

JEWISH EDUCATION AS COMMUNAL ACTIVITY: PATTERNS OF ENROLLMENT IN THREE GROWTH COMMUNITIES

BRUCE PHILLIPS

Associate Professor of Jewish Communal Service

and

MICHAEL ZELDIN

Associate Professor of Jewish Education

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles

The implications of this research are three-fold: first, there are important sub-populations that we do not reach and that we tend to forget about when charting the course of Jewish education. Second, this research challenges the prevalent assumptions among communal planners that Reform Jewish schools contribute less to Jewish schooling and thus deserve less support. Finally, it suggests that the discourse of Jewish education should be expanded.

It is a truism of education that successful planning requires a knowledge of who the learners are.¹ In Jewish education, knowledge of the learner has often been limited to attempts to understand the developmental level of students in a class and their previous classroom experiences. It is equally important, however, to understand who learners are in a broad communal context. This paper presents data from community planning studies that allow us to draw portraits of who does and who does not attend Jewish schools. This type of broad demographic data provides a backdrop for meaningful educational planning and raises issues which educational and communal planners must confront.

Research in Jewish education usually operates in the shadow of general educational research, which itself operates in the shadow of research in the various disciplines. For example, the last major wave

of quantitative research in Jewish education, conducted primarily by Himmelfarb² and Bock,³ drew on the then-current models of school effectiveness research. Building on Coleman's work in the Equality of Educational Opportunity studies,⁴ Himmelfarb and Bock sought to identify the factors that influence the religious identification of Jewish adults, and, more specifically, to determine the factors that make Jewish education effective.

Much of the later research in Jewish education followed the basic assumptions of the paradigms used in the general

An earlier version of this paper was presented to the Conference of the Jewish Education Network in June, 1987.

1. See, for example, Ralph Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949.

2. Harold Himmelfarb, "The Impact of Religious Schooling: The Effects of Jewish Education Upon Adult Religious Involvement." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1974. See also Harold Himmelfarb, "Jewish Education for Naught: Educating the Culturally Deprived Jewish Child," *Analysis*, No. 51, September 1975.

3. Geoffrey Bock, "The Jewish Schooling of American Jews: A Study of Non-Cognitive Educational Effects." Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1976. See also Geoffrey Bock, *Does Jewish Schooling Matter?* New York: American Jewish Committee, 1977.

4. James Coleman, et al., *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1966.

education research community. One factor, however, has frequently been neglected in this research program: Jewish education is fundamentally different from general education in several important ways—most notably in that it is a voluntary enterprise. The Jewish community in its entirety rests on a foundation of voluntarism, and Jewish education operates in this larger context.

Jewish parents make their own decisions about whether to send their children to Jewish schools, when to send their children to Jewish schools, and to what types of schools to send their children. To understand Jewish education, then, it is important to examine data on the voluntary participation of Jews in Jewish life.

This study therefore takes a new approach to Jewish educational research by analyzing the education-related data of a series of community planning studies conducted for Federations of three Jewish communities in the western United States, Los Angeles, Denver, and Phoenix. The purpose of the study is to explore the educational data from these demographic studies in order to provide tentative answers to three questions: Who participates in Jewish education? When do they participate and when do they cease to participate? And in what types of schools do they participate?

Jewish life in these growing communities is exemplary of the voluntarism that characterizes American Jewish life. Jews who live in these communities tend to live far away from their families of origin. The distance from the influence of grandparents and the relative rootlessness of newer Jewish communities diminishes the pressure placed on parents to enroll their children in a Jewish school. By comparing and contrasting data from three such communities, we are able to discern patterns that transcend any single community and its idiosyncracies. The three communities, Los Angeles, Denver, and Phoenix, each have their own personalities, but our purpose here is to identify

their commonalities regarding the participation of children in Jewish education.

