2 The Differential Impact of Jewish Education on Adult Jewish Identity

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Does Jewish education make a difference in the long run? More specifically, to what extent does Jewish education experienced in childhood and adolescence, in its many varieties, exert a long-term influence on Jewish identity in adulthood, in its many varieties? To what extent, and in which facets of Jewish identity, does it bring about a deeper Jewish commitment and greater tangible Jewish involvement in the years and decades following the time when individuals went to Jewish schools, youth groups, camps, and Israel? (To be clear, throughout this paper, the term *Jewish education* refers both to Jewish schooling and to so-called informal Jewish educational experiences.)

Parents, practitioners, and policymakers all have their reasons for more than idle curiosity about the extent to which, and the manner in which, Jewish education works to bestow higher levels of Jewish involvement many years down the road. Significantly, charitable bodies have invested considerable sums, and parents have place significant hopes, in a Jewish educational system thought by many to promote in-marriage specifically, and stronger Jewish identity generally. Are these hopes well-founded?

Research can go only so far in answering this key question. Ideally, we would want research that could accurately forecast the long-term impact of current Jewish educational experience on the Jewish identity of today's children thirty or so years from now. The only way to ascertain this is to collect data for thirty years.

And even if feasible, such research may be of dubious value. Knowing the long-term effectiveness of certain types of Jewish education being conducted today may not accurately predict effectiveness of the same sorts of Jewish education in thirty years, when contexts will have certainly changed. By similar reasoning, learning of the long-term effectiveness of Jewish education experienced in the 1970s or 1980s is of limited value in assessing the eventual impact of similar types of Jewish education now under way.

Because we can only approximate the ideal study from a policy point of view, we can draw inferences as to future effectiveness from two alternative models of research. One approach focuses on the short-term consequences of Jewish education. Such studies seek to understand the immediate, or near-immediate, impact of Jewish educational experiences on their youthful students, campers, members, or participants. Of course, these short-term studies, by their very nature, are incapable of determining long-range impact, except by way of speculative extrapolation: presumably, experiences that generate great enthusiasm or impart significant skills in the short run may well produce a noticeable contribution to Jewish identity, however conceived, in the long run. But that inference rests on an untested, albeit plausible, assumption.

The other category of research looks at the long-term impact of Jewish education, but does so in a retrospective fashion. Surveys ask adults today to report on their educational and other relevant experiences in their childhood and adolescent years. Researchers then analyze how education conducted decades ago influences the Jewish identity of today's adults. Such studies, of which there are at least a few dozen or more of various sorts, date back over thirty years, if not more. The earliest, to my knowledge, include my first social scientific article (1974); doctoral dissertations by Bock (1976, 1977) and Himmelfarb (1974); and extend to more recent analyses of the 1990 and 2000 National Jewish Population Surveys (NJPS) (Fishman and Goldstein 1993; Rimor and Katz 1993; Cohen and Kotler-Berkowitz 2004). (For reviews of this literature, see Fishman 1987; Dashefsky 1992; and Dashefsky and Lebson 2002.)

All such studies are modeled (directly or indirectly) on Greeley and Rossi's (1966) *The Education of Catholic Americans*, a pioneering work that explored the impact of different forms of Catholic schooling in childhood on Catholic religious identity and practice in adulthood. Parallel to that study, the ensuing social scientific quantitative research tradition on Jews invariably jointly examines three components:

1. Current adult Jewish identity, measured along a variety of dimensions (e.g., ritual observance, communal affiliation, etc.)
2. Educational experiences (which kind of schools or programs? how many hours, years, etc.?)
3. Possibly confounding factors, most prominently, Jewish upbringing, parents' identities, sociodemographic characteristics, and others

The essential task of this research is to determine not just the simple association between Jewish education in childhood and Jewish identity in adulthood but rather the net impact of the former on the latter. Doing so demands that the analysis successfully controls for the most influential confounding factors, of which parental religiosity is among the most important. Simply put, those receiving more intensive and extensive Jewish educational experiences also "benefit" from strong Jewish socialization experiences in their homes, resulting in a process of "self-selection."

Failure to parcel out the confounding factors — to, in effect, statistically remove the self-selection process — would produce artificially exaggerated estimates of the impact of Jewish education. Studies reporting simple bivariate relationships between Jewish education and adult Jewish identity cannot produce estimates of educational impact per se. The 1990 NJPS lacked adequate questions on parental Jewish identity, severely limiting the usefulness of the analyses emanating from that data set (see Fishman and Goldstein 1993; Rimor and Katz 1993).

At the same time, enough analyses of more comprehensive data sets over the years have generated an accumulation of usable evidence as follows:

1. *More intensive education* (particularly day schools) does indeed exert a positive impact on Jewish identity.

2. *Education of longer duration* (in terms of years or number of hours) exerts a greater impact than that with shorter duration.

3. *More Jewishly engaged homes* produce more participants in more intensive and longer-lasting Jewish educational settings.

4. The research is somewhat divided regarding "part-time" *supplementary schools* (they go by such names as Hebrew schools, Talmud Torahs, or religious schools, among others, and meet more than once a week). Earlier analyses (Bock 1977; Himmelfarb 1974) argued that most alumni of part-time schools in their childhood years displayed no measurable signs of impact in their adult years, owing to the large number of classroom hours required before a measurable effect emerges (a threshold effect). However, students who experienced an extraordinary number of hours of such schooling did show some impact, even in the pioneering Bock and Himmelfarb analyses that both argued for a high threshold of hours before impact could be observed. Other research (Cohen 1988, 1995; Cohen and Kotler-Berkowitz 2004) discerned evidence of impact of part-time supplementary schools, albeit somewhat limited.

5. The research is also somewhat divided regarding the impact of *Sunday schools*, or other schooling limited to one day a week. The impact may be somewhat positive, negligible, or even somewhat negative. That is, net of all other factors, former students in Sunday schools (and in no other school) report lower scores on some key measures of adult Jewish identity than do comparable adults reporting no Jewish schooling experiences. For example, according to the most recent analysis of the 2000 NJPS data, all things being equal, Sunday school alumni who attended no other form of Jewish education report somewhat lower rates of in-marriage (that

is, higher rates of intermarriage) than did comparable individuals with no Jewish schooling experience, a circumstance that also accounted for diminished levels of other Jewish identity indicators.

