

Unity and Diversity: Jewish Identification in America and Israel 1990-2000

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Introduced within a background of literature on Diaspora and majority society, this study compares Jewish identification in the United States and Israel and how differences and similarities evolved over the period 1990-2000. Four data bases are used, two for American Jews and two for Israeli Jews, which were given common denominators and merged into one file. American and Israeli Jews perceive very similarly the structure of Jewish identification. However, there are substantial differences in the levels of Jewish identification. These are mainly salient in ongoing observances and religious belief but are less meaningful for intermittent rituals and voluntary work. Over time, and more significantly after controlling for ethnic composition and education, these differences have narrowed or even totally disappeared. This is further supported by logistic regression according to which the United States and Israel are alternately associated with higher and lower levels of Jewish identification.

Terms such as “minority status” versus “sovereignty,” “communality” versus “statehood,” “exile” versus “rootedness,” or “dual loyalty” versus “single commitment” are central to the understanding of the identity of members of ethnoreligious groups who operate in different geopolitical contexts in the Diaspora or as a

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majority society (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993; Safran 1991; Sheffer 1986; 2003a). In the Diaspora, ethnoreligious identity interacts with the national identity and the norms established by the dominant group. Although minorities may slightly contribute from their own distinct cultures to the society at large, they will more likely accept the local social norms and values and adjust their particular behaviors to them. By contrast, in their own state members of the majority society shape the general norms, which are of course affected by their values and traditions. Similarly, specific values that may be marginal in the Diaspora become central for those living in their own sovereign state; ethnic diasporas, for their part, establish parochial organizations to promote and defend their specific cultural, religious and economic interests (Sheffer 1986). It is further suggested that particular values or even vocabulary may be interpreted differently in the Diaspora and in the homeland (Liebman and Cohen 1990). These different approaches can partly be connected to structural characteristics of each of the communities.

At the same time, there exists a wide identificational homogeneity among people who share a common religion or ethnicity regardless of where they live. Members of the group who live under minority conditions may often not wish to assimilate, or be blocked from assimilation, and are assumed to feel a shared history, identical symbols and myths, mutual responsibility with their counterparts in the homeland, and sometimes common religious, beliefs and values. These shared aspects have strengthened with today's pursuance of cultural diversity and multiculturalism, which provides a way for ethnic groups to preserve their affinity with their homelands (Anderson 1994). Advanced systems of communication are anticipated to further expand the cultural, economic and political activities of modern Diasporas at the trans-state level. Also the increasing legitimacy given by homelands to their Diasporas is likely to result in more equalized loyalties and relationships between the different segments of a given people (Sheffer 2001).

With these considerations in mind, we direct our attention to the specific case of American and Israeli Jews, with the former being in the position of a minority exposed to immediate non-Jewish influences, and the latter being a majority in the Jewish state. In America, one of the most legitimate sources of cultural differences lies in the religious domain (Herberg, 1955). But most Jews are not religiously oriented nor do they interpret their Jewishness in exclusively religious terms; religious, ethnic, cultural and historical components comprise the abundant expressions of Jewish identity and its variation in both the private and public domains (Fishman and Goldstein 1993; Cohen 1998; Hartman and Hartman 1999; Klaff in this volume; Phillips 1991; Winter 2002). Since 1948, and following political developments in Israel since then, Zionism and commitment to the Jewish state have turned into a major focus of communal cohesion (Goldscheider 1986b). In Israel, the national aspect of a Jewish majority (Goldscheider 2002a), the nature of Jewish life in the public sphere (Dowty 1998), the learned curriculum in school (Schweid 1999) and civic obligations

(Ben-Dor and Pedahzuer 2004), and/or religious elements of ritual observance, play a paramount role in the meaning of being Jewish.

Despite many overlaps in behaviors and interpretations there are characteristics of Jewish identification that are unique to each of the two societies. One community is not merely less or more Jewish than the other, but is rather Jewish in a different way. Aspects of Jewish identity may be important to one community but "Judaically irrelevant to the other" (Liebman and Cohen 1990: 2). There are also significant demographic and social differences between American and Israeli Jews including, *inter alia*, ethnic composition (European-American descendant [Ashkenazim] vs. Asian-North-African descendant [Sephardim]) and level of education, which are likely to affect the overall expressions of Jewishness of each society. The purpose of this article is to examine similarities and differences between American and Israeli Jews in major identificational indicators that are common to the two communities, how these differences are determined by structural affinities, and what is the direction in which the two communities have evolved during the period 1990-2000. More specifically, the following questions guide our analysis: (1) What are the interrelationships between the various components of Jewish identification, namely how do the people of each community conceptualize and organize the multi-variate expressions of group belonging? (2) What are the levels of ritual observance and belief among Jews in America and Israel? (3) How do the differences between the two populations change after controlling for major socio-demographic characteristics?

Our results neither intend to, nor can they, suggest which of the two communities is more committed to Jewish vitality and continuity. The many expressions that are unique to each community may be significant for their overall identificational profile. However, we hope that this analysis will contribute to the understanding of the fundamental elements of the Jewish tradition and their relationships to structural and cultural affinities in the different contexts of minority and majority societies. The extent to which people of a common faith who live in different localities practice distinct religious and ethnic behaviors can likewise attest to the long range uniformity and cohesion of the group at large.

JEWISH IDENTIFICATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL: WORKING HYPOTHESES

Different factors of the general social scene, the socio-demographic structure of the population, as well as personal preferences and lifestyle, jointly effect levels of ethno-religious identification and group cohesion. The direction and intensity of these effects on identificational behaviors are fluid and may change over time, across space and in different environmental contexts. In this section, we shall develop three hypotheses for the anticipated differences between Jewish identification in the United States and in Israel. Rather than competitive, these

three hypotheses are complementary to one another and reflect anticipated influence on different facets of Jewish identification.

The "General Orientation" Hypothesis

Jews in the United States have successfully integrated into the social and cultural American milieu (Lipset and Raab 1995). As such, their religious and ethnic patterns are heavily shaped by ideological and cultural processes occurring within the general society (Rebhun 2001). With increasing emphasis on cultural pluralism and greater openness toward different traditions, recent years also witnessed the "personalization" of group identification (Waxman, 2001). People today tend to choose, from within a defined religious context, individually selected and suitable ways to maintain their group belonging. The way people feel about their ethnic and religious identities can take many forms insofar as they do not demand strong commitments or penetrate into everyday lifestyles (Gans 1979; 1994).

The changes and developments, which transpire in western societies, mainly in the United States, influence the cultural preferences of the Israeli population. However, given the Jewish majority of Israel's society, the centrality of Jewish heritage in the public sphere, and the strong relationship between state and religion, the dynamic of external influences on personal religious and ethnic identification is somewhat slow. Yet, two important processes have taken place among Israeli groups at both ends of the identificational continuum, namely the ultra-orthodox and the very secular Jews. There is increasing involvement of the ultra-religious sector in Israeli life (Kaplan 2005), which, among other things, exposes them to the opportunities embodied in modernization and technology. The social and cultural changes derived from this are seen in dressing style, entertainment patterns, and the role of women outside the home. Nevertheless, these influences do not penetrate into the realm of religious belief or ritual observance, which continue to be rigorously kept. Among secular Israelis, there has recently been a quest for "deeper connection to Jewish sources" (Ezrachi 2004: 319) and a search "for alternative cultural and ideological frameworks that would provide meaning to the notion of Jewish life" (Kaplan 2005: 153). These new directions emerged in response to the influence of westernization and the rapid penetration of materialistic culture, which were viewed as threats to the spirit of Zionism and its values. They also reflect the "new age" need for self-fulfillment and spiritual experiences (Ezrachi 2004). The tangible application of this new Jewish secular culture has been the establishment of educational institutions where Judaism is taught and discussed in a pluralistic atmosphere and a secular context. These groups rarely perform any rituals, nor are they involved in ongoing communal activities, and they have attracted a limited number of people of high socio-economic status.