Conventional wisdom in the Jewish community suggests answers to the questions explored here, but the answers are rooted in common sense and have not previously been supported by broad demographic data. In some instances the data from Los Angeles, Denver, and Phoenix provide support for this conventional wisdom. In these cases, confrontation with evidence which supports conventional wisdom may lead educational policy makers and planners to consider seriously the educational implications of their assumptions. Support for commonly held beliefs can thus provide a context for educational policy which takes into account the demographic situation in which Jewish education operates.

At other times, however, the data contradict conventional wisdom and call on policy-makers to rethink their prior beliefs about who participates in what type of Jewish education. In other instances, the data suggest new insights not addressed by common beliefs held by Jewish communal and educational planners. In all these cases, the demographic data described here provide a backdrop for educational planning.

METHODOLOGY

The three community studies described here were all conducted within a few years of each other (Los Angeles, 1979; Denver, 1981; Phoenix, 1983) using virtually identical sample designs.⁵ Thus, the studies provide an unusually consistent basis for comparison. Random digit dialing was employed to gather a true cross-section of the Jewish community. A list of telephone numbers was generated by computer to

5. Bruce A. Phillips, "Sampling Strategies in Jewish Population Studies" in Steven M. Cohen, Jonathan S. Woocher and Bruce A. Phillips (eds.), *Perspectives in Jewish Population Research*, Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1984.

Table 1
ENROLLMENT PATTERNS BY COMMUNITY

	<i>Denver</i>	<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Los Angeles</i>
Currently Enrolled	54.1	45.4	28.7
Previously Enrolled	16.3	28.5	29.4
Never Enrolled	29.4	26.1	41.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	248	414	191

include both listed and unlisted telephone numbers (between 40% and 60% of all the Jewish households interviewed were, in fact, unlisted.) Once a household was identified, the interviewer explained the nature of the study and asked if anyone in the household was Jewish. The sample is thus of self-identified Jews, whether or not they participate in or are otherwise known to the Jewish community.

The unit of analysis in this paper is the individual child. A separate computer file was made using the data gathered for each child in the household. Several variables which describe the household or the parents of the child were added to this file. Thus, for example, a household with three children would contribute three "cases" to the analysis, with household variables such as income and Jewish status of parents repeated for each of the three children.

Because the sample designs were all stratified, the data were weighted by the inverse probability of selection in order to eliminate any stratification bias. The sample weights were then adjusted with a constant so that the weighted sample size is almost the same as the actual sample size. The weighted Ns shown in the tables are thus reflective of the actual number of cases in the data bases, and the Chi-square statistic used in this paper is not artificially inflated by the use of weighted data.

FACTORS RELATED TO ENROLLMENT

Other descriptions of these three communities reveal that despite the fact that all three are western communities of rapid

growth, each has its own distinctive personality.⁶ Los Angeles, the second largest Jewish community in the United States, has a relatively low proportion of families with children and (conversely) a higher proportion of single households (especially among never-married household heads). It also has the lowest reported affiliation rates of any American Jewish community studied to date. Phoenix stands in direct contrast to Los Angeles. It has the highest proportion of families with children and the highest rates of affiliation of these three communities. Denver stands in the middle, with intermediate rates of affiliation and proportion of families with children compared with Phoenix and Los Angeles.

The rates of intermarriage show a slightly different picture. Because of their smaller Jewish populations and lower Jewish densities, both Phoenix and Denver have higher rates of mixed marriages (i.e., marriages between a Jew and a spouse who remains non-Jewish). In fact, Denver has the highest rate of mixed marriages reported anywhere in the country. Although Phoenix has a higher rate of mixed marriages than Los Angeles, it also has a higher rate of conversion, in keeping with its more "stable" character.

The overall patterns of enrollment in Jewish education are consistent with other dimensions of communal personality (Table 1). Los Angeles has the lowest rates of

6. Bruce A. Phillips, "Factors Associated with Intermarriage in Western Jewish Communities," *Studies in Jewish Demography* (forthcoming).

