

Informal Social Networks and Formal Organizational Memberships Among American Jews: Findings From the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01

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This article contributes to a small but developing literature on social network effects among American Jews. We employ data from the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 to examine how informal social networks and formal organizational memberships among American Jews are related to philanthropic behavior, religious observance, attitudes toward Israel, and political party identification. Using standard OLS and logistic regression techniques, and controlling for household size, age, sex, region, education and denomination, we show that giving to Jewish causes is strongly related to organizational memberships and somewhat less so to informal networks; Jewish observance is similarly but slightly less related to organizations and informal networks; emotional attachment to Israel is still less related but organizations and informal networks have about equal effects; and finally, Democratic party preference is related only to informal networks and more weakly than the other variables. A concluding discussion offers a hypothesis about the differential effects, linking the explanatory power of networks to the institutional embeddedness of the dependent variables.

INTRODUCTION

Informal social networks and formal organizational memberships have been shown to affect attitudes, beliefs and behaviors in nearly every sphere of life (see Kadushin 2004 for fundamental social network concepts and propositions). To provide just a limited sampling, the list of factors linked to formal and informal networks includes employment opportunities and labor force par-

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ticipation (Granovetter 1973; Stoloff, Glanville and Bienenstock 1999), corporate asset management (Burt 1983), mental and physical health (Erickson 2003), community organizing (Granovetter 1973), political mobilization and behavior (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Zuckerman, 2005; McClurg 2003), social mobility (Lin 2001), philanthropy (Galaskiewicz 1997) and education (Petersen, Saporta, and Seidel 2000; Zax and Rees 2002).

While informal social networks and formal memberships frequently affect third variables, they are also often contingent upon each other. Social networks are dependent on the social structure of communities and societies. As Granovetter (1985) puts it, social networks are embedded; formal organizations, especially voluntary associations (Putnam 2000), are one critical source of that embeddedness, providing the environmental context in which informal networks develop and grow. Simultaneously, formal associations depend on the social networks of current members to expand their memberships, mobilize for social and political action, and accomplish their goals. Social networks and formal associations are intertwined with each other.

Nonetheless, these two forms of social relations—informal networks and formal memberships—are conceptually and empirically separate. For example, one can have friends that are not the result of memberships in voluntary associations; conversely, one may be drawn to voluntary associations for many reasons other than the influence or presence of friends or relatives. It is, therefore, of both theoretical and practical concern to discover the relative importance of each in influencing additional behaviors, attitudes and beliefs.

In this article, we apply these theoretical elements of informal networks and formal memberships to American Jews. Like other religious and ethnic communities in the United States, the American Jewish community is a voluntary one; no laws mandate a Jewish corporate existence as in earlier historical periods in other countries (Katz 1973). Despite the voluntary nature of its community, American Jews are one of the most densely organized groups in the U.S. Indeed, voluntary organizations proliferate within the American Jewish community; major bases of organization include (but certainly are not limited to) religion, social action, philanthropy, politics, economics, education, family and gender (Elazar 1995). However, many Jews remain unaffiliated with the community's voluntary organizations, as our data will show.

Variations in the informal networks of American Jews are also evident. The informal social networks of many Jews are often heavily populated by other Jews, both as friends and family members. Simultaneously, intermarriage, identificational assimilation and geographic mobility and dispersion are often associated with weaker intra-Jewish social networks among members of the Jewish group (Phillips 1998; Medding, Tobin et al. 1992; Goldstein and Goldstein 1996). Given variations in both formal memberships and informal networks, the relationships between voluntary associations and informal social networks are an especially salient issue in this population.

Moving beyond the connection between formal affiliations and informal social networks, this article examines how each type of social relationship affects four major bases of contemporary Jewish life and community in the United States: religion, ethnicity, politics and philanthropy. More specifically, we analyze how formal memberships and informal networks shape Jewish religious observance; emotional attachment to the State of Israel; Democratic party identification; and charitable contributions to Jewish and non-Jewish causes. Given the interdependent nature of informal networks and formal memberships, we enter both simultaneously in our full empirical models, thereby controlling one for the other. The models display important effects of informal networks and formal memberships; in all cases, at least one of the forms of social relationships affects the dependent variables. However, the effects are also variable. In some cases, informal networks are more important than formal associations, and in other cases the reverse is true, an issue we return to in the concluding discussion.

Our analyses accomplish three important objectives. First, the range of dependent variables we examine provides important examples of the utility of social networks for predicting and explaining multiple behaviors, attitudes and preferences. Second, by responding to an important call for scholars of contemporary Jews to place greater emphasis on the study of social networks (Goldscheider 2002b, 2004), our analyses contribute to a small but emerging literature on social networks among Jews, either like ours through the use of standard survey data (Phillips 1998; Fishman, Medding et. al. 1991; Medding, Tobin et al. 1992; Goldstein and Goldstein 1996; Kotler-Berkowitz 1997) or through the application of formal models of Social Network Analysis (SNA) (Horowitz, Beck and Kadushin 1997; Kelner 2002a, 2002b; Kadushin, Kelner et al. 2000). Third, our analyses of Jews suggest the utility of applying social network theory to other American religious and ethnic groups to explain variations in a wide range of within-group and across-group behaviors and attitudes (Smith and Denton 2005).