According to our "general orientation" hypothesis, the frequency of ritual observance associated with major Jewish holidays will be very similar among the Jewish populations in the United States and Israel; it might even be slightly higher among American Jews who, unlike their Israeli counterparts who directly

feel the religious holidays in the public environment, need tangible religious behaviors to reinforce meaning for their personal identity.

The "Sociodemographic Influence" Hypothesis

Similar to religious and ethnic identity in general, Jewish behavior is largely determined by demographic and socio-economic characteristics (Goldstein and Goldstein 1996; Hartman and Hartman 1996; Rebhun 1999; 2004). Individual affinities such as age, gender, educational attainment, or nativity status can explain a substantial portion of differences in the level of group identification. Each of these variables may either hinder or enhance religious and ethnic identification. Moreover, the direction of these relationships may be opposite in each of the two Jewish populations: the very same characteristics that strengthen Jewish identification in one place may weaken it in the other place, and vice versa.

Available demographic data point to some significant structural variations between the two populations under investigation (CBS; Goldstein 1992; DellaPergola and Rebhun 1997; Kotler-Berkowitz et al. 2003; Sicron 2004). For example, American Jews are, on the average, older than their Israeli counterparts; their educational attainment is higher; and they are characterized by a very homogenous ethnic composition (by continent of origin) as compared to a more balanced division among Israeli Jews. The large wave of new immigrants over the past decade, mainly from the Former Soviet Union, has changed the demographic composition of Israel's population (DellaPergola 1998) and probably somewhat weakened its overall level of Jewish identification. Much less of this migration wave reached the United States (DellaPergola 2005), so it consequently had a weaker impact on the structure and identificational profile of that community.

The "sociodemographic influence" hypothesis suggests that after controlling for major socio-demographic characteristics, the differences in levels of Jewish identification in the United States and Israel will narrow substantially. Nevertheless, Israel will still be associated with a higher level of observance of ongoing religious rituals, while the United States will probably exhibit a higher propensity for participation in some of the intermittent group behaviors.

The "Self-Definition" Hypothesis

Ideological orientation with the major religious denominations reflects how Jews in the United States define themselves in terms of religious identity. Although not necessarily a formal ideological affiliation, this self-descriptive is a proximate of religiosity and ethnic behaviors, and more generally attests to the readiness to adjust religious observance to modernity and changing lifestyles. Between 1990 and 2000 the proportion of Orthodox Jews increased slightly from 6% to 9%, that of Conservative Jews declined from 33% to 25%, while Reform Judaism maintained a fairly stable proportion of 35% and 34%; an increasing number of Jews choose not to identify with any of the three major denominations - from 24% in 1990 to 33% in 2000 (Ament 2005; Rebhun 1993).

In Israel, self definition as to the nature and strength of Jewish commitment does not refer to affiliation with a religious denomination but rather distinguishes, somewhat roughly, between religious, traditional and secular Jews; each of these identity labels covering different internal shadings of ritual practices and behaviors. Between 1991 and 1999, the proportion of religiously observant Israelis increased from 15% to 17%, that of traditionalists declined from 42% to 35%, while secular Israelis increased their share from 43% to 48% of the total Jewish adult population (Levy et al. 2002).

Much similarity exists between the Jewish behaviors of Orthodox Americans and religious Israelis. The two groups are characterized by consistent adherence to rigorous rituals in both the private and public spheres, according to Jewish religious law. From the point of view of types and frequency of religious practices, including synagogue attendance, there are also many similarities between Conservative Jews in the United States and traditional Israelis. However, being in the middle of the identity spectrum in their respective communities, they have fewer clear and defined religious guidelines, these being open to interpretations and adjustments determined by time and particularistic environmental circumstances. The largest disparity is likely to be between the least observant Jews, those of the American reform movement and the secular Jews of Israel. For the former, some religious and ethnic tradition in innovative and advanced forms is necessary for a meaningful Jewish identity; given the lack of public Jewish environment, it is imperative for them to maintain contacts with communal institutions and organized Jewish activities. Secular Israelis, on the other hand, may often reject any religious flavor or ritual as their everyday public life is strongly imbued with Jewish and Israeli content (Kopelowitz 2005).

According to the "self-definition" hypothesis, given the distribution of the American and Israeli Jewish populations with their relevant identity labels, and the relationships between self-definition and religious and ethnic practices, an overall higher percentage of Israelis will observe religious and continuous rituals. Over time, these differences are likely to grow slightly, mainly due to the substantial decline in the proportion of Conservative Jews in the United States. On the other hand, American Jews are expected to exhibit a higher propensity for communal and organizational affiliation being practiced by people from all three religious denominations.

SAMPLES

The following analysis is based on independently collected yet comparable data from the 1990 and 2000/01 National Jewish Population Surveys (NJPS) of American Jews, and the 1991 and 2000 studies on Beliefs, Observances, Values and Social Interaction among Israeli Jews.

The American Surveys

Similar to the data collection of the 2000/01 NJPS, which is described in detail in Kotler-Berkowitz's introduction to this volume, also the 1990 NJPS was a random (multi-stage) sample of telephone numbers attained using random digit dialed (RDD) procedure (Kosmin et al. 1991; Waksberg 1996). The study was part of the twice-weekly general market-research survey conducted by ICR Survey Group of Media. The final and interviewing stage of the survey was conducted from May through July 1990 and yielded a total sample of 2,441 completed interviews.

Our analysis focuses on respondents who at the time of the specific survey defined themselves as Jewish. This includes respondents who indicated Jewish as their current religion, as well as respondents with no religion but who considered themselves Jewish. In 2000, we further included slightly more than a dozen people whose religion is Jewish and at the same time had another religion but considered themselves Jewish. For 1990, these definitions comprise the entire 'core' Jewish population (DellaPergola 2003); in 2000, however, the 'core' Jewish population includes a third group of "Jewishly connected," which has no parallel in 1990, and was excluded from our analysis because they were not asked key Jewish behavior questions. Application of these criteria resulted in a sample of 1,804 respondents in 1990 and 4,147 respondents in 2000.

Data in both surveys were weighted to account for their differential selection probability. Further, each respondent weight was divided by the mean weight. In 1990, this ensured representativeness without changing the original sample size. In 2000, however, due to over-sampling in the stratified sampling and a higher response rate of Jews defined by the criteria above, this weighting procedure reduced the effective sample to 3,112.

The Israeli Surveys

The research population of the two Israeli surveys from 1991 and 2000 was the Jewish population aged 20 and over residing in all types of localities in Israel excluding kibbutzim (Levy et al. 1997; 2002). The respondents were systematically selected to ensure proper representation of this population. The sampling method was identical at both points of time. Each sample (consisting 2,399 and 2,466 interviewees, respectively) was drawn by means of cluster sampling based on the Central Bureau of Statistics' definition of clusters according to type, size and geographic location.