Table 2
ENROLLMENT BY FAMILY TYPE (MIXED MARRIED FAMILIES EXCLUDED)

	<i>Married Couple</i>	<i>Single Parent</i>
<i>Denver</i>		
Currently Enrolled	69.0	59.0
Previously Enrolled	18.1	14.9
Never Enrolled	12.9	25.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	158	35
<i>Los Angeles</i>		
Currently Enrolled	33.9	21.6
Previously Enrolled	35.2	15.3
Never Enrolled	30.9	63.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	140	30
<i>Phoenix</i>		
Currently Enrolled	55.2	22.0
Previously Enrolled	26.2	47.6
Never Enrolled	18.6	30.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	286	72

enrollment in Jewish education: 29% are currently enrolled and 42% have never been enrolled. Denver and Phoenix have comparable rates of enrollment. Around one-half of the children between 6 and 18 are currently enrolled and between 26% and 30% have never been enrolled.

Two demographic factors exert a strong influence on the likelihood of enrollment. Children of single-parent families are less likely than children of married couples to receive a Jewish education (Table 2). In Los Angeles, children of married couples are 1.5 times more likely than children of single-parent families to be currently enrolled. Conversely, children of single parents are twice as likely to have never received any Jewish education. In Phoenix, the differences are as pronounced: Children of married couples are more than twice as likely to be enrolled currently and almost twice as likely to have received a Jewish education regardless of their current enrollment status. In Denver, children of married couples are slightly more likely to be enrolled currently than children of single-

parent families (69% versus 60%), but are still twice as likely to have been enrolled at some point. The lower enrollments of children from single-parent families pose a challenge to Jewish educational institutions, especially since single-parent children make up around 20% of all children with Jewish parents.

Within the last few years, the Council of Jewish Federations has examined the issue of "the cost of living Jewishly" and suggested that only high-income households are truly in a financial position to participate fully in Jewish life.⁷ In all three communities discussed here, current enrollment increases with household income (Table 3), in some cases more than doubling between the bottom and top income categories, and at the very least increasing by one-third. Conversely, the children of families with incomes under \$30,000 are the least likely to have received a Jewish education, and the

7. J. Alan Winter, "An Estimate of the Affordability of Living Jewishly," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (Spring 1985), pp. 247-256.

Table 3
ENROLLMENT BY INCOME (MIXED MARRIED FAMILIES EXCLUDED)

	<i>Under \$30,000</i>	<i>\$30,000-\$59,000</i>	<i>\$60,000 +</i>
<i>Denver</i>			
Currently Enrolled	60.8	63.7	83.2
Previously Enrolled	13.5	23.5	12.7
Never Enrolled	25.7	12.8	4.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	66	82	45
<i>Los Angeles</i>			
Currently Enrolled	19.5	36.9	48.6
Previously Enrolled	27.2	37.8	26.5
Never Enrolled	53.3	25.4	24.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	59	39	46
<i>Phoenix</i>			
	<i>Under \$30,000</i>	<i>\$30,000 +</i>	
Currently Enrolled	42.3	59.4	
Previously Enrolled	39.1	23.3	
Never Enrolled	18.5	17.3	
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	
Weighted N	75	151	

likelihood of ever having been enrolled increases with income.

Surprisingly, three factors which might be expected to play a role in Jewish education do not do so. The labor force participation of the female was found to be related to Jewish education only in Phoenix. Although residential duration of the household in the community is related to all kinds of affiliation (including synagogue), it is not related to the likelihood of an individual child receiving a Jewish education. Similarly, individual community areas within Los Angeles, Denver, and Phoenix are not related to Jewish education although the perceived Jewish densities of the areas mark them as "more Jewish" or "less Jewish" to members of the community.

Jewish educational enrollment is, however, strongly related to participation in Jewish communal life. The children of parents who belong to Jewish organizations (other than synagogue) are more likely than children with uninvolved parents to be

enrolled in a Jewish school (Table 4). Moreover, children whose parents belong to more than one Jewish organization are more likely to be enrolled in Jewish education than children whose parents are involved in only one. Similarly, children whose parents contribute to the local Federation campaign are more likely to receive a Jewish education than children whose parents do not contribute (Table 5). Thus, Jewish educational enrollment is not an isolated involvement, but rather is part of a pattern of other Jewish involvements. This underscores the extent to which Jewish education for children represents a voluntaristic behavior on the part of their parents.