All analyses of informal networks and formal membership, ours included, need to address the direction of causality. Put simply, the question is whether causality flows from social networks to behaviors, preferences and attitudes, or conversely, if persons undertaking certain behaviors and holding certain preferences and attitudes self-select into networks of similar people. Cross-sectional data, which we work with here, cannot answer the question definitively. Our theoretical orientation, however, is to privilege structure, that is, to posit that causality flows primarily from social networks and formal memberships to other behaviors, attitudes and preferences. Nonetheless, we recognize that others may choose to view the direction of causality differently.

DATA, MEASURES AND ANALYTIC WEIGHT

To examine the relationship among formal memberships, informal networks and various dependent variables, we utilize the National Jewish Population

Survey (NJPS) 2000-01 (United Jewish Communities 2003a and Kotler-Berkowitz in this volume). Though NJPS encountered methodological and field problems (Schulman 2003) and has been the source of controversy over specific uses of its data (Kadushin, Saxe and Phillips 2005), all analysts agree that the survey works well for studying relationships between and among variables.

For our analyses, we have selected a Jewish sample that consists of 4,220 respondents who meet the following criteria:

1. their religion is Jewish; *or*
2. their religion is Jewish and another religion; *or*
3. they have no religion, they have a Jewish background (i.e., a Jewish parent or Jewish upbringing) and they consider themselves Jewish; *or*
4. they practice a non-monotheistic religion,¹ they have a Jewish background (i.e., a Jewish parent or Jewish upbringing) and they consider themselves Jewish.

We report detailed findings for five dependent variables.² The first is a 7-point Guttman scale (0 to 6) of religious behavior that in addition to the null category includes the following ordered categories: attending or holding a Passover Seder, attending Jewish religious services at least once in the year prior to the survey, lighting Chanukah candles all eight nights, usually or always lighting Shabbat candles, keeping kosher at home, and refraining from handling money on Shabbat. The order is from the most frequent behaviors to the least frequent. Given the structural nature of Jewish observance in the United States, those who refrain from handling money on Shabbat also keep kosher at home; those who keep kosher at home light candles on Friday night; those who light candles for Shabbat also light Chanukah candles, and so on. Ten percent of the total fell in the "wrong" cells—e.g. kept kosher but didn't light Shabbat candles—making this a legitimate "Guttman" scale.

The second dependent variable is a 5-point ordinal scale (0 to 4) of emotional attachment to Israel with the following response categories: not at all attached, not very attached, neutral, somewhat attached, and very attached. Though this is an ordinal variable, we treat it as a continuous variable in our OLS regression models. Our next dependent variable is a dichotomous measure of Democratic party identification, with independents and Republican supporters in the opposing category. The fourth and fifth dependent variables are also dichotomous, examining respondents' philanthropic behavior in the year prior to being interviewed. One variable measures whether respondents made a philanthropic contribution (of any amount) to a local Jewish federation,³ and one whether they made a contribution of any amount to a non-Jewish cause.

¹ This excludes those who identify their religion as any of the Christian traditions or denominations, or Islam.

² We examined two other dependent variables but only briefly report findings about them in footnotes 12 and 14.

³ See Kotler-Berkowitz's introduction to NJPS in this volume for more information on Jewish federations.

The major explanatory variables of interest are informal social networks and formal organizational memberships. Informal social networks is a 4-point ordinal scale (running from 0 to 3) that measures the number of Jewish adults with whom respondents reside in their homes and the proportion of respondents' closest friends who are Jewish.⁴ The formal membership scale, also running from 0 to 3, measures the number of Jewish organizations to which respondents belong. Respondents received one point on the scale for each of the following: belonging to a synagogue, belonging to a Jewish Community Center, and belonging to at least one other Jewish organization.⁵

One disadvantage of the NJPS social network data is that they do not allow us to know the characteristics of the other Jews in a respondent's networks, be it their household members, their friends or the people with whom they share institutional memberships. As a result, we assume that the oft-replicated homophily principle applies to Jews as well. The homophily principle states that people tend to associate with others like themselves, where "like themselves" includes both positional or status attributes as well as values or beliefs (Verbrugge 1977; Lazarsfeld and Merton 1978; Erickson and Nosanchuk 1983; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987; Pettigrew, Tropp, and Wright 2000; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001; Kadushin and Livert 2002). For example, we expect that Jews in the informal networks of a given respondent will share the characteristics of that respondent, thereby reinforcing the behaviors, attitudes and values of that respondent. Therefore, Jews whose informal networks have many other Jews in them should display different types of behaviors and attitudes than Jews whose informal networks have few other Jews. The same logic applies to respondents and the extent to which they share social contexts with other Jews through memberships in Jewish organizations.

