RELIGIOUS STABILITY AND ETHNIC DECLINE:

Emerging Patterns of Jewish Identity In the United States

A NATIONAL SURVEY OF AMERICAN JEWS

Professor Steven M. Cohen
The Melton Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora
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FOREWORD

Professor Steven M. Cohen describes the inherent difficulties in understanding Jewish identity as he points out that we were originally enjoined by God to be a "holy people" permanently intertwining the religious (i.e. holy) and ethnic (i.e. people) aspects of Judaism. Professor Cohen's study shows how these dimensions constitute separate aspects of the American Jew's understanding of his/her identity. To expand upon Dr. Cohen's analysis we invited four observers of the American Jewish scene to respond to the research report.

The study shows the continuing importance of ethnicity as a keystone of Jewish identity. Its decline in this regard is a matter of concern for the Jewish community. Religiosity, while being stable as a frame for Jewish identity, is not growing. These results must now be used to inform Jewish federations, synagogues, JCCs, and others who can individually and collectively provide programs and services which will pave the paths to strengthening Jewish identity.

We are indebted to Professor Cohen and the four respondents, Dr. Barry Chazan, Allan Finkelstein, Sam Norich, and Dr. Jonathan Woocher. Their insights help us understand the profound significance of this research and develop a sense of where we should direct our efforts.

Dr. Sandra O. Gold
President
October, 1998
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Summary

Building on the distinction between religiosity and ethnicity, this study explores emerging patterns of Jewish identity in the United States. Specifically, it asks: how are the levels of key dimensions of Jewish identity changing? To do so, it focuses on how younger adult Jews differ from their elders, on the assumption that age-related variations point to recent and future trends in Jewish identity. In other words, it assumes that as younger Jews differ from their elders today, so too will American Jews of the future differ from Jews of the present.

"Religiosity" is used here in a narrow sense to denote ritual practice, religious faith, and synagogue participation. In contrast, "ethnicity" is used broadly to refer to everything about being Jewish which differentiates it from being a member of a Protestant denomination. Ethnicity here, then, refers to the communal or collective aspects of being Jewish, that is, all manner of attachment to Jewish family members, neighbors, institutions, community, and people, including Israel. Such recent trends as intermarriage, geographic dispersal of the Jewish population, declines in philanthropic giving, the aging of organizational memberships, and distancing from Israel, to name but a few, all point to declines in Jewish ethnicity.

The data for this study derive from a mail-back random sample survey of 1,005 Jews nationwide who, as a group, are slightly more Jewishly identified than the population they represent. On most socio-demographic and Jewish identity measures, though, they closely resemble Jews-by-religion, age 25 and over, as portrayed by the NJPS (the National Jewish Population Survey).

The analysis identified several distinctive Jewish identity measures or indices consisting of several empirically related items (or questions). Three of these relate to the religious aspect to Jewish identity: religious commitment, faith in God, and ritual observance. The other measures relate to Jewish ethnicity: attachment to Jewish peoplehood, tribalism, felt marginality, commitment to endogamy (in-marriage), Israel attachment, Jewish friendship, institutional affiliation, institutional attachment, and social justice as a Jewish value.

The results are quite clear. Younger and older respondents hardly differ with respect to all three religious measures. That is, younger Jews are just as religiously committed, God-oriented, and ritually observant as their elders.

However, with the exception of one index, younger Jews are considerably less ethnically identified than their elders. Thus, they are less committed to Jewish people, less supportive of in-marriage, less attached to Israel, less likely to report having Jewish friends, less affiliated with Jewish institutions, less emotionally attached to those institutions, and less likely to view social justice as an important Jewish value. These and other trends point to a decline in Jewish ethnicity in the United States.

The rise in intermarriage is only partly responsible for the decline in ethnicity. Even when intermarried Jews are excluded from the analysis, younger Jews score lower on ethnic measures than older Jews.

With this said, the synagogue and the Jewish Community Center are each associated with higher levels of Jewish involvement, of both the religious and ethnic variety. Membership in these institutions may both bring about or result from higher levels of involvement. Among those who belong to synagogues, JCC members are both more religious and more ethnically committed than those who do not belong to Centers. JCC members score particularly high with respect to commitment to Jewish peoplehood, attachment to Israel, and attachment to local Jewish institutions.

The policy implications that flow from this analysis entail an increased emphasis on Jewish community building, on several levels. Jewish institutions and their leaders need to emphasize the normative value of associating with other Jews. They need to encourage more Jewish proximity and interaction. And they need to forge better-functioning partnerships among JCCs, synagogues, federations and other institutions.

* * *

Religiosity versus Ethnicity

For almost a decade, American Jewish communal leaders and their organizations have been concerned with addressing threats to "Jewish continuity." The reports of high and rising rates of intermarriage and the small number of mixed married families who raise their children as Jews raise the potential of a rapidly shrinking Jewish population in the next generation or two. Such an eventuality would, presumably, threaten the very "continuity" of Jewish institutions, American Judaism, and American Jewry. Whatever the merit of these concerns and predictions, most formulations fail to establish clear distinctions among the various aspects of Jewish identity that are thought to be imperiled. Are observers concerned about the continuity of all forms of Jewish identity and community, or are there specific features of American Jewish identity that are seemingly healthier and others that are more vulnerable? Are we speaking of "The Vanishing American Jew" (as the title of Alan Dershowitz's recent book [1997] intones)? Would a more finely honed understanding of trends in American Jewish identity yield a more complex, and, frankly, more sophisticated portrait of its relative strengths and weaknesses?

The distinction between the religious and ethnic aspects of Jewish identity and community provides a useful starting point for differentiating key aspects of contemporary American Judaism and Jewishness. Historically, the religious and ethnic dimensions of Jewish identity have been closely interwoven. In fact, they were so closely bound, that traditional Jewish lexicon hardly distinguishes the two concepts. Jewish religious practice was to be observed only by the Jewish people. Notions of Jewish peoplehood, nation, and community were suffused with faith in the Jewish God, the practice of Jewish (religious) law, adherence to religious custom, and the study of ancient religious texts. The Bible enjoins Jews to be a "Holy people," in one succinct phrase, fusing the modern, Western concepts of religion and ethnicity.

Of course, Jews' encounter with modernity occasioned a rift between Jewish ethnicity and Jewish religion. With the unfolding of the Enlightenment and the Emancipation, and Jews' entry into the larger societies as putative equals, they were obligated to adjust their group identity to the social constructs prevailing in the larger societies in which they dwelled. In Russia and other parts of Eastern Europe, this often meant giving primacy to national, cultural, or ethnic conceptions, as expressed in such movements as Zionism and Bundism. In the West, more decidedly religious formulations took precedence, giving rise to Reform and

Orthodoxy in Germany, and Conservatism in the United States. To date, no movement or community has succeeded in establishing a purely religious Judaism, largely free of ethnicity.

Since their arrival in the United States, American Jews have publicly defined themselves as a religious group. But, at the same time, their religious schools and synagogues have served as venues for expressing and perpetuating what surely must be regarded as ethnic attachments and activities. They have disproportionately married other Jews, maintained friendships with one another, lived near one another, and concentrated in certain industries, professions, and companies – all of which constitute social bases for ethnicity (Goldscheider 1986). They have supported a highly developed organized group life outside of the synagogue, most notably in Jewish Community Centers, philanthropic agencies, pro-Israel support groups, community relations agencies, fraternal associations, and cultural institutions, among others. They maintain an identifiable ethnic style in culture, the arts, intellectual life, and politics.

Stephen Sharot offers a particularly insightful formulation of the intertwining of American Jewish religion and ethnicity:

> *Among American Jews, ethnicity and religion are in a relationship of symbiosis. Ethnicity is strong with respect to identity and feeling of belonging to a group of purported common ancestry and history, but weak with respect to a structural basis. Religion is weak in the sense that feelings of belonging to a community of shared religious beliefs and practices are declining, but strong in that it provides a firm structural basis.Ethnicity ... provides the "real" reasons for joining synagogues and carrying out religious practice. ... Religious institutions...make possible the persistence of a relatively strongly-held ethnicity. (1997:40)*

To be clear, "ethnicity" is used here to refer not to the vulgar side of Jewish ethnicity (bagels-and-lox, Jewish comedians, ostentation), but to the more comprehensive way by which social scientists use the word (social networking, formal association, cultural differentiation, and more). In a manner of speaking, ethnicity refers to everything that distinguishes Jews from other American religious groups. It connotes common ancestry, shared circumstance, and common destiny. It underlies all the decidedly non-religious institutions that distinguishes Jews from Episcopalians and Methodists. The very need to clarify the meaning of ethnicity to free it of its unattractive association, is itself worthy of consideration. Ethnicity has never been fashionable in America. Over time, it has acquired a negative connotation, as something appropriate for immigrants, the working class, and non-whites (or all three). The denigration

of "ethnicity," by American culture, and the internalization of that denigration by American Jews, both exemplifies and constitutes the challenge to Jewish ethnicity in America today.

Several pieces of evidence point to the decline of the ethnic aspect of American Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness. Among these are the rise in intermarriage, a decline in in-group friendship, and the geographic dispersal of the Jewish population, both within metropolitan regions and across the United States (Goldstein and Goldstein 1996). On all these levels, Jews are maintaining fewer ties with one another. In other areas, Jewish membership organizations report aging and declining constituencies. Moreover, informed observers sense weakening enthusiasm for Israel. Jewish involvement in leftist politics (socialist at one time, liberal more recently) and social justice causes – their political orientation that constitutes an important part of Jews' ethnicity – seems to have waned, as numerous studies point to a Jewish shift toward the American political center, if not the right (Cohen and Liebman, 1997; Liebman and Cohen, 1996). Even if Jewish political views remain as far to the left of the American center as they always have, Jews are apparently attaching declining significance to politics as an expression of their Jewishness.

At the same time, indicators of specifically religious involvement seem to be holding their own, if not, in some cases, increasing. Among these are: membership in synagogues; enrollment in Jewish day schools; adult study of classic Jewish texts; as well as publication and reading of books on Jewish spirituality, theology, and religious practice, possibly even amounting to a flowering of American Jewish intellectual life, specifically in areas under the religious rubric.

Insofar as American Jewish group identity is assuming an increasingly religious and a decreasingly ethnic character, such a move would be consistent with several larger trends in American society, some of which have already been alluded to. The most influential and relevant of these are:

1. The near-evaporation, among all major European ethnic groups, of the social bases for ethnicity (neighborhoods, friendship networks, in-marriage, etc.) — a phenomenon that sociologist Richard Alba labels, "The Twilight of Ethnicity" (Alba 1986). For his part, Herbert Gans writes of the emergence of a very superficial identity he calls, "Symbolic Ethnicity" (1979; see also Alba 1990, and Waters 1990).

2. The breakdown of genuine community of all sorts, accompanied by individuation and atomization, a topic central to the writing of major social theoreticians since the nineteenth century and one given contemporary expression by the widely cited article, "Bowling Alone" (Putnam 1995).

3. The privatization of religion, in line with the dominant Protestant model, where religion becomes a matter of personal, voluntaristic faith rather than a matter of communal, obligatory action (Roof and McKinney 1987; Wuthnow 1988).

4. The declining store of "social capital" that underlies the de-emphasis of civic activity and political involvement of the sort that resembles involvement in ethnic activities in voluntary organizations (Bellah et al. 1996).

Beyond these society-wide factors lies a particular major development within the Jewish group that figures to further intensify the decay of the ethnic aspect of American Jewish identity: the rise in intermarriage. The proportion of Jews marrying non-converting non-Jews rose sharply during the 1960's and 1970's (Phillips 1997). Although the rate may have plateaued since then, a significant minority of Jews marrying today (perhaps 40-43% rather than the 52% figure widely reported) (Cohen [1994]) marry non-Jews.

Intermarriage weakens Jewish ethnic bonds in several ways. Inherently, it means that Jews form immediate families with non-Jews, acquiring non-Jewish in-laws and friends. One consequence, among others, is that Jews can no longer as readily maintain in-group and out-group stereotypes, be they grounded in reality or not. Higher rates of intermarriage almost automatically bring about an acceptance of intermarriage and a weakened preference for endogamy, a norm that is central to historic Jewish ethnicity and one that is crucial for most other groups' ethnic identity as well. The practice of Judaism loses its ethnic or group character in mixed-faith households (see, for example Medding et al 1992). Even if the Jewish partner observes religious customs, he or she does so more as an isolated individual and less as a matter of shared family observance, anecdotal examples to the contrary notwithstanding.

The power of intermarriage to transform American Judaism is even apparent where the formerly non-Jewish partner has converted to Judaism, thereby turning a potential mixed marriage into an in-marriage. Though the research has pointed to the relatively high rates of Jewish religious involvement of such families (far higher than that manifested by mixed-faith households), converts do score low on many ethnic measures of Jewish involvement (Winer

et al 1987; Cohen 1997). These include maintaining Jewish friends, opposition to children's out-marriage, Israel attachment, and organizational involvement. Some evidence points to very high rates of intermarriage among the children of conversionary marriages (Cohen 1997). Historian Jonathan Sarna has referred to converts as the only known phenomenon of one-generation Jews: neither are their parents Jewish, he suspects, nor are many of their children (1990).

If Jewish ethnicity has, indeed declined, we would expect to see evidence of the trend by way of age-related differences. That is, younger Jews should score lower than older Jews on relevant measures of ethnicity. If such is the case, does Jewish religious commitment and involvement also decline along with Jewish ethnicity? That is, are American social trends and rising Jewish intermarriage also driving down Jewish religiosity along with ethnicity? After all, if ethnicity and Jewish religious life are so intertwined, and if the mixed married are also less religious (as well as less ethnic), than the in-married, should not younger Jews also score lower on measures of Jewish religious involvement?

With respect to this issue, one analysis of the 1990 NJPS (Cohen 1994) reported far higher rates of intermarriage among younger adult Jews, but fairly constant rates of ritual practices across the age spectrum. In other words, despite more frequent mixed marriage, younger adults were (as a group) as likely as their elders to attend Passover Seders, belong to synagogues, and light Sabbath candles, to give but a few examples. The impact of intermarriage on aggregate Jewish identity characteristics, then, may not be as straightforward and unambiguous as some have suggested.

A related question concerns the impact of intermarriage per se as opposed to the larger social forces: To what extent does the decline in ethnicity, if it is established, characterize the entire Jewish population, and to what extent is it confined to the mixed married and, therefore, strictly attributable to intermarriage? Is intermarriage the main reason for the decline in Jewish ethnicity, or does Jewish ethnic commitment decline even among non-intermarried Jews? Here we would need to examine the non-intermarried for signs of ethnic decline among younger Jews. Differences in Jewish ethnicity between older and younger Jews who are not intermarried would support the notion that forces outside of intermarriage are also working to depress ethnic aspects of Jewish identity in the United States.

Evidence of declining Jewish ethnicity, broadly conceived, alongside of evidence of relative stability in a religious, privatized version of Judaism would point to a major shift in the

character of American Jewish identity. American Jews have expressed their group identity in fraternal organizations, philanthropic agencies, Jewish Community Centers, pro-Israel activities, politics, neighborhoods, and other such ethic arenas, that operate beyond the privacy of the home or the personal domain of the solitary individual. The decline of Jewish ethnicity, then, would constitute a matter of grave consequence for Jewish practice, sentiment, and institutions outside of the more personal, private, and strictly religious sphere of Jewish identity, narrowly defined.

To further our understanding of these complex and complicated issues, the Florence G. Heller—JCCA Research Center — which has an institutional interest and ideological commitment to enhancing American Jewish identity — commissioned a nationwide study of attitudes and behavior of American Jews. For its purposes, the FGHRC/JCCA was seeking a better understanding of the emerging contours of American Jewry, in part to better function among the ever-changing Jewish public, and in part to more sharply define the distinctive contribution of Jewish Community Centers to American Jewish society. Clearly, evidence of ethnic decline would have implications on both levels, that is, for the relationship of Centers with their immediate constituencies, real or potential, and for the conceptualization of their role within Jewish institutional life, both local and continental.

Data, Methods, and Measures

Sampling

The survey data analyzed below derive from a mail-back questionnaire completed by 1,005 Jewish respondents throughout the United States. The survey was fielded in June and July, 1997 by the Washington office of Market Facts, Inc., a national survey research company.

The respondents belong to the company's Consumer Mail Panel, consisting of about 368,000 Americans who have agreed to be surveyed from time to time on a variety of concerns. Of those, about 8,400 were potentially eligible for sampling for this study in that at least one of the adults was Jewish; of these, we sent questionnaires to 1,400 households. Market Facts drew the sample so as to approximate distributions on the following socio-demographic measures calculated from the 1990 NJPS data: household size, age, education, and number of Jewish adults (which usually assumed the value of two in the case of in-marriages, and one in the case of mixed marriages or unmarried individuals).

Almost 72% of the 1,400 households who received the questionnaire returned them. The high rate of return for this mail-back survey can be attributed to at least two considerations. One is that those who repeatedly refrain from returning questionnaires are eventually dropped from the Panel. Another reason for the high response rate is that, according to the Market Facts' professionals, a survey on Jewish identity bears more inherent interest for the potential respondents than do the consumer issues that are generally the topic of the company's surveys.

As noted, the households eligible contained at least one Jewish adult, as previously reported in responses to questions in religious identity in an annual screening questionnaire that collects information on a variety of basic socio-demographic variables from each Panel member. The 1990 National Jewish Population Study determined that approximately 80% of adults who are Jewish also said that their religion is Jewish (Kosmin et al. 1991: 5-6). Jews who do not identify as Jewish for purposes of religion (so-called "secular" or "ethnic" Jews), report lower levels of Jewish involvement (i.e., observance, affiliation, in-marriage, etc.). Hence, a survey (such as this) based upon a sample who claim to be Jewish by religion under-represents the Jewishly less involved, and, as a consequence, slightly over-estimates the overall population's levels of Jewish identification.