JEWISH EDUCATION AND INTERMARRIAGE

The Jewish status of a child's parents is both a demographic factor, in that it reflects family composition, and a Jewish factor, in that it reflects religion of spouse. It is more strongly related to enrollment in Jewish

Table 4
ENROLLMENT BY PARENTAL MEMBERSHIP IN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
(MIXED MARRIED FAMILIES EXCLUDED)

	<i>No Memberships</i>	<i>One Memberships</i>	<i>Two or More Memberships</i>
<i>Denver</i>			
Currently Enrolled	50.7	59.3	88.4
Previously Enrolled	18.8	40.5	10.7
Never Enrolled	30.5	0.0	1.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	94	19	81
<i>Los Angeles</i>			
Currently Enrolled	20.0	49.3	82.5
Previously Enrolled	35.0	26.6	17.5
Never Enrolled	45.0	24.1	0.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	107	60	4
<i>Phoenix</i>			
	<i>No Memberships</i>	<i>One or More</i>	
Currently Enrolled	48.8	69.0	
Previously Enrolled	18.9	29.5	
Never Enrolled	12.2	21.6	
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	
Weighted N	90	196	

education than any of the demographic or Jewish communal variables discussed above.

Children of mixed married parents are essentially outside the Jewish educational system (Table 6). In Los Angeles, only 12% are currently enrolled and close to 70% have never been enrolled. In Denver, only 8% are currently enrolled and fully 86% have never been enrolled. Even in Phoenix, with its high rates of affiliation, only 25% of the mixed married children are currently enrolled and fully 60% have never received a Jewish education.

At the time the studies were conducted, children of mixed married couple constituted between 13 and 22 percent of all families with two parents. As large as these figures are, they understate the developing impact of mixed marriages on the Jewish family and the Jewish school. The rates of mixed marriage are highest among Jews under 30, most of whom have not had children yet. In

addition, over the next 10 to 15 years, it is projected that over one-half of all Jewish marriages will include a non-Jew. Thus the children of mixed married couples will make up an increasingly large proportion of all Jewish children.

Intermarriage may thus present the single greatest challenge to Jewish educators interested in seeing large numbers of children receive a Jewish education. The children of these marriages, if they can be attracted to a school at all, will most likely enroll in a Reform synagogue school or in a non-synagogue educational setting (e.g., community center). First, the problem of Jewish status eliminates half of these children from consideration by Orthodox and Conservative schools. Second, to the extent that mixed married parents identify with a movement, they identify with Reform (Table 7).

Between one-half and three-fifths of the children of mixed marrieds have parents

Table 5
ENROLLMENT BY FEDERATION GIVING (MIXED MARRIED FAMILIES EXCLUDED)

	<i>Gives to Federation</i>	<i>Does Not Give to Federation</i>
<i>Denver</i>		
Currently Enrolled	83.3	58.9
Previously Enrolled	11.0	21.0
Never Enrolled	5.7	20.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	127	66
<i>Los Angeles</i>		
Currently Enrolled	37.4	26.3
Previously Enrolled	34.5	28.9
Never Enrolled	28.1	44.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	83	87
<i>Phoenix</i>		
Currently Enrolled	53.5	42.3
Previously Enrolled	30.2	30.4
Never Enrolled	16.2	27.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	178	169

Table 6
ENROLLMENT BY JEWISH STATUS OF PARENTS

	<i>Both Parents Jewish*</i>	<i>Mixed Married</i>
<i>Denver</i>		
Currently Enrolled	68.6	7.6
Previously Enrolled	17.6	6.3
Never Enrolled	13.2	86.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	159	45
<i>Los Angeles</i>		
Currently Enrolled	33.6	11.7
Previously Enrolled	35.7	19.6
Never Enrolled	31.4	68.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	140	21
<i>Phoenix</i>		
Currently Enrolled	55.2	25.0
Previously Enrolled	26.2	16.0
Never Enrolled	18.9	59.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	286	56

*Includes marriages to converts.

