Recent Developments in Jewish Identification in the United States: A Cohort Follow-Up and Facet Analysis

Uzi Rebhun

Following the removal of various social obstacles, and with the expansion in higher education and different economic sectors — a development which has characterized the United States after World War II (Lipset and Raab, 1995) — American Jews have experienced impressive social and economic mobility. Judged by their educational achievements, professional status and income, as compared to other subgroups, Jews have been thoroughly accepted and integrated into America's social mainstream (Goldstein, 1992). Today, Jews hold key positions in the American economy and in large financial corporations; they are over-represented, relative to their share in the national population, in the professional occupations, among faculty members of prestige universities, and in the media as reporters and editors; and they are salient in the political arena (Lipset and Raab, 1995).

As a minority group in a pluralistic society, many Jews find themselves in ongoing conflicts of at least two different, yet complementary, types. One is between their group belonging on the one hand, and the stimuli toward cultural and social integration within the majority population on the other hand; the second is the confrontation between their Jewish identification and the exposure to modern western civilization and personal freedom. The former may result in an increasing attachment to the majority culture, and in the establishment of different types of relationships with non-Jews, including inter-faith marriage, thus weakening group commitment. But it is also possible that the wide-spread atmosphere of religioethnic pluralism, despite intensified interreligious contacts, will yield enough to allow maintenance of traditional culture and the central elements of group awareness. The second conflict, between identificational essentials deriving from the Jewish religion and the pressure of secular revolution, may engender indifference and apathy toward the Jewish life style, thus blurring the distinction with other groups and the majority population. Alternatively, Jews may only superficially alter their traditional behaviors to suit secular and communal expressions, without seriously disrupting Jewish vitality and cohesion.

These different evaluations have been at the core of the recent scholarly literature on the social and cultural changes among American Jewry (Cohen, 1983; DellaPergola and Schmelz, 1989; Goldscheider, 1986a; Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1983). To a large extent, they reflect the more general debate on the nature and role of ethnic and religious identity in Contemporary America; since the 1960s, some sociologists and other observers have been questioning what was by then a wide-

spread expectation that the different ethnic Americans would assimilate and melt down into the Anglo-American prototype. Alternative perceptions were suggested including the "transformation" of the identity variable and ethnic "revival" (Alba, 1990; Gans, 1979; 1994; Glazer and Moynihan, 1963; Goldscheider and Zuckerman, 1984; Gordon, 1964; Lieberson and Waters, 1988; Novak, 1972; Waters, 1990; Yancey et al, 1976).

The present article seeks to further the current understanding of Jewish life in America by examining trends in Jewish identification over a relatively long span of time. To this end, I have used the most reliable and comprehensive empirical bases available today for the social-cultural study on American Jews, namely the 1970/71 and 1990 National Jewish Population Surveys (NJPS). First, behavioral patterns related to ritual observance, communal affiliation and social cohesion were traced applying a cohort follow-up method. From a descriptive point of view as well, I have formulated an index of Jewishness which allows a comparison of the overall intensity of Jewish life at two different points in time, as well as the relative weight of different aggregate expressions of identity. Finally, I apply a nonmetric multivariate analysis technique to provide insight into the mutual relationships between the various components of Jewish identification, and how this framework has changed between 1970 and 1990.

The findings of this study suggest that the processes characterizing American Jewry are diverse and often complex. American Jewry is not proceeding in one clear path. While some expressions of Jewish identification have experienced significant decline, others sustained a fair amount of stability and have even been slightly strengthened. The former mainly correspond with the public sphere of institutional affiliation and social participation, while the latter are behaviors in the private sphere and at specific occasions within the life-cycle and the Jewish calendar. We believe that this examination, over time and on the national scene, offers a new look at the identificational processes characterizing American Jews that can somewhat bridge between the different long-standing perceptions and bring them closer to one another.

Data, Methods, and Measures

Data

Data for this research derive from the 1970/71 and 1990 NJPS. The 1970/71 NJPS was a disproportionate stratified sample that included an "area probability sample", established by contacting and screening many thousands of housing units door-to-door for Jewish occupants, and a "list sample" of households known to be Jewish from local Jewish federations (Lazerwitz, 1973; 1974; 1978). According to reliable estimates of the Jewish population of the nation's communities, the U.S. was divided into several strata. Each stratum was further divided into a number of primary sampling units (PSU): eighteen of these were designated as self-representing PSUs being the largest Jewish communities, twenty PSUs represented themselves and other units as well, and one PSU included a sample of counties with "zero Jewish population." Area probability samples were selected within each sample PSU and integrated with local federation lists, thus ensuring that no

housing unit found in the federation lists was also included in the local area samples.

Three criteria were determined for the inclusion of a given household in the survey: at least one of the household members was born Jewish, regarded himself as a Jew, or had at least one Jewish-born parent. Personal interviews provided the study's data; any adult respondent (aged 21 years or older) who knew the required information was interviewed about family characteristics and individual behavioral items. The study yielded a national sample of 7,179 housing units which became, after adjusting for disproportional design (i.e., of marginal Jews and those directly associated with the Jewish community), a weighted sample of 15,145 Jewish housing units. Of these sample Jewish housing units, 79% gave interviews: 82% for the sample obtained from federation lists, and 78% for those sample housing units from the area samples. All individuals in the present study had been identified by the screening questions as being currently Jewish.