We restricted respondents to those age 25 or older. Previous experience with the Market Facts surveys of American Jews using the Consumer Mail Panel demonstrated a severe under-representation of adults under the age of 25. Their relative inaccessibility may be largely due to their frequent attendance at institutions of higher learning.

Questionnaire Construction

Several questions in the survey replicated those first used in a similar study sponsored by the American Jewish Committee ("Content or Continuity?") fielded in 1988 (Cohen 1989). Others were drawn from interviews conducted in the course of a research project on "moderately affiliated" American Jews, sponsored by the Wilstein Institute and under the direction of Prof. Arnie Eisen and myself (Cohen and Eisen 1997). In both the earlier and current surveys, large numbers of questions were drawn from actual quotes of the qualitative interviews, slightly revised for questionnaire use. The object here was to learn of the extent to which the expressions of key attitudes articulated in the conversations with the interviewees would in fact find support in a random sample of American Jewish respondents.

Building The Measures: Discerning the Structure of Jewish Identity

Few individual items (or survey questions) are so intrinsically interesting and unambiguous that they merit extended attention. Rather, they take on meaning and usefulness when joined to form indices with other items that tap the same underlying concept. Moreover, social scientists have learned to be skeptical of measuring important attitudes with single items, viewing such endeavors as fraught with happenstance and instability. Rather than putting exclusive store in a single question, researchers combine several items into scales or indexes to assure more reliable measures.

Through the use of factor analysis, a statistical procedure that sorts out groups of items with higher correlation's with each other than with others, I identified several indices which, taken together, constitute the major dimensions of American Jewish identity.

Three indices clearly fall within the religious domain. These are:

Religious commitment –attitudes toward holiday celebration, kashrut, Jewish law, and the synagogue.

Faith in God – certainty about God's existence and nature; importance of belief in God.

Religious observance and affiliation – service attendance and observance of religious practices.

The eight other scales pertain to the ethnic dimension of Jewish identity. These are:

Jewish peoplehood – positive attitudes toward belonging to the Jewish people; sense of Jewish victimization.

Tribalism – having a special relationship with and responsibility for other Jews.

Felt marginality – the sense of feeling apart from American society and subject to non- Jews antagonism.

Commitment to endogamy – opposition to intermarriage.

Israel attachment – positive views of Israel, of visiting there, and of its centrality to being Jewish.

Attachment to Jewish institutions – feeling attached to various institutions (as apart from belonging to them, or participating in their activities).

Affiliation with Jewish institutions – belonging, contributing and leading.

Importance of social justice to Judaism – perceived importance of social justice, political liberalism; perception of Jewishness as identified with the powerless, being compassionate.

In point of fact, all eleven scales are positively correlated with each other, albeit with varying degrees of magnitude. A factor analysis of the eleven factors, by identifying three clusters of scales, further confirmed the assumption of a distinction between religious and ethnic aspects of Jewish identity. One cluster consisted of the three factors most closely related to religious involvement: religious commitment, faith in God, and ritual observance. A second cluster consisted of three factors related to what might be called "ethnic familism": tribalism, felt marginality, and commitment to endogamy. The third cluster consisted of the five other indices — Jewish peoplehood, Israel attachment, the two Jewish institutional measures, and social justice. Perhaps, we may best offer this cluster as "ethnic communalism".

Religious involvement, ethnic familism, and ethnic communalism, then, constitute three super-scales, suggesting an even more simplified construction of American Jewish identity. In any event, the religious aspect, though related to ethnic aspects of Jewish identity, is nevertheless distinguishable from the two ethnic dimensions.

The Findings

The presentation of the findings spans four sections. The first presents the frequencies of items associated with each index, offering comments on their context and significance. The following section examines the identity patterns of synagogue members and JCC participants. The next section examines age-related variations, tabulating the indices by age. The last section explores age-related variations among the non-intermarried.

The Frequencies

Religious Commitment: In a variety of ways, majorities expressed positive sentiments about various aspects of Jewish religious life. Most respondents said they feel competent praying in synagogue (62%), regard themselves as spiritual (62%), and regard services as interesting (63%). About half look forward to going to services (50%) and try to make the Sabbath a special day (47%). When asked to evaluate the significance of various symbols and concepts – religious, ethnic or otherwise – those garnering the most widespread support included the High Holidays, the Torah, and Passover (regarded as very or extremely important by 82%, 76%, and 76% respectively). Substantially lower down the list were the Sabbath and Jewish law. In terms of their concept of the "good Jew," respondents ranked two relevant items rather high: giving one's children a Jewish education and attending services on the High Holidays. Far fewer saw educating oneself about Judaism and Jewish history as essential to their idea of a good Jew, indirectly testifying to the oft-noted "pediatric" conception of Jewish education (important for the children, but not for oneself; see Gans 1958). Far less important to their conception of the good Jew were celebrating the Sabbath, studying Jewish texts, and having a kosher home. Just 21% felt extremely attached to a synagogue, just under half of those who said they belong to a synagogue. But, it should be noted, attachment to a synagogue was far more frequent than that to any other Jewish institution listed, namely, the JCC, UJA-federation, or any other Jewish organization.

In several ways, then, most respondents affirmed their commitment to the religious conception of being Jewish. Aside from the fairly widespread indifference to a number of more traditional elements of Jewish religious life, the only other sign of weak religious commitment comes in answer to the question on the importance of religion in the respondents' lives. Just a quarter could claim it was very important, a figure just about half that who said the same about the importance of being Jewish in their lives.

Religious Commitment

How important would you say religion is in your own life?

Very important.....26
Fairly important.....43
Not very important.....29
Not sure.....2

Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
I really don't feel competent praying in synagogue	5	26	40	22	7
Most synagogue services are not interesting to me	6	27	44	18	5
I look forward to going to synagogue	12	38	33	8	9
Even if I don't observe every aspect of the Sabbath, I do try to make it a special day	11	36	41	8	5
I am a spiritual person	20	43	23	3	11

In thinking about your sense of being Jewish, how important are each of the following?

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur	50	32	15	3	1
The Torah	45	31	18	6	1
Passover	39	37	21	4	0
The Sabbath	22	26	31	20	1
Jewish law	21	24	38	14	3

In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter, and which are undesirable (better not to do)?

	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter	Undesirable	Not Sure
Give one's children a Jewish education	48	40	11	0	1
Attend services on High Holidays	36	38	24	1	1
Educate oneself about Judaism & Jewish history	24	62	13	0	1
Belong to a synagogue	24	43	32	1	1
Celebrate the Sabbath in some way	19	42	38	1	1
Study Jewish texts	7	35	54	1	2
Have a kosher home	9	18	67	5	1

To what extent do you feel attached to each of the following local Jewish groups and organizations?

	Extremely Attached	Very Attached	Somewhat Attached	Not Attached	Not Sure
A synagogue or temple	21	17	28	34	0

But, to be sure, one has to be somewhat skeptical of the large number of Jews who aver attachment to the religious aspects of being Jewish. As a demonstration of the distinction between survey responses and genuine underlying attitudes, that is, between what they say and what they really feel, we may compare the answers to the question on looking forward to going to the synagogue with the number who claim to attend. Fully half the respondents said they look forward to attending services, and an even greater number (62%) denied that services are uninteresting (in other words, most said they find services interesting). Yet only 16% said they attend services more than monthly and just another 10% attend about once a month. Even without assuming any exaggeration regarding actual attendance, the results indicate that most of those who look forward to going to services, as well as most who find them interesting, fail to attend services even once a month. The apparent contradiction calls into question the veracity of the respondents' implicit claim about the importance of religious aspects of being Jewish. Suffice it to say that about a quarter of the respondents do, in fact, appear genuinely committed to Judaism as a religion, and an even larger number express sympathy for religious aspects of being Jewish.

The types of items included under this rubric provide an operational definition of American Jews' conception of Jewish religiosity. It consists of holiday observance (including the Sabbath), religious education, synagogue involvement, but for only a few, observance of Jewish law. Faith in God, empirically, also falls within this rubric, but because a sufficient number of questions were available to measure this concept, we can operationally distinguish this aspect of religious commitment from all the rest.

Faith in God: Just over half the sample (56%) said they definitely believed in the existence of God. Over a third (36%) were definite that God watches over them in times of danger, and only fewer (25%) were definite that God has a special relationship with the Jewish people. When those answering "probably yes" are combined with those answering "definitely yes," the proportions affirming these views climb substantially. On other questions, about half provided the most unqualified responses to questions about God, and another quarter to a third provided concurring, albeit somewhat less confident replies.

Faith in God

Do you believe that...

	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Probably Not	Definitely Not	Not Sure
There is a God	56	27	7	2	8
God watches over you in times of danger	36	32	16	5	16
God has a special relationship with the Jewish people	25	27	23	7	17

In thinking about your sense of being Jewish, how important are each of the following?

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
God	50	25	17	7	1

In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter, and which are undesirable (better not to do)?

	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter	Undesirable	Not Sure
Believe in God	52	32	14	0	1

Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
Jews are God's "Chosen People"	15	35	30	6	14
In synagogue, I feel closer to God	15	39	31	6	9

The answers to these questions, then, suggest that about a third to a half of American Jews are firm believers, depending upon one's criteria, and as many as four fifths or more believe in God in some way. The answers point to no substantial number of confirmed atheists or those hostile to the notion of God.

Religious Observance and Affiliation: American Jews array themselves on a spectrum of religious practice extending fairly evenly from one end to another. The items selected for inclusion in this study are but a few of many available discrete practices that portray the religious life of American Jews. But even here we see signs of the broad spectrum of observance patterns, with some activities widely reported (Hanukah candles, Passover Seder), and others observed by a small minority (e.g., separate dishes at home for meat and dairy — 18%).

Religious Observance and Affiliation

About how often do you personally attend any type of synagogue, temple, or organized Jewish religious service?

Not at all or only on special occasions (a Bar Mitzvah, a wedding)	33
Only on High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur)	16
A few times a year	26
About once a month	10
Several times a month or more	16

During Passover, do you usually attend a Seder?	87
Does your household usually light candles on Hanukkah?	90
Does your household use separate dishes for meat and dairy?	18
Do you fast on Yom Kippur?	64
Does your household usually light candles on Friday night?	28
Are you . . . currently a member of a synagogue/temple?	49

One of the fascinating curiosities of these frequencies is that their ordering corresponds, more or less, with that found in studies of Jews around the world. The same practices are widely observed everywhere, and the same practices are observed only by smaller minorities in numerous countries, including Israel and the Diaspora.

Commitment to peoplehood: Large majorities of respondents agreed with the several positive statements on Jewish peoplehood drawn from our qualitative interviews. They said that they are proud to be Jewish (96%), and proud of Jews' rich history (94%); that being Jewish connects them with their family (90%); and that they believed in a permanent bond among Jews (76%). When asked to rank the importance of a number of concepts and symbols to their sense of being Jewish, the many items related to Jewish peoplehood elicited large numbers of respondents who attested to their importance. Among these are the Jewish family and the Jewish People, seen as extremely or very important by 84% in each case, as were American anti-Semitism (84%) and the Holocaust (85%). The relatively high correlation of responses on these latter two items with others falling under the Jewish peoplehood rubric is evidence that a sense of victimization and persecution are closely tied to the larger concept of Jewish peoplehood.

Commitment to Peoplehood

How important would you say being Jewish is in your own life?

Very important	47	Not very important	13
Fairly important	39	Not sure	1

Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
I am proud to be a Jew	68	28	1	0	3
Being Jewish connects me with my family's past	51	39	6	1	3
Jews are my people, the people of my ancestors	48	46	4	1	2
Jews have had an especially rich history, one with special meaning for our lives today	48	46	2	0	3
Jews have a permanent bond	23	53	16	2	8
My feelings about the Holocaust have deeply influenced my feeling about being Jewish	21	46	25	3	7

To what extent do you feel	To a Great Extent	To Some Extent	Not At All	Not Sure
Close to other Jews	37	55	2	6

In thinking about your sense of being Jewish, how important are each of the following?

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
The Jewish family	56	28	13	3	1
American anti-Semitism	54	30	12	3	2
The Jewish People	50	34	14	2	1
The Holocaust	49	36	12	2	1
Feel attached to the Jewish People	41	45	13	0	1

As noted earlier, almost half the respondents (47%) rated being Jewish as very important to them, almost twice as many (26%) as those who said the same about religion in their lives. This finding lends support to the inference that ethnic conceptions of Judaism are still more powerful than religious ones. In addition, statements on the survey attesting to ethnic attachment elicited more agreement than those attesting to religious commitment. However, these comparisons are somewhat fanciful owing to an apples and oranges problem. The questionnaire did not explicitly

ask respondents to contrast their religious and ethnic commitments, nor did it (or could it) pose precisely parallel questions serving as indicators of the two dimensions.

Suffice it to say that Jewish ethnicity – when expressed in terms of peoplehood, family, history, and victimization – garners widespread endorsement. However, as we shall soon see, more particularistic expressions of Jewish ethnicity are decidedly less popular.

Tribalism: In pre-modern times Jews maintained special relations with one another. Historian Jacob Katz (1961) notes that it was only in the sixteenth century that rabbinical opinions first enjoined Jews to save the lives of Gentiles for inherent ethical reasons (since Gentiles, as are Jews, are "created in the image of God"), and not for instrumental reasons (so as to avoid repercussions, for "the sake of ways of peace"). The extent to which Jews could transfer loyalty from each other to the larger society figured prominently on the agenda of Western societies. In the famous exchange of letters between Napoleon and French Jewish notables between 1806 and 1808, the French leader in effect was asking Jews whether they were prepared to become fully French and desist from treating each other with special regard. Nineteenth and early twentieth century Jews in the United States and elsewhere went to great lengths to demonstrate their patriotism and the extent to which they felt a part of the larger community. In a similar vein, as Eisen (1983) has demonstrated, the theological question of Jews' chosenness – how to re-interpret the ancient concept to suit the modern consciousness – presented a particularly vexing problem for American Jews and their rabbinic thinkers.

American Jews long have been torn between the ethnic particularism of their ancestral past and the universalist norms of contemporary American society that regard particularism as antiquated, and even, at times, racist. Indeed, if only out of enlightened self-interest, American Jews have been the champions of racial tolerance and combating discrimination based on group differences. The urge to move the society to take less notice of group differences certainly runs counter to harboring special feelings for other Jews.

The responses to the items contained in the index of Jewish tribalism reflect ambiguity and ambivalence surrounding these issues. A slight majority (52%) looked at the entire Jewish community as their extended family, and a plurality (47%) felt they have a special responsibility for Jews in need around the world. These items speak only gently of a special relationship with the Jewish people, yet, it appears that as much as half the sample could not assent to them. Only a minority agreed with more outright expressions of preferences for Jews over others. Just 35% said they relate easier to Jews than to non-Jews, and only a quarter felt that they can count more on their Jewish than their non-Jewish friends.

Tribalism

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
I look at the entire Jewish community as my extended family	14	38	35	5	8
I feel I can count more on my Jewish friends than on my non-Jewish friends	8	17	54	16	5
I relate easier to Jews than to non-Jews	9	26	48	12	5
I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world	9	38	39	5	9

In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter, and which are undesirable (better not to do)?

	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter	Undesirable	Not Sure
Have mostly Jewish friends	3	17	67	12	1

Perhaps even more striking is the very small number who are willing to say that having Jewish friends is important to being a good Jew. Nearly half the sample said that they, in fact, have mostly Jewish friends (among their closest friends). Generally, those activities or characteristics that are more widely shared are also more widely valued. The more who do something Jewish, the more who think it essential or desirable to undertake that behavior or activity. The High Holidays and Passover, for example, are more widely seen as essential or desirable for being a good Jew than observing the Sabbath in some way, an example in which popular practice over-rules rabbinic dictum. However, despite the fairly widespread phenomenon of having mostly Jewish friends, just 3% said that having mostly Jewish friends is essential for a person to be a good Jew, and only another 20% saw it as desirable. Apparently, expressing an outright preference for Jewish friendships takes on negative connotations for many American Jews. They may regard it as an expression of a preference for self-ghettoization, as un-modern or un-American, and in general, as contrary to the historic Jewish campaign for acceptance and integration in the larger society. By extension, to whatever extent American Jews may feel tribal or act tribal, they are less ready to voice tribalism or explicitly endow it with value.

Felt Marginality: Part of a strong ethnic identity for any group is a sense of feeling different from others in the larger society. Sometimes accompanying this perception is the view of others' antagonism toward one's own group, a feeling often present among members of a minority with a history of discrimination and persecution. For Jews, especially, memories of victimization play a crucial role in their group identity. In fact, a small research literature remarks as to how American Jews through the 1980s and 90s continued to perceive high levels of American anti-Semitism despite objective signs to the contrary.

Felt Marginality

Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
I feel that, as a Jew, there is something about me that non-Jews could never understand	**14**	38	37	6	5
As a Jew, I feel like somewhat of an outsider in American society	**3**	16	55	22	3
Jews are widely disliked by Gentile Americans	**3**	22	54	11	10
One day American Jews will probably face severe anti-Semitic persecution	**6**	22	44	8	21

Consistent with this prior research, a slight majority (52%) of the sample agreed that "as a Jew, there is something about me that non-Jews could never understand," a statement drawing upon a very individual and personal aspect of being Jewish. But in the three other related questions, most Jews rejected expressions of marginality. By almost a three to one majority they rejected the view that "Jews are widely disliked by Gentile Americans." Moreover, contrary to previous research that seemed to point to widespread American Jewish concerns about anti-Semitism, most (52%) rejected the proposition, "One day American Jews will probably face severe anti-Semitic persecution." The final piece of evidence of the denial of felt marginality by large numbers of American Jews comes in the form of the four-to-one majority who rejected the view that as Jews they "feel like somewhat of an outsider in American society."