6. Only a very limited literature has examined the impact of *Jewish youth groups*. One study, of a very intensive and elaborated form of the phenomenon (Young Judaea), suggested some fairly powerful long-term effects (Cohen and Ganapol 1998). Other work, measuring participation in less educationally intensive sorts of youth groups, found far more modest effects (Cohen and Kotler-Berkowitz 2004).

7. The sparse literature on *Jewish camping* suggests fairly robust effects of the more educationally intensive forms of overnight Jewish camping (Cohen 2000; Sales and Saxe 2003). (As is explained below, the available measure of Jewish camping in this study refers to the variety of camps at all levels of Jewish educational content.)

8. *Israel trips* generally seem to exert a very strong near-term effect and undoubtedly produce long-term consequences for Jewish identity, possibly second only to day schools in terms of overall impact. However, some disagreement does surround estimates of the impact of Israel travel on adult Jewish identity. The large part of research on Israel youth trips has focused on immediate reactions (Cohen and Cohen 2000) or relatively short-term impact (Saxe et al. 2004). These studies point to both intensive (and generally positive) immediate reactions to Israel experiences; they also report some measure of declining impact and enthusiasm as time elapses after return from Israel, leaving open the question of the duration of impact.

With all this said, the literature on Jewish educational impact remains inconclusive in several areas and has left uninvestigated several critical issues. The research heretofore conveys a general impression of the effectiveness of various forms of Jewish education, with day school at the top of the list, Sunday Schools at the bottom (even as a negative factor), and other instrumentalities arrayed somewhere between these two poles.

But even concerning day schools, questions remain. As noted, taken in their totality, studies have been inconclusive concerning the magnitude of impact of all forms of Jewish education, with the possible exception of day schools, where the evidence uniformly demonstrates significant long-term effects. Owing to limited sample sizes in the past, as well as the small number of non-Orthodox day school students, previous studies also could not address the specific question concerning the impact on non-Orthodox youngsters in day schools, a phenomenon that has increased in magnitude just over the past twenty years. Thus, whereas previous research could testify to the powerful impact of day schools, given earlier enrollment patterns, these findings could apply almost exclusively to Orthodox students in Orthodox day schools. No major study has, as yet, focused specifically upon non-Orthodox students in day schools, whatever their denomination.

Beyond the differences over the magnitude of impact, analysts have largely left

unexplored questions concerning the nature of impact associated with each instrument of Jewish education. That is, for what aspects of Jewish identity do schools, Israel travel and other forms of Jewish education make a difference? Accordingly, the matter of measuring the "impact of Jewish education on Jewish identity" requires taking into account the multidimensionality and diversity of Jewish identity.

These considerations generate the following research questions that this study will address:

1. What is the magnitude of impact on adult Jewish identity associated with each of the major instruments of childhood and adolescent Jewish education, net of confounding factors such as parental Jewish identity?
2. Which types of Jewish education affect which particular dimensions of adult Jewish identity? Are particular types of education especially effective with respect to certain aspects of being Jewish, or are effects fairly uniform and undifferentiated across the various features of Jewish involvement?

The Data, Sample, and Measures

This analysis draws on the National Jewish Population Survey of 2000–2001 (NJPS), a nationwide study administered by telephone and sponsored by the United Jewish Communities (see http://www.ujc.org/njps for documentation). One advantage of this study is its very large sample size (4,523 Jewish households) that permitted the extraction of a policy-relevant subsample specially designed to shed light on the question concerning the impact of Jewish education in recent years on adult Jewish identity. Another advantage entails the number and range of questions asked in each of the three main conceptual domains (Jewish educational experience, Jewish identity, and Jewish socialization in one's childhood or teen years).

The analysis was restricted to what may be regarded as a policy-relevant subsample circumscribed in four ways:

- Those raised Jewish, as converts to Judaism are unlikely to have undergone Jewish education in their youth
- Those born in the United States, as the foreign born may well exhibit peculiar relationships between Jewish identity and adult Jewish engagement
- Those under the age of fifty-five (born between 1946 and 1982), owing to the more limited relevance of educational experiences among those born earlier in the century
- Those raised other than Orthodox, in light of the more keen policy interest in those outside of Orthodoxy

The subsample to which these restrictions applied consisted of 2,093 cases (unweighted) of the 4,523 Jewish households in the full NJPS data file.

Measuring Jewish Education

The survey contains numerous questions on the major Jewish educational experiences, both "formal" (schools) and "informal" (other than schools). The informal experiences included the following:

- "Regular" participation "in an organized Jewish youth group" (generally, such as those associated with synagogues, Zionist youth movements, or B'nai B'rith)
- Jewish summer camp attendance (both day and overnight)
- Israel travel

The measure of Jewish schooling classified respondents in terms of the most intensive form of Jewish schooling they ever received, ranging, in descending order, from day school, to part-time school, to Sunday school. Preliminary analysis demonstrated the importance of years of schooling. Accordingly, respondents in part-time and Sunday school were further divided into those with six or fewer and those with seven or more years of education. (The sample size for day school students was too small to support further division of this group). The Jewish school variable, then, is distributed as follows: day school (5 percent); part-time (or "Hebrew") school, seven or more years (16 percent); Hebrew school, one to six years (22 percent); Sunday school, seven or more years (9 percent); Sunday school, one to six years (13 percent); and none (36 percent).

With respect to informal Jewish education (youth groups, Israel travel, and overnight Jewish summer camp), the analysis used a summative scale ranging from zero to three experiences. The informal education scale is distributed as follows: three experiences (5 percent); two (15 percent); one (25 percent); and none (55 percent).

Current Jewish Identity

With respect to current levels of Jewish engagement, the survey contains a very rich and broad array of items, which themselves are but a sampling of the wide variety of ways in which Jewish engagement can be, and is, conceived. The analysis addressed the following measures.

IN-MARRIAGE An in-marriage was defined as the marriage of two Jews (born, converted, or identifying as Jewish). Intermarriage is defined as the marriage of a Jew with a non-Jew. The proportion in-married refers to the proportion of all married individuals who are in-married. In this subsample, 55 percent of married adults are in-married (were the Orthodox-raised respondents included, this measure, and others, would reach a higher level).