The 1990 NJPS was a three-stage data collection process (Kosmin et al, 1991; Waksberg, 1996). First, a national random sample of 125,813 households was reached by random digit dialed telephone interviews as part of the twice-weekly general market-research survey conducted by ICR Survey Group of Media, Pennsylvania. Respondents (adults aged 18 and over on their most recent birthday) were asked to state any attachment to Judaism for themselves and for each member of their household. Four screening questions determined whether respondents were Jewish, considered themselves Jewish, were raised Jewish, or had a Jewish parent. This stage identified 5,146 households containing at least one person who qualified as currently Jewish or who was of Jewish background. No formal disposition of call results is available, although we know that the proportion refusing to participate in any given weekly survey is slightly less than 50% (Waksberg, 1996). During stage 2, the inventory stage, attempts were made to re-contact households to verify the identity of potential respondents and to solicit participation for the final sample. Those households classified as Jewish in the last three months of screening were omitted from stage 2, and were covered as part of stage 3. Stage 2 included 4,208 households. During this inventory procedure, several potential respondents dropped out of the sample pool due to changes in household composition or to disqualification upon further review of the Jewish credentials.

The final stage of the survey was conducted from May through July 1990, to coincide with the U.S. census. This interviewing stage yielded a total sample of 2,441 completed interviews with qualified respondents. The completed interviews constitute approximately half of all the households identified as Jewish in the screening phase: slightly over 15% refused to participate, 13% could not be contacted, and 18% failed to re-qualify. All of the latter were re-contacted during Stage 3, and all failed to validate their responses from the screening phase. The remaining cases were either non-household or ineligible units, or were classified as unused interviews. In this study we included those respondents who identified themselves as Jewish at the time of the survey.

Methods

For descriptive purposes of analyzing the trends in Jewish identification, I classified the Jewish populations of the 1970 and 1990 studies into age cohorts in

correspondence with the twenty year gap between the two surveys. This format lends itself to three types of comparison, each of which yields a different complementary understanding of the data and their inferences. First, we can read the tables horizontally and examine changes in Jewish identification by age, keeping the time period constant. Such an approach gives us an impression as to the role of age or life-cycle in determining ethnoreligious behavior. Second, we can read the table diagonally, to see periodic influences on each particular group, as well as the anticipated life cycle effects. While some entries of new people into cohorts (through accession to Judaism or return migration of the native-born), or exits (through secession from Judaism, emigration, or death) were possible, it stands to reason that these would have only minor effects on cohort characteristics. Third, we can look at the data vertically — i.e., comparing similar age groups at two different points of time — to gain insights into the effects of different times of birth and socialization.

Previous studies of Jews, as well as of other groups, suggest that ethnoreligious behavior is strongly determined by factors associated with family formation, marital stability and having children living at home (Cohen, 1983; Goldscheider, 1973; Himmelfarb, 1977; Nash, 1968; Nash and Berger, 1962). Thus, I adjusted the data for variation in marital status, in light of significant changes in singlehood and divorce frequencies among American Jews in recent years (DellaPergola and Schmelz, 1989; Goldstein, 1992).

To provide insights into the structure of the Jewish identification framework and the relationships between its components, we processed the data through Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), a standard nonmetric multivariate analysis technique. SSA produces a graphic translation of matrix of correlations of all variables examined (Guttman, 1968). Each variable (Jewish identification) is represented by a point in a Euclidean space, whereas the distance between a pair of points reflects their statistical similarity: the higher the correlation between two variables — relative to the size of correlation with the other variables — the closer they are in the space. The points are distributed in the space of smallest dimensionality which maintains the partial order of correlations between pairs of variables. Two variables with similar distribution will appear at the same point; two variables with inverse distribution will be posited at two extremes of the given facet. Structural analysis of the data in this technique allows development of some hypotheses and an interpretation of the content of the variables and their mutual relationships.

Measures

I have used ten indicators of Jewish identification. They represent different strategies of Jewish survival and continuity, and take into account the ideological orientations and socio-cultural milieu of contemporary American Jews (Goldscheider, 1986a; Lazerwitz et al, 1998). This variety of measures coincides with the notion that Jewish identity is multifaceted (Goldstein and Goldscheider, 1968; Lenski, 1963) being at the same time a religion and an ethnicity (Glazer, 1972; Himmelfarb, 1979; 1980).

Individual as well as household expressions of ritual practices were examined. These include maintaining Jewish dietary laws in the home by using separate

dishes for meat and dairy products, fasting on Yom Kippur, lighting of Hanukkah candles, and attending the Passover Seder. While only the dietary laws effect daily behavior, the others also indicate the importance of belonging to a group and to a distinct religioethnic heritage. For the 1970 analysis, all four variables distinguished dichotomously between those who observed a specific ritual and those who did not. In 1990, this was true only for fasting on Yom Kippur, while the other three variables were ranked according to: never, sometimes, usually, or all the time. We considered a respondent to be observant of the Jewish dietary laws if separate dishes were used "usually" or "all the time", and that Hanukkah and Passover were observed when a frequency of "sometimes" or higher was reported.

Three indicators show Jewish participation and involvement in the public domain: synagogue membership, synagogue attendance, and Jewish organizational membership. Synagogue membership and Jewish organizational membership assess social integration into the local Jewish community and involvement in the public sphere, while synagogue attendance measures participation in formal religious services and is thus a proxy of religiosity. The indicator of synagogue membership, which in 1970 referred to the respondent personally and in 1990 to the respondent or other household members, distinguishes between those who reported yes and those who reported no. The response scale for synagogue attendance was grouped according to whether respondents never, occasionally or regularly (at least once a month) participate in synagogue services. Finally, organizational membership distinguishes between "no" and "one or more" organizations to which the respondent belongs.