Table 7
MOVEMENT BY JEWISH STATUS OF PARENTS

	<i>Both Parents Jewish*</i>	<i>Mixed Married</i>
<i>Denver</i>		
Reform	33.1	48.4
Conservative	30.0	6.5
Orthodox	11.3	0.0
Just Jewish/Other	25.6	41.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	160	31
<i>Los Angeles</i>		
Reform	38.4	56.3
Conservative	38.4	1.0
Orthodox	1.4	12.5
Just Jewish/Other	21.2	31.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	146	16
<i>Phoenix</i>		
Reform	55.0	61.0
Conservative	32.9	9.2
Orthodox	5.2	0.0
Just Jewish/Other	7.1	29.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	280	52

*Includes marriages to converts.

who identify with Reform (when answering the question, "How do you think of yourself, as Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Orthodox, just Jewish, or something else? I don't mean what you belong to, but how you think of yourself."). Between one-third and two-fifths have parents who define themselves outside the four movements. Even if educational planners were successful in attracting the children of mixed marrieds to a Jewish school, they would then be faced with a whole host of curricular and programmatic challenges in connection with this very different student population.

Because enrollment rates among children of mixed marriages are so low and because mixed marriage is also related to virtually all the factors considered in this paper (i.e., income, Jewish organizational involvement, and movement identification), children from mixed married households have been excluded from the remainder of the analysis.

ENROLLMENT PATTERNS BY AGE

One of the most widely held beliefs concerning American Jewish education is that the vast majority of children who receive a Jewish education leave the Jewish school after Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Enrollment patterns in these three communities support this bit of conventional wisdom and give a more detailed picture of how age 13 acts as a pivotal moment for enrollment in Jewish schools.

Enrollment increases with the age of the child up until age 13, and then drops off precipitously. (Table 8). In Los Angeles, almost one-third of the children between 6 and 8 were enrolled in a Jewish school, increasing to almost one-half of all 9- to 12-year-olds. Of 13- to 15-year-olds, however, less than one-fifth attended a Jewish school. In Phoenix, the enrollment rate drops from 66% to 44% after age 13. In Denver, about eight in ten 9- to 12-year-olds, seven in ten 13- to 15-year-olds, and only two in ten 16-

Table 8
ENROLLMENT BY AGE (MIXED MARRIED FAMILIES EXCLUDED)

	6-8	9-12	13-15	16-18
<i>Denver</i>				
Currently Enrolled	68.4	80.0	74.5	20.0
Previously Enrolled	9.6	8.3	13.7	61.6
Never Enrolled	21.9	11.7	11.8	18.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	47	75	42	28
<i>Los Angeles</i>				
Currently Enrolled	29.1	58.1	20.8	16.6
Previously Enrolled	18.2	14.2	38.1	51.5
Never Enrolled	52.7	27.7	41.0	31.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	33	49	35	54
<i>Phoenix</i>				
Currently Enrolled	60.2	65.5	44.2	17.8
Previously Enrolled	9.2	14.3	42.4	62.8
Never Enrolled	30.6	20.2	13.4	19.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	94	96	92	76

to 17-year-olds receive a Jewish education. It is apparent, therefore, that as children approach the age of Bar or Bat Mitzvah, they are more likely to attend a Jewish school. The upcoming rite of passage and synagogue requirements for school enrollment seem to act as a lure for ever-increasing enrollment leading to age 13. The enrollment boom turns to bust as soon as the tangible rewards of Jewish education are removed.