OBSERVANCE OF JEWISH RITUALS This is a five-item scale consisting of the following:

- Attended a Seder last year
- Lit Hanukkah candles most nights last year
- Fasted a whole day on Yom Kippur
- Always or usually light Sabbath candles
- "Keep Kosher in your home"

The score represents the mean percentage (37 percent for the entire subsample) usually undertaking these five practices, as defined.

AFFILIATION This is a dichotomous a measure incorporating the following:

- Membership in a congregation
- Belonging to a Jewish Community Center
- Being a member in any other Jewish organization (e.g., Hadassah)

Those who belonged in any of these ways (37 percent in all) were defined as "affiliated."

In-marriage and affiliation are dichotomous (two-value) scales, scored as 100 if yes and 0 if no. Observance and belonging were calibrated to range from a score of 0 to 100, representing, respectively, the lowest possible and highest possible values on each measure.

Controls for Demographic Characteristics and Jewish Upbringing

The analysis controlled for three sociodemographic variables—age, gender, and U.S. Census region (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West). After experimenting with various combinations of the many indicators of parental Jewish identity and Jewish upbringing, I settled on five measures that, taken together, serve to predict the adult Jewish identity measures almost as well as far larger groups of variables. The Jewish upbringing measures are as follows:

- During high school, how many of the people you considered to be your *closest friends* were Jewish?
- Did your family ever have a *Christmas tree* when you were a child?
- When you were ten or eleven years old, how often did anyone in your household light *Sabbath candles* on Friday night?
- Thinking about *how you were raised*, were you raised as Conservative, Orthodox, Reform, Reconstructionist, Just Jewish, or something else? (Those raised Orthodox were excluded from the analysis.)

In addition, I developed a measure of *parental in-marriage*, where respondents received a score of 1 (for one parent Jewish) if his/her parents had been intermarried, and 2 if they were both Jewish (whether by birth or by choice/conversion).

The rationale here is that these five pieces of information provide a powerful way of classifying individuals in terms of their Jewish upbringing. On one end of the Jewish socialization spectrum are adults who, as youngsters, had two Jewish parents and exclusively Jewish close friends in high school, never had a Christmas tree at home, witnessed Shabbat candles lit in their homes every week, and identified as Conservative Jews. At the other end of the spectrum are those who reported intermarried parents (one non-Jewish), no Jewish friends, Christmas trees in their homes, no Shabbat candles lit, and no denominational identification (associated with the lowest levels of Jewish socialization). Obviously, between these two extremes, respondents range over a spectrum, one that is finely calibrated.

Findings

The Distribution of Jewish Education: Fewer at the Top

As a preliminary matter, I present the distribution of Jewish education among this special, policy-relevant subsample of American Jews, born in the United States during or after 1946, and raised in non-Orthodox homes. I examine both the distributions of Jewish schooling and of the number of informal Jewish educational experiences. The results show that increasing levels of Jewish informal education are associated with fewer such individuals, with the largest single category consisting of those with no informal experiences, as table 2.1 reports.

The More Educated Then, the More Engaged Now

Current levels of Jewish identity measures in adulthood vary consistently, and sometimes strongly, with variations in Jewish education in childhood. Simply put, those reporting more Jewish educational experiences as children also report higher levels of Jewish engagement now, as adults. (Of course, the extent to which these straightforward associations can be attributed to Jewish education, or to parental Jewish identity remains be seen.)

This pattern is clearly illustrated with respect to in-marriage. The more intensive the form and duration of Jewish schooling, the higher the rate of in-marriage. Among those who went to day school (all, to repeat, were raised in non-Orthodox families), 80 percent married Jews, as compared with just 55 percent of those with no Jewish schooling. Moreover, former Hebrew school pupils (twice a week or more) in-married more than Sunday school attendees. Among those who went to Hebrew school or Sunday school, those who attended for more years experienced more in-marriage than those who stopped after six years. In similar fashion, in-marriage is closely linked with the number of informal Jewish educational experiences, rising steadily from just 53 percent among those with no such experiences to fully 80 percent among those with all three (youth group, camp, and Israel visit).

TABLE 2.1

Distributions of Jewish Educational Experiences in Childhood and Teen Years

	Frequencies (percentage)
Schooling	
Day school	6
2+ times-per-week school, 7+ years	19
2+ times-per-week school, 1–6 years	27
Sunday school, 7+ years	12
Sunday school, 1–6 years	15
None	22
Total	100
Number of teen experiences (camp, youth group, Israel)	
3	6
2	19
1	30
0	45
Total	100

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

Attending Hebrew schools for more than seven years is associated with adult levels of Jewish engagement that equal and surpass those of individuals who attended day schools. Similarly, those with one informal experience report Jewish identity scores trailing those with two experiences, and, consistently those few who have had three such experiences report even higher Jewish identity scores as adults.

In short, today's adults who have undergone Jewish educational experiences in their childhood and adolescence report higher levels of current Jewish identity, however measured. The differences support the impression that their current high levels of Jewish identity can be causally attributed to their time spent in schools, youth groups, camps, and Israel. However, before leaping to such a conclusion, one must take into account the considerable differences in the home backgrounds that differentiate participants in several types of Jewish education from their non-participating counterparts.

More Jewish Socialization Leads to More Jewish Education

Those with more intensive forms of Jewish education also benefited from other Jewish socialization experiences. In patterns resembling those reported above for

TABLE 2.2

Measures of Adult Jewish Engagement by Jewish Educational Experiences in Childhood and Teen Years

	In-marriage (percentage)	*Observance*[b] *(percentage)*	*Affiliated*[b] *(percentage)*	*Belonging*[b] *(percentage)*
Schooling				
Day school	80	51	54	63
2+ times-per-week school, 7+ years	73	52	63	64
2+ times-per-week school, 1–6 years	65	44	52	51
Sunday school, 7+ years	58	43	44	51
Sunday school, 1–6 years	49	38	40	50
None	55	33	31	42
Number of teen experiences[a]				
3	80	59	68	80
2	72	54	65	63
1	65	46	51	57
0	53	34	34	41

[a]Total number of informal Jewish educational experiences consists of overnight Jewish camp, Jewish youth group, and visiting Israel.