The sample included the four large cities of the country (i.e. Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Haifa, Beer-Sheva). Apart from them, within each cluster one representative town (locality) was randomly chosen. Within each town (locality) a random sample of households was selected. The number of sampled households within each town (locality) is proportional to the relative size of the cluster to which the town (locality) belongs. Altogether 35 localities were included in each survey. Within each household the interviewee was chosen according to the Kish method (Kish 1967).

In 1991, study fieldwork was conducted in respondents' homes between October 20 and December 16. The fieldwork of the second study, which also took the form of face-to-face interviews, was carried out in the second half of 1999 concluding at the end of January 2000. The main part of the study is a replication of many of the subjects which were investigated in 1991; thus, while some of the topics were reduced in scope, or even totally omitted, and new ones were constructed, many of the questions were identically phrased allowing for an over-time comparison.

MEASURES

This study focuses on nine indicators of Jewish identification that were found comparable among all four surveys. These indicators relate to both behaviors and beliefs. They represent different areas of Jewish commitment. We define these areas as:

Shabbat. From the religious point of view, the Seventh Day, the Shabbat, is replete with both prescriptive ("do...") rituals and proscriptive ("don't do...") precepts resulting from the general prohibition to work on Shabbat. Not all the prescriptive rituals apply equally to men and women, so questions were asked in relation to the respondent or others in the home; by contrast, the prohibitions apply to both sexes, so questions were directed to the respondent himself/herself (Levy 2001). The two NJPS and the two Israeli studies asked respondents whether candles are lit in their household on Friday night: never (0), seldom/sometimes (1), often/usually (2), always/all the time (3). The proscriptive question in the American studies asked respondents to state whether they refrain from handling or spending money on Shabbat: no (0), yes (1). The parallel question in the Israeli studies asked respondents whether they never, seldom, sometimes, often or always refrain from going out to paid entertainment; those who stated never, seldom and sometimes were coded 0 and the others were merged into one category and coded 1.

Dietary Laws (Kashruth). Observance of the Jewish dietary laws is measured here according to whether or not utensils for meat and dairy foods are separated at home (or whether the respondent observes Kashruth — keeps Kosher — at home). Respondents in the 1990 NJPS who stated that in their household separate dishes are never or sometimes used were coded 'no' (0), and those who usually or always use separate dishes were coded 'yes' (1). This recoding coincides with the dichotomy of no and yes in the parallel question in the two Israeli studies. The 2000/01 NJPS has introduced a somewhat different question of whether or not the respondent observes Kashruth at home. Although this wording might have been understood in different ways, nevertheless we believe that these two measures of the Jewish dietary laws largely overlap with one another.

Jewish Holidays. Private and home-centered ceremonies on major religious holidays are examined. These include fasting on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur),

lighting Chanukah candles, and attending a Passover Seder (ritual meal). Although these patterns do not affect daily behavior, and do not permeate the routine activities of work and family, they can indeed point to the importance of group belonging and to a distinct religioethnic heritage. We distinguished between those who do not fast on Yom Kippur (0), and those who do fast (1). For lighting Chanukah candles and attending a Seder, frequency of practice was ranked: never (0), seldom/sometimes (1), often/usually (2), always/all the time (3).

Worship. Synagogue attendance is an adequate indicator of religious commitment, which takes place in the public sphere. Frequency of attendance was ranked: never (0), special events (1), high holidays (2), once a month or once a week (3), several times a week/every day (4).

Communality. This aspect of communal involvement was evaluated through a question on voluntary activities. In America, respondents were asked whether during the past 12 months they did not (0) or did (1) do any volunteer work for a Jewish organization. In the Israeli studies, respondents were ranked according to whether they engaged in voluntary public work: never (0), rarely/little (1), sometimes (2), to a very large extent/often (3). While the two measures are not identical, it stands to reason that voluntary work in Israel is largely associated with assisting other Jews or institutions representing Israeli or Jewish interests. For Israel, the former three categories were merged together and coded 0, and the latter category was coded separately with a value of 1.

Beliefs. Religious behaviors are strongly affected by belief in the principles of the faith (Almond, Appleby and Sivan 2003). A major aspect of the Jewish religion is the belief that the bible and commandments are a holy corpus, others, however, see them as historical text. Respondents in the United States were asked to state their feeling about whether the bible was: recorded/written by men (0), the inspired word of God (1), the actual word of God (2). Israelis were asked to report the extent to which they believe that the Torah and commandments are God's commands: don't believe at all (0), often doubtful, but sometimes believe (1), believe, but sometimes doubt (2), believe completely (3); the respondents who expressed some doubts (1 and 2) were merged into a single category.

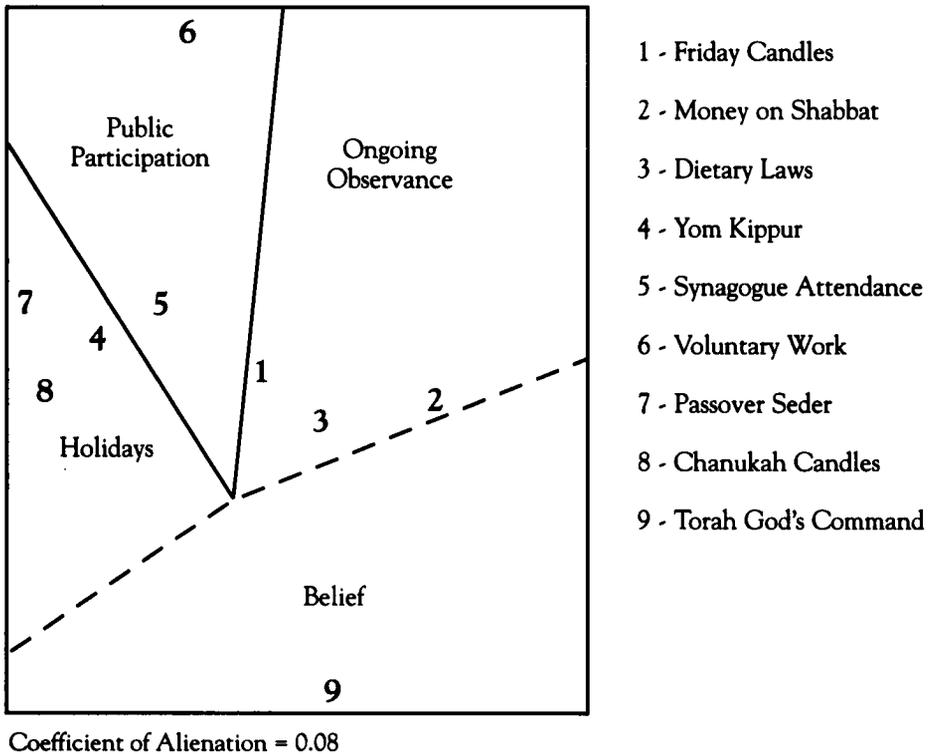
Several sociodemographic variables were included in the analysis because of their important effect on Jewish identification. These variables are age, gender, education, (household) income and ethnic origin (Ashkenazim vs. Sephardim). For purposes of multivariate regression analysis, the categorical variables, i.e. gender and ethnic origin, were dummy-coded: males are the reference category for gender, and Ashkenazi Jews are the reference category for ethnic origin. Age is given in years; level of education indicates the number of years completed by the respondents; and income is classified into three levels of below average, about average, and above average.

