz.

### **Introduction**

This study was funded by the Jewish Continuity Commission of UJA-Federation of New York. It grew out of a desire to better understand Jewish identity in the generations of American Jews born after World War II and to take a fresh look at the role that Judaism continues to play in the lives of these individuals. There was a concern that conventional approaches to studying issues of Jewish identity were no longer adequate. Instead, a more comprehensive study was needed to produce an accurate picture of where, if at all, being Jewish fits into people's lives today and to portray how a person's relationship to being Jewish evolves over the course of his or her lifetime.

The purpose of the Connections and Journeys study is to provide insight into two aspects of American-Jewish identity. First, the study explores people's current *connections* to Judaism. What does being Jewish mean to them? In what ways, if at all, do they identify as Jews? How do they relate to their Jewishness? Understanding how individuals see themselves -- as men and women, Jews, Americans, professionals, parents, etc. -- and how their Jewishness interacts with other facets of identity is essential in analyzing the life choices that these Jews make (for instance, friend and spouse selections, educational and career decisions, involvement in organizational and philanthropic activities). By looking at the connections that people forge between their Judaism and other aspects of their lives, this study describes more carefully than previous research the varieties of Jewishness that currently exist, attempting to move beyond the conventional ways of categorizing different types of Jews in terms of "denomination" or mere "affiliation."

Second, the Connections and Journeys study examines people's *journeys* -- how people's Jewish identities change and develop throughout the life course. What experiences and relationships, beginning with one's early life experiences and extending on into adulthood, positively or negatively impact a person's Jewish identity? To what extent, if at all, are people's relationships to being Jewish inscribed during childhood and how malleable are these ties later on in life?

## **Research Design**

The target population for this study was American-born individuals between the ages of 22 to 52 years old, residing in the eight-county UJA-Federation of New York catchment area. All participants had some sort of sociological connection to Judaism.

The research design for this study employed a variety of data sources and methods, both qualitative and quantitative, and was implemented over the course of three interrelated phases. The first task of the study was to gain a rich, detailed picture of people's individual stories, a job best accomplished through in-depth interviews. Eighty-eight such interviews were conducted between February and July 1996.

The second phase of the research design involved a series of focus groups, in which the themes that emerged from the individual interviews were explored in a small-group setting, in order to examine some of the shared, social aspects regarding Jewishness. These group discussions were conducted in April and May 1997.

Finally, based on the findings from the in-depth interviews and the focus groups, a survey of 1,504 Jewishly-connected adults ages 22-52 was carried out between February and May, 1998. Where the in-depth interviews emphasized the uniqueness of Jewish experiences of individuals, the survey sample was designed to be more broadly representative of the range of Jewish expression and connection in the population.

## **A New Conceptual Approach to Studying Jewish Identity**

This study develops a new conceptual approach to examining Jewish identity. In addition to considering a person's active involvement in religious and cultural-communal *practices and activities* (the conventional ways of examining Jewish involvement) it looks directly at a person's *identity* in terms of his or her self-perception and self-definition as a Jew. This subjective-perceptual dimension has been termed Subjective Jewish Centrality. The study has shown that to better understand how Jewish identity has developed and how it may be changing in coming years, it is essential to study Jewish self-perception as well as Jewish practice.

## ***Findings***

### Three Overall Modes of Jewishness

From the vantage point of current identity, three overall modes of Jewishness emerged: those with steady low or non-involvement; those with mixed patterns of Jewish engagement; and those with intensive Jewish engagement. Among these three broad conceptions of Jewishness, the two extremes are well understood and corroborate with "conventional wisdom" about Jewish life – that the American Jewish future is a forced

choice between assimilation and Jewish distinctiveness. The middle possibility, which has been less well understood up to now, will be more fully explicated in this study.

The typical image of assimilation involves people abandoning Judaism for a society that accepts them. As identified in this study, however, assimilation differs from the popular conception in that it no longer involves a conscious *rejection* of Judaism or of being Jewish, rather it results from a basic indifference about the subject. After all, rejection is a pattern that requires some previous involvement so that one has something to reject. This was a phenomenon more characteristic of the children of immigrants in America fifty years ago, at a time when America was less tolerant of group distinctiveness and Jews themselves were less secure in their American-ness. For the younger Jews of today who are fully in the mainstream of American life, there is no longer a feeling of forced choice between being Jewish and becoming American. Being American has simply become the default position, and any active relationship to Jewishness requires either prior commitment (i.e. a history of involvement or prior socialization) or an act of will.

The counterpoint to assimilation and indifference is intensive Jewish engagement and meaningfulness. Under this model individuals value the Jewish worldview and lifestyle over that of the American mainstream. This outlook is most sharply exemplified by the *Orthodox separatist* model, where there is strong Jewish engagement coupled with a clear distance from the American mainstream. But strong commitment and high Jewish practice are also characteristic of a significant *non-separatist subculture* where people seek both Jewish and American involvement and sophistication. Included here is a group of highly engaged non-Orthodox individuals who are also part of the American mainstream, but who, like the Orthodox, are highly committed to Jewish observance.

In between the two poles of assimilation and intensive Jewish involvement is a *mixed* pattern of Jewish engagement, which is perhaps the most distinctively American of the three modes. This middle mode combines two dimensions: a more circumscribed Jewish involvement along with integration and high achievement in the American mainstream. The people who have mixed patterns of Jewish engagement are not indifferent about being Jewish, but their ongoing Jewish involvement depends on it both being meaningful and fitting in with their lives. The people who subscribe to this third form of Jewishness experience their Judaism as a set of values and historical people-consciousness rather than as a mode of observance.

### Seven Patterns of Jewish Engagement

From these three broad “working theories” about how to be Jewish a series of seven distinct patterns of Jewish engagement were identified. The *Assimilated Otherwise Engaged* group was differentiated into two subgroups: those who were *Really Indifferent* about being Jewish, many of whom happened to be younger and less settled; and a group of people with “*Some modicum of Interest*,” many of whom happened to be older and more settled. There were three subgroups among those with mixed patterns of Jewish engagement: those with strong *Subjective Involvement* who did not express their Jewish commitments in normative, recognizably Jewish ways; those who had a *Strong Cultural-Communal Involvement*, but not a religious one; and those who were termed *Tradition-*

*Oriented*, who expressed their individual Jewishness in ritual ways, but who did not appear to be well integrated into a Jewish community. Finally, the *Intensively Engaged* group was split into two subgroups – the *Orthodox* and the *Non-Orthodox*.

#### What Works: Key Factors that Influence Adult Jewishness

What is the relationship between “background” experiences and three measures of adult Jewishness (Subjective Centrality, Ritual Observance, and Cultural-Communal involvement)?

*In general the relative importance of earlier training versus subsequent experiences varied for those who were raised Orthodox and those who were not. For those raised Orthodox, earlier experiences in childhood and day school retained a more lasting influence on Jewish identity, while among those with non-Orthodox upbringing the strongest predictors of current Jewishness were to be found among “voluntary” experiences – ones that a person chose to undertake, like Jewish youth group, Jewish college activities or a trip to Israel.*

Those with Orthodox upbringing were more strongly influenced *earlier* in their lives. The Orthodox-raised who continued their childhood Jewish engagement into adulthood were enmeshed in a mutually reinforcing network of Jewish commitment and practice, beginning in their families and continuing in day school and in synagogue life. Compared to their non-Orthodox counterparts, those who were raised Orthodox were more fully enveloped in a social context which offered and encouraged a wide range of Jewish “background” experiences, and this early training seems to have been the main factor shaping their Jewishness in adulthood. Day school education was particularly influential on later Jewish development, having the greatest effect on all three measures of adult Jewishness. By the time later voluntary experiences were available to students raised in an Orthodox home, students were already committed to Jewish practice, and these experiences did not create much “added value” over and beyond what had already been encouraged by day school (which in this population often continued through high school).

This Orthodox formula of Jewish maximal exposure, which was usually successful in producing later Jewish involvement, could potentially become undermined in three main ways. First, emotional turmoil within the family worked against the power of this comprehensive Jewish message. Second, significant negative events or experiences “happened” to some people, repelling them from further Jewish involvement. Finally, not being married or having a family were associated with less ritual involvement.

The people who were not raised Orthodox typically faced a different situation from their Orthodox colleagues. The most important influences on their identities were *later voluntary* experiences such as being involved in Jewish youth group, Jewish studies and Hillel-like activities in college or having had a significant positive relationship or experience with regard to one’s Jewishness. Both of these sets of influences involve

emphasize relationships. Whether with one's peers or with other key individuals, having important relationship within a Jewish context is paramount.

In addition to these later experiences there were also some earlier influences that affected adult Jewish identity both directly and indirectly (by predisposing a person to get involved in "voluntary experiences"). These included: the importance of being Jewish to one's parents, the development of an "Early Jewish Disposition," and early "enculturation" that resulted from steady Shabbat observance and/or involvement in a "total Jewish environment" like Jewish summer camp. The route to strong Jewish engagement in adulthood had to do with early commitment and "imprinting" and then becoming involved in a range of voluntary experiences in adolescence and early adulthood. Being single and without children was negatively associated with intensive Jewish engagement.

*The striking findings about the impact of later voluntary experiences such as youth group, college activities and trips to Israel and of significant positive relationships and experiences, show that the individual who has not had a steady, intensive Jewish upbringing is open to influence by experiences that come later in life when the personal consciousness of his/her own choices is greater. Day schools most greatly influence those with intense experience from the start, whereas voluntary experiences are especially important to those who have not benefited from an intense Jewish upbringing from early on.*

#### Who Changes and How?

For this population of 22-52 year olds, there was an overall decrease in Ritual practice from childhood to adulthood, while Subjective Centrality, or the importance of being Jewish increased over the same time period. This suggests that there may be a hunger for new forms of Jewishness (as well as re-discovery of old forms) over the lifecourse.

For Jewish institutions, it is crucial to learn that 60% of the people in the study experienced changes in their relationship to being Jewish over time, suggesting that Jewish identity is not a fixed factor in one's life but rather a matter that parallels personal growth and personal development. There are critical periods and moments in people's lives that offer potential opportunities for Jewish institutions to play a role, if only these institutions can be open and available to individuals in a way that meets their changing needs and concerns.

#### Five Types of Journeys

Five types of "journeys" or patterns of change were identified, based on a combination of perceptual and behavioral indicators. Two of these were stable and three involved movement or change over the course of a person's life. The stable patterns included those with *Steady Low* or non-engagement with Jewishness, and those with *Steady High* intensity involvement with Jewish life. The three more dramatic journeys involved movement in different directions: *Lapsing* further away from involvement; *Increasing* the intensity of Jewish involvement; and finally, the *Interior* journeys where a person's

internal subjective value commitments intensified, while religious and communal practice remained low or decreased. Fully one-third of the sample experienced this *Interior* journey, and this pattern was especially characteristic of people whose current Jewishness was marked by mixed patterns of engagement. This pattern was not characteristic of either the most intensively involved or the most Jewishly indifferent groups.

The journeys described in this report are related to people's current patterns of Jewish engagement. These findings are essential in fleshing out the various ways of being Jewish that exist in contemporary society, especially for those with mixed patterns of Jewish involvement. Indeed, the journey concept makes the biggest difference in our understanding of the middle patterns of Jewish identity, while it has the least impact at the extremes of Jewish identity –assimilation or intensive Jewish living.

The people who are most intensively involved in Jewish life, as well as those who are least connected, have typically had steady patterns of Jewish socialization that are fairly impervious to external influence. Of course these individuals could still have the all-important, idiosyncratic positive experience that comes from a relationship or chance encounter. Still, they remain generally less susceptible to these experiences than those whose socialization is more mixed.

In contrast, middle identity or engagement patterns are typified by change and variation in Jewishness over time with the most dramatic journeys being those of people who move appreciably from where they began. In examining these patterns, baseline appears to be a significant factor. For instance, there are those who start off high on all dimensions but who lower their observance and heighten their emphasis on the value dimension (an *Interior* journey). There does not seem to be a strong pattern among those who start off intensively engaged and go completely from one extreme to the other (from “all” to “nothing”). A second intriguing result is that among those who start off highly engaged, there is a significant subgroup of people whose Jewishness intensifies over their lives. This is categorized as a form of an *Increasing* journey.

The concept of journey appears to be both apt and necessary for accurately portraying the nature of contemporary American Jewish identity. The term “journey” encompasses how Jewishness unfolds and gets shaped by the different experiences and encounters in a person's life. Each new context or life stage brings with it new possibilities. A person's Jewishness can wax, wane, and change in emphasis. It is responsive to social relationships, historical experiences and personal events. It is worth noting how this concept of journey differs from the more typical Jewish self-image of the “wandering Jew,” in which the Jewish people are forced to wander from place to place, holding fast to their own fixed identities through a changing environment. In contrast, the journeys described in this report are about the *voluntary* movements of a continuously evolving self interacting with a changing environment. A person may intensify the Jewish nexus of his/her life, or by contrast may make it weaker and more shallow, and these changes may



come about intentionally or by the coincidence of human encounters and changing circumstances.

Looking at journeys shows that people change and that people are changeable, and this fact embodies both the hope and the challenge of American Jewish institutions. If the quality, number and variety of Jewishness-enhancing experiences and institutions grow, so will the opportunities for positive change.

## Acknowledgments

This study has had its own journey over five years. The idea for it grew out of the discussions of the Research and Evaluation Workgroup of the Jewish Continuity Commission in 1995-96, a process that culminated in my preparing a proposal to the Commission for this project. This study benefited from the unerring support and sage counsel of David Arnow, the chair of the Workgroup, Lynn Korda Kroll, the founding chair of the Commission, John Ruskay, the founding Executive Director of the Commission, and the members of the Workgroup. Without their help this study would not have been funded.

Alisa Rubin Kurshan, as Executive Director of the Jewish Continuity Commission, has been a central supporter of this work in partnership with Billie Gold, Chair of the Commission and Alan Siskind, Chair of the Research and Evaluation Workgroup. In addition, the Commission members themselves have been helpful collaborators in this work, through their lively and thoughtful ongoing interest in the findings of this study.

That UJA-Federation is the main sponsor of this important basic research is particularly noteworthy. It is very difficult to obtain funding for basic research about Jewish life, even for the many population studies that have provided the knowledge-base for the American Jewish communal enterprise during the past four decades. UJA-Federation of New York has shown its leadership in this regard through its willingness to move beyond the socio-demographic perspective of the population studies and to undertake exploratory research to begin to address the “continuity issue.”

Other funders joined UJA-Federation in this effort. The AviChai Foundation generously co-sponsored the first phase of the project – the in-depth interviews. The Chazen Family Fund made a generous contribution that allowed us to conduct the focus groups. Finally, the Lucius Littauer Foundation gave this project a helpful “vote of confidence,” despite the fact that social scientific research is beyond the normal purview of the foundation’s mission.

The Academic Advisory Board, which was set up especially for this project, served as a remarkable brain trust for my inquiry, and I am deeply grateful to its members for their unflagging, intensive (and unpaid) support for the project. Without their help and steady counsel, the study would not have been so successful.

The Academic Advisory Board included Dr. Pearl Beck; Dr. Stephen P. Cohen, Institute for Middle East Peace and Development; Professor Steven M. Cohen, The Melton Centre, Hebrew University; Professor Kay Deaux, The Graduate Center, C.U.N.Y.; Dr. Roberta Farber, Stern College; Dr. Eva Fogelman; Dr. Leora Isaacs, J.E.S.N.A.; Professor Charles Kadushin, The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University; Dr. Barry Kosmin, Institute for Jewish Policy Research, London; Rabbi Joy Levitt; Professor Riv-Ellen Prell, University of Minnesota; Professor Len Saxe, The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University; Professor Paul

Ritterband, Haifa University.; Dr. Elizabeth Schnur, Jewish Child Care Association; Dr. Mark Schulman, SRBI, Inc.; Rabbi Gordon Tucker.

Charles Kadushin, Pearl Beck, Paul Ritterband and Stephen P. Cohen greatly exceeded their roles as members of the Advisory Board with their generous help, counsel and support. They donated their time and expertise well beyond the call of duty, and I hope each of them receives a large recompense in the world to come, if not sooner.

Dina Pinsky served as my able research assistant for the first several years of this project and helped me both manage and think through the conduct of this research. Dina, Shaul Kelner and Shuli Rubin assisted me in analyzing the in-depth interviews. We had a fascinating set of conversations, which aided my thinking immensely.

The following people assisted me in conducting in-depth interviews:

Diane Abrams, Dr. Ronnie Braun, Dr. Marvin Ciporin, Dr. Lisa Dubinsky, Dr. Roberta Farber, Anne Korros, Shaul Kelner, Dr. Susan Kraemer, Janis Leventhal, Dina Pinsky, Sheindy Pretter, Alan Rosenberg, Shuli Rubin, Dorothy Weiss,

Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. (SRBI) in New York City conducted the survey. Mark Schulman and his associates were tremendously helpful and responsive. The focus groups were held at Focus Suites, Inc. in New York City.

The Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, Hebrew University was kind enough to offer me a suitable home and wonderful colleagues during my year in Israel in 1997-98. Professors Gabriel Horenczyck, Zvi Bekerman, Steven Cohen and Mordecai Nisan were tremendous supporters and helpful critics of my work.

Professor Adam Gamoran of the University of Wisconsin graciously read the penultimate draft of this report and offered incisive comments and suggestions. Nessa Rapoport (Mandel Foundation) and Professor Charles Liebman (Bar Ilan University) each shared encouraging suggestions about the earlier version of this report. Professor Barry Holtz's fine mind and encouraging heart bolstered me (and our children) throughout the past four years.

Elisheva Urbas played a crucial editorial role in the preparation of the final report, and working with her was both a great pleasure and tremendously instructive.

Finally, no research is possible without the cooperation of the more than 1,700 people who agreed to share their experiences and reflections about the role that being Jewish plays in their lives. I am deeply grateful to them for speaking with me, and I wish them all fruitful journeys.

## Introduction

This study was funded by the Jewish Continuity Commission of UJA-Federation of New York. It grew out of a desire to better understand Jewish identity in the generations of American Jews born after World War II and to take a fresh look at the role that Judaism continues to play in the lives of these individuals. There was a concern that conventional approaches to studying issues of Jewish identity were no longer adequate. Instead, a more comprehensive study was needed to produce an accurate picture of where, if at all, being Jewish fits into people's lives today and to portray how a person's relationship to being Jewish evolves over the course of his or her lifetime.

The purpose of the Connections and Journeys study is to provide insight into two aspects of American-Jewish identity. First, the study explores people's current *connections* to Judaism. What does being Jewish mean to them? In what ways, if at all, do they identify as Jews? How do they relate to their Jewishness? Understanding how individuals see themselves -- as men and women, Jews, Americans, professionals, parents, etc. -- and how their Jewishness interacts with other facets of identity is essential in analyzing the life choices that these Jews make (for instance, regarding friends, spouse, educational and career decisions, involvement in organizational and philanthropic activities). By looking at the connections that people forge between their Jewishness and other aspects of their lives, this study describes more carefully than previous research the varieties of Jewishness that currently exist, attempting to move beyond the conventional ways of categorizing different types of Jews in terms of "denomination" or mere "affiliation."

Second, the Connections and Journeys study examines people's *journeys* -- how people's Jewish identities change and develop throughout the life course. What experiences and relationships are influential for good or ill in forming a person's Jewish identity, beginning with one's family and early life experiences, and extending on into adulthood? To what extent, if at all, are people's relationships to being Jewish inscribed during childhood and how malleable are these ties later on in life?

The perspective taken in this study is that identity is the result of an ongoing process rather than an entity that is fully acquired at a particular point in a person's lifetime. Thus, a person's Jewish identity can be conceptualized as both the cause and consequence of choices made at certain points throughout an individual's lifetime. By identifying and describing the "enabling conditions" under which critical choices and positive connection to Jewishness have occurred, this study can enhance the ability of communal policy-makers to design effective programs and interventions.

### **A New Approach to Studying Jewish Identity**

The 40-year long enterprise of studying American Jewish identification and involvement in Jewish life has been based mainly on socio-demographic surveys like the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS)<sup>1</sup> and the 1991 New York Jewish Population Study (NYJPS).<sup>2</sup> The Connections and Journeys study has benefited from this large body of empirical research about American Jewry in two ways. First, our study adopts the same sociological definition of whom to include in the survey as do these other studies. A person is said to have a Jewish *connection* (although not necessarily a Jewish *identity*) for any of the following reasons: one's religion is Judaism; one considers oneself to be Jewish; one has a Jewish parent; or one received a Jewish upbringing. Second, in addition to defining the contours of the Jewishly connected population in the same manner as the prior studies, the Connections and Journeys survey includes many of the questions typically used in these studies to examine the conventional religious, cultural and communal practices of American Jews. These include religious ritual practice, cultural and educational involvements, institutional affiliations, philanthropic giving, and friendship networks.

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<sup>1</sup> Kosmin, B., Goldstein, S., Waksberg, J., Lerer, N., Keysar, A., & Scheckner, J. (1991). *Highlights of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey*. New York: The Council of Jewish Federations.

<sup>2</sup> Horowitz, B. (1993). *The 1991 New York Jewish Population Study*. New York: UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies.

Despite these similarities, the present study differs from these earlier ones in some important ways. First, students of American Jewry have tended to treat questions about conventional Jewish actions and behaviors as evidence of peoples' Jewish "identities." The present study challenges this formulation by asserting that identity -- a person's *subjective* relationship to being Jewish—should be explored more directly. It is more apparent than ever before that Jewish continuity depends on the individual's commitments and decision-making. As a result, we must examine the *subjective experience* of being Jewish in addition to looking at Jewish practices and involvements in Jewish life. This study examines both a person's internal, subjective relationship to being Jewish, as well as the person's active involvement in Jewish life and in Jewishly motivated activities. I argue that looking at behavioral measures alone is no longer a sufficient means of capturing a person's Jewish commitments.

Second, this study begins to address the important question of how (and for whom) Jewish identity and practice change over the course of a person's life. While some previous studies have explored changes in Jewishness over time, these have analyzed *aggregate* changes in American Jewry and its major demographic subgroups. Exploring the Jewish involvement of *individuals* over time – in terms of both subjective commitments and behavioral practices-- is a new undertaking introduced here.

Third, compared to previous studies, this project was more complex. It was carried out in three successive phases, using a variety of methods. In-depth interviews were used at the outset to capture people's individual stories, followed by focus groups, which provided a more shared, social perspective. A large-scale, statistically representative survey made up the third phase of the study. All three phases examined both external and subjective aspects of being Jewish and the relationship between them.

Finally, although the Connections and Journeys research culminated in a quantitative survey, it also provides extensive qualitative material about American Jewish identity. The interviews that were used to develop new questions for the survey provide many

insights in themselves, letting us hear the voices of the individuals whose identity we are trying to probe.

It is important to note that this study targeted people who were born in America between the years 1945 and 1974 (22-52 years old), who resided at the time of the study in the eight-county UJA-Federation of New York catchment area.<sup>3</sup> Each of these definitional elements deserves a brief explanation. First, the focus on American-born Jews arose because immigration itself plays a powerful role in shaping individual and group identity. The unique experiences of recent Russian, Syrian, Iranian and Israeli Jewish immigrants to the United States could each warrant an independent study tailored to the experiences of these different ethnic groups. Second, the focus on Baby Boomer and younger adults addresses the belief shared by many policy-makers, researchers and Commission members that studying the Jewish experiences of people born in the post-World War II era is critical. Finally, the people interviewed for this study all reside in the greater New York City area, as this is the geographic region under the purview of UJA-Federation of New York, the main sponsor of the study.

The fact that I discuss the identities of *American Jewry* while drawing on data gathered in the Greater New York area deserves a final introductory comment. What can we learn about American Jews from a study based in the New York area? On the one hand, the Greater New York area differs from the rest of America in some important ways. First, the Jewish population density is higher in the New York area than it is nationally. (In 1990-1991 13% of the New York area population was Jewish, compared to 2% nationally.) Second, Orthodox Jews make up 14% of New York's Jewish population, compared to 6% of the Jewish population of America (1990-91 figures). These two facts lead to the third distinctive feature of the New York Jewish community. Jewishness in New York City is a social category of consequence because of the longstanding Jewish presence in the city over the past century. Compared to elsewhere in America, it is easier

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<sup>3</sup> The five boroughs of New York City, plus Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties.

to be Jewish in New York,<sup>4</sup> where, to paraphrase the comedian Lenny Bruce, “even the non-Jews seem Jewish.” Insofar as Jewishness in America has become regional, the findings from this study will be limited.

Despite these limitations, the findings from this study of Jews living in the New York area can, in many ways, be generalized to Jews elsewhere in America. First, the greater New York area is home to 1.6 million (26%) of America’s 6.1 million Jews, so on statistical grounds alone, what happens in New York matters to America. Second, the variations in Jewishness of the many smaller locales which comprise the greater New York area are quite wide-ranging, including both Borough Park, which is 90% Jewish and highly Orthodox, to the suburban counties of Nassau, Westchester and Suffolk counties, which more closely resembles Jewish communities elsewhere in America. In sum, findings about Jewish identity in New York can serve as both an exception and a rule about American Jewish identity in general.

### **Connections and Journeys**

This report is organized in five sections. In Chapter One, entitled “Studying Jewishness in an Age of Choice,” I explore the new questions regarding Jewishness and Jewish identity in contemporary America that provided the impetus for conducting the Connections and Journeys study. I discuss the study’s unique framework, which includes measures of a person’s subjective commitments to Jewishness as well as his/her involvement in Jewish practices and activities. I describe the study’s multi-method approach, which included in-depth interviews, focus groups and a large-scale survey. The wealth of data -- both qualitative and quantitative-- generated by this study provides the means for addressing some of these new questions about American Jews and their relationship to their Jewishness. The subsequent chapters of the report explore these data from four different angles.

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<sup>4</sup> Horowitz, B. (1999). "Jewishness in New York: Exception or Rule?" In S. M. Cohen and G. Horenczyk (Eds.). *National Variations in Modern Jewish Identity*. Albany: State University of New York Press.



In Chapter Two, entitled “Connections,” I show that by conceptualizing Jewish identity in terms of two key dimensions --through actions of different sorts (in this case religious ritual, and cultural-communal actions), and as a subjective disposition (as seen in a person’s sense of attachment to or feelings about Jewishness) -- the American Jewish population can be portrayed in terms of seven different types of Jewish engagement. Each of these types of engagement is then described in detail, in terms of socio-demographic, attitudinal and behavioral correlates. The chapter culminates with a series of qualitative portraits of each of the seven types of Jewish engagement, drawing on material from the in-depth interviews to illuminate the differences among them.

Chapter Three, entitled “What Works?” analyzes the key elements that have shaped the Jewish identities of this generation. The impact of a series of formative experiences is explored for each of the different measures of adult Jewishness. This chapter addresses the paths that people have taken on their journeys – the contact with institutions, programs, and relationships that have had an impact on people’s Jewish lives.

Chapter Four, entitled “Journeys,” examines how and in what ways people change over the course of their lives from childhood and adulthood. Five characteristic journeys are identified and the relationship between a person’s journey and his/her current connections to Jewishness is explored.

Finally the report concludes with a discussion of how the organized Jewish community can learn from this study and foster Jewish identity in the current and coming generations.

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Horowitz, B. and Solomon, J. (Summer, 1992). “Why is this city different from all other cities? New York and the National Jewish Population Survey, 1991.” *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*.

## Chapter One

### Studying Jewishness in an Age of Choice

In some ways it used to be much easier to locate and identify American Jews than it is today. Consider that at one time the size of the Jewish population in New York City could be simply extrapolated from the percentage of children absent from the New York City public schools on Yom Kippur (Ritterband, 1997a)! This strategy of estimating Jewish population was viable at the time because the vast majority of Jews both enrolled their children in the public schools and also observed Yom Kippur (at least in the form of keeping one's children home from school). School absence during the holiday could be adopted as a sociological marker of being Jewish.

The 40-year enterprise of describing and tracking American Jewry has traditionally relied on outwardly observable and easily reportable "Jewish" activity. This includes actions like keeping religious rituals, giving to philanthropy, affiliating with Jewish institutions, attending Jewish classes, reading Jewish newspapers, and having mostly Jewish friends. Surveying these sorts of behaviors as a way of assessing Jewishness was a workable strategy because most Jews did these things, whether self-consciously or not.

Tracking Jewish identity is no longer so easy. Determining such clear-cut markers of being Jewish has become much more complex, because today Jews as individuals face a wider range of options than did Jews in previous generations. First of all, America itself has changed. The contemporary American setting is characterized by much more integration between people of various ethnic and religious groups than in prior eras, and the external boundaries that previously kept Jews (and other ethnic groups) separate from "America" have fallen away. American Jews can now live in the neighborhoods they desire, attend colleges of their own selection, work in the occupations to which they aspire, and marry partners of their own choosing without being rejected on the basis of group membership. Whereas earlier generations of Jews were "kept in place" by various structural and attitudinal barriers, American Jews today are no longer "marked" in a way

that enforces their segregation from the rest of America (unless they choose to be). They are neither forced to *be* Jewish nor to *escape from* being Jewish.

A second reason why it is now harder to keep tabs on the number of Jews in America is that being Jewish has become a *state of mind* and is not simply a matter of inherited membership in a religious or ethnic group. To be actively Jewish today for many reflects some element of personal choice and commitment over and above one's automatic membership-by-birth in the Jewish group. It has been remarked that *all* American Jews today (and not only converts to Judaism) must come to think of themselves as "Jews by choice," because in the face of wide-open opportunities about lifestyle and mobility in contemporary America, being actively Jewish for most people requires an active assertion of some sort, over and above simply being born Jewish.

Thus the changes in the American life – its increased openness and greater acceptance of Jews as part of the mainstream -- have made the *psychology* of Jewishness (i.e. the individual's subjective relationship to being Jewish) more important than ever before. In the past simply being marked as Jewish was sufficient to dictate behavior, up to a point, whereas today, being Jewish does not determine much of anything, without some additional commitment on the part of the individual.

If the nature of being Jewish today is more likely to involve elements of individual choice to "opt in" or to "opt out," then the contemporary tracking of American Jews needs to offer a window into the nature and extent of that choice. The commitment to being Jewish is something that can vary significantly among individuals, even though they may all belong to the same sociological category of people who indicate that they are Jewish by religion and have received a Jewish upbringing. One purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between a person's internal commitments to being Jewish and how, if at all, these commitments come to be expressed in terms of Jewish actions and practices. A second purpose is to examine the conditions and experiences that lead to Jewish commitment in adulthood.

## Many Ways of Being Jewish

What do we mean by a person's sense of "Jewishness" or Jewish identity? In this study, these two terms are used interchangeably to refer to those aspects of a person's sense of self that he/she considers to be "Jewish."<sup>5</sup> This is a deliberately subjective approach to defining Jewishness, which examines and probes the current reality of what being Jewish means when individuals speak about themselves and their lives. *Jewishness refers to the set of beliefs, images, feelings and practices that a person considers to be Jewish.* This formulation may stand in sharp contrast with what policy makers, communal leaders, rabbis, or educators might respond with if asked to define the elements of Jewish identity in advance. Rather than asking what is a "Good Jew?" this study emphasizes the question, "For you personally, what does being Jewish involve?" This may deviate from other possible definitions of being Jewish that are more prescribed –by tradition, the Jewish community, rabbis, one's parents, or anyone else. The images of Jewishness offered by people interviewed for this study are necessarily descriptive and personal, rather than prescriptive or normative.

It is important not to confuse the "is" and the "ought." For instance, many Jewish communal leaders believe that a strong commitment to and love of Israel is a fundamental feature of the content of American Jewish identity. But this belief is about an ideal of what some might want Jewish identity to be. In reality there are – as this study will show – a significant minority of people who feel Jewishly committed, even of those whose practice meets most conventional definitions of Jewish commitment, who nonetheless do not feel that strongly about Israel. Similarly, although most communal leaders feel that being Jewish *ought* to matter to most Jews, it is important to recognize that this importance can manifest itself in a variety of different ways. Being Jewish may be a central, salient part of one person's identity, while for another person it may simply be an aspect of background and ethnic or religious heritage.

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<sup>5</sup> Note that my usage of "Jewishness" and "Jewish identity" refers to the internal subjective state of the individual. Contrast this psychological definition of Jewishness to Ritterband's sociological definition in describing the Jewishness of Soviet Jews: "that which is peculiar to Jews, that which marks Jews off from other peoples either absolutely or in probabilistic terms. Thus Jewishness as an abstraction stands for the markers by which both Jews and non-Jews establish the Jewish social boundary as well as the content of traditional Judaism and the behaviors and attitudes that are derivative of both." Ritterband, P. (1997b).

Clearly, trying to narrow the gap between the “is” and the many definitions of “ought” is a great challenge facing the Jewish community. But before deciding what ought to count as Jewish identity, it is essential to develop a clear picture of how people themselves see their Jewishness. Hence this study takes an inclusive, pluralist perspective in describing the numerous ways that being Jewish is experienced today.

### **Key Aspects of Identity**

The nature of what “being Jewish” means to people varies across different subgroups, in different times and places. It can vary both in terms of the content of Jewishness and in its meaningfulness for different people. For some, being Jewish is a fact of one’s background or a category of membership and not something that is particularly meaningful psychologically. For instance, in a focus group one participant said,

[My Jewishness] is in the background, in the sense that it’s a template upon which I was formed. It’s not in the background in that it’s tucked away like a box. It’s in the background in that it’s always with me – to some subconscious degree. It’s a part of who I am... Just like I’m Caucasian, I’m Jewish. It’s like – it’s part of who I am.

I didn’t mean to imply that I’m neutral. I am proud that I’m Jewish. Particularly lately, I’ve made efforts to get more in touch with my heritage. And I realize more lately now than ever before, that being Jewish is special.

...I don’t go around thinking about it 24 hours a day. As I walked here to come here tonight, I wasn’t thinking, I’m Jewish. And I’m coming to a group of Jewish -- I was just rushing to get here, like everyone’s going about their business. I don’t think about it all the time. But we’re discussing it now, so it’s now in the forefront of my mind. (Male participant, Focus Group 5/15/97, p.16)

While this man sees being Jewish as a fundamental fact of his life which may determine many things (as does being Caucasian or male), for him being Jewish is not an element in his conscious decision-making. He describes being Jewish as a basic fact of his background, but it is not a particularly active or motivating element, although one imagines that under particular circumstances this Jewish spark could be “ignited.” In terms of its content, being Jewish is one of a series of attributes that this man has about the Self, but he does not feel particularly related to Jewish things, such as the practice of

Judaism or feelings of connection with other Jews or with Jewry as a whole. He is proud to be a Jew (at least he calls it “special”), a feeling that may rise and fall in importance in relation to changing circumstances.

In the same way that being Jewish may or many not be psychologically meaningful for different people, being Jewish also may or may not play a role in various decision-making situations. For instance, one woman stated,

I know I’m Jewish. And I don’t revolve everything in my life around being Jewish. I mean, I didn’t go out looking to meet somebody who was Jewish. My husband came along ...on the train – that’s where we met. So it’s just I met him. And I fell in love. I wasn’t going to say, okay, well I’m sorry Robert, you’re not Jewish, I’ll have to move on now. Yes, I couldn’t do that. (Female, Focus Group 5/7/97, p. 64)

While she is Jewish in terms of her background, being Jewish appears to have played no active role in her choice of spouse. Indeed she feels that it would be outlandish to use the fact of her Jewishness as a criterion in this kind of decision-making.

Another person’s image of Jewishness is linked to the family constellation and to specific life cycle occasions:

...My grandmother and my grandparents really held the Jewish part together. And when they passed away, it drifted away. I mean, [being Jewish] is part of me, but it’s not strong. Unless there’s a funeral or a wedding and I’m faced with it. Otherwise, I really don’t – it’s way in the background. So, I don’t know.

I have stereotypes of pushing and nagging that’s in my family. And my sister would say my mother speaks too loud. She’s always shushing her. Shhh. Shhh. Ma, you’re being such a...I don’t want to say four-letter word...[Another participant volunteers the word “Yenta.”] Right (*laughter*). Right. So that’s what I think of Jewishness. (Female participant, Focus Group 5/15/97, p.53)

The accessibility and salience of being Jewish ebb and flow in relation to changing circumstances, in this case in relation to specific family events. Clearly the “Jewish” can include numerous images – those which a person finds enriching and attractive, as well as those which are seen as off-putting. For each person “the Jewish” can include more than one set of feelings, so that part of the analytic task is to delineate those elements

which are seen as entangling, oppressive and inescapable versus those which are seen as energizing, attractive and enriching.

The examples presented so far have included people for whom being Jewish is *not* a central, salient feature of their sense of self. For others, “the Jewish” is a pivotal organizing element of their identity. This can be expressed in a variety of ways. For example, here is one person’s more religious worldview regarding Jewishness:

For me [Judaism/Jewishness] was kind of natural. I grew up in a religious home, and I’m Modern Orthodox now. I went to yeshiva my whole life. And I always grew up around Jewish people that were Modern Orthodox. And now even in my job everyone around me is Jewish. I look at it a little bit differently than Suzanne. As opposed to being cultural -- it is a little bit culturally, but it is a religion also, where there’s laws and all kinds of different things that you have to follow. (Focus Group 5/7/97, p. 14)

Another person expresses her religious outlook as all encompassing:

In terms of who I am, [“Jewish”] basically is who I am. Whatever I do is really dictated by my following the laws of the Torah. So that while I’m very involved in the outside world - my world is not confined to a Jewish religious world, particularly career-wise - it clearly defines who I am and how I will approach things.

I follow the laws of kashruth very carefully. I may be in a group of people, but I won’t eat what they eat. I follow the laws of Shabbat; I don’t work on holidays.

It’s like all around you. It influences what I read. I don’t just read Jewish literature, but I’m pulled toward certain materials because of interest. (Interview #13)

This person, based on his view of his atheist activist grandmother, expresses a very different image of Jewishness that emphasizes the Jewish intellectual tradition:

I, by the way, come from a long line of proud Jewish atheists. So it’s very interesting to hear that my grandmother, who was a union organizer, she was totally atheist...I don’t know if people realize it, in Eastern Europe, the men studied and the women supported the family. So, my great grandfather was a scribe who would give the Holy Books out free to people that needed, while my great grandmother struggled to feed 15 kids, or whatever it was.

So [my grandmother] definitely sneered at religion. So, it’s interesting where my grandmother was very strongly Jewish identified. And totally atheist...So in my family...Judaism was more about like questioning things and examining things and social activism and general left wing politics.

[The thing that ] I'm very proud [of] about Judaism is that it is an intellectual tradition. And you are supposed to question. And that there aren't pat answers. And you're supposed to sit and argue about it. (Focus Group 5/15/97, p. 53-54)

Although this man rejects a religious expression of Jewishness for himself, he views his own commitments as arising from a Jewish sensibility. For him, being Jewish plays a central role in his life and is not compartmentalized the way the earlier speakers describe it, as a passive element in the background.

Still another person describes how all encompassing Jewishness is in his life, even if it is not his only guide:

Basically I read the world from right to left. If the word "Jewish" shows up on a page, my eyes will immediately pick it up... In terms of behaviors there are some rituals in my life that I do, but not like I used to. Some part of me can imagine being off in the mountains and not participating in anything. In my being I am Jewish; it is what I am, but it's not based on theology. And none of my ethical views are based on my Jewishness. (Interview #41)

These different statements demonstrate that for different people Jewishness can vary a great deal in terms of content (religious, cultural, familial or personal), meaningfulness (Jewishness as a feature in a person's background or foreground, Judaism as all-encompassing or as compartmentalized), valence (positive or negative feelings and attitudes). Moreover, in many cases the description of a person's Jewish experience has the feel of a personal odyssey, filled with twists and turns over the course of a lifetime.

Reading the in-depth interviews, one is struck by the many ways of being Jewish today. From these various excerpts, it is clear that a person constructs a sense of Jewishness from his/her own mix of experiences, engagements, interactions and contexts. The people interviewed came from a variety of Jewish lifestyles and life spaces, and within each lifestyle the meaning of Jewishness varies. We see evidence of a more pliable, "personalized" Jewish identity, which for many has more to do with personal meaning and expression than with communal obligation. Jewishness appears to be salient insofar as it is meaningful. For many respondents, Jewishness is experienced as an essential,



often central aspect of the self, but the content of what is defined as Jewish may vary tremendously.

Perhaps a “salad-bar” metaphor is helpful here. Imagine a buffet containing the full array of ingredients possibly associated with Jewishness. These would include more normative ways of being Jewish such as following Jewish law, studying Jewish texts and emulating Jewish teachings. It would also include non-normative, but culturally understood ways of being Jewish – being smart, eating lox and bagels, being intellectually critical, watching *Seinfeld* on television. It would also contain particularly personal expressions of being Jewish, such as an individual’s feelings about his Uncle Louie or his relationship to a particular poem or book. From among the many possibilities displayed in our imaginary salad bar, suppose that each individual fills his/her plate with a unique assortment of ingredients which for him/her constitute “the Jewish” -- religious, ethnic, cultural, social, affective, ethical, etc. The task of this research is to try to describe the many ways of being Jewish – the combination of chosen components on each person’s plate.

The irony of this highly personalized relationship to Jewishness is that as each person’s Jewish expression becomes more unique, it is also less likely to be shared by others, less recognizably “Jewish.” Moreover, the increasingly personal ways of expressing Jewishness make the task of collecting and describing these variations by means of a survey very difficult. As a result, in this study the Jewishness of individuals is explored in two main ways. First a person’s relationship to Jewishness is examined in more conventional, *outwardly observable* terms, with reference to both the religious practices and the cultural and communal activities in which a person might engage. Second, Jewishness is examined from a more *interior* angle, in terms of how central, salient or meaningful the individual finds Jewishness to be in his/her life, as well as the particular content of that individual’s images, attitudes or beliefs.

## **Two Dimensions of Jewishness: Doing and Being**

The 40-year enterprise of studying American Jewish identification and involvement in Jewish life has relied on normative Jewish practice as means of assessing a person's Jewishness, beginning with Marshall Sklare's seminal work, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier* (1967). Sklare described the central question of his study as, "What is the nature and level of the Jewish identity of the American Jew?" (p.6). Interestingly, Sklare never defines Jewish identity directly, other than to say that Jews in the post-Emancipation world are caught between the pull of the "sacramental" (i.e. ritual) framework inherited from their ancestors and "the secularistic mode of [their] daily li[ves]...and [their] adherence to the norms of the general community" (p.48). For Sklare, Jewish identity could be measured by examining peoples' religious ritual practice and "their deviation from tradition." (p.51).

From the mid-1960s until today the observance of religious ritual has become the basic means of tracking a person's Jewish commitments in study after study of American Jewry (Goldstein & Goldscheider, 1968; Cohen, Woocher & Phillips, 1984; Goldstein, 1992). Over the years the list of practices associated with Jewish identity has been broadened to include both Jewish ethnic and communal behaviors, such as reading Jewish newspapers and magazines, donating money to Jewish charities, belonging to Jewish organizations, having mostly Jewish friends, and living in a Jewish neighborhood. This body of research has focused largely on the *things Jews do* and has assumed that these were indicators of Jewish identity. This is not surprising, given that Jewish religious and communal life has traditionally placed a high value on outwardly observable actions and communally meaningful behaviors (i.e. doing recognizably Jewish things and behaving in recognizably Jewish ways).

Methodologically, a set of judgments about what is worth surveying has come to characterize the sociological study of American Jewry, which contains within it at least a tacit approach to identity. This approach has emphasized objective, readily countable behaviors without attending to subjective experience, meaning and motivation. It has resulted in a wealth of information about such questions as who lights candles and how often

people have visited Israel. But it has revealed much less about Jews' opinions and beliefs about the world around them and has taught us practically nothing about why people do what they do and feel what they feel or about the role being Jewish plays in their lives.<sup>6</sup>

Much of the current knowledge base about American Jews is drawn from large socio-demographic population surveys like the NJPS and the NYJPS. In these studies a household is typically contacted by telephone and the respondent is asked, in essence, to the exclusion of nearly all other concerns, "Are you Jewish? If yes, then, which of these conventional Jewish things do you do?" The presumption has been that if being Jewish matters to the respondent, Jewish behaviors (especially traditional ones) will follow. In other words, the behavioral approach assumes that Jewish identity and Jewish practice coincide. But as this study will show, there are people who have strong ties to Jewishness that are not expressed in traditional, "tribal," ethnic, or religious ways, and there are people who follow some Jewish practices even when their internal commitments have ebbed. Looking at either identity or practice in isolation may prove to be an increasingly misleading way of characterizing the Jewishness of American Jews.

Indeed, the most problematic aspect of the current knowledge base about American Jewishness the notion of "identity" itself, an element that has been treated as outwardly recognizable without reference to its internal, subjective aspect. While the 1990 NJPS revealed a fair amount about the sociology of what its authors term the "identities" of American Jews—Core Jews, Jews by Religion, Jews by Choice, Secular Jews -- its scope did not include identity in the psychological or socio-psychological sense. In fact, "Jew by Religion," "Jew by Choice," and "Secular" are *category memberships* of a certain sort rather than subjective *identities*. People described by these terms (e.g. "Jews by Religion") share characteristics defined by the analysts, but these terms do not refer to the internal self understanding, meaning or motivation a person attaches to being (or "doing") Jewish or to how Jewishness relates to a person's overall life and lifestyle. Simon Herman (1977), a social psychologist whose major research involved Jews living

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<sup>6</sup> Happily this situation has begun to change, as a number of key sociologists of American Jewry come to grips with the limitations of a strictly quantitative method based on surveys (Tobin, 1997; Cohen and Eisen, 1998).

in Israel, echoed these concerns when he wrote, “Most studies of Jewish communities in the Diaspora...are at best studies of Jewish *identification*,” as distinct from Jewish *identity*. Herman viewed identification as the individual’s enactment of the group’s shared norms and practices, while he saw identity as referring to the way that being Jewish fit into an individual’s own self-definition.

In addition to the limitations arising from relying on an overly behavioralistic approach to American Jewish identity, our view of American Jewish identity has also been restricted because cross-sectional surveys remain the primary data source for our analyses. These studies portray the condition of American Jewry as a whole at one discrete moment, and have not allowed us to examine the stability or changeability of identity over time. Yet from casual conversations one learns that people’s Jewish involvement and practice often ebb and flow over the course of their lives, in response to changing circumstances. This dynamic perspective has been missing altogether from our understanding of American Jewish life.

In sum, the diverse ways of being Jewish have not been adequately captured by the behavioral measures typically employed in demographic studies of American Jews. The goals of this study then were to examine identity, both objective and subjective, and to examine the way identity – both parts – is formed and changes over time. The Connections and Journeys Study adds a new dimension to the outwardly observable manifestations of identity considered in previous studies, exploring the *internal, subjective aspect* of what being Jewish means to the individual. Here we are asking, how does the person perceive his or her Jewishness? Is it seen merely as a background attribute and a fact of birth, or does it constitute a more central, meaningful, motivating element of a person’s life? This dimension, which explores the internal aspects of Jewish identity, is termed “subjective Jewish centrality.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Other terms have been used regarding meaningfulness. Simon Herman speaks of both “salience” and “centrality” in a perceptual sense: “Centrality is a major component of what is termed the individual’s ‘involvement’ in the group. Salience refers to prominence in the perceptual field, the ‘figure’ against the ‘ground,’ the extent to which an object or activity captures a person’s attention at a given moment.” S.N. Herman (1989) p. 51. See also Stryker, S. & Serpe, R (1994).

Lastly, this study explores the ways that people's Jewish attachments have evolved over the course of their lives. In this more subjective definition of Jewish identity, the Jewish component of the self is seen as one identity among others that a person might find meaningful.<sup>8</sup> Over-riding centrality of Jewishness is not presumed in this formulation: rather, it is treated as a dimension that may vary across people. The Jewish self is seen as evolving out of an ongoing process of ebbs and flows in engagement and involvement, and the nature and extent of both engagement and practice may vary over the course of a person's life in relation to changing circumstances.

### **Research Design**

To address these issues the Connections and Journeys study combined a variety of data sources and methods, both qualitative and quantitative. The research design involved three interrelated tasks that culminated in a large-scale survey. Each task had a different purpose and thus drew on different methods for gathering data, some offering more depth and some greater breadth. The research tasks were successive; findings from each stage were used to refine the work in the subsequent stage.

In the first phase of the study 87 exploratory interviews were conducted between February and June 1996. The purpose of conducting the exploratory interviews was to develop a broader understanding of what Jews' lives are like by gaining a more intimate picture of Jewishness in the context of the whole person. The goal of these interviews was to explore the *variety* of ways that Jews live and to generate some working hypotheses about the phenomenon of Jewishness today, irrespective of the actual *representativeness* of these interviews. In the second phase, these in-depth interviews were followed by a series of focus groups, where themes that emerged from the individual interviews were explored in a small-group setting. These were conducted in April and May 1997.

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<sup>8</sup> This approach is based on the extensive and growing literature in social psychology on "social identity theory" as exemplified by Henri Tajfel (1981). Deaux (1996) provides a helpful overview.

Finally, based on the findings from both the in-depth interviews and the focus groups, a new survey instrument was developed and employed in a survey of 1,500 Jewish adults ages 22-52 who were interviewed by telephone between February and May 1998. Where the in-depth interviews served as grist for the mill in identifying key dimensions and issues to be probed, the telephone survey was designed to address these questions more systematically (albeit in less depth) using a representative sample of the population. By painting a picture of the whole population, these results provided in turn meaningful contexts to help understand the significance of the individual identity stories gleaned from the interview material.

#### PHASE ONE: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

##### *Selecting the Respondents*

The target population for the study was American-born Jews ages 22-50 living in the eight-county area of New York City, Long Island and Westchester. In defining the eligible population in terms of Jewishness, the study followed the logic of the 1991 New York Jewish Population Study screening, which defined as eligible for the sample anyone who described him/herself as Jewish, anyone who had a Jewish parent or anyone who had received a Jewish upbringing. (Thus in theory there could be people eligible for the study who did not define themselves as Jewish, but who had a Jewish parent or had received a Jewish upbringing.) This broad screening, which includes the full range of possible “outcomes,” was essential for investigating individuals’ Jewish journeys over time. In addition to these basic screening criteria, the 87 interviews were split evenly between men and women, and include both native New Yorkers as well as people who migrated to New York later in their lives.

The question of how to choose the respondents given all of the screening definitions was an interesting one. The goal of the in-depth interviews was to explore the varieties of connections to Jewishness and to Judaism that exist, and to thus provide a broader perspective about the sorts of lives and lifestyles that different Jews lead. In light of this goal it seemed wise to avoid the more conventional strategy of defining people on the

basis of Jewish behavior, by sampling in terms of denomination. To choose respondents on this basis would only serve to reify traditional categories instead of opening up new ways of thinking about the nature of contemporary American Jewishness.

Instead, the specific sampling strategy employed in this study was to identify people either “at work” or “at play,” in other words in the course of their involvement in two of the most important domains of their lives, but not necessarily in specifically Jewish settings. Thus 10-15 occupations and 10-15 leisure time settings were identified. The occupations included lawyers, doctors, real estate people, occupational and speech therapists, psychologists, writers, musicians, graduate students, homemakers, midwives, teachers, government employees, and police officers. The settings were spread out over many different localities, ranging from suburban Long Island and Westchester to Borough Park and the Upper West Side, and the sites included museums, nightclubs, playgrounds, parks, health clubs, bookstores, cafes, concerts, malls, and Internet bulletin boards. People identified in each of these occupations or settings were screened to see if they had a Jewish connection of some sort (i.e. they described themselves as Jewish either by religion or ethnicity, they had a Jewish parent or they had received a Jewish upbringing). Ultimately three to five people from each setting or occupational group were identified who then agreed to be interviewed in-depth. Wherever possible the screening sample was drawn from lists or occupational directories. For most of the leisure time settings “intercept sampling” was employed.

### *The Interview*

The face-to-face interview, which typically was conducted in people’s homes or offices (but at UJA-Federation in about 10 cases), lasted two hours on average. Interviewers began the meeting by discussing the basic purpose of the research and by asking the respondent to read and complete an informed consent form. Interviewers followed a semi-structured interview guide that was designed to allow the interviewees to discuss their lives in a non-judgmental or “leading” way. The purpose of the interview was to gain a rich, detailed view of a person’s lifestyle -- the basic facts, commitments, and concerns of the individual as she or he saw them as well as a sense of the person’s Jewish

life story including major experiences and significant turning points. [See Appendix B for specific questions] All interviews were taped, and interviewers later summarized each interview in an in-depth report. Respondents were offered an honorarium for completing an in-depth interview. About 10% of the people who were interviewed declined the honorarium.

The ten people on the interview team were themselves a diverse group in terms of professional training (clinical and social psychologists, sociologists, journalists, and an oral historian) and Jewishness (ranging from very Orthodox to secular, non-observant). The team met for intensive training, then conducted trial interviews, and continued to meet monthly as a group to discuss the progress of the interviews.

#### *Overview of the Respondents*

Having selected respondents in this novel fashion, how diverse a sample of Jews did it produce? As hoped, the respondents proved to vary widely quite in terms of their Jewishness. The sample included people from the ultra-Orthodox *haredi/yeshiva* world as well as people who were married to active Christians and had children who had been baptized and raised as non-Jews. The study included no people who left Judaism for another religion, although data from other studies indicate that these people make up 2% of New York's Jewishly-connected population (Horowitz, 1993).

Overall, compared to the equivalent population from the 1991 New York Jewish Population Study, our sample was virtually identical regarding length of time in America (measured by the number of generations since the respondent's family immigrated to America). This is important because Generation in America has been a key predictor of Jewish practice and identification in study after study of American Jewry. Indeed, on each of the measures of Jewish background and current milieu the two samples were indistinguishable. This similarity means that as a group the people selected for the in-depth interviews were typical of this overall age cohort regarding Jewishness, despite some variations in socio-demography.



## PHASE II: FOCUS GROUPS

### *Selecting the Participants*

The 40 focus group participants (five groups of eight people each) were recruited in two different ways. First, we contacted the 87 people who had been interviewed in depth the year before, updated them about the progress of the study, asked them to complete a short questionnaire, and invited those interested to participate in a focus group. Approximately 25 people expressed interest in joining a focus group (although only half actually participated due to scheduling difficulties).

Focus Suites, Inc., the firm we retained, selected the remaining participants from its database of 25,000 people, on the basis of the basic screening questions employed throughout the three phases of the study. By design, we recruited relatively more participants from the “outer boroughs” and Long Island in order to counter-balance the proportion of people from Manhattan and Westchester among the interview respondents. Compared to the interview respondents, the focus group participants included fewer high-level professionals and fewer people with advanced degrees.

### *The Discussion*

Each group discussion lasted for 1.5 hours. These meetings were recorded (using both video and audiotape) and subsequently transcribed. Dr. Bethamie Horowitz served as the moderator for all groups.

The discussions addressed four main topics. First, participants were asked about the role that being Jewish played their lives (Is Jewishness a feature of your background or “foreground?” How central a role does being Jewish play in a your life?). Second, people described their own images of Jewishness in whatever terms they found meaningful (food, humor, ethics, religion, family, etc.). Third, people were asked to consider whether there is such a thing as “too Jewish,” or “not Jewish enough” and what balance, if any existed between these two polarities. Finally, people were asked to describe the circumstances in which they felt their sense of Jewishness had changed or shifted.