In addition to the informal network and formal membership variables, we constructed a series of control variables. Household size is a 6-point interval scale in which two persons is the zero reference point for the intercept in the regression equations. Sex is a dummy variable in which females are coded 1 (male is the reference category for the intercept). Age is an ordinal scale of grouped data (ages 18-34, 35-49, 50-64, 65-74 and 75 and above) with the intercept reference point being 35-49 year-olds. Education is a 4-category ordinal scale (high school and below; some college; college degree; graduate/professional school or degree) with "some college" as the reference point for the intercept. We use education as

⁴ The scale originally ran from 0 to 8, but we recoded it at both ends and truncated it at 3 in order to create a more even distribution across the measure's categories, and so that it would have the same magnitude as the formal membership scale and thus the coefficients could be directly compared. The original 0-8 scale (before recoding and truncation) reflected the fact that respondents could live with up to five other Jewish adults, and the following coding for Jewish friends: none of closest friends Jewish = 0; some of closest friends Jewish = 1; about half of closest friends Jewish = 2; most/all of closest friends Jewish = 3.

⁵ Respondents may belong to more than three Jewish organizations, but the data do not allow us to measure beyond three.

a measure of socio-economic status rather than income because income had a substantial level of item non-response. Dummy variables for the Midwest, South and West control for region; Northeast is the omitted reference category. Similarly, dummy variables for Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and "just Jewish" control for Jewish denomination or movement.⁶ The omitted reference category is comprised of secular/no denomination, other Jewish and non-Jewish, which for shorthand we will frequently refer to simply as secular. The Appendix shows the weighted frequency distributions of both the dependent and independent variables.

All data shown here are weighted using an "analytic" weight calculated from the data file's final respondent weight (see Kotler-Berkowitz's introduction to NJPS in this volume for more information on weights). Our empirical analyses were conducted using Stata statistical software (Stata Corporation 2004) that automatically bases significance on the original sample size and takes account of design effects.⁷

FINDINGS

We look first at the determinants of informal networks and formal organizational memberships, including the relationship between the two. Table 1 displays the results of regressing informal networks and formal organizational memberships on the other independent variables. In the left side of Table 1, Model 1, household size is positively related to informal networks, an unsurprising finding because increasing household size raises the likelihood of living with multiple other Jews. Age is also related to informal networks, with older persons having more Jews in their informal networks than those who are younger. Jews in the Midwest, South and West have fewer Jews in their informal networks than do Jews who reside in the Northeast. Jews who identify with any of the institutionalized denominations and those who say they are "just Jewish" have more Jews in their informal networks than those without a denominational identification, with Orthodox Jews having nearly twice as many as Conservative Jews and three times as many as Reform Jews. Sex and education are unrelated to the proportion of Jews in informal networks. Persons represented by the zero intercept—men aged 35 to 49, some college education, secular and living in a two person household—have a score of .90 on the 0-3 scale.

⁶ In asking the question on denominational identification, interviewers read respondents the following response options: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, just Jewish or something else. Answers of "something else" received a follow-up probe, and those answers together with other initial answers that did not fit into the pre-selected categories were coded into separate response categories.

⁷ Stata computes confidence intervals based on the original size of the sample for the particular analysis (since some cases with missing values on the variables are omitted) and the design effect for that analysis. Design effects are due to NJPS' stratified sampling procedures and weights, though more so to weighting than to stratification because the same respondent may stand in for a number of other persons. The design effects over a simple random sample in a typical regression are about 1.6.

TABLE 1

OLS regression: predictors of informal social networks and formal memberships.

Dependent Variable Predictors	Informal Social Networks		Formal Memberships	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Household Size	.32 **	.27 **	.15 **	.07 **
Sex	.07	.06	.04	.02
Age	.26 **	.22 **	.16 **	.10 **
Education	.02	.00	.09 **	.09 **
Midwest	-.31 **	-.36 **	.14 *	.21 **
South	-.15 **	-.14 **	.00	.03
West	-.27 **	-.21 **	-.15 **	-.08
Orthodox	1.13 **	.68 **	1.16 **	.89 **
Conservative	.64 **	.32 **	.81 **	.66 **
Reconstructionist	.56 **	.31	.56 **	.43 **
Reform	.41 **	.20 **	.49 **	.39 **
Just Jewish	.20 *	.17 *	.03	-.02
Formal Memberships				
Level 1		.59 **		
Level 2		.83 **		
Level 3		.85 *		
Informal Social Networks				
Level 1				.23 **
Level 2				.50 **
Level 3				.72 **
Constant	.90 **	.78 **	.21 **	-.01
R-squared	.24	.31	.22	.28
N	4141	4141	4141	4141

Entries for predictors and constant are OLS regression coefficients.

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

In the left side of Table 1, Model 2, we enter formal memberships as a categorical explanatory variable in order to detect non-linear associations with informal networks. The results show that the association between the two variables is basically linear through two formal memberships, but then plateaus at the highest membership levels. Adding formal memberships to the model reduces the size of the most of the other parameter estimates, though only significantly in a statistical sense for Orthodox and Conservative Jews.⁸

The right side of Table 1 applies the same model to formal organizational memberships, and the findings vary somewhat. In Model 1, household size and age are

⁸ Statistical significance refers to the 95% confidence intervals surrounding the regression coefficients. Even when the size of a coefficient is reduced from one model to the next, if the respective confidence intervals overlap, the change is not statistically significant. Confidence intervals are not reported in the tables but are available from the authors.