The secular context of modern American society increases the importance of Jewish friends and neighborhood in maintaining a distinct Jewish community (Goldscheider, 1986a; 1986b). Thus, the extent of informal Jewish networks was considered for its impact upon the Jewish identification of respondents. Respondents were asked to state whether none, a few, some, most, or all of their closest friends were Jewish. They were also asked to describe the Jewish character of their neighborhood, and responses were categorized as not at all Jewish, a little Jewish, somewhat Jewish, or very Jewish.

Since its establishment in 1948, the State of Israel has become a central anchor of group identification for both individual American Jews and for the organized Jewish community. Support of the Jewish state is a major form of communal consensus and, by means of communal institutions and activities, Israel constitutes a social and cultural foundation and a source of group cohesion (Cohen, 1996; Goldscheider, 1986b; Goldstein and Goldstein, 1996). The major activities for Israel focus on the public sphere, and are mostly philanthropic or political (Cohen and Liebman, 1997). The lobbyist mechanisms have only minor implications on the private lives of most American Jews in terms of the meaning of Israel as a society, culture, language or a religious symbol (Liebman, 1995; Waxman, 1992). However, visits to Israel provide a more accurate measure of attachment, given their concrete form (Goldstein and Goldstein, 1996). In 1970, respondents were differentiated as those who had ever visited Israel, and those who had not, while in 1990 respondents were asked to indicate the number of times they had been to Israel. For purposes of comparison, I have regrouped into one category all those who in the latter survey reported that they had ever undertaken such a visit.

Trends in Jewish Identification

We begin with those behaviors which reflect an intensive religious and ethnic life style, including daily rituals. In 1970, approximately one-fifth of all Jewish adults in America resided in homes which had separate dishes for meat and dairy products (Table 1). This already low level declined over the next two decades, the change being attributable to both the weakening importance of dietary laws to younger generations as compared to their elders, and to the decline over time within a given age cohort. Religious commitments such as observance of dietary laws are, of course, highly correlated with the ideological preferences of American Jews among whom dramatic shifts have been observed from identification with Orthodoxy and the Conservative movements towards an increasing share of Reform Jews and those who do not identify with any of the major ideological denominations of American Judaism (Lazerwitz et al, 1998; Rebhun, 1993).

Synagogue and organizational membership serve as a bridge between personal Jewish identification and communal life, involving membership payment and often active participation. Between 1970 and 1990, synagogue membership rate declined from 48% to 33%. Membership level is related to life-cycle stage, and peaks during family formation when children are growing up and living at home (ages 38–57). Although this critical cohort maintained fairly stable membership levels throughout the twenty year period, in 1990 it had fewer affiliated households than did its counterpart in 1970 (39.2% vs. 56.5%, respectively). Moreover, the youngest age cohort of 1990 joined the adult population with a membership rate of slightly more than one-fourth; even if this initial level is kept constant, this group will exhibit a far lower rate than did similar cohorts in previous years. Very similar trends are revealed regarding Jewish organizational membership. Here, the level of affiliation is more linearly tied to age, starting with the highest rates among the elderly and falling with age. The fact that only one of every five Jews under age 37 in 1990 reported an affiliation is likely to further reduce the overall level of organizational membership. Jews no longer view membership in Jewish organizations as a meaningful component of group identification.

The unique educational and occupational achievements, the rapid shift from being self-employed to being employees, and the increasing rate of intermarriage enhanced both the formal and informal contacts of American Jews with people of different faiths. During the period discussed, Jewish cohesiveness in social networks of friends and neighbors declined markedly. While in 1970 as many as three-quarters said that most or all of their close friends were Jewish, in 1990 this was true for only 39%; the parallel figures for living in a very Jewish neighborhood were 29.8% and 9.5% (Table 1). Not only has the relative weight of the most socially committed segment declined, but it has been largely replaced by an increase at the other end of the cohesiveness spectrum with people having no attachment to informal Jewish networks. This overall decline in Jewish friendship and residential clustering combines the intergenerational process, seen in the differences between different age groups at a given time; the periodic effect, seen in the differences between similar age groups at different points of time; and a life-cycle change, as the same group passes from an early to a later stage. Informal Jewish associations affect involvement in Jewish activities and vice versa (Rebhun,

1997), thus resulting in a comprehensive and consistent decline in group identification.

TABLE 1. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE, INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION, AND SOCIAL COHESION, BY AGE (ADJUSTED FOR MARITAL STATUS): U.S. JEWS IN 1970 AND 1990 (PERCENTAGES)

Year	Total	18–37	38–57	58–77	78 and over
		Separate dishes			
1970	20.8	16.1	17.4	28.7	53.1
1990	13.8	11.6	13.0	14.3	31.6
		Synagogue membership			
1970	48.2	41.2	56.5	47.4	37.3
1990	33.4	26.6	39.2	37.9	41.2
		Membership in Jewish organization			
1970	42.6	26.8	49.8	52.8	58.9
1990	28.3	20.4	26.5	40.1	45.2
		Jewish friends			
1970-Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
None/few	5.4	6.2	5.9	3.9	2.8
Some	19.6	26.5	16.3	16.3	8.6
Most/all	75.0	67.3	77.8	79.8	88.6
1990-Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
None/few	20.7	29.3	19.9	10.8	3.9
Some	40.3	44.9	42.0	31.0	32.2
Most/all	39.0	25.8	38.1	58.2	63.9
		Jewish neighborhood			
1970	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
None/little	31.6	32.4	33.0	29.4	18.5
Some	38.6	39.3	37.1	38.4	50.5
Very	29.8	28.2	29.9	32.1	31.0
1990	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
None/little	62.1	68.2	66.8	49.6	43.2
Some	28.4	23.7	26.9	36.1	40.5
Very	9.5	8.1	6.3	14.3	16.3