### PHASE III: THE SURVEY

#### *Selecting the Respondents*

For the third phase of the study the survey company, Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc, interviewed by telephone a random sample of 1,504 American/Canadian-born Jews in the New York metropolitan area, ages 22-52. A series of screening questions was used to determine if anyone in the household had a Jewish connection:

- 1) “Does anyone in the household consider themselves to be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or Moslem?” (92.4% of the final Jewish sample qualified here.)
- 2) If no one in the household considered themselves to be Jewish, the interviewer then asked, “Was anyone in the household raised Jewish?” (4.3% of the final sample qualified here)
- 3) If no one in the household was raised Jewish, the interviewer asked, “Does anyone in the household have a Jewish parent?” (3.3% of the final sample qualified here.)

The sample was then further screened for age (22-52 years old) and birthplace (born in the United States or Canada). For households in which more than one eligible respondent resided (i.e. both husband and wife were eligible), one person was randomly selected to be interviewed.

Telephone interviewing was conducted between February 11 and May 4, 1998, with a break between April 3 and April 18 due to the Passover holiday, which began April 10. Interviewing too near the Passover holiday might have affected responses to questions about religious observance. Interviewing was also suspended on Fridays and Saturdays, except by appointment.

The overall success of a survey methodology is often evaluated in terms of the response rate. However, in a study involving a “rare” population where the incidence is low, the *cooperation rate* is an alternative measure, since it does not depend on the incidence of

Jews in the total population.<sup>9</sup> The cooperation rate, which is the proportion of all cases interviewed, divided by all eligible units ever contacted, was 72% for the eight-county area.

### *The Survey Questionnaire*

In addition to standard questions about a person's Jewish origins and socio-demographic background, the survey questionnaire was designed to portray a person's Jewish attachments at two different periods in life (childhood and adulthood) and to provide the means of exploring the relationship between these two life stages. Each time period required a different strategy, although for both of these time periods Jewishness was explored in terms of both *Jewish practice* and *subjective centrality*. The exploration of a person's childhood Jewish experience included questions about the respondent's education from childhood through college (schooling, camp, youth group, etc.). In addition, it included a set of retrospective questions about "your life at age 11 or 12," where the respondent was asked to recall the Jewish practice in the household, and the importance (i.e. centrality) of being Jewish for both the respondent and his/her parents. The purpose of this exercise was, in the absence of a true longitudinal study, to attempt to create a baseline in the past with which to compare the individual's present Jewishness. Respondents were asked about the relationship they saw between how they were raised and their current way of being Jewish. Finally, the respondent was asked to describe the quality of his/her relationship with each parent ("mostly happy or content, or mostly angry or conflictual?"), in order to get a sense of the respondent's emotional experience in the family of origin.

The exploration of the respondent's current life included questions about both *Jewish practice* (religious, cultural, communal) and sense of *subjective centrality* (feelings about being Jewish, degree of attachment to the Jewish people, extent of integration between the Jewish part of person's identity and the whole person). In addition, there were five

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<sup>9</sup> The American Association for Public Opinion Research. 1998. *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for RDD Telephone Surveys and In-Person Household Surveys*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: AAPOR.

other sets of questions. First, a series of questions probed the importance of being Jewish in comparison to other significant areas in a person's life (leisure time, work, family), in order to get a sense of the relative weight of each of these priorities. Second, individuals were asked to describe the most important elements of their sense of Jewishness, in order to attempt to capture the content of their Jewish identity (i.e. the items on the imaginary "salad bar" discussed above). Third, people were asked to imagine their responses to six scenarios involving their children (intermarrying, becoming ultra-Orthodox, converting to Christianity, never completing college, never marrying, becoming gay), in order to assess their values in action. Fourth, a series of questions explored the respondent's patterns of social interaction at home and at work, in order to learn about the extent of social contact with both Jews and non-Jews. Finally, people were asked to describe any particularly significant experiences or relationships that they viewed as affecting their sense of Jewish attachment, as a means of capturing instances of particular emotional intensity.

\* \* \*

The multi-method approach employed in this study resulted in a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data, both narratives and numbers, that together shed light on the complex set of practices and subjective images we have come to call “Jewish identity.” The remainder of this report uses these data to explore contemporary American Jewish identity from four different angles. Chapter Two, entitled “Connections,” describes the diversity of American Jewish identity today. Chapter Three, entitled “What Works?” considers the ways Jewish identity has been formed for this generation. Chapter Four, entitled “Journeys,” explores how the elements of Jewish identity interact over time. Finally, this report concludes with a discussion of what we can learn from this study about how the organized Jewish community can foster Jewish identity in the present generation and in their children.

## Chapter Two

### Connections: Seven Patterns of Jewish Engagement

In this chapter, which has three parts, we explore the diverse ways of connecting to Jewishness that exist among American Jews. First, by using both subjective and behavioral means of measuring Jewishness, we are able to discern seven patterns of American Jewish engagement. Second, we compare and contrast the seven patterns in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and attitudinal and behavioral correlates. This information is interesting in its own right, and additionally it will allow us to develop a deeper understanding of these seven patterns later on. Lastly, in the final part of this chapter we synthesize this statistical portrait into a qualitative portrait, drawing on material from the in-depth interviews.

#### **I. Three Scales and How They Produced Seven Patterns**

The Connections and Journeys study employed two different kinds of measures of each individual's Jewish engagement. One measure looked at people's subjective Jewish centrality while the other measured a range of Jewish behaviors, some of them ritually oriented and others more communal or cultural. In this research Jewish "identity" is not defined as a set of behaviors; instead Jewish identity is treated as theoretically distinct from Jewish practice (although it may correlate strongly with and be reinforced by practice). Jewish identity is conceptualized as involving a person's self-definition as a Jew, which includes the degree of subjective Jewish centrality and the content and meaning of being Jewish to the individual. It is an aspect of the person's internal self-understanding; it may be considered as a disposition or a set of commitments that can lead to action.<sup>1</sup> Even if a person does nothing countable in terms of the conventional, more normative sorts of Jewish behaviors, Jewishness as a component of the self can

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of calling Jewishness a "disposition" was suggested by Prof. Mordecai Nisan of the Hebrew University. Gordon Allport (1968) defines dispositions as "the actual organized foci of the individual's life. While objective methods are preferable in determining these dispositions, subjective experience and self-report are not to be denied their place." Later he continues, "...all structural dispositions are in some degree motivational in that they "cause" behavior." Similarly, M. Ostow (1977) distinguished between "latent" and "manifest" identity.

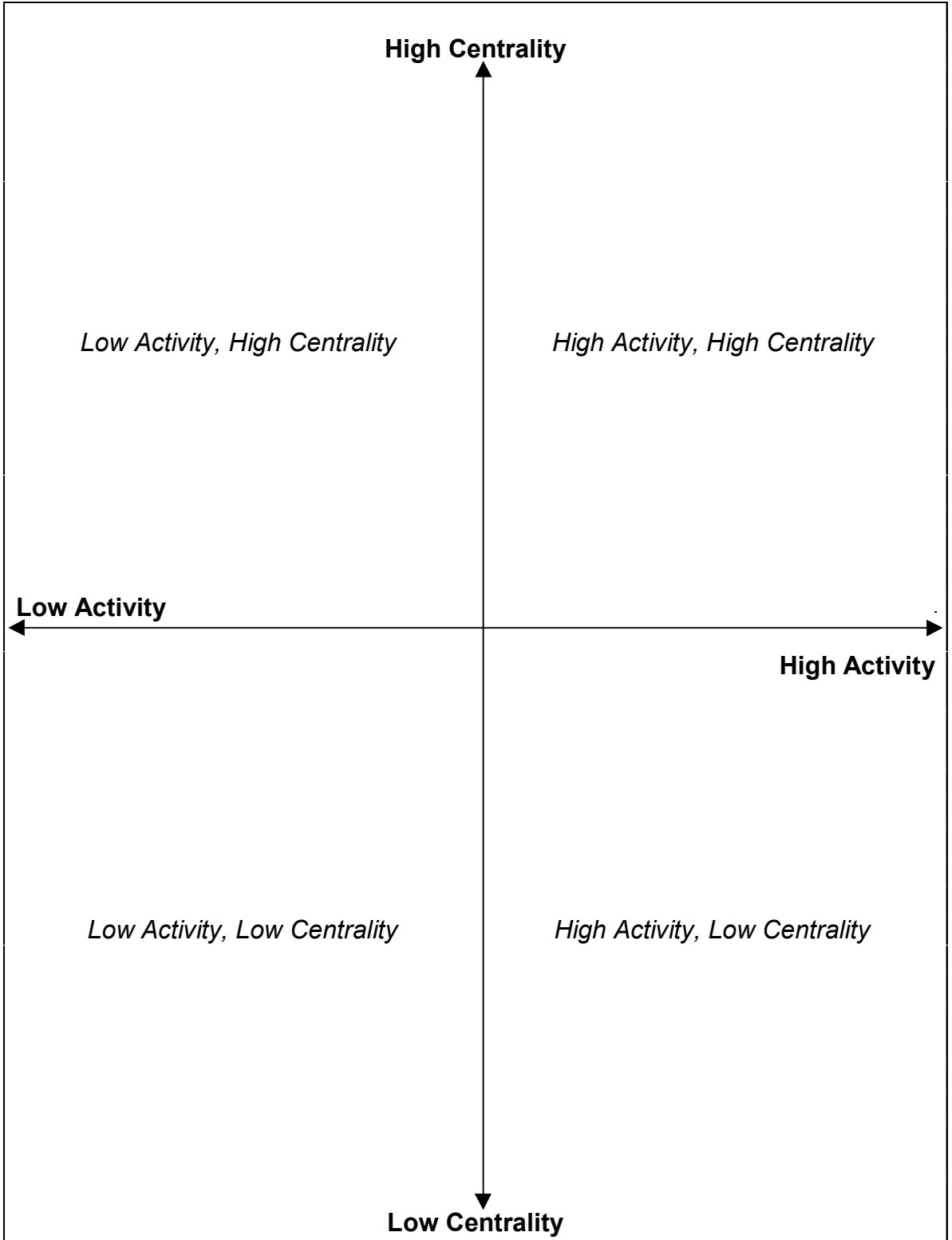
persist in a person's life. Moreover, some countable Jewish behaviors may persist after a subjective feeling of Jewishness has dwindled. Although specific Jewish behaviors are certainly powerful indicators of Jewish commitment, focusing only on these indicators may lead us to either under or overestimate the extent and importance that being Jewish may play in the lives of both individuals and their families.

By conceptualizing Jewishness as being expressed in two dimensions, it is possible to explore the relationship between one's internal subjective connection to Jewishness and the external, outwardly observable actions that may or may not coincide with that commitment. Using these two dimensions -- the outwardly observable actions and the internal, subjective experience -- the interrelationship between them can be portrayed. In **Chart 2.1** the two dimensions (subjective centrality and activity or behavior) are arrayed as in a map, resulting in four possible overall "locations:"

- 1) High Activity - High Centrality
- 2) Low Activity - Low Centrality
- 3) High Activity - Low Centrality
- 4) Low Activity - High Centrality.

The conventional understanding of the relationship between Jewish identity and Jewish behaviors is that these correlate -- that the inward experience and the outward actions go together. The expectation is that those who do a lot will also feel a lot (High Activity - High Centrality), and that those who feel less connected will not engage in many Jewish actions (Low Centrality-Low Activity). However, it is also possible for people to have a significant connection to Jewishness without necessarily engaging in any observably Jewish actions (High Centrality -Low Activity), or, by contrast, it is possible for a person to actively enact Jewish behaviors without strong internal commitment (Low Centrality, High Activity). This last possibility might be illustrated by a person who keeps kosher or observes Shabbat by habit, or a person who lives in a household or in a more extended community where s/he conforms to the surrounding norms (a case of "when in Rome...").

Chart 2.1





The distinction between these dimensions is very important to keep in mind, because there are people who may on the inside have significant Jewish leanings, interests, or openness, but are not carrying out Jewish actions on the outside. The tendency to confuse the internal, subjective state with the objectively apparent is very problematic for Jewish educators, policy makers and planners. The people who do the least are the most likely to be “written off.” Yet among these people, some may feel generally positive toward Jewishness, which might mean that they would be open to various initiatives or programs. And this might lead them to begin to *do* things. By the same token, a clue to understanding a person’s moving away from Jewish religious practice may be found in his/her subjective relationship to being Jewish. Indeed, as we shall see in Chapter Four, lack of convergence between the “outsides” (behavioral practice) and the “insides” (subjective outlook) seems to be a marker of potential shift or transition.

#### A Typology of Jewish Engagement

Next, having delineated the range of theoretically possible types of Jewish engagement, these are explored empirically among the people in the Connections and Journeys survey sample who considered themselves (at the time of the survey) to be Jewish (n=1,425).<sup>2</sup> To this end three scales were developed as a means of creating a typology of Jewishness. The first scale is an index of *subjective Jewish centrality or commitment*, which looks directly at a person’s internal relationship to Jewishness, separate from any active, outward expression.<sup>3</sup> The other two scales are *behavioral* and draw on different clusters of recognizably Jewish activity. The first of these behavioral scales taps a person’s religious ritual practice and the second index addresses a person’s involvement in “cultural-communal” activities.

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<sup>2</sup> Removed from the analysis were 79 people who, at the time of the interview, did not consider themselves to be Jewish.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that there appear to be two aspects of commitment to or centrality of Jewishness: a personal aspect where being Jewish is related to one’s self-description and a relational aspect where being Jewish involves linkages between the self and other people or entities – Jews, friends, Judaism and the Jewish tradition. These should be more fully explored in subsequent research.

The subjective Jewish Centrality Scale was based on the following items:<sup>4</sup>

1. I am proud to be a Jew.
2. I have a clear sense of what being Jewish means to me.
3. I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people.
4. I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world.
5. Overall, the fact that I am a Jew has very little to do with how I see myself.
6. It's important for me to have friends who share my way of being Jewish.
7. When faced with an important life decision, I look to Judaism for guidance.

The first of the two activity scales was based on the following four religious ritual practices (referred to as the Religious Ritual Scale):<sup>5</sup>

The respondent reports...

1. personally fasting on Yom Kippur.
2. that someone in the household lights Shabbat candles ("some," "most" or "every Friday night").
3. that the household keeps separate sets of meat and dairy dishes.
4. refraining from spending money on Shabbat.

A second activity scale was made up of five non-ritual Jewish behaviors or actions that could be characterized as *cultural-communal items* (referred to as the Cultural-Communal Scale):

The respondent reports...

1. displaying any Jewish objects in the home, like ritual objects, works of art, books.
2. having attended any lecture, class or study circle on a Jewish topic during the past year.
3. reading Jewish periodicals, newspapers or magazines ("sometimes" or "often").
4. attending synagogue ("monthly or more often").<sup>6</sup>
5. Being able to read (and mostly understand) Hebrew.

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<sup>4</sup> The original format for these items was a four-point agree-disagree scale. To create the scale each item was dichotomized at the median split. The fifth item, "Overall, the fact that I am a Jew has very little to do with how I see myself," was indexed in terms of the amount of *disagreement*.

<sup>5</sup> I attempted to arrange these in a hierarchical fashion (a Guttman scale) because I assumed that those who spend no money on Shabbat would also keep kosher, light Shabbat candles and fast on Yom Kippur. However, the error rate was 16%, which indicates that the ritual items no longer work so well as an index from most to least observant. Thus, there are people who have separate dishes for meat and milk but who do not light Shabbat candles.

<sup>6</sup> Some might be surprised to find "attending synagogue" in a list of "non-ritual" actions. I factor analyzed the behavioral items and found three factors, the first of which contained both ritual and non-ritual items. I removed the ritual observance items and scaled them separately, and then created a scale out of the remaining non-ritual items. Attending synagogue thus became part of this cluster of items. It is also noteworthy that synagogue attendance is a "gendered" behavior especially among the Orthodox in this sample, where the women are much less likely than the men to attend regularly. This is not the case among Reform and Conservative Jews. In addition, Ritterband (1997c) has found that synagogue attendance among Conservative synagogue members emerges from more of a communal-affiliative interest than from a need for religious expression.

To create the typology, each of the three scales was split at the median value into two groups, one “low” and the other “high.” It is important to be aware of the substantive meaning of the “cut point” of each scale. The median cut point for the Religious Ritual Scale was at one out of the four items. That is, a person who does *none* of the four items, or *only one* of the items (such as “fasts of Yom Kippur”) would fall into the “low” group for this scale, while people who engage in two or more ritual practices would be considered “high” on religious ritual. The median cut point for the Cultural-Communal Scale was also one out of the five possible items. That is, people who engaged in *none* or *only one* action (such as “displays any Jewish objects in your home” or “regularly reads Jewish periodicals and newspapers”) would be considered “low” on this scale, while anyone who engaged in two or more of these items would be categorized as “high.” Finally, regarding the Subjective Jewish Centrality Scale, those who agreed with five or more items out of the seven were categorized as “high.”

Next, the three scales were combined into the eight possible patterns that could have resulted from the 2<sup>3</sup> combinations:<sup>7</sup>

Table 2.1  
**Patterns of Responses Across Three Scales**

| <i>Scales:</i>                         |                                     |                                      |           |         |                               |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------|-------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Centrality</i>                   | 2. <i>Ritual</i>                    | 3. <i>Cultural</i>                   | Frequency | Percent | <i>Pattern Name</i>           |
| 1. <i>Subjective Jewish Centrality</i> | 2. <i>Religious Ritual Activity</i> | 3. <i>Cultural-Communal Activity</i> | Frequency | Percent | <i>Pattern Name</i>           |
| low                                    | Low                                 | low                                  | 458       | 32%     | 1. <i>Otherwise Engaged</i>   |
| high                                   | Low                                 | low                                  | 94        | 7       | 2. <i>Subjective</i>          |
| high                                   | Low                                 | high                                 | 91        | 6       | 3. <i>Cultural-Communal</i>   |
| low                                    | Low                                 | high                                 | 109       | 8       | 4. <i>Cultural-Communal</i>   |
| low                                    | High                                | high                                 | 91        | 6       | 6. <i>Tradition-Oriented</i>  |
| high                                   | High                                | low                                  | 43        | 3       | 7. <i>Tradition-Oriented</i>  |
| high                                   | High                                | high                                 | 487       | 34      | 8. <i>Intensively Engaged</i> |
| TOTAL                                  |                                     |                                      | 1,425     | 100%    |                               |

This eight-cell scheme can be reduced to three basic types of Jewish engagement, each made up of several patterns:

1. The ***Otherwise Engaged***, who are not particularly involved or interested in an active Jewish life. The people in this group scored low on all three scales (pattern number 1).
2. Those with ***Mixed Engagement***, who have some areas of high Jewish expression and some areas of lower expression (patterns number 2-7). The people in this group scored high on at least one of the three scales but not on *all* of them.
3. Those who are ***Intensively Engaged*** in Jewish life, who score high on all three scales (pattern number 8).

Each of these three major types constitutes approximately one-third of the sample.

<sup>7</sup> In order to determine whether or not a similar set of factors predicted each scale, I conducted three parallel sets of regression analyses. A similar set of predictors resulted for each of the three scales. I ran these regression analyses twice for the three scales, once using the original metric scale and the second time using the dichotomous scale. The findings from these two sets of regressions were quite similar, although the original non-dichotomous scales resulted in a more nuanced but essentially similar pattern of prediction to that of the dichotomized scales. These analyses appear in Chapter Three, tables 3.6a-3.6c.)

One of the tensions in carrying out this exploratory work about contemporary Jewish identity is to determine the “right” number of patterns to explore. The goal is to identify and examine some of the main ways of being Jewish that predominate today. There is no correct answer for this task, but limiting the inquiry to three basic clusters of Jewish identity seemed too simplistic, given the purpose of drawing a “map” of different forms of Jewishness that exist today. This is exploratory research, after all, and so it makes sense to differentiate each of these three large clusters into some of their constituent parts, as far as these can be discerned.

In refining the Otherwise Engaged group, an initial expectation was that it would split into a group that was outright hostile or negative about being Jewish and one that was more positively disposed, albeit passive in practice. The interesting finding was that only 1% of the overall sample had outright “rejectionist” feelings about being Jewish and 13% described their feelings as “neither positive nor negative,” while 23% held “somewhat positive” feelings and the remaining 63% felt “very positive.” In other words, even of the 32% of the total sample who fell into the Otherwise Engaged group, only 2% were actively hostile to Jewishness, 31% described their feelings as “neither positive nor negative,” and the remaining 67% had some degree of positive Jewish feeling, however passive or mild.<sup>8</sup> The ratings suggest that compared to the spectrum of feeling that seems to have characterized earlier generations of American Jews, *the range of emotion about being Jewish has shifted, from acceptance versus rejection to **meaningfulness versus indifference.***

With this dynamic in mind, the Otherwise Engaged cluster was split into two subgroups: *those who are really indifferent about being Jewish, and those who exhibit some modest interest in or positive expression of Jewishness.*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Thirty-eight percent described their feelings as “somewhat positive,” and the remaining 29% characterized their feelings as “very positive.”

<sup>9</sup> This group of Otherwise Engaged was split according to the following criteria: The Really Indifferent were defined as those who *neither* displayed any Jewish objects in their homes (continued on next page) (books, art, ritual objects), *nor* gave to Jewish charity. Otherwise the person was characterized as exhibiting “some interest.” These criteria yielded a clean split across all patterns of engagement – no one else but the Really Indifferent refrained from both of these two practices.

Second, those with Mixed patterns of engagement were divided into three groups, based on a refined clustering of the original patterns of response to the three scales – Subjective Jewish Centrality, Religious Ritual, and Cultural-Communal:

- a) *Subjectively Involved*: Those people who feel a strong internal subjective connection to being Jewish (who scored high on the Subjective Jewish Centrality Scale), but who do not express this connection through much activity as measured in either of the two activity scales.
- b) *Cultural Communal*: Those who are highly involved in the communal cultural domain, but who are not highly involved in ritual practice. They scored either high or low on the Subjective Jewish Centrality scale.
- c) *Tradition-Oriented*: Those who engage in religious ritual activity and may also exhibit *either* strong cultural communal activity or strong subjective Jewish centrality *but not both*.

Finally, the Intensively Engaged pattern was divided into two groups – those who are *actively Orthodox* and those who are actively engaged Jewishly but who are *not Orthodox*.<sup>10</sup> The distinction involved splitting out this group into those who observe *halacha* (the body of Jewish law) and those who while perhaps cognizant and mindful of these practices, have a more selective relationship to them.

Thus, using the above criteria, **seven patterns of Jewish engagement** have been discerned within the sample:

Those who are ***Otherwise Engaged*** (33%):

1. *The Really Indifferent about being Jewish* (9%).
2. *Those who exhibit Some Interest in Jewishness* (24%).

Those with ***Mixed Engagement*** (34%):

3. *Subjectively Involved*: Those who feel a strong internal, subjective connection to being Jewish but do not express this connection through much normative Jewish practice or activity (7%).

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<sup>10</sup> In order to split the Intensively Engaged into two groups, people were defined as “Orthodox” if they *both* called themselves Orthodox when asked their current denomination and reported that they handle no money on Shabbat. Otherwise they were defined as “Non-Orthodox” Intensively Engaged.

4. *Cultural Communal*: Those who are highly involved in the communal cultural domain but who are not highly involved in ritual practice. These individuals scored either high or low on the Subjective Jewish Centrality Scale (14%).
5. *Tradition-Oriented*: Those who engage in religious ritual activity, and may exhibit *either* strong cultural communal activity or strong subjective Jewish centrality, *but not both* (13%).

Those who are ***Intensively Engaged*** in Jewish life (34%):

6. *Non-Orthodox* (18%).
7. *Orthodox* (16%).

**Chart 2.2**

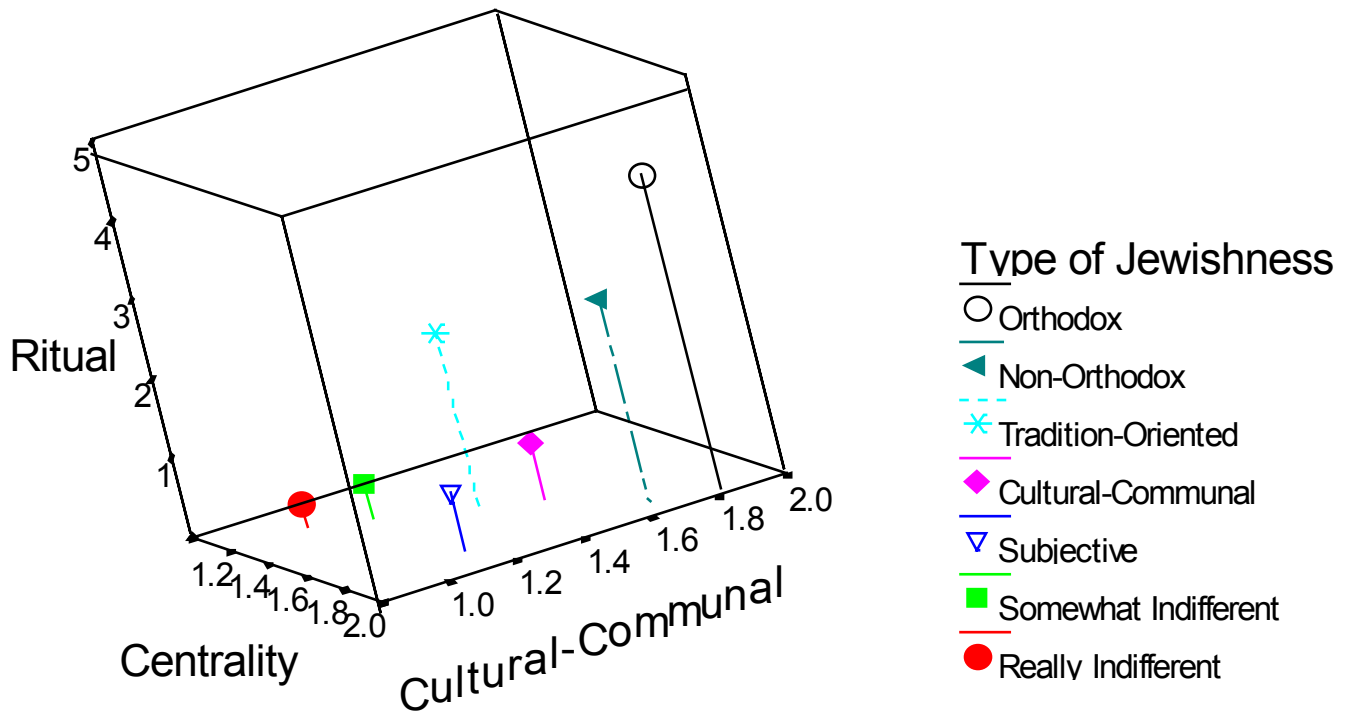
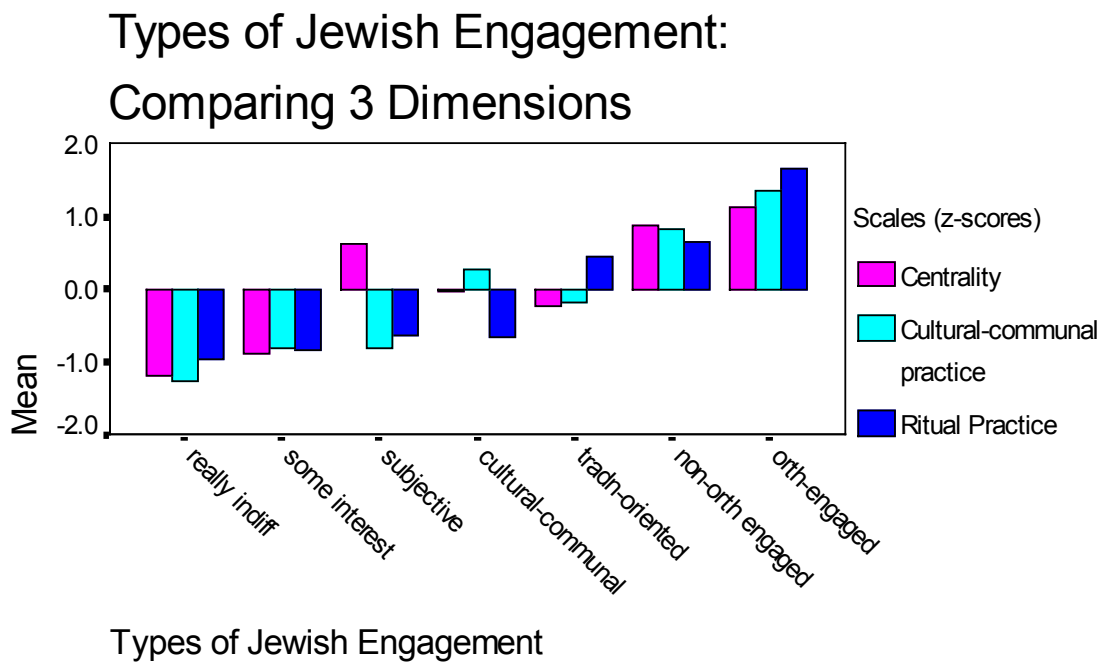


Chart 2.2 shows the actual mapping of the seven types of Jewish Engagement in terms of aggregate mean scores on each of the three scales used to define the seven types. The distribution of the patterns of engagement suggests that in some ways Jewish identity is a concept which can be scaled from more to less, while in other ways Jewishness should be considered a typology, reflecting qualitatively different ways of being Jewish.

In Chart 2.3 it is apparent that the three mixed patterns of engagement, when mapped in three dimensions, indicate a typology of Jewishness, rather than a scale ranging from least to most.

Chart 2.3





Most significantly, looking across the seven different patterns of Jewish engagement, we see three broad categories relating to Jewishness. For most people, a person's sense of subjective involvement (or psychological *centrality*) with being Jewish correlated with engagement in Jewish practice. For one-third of the sample, being Jewish was a central component of their identity and was expressed through intensive involvement in Jewish actions. And for one-third of the sample, being Jewish was something about which they were rather indifferent—it was a membership category but not a central component of their identity or self-definition (This group was not very involved in Jewish activities.). One-third of the sample evinced mixed patterns of centrality of Jewish identity and enactment of Jewish “behaviors.”

Typically, Jewish “identity” has been discussed as if it were a scale ranging from low to high or weak to strong, and to some extent these two extremes are represented in the two polarities of Jewish engagement identified here – the Otherwise Engaged and the Intensively Engaged. However, the mixed patterns of Jewish engagement, which characterize one-third of this sample, do not appear to be simply the default between the two extremes of assimilation and intensive Jewish involvement. Rather these mixed patterns appear to represent qualitatively different ways of relating to or defining the meaning of being Jewish.

Tables 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4. display the response patterns for the seven patterns of Jewish engagement regarding the items comprising each of the three scales. In the next section of this chapter we will explore each of the seven groups in more detail.

Table 2.2  
**Subjective Jewish Centrality by Type of Jewish Engagement**

Core Jews (n=1,425)

| % answering "completely agree"  | Type of Jewish Engagement |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |             |
|---|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|
|   | Otherwise Engaged         |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |             |
|   | Really Indifferent        | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox    |
| I am proud to be a Jew.   | 47                        | 60            | 99               | 80                | 79                 | 98                  | 98          |
| I have a clear sense of what being Jewish means to me.                            | 26                        | 31            | 73               | 57                | 47                 | 86                  | 97          |
| I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people.                          | 7                         | 15            | 73               | 49                | 32                 | 92                  | 100         |
| I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world.    | 0                         | 4             | 17               | 22                | 21                 | 47                  | 86          |
| Overall, the fact that I am a Jew has very little to do with how I see myself. ** | 35                        | 27            | 7                | 12                | 13                 | 6                   | 9           |
| It is important for me to have friends who share my way of being Jewish.          | 4                         | 6             | 18               | 14                | 8                  | 27                  | 73          |
| When faced with an important life decision, I look to Judaism for guidance.       | 2                         | 0             | 8                | 4                 | 7                  | 20                  | 82          |
| <b>% Scoring "high" *</b>   | <b>0%</b>                 | <b>0%</b>     | <b>100%</b>      | <b>46%</b>        | <b>23%</b>         | <b>100%</b>         | <b>100%</b> |

\* "high" = "yes" on 5 or more items

\*\* For this item, disagreement with the statement counted towards the score on the scale

Table 2.3  
**Ritual Activities Scale by Type of Jewish Engagement**

Core Jews (n=1,425)

| % answering "yes"                            | Type of Jewish Engagement |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |             |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|
|  | Otherwise Engaged         |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |             |
|  | Really Indifferent        | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox    |
| <b>Ritual Observance:</b>                    |                           |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |             |
| Fasts on Yom Kippur                          | 25                        | 39            | 64               | 57                | 95                 | 98                  | 100         |
| Lights Shabbat candles                       | 7                         | 5             | 10               | 12                | 81                 | 92                  | 99          |
| Keeps separate sets of meat and dairy dishes | 0                         | 1             | 0                | 3                 | 30                 | 45                  | 99          |
| Does not spend money on Shabbat              | 0                         | 0             | 0                | 0                 | 21                 | 21                  | 100         |
| <b>% Scoring "high" on scale *</b>           | <b>0%</b>                 | <b>0%</b>     | <b>0%</b>        | <b>0%</b>         | <b>100%</b>        | <b>100%</b>         | <b>100%</b> |

\* "high" = "yes" on two or more items

Table 2.4  
**Cultural-Communal Activities by Type of Jewish Engagement**

Core Jews (n=1,425)

| <i>Type of Jewish Engagement</i>   |                    |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |             |
|--|--------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|
|  | Otherwise Engaged  |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |             |
|  | Really Indifferent | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox    |
| <b>Cultural-Communal Conduct:</b>  |                    |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |             |
| Displays any Jewish objects at home, such as books, ritual objects or works of art             | 0                  | 73            | 68               | 97                | 91                 | 98                  | 98          |
| During the past year or so has attended any lecture, class or a study circle on a Jewish topic | 7                  | 3             | 5                | 61                | 31                 | 72                  | 89          |
| Sometimes or often reads Jewish periodicals, newspapers or magazines                           | 3                  | 2             | 5                | 60                | 32                 | 76                  | 93          |
| Attends synagogue (monthly or more often)  | 1                  | 0             | 0                | 21                | 19                 | 58                  | 57          |
| Can read (and mostly understand) Hebrew  | 2                  | 2             | 1                | 14                | 10                 | 28                  | 78          |
| <b>% Scoring "high" on scale *</b>   | <b>0%</b>          | <b>0%</b>     | <b>0%</b>        | <b>100%</b>       | <b>49%</b>         | <b>100%</b>         | <b>100%</b> |

\* "high" = "yes" on two or more items

## **II. Comparing and Contrasting the Seven Patterns of Jewish Engagement**

Having formally identified seven different patterns of Jewish engagement, our next task is to provide a clear statistical portrait of each of the seven patterns and of their relationship to one another. This section is divided into two parts. First, we examine the socio-demographic characteristics of each identity pattern. Second, we explore the attitudinal and behavioral correlates of these patterns. (In the final section of this chapter we return to examining the distinctive outlooks of each pattern of engagement.)

### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PATTERNS OF JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

What are the socio-demographic characteristics for the study sample as a whole and then for each of the identity patterns individually? In what ways do the social locations of the people who comprise each of the seven patterns differ? Are particular identity patterns characteristic of people of different ages, men versus women, individuals at different stages of life? To what extent are particular patterns of Jewish engagement related to measures of socio-economic status such as educational attainment, occupation and income? Are these patterns correlated with a person's generation status in America or denominational preference? How are the various identity patterns distributed across the greater New York area? (The descriptions below draw on Tables 2.5 - 2.9 at the end of this section - pages 46-50.)

Nearly half (45%) the sample is between 41 and 52 years old, 30% are between 31 and 40 years old, and the remaining quarter (26%) are between 22 and 30 years of age. Fifty-five per cent are women and 45% are men. Two-thirds (67%) of the respondents are currently married and the remaining third are single (25% are age 40 or younger and 9% are over age 40). Nearly three-fifths (58%) of the respondents have children (47% have children age 18 years or younger living at home, and 11% have older children).

The slice of the New York Jewish population represented in this study has a high socio-economic profile. Nearly two-fifths of the respondents (38%) have completed a bachelor's degree, with an additional 36% having attended some graduate school (27% master's level study and 9% doctoral or professional level degrees). Thirty-six percent of

the sample report 1997 household income of less than \$50,000, with an additional 38% reporting an income of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and 26% reporting income of over \$100,000. Half of the respondents report professional or technical occupations, and an additional 11% report that they are managers or officials.

A crucial variable to examine in any study of American Jewish identity is the length of time in America, as indexed by “generation status.” A number of scholars have examined the relationship between generation status and identity by comparing the ritual practices and ethnic behaviors of the Jewish immigrants to America (the first generation) to those of the children of immigrants (second generation) to those of the grandchildren of immigrants (third generation) and so on. In the context of the mass immigration from Europe between 1880 and 1924, Jewish immigrants to America were typically characterized by strong ethnic solidarity (e.g. living in Jewish neighborhoods; sharing a common language) as well as religious practices, the observance of which decreased from first to second to third generation of American-born Jews (Cohen, 1988; Goldstein & Goldscheider, 1968). The extent to which this pattern of linear decline persists into the fourth generation and beyond remains an empirical question.

One problem with analyzing American Jewry using Generation in America is that researchers have examined only a narrow set of traditional Jewish ritual, religious and communal practices, without allowing for a wider range of variations in Jewish practice or subjective centrality. In effect, this accounting strategy has given high marks to a more homogeneous and traditional Jewish population and low marks to a population characterized by a variety of less traditional Jewish behaviors, a bias that has contributed to the “erosion model” of American Jewishness. (Horowitz, 1998). The stereotype is that first generation immigrants were highly committed Jews while their children and grandchildren sloughed off their Jewishness and become American, cut off from their origins.

Yet, the effects of living in the American context on Judaism, Jews, and their sense of Jewishness have been described as paradoxical:

America undermined and energized Jewish commitment. Much was discarded and much was saved. Acculturation...did not always lead to assimilation: sometimes the most acculturated were among the most conscious of their Jewish identity and the most preoccupied with Jewish affairs. Despite rapid and severe acculturation, Jewishness was honed as an independent variable in the motivations of more than a few of its American adherents—and has remained so, even though Jewish institutions, ideologies and even Jewish values have been reshaped by America to such a degree that many Jews of the past might not recognize as Jewish some of what constitutes American Jewishness (Seltzer, 1990, p. 5).

As this study will show, Jews in America express many different kinds of Jewish connections, some more clearly traditional and others less conventional. These continue to be related to generation status in America, although not in a singular way.

The present study was limited to American-born individuals. Three-fifths (61%) of the respondents are third generation in America (the grandchildren of immigrants), while 29% are second generation and one-tenth are fourth generation or more. Due to the massive immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to America between 1880 and 1924, there has been a strong relationship between Generation in America and age for American Jewry. In this sample, Generation in America is moderately related to age: 21% of the 22-30 year olds are fourth generation (great-grandchildren of immigrants to America), compared to 11% of the 31-40 year olds and only 4% of the 41-52 years olds. Likewise 50% of the youngest adults are third generation, compared to 65% of the 31-40 year olds and 63% of the 41-52 year olds. However, the pattern breaks down when we examine the second generation Jews: 29% of the youngest adults are the children of immigrants, compared to 24% of the 31-40 year olds and 32% of the 41-52 year olds.

The current denominational preference of the sample is nearly one-fifth (19%) Orthodox—nearly double the proportion of the comparable population in the New York area reported in the 1991 NYJPS (see Appendix A for more details). One-quarter (27%) of the sample identifies as Conservative, 38% identify as Reform, 3% identify as Reconstructionist and 13% said they were something else.

The target population is concentrated geographically in three areas: Manhattan (24%), Brooklyn and Nassau (22% each). The final third of the sample is spread out among the five remaining counties: Queens (12%), Westchester (9%), Suffolk (7%) and Staten Island and The Bronx (3% each).

Having sketched a socio-demographic picture of the sample as a whole, we now examine the distinctive socio-demographic features of each of the seven types of Jewish engagement. Some key questions to ponder are: To what extent are the various ways of being Jewish related to different demographic features, such as age, stage in life, gender, period in history, extent of Americanization (i.e. distance from the experience of immigration), socio-economic status, and geographic location? Do different social locations “produce” or “support” different forms of Jewishness?

*Other than Jewishly Engaged (33%)*

Among the two subgroups of **Otherwise Engaged**, those who are **Really Indifferent** about their Jewishness (9% of the total sample) are characterized by their single marital status, by their relative youth and by being male. Compared to the sample as a whole they are twice as likely to be unmarried (67% compared to 34%) and they are disproportionately both young (36% are in their 20s compared to 26% of the sample as a whole) and male (53% compared to 45% of the sample as a whole).

Because this is a younger group, it is not surprising that compared to the overall sample this group lags in terms of both educational attainment (73% have a BA or less, compared to 63% of the sample overall) and income (53% reported incomes of under \$50,000 per year compared to 36% of the total sample).

This group is more heavily weighted toward third and fourth Generation in America than the other groups. There is an interaction between the youthful profile of the Really Indifferent and its generation status. If we hold age group constant in order to compare the percentage of each generation that is characterized by this type of Jewish



engagement, we find that among the youngest adults who are second generation, only 5% are Really Indifferent, compared to 13% among the youngest adults who are third generation, and 21% among the fourth generation of this age group. There is a relationship between Generation in America and being Really Indifferent.

Regarding denominational preference, the Really Indifferent typically do not name any denomination (46% describe themselves as “something else”) or describe themselves as “Reform” (42%). One suspects that this has more to do with the fact that “Reform” is often understood as “least involved,” as opposed to “Reform” in the sense of one who has institutional, organizational or ideological commitments to the Reform movement.

This group tends to reside in Manhattan (where 44% of this group is located), in a concentration which is nearly double the Manhattan-based percentage in the sample overall. This group is over-represented in Manhattan and Staten Island, and under-represented in The Bronx, Brooklyn and Nassau.

In contrast to this younger group which showed the least degree of current connection to Jewishness of all the groups, those with **Some Jewish Interest** (who comprise 24% of the sample) are an older population, with nearly half (46%) in their forties or older (compared to 31% among the Really Indifferent), and only one-fifth in their twenties (compared to 36% of the Really Indifferent). In this group men and women are represented in a proportion identical to that in the sample as a whole (55% female), compared to the male bias among the Really Indifferent (only 47% female).

As we might expect of an older group, those with Some Jewish Interest are more likely to be married than the Really Indifferent (62% compared to 35%). To what extent the differences between these two subgroups can be attributed to differences in adult development (i.e. lifecycle stage), or are attributable to differences in cohort (i.e. period of socialization and time in history) remains to be seen. This question will be addressed in a limited way in this study, but it also lies beyond the purview of these data and will need to be addressed elsewhere.

Although there is not much difference in educational attainment between those with Some Jewish Interest and the Really Indifferent, those with Some Interest are more likely to be employed in higher status jobs (63% compared to 56%) and less likely to be unemployed (15% compared to 22%). Not surprisingly, given their older age and higher occupational attainment, those with Some Interest tend to have higher incomes than the Really Indifferent (24% earn over \$100,000 per year compared to 14% among the Really Indifferent.).

Compared to the Really Indifferent group, the Otherwise Engaged with Some Jewish Interest tend to be third and second generation Americans (rather than third and fourth). Most describe themselves as “Reform” (58% compared to 42% of the Really Indifferent) and are more likely to name a denominational affiliation than the Really Indifferent (only 22% call themselves “something else,” compared to 46% of the Really Indifferent). Nonetheless, both of these groups are significantly less affiliated in terms of denomination than the sample as a whole, in which only 13% do not identify with one of the three main Jewish denominations.

Geographically, those with Some Interest are spread out rather evenly across the eight-counties in proportion to the overall distribution of the sample as a whole. Half of this group resides in either Manhattan or Nassau County; 14% live in Brooklyn, 30% are even split among Queens, Westchester and Suffolk counties, and 6% are spread equally between The Bronx and Staten Island.

#### *Mixed Jewish Engagement (34%)*

Each of the “mixed” patterns of Jewish engagement has a somewhat different socio-demographic character. The socio-demographic profile of the **Subjectively Engaged** (7% of the sample) is disproportionately female and older than the profiles both of the sample as a whole and of the other two groups of mixed patterns of Jewish engagement. Three-fifths (61%) are female, compared to 55% of the total sample, and 54% are people in their 40s compared to 45% of the sample overall.

Three-quarters of the Subjectively Engaged have completed a BA or less, compared to 63% of the total sample. Along with their comparatively lower level of educational attainment, the occupational status of the Subjectively Engaged is also lower. 15% are employed in clerical positions and 20% are unemployed, compared to 12% clerical and 19% unemployed in the total sample. (Among the other two groups with mixed patterns of Jewish engagement, 11-13% occupy clerical positions and 12-14% are unemployed.)

Grandchildren of immigrants (third generation Americans) comprise a disproportionate share of this pattern (71%, compared to 61% for the sample overall). Most (59%) of the Subjectively Engaged identify themselves as Reform, while an additional 29% indicate Conservative denomination.

The Subjectively Engaged reside predominantly in Manhattan (25%) and in Nassau (22%). Fifteen percent live in Queens, 13% in Brooklyn, and 10% each in Westchester and Suffolk, 5% in Staten Island and 1% in The Bronx. More than a tenth (12%) of the Staten Island respondents fall into this type, 9% of Suffolk, 8% of Queens, 7% of Manhattan, Nassau and Westchester, and only 4% of Brooklyn and 3% of The Bronx.

Along with the Subjectively Engaged, those with **Cultural Communal Involvement (14%)** have a slightly older profile than the other groups. Nearly half (49%) are in their forties, 30% in their thirties and the remaining 22% in their twenties. Given the female skew in the sample as a whole (55% female) men and women are equally likely to be represented in this group. This group has proportionately more people who are married without children or with grown children no longer living at home than the sample as a whole (25% compared to 20%).

As a whole, this group is well established both financially and professionally. Nearly two-fifths have professional occupations, and only 14% are not employed. compared to the other groups, the individuals who fit the Cultural Communal profile are among the most likely to have attended graduate school (fully 48% have attended, a rate second only

to that of the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged) and have the highest occupational and income profile. The pattern includes a large number of third generation Americans (67%) as well as those who tend to describe themselves as Reform or Conservative.

This group is especially likely to be found in Manhattan (33% live there) and also resides in Nassau (20%), Brooklyn (15%), Queens (14%) and Westchester (10%). Seven percent live in Suffolk County,

**The Tradition-Oriented** group (18% of the sample) has the youngest age profile of the three mixed patterns of engagement (25% are in their 20s). Men are over-represented in this group (53% compared to 45% in the sample overall), and the number of married individuals is proportionally greater than in the other two patterns of mixed engagement.

This group has a high level of educational and income attainment (the second highest among the seven identity patterns) and is very professionally oriented in terms of occupation. Nearly one-fifth (18%) of this group is fourth generation Americans – the highest share of all the groups (along with the Really Indifferent, who have a similar generational profile). Nearly one-tenth (8%) consider their denomination to be Orthodox, with slightly more than two-fifths each identifying as Conservative (41%) or Reform (43%).

One-quarter of this group resides in Nassau, 22% in Manhattan, 16% in Brooklyn, 13% in Queens, 11% in Suffolk, 9% in Westchester, 3% in Staten Island and 1% in The Bronx. The Tradition-Oriented make up on average 13% of the population within each county, with 19% of the Suffolk county population, 14-15% each of the populations of Staten Island, Nassau and Queens, 12-13% of Westchester and Manhattan, and 10% of Brooklyn and 6% of The Bronx falling into this category.

*The Intensively Engaged (34%)*

This group is comprised of two distinct subgroups: **the Orthodox (16%)** and **the Non-Orthodox (18%)** that are differentiated in numerous ways beyond denomination.

Members of the Non-Orthodox subgroup are comparatively older than the sample as a whole (54% are in their 40s and early 50s, compared to 45% for the sample overall), while the Orthodox are the youngest (fully 42% are in their 20s). The Non-Orthodox group has both a higher proportion of respondents who are married (75% compared to 67%) and a greater proportion of respondents with older children (16% compared to 11%) than the sample as a whole. In contrast, the Orthodox group is characterized by even higher percentages of married respondents (83%), a large proportion of whom are parents of young children (72% compared to 50% among the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged and to 47% of the total sample). A disproportionate number of women comprise the Orthodox pattern (61% compared to 58% of the Non-Orthodox and 55% of all respondents).

Compared to those with Cultural-Communal engagement who are similar to them in age and with whom they share many other demographic characteristics, the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged are more likely to be second and third generation in America, while the Cultural-Communal Jews are more typically third and fourth generation.

The Non-Orthodox group is the most highly schooled in the sample, with a high proportion of graduate-level degrees (54% compared to 37% of the sample overall). The income of the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged is among the highest of the sample (32% report incomes of over \$100,000, compared to 26% of the total sample). Three-fifths are professionally employed (compared to 50% of the total).

In terms of current denomination, the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged describe themselves overwhelmingly as Conservative (61%), with some individuals calling themselves Reform (27%) and a small percentage naming describing themselves as “Orthodox” (these are people who handle money on Shabbat, or they would have been categorized as Orthodox Intensively Engaged for the purposes of this study).

Geographically the Non-Orthodox are disproportionately represented in Nassau and Westchester compared to distribution across the counties of the sample as a whole.

In contrast, the Orthodox Intensively Engaged have the lowest (secular) educational attainment in the sample (37% do not have a BA, compared to 24% of the total sample). Their income reflects their limited educational background (half of the Orthodox report incomes of under \$50,000 compared to 36% of the total sample), with one-third of Orthodox respondents unemployed, compared to 19% of the total.

In contrast to all of the other patterns of Jewishness, most of the Orthodox Intensively Engaged are *second-generation* children of immigrants (59% compared to 29% overall). By definition all are Orthodox both in self-description and in practice, as measured by the survey item “does not spend money on Shabbat.”

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of all the Orthodox Intensively Engaged live in Brooklyn, compared to 22% of the total sample. The Jewish populations of Brooklyn and The Bronx also have high concentrations of the Orthodox Intensively Engaged (47% and 36% respectively) compared to the 8-county area as a whole where the this group makes up 16% of the total population.

Table 2.5  
**Type of Jewish Engagement by Age, Sex and Life Cycle Status**

Core Jews (n=1,425)

| <i>% answering "yes"</i>       | <i>Type of Jewish Engagement</i> |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |       |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------|-------|
|                                | Otherwise Engaged                |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |          | TOTAL |
|                                | Really Indifferent               | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox |       |
| <b>Age:</b>                    |                                  |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |       |
| 22-30                          | 36%                              | 21%           | 17%              | 22%               | 25%                | 19%                 | 42%      | 26%   |
| 31-40                          | 34                               | 33            | 29               | 30                | 31                 | 27                  | 26       | 30    |
| 41-52                          | 31                               | 46            | 54               | 49                | 44                 | 54                  | 32       | 45    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | 100%                             | 100%          | 100%             | 100%              | 100%               | 100%                | 100%     | 100%  |
| <b>Sex:</b> Female             | 47                               | 55            | 61               | 55                | 47                 | 58                  | 61       | 55    |
| Male                           | 53                               | 45            | 39               | 45                | 53                 | 42                  | 39       | 45    |
| <b>Life Cycle Status:</b>      |                                  |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |       |
| Single, 40 or under            | 49                               | 27            | 23               | 28                | 27                 | 18                  | 14       | 25    |
| Single, 41 or older            | 18                               | 10            | 12               | 8                 | 7                  | 7                   | 4        | 9     |
| Married, no children           | 9                                | 9             | 10               | 11                | 11                 | 9                   | 7        | 9     |
| Parents, children under 18 yrs | 18                               | 41            | 44               | 40                | 45                 | 50                  | 72       | 47    |
| Parents, children above 18 yrs | 8                                | 12            | 11               | 14                | 11                 | 16                  | 4        | 11    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | 100%                             | 100%          | 100%             | 100%              | 100%               | 100%                | 100%     | 100%  |

Table 2.6  
**Type of Jewish Engagement by Socio-Economic Indicators**

Core Jews Only (n=1,425)

| % answering "yes"                        | Type of Jewish Engagement |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |             | TOTAL       |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
|  | Otherwise Engaged         |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |             |             |
|  | Really Indifferent        | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox    |             |
| <b>Education:</b>                        |                           |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |             |             |
| Less than a B.A.                         | 28%                       | 26%           | 29%              | 16%               | 21%                | 16%                 | 37%         | 24%         |
| Achieved a B.A.                          | 45                        | 44            | 48               | 36                | 42                 | 31                  | 33          | 39          |
| Achieved a Masters                       | 21                        | 22            | 21               | 38                | 25                 | 42                  | 21          | 28          |
| Doctorate-Level                          | 6                         | 8             | 2                | 10                | 11                 | 12                  | 9           | 9           |
| <b>Income:</b>                           |                           |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |             |             |
| Less than \$50,000 per year              | 53%                       | 34%           | 38%              | 26%               | 32%                | 27%                 | 52%         | 36%         |
| \$50,000 to less than \$100,000 per year | 33                        | 42            | 34               | 41                | 37                 | 41                  | 34          | 38          |
| Over \$100,000 per year                  | 14                        | 24            | 29               | 33                | 31                 | 32                  | 14          | 26          |
| <b>Occupation:</b>                       |                           |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |             |             |
| Professional/Technical                   | 43%                       | 46%           | 48%              | 57%               | 55%                | 60%                 | 41%         | 50%         |
| Managerial/Official/Owner                | 13                        | 17            | 12               | 9                 | 11                 | 7                   | 9           | 11          |
| Clerical                                 | 12                        | 12            | 15               | 13                | 11                 | 9                   | 13          | 12          |
| Other                                    | 11                        | 9             | 5                | 8                 | 11                 | 8                   | 5           | 9           |
| Not Employed                             | 22                        | 15            | 20               | 14                | 12                 | 17                  | 32          | 19          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>100%</b>               | <b>100%</b>   | <b>100%</b>      | <b>100%</b>       | <b>100%</b>        | <b>100%</b>         | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b> |



Table 2.7  
**Type of Jewish Engagement by Generation in America and Current Denomination**

*Core Jews Only (n=1,425)*

| <i>% answering "yes"</i>      | <i>Type of Jewish Engagement</i> |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------|-------|
|                               | Otherwise Engaged                |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |          | TOTAL |
|                               | Really Indifferent               | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox |       |
| <b>Generation in America:</b> |                                  |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |       |
| Second (Child of Immigrants)  | 15%                              | 21%           | 20%              | 22%               | 27%                | 30%                 | 59%      | 29%   |
| Third                         | 69                               | 70            | 71               | 67                | 54                 | 62                  | 37       | 61    |
| Fourth or More                | 16                               | 9             | 9                | 11                | 18                 | 9                   | 4        | 10    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | 100%                             | 100%          | 100%             | 100%              | 100%               | 100%                | 100%     | 100%  |
| <b>Current Denomination:</b>  |                                  |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |       |
| Orthodox                      | 0%                               | 1%            | 2%               | 0%                | 8%                 | 5%                  | 100%     | 19%   |
| Conservative                  | 8                                | 15            | 29               | 31                | 41                 | 61                  | 0        | 27    |
| Reform                        | 42                               | 58            | 59               | 48                | 43                 | 27                  | 0        | 38    |
| Reconstructionist             | 4                                | 5             | 2                | 8                 | 0                  | 2                   | 0        | 3     |
| Something Else                | 46                               | 22            | 9                | 13                | 7                  | 5                   | 0        | 13    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | 100%                             | 100%          | 100%             | 100%              | 100%               | 100%                | 100%     | 100%  |

Table 2.8  
**Type of Jewish Engagement by County of Residence**

*Core Jews Only (n=1,425)*

| <i>% answering "yes"</i> | <i>Type of Jewish Engagement</i> |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          | TOTAL |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------|-------|
|                          | Otherwise Engaged                |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |          |       |
|                          | Really Indifferent               | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox |       |
| <b>County:</b>           |                                  |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |       |
| Bronx                    | 1%                               | 3%            | 1%               | 2%                | 1%                 | 3%                  | 6%       | 3%    |
| Brooklyn                 | 11                               | 14            | 13               | 15                | 16                 | 13                  | 63       | 22    |
| Manhattan                | 44                               | 26            | 25               | 33                | 22                 | 19                  | 7        | 24    |
| Queens                   | 12                               | 11            | 15               | 14                | 13                 | 8                   | 13       | 12    |
| Staten Island            | 4                                | 3             | 5                | 3                 | 3                  | 2                   | 1        | 3     |
| Nassau                   | 13                               | 24            | 22               | 19                | 25                 | 33                  | 10       | 22    |
| Suffolk                  | 8                                | 9             | 10               | 7                 | 11                 | 8                   | 1        | 7     |
| Westchester              | 7                                | 10            | 10               | 10                | 9                  | 14                  | -        | 9     |
| TOTAL                    | 100%                             | 100%          | 100%             | 100%              | 100%               | 100%                | 100%     | 100%  |

Table 2.9  
**County of Residence by Type of Jewish Engagement**

*Core Jews Only (n=1,425)*

| <i>% answering "yes"</i> | <i>Type of Jewish Engagement</i> |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          | TOTAL |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------|-------|
|                          | Otherwise Engaged                |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |          |       |
|                          | Really Indifferent               | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox |       |
| <b>County:</b>           |                                  |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |       |
| Bronx                    | 3                                | 25            | 3                | 8                 | 6                  | 19                  | 36       | 100%  |
| Brooklyn                 | 4                                | 15            | 4                | 9                 | 10                 | 11                  | 47       | 100   |
| Manhattan                | 16                               | 26            | 7                | 19                | 12                 | 15                  | 5        | 100   |
| Queens                   | 9                                | 22            | 8                | 16                | 14                 | 13                  | 18       | 100   |
| Staten Island            | 12                               | 27            | 12               | 15                | 15                 | 15                  | 5        | 100   |
| Nassau                   | 5                                | 26            | 7                | 12                | 15                 | 27                  | 7        | 100   |
| Suffolk                  | 10                               | 30            | 9                | 13                | 19                 | 18                  | 2        | 100   |
| Westchester              | 7                                | 26            | 7                | 16                | 13                 | 30                  | 1        | 100   |
| TOTAL                    | 9%                               | 24%           | 7%               | 14%               | 13%                | 18%                 | 16%      | 100%  |

## EXPLORING THE DIFFERENCES AMONG THE SEVEN PATTERNS OF JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

Having examined the socio-demographic profiles of each of the seven patterns of Jewish engagement, we now turn to other information from the survey that can help us discern the outlook or worldview embodied by each pattern. In this section we explore the various ways of being Jewish from a number of different vantage points:

1. First, the relative importance of being Jewish is examined for people in each group. Where does being Jewish fit within the broader frame of a person's priorities? Who sees being Jewish seen as a paramount concern, and for whom is it less important? In what domains or arenas of a person's life does being Jewish come into play?
2. Second, the content of Jewishness is compared and contrasted for each of the various patterns of engagement. What are the most meaningful aspects of Jewishness for people in each group? Is each pattern of engagement associated with a different set of images, understandings or expressions of Jewishness?
3. Finally, the attitudinal and behavioral correlates (including feelings, social networks, and patterns of giving to philanthropy) of the various patterns of engagement are explored.