[b]*Observance:* composite of seder, lighting Hanukkah candles, fasting on Yom Kippur, keeping kosher in some way at home, and usually lighting Shabbat candles; *affiliated:* membership in synagogue, JCC, and/or another Jewish organization; *belonging:* four items on feeling very positive about being Jewish, having a clear sense of what it means to be a Jew, belonging to the Jewish people, and being Jewish is very important.

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

current Jewish identity, measures of Jewish socialization are indeed closely linked with the extensiveness and intensity of Jewish education.

We may take the proportion of friends who were Jewish as a bellwether indicator to illustrate this larger point. Of those with no Jewish schooling, just 37 percent of their high school friends were Jewish as compared with 47 percent of those who went to Hebrew school past seventh grade, and 44 percent of those who ever went to day school. Of those with no informal Jewish education, just 33 percent of their friends were Jewish as compared with 47 percent of those with even one such experience, and 55 percent of those with three. We find similar patterns with respect to Shabbat candles at age ten and the absence of a Christmas tree at age ten.

These findings imply that Jewish schools and informal experiences channel the Jewish population into different venues according to the levels of Jewish commitment experienced in the home. Thus, day school students benefit Jewishly from their own Jewish cultural resources and from being brought into contact with other students, members, campers, and travelers who share their higher-than-average

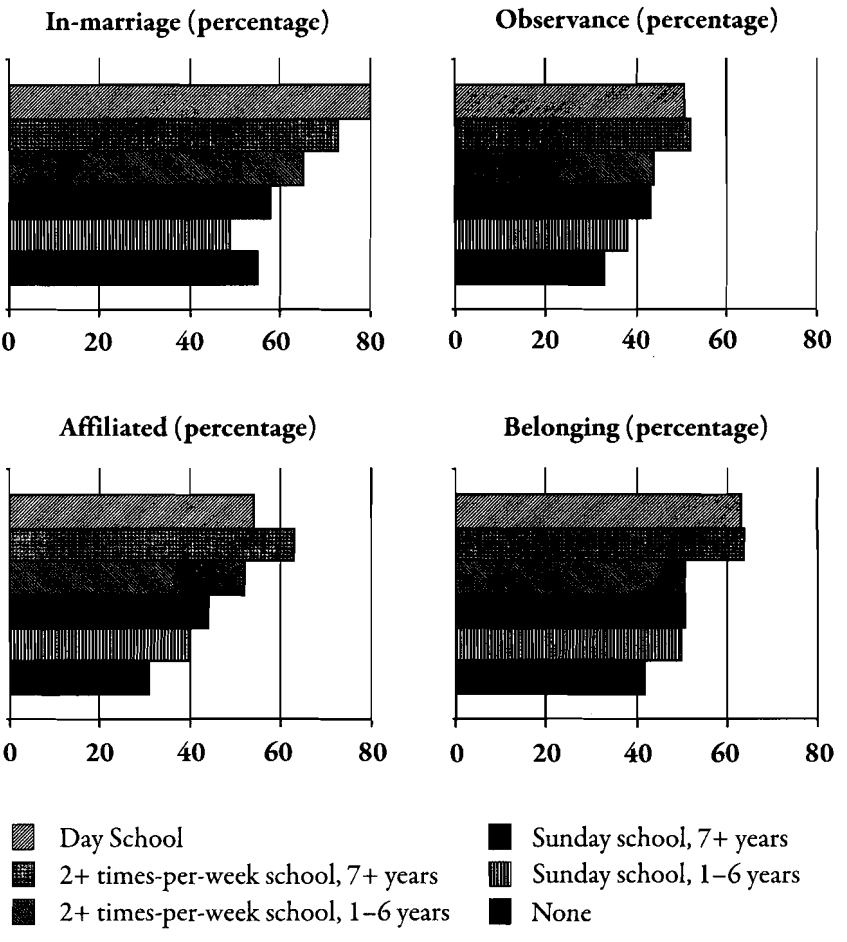

FIGURE 2.1 Measures of Adult Jewish Engagement by Jewish Educational Experiences in Childhood

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

levels of Jewish socialization. The friendship ties that grow out of such clustering reinforce the lessons that Jewish educators seek to convey. Conversely, those in less intensive schools and those who fail to participate in informal Jewish education maintain more friendships with non-Jews and with Jews who are less engaged in conventional Jewish life.

In sum, those who participate in more intensive forms of Jewish education bring with them higher levels of familiarity with and commitment to things Jewish. These educational experiences build on a cultural predisposition toward Jewish engagement among the participants, one that derives from the home and community, and

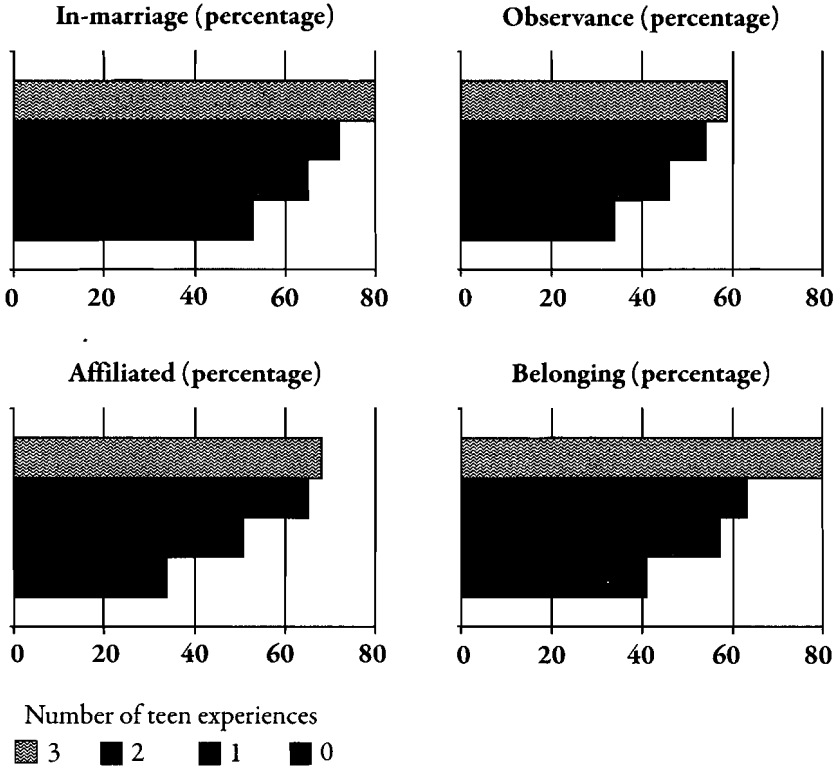

FIGURE 2.2 Measures of Adult Jewish Engagement by Jewish Educational Experiences in Teen Years

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

from mutually reinforcing Jewish educational experiences. The impact of Jewish education is effected not exclusively through the educational staff and curriculum but also by way of social networks among the participants and the communities that surround them.