A very different picture emerges in respect to rituals associated with the major Jewish holidays, practiced either privately or in primary groups (Table 2). In 1970, approximately half of all American Jewish adults fasted on Yom Kippur, slightly less than three-quarters lit Hanukkah candles, and about eight out of every ten Jews attended a Passover Seder — levels which remained constant over the next twenty years. A detailed examination by age cohorts shows that the youngest group in 1990 displayed levels of ritual observance similar to those of their counterparts in 1970. Furthermore, the tendency among the youngest cohort to light Hanukkah candles or to attend a Passover Seder is stronger than that of the elderly segment,

and this is likely to increase when they pass to the critical stage of being married and having children at home (ages 38–57). Taken together, these empirical observations indicate that American Jews continue to attach importance to feelings of collective identity through observance of annual festivals involving family gathering, ethnic food, items with Jewish themes (e.g., the Hanukkah candelabrum), ethnic games (e.g., *draidle*), songs, and the like.

Attendance at Jewish religious services is not restricted by formal membership or financial commitments (Goldscheider and Goldstein, 1988). The frequency is likely to be higher among those who hold membership than among those who do not, but the latter group need not necessarily totally abstain from participation (Rebhun, 1997). Thus, in contrast to the above observations on the decline in congregational membership levels, the proportion of Jews who attend synagogue at least several times a year remained at around 75%. The difference between those attending synagogue occasionally and those who go on a regular basis was also unchanged. These conclusions were found to be valid, both if we compare similar age groups at two different points of time, and if we trace the behavior of a specific cohort over the period 1970–1990. The fact that young Jews in 1990 joined the adult population with a participation rate significantly higher than that of their counterparts in 1970 attests to the maintenance of symbolic expressions of group belonging on major religious occasions.

The ethnoreligious identification of American Jews has been strengthened by a more widespread acquaintance with Israel: the proportion of people who have visited Israel at least once doubled from 14.5% in 1970 to 28.2% in 1990. The chance of having been abroad is highly correlated with age; it therefore comes as no surprise that the percentage who have visited Israel gradually increases, whether we read the data horizontally or diagonally. What is most striking is the empirical evidence that ties to Israel, privately expressed through tourism rather than publicly through political or philanthropic activities, have strengthened in each age cohort relative to the parallel cohort twenty years earlier, demonstrating the effects of a different sociocultural environment.

Construction of Jewishness Index

We combined the ten identificational variables into a single index of Jewish identification, each variable carrying the same weight. The percentages indicating these ethnoreligious behaviors are presented separately for 1970 and 1990 (columns A and C) in Table 3, with the 1970 Jewish population serving as the reference group. Thus, for 1970, each variable is equivalent to one score point with a resultant scale of 10 (column B); for 1990, the score is the ratio of the percentage reporting positively in the two populations, that of 1970 and that of 1990 (column D), reflecting the direction as well as the relative amount of change over the twenty year interval.

TABLE 2. HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE, RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND TIES TO ISRAEL, BY AGE (ADJUSTED FOR MARITAL STATUS): U.S. JEWS IN 1970 AND 1990 (PERCENTAGES)

Year	Total	18–37	38–57	58–77	78 and over
		Fast on Yom Kippur			
1970	49.5	48.8	48.8	49.8	63.6
1990	49.8	46.6	52.1	50.8	59.6
		Light Hanukkah candles			
1970	73.1	72.3	80.5	63.4	67.5
1990	74.0	71.8	80.1	70.9	70.4
		Attend Passover Seder			
1970	78.5	77.7	84.2	72.0	71.6
1990	80.5	79.7	82.5	80.6	76.6
		Synagogue attendance			
1970—Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Not at all	28.0	34.3	23.0	24.1	43.5
Occasionally	48.7	51.8	48.9	46.8	26.5
Regularly	23.3	13.9	28.1	29.1	30.0
1990—Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Not at all	25.2	26.8	21.4	28.9	21.3
Occasionally	52.5	56.4	54.7	43.0	53.7
Regularly	22.3	16.8	23.9	28.1	25.0
		Visited Israel			
1970	14.5	9.4	13.9	22.9	16.0
1990	28.2	23.0	24.0	39.2	46.8

TABLE 3. JEWISHNESS INDEX, 1970 AND 1990

	1970		1990	
	Percentage (A)	Score (B)	Percentage (C)	Score C/A (D)
Category 1:				
Separate dishes	20.8	1.00	13.8	0.66
Synagogue membership	48.2	1.00	33.4	0.69
Membership in Jewish organization	42.6	1.00	28.3	0.66
Jewish friends (most/all)	75.0	1.00	39.0	0.52
Jewish neighborhood (very)	29.8	1.00	9.5	0.32
Category 2:				
Fast on Yom Kippur	49.5	1.00	49.8	1.01
Light Hanukkah candles	73.1	1.00	74.0	1.01
Attend Passover Seder	78.5	1.00	80.5	1.03
Synagogue attendance (occasionally/regularly)	72.0	1.00	74.8	1.04
Visited Israel	14.5	1.00	28.2	1.95
Total score		**10.00**		**8.89**
Thereof, category 1		**5.00**		**2.85**
category 2		**5.00**		**6.04**

The overall score of the Jewish identification index declined from 10 in 1970 to 8.89 in 1990. While this can be regarded as a relatively slight weakening, it reflects very different trends regarding those identification components requiring consistent daily ethnoreligious practice and involvement, as opposed to the more occasional ones. The combined category of dishes, and organizational membership, and social networks of Jewish friends and neighbors underwent a substantial decline from a score of 5 to 2.85. By contrast, the combined category of annual holidays, synagogue attendance and visits to Israel, which scored 5 in 1970, had increased to 6.04 in 1990, partly compensating for the loss in the first category.