How are we to reconcile the two seemingly contradictory bodies of evidence on American Jewish perceptions of vulnerability and marginality? Have attitudes changed so drastically in less than a decade? Apparently not. A close reading of the earlier evidence suggests that Jews endorse vigilance lest American anti-Semitism intensify. This evidence suggests that they do,

in fact, feel safe in and fully part of America, albeit perhaps with a lingering concern over a remote possibility of the emergence of American anti-Semitism.

Clearly, the implications of the denial of felt marginality are two-sided. On the one hand, a lack of felt marginality reflects the achievement of the dream of Jews since before the Enlightenment, to feel accepted, to be "At Home in America" (the title of the work in American Jewish history by Deborah Dash Moore (1981)). On the other hand, felt marginality has been so much a part of Jewish identity – even in the United States – that evidence of its decline must be seen as evidence of a critical change in Jewish ethnic identity, if not its decline as well.

Commitment to endogamy: The questionnaire posed four questions directly related to attitudes toward intermarriage. These, of course, empirically clustered together, as did a fifth question on having a Christmas tree, an issue connected to mixed marriage specifically and to boundary maintenance between Jews and Christians generally.

With respect to the straightforward and relatively undemanding statement that Jews should marry Jews, 60% agreed (just a quarter agreed strongly). The sample was almost evenly split on the question of whether in-married partners experience fewer difficulties than intermarried partners. With respect to the extent to which marrying in the group is connected to being a good Jew, just 28% saw it as essential, another 39% view in-marriage as desirable, and almost all the rest (about a third) said that it does not matter. Another question asked about the likely response should one's child consider marrying a non-Jew. Just 27% would oppose such a marriage. (Among the comparable subset of the NJPS, 22% answered the same question in like fashion; the small difference may well be due to the under-representation of least involved Jews in the current study's sample.) While 69% felt that having a Christmas tree would violate their sense of being Jewish, almost a third could not agree with this statement.

Taken together, these results suggest that with respect to intermarriage, the population divides into three camps. About a quarter oppose intermarriage quite vigorously. At the other extreme, about a third seems to accept intermarriage with few reservations. The remainder (just under half) take an intermediate position. Their opposition to intermarriage is lukewarm or qualified; while not unmoved by the arguments against mixed marriage, they are not particularly vigorous in their opposition.

Commitment to Endogamy

If your child were considering marrying a non-Jewish person with no plans to convert to Judaism, would you.

Strongly encourage them to marry	3	Oppose their marriage	15
Encourage them	6	Strongly oppose	12
Be neutral	64	Not sure	0

Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
Having a Christmas tree would violate my sense of being Jewish	45	24	18	11	2
Jews should marry Jews	25	35	23	7	9
In-marriages (between Jews and Jews) tend to have fewer difficulties than intermarriages	15	29	33	11	13

In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter, and which are undesirable (better not to do)?

	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter	Undesirable	Not Sure
Marry a Jew (or a convert to Judaism)	28	39	30	2	1

Israel attachment: For years Israel has stood at the top of American Jews' public agenda. It remains the single largest recipient of charitable contributions collected through the UJA-Federation system and it lies at the heart of collective Jewish political mobilization and lobbying.

With this said, many observers have come to question whether Israel continues to concern American Jews as much as it once did. Some cite dissatisfaction with developments related to Jewish religious pluralism and disaffection with Israel's stance in its search for peace with its Arab neighbors. On another plane, the relationship of American Jews with Israel has historically been heavily conducted on two channels: the philanthropic and the political. Now that Israel seemingly is less insecure politically and economically, the argument goes, American Jews feel less needed in Israel and less committed to Israel involvement (Cohen and Liebman forthcoming).

Whatever the virtue of such arguments, a more subtle, possibly more influential process may be eroding attachment to Israel. If, in fact, American Jews are losing attachment to all things

ethnic, and if the balance of their Jewish passion is shifting from the more ethnic sphere of organizations, politics, and philanthropy toward the more religious sphere of family-based ritual and synagogue involvement, then Israel activism (as part of the ethnic sphere) becomes less critical.

The limited extent to which Israel figures in the private lives of American Jewish consciousness is underscored by focus group discussions I recently conducted. In 1995, a year in which I had returned to New Haven after having made aliyah in 1992, I interviewed parents of Hebrew school youngsters in a leading suburban synagogue. Both sessions opened with responses to very general questions on what parts of being Jewish participants found attractive and which unattractive. During the course of the first part of both discussions, each lasting about 30 minutes, none of the participants in either focus group mentioned Israel for well or ill. After I asked why none had done so, some participants vigorously claimed to feel strongly about Israel. The failure to mention Israel is even the more startling in that my having moved to Israel about three years earlier from New Haven was well-known to the participants. Apparently, Israel – as least for these focus group participants, if not for many American Jews – carries little real import in the private sphere of Jewish identity, the part that is closest to their inner core.

The results of the survey certainly point in that direction. When asked about their emotional attachment to Israel, just 9% answered extremely attached (as opposed to 13% in the 1988 study), and only another 18% said very attached (versus 24% in 1988); in other words, a total of just over a quarter (27% in 1997, versus 37% in 1988) defined themselves at least very attached to Israel. When asked about how close they feel to Israelis, 8% said to a great extent (against 19% in 1988), and 41% answered to some extent (versus 54% in 1988). About a third do see Israel as extremely important to their sense of being Jewish. But this places Israel well down on the list of symbols and concepts that seem to resonate with American Jews. By contrast, about half the respondents said that Torah, High Holidays, the Jewish family, American anti-Semitism, the Jewish People, and the Holocaust were very important to their sense of being Jewish.

With respect to their ideas of the good Jew, just 20% thought it was essential for a good Jew to support Israel, and even fewer (18%) had similar views regarding visiting Israel during one's life. For most respondents, these behaviors were at least desirable, but about a third, in fact, found them irrelevant to their concept of a good Jew.

Israel Attachment

Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
Israel is critical to sustaining American Jewish life	15	37	29	5	14
Israel is a dangerous place to visit	5	28	40	16	11
Israel doesn't really need American Jewish charity any more	2	7	48	26	7

How emotionally attached are you to Israel?

Extremely attached	9	Not attached	27
Very attached	18	Don't know	4
Somewhat attached	42		

To what extent do you feel	To a Great Extent	To Some Extent	Not At All	Not Sure
Close to Israelis	8	41	43	8

In thinking about your sense of being Jewish, how important are each of the following?

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
Israel.	33	33	28	5	1

In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter, and which are undesirable (better not to do)?

	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter	Undesirable	Not Sure
Support Israel	20	51	28	1	1
Visit Israel during one's life	18	41	38	1	2
Contribute to Jewish philanthropies	11	47	40	1	2

Most respondents (52%) agreed that Israel is critical to sustaining American Jewish life, and 56% rejected the idea that Israel is a dangerous place to visit. Three quarters also rejected the view that Israel doesn't really need American Jewish charity any more (a view increasingly widespread among American Jewish donors); but at the same time, just 11% believed that

contributing to Jewish philanthropies is essential to their concept of a good Jew, joining 47% who think it desirable.

Clearly, different questions elicit varying levels of engagement with Israel; some items are more personal, others more theoretical and abstract. However, with some degree of caution, it seems fair to say that Israel can be termed very important to only about a fifth to a quarter of American Jews; it is of little importance to about a third of the population; and of intermediate importance to just under half of American Jewry.

Jewish friends: Like in-marriage, maintaining ties with Jewish friends touches the question of Jewish ethnicity in a very profound way. It is both a reflection of ethnic involvement and an important condition for such involvement. It is hard to imagine a strong ethnic group with few in-group ties, and it is hard to imagine a group with many in-group ties failing to produce a sense of group identity, if not an identifiable sub-culture.

Just one item on the questionnaire measures the extent of friendship with other Jews. With respect to their closest friends, just 10% said that all or almost all were Jewish, and another 37% reported that most were Jewish. Over half report that most of their closest friends are non-Jewish.

Jewish Friendships

Among the people you consider your closest friends, would you say that.

None are Jewish.....5	Most are Jewish.....37
Few are Jewish.....16	All or almost all are Jewish.....10
Some are Jewish 33	

As a general rule, in-group ties are more frequent for more intimate relationships. Thus, the percentage of Jews with Jewish spouses exceeds those with mostly Jewish close friends, which in turn exceeds those with mostly Jewish neighbors nowadays true of a very small minority. It is fair to assume, then, had the question not specified "closest friends," but friends in general, even fewer respondents would have reported mostly Jews among their friends.

Jewish institutions — affiliation and attachment: The Jewish organizational infrastructure, highly elaborate, and highly professionalized, has long been seen as a distinguishing feature of American Jewish group life. The organized community embraces numerous functions: synagogues, Centers, federations and other fund-raising bodies, fraternal organizations, community relations agencies, Zionist organizations, old-age homes and services, family and children's agencies, vocational services, youth groups, schools, institutions of higher learning, museums, newspapers and magazines, other cultural agencies, and bodies serving still other functions. Each functional area is characterized both by local institutions and continental umbrella organizations. One researcher conservatively estimates the annual philanthropic contributions to this infrastructure at $4.5 billion (Wertheimer 1997), and to that figure must be added fees for services and other sources of income that further expand the size of the national Jewish political economy.

The expanse and significance of organized Jewish communal life is such that it is fair to say that no other major religious or ethnic group supports a voluntary organizational life as elaborate, variegated, or prodigious. Today's Jewish communal agencies derive from a long history of Jewish communal organization that characterized Jewish communities in the Diaspora. Any examination of American Jewish identity needs to treat the relationship of rank-and-file Jews population with the Jewish institutional infrastructure. This study asked several questions on affiliation and attachment with Jewish institutions, obtaining results (on affiliation) not all that different from those found in the NJPS and numerous other surveys.

Almost half (48%) of the respondents claimed membership in a synagogue. Jewish Community Centers represent the next largest point of affiliation with 14% of the current sample who reported membership in JCCs (as compared with 17% on the NJPS sub-sample which must be assumed to be more accurate); the difference can largely be explained by the larger number of elderly respondents in this study). Even more (27%) reported that their household has participated in a JCC-sponsored program in the prior year. About a third (32%) of American Jews belonged to some other Jewish organization, while 42% claimed to have contributed to the UJA/Federation campaign in their local communities in the prior year (as against the actual numbers of donors, this figure is undoubtedly exaggerated, and is apparently in decline; see Wertheimer 1997). Combining these figures, a clear majority of American Jewish households (56%) report membership in a synagogue, JCC, or other Jewish organization.

Of these questions on affiliation, three were asked of a similarly constructed Market Facts sample in 1988 (Cohen 1989b). In comparison with that survey, synagogue affiliation held nearly steady (49% in 1988 versus 48% in 1997). However, organizational affiliation dropped sharply (from 46% to 32%), as did claims -- as faulty as they may be -- of having contributed to the UJA federation campaign (from 50% to 42%). These over-time changes underscore the central theme of this study: American Jewish religious identity, as symbolized by synagogue membership, is holding steady, while American Jewish ethnic identity, as symbolized by organizational membership and federation campaign participation, is in decline.

Affiliation with Jewish Institutions

Dues-paying member of a Jewish Community Center (JCC) or YMHA	14*
Participated in any program or activity at a JCC or a YMHA within the past year	27
Dues-paying member of a synagogue	48
Belong to any Jewish organizations other than a synagogue, temple, JCC or YMHA	31
Contribute to the UJA/Federation in the past year	42
In the past two years, served as an officer or on the board or committee of a Jewish organization, synagogue or temple	19

The NJPS reports a comparable figure of 17%. This sample over-represented Jews age 65 and over, an age category with low rates of JCC affiliation.

The vast number of voluntary Jewish institutions maintain numerous boards and committees of volunteers (lay leaders). These bodies serve to provide lay governance and accountability, and serve as an instrument to promote contributions of time and money to the agencies. Indeed, of all those who belong to Jewish organizations of any sort (56%), about a third (19% out of the 56%) have served in the prior two years as an officer or member of a board or committee.

To what extent do American Jews feel attached to their formal institutions? A question on the extent of felt attachment demonstrated that the feelings of attachment toward specific institutions (synagogues, JCCs, federations, other organizations) generally followed the extent to which the sample reported affiliation with these institutions. Synagogues were the object of the most widespread attachment (38% were either very or extremely attached), followed by other Jewish organizations (18%), JCCs (11%) and federations (11%). Only the

synagogues could report a sizable number of respondents who felt "extremely attached" (21%); comparable figures for the other institutions ranged from 3% to 7%.

The small size of the activist core heavily committed to Jewish organizational life is further underscored by responses to the "good Jew" question. Just 10% regarded belonging to Jewish organizations as essential for their concept of the good Jew, and another 41% thought it desirable to do so. These figures are down slightly from 1988: 11% and 43% respectively. As such, the comparison with the earlier survey points, albeit very weakly, to small declines in the felt significance of Jewish organizations to American Jewry.

Attachments to Jewish Institutions

To what extent do you feel attached to each of the following local Jewish groups and organizations?

	Extremely Attached	Very Attached	Somewhat Attached	Not Attached	Not Sure
A synagogue or temple	21	17	28	34	0
Another Jewish organization	7	11	25	54	3
A Jewish Community Center (or YMHA)	4	7	25	64	1
The local Jewish federation/UJA	3	8	30	58	1

In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter, and which are undesirable (better not to do)?

	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter	Undesirable	Not Sure
Belong to Jewish organizations	10	41	47	1	1
Belong to a JCC	4	27	67	1	2
Contribute to Jewish philanthropies	11	47	40	1	2
Belong to Synagogue	24	43	--	--	--

Even smaller numbers of respondents viewed belonging to a JCC important for being a good Jew. Just 4% saw it as essential, and another 27% said the JCC membership is desirable for a person to be a good Jew. Contributing to Jewish philanthropy was seen as essential by 11% of the respondents and desirable by another 48%. Both sets of figures contrast sharply with those associatedwith synaagogue membership, where 24% answered "essential" and another 43% thought it "desirable." The figures for synagogues, philanthropy, and organizations nearly replicate those obtained in 1988 (a parallel question on JCCs was not asked then). The synagogue again emerges as the institution with the most widespread import, salience,

significance, and/or affection (which precise sentiment is not at all clear), substantially ahead of other organizations, Jewish philanthropy, and JCCs.

Of the four sorts of organized Jewish life queried in this survey, the synagogue emerges as the one drawing the most widespread support, and the only one to show signs of either stability or growth in support since the last comparable survey. Organizational belonging and philanthropic contributions, on the other hand, elicited somewhat less support than they did in 1988.

Of course, one reason for the variations in levels of attachment to the four institutions relates to the extent to which people actually belong to the respective institutions (or, in the case of the federation/UJA, contribute financially). Another way to look at the results is to focus the analysis on those who are members of these organizations. Upon doing so, a somewhat different portrait emerges. The diagonal in the table below reports the percent attached to each institution, but only for those individuals who belong to the respective institution. Thus, of synagogue members, 70% report feeling extremely or very attached. For both JCCs and other Jewish organizations, the figure reaches just over 40% of those who are members. Among UJA/Federation donors, just 21% report a similar level of attachment. In a manner of speaking, synagogues still seem more capable than the other institutions of breeding felt attachment, but the gaps are far smaller than in the gross results reported earlier.

Percent "Extremely" or "Very Attached" to Four Institutions for Synagogue Members, JCC Members, Organization Members and UJA Donors

Extremely or Very attached to:	Synagogue Members	JCC Members	Jewish Org'n Members	UJA Donors
Synagogue	**70**	57	57	53
JCC	17	**41**	16	**17**
Jewish Organization	28	**34**	**43**	**27**
Federation/UJA	16	**25**	20	**21**
Mean Attachment	33	**39**	34	**29**
N=	473	138	313	**413**

The row labeled "mean attachment" reports the simple mean percentages for members of each institution. On average, JCC member are more attached to Jewish institutions (mean = 39%), UJA donors least attached (29%), with members of synagogues and Jewish organizations in

between. In practical terms, the results suggest that if one were seeking an efficient way to identify institutionally attached Jews, the JCC would be the place to look.

Social Justice: American Jews' association with social justice activities, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, has assumed mythic proportions. Indeed, Jews have figured prominently in all mass-based left-of-center American social movements in the mid- and late-twentieth century. To some readers it may seem odd to include social justice in the list of significant Jewish ethnic attitudes. But American Jews' involvement in these causes has been so widespread that it must be regarded as a constituent, distinctive element in American Jewish ethnicity. Moreover, the social justice index correlates with other measures of Jewish ethnicity suggesting that it does, in fact, contribute a part of this conceptual domain. Social justice involvement is especially relevant here in that some prominent figures have advocated re-invigorating social justice activities under Jewish auspices as a strategy of Jewish identity building (e.g., Fein 1994).

Yet not withstanding its history and its promise, the social justice sphere seems to some to exercise less of a sway over the American Jewish consciousness than it once did. Social justice activities certainly seem less visible and powerful than they were in the heyday of the civil rights and anti-war movements. The agenda of Jewish organizations seems to some less overtly liberal in its orientation and, indeed, culturally and politically conservative voices seem more numerous and articulate now than two or three decades ago (Friedman 1997). Jews are not particularly liberal in many areas beyond what would be expected on the basis of their educational achievement and geographic location (Cohen and Liebman 1997; Liebman and Cohen 1996).