Jewish Educational Experiences: The More, the More

The untangling of educational impact is further complicated by what may be called the "redundancy" of Jewish educational experiences. People with more intensive and extensive Jewish education in one area stand a good chance of undergoing other forms of Jewish education. Participation in youth groups, camps, and Israel trips generally increases with intensity of Jewish schooling. Thus, of those with no Jewish schooling, just 31 percent could report any informal Jewish education experience. The figure rises almost steadily with intensive Jewish schooling: Sunday

TABLE 2.3

Measures of Jewish Socialization in Childhood Years by Schooling Alternatives and Informal Teen Jewish Educational Experiences

Measures of Jewish socialization	*Percentage of high school friends who were Jewish*	*Shabbat candles usually lit, age 10 (percentage)*	*No Christmas tree, age 10 (percentage)*
Schooling			
Day school	44	64	80
2+ times-per-week school, 7+ years	47	54	92
2+ time-per-week school, 1–6 years	45	38	79
Sunday school, 7+ years	37	41	68
Sunday school, 1–6 years	37	27	58
None	37	29	50
Number of teen experiences (camp, youth group, Israel)			
3	55	61	90
2	50	49	88
1	47	42	78
0	33	31	56

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

school, up to six years (46 percent); Sunday school for seven or more years (56 percent); Hebrew school, up to six years (59 percent); Hebrew school for seven or more years (76 percent) and day school (71 percent). These results point not only to the close relationship between formal and informal Jewish education, but also to the relative intensity of Hebrew school attendance in the high school years. Such ex-students report even higher levels of informal experiences than their day school counterparts.

In like fashion, participation in the three informal experiences are themselves closely related statistically. Youth group members were about three times more likely than nonmembers to attend a Jewish camp (54 percent versus 20 percent), and to visit Israel (28 percent versus 9 percent). Similarly, former Jewish campers were more than three times as likely to report having been to Israel in their adolescent and young adult years (28 percent for campers, versus 8 percent for noncampers).

The frequent overlap of Jewish educational experiences means that such experiences frequently reinforce one another. From the research perspective, the empirical overlap underscores the necessity of controlling for confounding variables if one is to obtain "pure" estimates of the net effects of each form of Jewish education. In other words, relying on simple descriptive data comparing former participants with

their opposite number will only serve to yield significantly exaggerated impressionistic evidence of the impact of particular forms of Jewish education. Rather, owing to the clustering of educational participation, each particular educational experience also carries with it the likelihood that other experiences are also contributing to enhanced Jewish identity on the part of the students or participants.

Understanding the Analysis

The critical part of the analysis below relies on "multiple classification analysis" (MCA). MCA is a regression-based procedure that provides estimates of the

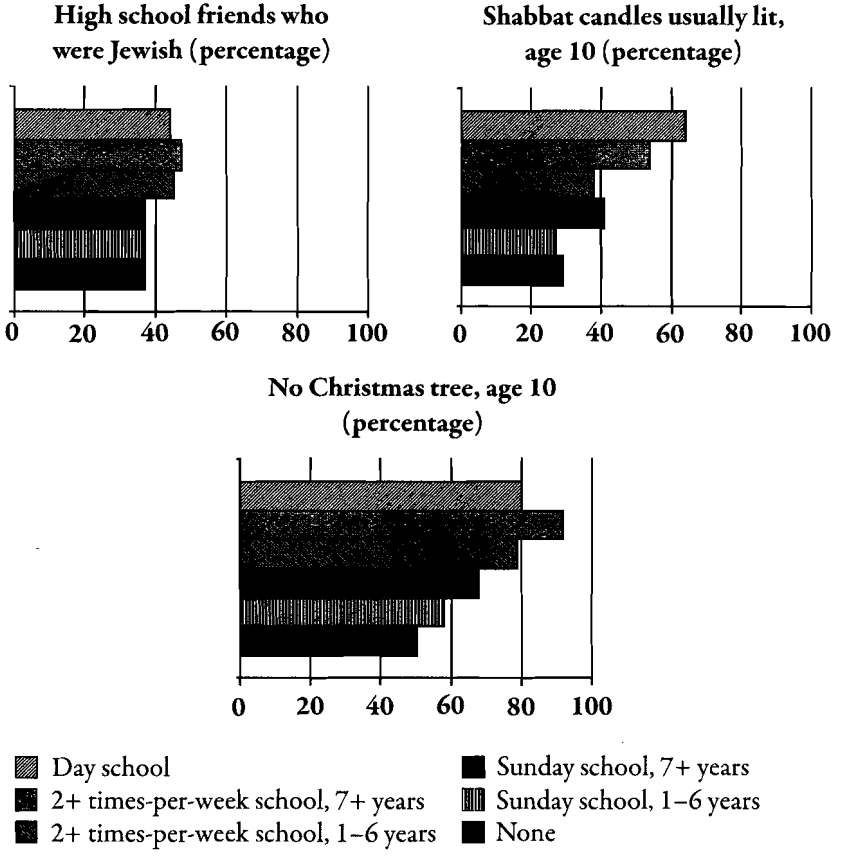

FIGURE 2.3 Measures of Jewish Socialization in Childhood Years by Schooling Alternatives