both positively related to memberships, and so too this time is education. Jews in the West have fewer organizational memberships than those in the Northeast, while Jews in the Midwest have more than their Northeastern counterparts. Identification with any of the Jewish denominations raises the number of formal memberships, but identifying as "just Jewish" does not. Orthodox and Conservative Jews again lead, but the differences between them are not as great as with informal networks. Sex is unrelated to formal memberships. Finally, it is noteworthy that the people represented by the intercept have but .2 organizational memberships, that is, virtually none. In Model 2, informal networks are entered as a categorical explanatory variable in order to detect non-linear effects. The regression coefficients, however, reveal a generally linear association between informal networks and formal memberships. With the addition of informal networks, many of the other coefficients are reduced in size, but only household size and age change significantly.⁹

Religious Observance

Turning to the dependent variables, we begin by predicting the Guttman scale of religious observance. In Table 2, model 1, the religious observance scale is regressed on all independent variables except the network and formal membership variables, in order to provide a baseline model. The intercept, 1.41, is about half way between going to a Seder and attending services at least once a year. Household size and sex (female) are positively related to observance, as are identifying with any denomination or being just Jewish relative to being secular. As one would expect, Orthodox Jews are about level 5 (the intercept plus the coefficient), which is equivalent to keeping kosher at home, but not refraining from handling money on Shabbat. By contrast, Reform Jews are at 2.2, equivalent to going to religious services once a year. Jews in the South and West are significantly less observant than those in the Northeast.

In Table 2, model 2, we add informal networks to the right hand side of the equation, which improves the model R-square modestly. Here again we enter informal networks as a categorical variable to detect any non-linear effects. In this case, the effects again appear to be generally linear, with informal networks showing a positive and monotonic relationship with religious observance. The more Jews one has in his or her social networks, the more religiously observant he or she is, independent of the other predictors. Adding social networks to the regression model has a significant statistical effect on household size, age and residence in the south, but not on any of the Jewish denominational variables.

In Table 2, model 3, formal memberships are added to complete the full model, and the R-square again increases. As with informal networks, formal

⁹ To examine the bivariate relationship between informal networks and formal memberships, we calculated the Somers' D coefficient, an asymmetric measure of association, first with informal networks predicting formal membership and then vice versa. The coefficients are virtually identical: .38 in predicting informal networks from formal memberships and .35 in predicting formal memberships from informal networks. This suggests the relationship between the two variables is symmetric.

TABLE 2

OLS regression: predictors of Jewish religious observance.

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Household size	.27 **	.14 **	.10 **
Sex	.24 **	.21 **	.21 **
Age	-.03	-.14 **	-.17 **
Education	.03	.02	-.02
Midwest	-.15	-.02	-.15
South	-.15 *	-.09	-.10
West	-.34 **	-.23 **	-.16 *
Orthodox	3.42 **	2.95 **	2.38 **
Conservative	1.57 **	1.30 **	.87 **
Reconstructionist	1.29 **	1.06 **	.74 **
Reform	.82 **	.65 **	.36 **
Just Jewish	.36 **	.28 **	.27 **
Informal networks			
Level 1		.48 **	.29 **
Level 2		.85 **	.51 **
Level 3		1.24 **	.77 **
Formal memberships			
Level 1			1.01 **
Level 2			1.34 **
Level 3			1.43 **
Constant	1.41 **	1.02 **	.96 **
R-squared	.39	.45	.54
N	4141	4141	4141

Entries for predictors and constant are OLS regression coefficients.

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

memberships are entered categorically in order to detect non-linear effects, but here too the effects appear to be linear, with each increase in formal memberships significantly boosting scores on the religious observance scale independent of the other predictors. The effects of formal memberships are more potent than those of informal networks, and entering formal memberships into the equation significantly reduces the effects of informal networks at levels 2 and 3. These findings indicate that, at least with respect to religious observance, informal networks are embedded in formal organizational contexts and their effects are partly a function of formal organizational memberships.

Table 3 shows the predicted joint effects of informal networks and formal organizational memberships on religious observance, holding the other predictors at constant values (including denomination set at secular; see table for all constant values). With both informal networks and formal memberships at zero, the predicted value on the Guttman scale of religious observance is .96, just shy of going

TABLE 3

Joint effect of informal networks and formal memberships on Jewish religious behavior.

Informal networks	Formal memberships			
	0	1	2	3
0	.96	1.97	2.31	2.40
1	1.26	2.26	2.60	2.69
2	1.47	2.48	2.82	2.90
3	1.73	2.74	3.07	3.16

Source: Table 2, Model 3. Entries are values on the Guttman scale of Jewish religious behavior that runs from 0-6, for pairs of values on the informal network and formal membership scales. Other predictors held constant at household size = 2, sex = male, age = 35-49, education = some college, region = Northeast, denomination = secular.

to a Seder. With both informal networks and formal memberships at their maximum, 3, the predicted value on the religious observance scale is 3.16, somewhat more than lighting Chanukah candles all eight nights (but not yet close to regularly lighting Shabbat candles). The effects are not symmetric, with formal organization memberships having more powerful effects than informal networks. For example, at the level of one on the informal scale, movement across the formal scale produces a change in religious observances from 1.26 to 2.69, a difference of 1.43. At the level of one on the formal scale, movement across the informal scale produces a change in religious observance from 1.97 to 2.74, a difference of .77.