The survey asked several questions on some key underlying premises of Jewish commitment to social justice activities (indeed, responses to these three questions correlated with the four "good Jew" questions that related most closely to social justice). Significantly, the sample rejected each of the three pertinent items. Most disagreed with the notion that, "Because I'm Jewish, I identify with the powerless, the vulnerable, and the underdog," (only 45% agreed, 57% disagreed). They also rejected the idea that, "Being Jewish means being especially compassionate," (41% versus 48%). A plurality also rejected a statement of an empirical observation with normative implications: "Generally, Jews are more charitable than other Americans" (41% agreed; 45% disagreed).

Other results also point to the limited appeal of social justice involvement. The "good Jew" question asked directly about the importance of working for social justice causes as well as

three items that, it developed, were moderately correlated with that question. To "lead an ethical and moral life" garnered the most support of any item on the "good Jew" list, with 67% seeing it as essential and 29% as desirable (figures that almost exactly replicate those found in 1988). However, on three questions that seemingly translate Jewish ethics and morality into action, hardly any respondents find such behavior essential to their concept of the good Jew. To "work for social justice causes" was seen as essential by 9% and desirable by 41% (down from 14% and 46% respectively in 1988). For "contribute to non-sectarian charities," the respective figures are 6% and 38% (very slightly lower than in 1988). For "be a liberal on political issues," just 3% see it as essential and a mere 18% as desirable, somewhat lower in both cases than in the 1988 survey (6% and 21% respectively).

Commitment to Social Justice Activities and Related Attitudes

In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter, and which are undesirable (better not to do)?

	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter	Undesirable	Not Sure
Lead an ethical and moral life	67	29	3	0	0
Work for social justice causes	9	41	45	3	3
Contribute to non-sectarian charities	6	38	51	1	3
Be a liberal on political issues	3	18	65	9	4

Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
Because I'm Jewish, I identify with the powerless, the vulnerable, and the underdog	6	29	44	13	8
Being Jewish means being especially compassionate	7	34	42	6	11
Generally, Jews are more charitable than other Americans	7	34	39	6	14
My being Jewish doesn't make me any different from other Americans	25	41	27	5	2
I feel as moved by the oppression of non-Jews as by the comparable oppression of Jews	19	56	16	2	8

Thus, leading an ethical and moral life scores high and holds steady since 1988, and the three collective, public expressions of leading such a life (at least in the minds of Jewish liberals) score low and even decline from their already low levels in 1988. The contrast between the high regard for leading an ethical and moral life and the little enthusiasm for the three specific activities yields a number of interpretations. One is the widely noted phenomenon in survey research of general, more ambiguous statements obtaining more concurrence then more specific or narrower statements. Apparently, American Jews believe in being moral and ethical, but are not so sure they want to do anything about it.

By distinguishing so sharply between ethical and moral life on the one hand and a variety of collective activities and stances on the other, the respondents may be expressing a greater enthusiasm for the personal over the collective, the private over the public. As we shall soon see, these are themes that course through the analysis of age-related variations in dimensions of Jewish identity.

Patterns of Identity Among Members of Synagogues and JCCs

Synagogues and Jewish Community Centers are two of the more important loci for reaching American Jews and building community. Just under half of American Jews belong to synagogue and over a quarter participate in Jewish Community Centers. With respect to the various measures of Jewish identity developed here, just how do the memberships of these two institutions differ, and how do they differ from those who affiliate with neither? Insofar as the synagogue is the key religious institution, we might well expect synagogue members to score higher than non-members on the religious measures certainly, and the ethnic measures possibly. Our purely speculative expectations for how the JCC constituency is distinctive are not as clear. On the one hand, the JCC is a key locus for Jewish formal and informal association, leading us to anticipate higher scores for participants over non-participant in the ethnic measures, if not, possibly the religious measures. On the other hand, the JCCs have an image of appealing to Jews from a very wide range of Jewish involvement (including the least involved). Moreover, many are initially drawn to Centers not for explicit Jewish ideological reasons but to avail themselves of child-care or physical fitness services, certainly not a sure-fire recipe for attracting the most Jewishly engaged members of the population.

The issue is muddied to some extent by the overlap between the two constituencies about two thirds of JCC members and participants also belong to synagogues, and over a third of synagogue members belong to JCCs or participate in Center programs. Of the four possible patterns of synagogue-JCC affiliation, 44 % belong to neither, 9% belong to (or participate in) a Center only, 28% belong to a synagogue only, and 19% affiliate with both. (*A technical aside: the entries in the tables for all but the ritual index denote the percentage scoring high with respect to each index. The entries for the ritual index represent mean scores on the seven items. The items which make up each index are found in the frequency tables above.)*

Consistent with expectations, synagogue members are indeed more religiously committed than non-members. Controlling for JCC membership (that is, among JCC members or among non-members), synagogue members score about 40 percentage points higher than others on religious commitment. Gaps for faith in God amount to roughly 25 percentage points; and synagogue members' ritual observance scores are almost twice those of non-members. The synagogue difference extends beyond religious measure to ethnic measures as well. The gaps for ethnicity are not nearly as large as for religiosity, but it can be safely said that synagogue Jews are more ethnically involved than non-synagogue Jews.

What of the JCC constituency? How does it differ from those outside the JCC? Controlling for synagogue membership (that is, among synagogue members or among non-members), those who participate in JCC programs score higher on all measures of Jewish identity than those who do not. This characterization includes, perhaps surprisingly, all three measures of religious involvement. The largest JCC/non-JCC differences are associated with Jewish peoplehood, Israel attachment, institutional attachment, and (for non-synagogue members) support for endogamy. In short, the JCC constituency is somewhat more religious and decidedly more Jewishly ethnic than those outside the JCC, among both synagogue members and non-members.

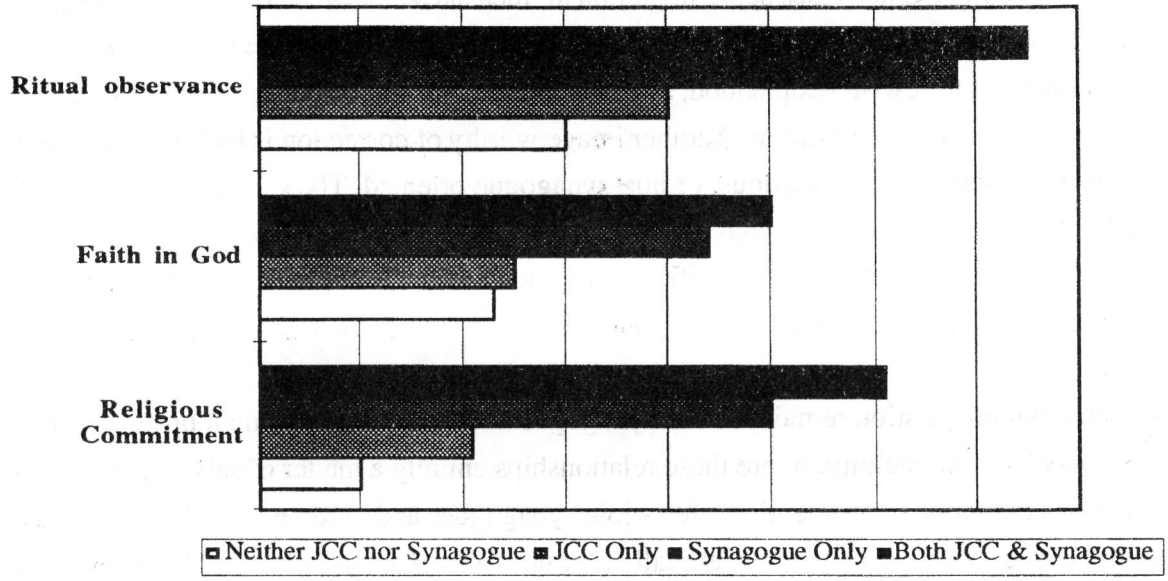
As seen in the table below, the JCC constituency is sharply divided between those who belong to synagogues and those who do not. Those who combine synagogue membership with JCC participation emerge as the most Jewishly involved group of all four combinations, scoring highest on all measures of Jewish religiosity and Jewish ethnicity.

Measures of Jewish Religiosity and Ethnicity by Membership in Synagogues and Participation in JCCs

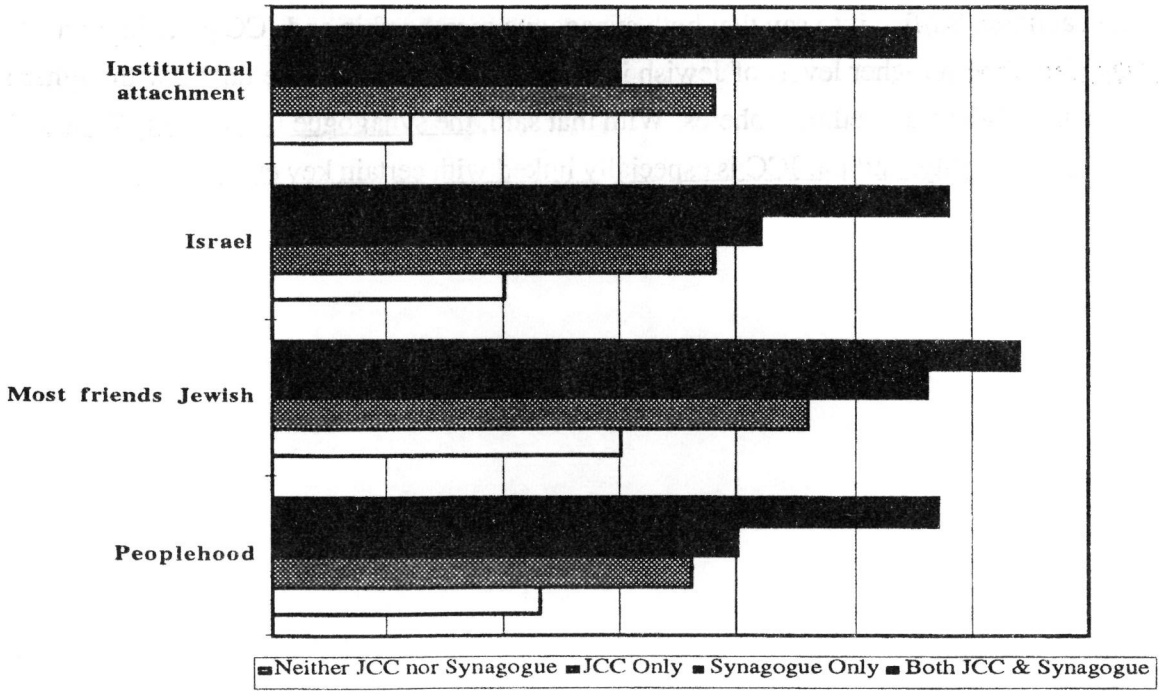
Membership Status	Neither JCC nor Synagogue	JCC only	Synagogue only	Both JCC & Synagogue
Religiosity Measures				
Religious Commitment	10	21	50	61
Faith in God	23	25	44	50
Ritual observance	.30	.40	.68	.75
Ethnicity Measures				
Peoplehood	23	36	40	57
Tribalism	17	34	41	45
Felt Marginality	42	51	49	52
Endogamy	41	62	73	77
Most friends Jewish	30	46	56	64
Israel	20	38	42	58
Institutional attachment	12	38	30	55
Social Justice as Jewish value	23	29	38	44
N =	443	89	279	194

The charts below descibes the clear pattern on both the religiosity and ethnic dimensions showing how the combination of synagogue and JCC affilaition is associated with higher levels in each of the sub-categories.

Religious Dimension



Ethnic Dimension



These findings run counter to several prevailing images of JCC constituents, images that now bear correcting. One inaccurate image is that JCC participants are fairly distant from conventional Jewish life. In fact, it develops, that JCC participants are more religiously and ethnically involved than non-participants. Moreover, even within synagogues, those who participate in JCC activities score higher on all measures of Jewish identity than those with no JCC connection. The JCC difference is especially pronounced for three measures: commitment to Jewish peoplehood, attachment to Israel, and institutional attachment. All three fall within the ethnicity rubric. Another image worthy of correction is that JCC Jews are especially secular, non-religious, or non-synagogue oriented. The substantial majority of JCC participants also belong to synagogues. Among non-synagogue Jews, JCC participants are substantially more ethnically identified and somewhat more religiously identified than those with no JCC involvement.

One obvious question remains. Does synagogue and/or JCC involvement bring about higher levels of Jewish identity, or are these relationships entirely a matter of self-selection? That is, to what extent do more identified Jews join synagogues and participate in Centers, and to what extent does such involvement eventually elevate levels of Jewish identity? Or, in more precise terms, which is chicken and which is egg: higher Jewish involvement or joining a synagogue or JCC? The answers to questions such as these cannot be determined with the cross-sectional data at hand. Suffice it to say that both synagogue membership and JCC participation are associated with higher levels of Jewish identity. Both institutions are linked with higher scores in both religious and ethnic spheres. With that said, the synagogue is especially linked with higher religiosity, and the JCC is especially linked with certain key ethnicity measures.

Age-Related Variations: Religious Stability and Ethnic Decline

At the core of this analysis lies the assumption that contrasts between younger and older adult Jews point to recent historical trends. We know, for example, that younger Jews are more often intermarried than are older Jews and, indeed, the mixed marriage rate has climbed considerably in recent years, especially between 1960 and 1980. Inferring population trends from age-related variations relies on the concept of "cohort effects," the assumption that people born and raised at a certain time bear certain tendencies that distinguish them from those born earlier or later.

Not all age-related data allows for simple extrapolation to historical trends. The principal complicating factor entails family life cycle effects: older and younger people express different attitudes in part because they find themselves in different relationships to the family life course. Older adults views may differ from those of younger adults because they have completed raising children or are approaching retirement, or have more vivid thoughts of their mortality.

Data collected at one point in time cannot satisfactorily address these complications. We cannot totally disentangle cohort effects from family life cycle effects, so as to understand which findings point to genuine historical trends and which are artifacts of the aging process or of the family life cycle.

To reduce the chances of making faulty inferences from these data, we can focus on the 30-year age range from age 35 to 64. Although family and career characteristics of those in their late thirties certainly differ from those in their early sixties, the differences are less dramatic, and may have fewer consequences for attitudes related to Jewish identity than those which are associated with people under 35 or over 65 in age. The younger group typically finds itself in the early stages of family and career-building, steps which are associated with rather dramatic changes in Jewish affiliation, ritual practice, and several more subtle signs of committed Jewish identity (Cohen 1989a; Wall 1994). After reaching 65, many individuals retire from full-time labor force participation and find they are more able to become involved in Jewish communal activities.

One check on the veracity of the inferences drawn from age-related variations is to compare over-time data. If differences between young and old are truly related to birth cohort effects,

they should eventually make themselves felt in overall population trends. As noted, the only other comparable data set was collected in 1988, nine years prior to the current survey. In all instances where comparison of identically worded questions is possible, the comparisons point to movement in the directions suggested at the outset of this paper and in the analysis below.

Finally, the inferences, if accurate, ought to find support theoretically. Do they make sense? Are they consistent with everything else we know? Can they be predicted; have they been predicted?

With these concerns and approaches in mind, we can proceed to a consideration of the variations between older and younger respondents. For completeness' sake, the tables span the entire age range. However, for reasons explained above, the text focuses on the three intermediate ten-year age intervals (35-44, 45-54, and 55-64).

Age-Related Variations in Measures of Religiosity

The table below presents the three measures connected to religious attitudes and practice discussed earlier: religious involvement: religious commitment, faith in God, and ritual occurrence.

Measures of Religiosity by Age

	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Religious Commitment	29%	32%	35%	35%	30%	32%
Faith in God	39%	31%	34%	39%	29%	34%
Ritual Observance	.49	.51	.54	.54	.49	.51
N=	195	212	145	137	253	1,005

On all three indices, one is struck by the near-uniformity in their levels across the age spectrum. This observation is even more applicable to the critical comparisons among the three intermediate ten-year age intervals between 35 and 64. But even the youngest adults, age 25-34, many of whom do not enjoy the religious "benefit" of marriage and parenthood, report scores similar and certainly not much lower than their elders. In fact, they score the highest (by a slim margin) on faith in God. The implications here are clear. Despite the sharp rise in intermarriage, such that it is far more frequent among the young than the old, younger Jews maintain their elders' levels of religious commitment and practice. The data provide no evidence of decline in Jewish religiosity (defined in these terms), either in prospect or retrospect.

Age-Related Variations in Measures of Ethnicity

The table below presents nine measures of Jewish ethnic involvement. Seven of the measures refer to attitudes and two of them, relating to in-group friendship and institutional affiliation, pertain to a set of behaviors. All entries refer to the proportion scoring high on the respective index.