The proportion of children never enrolled does not, however, decrease with age as would be expected. As children grow older, we would expect a lower percentage to remain in the "never enrolled" group, or, at the very least, the percentage of "never enrolled" children should remain constant after Bar/Bat Mitzvah age. Instead we find an inconsistent pattern in which one age cohort shows an unusually high probability of having been educated. By translating age to year of birth, a consistent picture emerges: Children born immediately after the Six-Day War are more likely to have been enrolled than would be expected given the overall pattern of schooling by age. For

example, the 9 to 12 age cohort in Los Angeles (children born between 1967 and 1970) are more likely to have received a Jewish education than any other age cohort. In Phoenix, the post-1967 cohort are found in the 13- to 15-year-old category, and they are more likely to have received a Jewish education than the 16- to 18-year-old group.

Enrollment patterns in Denver illustrate the point clearly because of the overlap between the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the Six-Day War cohort (see Table 9). When the Denver study was conducted in 1981, children born prior to 1967 were 15, 16, and 17 years of age. Children born just following the Six-Day War were between 11 and 14 years of age and children born after 1970 were ten years of age and younger. One would expect that the 1967-70 cohort would have a higher proportion of children never enrolled than the pre-1967 cohort because it contains younger children. By the same logic, the post-1970 cohort should have an even greater proportion of children never enrolled, because the children in this cohort are even younger. In fact, the proportion of

Table 9
 ENROLLMENT BY BIRTH COHORT AND AGE IN DENVER
 (MIXED MARRIED FAMILIES EXCLUDED)

<i>Birth Cohort Age</i>	<i>Before 1967 Age 15 +</i>	<i>1967-1970 Age 11-14</i>	<i>After 1970 Age 10 and Under</i>
Currently Enrolled	41.8	73.8	74.6
Previously Enrolled	41.8	13.1	8.5
Never Enrolled	16.4	13.1	16.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	55	61	59

children never enrolled is essentially the same for all three age cohorts: between 13 and 17 percent. That is, children under 10 are as likely as children 15 and over to have received a Jewish education. Although the difference is small, it is interesting to note that the proportion never enrolled in the 1967-70 cohort is even less than in the pre-1967 cohort.

A more thorough investigation of the post-1967 cohort effect would require longitudinal data to establish a "base line." In other words, we need to examine the enrollment patterns for different birth cohorts *at the same time in the life-cycle*. For example, it would be necessary to compare the proportion of the 1960-66 birth cohort never enrolled when they were under 13 with the proportion of the 1967-70 birth cohort never enrolled at the same age. Nonetheless, the data examined here are strongly suggestive of a Six-Day War cohort effect.

One piece of evidence for the impact of the Six-Day War is the sudden increase of interest in Jewish Studies courses on the college campus directly following the Six-Day War.⁸ What we see in the enrollment data may be another aspect of the same phenomenon: People who were young adults starting families when they experienced the Six-Day War manifest the same surge in Jewish involvement by involving their *children* in the study of Judaism.

8. See, for example, Leon Jick (ed.), *The Teaching of Judaica in American Universities*. Association for Jewish Studies, 1970.

This discovery suggests that in addition to developmental issues, policy-makers must take into account the historical experience of the cohort which is currently eligible for enrollment in Jewish schools. Having identified this secondary effect on the cohort born in the aftermath of the 1967 War, it would also be important to discover the duration of the effect. Is this cohort unique today (at the college age)? Will they be different when they are ready to make decisions about the Jewish education of their children? While the answers to these questions must await further study, the raising of the questions may alert educational and communal decision-makers to a new area to consider as they seek to develop Jewish educational programs for new cohorts.

ENROLLMENT PATTERNS BY MOVEMENT

Children whose parents identify with a movement are significantly more likely to be currently enrolled in a Jewish school than children whose parents identify as "other" (Table 10). While the differences between children identifying with a movement and "others" is small in Denver, in Phoenix children identified with a movement are at least 3 times more likely to be enrolled than "others," and in Los Angeles they are at least 10 times more likely to be enrolled. The situation of children who have never been enrolled is precisely the reverse: Children whose parents identify with a movement are significantly less likely than "other" children to have never attended.