Emotional Attachment to Israel

Strictly speaking, our measure of emotional attachment to Israel (see variable description in data and measures section above) is an ordered but not a scaled variable. Regression, however, is a sufficiently robust procedure so that we can obtain reasonable interpretations from its use in this case.

Table 4 provides the regression of emotional attachment on our baseline model (without the social network variables), then with informal networks entered as predictors, and finally with formal memberships in the model. To be sure, the network variables are statistically significant independent of the other predictors, demonstrating that ties to other Jews result in greater emotional attachment to Israel. In this case, though, entering the formal membership variables does not significantly reduce the size of the parameter estimates for informal networks at any of the three levels, suggesting that the effects of informal networks on emotional attachment to Israel are less embedded in the effects of formal memberships than is the case with religious observance. Among the denominational variables, only the coefficients for Orthodox and Conservative Jews are statistically significant in the models with the networks variables; the coefficient for Reform Jews is also statistically significant in the baseline model,

TABLE 4

OLS regression: predictors of emotional attachment to Israel.

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Household size	.04	-.06 *	-.07 **
Sex	-.05	-.06	-.07
Age	.17 **	.10 **	.08 **
Education	.09 **	.09 **	.07 **
Midwest	.04	.12	.08
South	-.09	-.05	-.05
West	-.04	.04	.06
Orthodox	1.35 **	1.02 **	.80 **
Conservative	.77 **	.58 **	.42 **
Reconstructionist	.36	.20	.08
Reform	.23 *	.11	.00
Just Jewish	.12	.07	.06
Informal networks			
Level 1		.31 **	.24 **
Level 2		.52 **	.40 **
Level 3		.89 **	.72 **
Formal memberships			
Level 1			.36 **
Level 2			.49 **
Level 3			.60 **
Constant	2.00 **	1.75 **	1.73 **
R-squared	.11	.16	.18
N	4141	4141	4141

Entries for predictors and constant are OLS regression coefficients.

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

but the effect is accounted for by the network variables. Household size, age and education are also related to attachment to Israel, but sex and region are not.

Examining the model R-square statistics reveals that the predictors are not as successful at explaining attachment to Israel as they are in explaining religious observance. In the models predicting emotional attachment to Israel, R-square never exceeds .18, about one-half to one-third the magnitude of R-square in the models predicting religious observance. Moreover, though the coefficients for formal memberships in these models are statistically significant and in the expected direction, their addition to the model does not significantly add to the variance accounted for in the dependent variable.

Table 5 shows the predicted effects of informal networks and formal memberships on emotional attachment to Israel, based on results from Table 4, model 3 (and holding the other variables constant). From minimal to maximal values

TABLE 5

Joint effect of informal networks and formal memberships on emotional attachment to Israel.

Informal networks	Formal memberships			
	0	1	2	3
0	1.73	2.08	2.21	2.32
1	1.97	2.33	2.46	2.57
2	2.12	2.48	2.61	2.72
3	2.44	2.80	2.93	3.04

Source: Table 4, Model 3. Entries are values on scale of emotional attachment to Israel that runs from 0-4, for pairs of values on the informal network and formal membership scales. Other predictors held constant at household size = 2, sex = male, age = 35-49, education = some college, region = Northeast, denomination = secular.

on both predictors, the predicted value of emotional attachment to the Jewish state increases from 1.73 to 3.04, a difference of 1.31.

Democratic Partisanship

Ever since *The People's Choice* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948), the personal influence of others in the environment has been known to affect political behavior and preferences. We would expect this to be true of Jews as well, and an intermittent literature over time has in fact linked social networks among Jews to their political preferences (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Fuchs 1956; Liebman 1973; Cohen 1985; Kotler-Berkowitz 1997, 2005). This section analyzes the effects of informal networks and formal memberships on Democratic support, using a dichotomous dependent variable that measures general Democratic partisanship (not past or expected vote in any particular election), with Republican supporters and independents in the reference category.

Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, we employ logistic regression. Table 6 shows our usual models. The table displays the odds ratios rather than the logistic coefficients, which are difficult to interpret. For unit changes in the explanatory variables, odds ratios give the multiplicative increase in the odds that the selected category will be Democrat as compared with the reference category. The odds are defined as the probability of being Democratic divided by 1 minus that probability. When the probability = .5, the odds = 1. For example, in the first equation, the odds of Democratic party preference are 2.26 times higher among women (coded 1) than men, while respondents from larger households have a lower odds of preferring the Democrats (odds ratio less than 1) than those in smaller households. Age and education have no effects, and among the regional variables, only Jews in the West are more likely to be Democratic than Jews in the Northeast. As compared with those who are secular, Jews who identify as

TABLE 6

Binary logistic regression: predictors of Democratic party identification.

