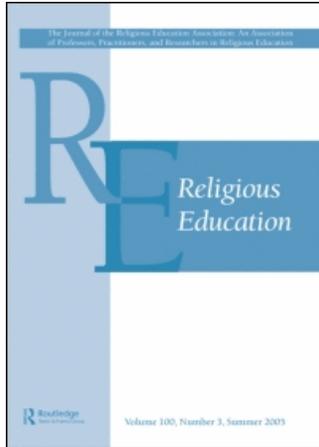


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JEWISH YOUTH IN TEXAS: TOWARD A MULTI-METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO MINORITY IDENTITY¹

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Abstract

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are used to examine the religious and ethnic identity of youth attending a Jewish summer camp in Texas. A strong aspect of participants' Jewish identity is formulated in reaction to the surrounding Christian society, with which they negotiate a compromise to live relatively comfortably. The informal religious education and temporary community of the camp allow exploration of a proactive Jewish identity. A typology is developed with two sets of opposed concepts of identity: individual versus peoplehood and internal versus external. Sub-regions differentiate between fearful versus benevolent external identity and between psychological versus traditional internal identity.

INTRODUCTION

Jewish Identity in the Southern United States

The United States is home to the largest Jewish population today, with 5.8 million (44%) of the world's 13 million Jews living within its borders. It is by far the largest Diaspora population. Nevertheless, Jews represent only approximately 2% of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau 2002). Therefore, members of the largest Jewish population are a tiny minority within their home country. Most of those Jews are concentrated in urban areas. However, increasing numbers of

¹The authors thank Louis J. Dobin, director of the Kibbutz Program at Greene Family Camp in Texas who allowed us to conduct this survey. Thanks also to Allison Ofanansky for her invaluable editorial help in the preparation of the manuscript.

Jews are leaving ethnically homogenous neighborhoods and dispersing throughout the general population.

The present study looks at the ethno-religious identity of participants from Texas and Oklahoma in a regional Jewish summer camp. Over three quarters of Texans identify themselves with one of the various denominations within Christianity, with a strong fundamentalist and evangelical presence (Alvarez and Plocheck 2004). Jews make up only 0.6% of the population of Texas and 0.1% of Oklahoma (U.S. Census Bureau 2002). Many camp participants are among the only Jewish students in their public schools. The religious education received at the short-term camp must be understood in the context of the daily religious context in which the Jewish youth live.

Although most Jews in the United States have not experienced violent anti-Semitism, Jewish-Christian relations, particularly in the Southern "Bible Belt" have been complex, and at times uneasy, over the past several decades. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention have missionary efforts aimed specifically at converting Jews to Christianity, and some of their leaders and missionaries have made statements offensive to Jews (Ariel 2000). At the same time, the SBC is a supporter of Israel and has issued resolutions condemning anti-Semitism and racism. The historical role of the Catholic Church in persecution of Jews and specifically in the Holocaust necessarily influences Catholic-Jewish relations today, although Church leaders, including the current Pope Benedict XVI and his predecessor Pope John Paul II, have made efforts to improve relations between the religions. Although this study concerns adolescents who may not know the "official policies" of their religious leaders, the larger context of Jewish-Christian relations in the Southwestern United States is mirrored in the experience of our study population.

The development of "reactive identity" in such circumstances and the educational benefit of participating in a "temporary community" as means of fostering a proactive identity are discussed.

Temporary Community

A community has been said to encompass "... all forms of relationship which are characterized by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion and *continuity in time*" (Nisbet 1967, 47, emphasis added). A *temporary* community may be said to encompass each of these criteria except the last. The three basic elements of community according to Hillery's

(1955) review of 94 sociological definitions of the term are geographical proximity, social interaction, and a common tie (value, goal, etc.). Although a temporary community includes all three, the members share the first for only a limited time.

The creation of temporary communities as an education tool for preserving or fostering a sense of identity has been noted among a wide variety of religious, ethnic, and cultural groups. Temporary communities such as camps, retreats, festivals, and conferences provide opportunities for participants to remove themselves from the dominant surrounding society, immerse themselves in a controlled environment, meet others who share their background and/or beliefs, learn, and express their identities in ways that may not be possible or acceptable in the “permanent community” in which they live. The group dynamic and the feeling of connection in temporary communities are of utmost importance, produced through an intensive encounter that stresses participation.