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

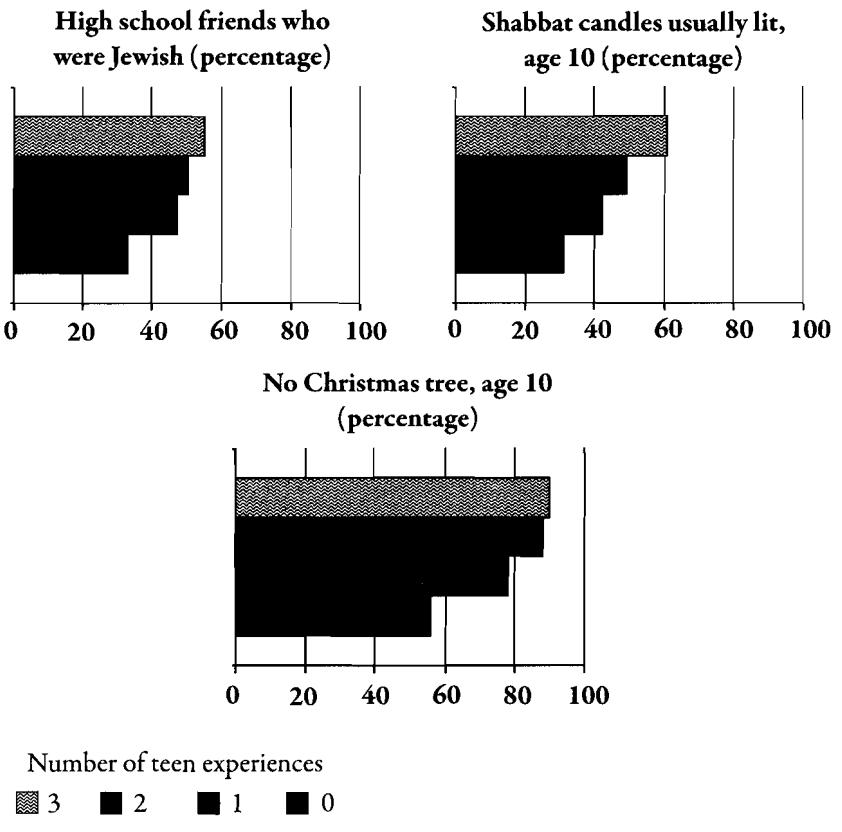

FIGURE 2.4 Measures of Jewish Socialization in Childhood Years by Informal Teen Jewish Educational Experiences

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

impact of each form of Jewish education, while controlling for other educational experiences simultaneously, as well as for demographic and background variables. The entries in the MCA tables and figures that follow report the "net impact" of attending a particular type of school as compared with those who experienced no Jewish schooling. That is, the analysis estimates the long-term contribution of each type of school to enhancing Jewish identity over and above anticipated outcomes for those with no schooling. For the impact of the three types of informal Jewish educational instruments, the entries report the impact of undergoing one, two, or three of the experience as contrasted with those who reported no such experience in their adolescent years.

To provide a more accessible explanation of this procedure, take the seemingly

TABLE 2.4

Jewish Informal Educational Experiences by Jewish Schooling

	Number of informal experiences			
	None	*One*	*Two*	*Three*
Day school	29	36	24	11
2+ times-per-week school, 7+ years	24	30	33	14
2+ time-per-week school, 1–6 years	41	31	22	7
Sunday school, 7+ years	44	30	22	4
Sunday school, 1–6 years	54	33	10	2
None	69	23	7	2

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

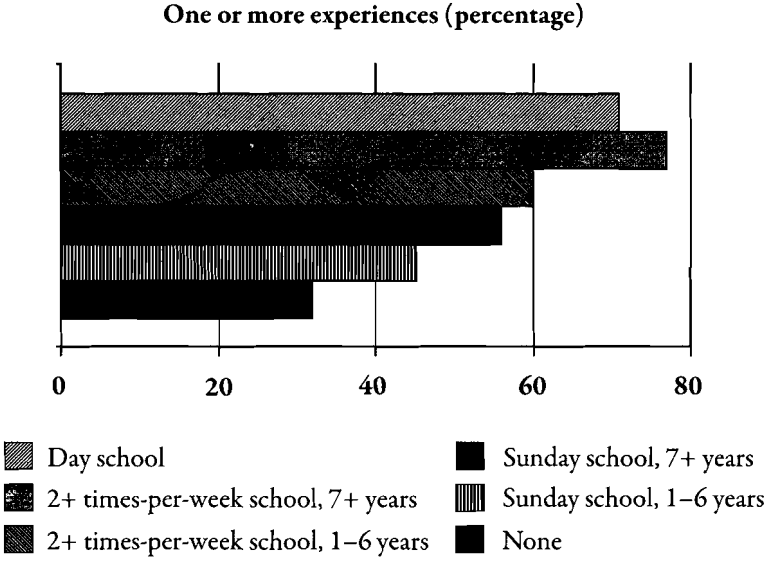

FIGURE 2.5 Jewish Informal Educational Experiences in Teen Years by Jewish Schooling Experiences

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

straightforward question: to what extent do day schools increase the chances of in-marriage (or reduce the chances of intermarriage)? MCA compares those who went to day school with those who had no Jewish schooling at all. Any measure of true effect needs to take into account the several Jewish identity-enhancing advantages that day schoolers typically enjoy relative to those with no schooling. Like other regression-based procedures, MCA, in effect, removes these advantages and creates a statistically level playing field, in which day school students and no-school students are set equal in terms of all these possibly confounding variables. The gap in in-marriage between these two populations is then assessed, deriving the "net impact" of day schools, that is, net of all other factors. By similar logic, the net impact of other types of schools may be assessed, and of the number of informal Jewish educational experiences, on intermarriage and other measures of Jewish engagement.

In-marriage: The Impact of Day Schools and Many Informal Experiences

Given the central concern with intermarriage, as well as its undeniable impact on other forms of Jewish engagement, we begin with a focused examination of its etiology. Table 2.5 reports that, factoring out parents' Jewish engagement and other forms of Jewish education, day school attendance alone raises the chances of marrying a Jew by 14 percentage points, as compared with those who never attended a Jewish school. All other things being equal (which they never are) someone who attended a day school will marry a Jew 14 percentage points more often (on a scale from 0 to 100, where 100 = absolutely likely to marry a Jew) than is someone who had no Jewish schooling as a youngster.

In contrast, attendance at Hebrew school (twice or more per week), whether for a few or many years, exerts no such impact. In even sharper contrast, Sunday school attendance actually *lowers* the chance of marrying a Jew by 8 to 9 percentage points. In other words, from the point of view of encouraging in-marriage, the contrast between day school and Sunday school can amount to as much as 23 percentage points.