Table 10
ENROLLMENT BY MOVEMENT (MIXED MARRIED FAMILIES EXCLUDED)

	<i>Reform</i>	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Just Jewish and Other</i>
<i>Denver</i>				
Currently Enrolled	70.5	65.6	91.7	57.9
Previously Enrolled	10.6	23.2	8.3	27.6
Never Enrolled	18.9	11.2	0.0	14.5
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	70	50	22	47
<i>Los Angeles</i>				
Currently Enrolled	30.8	50.6	—	2.7
Previously Enrolled	35.3	50.6	—	22.7
Never Enrolled	33.9	15.2	—	74.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	62	65	2	38
<i>Phoenix</i>				
Currently Enrolled	55.0	47.7	77.3	16.6
Previously Enrolled	30.1	35.0	17.3	26.2
Never Enrolled	15.0	17.4	5.4	57.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	185	110	17	40

Again, in Denver the differences are smaller than in Phoenix and Los Angeles. This suggests that "Reform" is not, as some have argued, just a "residual category" frequently used by Jews who have no other identification. Rather, the identification as "Reform" is an affirmative statement of a particular Jewish identification that carries with it a set of behaviors which are quite different from those who choose no specific identification.

Only in Los Angeles are there great differences in enrollment *between* movements: Conservative children are significantly more likely than Reform children to be in a Jewish school. This remains true when controlling for age (Table 11). However, the differences between Reform and Conservative children in Los Angeles exist only under the age of 13. It is possible that Conservative children are enrolled earlier and thus a finer age breakdown might reduce these differences further, but the sample sizes are too small to allow for this finite an analysis. Even so, under the age of

13, the percentage of Conservative drop-outs is higher. Two scenarios are possible. The first is that as they grow older, Conservative children will come to resemble their older counterparts, where Reform-Conservative differences disappear. The second possibility is that current patterns will continue, where Conservative children are more likely to enroll and also more likely to drop out. The concern then becomes the value of having "entered the schoolhouse door." If mere attendance at a Jewish school at some point during a child's growth has some significance in terms of socialization and enculturation into the Jewish community, then the high proportion of Conservative children who have received some amount of Jewish education may be cause for satisfaction.⁹ If, however, the impact of Jewish education requires

9. See Bock, *op. cit.*

Table 11
ENROLLMENT BY MOVEMENT CONTROLLING FOR AGE
(MIXED MARRIED FAMILIES EXCLUDED)

	Age 6-12			Age 13-17		
	Reform	Conservative	Other	Reform	Conservative	Other
<i>Denver</i>						
Currently Enrolled	77.3	75.3	66.6	58.5	46.8	41.6
Previously Enrolled	3.3	7.8	21.7	23.4	53.2	38.6
Never Enrolled	19.4	17.0	11.7	18.1	0.0	19.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	45	33	31	25	17	17
<i>Los Angeles</i>						
Currently Enrolled	43.3	72.3	3.4	20.5	25.7	2.1
Previously Enrolled	7.5	16.7	31.1	58.3	54.2	16.7
Never Enrolled	49.2	11.0	65.5	21.3	20.0	81.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	28	35	16	34	30	22
<i>Phoenix</i>						
Currently Enrolled	71.1	62.4	19.3	36.3	30.3	14.1
Previously Enrolled	9.8	13.5	19.4	53.4	60.3	32.4
Never Enrolled	19.1	24.0	61.2	10.2	9.5	53.5
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	99	60	19	86	51	21

prolonged exposure, then the low drop-out rate of Reform children may be cause for satisfaction. What is interesting to note here is that these data take the usual interpretation of the relative effectiveness of Reform and Conservative Jewish education and turn it around. It is usually argued that Conservative Jewish education may be more effective because children are involved more intensively (more hours for more years) and Reform Jewish education may be more effective not because of its duration but as a result of getting children into a Jewish environment at all.