The overall increase in the second category is largely due to the growing tendency to visit Israel. Some may argue that foreign tourism is generally more common today, and thus these recent observations of a higher percentage of Jews visiting Israel does not necessarily indicate a meaningful change in terms of ethnoreligious ties. Others would claim a type of imitation. To a large extent, these arguments can be rejected, as there are many options other than Israel which are actually less expensive, to highly developed areas which are convenient stepping stones to adjacent countries — something more difficult to do in the political context of the Middle East. But even if the variable of a visit to Israel were omitted, the identification score of the second category would have at least retained stability, and even slightly increased.

Structural Correlates of Jewish Identification: Application of Nonmetric Multivariate Analysis (SSA)

Despite the expansion of alternative forms of Jewish identification, "a religious value system remains a distinctive defining characteristic of the Jewish group" (Medding et al, 1992: 17). Different behavioral patterns are likely to be interrelated in such a way that they create the elements that tie the individual to a common Jewish culture and heritage. The power of the relationships between each pair of identificational variables may change over time, thus reflecting the trend in the nature of group commitment. But human behavior is aimed at "identifying a person to himself and others" (Miller, 1963), in our case as a member of the Jewish group; hence, and according to Guttman's conception of behavior, whether cognitive or instrumental, the identificational variables will have positive or essentially zero correlations (Levy, 1985; Levy and Guttman, 1989).

Table 4 presents the correlation matrix of the ten items of Jewish identification, separately for the 1970 and 1990 Jewish populations. The monotonicity coefficients show the extent to which the values of a given variable increase (or decrease) monotonily with the increase in the other variable. Inspection of the data suggests that all correlations are positive, or at worst negative but very close to zero. The few slightly negative corelations do not exceed –.08 and are likely due to sampling error or error of approximation ("noise") (Levy, 1985). Varieties of behaviors towards the common object of group belonging are not contradictory; rather, they are complementary, if at all related. In 1970, the relationships between the components of Jewish identification were relatively modest; this reflects a behavioral profile which is dispersed quite evenly among the various expressions of Jewishness. By 1990, this pattern had changed towards higher correlations. In other words, one pattern of Jewish identification more strongly effected the likelihood of observing other behavior. The result is the adaptation of a specific and well defined set of behaviors; this is mainly pronounced in the monotonicity coefficients among those variables that we defined as "symbolic" (i.e., Jewish holidays and visits to Israel) which have experienced a significant increase.

This interpretation of the elements which are highly intercorrelated and those which are less intercorrelated can be better evaluated by the *relative sizes* of the correlation coefficients. This is presented in the two-dimensional Figures 1 and 2. It should be emphasized that the grid of lines, whether diagonal or vertical, are somewhat arbitrary areas; they are intended to help read the SSA space by better characterizing its different regions according to content facets. Further, "regions are in general not 'clusters' that are discernible by 'empty space' around them. Regional hypotheses are generally for a space that in principle has points everywhere. This means that some variables in one region may correlate less with other variables of the same region than they do with variables from other regions" (Levy, 1985: 76). In 1970, the facet of areas of Jewish identification was found to display a radial mode. The space is partitioned into five major regions with the radiuses emanating from a common origin.

TABLE 4. INTERRELATIONS AMONG TEN JEWISH IDENTIFICATIONAL INDICATORS (WEAK MONOTONICITY COEFFICIENTS): U.S. JEWS IN 1970 AND 1990[a]

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1970										
1	Separate dishes	—	28	16	46	20	82	67	53	56	28
2	Synagogue membership	28	—	71	20	–8	29	56	62	81	29
3	Membership in Jewish organization	16	71	—	25	–3	12	28	44	64	47
4	Jewish friends	46	20	25	—	51	31	29	36	29	21
5	Jewish neighborhood	20	–8	–3	51	—	12	9	16	0	14
6	Fast on Yom Kippur	82	29	12	31	12	—	51	51	42	10
7	Hanukkah candles	67	56	28	29	9	51	—	82	62	7
8	Passover Seder	53	62	44	36	16	51	82	—	68	24
9	Synagogue attendance	56	81	64	29	0	42	62	68	—	38
10	Visit to Israel	28	29	47	21	14	10	7	24	38	—
	1990										
1	Separate dishes	—	62	51	59	47	84	54	55	69	57
2	Synagogue membership	62	—	73	53	37	74	83	79	87	48
3	Membership in Jewish organization	51	73	—	64	39	65	66	67	69	63
4	Jewish friends	59	53	64	—	64	55	52	61	54	51
5	Jewish neighborhood	47	37	39	64	—	39	41	45	33	34
6	Fast on Yom Kippur	84	74	65	55	39	—	77	78	76	50
7	Hanukkah candles	54	83	66	52	41	77	—	85	74	48
8	Passover Seder	55	79	67	61	45	78	85	—	74	52
9	Synagogue attendance	69	87	69	54	33	76	74	74	—	46
10	Visit to Israel	57	48	63	51	34	50	48	52	46	—

a. Decimal point omitted.