STRUCTURE OF JEWISH IDENTIFICATION

We first note the structure of the interrelations among the various Jewish identification indicators listed above. It should be re-emphasized that these indicators do not reflect, of course, the entire universe of content of Jewish identity but just those available in both surveys and comparable between the two countries. The structural analysis is done through Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), a standard nonmetric multivariate analysis technique. SSA produces a graphic presentation of matrix of correlations of all variables examined (Guttman 1968; Lingoes 1968). Each indicator (of Jewish identification) is represented by a point in a Euclidean space in such a way that the higher the correlation between two variables the closer they are in the space. The points are distributed in the space of smallest dimensionality, which maintains such inverse relationships between the observed correlations and the geometric distances. Only the relative sizes of correlations and distances are considered. Structural analysis of the data by this

FIGURE 1

Graphic Presentation (SSA) of the Interrelations among Indicators of Jewish Identification, for US Jews in 1990

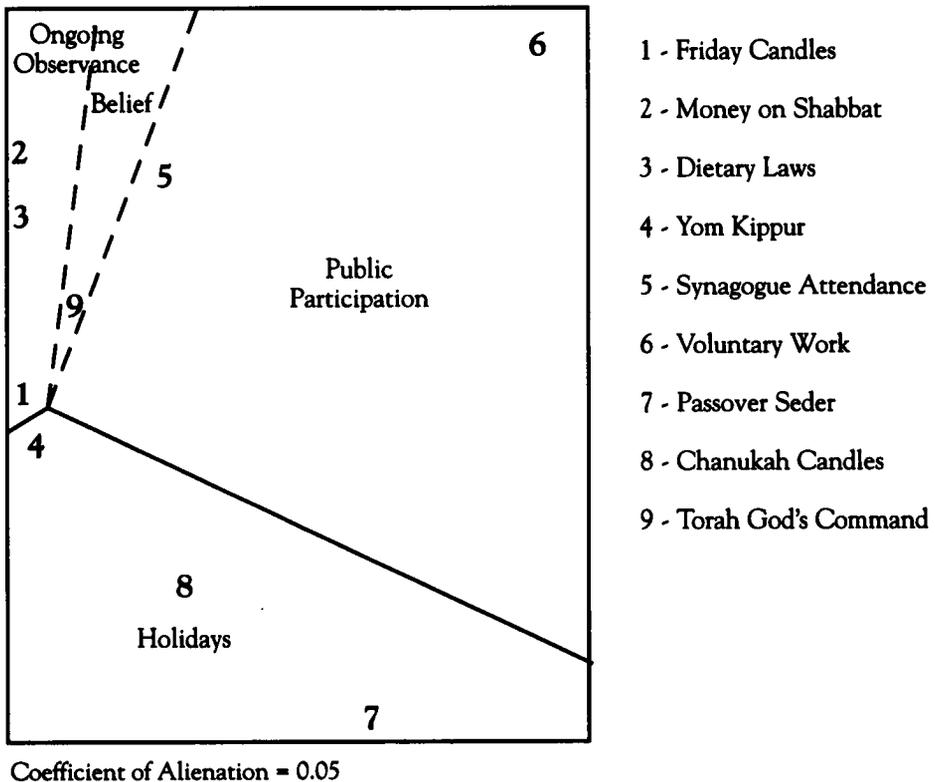


technique allows development of hypotheses concerning the correspondence between the content of the variables and their mutual interrelationships.

As a general note, the inspection of the correlation matrices reveals that all the coefficients among the Jewish identification indicators are positive, yet varied by size (ranging between $r = 0.06$ to $r = 0.59$). Figure 1 presents the graphic configuration of the structure of Jewish identification in the United States in 1990. It shows a circular arrangement of wedge-like regions, emanating from a common origin, according to the content of variables. There is a clear distinction between belief and practice with the former being in a delineated region in the lower right part of the Figure marked by broken lines. Within the observance area and moving from the lower left part of the configuration, the regions correspond to contents of homogenous meaning: (yearly) holidays, public participation (voluntary work and synagogue attendance), and ongoing observances (Shabbat and Jewish dietary laws). The variable of voluntary work is located in the periphery

FIGURE 2

Graphic Presentation (SSA) of the Interrelations among Indicators of Jewish Identification, for Israeli Jews in 1991

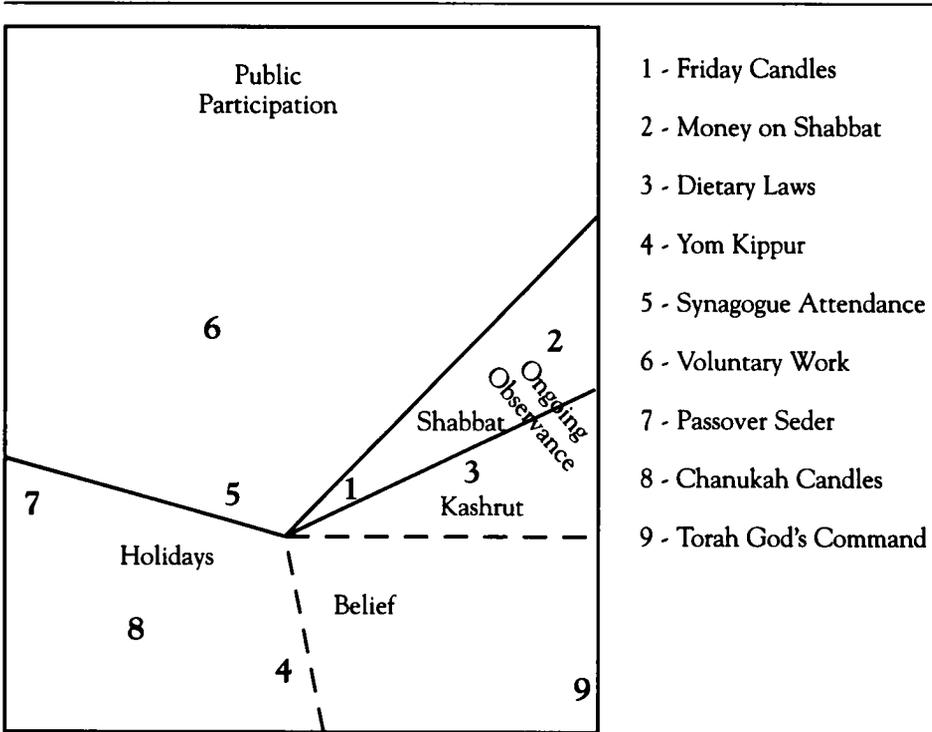


of the circular structure, in accordance with its being a social activity rather than a distinct religious practice. The region of belief is located between, though distant from, the regions of intensive observances (dietary laws and Shabbat) and the region of intermittent observances (yearly holidays). Interestingly, the two regions of ongoing rituals and holidays are polarized in the circular structure. The coefficient of alienation, which indicates the goodness of fit between the correlations and distances, is almost perfect (0.08).