### *The Relative Importance of Being Jewish in a Person's Life*

A crucial part of the study of Jewish identity is to examine the relative importance of being Jewish in a person's life. Is "the Jewish" all-encompassing or is it more circumscribed? (In the focus groups we asked people to describe Jewishness using the metaphor of a house: Is your Jewishness the whole house, or is it a box in a closet that you take down occasionally? Is it the air you breathe or an easy chair you sit on when you get home?) This is a somewhat tricky enterprise, since for many American Jews the importance or salience of being Jewish is highly dependent on context. Time of life, time in history, and time of year (among other things) may play a role in framing this issue, and even the fact of the interview itself can influence an individual's response.

The relationship between "being Jewish" and other potentially competing concerns was explored using two groups of questions. The first question addressed a person's "life

priorities” and examined the relative importance of being Jewish compared to other important aspects of a person’s life. The second question presented a series of scenarios that might be termed “parents’ concerns about their children,” about which respondents were asked to share their reactions. Each set of questions served as a means of locating the “Jewish” among the range of alternative considerations that might play a role in a person’s life.

Important Aspects of Life

Where does being Jewish fit in a person’s life? To explore this contextual question respondents were asked to indicate the personal importance of a number of different aspects of their lives, as shown in table 2.10:

Table 2.10  
**How important to you is/are...?**

| Core Jews (n=1,425)<br>percentage answering | <i>Extremely<br/>Important</i> | <i>Very<br/>Important</i> | <i>Somewhat<br/>Important</i> | <i>Not<br/>Too<br/>Important</i> | <i>Not at all<br/>Important</i> |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Your family and children                    | 78                             | 17                        | 3                             | 1                                | -                               |
| Your relatives                              | 47                             | 34                        | 15                            | 3                                | 1                               |
| Being Jewish in your own life               | 33                             | 28                        | 24                            | 11                               | 5                               |
| Your free time and relaxation               | 32                             | 46                        | 18                            | 3                                | 1                               |
| Your career and work                        | 29                             | 49                        | 18                            | 3                                | 2                               |
| Your friends and acquaintances              | 29                             | 50                        | 17                            | 2                                | 2                               |
| Politics and public life                    | 5                              | 27                        | 46                            | 17                               | 6                               |

The vast majority of respondents viewed their families as especially important in their lives: nearly four-fifths of the sample rated their family and children as “extremely important” and nearly half of the respondents ranked their relatives just as highly. In addition, there was general consensus about the importance of other domains in a person’s life such as career, leisure and friendship, although these tended to be rated as “very important” if not “extremely important.” In contrast to these areas of consensus, the role of “being Jewish” proved to be more controversial. One-third of the sample viewed “being Jewish” as “extremely important,” while 16% of the respondents rated it is “not too/not at all important.” Politics and public life were seen as “somewhat important” by nearly half the sample, with an additional third rating this item even more strongly and 23% viewing it as unimportant in their lives.

When examined according to type of Jewish engagement, alternative ways of viewing these data became apparent. These are shown in the following table:

Table 2.11  
**I'd like to ask a few general questions about what is important to you.  
 Please tell me how important each of the following aspects of life is to you.**

*Core Jews (n=1,425)*

| Percentage reporting:<br>"extremely important" | TYPE OF JEWISHNESS |               |            |                   |                    |              |          |
|--|--------------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------|
|  | Really Indifferent | Some Interest | Subjective | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox | Orthodox |
| Your family and children                       | 57                 | 73            | 77         | 74                | 79                 | 84           | 89       |
| Your relatives                                 | 33                 | 42            | 47         | 42                | 48                 | 55           | 57       |
| Being Jewish in your own life                  | 1                  | 5             | 22         | 21                | 20                 | 54           | 91       |
| Your free time & relaxation                    | 31                 | 40            | 43         | 34                | 34                 | 26           | 22       |
| Your career and work                           | 29                 | 30            | 23         | 33                | 32                 | 29           | 22       |
| Your friends and acquaintances                 | 27                 | 31            | 30         | 28                | 29                 | 32           | 27       |
| Politics and public life                       | 3                  | 4             | 5          | 6                 | 5                  | 6            | 4        |

For each item we are comparing the extent to which respondents in each group saw a particular priority as "extremely important." Among the seven aspects of life, "family and children" received the most endorsement across all identity groups, ranging from 57% among the Really Indifferent to 89% among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged. In contrast, "politics and public life" received the least amount of support for being "extremely important," hovering between 3-6% across all patterns. The place of "being Jewish in your own life" ranged from 1% to 5% among the Other than Jewishly Engaged, to 20-22% among the people with mixed patterns of engagement, rising to 54% among the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged and reaching a high of 91% among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged.

The rank order position of each of the seven aspects of life was shown to vary by group as well. For the Otherwise Engaged (both the Really Indifferent and those with Some Interest) and for the three patterns of Mixed Engagement, being Jewish ranked sixth or seventh among the seven items. Among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged it ranked highest of all (91%), while for the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged being Jewish received the third highest endorsement of the seven items. 54% of the respondents said that being Jewish was “extremely important” in their lives, next only to “family and children” and “relatives.”

The differences in outlook among these seven groups are seen more sharply when the seven aspects of life are further analyzed. A multivariate analysis of six of the seven items (leaving out importance of being Jewish) resulted in two underlying constructs:<sup>11</sup>

1. *the importance of the familial aspects of life*: family and children; relatives.
2. *the importance of the non-familial aspects of life*: career and work, free time and relaxation, friends and acquaintances, and politics and public life.

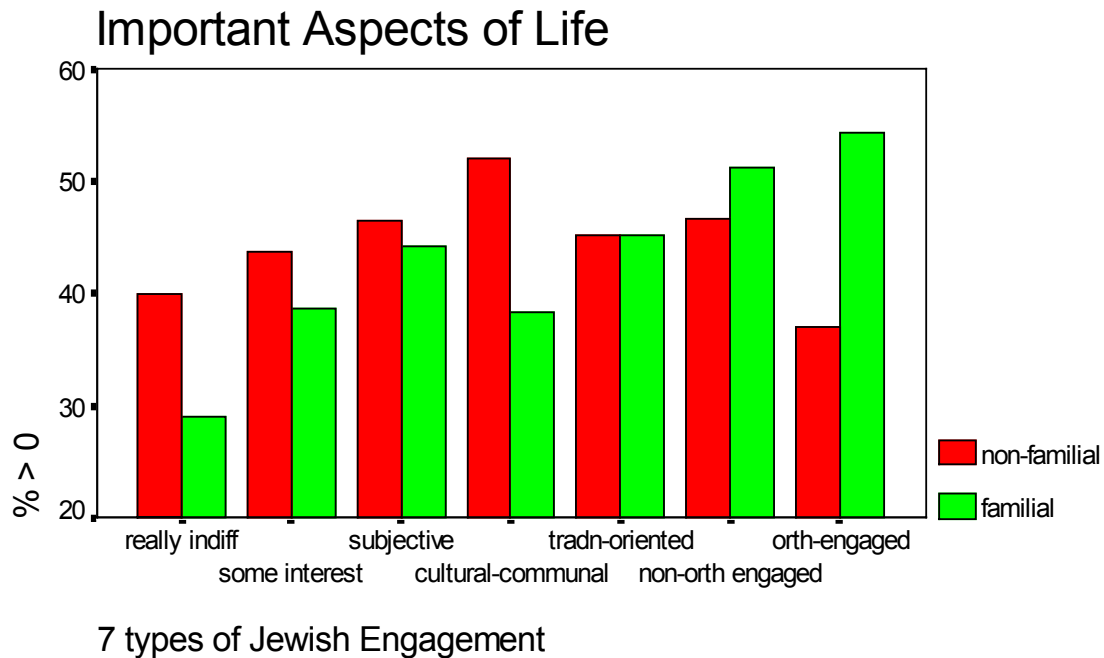
We next compare the patterns of Jewish engagement in terms of these two axes, shown in Chart 2.4 (below).

Non-familial concerns outweighed familial concerns for the Otherwise Engaged and for the Subjective, all of whom were less likely to be married than people in other groups. The same pattern was even more pronounced for those with Cultural-Communal engagement, a group that had the highest socio-economic attainment of all. The familial and non-familial were areas of equal concern for the Tradition-Oriented. In contrast, the Intensively Engaged, particularly the Orthodox, saw familial concerns as paramount.

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<sup>11</sup> I analyzed these items using factor analysis with an oblique rotation. “The importance of being Jewish in my life” clustered with the two family-related items, but in constructing the familial variable I left it out, since importance of being Jewish is captured separately by the subjective centrality scale.

Chart 2.4



#### Hopes and Fears about Children’s Lives

A second means of exploring the role of “the Jewish” in a person’s life is to examine how a person responds to various scenarios about the future. In the major studies of American Jewry, respondents have typically been asked to react to a single scenario -- to imagine that their child plans to intermarry and then to indicate to what extent they would either *oppose* or *support* the marriage. The question seems to treat intermarriage as a single issue to be tracked, and the respondents’ replies have been considered almost as a gauge of aggregate Jewish commitment: to accept the marriage is to be weak on Jewish identity, while opposing the marriage suggests a staunch Jewish commitment. My view is that treating intermarriage in this way is too simplistic. Today’s high intermarriage rates do not arise from an overwhelming desire to marry out, intermarriage as it may have signified fifty years ago. Rather, intermarriage continues to increase because Jews are freely interacting with non-Jews and are not acting with an overriding sense of Jewish identity.



Rather than limiting the inquiry to intermarriage, a central topic explored in this study is the relative value of various outcomes that characterize Jewish-American life. A new set of questions developed for the survey explored an array of possibilities about children's life choices (and society's options), ranging from scenarios that some might view as "too Jewish" to situations that might evoke a feeling of "not Jewish enough." My interest in this subject arises from a sense that American Jews do not necessarily see their lives in terms of a forced choice between being Jewish and being American, but they do feel a need to balance between these. A comment made by Susan in the course of her in-depth interview emphasizes this idea. When asked what she hoped for her children, Susan said,

I want them to be good citizens, happy adults. A little more religious than me, but not Orthodox, not so religious that ritual would take over their lives or that they wouldn't be able to eat in my house. If they separated themselves for the community-at-large, as they do in Borough Park...

*What about on the other end of the spectrum, since you, yourself, are intermarried?*

If they converted that would bother me more than Orthodoxy!

Susan's comments suggest that there may be a zone of tolerable outcomes that parents have for themselves and for their children. In this light, the possibility of intermarriage was examined along with five other hypothetical scenarios involving the future of one's children, including: converting to Christianity, never marrying, becoming very religiously observant, being involved in a long-term gay relationship, and never graduating from college. Respondents were asked assess to what extent they would feel happy or upset at each prospect. Their responses are shown in Table 2.12:

Table 2.12  
**How happy or upset would you be if your child...?**

*Core Jews (n=1,425)*

| <i>Percentages reporting</i>   | <i>Very upset</i> | <i>Somewhat upset</i> | <i>Somewhat happy</i> | <i>Very happy</i> | <i>Wouldn't matter</i> |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Converted to Christianity  | 51                | 26                    | 1                     | 1                 | 21                     |
| Never got a college degree   | 41                | 36                    | 1                     | 1                 | 21                     |
| Formed a lasting romantic relationship with a person of the same sex | 34                | 30                    | 2                     | 4                 | 30                     |
| Married a non-Jew  | 28                | 23                    | 2                     | 2                 | 45                     |
| Never married  | 26                | 38                    | 1                     | 1                 | 35                     |
| Became very religiously observant (ultra-Orthodox)                   | 11                | 24                    | 15                    | 16                | 34                     |

For the sample as a whole, the prospect of a child converting to Christianity or never getting a college degree generated the most upset (51% and 41% respectively), while the idea that a child would become very religiously observant generated the least upset (only 11% indicated that they would be very upset while 31% responded that they would be “somewhat” or “very happy.”). These findings suggest that rejecting the possibility of conversion (i.e. retaining a Jewish boundary) and valuing a university degree (for its own sake or as a means to socio-economic attainment) appear to be two strong axes for American Jews. The idea that a child might be gay was very upsetting for one-third of the total sample. In this context, the prospect of a child intermarrying was very upsetting to only one-quarter (28%) of the respondents, while 45% said that they “wouldn’t care,” a higher rate of indifference than in any of the other five scenarios.

When these scenarios are examined for each of the seven patterns of Jewish engagement, striking differences in outlook emerge (Table 2.13).

Table 2.13  
**Sentiments Regarding Children's Future by Type of Jewish Engagement**

How happy or upset would you be if your child...?

*Core Jews Only (n=1,425)*

| % answering "very upset"   | Type of Jewish Engagement |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          | TOTAL |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------|-------|
|  | Otherwise Engaged         |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |          |       |
|  | Really Indifferent        | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox |       |
| Converted to Christianity  | 11                        | 26            | 52               | 47                | 40                 | 71                  | 97       | 51    |
| Never got a college degree   | 37                        | 44            | 44               | 43                | 43                 | 52                  | 19       | 41    |
| Formed a lasting romantic relationship with a person of the same sex | 16                        | 20            | 22               | 21                | 24                 | 36                  | 87       | 34    |
| Married a non-Jew  | 3                         | 4             | 11               | 11                | 12                 | 40                  | 97       | 28    |
| Never married  | 10                        | 12            | 15               | 16                | 17                 | 26                  | 71       | 26    |
| Became very religiously observant (ultra-Orthodox)                   | 24                        | 17            | 10               | 12                | 8                  | 8                   | 1        | 11    |

The Really Indifferent group did not become particularly upset about any of the six scenarios. “Never getting a college degree” generated the most upset (37%) compared to the other five possibilities, while “marrying a non-Jew” generated the least (3%). This group conveyed an overall indifference regarding many aspects of life, not only an apathy towards being Jewish. Their indifference is underscored by the fact that, except for the “no college degree” scenario, the modal response to the other five possibilities was that “it wouldn’t matter” (ranging from 90% regarding intermarriage to 40% regarding “becoming very religious”). More people in this group (24%) were unhappy at the thought that a child might become very religiously observant than in any of the other groups, while only 11% said they would be upset if their child converted to Christianity. Insofar as they care at all, the people in this group appear to care less about the boundaries between religions than about the idea of a person becoming seriously religious, suggesting a decidedly secular stance among the people in this group. Bear in mind that the people in this group are also younger, more Americanized (their families having been longer in America), and less settled in terms of many central life issues (how to live, what work to pursue, whom to love, where to settle) than people in the other groups, which may explain their views to some extent.

The Otherwise Engaged who show Some Jewish Interest resembled those who are Really Indifferent to the extent that they were most upset about the prospect of no college degree (44%) and were least bothered by the prospect of intermarriage (4%). However, in contrast to the Really Indifferent, more of whom were disturbed by the thought of a child becoming very religiously observant than of by a child converting to Christianity, more people in this group were very bothered by the possibility of conversion (26% as compared to 11% among the Really Indifferent). This suggests a more salient boundary between Jewish and Christian for these individuals, a fact that could reflect differences in each group’s experience of “America.” Those with Some Interest, a group with an older age profile, can probably recollect a time when Philip Roth was writing about the unattainable “golden *shikse*” (i.e. non-Jewish woman), a symbol of the unbreachable barrier between Jews and the American mainstream. In contrast, the Really Indifferent are both younger and more Americanized (further from immigration) than those with

Some Jewish Interest. They feel part of America and do not see themselves as particularly marginalized because of their Jewish origins. On the contrary, some people, like Dan, a man in his early 20s, see themselves as privileged because of cultural associations that accrue to them from their Jewish origins.

Have I ever felt marginal because I'm Jewish? No! Probably, if anything, the opposite of marginal...Significant? What would you call the opposite of marginal...? When I think of marginal, I mean being taken out of the sphere of influence. Far from being taken out of the sphere of influence by being Jewish, I would say that being Jewish, if anything, puts me more into the sphere of influence than someone who is not Jewish.

*How does it do that?*

Again, having to do with stereotypes that a lot of people have about Judaism, or that I have about Judaism, being respected, intelligent, affluent and successful. That being Jewish gives me, to a degree, an automatic in into a Jewish community which is very influential and successful in a lot of ways, one that wields a fair amount of influence.

For many people who are Otherwise Engaged, the possibility of religious fervor and parochial Jewish expression are seen as challenges to their image of themselves as part of the American mainstream.

For the people in the three "mixed" patterns of Jewish engagement, both conversion to Christianity and never getting a college degree generated the greatest upset (ranging from 40% to 52%), while the least marked reaction was generated both by the prospect of a child becoming very religiously observant and by the prospect of intermarriage (8-12% reported being "very upset"). The prospect of a child being gay or never marrying at all was more disturbing than the possibility of either intermarriage or of ultra-Orthodoxy.

The people who are Intensively Engaged with being Jewish had a sharper set of opinions about the six scenarios than individuals in other groups. Among the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged, the possibility of a child's conversion proved to be most widely upsetting (71% reported they would be "very upset), and the prospect of a child without a college degree upset more than half of the people in this group. Two-fifths reported that

they would be “very upset” if faced with a child’s intermarriage, slightly more than the 36% who would feel that way if a child were gay. Least upsetting was the possibility of a child becoming very religiously observant (8%). Indeed 41% said that they would be “somewhat or very happy” with that outcome, with 28% reporting that “it wouldn’t matter.” These findings suggest that the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged have been around America and are aware of its options, but have themselves chosen to carve out a committed Jewish life. They have hopes for their children but are aware that there are no guarantees for the future.

Among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged, nearly everyone (97%) expressed deep upset both at the idea of a child converting to Christianity and at the thought that a child might intermarry. In the same vein, fully 87% indicated that they would be very upset if their child “formed a lasting romantic relationship with a person of the same sex.” Nearly three-quarters (71%) registered strong upset at the possibility of a child never marrying. For the people in this group, Judaism and family continuity are paramount, and those situations that might impede such commitments are viewed with great dismay. In contrast, only one-fifth felt very upset about a child not getting a college degree (and fully 42% said it wouldn’t matter one way or another), leading one to suspect that for this group, the idea of an educated Jew may not be dependent on a college education. Not surprisingly, there was virtually no objection to the prospect of a child becoming ultra-Orthodox. (Indeed 71% said that they would be “very happy,” with an additional 12% reporting they would be “somewhat happy,” and 12% indicating that “it wouldn’t matter.”)

A factor analysis revealed two underlying constructs for the above items:<sup>12</sup>

1. The first construct involves an overall *worry about not having Jewish grandchildren* and, by extension, a desire to *retain Jewish distinctiveness*. The items that clustered together here are the scenarios that could possibly thwart the chances of Jewish

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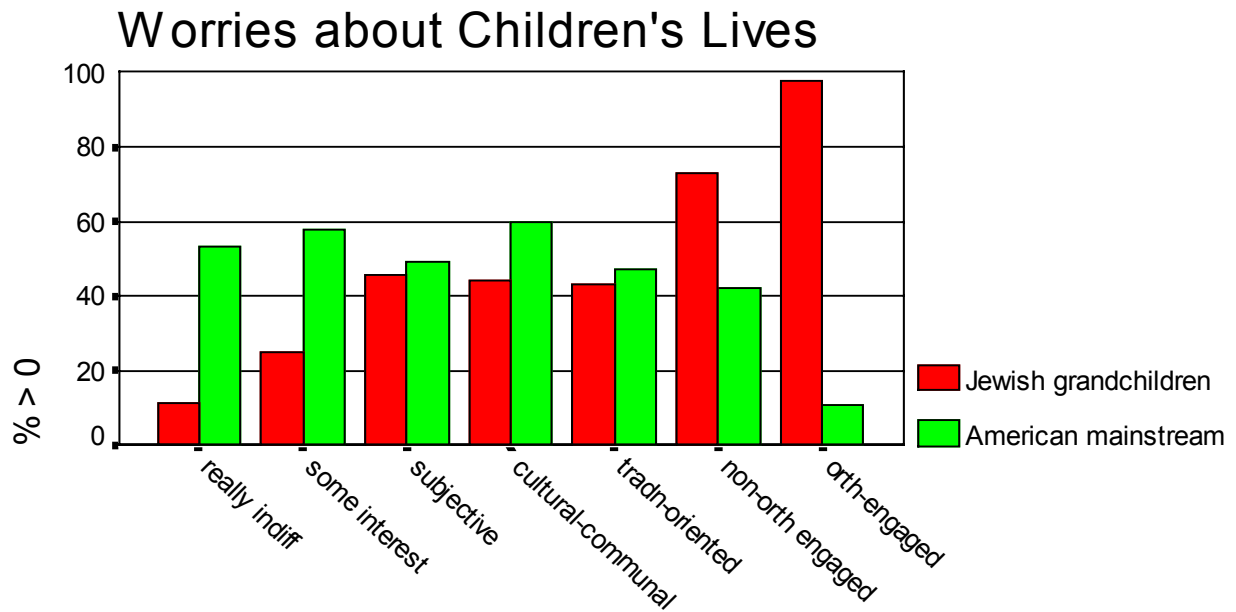
<sup>12</sup> For the factor analysis I used an oblique rotation.

grandchildren: a child's intermarriage, conversion to Christianity, never marrying, or being gay.

2. A second construct is about a child's *conforming to the middle class American mainstream* (i.e. *being comfortably American*) which would be imperiled by either failing to get a college degree, becoming religiously ultra-Orthodox, or both.

The relationship between these two constructs and the seven patterns of Jewish engagement are shown in chart 2.5.

Chart 2.5



7 types of Jewish Engagement

A comparison across the identity groups of the interplay between these two axes of concern – retaining Jewish distinctiveness and being fully American – illuminates some of the variations in outlook about being Jewish in America. Except for the Orthodox Intensively Engaged, being part of the American mainstream is more or less equally important for all of the identity patterns, while concern about retaining Jewish distinctiveness and having Jewish grandchildren varies among them. Only a small percentage of people in the two Otherwise Engaged groups care about Jewish distinctiveness (as symbolized by Jewish grandchildren), but many more are concerned about making it in the American mainstream. The relative lack of concern about their own Jewish continuity appears to reflect the fact that people in this group are less Jewishly involved than others, and a large percentage of these individuals are not married. In contrast to those who are Otherwise Engaged, the people in the three mixed patterns of Jewish engagement appear to care more about familial Jewish continuity, even while they retain a parallel concern about conforming to the American mainstream. Finally, the vast majority of the Intensively Engaged care very deeply about their Jewish grandchildren and familial continuity, and while fewer care about conforming to the American mainstream. Indeed, the Orthodox Intensively Engaged *do not care all* about conforming to these American values.

From this examination of both people's life priorities and their worries about children it is apparent that distinctive outlooks about life and Jewishness characterize the seven patterns of Jewish Engagement. Additionally, these groups differ in terms of how they see the "content" of their Jewishness, a subject to which we now turn.

### *The Content of Jewishness*

The topic of "what does being Jewish involve for you personally?" is something that is very complex and difficult to get people to discuss. Initially, upon being asked the question in the in-depth interviews, many people spoke first about their *deficiencies* in being Jewish. The normative frame is so strong that even when people were asked to discuss what being Jewish means to them, where it fits in with their lives, and how they expressed it (if at all), they did not really understand the question. It took time for people



to understand that the object of interest was not their idea of what being Jewish was *supposed* to involve, but rather their view of what being Jewish *actually did involve for them personally*.

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate the personal importance to them of a number of aspects of Judaism, shown below in Table 2.14.

Table 2.14

**There are many different ways of being Jewish. How much, if at all, does being Jewish involve for you personally...?**

*Core Jews (n=1,425)*

| <i>Percentage reporting:</i>              | <i>A lot</i> | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Only a little</i> | <i>Not at all</i> |
|---|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Remembering the Holocaust                 | 73           | 22              | 4                    | 2                 |
| Leading an ethical and moral life         | 73           | 17              | 4                    | 6                 |
| Celebrating Jewish holidays               | 57           | 29              | 10                   | 5                 |
| Giving your children a Jewish education   | 57           | 26              | 9                    | 9                 |
| Making the world a better place           | 55           | 28              | 8                    | 10                |
| Believing in God                          | 54           | 23              | 11                   | 12                |
| Learning about Jewish history and culture | 43           | 41              | 10                   | 6                 |
| Having a rich spiritual life              | 41           | 32              | 15                   | 13                |
| Giving to charity                         | 39           | 37              | 14                   | 10                |
| Being part of a Jewish community          | 36           | 35              | 16                   | 14                |
| Supporting Israel                         | 33           | 35              | 18                   | 14                |
| Supporting Jewish organizations           | 27           | 39              | 19                   | 15                |
| Observing Jewish law (halacha)            | 27           | 32              | 22                   | 20                |
| Attending synagogue                       | 25           | 30              | 22                   | 23                |
| Studying Jewish texts                     | 20           | 25              | 25                   | 30                |

For the sample as a whole, the vast majority of respondents saw “remembering the Holocaust and leading an ethical and moral life” as being key elements of their Jewishness. “Celebrating Jewish holidays,” “giving your children a Jewish education,” “making the world a better place,” and “believing in God” were all rated by more than half the sample as being very important elements of people’s Jewishness. In contrast, “attending synagogue” and “studying Jewish texts” were rated by more than half the respondents as relatively unimportant to their own way of being Jewish.

Not surprisingly, the meanings associated with being Jewish varied among people with different patterns of Jewish engagement. Table 2.15 shows the ratings of these content

Table 2.15  
**Content of Jewishness by Type of Jewish Engagement**

There are many ways of being Jewish. How much, if at all, does being Jewish involve for you personally...?

*Core Jews Only (n=1,425)*

|   | <i>% answering "a lot"</i>       |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------|
|   | <i>Type of Jewish Engagement</i> |               |                  |                   |                    |                     |          |
|   | Otherwise Engaged                |               | Mixed Engagement |                   |                    | Intensively Engaged |          |
|   | Really Indifferent               | Some Interest | Subjective       | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orthodox        | Orthodox |
| Remembering the Holocaust                 | 53                               | 62            | 80               | 80                | 74                 | 80                  | 81       |
| Leading an ethical and moral life         | 58                               | 58            | 72               | 71                | 70                 | 82                  | 98       |
| Celebrating Jewish holidays               | 19                               | 28            | 49               | 50                | 57                 | 83                  | 99       |
| Making the world a better place           | 33                               | 40            | 59               | 59                | 56                 | 63                  | 70       |
| Believing in God                          | 26                               | 31            | 52               | 46                | 48                 | 68                  | 97       |
| Giving your children a Jewish education   | 9                                | 25            | 55               | 53                | 53                 | 87                  | 99       |
| Learning about Jewish history and culture | 12                               | 18            | 35               | 47                | 39                 | 62                  | 80       |
| Having a rich spiritual life              | 18                               | 28            | 27               | 33                | 31                 | 53                  | 91       |
| Giving to charity                         | 11                               | 18            | 28               | 33                | 29                 | 47                  | 91       |
| Being part of a Jewish community          | 6                                | 7             | 13               | 26                | 23                 | 59                  | 92       |
| Supporting Israel                         | 8                                | 15            | 33               | 29                | 28                 | 53                  | 57       |
| Observing Jewish law (Halacha)            | 3                                | 5             | 11               | 13                | 15                 | 30                  | 98       |
| Supporting Jewish Organizations           | 2                                | 6             | 18               | 18                | 14                 | 40                  | 80       |
| Attending synagogue                       | 2                                | 2             | 5                | 11                | 14                 | 36                  | 84       |
| Studying Jewish texts                     | 3                                | 3             | 7                | 9                 | 7                  | 21                  | 81       |

items for people in each of the seven patterns of Jewish engagement. The first suggestion of this variation is seen in comparing the *style of response* across the different engagement seven patterns of Jewish engagement. Those who were most intensively involved in Jewish life were more likely to rate a greater number of items as being very meaningful to them personally, compared to those whose relationship to being Jewish was less intensive. The vast majority of the most Intensively Engaged endorsed nearly every item, while those with less extensive types of Jewish engagement rated fewer of the individual items as “very important.”

This suggests that those who are the most deeply and traditionally enmeshed in Jewish life see their Jewishness /Judaism as a whole package, and asking about individual items yields little variation. Regarding fully 13 of the 15 items, most (80-99%) of the Orthodox Intensively Engaged respondents indicated that these were very important to them personally. Only two items fell below the 80% endorsement: making the world a better place (70% said that this was a personally very meaningful aspect of their own Jewishness) and supporting Israel (57%).

In contrast, for the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged, only four items yielded agreement at the 80% level: giving your children a Jewish education, celebrating Jewish holidays, leading an ethical and moral life, and remembering the Holocaust. At the opposite extreme, four items received less than 50% endorsement: observing Jewish law, supporting Jewish organizations, attending synagogues and studying Jewish texts.

For the mixed identity patterns, the levels of endorsement of individual items were markedly lower, with only one item-- remembering the Holocaust-- reaching the 80% endorsement level. Furthermore, only among the Subjectively Engaged and the Cultural-Communal groups reached this level . Among people characterized by mixed patterns of engagement, only five items received the endorsement of at least 50% of the group, although there were slight variations among these three groups. For both the Cultural-Communal and the Tradition-Oriented groups, 50% or more endorsed: remembering the Holocaust, leading an ethical moral life, making the world a better place, giving one’s

children a Jewish education and celebrating Jewish holidays. Fifty percent or more of the Subjectively Engaged endorsed five items, but they preferred “believing in God.” to “celebrating Jewish holidays.” The Cultural-Communal showed greater interest in “learning about Jewish history and culture” compared to the other mixed engagement groups (47% compared to 35-39%); the Tradition-Oriented showed greater interest in “celebrating Jewish holidays” than the other two groups (57% compared to 49-50%); and the Subjectively Engaged were noticeably less inclined than the other two groups to view “being part of a Jewish community” as important to them (13% compared to 23-26%).

For the Other than Jewishly Engaged, levels of endorsement were lower still. Only two items were associated with being Jewish by at least 50% of this group: remembering the Holocaust, and leading an ethical and moral life. Since being Jewish overall is not very important to the people in this group, it should come as no surprise that the individual items did not generate much response.<sup>13</sup>

The overall pattern of response to this group of questions was that the Really Indifferent valued these much less while the Intensively Engaged valued these much more. The contrast suggests a polarity of Indifference and Meaningfulness, irrespective of the item at hand. The most intensively involved had a shared way of relating to Jewishness, whereas those who were the least engaged in Jewish life drew on a narrower and thinner range of what was personally meaningful to them about being Jewish. Jewishness constituted a smaller part of their lives and, and their ratings of meaningfulness reflect this. It is also possible that any connection to Jewishness that they did feel was idiosyncratic and personal, comprised of symbols and meanings that are not captured in our inventory’s list of 15 items.

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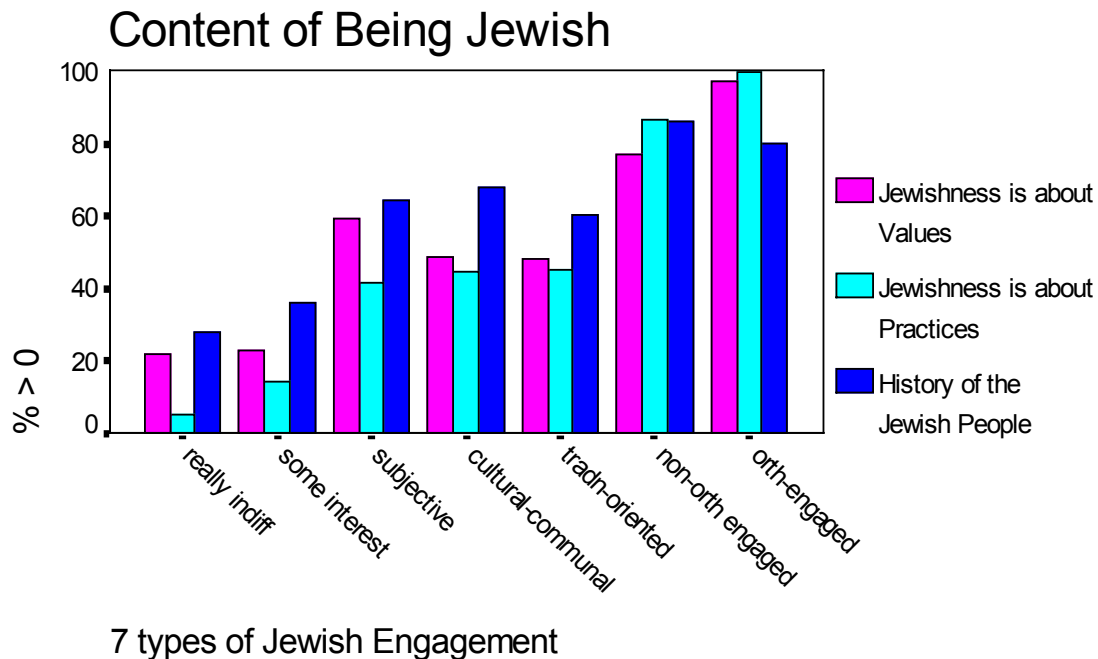
<sup>13</sup> This group may have responded more strongly to an item on anti-Semitism, had one been included among the possibilities. But the question is, would this group have responded more strongly to such an item when compared to people in the other groups?

A multivariate analysis of these 15 individual items resulted in three underlying constructs of what constitutes Jewishness or Judaism:<sup>14</sup>

1. *Doing things*: attending synagogue, observing Jewish law, being part of a Jewish community, supporting Jewish organizations, studying Jewish texts, celebrating Jewish holidays, and giving one's children a Jewish education.
2. *Living according to a set of basic universalistic values*: making the world a better place, leading a moral and ethical life, giving to charity, having a rich spiritual life, and believing in God.
3. *The historic and collective experience of the Jewish people*: remembering the Holocaust, supporting Israel, and learning about Jewish history and culture.

The distribution of these three constructs across the seven identity patterns is depicted in Chart 2.6.

Chart 2.6



<sup>14</sup> I analyzed these items using factor analysis with an oblique rotation.

For both the Non-Orthodox and the Orthodox Intensively Engaged, the notion of Jewishness as a set of practices received the strongest endorsement, followed by Jewishness as a set of basic values, and Jewishness as involving the historical-collective experience of the Jewish people. (The Orthodox ranked the “values” ahead of “history,” while the Non-Orthodox rated “history” ahead of “values.” The especially low endorsement of “supporting Israel” among the Orthodox accounts for this difference).

The other five types of engagement were characterized by a different worldview. For these groups, the Jewish experience in history (especially the Holocaust) was a paramount element of what it meant to be Jewish, followed by an image of Jewishness as involving a set of (universal) values, and then values and lastly by an image of Jewishness as involving particular Jewish practices. The strong consensus across all groups regarding the importance attached to the Holocaust is striking. Across all seven groups people viewed this event as a highly salient aspect of being Jewish, the most potent symbol of all. It is worth noting that in the in-depth interviews, people’s comments about the Holocaust revealed how alive and “undigested” this experience continues to be for younger American Jews. People’s comments about the Holocaust veered in every direction, and were not very predictably related to one sort of Jewishness or another. Throughout this study we see an overall pattern of “least” to “most” that consistently characterizes the differences among the seven identity patterns. People’s responses to the Holocaust offered one of the rare instances of an exception to this predictable pattern.

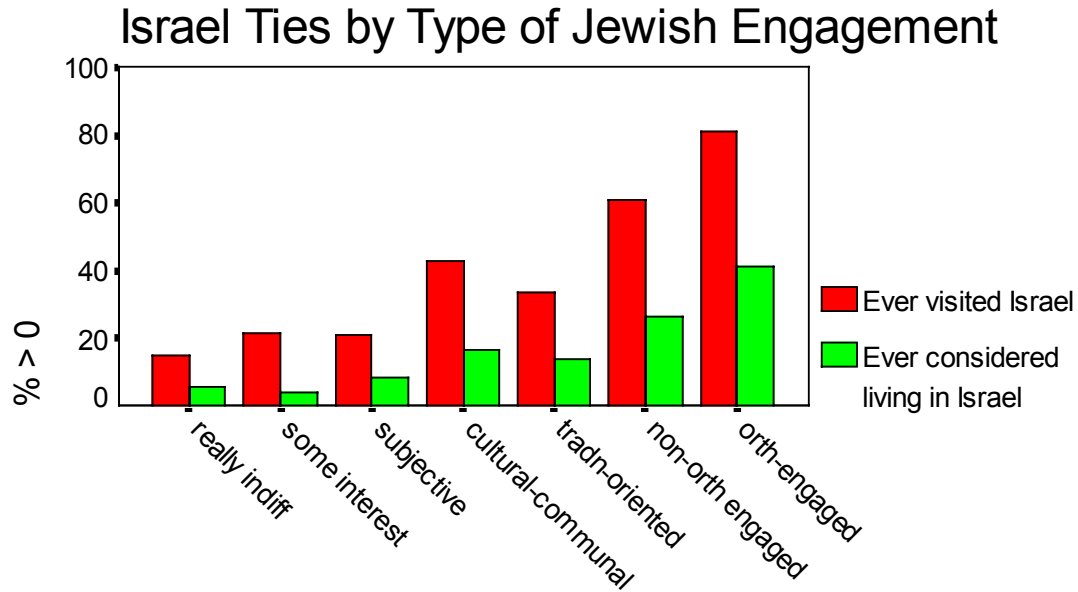
### Relationship to Israel

In contrast to the power of the Holocaust as a symbol in American Jewish identity, “supporting Israel” was seen as a much less personally meaningful component of being Jewish across all groups, ranging from 8% among the Really Indifferent to 57% among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged. For most of the identity patterns, “supporting Israel” ranked between eighth and tenth among the 15 possibilities, and *last* among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged. In the in-depth interviews, the comments about Israel were generally predictable and not very revealing. This pattern of responses lends support to

the growing impression about the weakening hold that Israel has on the inner lives and imagination of younger American Jews. For the Orthodox Intensively Engaged, the idea of “supporting Israel” was probably understood to refer to the *State* of Israel, which is not supported by a distinct segment of the ultra-Orthodox world, rather than to *Eretz Yisroel* (The *Land* of Israel), which is highly supported in that subculture.

Two other survey questions tapped a person’s experience with Israel, as shown in Chart 2.7 below. First, the rate of ever having visited Israel ranged from 15% (one out of every seven people) among the Really Indifferent to 81% (four out of every five people) among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged. Among the people with mixed patterns of Jewish engagement, only one-fifth of the Subjectively Engaged had ever visited Israel, and double that proportion (43%) of those with Cultural-Communal involvement had done so.

Chart 2.7



7 types of Jewish Engagement

A second question asked of respondents was, “have you ever seriously considered living in Israel?” which taps in some way into the power of Israel to capture a person’s imagination. When a person responds “yes,” s/he has seriously considered living in Israel, what s/he is saying is that the Israel has enough appeal that one could imagine living there, even if this possibility is never actualized. The responses to our survey question ranged from a low of 4% among the Otherwise Engaged with Some Jewish Interest to 41% among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged. Of course, it makes sense to look at those who have ever visited Israel in the first place, and to compare the percentage that have ever visited to those who have ever seriously considered living there, a calculation which is shown at the bottom of Table 2.16. Approximately half of the Orthodox Intensively Engaged who ever visited Israel has considered living there (81% ever visited, of whom 49% have considered living there). Among Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged, 36% of the people who ever visited have also considered living in Israel. The “interest” rates are less favorable among the other groups and least favorable of all among the Otherwise Engaged with Some Jewish Interest, where 12% of visitors expressed a serious interest in Israel. Interestingly, among the 15% of the Really Indifferent who have ever visited Israel, 17% reported that they had seriously considered living there, more than the comparable percentages among the Subjectively Involved and the Otherwise Engaged with Some Interest. The Really Indifferent include many younger people who have been in America for longer (many fourth generation people), and the finding suggests that their apparent indifference may result from a lack of interest in the *forms* of Jewishness to which they have been exposed (rather than some innate or immutable) lack of interest in “the Jewish” altogether.



Table 2.16

**Israel Ties by Type of Jewish Engagement**

*Core Jews (n=1,425)*

|  | TYPE OF JEWISH ENGAGEMENT |               |            |                         |                    |                            |          |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------|
|  | <i>Otherwise Engaged</i>  |               | Subjective | <i>Mixed Engagement</i> |                    | <i>Intensively Engaged</i> |          |
| % answering "yes"  | Really Indifferent        | Some Interest |            | Cultural-Comm.          | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orth.                  | Orthodox |
| <b>Israel Ties</b>   |                           |               |            |                         |                    |                            |          |
| Visited Israel one or more times   | 15                        | 23            | 21         | 43                      | 34                 | 61                         | 81       |
| Ever seriously considered living in Israel                                   | 6                         | 4             | 9          | 17                      | 14                 | 27                         | 41       |
| Of those who ever visited Israel, the % that has considered living in Israel | 17                        | 12            | 15         | 22                      | 27                 | 36                         | 49       |

*Attitudinal and Behavioral Correlates of the Patterns of Jewish Engagement*

Feelings about Being Jewish

Not surprisingly, there is a range of feeling about being Jewish that correlates with the different ways of being Jewish. Overall, nearly two-thirds of the respondents say they feel very positive about being Jewish, and 23% say they have somewhat positive feelings.

Table 2.17  
**Feelings about Being Jewish by Type of Jewish Engagement**

(n=1,425)

| % answering "yes"             | Type of Jewish Engagement |                  |             |                   |                     |              |          | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|-------|
|                               | Otherwise Engaged         | Mixed Engagement |             |                   | Intensively Engaged |              |          |       |
|                               | Really Indifferent        | Some Interest    | Sub-jective | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented  | Non-Orthodox | Orthodox |       |
| Very positive                 | 19%                       | 32%              | 73%         | 65%               | 57%                 | 93%          | 98%      | 63%   |
| Somewhat positive             | 32                        | 40               | 23          | 25                | 33                  | 7            | 2        | 23    |
| Neither positive nor negative | 45                        | 27               | 2           | 8                 | 10                  | -            | -        | 13    |
| Somewhat or very negative     | 4                         | 2                | 1           | 2                 | 0                   | -            | -        | 1     |
| TOTAL                         | 100%                      | 100%             | 100%        | 100%              | 100%                | 100%         | 100%     | 100%  |

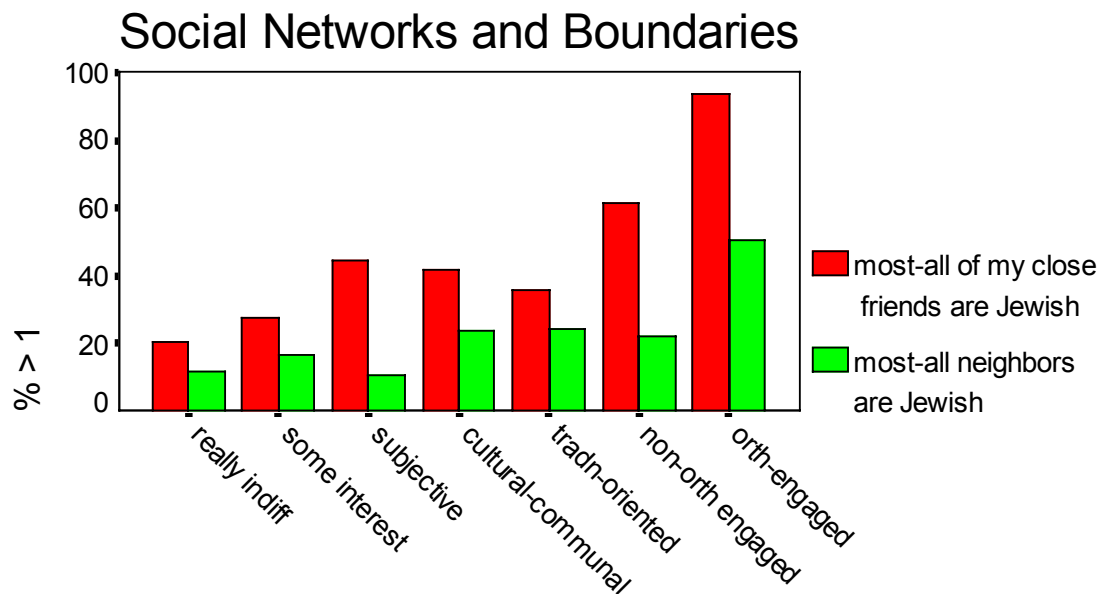
Those with “very positive” feelings range from one-fifth of the Really Indifferent to 98% of the Orthodox Intensively Engaged. The real surprise to some observers may be the absence of overt negative feelings (e.g. *rejection*) about being Jewish. This contrasts with the “self-hating” feelings that were prevalent among American Jewry in earlier parts of this century. Only 1% of the sample indicated “somewhat or very negative feelings” about being Jewish, with 13% avowing “neither positive nor negative feelings.” Overt rejection of being Jewish has been replaced by *indifference*.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>An alternative explanation for the lack of expression of outright negative feelings about being Jewish is that respondents with these feelings would not share them in the context of thea telephone interview.

## Networks and Boundaries

The nature of a person's Jewish engagement and identity can be seen as both a cause and a consequence of an individual's social networks, illustrated by looking at friendship patterns and neighborhood composition. Having highly Jewish networks –among friends and neighbors (and also professional colleagues) --has been treated as evidence of strong ethnic association.<sup>16</sup>

Chart 2.8



### 7 types of Jewish Engagement

Only one-fifth of the Really Indifferent report that all or most of their close friends are Jewish, compared to 94% among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged. Similarly, the Jewish density of the neighborhood is lowest for the Subjectively Engaged (11%) and for the least Jewishly involved (12%), compared to 50% among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged, hovering between 17% and 24% for everyone else. More than any of the other non-Intensively Engaged groups, the Subjectively Engaged report densely Jewish friendship networks. At the same time they are the least likely of any of the groups to rate their neighborhoods as Jewishly populated.

<sup>16</sup> There is a sociological literature about this. Regarding the Jews in particular, see Calvin Goldscheider (1986). *Jewish Continuity and Change: Emerging Patterns in America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

## Patterns of Giving to Philanthropy

Examining people's decisions about the philanthropic causes they choose to support is a way of tracing people's values, commitments and social milieu.<sup>17</sup> We consider the data in two different forms (table (Table 2.18)). First, the aggregate levels of giving for each identity type are presented and then the overall pattern of philanthropy, in terms of giving to "Jewish" versus general (i.e. not specifically Jewish causes is considered

Table 2.18  
**Philanthropic Activity by Type of Jewish Engagement**

*Core Jews Only (n=1,425)*

|  | % answering "yes" Type of Jewish Engagement |               |                  |                   |                     |              |          | TOTAL |
|--|---|---------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|-------|
|  | Otherwise Engaged                           |               | Mixed Engagement |                   | Intensively Engaged |              |          |       |
|  | Really Indifferent                          | Some Interest | Sub-jective      | Cultural-Communal | Tradition-Oriented  | Non-Orthodox | Orthodox |       |
| <b>Pattern of 1997 Giving:</b><br>Both Jewish and General Causes | -   | 69%           | 71%              | 74%               | 77%                 | 83%          | 63%      | 67%   |
| Jewish Causes only   | -   | 2             | 1                | 4                 | 8                   | 9            | 35       | 9     |
| General Causes only  | 36  | 13            | 7                | 11                | 4                   | 2            | 1        | 9     |
| Non-givers   | 64  | 17            | 20               | 12                | 11                  | 6            | 2        | 15    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | 100%  | 100%          | 100%             | 100%              | 100%                | 100%         | 100%     | 100%  |
| <b>Reports 1997 Contribution to UJA Federation</b>               | -   | 14            | 23               | 31                | 24                  | 45           | 18       | 23    |

\*Note: "Not giving to Jewish causes" was one of the two criteria used to differentiate the "Really Indifferent" from those with "Some Interest." The other criterion used to define this group was "Does not display any Jewish objects at home."

<sup>17</sup> I have discussed the relationship between identity and patterns of giving to philanthropy in two other studies: *The 1991 New York Jewish Population Study*, Chapter 4 (Horowitz, 1993); and in (Horowitz, 1991). "Havurah Jews and Where They Give." In B. Kosmin & P. Ritterband (Eds.) *Contemporary Jewish Philanthropy in America*. Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Propensity to give to charity at all seems to vary in relation to intensity of Jewish engagement. Across six of the seven the modes of Jewishness, the vast majority of respondents report that they gave to philanthropy in 1997, with levels ranging from a low of 82% among the Subjectively Engaged to a high of 99% among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged. Only the Really Indifferent deviate from this pattern: only 36% reported of this group 36% report making a contribution to any charity (and the remaining two-thirds were are non-givers.) *Note: Since “not giving to Jewish charity” was used as a criterion to distinguish this subgroup of people, in the chart no one in this group gives to Jewish charity by definition.* That so many (two-thirds of this group) also do not support any general charities shows that for this group, philanthropy is not related to Jewishness *per se*. Rather, the high proportion of non-giving individuals among the Really Indifferent bespeaks this group’s youth and lack of economic capability, perhaps more than its long-term intent. In contrast, among all donors to philanthropy, the modal pattern is to support both Jewish and general non-Jewish causes.

Respondents who reported making a donation to any Jewish cause in 1997 were asked if they made a contribution to UJA-Federation. The responses ranged from 14% among the Otherwise Engaged “with some Jewish interest” and 18% among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged to nearly one-third (31%) of the Cultural-Communal Jews and 45% of the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged.

### **III. Qualitative Synthesis of the Distinctive Elements of Each of the Seven Patterns**

Armed with these demographic, attitudinal and behavioral comparisons of the different identity patterns, it is helpful to synthesize this information into qualitative portraits, which highlight the distinctive elements of each of the seven types. These portraits are illustrated with examples selected from the in-depth interviews from Phase One of the study. Although the typology was developed using the survey data after the in-depth interviews had already been collected, the cases chosen here seem to fit these types, and can let us hear in the interviewees’ own words how they see themselves and their relationship to their Jewishness.

THE OTHERWISE ENGAGED (33% OF THE SAMPLE)

The Other-than-Jewishly-Engaged constitute one-third of the American-born 22-52 year old Jewish population in the New York area. The people in this group are neither deeply attached nor outwardly (behaviorally) expressive of Jewishness. Being Jewish is not a personally meaningful or important part of their identities—fully 65% of this group agreed that “Overall the fact that I am a Jew has very little to do with how I see myself.” (Table 2.2 reports that 35% *disagree* with the statement). For them, being Jewish is a fact of background, but it does not play a particularly active or dynamic part in their (conscious) lives. The people characterized by this way of being Jewish are not pursuing an actively Jewish life, and they tend to view being Jewish more as an accident of birth than as a central, motivating element of identity. For example, here is Robert,<sup>18</sup> a man in his late 40s, whose Christian wife is actively involved in the Episcopalian church. They have three children, the youngest of whom was baptized:

...I don't feel proud of being Jewish at all, and I don't feel ashamed of being Jewish at all. It's like sort of an historical accident. It's like being black or white. It's basically a rather random event that I happen to be born to Jewish parents. It doesn't have a heck of a lot to do with my conscious life.

Being Jewish is relatively unimportant in the lives of the people in this group, either because they have not really thought about it, or because they tend to be otherwise engaged, and they tend to have few Jews in their social networks. Only a small minority of people among the Otherwise Engaged report that their close friends are Jewish.

Dan, a man in his early 20s, was asked, asked:

Q: “What proportion of your friends would you say are Jewish?”

A: “Zero.”

Q: “Was that a conscious choice?”

A: “No! Not at all.”

He has two friends who are half Jewish (we joked that they count as one Jewish friend). But he said that neither of them identifies as Jews. About 10-20% of his coworkers and patients are Jewish.

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<sup>18</sup> The names here are all pseudonyms and the biographical details have been slightly altered to maintain interviewees' confidentiality.

This pattern of friendship can be viewed as both resulting from and contributing to individuals' general lack of involvement with Jewishness.

This group can be split into two sub-groups: those who are Really Indifferent (9% of the sample) and those with Some (latent) Interest (24% of the sample).