School type. Reform children in Denver and Phoenix are more likely to attend a one-day-a-week school whereas Conservative children are more likely to attend an afternoon school. In Los Angeles there are no differences between Reform and Conservative children in the type of school they attend (including day schools). Taking Tables 10 and 12 together, the following

conclusion can be drawn: in Los Angeles, where Reform children are somewhat less likely to attend a Jewish school than Conservative children, the type of schools attended are the same; in Denver and Phoenix, where Reform children are as likely as Conservative children to be educated, Reform enrollment is higher in one-day-a-week schools. It would seem, then, that Reform parents in Los Angeles are less likely to educate their children, and in Denver and Phoenix they send them to one-day-a-week schools. Nonetheless, the proportion of Reform children in afternoon schools is not small: 28% in both Phoenix and Denver. Moreover, these studies were conducted at a time when little or no day school alternatives were available in Denver and Phoenix. Further, in Denver the proportion of Conservative children in one-day-a-week schools is almost as high as in afternoon schools. Thus, even without the availability of longitudinal data, our

Table 12
 TYPE OF SCHOOL CURRENTLY ATTENDED BY MOVEMENT
 (MIXED MARRIED FAMILIES EXCLUDED)

<i>Type of School Attended</i>	<i>Reform</i>	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Just Jewish and Other</i>
<i>Denver</i>			
One Day/Week	64.8	37.7	48.7
Afternoon	28.1	44.7	15.8
Day School	1.7	14.8	35.6
Tutor/Other	5.4	2.8	0.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
Weighted N	41	32	27
<i>Los Angeles</i>			
One Day/Week	30.1	33.3	—
Afternoon	38.3	45.8	—
Day School	12.7	9.0	—
Tutor/Other	9.0	12.0	—
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	—
Weighted N	18	33	1
<i>Phoenix</i>			
One Day/Week	53.2	23.8	—
Afternoon	28.4	53.0	—
Day School	1.3	15.0	—
Tutor/Other	17.0	8.2	—
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	—
Weighted N	102	53	7

historical understanding of Reform Jewish education suggests that Reform is “catching up.”

The weighted Ns at the bottom of the columns in Denver and Phoenix tell another important story, which lies outside the purview of this analysis: There are more students in Reform synagogue schools than in Conservative synagogue schools. This suggests that while Bureaus of Jewish Education frequently dismiss the one-day-a-week school as insignificant, there are in fact many Jewish children who have selected this option rather than the option of not going to a Jewish school at all. To dismiss this choice as meaningless is to ignore large groups of children who have chosen to receive some form of Jewish education at a time when as many as one-third of all Jewish children receive no Jewish education at all.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

We have challenged three sorts of conventional understandings about Jewish education. First, Jewish education is usually seen as an expression of the Jewish commitment of a child's parents. Second, the relationship between age and schooling has been conceptualized primarily in life-cycle terms, focusing on Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Third, the educational patterns of the movements are conventionally seen as linearly related, with Conservative children receiving more intensive schooling than Reform, who in turn are seen as a kind of residual category (“better to say one is Reform than to admit one is nothing”).

In contrast, we have found that socio-demographic factors profoundly influence the likelihood of Jewish schooling; that parents' experience of historical events may

also play a part; that differences in cumulative exposure to Jewish education between Reform and Conservative children are not very great; and finally that identification with a movement per se is more important than the particular movement with which parents identify.

The implications of this research are threefold: first, there are important sub-populations that we do not reach and that we tend to forget about when charting the course of Jewish education. Second, this research challenges the prevalent assumption among communal planners that Reform Jewish schools contribute less to Jewish schooling and thus deserve less support. Finally, it suggests that the discourse of

Jewish education should be expanded. Curricular decisions often emerge (and appropriately so) from ideologies of Judaism and from philosophies which address the nature of religious knowledge and the role of the individual. But decisions grounded in ideology alone ignore the fact that education is essentially a moment of praxis, where ideologies confront social realities. It is our hope that the type of data we have analyzed here will motivate educational planners and policy makers to consider the social situation which faces Jewish education, not clinging to worn assumptions but open to new perceptions and possibilities.