Each region represents contents of homogenous meaning, which can be defined as: *Daily observance* — maintenance of daily religious practice reflected in having separate sets of dishes; *Holidays* — celebration of the major Jewish holidays; *Institutional affiliation* — including synagogue membership and attendance, and attachment to Jewish organizations; *Attachment to ancestral country* — the tendency to visit Israel; and *Social segregation* — belonging to social networks composed mainly of other Jews in residential areas and informal social circles. The various points in each region, especially those of ritual observance, are somewhat dispersed; nevertheless, their relative proximity reproduced structured partition of the content facets.

FIGURE 1. RADIAL STRUCTURE OF JEWISH IDENTIFICATION - U.S., 1970

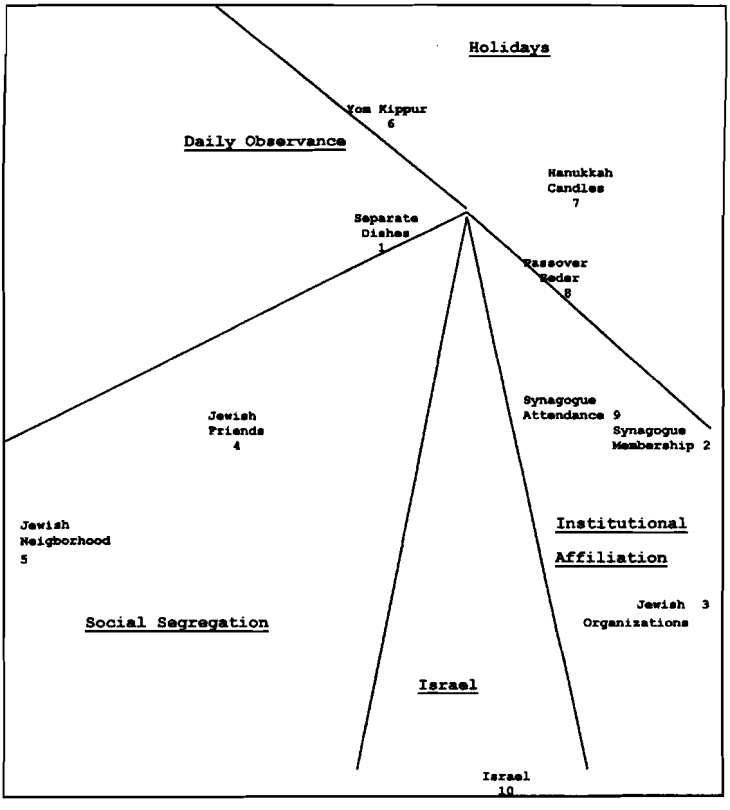
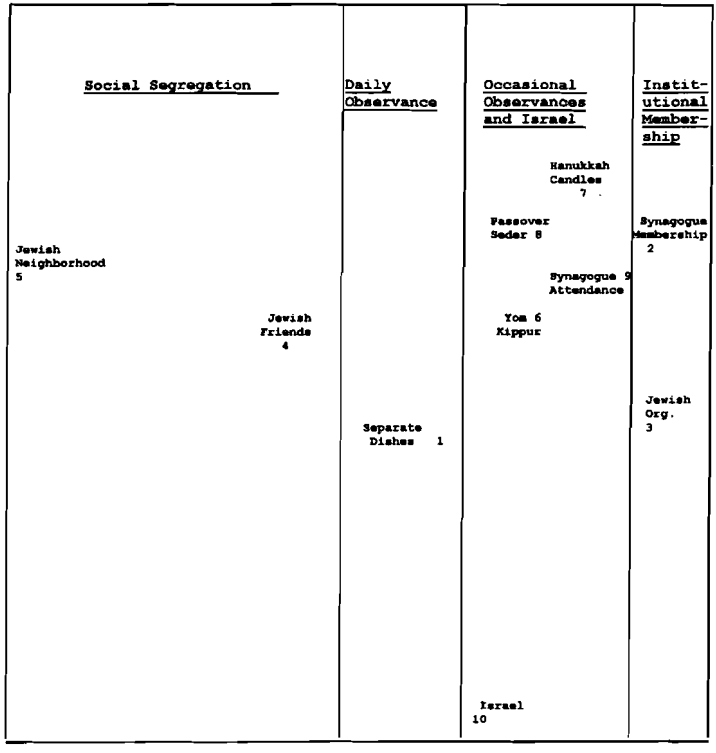


FIGURE 2. AXIAL STRUCTURE OF JEWISH IDENTIFICATION - U.S., 1990



Along with some signs of structural stability, several important changes have occurred over time which justify a totally different interpretation of the way people in 1990 conceptualized their group belonging. The points representing the Jewish holidays have moved closer to one another, and have been posited closer to synagogue attendance. By contrast, keeping separate sets of dishes moved to a more isolated position in the identificational space. The polarized configuration is largely inappropriate for the 1990 data, but it more strongly verifies the axial roles for areas of Jewish identification. Figure 2 can also be partitioned into four regions, generating the following content facets: *Institutional membership* (in synagogue and Jewish organizations); *Occasional observance and attachment to ancestral country* — expressed in major Jewish holidays, and by visits to Israel; *Daily observance* — having separate dishes at home; and *Social segregation.* The second facet largely corresponds with the nature of "symbolic" identification, while the other facets reflect a more intensive Jewish life-style.

Finally, it should be noted that the larger the number of regions, the sharper the distinction between the various expressions of religioethnic identification. Yet, given the small number of variables in this study, we were restricted to partitioning

the space into relatively few facets. Combined with the roughness of the two-dimensional representation, our results should be evaluated cautiously.