*The Really Indifferent (9% of the sample)*

As a group, the Really Indifferent are younger, less settled and have a whole range of “identity” concerns and life arrangements up for grabs— where to live, who to be, whom to date, what work to pursue. Dan spoke about the fluidity of his identity:

I define myself a lot by other people's perceptions of me. I'm not sure whether that's a good thing... A lot of my feelings about myself, and whether I feel good about myself or bad on a given day has a lot to do with how people around me seem to be perceiving me. I find a lot of my actions are centered around trying to make sure that all the people in my life like me and think that I'm a nice person, an intelligent person. To such a degree that it's hard sometimes to know what it is that I myself want to do. So having friends, having a number of people in my life who like me and who value me, is a major part of my identity, if not the biggest part of my identity.

This is a group for whom being Jewish is not a core concern, but their lack of interest is not the same as rejection. Whether due to age or stage of life, the people who are Really Indifferent have not thought about Jewishness much at all, and any attachment or feeling they may have about their Jewish origins is not expressed (or, at least, not well measured by the questions used in the survey<sup>19</sup>). It is noteworthy that although the vast majority of members of this group do no Jewish actions, 25% of the Really Indifferent reports fasting on Yom Kippur, hinting at a minimal relationship to the world of Jewish religious practice.

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<sup>19</sup> It is possible that the existence of such feelings is not traced by either of the two indicators of minimal Jewish association used in this study – giving to Jewish charity, or displaying any Jewish object at home. Note that these two measures are probably the *least* effective in differentiating the youngest adults, since giving money depends on a person having (enough) money (to spare), (continued on next page) and displaying an object at home depends on having objects to display and a home in which to display them – both things that younger, less settled/unsettled people are less aptly likely to have.

Because so many individuals in this group are younger and single, their as yet unsettled situation today may have no predictive value for tomorrow. Bear in mind that the extent of institutional affiliation and personal Jewish commitment and expression among the people in this group seem particularly sensitive to changes in the life course. To write this group off would be a strategic mistake.

The literature about ethnic identity development is instructive regarding this caution. Phinney (1990) has described three stages of ethnic identity development in early adulthood: unexamined ethnicity, ethnic search, and achieved ethnic identity. Typically, younger adults begin with a condition of “unexamined ethnicity” -- (because, for instance, nothing has ever made them think about or reconsider their relationship to their background), and under various circumstances they may begin a process of “ethnic search” during which they explore various alternatives to who and how they want to be. The process can culminate in the “achieving of an ethnic identity.” Achieving an identity implies a process of reckoning with ethnicity and how this fits into one’s life. It is a form of clarity, really, since it involves a person’s coming to terms with his/her ethnic “inheritance.” Some people may never begin to reflect on their identities—they may have “foreclosed” the search. People who have not yet embarked on such a process are said to be in “moratorium” about the overall question of their relationship to the group. For them, it is not (yet) of interest, although they may come to address this question at some later point in their lives. These observations are particularly relevant for the Really Indifferent. The in-depth interviews suggest that many of them are in a period of moratorium about their Jewish identities (and perhaps other aspects of identity as well).

*Those with Some Jewish Interest (24% of the sample)*

The second subgroup – those with Some Jewish Interest-- is an older population that is more settled and more psychologically “formed.” They come across as more opinionated than the Really Indifferent. (In Phinney’s terms, I imagine that many of them have “achieved” a Jewish identity that is minimal, and the remainder have not thought much about identity in the first place.) Given the age characteristics of this group (mostly in



their 40s and early 50s) many in this group (50s), many may associate Jewishness as part of a package that includes lower middle class status, being socially segregated from America, and having a highly visible ethnicity (i.e. “talking too much”). Robert commented:

A lot of the way that I run my life, and a lot of the decisions that I’ve made, have been made as an escape from being labeled as being Jewish. Because I have some strong negative reactions and negative connotations to the idea of being Jewish. A lot of my life has been to escape that.

...it tends to exclude me from America, from the culture that I want to be part of. I don’t like standing out. I’m somebody that likes to blend into the woodwork...As long as I can remember, I was never very happy about being Jewish because it interfered with my self-image, or wanting to be the kind of kid you saw on TV with a house and a backyard - a regular American kid.

For people with these associations, being Jewish is a fact of their origins, but it is not something in which to revel. They are Jewish by background and by ethnicity. They are aware of it, and they do not deny it. Their Jewish ethnicity is their natural idiom: three-quarters (73%) report that they display some Jewish objects at home, and nearly three-quarters (71%) of this group report giving to Jewish charity. Nearly two-fifths (39%) indicate that they fast on Yom Kippur.

A large proportion of this group is unmarried, and does not have children. Thus, the conventional modes of connecting to much Jewish life – through synagogue and organizations – are not apt to appeal to these individuals, who have no children or (intact) families of their own.

#### MIXED PATTERNS OF ENGAGEMENT (33% OF THE SAMPLE)

The mixed patterns of Jewish engagement include people whose relationship to Jewishness is not completely all or none, but rather more circumscribed. They are highly involved in Jewish life in some ways, but not in others. They are not indifferent about being Jewish, but their ongoing Jewishness appears to depend on its fitting in with their lives and meeting their needs. Some might see these people as characterized by a more “pick and choose” approach regarding Jewish commitment and active expression. Three

“mixed” patterns were identified in this study: the Subjectively Engaged (7% of the sample overall); those characterized by Cultural-Communal engagement (14% of the total); and the Tradition-Oriented (13% of the total). Together, the people with mixed patterns of engagement experience their Jewishness as a set of values and as historical people-consciousness more than as a mode of observance.

*The Subjectively Engaged (7% of the sample)*

The people in this group have found personally meaningful ways of connecting to Jewishness, which do not include more conventional or communal modes. For instance, Daniel, age 40, is a professional musician living in Manhattan, who has deepened his Jewish connections through his exploration of klezmer music, finding a personally authentic mode of expression:

*Let’s talk about your work. How do you like your job, is this your long-term occupation?*

[Music] is my life; it’s my whole life. A long term occupation, unless I had some major psychological change...no...this is what I do, I play concerts [both classical and klezmer music] all over the world.

*Tell me a little bit about how you got into the klezmer and the classical?*

I was classically trained [at two top European and American conservatories]. At the same time I was learning classical music, I was very involved in playing jazz and in fact that’s what I still mainly listen to...so its one of the things that I’m pretty involved with and knowledgeable about. This has a certain thing to do with my identity too, because then when I got out of graduate school I was doing a lot of classical freelancing, I went to [a premier music festival] for two summers. So I’ve done quite a lot of chamber music but I was always still involved with improvisation, writing my own music and talking about identity.

I think that when I was in high school and in my early years in college...I always had these identity struggles about: I’m Jewish and I’m trying to play jazz, what does that mean? I got into a whole thing about not being an African American and what am I doing here feeling like a fish out of water? So eventually I was concentrating more on classical music but increasingly unhappy there. I won a couple of major classical competitions [and played at several well-known festivals]...but somehow there was always something in me that was resisting just being a classical musician, and so coming to klezmer music was a real affirmation. It brought a lot of things together. I could do music that was not so much improvised, although there are improvised elements, but I could do music where I could be more creative, less adhering to a specific text, more writing my own music. It’s *mine*; it was my grandmother’s music; that was very important to

me. Now I'm taking it more and more, and returning to a jazz direction, a composition direction, an improvisation direction and it's less about playing through klezmer tunes, and more about just having a general identity of being a Jewish musician, a Jewish artist.

*So it does really capture the Jewish and the musician in you?*

Yes. I think as you're going to find that out in this interview later on, talking about my Jewishness and my Jewish identity. I would say klezmer music is the really big, tangible expression of my Jewish identity. I play at weddings from time to time, and I feel that that makes me part of the Jewish community in that sense.

*How important would you say being Jewish is in your life?*

The Jewishness is very new to me. When I started playing klezmer music, I took it on as a musical hobby. I thought this'll be fun, I won't care about the money or a career or anything, I'll just play at parties and have fun with it. I have fun with it, but I thought I wouldn't take it very seriously. It turned very serious very fast.

This group is small in number, but it is important theoretically. Without examining a person's internal, subjective stance towards Jewishness as we do here, it would not have been possible to isolate this group of people using more typical behavioral measures. Indeed, they would have been classified as completely uninvolved. For example, the Subjectively Engaged ranked "supporting Jewish organizations," and "being part of a Jewish community" as *less important* to them personally than all the other groups except the Otherwise Engaged. At the same time, their feelings of pride in being Jewish and the importance they place on it (along with their high scores on the subjective centrality measures altogether) are *higher* than those of the other identity patterns of mixed engagement. In the case of Melissa, a woman in her late 30s who is employed by the New York City Police Department, her strong feelings of connection to her Jewish heritage are reinforced by the feelings of difference she feels in the workplace.

*Tell me more about the Jewish part of your life, holidays, ritual or otherwise.*

[In addition to seder] I do Hanukkah... Until two weeks ago I was the only female [and only Jew] in my [very multicultural] office. So of course I'm a girl so they say, "The Christmas Tree is in that box." And I say, "Hello! One of you can put it up, [since] I'm not Christian." "Oh come on now, put the Christmas tree up!"

*So they wanted you to do that?*

They told me to put up the tree and decorate. I received no further instructions. This is not a problem! I put the Christmas tree up...with a Star of David at the top!

And I made Christmas tree ornament cookies of dreidels and menorahs and stars of David. [I said to myself,] You want a freakin' Christmas tree, you got a freakin' Christmas tree, you want it decorated, not a problem here (shouts)! And my immediate supervisor was hysterical watching. My sergeant helped me put everything up. He's hysterical, he holds it up and says, "This is a dreidel," and I said, "I know." And he's saying, "They're gonna freak out tomorrow." I say, "Too bad. They told me to decorate the tree and the tree is decorated. They have no reason to complain." In blue and silver decorations. "You want the tree? It's up! You want it decorated? It's decorated!" There are ways to get your point across. The woman does it, "I'll do this, yes, Sir" and smiles. And [the tree] went up.

I wasn't there the next morning, but from what I understood they were standing there saying, "Well, this is the candelabra." They laughed and everyone was eating cookies off the tree.

Note the importance of the occupational setting and the fact that this is clearly a [New York] multicultural environment. Melissa's identity as a woman, a Jew and a police detective are intertwined here. The occupational environment reinforces her sense of Jewishness because it is set in relief. The fact that this is happening in New York City, where "Jewish" has the status of a significant cultural category that is significant, lends support to her actions. Indeed, the non-Jewish coworkers recognized the dreidel and knew what to call it. Melissa might not have felt the same way if the scene had occurred in Idaho.

*What I'm getting from you is that you do something at Hanukkah, at Christmas, and at Passover, is that right?*

I don't know how else to put this. If someone's gotten on my case and has offended me about being Jewish in some way or another, oh, I [would] take off every holiday that comes along. Just to put the knife in, turn it, heat it up and throw a little salt in there. And I [would] check calendars, and I [would] take off for Tisha B'Av.

*What are your feelings about being Jewish?*

There's a sense of identity, there's a history I'm a part of. I've gotten my family tree back to 1690.... I'm angry. Why the hell does this shit happen to us?!...Pride. As far as I'm concerned it's one of the oldest religions around and we predated everyone and everything is descended from us.... [like] humor. I was discussing Kwanzaa with my boss. "They ripped that off from us. We have a menorah, they have a candelabra. We have the seven days..."

[Being Jewish] It's part of me. It's not something I can really define. I don't think much about it until something gets in my face about it.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) have very positive feelings about being Jewish, a more uniformly positive response than any other group except for the Intensively Engaged. Their assertion of feeling proud to be Jewish is equally strong compared to the Intensively Engaged groups (98-99% of both the Subjective and the Intensively Engaged say they are “extremely proud” to be Jewish, compared to 47-79% among the other groups). This strong subjective commitment is also demonstrated in attitudes about “boundary maintenance,” with more than half (52%) indicating that they would be very upset if their child converted to Christianity (a higher percentage than any of the other groups except the Intensively Engaged). At the same time, while the Subjectively Engaged are more likely to have many Jewish friends than other non-Intensively Engaged, they also have fewer Jewish neighbors. Perhaps, as in Melissa's case, their greater social integration into a not-specifically-Jewish milieu acts to reinforce their group identity as Jews.

The Subjectively Engaged are less apt than the other mixed engagement groups to have visited to Israel (although they are more likely than the other non-Intensively Engaged to rate “supporting Israel” as a personally meaningful element in their Jewishness), and, except for the Otherwise Engaged, they are less likely than any other group to give to charity.

The socio-demographic profile of this group is disproportionately female and is also slightly older than for the sample as a whole.

#### *Cultural-Communal (14% of the sample)*

This group of people, 14% of the population, is one of the more affluent and cosmopolitan of the seven groups. Compared to the other non-Intensively Engaged, this group is less involved in ritual, and more likely to express its Jewish involvement in terms of communal affiliation and cultural involvements. Next to the Non-Orthodox

Intensively Engaged, this group has the highest percentage of givers to UJA-Federation in the sample (31% of the Cultural-Communal, compared to 0-24% among other groups and 45% among the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged). The Culturally-Communally engaged are highly accomplished in terms of America success, and demonstrate commitment to Jewishness in a way resembling the idea of “civil Judaism.”<sup>20</sup> Among the non-Intensively Engaged groups, the Cultural-Communal are the most likely to have visited Israel (43% compared to 15-34%). Being Jewish is an intellectually stimulating involvement for them, but it does not fully define their lives.

Susan, a lawyer in her mid-40s, lives in an affluent, largely Jewish Westchester suburb with her husband, who is not Jewish --Jewish, (“He is Italian, raised as Catholic but is non-religious”)-- and their two children. Susan and her husband have agreed to raise the children as Jews, a task which is Susan’s responsibility. The children go to Hebrew school and are regular attendees of the temple’s family services. Susan reports that no tension exists between herself and her husband about these issues; she is clearly the active parent in this matter and he is the silent partner.

“I am a mother, wife, lawyer, community member, friend, daughter and sister. The Jewish part fits in, but it’s not in the top category of items.” She describes herself as “not religious; I am secular.”

Susan is comfortable about being Jewish, and seems to view this as an active, although not a predominant part of her identity:

I like the religion; I’m just not by nature a religious person. I like the intellectual side of the religion; I like the history. I like the associations that I have, the family associations. My grandparents were religious...I liked going to a seder when I was a child, High Holidays, visiting family...those are all good associations.

Like Susan, for many in this group one important area of access to Judaism and Jewishness is intellectually based. Three-fifths regularly read Jewish newspapers and periodicals, and the same proportion is involved in attending lectures and taking classes about Jewish subjects.

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<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Woocher (1986). *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Nearly half of cultural-communally engaged view “learning about Jewish history and culture” as a very important element in their personal conception of Jewishness. They relate to their Jewishness more as a social and cultural orientation rather than as a religious outlook. Given their level of socio-economic attainment and their clear Jewish commitments, this pattern of Jewish engagement can be said to include many in the UJA-Federation donor community. In contrast to the Subjectively Engaged, who are characterized by powerful subjective commitment to Jewishness, those with Cultural-Communal engagement tend to exhibit less Subjective Jewish Centrality, and to express their Jewishness instead through their Jewish cultural and communal activities.

*Tradition-Oriented (13% of the sample)*

Moderate to high practice of religious ritual characterizes the Tradition-Oriented. Unlike the Intensively Engaged, for whom being Jewish involves an interrelated set of religious, cultural and personal attachments and expressions, the Tradition-Oriented are not fully enmeshed in Jewish life. For instance, being Jewish has become very important to Sarah, a single woman in her 20s, who is an attorney and lives in Queens. In particular, she seems to be seeking meaning through ritual. Sarah feels she would be happiest living in a Jewish neighborhood without necessarily going to a synagogue, although she did go attend synagogue once or twice on the Upper West Side and found it very appealing.

The people in this group practice religious rituals, but either, like Sarah, they exhibit less Cultural-Communal expression, or, even more commonly, they exhibit quite low levels of subjective attachment – on (on average barely half the level of those with Cultural-Communal engagement and only a quarter the level of the Subjectively Engaged). Engaged.

Compared to the other four non-Intensively Engaged groups, those who are Tradition-Oriented rated “celebrating Jewish holidays” as an especially important aspect of their Jewishness. Sarah feels Jewish around the holidays -because of the culture, the sense of family:

This year, my family got me a menorah and I lit the candles and I said the prayers... I probably say them wrong. I read them phonetically spelled off the box, but we all start somewhere. In the future, I will do some of the Jewish outreach programs, crash programs in Hebrew or learning about Judaism. A lot of these things I would do with someone, but I'm not with anyone now.

The Tradition-Oriented express their Jewishness in ritual-religious ways *as individuals*, *but they do not appear to be well integrated into the Jewish community*. Some in this group are exploring Judaism. Others in this group may be part of a resurgent Orthodoxy, or may be among the small number of unaffiliated Orthodox. In demographic terms, this pattern of engagement is particularly characteristic of highly educated, high-earning individuals who are fourth generation Americans, with men over-represented when compared to the skewed gender distribution in the sample overall.

#### THE INTENSIVELY ENGAGED (34% OF THE SAMPLE)

This group, which comprises one-third of the population, is involved in Jewish life and embraces an enveloping Jewish lifestyle expressed in the observance of religious ritual, in cultural-communal involvement, and in subjective attachment to being Jewish. The people in this group see Jewishness as something they want to inculcate in their children; they are very committed to the maintenance of Jewish life both in their own families and more broadly in their communal engagements. Overall, this group experiences Jewishness through ritual observance, in terms of moral values, and historical connection to the Jewish people and to Jewish history. The cohort is split into two subgroups—the Orthodox (16% of the total population) and the Non-Orthodox (18% of the total population).

#### *The Non-Orthodox (18% of the sample)*

The Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged is grounded in their commitments both to Jewishness and Judaism, but they are also at home in America. They have explored



opportunities in American society and are aware of its options, but they have chosen to live deeply involved Jewish lives.. Balancing or navigating the relationship between the Jewish and the “general” is an important dynamic for the people in this group, demonstrated in the strong weight they place on both maintaining Jewish distinctiveness and being part of the American mainstream.

For example, Sasha is a woman in her late 20s, a performing artist whose troupe has a Hebrew name. An essential quandary for her since adolescence has been her desire to reconcile her identity as an artist with her identity as an observant Jew, an identity that ranges from intensely committed to on-again-off-again. This deeply felt conflict lies at the heart of her struggles about daily practice (e.g. whether or not to take a “gig” on Shabbat or not). She sees her struggle over how to integrate these two key aspects of herself as her major preoccupation at the present time.

My Jewish identity is really important and my artistic identity is very important as well...Every step of the way, I've been struggling to find a way fit my strong artistic self and love of being in an artistic community within the mold of a Jewish normative life style and conventional career choices.

Sasha also describes the way in which she has struggled with her fluctuating desire to be *shomer shabbat* (observant of Shabbat) while living in her self-contained performing world. Recently she was close to making a deal for a two-year world tour; if that had come through, “no question I would have done it and put the spiritual struggle on the back burner.” When the offer did not come through, she used it as an opportunity to begin exploring her Judaism, becoming more religious, and now turning down gigs on Friday nights evenings, while performing several other nights of the week.

The Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged interact through their work and their cultural interests in both the Jewish and general environments; they seek to cultivate strong Jewish commitments in their children. Rina, in her late 30s, says:

[I want to teach my son to be] a good ethical person and to be Jewishly rooted and committed...I want to *shtup* him so full of Jewish values, culture, and identity, that he won't want anything else.” He goes to a liberal day school, where they stress Jewish values in the larger context. He goes to synagogue regularly and attends Camp Ramah in the summers.

Many of the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged worry about what they feel is a potential flip-side of living with this commitment to an intensive Jewish life – insularity from the larger world. For instance, Bill, a doctor who was raised Conservative and is separating after 18 years of marriage to his Orthodox wife, said that while many Orthodox people want to isolate their children from the world, he would like his children to become more worldly. In a sense, he feels that some Orthodox Jews are becoming like many of the patients he sees, whose kids are being brought up in Borough Park to speak only Yiddish --they can not communicate with the rest of the world. Bill struggles with this image. He feels that the *yeshivot* seem limited to the goal of getting the kids to be “Israel Torah Loving Jews,” but he thinks of himself as “a Torah Loving Jew who lives in a total world,” adding that, “God is in both [these visions].”

In a parallel way, David, a man in his late 40s who himself was raised in hasidic Brooklyn, describes his children as having been enrolled in a liberal Jewish day school since kindergarten, and having attended Jewish summer camps. Jewishness is a central part of the family’s life and also a conscious part of David’s and his wife’s thinking about how to raise the children. Most, but not all of the children’s friends are Jewish. But David adds,

My son’s best friend is a Black kid, and I prefer that they have some non-Jewish friends. A problem about going to Jewish day schools is that they are really insular, and that insularity is an issue for us.

In addition to Jewish schooling, the Non-Orthodox clearly value secular education, both for themselves -- the people in this group are the most highly schooled in the sample— and for their children. More than half the people in this group – a larger percentage than any other group - said they would be very upset if their child never got a college degree (52% compared to 41% overall).

Balancing or juggling between the Jewish and the larger world is evident in this group’s philanthropic patterns. The people in this group are more likely than any of the other groups to contribute to both Jewish and general, non-Jewish philanthropies (83% of this

group compared to 67% of the total sample). Moreover, a larger percentage of this group compared to any other reports having made a charitable contribution to UJA-Federation in the past year (45% compared to 23% overall).

*The Orthodox (16% of the sample)*

For the Orthodox Intensively Engaged, Judaism and being Jewish are the core of their identities and fully define their social world and life space. More than four-fifths of the Orthodox completely agreed that “When faced with an important life decision, I look to Judaism for guidance,” compared to only 20% of the Non-Orthodox Intensively Engaged, (compared to (and no more than 8% among any of the five other patterns). This group’s commitment to being Jewish is especially expressed through Jewish halachic practice (“Torah”) and family life (“*chuppah*”—marriage and family). In this context family life is a key arena that offers a tangible means of Jewish expression. Members of this group value their involvement in family life. Only a minority (20%) of this group has never married, and nearly three-quarters (71%) have children (nearly half of those with children have three or more.) A large majority (87%) of this group (including people who have never married) indicates that “[my] family and children are extremely important in my life.”

The Intensively Engaged Orthodox reject American middle class values as an end in themselves (as seen in their relative lack of concern about the secular educational accomplishments of their children) and are more internally focused on continuing a deeply committed Jewish lifestyle. Their social networks and neighborhoods are densely Jewish, probably including a higher percentage of other Jews like themselves, rather than a broader mix of different individuals.

Ruth, for example, is 25 years old and works as a production editor at a publishing company. She lives in an Orthodox neighborhood in Queens with her parents and her younger sister. She attended Orthodox day schools, yeshiva in Israel, and then a Jewish college in the New York area. Ruth grew up interacting primarily Jews. Her neighbors, friends, her parents and her sibling’s friends are all Jewish --mostly

Orthodox Jewish. She had made non-Jewish friends only now that she is on her own at work.

Not surprisingly, the Orthodox Intensively Engaged express greater feelings of marginality in relation to America in general, compared to the other patterns of engagement. Ruth talked about having a Catholic friend who always wants her to come with her and her friends to bars and to hang out like they do. This is one of the lines “she will not cross.” She feels uncomfortable - it’s not her world. Perhaps if there were Jews there she might be more comfortable. She goes with her Reform friend and her buddies, most of whom are not Jewish, to sit in pubs together and talk. But her Catholic friend goes to bars to meet people. This Ruth would never consider doing.

Children of immigrants are over-represented among the Orthodox Intensively Engaged, as are younger women. The secular educational attainment of this group is much lower than that of the other groups (37% do not have a BA, compared with 24% of the sample overall), and a one-third are not employed outside of the home. Household incomes are substantially lower for this group. Philanthropically, a significant portion (35%) of this group gives only to Jewish charities, suggesting the existence of a subgroup with a more “insular Orthodox” stance. This same thrust is evident in this group’s more limited commitment to “supporting Israel” (which connotes supporting the State of Israel), a value that received much less support from the Orthodox Intensively Engaged than it probably would have had it been phrased to reflect a more religious notion of Israel (*Eretz Yisroel*).

Not surprisingly for people familiar with the New York area, the Orthodox Intensively Engaged are heavily concentrated in Brooklyn.

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In this chapter we have identified seven distinctive patterns of Jewishness.

The existence of these patterns of Jewish engagement lends credence to the notion of the diversity of Jewishness in America today. The specifics of these patterns should not be viewed as hewn in stone, for they may be refined in future studies, and they may shift in relation to societal changes. But the message is clear: there are multiple ways of relating to being Jewish in America, and no single measure does justice to the diversity of content, meaning, and expression found within the American Jewish community at large.

## Chapter Three

### What Works? Factors That Influence Jewish Engagement

In the Jewish communal world there is great interest in identifying experiences and conditions which can be shown to influence Jewish identity in order to design “interventions” that could help strengthen a person’s sense of Jewishness. To shed some light on these concerns, this chapter explores the relationship between past and present Jewishness by examining the impact of various experiences over the life course on current Jewish engagement in both perceptual (subjective) and behavioral (religious and cultural-communal) terms. The goal here is to explore the particular combinations of influences and experiences that have attracted people to Jewishness or repelled them from it over the course of their lives.

The ideal way to address the question at hand would be to draw on longitudinal data about different periods in a person’s life, following a cohort of individuals beginning with their earliest experiences and tracking them regularly to see how their lives and their relationship to Jewishness unfold. No such study exists, however, and in its stead this cross-sectional study was designed to include numerous questions about different aspects of respondents’ upbringing, in addition to examining many facets of people’s current connections to Jewishness. Nine “working hypotheses” were developed concerning key experiences that shape a person’s relationship to being Jewish in adulthood.

The strategy in this chapter is two-fold. First, the chapter begins by describing the nine “working hypotheses” about key factors influencing Jewish identity formation. Each of these elements is described individually, beginning with the earliest influences and proceeding on in the approximate order of occurrence over the course of a person’s life. The second part of this chapter explores these hypotheses in relation to the current Jewish engagement of respondents in adulthood, first in terms of bivariate relationships and then using multivariate analysis.

## Working Hypotheses about Factors Influencing Jewish Identity

In this section, we examine each of the nine hypotheses about key influences on Jewish identity in adulthood, both in terms of the conceptual rationale for including them in the analysis and in terms of the way that these were measured for this sample of American-born adults who were raised as Jews (n=1,378). These hypotheses are arranged in a sequence beginning with a person’s origins – the “givens” of a person’s experience – and proceeding on to include other possible “exposures” in a person’s life, from childhood into adulthood. The nine hypotheses are arrayed below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1  
**Factors Affecting Current Jewishness**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1. Americanization</b><br/>           American-born grandparents<br/>           Raised outside of New York City Area</p>   | <p><b>6. Denomination Raised</b></p>  |
| <p><b>2. Family Structure</b><br/>           Raised by two Jewish parents<br/>           Raised by both parents (intact family)</p>  | <p><b>7. Voluntary Experiences</b><br/>           Jewish youth group<br/>           Jewish studies courses<br/>           Hillel-type experiences<br/>           Visited Israel</p> |
| <p><b>3. Family Climate During Upbringing</b><br/>           Content relationship with parents<br/>           Being Jewish was important to parents</p>  | <p><b>8. Significant Relationships</b><br/>           Positive<br/>           Negative</p>  |
| <p><b>4. Gender</b></p>  |   |
| <p><b>5. Early Jewish Training</b><br/>           Importance of being Jewish at age 11/12<br/>           Regular lighting of Shabbat candles<br/>           Ever attended Jewish summer camp<br/>           Synagogue involvement (bar mitzvah, synagogue attendance)<br/>           Years of Jewish schooling<br/>           Attended Jewish day school</p> | <p><b>9. Adult Life Stages</b><br/>           Getting married<br/>           Having children<br/>           Age</p>   |

### *Americanization*

The first hypothesis employed in this analysis is that the Americanization of the person’s family of origin plays a role in shaping the identity of the respondent. Americanization is defined as distance from the immigrant generation with its Jewish experience and sensibility. It is tapped by two components in this study: Generation status in America and a contextual variable regarding the Jewishness of the place of upbringing.

Generation status: There is a large sociological literature about the significance of Generation status in America (measured in terms of the number of generations a person's family has lived in America) in relation to ethnicity and ethnic identity of immigrants and their descendants. In general this has been a tale of linear decline over time (i.e. the more recent the immigration, the stronger the immigrant culture and the group identification). The same pattern has characterized American Jews,<sup>1</sup> although whether there will be ongoing linear decline beyond the third generation (those with European grandparents) remains a question, particularly since Jews are not simply an ethnic group but also have the possibility of religious identification as well.

This sample was limited to people who were American-born (that is, second generation in America or longer), and so the power of this variable in relation to adult Jewish involvement is expected to be muted. In this sample of American-born adults, 30% are second generation (i.e. the children of immigrants), 60% are third generation and 10% are fourth generation. Forty-seven percent of the respondents reported having at least one American-born grandparent.

The contextual aspect of growing up in a Jewish place is considered in relation to a person's subsequent sense of Jewishness in two different ways. First, New York City, with its high Jewish population density, broad range of Jewish expression and wide array of Jewish institutions and subcultures, can be said to provide a distinctively Jewish context compared to elsewhere in America. A person who grew up in New York City could be said to have been raised in a place that took Jewishness for granted, and this might *enhance* a person's feeling of Jewishness in an unself-conscious way (Horowitz, 1999). In a place where a majority of people are Jewish, being Jewish is taken for granted. Growing up outside of a dense Jewish environment, in a place where a person is more clearly a part of a minority group (in a context with less public support or

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<sup>1</sup> This empirical finding captures the experience of the large swell of American Jews whose grandparents arrived in the United States between 1880 and 1924. The relationship between strong Jewish identity and



acceptance of Jewishness), might serve to heighten a person's awareness of being Jewish. The impact of heightened awareness of group membership in turn could result in either stronger connection to Jewishness or in a greater desire to leave it behind. In this sample, 16% of the respondents reported that they were raised outside of the New York City area prior to age 16.

#### *Family structure and characteristics*

Two aspects of family structure were examined in this analysis. First was the possibility that the respondent was raised by only one parent, a situation most commonly due to divorce. In the sample population interviewed for Connections and Journeys, 29% of the respondents reported that one parent, typically the mother, raised them. One would expect that the financial resources of such a family would be more modest, and given the "high cost of living Jewishly" as well as the social pressures working against non-conventional households, one would expect a lower level involvement in Jewish life among single parent households compared to those with two parents.

The second aspect of family structure examined in this analysis was the possibility that one of the respondent's parents was not Jewish. Only twelve percent (n=180) of the full Connections and Journeys sample of 1,504 were themselves "products" of an intermarriage. This figure may seem surprisingly low (given the Jewish community's current expectations), but it will rise with the coming cohort. The rate of intermarriage rose to around 40% for marriages between 1975-84 and to around 50% for marriages between 1985-1990.<sup>2</sup> Because a child born in 1975 would have been only 23 years old at the time of the 1998 Connections and Journeys survey, the target group for this study does not include many representatives of this age group.

Having a non-Jewish parent is expected to exert a diluting effect on the Jewish identity of the child because the non-Jewish parent presents the child with an alternative to being

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recent immigration status does not necessarily describe the situation of more recent Jewish immigrants to America (for instance, Russians or Israelis).

Jewish, a possibility which does not exist so close to home for the child of two Jewish parents.<sup>3</sup> This expectation is borne out when we compare those respondents in the full sample (n=1,504) who were raised by two Jewish parents with those who were raised by intermarried parents. 98% of individuals with two Jewish parents describe themselves as having been raised Jewish, compared to only 46% of those with one Jewish and one non-Jewish parent. Clearly, being raised by two Jewish parents is strongly associated with being raised Jewish.

Furthermore, analysis of the in-depth interviews suggested that there was a qualitative difference between having an actively Christian spouse and having a spouse who was non-practicing or secular, in terms of the religious identity of the children. For instance, Robert, whom we discussed in the last chapter, is a non-practicing, secular Jew married to a non-Jewish woman who has renewed her interest in Christianity over the course of their marriage. Their youngest son was baptized. In contrast, Susan, whose husband is a secular non-Jewish, describes the situation this way:

The children and I attend monthly family services and services on the High Holidays. We have a seder with family... We have some dietary observance during Passover -- no bread or bread products in the house. We celebrate Hanukkah. No Christmas observance.

*What about your husband's religious observances?*

My husband is non-religious; he doesn't want to have to go to Jewish services. But at Seder he joins in and says, "You're not strict/serious enough about how you're doing the seder!"

The Connections and Journeys survey did not differentiate between non-Jewish spouses who were actively religious and those who were secular, but clearly this is an important distinction to track. Indeed, Phillips' recently issued study of intermarriage found this measure to be an important predictor of the religious identity of children (Phillips, 1996).

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<sup>2</sup> Although the intermarriage figures have been subject to some debate, there is agreement about the overall trends and their magnitude. See Kosmin, et. al. (1991); Cohen, S.M. (1994); Phillips (1996).

Bear in mind that in order to focus on the impact that different elements of Jewish upbringing have on Jewishness in adulthood, the analysis in this chapter has been restricted to the 1,378 people who say they were raised Jewish. Thus we excluded 126 people (8% of the total 1,504) who described the religion of their upbringing as something other than “Jewish” when asked, “In what religion were you raised?” More than three-quarters (78%) of this group had only one Jewish parent, compared to only 6% of those who were raised Jewish.

### *Family Climate During Upbringing*

The climate of the family of origin during upbringing plays an important role in the child’s Jewish and general identity formation. Two aspects of family climate were examined here: the quality of the respondent’s emotional relationships with his/her parents and the overall importance of being Jewish in the lives of the respondent’s parents.

Regarding the quality of a person’s emotional relationship with his/her parents, two studies have reported a link between mother’s religiosity, the quality of the emotional relationship between parent(s) and child and the nature of the respondent’s religiosity in adulthood. Where the relationship between mother and child is secure and can be described as one of “strong attachment,” the child (in adulthood) comes to emulate the mother’s religiosity, whether it is “high” or “low.” (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990; Batson, et al, 1993). Similarly, the literature on religious conversion shows that extreme emotional turmoil and upset in relationships within the family of origin correlate with a subsequent break from the parents’ religion. (Ullman, 1989). In this sample, 22% of the respondents reported mixed or negative emotional relationship with their mothers, while

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<sup>3</sup> This has been described as “segmented identity” by Medding, P., Tobin, G., Fishman, S., & Rimor, M. (1992). “Jewish identity in conversionary and mixed marriages.” *American Jewish Yearbook, 1992*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.

12% of those raised by their fathers reported a mixed or negative emotional relationship with their fathers.<sup>4</sup>

The second aspect of family climate examined in this study was the nature of the Jewish commitments expressed within the family. The respondent was asked to indicate the importance of being Jewish to each of his/her parents.<sup>5</sup> When the message that being Jewish is important (or unimportant) is communicated to the child, the internalization of a sense of Jewishness begins at an early age.<sup>6</sup> Nearly two-fifths (38%) of respondents in this study reported that being Jewish was extremely important to their mothers, and an equal proportion (39%) reported this regarding their fathers. These ratings were strongly correlated ( $\phi=.65$ ); the respondents typically gave similar ratings to both their mother and their father regarding the importance of being Jewish.<sup>7</sup>

### *Gender*

Gender is expected to affect Jewish identity in adulthood in the following ways. First, American Jewish boys have traditionally been more likely than girls to have received any formal Jewish education as children and to have celebrated becoming a Bar Mitzvah. This pattern still holds in our study population of 22-52 years olds, where 91% of the men and only 71 % of the women report having received any Jewish schooling as children, and 90% of the men report having celebrated becoming a Bar Mitzvah, compared to 30% of the women. (The incidence of Bat Mitzvah is, however, increasing with each succeeding cohort of women. Only 13% of the women in their 40s reported having celebrated their Bat Mitzvah as girls compared to 32% among the 30 year olds

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<sup>4</sup> Bear in mind that 29% of the respondents were not raised by their fathers. When this full sample is considered, 62% of respondents report happy, content relationship with their fathers, 9% report mixed or negative relationships, and 29% were not asked about the nature of their relationship with their fathers.

<sup>5</sup> One byproduct of the analysis was to discover that 29% of the respondents in the study were not raised by both parents. Consequently, in order to include the largest number of cases in the regression analyses, Family Climate was operationalized by using respondent's ratings of his/her mother. However, I ran a parallel set of analyses on the smaller sample of those raised by *both* parents and found the same pattern of results as for mother only.

<sup>6</sup> Herbert Kelman (1999) has discussed the three processes of compliance, identification and internalization as elements that lead to the development of strong Jewish identity.

<sup>7</sup> Respondents who were raised by their mothers only were not asked to assess the importance of being Jewish regarding their fathers.

and 57% of the 20 year olds.) On the other hand, the women in our study appear to be slightly more likely than the men to have been involved in non-formal experiences such as Jewish summer camp (41% of the women compared to 36% of the men) and Jewish youth group (55 % compared to 49%) and to have experienced particularly significant positive relationships or experiences which attracted them to Jewish life (51% of the women compared to 44% of the men). These data suggest different patterns of socialization for boys and girls regarding Jewish identity, corroborating findings of social and cultural historians.<sup>8</sup>

Second, previous studies have shown an empirical finding of a steady, but small gender gap on many measures of American Jewish identification (Cohen, 1991). Women consistently rate slightly higher than men on most measures of religiosity and religious practice, even though they typically have had less exposure to formal Jewish schooling. An hypothesis arising from these findings is that women should be expected to show stronger internal connection to Jewishness, which would lead us to expect a gender difference in terms of Subjective Jewish Centrality in adulthood.

### *Early Jewish Training*

Early life experiences are widely held to play a powerful role in the formation of lifelong identity. In this study we consider this hypothesis by extending the age range of “early life experiences” to include pre-adolescence. In other words, a person’s early Jewish “training,” to the age of 11 or 12, is expected to be related to that person’s sense of Jewish engagement in adulthood.

“Early Jewish training” is a composite of several elements from a person’s upbringing which, taken together, intermingle and result in a basic outlook about being Jewish. For instance, a person who received little Jewish education or was forced to endure disappointing Jewish schooling without concurrent positive support for Jewishness in the family is not likely to be positively disposed to Jewishness in adulthood. By the same

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<sup>8</sup> Rivellen Prell’s book (1999) examines the gendered patterns of socialization for Jewish children in the middle of the twentieth century. See also Paula Hyman (1995).

token, positive memories of camp or Jewish schooling, along with a sense of a “lived,” natural Jewish involvement at home would be expected to carry positive associations forward into adulthood. Thus “Early Jewish Training” is a concept that combines the person’s “exposure” to Jewish practice at home with the person’s contact with other Jewish institutional settings.

Included here under the rubric of Early Jewish Training are:

- a) The nature of a person’s Jewish disposition in early adolescence.
- b) The denomination of upbringing (as indexed by having been raised Orthodox).
- c) The exposure to Jewish practice at home and beyond, which is tapped by three different measures:
  - 1) The extent to which the respondent experienced Jewishness as a regular, “natural” feature of his/her life.
  - 2) The respondent’s exposure during childhood to synagogue life, Jewish schooling (number of years), or Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.
  - 3) The main type of Jewish schooling received during childhood.

These can be thought of as “involuntary experiences” because the child is exposed to them by virtue of growing up in the parents’ home.

Early Jewish Disposition perhaps best captures the “child until s/he is 11 or 12,” since it represents the psychological importance of being Jewish in the person’s life at that time and thus represents the degree to which any of the various inputs have been internalized up to that point. I chose this age as a baseline because I felt that it captured the dawning of psychological consciousness, and yet was still early enough to reflect the childhood experience, rather than the later adolescent dynamics of the mid-teen years. In addition, I chose the pre-Bar Mitzvah age because there is an entire literature about accurate recollection and the importance of linking people’s memories to concrete events. Since the Bar-Mitzvah year may represent for many a period of *heightened* Jewish involvement, this baseline measure may be higher than it would be if measured at an earlier (or later?) age. Additionally, where there are people for whom the Bar Mitzvah represents their most intensive Jewish involvement, it is possible that this measure offers

the best opportunity to assess the holding power of this experience in the absence of subsequent Jewish involvements.

To illustrate the importance of having a “Jewish disposition,” here is what one interview respondent had to say about his own sense of Jewishness. He is a man in his mid-20s who had been raised with a very intensive Jewish upbringing and who has lapsed behaviorally from Orthodox practice.

*Being Jewish is not important. I am Jewish. I’m sort of hoping that my children won’t be so Jewish, in a sense. I realize that I have to marry a Jewish girl and that bothers me. I don’t want to be limited like that. I’m so Jewish that with a non-Jewish girl, a part of me is just not being expressed. And I don’t mean kiddush on Friday night, or any of these things, because I don’t practice anything.*

Judaism fits into everything that I am. It’s inescapable. I’ve been imprinted. There is difference between me and a non-Jew. I can’t tell you exactly what it is. I can tell you symptoms. I think that it’s part of everything that I do. I form the best business relationships with Jews. There’s a certain trust that is there. I’m more willing to help them and be nice. I’m more willing to go out of my way for a Jew. It’s sad that these things matter so much, but this is real life. (Interview #64)

In this particular case, having a strong Jewish subjective disposition and having been raised Orthodox are intertwined, and this man’s struggle with his “imprinting” carries with it a particular meaning which might be quite different for someone raised in another set of circumstances. But clearly having been raised with a strong sense of Jewishness – a Jewish *disposition* -- colors his expression of Jewishness today. Early Jewish disposition can be thought of as an outcome of the various influences on a person throughout his/her childhood. It was measured by asking the respondent to recall the importance that he/she placed on being Jewish at age 11 or 12. (“Think back to when you were 11 or 12 years old. How important would you say that being Jewish was in your life?”) Nearly half (45%) of those who were raised Jewish indicated that at age 11 or 12 being Jewish was extremely important in their lives.

The family’s Jewish denomination during the respondent’s upbringing is important in relation to subsequent Jewish identity, because this affiliation typically channels the

family into a life style and a set of institutional arrangements that encourage or discourage particular possibilities. In this sample, 22% of the respondents said that their denomination during upbringing was Orthodox, 37% said they were raised Conservative, 34% indicated a Reform upbringing, and 8% stated that they were not raised in any one of these three major denominations. The main difference between these categories was the contrast between those who were raised Orthodox and those who were not, a difference that is strongly correlated to other Jewish background experiences, shown in Table 3.2.

A distinctive pattern of “grooming” typifies those who were raised Orthodox compared to those who were not (Table 3.2). Those raised Orthodox came from homes where the parents’ Jewish commitments were especially strong (75% of those raised Orthodox indicated that being Jewish was extremely important to their parents, compared to only 27-28% among those not raised Orthodox), and Jewish religious ritual practice was more prevalent. More than half (52%) of those raised Orthodox reported that being Jewish was extremely important in their own pre-adolescent lives, compared to 12% among those with non-Orthodox upbringing. The majority of those raised Orthodox attended synagogue regularly at age 11 or 12 (58%), celebrated becoming a Bar Mitzvah if they were male, attended day school (72%) and summer camp (64%), and participated in youth group (58%). Nearly three-quarters (72%) had visited Israel. Among those who attended college, (78% of those raised Orthodox, compared to 94% of those not raised Orthodox) 52% took a class in Jewish studies, and 32% became involved in Hillel-like activities. Three-fifths of those who reported having been raised Orthodox said that they had experienced a particularly significant positive relationship or experience which attracted them to Jewish life. One-fifth reported having had a particularly negative relationship or experience that repelled them from Jewish life.

*It is important to note that in this analysis having had an Orthodox upbringing serves as a proxy for an intensive Jewish upbringing. Although using “Orthodox upbringing” is the simplest way to signify this concept, we know that an intensive Jewish upbringing is not limited to an Orthodox one.*



Table 3.2  
**Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Upbringing Compared:  
 Jewish Background Experiences**

| <i>Raised Jewish (n=1,378)</i>          |  | TOTAL   | Non-Orthodox | Orthodox |
|---|--|---------|--------------|----------|
| % answering "yes"                       |  | N=1,378 | N= 1,078     | N= 300   |
| <b>Americanization</b>                  |  |         |              |          |
| NGEN3                                   | Generation in America                                    |         |              |          |
|   | second (Child of immigrants)                             | 30      | 22           | 59       |
|   | third, with no American-born grandparent                 | 27      | 29           | 20       |
|   | third, with 1-3 American grandparents                    | 34      | 38           | 16       |
|   | fourth   | 10      | 11           | 4        |
| NYCYOUTH                                | raised outside NYC area before age 11.                   | 16      | 17           | 12       |
| <b>Family Structure</b>                 |  |         |              |          |
| RELPAR3                                 | 1 parent was not Jewish                                  | 6       | 6            | 4        |
| BOTHPAR                                 | non-intact family during upbringing                      | 28      | 30           | 23       |
| <b>Family Climate During Upbringing</b> |  |         |              |          |
| MOMHAP2                                 | "less than content" relationship with mother             | 21      | 23           | 15       |
| IMPJEW                                  | importance of being Jewish to mother                     | 38      | 27           | 75       |
| <b>Gender</b>                           |  |         |              |          |
|   | male   | 45      | 46           | 41       |
| <b>Early Jewish Training:</b>           |  |         |              |          |
|   | household usually lit Shabbat candles                    | 51      | 39           | 92       |
|   | never had a Christmas tree in the home                   | 87      | 84           | 97       |
|   | being Jewish was extremely important to R                | 45      | 12           | 52       |
|   | attended synagogue weekly or more often                  | 55      | 22           | 58       |
|   | most or all neighbors on the block were Jewish           | 44      | 44           | 44       |
|   | received formal Jewish education as a child              | 80      | 76           | 94       |
|   | attended Jewish day school or yeshiva                    | 21      | 7            | 72       |
|   | celebrated a Bar/Bat mitzvah                             | 57      | 57           | 56       |
|   | attended or worked at a Jewish overnight camp            | 39      | 32           | 64       |
| <b>Later Experiences:</b>               |  |         |              |          |
|   | belonged to a Jewish youth group                         | 52      | 51           | 58       |
|   | attended college   | 90      | 94           | 78       |
|   | attended college-level Jewish studies courses            | 30      | 24           | 52       |
|   | participated in Jewish college activities such as Hillel | 30      | 29           | 32       |
|   | visited Israel   | 43      | 35           | 72       |
|   | had significant experiences which:                       |         |              |          |
|   | Attracted R to Jewish life                               | 48      | 44           | 61       |
|   | turned R off to Jewish life                              | 25      | 26           | 20       |

The non-Orthodox pattern is different from that which characterizes the Orthodox model. Typically, in addition to reporting less intensive commitments on the part of the parents, those not raised Orthodox had less extensive exposure to the full array of Jewish educational modalities: either a person had not received any Jewish education or else he/she had been exposed to Sunday school or part-time Jewish school (but not day school). Bar Mitzvah was common among males, but only a minority (22%) attended synagogue regularly at age 11 or 12. 12% reported that being Jewish was extremely important in their lives at that age. One-third attended Jewish summer camp,<sup>9</sup> and half participated in a Jewish youth group. The people who were raised non-Orthodox were overwhelmingly college-bound (94%), but only 24% enrolled in Jewish Studies courses and 29% participated in Jewish college activities such as Hillel. More than one-third (35%) of those raised non-Orthodox reported having visited Israel. More than two-fifths (44%) reported having experienced significant positive relationships or experiences, while 26% reported particularly negative or repelling Jewish experiences.

Exposure to Jewish practice at home and beyond. This is tapped by three different measures. First, the extent to which the respondent experienced Jewishness as a regular, “natural” feature of his/her life was indexed by regular Shabbat candle lighting or by involvement at a Jewish summer camp. (The pairing of these two items emerged from a factor analysis of the background experiences.) This measure is related to the concept of “*enculturation*,” which has been described as “a loving induction into Jewish culture and the Jewish community” (Aron, 1995). In our sample 51% of the respondents reported that someone lit Shabbat candles regularly at home during childhood, and 39% reported that they attended a Jewish summer camp. When these two questions were combined into a scale, 37% reported having had neither of these experiences, 37% reported having had one of these experiences and 26% of the sample reported having had both of these experiences.

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<sup>9</sup> The survey question asked “Did you ever attend or work at a Jewish overnight camp which had a Jewish educational program?”

The second aspect of exposure to Jewish practice is an index of involuntary experiences which combines synagogue attendance, Jewish schooling, and having celebrated becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. [55% of the respondents reported that they attended synagogue regularly at age 11 or 12; 20% reported having received no Jewish schooling, while 53% reported having attended for six years or more; 57% reported celebrating a Bar or Bat mitzvah--90% of the boys and 30% of the girls.] The third aspect of exposure to Jewish practice was predominant form of Jewish education received during childhood. In this sample 21% of the respondents reported having attended a day school as their main form of Jewish education during childhood.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Later “Voluntary” Experiences*

The first five types of characteristics and experiences that we have examined could be considered as “givens” in a person’s life, at least from the respondent’s point of view. The next group of hypotheses address influences, such as youth group and college activities, that typically occur a bit later in life. For most people, these occur during the teen years or later, a time when people become more aware of their own choices. Because these later experiences are ones which a person can choose to undertake (or at least, they are experiences where a person would have a say about whether or not to participate), they are termed “voluntary,” although conscious choice or decision-making may not come into play for every person.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The breakdown of day school attendance by denomination of upbringing is 72% Orthodox and 7% non-Orthodox (11% among Conservative, 3% among Reform, 5% for those with some other or no denomination.)

<sup>11</sup> I developed this concept while analyzing the patterns of Jewish practice of the 1991 New York Jewish population. Horowitz, B. (1993). p 67.

In this study, the voluntary experiences included participating in a Jewish youth group, attending Jewish studies courses in college, being involved in Jewish college activities (such as those offered by Hillel) and visiting Israel. These experiences clustered together (in a factor analysis), which suggests that *none* of these, including a trip to Israel, operates on its own. Rather, they form a web of interrelated experiences that mutually reinforce each other (i.e. “the more inputs, the greater the results”). Together these experiences are expected to exert a strong positive influence on subsequent Jewish identity. However, since visiting Israel is a particularly central element on the agenda of American Jewish policy-makers today, I include ever having visited Israel as a separate variable in the regression analyses below. In interpreting the meaning of the relationship between having visited Israel and the various adult Jewish measures, it will be important to bear in mind that it was unclear from our survey when in the respondent’s lifetime the visit to Israel occurred. We thus will not be able to determine whether the visit was a cause, correlate or consequence of adult Jewish involvement.

### *Significant Relationships and Experiences*

The next hypothesis about key influences on adult Jewishness involves particularly significant relationships and experiences, both the especially positive experiences as well as the significantly negative ones. Prior studies of Jewish identity have not explored these emblematic experiences but our study’s investigation of them suggests that they may be particularly influential in identity formation.

In the in-depth interviews, respondents were asked to describe any particularly significant relationships that “attracted” them to or “repelled” them from Jewish life, and they were asked about key events or turning points in their lives. The responses to these questions often turned out to be very personal moments of recognition or awareness – essential stories or symbols which seemed to pull together many aspects of a person’s sense of Jewishness. For instance, Daniel, the klezmer musician, spoke about the image of his great uncle chanting at the Passover table:

When I was a little kid, we did seders at a very religious uncle of my mother's, a great uncle of mine. It was practically all in Hebrew, very strict, and I think I relate more to that kind of expression of Jewishness than synagogues on Long Island which I considered pretty half-assed, and ugly architecturally, spiritually bare. There was something about my great uncle doing the seder in a very, very tense way that I connected to a lot...It was very authentic. He would go off and *haggadah* [sic] completely, and we would sit there. He did *Dayenu* and more chanting than singing. I think that was a very good thing for me to see. It was out in Brooklyn in Grand Army Plaza, so I always felt that was where Jews lived. We grew up in Manhattan, and we would go out to Grand Army Plaza - it seemed like a new world.

For Daniel, the image of *his* uncle at seder contained within it both the essence of an authentic (albeit remote) way of being Jewish as well as a deep musical aspect which appears to have fascinated him. Having this experience in his background made it easier for Daniel to experience a connection to Jewishness later in his life.

Susan, the lawyer, described a seminal moment in her developing awareness of her Jewishness:

I was an AFS student living with a family in a small town in Austria. This experience was really important in building my level of awareness. I wound up in Austria, the father was German, mother was Austrian, and the family photos had pictures of this fellow in German army uniform...He was 20 or 30 years old during WW II. I just became very aware of it. At one point we took a trip to Germany to Oktoberfest for a reunion with his army buddies. This threw me into tremendous conflict. They didn't know I was Jewish at the start [of my stay]. It came out when they took me to church, and then afterward I told them I'd rather not go and [being Jewish] was the reason why. There was tremendous discomfort on my part during that weekend and I think also on theirs...I had a tremendous awareness about the Holocaust...Being in Europe brought home who I was and who I wasn't. It's an environment that puts a penalty on being Jewish, and that affected my Jewish consciousness a lot.

Susan's experience in Austria starkly reinforced her connection to Judaism, and heightened her sense of shared fate with the Jewish people. In her experiences in Austria she was filled with an intense awareness both about what she shared and about how she differed from the people around her. She also grew to appreciate how different her life was in America in the 1970's from what it would have been like in Europe 30 years earlier.

These events and relationships must be treated as *barometers of meaning*, because whatever the experience was, it was salient or meaningful enough at the time of the interview to be shared. These recollections often contain core images that embody the person's particular connection to Jewishness. For instance Robert, who described his life as "an escape from being Jewish" recalled being singled out as a Jew in the school yard, an image that was emblematic of his not being a "regular American kid."

In the survey, our goal was to gain a quantitative picture of how widespread these pivotal experiences were. Survey respondents were asked,

When people think about their lives, some have had experiences or relationships which may have attracted them to Jewish life or "turned them off to" Jewish life, while others may have had no such experiences. How about you? Thinking about your own life, have you had any significant relationships or experiences which particularly "turned you off" to Jewish life? Did you have any significant relationships or experiences which particularly attracted you to Jewish life?<sup>12</sup>

In general, more people reported having had positive experiences than having had negative encounters (48% versus 25%). Both the positive and the negative experiences are expected to exert an effect on a person's sense of subjective connection to Jewishness.

The meaning of these personal experiences could not be probed extensively using the survey format. However, people were asked to briefly describe the experiences. These descriptions were categorized in Table 3.3.

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<sup>12</sup> In each case, those who replied "yes" were asked to describe the experience.

Table 3.3

**Significant Experiences and Relationships**

| <i>Percent Reporting</i>   | <i>“Turnoffs”</i> | <i>Attractors</i> |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
|  | (n=306)           | (n=616)           |
| family of origin   | 15%               | 34%               |
| spouse and family  | 4                 | 6                 |
| friends, lovers  | 11                | 11                |
| personal crisis  | 8                 | 3                 |
| Jewish institutions:   | 28                | 30                |
| <i>Rabbi</i>   | (10)              | ( 5)              |
| <i>time spent in Israel</i>  | ( 2)              | (11)              |
| <i>college years</i>   | ( 2)              | ( 3)              |
| <i>education – Hebrew school</i>                                       | (14)              | ( 9)              |
| <i>youth group and activities</i>                                      | --                | ( 2)              |
| people in the Jewish community   | 9                 | 5                 |
| negative interactions with people<br>who were “more religious than me” | 10                | -                 |
| Jewish holidays  | -                 | 3                 |
| work   | 1                 | 1                 |
| other  | 17                | 9                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100%</b>       | <b>100%</b>       |

One third of the respondents who reported having had experiences which attracted them to Jewish life referred to relationships with family members (“Family of origin,” i.e. parents, siblings, grandparents). Jewish institutions accounted for an additional 30% of the respondents’ experiences, and among these institutionally-connected experiences, some encounter with Israel was mentioned by 11% of the respondents, while Jewish education (such as Hebrew school) was mentioned by 9% of respondents.