The Israeli Jewish population (in 1991) also exhibited a circular structure of the Jewish identification indicators (Figure 2). The space is partitioned into four wedge-like regions corresponding to the same contents of holidays, ongoing observances, belief, and public participation. Here, too, the socially oriented voluntary variable is peripheral to the distinct Jewish practices. Yet, Israeli Jews connect the belief that the Torah is God's commands with religious practices more strongly than do American Jews; this belief being located in close proximity to the region of ongoing observances (Shabbat and dietary rules). The coefficient of alienation is 0.05.

FIGURE 3

Graphic Presentation (SSA) of the Interrelations among Indicators of Jewish Identification, for US Jews in 2000



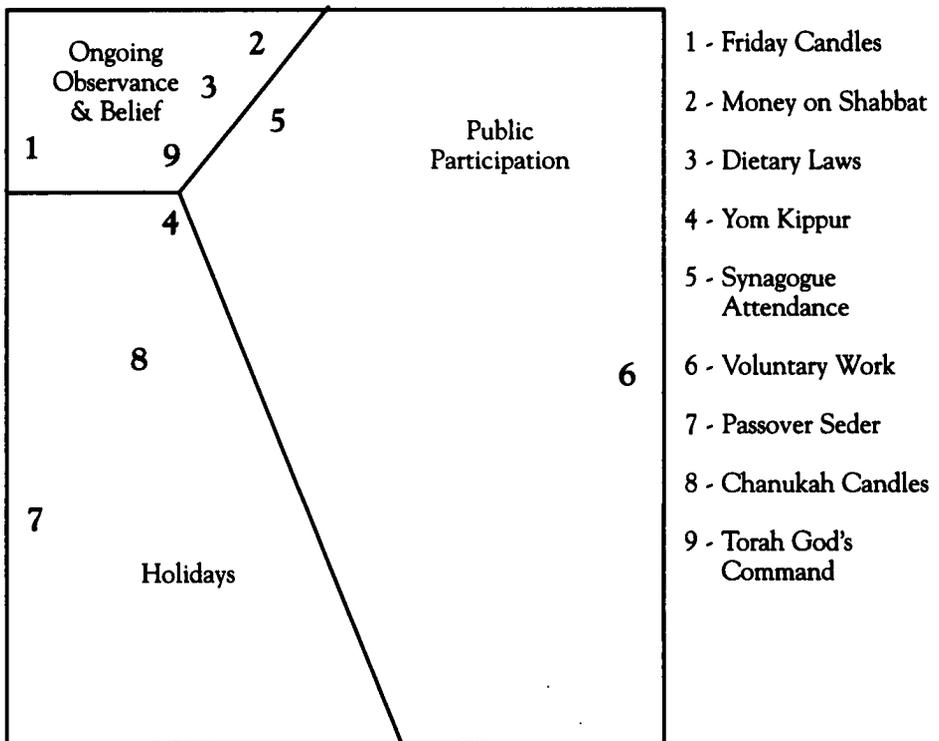
Coefficient of Alienation = 0.10

For American Jews, the circular structure of Jewish identification has remained invariant over the last decade (Figure 3). Yet, there is a clear distinction between Shabbat and dietary laws sub-dividing the region of ongoing observances. In Israel as well, the overall circular remained basically unchanged (Figure 4). Nevertheless, ongoing observances and belief (that the Torah is God's command) are no longer differentiated in the 2000 samples; rather, they intermingle into one region.

Even the small number of variables that were analyzed here allowed us to arrive at a very refined partitioning of the space into content regions. The basic similarity in the perceived structures of the American and Israeli societies, and their stability over time, makes possible a meaningful comparison of the levels and determinants of their Jewish attitudes and behaviors. This could also be seen as a starting point for a richer design of observations and a comprehensive analysis of the structure of Jewish identification in other Jewish communities.

FIGURE 4

Graphic Presentation (SSA) of the Interrelations among Indicators of Jewish Identification, for Israeli Jews in 2000



Coefficient of Alienation = 0.03

LEVELS OF JEWISH IDENTIFICATION

The data in Table 1 (Columns A and B) indicate substantial differences in 1990 between American and Israeli Jews in the observance of Shabbat and the Jewish dietary laws. While only 16.3% of American Jews always or often lit candles on Friday evening and 11.0% refrained from handling or spending money on Shabbat, this was true for 66.3% and 32.5%, respectively among Israeli Jews. Similarly, the proportion of Israeli Jews who had separate dishes for meat and dairy food was more than three times higher than among their American counterparts.

TABLE 1

Levels of Ethno-religious Identification among American and Israeli Jewish Adults, 1990 and 2000

Ethno-Religious Identification	United States (A)	Israel Total (B)	Israel European Descent (C)
1990			
Light Friday Candles (usually/all the time)	16.3%	66.3%	53.1%
Refrain Spending Money on Shabbat	11.0	32.5	23.8
Have Separate Dishes	13.0	47.9	34.5
Fast on Yom Kippur	52.8	71.4	57.3
Light Chanukah Candles (usually/all the time)	61.0	81.8	74.8
Attend Passover Seder (usually/all the time)	63.8	89.5	84.8
Synagogue Attendance (high holidays +)	60.7	66.3	59.7
Voluntary Work	18.4	21.5	23.4
Torah is God's Command	13.9	47.2	30.4
Index of Difference: USA-Israelia		23.7	14.8
2000			
Light Friday Candles (usually/all the time)	23.2%	58.2%	49.6%
Refrain Spending Money on Shabbat	12.3	32.2	24.7
Have Separate Dishes	17.2	43.7	31.1
Fast on Yom Kippur	55.8	67.2	55.4
Light Chanukah Candles (usually/all the time)	62.1	80.5	75.0
Attend Passover Seder (usually/all the time)	74.4	93.0	89.0
Synagogue Attendance (high holidays +)	57.9	61.0	54.2
Voluntary Work	22.7	18.2	18.6
Torah is God's Command	15.4	50.9	37.2
Index of Difference: USA - Israel ^a		19.2	12.2
Index of Difference: 1990-2000 ^a	4.0	3.8	3.5
a) $\frac{XX_i - X_j}{n}$ when n is the number of variables			

n

Differences between the two Jewish communities were also revealed with respect to the major Jewish holidays. The relatively high proportion of American Jews who always or usually observe these holidays somewhat moderates the differentials with Israeli Jews. A rather similar proportion of American and Israeli Jews attend Jewish religious services at least on the high holidays, or do volunteer work. It should be noted, however, that the proportion of Israelis who attend synagogue on a regular basis of at least a few times a week is significantly higher than that among American Jews (8.5% and 2.7%, respectively). A higher percentage of Israeli Jews believe that the Torah is God's command.