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Household size	.90 *	.87 **	.87 **
Sex	2.26 **	2.24 **	2.24 **
Age	1.06	1.02	1.02
Education	1.04	1.03	1.03
Midwest	.83	.86	.86
South	.97	1.00	1.00
West	1.33 *	1.39 **	1.39 **
Orthodox	1.03	.88	.87
Conservative	1.67 **	1.49 *	1.48 *
Reconstructionist	2.01	1.82	1.80
Reform	1.48 *	1.36	1.34
Just Jewish	1.39 *	1.34	1.34
Informal networks			
Level 1		1.45 **	1.44 **
Level 2		1.65 **	1.63 **
Level 3		1.58 **	1.57 **
Formal memberships			
Level 1			1.07
Level 2			1.00
Level 3			1.01
Pseudo R-squared	.04	.05	.05
N	3737	3737	3737

Entries for predictors are odds ratios.

** p < .01

* p < .05

Conservative, Reform and "Just Jewish" are more likely to favor Democrats, while Orthodox Jews do not differ.¹⁰

When we enter informal social networks on the right-hand side of the equation, we see that they produce greater odds of preferring the Democratic party, independent of the other predictors. However, the informal network effects are not linear, rising only through level 2 and then dropping slightly (though not significantly) at level 3. In the third model, formal affiliations have no effect on partisanship; all of the network effects on party support are due to informal networks, not to formal memberships. In addition, the pseudo R-square statistic is small and does not rise significantly when network variables are added to the model. Table 7 shows the adjusted proportion of Jews who support the Democrats

¹⁰ Unlike regression coefficients, odds ratios are not cumulative with the intercept, so no constant is reported.

TABLE 7

Effect of informal networks on probability of Democratic party identification.

Informal networks	Probability of Democratic party identification
0	.40
1	.49
2	.52
3	.51

Source: Table 6, Model 2. Other predictors held constant at household size = 2, sex = male, age = 35-49, education = some college, region = Northeast, denomination = secular.

TABLE 8

Binary logistic regression: predictors of philanthropic contribution to Jewish Federation system.

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Household size	1.12 **	.91	.84 **
Sex	.97	.93	.90
Age	1.86 **	1.62 **	1.54 **
Education	1.40 **	1.40 **	1.34 **
Midwest	1.38	1.61 *	1.34
South	.96	1.03	.99
West	.66 **	.75 *	.78
Orthodox	3.09 **	1.82 *	.88
Conservative	5.85 **	4.38 **	2.71 **
Reconstructionist	4.07 **	3.09 **	2.25 **
Reform	3.27 **	2.69 **	1.99 **
Just Jewish	1.12	.97	.99
Informal networks			
Level 1		2.58 **	2.11 **
Level 2		4.00 **	2.78 **
Level 3		6.89 **	4.31 **
Formal memberships			
Level 1			2.49 **
Level 2			5.18 **
Level 3			9.89 **
Pseudo R-squared	.16	.21	.28
N	4005	4005	4005

Entries for predictors are odds ratios.

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

TABLE 9

Joint effect of informal networks and formal memberships on philanthropic contribution to Jewish Federation system.

Informal networks	Formal memberships			
	0	1	2	3
0	.03	.06	.13	.21
1	.05	.13	.23	.37
2	.07	.16	.28	.43
3	.11	.23	.38	.54

Source: Table 8, Model 3. Entries are probabilities of making a philanthropic contribution to the Jewish federation system, for pairs of values on the informal network and formal membership scales. Other predictors held constant at household size = 2, sex = male, age = 35-49, education = some college, region = Northeast, denomination = secular.

as informal networks increase and other variables are held constant (based on Table 6, model 2). At the baseline level of zero on the informal network measure, a minority, 40%, give their support to the Democrats.¹¹ Democratic partisanship rises to 49% and 52% at network levels 1 and 2, but then dips back to 51% at the highest network level. (Note that network levels 2 and 3 have overlapping confidence limits at the 95% level.)

Philanthropy

Philanthropy is one of the hallmarks of Jewish life in America. Not only is it highly institutionalized, but the lore of fundraisers holds that money is raised mainly through personal and organizational contacts. Table 8, which presents odds ratios from logistic regression equations, strongly supports these contentions with respect to giving to Jewish federations in the year before the survey interview. In the baseline model, household size, education, age and identification with each of the institutionalized denominations increase the odds of giving, while living in the West reduces the odds of contributing, and sex has no effect. Adding informal networks demonstrates their considerable effect in producing contributions to the federations, but organizational memberships are exceptionally effective. Compared to the models of Democratic party support, the pseudo R-square for contributions to Jewish federations are larger and rise significantly as the network variables are entered. Table 9 shows the strongest joint effects of informal networks and formal memberships we have thus far encountered. Just three percent of those with scores of 0 on both informal networks and formal

¹¹ Recall that the reference category includes both Republican partisanship and an independent stance. This reduces the level of Democratic support compared to the level that Jews usually give the Democrats in a match-up between the parties without an independent option.

TABLE 10

Binary logistic regression: predictors of philanthropic contribution to non-Jewish cause(s).