Those who reported negative encounters cited experiences involving Jewish institutions most frequently (28%), especially those involving Hebrew School (14%) and rabbis (10%). Family of origin accounted for 14% of the negative experiences, while friends and lovers accounted for 11% of the responses. Negative interactions with people who were “more religious than me” accounted for 10% of the negative responses. This category collects incidents involving the respondent’s disturbing experiences with (or reactions to) much more observant Jews, as in the following examples:

A leader of the Jewish people expressed extreme and intolerant views which are not mine or those of many other Jewish people I know. (#20287)

Members of the household wanted to impose extreme religious views on everyone else. (#106755)

The large number of Orthodox Jews living in my neighborhood who don't approve of Reform Jews. They don't give a very warm feeling in the community. They think they are more kosher than the Reform Jews. (#509914)

I felt I was being judged because my life style was not as religious as others. (#513966)

The two types of significant relationships or experiences were slightly correlated ( $\phi=.13$ ) suggesting that there is an intensity dimension operating here. There are some people (45%) who have experienced neither positive nor negative significant experiences or relationships with regard to Jewishness (i.e. they have somewhat neutral associations with it), while the remaining 55% of the respondents reported having either a negative experience, a positive experience or both. The idea of intensity involves the notion that if you are enmeshed in a relationship, you are subject to a range of emotions, both hot and cold. This echoes the finding discussed in Chapter Two that the spectrum of Jewish engagement in this sample runs from indifference to intensity, rather than from rejection of Jewishness to embrace of it.

Positive experiences are possibly related to the extent of interaction with "the Jewish," as illustrated in Table 3.4. For instance, looking at people who have had only very few (0-2) typical Jewish socializing experiences (like schooling, camping, synagogue attendance), 32% of them report positive significant encounters, compared with 46% of those who had more extensive involvement (3-4 experiences) and 73% of those who had been extensively "groomed" (5-7 experiences). In other words, more contact with a Jewish environment correlates, as one might expect, with more positive significant encounters. In contrast, having a significant negative experience or relationship is unrelated to degree of contact.



Table 3.4

**“The More...the More:” Past Jewish Educational Experiences by Having Had a Positive Significant Relationship**

*Raised Jewish (n=1,378)*

|  | <i>Had no significant positive experience (52%)</i> | <i>Had at least one significant positive experience (48%)</i> | <i>T o t a l</i> |
|--|---|---|------------------|
| <u>Number of Educational Experiences</u> |   |   |                  |
| 0-2 (39%)                                | 68  | 32  | 100%             |
| 3-4 (35%)                                | 54  | 46  | 100%             |
| 5-7 (26%)                                | 27  | 73  | 100%             |

The following educational experiences were counted for each person: regular synagogue attendance during upbringing, at least 1 year of Jewish schooling during childhood, Jewish summer camp, youth group involvement, Jewish studies classes, Hillel involvement, and having visited Israel.

Bear in mind that it is unclear from the survey questionnaire when these significant events occurred in a person’s life, so that the causal ordering of these experiences in relation to adult Jewishness is indeterminate. These may function as causes, correlates or consequences of a person’s Jewish experiences.

*Life Stage*

The final class of influences considered in this analysis is life stage. Clearly there are any number of other possible events and experiences that may play an important role in shaping people’s identities. Some of these moments are more predictable both in terms of the age at which they occur and in terms of the processes that they engender. For instance, adolescence is usually envisioned as an age-linked stage of development that involves the assertion of independence from one’s parents and an active process of identity exploration. Leaving home and going away to college are events or processes that are both age-related and culturally-defined. Other critical stages include choosing a spouse and getting married; having children and forming a family (i.e. developing a family life and family culture). Large numbers of people do these things in similar patterns and sequences. (There are also other important experiences such as career

related achievements and set-backs, retirement, children leaving the household, death of a parent, birth of grandchild, and so on which were not addressed in this exploration, but which are clearly important to examine in subsequent studies.)<sup>13</sup>

Even though there are critical life events and processes, many changes in people's lives arise from more unique experiences. In this regard we probably should speak about identity *formation* rather than identity *development*. Unlike child development, where so much unfolds in a linear fashion (i.e. moving through one developmental stage is essential for achieving the next, the sequence and timing are important), adult lives involve a much wider range of possibilities. The critical periods and psychological stages of adulthood may not be either as task-specific or as linked to particular ages as the developmental stages of childhood.

Because both the occurrence and *timing* of critical periods in a person's life may be unique, it is difficult to index these events and periods and their related processes in a survey format. In this study, life stage was captured in two ways. First, becoming a parent and beginning a family is a time that is expected to intensify Jewish involvement (unless the spouse is not Jewish). For the vast majority of people, becoming a parent also involves getting married. Therefore, despite their conceptual distinctiveness, our study uses "having children" as the index for both experiences. Second, age is expected to exert an intensifying influence on subsequent Jewishness, in that the motivation for identity integration increases as one grows older. In the analyses below, "having no children" and "age" are used as proxies for these aspects of adult life stage.

In this study, one-third of the sample was single and two-thirds were married; 42% of the respondents had no children while 58% had at least one. When these two variables are combined with age into a "stage in life" variable, we see that 25% of the respondents were single and 40 years old or younger; 9% were single and 41 or older; 9% were

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<sup>13</sup> The survey population was limited to people ages 22-52, so our analysis addresses only life course changes which happen in early and middle adulthood.

married (any age) without children; 47% were parents with children 18 years or younger at home; and 11% were parents with children older than 18 years.

### **The Relationship Between Past Exposure and Current Jewishness**

Next, the relationship between the above hypotheses and current “outcome” measures of Jewishness in adulthood were explored using several different techniques. In this case, the “outcome” measures were the three scales of Jewish engagement –subjective, cultural-communal, and ritual -- which led to the typologies outlined in Chapter Two. First, the bivariate relationship between each of the “predictor” variables (the nine hypotheses) and each of the outcome variables (the three different measures of Jewish engagement) was examined. (The correlation matrix is shown in Table 3.5 at the chapter’s end). This table shows the strength of the relationship between each of the nine hypotheses and each of the three outcome measures.<sup>14</sup> Taken one at a time, each of the predictor variables was correlated with the measures of Jewish involvement, some more strongly than others. Among the variables with the strongest relationship to each of the measures of current Jewish involvement were age, having been raised Orthodox, having attended Jewish day school, and having experienced Jewishness during upbringing as a “natural” feature of one’s life in terms of regular Shabbat observance (candle lighting) and/or summer camp. Clearly, these and the other predictor variables are interrelated. (For instance, having gone to day school is strongly associated with having been raised Orthodox.)

The next step in the analysis was to explore the *joint* impact of the nine predictor variables on each of the three measures of current Jewish engagement – subjective commitment, ritual practice and cultural-communal practice—using a multivariate approach, (regression analysis). The purpose of this analysis was to determine how much of the variation in current Jewishness was accounted for by the combined influence of a group of predictor variables. This form of analysis also permitted us to evaluate the

specific contribution of one set of variables on outcome, by controlling for other confounding factors. We cannot fully determine causality based on a cross-sectional study such as this.<sup>15</sup> However, because the study included many questions about the respondents' background experiences, this information was used to simulate the impact of these influences over the life course.

For purposes of the regression analysis, the nine hypothesis described above were arranged in seven groups, each of which represented a discernible time period in the respondent's life. These were then entered into the regression analysis in seven separate steps, in order to examine the added impact of each subsequent set of life experiences.

The seven groups of variables were:

- 1) *A person's origins*. These included characteristics of the individual's life that were in place during his/her earliest experiences: the family's Americanization (Generation in America and place of upbringing), its structure (number of Jewish parents and whether or not both parents were in the household) and the individual's gender.

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<sup>14</sup> Bear in mind that the nine "predictor" variables are themselves interrelated (as discussed above), but in the interest of a more streamlined presentation I am limiting my discussion to the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables.

<sup>15</sup> There is one very important methodological caveat to keep in mind here. In the absence of a longitudinal study following individuals regularly over the course of their lives, the data collected for this study are drawn from a cross-sectional survey (i.e. administered at one moment in time). The key methodological difficulty with a cross-sectional study (like the NJPS and NYJPS demographics studies, in addition to Connections and Journeys) is the difficulty in fully separating analytically between, say, the *impact of different sorts of institutions (e.g. formal and informal education)* and the *impact of family's prior commitment to Jewishness altogether* (which presumably leads people to marry a Jewish spouse, to settle in particular communities, to decide to send their children to Jewish schools, camp, etc.). This confounding makes it impossible to fully distinguish between causes and effects and leads us to both underplay the impact of prior disposition and overstate the impact of various "exposures on adult Jewishness."

To deal with this problem as effectively as possible within the confines of a cross-sectional study, the Connections and Journeys questionnaire included many additional questions about the respondent's family and earliest Jewish background as well as Jewish social and educational experiences during upbringing. Although these questions were necessarily retrospective (e.g. "How often did you attend synagogue when you were 11 or 12?") and may have elicited replies which were less accurate than accounts about a person's current practice, including these sorts of queries was an attempt to assess the respondents' family background and commitments more directly than inferring these from, say, schooling choices. In the absence of longitudinal data, the addition of more questions about respondent's background permits us to examine changes over the life course, at least in a rudimentary way.

- 2) *Family climate and interrelations during the person's upbringing.* Variables entered into the analysis in this step included a measure of the individual's emotional relationship with his/her mother and the person's recollection of the importance of being Jewish to his/her mother.
- 3) *Early Jewish training.* In this step three variables were entered into the analysis - the importance of being Jewish to the individual at age 11 or 12, having experienced Jewish life as "natural," and the "involuntary" Jewish experiences of having received some sort of Jewish education or having celebrated a Bar/Bat Mitzvah during childhood.
- 4) *Jewish day school.* Although this is part of "early Jewish training," having attended a Jewish day school is examined independently because it is expected to exert such a powerful impact on adult Jewish identity.
- 5) *Having been raised Orthodox,* like having attended day school, is part of early Jewish training but examined independently. It is entered into the regression equation after day school in order to assess its effect on adult Jewish identity over and above the impact of having attended day school.
- 6) *Later voluntary experiences and significant relationships;* such as having participated in Hillel or youth groups, having experienced either "turn-offs" or "attractors" to Jewishness and having visited Israel.
- 7) *Adult life stage,* as measured by having a family and getting older.

The analysis of the relationship between people's past experiences and their Jewish "outcomes" in adulthood involved several steps. First, three sets of regression analyses were conducted, one for each of the three measures of Jewishness – subjective Jewish commitment, religious ritual practice and cultural-communal involvement. In each analysis seven groups of "predictor" or "independent" variables were entered one at a time in chronological sequence, beginning with "origins" and culminating with "life stage," in order to assess the added impact of each group of variables while holding the others constant (in effect simulating their occurrence over the life course). These

regressions were conducted using the sample of people raised Jewish (n=1,378), and are summarized in Tables 3.6, 3.6a-3.6c, which appear at the chapter's end.

From these analyses of the sample as a whole it was clear that it made sense to partition the population into two parts – those who were raised in more intensively Jewish environments and those who were not. The easiest way to institute this partition was to examine those who were raised Orthodox separate from those who were not raised Orthodox. As we saw in the above discussion (Table 3.2), there are clear differences in the extent of exposure to various Jewish background experiences for each of these two groups. Thus, the sample of those raised Jewish was split into two groups – those raised Orthodox (n=300) and those raised Jewish but not Orthodox (n=1,078). For each sub-sample there are three sets of regression analyses (one for each of the three measures of current Jewish involvement) and one summary table.

The discussion of the findings begins with a brief overview of the results for the sample as a whole and then focuses on contrasting stories emerging from the two sub-samples (Those who were raised Orthodox and those who were not raised Orthodox). These are discussed in sequence, and the results for the two sub-samples are compared. The findings are presented in conceptual rather than statistical terms wherever possible, and readers who wish to inspect the detailed statistical findings are referred to the Tables (3.6- 3.14) which appear at the chapter's end.

## Findings

For this sample of adults (who were 22 to 52 years old in 1998), we see that the impact of one's earliest origins tends to be superseded by influences which come later in life. Of the variables that represent the "givens" at the start of a person's life, only gender and generation in America retain lasting impact on later adult identity. Gender exerts an enduring impact on both Subjective Jewish Centrality and Cultural-Communal practice in adulthood (males score lower, all other things being equal), and length of time in America undercuts Religious Ritual practice in adulthood (but has no impact on the other two measures), holding other conditions constant. At the same time, there are enduring effects of early Jewish training which hold into adulthood for all three measures of Jewishness (e.g. Subjective Centrality, Ritual practice or Cultural-Communal practice). For instance, the degree to which being Jewish is recalled as being important to the respondent at age 11 or 12 is a consistent predictor for all three measures of current Jewishness. Assuming that the self-report is accurate, this finding suggests that creating a strong Jewish subjective disposition early in life plays an important role in promoting Jewishness in adulthood.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to early Jewish disposition, the statistical analyses point to three other aspects of early Jewish training as significant antecedents of adult Jewish expression: having been raised Orthodox, having attended Jewish day school, and having come to experience Jewishness as a natural, integral part of one's life (as measured by regular Shabbat observance in the family and by the respondent having attended Jewish summer camp). Not surprisingly, having been raised Orthodox has the strongest independent effect on adult ritual practice, followed by having attended day school and having experienced Jewishness in one's youth as a natural, integral part of one's upbringing. All three influences are also antecedents to Cultural-Communal involvement in adulthood. Taking into account other influences like the Jewish commitments of one's parents, experiencing Jewishness naturally has no enduring independent influence on Subjective Jewish

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<sup>16</sup> It remains quite possible that this finding is an artifact of the "self-reporting" involved in the study design. That is, the respondent is asked to recall how important being Jewish was at an earlier point in

commitment in adulthood, and Orthodox upbringing and day school exposure exert only small effects.

It may seem surprising that exposure to synagogue and Jewish schooling (having been exposed during one's upbringing to regular synagogue attendance or any kind of Jewish schooling or having celebrated a Bar/Bat mitzvah) did not appear to exert a lasting impact on adult Jewishness. However, note that these early experiences exerted a statistically significant impact on all three measures of adult Jewishness up until later voluntary experiences and adult life stage were taken into account. (This is apparent in Tables 3.6a, 3.6b and 3.6c, which display the statistical significance of the variables at each step of the regression analyses.) Once these later experiences are factored into the picture, these early variables lose their statistical potency. This suggests that the earlier experiences in synagogue and Jewish schools (which were "involuntary" for the respondent in childhood) created a "readiness" to subsequently embark on the later voluntary experiences.

The overall message is that the "baseline" of where one begins and the nature of one's early training both do matter. These function to determine the readily available pathways for interacting with Jewish people, networks, institutions, ideas, culture, and religion. Depending upon upbringing and early training, different sorts of Jewish opportunities become more or less accessible to individuals over the course of their lives. For instance, Jewish "literacy" attained during childhood may lead to confidence in having the skills to partake in synagogue life whereas lacking these skills may raise the "barriers to entry" later on.

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his/her life. Whether the report is accurate or largely a reflection of the respondent's current state of mind is not possible to untangle.



One of the most clearly demarcated differences for this sample was having been raised Orthodox or in an intensive Jewish environment which yielded strong Jewish commitments (i.e. a strong baseline) early in life. Given this difference, it made sense to split the group into two sub-samples according to baseline (Orthodox versus non-Orthodox upbringing) in order to examine patterns of influence more carefully for each of these populations.

Before discussing the outcomes of these different baseline conditions, it bears mentioning that the likelihood of being raised Orthodox itself arises from a particular set of circumstances. Those who were raised Orthodox are more likely than their non-Orthodox-raised counterparts to be the children of immigrants. In addition, they are more likely to have been raised in the New York City area prior to age 11 or 12, whereas those with non-Orthodox upbringing are more likely to have been raised outside of New York City in a different cultural climate. The existence of these “climactic differences” is what leads us to analyze the two sub-populations separately.

### *The Orthodox-Raised*

#### Origins

Starting only with knowledge of a person’s origins, more time spent in America (as measured by a person’s generation status) has a negative effect on adult Ritual practice, when all other factors are held constant. Being raised outside of the New York area has a negative impact on adult Cultural-Communal involvement once day school is brought into the picture, perhaps because those raised in New York are more likely to have attended a Jewish day school than those raised elsewhere. Gender also plays an enduring role on Cultural-Communal involvement; all other things being equal, men are less likely to be involved than women in cultural-communal life.

### Family Climate

Having a less than content emotional relationship with one's parents (specifically with one's mother) decreases the chances of adult Jewish involvement across all three measures. Thus, emotional turmoil works against the stable transmission of Jewishness from presumably Orthodox parents to their children. It is unclear from our data exactly when such turmoil arose, since the adult respondents were asked to report retrospectively about the nature of their relationship to their parents. It is possible that the respondents' assessments have more to do with their current views of the parent-child relationship and are not accurate reflections of the relationship that used to exist. In any event, the power of this aspect of family climate (whether representative of the past or more reflective of today) on adult Jewishness points to the emotional health of the family-of-origin as an important ingredient in shaping adult Jewishness.

### Early Jewish Training

*Having attended day school is the most powerful predictors of adult Jewishness among the Orthodox-raised population.* It exerts an especially powerful effect on Religious Ritual and Cultural-Communal involvement and makes a less dramatic, but still strong, contribution to Subjective Centrality in adulthood.

Early Jewish disposition plays an persistent role in strengthening Subjective Centrality in adulthood but does not exert an ongoing influence on either Communal involvement or religious Ritual practice once day school enrollment is added to the picture. For the Orthodox-raised population experiencing Jewishness as a natural, lived experience (whether through Jewish camp involvement and/or through regular Shabbat observance at home), this variable retains an enduring influence on Ritual practice although not on the other two measures of adult Jewishness.

The final aspect of early Jewish training, exposure to Jewish life in synagogue (regular attendance and becoming a Bar/Bat mitzvah) and in school (number of years of Jewish schooling), plays a role only in relation to Cultural-Communal involvement in adulthood but not for the other two measures, once day school is added to the equation.

### Later Experiences

For the Orthodox-raised population, exposure to the voluntary experiences of youth group and college-based activities plays a role in strengthening a person's subsequent Cultural-Communal involvement. Having visited Israel is related to higher Ritual practice, although it is not clear from the survey at what point in their lifetimes people visited Israel, so this relationship may be more of a correlate than a predictor of adult involvement.

Significant positive relationships are related to Ritual practice and Subjective Centrality in adulthood but have no effect on Cultural-Communal involvement. Similarly, the negative experiences, which function independently of other influences, play a powerful role in pushing people away from Jewish involvement in the modes of Subjective Centrality and Ritual practice but do not have an impact on Cultural-Communal involvement.

### Life stage

Among people who were raised Orthodox, life stage has no independent effect on either Subjective Centrality or Cultural-Communal involvement in adulthood, with all other influences held constant. However, this variable does relate to Religious Ritual practice: younger adults are more likely than older adults to score high on the Religious Ritual scale. This may be explained by differences in extent of day school training among the different age groups. Fully 89% of those in their 20s attended day school, compared to 85% of those in their 30s and only 53% of those in their 40s and 50s. Likewise, being childless exerts an independent influence on adult Ritual practice but not on Subjective Jewish Centrality or Cultural-Communal involvement.

## *Those Who Were Not Raised Orthodox*

### Origins

First, while Orthodox individuals raised outside of the New York area have *lower* Cultural-Communal involvement, non-Orthodox individuals raised outside of New York tend to exhibit *increases in* all three types of Jewish involvement, at least until the voluntary experiences (teenage years and later) are taken into account (and then the role of place of upbringing becomes inconsequential). Part of the impact of place of upbringing occurs because those who grew up outside of New York were also more likely to participate in key early experiences and activities than those raised in New York.

The second aspect of a person's origin that affects Jewish engagement in adulthood is gender, which plays an enduring role in relation to Subjective Centrality, even when all other influences are taken into account. All other things being equal, non-Orthodox raised men have lower levels of Subjective commitment to Jewishness than do women. Gender also makes a difference in terms of Cultural-Communal involvement, at least until the teenage years when the voluntary experiences may come into play. As with those of Orthodox upbringing, gender has no independent bearing on Ritual practice.

### Family Climate

In examining the experiences of those with Orthodox upbringing, we saw that emotional turmoil with one's parents led to lower Jewish engagement in adulthood. For those who were not raised Orthodox, this factor came into play, significantly enough, only in relation to Ritual practice. However, having had a parent (specifically a mother) who viewed being Jewish as very important led both to an increase in the subjective Jewish Centrality of the respondent in adulthood and to an increase in Ritual practice, at least until having children and age were taken into account. (At such a point this variable may play an indirect role by making it likely that a person will have children, which then leads to a rise in Ritual practice.) This variable made no difference in relation to Cultural-Communal practice.

### Early Jewish Training

Although we saw that among those who were raised Orthodox, early Jewish training -- especially having attended Jewish day school -- was extremely important for subsequent identity, among those not raised Orthodox, early Jewish training had less of a direct influence. *What enduring influence early Jewish training did have appears to have arisen more from the degree to which Jewishness was internalized in early adolescence and from having come to experience Jewishness as a natural, lived experience than from formal synagogue attendance, Bar Mitzvah or years of Jewish schooling.* Jewish schooling retained ongoing significance only in the tiny percentage of the non-Orthodox population that attended day school (7%), and even here, the experience made a difference only in the extent of Cultural-Communal involvement and Ritual practice. The scale of involuntary experiences (years of Jewish schooling, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and regular synagogue attendance) did not have any independent, lasting impact on Jewishness in adulthood, once day school and voluntary experiences were brought into the analysis (although these may well have set the stage for participating in these voluntary experiences). In contrast, early Jewish disposition and coming to experience Jewishness as a regular, natural part of one's life ("enculturation") were both particularly significant variables for the non-Orthodox part of the sample. Early Jewish disposition turned out to have a lasting effect on all three measures. Enculturation (indexed by regular Shabbat observance and having attended a Jewish camp) played a lasting role in relation to Ritual practice and Cultural-Communal involvement, but fell out of the picture for Subjective Centrality once voluntary experiences were taken into account.

### Later Experiences

*The impact of later, voluntary experiences on subsequent Jewishness is also quite clear; they play a crucial role in shaping the Jewishness of those who were not raised Orthodox.* These later experiences include "voluntary activities" (having participated in a Jewish youth group, having been involved in Jewish academic and/or social college activities), having ever visited Israel (which typically occurs in the teenage or early adult years), and having had a particularly significant positive or negative Jewish encounter, relationship or experience. Of these, the voluntary activities and the significant positive

experiences had the strongest impact. Visiting Israel had slightly less of an impact on Subjective Centrality and Ritual practice but asserted more influence on Cultural-Communal involvement.

### Israel

The impact of Israel in the regression analysis may not be entirely “causal,” since the age at which the visit took place is not known. Included in our sample are some people who first visited Israel in adulthood, and indeed, for some of these people, causality may be reversed. Individuals may have visited Israel on a UJA mission because they were already involved in Cultural-Communal commitments. Alternatively, trips to Israel may “work” by creating an interest in news about Israel, Jews and Judaism, reading Hebrew, and adult Jewish study, the same items that comprise the Cultural-Communal practice index. Because the nature of the Israel visits is not specified in the survey, we cannot say what aspects of “Israel” in general (or organized educational trips in particular) make a notable difference. *Overall, it is noteworthy that Israel clusters with the other voluntary experiences (in a factor analysis) and does not stand on its own as a separate influence, suggesting that it should be viewed as part of a series or combination of experiences that jointly produce an impact.*

In this context, asking a question such as “Will a trip to Israel or a summer at a dynamic Jewish camp play a serious role in creating Jewish commitment in adulthood?” leads to the following answer: It depends on the individual’s history and the particular combination of factors and experiences of that person’s biography. There is no group among the sample for whom either camp or Israel was a magic bullet of Jewishness. Indeed, significant personal encounters made a greater difference to individual adult patterns for all segments of the sample. On the other hand, positive significant encounters were correlated with more Jewish experiences, and both camping and Israel trips two also correlated independently with increases in measures of Jewishness for both Orthodox and non-Orthodox raised populations. As we have seen, people raised in intensively Jewish environments with strong commitment at home and in school, at camp, in synagogue, and elsewhere (typically an Orthodox upbringing but by no means

exclusively) were more influenced by having gone to day school more than they are by having participated in later voluntary experiences, including Israel trips. Although these later experiences modestly contributed to ongoing Jewish commitment, they did not typically change the course of such a person's life. The idea of a trip to Israel "searing a person's soul" is an image more appropriate to those people raised non-Orthodox (i.e. in less intensive Jewish upbringings) than to those raised in Orthodox families.

Significant negative experiences exerted a strong negative influence on Subjective Jewish Centrality (and a moderate negative influence on Ritual practice, with no influence on Cultural-Communal involvement). Interestingly, in contrast to the positive significant relationships and experiences, which clustered together with the voluntary experiences and having visited Israel (in a factor analysis), the negative experiences stood on their own as an independent, unpredictable, element in people's lives. Unlike the cluster of positive, voluntary experiences that could be anticipated from prior patterns of experience, the negative events were wholly random and not subject to prediction or control. They just happened, and when they did, the effect could be powerful. Without the countervailing effects of prior involvement in Jewish life and a history of positive experiences, the impact of the negative experience was much more potent than the positive. One was left with a sense of who is Jewishly robust – who can roll with the punches and whose relationship to Jewishness is more tenuous and brittle.

### Life Stage

When examined for those who were not raised Orthodox, age alone had a weak but statistically significant effect in the case of Ritual observance (although not for any of the other scales). Having children, on the other hand, had a significant impact on all three measures of adult Jewishness. For many people, having children is a time of great opportunity and interest in Jewish life. It places fundamental issues in the spotlight, forcing one to consider how to raise children, educate them, celebrate holidays with them, and teach them about their background and their origins. One is suddenly forced to find answers to children's questions about the way the world works, to try to explain to

them “why bad things happen to good people,” and to respond to other kinds of theological and moral queries.

### *Comparison Between the Two Groups*

In general, the relative importance of earlier training versus subsequent experiences varied for those who were raised Orthodox and those who were not. For those raised Orthodox, earlier experiences in childhood and day school retained a more lasting influence on Jewish identity, while among those with non-Orthodox upbringing, the strongest predictors of current Jewishness were to be found among the voluntary experiences.

Those with Orthodox upbringing were more strongly influenced *earlier* in their lives. The Orthodox-raised who continued their childhood Jewish engagement into adulthood were enmeshed in a mutually reinforcing network of Jewish commitment and practice, beginning in their families and continuing in day school and in synagogue life. Compared to their non-Orthodox counterparts, those who were raised Orthodox were more fully enveloped in a social context which offered and encouraged a wide range of Jewish “background” experiences, and this early training seems to have been the main factor shaping their Jewishness in adulthood. day school education was particularly influential on later Jewish development, having the greatest effect on all three measures of adult Jewishness. By the time later voluntary experiences were available to students raised in an Orthodox home, students were already committed to Jewish practice, and these experiences did not create much “added value” over and beyond what had already been encouraged by day school (which in this population often continued through high school).



There were three main ways in which this Orthodox formula of maximal exposure could be potentially undermined. First, emotional turmoil within the family worked against the power of this comprehensive message. Second, significant negative events or experiences “happened” to some people, repelling them from further involvement. Finally, not being married or having a family worked against a person’s adult ritual involvement.

Those raised non-Orthodox faced a different situation. The most important influences on their identities were the later, voluntary experiences (having had a significant positive relationship or experience with regard to Jewishness was particularly powerful) and having been involved in a combination of activities such as Jewish youth group, Jewish studies courses and Hillel-like activities in college. Both of these sets of influences emphasize relationships, whether with key individuals or with one’s peers. The importance of relationships in shaping the adult Jewishness of those who were not raised Orthodox is further underscored by the few early “exposures” that were found to influence later adult identity: the importance of being Jewish to one’s parents, the development of an “Early Jewish Disposition,” and the early “enculturation” that resulted from steady Shabbat observance and/or involvement in a “total Jewish environment” like a Jewish summer camp. The route to strong Jewish engagement in adulthood for this population had to do first with early commitment and “imprinting” and then with becoming involved in a range of voluntary experiences in adolescence and early adulthood. Being single and without children correlated negatively with intensive Jewish engagement.

\* \* \*

In this chapter we have identified the particular pathways that have been most effective in bolstering adult Jewishness among individuals ages 22-52 (albeit given the confines of the cross-sectional data set which limits the power of causal analysis). We have examined what “worked” for people starting with more or less intensively Jewish upbringings, treating the three measures of adult Jewishness as “outcomes” that resulted from differential “exposure” to Jewishness in numerous settings and situations (e.g. at home, in school, in synagogue, and so on) over the course of a person’s experience. This approach has allowed us to compare various formative experiences in terms of their relative effectiveness in shaping different aspects of adult Jewishness. In viewing adult Jewishness as an “outcome” we have treated it as static, although it is clear from the in-depth interviews that people’s identities (including Jewish identities) continue to evolve over the life course. This dynamism is the subject of the next chapter of this study.

Table 3.5  
Correlation Coefficients

| Raised Jewish (n=1,378)       |   |                                  |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Kendall's tau-b</i>        |   | <i>Subjective<br/>Centrality</i> | <i>Cultural-<br/>Communal</i> | <i>Religious<br/>Ritual</i> |
| <b>Origins:</b>               |   |                                  |                               |                             |
| NGEN3                         | generation status in America                              | -.15**                           | -.16**                        | -.18**                      |
| NYCYOUTH                      | raised outside NYC area before age 11.                    | .04                              | .06*                          | .02                         |
| SEX                           | male  | -.13**                           | -.09**                        | -.04                        |
| RELPAR3                       | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.11**                           | -.08*                         | -.08*                       |
| BOTHPAR                       | non-intact family during upbringing                       | -.09**                           | -.04                          | -.10**                      |
| <b>Family Climate:</b>        |   |                                  |                               |                             |
| MOMHAP2                       | "less than content" relationship with mother              | -.12**                           | -.10**                        | -.16**                      |
| IMPJEWM                       | importance of being Jewish to mother                      | .40**                            | .33**                         | .38**                       |
| <b>Early Jewish Training:</b> |   |                                  |                               |                             |
| IMPOLD                        | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   | .46**                            | .41**                         | .45**                       |
| NATURAL                       | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  | .40**                            | .46**                         | .50**                       |
| INVOL2                        | synagogue involvement, Bar Mitzvah or<br>Jewish education | .27**                            | .30**                         | .31**                       |
| DAY                           | attended Jewish day school                                | .39**                            | .50**                         | .56**                       |
| ORTHOLD                       | raised Orthodox   | .38**                            | .47**                         | .56**                       |
| <b>Later Experiences:</b>     |   |                                  |                               |                             |
| TURNOFF                       | significant negative experiences                          | -.20**                           | -.07*                         | -.17**                      |
| ATTRACT                       | significant positive experiences                          | .36**                            | .38**                         | .31**                       |
| YOUTHG                        | belonged to a Jewish youth group                          | .24**                            | .24**                         | .21**                       |
| HILLEL                        | participated in Jewish college group, like<br>Hillel      | .26**                            | .26**                         | .20**                       |
| JSTUDIES                      | took Jewish studies courses in college                    | .30**                            | .35**                         | .33**                       |
| VISITIS                       | visited Israel  | .38**                            | .47**                         | .42**                       |
| <b>Lifestage:</b>             |   |                                  |                               |                             |
| CHILDREN                      | R has no children   | -.17**                           | -.21**                        | -.19**                      |
| AGE                           | age - (continuous)  | -.51**                           | -.44**                        | -.49**                      |

\*\* p<.001

\* p<.01

Table 3.6  
Regression Analyses  
Summary of Predictors for Three Jewish Identity Scales

| RAISED Jewish (n=1,244)                         |   | Dependent Variables      |     |                       |     |                  |     |
|---|---|--------------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|------------------|-----|
|   |   | Subjective<br>Centrality |     | Cultural-<br>Communal |     | Religious Ritual |     |
| Independent Variables                           |   | B                        | SE  | B                     | SE  | B                | SE  |
| <b>Origins:</b>                                 |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| NGEN3   | Generation status in America                              | .00                      | .01 | -.02                  | .01 | -.10 *           | .04 |
| NYCYOUTH  | raised outside NYC area before age 11.                    | .00                      | .02 | .02                   | .02 | .00              | .08 |
| SEX   | male  | -.05 *                   | .01 | -.04 *                | .01 | .03              | .06 |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.04                     | .03 | -.03                  | .03 | -.01             | .12 |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | .00                      | .01 | .03                   | .01 | -.01             | .06 |
| <b>Family Climate:</b>                          |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| MOMHAP2   | “Less than content” relationship with mother              | -.01                     | .02 | -.02                  | .02 | -.21 *           | .08 |
| IMPJEW  | importance of being Jewish to mother                      | .03 **                   | .01 | .00                   | .01 | .03              | .03 |
| <b>Early Jewish Training:</b>                   |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   | .04 **                   | .01 | .03 **                | .01 | .13 **           | .03 |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  | .02                      | .01 | .03 **                | .01 | .19 **           | .04 |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education | .01                      | .01 | .01                   | .00 | .02              | .02 |
| DAY   | attended Jewish day school                                | .05 *                    | .02 | .13 **                | .02 | .60 **           | .10 |
| ORTHOLD   | raised Orthodox   | .05 *                    | .02 | .10 **                | .02 | .68 **           | .09 |
| <b>Later Experiences:</b>                       |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          | -.13 **                  | .02 | -.03 *                | .01 | -.36 **          | .07 |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          | .14 **                   | .01 | .12 **                | .01 | .40 **           | .06 |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         | .05 **                   | .01 | .06 **                | .01 | .20 **           | .03 |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel/considered living                          | .08 **                   | .01 | .11 **                | .01 | .38 **           | .06 |
| <b>Lifestage:</b>                               |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   | -.06 **                  | .01 | -.09 **               | .01 | -.41 **          | .06 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  | .00                      | .00 | .00                   | .00 | -.02 **          | .00 |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.21                     |     | 1.22                  |     | 1.36             |     |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.47</b>               |     | <b>.52</b>            |     | <b>.56</b>       |     |

Unstandardized regression coefficients.

\* p<.05

\*\* p<.01

Table 3.6a

Dependent Variable: CENTNEW  
 RAISED Jewish (n=1,244)

|   |   | M              |        | O                       |        | D                            |        | E                        |        | L                      |        |                              |        |                  |        |
|---|---|----------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
|   |   | <i>Origins</i> |        | <i>Family Relations</i> |        | <i>Early Jewish Training</i> |        | <i>Jewish Day School</i> |        | <i>Raised Orthodox</i> |        | <i>Voluntary Experiences</i> |        | <i>Lifestage</i> |        |
|   |   | B              | SE     | B                       | SE     | B                            | SE     | B                        | SE     | B                      | SE     | B                            | SE     | B                | SE     |
| NGEN3   | generation status in America                              | -.08           | ** .01 | -.05                    | ** .01 | -.02                         | * .01  | -.01                     | .01    | -.01                   | .01    | -.01                         | .01    | .00              | .01    |
| NYCYOUTH  | not raised in NYC before age 11.                          | .08            | ** .02 | .06                     | ** .02 | .02                          | .02    | .03                      | .02    | .03                    | .02    | -.01                         | .02    | .00              | .02    |
| SEX   | male  | -.07           | ** .02 | -.06                    | ** .02 | -.09                         | ** .02 | -.09                     | ** .02 | -.09                   | ** .02 | -.05                         | ** .02 | -.05             | * .01  |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.13           | ** .04 | -.06                    | .04    | -.06                         | .03    | -.06                     | .03    | -.06                   | .03    | -.04                         | .03    | -.04             | .03    |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | -.05           | ** .02 | -.03                    | .02    | .00                          | .02    | .00                      | .02    | .00                    | .02    | .00                          | .01    | .00              | .01    |
| MOMHAP2   | less than content relationship with mother                |                |        | -.05                    | * .02  | -.03                         | .02    | -.03                     | .02    | -.03                   | .02    | -.01                         | .02    | -.01             | .02    |
| IMPJEW  | perceived imp. of being Jewish to mother                  |                |        | .10                     | ** .01 | .03                          | ** .01 | .03                      | ** .01 | .03                    | ** .01 | .03                          | ** .01 | .03              | ** .01 |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   |                |        |                         |        | .07                          | ** .01 | .06                      | ** .01 | .06                    | ** .01 | .04                          | ** .01 | .04              | ** .01 |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  |                |        |                         |        | .07                          | ** .01 | .05                      | ** .01 | .05                    | ** .01 | .02                          | .01    | .02              | .01    |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education |                |        |                         |        | .02                          | ** .01 | .02                      | ** .01 | .02                    | ** .01 | .01                          | .01    | .01              | .01    |
| DAY   | Attended Jewish day school                                |                |        |                         |        |                              |        | .12                      | ** .02 | .09                    | ** .02 | .05                          | * .02  | .05              | * .02  |
| ORTHOLD   | Raised Orthodox   |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        | .06                    | * .02  | .07                          | * .02  | .05              | * .02  |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                        |        | -.14                         | ** .02 | -.13             | ** .02 |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                        |        | .14                          | ** .01 | .14              | ** .01 |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                        |        | .05                          | ** .01 | .05              | ** .01 |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                        |        | .08                          | ** .02 | .08              | ** .01 |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                        |        |                              |        | -.06             | ** .01 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                        |        |                              |        | .00              | .00    |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.90           |        | 1.40                    |        | 1.27                         |        | 1.26                     |        | 1.25                   |        | 1.22                         |        | 1.21             |        |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.07</b>     |        | <b>.19</b>              |        | <b>.31</b>                   |        | <b>.32</b>               |        | <b>.33</b>             |        | <b>.46</b>                   |        | <b>.47</b>       |        |

\* p<.05

\*\* p<.01

Table 3.6b

Dependent Variable: COMMACT2  
 RAISED Jewish (n=1,244)

|   |   | M              |    | O                       |    | D                            |    | E                        |    | L                      |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |    |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |  |
|---|---|----------------|----|-------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|------------------|----|-----|----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|--|
|   |   | <i>Origins</i> |    | <i>Family Relations</i> |    | <i>Early Jewish Training</i> |    | <i>Jewish Day School</i> |    | <i>Raised Orthodox</i> |    | <i>Voluntary Experiences</i> |    | <i>Lifestage</i> |    |     |    |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |  |
|   |   | B              | SE | B                       | SE | B                            | SE | B                        | SE | B                      | SE | B                            | SE | B                | SE |     |    |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |  |
| NGEN3   | generation status in America                              | -.11           | ** | .01                     |    | -.08                         | ** | .01                      |    | -.03                   | *  | .01                          |    | -.02             | *  | .01 |    | -.02 | .01 |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |  |
| NYCYOUTH  | not raised in NYC before age 11.                          | .10            | ** | .02                     |    | .08                          | ** | .02                      |    | .04                    |    | .02                          |    | .05              | *  | .02 |    | .05  | **  | .02 | .01  | .02 | .02 |      |     |     |      |     |     |  |
| SEX   | male  | -.06           | ** | .02                     |    | -.05                         | *  | .02                      |    | -.09                   | ** | .02                          |    | -.08             | ** | .02 |    | -.08 | **  | .02 | -.05 | **  | .01 | -.04 | *   | .01 |      |     |     |  |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.11           | ** | .04                     |    | -.06                         |    | .04                      |    | -.05                   |    | .03                          |    | -.05             |    | .03 |    | -.05 |     | .03 | -.03 |     | .03 | -.03 |     | .03 |      |     |     |  |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | -.03           |    | .02                     |    | -.01                         |    | .02                      |    | .02                    |    | .02                          |    | .02              |    | .02 |    | .02  |     | .02 | .03  |     | .01 | .03  |     | .01 |      |     |     |  |
| MOMHAP2   | less than content relationship with mother                |                |    |                         |    | -.05                         | *  | .02                      |    | -.03                   |    | .02                          |    | -.03             |    | .02 |    | -.03 |     | .02 | -.03 |     | .02 | -.02 |     | .02 |      |     |     |  |
| IMPJEW  | perceived imp. of being Jewish to mother                  |                |    |                         |    | .08                          | ** | .01                      |    | .01                    |    | .01                          |    | .00              |    | .01 |    | .00  |     | .01 | .00  |     | .01 | .00  |     | .01 |      |     |     |  |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   |                |    |                         |    |                              |    | .05                      | ** | .01                    |    | .04                          | ** | .01              |    | .03 | ** | .01  |     | .03 | **   | .01 | .03 | **   | .01 | .03 | **   | .01 |     |  |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  |                |    |                         |    |                              |    | .11                      | ** | .01                    |    | .07                          | ** | .01              |    | .07 | ** | .01  |     | .03 | **   | .01 | .03 | **   | .01 | .03 | **   | .01 |     |  |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education |                |    |                         |    |                              |    | .03                      | ** | .01                    |    | .02                          | ** | .01              |    | .02 | ** | .01  |     | .02 | **   | .01 | .01 |      | .01 | .01 |      | .00 |     |  |
| DAY   | Attended Jewish day school                                |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    | .23                    | ** | .02                          |    | .17              | ** | .02 |    | .13  | **  | .02 | .13  | **  | .02 | .13  | **  | .02 | .13  | **  | .02 |  |
| ORTHOLD   | Raised Orthodox   |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    | .11              | ** | .02 |    | .11  | **  | .02 | .11  | **  | .02 | .10  | **  | .02 | .10  | **  | .02 |  |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |    | -.04 | *   | .02 | -.03 | *   | .02 | -.03 | *   | .02 | -.03 | *   | .01 |  |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |    | .12  | **  | .01 | .12  | **  | .01 | .12  | **  | .01 | .12  | **  | .01 |  |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |    | .06  | **  | .01 | .06  | **  | .01 | .06  | **  | .01 | .06  | **  | .01 |  |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |    | .11  | **  | .01 | .11  | **  | .01 | .11  | **  | .01 | .11  | **  | .01 |  |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |    |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |  |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |    |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |  |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.77           |    | 1.37                    |    | 1.28                         |    | 1.26                     |    | 1.25                   |    | 1.18                         |    | 1.22             |    |     |    |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |  |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.08</b>     |    | <b>.15</b>              |    | <b>.31</b>                   |    | <b>.37</b>               |    | <b>.38</b>             |    | <b>.50</b>                   |    | <b>.52</b>       |    |     |    |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |      |     |     |  |

\* p<.05

\*\* p<.01

Table 3.6c

Dependent Variable: RITUAL  
RAISED Jewish (n=1,244)

|   |   | M              |    | O                       |    | D                            |    | E                        |    | L                      |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |  |      |    |     |  |      |    |     |  |            |    |     |
|---|---|----------------|----|-------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|------------------|----|-----|--|------|----|-----|--|------|----|-----|--|------------|----|-----|
|   |   | <i>Origins</i> |    | <i>Family Relations</i> |    | <i>Early Jewish Training</i> |    | <i>Jewish Day School</i> |    | <i>Raised Orthodox</i> |    | <i>Voluntary Experiences</i> |    | <i>Lifestage</i> |    |     |  |      |    |     |  |      |    |     |  |            |    |     |
|   |   | B              | SE | B                       | SE | B                            | SE | B                        | SE | B                      | SE | B                            | SE | B                | SE |     |  |      |    |     |  |      |    |     |  |            |    |     |
| NGEN3   | generation status in America                              | -.55           | ** | .06                     |    | -.40                         | ** | .05                      |    | -.27                   | ** | .05                          |    | -.15             | *  | .05 |  | -.09 | *  | .05 |  | -.09 | *  | .04 |  | -.10       | *  | .04 |
| NYCYOUTH  | not raised in NYC before age 11.                          | .32            | ** | .11                     |    | .24                          | *  | .10                      |    | .06                    |    | .09                          |    | .09              |    | .08 |  | .14  |    | .08 |  | -.02 |    | .08 |  | .00        |    | .08 |
| SEX   | male  | -.09           |    | .08                     |    | -.06                         |    | .07                      |    | -.20                   | ** | .07                          |    | -.16             | *  | .07 |  | -.16 | *  | .07 |  | -.03 |    | .06 |  | .03        |    | .06 |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.37           | *  | .17                     |    | -.09                         |    | .16                      |    | -.07                   |    | .14                          |    | -.05             |    | .13 |  | -.06 |    | .13 |  | .00  |    | .12 |  | -.01       |    | .12 |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | -.31           | ** | .09                     |    | -.21                         | *  | .08                      |    | -.07                   |    | .07                          |    | -.04             |    | .07 |  | -.04 |    | .07 |  | -.03 |    | .06 |  | -.01       |    | .06 |
| MOMHAP2   | less than content relationship with mother                |                |    |                         |    | -.40                         | ** | .10                      |    | -.30                   | ** | .09                          |    | -.28             | ** | .09 |  | -.29 | ** | .08 |  | -.25 | *  | .08 |  | -.21       | *  | .08 |
| IMPJEW  | perceived imp. of being Jewish to mother                  |                |    |                         |    | .42                          | ** | .04                      |    | .07                    |    | .04                          |    | .05              |    | .04 |  | .03  |    | .03 |  | .02  |    | .03 |  | .03        |    | .03 |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    | .25                    | ** | .03                          |    | .18              | ** | .03 |  | .16  | ** | .03 |  | .12  | ** | .03 |  | .13        | ** | .03 |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    | .54                    | ** | .05                          |    | .36              | ** | .05 |  | .31  | ** | .05 |  | .20  | ** | .04 |  | .19        | ** | .04 |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    | .11                    | ** | .03                          |    | .06              | ** | .02 |  | .07  | ** | .02 |  | .02  |    | .02 |  | .02        |    | .02 |
| DAY   | Attended Jewish day school                                |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    | 1.23             | ** | .09 |  | .85  | ** | .10 |  | .69  | ** | .10 |  | .60        | ** | .10 |
| ORTHOLD   | Raised Orthodox   |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |  | .73  | ** | .10 |  | .74  | ** | .09 |  | .68        | ** | .09 |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |  |      |    |     |  | -.40 | ** | .07 |  | -.36       | ** | .07 |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |  |      |    |     |  | .42  | ** | .06 |  | .40        | ** | .06 |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |  |      |    |     |  | .20  | ** | .03 |  | .20        | ** | .03 |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |  |      |    |     |  | .36  | ** | .06 |  | .38        | ** | .06 |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |  |      |    |     |  |      |    |     |  | -.41       | ** | .06 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  |                |    |                         |    |                              |    |                          |    |                        |    |                              |    |                  |    |     |  |      |    |     |  |      |    |     |  | -.02       | ** | .00 |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 3.38           |    | 1.40                    |    | .90                          |    | .80                      |    | .75                    |    | .59                          |    | 1.36             |    |     |  |      |    |     |  |      |    |     |  | 1.36       |    |     |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.09</b>     |    | <b>.19</b>              |    | <b>.36</b>                   |    | <b>.44</b>               |    | <b>.47</b>             |    | <b>.54</b>                   |    | <b>.56</b>       |    |     |  |      |    |     |  |      |    |     |  | <b>.56</b> |    |     |

\* p<.05

\*\* p<.01

Table 3.7  
Regression Analyses  
Summary of Predictors for Three Jewish Identity Scales

| RAISED Orthodox (n=275)                         |   | Dependent Variables      |     |                       |     |                  |     |
|---|---|--------------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|------------------|-----|
|   |   | Subjective<br>Centrality |     | Cultural-<br>Communal |     | Religious Ritual |     |
| <i>Independent Variables</i>                    |   | B                        | SE  | B                     | SE  | B                | SE  |
| <b>Origins:</b>                                 |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| NGEN3   | Generation status in America                              | -.01                     | .02 | -.02                  | .02 | -.17 *           | .08 |
| NYCYOUTH  | raised outside NYC area before age 11.                    | -.03                     | .03 | -.09 *                | .04 | -.07             | .16 |
| SEX   | male  | -.04                     | .03 | -.12 **               | .04 | -.04             | .14 |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.05                     | .05 | .01                   | .07 | .19              | .25 |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | .03                      | .03 | .02                   | .03 | -.01             | .12 |
| <b>Family Climate:</b>                          |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| MOMHAP2   | "Less than content" relationship with mother              | -.12 **                  | .04 | -.14 **               | .05 | -.46 **          | .18 |
| IMPJEWM   | importance of being Jewish to mother                      | .01                      | .02 | -.01                  | .02 | .04              | .09 |
| <b>Early Jewish Training:</b>                   |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   | .04 **                   | .01 | .03                   | .02 | .07              | .06 |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  | .04                      | .02 | .03                   | .02 | .24 *            | .10 |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education | .01                      | .01 | .03 *                 | .03 | .02              | .05 |
| DAY   | attended Jewish day school                                | .10 **                   | .03 | .20 **                | .04 | .96 **           | .16 |
| <b>Later Experiences:</b>                       |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          | -.11 **                  | .03 | -.05                  | .04 | -.72 **          | .14 |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          | .08 **                   | .02 | .05                   | .03 | .28 **           | .11 |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         | .01                      | .01 | .03 *                 | .01 | .03              | .05 |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  | .05                      | .03 | .06                   | .03 | .44 **           | .13 |
| <b>Lifestage:</b>                               |   |                          |     |                       |     |                  |     |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   | -.01                     | .03 | -.01                  | .03 | -.34 **          | .13 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  | .00                      | .00 | .00                   | .00 | -.02 **          | .01 |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.46                     |     | 1.43                  |     | 2.49             |     |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.45</b>               |     | <b>.47</b>            |     | <b>.62</b>       |     |

Unstandardized regression coefficients.