Over the period 1990-2000, American Jews have strengthened their religio-ethnic identification (Table 1, Column A top and bottom). This is mostly salient in ongoing observances such as lighting Friday candles and keeping dietary laws, as well as in attendance at a Passover Seder. At the same time, fewer Jews today occasionally attend religious services. Interestingly, the percentage who attend

TABLE 2

Rank Order of Ethno-Religious Identification among American and Israeli Jewish Adults, 1990 and 2000

Rank	United States		Israel-Total	
	Indicator	Ratio (V _x /V ₁)	Indicator	Ratio (V _x /V ₁)
1990				
V1	Attend Passover Seder	1.00	Attend Passover Seder	1.00
V2	Light Chanukah Candles	0.96	Light Chanukah Candles	0.91
V3	Synagogue Attendance	0.95	Fast on Yom Kippur	0.79
V4	Fast on Yom Kippur	0.83	Synagogue Attendance	0.74
V5	Voluntary Work	0.29	Light Friday Candles	0.74
V6	Light Friday Candles	0.26	Have Separate Dishes	0.53
V7	Torah is God's Commands	0.22	Torah is God's Commands	0.52
V8	Have Separate Dishes	0.20	Refrain Spending Money on Shabbat	0.36
V9	Refrain Spending Money on Shabbat	0.17	Voluntary Work	0.24
2000				
V1	Attend Passover Seder	1.00	Attend Passover Seder	1.00
V2	Light Chanukah Candles	0.83	Light Chanukah Candles	0.87
V3	Synagogue Attendance	0.78	Fast on Yom Kippur	0.72
V4	Fast on Yom Kippur	0.75	Synagogue Attendance	0.66
V5	Light Friday Candles	0.31	Light Friday Candles	0.63
V6	Voluntary Work	0.31	Torah is God's Commands	0.55
V7	Have Separate Dishes	0.23	Have Separate Dishes	0.47
V8	Torah is God's Commands	0.21	Refrain Spending Money on Shabbat	0.35
V9	Refrain Spending Money on Shabbat	0.16	Voluntary Work	0.20

synagogue on a daily basis has increased from 2.7% in 1990 to 4.5% in 2000. These findings may suggest some expansion of the more committed Jews. By contrast, the levels of Jewish identification among Israeli Jews (Table 1, Column B top and bottom) slightly but systematically decreased in seven of the eight practices examined.¹ The one indicator of belief, however, has strengthened, as did Passover Seder attendance. The above mentioned decline can largely be attributed to the addition of a large number of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, many of whom are secular in nature both according to self-definition, life-style, and their attitudes on issues of state and religion (Horowitz and Leshem 1998; Levy et al. 2004). Changes towards strengthening of beliefs and higher attendance at a Passover Seder may be due to internal dynamics of Israeli society, and they express a symbolic attachment to Jewishness by selectively adopting some practices and beliefs. Overall, the differences between Jewish identification in the United States and Israel have slightly diminished as suggested by the indices of difference: the index declined from 23.7 in 1990, to 19.2 in 2000.

RANK ORDER OF JEWISH IDENTIFICATION

Table 2 presents the rank order of the religio-ethnic indicators and suggests some interesting peculiarities for the Jewish populations in the United States and Israel. In 1990, the most popular Jewish behavior among American Jews was the participation in a Passover Seder. Next in popularity are lighting Chanukah candles, attendance at religious services, and fasting on Yom Kippur. The differential between the latter observances and participation in a Passover Seder, which is reflected by a measure of ratio, is relatively small. The remainder of the Jewish indicators receive less practicing ranging from a ratio of 0.29 (for voluntary work) to 0.17 (for refraining from spending money on Shabbat) relative to participation in the Passover Seder. People who observe the rigorous behaviors at the lower part of the scale also observe the more popular rituals at the upper end (Levy 2001). Thus, American Jews are polarized between a large proportion who observe the Jewish holidays and the small segment who also maintain an ongoing daily Jewish life style and intensive communal involvement.

In Israel as well the Jewish holidays are ranked highest with the differentials between them quite similar to those found among American Jews. Yet, in Israel there is a much larger gap between participation in a Passover Seder and synagogue attendance. Another interesting finding is the moderate and overall gradual differentiation between one ritual and another. Relative to participation in a Passover Seder, which is ranked first, the ratio of Israelis who light Shabbat candles in the fifth place is 0.74, of those having separate dishes in the sixth place 0.53, and of

¹ The decline in the percentage of Israelis involved in voluntary work should be treated cautiously since there was a slight change in the details of the alternative answers between the 1990 and 2000 studies. Over the last decade, there has been an increase in the percentage of those who "sometimes" devote time to voluntary activities at the expense of those devoting less time.

those believing that the Torah is God's commands 0.52. The maximum differential between the highest and lowest variables is smaller than among American Jews.

By 2000, in the United States and Israel alike, only slight alterations had taken place in the rank order of the Jewish identification measurements. However, in both communities, the differentials between the highest variable and each of the next three variables have widened. Similarly, the two communities have slightly converged in regard to the differential between the most and least widely observed rituals.

THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY

The ethnic composition of the American Jewish population is very homogeneous. An overwhelming majority of more than 90% is of European descent and the remaining small proportion is of oriental background originating in the Muslim countries of Asia and North Africa (DellaPergola and Rebhun 1997). By contrast, the Israeli Jewish population is about equally split between European descent on the father's side and origins in Muslim countries (CBS 1991).

European Jewry was strongly exposed to the western developments of civil rights, the Enlightenment, and a high degree of secularization, which was accompanied by a demographic transformation to low birthrates and modest population growth. Many of these processes did not penetrate into Muslim countries and, until they immigrated to Israel after the foundation of the state in 1948, oriental Jews maintained a strongly traditional and religious life style. In Israel, where ethnicity is a decisive identifying factor within the Jewish group, the present reality is found to be similar to the historical religio-cultural behavior of the various countries of origin. Emphasis was placed in particular on the symbiosis between religious life, family and community among the Jews of oriental background (Deshen 1970; 1974; Shokeid 1984; Lazerwitz and Tabory 2002), and a greater autonomy in the field of religious activity among Jews of European descent.

As expected, analysis of Israeli Jews of European-American descent reveals a slightly lower level of observance and belief than the total Israeli population (Table 1, Column C); the exception is voluntary work which is more popular among Ashkenazi Israelis and may reflect a tradition of communal consciousness and assistance as well as the sociodemographic characteristics of high education and older age composition. Thus, restricting our comparison of American Jews to Israelis of European-American provenance substantially reduces the differences between the two communities. In 2000 this brought about a total convergence in the percentage of those fasting on Yom Kippur.

Moreover, a larger proportion of American Jews than their Israeli Ashkenazi counterparts attend religious services at least on high holidays. Yet data not presented here indicate that more than twice as many Israelis as American Jews visit synagogue every week. The secular segment among American Jews is concerned with feeling and expressing their group identity in the public sphere, and this

TABLE 3
Logistic Regression (Odds Ratios) of Jewish Identification on Sociodemographic Characteristics, Ethnic Origin and Country of Residence: American and Israeli Jews in 1990