Summary and Conclusions

The findings from this study, which trace changes in Jewish identification over the relatively long span of two decades, suggest that some identificational expressions, mainly in the private sphere and home-centered activities, have maintained stable levels of adherence, while those which request formal religious affiliation, or attachment to institutions and informal social networks, suffered a substantial erosion.[1] American Jews are shifting their allegiance from the public to the private sphere, resulting in a less intense ethnoreligious life.

The abovementioned shift is further supported by a nonmetric multivariate analysis, in which an attempt was made to evaluate the structural configuration of Jewish identification. This is based on the relative sizes of correlation coefficients between each pair of variables. In 1970, American Jews more clearly differentiated between the cluster of ritual observances, institutional affiliation, Israel and social segregation. By 1990, the partition of the space showed closer relationships among occasional expressions of the Jewish holidays, synagogue attendance (which for most Jews is only few times a year) and visits to Israel; this content facet was distinguished from the other three facets of daily ritual, institutional membership, and social segregation.

The emerging type of group identification among American Jews is largely coincident with Herbert Gans' definition of "symbolic religiosity" or "symbolic ethnicity." These terms refer to a form of religiosity which lacks structural cohesion, are detached from the practice of an ongoing religioethnic culture, and do not "require functioning groups or networks" (Gans, 1979: 12). The way people feel about their group identity can take many forms, insofar as they do not demand strong commitments or penetrate into daily lifestyles; among other things, they involve the strengthening of ties to the ancestral country, tours to religious sites, occasional participation in religious worship — especially on major holidays and certain rites of passage events, and increasing importance of home-centered ceremonies which are often expressed through family dinners, or major holidays within a religioethnic context.

From a comparative world-wide Jewish perspective and along a very general identificational spectrum which can be applied to Jews over the last hundred years or so, two major paradigms of group identity and strategies for continuity can be identified: religiosity at various levels of adherence, and nationality according to

---

[1] Rather similar findings emerge from a national survey of American Jews conducted by Steven M. Cohen in 1997 (Cohen, 1998). Based on a mail-back questionnaire completed by 1,005 Jewish respondents, Cohen shows that younger and older Jews are similarly committed to such religious aspects as ritual observances, religious faith, and synagogue participation; by contrast, younger Jews are less ethnically identified than their older counterparts: they are "less committed to Jewish people,...less likely to report having Jewish friends, less affiliated with Jewish institutions,...and less likely to view social justice as an important Jewish value" (Cohen, 1998: 3). This trend among the younger generation is largely independent of the recent increase in the intermarriage rate.

the Zionist program of a Jewish sovereign state. There is no necessary contradiction between these two ideologies, and they have been combined by many Jews. It would seem that many American Jews today have found a different, third way of expressing their group identity. While there are those who practice Judaism intensively and are very committed to Jewish tradition and culture, and those at the other end who are assimilated and have distanced themselves from Jewish life, the bulk — I would say at least half — of American Jews today have anchored their feelings of group belonging and identification on occasional ethnoreligious events. This 'symbolic Judaism' is perhaps weaker than the original paradigms of religiosity and nationality.

Nevertheless, the fact that an overwhelming majority of American Jews express their group identification on a few dates of the Jewish calendar and at certain stages of their personal life-cycle, suggests that this is not "assimilation" in the broad sense of the term. In the midst of their integration into the majority society, American Jewry has developed different types of behavior and orientation, but in general it is neither a vanishing nor a dying community, nor is it proceeding in this direction. The term "integration and conservation" seems to me more appropriate to describe the current status of American Jews. While their social and economic success results in combining Jewish values with cultural components of the host society, at the same time they are maintaining selected ancestral behaviors and essential expressions of their Jewish heritage.

References

Alba, R. D. (1990). *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America.* Yale University Press, New Haven.

Cohen, M. S. (1983). *American Modernity & Jewish Identity.* Tavistock Publications, New York and London.

———. (1996). "Did American Jews Really Grow More Distant from Israel, 1983–1993?" In: Gal, A., ed. *Envisioning Israel: The Changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews.* Magnes Press, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Wayne State University Press, Jerusalem and Detroit. pp. 352–373.

———. (1998). *Religious Stability and Ethnic Decline: Emerging Patterns of Jewish Identity in the United States.* Jewish Community Centers Association, New York.

——— and Liebman, C. S. (1997). "American Jewish Liberalism: Unraveling the Strands." *Public Opinion Quarterly,* Vol. 61. pp. 405–430.

DellaPergola, S. and Schmelz, U. O. (1989). "Demographic Transformation of American Jewry: Marriage and Mixed Marriage in the 1980s." *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: An Annual,* Vol. 5. Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford. pp. 169–200.

Gans, H. J. (1979). "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America." *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* Vol. 2. pp. 1–20.

———.(1994). "Symbolic Ethnicity and Symbolic Religiosity: Towards a Comparison of Ethnic and Religious Acculturation." *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* Vol. 17. pp. 577–592.

Glazer, N. [1952] (1972). *American Judaism.* University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

——— and Moynihan, D. P. (1963). *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City.* M.I.T. Press, Cambridge.

Goldscheider, C. (1973). "Childlessness and Religiosity: An Exploratory Analysis." In: Schmelz, U. O., Glikson, P. and DellaPergola, S., eds. *Papers in Jewish Demography, 1969.* Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem. pp. 143–158.