We also find a noticeable effect of informal Jewish education on the chances of marrying a Jew. Two such experiences (say, camp and youth group, or Israel visit and camp) improves the odds of marrying a Jew by 7 percentage points. The small group who actually experienced all three types of Jewish informal educational experiences reported a net gain in in-marriage of 12 percentage points. Thus, of all the various Jewish educational alternatives, just two seem to substantially raise the chances of in-marriage: day school enrollment and significant participation in informal Jewish education in the teen years. Hebrew school attendance in the teen years also operates to increase in-marriage, but does so by way of leading to youth group, camps, and Israel travel experiences.

TABLE 2.5

Net Impact of Jewish Schooling Alternatives and of Informal Teen Jewish Educational Experiences on Measures of Adult Jewish Engagement

	In-marriage	*Observance*[b]	*Affiliated*[b]	*Belonging*[b]
Schooling				
Day school	+14	+12	+11	+12
2+ times-per-week school, 7+ years	+2	+4	+13	+7
2+ times-per-week school, 1–6 years	−1	+3	+10	+0
Sunday school, 7+ years	−8	+4	+3	+2
Sunday school, 1–6 years	−9	+3	+4	+5
Number of teen experiences[a]				
3	+12	+16	+21	+29
2	+7	+11	+19	+13
1	+3	+6	+10	+10

Controlling for sex, age, region, denomination raised, presence of Christmas tree, Sabbath observance in the home, and number of Jewish friends in high school.

Entries represent the gap (in points on a 0–100 scale) between those receiving the respective form of Jewish education and those receiving none (either no Jewish school or no informal experiences), adjusting for statistical controls above.

[a]Total number of informal Jewish educational experiences consists of overnight Jewish camp, Jewish youth group, and visiting Israel.

[b]*Observance:* composite of seder, lighting Hanukkah candles, fasting on Yom Kippur, keeping kosher in some way at home, and usually lighting Shabbat candles; *affiliated:* membership in synagogue, JCC, and/or another Jewish organization; *belonging:* four items on feeling very positive about being Jewish, having a clear sense of what it means to be a Jew, belonging to the Jewish people, and being Jewish very is important.

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

Impact of Jewish Education on Observance, Affiliation, and Belonging

As might be expected, day school exerts positive effects on all three other measures of Jewish engagement, but in none do we see effects as strong as those for in-marriage, where the net positive effect of day school amounts to 14 percentage points. Hebrew school exerts small to moderate effects. It increases the chances that adults will affiliate with a Jewish institution. Hebrew school attendance in the teen years leads to a more positive Jewish engagement imprint than stopping with bar/bat mitzvah.

The impact of Sunday school, though even smaller, is still positive. Sunday school probably operates much like Hebrew school for those who do in fact marry Jews. In other words, among the in-married population, those with any form of Jewish schooling are somewhat more Jewishly engaged than those with no schooling.

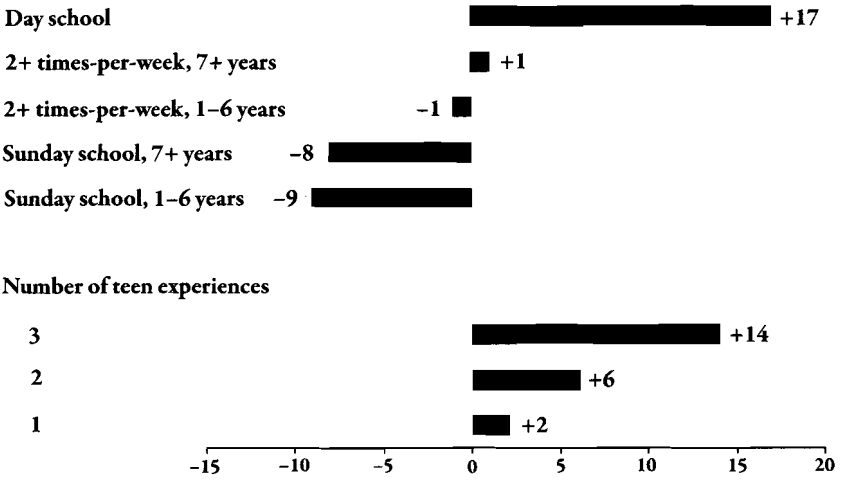

FIGURE 2.6 Impact of Jewish School and Informal Jewish Educational Teen Experiences on In-marriage

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

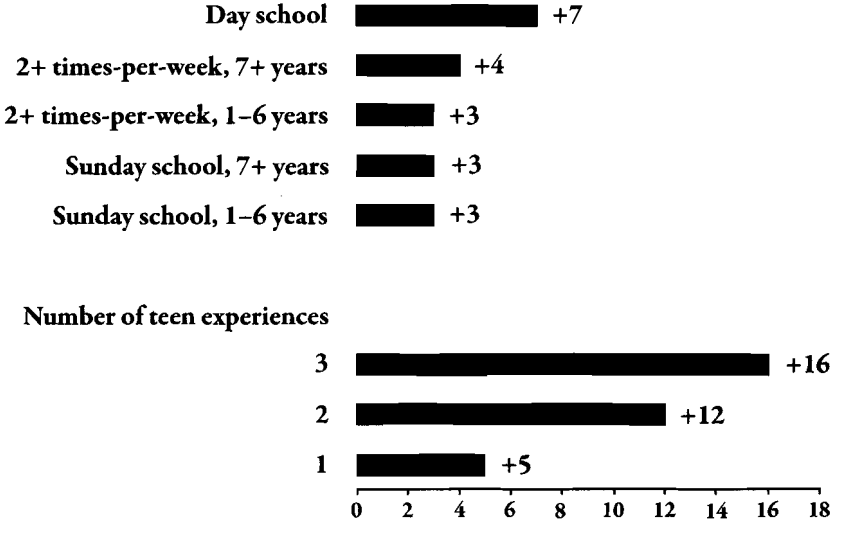

FIGURE 2.7 Impact of Jewish School and Informal Jewish Educational Teen Experiences on Observance