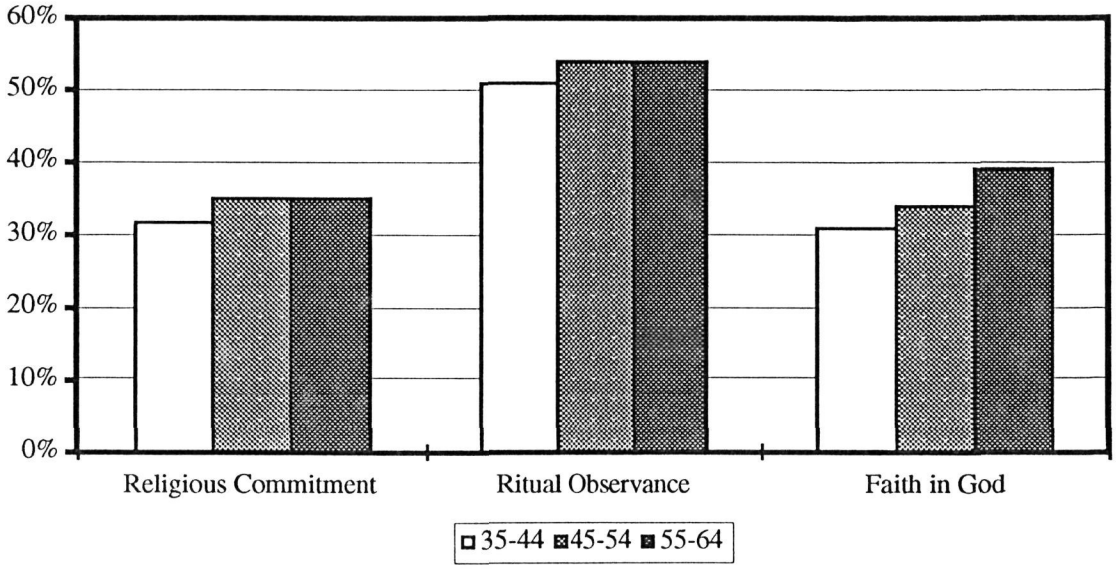
Measures of Jewish Ethnicity by Age

	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Jewish Peoplehood	29%	28%	33%	44%	42%	35%
Tribalism	25%	20%	30%	39%	40%	30%
Felt Marginality	37%	45%	55%	43%	52%	47%
Pro-Endogamy	49%	50%	59%	73%	66%	59%
Most Close Friends Jewish	36%	34%	40%	60%	61%	46%
Israel Attachment	23%	29%	32%	46%	47%	35%
Belongs to 2+ Institutions	25%	34%	43%	57%	58%	43%
Institutional Attachment	19%	21%	25%	34%	37%	27%
Social Justice	19%	25%	23%	37%	50%	32%
N =	195	212	145	137	253	1,005

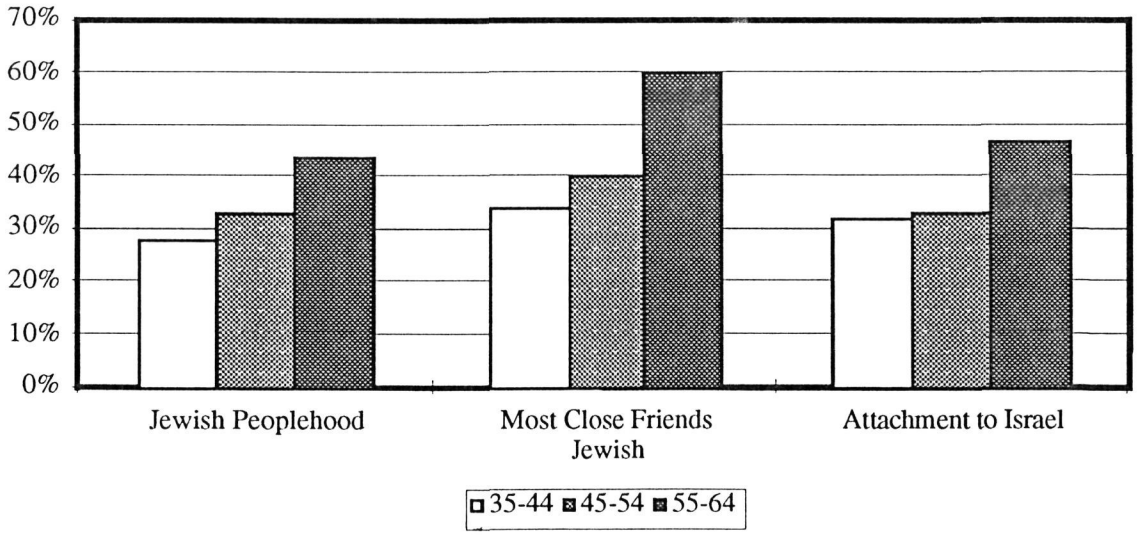
With the exception of felt marginality, all measures exhibit an age-related decline where, younger respondents score lower than older respondents. Contrasting the 55-64 year olds with those just twenty years younger, the proportions scoring high on Jewish peoplehood commitment fall from 44% to 28%, those for tribalism from 39% to 20%, those for supporting endogamy from 73% to 50%, and for Israel attachment from 46% to 29%. Meanwhile, the proportions with mostly Jewish close friends drops from to 60% to 34%; those affiliated with at least two of four Jewish institutions (synagogue, JCC, UJA/federation campaign, or other Jewish organization) falls from 57% to 34%; felt attachment to such institutions (excluding the synagogue) drops from 34% to 21%; and those scoring high on the social justice index decline from 37% to 25%. In seven of nine instances, those age 65 and over score higher -- albeit marginally, than those 55-64; and in six of the nine instances, the youngest (age 25-34) score lower than the next older age group (35-44 year olds).

The following charts describe this clear pattern whereby younger Jewish adults are essentially no different from their older counterparts in terms of their religiosity, but score substantially lower on aspects of Jewish ethnicity.

Younger Adults are as Religious as Older Adults



Younger Adults Score Lower on Ethnic Measures than Older Adults



In short, with a minor exception here and there, younger respondents were clearly less ethnically committed or involved than were older respondents. This generalization holds no matter what index of ethnicity is utilized, with the exception of felt marginality. If the age patterns reflect recent over-time trends, then Jewish ethnicity surely has been in decline.

The Social Justice Paradox

One particular finding bears some elaboration: the apparent decline in social justice attitudes. Social justice commitment to the larger society has been seen as standing in contrast to and in tension with commitment to the in-group (Jews). If so, then why does commitment to social justice decline along with Jewish ethnicity? Shouldn't less Jewish ethnicity mean more social justice commitment, not less?

The problem with these questions is their underlying premise: that Jewish social justice commitment (a universalist impulse) contradicts, either philosophically or empirically, with an attachment to the Jewish group (a particularist impulse). If the two impulses are in tension, if people have a limited capacity for caring, then caring for Jews would come at the expense of caring for the larger society. How are we to explain this paradox? Accordingly, one would expect that less tribalism and related attitudes would mean more passion for the rest of the world. As Leonard Fein has written, "Traditionally and even today, Jewish universalists have seen Jewish particularism as an embarrassment, while Jewish particularists have seen Jewish universalism as a threat" (1988:160).

As these data show (and as Fein argues), the universalist-particularist dichotomy is a false forced choice. The alternative to caring less about the Jews is not necessarily caring more about others, but caring less about others. Indeed, in detailed inspections of the components of the social justice index, younger respondents differed from their elders not by way of rejecting various affirmations of the importance of social justice activities. Rather, the younger respondents more often expressed a neutral position or answered "does not matter." In addition, the index of social justice is positively correlated with every measure of Jewish ethnicity, including Jewish peoplehood, tribalism, and Israel attachment ($r = .19, .24$ and $.26$ respectively). Now, these are not particularly strong correlations, but, the point is, they are all positive. The classic notion of a dichotomous relationship between Jewish particularism and social justice commitment would have predicted negative correlations, where more of one would mean less of the other. These findings point in the opposite direction: Jews who are more peoplehood-oriented, tribalist, attached to Israel, and ethnically committed in other ways, are also more likely to evince sympathy for Jewish value of social justice activities.

Thus, a retreat from Jewish particularism among younger adults does not open thedoors to a flood of universalist passion. Rather, as Fein argues, "Jews can [anddo] at one and the same time declare their loyalties to other Jews and to all of humankind" (1988: 196-197). And those who cease declaring their loyalties to Jews, also desist in declaring their loyalty to others as well.

The Intermarriage Effect - Only Part of the Story

Over the years, the frequency with which Jews have married non-Jews has climbed dramatically. Younger adults report far higher levels of mixed marriage than their elders. In this sample, current intermarriage rates climb steadily as age declines: from 4% among those 65 and older, to 8% of those 55-64, to 18% of those 45-54, to 28% among those 35-44, and, finally, to 39% among those 25-34. To the extent that the mixed married are less engaged in Jewish life, they figure to account for much of the age-related variations in Jewish identity. That is, to some extent, younger Jews as a group are less Jewishly involved because so many more of them are mixed married. The question here is to determine the extent to which intermarriage alone accounts for the lower levels of Jewish involvement among younger adults.

The preliminary issue is to determine the extent to which the intermarried are in fact less Jewishly involved than their counterparts. As the tables below amply demonstrate, mixed married Jews score lower on all measures of Jewish involvement than do the in-married. The relatively low levels of Jewish commitment on the part of the intermarried is well-documented (Medding, et al. 1992; Phillips 1997), but here we can examine aspects of Jewish identity not previously explored. In particular, we can ask, with respect to which features of Jewish identity do the intermarried most lag behind the others, and where are the differences relatively smaller?

Intermarriage is associated with lower levels of Jewish identity for two sorts of reasons. One is that less Jewishly identified individuals are more likely to marry non-Jews. The other is that mixed marriage produces lower levels of Jewish involvement than would otherwise be the case. Simple cross-sectional data reflects both processes at work simultaneously, that is, the selection of the mixed married and the consequences of mixed marriage.

So, although these data cannot distinguish these two processes, they do describe those features of Jewish identity that are more closely associated with mixed marriage, whether by way of producing mixed marriage or as a result of mixed marriage. And here it is noteworthy that whereas mixed marriage is clearly associated with some diminished religious involvement (e.g., beliefs, practices), it is far more associated with diminished Jewish ethnic involvement (tribalism, peoplehood, Israel, friends, institutions). Two sets of figures here may be quite illustrative. With respect to seven religious practices (five rituals, synagogue attendance and temple membership), the in-married reported a mean of .57 as contrasted with .32 among the mixed married. With respect to having mostly Jewish close friends, the gap is far larger: 57% of

the in-married made such a claim as against less than 9% of the mixed married. Clearly, the gap between in-married and mixed married is far wider for friendship than for ritual practice. The patterns for these two measures are emblematic of those for the groups of measures (religious or ethnic) from which they are drawn.

Measures of Religiosity and Ethnicity by Mixed Marriage

	In-married	Mixed
Measures of Religiosity		
Religious Commitment	39%	13%
Faith in God	36%	27%
Ritual Observance	.57	.32
Measures of Ethnicity		
Jewish Peoplehood	38%	15%
Tribalism	37%	6%
Felt Marginality	51%	39%
Pro-Endogamy	72%	18%
Most Close Friends Jewish	57%	9%
Israel Attachment	38%	15%
Belongs to 2+ Institutions	49%	8%
Institutional Attachment	30%	9%
Social Justice	33%	24%
N =	499	124

Two implications flow from this observation. One concerns Jewish communal efforts to limit the growth of intermarriage. One tentative implication is that strengthening Jewish ethnic identity in all its manifestations may be more effective in inhibiting intermarriage than enhancing Jews' religious identity. The other implication concerns the impact of intermarriage on the future shape of American Jewish identity. These findings suggest more rapid and deeper declines in the ethnic aspects of Jewish identity as a result of intermarriage than in the religious aspects.

With this said, we can proceed to examine the extent to which the age-related variations in Jewish identity depend upon the growth in intermarriage and its generally adverse impact on Jewish involvement. The tables below present the religiosity and ethnicity measures by age, excluding the mixed married. Those who remain in the analysis were either in-married or non-married (single, divorced or widowed).

Measures of Religiosity by Age, Excluding Mixed Married						
	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Religious Commitment	34%	36%	40%	36%	30%	35%
Faith in God	42%	34%	35%	38%	28%	35%
Ritual Observance	.53	.56	.57	.56	.49	.54
N=	149	170	127	130	247	823

Excluding the mixed married we again find near-stability in all five measures of Jewish religiosity. Comparing those 55-64 with those 35-44, we find hardly any difference on any measure. For religious commitment 36% of the older group scored high as did a like number of the 35-44 year olds; for faith in God, 38% versus 34%; and for ritual practices, a mean of .56 for both groups. These comparisons are but symptomatic of the remarkable lack of variation in religiously oriented measures across the age spectrum.

Measures of Ethnicity by Age, Excluding Mixed Married						
	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Jewish Peoplehood	35%	31%	36%	44%	42%	38%
Tribalism	31%	24%	33%	39%	40%	34%
Felt Marginality	38%	48%	54%	44%	52%	48%
Pro-Endogamy	61%	58%	65%	75%	66%	64%
Most Close Friends Jewish	44%	39%	44%	63%	63%	52%
Israel Attachment	28%	32%	33%	47%	47%	38%
Belongs to 2+ Institutions	32%	41%	49%	59%	58%	48%
Institutional Attachment	23%	24%	27%	35%	37%	30%
Social Justice	17%	26%	25%	35%	50%	33%
N=	149	170	127	130	247	823

The ethnicity measures display quite different contours. Although in some cases the results are muted, we again find that for all measures except felt marginality, older respondents tend to out-score their younger counterparts. Again, the comparisons of 55-64 year olds with those twenty years their junior are instructive: for Jewish peoplehood, 44% versus 31%; for tribalism, 39% of the older group scored high versus only 24% of the 35-44 year olds; for support of endogamy, 75% versus 58%; the proportion of those with mostly Jewish close

friends falls from 63% of the older group to just 39% of the younger cohort; Israel attachment moves from 47% to 32%; affiliation with at least two Jewish institutions declines from 59% to 41%; the measure of institutional attachment drops from 35% to 24%; and those scoring high on the social justice index number 35% among the 55-64 year olds and just 26% among their younger counterparts, 35-44.

The growth in intermarriage, then, is clearly not the only factor at work here. Both with and without mixed married Jews in the analysis, we find evidence of stability in measures of Jewish religiosity, but decline in measures of Jewish ethnicity.

Conclusions and Implications

For nearly a decade, Jewish communal leaders have expressed anxieties over "Jewish continuity," translated as concern for the very existence of a demographically sizable and culturally distinctive Jewish group in the United States. The results here suggest that Jewish continuity per se is not threatened. Notwithstanding rates of intermarriage far higher than in the past, Jews seem to be succeeding in maintaining various aspects of religious commitment. Some rabbis and Jewish intellectuals may be unhappy with the quality of Jewish religious life, or the extent to which most Jews are religiously educated or committed. But the results here suggest that they will have no more reason to be unhappy in the near future than they were in the recent past. In fact, developments that are not reflected in these survey data may even point to a cultural revival, of sorts, in the religious or private sphere of Jewish identity.

While sheer Jewish continuity may not be at risk, the nature of the Judaism and Jewishness that will continue certainly are undergoing rapid change, particularly in the ethnic sphere. As Judaism is drawn into the self, it is withdrawn from politics, philanthropy, organizations, peoplehood, Israel, and Jewish-Gentile interactions. The Jewish ethnic impulse may still be stronger than its religious counterpart, but ethnic attachments of all sorts seem to be in decline, while the religious dimensions seem to be holding their own.

Of course, the decline of the ethnic impulse may eventually pose problems for the strictly religious sphere of American Judaism. Absent strong ethnic motivations, rabbis and congregants will need to develop a stronger spiritual basis for prayer, ritual, and religious community, or else see eventual faltering in these and other areas of religious practice and observance.

These declining ethnic attachments move Judaism in the direction of other upper-middle class white American religious groups. They may well mean, for the immediate future, continued prosperity for synagogues, religious schools, and the purchase and study of books on such matters as texts and religiosity. At the same time, taken to their extreme, the weakening of the ethnic dimension could spell trouble for those institutions which differentiate American Judaism from liberal Protestant denominations. The UJA-federation campaign, the social services it supports, the connection with Israel, Jewish political mobilization, fraternal organizations, and Jewish Community Centers are all collective expressions of that which most clearly differentiates being Jewish in America from being Methodist or Episcopalian. The decline in Jewish ethnicity, if unarrested, will present particular difficulties for those institutions and activities that most directly draw upon Jews' historic commitment to peoplehood.

There is no guarantee that communal or educational policies and programs can, in any substantial way, retard or even influence the decline of American Jewish ethnicity. But insofar as they can, it seems that such policies should be aimed at the following goals:

1. **Promote Jewish proximity**: Jews living near one another is a pre-requisite for interaction and building organic communities. While little can be done to promote residential propinquity, the community may be able to influence the choice of higher education by advising families to choose the thirty or forty institutions — at all levels of cost and selectivity, in almost all regions of the country — that now enroll the largest Jewish student bodies.
2. **Overcome geographic dispersal**: To some extent Jewish institutions will need to accept dispersal as a given. Prime consideration should be given to instruments to overcome the far-flung patterns of Jewish settlement. The Internet, video-conference, and virtual cyber-communities offer some new technologies that may be useful in this regard.
3. **Promote institutional partnership**: The lower rates of affiliation mean that fewer Jews will enjoy multiple contacts with Jewish institutional life. As a result, in order to ensure the delivery of the full range of Jewish communal services and to maximize the chances of institutional involvement, synagogues, JCCs, federations, and schools will need to intensify efforts to work closely and to engage in smoother and more frequent cross-institutional "hand-offs" as families become interested in or eligible for services provided by other institutions.
4. **Promote the norm of community involvement**: These findings demonstrate that Jews generally value what they do frequently (e.g., Passover Seder) and attach little importance to that which few perform (e.g., kashrut). One exception to this rule is that they attached little importance to having Jewish friends, belonging to Jewish institutions, and other aspects of connection with other Jews, even though large numbers have Jewish friends, affiliate, etc. The problem, then, is not only behavioral, but attitudinal: how to get Jews to place greater normative value upon Jewish association.