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Household size	1.07	1.07	1.05
Sex	.99	.97	.97
Age	1.24 **	1.67 **	1.20 **
Education	1.64 **	1.59 **	1.60 **
Midwest	1.92 **	1.87 **	1.78 **
South	1.05	1.07	1.06
West	1.08	1.12	1.15
Orthodox	.97	.57**	.62 *
Conservative	1.92 **	1.38	1.42 *
Reconstructionist	3.40 **	2.70**	2.78 **
Reform	1.78 **	1.46 *	1.48 *
Just Jewish	.81	.80	.81
Informal networks			
Level 1			1.04
Level 2			.91
Level 3			.68 **
Formal memberships			
Level 1		1.69**	1.82 **
Level 2		2.27**	2.55 **
Level 3		4.66**	5.26 **
Pseudo R-squared	.09	.11	.11
N	4033	4033	4033

Entries for predictors are odds ratios.

** $p \leq .01$

* $p \leq .05$

memberships gave to federations, while 54% of those with scores of 3 on each contributed to the federation system.¹²

Giving by Jews to non-Jewish causes follows a different dynamic, as the models in Table 10 indicate. Model 2 in Table 10 enters formal memberships rather than informal networks, because formal memberships have the dominant effect

¹² While Jewish Federations comprise the largest single network of Jewish philanthropies, many other Jewish philanthropic organizations and foundations also operate in the United States, and NJPS asked respondents if they had contributed to any non-Federation Jewish causes. Our analyses show that network effects on giving to non-Federation Jewish causes are similar to network effects on Federation giving: informal networks and formal memberships both independently and significantly raise the odds of making a philanthropic contribution to a non-Federation Jewish cause. Other variables show similar effects, but with one major exception: Orthodox Jews are much more likely to give to non-Federation Jewish causes than Jews who identify with any of the other denominations. The regression models are available from the authors.

TABLE 11

Effects of formal memberships on philanthropic contribution to non-Jewish cause(s).

Formal Memberships	Probability of Contribution
0	.42
1	.55
2	.62
3	.77

Source: Table 10, Model 2. Entries are probabilities of making a philanthropic contribution to non-Jewish cause(s), for formal memberships scale values. Other predictors held constant at household size = 2, sex = male, age = 35-49, education = some college, region = Northeast, denomination = secular.

on giving to non-Jewish causes. Model 3 reports our standard full equation. Independent of the other predictors, formal Jewish organizational affiliations considerably raise the odds of giving to non-Jewish causes, but not as much as for Jewish causes (Federations or otherwise). However, informal networks have no statistically significant effect until level 3, at which point they actually decrease the likelihood of giving to non-Jewish causes. Moreover, the pseudo R-square statistic does not increase significantly with the addition of the network variables. Table 11 shows the effects of formal affiliations on the probability of giving to non-Jewish causes.

DISCUSSION

As we have operationalized them, informal networks among Jews are related to some key facts of Jewish demography. They are more common in the Northeast, where Jewish density is greater, and among older persons. Household size is also positively related to having Jews in the interpersonal environment, largely because as household size increases so does the probability of having other Jews in one's household. Those who identify with any Jewish denomination are, not surprisingly, more likely to have stronger informal networks than Jews who do not. Formal memberships in Jewish organizations are responsive to these same factors, and to education, in part probably a reflection of education's correlation with income and the financial costs associated with memberships.¹³ The two network measures are symmetrically and fairly strongly related (see footnote 9), yet it is certainly possible to be high on one and low on the other.

The various regression models we have presented show variations in the effects of social networks across dependent variables. In every model, either informal or

¹³The association between education and formal memberships also supports Goldscheider and Zuckerman's (1984a) thesis on the social structural bases of Jewish cohesion.

formal networks are related to the dependent variables, and in some cases both are. However, there are interesting variations in the strength of the network effects; they are strongest for religious observance and philanthropic giving to Jewish causes (Federation and non-Federation), but weaker for party identification, attitudes to Israel and donations to non-Jewish causes. In addition, formal memberships are more powerful predictors in most cases, but this is not always true, and total model R-squared statistics vary as well. What might explain these variations?

We suggest that formal membership effects are strongest when dependent variables measure behaviors that are embedded in Jewish institutions, be they formal organizations or household and family structures. In contrast, when dependent variables are attitudinal—even attitudes about Jewish topics—or reflect behaviors that are not embedded in specifically Jewish contexts, formal membership effects are weaker and informal network effects may be relatively stronger. The embeddedness of informal and formal Jewish networks within one another often carries over strongly to other instituted Jewish practices, wrapping them together more tightly than with either attitudes or non-Jewish behaviors.

Jewish religious observance is highly institutionalized in synagogues and in family and household structures, the latter often including the participation of close friends as well. The findings testify to the strong empirical relationship between formal and informal networks on the one hand and Jewish religious practice on the other. We note especially the relatively stronger formal than informal network effects on our Guttman scale of religious observance. Similarly, Jewish philanthropy is highly institutionalized. Giving to the Jewish Federation system is strongly related to both formal and informal networks, as fundraisers can anecdotally attest to and as clearly shown in Table 10, where formal effects are relatively stronger than informal effects.