Variable	Light Friday Candles	Refrain Spending Money on Shabbat	Jewish Dietary Laws	Fast on Yom Kippur	Light Chanukah Candles	Attend Passover Meal	Synagogue Attendance	Voluntary Work	Torah is God's Command
United States									
<i>Sociodemographic Characteristics</i>									
Age	1.007	0.912	1.025	0.973	0.945	0.942	0.884**	1.022	1.014
Gender-Female ^a	1.755***	1.026	1.189	1.480*	1.969***	2.378***	1.296	1.472*	0.897
Education	1.059	0.983	0.88	1.286**	1.118	1.365***	0.999	1.073	1.099
Income	1.022	0.639***	0.757*	1.023	1.453***	1.276	1.382*	1.001	1.629*
Ethnic Origin									
Asia-Africa Origin ^b	0.95	0.741	0.357**	0.840	0.756	0.514**	0.473*	0.713	0.569
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	2.1%	2.8%	4.8%	3.4%	6.8%	10.7%	5.4%	1.7%	6.2%
Israel									
<i>Sociodemographic Characteristics</i>									
Age	1.034	1.079***	1.011	0.951*	1.016	1.033	1.009	1.083***	0.977
Gender-Female ^a	1.123	0.958	0.906	1.005	1.420**	1.359*	0.795*	0.899	0.823
Education	0.789***	0.993	0.874**	0.848***	0.902*	0.996	0.932	1.235***	0.818***
Income	0.835*	0.651***	0.743***	0.716***	1.240**	1.321**	0.796**	1.078	0.695***
Ethnic Origin									
Asia-Africa Origin ^b	3.139***	2.366***	2.919***	4.331***	2.677***	2.973***	1.769***	1.088	3.667***
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	14.8%	9.4%	13.5%	19.5%	6.9%	5.7%	4.9%	2.5%	20.1%
United States and Israel									
<i>Sociodemographic Characteristics</i>									
Age	1.015	1.049**	1.008	0.944**	0.991	1.002	0.957	1.078***	0.965
Gender-Female ^a	1.242	0.972	1.117	1.117	1.534***	1.617***	0.870	1.043	0.841
Education	0.824***	0.978	0.875***	0.877***	0.939	1.040	0.891**	1.176***	0.843***
Income	0.901	0.662***	0.749***	0.852**	1.320***	1.335***	1.034	1.044	0.776***
Ethnic Origin									
Asia-Africa Origin ^b	2.555***	2.054***	2.298***	3.233***	2.159***	1.923***	2.034***	1.014	3.232***
Country of Residence									
United States ^c	0.256***	0.416***	0.394***	1.295*	1.015	0.481***	2.125***	1.066	3.555***
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	27.5%	12.0%	18.6%	12.6%	5.6%	7.1%	4.6%	2.8%	17.0%

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
 a) Reference category is male.
 b) Reference category is Ashkenazic Jews.
 c) Reference category is Israeli.

may be done by intermittent participation in religious worship on the major Jewish holidays, something which is much less crucial for Israelis who live within a Jewish majority society and in many different ways are exposed to, and affected by, the Jewish calendar and its reflections in the life routine.

Overall, for 1990, the diversity between American and Israeli Jews diminishes to an index of difference of 14.8 when the comparison is only with Israelis of Ashkenazi origin. By 2000, this difference had further declined to an index of difference of 12.2.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

In this section we investigate the effects of socio-demographic characteristics, ethnic origin and country of residence on Jewish identification in 1990 and 2000. Since some of our dependent variables (Jewish identification) are ordinal and others are binary, we decomposed the former into a binary (non-metric) scale. This character of the dependent variables is appropriate for logistic regression. For each of the nine measures of Jewish identification, a single model is presented in which all the independent variables are retained. The relationships between the independent variables and Jewish identification are presented as odds ratios ($\exp [b]$), which express the relative odds of the event (ritual/belief) occurring.

The covariates for American Jews in the upper part of Table 3 show that with the exception of synagogue attendance, age does not play a significant role in determining levels of Jewish identification. All other things being equal, women are more committed both to religious practices that take place in family circles and to participation in the public sphere; for example, the odds ratios for Jewish women to attend a Passover Seder was more than twice as high as for Jewish men (2.395) and one and a half times more to do voluntary work (1.472). Socio-economic affinities of secular education and income often have a positive effect on Jewish identification although each on different practices. At the same time, higher income implies a weaker adherence to ongoing religious practices (Shabbat and dietary laws). For American Jews, being of Asian-African Jewish descent decreases the odds of practicing religio-ethnic rituals albeit in only three out of the nine indicators examined (i.e. dietary laws, Passover Seder, and synagogue attendance).²

Taken together, the sociodemographic and ethnic origin characteristics were only slightly effective in explaining the variation in Jewish identification. A

² As for Passover Seder, the values associated with this holiday largely confluence with that of the American society, namely the primary value placed on 'freedom'. The majority of American Jews of Asian-African descent arrived fairly recently in America as compared to European Jews. Thus they did not experience the acculturation process when assimilation was the model for new immigrants. Further, many of the Asian-African origin Jews tend towards greater separateness vis-à-vis other Jews. As such, they would not have adopted this celebration to the same extent as American Jews of European descent.

measure of the predictive fit (pseudo R^2) ranges between 1.7% for voluntary work to 10.7% for attending a Passover meal.

While some of the above relationships hold true also for Israeli Jews, other relationships reflect substantial variations between the two populations (Table 3). In Israel, older age is associated with a stronger inclination to refrain from handling money on Shabbat and involvement in voluntary work, and it has a weakening effect for fasting on Yom Kippur. The effect of being female on Jewish identification was statistically significant for three indicators (as compared to five in the United States) and in the case of synagogue attendance was negative. Unlike in the United States, in Israel the multivariate approach attests to a negative effect of secular education on Jewish identification. High income has mixed effects on Jewish identification: all else being equal, higher income has a negative relationship with six out of the nine indicators examined, while it increases the odds of practicing two rituals.

Perhaps the most salient difference between the American and Israeli populations lies in the independent role of ethnic origin: in Israel, being of Asian-African Jewish descent significantly increases the odds of practicing Jewish rituals and the belief that the Torah is God's command as compared to Jews of European descent (Ashkenazim). These relationships were revealed among all indicators of Jewish identification with the exception of voluntary work. Thus, for example, oriental Jews were more than four times as likely as Ashkenazi Jews to fast on Yom Kippur, about three times as likely to believe that the Torah is God's command or to light Friday candles, and twice as likely to refrain from handling money on Shabbat.

For most of the models, the explanatory power of the independent variables was substantially stronger among Israeli Jews as compared to the parallel models among American Jews. The independent variables were most effective in explaining variation in lighting Friday candles (14.8%), keeping the dietary laws (13.5%), fasting on Yom Kippur (19.5%), and believing that the Torah is God's command (20.1%).

Next, we combined the 1990 NJPS and the 1991 Israeli study into a single file. This enabled us to introduce "country of residence" (United States vs. Israel) as an independent variable and to evaluate its effect on religioethnic behaviors and attitude, all else being equal. In the early 1990s, living in the United States as compared to living in Israel had a statistically significant effect on seven out of the nine Jewish identificational variables. All other things being equal, American Jews are less likely to light Friday candles, refrain from spending money on Shabbat, have separate dishes, and attend a Passover Seder. The odds ratios for these variables range between .256 for Friday candles to .481 for Passover Seder. American Jews, as compared to their Israeli counterparts, had higher odds of fasting on Yom Kippur with an odds ration of 1.295, were more than twice as likely to attend synagogue, and more than three times as likely to believe that the Torah is God's command; note that the stronger tendency to

attend synagogue was reiterated, though with a slightly smaller odds ratio, after recoding the dependent variable to distinguish between those who attend synagogue once a month or less, and those who attend synagogue every Shabbat or more. The odds ratios for lighting Chanukah candles and participation in voluntary work were found to be statistically insignificant.