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

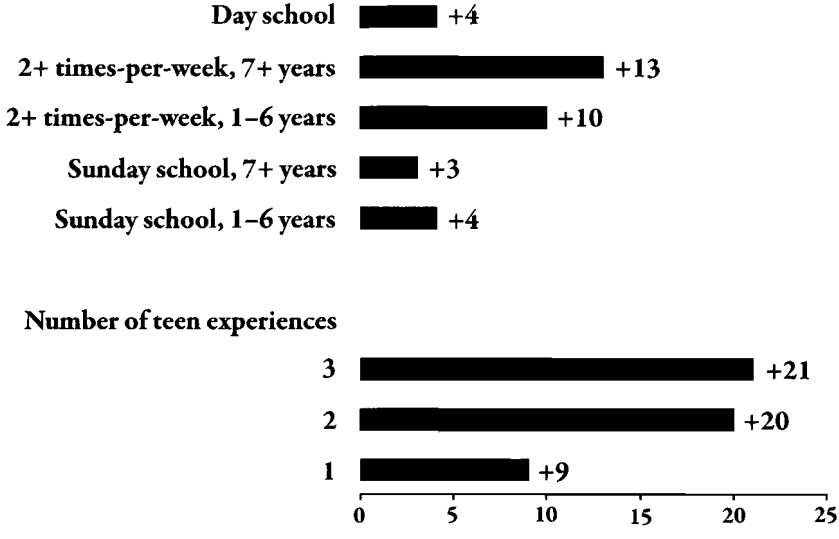

FIGURE 2.8 Impact of Jewish School and Informal Jewish Educational Teen Experiences on Affiliation

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

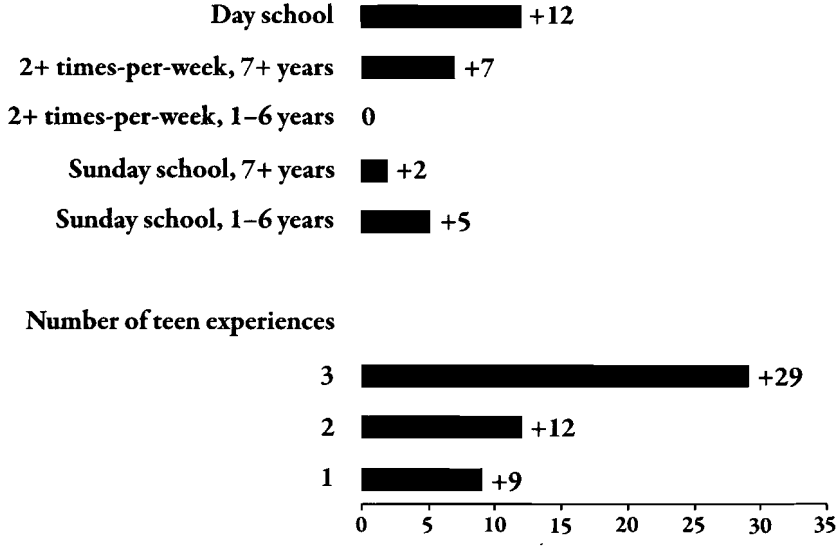

FIGURE 2.9 Impact of Jewish School and Informal Jewish Educational Teen Experiences on Belonging

Source: NJPS, 2000–2001; subsample: adults, 18–54, U.S.-born, raised Jewish but not Orthodox.

The impact of youth groups, camping, and Israel visits on observance, affiliation, and sense of Jewish belonging is seemingly more powerful than that exerted by schools. Generally, just one such experiences seems more "productive" than going to Hebrew school for up to six years. Two such experiences seems to equal or surpass day school education with respect to Jewish engagement, outside of the matter of in-marriage. The impact of three experiences (youth group plus camp plus Israel travel) substantially outweighs that of day school alone.

Conclusions

Jewish education matters. Even more precisely, certain forms of Jewish education matter more than others for affecting certain types of outcomes.

To elaborate, of any single instrument of Jewish education, day schools exert the most powerful effects on adult Jewish identity, and, as this analysis has established, those effects are associated not only with Orthodox day schools as confirmed in previous studies, but with (putatively) non-Orthodox day schools as well (or at least, day schools of any variety that serve non-Orthodox children).

Also noteworthy is the impact of attending twice-a-week Hebrew school into the high school years. Its effect on affiliation is especially pronounced. Part-time (but more than once-a-week) schools do yield Jewish identity benefits. In several earlier studies, researchers found that duration of attendance was associated with more powerful effects. Youngsters who attended for several years did emerge as more Jewishly identified adults, while most part-time students showed minimal effects of schooling on adult Jewish identity.

Perhaps most encouraging is the "good news" about the strong impact of youth groups, camps, and Israel trips, especially in combination. These experiences seem more "Jewishly productive" in the adult years than do Jewish schools other than day schools. Moreover, the combination of all three generally exerts a more positive impact on measures of Jewish engagement than does attending day schools for five to eight years.

Combining these findings provides evidence that part-time schools, when extending to the high school years and combined with informal Jewish education, can produce fairly significant effects many years hence. The upshot of this line of information is that policymakers ought not to dismiss the possibility that part-time school youngsters can indeed embark on a path of considerable Jewish growth, providing their schooling is augmented by informal Jewish educational alternatives.

At the same time, the absence of any noticeable positive impact of Sunday school education on Jewish identity outcomes in adulthood should be noted. In fact, Sunday school works to lower the rate of in-marriage. One can speculate (and only speculate) on the reasons for this relationship (or lack thereof). Sunday schools may be limited simply by the number of hours their students spend in class over the years. In addition, their effectiveness may be limited by virtue of the type of fami-

lies they attract: those with relatively low rates of Jewish involvement even when compared with those sending their children to part-time schools. But more pointedly, and maybe more powerfully, Sunday schools serve the children of interfaith families far more than other institutions. Hence, Sunday schools, in effect, teach the acceptability of intermarriage, perhaps making their youngsters more prone to marry non-Jews than were they never to have been exposed in a specifically Jewish setting to the presence of so many children of intermarried parents.

Several considerations serve to understate the impact of Jewish education in this analysis. This study's classification of Jewish educational experience necessarily fails to incorporate exact years of participation, nor any finely tuned measures of quality or intensity. Any increase in accuracy, precision, or sophistication in measuring Jewish education can only serve to further enhance estimates of its impact on Jewish identity outcomes.

These findings, then, testify to the power of Jewish education to shape adults' Jewish identity and the education of their children. They also testify to the limits of some forms of Jewish education, as well as to the special areas where they exert influence and where they do not.

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