\* p<.05

\*\* p<.01



Table 3.8

Dependent Variable: CENTNEW  
RAISED ORTHODOX (n=275)

|   |   | M              |     | O                       |     | D                            |     | E                        |     | L                            |     |                  |     |
|---|---|----------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|------------------|-----|
|   |   | <i>Origins</i> |     | <i>Family Relations</i> |     | <i>Early Jewish Training</i> |     | <i>Jewish Day School</i> |     | <i>Voluntary Experiences</i> |     | <i>Lifestage</i> |     |
|   |   | B              | SE  | B                       | SE  | B                            | SE  | B                        | SE  | B                            | SE  | B                | SE  |
| NGEN3   | generation status in America                              | -.04           | .02 | -.02                    | .02 | -.02                         | .02 | -.01                     | .02 | -.01                         | .02 | -.01             | .02 |
| NYCYOUTH  | not raised in NYC before age 11.                          | -.04           | .04 | -.04                    | .04 | -.03                         | .03 | -.05                     | .03 | -.04                         | .03 | -.03             | .03 |
| SEX   | male  | -.02           | .03 | -.02                    | .03 | -.08 *                       | .03 | -.06 *                   | .03 | -.04                         | .03 | -.04             | .03 |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.12           | .07 | -.08                    | .06 | -.06                         | .06 | -.05                     | .06 | -.05                         | .05 | -.05             | .05 |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | -.02           | .03 | .00                     | .03 | .02                          | .03 | .03                      | .03 | .03                          | .03 | .03              | .03 |
| MOMHAP2   | less than content relationship with mother                |                |     | -.20 **                 | .04 | -.16 **                      | .04 | -.15 **                  | .04 | -.13 **                      | .04 | -.12 **          | .04 |
| IMPJEW  | perceived imp. of being Jewish to mother                  |                |     | .08 **                  | .02 | .01                          | .02 | .01                      | .02 | .02                          | .02 | .01              | .02 |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   |                |     |                         |     | .05 **                       | .01 | .05 **                   | .01 | .04 **                       | .01 | .04 **           | .01 |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  |                |     |                         |     | .08 **                       | .02 | .05 *                    | .02 | .04                          | .02 | .04              | .02 |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education |                |     |                         |     | .03 **                       | .01 | .02                      | .01 | .01                          | .01 | .01              | .01 |
| DAY   | Attended Jewish day school                                |                |     |                         |     |                              |     | .13 **                   | .03 | .10 **                       | .03 | .10 **           | .03 |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     | -.12 **                      | .03 | -.11 **          | .03 |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     | .08 **                       | .02 | .08 **           | .02 |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     | .01                          | .01 | .01              | .01 |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     | .05                          | .03 | .05              | .03 |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     | -.01             | .03 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     | .00              | .00 |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.96           |     | 1.53                    |     | 1.44                         |     | 1.45                     |     | 1.44                         |     | 1.46             |     |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.04</b>     |     | <b>.20</b>              |     | <b>.34</b>                   |     | <b>.38</b>               |     | <b>.45</b>                   |     | <b>.45</b>       |     |

\* p&lt;.05

\*\* p&lt;.01

Table 3.9

Dependent Variable: COMMACT2  
RAISED ORTHODOX (n=275)

|   |   | M              |     | O                       |     | D                            |     | E                        |     | L                            |     |                  |     |
|---|---|----------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|------------------|-----|
|   |   | <i>Origins</i> |     | <i>Family Relations</i> |     | <i>Early Jewish Training</i> |     | <i>Jewish Day School</i> |     | <i>Voluntary Experiences</i> |     | <i>Lifestage</i> |     |
|   |   | B              | SE  | B                       | SE  | B                            | SE  | B                        | SE  | B                            | SE  | B                | SE  |
| NGEN3   | generation status in America                              | -.05           | .03 | -.03                    | .02 | -.03                         | .02 | -.02                     | .02 | -.02                         | .02 | -.02             | .02 |
| NYCYOUTH  | not raised in NYC before age 11.                          | -.07           | .05 | -.06                    | .05 | -.06                         | .04 | -.09 *                   | .04 | -.09 *                       | .04 | -.09 *           | .04 |
| SEX   | male  | -.06           | .03 | -.06                    | .03 | -.18                         | .04 | -.15 **                  | .04 | -.12 **                      | .04 | -.12 **          | .04 |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.08           | .08 | -.04                    | .08 | -.01                         | .07 | .00                      | .07 | .01                          | .07 | .01              | .07 |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | -.05           | .04 | -.03                    | .04 | -.01                         | .03 | .02                      | .03 | .02                          | .03 | .02              | .03 |
| MOMHAP2   | less than content relationship with mother                |                |     | -.25 **                 | .05 | -.18 **                      | .05 | -.16 **                  | .05 | -.14 **                      | .05 | -.14 **          | .05 |
| IMPJEW  | perceived imp. of being Jewish to mother                  |                |     | .08 **                  | .02 | -.01                         | .02 | -.02                     | .02 | -.01                         | .02 | -.01             | .02 |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   |                |     |                         |     | .04 *                        | .02 | .03                      | .02 | .03                          | .02 | .03              | .02 |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  |                |     |                         |     | .11 **                       | .03 | .05                      | .03 | .03                          | .03 | .03              | .02 |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education |                |     |                         |     | .06 **                       | .01 | .04 **                   | .01 | .03 *                        | .01 | .03 *            | .03 |
| DAY   | Attended Jewish day school                                |                |     |                         |     |                              |     | .23 **                   | .04 | .21 **                       | .04 | .20 **           | .04 |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     | -.06                         | .03 | -.05             | .04 |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     | .05                          | .03 | .05              | .03 |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     | .03 *                        | .01 | .03 *            | .01 |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     | .06                          | .03 | .06              | .03 |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     | -.01             | .03 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  |                |     |                         |     |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     | .00              | .00 |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.87           |     | 1.47                    |     | 1.42                         |     | 1.46                     |     | 1.42                         |     | 1.43             |     |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.05</b>     |     | <b>.17</b>              |     | <b>.35</b>                   |     | <b>.43</b>               |     | <b>.47</b>                   |     | <b>.47</b>       |     |

\* p&lt;.05

\*\* p&lt;.01

Table 3.10

Dependent Variable: RITUAL  
RAISED ORTHODOX (n=275)

|   |   | M              |        | O                       |        | D                            |        | E                        |        | L                            |        |                  |        |
|---|---|----------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
|   |   | <i>Origins</i> |        | <i>Family Relations</i> |        | <i>Early Jewish Training</i> |        | <i>Jewish Day School</i> |        | <i>Voluntary Experiences</i> |        | <i>Lifestage</i> |        |
|   |   | B              | SE     | B                       | SE     | B                            | SE     | B                        | SE     | B                            | SE     | B                | SE     |
| NGEN3   | generation status in America                              | -.35           | ** .11 | -.26                    | * .11  | -.27                         | ** .09 | -.19                     | * .09  | -.14                         | .08    | -.17             | * .08  |
| NYCYOUTH  | not raised in NYC before age 11.                          | -.11           | .23    | -.10                    | .21    | -.05                         | .19    | -.23                     | .17    | -.13                         | .16    | -.07             | .16    |
| SEX   | male  | -.02           | .16    | -.01                    | .14    | -.41                         | ** .17 | -.27                     | .15    | -.13                         | .14    | -.04             | .14    |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.21           | .39    | .03                     | .36    | .16                          | .32    | .24                      | .28    | .22                          | .26    | .19              | .25    |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | -.38           | * .18  | -.29                    | .17    | -.21                         | .15    | -.02                     | .13    | -.05                         | .12    | -.01             | .12    |
| MOMHAP2   | less than content relationship w/ mother                  |                |        | -1.08                   | ** .24 | -.79                         | ** .22 | -.69                     | ** .20 | -.50                         | ** .18 | -.46             | ** .18 |
| IMPJEW  | perceived imp. of being Jewish to mother                  |                |        | .50                     | ** .11 | .08                          | .11    | .03                      | .10    | .06                          | .09    | .04              | .09    |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   |                |        |                         |        | .18                          | ** .07 | .12                      | .07    | .05                          | .06    | .07              | .06    |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  |                |        |                         |        | .67                          | ** .12 | .30                      | * .11  | .25                          | * .11  | .24              | * .10  |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education |                |        |                         |        | .22                          | ** .06 | .10                      | .05    | .04                          | .05    | .02              | .05    |
| DAY   | Attended Jewish day school                                |                |        |                         |        |                              |        | 1.29                     | ** .16 | 1.15                         | ** .15 | .96              | ** .16 |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        | -.86                         | ** .13 | -.72             | ** .14 |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        | .29                          | ** .11 | .28              | ** .11 |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        | .02                          | .06    | .03              | .05    |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        | .36                          | ** .13 | .44              | ** .13 |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                              |        | -.34             | ** .13 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                              |        | -.02             | ** .01 |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 4.2            |        | 1.74                    |        | 1.43                         |        | 1.59                     |        | 1.62                         |        | 2.49             |        |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.07</b>     |        | <b>.21</b>              |        | <b>.39</b>                   |        | <b>.52</b>               |        | <b>.60</b>                   |        | <b>.62</b>       |        |

\* p<.05

\*\* p<.01

Table 3.11  
Regression Analyses  
Summary of Predictors for Three Jewish Identity Scales

| RAISED Non-Orthodox (n=969)                     |   | Dependent Variables   |     |                   |     |                  |     |
|---|---|-----------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------|-----|
|   |   | Subjective Centrality |     | Cultural-Communal |     | Religious Ritual |     |
| Independent Variables                           |   | B                     | SE  | B                 | SE  | B                | SE  |
| <b>Origins:</b>                                 |   |                       |     |                   |     |                  |     |
| NGEN3   | Generation status in America                              | .00                   | .01 | -.01              | .01 | -.05             | .05 |
| NYCYOUTH  | raised outside NYC area before age 11.                    | .00                   | .02 | .04               | **  | .02              | .09 |
| SEX   | male  | -.04                  | *   | .02               |     | .02              | .07 |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.03                  | .03 | -.03              |     | .03              | .13 |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | .00                   | .02 | .03               | *   | .02              | .07 |
| <b>Family Climate:</b>                          |   |                       |     |                   |     |                  |     |
| MOMHAP2   | "Less than content" relationship with mother              | .00                   | .02 | .00               |     | .02              | .09 |
| IMPJEW  | importance of being Jewish to mother                      | .03                   | **  | .01               |     | .01              | .03 |
| <b>Early Jewish Training:</b>                   |   |                       |     |                   |     |                  |     |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   | .04                   | **  | .01               |     | .01              | .03 |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  | .01                   | .01 | .03               | *   | .01              | .05 |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education | .01                   | .01 | .01               |     | .01              | .02 |
| DAY   | attended Jewish day school                                | .05                   | .03 | .09               | **  | .03              | .13 |
| <b>Later Experiences:</b>                       |   |                       |     |                   |     |                  |     |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          | -.14                  | **  | .02               |     | .02              | .07 |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          | .15                   | **  | .02               |     | .02              | .07 |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         | .06                   | **  | .01               |     | .01              | .04 |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  | .08                   | **  | .02               |     | .02              | .07 |
| <b>Lifestage:</b>                               |   |                       |     |                   |     |                  |     |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   | -.07                  | **  | .02               |     | .02              | .07 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  | .00                   | .00 | .00               |     | .00              | .00 |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.15                  |     | 1.14              |     | .89              |     |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.38</b>            |     | <b>.39</b>        |     | <b>.31</b>       |     |

Unstandardized regression coefficients.

\* p<.05

\*\* p<.01

Table 3.12

Dependent Variable: CENTNEW  
 RAISED NON-ORTHODOX (n=969)

|   |   | M              |     | O                       |      | D                            |      | E                        |      | L                            |      |                  |      |      |      |     |      |     |     |
|---|---|----------------|-----|-------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|--------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|------------------|------|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|
|   |   | <i>Origins</i> |     | <i>Family Relations</i> |      | <i>Early Jewish Training</i> |      | <i>Jewish Day School</i> |      | <i>Voluntary Experiences</i> |      | <i>Lifestage</i> |      |      |      |     |      |     |     |
|   |   | B              | SE  | B                       | SE   | B                            | SE   | B                        | SE   | B                            | SE   | B                | SE   |      |      |     |      |     |     |
| NGEN3   | generation status in America                              | -.03           | .01 | -.01                    | .01  | -.01                         | .01  | -.01                     | .01  | .00                          | .01  | .00              | .01  |      |      |     |      |     |     |
| NYCYOUTH  | not raised in NYC before age 11.                          | .11            | **  | .03                     | .09  | **                           | .02  | .05                      | *    | .02                          | .05  | **               | .02  | -.01 | .02  | .00 | .02  |     |     |
| SEX   | male  | -.07           | **  | .02                     | -.07 | **                           | .02  | -.09                     | **   | .02                          | -.09 | **               | .02  | -.05 | **   | .02 | -.04 | *   | .02 |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.10           | *   | .04                     | -.06 | .04                          | -.06 | .04                      | -.06 | .04                          | -.06 | .04              | -.04 | .03  | -.03 | .03 |      |     |     |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | -.04           |     | .02                     | -.02 | .02                          | .00  | .02                      | .00  | .02                          | .00  | .02              | .00  | .02  | .00  | .02 |      |     |     |
| MOMHAP2   | less than content relationship with mother                |                |     | -.02                    | .02  | -.01                         | .02  | -.01                     | .02  | .00                          | .02  | .00              | .02  | .00  | .02  | .00 | .02  |     |     |
| IMPJEW  | perceived imp. of being Jewish to mother                  |                |     | .08                     | **   | .01                          | .03  | **                       | .01  | .03                          | .01  | .03              | **   | .01  | .03  | **  | .01  |     |     |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   |                |     |                         |      | .06                          | **   | .01                      | .06  | .01                          | .04  | **               | .01  | .04  | **   | .01 | .04  | **  | .01 |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  |                |     |                         |      | .05                          | **   | .01                      | .05  | .01                          | .01  | .01              | .01  | .01  | .01  | .01 | .01  | .01 |     |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education |                |     |                         |      | .02                          | **   | .01                      | .02  | .01                          | .01  | .01              | .01  | .01  | .01  | .01 | .01  | .01 |     |
| DAY   | Attended Jewish day school                                |                |     |                         |      |                              |      |                          | .06  | .04                          | .04  | .03              | .05  | .03  |      |     |      |     |     |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          |                |     |                         |      |                              |      |                          |      |                              | -.14 | **               | .02  | -.14 | **   | .02 |      |     |     |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          |                |     |                         |      |                              |      |                          |      |                              | .16  | **               | .02  | .15  | **   | .02 |      |     |     |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         |                |     |                         |      |                              |      |                          |      |                              | .06  | **               | .01  | .06  | **   | .01 |      |     |     |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  |                |     |                         |      |                              |      |                          |      |                              | .08  | **               | .02  | .08  | **   | .02 |      |     |     |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   |                |     |                         |      |                              |      |                          |      |                              |      |                  |      |      |      |     | -.07 | **  | .02 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  |                |     |                         |      |                              |      |                          |      |                              |      |                  |      |      |      |     | .00  | .00 |     |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.67           |     | 1.35                    |      | 1.24                         |      | 1.24                     |      | 1.19                         |      | 1.15             |      |      |      |     |      |     |     |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.04</b>     |     | <b>.11</b>              |      | <b>.19</b>                   |      | <b>.20</b>               |      | <b>.37</b>                   |      | <b>.38</b>       |      |      |      |     |      |     |     |

\* p<.05  
 \*\* p<.01

Table 3.13

Dependent Variable: COMMACT2  
 RAISED NON-ORTHODOX (n=969)

|   |   | M              |        | O                       |        | D                            |        | E                        |        | L                            |        |                  |        |
|---|---|----------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
|   |   | <i>Origins</i> |        | <i>Family Relations</i> |        | <i>Early Jewish Training</i> |        | <i>Jewish Day School</i> |        | <i>Voluntary Experiences</i> |        | <i>Lifestage</i> |        |
|   |   | B              | SE     | B                       | SE     | B                            | SE     | B                        | SE     | B                            | SE     | B                | SE     |
| NGEN3   | generation status in America                              | -.03           | * .01  | -.03                    | .01    | -.02                         | .01    | -.02                     | .01    | -.02                         | .01    | -.01             | .01    |
| NYCYOUTH  | not raised in NYC before age 11.                          | .14            | ** .02 | .13                     | ** .02 | .09                          | ** .02 | .09                      | ** .02 | .03                          | .02    | .04              | * .02  |
| SEX   | male  | -.04           | * .02  | -.04                    | * .02  | -.07                         | ** .02 | -.07                     | ** .02 | -.02                         | .02    | -.01             | .02    |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.08           | * .04  | -.06                    | .04    | -.06                         | .04    | -.06                     | .03    | -.04                         | .03    | -.03             | .03    |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | .01            | .02    | .01                     | .02    | .03                          | .02    | .03                      | .02    | .03                          | * .02  | .03              | * .02  |
| MOMHAP2   | less than content relationship with mother                |                |        | -.01                    | .02    | .00                          | .02    | .00                      | .02    | -.01                         | .02    | .00              | .02    |
| IMPJEW  | perceived imp. of being Jewish to mother                  |                |        | .04                     | ** .01 | .00                          | .01    | .00                      | .01    | .00                          | .01    | .00              | .01    |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   |                |        |                         |        | .04                          | ** .01 | .04                      | ** .01 | .02                          | ** .01 | .02              | ** .01 |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  |                |        |                         |        | .07                          | ** .01 | .06                      | ** .01 | .03                          | * .01  | .03              | * .01  |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education |                |        |                         |        | .02                          | ** .01 | .02                      | ** .01 | .00                          | .01    | .01              | .01    |
| DAY   | Attended Jewish day school                                |                |        |                         |        |                              |        | .11                      | ** .03 | .08                          | ** .03 | .09              | ** .03 |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        | -.02                         | .02    | -.02             | .02    |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        | .13                          | ** .02 | .13              | ** .02 |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        | .07                          | ** .01 | .07              | ** .01 |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        | .12                          | ** .02 | .12              | ** .02 |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                              |        | -.10             | ** .02 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  |                |        |                         |        |                              |        |                          |        |                              |        | .00              | .00    |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.45           |        | 1.29                    |        | 1.23                         |        | 1.23                     |        | 1.15                         |        | 1.14             |        |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.05</b>     |        | <b>.07</b>              |        | <b>.16</b>                   |        | <b>.17</b>               |        | <b>.36</b>                   |        | <b>.39</b>       |        |

\* p<.05

\*\* p<.01

Table 3.14

Dependent Variable: RITUAL  
RAISED NON-ORTHODOX (n=969)

|   |   | M              |    | O                       |    | D                            |     | E                        |     | L                            |     |                  |      |
|---|---|----------------|----|-------------------------|----|------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|------------------|------|
|   |   | <i>Origins</i> |    | <i>Family Relations</i> |    | <i>Early Jewish Training</i> |     | <i>Jewish Day School</i> |     | <i>Voluntary Experiences</i> |     | <i>Lifestage</i> |      |
|   |   | B              | SE | B                       | SE | B                            | SE  | B                        | SE  | B                            | SE  | B                | SE   |
| NGEN3   | generation status in America                              | -.13           | *  | .06                     |    | -.09                         | .06 | -.07                     | .05 | -.06                         | .05 | -.05             | .05  |
| NYCYOUTH  | not raised in NYC before age 11.                          | .45            | ** | .10                     |    | .40                          | **  | .10                      | .24 | *                            | .09 | .23              | *    |
| SEX   | male  | -.04           |    | .07                     |    | -.04                         | .07 | -.12                     | .08 | -.11                         | .08 | .04              | .07  |
| RELPAR3   | 1 parent was not Jewish                                   | -.23           |    | .16                     |    | -.11                         | .16 | -.11                     | .15 | -.11                         | .15 | -.05             | .14  |
| BOTHPAR   | non-intact family during upbringing                       | -.12           |    | .08                     |    | -.08                         | .08 | .00                      | .08 | -.01                         | .08 | .01              | .07  |
| MOMHAP2   | less than content relationship with mother                |                |    | -.23                    | ** | .10                          |     | -.19                     | *   | .09                          |     | -.20             | *    |
| IMPJEW  | perceived imp. of being Jewish to mother                  |                |    | .19                     | ** | .03                          |     | .02                      | .04 | .03                          | .04 | .02              | .03  |
| IMPOLD  | importance of being Jewish at age 11/12                   |                |    |                         |    | .17                          | **  | .04                      |     | .17                          | **  | .04              | .11  |
| NATURAL   | regular Shabbat as child/<br>attended Jewish summer camp  |                |    |                         |    | .31                          | **  | .05                      |     | .30                          | **  | .05              | .17  |
| INVOL2  | synagogue involvement, bar mitzvah or<br>Jewish education |                |    |                         |    | .06                          | *   | .03                      |     | .06                          | *   | .03              | .01  |
| DAY   | Attended Jewish day school                                |                |    |                         |    |                              |     |                          |     | .39                          | *   | .14              | .29  |
| TURNOFF   | significant negative experiences                          |                |    |                         |    |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     | -.26             | **   |
| ATTRACT   | significant positive experiences                          |                |    |                         |    |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     | .42              | **   |
| VOLUNT  | Hillel/Jewish studies/youth group                         |                |    |                         |    |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     | .28              | **   |
| ISRAEL  | visited Israel  |                |    |                         |    |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     | .34              | **   |
| CHILDREN  | R has no children   |                |    |                         |    |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     |                  | -.34 |
| QD1   | Age - (continuous)  |                |    |                         |    |                              |     |                          |     |                              |     |                  | -.01 |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                |   | 1.71           |    | .92                     |    | .63                          |     | .61                      |     | .40                          |     | .89              |      |
| <b>Percent of Variance Explained (R square)</b> |   | <b>.03</b>     |    | <b>.07</b>              |    | <b>.15</b>                   |     | <b>.16</b>               |     | <b>.29</b>                   |     | <b>.31</b>       |      |

\* p&lt;.05

\*\* p&lt;.01

## Chapter Four

### Changes in Jewish Identity Over the Life Course: Five Characteristic Journeys

Throughout this report the emphasis has been placed on *current* Jewishness. Even in Chapter Three, where we began to explore the relationship between a person's past and present identity, we treated people's current Jewishness as the *outcome or endpoint* that resulted from a variety of prior life "exposures." In essence, we have viewed a person's current Jewish "outcome" as frozen in time, without allowing for the possibility that this measure might change. Yet people's lives (and often their Jewish lives) continue to unfold over the life course in the face of changing circumstances, and many people, when asked to discuss their own connection to Jewishness, tell a story of how they *became* the kind of Jew they are today. We now turn our attention to the "shelf life" of a person's identity, exploring variations in this identity over time.

This chapter looks directly at personal journeys -- *the changes in Jewishness that occur over the course of an individual's lifetime*. The chapter has three goals:

1. to explore changes in both the subjective and behavioral aspects of Jewishness for the sample as a whole, at the "aggregate" level. Is overall involvement in Jewishness increasing or decreasing for the Jewish population as a whole?
2. to identify characteristic Jewish journeys based on the interplay of both the subjective and behavioral dimensions in a person's life. *For each person*, is his/her Jewish involvement increasing, decreasing or staying the same?
3. to explore the overall relationship between a person's origins, journey and present "location" in terms of current Jewish engagement and identity

We want to gauge the stability of people's commitments and to identify the factors that might push or pull them in different directions. Having a sense of people's personal histories and how they arrived at this current orientation is essential both in



determining how to reach individuals as adults and in trying to identify the most promising ways of cultivating today's children.

### **Measures of Stability and Change**

The survey data set provides information about each respondent's past (origins and upbringing) in addition to providing a profile of each person's current Jewish involvement. By comparing these, the basic shape of each person's overall journey can be described.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, there is no single measure of change in this study, just as there is no single indicator of Jewishness. However, the following six measures of change are examined:

1. *Denominational retention rate*: a comparison of each respondent's report of denomination during upbringing to his/her current denominational preference
2. *Perceived overall stability of Jewish identity*: This measure comes out of the survey question, "Thinking not just about your religious beliefs and activities, how does your current way of being Jewish compare with how you were raised? Is it very similar, somewhat similar, somewhat different, very different?"
3. *Change in the importance of being Jewish*: a comparison of each respondent's recollection of the importance of being Jewish at age 11 or 12 to his/her current perception
4. *Change in frequency of lighting Shabbat candles*: a comparison of the respondent's household practice during upbringing to current practice
5. *Change in frequency of synagogue attendance*: a comparison of frequency of respondent's synagogue attendance at age 11 or 12 to current attendance
6. *Change in possession of Christmas trees*: a comparison of the respondent's household practice during upbringing to current practice

The analysis is confined to 1,378 people in the survey who were raised "Jewish."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I view Jewishness as part of an unfolding life story that involves the interplay between Jewishness, memory, events, experiences, relationships and conditions.

<sup>2</sup> Excluded are 126 people who were either raised in another religion or in no religion.

## **Changes at the Aggregate Level**

The first and simplest step in analyzing change in Jewishness is to determine the *rates* of change overall. That is, to what extent are people reporting stability or change? (Later on in the analysis the *direction* of the change will be assessed.) For each of the six measures an overall rate of stability can be determined, despite the differences in question formats.

### *Denominational Retention*

Beginning with denominational retention, the rate of stability is calculated by comparing the respondent's denomination during upbringing to his/her present denominational preference. Thus anyone who describes herself as having been raised Conservative and as currently Conservative (and so on for each denomination) would be termed for our purposes as a "stayer." Three-fifths (60%) of those raised Conservative say that they are Conservative today; 73% of those raised Orthodox say they are still Orthodox; and 80% of those raised Reform describe their current denomination the same way. Overall 70% continue to identify in adult life with the denomination of their upbringing, with the remaining 30% having switched denominational preference.

It is noteworthy that the Orthodox retain their own in numbers similar to the other denominations, performing neither significantly better nor significantly worse. That the Conservative movement does the least well relative to the other two movements is perhaps explained by its location in the "middle" between Orthodoxy and Reform. Among the three main denominations, the Conservative movement is the only one to offer an easy egress in both directions – towards Orthodoxy and towards Reform. The high retention rate among Reform Jews includes both those who view "Reform" as an ideology attached to a synagogue movement as well as those for whom "reform" is a shorthand for "least religious, least active" (This is especially the case when a person says "I was raised *reformed*"). Bear in mind that denomination may not be a particularly accurate variable to measure. For instance, it is well known that there are people raised Orthodox who today affiliate as ultra-Orthodox, yet the designations on the survey do not capture this dynamic. When asked to indicate their current denomination, Orthodox of all

stripes call themselves “Orthodox,” even those who have become *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox). This suggests that more than 25% of those raised Orthodox may in fact experience denominational changes in adulthood. Similarly, many of the least involved or lapsing Jews call themselves “Reform” or “Reconstructionist,” hearing that these are the end of a scale of Jewish practice ranging from most to least.

#### *Perceived Overall Stability of Jewish Identity*

The second measure of change is based on a judgment made by the respondents, who were asked to describe the extent of similarity or difference between their current way of being Jewish and the Jewishness of their upbringing. A stayer in this case is a person who describes his current way of being Jewish as *similar* to his upbringing, while a “mover” is a person who describes it as *different*. Three-fifths (60%) of the respondents perceived their current way of being Jewish as similar to how they were raised, and the remaining 40% viewed their current Jewishness as somehow different. (The survey question did not clarify the criteria used by the respondent in making this assessment.)

#### *Change in Four Measures of Jewish Involvement*

The remaining four measures of change are based on comparisons between the respondent’s past experiences and his/her present one, in relation to four specific aspects of Jewish life: the importance of being Jewish, lighting Shabbat candles, attending synagogue, and not owning a Christmas tree. For example, the respondent’s self-report about the importance of being Jewish in his/her life at age 11 or 12 is compared to the respondent’s assessment of this variable today. The comparisons are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

**Changes in Four Measures of Jewishness**

| <b>1. Importance of Being Jewish (“extremely”)</b> |     |    |       |            |            |
|--|-----|----|-------|------------|------------|
| At Age 11 or 12                                    |     |    |       |            |            |
| Current Importance                                 | Yes | No | Total | Turn-over  | Net shift  |
| Yes  | 36  | 25 | 61    |            |            |
| No   | 9   | 30 | 39    |            |            |
| Total  | 45  | 55 | 100%  | <b>34%</b> | <b>+16</b> |

| <b>2. Lighting Shabbat Candles</b> |     |    |       |            |            |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|-------|------------|------------|
| During Upbringing                  |     |    |       |            |            |
| Current Practice                   | Yes | No | Total | Turn-over  | Net shift  |
| Yes                                | 25  | 6  | 31    |            |            |
| No                                 | 26  | 43 | 69    |            |            |
| Total                              | 51  | 50 | 100%  | <b>32%</b> | <b>-20</b> |

| <b>3. Synagogue Attendance (monthly or more often)</b> |     |    |       |            |            |
|--|-----|----|-------|------------|------------|
| At Age 11 or 12  |     |    |       |            |            |
| Current Practice                                       | Yes | No | Total | Turn-over  | Net shift  |
| Yes  | 19  | 6  | 25    |            |            |
| No   | 36  | 39 | 75    |            |            |
| Total  | 55  | 45 | 100%  | <b>42%</b> | <b>-30</b> |

| <b>4. Never Had A Christmas Tree</b> |       |      |       |            |           |
|--------------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------------|-----------|
| During Upbringing                    |       |      |       |            |           |
| Current Practice                     | Never | Ever | Total | Turn-over  | Net shift |
| Never                                | 75    | 6    | 81    |            |           |
| Ever                                 | 12    | 7    | 19    |            |           |
| Total                                | 87    | 13   | 100%  | <b>18%</b> | <b>-6</b> |

How to read the chart: In the first table, 45% of the respondents reported that being Jewish was “extremely important” to them at age 11 or 12, while 55% saw it as less important. Regarding the importance of being Jewish in their lives today, 61% said it was extremely important, while 39% rated it as less important. Of the 45% for whom being Jewish was very important in adolescence, 36% still view it that way while 9% now view it as less important. The net shift represents a change in the percentage of people who viewed being Jewish as very important at age 11 or 12 (45%) compared to those who viewed it as important in adulthood (61%), a shift of 16 points. The turnover represents the percentage of individuals who changed their views in either direction: 25% of the respondents rated the importance of being Jewish in their lives more highly in adulthood than they did in adolescence, while 9% viewed it as more important in adolescence. Thus the turnover rate is 34%.

In looking at these four tables, there are several points to consider. First, we notice the overall direction of change. For each of the four measures we ask, “Overall, is it on the upswing or the downswing?” The technical term for this statistic is the *net shift*, which summarizes the overall shift in direction for each measure of Jewishness at the aggregate level. A second datum contained in each chart is the degree of change at the *individual level*, a statistic that is termed *turnover*. This statistic tells us what percentage of the respondents changed their practice with regard to each of the four measures of Jewishness. We will first consider the overall direction of change (*net shift*) for each measure, in order to gauge the overall pattern of change. Later on we will examine the degree of change at the individual level (*turnover rates*).

Regarding the *importance of being Jewish*, 45% of the sample rated this as extremely important at age 11 or 12. This percentage grew to 61% in adulthood, indicating a net increase of 16 percentage points.

In contrast, the other three measures of Jewishness showed overall declines over time. More than half (55%) of the respondents reported that they *attended synagogue* monthly or more often at age 11 or 12, but only one-quarter reported that they currently attend that often, a net decrease of 30 percentage points. Similarly, half (51%) the respondents reported that *Shabbat candles* were lit regularly during their childhood, but only 31% report lighting Shabbat candles in their homes today. This is a net decrease of 20 points. Finally, the vast majority (87%) of respondents report that they *never had a Christmas tree at home* during their upbringing, and 81% report that they don’t have a tree now, a decrease of 6% points.

At the aggregate level, *there has been an upswing in the respondents’ reporting that being Jewish is an important part of their lives, while at the same time there have been decreases in the extent of Jewish practice, as indexed by synagogue attendance and*

*lighting Shabbat candles.* Despite an upswing in the percentage of intermarried individuals (6% of the respondents came from homes with only one Jewish parent, while at least 16% of the respondents overall and 23% of all married respondents currently live in households with a non-Jew), the percentage of respondents with Christmas trees at home has increased by only 6 percentage points.

In addition to examining these *net shifts* in Jewish commitment and practice as they apply to the sample as a whole, it is important to determine the percentage of people who have changed from past to present on each indicator (i.e. *turnover rates*). Bear in mind that these two rates refer to different levels of analysis. For instance, imagine a decrease in candle lighting from 75% to 25% for the sample as a whole -- a net shift of 50 points. This shift could be the result of two very different situations with regard to individual practice. One possibility is that none of 75% of the respondents who lit candles in the past continue to light candles today, while 25% who never lit candles in the past now light them. In this case fully 100% of the people have changed their practice (and the turnover rate would be 100%). A second, very different possibility for the same net shift of 50 points would be if 75% of the people lit candles in the past, but 50% no longer light them. In this case 50% of the people would have changed their practice (while 50% would have remained stable --25% continued to light candles and 25% never lit candles), so the turnover rate is 50%.

The turnover rates for each of the four “before and after” measures of Jewish involvement (i.e. comparing childhood involvement to current involvement) provide a means of comparing degrees of stability and change. These four measures are rank-ordered from most to least stable in Table 4.2. In addition to these four measures, the table also includes the first two measures of stability we discussed earlier in this chapter – denomination retention and perceived overall stability of Jewish identity.

Table 4.2  
**Rank Order of Six Measures of Stability in Jewish Involvement Over Time**

| Raised Jewish only (n=1378)   |                           |           |        |
|---|---------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Measure   | (reported in percentages) | Stability | Change |
| Never having a Christmas tree at home*  |                           | 82        | 18     |
| Denomination*   |                           | 70        | 30     |
| Lighting Shabbat candles in the household*<br>(“usually”, “most” or “every” week)                         |                           | 68        | 32     |
| The importance of being Jewish**<br>(“very” or “extremely”)   |                           | 66        | 34     |
| How does your current way of being Jewish compare with how you were raised?<br>(“similar” or “different”) |                           | 60        | 40     |
| Synagogue attendance**<br>(“monthly” or “more often”)   |                           | 58        | 42     |

\* Questions comparing Jewishness during upbringing to current Jewishness.

\*\* Questions comparing Jewishness at age 11 or 12 and to current Jewishness.

Of the four “before and after” measures, “never having a Christmas tree” yielded the highest proportion of Jewish stability among respondents. 82% of the respondents reported continuity of practice (high or low) from their childhood upbringing to the present and could be termed stayers, while 18% reported having changed their practice from childhood to adulthood. The movers included both those who stopped having a Christmas tree as well as those who never had a Christmas tree in childhood but who adopted this practice later on in their lives. As an index of change, this measure lies at one extreme and probably overstates the rate of Jewish stability over time, since for most Jews, not having a Christmas tree is something about which there is relatively strong consensus both today (81% of those raised Jewish do not have one currently) as well as in the past (87% of those raised Jewish never had one during upbringing.). For most people not having a Christmas tree is a measure of the extent of boundary maintenance, a way of asserting that one is *not* Christian.

In contrast to never having a Christmas tree, attending synagogue (monthly or more often) revealed the greatest *variability* over time, with 42% of respondents reporting

change in their practice (from age 11 or 12 to adulthood) and 58% reporting stability. Note that this group includes both the constant synagogue-goers as well as the constant non-goers. Regular synagogue attendance fluctuates more in relation to various life circumstances than some of the other indicators of Jewish involvement. This may be partially due to the fact that the survey question elicited what for many people was probably an elevated baseline “reading” of childhood synagogue attendance, since it queried about the respondent’s behavior at age eleven or twelve -- a pre-Bar Mitzvah period during which respondents may have attended synagogue more frequently than was typical during the rest of their upbringing. For many people, regular synagogue attendance in adulthood pales dramatically in comparison, as in the case of people who attended synagogue regularly in order to become a Bar Mitzvah, after which they did not continue to attend. Another example of the fluctuation of synagogue attendance in relation to life course changes is seen among observant, married women with children, many of whom do not attend synagogue as frequently as they did when they were adolescents.

In between the relative stability over time regarding the avoidance of Christmas trees and the relative variability over time of synagogue attendance, the remaining two measures of change --lighting Shabbat candles and views about the importance of being Jewish -- showed similar rates of stability. Sixty-eight per cent of respondents were stayers regarding Shabbat candles, and 66% of respondents had stable views about the importance (or lack thereof) of being Jewish in their lives.

Across all six measures of change there is evidence of both stability and change, although more people emulate the patterns of their upbringing than deviate from them. For most people, the past generally appears to be a good predictor of the future. Those who are Jewishly involved as children turn out to be Jewishly involved adults, and those who are raised with minimal Jewish commitment tend to be minimally involved as adults. This suggests that for the stayers at least, there is a relatively stable transmission of a Jewish way of life (or a commitment to a set of values) that begins early in the formative years



and continues on into adulthood. The stayers – both those who have been highly involved as well as those who are less intensively engaged --are “groomed” into their current pattern of Jewish involvement beginning with their early life experiences.<sup>3</sup>

*But the parallel finding that the “change rates” hover between 30-40% suggests that for a large segment of the population, Jewishness is something that can fluctuate and evolve over a person’s lifetime (or at least from childhood to middle adulthood).* In addition to the two stable journeys that have been delineated among those termed stayers– those with *higher* or *lower intensity* involvement-- it is possible to isolate two additional sorts of trajectories among the movers. One possibility is where a person *lapses out* of an active Jewish lifestyle and becomes relatively inactive. By contrast, a person who has had very little involvement in the past can also *bloom* into a more intensive Jewish life. Clearly there are different patterns of change represented among the respondents. The next step in the analysis is to determine each person’s journey type by comparing the individual’s present Jewishness to his/her past identification and behavior. This task is tricky because the outcomes vary depending on which measure is used. In the next section of this chapter a typology of journeys is developed, first by examining each of the four “before and after” measures separately and then by combining two of the measures to assign each person to one of five overall journey types.

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<sup>3</sup> In a study of leaders in training, Jonathan Sarna applies the terms “groom” and “bloom:” He uses groom to refer to those who were raised into intensive Jewish commitment. (Note that his sample did not include currently uninvolved Jews, who might have been groomed to indifference.) Sarna, J. (1995) “The Road to Leadership.” In C. Liebman (Ed.) *Expectations, Education and Experiences of Jewish Professional Leaders: Report on the Wexner Foundation Research Project on Contemporary Jewish Professional Leadership*. Research Report 12, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies. Brandeis University.

## Identifying Characteristic Journeys

We observed five major types of journeys or trajectories by listening to life stories told during the in-depth interview phase of this study:

- (1) *Steady higher intensity involvement*: those who were highly involved in childhood and continued that pattern in adulthood
- (2) *Steady lower intensity involvement*: those who were relatively uninvolved in childhood and continued that pattern in adulthood
- (3) *“Decreasing” or “lapsing” involvement*: those whose Jewish involvement decreased from childhood to adulthood
- (4) *“Blooming” or “increasing” involvement*: those whose Jewish involvement increased from childhood to adulthood
- (5) *“Oscillating” involvement*: those whose pattern of involvement swung back and forth at different periods of their lives

In the survey data we can identify the first four of the journey types using the “before and after” measures which compare a person’s past experience to the present (measured by three different practices-- lighting candles, attending synagogue, and never having a Christmas tree -- or by subjective experience -- indicating the importance of being Jewish). Only the oscillating journey lies out of the reach of this current data set, since identifying this pattern would require at least one more data point between past and present.

The frequency of these four patterns in the sample is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3  
**Four Patterns of Change Over Time**

Raised Jewish Only (n=1,378)

| <b>Measure</b> (reported in percentages)  | <i>J o u r n e y   T y p e s</i> |                   |              |                 |      |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|------|
|   | <b>Steady High</b>               | <b>Steady Low</b> | <b>Lapse</b> | <b>Increase</b> |      |
| The importance of being Jewish            | 36                               | 30                | 9            | 25              | 100% |
| Lighting Shabbat candles in the household | 25                               | 43                | 26           | 6               | 100% |
| Synagogue attendance                      | 19                               | 39                | 36           | 7               | 100% |
| Never having a Christmas tree at home     | 75                               | 7                 | 12           | 6               | 100% |

The incidence rates for each of the four patterns vary widely, depending on which of four separate behaviors or perceptions is being tracked (the importance of being Jewish, lighting Shabbat candles, attending synagogue, or never having a Christmas tree). The percentage of people whose relationship to Jewishness could be characterized as “steady high involvement” (high in past and high now) ranges from of 75% when based on those who have never had a Christmas tree at home, to a low of 19% when it is based on those who were raised attending synagogue monthly or more often and who continue to do so now. Similarly, the percentage of those whose journeys would be categorized as “steady low involvement” (low in past and low now) ranges from a high of 43% when assessed in terms of lighting Shabbat candles to a low of only 7% when based on those who have never had a Christmas tree at home.

The percentage of “lapsers” (high in past, but lower now) ranges from a high of 36% based on synagogue attendance to a low of 9% based on the measure of subjective centrality. Finally, the incidence of “increasers” (low in past, but higher now) ranges from a high of 25% based on subjective centrality, to a low of 6% based on each of the three behavioral measures. Clearly, determining the nature or pattern of a person’s journey depends on which measure is being employed.

Given the wide variation across these measures, what is the best way of defining each journey? On the one hand, using the subjective dimension alone to characterize patterns of change may create too rosy a picture, while using only behavioral measures conveys a sense that people's ties to Jewishness are altogether eroding. It is clear that relying on either the behavioral or the perceptual (subjective) indicator alone is not sufficient. Just as we have seen a variety of ways that different people experience being Jewish, so too this diversity of expression characterizes a person's relationship to Jewishness over time. Depending on which theme or axis is traced over the life course, some variation in patterning may emerge<sup>4</sup>. Clearly some people's lives are characterized by steady lower involvement in religious ritual practice but ongoing subjective commitment to Jewishness. The only way to capture such a pattern is to track change using two dimensions.

The journeys can be defined by using two dimensions— a perceptual measure (i.e. the importance of being Jewish) and a behavioral measure— in this case indexed by the practice of regularly lighting Shabbat candles, since this indicator lies midway between the “lenience” (of never having a Christmas tree) and the “stringency” (of attending synagogue monthly or more often) among the measures available in the survey. Using the lighting of Shabbat candles as the behavioral measure may lead us to somewhat under-report the stayers, because some single people with otherwise constant ritual practice do not light Shabbat candles until they get married. (This is somewhat true for young women and very true for young men who assume that their mothers are at home lighting candles “for them.”)

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<sup>4</sup> In future research it will be important to include an even wider range of questions about the nature of the Jewishness during the respondent's upbringing in the family of origin, moving beyond the Ritual and Subjective (and at least add in a more Cultural-Communal measure).

When examined in two dimensions – in terms of *both* behavioral practice and in terms of changing perception or subjective commitment over time (where each of these dimensions results in four possible patterns: steady high, steady low, increasing and lapsing)-- there are 16 potential combinations of the four outcomes based on the two measures of Jewish expression (Shabbat candles and subjective importance). These are displayed in the middle columns of Table 4.4.

Table 4.4  
**Movers and Stayers: Sixteen Patterns of Subjective and Ritual Change Over Time**

*Raised Jewish (n=1,378)*

|  | Subjective Measure | Ritual Measure | %            |
|--|--------------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>STAYERS</b>   |                    |                |              |
| 1. <i>Steady low involvement</i>   | a) steady low      | steady low     | 20.4         |
| 2. <i>Steady high involvement</i>  | b) steady high     | steady high    | 19.1         |
|  |                    |                | <b>39.5%</b> |
| <b>MOVERS</b>  |                    |                |              |
| 3. <i>Interior</i> : People with high or increasing subjective commitments, but lapsing or low ritual.       | c) increase        | steady low     | 11.9         |
|  | d) steady high     | lapse          | 8.0          |
|  | e) steady high     | steady low     | 6.8          |
|  | f) increase        | lapse          | 5.6          |
|  |                    |                | <b>32.3</b>  |
| 4. <i>Lapsing</i> : People with low or lapsing subjective commitments, and low or lapsing ritual.            | g) steady low      | lapse          | 8.0          |
|  | h) lapse           | lapse          | 4.1          |
|  | i) lapse           | steady low     | 4.1          |
|  |                    |                | <b>16.2</b>  |
| 5. <i>Increasing</i> : People with high or increasing subjective commitments, and increasing or high ritual. | j) steady high     | increase       | 1.9          |
|  | k) increase        | increase       | 3.0          |
|  | l) increase        | steady high    | 4.6          |
|  |                    |                | <b>9.5</b>   |
| 6. People with low or lapsing subjective commitments, with high or increasing ritual.                        | m) steady low      | steady high    | .9           |
|  | n) lapse           | steady high    | .7           |
|  | o) steady low      | increase       | .6           |
|  | p) lapse           | increase       | .2           |
|  |                    |                | <b>2.4</b>   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |                    |                | <b>100%</b>  |

These 16 combinations can be reduced to a more manageable set of groupings. One way to cluster these patterns is to look for instances where the journey based on subjective indicators are *identical* to the journey based on behavioral indicators. In other words, this strategy involves looking for patterns where the outcome is the same irrespective of which of the two indicator measures is employed. Altogether, the journeys of 46.6% of

the people in the study fall into this category (“steady-steady,” “lapse-lapse,” or “increase-increase” --patterns a, b, h, and k). The “steady-steady” patterns are by far the most prevalent -- one-fifth (20%) of the sample are people who show steady low intensity Jewish involvement according to both subjective and behavioral (i.e. ritual) measures, while 19% are people with steady high intensity involvement according to both measures. By contrast, only 4% of the sample is people who are categorized as lapsing according to *both* measures, and only 3% are increasers according to *both* measures. The two major patterns here involve stable engagement over time, while the minor ones involve variable engagement.

The difference between stable and variable engagement suggests another way to examine these 16 patterns – by distinguishing between those who have had a more or less *fixed* experience over time and between those whose experience has been more *dynamic*. The journeys of nearly half (47.2%) of the people in our sample remained stable over time (patterns a, b, e and m), and of these, the “steady low, steady low” and the “steady high, steady high” patterns again predominated. The “steady high (on the subjective measure), steady low (on the behavioral measure)” and the “steady low (subjective), steady high (behavioral)” patterns accounted for only 8% of the total. These were cases where the patterns included inconsistent levels of involvement across the subjective and behavioral dimensions.

Finally, we can distinguish among those patterns that contain a *consistent* overall direction or level for both subjective and behavioral measures and those which are *inconsistent*. The journeys of two-thirds of the sample are consistent by this definition (steady low involvement; steady high involvement; the lapsers and the increasers -- patterns a, b, g, h, i, j, k, and l), while the remaining third have experienced journeys with *high* or *increasing involvement* on one measure but *low* or *decreasing* involvement on the other (patterns c, d, e, f, m, n, o, and p).

Based on these three sets of contrasts, the 16 patterns described above can be split into two groups: the stayers, whose Jewish experience is both stable and consistent over time

(those with steady low or steady high involvement over time --patterns a and b); and the movers, whose experience is either variable or inconsistent or both – (patterns c through p). The stayers are more easily characterized by a single dimensional measure (either the subjective or the behavioral), whereas *both* dimensions are often needed to depict the patterns of the movers. The movers tend to be characterized by non-symmetry in behavioral and subjective expressions over time. This finding suggests that among the movers it is less common for a person to change in a wholesale manner -- all at once in every way (i.e. both perceptually and behaviorally)-- and more typical for change to be reflected in one domain or the other. Perhaps the movers have an altogether higher tolerance for inconsistency than do the stayers.

The *lack of consonance* across measures may be an important indicator about a person's ongoing relationship to Jewishness, potentially signaling the onset of change. For instance, a person who ceases to feel that being Jewish is very important but who still keeps kosher or observes Shabbat may be on the verge of a journey of lapsing away from ritual expression. Similarly, a person whose journey is one of "blooming" when measured using a subjective index, but who is categorized as "steady low" when measured behaviorally, may be on the cusp of increased behavioral expression.

On the other hand, it is also possible that the lack of consonance across the subjective and behavioral measures of change represents a normal (rather than temporary) state for the individual, and this asymmetry itself may be a hallmark of a large segment of American Jewry. This lack of consonance seems to underscore how personal and idiosyncratic Jewish identity is for many American Jews. People in the middle – the movers-- seem to be trying to figure out what works for them Jewishly. *For them, Jewish identity has become a journey, rather than a steady set of practices and commitments.* This lack of consistency across the subjective and behavioral measures over time suggests a particularly American pattern of identity. In contrast to the more traditional either/or dichotomy of complete Jewish involvement versus total assimilation, our study reveals a

distinctly American possibility of a *both/and* middle ground, in between the two polar extremes of all or nothing.

Having identified the two clear journey types among the stayers, the next step is to examine the 14 remaining patterns and to cluster these into sensible groupings. (See Table 4.4.) The movers are characterized by four kinds of journeys. First, one-third (32%) of the sample is people with high or increasing feelings of connection to Jewishness, but with low or decreasing involvement in religious ritual (at least as measured by lighting Shabbat candles). This pattern will be termed an *interior journey*, since a person's internal commitments to Jewishness endure and continue to deepen, although the individual's Jewish practice may be low or on the wane. Second, one-sixth (16%) of the sample is people who are *lapsing* either in their subjective commitments, their ritual practice or both. Third, one-tenth of the sample is people who are *increasing or intensifying* either their religious practice or internal commitment or both. Finally, the last pattern of change is one where a person has low or lapsing subjective commitment along with high or increasing ritual practice. *Since only 2.4% of the sample was characterized by this pattern, it will be dropped from the final typology and subsequent analysis.* With only 32 people it is too small a group to analyze statistically. However, it is noteworthy that 17 of the 32 people with this pattern were categorized as Tradition-Oriented, a pattern of current Jewish engagement similarly characterized by high Ritual practice but relatively low Subjective Jewish Centrality.



Having dropped this last pattern, we now turn our attention to the **five basic types of journeys** based on both subjective (i.e. importance of being Jewish) and behavioral (i.e. lighting Shabbat candles) measures of Jewish involvement over time. These journey types are:

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. <i>Steady Low intensity Jewish involvement</i> on both dimensions.                       | 21%       |
| 2. <i>Lapsing or Decreasing</i> on at least one dimension; low or lapsing on the other.     | 17        |
| 3. <i>Interior</i> : Higher or increasing subjective and low or decreasing ritual practice. | 33        |
| 4. <i>Increasing</i> on at least one measure; increasing or high on the other.              | 10        |
| 5. <i>Steady high intensity Jewish involvement</i> on both dimensions.                      | <u>20</u> |
| TOTAL   | 100%      |

It is noteworthy that the state of ritual practice is either steadily low or decreasing for nearly 70% of the sample, while subjective attachment is either steadily high or increasing for 63% of the sample. The conventional pessimistic expectation about American Jewishness (and the modern Jewish experience more generally) has been that if practice erodes, so, too does Jewish consciousness. This appears to be the case for 17% of the sample with journeys of lapsing or decreasing Jewishness. However, the existence of the *Inner or interior* journeys presents an alternative possibility: a person's internal value commitments intensify, while the religious and communal practices remains low or decrease. Fully one-third of the sample experienced the inner journey.

## Explicating the Journeys

Having identified a distinctive type of journey for each individual in our study, we now can explore the nature of these journeys. What accounts for each journey type? Where do the journeys lead? What is the relationship between the journeys and the series of seven types of Jewish engagement identified in Chapter Two? Are particular identity patterns associated with particular journeys? What are the experiences associated with staying or with moving? It is to these questions that we now turn our attention.

### *Jewishness during Upbringing*

There are many questions to explore, but a good place to begin is with the question of a person's Jewish origins and the relationship between those origins and an individual's current situation. So far, we have identified the direction of a person's journey, but we have looked at this without a baseline. In order to create such a baseline, a person's *denomination during upbringing* can serve as a rough proxy. The relationship between type of journey and denomination of upbringing is shown in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5  
**Denomination Raised by Journey Type**

|             | Orthodox<br>(n=290) | Conservative<br>(n=483) | Reform<br>(n=448) | Other<br>(n=104) | Total<br>(n=1,325) |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Steady Low  | 3                   | 14                      | 34                | 45               | 21                 |
| Lapsing     | 9                   | 19                      | 21                | 10               | 17                 |
| Interior    | 14                  | 44                      | 36                | 29               | 33                 |
| Increasing  | 10                  | 11                      | 8                 | 14               | 10                 |
| Steady High | 64                  | 14                      | 1                 | 3                | 20                 |
| TOTAL       | 100%                | 100%                    | 100%              | 100%             | 100%               |

There is a strong relationship between denomination raised and the type of journey upon which a person will embark. Among the people who say that they were raised Orthodox, nearly two-thirds have followed Steady High journeys and an additional 10% have intensified their Jewishness. (Bear in mind that since “lighting Shabbat candles regularly” was the behavioral measure used for the journey, a Steady High journey refers to steady candle lighting and not necessarily to steady observance of “more rigorous” mitzvot.) In the other direction, 14% of those raised Orthodox ended up on journeys that

were characterized as Interior, because although their practice declined, their subjective or values attachment to Jewishness increased or stayed the same. Nine percent have experienced decreasing involvement in Jewish life, although some of these may represent an artifact of measuring ritual according to candlelighting. Many Jewishly observant single young adults do not light Shabbat candles while living on their own, although they will when they form their own families. It is perhaps an anomaly that 3% of those raised Orthodox have had steady journeys of low or non-involvement (prompting the question of what these respondents meant by terming their upbringing “Orthodox”).

Among those who were raised Conservative, one-quarter were classified as having Steady High or Increasing journeys and one-third were classified as having Lapsing or Steady Low journeys. Interior journeys of strong commitment but lessening or low practice were characteristic of 44% of those raised Conservative, the largest percentage of any of the denominations.

Among those who said that they were raised Reform, less than one-tenth “Increased” or had Steady High journeys. Thirty-six percent had Interior journeys of strong subjective commitment to Jewishness coupled with low or decreasing practice, while 55% had Steady Low or Lapsing involvement. A similar pattern emerged for those raised with some other or no denomination. Most of these people followed Steady Low or Lapsing journeys (55% in all), 29% experienced interior journeys, and 17% had journeys of Steady High or Increasing involvement.

### *Current Jewish Identity*

There is also a strong relationship between the character of a person’s journey and the nature of that person’s current Jewishness. The people at either end of the identity spectrum – the Otherwise Engaged and the Orthodox Intensively Engaged– have the steadiest journeys (if one can call such steadiness a *journey*), exhibiting the least change.

At the same time, people with mixed patterns of identity experienced journeys characterized by movement and change. Table 4.6 depicts these relationships:

Table 4.6

**Patterns of Current Jewish Engagement by Journey Type**

|                     | Really Indiff.    | Some Interest  | Subjective   | Cultural Comm. | Tradition-Oriented | Non-Orth Engaged | Orthodox Engaged | TOTAL           |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                     | N=10<br>1<br>(8%) | n=312<br>(24%) | n=92<br>(7%) | n=189<br>(14%) | n=169<br>(13%)     | n=236<br>(18%)   | n=226<br>(17%)   | 1,325<br>(100%) |
| <b>Journey Type</b> |                   |                |              |                |                    |                  |                  |                 |
| Steady Low          | 65                | 43             | 12           | 20             | 14                 | 2                | --               | 21              |
| Lapsing             | 21                | 30             | 15           | 23             | 25                 | 2                | --               | 17              |
| Interior            | 14                | 26             | 70           | 55             | 40                 | 44               | 1                | 33              |
| Increasing          | --                | --             | 2            | 2              | 12                 | 24               | 20               | 10              |
| Steady High         | --                | --             | 1            | --             | 8                  | 28               | 78               | 20              |
| TOTAL               | 100               | 100            | 100          | 100            | 100                | 100              | 100              | 100             |

The fact that two-thirds of those who are Really Indifferent (in this case Steady Low journey), and more than three-quarters (78%) of the Orthodox Intensively Engaged are stayers (with Steady High journeys), shows how much these people can be said to have been *groomed* for their current ways of being Jewish.

In contrast to the steady journeys which typify people who are either the least or the most intensively engaged Jewishly, *people with mixed patterns of Jewish engagement tend to be characterized by journeys of movement and change, with the most common of the mixed pattern journeys being the Interior one.* Fully 87% of the Subjectively Engaged turn out to be movers in terms of their journeys. The vast majority (70%) are characterized by Interior journeys, signifying that their subjective commitments to being Jewish have intensified or remained high over time, while their involvement with Jewish practice has decreased or remained low. Similarly, 80% of the people with Cultural-Communal patterns of current involvement have changing journeys rather than stable ones, with the Interior journey being most characteristic (55%). The remaining movers in the group are mostly people whose Jewish involvement has decreased over time (i.e., 23% had Lapsing journeys). Movement rather than stability is also typical for the Tradition-Oriented (74%), for whom the Interior journey is the modal pattern (40%).

Among the Intensively Engaged Non-Orthodox, the majority (70%) experienced some sort of change in Jewishness since childhood, and here, too, the Interior journey was the most frequent (44%). Even among the Otherwise Engaged with Some Interest, more people changed (56%) than remained steady over time. Most of the movers Lapsed (30%), or had Steady Low journeys (43%), while 26% were characterized by Interior journeys.

The experiences of people with mixed patterns of Jewish engagement might be more correctly characterized as a form of exploring, rather than of journeying, since for many individuals their destination seems to be unclear. In a more liberal light one could view their experience as suggestive of “inventiveness.” In a more conservative light these same experiences might be viewed as a form of picking and choosing, looking for some meaningful essence, rather than accepting or rejecting the entire package of Judaism.

The directions of movement vary for people in the middle patterns of engagement. The aggregate profile of these middle groups is one of upswings, downswings and spirals. For these people identity may well be experienced as a journey, an ongoing interplay between the self and the environment. If this is the case, there is much interest in understanding how, when and why people change, questions that this study begins to examine in a descriptive fashion.

The journeys leading to these mixed types of engagement come across less clearly delineated than either the Steady High or the Steady Low journeys. Specifically, the journeys of the movers are characterized by *uneven* exposure to Jewish socializing or educational experiences, rather than by complete immersion in or lack of exposure to these experiences. This point is suggested by the following table [4.7], which depicts the number of past educational experiences by type of journey:

Table 4.7

**Number of Past Educational Experiences by Type of Journey**

| <i>Percentage reporting</i>  | <i>Steady Low</i> | <i>Lapse</i> | <i>Interior</i> | <i>Increasing</i> | <i>Steady High</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Number of Experiences</u> |                   |              |                 |                   |                    |
| 0-2                          | 60                | 34           | 34              | 11                | 6                  |
| 3-5                          | 36                | 55           | 49              | 55                | 41                 |
| 6-8                          | 4                 | 11           | 17              | 35                | 53                 |
| Total                        | 100%              | 100%         | 100%            | 100%              | 100%               |

The following educational experiences were counted for each person: regular synagogue attendance during upbringing, at least 1 year of Jewish schooling during childhood, Jewish summer camp, youth group involvement, Jewish studies classes, Hillel involvement, having visited Israel, and having had a particularly significant experience which attracted the respondent to Jewish life.

People with Steady Low journeys have had minimal exposure to Jewish educational programs, while those with Steady High journeys have had more sustained exposure to such experiences. The movers are more likely to have experienced uneven exposure, or perhaps serial exposure, as captured in simply quantitative terms. One-third of the people with Lapsing or Interior journeys have had minimal exposure to these types of experiences, compared to one-third of the Increasers, who have had a wider range of experiences.

**Correlates of Stability and Change**

What explains these patterns of change? Which experiences correlate with each pattern? Each journey has a different “feel,” and these are described below. In parsing these different trajectories I draw on Table 4.8 (pages 171-172 below), which shows the incidence of each journey for cohorts of varied background experiences (i.e. the nine “hypotheses about factors which influence Jewishness in adulthood”), which were explored in detail in Chapter Three. In addition, I incorporate examples of each journey type selected from the in-depth interviews from Phase One of the study.

## The Stable Journeys

### Steady Low Involvement

For the least involved Jews, a person's Jewish origins are experienced as an accident of history, which, in America at least, is not an unfortunate one. Among the five types, the people with Steady Low journeys were the least likely to have had any sustained positive exposure to Jewishness. These were people who came from assimilated, Americanized households, where only a handful (6-7%) of respondents reported that being Jewish was very important to their parents, compared to 38% in the sample as a whole. For instance, Robert describes his Jewish upbringing as "pretty absent:"

My grandparents were not religious. My grandfather went to temple on the High Holy days but did not go any other time. Nobody was kosher.

Robert's parents did not send him to Hebrew school because they felt that it was meaningless and they didn't want to spend the money. He was tutored for a year and celebrated his Bar Mitzvah as a favor to his mother who was doing it as a favor to her father.

This was presented to me as my mother saying, "Please do this for me because my father is going to be very, very upset. This is something you should do for me and your grandparents. But you don't have to believe in any of this. But I'd like you to do this."