These, for sure, are only a few, undeveloped suggestions for addressing the declines in American Jewish ethnicity. Undoubtedly further reflection and deliberation can develop more appropriate and effective policies and programs. In any case, the challenge to American Jewry here is real, and merits considered attention and response on the part of JCCs, synagogues, federations, schools, and other communal and educational institutions.

Methodological Comment: Survey Data versus Depth Interviews

This survey was conducted on the heels of another research project, sponsored by the Wilstein Institute, entailing qualitative depth interviews with fifty moderately affiliated American Jews. Covering many of the same topics that would be treated in the survey, senior investigators and their research associates (several of whom were highly educated and experienced professional therapists) conducted two depth interviews with the respondents, each of which lasted about an hour and a half. Interviews were transcribed, word for word, and were subjected to close scrutiny by Arnold Eisen and myself who discussed each interview at great length.

I detail these procedures so as to substantiate the veracity of the conclusions we have drawn from the qualitative interviews (the full analysis will appear in a monograph Eisen and I are now preparing). When compared with the survey data, the qualitative interviews suggest a somewhat different portrait of American Jewish identity. In particular, the survey findings portray a population that is seemingly more religious and seemingly less animated by ethnic particularism than were the people we interviewed at considerable length and great depth. To illustrate, the understanding of American Jews we derived from the qualitative interviews contrasted sharply with each of the following findings drawn from the survey:

- Twice as many respondents disagreed as who agreed with the statement, "I really don't feel competent praying in synagogue."
- Almost two thirds called themselves "a spiritual person."
- Half said they "look forward to going to synagogue."
- Three fifths denied that they "relate easier to Jews than to non-Jews."
- By a margin of almost three-to-one, they rejected the view, "I feel I can count more on my Jewish friends than on my non-Jewish friends."
- By a majority of more than four-to-one, they claimed to "feel as moved by the oppression of non-Jews as by the comparable oppression of Jews."

In sum, these findings point to the widespread assertion of religious commitment and the broad denial of ethnically based feelings for other Jews. But Eisen and I found our qualitative interviewees far less serious about the religious aspects of being Jewish, and more willing to evince ethnic attachment than the survey data seem to indicate. In other words, we do not believe that American Jews are as religiously committed as they say they are on the survey; nor do we believe that they are as ethnically indifferent as they claim.

On what basis do we feel justified in making this judgment? How can social scientists who respect the art and science of survey research, and who recognize the value of generalizing from large random samples to the wider population, seriously question the apparent veracity of the survey results? Part of the answer lies in understanding how respondents answer survey questions, and how they answer over the course of three hours of face-to-face depth interviewing. On surveys, respondents are confronted with a long list of closed-ended questions, in this case, an eight-page booklet with 124 questions. They complete the questionnaire in short order, providing rather rapidly formulated responses by way of pre-conceived answer categories, lacking in nuance or complexity. By way of contrast, in the personal interview, they are free to elaborate, to augment their first answer with a second, third, or fourth response. They provide personal context, and more information as to the depth and passion accompanying their answers, as well as on the extent to which the extent to which they have given the matter any thought prior to the interview.

The very terminology of survey research points to variations in the significance of answers to survey questions. On the one hand, the term, "public opinion," connotes the act of "opining," thinking about a matter in some depth, weighing of alternatives; in contrast, the term, "respondents," connotes an act of responding to a stimulus, something that even amoebae and other lower life forms manage to execute. Survey research data contain an amalgam of true, well-considered opinions and simple, off-the-cuff responses. It is up to the researcher — and reader — to learn to distinguish the two, or more precisely, the extent to which each answer reflects a genuine opinion or a response to a given stimulus.

A related reason to question accepting the results at face value derives from the well-known survey research phenomenon of respondents providing socially desirable answers. To illustrate, researchers have noted that Americans over-report such behaviors as voting and exercise, and under-report cheating on their income taxes. Of direct pertinence to this study is recent research into church attendance. That over 40% of Americans claim to have attended church the previous Sunday is one of the most uniformly reported findings in social research in the United States over several decades. Yet, according to one researcher who conducted a census of church attendance on a particular fair-weather Sunday in a particular county in Ohio, fewer than half as many adult Ohioans (perhaps 19%) actually attended church that day, dramatically demonstrating the tendency of survey respondents to exaggerate socially approved behavior (Hadaway 1993).

In the studies of American Jews, several researchers noted inflated reports of donations to local UJA-federation campaign. Some estimate that two thirds of those who said they have given in the previous year actually did so. In other words, simple extrapolation from the surveys would inflate the number of donors by one half. Ritterband and Cohen, in their work on the 1981 New York Jewish population study, found that by comparing answers of respondents with the actual contours of giving to the local federation that almost all the exaggerated giving occurred with respect to donors claiming to have given under $100 at the time.

All of this skepticism is not to suggest that survey research is without value, but that the data demand subtle interpretation. The responses reflect the interaction of two elements: the "authentic" views of the respondents, and their perceptions of the norms that move their answers in a socially desirable direction.

The value of this perspective is not only in leading us to cast a skeptical eye on the findings. But if the responses reflect the combination of true underlying attitudes and the influence of social desirability, they provide evidence on both phenomena. In short order we will explore the import of the findings for the respondent's underlying attitudes; but before doing so, it would be useful to understand the norms that influenced these answers.

To be sure, this is not the first time that social researchers have wondered if Jews who deny Jewish particularism are reporting their true feelings. Commenting on a similar conundrum a decade ago, Leonard Fein wrote:

> *It is always dangerous to allow impression to overrrule data, but I do not believe these [survey] data [cited above] accurately reflect the real dispositions of the respondents; instead, they reflect what the respondents take to be the "acceptable" answer. There is, in other words, an apparent break between our instincts and our ideology, for despite our [overly universalist] answers, we do, indeed, feel more keenly the oppression of other Jews, the attacks against them. (1988: 194)*

Insofar as the responses in the current study reflect a conception of Judaism that is more religious and less ethnic than is actually the case, they point to the influence, of American society upon Jews' understanding of their group identity. In other words, the discrepancies between the survey responses and what we believe are the true attitudes of American Jews

reflect the pull of American culture to define being Jewish in the United States as more of a religion and less of an ethnic phenomenon, especially in its most particularistic formulation (i.e., favoring Jews, in one respect or another, over non-Jews). If such is the case, then even if the results do not accurately reflect the current reality, they may well point the direction to the condition of American Jewish identity in the not-too-distant future. In this sense, the results may be taken as "leading indicators" of the attitudes they purport to measure.

Appendix: Comparison of Sample with 1990 NJPS Sub-sample

Comparisons of these respondents with the distributions drawn from the NJPS reveal striking similarities across a large number of variables (see tables in the Appendix). Differences are small with respect to household size, percent married, education, geographic location (state), intermarriage, Jewish friends, Christmas trees, fasting on Yom Kippur, Kosher dishes, service attendance, synagogue membership, JCC affiliation, organizational membership, UJA giving, visiting Israel and importance of being Jewish. However, in a few instances, the sample in this study departs considerably from comparable respondents in the NJPS. Most notably, this sample somewhat over-represents respondents age 65 and older. It also under-represents those who failed to report observance of some widely practiced ritual observances. This finding indicates a further under-representation of those most distant from conventional Jewish life, a feature compounded by the unavoidable exclusion of Jews who did not claim to be Jewish by religion. In other words, this sample is somewhat more Jewishly involved than American Jews at large, and the results for relevant attitudes need to be seen in that light. To take an illustration, when the analysis reports that 27% of the sample would oppose the mixed marriage of their children, it is reasonable to assume that the actual percentage with such a view in the American Jewish population is somewhat lower, perhaps reaching just 22% as reported in the 1990 NJPS.

This sample bias understates the extent to which the findings support the study's main hypotheses. In other words, if these data, with their partial truncation of the least Jewishly involved respondents, point to signs of weakening Jewish ethnic identity, then a fortiori (or, in another lexicon, kal v'khomer) thoroughly unbiased data should point to even lower levels of ethnic attachment among American Jews as an aggregate.

But whatever the overall averages, the implications of the sample biases noted above for age-related differences are not at all clear. That is, while we can be reasonably certain that the biases produce a sample somewhat more Jewishly involved than the population from which it was drawn, we have no reason to suspect that they significantly affect the relationship of key indicators of Jewish identity with age or the differences in Jewish identity measures between older and younger Jews.

Socio-Demographic Variables

		This Sample	NJPS Sub-sample
Household Size	4+	22	23
	3	18	19
	2	44	40
	1	16	16
Age	65+	27	18
	55-64	15	15
	45-54	15	17
	35-44	23	27
	25-34	21	24
% Married		77	73
Education (Men)	Graduate Degree	27	30
	Bachelor's	34	35
	Less	39	35
Education (Women)	Graduate Degree	27	22
	Bachelor's	27	33
	Less	46	45
State	New York	24	25
	California	12	13
	New Jersey	11	9
	Florida	12	8
	Massachusetts	4	7
	Pennsylvania	7	6
	Maryland	5	5
	Illinois	4	4
	Ohio	3	3
	Other	21	18

*NJPS sub-sample consists of respondents who are Jewish by religion, age 25 and above, weighted for number of Jewish adults in the household.

Jewish Background and Identity Variables

		This Sample	NJPS Sub-sample
Jewish Education	Day School	7	8
	Part-time (exc. Sunday)	48	39
	Sunday School	22	21
	Other, none	23	31
Intermarried	(of those now married)	20	19
Most close friends are Jewish		46	49
No tree on Christmas		79	77
Passover Seder		86	73
Hanukah candles		90	71
Yom Kippur fast		64	63
Shabbat candles		28	22
Meat & dairy dishes		18	16
Service attendance	High holidays or more	67	59
	Monthly or more	25	27
Denomination	Orthodox	7	7
	Conservative	34	39
	Reform	35	41
	Other	24	14
Synagogue Member		48	44
JCC User (or member)		28	30
Other Jewish organization member		32	34
UJA/Federation donor		42	42
Visited Israel	Twice or more	16	16
	Once or more	36	33
Would oppose child marrying non-Jew		26.5	22
Very or extremely attached to Israel		27	36
Being Jewish very important		47	50

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Responses to Professor Steven M. Cohen's Paper

1) Professor Barry Chazan

2) Sam Norich

3) Dr. Jonathan S. Woocher

4) Allan Finkelstein

THE SOCIAL SCIENTIST AND CHANGING THE WORLD

Comments of Professor Barry Chazan on Professor Steven Cohen's Paper

For several decades Professor Steven Cohen has been one of the most reliable tour guides of the pathways of American Jewish life. He has employed rigorous methods of the social sciences to look at Jewish life, and he has been concerned with both the theoretical reliability and the practical utility of his research. He takes research seriously and he cares no less about changing Jewish life.

The study of "Religious Stability and Ethnic Decline: Emerging Patterns of Jewish Identity in the United States" is a valuable contribution to the "Steven Cohen guided tour of American Jewish life". Like conversations with the author, the research is as important for the ideas and thoughts that it generates as for the actual summary of the data presented. Consequently, rather than commenting on specifics of the research, I would like to record three pathways that my mind traveled as a result of reading this research.

A NEW JEWISH WORLD

This research underscores what is so clear and is so strongly being said in every study and in every daily communal development in North American Jewish life: we are on the threshold of an entirely new Jewish world. How convenient for the millennium to happen now, for it clearly comes at a time of overwhelming changes!

The organizational structure of American Jewish life is undergoing significant changes right before our eyes. Structures that were put in place in earlier periods in the century are now forced to change. The federation and welfare structures, creations of former times, are now wrestling with who they will become in the next decades. The entire map of national agencies is evolving and this structure will look much different in a decade or two.

The two major agencies that service Jews locally — the synagogue and the JCC — are in processes of major metamorphoses. The synagogue has been and will be a stalwart of Jewish life. It is truly a *mikdash m'at*, At the same

time, it is re-creating, re-engineering and transforming itself to meet the needs of a new Jewish world. It is and will be a far cry from the "steibel" of former days or the large suburban synagogue of the 1950's – 1970's.

Since the 1980's, JCCs have been transforming themselves and they have taken their place as important partners in the process of Jewish identity, culture, and continuity. The stereotype of JCCs as "simply pools and health clubs" is a legacy of the past or of ignorance.

The changes that we are seeing are not casual or incidental. They are big, basic, and bold. If we do not see them or if we treat them casually we are Jewish Rip Van Winkles.

THE NEW JEWS

Whether we like it or not, there are new Jews and new routes to Jewishness out there. In this century the new route symbolically began with Kafka and it has traversed numerous biographies and personalities over the last hundred years (if you need further verification, read the marriage announcement section of the New York Times for a few Sundays).

There is no longer one right route or one fixed way to become Jewish. For some it is clearly the path of intensive Jewish family life, day school, camp, youth movement, Israel experience, Jewish studies during the university years, Jewish marriage, two-three children and the pattern begins all over. Except that it doesn't always—or maybe even usually- work that way anymore. There are diverse access roads to the highway. Some begin with an Israel experience. Others get on board via a Judaic studies program at the university. Still others only even realize that there is a path in adulthood. For some it happens in childhood, for others with the birth of a child, for others at divorce and remarriage.

We need our social scientists and educators to chart new models, new routes, and new paradigms. We need Steven Cohen's paradigm of religious and ethnic, and Steven himself may decide at some point that this paradigm isn't efficient for describing today's Jews. We need to face facts and demand new levels of boldness from our social scientists and educators. "Lead us" we need

to say to them. "Help us see what is happening rather than telling us what we like to hear".

The same must be said about our ideological passions. We all may not be happy with the new Jews and the new Jewish routes, But if we love Jews and Judaism, then we need the courage to say, "These too are Jews. This is the map of Jewish life in the twenty first century". For some this is painful and near heresy because they love what they believe is authentic Judaism. But very soon all of us will face a major decision: we either will become so locked into our ideologies that we will bode no diversions, or we will so love Jews and Judaism that we will face the new facts and do all that we can to enable people to find the yellow brick road of positive Jewish life.

ISRAEL AND JEWISH LIFE

This metamorphosis is happening before our eyes every day and every minute. Israel is fifty years old. It is established and settled. It still has major problems but it is here, here to stay, and part of the here and now. It is very soon going to become the largest Jewish community in the world. The old paradigms of relations with Israel are over. These are the years of the creation of new forms. The pains of the moment are signs of the challenge. We will either come out of this crisis—as in personal crisis—healthier for it, or as a torn organism. It will not be healthy to continue in the current way. There is too much pain, dissent, bickering, distance. We either will care and change, or we will become two nations.

SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

These are thoughts that were ignited in my head by Steven Cohen's research – and by his thinking over the years. . What does it mean practically? I will briefly put on my JCC hat and list the immediate thoughts:

1. JCCs and synagogues are going to need to seriously figure out their relationship. Up to now they have been occasional allies, careful neighbors, and frequently, suspicious competitors. This research and clearly comes to say: "Dear JCC and synagogue: you could be important

partners in this new world. You often serve the same clientele and certainly the same Master. Get your act together and work together to create a truly Jewish neighborhood".

2. Anyone concerned for Jews is gong to have to decide to reach out to Jews wherever and whoever they are. The dilemma is not where Jews are at, but how to get them to a better Jewish place, If we become closed and doctrinaire about where they are at, we will never have a crack at moving them to a better place.

3. Anyone concerned with the Jewish people should focus much love, attention, and investment in the issue of Israel and its connection to Jewish life. We can't make peace with the alarming implications of Professor Cohen's research in this area. The Israel connection is important for the lives of Jews, for local communal Jewish life and for the Jewish future, it deserves great love, care, and effort.

CONCLUSION

This study might be read as yet another thoughtful and reasoned collection of data and conclusions about American Jewish life. That is not how I read it. For me it is a continuing conversation I have been having with Steven Cohen (and other creative people like him) in which I hear myself saying:

The writing is on the wall. The picture is clear. The twentieth century is over. It's a new Jewish world. Wake up. Make the changes. Be bold. Have courage. Create new forms. Break out of your old mind set. Don't be afraid. Go for it. Discard your parochial loyalties. Enter the twenty first century. Do what great Jewish leaders and communities of the past have done. Follow the innovative paths of our Moseses, Akivas, Rashis, Rambams, Wises, Schechters, Bubers, Ben Gurions.

Change this world.

RESPONSE TO THE JCCA STUDY REPORT

"RELIGIOUS STABILITY AND ETHNIC DECLINE: EMERGING PATTERNS OF JEWISH IDENTITY IN THE UNITED STATES"

Comments of Sam Norich on Professor Steven Cohen's Paper

The most telling critique of Steve Cohen's paper is the one he makes himself. I read this paper as an argument between the author's findings on religiosity and ethnicity and what he believes -- and in his *kishkes* he knows -- to be true.

The measures of religiosity and ethnicity Cohen has constructed tell him that there's probably been a decline in the past decade in ethnic identification among American Jews, notably among younger cohorts, while religious identification has held steady. But a lifetime of living as part of the group he's studying, and a recent series of in-depth interviews he and colleagues conducted with 50 American Jews, persuade him that ethnic dimensions of Jewish identity continue to be far more salient than his survey data indicate. So how is the contradiction to be resolved?

A careful reading of the paper shows the contradiction to be more apparent than real. Cohen tells us enough about his measures and his method to remove any surprise that might have been occasioned, in the methodological note he appends to his paper, when he raises doubts about his findings that are so sharp, that he seems to be repudiating them altogether.