———.(1986a). *Jewish Continuity and Change: Emerging Patterns in America.* Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

———.(1986b). *The American Jewish Community: Social Service Research and Policy Implications.* Scholars Press, Atlanta (Brown Studies on Jews and their Societies, Vol. 3).

——— and Goldstein, S. (1988). *The Jewish Community of Rhode Island: A Social and Demographic Survey 1987.* The Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, Providence.

——— and Zuckerman, A. S. (1984). *The Transformation of the Jews.* University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Goldstein, S. (1992). "Profile of American Jewry: Insights from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey." *American Jewish Year Book,* Vol. 92. pp. 77–173.

——— and Goldscheider, C. (1968). *Jewish Americans: Three Generations in a Jewish Community.* Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

——— and Goldstein, A. (1996). *Jews on the Move: Implications for Jewish Identity.* State University of New York Press, Albany.

Gordon, M. M. (1964). *Assimilation in American Life.* Oxford University Press, New York.

Guttman, L. (1968). "A General Nonmetric Technique for Finding the Smallest Coordinate Space for a Configuration of Points." *Psychometrika,* Vol. 33. pp. 469–506.

Himmelfarb, H. S. (1977). "The Interaction Effects of Parents, Spouse, and Schooling: Comparing the Impact of Jewish and Catholic Schools." *Sociological Quarterly,* Vol. 18. pp. 464–477.

———.(1979). "Patterns of Assimilation-Identification among American Jews." *Ethnicity,* Vol. 6. pp. 249–267.

———. (1980). "The Study of American Jewish Identification: How It Is Defined, Measured, Obtained, Sustained and Lost." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion,* Vol. 19. pp. 48–60.

Kosmin, B. A., Goldstein, S., Waksberg, J., Lerer, N., Keysar, A. and Scheckner, J. (1991). *Highlights of the CJF 1990 National Jewish Population Survey.* Council of Jewish Federations, New York.

Lazerwitz, B. (1973). *The Sample Design of the National Jewish Population Survey.* Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, New York.

———.(1974). *Sampling Error and Statistical Inference for the National Jewish Population Survey.* Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, New York.

———. (1978). "An Estimate of a Rare Population Group: The U.S. Jewish Population." *Demography,* Vol. 15. pp. 389–394.

———, Winter, A., Dashefsky, A. and Tabory, E. (1998). *Jewish Choices: American Jewish Denominationalism.* State University of New York Press, Albany.

Lenski, G. (1963). *The Religious Factor.* Doubleday, New York.

Levy, S. (1985). "Lawful Roles of Facets in Social Theories." In: Canter, D., ed. *Facet Theory: Approaches to Social Research.* Springer-Verlag, New York. pp. 59–96.

——— and Guttman, L. (1989). "The Conical Structure of Adjustive Behavior." *Social Indicators Research, Vol. 21.* pp. 455–479.

Lieberson, S. and Waters, M. C. (1988). *From Many Strands: Ethnic and Racial Groups in Contemporary America.* Russel Sage Foundation, New York.

Liebman, C. S. (1995). "Religious Trends among American and Israeli Jews." In: Wistrich, R. S., ed. *Terms of Survival: The Jewish World Since 1945.* Routledge, London and New York. pp. 299–319.

Lipset, S. M. and Raab, E. (1995). *Jews and the New American Scene.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London.

Medding, P. Y. (1987). "Segmented Ethnicity and the New Jewish Politics." *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: An Annual,* Vol. 3. pp. 26–48.

———, Tobin, G. A., Fishman, S. B. and Rimor, M. (1992). "Jewish Identity in Conversionary and Mixed Marriage." *American Jewish Year Book,* Vol. 92. pp. 3–76.

Miller, D. R. (1963). "The Study of Social Relationships: Situation, Identity, and Social Interaction." In: Koch, S., ed. *Psychology: A Study of a Science, Vol. 5.* McGraw-Hill, New York. pp. 639–737.

Nash, D. (1968). "A Little Child Shall Lead Them: A Statistical Test of an Hypothesis that Children Were the Source of the American 'Religious Revival'." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion,* Vol. 7. pp. 238–240.

——— and Berger, P. (1962). "The Child, the Family, and the 'Religious Revival' in Suburbia." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion,* Vol. 2. pp. 85–93.

Novak, M. (1972). *The Rise of Unmeltable Ethnics.* Macmillan, New York.

Rebhun, U. (1993). "Trends in the Size of American Jewish Denominations: A Renewed Evaluation." *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly,* Vol. 40. pp. 1–11.

———. (1997) *Geographic Mobility and Religioethnic Identification among American Jews 1970-1990.* Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem.

———. (1999) "Jewish Identification in Intermarriage: Does a Spouse's Religion (Catholic vs. Protestant) Matter?" *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review,* Vol. 60. pp. 71–88.

Schmelz, U. O. and DellaPergola, S. (1983). "The Demographic Consequences of U.S. Jewish Population Trends." *American Jewish Year Book,* Vol. 83. pp. 141–187.

Waksberg, J. (1996). "The Methodology of the National Jewish Population Survey." In: Goldstein, S. and Goldstein, A. *Jews on the Move: Implications for Jewish Identity.* State University of New York Press, Albany. pp. 333–359.

Waters, M. C. (1990). *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America.* University of California Press, Berkeley.

Waxman, C. I. (1992). "All in the Family: American Jewish Attachment to Israel." *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: An Annual,* Vol. 8. pp. 134–149.

Yancey, W. L., Ericksen, E. P. and Juliani, R. N. (1976). "Emergent Ethnicity: A Review and Reformulation." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 41. pp. 391–403.