More than one-third (37%) of the respondents in the Steady Low Involvement group were raised by only one of their parents, as compared to 29% in the sample as a whole. In Lana's case, her parents divorced when she was six. In her own words:

Before the divorce, I had all Jewish friends. I felt good on Chanukah, such a good holiday...also Passover. All the family came together and my grandfather made everyone laugh. I felt warm and protected, a good family feeling. My grandfather was a good man.

After the divorce, all contact with Lana's father and his family was cut off. Lana's mother struggled to support her children and the family had much less than did others in Lana's neighborhood. Lana's grandmother saw to it that her grandchildren had clothes, even if they were hand-me-downs, but her mother was too proud to ask for or take help. Subsequently Lana's family moved to a "bad neighborhood" where Lana says that her self-esteem and her sense of positive connection to Jewishness suffered greatly.

One-quarter of the respondents in the Steady Low Involvement group grew up in households where there was a Christmas tree at least once in a while, although only 7% of the respondents came from mixed-married households. Nearly one-third (32%) of the respondents had no formal Jewish education during their upbringing, compared to 20% in the sample as a whole. In Lana's case, "little about being Jewish was passed down to me. We had a Christmas tree and celebrated Hanukkah."

More than half (56%) of the Steady Low Involvement group say that they were raised Reform and an additional 17% were not raised within a particular denomination, compared to 8% of the denominationally unaffiliated in our overall sample. People with Steady Low journeys had the lowest participation rates of the five groups: fewer than half (45%) had a bar mitzvah, 22% attended Jewish summer camp, and 31% participated at some point in a Jewish youth group. Only one in eight participated in either Hillel or Jewish studies courses in college; 19% visited Israel. Approximately one-quarter (26%) reported having had any particularly positive experiences that attracted them to Jewish life, while one-third (32%), reported experiencing particularly negative events. In Robert's case, he developed a negative image of Jewishness through a number of experiences. First, he learned that being Jewish had a negative connotation:

I was surprised [to learn] that I was Jewish. Somebody told me that I was Jewish. I was old. I was eight. It happened in the schoolyard. One of the tougher Italian kids in the neighborhood said to me, "Hey, Cohen<sup>5</sup>, you know you're Jewish." And I guess I knew that I was Jewish, but I didn't know that I was Jewish in that way. I didn't know it was something that would really mark me, or differentiate me. And I felt badly about that. I felt ostracized.

Second, Robert described his rich, religious uncle as looking down on his family because they were poor:

My father's older brother was much more observant...He was wealthy. And we were poor... lower middle class; we lived in a housing project. My father's older

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<sup>5</sup> Pseudonym



brother lived in [a well-to-do New York area suburb]. And they would have very fancy, upper middle class seders. And it was really the only time I ever saw them. They were pretty mean people. They were cold, supercilious, looked down on us because we were poor and let us know it.

Thus it is no surprise that these people who were raised with very little exposure to Jewish life and education and with ambivalent or negative attitudes about being Jewish, typically end up rather indifferent or uninvolved regarding their personal ties to Jewishness or to Jewish life. They can be said to have emulated their upbringing, having received a *de facto* grooming in the form of a lack of exposure to Jewish culture and life. For instance, Susanna, a woman in her early 40s says,

My grandparents used to have my father and his sisters for Friday night for dinner but never included the children[!].

We [she and her siblings] weren't involved in that. Maybe that's part of the reason why we have less feeling about that, because we weren't included in that a lot. If my parents were home, my mother lit the candles and we said the prayers over the bread and the wine. But the children were absent from the Friday night dinners and that makes a difference because the ritual doesn't become that much of your life.

[Today] being Jewish is not at all a factor in my life. My husband is Catholic, and I have agreed to raise my children as Catholics. I go with them to church, rather than be divided...

I think that part of the reason that I've made the choices that I've made, is that Judaism has never been very important to me. I was raised in a traditional Reform household. I went to Sunday school and hated it. Nor did I have a particular reason to identify.

From the communal viewpoint of promoting Jewish continuity, the people with Steady Low journeys have been viewed as doomed and somehow irretrievable. For some of the interviewees, Jewishness stood as a barrier between who they were and their secular aspirations. For others, Jewishness and Judaism were not an accessible component of the world in which they were raised. Lacking exposure to Jewish norms and culture, they also lacked interest in a Jewish way of life.

### Steady High Involvement

For the most intensively involved, to be Jewish is to be born into a way of life that is experienced as hardly different from breathing. “What does being Jewish mean to me?” said one such interviewee. “It’s how I see the world. I’m Jewish like I’m a girl.” The person who experiences this sort of journey typically has been raised in an intensive Jewish lifestyle where the commitments and practices of the family of origin, the social networks, and the sorts of schooling and informal educational experiences are all mutually reinforcing. Together these result in stronger Jewish identification and practice. Ruth, a 25 year old woman, said:

Everything about my upbringing was Jewish. Everything expressed in our household had being Jewish as its reference point. I always went to Jewish schools- yeshivot. My parents and grandparents who lived in the other apartment in our two-family house were unquestionably the most important influences. But there were no opposing influences. There was never any choice in what I was to be *-frum* (religiously observant).

Implicit here is a notion of how Jewish identity becomes “strong” or distinct. In this case, Jewishness is seen as a primordial loyalty that comes early in the life of the individual, separate from (and perhaps prior to) reflection, choice and decision-making. By the time a young person raised in this manner reaches later adolescence or adulthood, s/he has been so imprinted with a Jewish way of being that intensive Jewish commitment and involvement results. The socialization principle here is that high saturation, early and often, creates a habit of involvement, an internal commitment, and a reservoir of knowledge and social ties upon which to draw over the course of a lifetime.<sup>6</sup>

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of those who have had Steady High journeys were raised Orthodox, with an additional 25% raised Conservative. Seventy percent reported that day school was their main form of Jewish education during upbringing, and 88% reported receiving six years or more of formal Jewish schooling.

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<sup>6</sup> Kelman (1999) elaborates on the internal processes that lead a person from compliance to greater identification and from identification to commitment to the Jewish group.

In addition to the fact that all respondents in the Steady High group reported that being Jewish was extremely important to them when they were eleven or twelve years old (one of the two measures defining this journey), being Jewish was also highly important to the respondents' parents (77% of the mothers and 79% of the fathers). Nearly three-fifths of the respondents (57%) were second generation in America (the children of immigrants), compared with 15-30% of the other journey types.

More than three-quarters of the members of this group reported having visited Israel at least once in their lives, and nearly as many (72%) attended Jewish summer camp. Two-thirds participated in a Jewish youth group. Fewer of the people in this group attended college, and consequently, rates of Jewish studies courses and Hillel activities are lower here than in other cohorts (52% and 35% respectively). Two-thirds of the individuals in this group reported having had a particularly positive experience that attracted them to Jewish life, compared to 48% of the overall sample. Only 12% reported particularly negative experiences or "turn-offs to Jewish life," about half the overall rate. The experience of people with Steady High journeys is the polar opposite of the experience of those with Steady Low journeys: a maximal positive exposure to Jewish life from an early age, with much contextual reinforcement through the network of community institutions –family, synagogue, day school, summer camp, youth group, and so on.

### *The Journeys of Movers*

There are three types of movers: those who are experiencing Interior journeys (where the subjective is high or increasing, while the behavioral is low or decreasing), those who are increasing on both subjective and observance measures, and those who are Lapsing or decreasing in their Jewish engagement over time. Each of these trajectories is explored in turn below.

#### Interior Journey

The most noteworthy feature of the Interior journeys is that these people develop a sense of the importance of their own Jewishness *early* in their lives: 46% report that being Jewish was especially important to them at age 11 or 12, compared to 20% of the Increasers (and 51% of the Lapsers). For instance, Barbara, a 46 year old woman, recalled:

I think I always knew I was Jewish. I don't remember ever not knowing that. It doesn't seem like there was ever a time I didn't know about the Holocaust also. I also remember being very dressed up in new clothes for the Holidays and it would inevitably always be hot and I remember being out in the courtyard and there was always a special holiday smell in the air. A lot of people were off [from] school for the holidays in my neighborhood. That was a nice special feeling. I also remember being embarrassed. I remember being embarrassed by how certain women were dressed or their makeup that seemed garish to me. I remember hating on the High Holidays the whole pitching for money thing. I still hate that. It's another one of those things that just turned me off.

Two-fifths of the members of this group described their parents as feeling very strongly about being Jewish, compared with 22-25% of the Lapsers and 37-39% of the Increasers. Barbara described her father saying, "He was a *Cohen* and he loves prayers and to sing." Jeremy, a 33 year old man, recalls his parents' forceful reactions to their own Jewishness:

When I was growing up I remember hearing if someone didn't get a job it was because "they don't hire Jews." He also recalls unpleasant neighbors who called his mom a "kike" when they were fighting over the driveway. In turn, his parents called the neighbors "Anti-Semitic John Birchers." These stories shaped my identity - we were Jewish people - we were different. I enjoyed being different.

Interior journeyers grew up in families with a clear sense of boundaries about what was Jewish and what was not (90% of these people reported that they never had a Christmas tree while growing up). For example Jeremy remembers,

...[O]ne Hanukkah, when I was very young, running up to the fireplace and saying, “Did Santa bring us any presents?” When my parents told me that Jewish people do not believe in Santa, this reinforced for me that we were Jewish and different from other people.

Jewish socialization for the Interior Journey group appears to have been less institutionally based than the socialization of people with Increasing or Steady High trajectories. The values and commitments communicated at home seem to have been very important in shaping these individuals’ views, perhaps more than early Jewish schooling (which nearly one-quarter did not receive at all). The fact that nearly half of the Interior Journey group reported having had a particularly significant experience that attracted them to Jewish life seems noteworthy (in comparison with 26% of the Steady Low, 35% of the Lapsers, and much higher percentages among the Increasers and those with Steady High journeys). For example, Barbara talked about seeing a movie that had a major impact on her when she was in her late teens-- “The Voyage of the Damned,” a film about a ship full of Jews that was turned back to Europe during the Second World War.

I remember thinking that it doesn’t matter what I think about being Jewish or how I feel about being Jewish, or how alienated I am, or whether I want to be or don’t want to be, but I am and I would have been there. It was a wake-up call, in a way. It was an acceptance of that piece of my identity. No matter what I think or feel about being Jewish, I am.

In addition, people with Interior journeys come disproportionately from Conservative backgrounds.

### Increasing Jewish Journey

Compared to the Lapsers and to those with Interior journeys, the people who have experienced Increasing involvement over time received greater exposure to Jewish programs both formal and informal. They were more likely to have attended Jewish summer camp (45%, compared to only one-third of each of the other groups) and to have received six or more years of Jewish schooling (62% as compared to 45-50%), and they were nearly three times more liable to have attended day school (25% as compared to 9% among the Lapsers and Interior sojourners). It is not clear how much the subsequent “blooming” of this group is attributable solely to these kinds of exposures, since proportionately more of the Increasers also came from Orthodox households (22%, as compared to around one-tenth of each of the other two groups of movers).

As they got older, the Increasers were much more likely to have partaken in the various “voluntary” experiences available to them, especially college-based activities like Jewish studies classes, Jewish student activities (like Hillel), and visiting Israel. They were much more likely than people with any of the other journeys (including those with Steady High journeys) to have had a particularly significant experience or relationship which attracted them to Jewish life (more than three-quarters of the Increasers reported this, compared to only one-third of the Lapsers and half of the people with Interior journeys). For instance, Tina, a woman in her 40s was raised in a Conservative household and was deeply influenced by one of her teachers in Hebrew (elementary) school who had a religious home. Tina baby-sat for his kids, and she was always welcome there. Over the course of high school, college and graduate school Tina intensified her involvement in Jewish life. She has remained close to her teacher and his children and grandchildren, and the teacher officiated at her wedding.

Similarly, Nancy, a woman in her mid-20s, describes her older sister’s experience, which made a strong impression upon her:

My sister had a lot of problems, anorexia being one of them. In college she became involved in cults and the hippie movement and was kicked out of school

for being “crazy.” She then found her way to Orthodox Judaism and married a Chassidic man.

Nancy’s family is glad that she is now connected to a “legitimate community,” “which leveled her out and has been very good for her.” Her sister’s move to Orthodoxy has prompted Nancy to think more openly about her own Judaism. Although Nancy doesn’t agree with a portion of what her sister does as part of her religious practice, she respects these behaviors nonetheless. She feels “it is so limiting, [but] it’s great for her. She has brought a lot of religion back to the family.” Nancy’s sister has the family over for holidays. When she lived in Israel for a year, the family went to visit her.

### Lapsing

The Lapsers appear to have accumulated a collection of reasons to lapse, although it is not clear when or why in their own histories the decrease in Jewish involvement began. In terms of family background, the Lapsers are more likely to report negative or mixed relationships with at least one of their parents than the people with other sorts of all “moving” journeys (the Interior journeyers and the Increaseers), and comparatively fewer of the Lapsers report that being Jewish was especially important to their parents (22-25% of the Lapsers report this, compared to 37-39% of the Increaseers and 40-41% of those with Interior journeys). Mark, a man in his forties, described his relationship with his father as particularly difficult:

Looking back on my childhood, my earliest images were being scared that my parents were going to kill me... I was made to feel like I was [the wicked son]. There is no wicked son when you are the child. You are the child. You are made to feel certain ways. It takes a lot of therapy for you to say, “No, I’m not the wicked son.

Mark described his experience when his father died:

[O]ther than at the funeral [I didn’t say kaddish for him]... My father and I had a stormy relationship, even up unto the end. It became less stormy; there was a high degree of respect. Would he have wanted me to [say Yizkor]? I don’t know and I have to tell you quite honestly I don’t care, because it wasn’t that smooth.

Although only 6% of all respondents who were raised Jewish came from intermarried households, the Lapsers were more likely than others to have had only one Jewish parent (9%).

Three-quarters of the Lapsers were raised in households where Shabbat candles were lit regularly, compared to 42% of those on Interior journeys and 49% of the Increasesers (also 100% of the Steady High group and 0% of the Steady Low group). Two-thirds of the Lapsers reported attending synagogue monthly or more often at age 11 or 12, compared to 48% of the Interior group and 52% of the Increasesers (also 73% of the Steady High and 30% of the Steady Low). Half (51%) of the Lapsers reported that being Jewish was extremely important in their lives at this age, compared to 46% of the Interior group (a similar proportion) and 20% of the Increasesers (also 100% of the Steady High and 0% of the Steady Low). The Lapsers celebrated becoming a Bar Mitzvah at rates equal to those of the Increasesers and the Steady High (62%) and at a rate exceeding the Interior (56%) and the Steady Low groups (45%). Coupled with the high percentage of male respondents in this group, the Lapsers included a large number of people who were engaged in periods of intensive Bar Mitzvah preparation and subsequently became much less involved. For example, Mark attended Hebrew school 5 days a week for about five years, about which he recalls,

It's funny, my memory of it. I thought the rabbis were the best teachers I ever had compared to my elementary school. The rabbis were noble teachers, I thought. Noble teachers, all. They did a good job preparing me for my Bar Mitzvah.

Overall, in comparison with the two other groups of movers, the Lapsers had lower levels of involvement in various Jewish experiences: summer camp, Jewish youth group, Jewish college experiences (both social and academic), and contact with Israel. The Lapsers were more likely than anyone else to report having had a particularly negative experience or relationship which turned them off to Jewish life (39% reported this, twice as many as the Increasesers or people with Interior journeys). Significantly fewer of the Lapsers reported any particularly meaningful positive experiences or relationships that might have attracted them to Jewish life.



All in all the Lapsers appear to lack the motivation to actively attach to Jewish life, and the structural “glue” appears to be missing as well. The Lapsers are disproportionately male, older, unmarried (if married, they tend to be more likely than the other movers to be intermarried) and without children.

Table 4.8

### Journey Types by Background Experiences

| <i>Percentage reporting "yes"</i>                       | <b>Steady Low</b> | <b>Lapse</b> | <b>Interior</b> | <b>Increase</b> | <b>Steady High</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>   |
|---|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|
|   | <i>n=277</i>      | <i>n=220</i> | <i>n=439</i>    | <i>n=130</i>    | <i>n=259</i>       | <i>n=1,325</i> |
| <b>1. Americanization</b>                               |                   |              |                 |                 |                    |                |
| Generation in America: Second                           | 15                | 22           | 25              | 30              | 57                 | 29             |
| Third   | 73                | 66           | 64              | 58              | 40                 | 61             |
| Fourth  | <u>12</u>         | <u>12</u>    | <u>10</u>       | <u>12</u>       | <u>3</u>           | <u>10</u>      |
|   | 100               | 100          | 100             | 100             | 100                | 100            |
| Raised outside NYC area prior to age 11                 | 13                | 18           | 15              | 20              | 18                 | 16             |
| <b>2. Family Structure</b>                              |                   |              |                 |                 |                    |                |
| Raised by only one parent                               | 37                | 25           | 31              | 28              | 20                 | 29             |
| Only one parent is Jewish                               | 7                 | 9            | 6               | 5               | 3                  | 6              |
| <b>3. Family Climate</b>                                |                   |              |                 |                 |                    |                |
| Reports negative or mixed relationship w:               |                   |              |                 |                 |                    |                |
| Mother  | 27                | 27           | 22              | 17              | 13                 | 22             |
| Father  | 17                | 19           | 11              | 12              | 5                  | 12             |
| Being Jewish was extremely important to:                |                   |              |                 |                 |                    |                |
| Mother  | 7                 | 25           | 40              | 39              | 77                 | 38             |
| Father  | 6                 | 22           | 41              | 37              | 79                 | 39             |
| <b>4. Gender</b>  |                   |              |                 |                 |                    |                |
| Female  | 53                | 42           | 60              | 57              | 63                 | 56             |
| Male  | <u>47</u>         | <u>58</u>    | <u>40</u>       | <u>43</u>       | <u>37</u>          | <u>44</u>      |
|   | 100               | 100          | 100             | 100             | 100                | 100            |
| <b>5. Early Jewish Training</b>                         |                   |              |                 |                 |                    |                |
| Being Jewish was "extremely important" to respondent +* | 0                 | 51           | 46              | 20              | 100                | 45             |
| <u>Jewish Practice in Childhood</u>                     |                   |              |                 |                 |                    |                |
| Household usually lit Shabbat candles                   | 0                 | 75           | 42              | 49              | 100                | 51             |
| Household never had a Christmas tree                    | 74                | 86           | 90              | 86              | 99                 | 88             |
| Attended synagogue monthly*                             | 30                | 66           | 48              | 52              | 73                 | 55             |
| Had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah                                   | 45                | 63           | 56              | 62              | 62                 | 57             |
| Attended a Jewish overnight camp                        | 22                | 31           | 33              | 45              | 72                 | 39             |
| Years of formal Jewish education                        |                   |              |                 |                 |                    |                |
| None  | 32                | 19           | 23              | 18              | 3                  | 20             |
| 6 years or more   | 31                | 50           | 45              | 62              | 88                 | 53             |
| Attended Jewish day school **                           | 3                 | 9            | 9               | 25              | 70                 | 21             |

+ These items were the criterion variables used in calculating the journey types.

\* At age 11 or 12.

\*\* Day school was the main form of Jewish education.

## Journey Types by Background Experiences (continued)

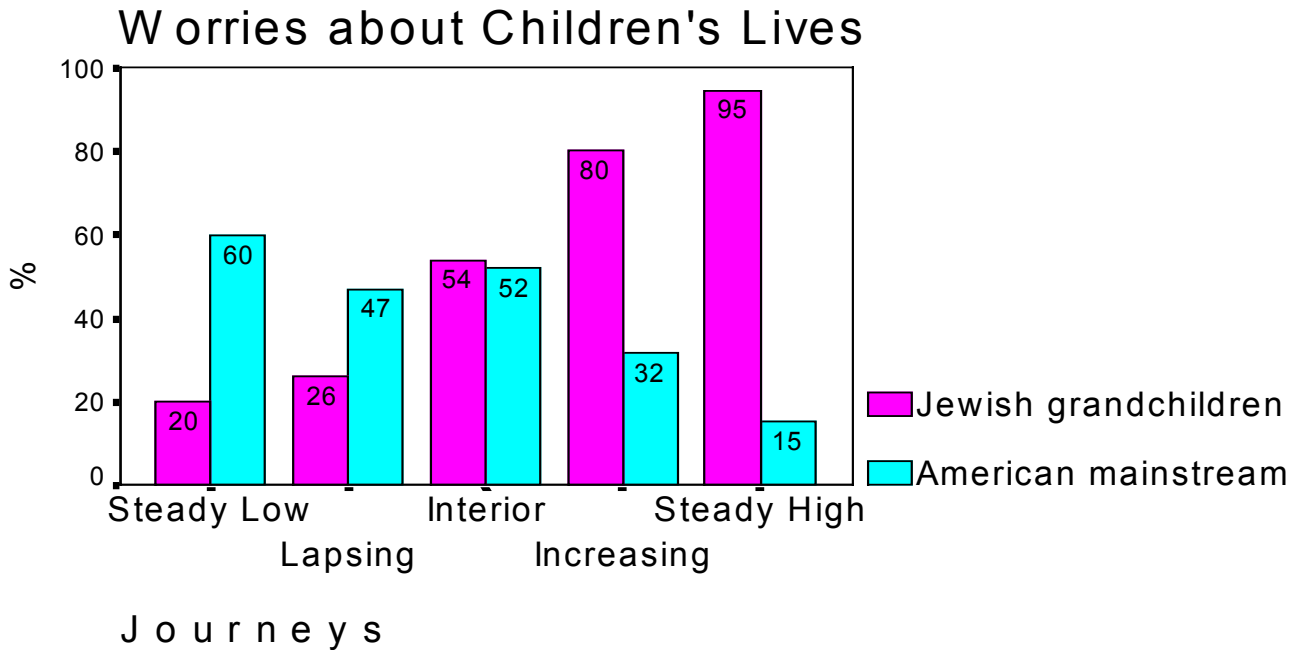
| Percentage reporting “yes”   | <b>Steady<br/>Low</b><br><i>n</i> =277 | <b>Lapse</b><br><i>n</i> =220 | <b>Interior</b><br><i>n</i> =439 | <b>Increase</b><br><i>n</i> =130 | <b>Steady<br/>High</b><br><i>n</i> =259 | <b>TOTAL</b><br><i>n</i> =1,325 |
|--|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>6. Denomination raised</b>  |  |                               |                                  |                                  |   |                                 |
| Orthodox   | 4                                      | 11                            | 9                                | 22                               | 72                                      | 22                              |
| Conservative   | 24                                     | 41                            | 48                               | 39                               | 25                                      | 37                              |
| Reform   | 56                                     | 43                            | 36                               | 28                               | 2                                       | 34                              |
| Else   | <u>17</u>                              | <u>5</u>                      | <u>7</u>                         | <u>11</u>                        | <u>1</u>                                | <u>8</u>                        |
|  | 100                                    | 100                           | 100                              | 100                              | 100                                     | 100                             |
| <b>7. Later Experiences</b>  |  |                               |                                  |                                  |   |                                 |
| Belonged to a Jewish youth group   | 31                                     | 51                            | 56                               | 62                               | 65                                      | 52                              |
| Attended college-level Jewish studies <sup>1</sup><br><small>courses</small> | 14                                     | 18                            | 26                               | 43                               | 61                                      | 30                              |
| Participated in Hillel-like activities <sup>1</sup>                          | 14                                     | 19                            | 33                               | 48                               | 43                                      | 30                              |
| Ever visited Israel  | 19                                     | 34                            | 36                               | 63                               | 78                                      | 43                              |
| Had significant experiences which:   |  |                               |                                  |                                  |   |                                 |
| Attracted R to Jewish life   | 26                                     | 35                            | 49                               | 77                               | 66                                      | 48                              |
| Turned R off to Jewish life  | 32                                     | 39                            | 21                               | 20                               | 12                                      | 25                              |
| Had either or both experiences   | 43                                     | 54                            | 56                               | 80                               | 68                                      | 58                              |

<sup>1</sup> Based on portion of the sample that attended college.

### Being Jewish in America: Balancing Among Competing Claims

The analysis of the journeys calls into question the applicability of the concept of identity for the broad spectrum of American Jews. The notion of *identity* fits best for people who are the most firmly fixed, who have had the steadiest journeys. For the people who have experienced more fluidity in their sense of group belonging, who perhaps have multiple or competing loyalties, the notion of a *journey* is better at capturing the waxing and waning of their overall Jewish involvement. For people with mixed patterns of current Jewish engagement, knowing the nature of a person’s journey may be a better predictor of future actions than knowing the person’s current pattern of engagement. For them, the issue may not be the *content* of the identity, but balancing the competing claims of Jewish commitment and participation in American society more broadly and delineating boundaries between being Jewish and blending into the American mainstream. Consider, for example, the relationship between the journeys and one of the “outlook” measures described in Chapter Two – “Parent’s Worries About Their Children’s Lives” shown in the chart below:

Chart 4.1



The chart shows the distinctive character of each of the five types of journeys in terms of the value that people place on being part of the American mainstream on the one hand and on retaining Jewish distinctiveness (as expressed in “having Jewish grandchildren”) on the other hand.<sup>7</sup> At either extreme are the steady journeys, with Lapsers and the Increasers leaning in the direction of these two stable poles. For both the people with Steady Low and those with Steady High journeys, the American Jewish experience seems to be viewed as a forced choice between being *either* American *or* being Jewish. Being American involves assimilating while being Jewish involves retaining group distinctiveness. Thus, people with Steady Low journeys and Lapsers are characterized by valuing the American mainstream over Jewish distinctiveness, while those on Increasing or Steady High journeys place an especially high premium on maintaining Jewish distinctiveness.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter Two for a detailed description of the items on which this chart was based.

In contrast to this forced-choice paradigm, those with Interior journeys give valuing the American mainstream and desiring Jewish distinctiveness more or less equal weight, as if these two priorities need to be somehow balanced. Rather than viewing the Jewish and the American as at odds, the people on an Interior journey seem to view it as possible to be *both Jewish and American*. Their journeys reflect the exploration of different ways of accomplishing this mix.

### **Understanding American Jewish Journeys**

It is striking that as we look at changes in the Jewishness of our sample over time as measured by a number of different indicators, we see an overall decrease in ritual practice accompanied by an increase in Subjective Centrality over the same time period. This suggests that there may be a hunger for new forms of Jewishness (and for re-discovery of old forms).

For Jewish institutions, it is crucial to learn that 60% of the people in the study experienced changes in their relationship to being Jewish over time, suggesting that Jewish identity is not a fixed factor in one's life but rather a matter that parallels personal growth and personal development. There are critical periods and moments in people's lives that offer potential opportunities for Jewish institutions to play a role, if only these institutions can be open and available to individuals in a way that meets their changing needs and concerns.

### Five Types of Journeys

Five types of "journeys" or patterns of change were identified, based on a combination of perceptual and behavioral indicators. Two of these were stable and three involved movement or change over the course of a person's life. The stable patterns included those with *Steady Low* or non-engagement with Jewishness, and those with *Steady High* intensity involvement with Jewish life. The three more dramatic journeys involved movement in different directions: *Lapsing* further away from involvement; *Increasing* the intensity of Jewish involvement; and finally, the *Interior* journeys where a person's

internal subjective value commitments intensified, while religious and communal practice remained low or decreased. Fully one-third of the sample experienced this *Interior* journey, and this pattern was especially characteristic of people whose current Jewishness was marked by mixed patterns of engagement. This pattern was not characteristic of either the most intensively involved or the most Jewishly indifferent groups.

The journeys described in this report are related to people's current patterns of Jewish engagement. These findings are essential in fleshing out the various ways of being Jewish that exist in contemporary society, especially for those with mixed patterns of Jewish involvement. Indeed, the journey concept makes the biggest difference in our understanding of the middle patterns of Jewish identity, while it has the least impact at the extremes of Jewish identity –assimilation or intensive Jewish living.

The people who are most intensively involved in Jewish life, as well as those who are least connected, have typically had steady patterns of Jewish socialization that are fairly impervious to external influence. Of course these individuals could still have the all-important, idiosyncratic positive experience that comes from a relationship or chance encounter. Still, they remain generally less susceptible to these experiences than those whose socialization is more mixed.

In contrast, middle identity or engagement patterns are typified by change and variation in Jewishness over time with the most dramatic journeys being those of people who move appreciably from where they began. In examining these patterns, baseline appears to be a significant factor. For instance, there are those who start off high on all dimensions but who lower their observance and heighten their emphasis on the value dimension (an *Interior* journey). There does not seem to be a strong pattern among those who start off intensively engaged and go completely from one extreme to the other (from “all” to “nothing”). A second intriguing result is that among those who start off highly engaged,

there is a significant subgroup of people whose Jewishness intensifies over their lives. This is categorized as a form of an *Increasing* journey.

\* \* \*

The concept of journey appears to be both apt and necessary for accurately portraying the nature of contemporary American Jewish identity. The term “journey” encompasses how Jewishness unfolds and gets shaped by the different experiences and encounters in a person’s life. Each new context or life stage brings with it new possibilities. A person’s Jewishness can wax, wane, and change in emphasis. It is responsive to social relationships, historical experiences and personal events. It is worth noting how this concept of journey differs from the more typical Jewish self-image of the “wandering Jews,” in which the Jewish people is forced to wander from place to place, holding fast to its own fixed identity through a changing environment. In contrast, the journeys described in this report are about the *voluntary* movements of a continuously evolving self, interacting with a changing environment. A person may intensify the Jewish nexus of his/her life, or by contrast may make it weaker and shallower, and these changes may come about intentionally or by the coincidence of human encounters and changing circumstances.

Looking at journeys shows that people change and that people are changeable, and this fact embodies both the hope and the challenge of American Jewish institutions. If the quality, number and variety of Jewishness-enhancing experiences and institutions grow, so will the opportunities for positive change.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions and Implications

#### **A New Portrait Reflecting Contemporary Realities**

The goal of this study was to examine the Jewish identities of people born after the Second World War, in order to learn about both their current *connections* to Jewishness --how being Jewish fits into their lives today -- and their Jewish *journeys* --how their relationship to being Jewish has evolved over the lifecourse. The updated and nuanced portrait presented in this report will help us make communal planning and programming decisions more effectively.

An important contribution of this study is its new approach to studying Jewish identity. Up to now, analysts have treated people's enactment of normative Jewish *practice* as evidence of their Jewish "identities." This study raises a challenge to the traditional formulation. Jewish identity, which includes a person's subjective relationship to being Jewish, cannot be measured simply by asking about behaviors. Instead, studying Jewish identity requires a set of questions that taps self-perception directly. Thus, this study employed measures of both psychological commitment (Subjective Jewish Centrality) and Jewish practice (both Religious Ritual and Cultural-Communal) to explore the nature of people's Jewish engagement.

A second contribution of this study is to view a person's current Jewish identity as necessarily linked to that individual's Jewish experience over time. It is difficult to make sense of a person's current involvement by viewing him/her merely as a bundle of demographic characteristics. It is more enlightening to envision an individual dynamically over the course of his or her life: seeking certain things and avoiding others, emulating and striving, breaking away, trying to understand, resolve, and integrate, creating as well as abandoning. The quality of a person's involvement (or lack thereof) with Jewishness today is better understood when we are able to understand where a person is coming from.



The above questions are not simply methodological novelties, or a new set of techniques. Rather, the approach of this study reflects a broader line of inquiry that differs from the one that has predominated for much of the past half a century. The bulk of the research about American Jewish identity in the past has centered on the question, “How *Jewish* are American Jews?” in comparison to Jews of prior generations, to other American immigrant groups, or to an idealized way of being Jewish.

A new question has emerged in the past decade or so: *How* are American Jews Jewish? In what ways, if any, do they connect to Jewishness and Judaism? American Jewry is more diverse and dispersed than ever before, and the Jewish group in America today is characterized by a degree of integration and social acceptance which contrasts sharply with their situation in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe or even here in America during just 50 years ago. In this new environment no one is forced either to be Jewish or to escape from being Jewish. As we have seen in this study, the dynamic of acceptance versus rejection/belligerence regarding one’s Jewishness has been replaced by a dynamic of finding Jewishness to be meaningful versus remaining indifferent to it. Jewish continuity of the group as a whole has come to depend on the individual’s commitments and decision-making. For this reason, in addition to looking at Jewish practices and involvements, it is essential to examine the subjective, inner experience of being Jewish in contemporary society.

In this study we see that the concept of Jewish identity has changed. Jewish identity is no longer to be tracked solely by a “canon” of normative religious behaviors and practices; rather the content of Jewish identity has expanded to include whatever is personally meaningful for each individual. Moreover, the internal subjective attachment to being Jewish is considered, alongside the behavioral enactment of Jewish practice. In this approach to the study of Jewish identity, the emphasis is on diverse ways of being Jewish, rather than on better or worse levels of Jewishness. Identity is seen as multifaceted and multi-dimensional.

## Key Findings

This study yielded some basic conclusions about American Jewish identity.

### **1. Jewish identity is not necessarily on the decline; it also persists and is reinvented.**

This is true both for individuals over the course of their lives and for Jewishness within American society (from generation to generation). At the societal level there have been decreases in measures of Jewish involvement when comparing the character of Jewish immigrants to second and third generation Americans. For instance, the percentage of people that keep kosher or in-marry has declined over the past fifty years. In part these declines correspond to the process of the Jewish integration into American society, and in part these declines reflect the move from a closed, segmented society to a more open one. At the same time, we have also seen some recent upswings in Jewish involvement. For instance, there is a set of indigenously American Jewish experiences (summer camp, Jewish college experiences, trips to Israel, to name a few), which younger, more Americanized Jews are more likely to have experienced than are their older counterparts (Horowitz, 1993).

For individuals, people's ways of identifying Jewishly are more complex than we had thought, with both hidden strengths and unsuspected weaknesses. In the past, *doing* and *acting* were seen as the key indicators of a person's Jewish identity and the overall picture that resulted was one of overall erosion of Jewish practice. Jewish "consciousness" without Jewish practice was seen as a last stage along the way to total assimilation and disappearance. Today, in a Jewish population that is more comfortably American than those of prior generations, a person's Jewish background is more likely to be ignored rather than rejected. When we examine people's internal attachments to Jewishness, American Jewry could be said to exhibit a remarkable degree of identity persistence, despite the erosion of many ritual and communal measures.

Is it possible to see in the persistence of Jewish attachment among later generations of American Jews a sense of potential, rather than demise? When considered in this light, people's interest in Jewishness could be seen as the first step in a larger process, rather

than as a last gasp. Once people have developed (or retained) an interest in Jewishness, finding means of helping them along their way is less difficult.

In examining people's personal experiences over time we have seen that for most people (63%) Jewish consciousness and attachment persists or intensifies from childhood through (middle) adulthood, while for 70% ritual practice decreases or remains low.

## **2. Jewish identity is diverse.**

Using a multifaceted approach to studying identity, we identified three broad modes of Jewish engagement which we further subdivided into seven types of Jewish engagement, each one animated by a different set of underlying concerns and motivations. The first mode was the *Otherwise Engaged* (34% of the sample), comprised of people who appeared indifferent about being Jewish and had no active relationship with it, except in the most sporadic fashion. For people in this mode, being Jewish was a fact of background and ancestry, but this component of identity did not play a big role in defining the person's sense of self or in guiding a person's decision-making. The *Otherwise Engaged* was comprised of two subgroups: the *Really Indifferent*, who were younger and less settled, and those *With Some Jewish Interest*, who were somewhat older.

The second mode of relating Jewishness is exemplified by those who are *Intensively Engaged Jewishly* (34%), who place a priority on a Jewish worldview and lifestyle over that of the American mainstream. The *Intensively Engaged* see the world through Jewish eyes and being Jewish constitutes a major portion of how they see themselves. This mode includes both an *Orthodox* and a *Non-Orthodox* subgroup.

Finally, the third mode of relating to Jewishness is found among those with *Mixed* patterns of Jewish engagement (33%). These people seem to be trying to combine a more circumscribed Jewish involvement with success in the American mainstream. This study has more fully explicated this middle mode— those with mixed patterns of Jewish engagement— which has been poorly understood up to now. This group is not simply the

default between the two extremes of assimilation and intensive Jewish involvement, but is better conceptualized as the most distinctively American of the three modes of Jewishness. People who have mixed patterns of Jewish engagement are not indifferent about being Jewish, but their ongoing Jewish involvement depends on it being meaningful and fitting in with their lives. The people who fit this especially American pattern of Jewishness experience their Jewishness as a set of values and as a historical people-consciousness more than as a mode of religious observance.

Three patterns of mixed engagement were identified in this study. One type, the *Subjectively Engaged*, was not discernible prior to this study, due to its intensely internal, personal mode of expression and its attendant lack of conventional Jewish behavioral expression. The people in this group have found personally meaningful ways of connecting to Jewishness, which do not include more conventional or communal modes of Jewish practice. Their pride in being Jewish and the strength of their internal connections are among the highest in the sample, yet their social networks are apt to be much less Jewish compared to the other groups. Although the Subjectively Engaged group comprises only 7% of the sample, one imagines that in a broader sample of American Jews this cohort would be larger than it is in this study limited to Jews living in the New York area.

The second of the mixed patterns of Jewish engagement were those whose Jewishness is expressed in terms of strong *Cultural-Communal* engagement (14% of the sample), rather than in particularly religious ways. These individuals are connected to Jewish life through their communal affiliation and social and cultural involvement. The people in this group are among the most affluent in the sample. Those who were termed *Tradition-Oriented* (18% of the sample) express their Jewishness in ritual ways as individuals but do not appear to be as well integrated into the Jewish community. This group has an over-representation of fourth-generation American Jews, suggesting a type of ritual resurgence.

The findings from this study can help us to understand which Jews we are reaching with the programs we now maintain and what additional kinds of programming we might tailor to reach other Jews. For example, synagogue family education programs would seem to reach Cultural-Communal Jews, hopefully intensifying their subjective attachment as well as their sense of religious connection. Similarly, supporting the Jewish Museum or endorsing a series of klezmer concerts, Israeli film festivals or work place Judaica classes might all be effective ways of reaching the Subjectively Engaged and helping them to build communal ties.

In the past, communal programs and interventions have been wholly planned according to demographics (singles, families, etc.). Our research provides many more handles by which to grasp the different populations we wish to engage. The more we are able to focus on the target of a specific program, the better able we will be to make choices that help that program succeed in reaching those people.

From an organizational point of view, each of the groups that our study identified should be targeted in different ways, in different degrees and for different purposes. Each segment of the population would be better served by a message and intervention strategy designed specifically to meet their needs. Regarding Subjectively Engaged Jews, who are highly committed but not connected to Jewish organizations or religious/communal practice, we need to reach people in other ways – through their work and leisure-time interests. For example, one interviewee found a connection to Jewishness through klezmer music, but has no contact with any Jewish organization that could facilitate the growth of that connection. Another person brought her children to the local synagogue, but did not find the kind of family education program there that would let her family build upon their own subjective commitment to being Jewish.

### **3. Jewish identity is dynamic over the course of a person's life.**

Jewish identity is not something static that a person either has or does not have. Rather, identity can evolve and change, ebb and flow, in relation to all sorts of influences, internal and external. A person may be much less connected to Judaism at one point in

his/her lifetime and more deeply identified at another, so that the idea of “writing someone off” on the basis of his/her current low Jewish involvement seems misguided. Indeed, the study yielded five types of “journeys” or patterns of individual change, based on a combination of perceptual and behavioral indicators. Two of these were stable patterns and three involved movement or change in Jewishness over the course of a person’s life. The stable patterns included those with *Steady Low* or non-engagement with Jewishness and those with *Steady High* intensity involvement with Jewish life. Together the steady journeys accounted for 40% of the sample. The three more dramatic journeys involved movement in different directions: *Lapsing* further away from involvement; *Increasing* the intensity of Jewish involvement; and finally, the *Interior* journeys where a person’s internal subjective value commitments intensify, while religious and communal practice remains low or decreases. Fully one-third of the sample experienced this interior journey that was especially characteristic of people whose current Jewishness was characterized by mixed patterns of engagement and not especially characteristic of either the most intensively involved or the most Jewishly indifferent.

Taking a snapshot of where people are Jewishly today and then making programming decisions based on that static picture will perhaps simplify the market definition, but it will also limit the size of the market. An alternative approach is to think about the many *potential targets* for increased involvement. The issue then becomes how to reach new individuals, when and in what circumstances.

That identity is a process suggests that we continue to need educational and outreach opportunities at every age and every stage. We have already begun to design interventions and experiences that can be accessed at different times over the life course, and we need to promote an “open-door policy” that encourages people to come in when they are ready instead of making them feel guilty or less than adequate. While we have seen that there is clearly a group of people with Steady Low engagement who will probably continue to remain uninvolved over the course of their lives, some people who today appear distant from Jewish life may in fact feel a deep inner affinity to Jewishness

that has not (yet) found outward or communal expression. Particularly for these people we need to have an entranceway with many portals.

The life-course perspective taken in this study has implications for assessing the “success” of various sorts of programs. Since identity evolves over a person’s lifetime and not necessarily in a linear fashion, it is important to step back and re-evaluate how and when to think about “success” when we evaluate programs or benchmarks regarding “continuity.” A longer-term process is at work with effects that may not be direct or immediate.

#### **4. The family plays a powerful role in shaping Jewish identity.**

The emotional quality of family relationships during upbringing plays an important mediating role in whether or not the child will emulate the family’s Jewish (and general) commitments. Traumatic or difficult emotional relationships push people away, whereas happier relationships attract the child to adopt the parents’ values and behaviors. This important issue has not been considered in past research about American Jewish identity.

The nature of family climate in childhood, in addition to parents’ Jewish commitments, plays a formative role in laying the groundwork for positive Jewish identity. This suggests that the emotional health of the Jewish family is another venue for addressing the “Jewish continuity” agenda. For the past 15 years the idea of “family education” has been developed as a way of working with families to intensify their Jewishness. Often it has simply meant learning how to celebrate Jewish holidays at home as a family. The findings from Connections and Journeys begin to give the concept of Jewish family education a new slant – the curriculum of Jewish family education needs to be broadened to include the general health and well being of the family as a family.

The Jewish community has traditionally not intervened in family life (except in the case of dysfunction – as per Family Service agencies). But promoting healthier Jewish families and building the family’s commitment toward Jewishness is very important in

terms of the impact on children's Jewish identities. Communal efforts in family education more broadly defined (i.e. envisioned by both educators and mental health professionals) are important initiatives.

**5. Significant positive relationships, experiences, or events play an important role in Jewish identity formation.** Over the course of a person's life, Jewish identity can be powerfully influenced by significant relationships ---- with grandparents, rabbis, teachers, and other individuals to whom Jewishness is important. Often interactions with these individuals are powerful because they are seen as authentically Jewish and come to represent a "lived" Jewish life. These individuals are not "role models," because grandparents and others rarely provide the means for creating a Jewish life. Instead, these people act like "beacons" in that they represent something meaningful to the interviewees. They often represent something authentic, and people look back on them (or toward them) in constructing their own Jewish lives. It is as if knowing these people help the respondents imagine that a serious Jewish life is possible. For instance, Daniel contrasted his exposure to the sterile, suburban temples of his youth to the compelling, authentic chanting at his uncle's seder, an image he returns to in his adulthood once he discovers his musical calling in klezmer music. Another young woman talked about the "natural" quality of her grandmother's Jewishness, down to her being able to make chicken soup without relying on a recipe. For this young woman, the image of a natural Jewish life, albeit on her own terms, was an important element in her own Jewish quest. A counter example to this sense of authentic Jewishness is found in Robert's recollection of his mother asking him to go through with his Bar Mitzvah preparation purely "for show," in order to please his grandfather.

Although these significant encounters were very individual and personally meaningful, it is possible to imagine some ways to increase the chances of such experiences occurring. On the one hand, a simple strategy is to increase the exposure to Jewish life – "the more, the more"—hoping that more contact will create more opportunities for meaningful encounter and connection.



A second approach relates to the fact that it is often the case that such positive relationships often involve “official” figures in the Jewish world, such as teachers, rabbis, camp counselors, and so on. Therefore a communal strategy that makes sense is to place a premium on locating and investing in the highest quality personnel and in innovative leadership training that addresses the potential power of these relationships.

## **6. Jewish identity can be intensified in different ways**

Based on what we have learned about the Jewish identity formation of today’s adults, the overall message is that the “baseline” of where one begins and the nature of one’s early training matter, but only up to a point. These function to determine the readily available pathways for encountering “the Jewish” – people, networks, institutions, ideas, culture, religion -- but they do not *determine* Jewishness in adulthood. Depending on the upbringing and early training, different sorts of Jewish opportunities become more or less accessible to people over the course of their lives. For instance, Jewish “literacy” attained during childhood may lead to confidence about having the skills to partake in synagogue life, whereas lacking these skills may raise the “barriers to entry” later on.

Nonetheless certain kinds of background experiences are associated with a more intensified Jewish engagement in adulthood--- early Jewish training, “voluntary” experiences and the power of an intensive Jewish upbringing.

Jewish identity continues to be strongly related to early enculturation experiences and having attended Jewish day school during one’s upbringing, especially for those from Orthodox Jewish backgrounds. Among the adults in this sample who were raised non-Orthodox, only a small percentage (7%) attended Jewish day schools, and the schools they attended were most likely Orthodox. As both the number of non-Orthodox schools and the number of children that attends them grow in the coming years, we expect to see a large day school influence on the Jewishness of adults of all backgrounds.

For those from less intensive Jewish backgrounds, Jewish identity appears to be especially bolstered by “voluntary experiences.” These voluntary experiences are those

that a person chooses to undertake (for example in adolescence and later), like Jewish youth group, Jewish college activities and trips to Israel. Particularly for people from less intensive Jewish backgrounds, it is important for the community to strengthen and support a wide range of voluntary experiences—and the institutions that provide them—such as those mentioned above. This might include finding ways to help improve and expand existing institutions, developing new “providers” of such experiences, imagining new and different voluntary experiences that would add to the opportunities that currently exist and providing support for individuals who may wish to attend such programs.

In this context, asking a question such as “Will a trip to Israel or a summer at a dynamic Jewish camp play a serious role in creating Jewish commitment in adulthood?” leads to the following answer: It depends on the individual’s history and the particular combination of factors and experiences of that person’s biography. There is no group among the sample for whom either camp or Israel was a magic bullet of Jewishness. Indeed, significant personal encounters made a greater difference to individual adult patterns for all segments of the sample. On the other hand, positive significant encounters were correlated with more Jewish experiences, and both camping and Israel trips correlated independently with increases in measures of Jewishness for both Orthodox and non-Orthodox raised populations. As we have seen, people raised in intensively Jewish environments with strong commitment at home and in school, at camp, in synagogue, and elsewhere (typically an Orthodox upbringing but by no means exclusively) were more influenced by having gone to day school more than they are by having participated in later voluntary experiences, including Israel trips. Although these later experiences modestly contributed to ongoing Jewish commitment, they did not typically change the course of such a person’s life. The idea of a trip to Israel “searing a person’s soul” is an image more appropriate to those people raised non-Orthodox (i.e. in less intensive Jewish upbringings) than to those raised in Orthodox families. It is noteworthy that Israel clustered with the other voluntary experiences and did not stand on its own as a separate influence. It should be viewed as part of a series or combination of experiences that jointly produce an impact.

Efforts to expand Jewish educational experiences into adolescence and beyond seem to be essential. The community should not feel that day school until 8<sup>th</sup> grade is independently sufficient to guarantee strong adult Jewish commitments. First of all, not everyone will go to day school. Second, ignoring late adolescence and early adulthood is a bad idea, because that period seems to be a crucial one for identity formation

The community ought to encourage opportunities and programs that aim at adolescence and early adulthood and put more emphasis on them, by supporting youth groups, college age programming, Jewish schooling (both day and supplemental) for post Bar Mitzvah students, and adult Jewish experiences beyond college. It is essential to emphasize that earlier “involuntary” experiences like Jewish schooling play a preparatory role in channeling people into later voluntary programs.

Indeed, a policy implication of this study is that the community should strive to find ways to integrate the pathways available to people especially at moments of life transition.

The idea would be to develop a *communal identity strategy* analogous to the “cradle to grave” social services provided by Jewish human service agencies, so that there would be a plan for comprehensive Jewish educational opportunities throughout the individual’s lifetime. Although people have journeys that can be very idiosyncratic, the Jewish community can develop pathways to help bolster people along their way. The purpose of a pathways initiative is to create expectations about “what happens next--” the possible sequences and opportunities of which people might avail themselves, if they could only imagine them.

## Appendix A

### Comparing Samples: Connections and Journeys (1998) and the New York Jewish Population Study (1991)

We begin by comparing the 1998 Connections and Journeys (“CJ”) survey sample to the corresponding group (22-52 year olds) from the 1991 New York Jewish Population Study (“NYJPS”). These comparisons are shown in Table A-1, which follows. The findings are summarized below, and the main difference – the upswing in Orthodox affiliation – is discussed.

#### **County**

A greater proportion of the Connections and Journeys sample was concentrated in Brooklyn and Nassau counties than was the comparable population from the 1991 NYJPS. The two samples had comparable proportions drawn from Manhattan and Queens. Finally, compared to the NYJPS sample, a smaller proportion of CJ respondents came from The Bronx, Staten Island, Suffolk and Westchester counties. Is this discrepancy due to sampling differences, or does it reflect actual redistribution of the population? The answer cannot be determined from these data.

#### **Age**

The Connections and Journeys sample of 22-52 year olds was proportionately older than the NYJPS sample (45% were in their forties or older, compared to 32% over forty in the 1991 NYJPS). This partly reflects the aging (over seven years) of the post-World War II “Baby Boom” generation.

#### **Sex**

The Connections and Journeys sample was 55% female, compared to 59% in the 1991 NYJPS.

#### **Education**

Education attainment was slightly higher in the CJ sample: three-quarters of the sample had completed college, compared to two-thirds of the NYJPS sample.

#### **Income**

CJ sample reported higher household income (unadjusted for inflation): 30% of the respondents reported an annual household income of less than \$50,000 and 59% reported \$50,000 or more, with the remaining 11% refusing to answer. In the NYJPS sample, 38% reported lower incomes, 47% reported higher incomes, and 15% refused to answer.

### **Generation in America**

The samples were comparable in this regard. 29% of the CJ sample were children of immigrants (second generation) and 71% were third generation or higher, compared to 25% and 75% respectively of the NYJPS sample.

**Marital status** was comparable in the two samples: the never married made up nearly one-third of each sample, 58-59% were married, and 11% were divorced or separated.

### **Religion of Spouse**

In the CJ sample, 74% of the married respondents had spouses who were Jewish, compared to 69% of the NYJPS sample. In the CJ sample 20% of the spouses were non-Jewish, compared to 30% of the spouses in the 1991 NYJPS.

### **Current Denomination**

The most notable difference in the two surveys was the redistribution of current denominational preference for the age group between 1991 and 1998. Compared to the relevant subgroup from the 1991 NYJPS, the percentage of Orthodox respondents rose from 10% in 1991 to 18% in the CJ 1998 sample. The percentage of 20-50 years olds saying they had no denomination decreased from 23% in 1991 to 15% in 1998. (Other differences were too small and fell within the margin of error for the two samples.)

The key question here is, were the denominational differences due to different sampling schemes or were they evidence of changing population characteristics? Both studies drew random representative samples of the population in the eight-county area as a whole, but as we saw above, a greater proportion of the overall 1998 (CJ) sample was drawn from Brooklyn compared to the 1991 (NYJPS) sample. How much of the increase in Orthodox denomination was due to the fact that a greater proportion of the overall 1998 (CJ) sample was drawn from Brooklyn compared to the 1991 (NYJPS) sample? To address this we examined the current denominational preference within each county (Table A-2).

The increases in Orthodox identification were not limited to Brooklyn, but were concentrated in three counties – Brooklyn, The Bronx and to a lesser degree in Queens. Manhattan and Westchester exhibited no changes in the percentage Orthodox, and the remaining counties showed slight increases (but within the margin of sampling error).

In Brooklyn, one-third of the American-born 20-50 year old population identified as Orthodox in 1991, and by 1998 fully half of this population identified as Orthodox. Along with this surge in Orthodox denominational identification, the percentage of people who identified themselves as Reform or Conservative declined substantially, from 26% to 20% for Reform Jews and from 21% to 14% for Conservative Jews.

In The Bronx the percentage Orthodox more than doubled (from 13% in 1991 to 33% in 1998). The percentage with no denomination decreased from 25% to 15%, and the percentage Conservative decreased from 29% to 20%.

In Queens the percentage of Orthodox grew from 12% in 1991 to 19% in 1998. More pronounced, however, were the changes in the proportion of the population identifying as Reform (32% in 1991 compared to 42% in 1998) and among those identifying as Conservative (36% in 1991 and 21% in 1998).

In Nassau County the percentage Orthodox in this age group doubled (from 4% in 1991 and 9% in 1998), although the preponderance of people continued to identify as Reform (42%) or Conservative (36%).

Another notable change was seen in Westchester County, where the proportion of the population which identified as Conservative grew from 23% in 1991 to 32% in 1998, while the percentage of people who described their denomination as “other” decreased (18% in 1991 and 11% in 1998).

What do these two trends tell us about the (aggregate) state of Jewishness among New York American-born 22-52 year olds from 1991-1998? We do not know if these are the same people staying put who have changed over seven years, or alternatively, if the changes in denominational preference resulted from differential migration (i.e. the more traditionally affiliated/more likely to be Orthodox have come to and/or remained in the NY area, while the less conventionally affiliated/less likely to be Orthodox have left the area). Until we have an updated picture of greater New York Jewry from a new installment of the NYJPS in 2001, we will not be able to determine the answer to this question.