By 2000, the main changes among American Jews (Table 4) were the strengthening negative effect of older age on Jewish identification; the reversal, from positive to negative, and expansion, of the relationships between education and Jewish observances; and the increasing role of income as a determinant of religio-ethnic behavior mostly in the direction of strengthened adherence. In Israel, the important developments were the strengthening positive relationship between age and Jewish identification; and the erosion in the effect of education, which for four of the ritual indicators became statistically insignificant. Analysis of a combined data set suggests that in 2000, living in the United States as compared to living in Israel had a statistically significant effect on all nine Jewish identificational variables. As in 1990, also a decade later, country of residence United States implied less observance of lighting Friday candles, refraining from spending money on Shabbat, keeping dietary laws, lighting Chanukah candles, and attending a Passover Seder. The odds ratios for these variables range between 0.339 for the variable of believing the Torah is God's command, to 0.629 for Chanukah candles. All else being equal, American Jews were more inclined than Israeli Jews to fast on Yom Kippur (1.496), to attend synagogue at least a few times a year (1.508), and to do voluntary work (1.553).

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This study has attempted to compare religio-ethnic patterns of American Jews who operate as a minority group within a majority society, and Israeli Jews who are a majority in their own state. Another comparative aspect of this study concerns trends over time from 1990 to 2000. This approach coincides with the theoretical and empirical literature on minorities, including that on Jews, which emphasizes the importance of space and time on group orientation and cohesion.

To that end, we made use of four different surveys. These surveys differ somewhat in their methodology, sample size, and phrasing of questions. They might not provide the ideal explicit similarity and equal quality of the data bases examined. Nevertheless, each constitutes a random and comprehensive sample of the population in question and the major similarities and dissimilarities repeat themselves strengthening the validation of the comparisons; new directions of development largely reflect the continuation of previous trends which might have strengthened or been affected by structural socio-demographic changes.

Findings from structural analysis suggest that despite the different societal surrounding and status of a religious minority and a majority population, American and Israeli Jews are very similar in their conceptualization and organ-

TABLE 4

Logistic Regression (Odds Ratios) of Jewish Identification on Sociodemographic Characteristics,
Ethnic Origin and Country of Residence: American and Israeli Jews in 2000

Variable	Light Friday Candles	Refrain Spending Money on Shabbat	Jewish Dietary Laws	Fast on Yom Kippur	Light Chanukah Candles	Attend Passover Meal	Synagogue Attendance	Voluntary Work	Torah is God's Command
United States									
Sociodemographic Characteristics									
Age	0.940*	0.907***	0.904***	0.890***	0.944*	0.908**	0.901***	0.988	0.865***
Gender-Female ^a	1.356*	0.789	0.926	0.905	1.735***	1.338*	1.201	1.532***	0.889
Education	0.616***	0.644***	0.591***	0.811**	0.857	1.046	0.906	1.046	0.677***
Income	1.241*	0.806*	1.027	1.118	1.307**	1.392**	1.193*	1.576***	0.727**
Ethnic Origin									
Asia-Africa Origin ^b	1.089	1.45	1.686**	1.169	1.072	0.640*	0.716	0.780	1.324
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	5.2%	6.1%	7.2%	3.3%	3.7%	3.4%	2.9%	4.2%	7.0%
Israel									
Sociodemographic Characteristics									
Age	1.085***	1.086***	1.008	1.022	1.055*	1.102**	1.060**	1.071**	0.994
Gender-Female ^a	1.123	0.95	1.013	0.996	1.325*	1.287	0.755**	1.179	1.061
Education	0.931	0.917	0.956	0.887**	0.921	1.029	0.977	1.103	0.828***
Income	0.894	0.613***	0.682***	0.825**	0.999	1.494**	0.785**	0.986	0.601***
Ethnic Origin									
Asia-Africa Origin ^b	2.495***	2.522***	3.386***	3.919***	2.837***	4.876***	2.319***	1.196	3.752***
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	7.7%	10.7%	13.4%	13.9%	7.0%	9.4%	6.9%	1.1%	18.9%
United States and Israel									
Sociodemographic Characteristics									
Age	1.033*	1.028	0.974	0.965*	1.000	0.990	0.996	1.031	0.960**
Gender-Female ^a	1.193*	0.89	0.977	0.950	1.503***	1.334**	0.901	1.310**	1.012
Education	0.837***	0.843***	0.851***	0.856***	0.890**	0.946	0.942	1.066	0.794***
Income	1.057	0.682***	0.792***	0.970	1.163*	1.442***	0.956	1.259***	0.645***
Ethnic Origin									
Asia-Africa Origin ^b	1.995***	2.179***	2.824***	2.926***	2.076***	1.980***	1.732***	1.044	3.098***
Country of Residence									
United States ^c	0.424***	0.616***	0.583***	1.496***	0.629***	0.437***	1.508***	1.53***	0.339***
Pseudo R ² (Nagelkerke)	15.6%	12.7%	17.3%	7.9%	8.2%	8.3%	2.3%	3.3%	29.0%

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

a) Reference category is male.

b) Reference category is Ashkenazic Jews.

c) Reference category is Israel.

ization of the multi-variate expressions of group belonging. The structure of Jewish identification indicators revealed in both communities distinguishes between several content areas of homogenous meaning; these areas of identification have been defined as ongoing observances (Shabbat, dietary laws), holidays (intermittent rituals), and public participation. Yet, while in the United States Jews make a clear distinction between practices and belief (that the Torah is God's command), in Israel these two aspects are intermingled.

Largely in accordance with our working hypotheses of the "general orientation" and "self-definition," Israelis adhere more strongly to religious practices than do American Jews; substantial differentials were revealed in ongoing rituals and beliefs, as were more moderate differences in intermittent behaviors in both the private and public spheres. Similarly, the rank order of the religio-ethnic indicators suggests that Israelis are committed more evenly to the different expressions of Jewish identification while American Jews are polarized with a large proportion that observes only Jewish holidays and a small segment that maintains an intensive Jewish life-style. Over time, due to some contrasting processes, the overall difference between Israeli and American Jews has slightly narrowed.

In accordance with the "sociodemographic influence" hypothesis is the almost disappearance, or even reverse, of some of the differences between American and Israeli Jews after controlling for major demographic and social characteristics. Introducing country of residence as an independent variable shows that all else equal, living in 1990 in the United States had a strengthening effect on fasting on Yom Kippur, synagogue attendance, and religious belief, but did not play a significant role in the other two practices of lighting Chanukah candles and voluntary work; it had a negative effect on Shabbat observances, dietary laws and attendance at a Passover Seder. By 2000, living in the United States maintained its positive and significant effect on fasting on Yom Kippur and synagogue attendance but more recently also found to strengthen voluntary work; at the same time, the remaining six indicators of Jewish identification, including religious belief, were negatively related to living in the United States. The observed changes over time provide further support for the "self-definition" hypothesis.

The nature of Judaism in America, and American religion in general, accepts even if only judgmentally, broad social norms and values which eventually can bring about the weakening of religio-ethnic tradition. In Israel, the central role that Judaism plays and the status of Orthodoxy in public life provide a social and cultural environment that facilitate Jewish feelings and attachments. Moreover, despite the various shades of Orthodoxy in Israel, pluralism in the broader sense never penetrated into the religious sphere and non-religious Israelis are discouraged from changing the accepted forms of beliefs and customs (Liebman 1995). Further investigation should focus separately on each of the Jewish sub-populations in the United States and Israel and include a broader

range of behavioral and attitudinal indicators unique to their social and cultural environments; this will enable an in-depth evaluation of the overall trends in their ethno-religious identification whether of continuity, change, or innovation. For the United States, if use is made of appropriate general empirical surveys, this will accomplish another important comparison between Jews and other religious and ethnic groups.

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