Cohen begins by telling us that in Jewish experience, religion and ethnicity are historically and theologically "fused". He quotes Stephen Sharot's observation that for American Jews, "Ethnicity ... provides the "real" reasons for joining synagogues and carrying out religious practice..." In American experience, however, the two could not be regarded more differently: while the majority American culture values religion, it "denigrates" ethnicity and relegates it to "immigrants, the working class and non-whites (or all three)". And if the negative regard in which ethnicity is held were not bad enough, Cohen points out "several larger trends in American society" that only diminish the chances for its persistence and expression: "the near-

evaporation . . . of the social bases for ethnicity (neighborhoods, friendship networks, in-marriage) . . . the breakdown of community of all sorts . . . the privatization of religion . . . the declining store of "social capital" . . . the de-emphasis of civic activity and political involvement..."

Cohen could easily have added a paragraph about the powerful and ultimately successful effort of American Jews, over the course of three generations, to overcome the barriers to their full integration into this society. Having put forward the banner of individual achievement and carried it to victory over the forces of group exclusion, one might think that American Jews are hardly positioned to now assert their group solidarity.

When he turns to a discussion of his findings, Cohen emphasizes the "positive sentiments [expressed by a majority of his sample] about various aspects of Jewish religious life." But his empirical findings speak far louder on the saliency of ethnicity: his strongest majorities come in answer to measures of Jewish peoplehood. Almost all "said that they are proud to be Jewish (96%), and proud of Jews' rich history (94%); that being Jewish connects them with their family (90%); and that they believed in a permanent bond among Jews (76%). Cohen acknowledges that " . . . almost half the respondents (47%) rated being Jewish as very important to them, almost twice as many (26%) as those who said the same about religion in their lives. This finding lends support to the inference that ethnic conceptions of Judaism are still more powerful than religious ones." Even "Israel", which most American Jews have never visited and never will, but which serves as a marker of Jewish ethnic identification, gets rated more highly (33% consider it as extremely important, and an additional 33% as very important in their "sense of being Jewish") than does religion.

To be sure, Cohen underlines the essential stability of measures of religiosity across the 9 year time span between his 1988 and 1997 surveys, as well as across the 30 year age range of his core sample. But he also tells us that the questions he used to tap religiosity combined items referring to purely confessional and private domains (e.g., faith in God, observance of Jewish law) with items that refer to social interactions and group processes (synagogue attendance and involvement, religious schooling), that are -- at least conceptually -- closer to the ethnic domains. His indices of religiosity may therefore be "polluted" by ethnic influences, and the vaunted stability in

his measures of religiosity may, in fact, camouflage a very different kind of development. Is it too much to infer that younger cohorts, who have not yet acquired either the experience or the language of an elaborate ethnic involvement with which older Jews are more comfortable and familiar, find it easier to manifest and verbalize their ethnicity in synagogue involvement, whether they actually attend or merely give it lip-service? As Cohen reminds us, there is a tendency for "survey respondents to exaggerate socially approved behavior". That would surely incline them to exaggerate religious, as opposed to ethnic identification, particularly when they are members of a historically denigrated ethnic minority answering questions from a non-sectarian survey company that usually asks them about their consumer behavior.

Cohen also allows us to wonder about his measures of ethnicity. He begins with the identification of two "clusters", one called "ethnic familism" (encompassing "tribalism, felt marginality, and commitment to endogamy") and the other "ethnic communalism" (by which he means "peoplehood, Israel attachment, the two Jewish institutional measures, and social justice"). But when he turns to the analysis of his findings, he examines the components mentioned, while "familism" and "communalism" are forgotten. Could it be that they do not constitute discernible patterns in the response data?

American Jewry's historical experience, as well as a cursory perusal of Cohen's findings, suggests another way to parse the domain of ethnicity. American Jews have overcome ethnic exclusion and have nevertheless retained the habit of ethnic self-affirmation and affiliation. The result may be a reluctance to claim for our ethnic group any moral or political distinction, or even to make invidious comparisons that implicitly denigrate others. Hence the low percentage who regard having mostly Jewish friends as essential to being a good Jew (3%), and the majorities that disagree with the three social justice measures ("because I'm Jewish, I identify with the powerless, vulnerable and the underdog"; "being Jewish means being especially compassionate"; and "generally, Jews are more charitable than other Americans.")

What we may be seeing here is a distinction between two kinds or dimensions of ethnicity, which we might call ascribed and achieved ethnicity

(paraphrasing the famous distinction between different kinds of mobility that is noted in the literature on American social history.) Ascribed ethnicity is the sort manifested by ethnics without choice, constrained by linguistic, racial or cultural barriers to limit most of their interactions to members of their own group. Achieved ethnicity would then be the sort manifested by those who can and do move in circles far beyond the confines of their own group, but choose to assert a primal identification and belonging with what is largely a voluntary community. There are doubtless elements of each type in the experience of contemporary American Jews, even if the balance has been shifting.

Herbert Gans surely had elements of this notion of achieved ethnicity in mind when he coined the term "symbolic ethnicity". From the vantage point of someone who had known the thick and enveloping quality of social life on the Jewish Lower East Side at first hand, "symbolic ethnicity" could only have carried a negative connotation. We who have now managed to create some very elaborate and successful communities that embody an ethnicity of choice need not attach negative connotations to the concept, at least not as a matter of course.

In sum, Cohen's own findings can be read as a confirmation of the essential continuity of the traditional Jewish pattern of ethnic identification, while recognizing that the changed historical circumstances of recent decades give both the religious and the ethnic components of Jewishness different content than what would have been familiar in an earlier day.

COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT OR PERSONAL FAITH: AMERICAN JUDAISM AT A CROSSROADS?

Comments of Dr. Jonathan S. Woocher on Professor Steven Cohen's Paper

American Jewish identity is changing. Of this, there can be no doubt. Steven M. Cohen's latest survey of the American Jewish population, reported in his paper, "Religious Stability and Ethnic Decline: Emerging Patterns of Jewish Identity in the United States," reinforces what is rapidly becoming the dominant view of the nature and direction of these changes: "Jewish identity" is becoming much more like American religious identity in general. What is most meaningful to the largest number of Jews are those aspects of their Jewishness that relate them to the Jewish religious tradition (especially holidays and life-cycle events), to their families, and to the institution (the synagogue) that best embodies the linkage between these two. Jews are becoming less ethnically particularistic, less likely to value norms or expressions of "connectedness" to other Jews, whether in the form of charitable giving, friendship patterns, institutional membership, attachment to Israel, or endogamy. While "religiosity" and "ethnicity" continue to be mutually reinforcing (or at least remain statistically correlated with one another), the "weight" of the former in the overall identity of Jews — especially younger Jews — appears to be proportionately growing. The most straightforward reading of the data would imply that, if current trends continue, we can anticipate a community more "privatized" and "Protestantized" than the one we have known through the middle decades of the twentieth century: Jews will think and behave very much like their fellow (upper middle-class) Americans, except that the rituals they practice will be different and the places that they go (or fail to go) to worship will be synagogues, rather than churches.

To be sure, as Cohen himself affirms, we should not take any survey's results entirely at face value (and not only because respondents do not always tell the whole truth). Surveys are inherently blunt instruments for understanding people as opposed to populations. Especially when the analysis is limited to item by item frequencies, as it necessarily is in this relatively short paper, what we learn is how often particular attitudes or behaviors are (or are not) manifested among the entire population surveyed. What we are not able to

glean from survey data alone is a detailed and nuanced picture of how individual Jews are actually constructing their Jewish identities. Here, there is no reason to believe from the accumulation of evidence now available that the story is one of enormous diversity. Many things are going on today in American Jewish life at the same time, some among large numbers of Jews, some among relatively smaller but nevertheless important segments of the population. Thus, while in the aggregate "ethnic" measures of Jewish identity may be declining while "religious" ones are holding relatively stable, this certainly does not imply that the same reconfiguration of Jewish identity is taking place among all Jews equally or at the same rate. Indeed, before we rush to proclaim (and bemoan) wholesale changes in Jewish identity, we should recall Cohen's own conclusion that "ethnic conceptions of Judaism are still more powerful than religious ones" (p. 17).

Having said this, there is still the reality of what this survey does tell us. Should we be concerned that a growing number of Jews apparently will feel less "ethnically" attached to their fellow Jews and to the Jewish people, even if they remain committed to Judaism as their personal religious identity? From one perspective, perhaps this is not such a bad thing. We can argue that much of what has marked (and continues to characterize) Jewish ethnic "solidarity" represents the inevitable and not always admirable attitudes / behaviors of a besieged minority. "Sticking together," "watching out for one another," "being suspicious of outsiders" — these "tribalistic" sentiments may have positive dimensions (and survival value), but they may also express themselves in an ethnic chauvinism that is out of place in the contemporary American social cultural milieu in which most Jews live. American Jews are not a besieged minority. They are full participants in the mainstream of American life, and it is both logical and necessary that they shape and embrace a Judaism that is appropriate to this life situation. The data would appear to indicate that American Jews do continue to value the heritage of their people and to take pride in their Jewishness; it is simply the case that increasing numbers do not see a need or feel a desire to translate their sense of "Jewish rootedness" into acts or attitudes of self-segregation. They recognize the particularist and collectivist character of Jewish history, but their own Jewishness is both more personal and more universal. And, why should this not be so? Is it so clear that the residua of classical American Jewish "ethnic" identity — anti-anti-semitism; the "culture of organizations"

that Harold Weissberg wrote about several decades ago; the "lox and bagels, kugel and knishes" Jewishness that has now become part of American popular culture — have an inherent moral, aesthetic, or spiritual value that justifies our concern for their preservation? Judaism has been recast countless times in our history, and if American Jews are doing it once again, perhaps this is a sign of their vitality, not their imminent disappearance.

Obviously, the new configurations of American Jewish identity pose a substantial challenge to many of the Jewish community's institutions. But, here too, there is room to ask whether their evident vulnerability in an era when all institutions must prove their worth in a demanding marketplace may not be a necessary spur to long-overdue organizational changes. We see this happening already among synagogues, educational institutions, federations, membership organizations and Jewish community centers. In each of these categories there are fabulous success stories today; institutional decline and abandonment is not inevitable when the institutions themselves learn how to adapt to new needs and desires. Though the challenge is not inconsiderable, the evidence is that Jewish community can be reconstituted on bases other than traditional "ethnic" solidarity. The good news in surveys such as Cohen's is that there remains a substantial number of American Jews who do want to be actively and affirmatively Jewish — if we, the "community," can provide them with the right instruments and resources.

So, do I dismiss Cohen's findings and the changes they point to as unimportant, or embrace them as inevitable and desirable? Not quite. The truth is, I do find them troubling. Not because I am attached to Jewish "ethnicity" per se, and certainly not to some of its more banal and even repulsive manifestations. In the end, I see cause for concern in the changes that Cohen documents because my personal understanding of Judaism places the collective dimensions of Jewish life at the core of what I take Judaism to be about: the audacious, ongoing, ever-changing effort to live as a mamlekhet kohanim v'goy kadosh (a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation") as our contribution to the work of tikkun olim ("perfecting the world"). A community in which large and growing numbers of Jews feel only mild attachment to Israel and to the major (non-synagogal) institutions of Jewish life; deny any special responsibility for the well-being of other Jews; and maintain friendship and marriage patterns that dilute the sense of being part

of a unique, global people; would represent a dramatic departure not only from historical American Jewish patterns, but from Jewish values and behavior throughout our history.

The "ethnic" aspects of Jewish life — including our sense of peoplehood, mutual responsibility, desire to survive as a group, and deep attachment and commitment to a Jewish state in eretz yisrael — are important because they are part and parcel of our Covenantal mission. For Jews (at least), there is no way to personal "redemption" that does not flow through the life of a community pledged to seek tzedakah, hesed, and kedushah. Within this framework, we should indeed value everything that enables Jews to feel and behave more like an extended family — a family concerned not merely for its own well-being, but for how its "family life," including how it relates to non-family members, contributes to the ultimate "well-being" of all the families of the earth.

The challenge for the Jewish community today is, in my view, less to restore American Jewish ethnicity than to reinvigorate American Jewish covenantalism. Only the latter is likely to render the former meaningful and enduring. Fostering proximity, countering geographic dispersion, promoting institutional partnerships, and reasserting a norm of community involvement — strengthening the "plausibility structure" for covenantal commitment — are part of what is needed. But, so too is a serious, straightforward effort to build on the renewal (or maintenance) of interest in Jewish religious expression, and the possibly waning, but still considerable sentiments of ethnic solidarity, by emphasizing the holistic character of the Jewish pursuit of kedushah. The task of the hour, as Avraham Infeld has described it, is to "make the collective dimensions of Jewish life personally meaningful." Whether it be responding to the needs of Jews in far-flung corners of the globe, building a direct relationship with the people and land of Israel, devoting energies to a Jewish cause, or spending time at a JCC (or in some other Jewish organization), the behaviors that once may have flowed naturally from the experience of being part of an endangered, semi-excluded minority, will now have to be reframed as components of a process of meaning making and community-building that 21st century American Jews can enthusiastically embrace. To do this, the experiences themselves will need to be reinvigorated and transformed: trips to Israel will need to become

personal encounters rather than tourist visits; Jewish organizations will need to engage the heart and mind, not just the pocketbook. But, we will also need to be clearer about what we are affirming: A commitment to the Jewish community and people is important not just because our ancestors were once persecuted (and our children might yet again be), but because the Jewish community and people are engaged in a bold historic effort to demonstrate that justice can triumph over injustice, compassion over indifference, intimacy over alienation, modesty over excess, joy over suffering, beauty over ugliness, and life over death. If this effort is meaningful, if Jews as individuals wish to share in it, then the collective dimensions of Jewish life must be embraced alongside the personal; indeed, they are inseparable.

I believe this message can still be delivered and will still be heard today. I believe that Judaism, precisely because it transcends categories like "religious and ethnic," "particular and universal," "personal and collective," can constitute an attractive, even compelling, way of life for 21st century Jews. The task of our institutions — all of our institutions — is to give as many Jews as possible the chance to encounter a Judaism that speaks to their unique needs and life circumstances, but also draws them toward the larger collective project of being a "holy community" which is our shared responsibility. I know that not all Jews will choose to embrace this path. But, I am convinced that many will. And that, I think, is cause enough to proceed with the effort to help them along this way.

Dr. Jonathan S. Woocher
Executive Vice President, JESNA

July 16, 1998

Our time has Come—Maximizing Communal Efforts to Enhance Ethnicity

Comments of Allan Finkelstein on Professor Steven Cohen's Paper

Steven Cohen's research identifies a number of trends and issues that have clear and challenging implications for anyone involved in Jewish communal life. He clearly documents declines in the following:

- support for in-marriage
- frequency of friendship with other Jews
- attachment to Jewish institutions of all sorts
- attachment to Israel
- attachment to Jewish peoplehood.

While certainly many of us had sensed these trends taking place, the research just as certainly underscores our concerns. Moreover, it tells us that these trends are part of a package, namely, the web of community and connection that has tied Jews to one another. On all levels, from the micro to the macro, from family to peoplehood, that web is becoming unraveled.

But beyond clarifying the challenges to Jewish life, the **research also points to some solutions. Cohen demonstrated quite clearly that affiliation with any institution – be it a JCC or a synagogue (and presumably others) – is associated with far higher levels of commitment to Jewish community and Jewish connection.** We don't know whether commitment precedes affiliation, or whether affiliation builds commitment. But we do know that the two are intertwined.

We also know that **more affiliation is associated with more commitment.** Someone who belongs to a JCC or a congregation will generally exhibit far more community commitment than someone who belongs to neither. But, and this is the point, **someone who belongs to both a JCC and a congregation will express more commitment than those who belong to just one of these key institutions in American Jewish life.** Despite long-held feelings regarding "turf," and competition between these institutions, Cohen's research clearly tells us that we will have a greater impact working together than our traditional "separate and unconnected" approach.

From these findings, I draw the following conclusions:

1) Building Jewish community and commitment to community is the central challenge facing organized Jewry. The religious dimension of Jewish identity is basically sustaining itself, but the ethnic or communal dimension is more in need of attention.

2) Institutional affiliation (and serious involvement in those institutions) is the key to bolstering Jewish communal commitment. **Jews who belong are also those who are most committed** to marrying other Jews, having Jewish friends, supporting Israel, and, in general, seeing themselves as part of a world-wide Jewish people that extends backwards and forward in time.

3) The major institutions of Jewish life need to work in partnership to maximize the number of points of contact and spheres of involvement for their members. Instead of seeing ourselves in competition, we need to understand that more involvement in one institution often means more involvement in another agency. Jewish involvement is not a zero-sum game.

It is abundantly clear that the role of the JCC movement in North American Jewish life takes on even greater significance as we face both our current reality and projections of what will be if we don't change our approach. We are singularly committed to fostering Jewish connections and building meaningful Jewish community. We can, and should, do more in these areas, but I have no doubt that we are fulfilling a crucial function at a critical juncture in American Jewish history.

I have spoken and written about the need for "partnership" between and among Jewish agencies. The rhetoric must become reality in practice. We all need to see ourselves as advancing a common goal in complementary ways. We touch Jews at different points in their lives and in different ways. But the success of one agency does not imply the failure of the other. Rather, the success of one as often brings about the success of the other.

The "language" of Jewish institutional life has all to often included berating the work of other institutions, minimalizing their unique contributions both within their sphere and within the larger community. Cohen emphasizes

the "normative value of associating with other Jews," which clearly points to a need to recognize that one never knows which entry point, which affiliation, or which activity might lead to a more meaningful and "total" involvement in the community. The energy that we spend criticizing each other and in fear of "losing" if someone participates in another institution, could be much better spent developing smoother hand-offs and a "seamless journey" through Jewish life. Being conscious of the language we use in speaking about each other is an important step in changing the face of how we ease the path along this journey for many Jews who simply do not know yet what combination of affiliations might make sense, or lead to their unique ethnic identification.