Table A-1

**Comparison on Selected Characteristics:  
Connections and Journeys (CJ)  
and 1991 New York Jewish Population Study (NYJPS)**

|                    | CJ<br>(n=1,504) | NYJPS<br>(n=2,248) |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>County:</b>     |                 |                    |
| Bronx              | 3               | 7                  |
| Brooklyn           | 22              | 14                 |
| Manhattan          | 24              | 22                 |
| Queens             | 12              | 12                 |
| Staten Island      | 3               | 10                 |
| Nassau             | 22              | 13                 |
| Suffolk            | 7               | 12                 |
| Westchester        | 8               | 11                 |
| <b>Age:</b>        |                 |                    |
| CJ / NYJPS         |                 |                    |
| 22-30 / 20-30      | 25              | 31                 |
| 31-40 / 31-40      | 30              | 36                 |
| 41-52 / 41-50      | 45              | 32                 |
| <b>Gender:</b>     |                 |                    |
| Female             | 55              | 59                 |
| Male               | 45              | 41                 |
| <b>Education:</b>  |                 |                    |
| Less than B.A.     | 25              | 34                 |
| College Graduate   | 38              | 32                 |
| Post Graduate      | 37              | 34                 |
| <b>Income:</b>     |                 |                    |
| Less than \$50,000 | 30              | 38                 |
| \$50,000 and over  | 59              | 47                 |
| Missing/Refused    | 11              | 15                 |

Table A-1, continued

**Comparison on Selected Characteristics:  
Connections and Journeys (CJ)  
and 1991 New York Jewish Population Study (NYJPS)**

|  | CJ<br>( <i>n</i> =1,504) | NYJPS<br>( <i>n</i> =2,248) |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Generation in America:</b>            |                          |                             |
| Second (Child of Immigrants)             | 29                       | 25                          |
| Third or more                            | 71                       | 75                          |
| <b>Religion of Respondent's Parents:</b> |                          |                             |
| Both parents Jewish                      | 88                       | 86                          |
| Mother Jewish                            | 4                        | 5                           |
| Father Jewish                            | 7                        | 6                           |
| Neither Jewish                           | 2                        | 3                           |
| <b>Marital Status:</b>                   |                          |                             |
| Never Married                            | 32                       | 30                          |
| Married                                  | 58                       | 59                          |
| Divorced/Separated/Widowed               | 11                       | 11                          |
| <b>Religion of Spouse:</b>               |                          |                             |
|  | ( <i>n</i> =1,024)       | ( <i>n</i> =1,501)          |
| Jewish                                   | 74                       | 69                          |
| No Religion/Atheist                      | 4                        | 1                           |
| Another Religion                         | 20                       | 30                          |
| DK/RF                                    | 1                        | ~~~                         |
| <b>Current Denomination:</b>             |                          |                             |
|  | ( <i>n</i> =1,504)       | ( <i>n</i> =2,248)          |
| Orthodox                                 | 18                       | 10                          |
| Conservative                             | 26                       | 29                          |
| Reform                                   | 38                       | 37                          |
| Reconstructionist                        | 3                        | 2                           |
| Something Else                           | 15                       | 23                          |



Table A-2

**Connections and Journeys (CJ) and the 1991 New York Jewish Population Study (NYJPS) Compared:  
Denomination by County**

| <i>Denomination</i> | Bronx |       | Brooklyn |       | Manhattan |       | Queens |       | Staten Is. |       | Nassau |       | Suffolk |       | Westchstr |       | TOTAL |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
|                     | CJ    | NYJPS | CJ       | NYJPS | CJ        | NYJPS | CJ     | NYJPS | CJ         | NYJPS | CJ     | NYJPS | CJ      | NYJPS | CJ        | NYJPS | CJ    | NYJPS |
| Orthodox            | 33    | 13    | 50       | 33    | 6         | 6     | 19     | 12    | 14         | 11    | 9      | 4     | 3       | 1     | 2         | 2     | 18    | 10    |
| Conservative        | 20    | 29    | 14       | 21    | 27        | 29    | 21     | 36    | 36         | 34    | 36     | 36    | 29      | 29    | 32        | 23    | 26    | 29    |
| Reform              | 30    | 32    | 20       | 26    | 43        | 41    | 42     | 32    | 32         | 31    | 42     | 45    | 46      | 42    | 53        | 56    | 38    | 37    |
| Reconstructionist   | 3     | 1     | 3        | 1     | 4         | 2     | 2      | 2     | 5          | 4     | 2      | 1     | 8       | 3     | 2         | 0     | 3     | 2     |
| Other               | 15    | 25    | 15       | 20    | 21        | 23    | 16     | 19    | 14         | 20    | 12     | 14    | 15      | 25    | 11        | 18    | 15    | 23    |
| Total               | 100%  |       | 100%     |       | 100%      |       | 100%   |       | 100%       |       | 100%   |       | 100%    |       | 100%      |       | 100%  |       |

## Appendix B: Instruments

### Connections and Journeys In-depth Interview Guide

(2/20/96)

Hi, thanks so much for agreeing to meet with me. This interview takes 1½ - 2 hours and I'd like it to be more like a casual conversation than a formal interview. Feel free to bring up anything that comes to your mind. If your thoughts drift to something that doesn't seem to relate to what we're discussing, by all means, don't hesitate to talk about what you're thinking. At the same time, I will direct you in the topics of our discussion. Also, if you don't feel comfortable answering a question, please let me know.

This interview is divided into two parts: first we'll discuss your life today and then the course of your life up until now. The purpose of this study is to better understand the role of ethnic and religious identity in personal development. We are especially interested in hearing about how being Jewish fits in with your life. We are talking to all kinds of people, not just rabbis or synagogue members, but also people who don't care about being Jewish. So don't talk about what you think being Jewish is *supposed* to mean to you, but about how you truly feel. There are no correct answers.

[Explain and Complete Informed Consent Form]

## I. CONNECTIONS

**Who are you?/Tell me about yourself:**

1. First, let's discuss your **life today**.
  - a. Who lives in your **household**? Are you married, single, divorced, widowed? Do you have children?
  - b. Tell me about your **work**. (PROBES: What do you do for a living? How do you like your job? Is this your long-term occupation?)
  - c. Now, let's discuss your **free-time**. What are your key interests, passions, and responsibilities? (PROBES: What matters to you? Hobbies, political/communal activities, types of books, which newspapers and magazines regularly read, organizational/cultural involvements. Do you travel? Where to?)
2. a. What are the **most important elements in your identity**? How do you define yourself (i.e. as a Jew, a gay man, or a liberal, a mother, doctor..?) Who are you not?

- b. **How important is being Jewish** in your life? Where does being Jewish fit in (if at all) with who you are? (PROBES: How does it relate to the aspects of your self/life that we just discussed? How does it get expressed, or what do you do that is Jewish? What behaviors, activities, what impulses? Choice of occupation, how to spend time?)

3. **Social Networks:**

- a. What proportion of your **friends** are Jewish? What about co-workers, neighbors, and other acquaintances? (PROBES: Would you say most or all; some; or few or none? Was this an intentional choice?)
- b. What about your **significant others**? (PROBES: If you are married, is your spouse Jewish? What about former spouses? What proportion of the people you date are Jewish? Did it matter to you that they were Jewish or not Jewish?)

**Feelings:**

- 4. I'd like to hear about your **feelings on being Jewish**. There are two parts to this question.
  - a. **Free association:** First, what feelings are associated with being Jewish -- positive, negative, ambivalent?
  - b. Can you remember **specific examples** of situations or events when you felt particularly good about or proud of being Jewish? What about situations in which you felt particularly bad or ashamed of being Jewish?

**Spiritual/Religious Life:**

- 5. a. **Do you think of yourself as a religious or spiritual person?** (PROBES: What do you mean by this? Do these terms relate to you? What images get evoked here? What about God, what do you believe about God?)
  - b. How do you **express your spirituality**? How is your spirituality related to your practices? (PROBES: What behaviors or activities do you engage in? Do your religious practices intersect with your spirituality or is spirituality distinct from observance for you?)
- 6. In times of difficulty or confusion, **where do you turn for support** or advice? What do you do for your well-being?

## The Self and the Larger World:

7. **Being an American/New Yorker and a Jew:**
  - a. Think about yourself as a person who lives in New York or the United States. Do these identities mean anything to you? How do you feel about being an American? (PROBES: For you, what is being a good American? What do you do to express your American identity, i.e. civic behaviors?)
  - b. How do you combine or reconcile being both an American and a Jew? (PROBES: Where are the boundaries? Does this self-image ever fluctuate and in what circumstances?)
8. **Shared fate:** Do you feel a sense of connection with Jews around the world and in history (or other collectivities/categories)? How? (PROBES: Examples: When you are reading articles or flipping through channels, are you drawn to stories that have to do with Jews? Do you feel connected to Jews in crisis, such as Ethiopian and Russian Jews? When you heard about Baruch Goldstein (or Joel Rifkin, Ivan Boesky, Michael Millken) or a Jew winning the Nobel prize, did it make a difference to you more than if a non-Jew did something good or bad? Do you look at movie credits for Jewish names?)
9. Have any **events in the world** had a profound impact on you? Which ones and in what way? (PROBES: Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Gulf War, '67 War. Feelings on Israel.)
10. **Being with non-Jews:** Have you ever felt marginal because you are Jewish? Have you been in situations or settings in which you have perceived anti-Semitism? How do you feel when you are with other Jews and how do you feel when you are with non-Jews?
11. Has the **Holocaust** affected you in a notable way? (PROBES: Has it entered your thoughts on a regular basis at any time in your life? Did it provoke any fears, anxieties, or impulses while growing up or now? Did any relatives perish in the Holocaust?)
12.
  - a. In your opinion, what are the **major issues or problems** facing Americans today?
  - b. In your opinion, what are the **major issues or problems** facing Jews today?
13. Do you feel a sense of **personal or social obligation** in the larger world, such as to give to charities, volunteer, or participate in social change? (PROBES: What do you do to fulfill this obligation? How does it get expressed? Where does this sense of obligation come from?)

14. **If Respondent is a Parent:**
- a. What do you want to teach or have you tried to teach your children? How do you want them to turn out? Where do they go to school, camp, etc.?
  - b. Does being Jewish affect the way you raise them, and how? (PROBES: your choice of schools for them, neighborhoods, etc. Are most of your kids' friends Jewish and how do you feel about this?)
  - c. As a parent, how competent do you feel Jewishly? How does this relate to how you want your children to turn out?
15. **If married:** Are there issues between you and your spouse surrounding being Jewish? Do you and your spouse agree about Jewish things?

## II. JOURNEYS

We've reached the second part of the interview. Now that you've painted a picture of your life today, let's talk about your **past**.

16. Tell me about your **childhood**.
- a. **Where** were you born? Where did you grow up (and go to school)? City or suburbia?
  - b. When did you **move to the New York area**? Did being Jewish have to do with your decision to move?
  - c. Where else have you **lived**?
  - d. Give me a quick thumb-nail sketch of your **family**. (PROBES: Are your parents alive, and married or divorced? What do/did your parents do for a living? How many siblings do you have? What were your parents childrearing practices like, i.e. strict or lenient, controlling or hands-off? How did and does everyone in your family get along?)
  - e. When did your ancestors **immigrate** to America? From where?
17. Now, how would you describe your **Jewish upbringing**? How was being Jewish expressed in your household? Did your parents' commitments to Judaism differ? (PROBES: If you've had any Jewish education, tell me about it. What schools, camps,

youth groups have you experienced? What was the religious content, if any of your camps and schools? What have these meant to you?)

18. In relation to being Jewish, who have been the **significant influences** (positive or negative) on your life?
19.
  - a. What have been the major **turning-points** in your life and the important **decisions** you've had to make? (PROBES: Have there been moments when the things that mattered to you changed? It could have been a conventional rite-of-passage such as travel, graduation, bat-mitzvah or a more personal milestone - periods/events/decision points/experiences. Or decisions such as where to live, what work to do, what sorts of relationships to pursue, what to support.)
  - b. At these turning points or times of decision-making, **has being Jewish mattered?** How?
20. **Social Networks:**
  - a. Think back about your **friends**. When you were growing up, how many were Jewish? What about your parents' friends? What about your acquaintances, class-mates, and neighbors?
  - b. **Significant Others:** What about the people you've dated in the past? Was this intentional?
21. Think back to your early childhood, What were your **early attitudes and images about being a Jew?** (PROBES: Do you remember first becoming aware that you were Jewish? What about Jewish role models? Do you remember specific events?)
22. Have we missed anything important in your life that has shaped who you are? (PROBES: traumas, triumphs, experiences?)
23. Can you think of any questions that I didn't ask you that I should have? Is there anything else that you would like to add? Do you have any comments?
24. Thank you very much for your time. You have been a great help. If need be, later in the study, can we get in touch with you for further participation, i.e. a focus group or follow-up interview? Also, would you be interested in seeing the results of the study?

Would you like to receive an honorarium? I need your address and social security number so we can send you the check.

## SURVEY QUESTIONS AND MARGINALS

### CONNECTIONS AND JOURNEYS

#### INTRODUCTION

Hello, I am \_\_\_\_\_ calling from SRBI, the opinion research firm in New York City. We're conducting an important survey about people's attitudes and beliefs and we would very much like to include your opinions. May I speak with someone 18 years of age or older who resides at this number. All answers are completely confidential.

#### SCREENER QUESTIONS

S2. To make sure that we interview people across different backgrounds, I'd like to first ask you whether anyone in your household considers themselves to be.....(READ

LIST)

(MULTI-PUNCH)

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Catholic?   | 1 |
| Protestant? | 2 |
| Jewish?     | 3 |
| Muslim?     | 4 |
| DK/Refused  | 5 |

S3. Was anyone in the household raised Jewish?

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Yes        | 1 |
| No         | 2 |
| DK/Refused | 3 |

S4. Does anyone in the household have a Jewish parent?

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Yes        | 1 |
| No         | 2 |
| DK/Refused | 3 |

S5. How many people in your household are between the ages of 22 and 52, were born in the United States or Canada, and either consider themselves to be Jewish, were raised Jewish, or have a Jewish parent? Don't forget to include yourself in the total.

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Number _____ |   |
| None         | 2 |
| DK/Refused   | 3 |





N=1425

D3a. Which borough? (IF NECESSARY: Were you born in)

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Bronx            | 12%         | 1 |
| Brooklyn         | 42          | 2 |
| Manhattan        | 25          | 3 |
| Queens           | 16          | 4 |
| Staten Island    | 2           | 5 |
| (VOL) Don't know | 3           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    |             | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

D4. What state? (IF NECESSARY: Were you born in)  
**[IF Q.D3=1, AUTOMATICALLY PUNCH "1"]**

|      |                      |             |   |         |
|------|----------------------|-------------|---|---------|
| Q.D8 | New York             | 84%         | 1 | SKIP TO |
|      | New Jersey           | 3           |   |         |
|      | Other (specify)_____ | 13          | 2 | "       |
|      | (VOL) Don't know     | -           | 8 | "       |
|      | (VOL) Refused        | -           | 9 | "       |
|      |                      | <u>100%</u> |   |         |

D5. Were you born in Canada?

|                  |   |            |
|------------------|---|------------|
| Yes              | 1 |            |
| No               | 2 | SCREEN OUT |
| (VOL) Don't know | 8 | "          |
| (VOL) Refused    | 9 | "          |

D6. What city or town?  
\_\_\_\_\_

D7. What province?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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D8. What is your current religious preference?

|   |   |             |   |   |
|---|---|-------------|---|---|
| Jewish  |   | 89%         |   | 1 |
| Protestant (Baptist, Christian,<br>Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist,<br>Presbyterian, etc.) | - |             | 2 |   |
| Roman Catholic  |   | -           |   | 3 |
| Some other religion (specify)_____  |   | -           |   | 4 |
| (VOL) No religion/Atheist/Agnostic  |   | 10          |   | 5 |
| (VOL) Both Jewish and another religion  |   | <1          |   | 6 |
| (VOL) Don't know  |   | <1          |   | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused   |   |             |   | 9 |
|   |   | <u>100%</u> |   |   |

D9. In what religion were you raised?

|   |    |              |   |   |
|---|----|--------------|---|---|
| Jewish  |    | 95%          |   | 1 |
| Protestant (Baptist, Christian,<br>Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist,<br>Presbyterian, etc.) | <1 |              | 2 |   |
| Roman Catholic  |    | <1           |   | 3 |
| Some other religion (specify)_____  |    | -            |   | 4 |
| (VOL) No religion/Atheist/Agnostic  |    | 3.2          |   | 5 |
| (VOL) Both Jewish and another religion  |    | <1           |   | 6 |
| (VOL) Don't know  |    | <1           |   | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused   |    | <u>&lt;1</u> |   | 9 |
|   |    | 100%         |   |   |

D10. Is either one of your parents Jewish?

|                  |             |   |                |
|------------------|-------------|---|----------------|
| Yes              | 99%         | 1 | SKIP TO Q.D10a |
| No               | 1           | 2 | SKIP TO Q.D11  |
| (VOL) Don't know | -           | 8 | "              |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 | "              |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |                |

**[IF EITHER Q.D8, Q.D9, OR Q.D10 DO NOT EQUAL "1" SCREEN OUT "D10"]**

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D10a. Which of your parents is Jewish? Your mother, your father, or are they both Jewish?

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Mother           | 3%          | 1 |
| Father           | 5           | 2 |
| Both             | 91          | 3 |
| (VOL) Don't know | 1           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    |             | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

D11. What is your gender?

|        |             |   |
|--------|-------------|---|
| Male   | 45%         | 1 |
| Female | 55          | 2 |
|        | <u>100%</u> |   |

**CURRENT IDENTITY**

1. Now I'd like to ask a few general questions about what is important to you. Please tell me how important each of the following aspects of life is to you.

First, how important to you is/are (your) **[INSERT FIRST ITEM-ROTATE]**?  
Would you say....(READ LIST)

How about (your) **[INSERT NEXT ITEM-ROTATE]**? Would you say....(READ LIST)

|                                  | <i>Extremely Important</i> | <i>Very Important</i> | <i>Somewhat Important</i> | <i>Not Too Important</i> | <i>Not at all Important</i> |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Family and children           | 78%                        | 17%                   | 3%                        | 1%                       | -%                          |
| b. Relatives                     | 47                         | 34                    | 15                        | 3                        | 1                           |
| c. Being Jewish in your own life | 33                         | 28                    | 24                        | 11                       | 5                           |
| d. Free time and relaxation      | 32                         | 46                    | 18                        | 3                        | 1                           |
| e. Career and work               | 29                         | 49                    | 18                        | 3                        | 2                           |
| f. Friends and acquaintance      | 29                         | 50                    | 17                        | 2                        | 2                           |
| g. Politics and public life      | 5                          | 27                    | 46                        | 17                       | 6                           |
|                                  | 100%                       | 100%                  | 100%                      | 100%                     | 100%                        |

The next several questions are about your experiences with Judaism. It is NOT necessary for you to be religious or to even consider yourself to be Jewish in order to answer these questions. We need to interview everyone, regardless of current religious preference or involvement. If, however, you feel as though a particular question does not apply to you, just say so.

2. When people think about being Jewish, some have positive feelings, some have negative feelings, while others do not feel one way or the other. Overall, how would you characterize your feelings about being Jewish? Do you feel.... (READ LIST)

|   |             |   |
|---|-------------|---|
| Very positive                                 | 63%         | 1 |
| Somewhat positive                             | 23          | 2 |
| Neither positive nor negative                 | 12          | 3 |
| Somewhat negative                             | 1           | 4 |
| Very negative                                 |             | 5 |
| (VOL) Both positive and negative (ambivalent) |             | 6 |
| (VOL) Don't consider myself to be Jewish      | 1           | 7 |
| (VOL) Don't know                              |             | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused                                 |             | 9 |
|   | <u>100%</u> |   |

3(1). Now I'm going to read you some statements and ask how much you agree or disagree with each one. (First,) do you agree or disagree with this statement.....

|   | <i>Completely Agree</i> | <i>Somewhat Agree</i> | <i>Somewhat Disagree</i> | <i>Completely Disagree</i> |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. I am proud to be a Jew.  | 80%                     | 16%                   | 2%                       | 1%                         |
| b. I have a clear sense of what being Jewish means to me.                         | 60                      | 31                    | 6                        | 3                          |
| c. I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people.                       | 53                      | 31                    | 11                       | 5                          |
| d. I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world. | 31                      | 42                    | 18                       | 10                         |
| <hr/>   |                         |                       |                          |                            |
| TOTAL   | 100%                    | 100%                  | 100%                     | 100%                       |

### **BOUNDARIES**

4. Do you have any children of your own, either natural or adopted?

|                  |       |      |
|------------------|-------|------|
| Yes              | 57%   | 1    |
| No               | 43    | 2    |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -     | 8    |
| (VOL) Refused    | -     | 9    |
|                  | <hr/> | 100% |

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5. I'd like you to think about several situations, some of which you may have already experienced and others which you may not have experienced. Please either tell me what your reaction WAS or what your reaction WOULD BE to each situation. **[READ IF Q.4=1]**

Now, I'd like you to think about several hypothetical situations, that is, situations that you may not have personally experienced. Please tell me what your reaction would be IF you personally experienced each situation. **[READ IF Q.4 GREATER THAN 1]**

How happy or upset would you be if your child **[INSERT FIRST ITEM--ROTATE]**?

Would you say...(READ LIST)

What about if your child **[INSERT NEXT ITEM--ROTATE]**? Would you say... (READ LIST)

|   | <i>Very Upset</i> | <i>Somewhat Upset</i> | <i>Somewhat Happy</i> | <i>Very Happy</i> | <i>Wouldn't Matter</i> |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| a. Converted to Christianity  | 51%               | 26%                   | 1%                    | 1%                | 21%                    |
| b. Never got a college degree   | 41                | 36                    | 1                     | 1                 | 21                     |
| c. Formed a lasting romantic relationship with a person of the same sex | 34                | 30                    | 2                     | 4                 | 30                     |
| d. Married a non-Jew  | 28                | 23                    | 2                     | 2                 | 45                     |
| e. Never married  | 26                | 38                    | 1                     | 1                 | 35                     |
| f. Became very religiously observant (ultra-Orthodox)                   | 11                | 24                    | 15                    | 16                | 34                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>100%</b>       | <b>100%</b>           | <b>100%</b>           | <b>100%</b>       | <b>100%</b>            |

N=1425

3(2). Now I'm going to ask you whether you agree or disagree with a few more statements. (First,) do you agree or disagree with this statement.....

|   | <i>Completely Agree</i> | <i>Somewhat Agree</i> | <i>Somewhat Disagree</i> | <i>Completely Disagree</i> | TOTAL |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| a. Overall, the fact that I am a Jew has very little to do with how I see myself. | 16                      | 20                    | 30                       | 34                         | 100%  |
| b. It's important for me to have friends who share my way of being Jewish.        | 23                      | 33                    | 17                       | 27                         | 100%  |
| c. There is something about me that non-Jews could never understand.              | 20                      | 29                    | 22                       | 29                         | 100%  |
| d. I lack the skills to participate comfortably in Jewish life.                   | 10                      | 21                    | 23                       | 40                         | 100%  |
| e. When faced with an important life decision, I look to Judaism for guidance.    | 19                      | 27                    | 24                       | 29                         | 100%  |

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**THE CONTENT OF BEING JEWISH**

6. There are many different ways of being Jewish. How much, if at all, does being Jewish involve for FOR YOU PERSONALLY **[INSERT ITEM-ROTATE]**? Would you say...(READ LIST) (MAKE SURE COMPLETE QUESTION IS READ FOR EACH STATEMENT)

|   | A Lot | Somewhat | Only A Little | Not At All | TOTAL |
|---|-------|----------|---------------|------------|-------|
| Remembering the Holocaust                 | 72    | 22       | 4             | 3          | 100%  |
| Leading an ethical and moral life         | 72    | 17       | 5             | 6          | 100%  |
| Celebrating Jewish holidays               | 55    | 29       | 11            | 6          | 100%  |
| Making the world a better place           | 55    | 28       | 8             | 10         | 100%  |
| Believing in God                          | 55    | 23       | 11            | 12         | 100%  |
| Giving your children a Jewish education   | 54    | 27       | 9             | 10         | 100%  |
| Learning about Jewish history and culture | 43    | 40       | 11            | 7          | 100%  |
| Having a rich spiritual life              | 41    | 31       | 15            | 13         | 100%  |
| Giving to charity                         | 39    | 37       | 14            | 11         | 100%  |
| Being part of a Jewish community          | 34    | 34       | 17            | 15         | 100%  |
| Supporting Israel                         | 32    | 35       | 18            | 15         | 100%  |
| Observing Jewish law (halacha)            | 27    | 31       | 22            | 21         | 100%  |
| Supporting Jewish organizations           | 26    | 38       | 19            | 16         | 100%  |
| Attending synagogue                       | 24    | 29       | 22            | 26         | 100%  |
| Studying Jewish texts                     | 20    | 25       | 24            | 31         | 100%  |



**SOCIAL INTERACTION**

7. Think about the people who currently live on your block in your neighborhood. Would you say that.....(READ LIST)

|   |             |   |
|---|-------------|---|
| All are Jewish                                  | 2%          | 1 |
| Most are Jewish                                 | 23          | 2 |
| About the same number are Jewish and non-Jewish | 38          | 3 |
| Most are non-Jewish                             | 31          | 4 |
| All are non-Jewish                              | 2           | 5 |
| (VOL) Don't Know                                | 5           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused                                   |             | 9 |
|   | <u>101%</u> |   |

8. If you had your choice, would you like there to be....(READ LIST)

|   |             |   |
|---|-------------|---|
| More Jewish people in your neighborhood,<br>Fewer Jewish people, or | 26%         | 1 |
| About the same number of Jewish people as<br>there are now?         | 2           | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't care  | 56          | 3 |
| (VOL) Don't Know  | 14          | 4 |
| (VOL) Refused   | 2           | 8 |
|   | <u>100%</u> | 9 |

9. Now, think about the people in your workplace (INCLUDES PART-TIME WORK). Would you say that.....(READ LIST)

|  |          |   |              |
|--|----------|---|--------------|
| All are Jewish                                     | 7%       | 1 |              |
| Most are Jewish                                    | 11       | 2 |              |
| About the same number are<br>Jewish and non-Jewish | 24       | 3 |              |
| Most are non-Jewish                                | 40       | 4 |              |
| All are non-Jewish                                 | 5        | 5 |              |
| (VOL) Don't work                                   | 10       | 6 | SKIP TO Q.11 |
| (VOL) Don't Know                                   | 4        | 8 |              |
| (VOL) Refused                                      | <u>9</u> |   |              |
|  | 100%     |   |              |

10. If you had your choice, would you like there to be.....(READ LIST)

|  |                |   |
|--|----------------|---|
|  | <i>N= 1227</i> |   |
| More Jewish people at work                               | 21%            | 1 |
| Fewer Jewish people, or                                  | 2              | 2 |
| About the same number of Jewish people as there are now? | 54             | 3 |
| (VOL) Don't care   | 23             | 4 |
| (VOL) Don't Know   | -              | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused  | <u>-</u>       | 9 |
|  | 100%           |   |

11. Among the people you consider to be your closest friends, would you say that....(READ LIST)

|   |          |   |
|---|----------|---|
| All are Jewish                                  | 15%      | 1 |
| Most are Jewish                                 | 34       | 2 |
| About the same number are Jewish and non-Jewish | 34       | 3 |
| Most are non-Jewish                             | 15       | 4 |
| All are non-Jewish                              | <1       | 5 |
| (VOL) Don't Know                                | 1        | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused                                   | <u>-</u> | 9 |
|   | 100%     |   |

N=1425

**SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS AND KEY INFLUENCES**

12. When people think about their lives, some have had experiences or relationships which may have attracted them to Jewish life or “turned them off to” Jewish life, while others may have had no such experiences. How about you? Thinking about your own life, have you had any significant relationships or experiences which particularly “turned you off” to Jewish life?

|                  |             |   |              |
|------------------|-------------|---|--------------|
| Yes              | 25%         | 1 |              |
| No               | 74          | 2 | SKIP TO Q.14 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | 1           | 8 | "            |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 | "            |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |              |

13. What were they? (MULTI-PUNCH) (PUNCH WHEN APPROPRIATE)

|                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                | <i>“Turnoffs”</i><br>(n=306) |
| Family of origin               | 15%                          |
| Spouse and family              | 4                            |
| Friends, lovers                | 11                           |
| Personal crisis                | 8                            |
| Jewish institutions            | 28                           |
| Rabbi                          | (10)                         |
| Time spent in Israel           | ( 2)                         |
| College years                  | ( 2)                         |
| Education – Hebrew school      | (14)                         |
| Youth group and activities     | --                           |
| People in the Jewish community | 9                            |
| “More Jewish than me”          | 10                           |
| Jewish holidays                | -                            |
| Work                           | 1                            |
| Other                          | 17                           |
| <hr/> TOTAL                    | <hr/> 100%                   |

14. Did you have any significant relationships or experiences which particularly attracted you to Jewish life?

|                  |             |   |              |
|------------------|-------------|---|--------------|
| Yes              | 48%         | 1 |              |
| No               | 50          | 2 | SKIP TO Q.16 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | 2           | 8 | "            |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 | "            |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |              |

N=1425

15. What were they? (MULTI-PUNCH) (PUNCH WHEN APPROPRIATE)

|                                | <i>"Attractors"</i><br>(n=616) |      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| Family of origin               | 34%                            |      |
| Spouse and family              | 6                              |      |
| Friends, lovers                | 11                             |      |
| Personal crisis                | 3                              |      |
| Jewish institutions            | 30                             |      |
| Rabbi                          |                                | ( 5) |
| Time spent in Israel           |                                | (11) |
| College years                  |                                | ( 3) |
| Education – Hebrew school      |                                | ( 9) |
| Youth group and activities     |                                | ( 2) |
| People in the Jewish community | 5                              |      |
| "More Jewish than me"          | -                              |      |
| Jewish holidays                | 3                              |      |
| Work                           | 1                              |      |
| Other                          | 9                              |      |
| TOTAL                          | 100%                           |      |

N=1425

**CURRENT JEWISH RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PRACTICE**

Now, I'd like you to think about your current Jewish activities.

**[TWO GROUPS OF QUESTIONS (Q.16-Q.22) AND (Q.23-32) SHOULD BE ROTATED RANDOMLY]**

16. Regardless of whether you go to synagogue regularly or not, do you consider yourself to be....

|                                     |             |    |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| Orthodox                            | 19%         | 1  |
| Conservative                        | 27          | 2  |
| Reform                              | 38          | 3  |
| Reconstructionist                   | 3           | 4  |
| (VOL) Hasidic                       | -           | 5  |
| (VOL) Just Jewish                   | 2           | 6  |
| (VOL) Not practicing/Not affiliated | 8           | 7  |
| (VOL) Something else (specify)_____ | -           | 8  |
| (VOL) Don't Know                    | 2           | 98 |
| (VOL) Refused                       | -           | 99 |
|                                     | <u>101%</u> |    |

17. About how often, if at all, do you personally attend any type of synagogue, temple, or organized Jewish religious service? Would you say.....(READ LIST)

|                       |             |    |
|-----------------------|-------------|----|
| Never                 | 18%         | 1  |
| A few times a year    | 51          | 2  |
| About once a month    | 10          | 3  |
| Several times a month | 7           | 4  |
| Weekly                | 9           | 5  |
| Daily or more         | 5           | 6  |
| (VOL) Don't Know      | 1           | 98 |
| (VOL) Refused         | -           | 99 |
|                       | <u>101%</u> |    |

D12. Are you....(READ LIST)

|                            |             |   |              |
|----------------------------|-------------|---|--------------|
| Married for the first time | 51%         | 1 |              |
| Remarried                  | 7           | 2 |              |
| Widowed                    | 2           | 3 |              |
| Separated                  | 2           | 4 |              |
| Divorced                   | 7           | 5 |              |
| Never married              | 32          | 6 | SKIP TO Q.18 |
| (VOL) Don't Know           | -           | 8 | "            |
| (VOL) Refused              | -           | 9 | "            |
|                            | <u>101%</u> |   |              |

N=1425

D13. What is your spouse's current religion? Is it.....(READ LIST)

[IF Q.D12=3, ASK:] What was your spouse's religion? Was it.....(READ LIST)

|   |   |             |   |
|---|---|-------------|---|
| Not Married   |   | 32%         |   |
| Jewish  |   | 53%         | 1 |
| Protestant (Baptist, Christian, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.) | 4 |             | 2 |
| Roman Catholic  |   | 7           | 3 |
| Some other religion (specify)_____  |   | 1           | 4 |
| (VOL) No religion/Atheist/Agnostic  |   | 2           | 5 |
| (VOL) Both Jewish and another religion  |   | -           | 6 |
| (VOL) Don't know  |   | 1           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused   |   | -           | 9 |
|   |   | <u>100%</u> |   |

18. How often, if at all, does someone in your household light candles on Friday night? Would you say.....(READ LIST)

|                        |             |   |
|------------------------|-------------|---|
| Every Friday night     | 26%         | 1 |
| Most Friday nights     | 5           | 2 |
| Some Friday nights, or | 17          | 3 |
| Never                  | 53          | 4 |
| (VOL) Don't Know       | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused          | -           | 9 |
|                        | <u>101%</u> |   |

19. How often, if at all, during the Christmas season do you have a Christmas tree in your home? Would you say.....(READ LIST)

|                            |            |   |
|----------------------------|------------|---|
| Every Christmas            | 11%        | 1 |
| Most Christmases           | 3          | 2 |
| Some Christmases           | 5          | 3 |
| Never                      | 80         | 4 |
| (VOL) Have a Chanukah bush | -          | 5 |
| (VOL) Don't Know           | -          | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused              | -          | 9 |
|                            | <u>99%</u> |   |

N=1425

20. Does your household use separate dishes for meat and dairy?

|  |             |   |
|--|-------------|---|
| Yes  | 28%         | 1 |
| No   | 71          | 2 |
| (VOL) Vegetarian                                   | 1           | 3 |
| (VOL) Only on special occasions<br>(e.g, Passover) | -           | 4 |
| (VOL) Don't Know                                   | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused                                      | -           | 9 |
|  | <u>100%</u> |   |

21. Do you personally fast on Yom Kippur? (FASTING "MOST OF THE DAY" COUNTS AS FASTING)

|   |             |                |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| Yes   | 69%         | 1              |
| No  | 30          | 2 SKIP TO Q.23 |
| (VOL) Would fast, but prevented<br>by health problems | 1           | 3              |
| (VOL) Don't Know                                      | -           | 8              |
| (VOL) Refused   | -           | 9              |
|   | <u>100%</u> |                |

22. Do you personally avoid handling or spending money on the Jewish Sabbath?

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Yes              | 23%         | 1 |
| No               | 77          | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

23. Can you read Hebrew?

|                  |             |                |
|------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Yes              | 59%         | 1              |
| No               | 41          | 2 SKIP TO Q.25 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 "            |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 "            |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |                |

N=1425

24. When reading Hebrew, do you ..... (READ LIST)

|  |             |   |
|--|-------------|---|
| Understand everything you read in Hebrew       | 7%          | 1 |
| Understand most of what you read in Hebrew     | 15          | 2 |
| Understand some of what you read in Hebrew, or | 24          | 3 |
| Do you not understand what you read in Hebrew? | 13          | 4 |
| (VOL) Don't Know                               | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused                                  | -           | 9 |
| <b>(TOTAL Reads Hebrew)</b>                    | <b>59%</b>  |   |
| <b>(Don't read Hebrew)</b>                     | <b>41%</b>  |   |
|  | <b>100%</b> |   |

25. Approximately how many times, if at all, have you been to Israel?

|                  |             |    |
|------------------|-------------|----|
| Never            | 58%         |    |
| Once             | 20          |    |
| 2 or more times  | 22          |    |
| (VOL) Don't know | -           | 98 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 99 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |    |

26. Have you ever seriously considered living in Israel?

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Yes              | 18%         | 1 |
| No               | 82          | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

27. During the past year or so did you attend any lecture, class or a study circle on a Jewish topic?

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Yes              | 42%         | 1 |
| No               | 58          | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

N=1425



28. How often do you read Jewish periodicals, newspapers or magazines?  
Would you say...

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Often            | 21%         | 1 |
| Sometimes        | 21          | 2 |
| Rarely           | 24          | 3 |
| Never            | 34          | 4 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

29. Do you display any Jewish objects in your home, like ritual objects, works of art, books?

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Yes              | 81%         | 1 |
| No               | 19          | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

30. In 1997, did you or any other member of your household contribute or give gifts to ANY philanthropies, charities, causes or organizations, Jewish or otherwise? Please do not include dues or memberships.

|                  |             |   |              |
|------------------|-------------|---|--------------|
| Yes              | 87%         | 1 |              |
| No               | 12          | 2 | SKIP TO Q.33 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | 1           | 8 | "            |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 | "            |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |              |

31. Did you give to.....

|  |                   |   |
|--|-------------------|---|
| Only Jewish charities,                   | 9%                | 1 |
| Only non-Jewish charities, or            | 9                 | 2 |
| To both Jewish and non-Jewish charities? | 67                | 3 |
| (VOL) Don't Know                         | 2                 | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused                            | -                 | 9 |
| <b>(Gave to charity)</b>                 | <b><u>87%</u></b> |   |
| <b>(Don't give to charity)</b>           | <b><u>13%</u></b> |   |
|  | <b>100%</b>       |   |

N=1425

32. In 1997, did you contribute to UJA/Federation of New York?

|   |             |   |
|---|-------------|---|
| Yes                                     | 23%         | 1 |
| No                                      | 55          | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't Know                        | 8           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused                           | -           | 9 |
| <b>(Gave to Jewish charities)</b>       | <b>86%</b>  |   |
| <b>(Don't give to Jewish charities)</b> | <b>14%</b>  |   |
|   | <b>100%</b> |   |

**NOTE: In this section marginals are reported only for those who were raised Jewish (N= 1378)**

### **PAST JEWISHNESS**

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your childhood.

**[Q.33-Q.39 ASK ONLY IF RAISED JEWISH, Q.D9=1]**

33. Referring to Jewish religious denominations, were you raised.....(READ LIST)

N= 1425

|                                     |             |    |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|----|
| Orthodox                            | 22%         | 1  |
| Conservative                        | 37          | 2  |
| Reform                              | 34          | 3  |
| Reconstructionist                   | <1          | 4  |
| (VOL) Hasidic                       | -           | 5  |
| (VOL) Just Jewish                   | 3           | 6  |
| (VOL) Something else (specify)_____ | 2           | 7  |
| (VOL) Don't Know                    | 3           | 98 |
| (VOL) Refused                       | -           | 99 |
|                                     | <b>101%</b> |    |

34. All together, after age five, how many years of formal Jewish education did you receive, if any?

Mean number of years                      6.6

N=1378

35. Jewish What was the main type of schooling you received for your formal education? Was it.....(READ LIST)

|  |             |   |
|--|-------------|---|
| Full-time day school (such as yeshiva)   | 21%         | 1 |
| Part-time afternoon school that met more than once a week (such as Talmud Torah) | 39          | 2 |
| One-day-a-week Sunday school or other Jewish educational program                 | 17          | 3 |
| Private tutoring   | 2           | 4 |
| Something else (specify) _____   |             | 5 |
| (VOL) Don't Know   | 1           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused  |             | 9 |
| <b>(Received a Jewish education)</b>   | <b>80%</b>  |   |
| <b>(Received no Jewish education)</b>  | <b>20%</b>  |   |
|  | <b>100%</b> |   |

36. As you look back on your Jewish education overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of Jewish education you received as a child? Are you....

|                       |             |   |
|-----------------------|-------------|---|
| Very satisfied        | 29%         | 1 |
| Somewhat satisfied    | 37          | 2 |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 21          | 3 |
| Very dissatisfied     | 14          | 4 |
| (VOL) Don't know      | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused         | -           | 9 |
|                       | <u>101%</u> |   |

37. Did you have a Bar or Bat mitzvah when you were young?

|                         |             |   |
|-------------------------|-------------|---|
| Yes                     | 57%         | 1 |
| No                      | 43          | 2 |
| No, but did as an adult | -           | 3 |
| (VOL) Don't Know        | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused           | -           | 9 |
|                         | <u>100%</u> |   |

38. Did you ever belong to a Jewish youth group?

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Yes              | 53%         | 1 |
| No               | 47          | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

N=1378

39. Did you ever attend or work at a Jewish overnight camp which had a Jewish educational program?

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Yes              | 39%         | 1 |
| No               | 61          | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

**[ASK ALL]**

40. When you were in college or a university, did you ever take any Jewish studies courses, that is, courses which dealt primarily with Judaism?

|  |             |   |              |
|--|-------------|---|--------------|
| Yes                                    | 28%         | 1 |              |
| No                                     | 69          | 2 |              |
| (VOL) Didn't attend college/university | 3           | 3 | SKIP TO Q.42 |
| (VOL) Don't Know                       | -           | 8 |              |
| (VOL) Refused                          | -           | 9 |              |
|  | <u>100%</u> |   |              |

41. Did you ever participate in any activities of a Jewish college group, like Hillel?

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Yes              | 28%         | 1 |
| No               | 72          | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

42. Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about your family when you were growing up.

Please tell me which persons or person pretty much raised you when you were a child? **[MULTI-PUNCH]** (IF RESPONDENT SAYS "SOMEONE ELSE" WRITE EACH PERSON ON A SEPARATE LINE)

|                               |       |   |
|-------------------------------|-------|---|
| Mother                        | 96%   | 1 |
| Father                        | 74    | 2 |
| Stepmother                    | <1    | 3 |
| Stepfather                    | -     | 4 |
| Grandmother                   | 2     | 5 |
| Grandfather                   | <1    | 6 |
| Someone(s) else (specify)____ | 1     | 7 |
| (VOL) Don't Know              |       | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused                 | _____ | 9 |

N=1378

**[ASK Q.43 FOR EACH PERSON PUNCHED IN Q.42]**

43. Still thinking about your childhood, excluding what you consider normal parent-child conflict, overall how would you characterize your relationship with your **[FILL Q.42]** while you were growing up? Was it....(READ LIST)

**[AFTER FIRST TIME, ASK:]** How would you characterize your relationship with your **[FILL Q.42]** while you were growing up? Was it....(READ LIST)

| Father                                   | Raised by Mother<br>(n= 1374) | Raised by<br>(n= 1013) | by |
|--|-------------------------------|------------------------|----|
| Mostly happy or content                  | 79%                           | 62%                    | 1  |
| Mostly angry or difficult                | 10                            | 6                      | 2  |
| (VOL) Mixture of above (specify)_____    | 3                             | 1                      | 3  |
| (VOL) Mostly emotionally remote, distant | <1                            | 1                      | 4  |
| (VOL) None of above                      | <1                            | <1                     | 5  |
| (VOL) Don't Know                         | 1                             | <1                     | 8  |
| (VOL) Refused                            | 7                             | <1                     | 9  |
| Not raised by Father                     | <u>n/a</u>                    |                        |    |
|  | <u>29</u>                     |                        |    |
|  | 100%                          | 100%                   |    |

44. When you were growing up, did someone in you household usually light candies on Friday night? (IF NECESSARY: For Shabbat?)

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Yes              | 52%         | 1 |
| No               | 48          | 2 |
| (VOL) Don't Know | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

45. When you were growing up, how often during the Christmas season did you have a Christmas tree in your home? Would you say.... (READ LIST)

|                           |             |   |
|---------------------------|-------------|---|
| Every Christmas           | 5%          | 1 |
| Most Christmases          | 2           | 2 |
| Some Christmases          | 5           | 3 |
| Never                     | 88          | 4 |
| (VOL) Had a Chanukah bush | -           | 5 |
| (VOL) Don't Know          | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused             | -           | 9 |
|                           | <u>100%</u> |   |

N=1378

**[ASK Q.46 FOR EACH PERSON PUNCHED IN Q.42]**

46. As far as you can tell, how important was being Jewish in your [FILL Q42]'s life?

**[AFTER FIRST TIME, ASK:]**How important was being Jewish in your [FILLQ.42]'s life?

|                         | Raised by Mother<br>(n= 1374) | Raised by Father<br>(n= 1013) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Extremely important     | 34%                           | 27%                           |
| Very important          | 26                            | 21                            |
| Somewhat important      | 23                            | 15                            |
| Not too important       | 6                             | 5                             |
| Not at all important    | 3                             | 2                             |
| (VOL) Not Jewish at all | <1                            | <1                            |
| (VOL) Don't Know        | <1                            | <1                            |
| (VOL) Refused           |                               | <1                            |
| Not raised by Father    | <u>n/a</u>                    | <u>29</u>                     |
|                         | 100%                          | 100%                          |

47. Think back to when you were around 11 or 12 years old. How important would you say that being Jewish was in your life at that time?

|                      |             |   |
|----------------------|-------------|---|
| Extremely important  | 21%         | 1 |
| Very important       | 24          | 2 |
| Somewhat important   | 32          | 3 |
| Not too important    | 16          | 4 |
| Not at all important | 7           | 5 |
| (VOL) Don't Know     | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused        | -           | 9 |
|                      | <u>100%</u> |   |

48. How often did you attend synagogue or temple when you were 11 or 12? Would you say.....(READ LIST)

|                       |             |    |
|-----------------------|-------------|----|
| Never                 | 11%         | 1  |
| A few times a year    | 35          | 2  |
| About once a month    | 13          | 3  |
| Several times a month | 12          | 4  |
| Weekly                | 25          | 5  |
| Daily or more         | 5           | 6  |
| (VOL) Don't Know      | -           | 98 |
| (VOL) Refused         | -           | 99 |
|                       | <u>100%</u> |    |

N=1378

49. Approximately how many of your neighbors on your block were Jewish when you were 11 or 12? Would you say that....(READ LIST)

|  |       |   |
|--|-------|---|
| All were Jewish                                  | 9%    | 1 |
| Most were Jewish                                 | 34    | 2 |
| About the same number were Jewish and non-Jewish | 25    | 3 |
| Most were non-Jewish                             | 23    | 4 |
| All were non-Jewish                              | 7     | 5 |
| (VOL) Don't know                                 | 2     | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused                                    | -     | 9 |
|  | <hr/> |   |
|  | 100%  |   |

**CHANGE IN NATURE OF JEWISHNESS OVER THE LIFECOURSE**

50. Now, I'm going to ask you a few questions about the way your involvement in Jewish life has changed over time. Keep in mind that involvement in Jewish life does not necessarily include religious activities.

Did your involvement in Jewish life increase, decrease, or stay about the same.....**[READ]**

|  | Increase | Decrease | Same | TOTAL |
|--|----------|----------|------|-------|
| a. Between your pre-teen years (11 or 12) and your teen years                | 17%      | 27       | 56   | 100%  |
| b. Between your teen years and your early 20's                               | 19%      | 33       | 48   | 100%  |
| c. When you were first married<br><b>[ASK ONLY IF MARRIED AT SOME POINT]</b> | 27%      | 17       | 53   | 100%  |
| d. Upon the birth of your first child<br><b>[ASK ONLY IF HAVE CHILD]</b>     | 37%      | 7        | 54   | 100%  |

53. Thinking not just about your religious beliefs and activities, how does your current way of being Jewish compare with how you were raised? Is it.... (READ LIST)

|                    |             |   |
|--------------------|-------------|---|
| Very similar       | 29%         | 1 |
| Somewhat similar   | 30          | 2 |
| Somewhat different | 23          | 3 |
| Very different     | 18          | 4 |
| (VOL) Don't Know   | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused      | -           | 9 |
|                    | <u>100%</u> |   |

**DYNAMISM: STABILITY OR FLUX OF CURRENT IDENTITY**

54. Finally, think about your life in the future, as best you can envision it. In the next three to five years do you imagine that you will be more involved in Jewish life, less involved or involved about the same in Jewish life as you are today? Remember, involvement in Jewish life does not necessarily include religious activities.

|                         |             |   |
|-------------------------|-------------|---|
| More involved           | 30%         | 1 |
| Less involved           | 2           | 2 |
| Involved about the same | 68          | 3 |
| (VOL) Don't Know        | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused           | -           | 9 |
|                         | <u>100%</u> |   |

**NOTE: In this section marginals are reported for people who are currently**



**Jewish**  
**(N= 1425).**

**DEMOGRAPHICS II**

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions for classification purposes only, then we will be done.

**[ASK ONLY IF SPOUSE IS JEWISH, BOTH JEWISH AND ANOTHER RELIGION, OR NO RELIGION]**

D14. In what religion was your spouse raised? Was it.....(READ LIST)

|   |   |             |   |
|---|---|-------------|---|
| Jewish  |   | 96%         | 1 |
| Protestant (Baptist, Christian, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.) | 2 | 2           |   |
| Roman Catholic  |   | 1           | 3 |
| Some other religion (specify)_____  |   | -           | 4 |
| (VOL) No religion/Atheist/Agnostic  |   | 1           | 5 |
| (VOL) Both Jewish and another religion  |   | -           | 6 |
| (VOL) Don't know  |   | -           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused   |   | -           | 9 |
|   |   | <u>100%</u> |   |

**[ASK ONLY IF Q.D12=2]**

D14a. In what religion was your first spouse raised? Was it.....

|   |    |             |   |
|---|----|-------------|---|
| Jewish  |    | 71%         | 1 |
| Protestant (Baptist, Christian, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.) | 14 | 2           |   |
| Roman Catholic  |    | 11          | 3 |
| Some other religion (specify)_____  |    | 1           | 4 |
| (VOL) No religion/Atheist/Agnostic  |    | 2           | 5 |
| (VOL) Both Jewish and another religion  |    | -           | 6 |
| (VOL) Don't know  |    | 1           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused   |    | -           | 9 |
|   |    | <u>100%</u> |   |

N=1425

**[ASK IF Q.4=1; ELSE GO TO Q.D19]**

D15. Number of respondents with children

|      |           |
|------|-----------|
| None | 44%       |
| Some | <u>56</u> |
|      | 100%      |

**[ASK ONLY IF SPOUSE IS NOT JEWISH, Q.D13=2 THROUGH 9, OR FIRST SPOUSE NOT JEWISH, Q.D14a=2 THROUGH 9]**

D16. What is your oldest child's religion? Is it.....(READ LIST)

|   |          |   |
|---|----------|---|
| Jewish  | 49%      | 1 |
| Protestant (Baptist, Christian, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.) | 10       | 2 |
| Roman Catholic  | 14       | 3 |
| Some other religion (specify)_____  | 2        | 4 |
| (VOL) No religion/Atheist/Agnostic  | 13       | 5 |
| (VOL) Both Jewish and another religion  | 6        | 6 |
| (VOL) Don't know  | 6        | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused   | <u>1</u> | 9 |
|   | 101%     |   |

**[ASK ALL]**

D19. Were either of your parents born in North America (U.S. or Canada)?

|                  |          |   |               |
|------------------|----------|---|---------------|
| Yes              | 83%      | 1 | SKIP TO Q.D20 |
| No               | 17       | 2 | SKIP TO Q.D22 |
| (VOL) Don't know | -        | 8 | "             |
| (VOL) Refused    | <u>-</u> | 9 | "             |
|                  | 100%     |   |               |

D20. Which of your parents were born in North America? Your mother, your father, or both?

|                  |          |   |
|------------------|----------|---|
| Mother           | 8%       | 1 |
| Father           | 5        | 2 |
| Both             | 70       | 3 |
| Neither          | 17       |   |
| (VOL) Don't know | -        | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | <u>-</u> | 9 |
|                  | 100%     |   |

N=1425

**[ASK ONLY IF EITHER PARENT BORN IN NORTH AMERICA, IF Q.D19=1]**

D21. Of your four grandparents, how many of them were born in either the U.S. or Canada?

|                  |             |   |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| One              | 12%         | 1 |
| Two              | 16          | 2 |
| Three            | 7           | 3 |
| Four             | 11          | 4 |
| (VOL) None       | 52          | 7 |
| (VOL) Don't know | 2           | 8 |
| (VOL) Refused    | -           | 9 |
|                  | <u>100%</u> |   |

**[ASK IF NOT BORN IN NYC AREA, Q.D3=2 THROUGH 9]**

D22. How old were you when you moved to the New York area?

(N= 388)

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| <u>18.5</u> (0-97) Age in years |    |
| (VOL) Don't know                | 98 |
| (VOL) Refused                   | 99 |

**[ASK ALL]**

D23. What was the highest year or level of school you have completed?

|  |             |    |
|--|-------------|----|
| Grades 1 through 8   | -           | 1  |
| Grades 9 through 11  | 1%          | 2  |
| Grade 12 or GED (High School Graduate)                         | 8           | 3  |
| Freshman/First year college                                    | 4           | 4  |
| Sophomore/Second year college/Associates Degree                | 7           | 5  |
| Junior/Third year college                                      | 4           | 6  |
| Graduated FOUR-YEAR college/In 4 <sup>th</sup> year of college | 38          | 7  |
| Master degree program/Graduate school                          | 28          | 8  |
| Law School/JD  | 4           | 9  |
| PhD/Other doctorate/In doctoral program                        | 4           | 10 |
| MD/DDS/Medical doctor  | 2           | 11 |
| Other (specify)_____   |             | 12 |
| (VOL) Don't know   | 1           | 98 |
| (VOL) Refused  |             | 99 |
|  | <u>101%</u> |    |

D25. Was your total household income for 1997... (READ LIST)

|                        |          |   |                |
|------------------------|----------|---|----------------|
| Less than \$50,000, or | 29%      | 1 | SKIP TO Q. D26 |
| \$50,000 or more?      | 59       | 2 | SKIP TO Q. D27 |
| (VOL) Don't know       | 2        | 8 | SKIP TO Q.D28  |
| (VOL) Refused          | <u>9</u> | 9 | SKIP TO Q.D28  |
|                        | 100%     |   |                |

**[ASK IF LESS THAN \$50,000]**

|                                    |            |   |              |
|------------------------------------|------------|---|--------------|
| D26. Was that... (READ LIST)       |            |   |              |
| Under \$30,000,                    | 12%        | 1 | SKIPTO Q.D28 |
| \$30,000 to less than \$40,000, or | 8          | 2 | "            |
| \$40,000 to less than \$50,000?    | 8          | 3 | "            |
| (VOL) Don't know                   | 2          | 8 | "            |
| (VOL) Refused                      | -          | 9 | "            |
|                                    | <u>30%</u> |   |              |

**[ASK IF \$50,000 OR MORE]**

|                                      |            |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|------------|---|--|
| D27. Was that....(READ LIST)         |            |   |  |
| \$50,000 to less than \$75,000,      | 19%        | 1 |  |
| \$75,000 to less than \$100,000,     | 13         | 2 |  |
| \$100,000 to less than \$150,000,    | 10         | 3 |  |
| \$150,000 to less than \$200,000, or | 4          | 4 |  |
| \$200,000 or more?                   | 7          | 5 |  |
| (VOL) Don't know                     | 2          | 8 |  |
| (VOL) Refused                        | 5          | 9 |  |
|                                      | <u>60%</u> |   |  |

|                                  |             |   |               |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---|---------------|
| D28. Are you currently employed? |             |   |               |
| Yes                              | 82%         | 1 |               |
| No                               | 18          | 2 | SKIP TO Q.D30 |
| (VOL) Don't know                 | -           | 8 | "             |
| (VOL) Refused                    | -           | 9 | "             |
|                                  | <u>100%</u> |   |               |

|  |            |    |  |
|--|------------|----|--|
| D29. What kind of work do you do?        |            |    |  |
| Professional and Technical               | 62%        | 1  |  |
| Manager/Official                         | 9          | 2  |  |
| Proprietor/Owner                         | 5          | 3  |  |
| Clerical worker                          | 7          | 4  |  |
| Sales worker                             | 7          | 5  |  |
| Skilled craftsman/foreman                | 3          | 6  |  |
| Operative, unskilled labor (except farm) | 1          | 7  |  |
| Service worker                           | 3          | 8  |  |
| Laborer                                  | -          | 9  |  |
| Farmer and Farm Manager                  | -          | 10 |  |
| Student                                  | -          | 11 |  |
| Housewife/househusband/stays at home     | -          | 12 |  |
| Military service                         | -          | 13 |  |
| Other (specify)_____                     | 1          | 14 |  |
| (VOL) Don't know                         | -          | 98 |  |
| (VOL) Refused                            | 1          | 99 |  |
|  | <u>99%</u> |    |  |

D30. Where in the New York Metropolitan area do you live? Do you live in.....(READ LIST)

|                     |          |    |                 |
|---------------------|----------|----|-----------------|
| The Bronx?          | 3%       | 1  | SKIP TO END     |
| Brooklyn?           | 22       | 2  | SKIP TO END     |
| Manhattan?          | 23       | 3  | SKIP TO END     |
| Queens?             | 12       | 4  | SKIP TO END     |
| Staten Island?      | 3        | 5  | SKIP TO END     |
| Nassau County?      | 20       | 6  | (SKIP TO Q.D31) |
| Suffolk County?     | 7        | 7  | (SKIP TO Q.D31) |
| Westchester County? | 8        | 8  | (SKIP TO Q.D31) |
| (VOL) Don't know    | -        | 98 | SKIP TO END     |
| (VOL) Refused       | <u>1</u> | 99 | SKIP TO END     |
|                     | 99%      |    |                 |

**THAT COMPLETES OUR INTERVIEW! THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**

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