In contrast, giving to non-Jewish causes is less instituted for Jews. Jewish formal memberships still matter but less so than for Federation giving, while strong informal connections to other Jews are a detriment to giving to non-Jewish causes, perhaps because they draw Jews into a Jewish rather than a non-Jewish orbit. Network effects are also present but weaker for emotional attachments to Israel and Democratic party support. While support for Israel is institutionalized in the American Jewish community (e.g., numerous organizations advocate for Israel), emotional attachment to Israel is a diffuse characteristic that appears not as responsive as actual behaviors to social networks.¹⁴ Democratic party support, while traditionally high among American Jews, has little formal institutionaliza-

¹⁴ A behavioral measure, having ever taken a trip to Israel, has a strong relationship to networks when analyzed as a dependent dichotomous variable in our standard model. The adjusted proportion of those having taken a trip to Israel with a score of 0 on both informal networks and formal memberships is 18 percent; the proportion who ever took a trip is 76 percent with a score of 3 on both measures. Formal networks have a more powerful effect than informal networks. However, trips are even more susceptible to having a causal effect on social networks than some of the other dependent variables analyzed in this article. Trips are a strong bonding experience, both to organizations and to friends (Saxe, Kadushin et al. 2002).

tion in the American Jewish community—especially in comparison to areas like philanthropy and religious observance—so it is not surprising that informal networks promote Democratic partisanship but formal ones do not. Further, the connection between being Jewish and Democratic partisanship has begun to unravel in recent years among more religiously observant Jews (Kotler-Berkowitz 1997, 2005). The result is a tailing off of the probability of Democratic party preference among Jews with the highest informal network scores. More religiously observant Jews, we have shown, are more likely to have high informal network scores.

We make two concluding sets of remarks. First, it is important to note a limitation of our data and mode of analysis. NJPS is a general survey, not one specifically designed to collect social network data for the application of formal social network analysis (SNA) (see Kadushin 2004). As a result, we have measured networks in a somewhat indirect way, and lacking data on the characteristics of alters within networks, we have relied on the general principles of homophily to assume that their friends and household members reflect the major attributes of the respondents. We have also relied on traditional regression techniques rather than SNA. Despite these limitations, we have found strong evidence that informal and formal Jewish networks strongly affect behaviors that are well instituted in American Jewish life, and have important albeit weaker effects on attitudes and behaviors less institutionalized in specifically Jewish contexts. While our findings are theoretically and empirically interesting and important, they also suggest that a more rigorous application of network measurement and data collection techniques (e.g., the use of a name generator; see Campbell and Lee 1991; Bailey and Marsden 1999) and the application of formal SNA would provide a more extensive and nuanced understanding of the social network basis of American Jewish behavior and attitudes.

Lastly, while our findings are important to the study of American Jews, they also suggest avenues for analysis within and across other American religious and ethnic groups. As initial hypotheses for further testing, then, we would expect the formal and informal networks of other religious groups to be related to other factors as they are among Jews—that is, to household size, region, age, education, intra-group denominational distinctions, as well as to each other. Moreover, we would expect that the formal and informal networks of other groups vary in strength according to the extent to which the behavior or attitude being predicted is institutionalized within the group. Empirical support for these hypotheses would demonstrate that the theoretical import of studying Jews, at least in the social sciences, consists as much in understanding Jews' continued distinctiveness as it does in how Jews can help elucidate general social processes (Goldscheider and Zuckerman 1984b).

Note: For References, refer to the Bibliography at the end of this issue.

Appendix: Weighted frequencies of dependent and independent variables.

VARIABLES	Proportion	Standard error
Informal networks		
Level 0	.36	.010
Level 1	.18	.007
Level 2	.18	.007
Level 3	.28	.009
Formal memberships		
Level 0	.44	.010
Level 1	.28	.009
Level 2	.18	.008
Level 3	.10	.006
Household size		
1	.22	.007
2	.41	.010
3	.14	.007
4	.13	.007
5+	.10	.007
Sex		
Male	.47	.010
Female	.53	.010
Age		
18-34	.25	.009
35-49	.26	.008
50-64	.25	.008
65-74	.12	.006
75+	.13	.006
Education		
High school or below	.19	.008
Some college	.23	.008
College degree	.32	.009
Graduate degree	.26	.008
Jewish Denomination		
Orthodox	.10	.006
Conservative	.26	.009
Reconstructionist	.02	.003
Reform	.34	.009
Just Jewish	.20	.008
Secular/no denomination	.05	.004
Other Jewish	.02	.003
Not Jewish	.01	.002

VARIABLES	Proportion	Standard error
Region		
Northeast	.44	.009
Midwest	.12	.007
South	.23	.008
West	.22	.008
Religious behavior (Guttman scale)		
None	.11	.006
Attended/held Passover Seder	.15	.007
Attended synagogue at least once	.23	.008
Lit Chanukah candles all eight nights	.24	.008
Usually/always light Shabbat candles	.11	.006
Keep kosher at home	.07	.005
Does not handle money on Shabbat	.09	.006
Emotional attachment to Israel		
Not at all attached	.12	.006
Not very attached	.20	.007
Neutral	.01	.001
Somewhat attached	.37	.009
Very attached	.31	.009
Political party identification		
Democratic	.64	.010
Republican or independent	.36	.010
Contribution to Jewish Federation		
Yes	.29	.009
No	.71	.009
Contribution to non-Jewish cause(s)		
Yes	.64	.009
No	.36	.009

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