One long-held assumption is that JCCs and synagogues compete for the same people, and that, membership in one will preclude membership in the other. Cohen's data bear out the clear findings of the NJPS, in that about two thirds of JCC members and participants belong to synagogues, and over a third of synagogue members belong to JCCs." I would suggest that we would be more productive as a community in dealing with the real challenges to Jewish life on which we could work together, rather than continuing to play this old and inaccurate tape. Cohen tells us that "the JCC constituency is somewhat more religious and decidedly more Jewishly ethnic than those outside the JCC, both among synagogue and non-members" Cohen says that "even within synagogues, those who participate in JCC activities score higher on all measures of Jewish identity than those with no JCC connection." What a fascinating challenge this provides to these two significant worlds of Jewish affiliation. I invite our synagogue colleagues, both lay and professional, to a serious dialogue about the implications of these findings for our work together. The potential for JCCs to impact synagogue affiliation, and religious identification is also interesting as we learn that "among non synagogue Jews, participants are substantially more ethnically identified and somewhat more religiously identified than those with no JCC involvement.

We have spent a significant amount of communal time, and financial resources dealing with the challenge to Jewish continuity. Cohen challenges us to look instead at "the nature of Judaism and Jewishness,.....particularly in the ethnic sphere." We are evolving new and exciting approaches to informal Jewish education that supplement the critical formal efforts that are

at the core of Jewish identity formation. Our ability to articulate different approaches to defining the "nature of Judaism and Jewishness" that will meet the realities of the younger generation will clearly shape the nature of North American Jewish life entering the year 2000 and beyond.

We have a unique opportunity to respond to the realities of geographic dispersal in the way that we work together in new models and new settings. The norms of Jewish association and involvement are being defined for us. Our ability to respond in creative and meaningful ways may very well determine the kind of Jewish Community that we will leave for future generations.

The Jewish Community Center has, often, focused its efforts primarily on its members, or its immediate constituency. Cohen's charge to focus on community building implores the JCC to take another critical look at its broader role in the larger Jewish community, especially as it relates to the more marginally affiliated Jews, and to its sister agencies and congregations

While Cohen's research may provide no real surprises, it certainly states in clear terms what many of us know and feel instinctively. It may provide some troubling data, but it also leads us to optimism that there are real solutions to realizing the incredible potential of the organized community to touch individuals and enhance their connections. I, for one, am optimistic that our collective thinking has enormous and unrealized possibilities for enhancing the ethnic aspects of Jewish life.

In the coming years, all of us will need to strengthen our own commitment building meaningful Jewish community through genuine partnerships among the leading institutions of Jewish life. To fail to do so will be at our own peril. To do so is to fulfill our responsibility as reflective Jewish leaders committed to the greater good of the Jewish people.

July 31, 1998

The Questionnnaire with Marginal Frequencies

Dear Panel Member,

Your household has been selected for a national survey about topics of importance to the American Jewish community. The information provided will contribute to the development of a unique profiling of the opinions, beliefs, and practices of contemporary American Jewry. All responses, of course, will remain anonymous and compiled together with hundreds of others in the form of statistical summaries. The statistical profile will be available to Jewish organizations and leaders, journalists, and academics interested in these issues. For the research to be valid, it is important that everyone selected complete the survey -- not just those who feel they are "strongly Jewish."

IMPORTANT: Because we need a balanced number of replies from men and women, this questionnaire needs to be answered by a Jewish male in your household.

Cordially,

YOUR SENSE OF BEING JEWISH

1. In thinking about your sense of being Jewish, how important are each of the following?

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
a. Israel	33%	33	**28**	**5**	**1**
b. God	50%	25	**17**	**7**	**1**
c. The Holocaust	49%	36	**12**	**2**	**1**
d. The Torah	45%	31	**18**	**6**	**1**
e. Passover	39%	37	**21**	**4**	**0**
f. Rosh Hashana & Yom Kippur	50%	32	**15**	**3**	**1**
g. The Sabbath	22%	26	**31**	**20**	**1**
h. Jewish law	21%	24	**38**	**14**	**3**
i. American anti-Semitism	54%	30	**12**	**3**	**2**
j. The Jewish People	50%	34	**14**	**2**	**1**
k. The Jewish family	56%	28	**13**	**3**	**1**

ATTACHMENTS TO JEWISH INSTITUTIONS

2. To what extent do you feel attached to each of the following local Jewish groups and organizations?

	Extremely Attached	Very Attached	Somewhat Attached	Not Attached	Not Sure
a. A synagogue or temple	21%	17	**28**	**34**	**0**
b. A Jewish Community Center (or YMHA)	4%	7	**25**	**64**	**1**
c. The local Jewish federation/UJA	3%	8	**30**	**58**	**1**
d. Another Jewish organization	7%	11	**25**	**54**	**3**

THE "GOOD JEW"

3. In your opinion, for a person to be a good Jew, which of the following items are essential, which are desirable, which do not matter, and which are undesirable (better not to do)?

	Essential	Desirable	Does Not Matter	Undesirable	Not Sure
a. Believe in God	52%	33	14	0	1
b. Contribute to Jewish philanthropies	11%	47	40	1	2
c. Support Israel	20%	51	28	1	1
d. Contribute to non-sectarian charities	6%	38	51	1	3
e. Belong to Jewish organizations	10%	41	47	1	1
f. Belong to a synagogue	24%	43	32	1	1
g. Belong to a Jewish Community Center	4%	27	67	1	2
h. Attend services on High Holidays	36%	38	24	1	1
i. Lead an ethical and moral life	67%	29	3	0	0
j. Have a kosher home	9%	18	67	5	1
k. Study Jewish texts	7%	35	54	2	2
l. Educate oneself about Judaism & Jewish history	24%	62	13	0	1
m. Have mostly Jewish friends	3%	17	67	12	1
n. Work for social justice causes	9%	41	45	3	3
o. Be a liberal on political issues	3%	18	65	9	4
p. Be a conservative on political issues	1%	10	69	14	6
q. Marry a Jew (or a convert to Judaism)	28%	39	30	2	1
r. Celebrate the Sabbath in some way	19%	42	38	1	1
s. Give one's children a Jewish education	48%	40	11	0	1
t. Feel attached to the Jewish People	41%	45	13	0	1
u. Visit Israel during one's life	18%	41	38	1	2

YOUR BELIEFS AND OPINIONS

4. Do you agree or do you disagree with each of the following statements?

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure
a. I am proud to be a Jew	68%	28	1	0	3
b. Being Jewish connects me with my family's past	51%	39	6	1	3
c. Being Jewish is a major part of how I live my life	30%	38	26	3	3
d. Jews are my people, the people of my ancestors	48%	46	4	1	2
e. Jews have had an especially rich history, one with special meaning for our lives today	48%	46	2	0	3
f. I look at the entire Jewish community as my extended family	14%	38	35	5	8

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure	
g. Jews have a permanent bond	23%	53	16	2	7	(56)
h. I feel I can count more on my Jewish friends than on my non-Jewish friends	8%	17	54	16	5	
i. I relate easier to Jews than to non-Jews	9%	26	48	12	5	
j. To me, being Jewish means having an ethnic identity as well as a religious identity	25%	55	14	2	4	
k. My being Jewish doesn't make me any different from other Americans	25%	41	27	5	2	
l. I feel that, as a Jew, there is something about me that non-Jews could never understand	14%	38	37	6	5	
m. Jews are God's "Chosen People"	15%	35	30	6	14	
n. As a Jew, I feel like somewhat of an outsider in American society	3%	16	55	22	3	
o. I feel as moved by the oppression of non-Jews as by the comparable oppression of Jews	19%	56	16	2	8	
p. I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world	9%	38	39	5	9	
q. Jews are widely disliked by Gentile Americans	3%	22	54	11	10	
r. One day American Jews will probably face severe anti-Semitic persecution	6%	22	44	8	21	
s. My feelings about the Holocaust have deeply influenced my feeling about being Jewish	21%	44	25	3	7	
t. I really don't feel competent praying in synagogue	5%	26	40	22	7	(69)
u. Most synagogue services are not interesting to me	6%	27	44	18	5	(14)
v. I look forward to going to synagogue	12%	38	33	8	9	
w. Even if I don't observe every aspect of the Sabbath, I do try to make it a special day	11%	36	41	8	5	
x. A Jew can be religious even if he or she isn't particularly observant	29%	57	8	3	3	
y. I am a spiritual person	20%	43	23	3	11	
z. It bothers me when people try to tell me that there's a right way to be Jewish	41%	42	11	3	3	
aa. I have the right to reject those Jewish observances that I don't find meaningful	20%	54	16	6	5	
bb. Parents shouldn't try to impose a particular pattern of Jewish living on their children	10%	34	39	12	6	
cc. Having a Christmas tree would violate my sense of being Jewish	45%	24	18	11	2	

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure	
dd. Jews should marry Jews	27%	35	23	7	9	
ee. In-marriages (between Jews and Jews) tend to have fewer difficulties than intermarriages	15%	29	33	11	13	(24)
ff. In synagogue, I feel closer to God	15%	39	31	6	9	(25)
gg. Many Jews in synagogue or Jewish organizational life are hypocrites	10%	33	34	8	17	
hh. Jewish charities place too much emphasis on helping only Jews	4%	26	50	8	12	
ii. The organized Jewish community gives too much recognition to the wealthiest Jews	11%	34	36	4	15	
jj. I find Jewish organizations largely remote & irrelevant to me	6%	35	41	7	11	
kk. Orthodox Jews are the most authentic Jews	6%	9	48	30	7	
ll. Most Orthodox Jews are narrow-minded	13%	38	29	7	13	
mm Orthodox Jews' feelings of superiority bother me	16%	36	32	6	9	
nn. I am grateful to Orthodox Jews for doing so much to maintain Jewish life	9%	30	36	11	13	
oo. I get upset when Orthodox Jews in Israel try to limit the practice of Conservative and Reform Judaism in Israel	44%	36	9	3	9	
pp. Jews have a special intellectual style	9%	40	34	4	12	
qq. Because I'm Jewish, I identify with the powerless, the vulnerable, and the underdog	6%	29	44	13	8	
rr. Being Jewish means being especially compassionate	7%	34	42	6	11	
ss. Generally, Jews are more materialist than other Americans	2%	12	57	20	9	
tt. Generally, Jews are more charitable than other Americans	7%	34	39	6	14	
uu. Israel is critical to sustaining American Jewish life	15%	37	29	5	14	
vv. Israel is a dangerous place to visit	5%	28	40	16	11	
wwIsrael doesn't really need American Jewish charity any more	2%	8	48	26	17	(42)

ISRAEL

5. How many times have you been to Israel?

Never	64%	Twice or more	15
Once	21%	I was born in Israel	1

6. How emotionally attached are you to Israel?

Extremely attached	9%	Not attached	27
Very attached	18%	Don't know	4
Somewhat attached	42%		

(44)

7. With respect to Israel's policies regarding Palestinians, the Land of Israel, and the Peace Process, which approach do you tend to favor more — that of Likud (the party of Benjamin Netanyahu and the late Menachem Begin), or that of Labor (the party of Shimon Peres and the late Yitzhak Rabin)?

Likud	20%	Other party	1
Labor	35%	Don't know	43
A religious party	2%		

(45)

YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT GOD

8. Do you believe that...	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Probably Not	Definitely Not	Not Sure
a. There is a God	56%	27	7	3	8
b. God watches over you in times of danger	36%	32	16	5	12
c. God has a special relationship with the Jewish people	25%	27	24	7	17

INTERMARRIAGE AND OTHER MATTERS

9. If your child were considering marrying a non-Jewish person with no plans to convert to Judaism, would you . . .

Strongly encourage them to marry	4%	Oppose their marriage	15
Encourage them	6%	Strongly oppose	12
Be neutral/ Not sure	64%		

10. What would you do about this marriage if it involved a conversion to Judaism?

Strongly encourage them to marry	9%	Oppose their marriage	2
Encourage them	39%	Strongly oppose	3
Be neutral/ Not sure	47%		

11. To what extent do you feel . . .	To a Great Extent	To Some Extent	Not At All	Not Sure
Close to other Jews	37%	55	6	2
Close to Israelis	8%	41	43	8
Close to non-Jewish Americans	15%	72	8	5

(53)

12. How important would you say religion is in your own life?

Very important	26%	Not very important	29
Fairly important	43%	Not sure	2

13. How important would you say being Jewish is in your own life?

Very important	47%	Not very important	13
Fairly important	39%	Not sure	1

(55)

YOUR JEWISH BACKGROUND

14. What is the main type of Jewish education you received as a child? **(SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

None **16%**
Sunday School **22%**
Hebrew School or other part-time Jewish school **48%**
Yeshiva or Day School..... **7%**
Private tutoring..... **5%**
Any other type **3%** (56)

15. Referring to Jewish religious denominations, do you consider yourself to be... **(SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

Conservative **34%**
Orthodox..... **7%**
Reform..... **35%**
Reconstructionist **2%**
Something else Jewish..... **2**
Just Jewish **18**
Secular **2**
Not Jewish .....

16. About how often do you personally attend any type of synagogue, temple, or organized Jewish religious service?

Not at all or only on special occasions (a Bar Mitzvah, a wedding)..... **33%**
Only on High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur) **16%**
A few times a year **26%**
About once a month..... **10%**
Several times a month or more..... **16%** (58)

17. Among the people you consider your closest friends, would you say that _

None are Jewish..... **5%**
Few are Jewish **16%**
Some are Jewish..... **33%**
Most are Jewish..... **36**
All or almost all are Jewish..... **10**
(59)

18. Which of the following apply to you? **(MARK EACH ITEM "YES" OR "NO")**

		Yes	No	
a.	During the Christmas season, does your household ever have a Christmas tree?	21%	79	(60)
b.	During Passover, do you usually attend a Seder?	87%	14	
c.	Does your household usually light candles on Hanukkah?	90%	10	
d.	Does your household use separate dishes for meat and dairy?	18%	82	
e.	Do you fast on Yom Kippur?	64%	36	
f.	Does your household usually light candles on Friday night?	28%	72	
g.	Are you or any member of your household currently a member of a synagogue or temple?	49%	52	
h.	Are you or anyone in your household a dues-paying member of a Jewish Community Center (JCC) or YMHA?	14%	86	
i.	Have you or anyone in your household participated in any program or activity at a JCC or a YMHA within the past year?	27%	73	
j.	Do you belong to any Jewish organizations other than a synagogue, temple, JCC, or YMHA?	32%	68	(69)
k.	In the past two years have you served as an officer or on the board or committee of a Jewish organization, synagogue, or temple?	19%	81	10121 (14)
l.	Did you contribute to the UJA/Federation in the past year?	42%	58	
m.	During the last 5 years have you engaged in regular study of Jewish subject matter such as in a class or in an informal study group?	25%	75	
n.	Have you ever seriously considered living in Israel?	12%	88	

19. Of the following people, who was raised Jewish, and who is Jewish now?
(MARK THE "NA" BOX IF THAT QUESTION IS NOT APPLICABLE TO YOU.)

		Raised Jewish?			Jewish Now?			
		Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	NA	
a.	You	95%	5		99	1		(18-19)
b.	Your spouse	78%	22		80	20		
c.	The spouse of your youngest married child	55%	45		54	46		

20. **(ANSWER IF YOU HAVE ANY MARRIED CHILDREN:)** How old is your youngest married child? ____

32% have a married child
Average age of the married child: 37 (Range 21-58)

(24-25)

YOUR BACKGROUND

21. Are you: Male.....**51%** Female.....**49**

22. Are you: **(MARK ONE):**

Married	**77%**	Divorced or separated	**7**
Never Married	**11%**	Widowed	**5**

23. How many children have you had? _____

76% have children
1 child: 20% 2 children: 48% 3 or more children: 32% (28-29)

24. What is your age? _____

Average age: 50 (Range 18-93) (30-31)

25. With respect to your political views on most issues, do you regard yourself as **(MARK ONE):**

Very liberal	**7%**	Conservative	**21**
Liberal	**28%**	Very conservative	**2**
Moderate	**43%**		

26. With regard to political party identification, do you regard yourself as:

A Democrat	**64%**
An Independent	**20%**
A Republican	**16%**

(33)

RAISING JEWISH CHILDREN

IF YOU HAVE HAD NO CHILDREN, SKIP THE REMAINING QUESTIONS AND RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY! OTHERWISE -- IF YOU HAVE HAD CHILDREN -- PLEASE CONTINUE.

27. Who would you say is/was more involved in your child(ren)'s Jewish upbringing -- you or your spouse?

You	29%
Your spouse	17%
Both equally	50%
Not sure	4%

(34)

Please answer the questions below with respect to your oldest child:

28. How old is this child? _____ (35-36)

Average age: 27 (Range 1-63)

29. Is this child male or female?

Male	48%
Female	52%

30. Did this child ever attend...

		Yes	No	
a.	A JCC pre-school	16%	84	(38)
b.	Another Jewish-sponsored pre-school	25%	75	
c.	A full-time Jewish school (yeshiva or day school, grade 1 or higher)	11%	89	
d.	A part-time Jewish school that met more than once a week	41%	59	
e.	A Jewish Sunday School or other one-day-a-week program	50%	50	
f.	A Jewish youth group	42%	58	
g.	An overnight camp sponsored by a JCC	14%	86	
h.	An overnight camp sponsored by another official Jewish agency such as a synagogue movement, or a Zionist organization	21%	79	
i.	A Christian religious school	4%	96	(46)

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY!

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