Overnight camps have some characteristics of a “total institution,” in that participants do all their daily activities as a group, with a schedule imposed by an authority and with a particular institutional goal (Goffman 1961, 6–7). However, camps are temporary and participation is voluntary. Although the term “temporary voluntary total institution” has been used to describe similar programs (Kelner 2002), here the shorter and simpler term “temporary community” will be used.

Jewish Summer Camps as Temporary Communities

The creation of such temporary communities is a widespread phenomenon within Diaspora Judaism. The camp may serve as a “surrogate community” where a Jewish community does not exist at home (Keysar, Kosmin, and Scheckner 2000). Levinas (1963) contended that Jewish summer camps in France created a community and full Jewish life that could not exist in the city. Summer camps provide an opportunity for participants to experience being in a Jewish environment, to learn about their heritage, and to obtain answers to the questions and challenges that are raised by their encounters with their non-Jewish peers. Other types of informal religious education, such as youth movements and trips to Israel also allow Diaspora youth to explore their identity in Jewish settings.

Evaluations of informal religious educational programs have found that the close inter personal bonds formed between participants and with the counselors are equally important to the curriculum

(Cohen, Ifergan, and Cohen 2002; Chazan 2002). Keysar, Kosmin, and Scheckner (2000, 5) note three interacting elements of Jewish education and identity formation: the home environment (responsible for passing on tradition), the Jewish school (responsible for transmitting skills, history, texts) and Jewish youth groups and summer camps, which provide, primarily, role models, peers, and opportunities for social interactions in a Jewish setting. In the case of young Jews from nonreligious families who attend public schools in predominantly Christian areas, participation in a summer camp may be the primary force in Jewish education and identity development.

This article analyzes research done on the Jewish identity of participants in the Greene Family Camp Kibbutz Program, located in central Texas and affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism. Campers in the Kibbutz Program attend courses in Jewish studies and participate in prayer and Shabbat services in addition to general recreational activities. The purpose of the Kibbutz Program is to celebrate Jewishness, and to overcome hardships in understanding one's identity as a Jew.

Reactive Identity

Identity may be proactive or reactive, embraced from within or imposed from without. A reactive identity is based on what one is *not* rather than what one is. It is often an identity of defense, adopted by people who are constantly challenged on their beliefs and their values. Those with a reactive identity are often focused on prejudice (real or perceived) against the group, and with what they oppose, rather than what they support. Values may be inversions of those held by the surrounding society, rather than based on a coherent value system formed within the group.

A reactive nature of Jewish identity has been the focus of several European philosophers of identity formation, for whom Jews define themselves in reaction to the "otherness" imposed on them by the surrounding society (Morris-Reich 2004). Opportunities to participate in leisure activities and social settings fostering a proactive and positive ethnic identity during the adolescent years may have significant and long-lasting impacts.

METHODS

This article presents findings from two research projects conducted at the Greene Family Camp, one using qualitative methods, the

other quantitative. By dialoging theory-building qualitative methods, with theory-testing quantitative methods, the researchers can better understand the issue under investigation (Newman and Benz 1998).

The ethnographic survey (Bar Shalom 1997, 2002) consisted of interviews with participants entering grade 10 (average age 15–16). These interviews took place during the first two weeks of ten camp sessions, during the summers of 1992 through 1996, and again in 2001. The in-depth interviews enabled the participants to relate detailed, specific stories about complex interactions with peers both in the Texas public schools and the camp, and their emotions connected to such interactions and experiences.

The second source is quantitative data collected through a questionnaire distributed to participants in the summer of 2002 and again in 2004. In 2002, 126 questionnaires were completed and returned and 213 were completed and returned in 2004, representing more than 95% of the campers. These campers ranged in age from 12 to 16.

Two sections of the questionnaire will be examined in this article. In one, respondents were given a list of 15 possible ways in which to identify oneself as Jewish. The question was phrased, “I consider myself Jewish. . . [by birth, in reaction to anti-Semitism, etc. . .]. Respondents selected as many of these components as they felt were applicable to their own Jewish identity. Another section asked to what extent campers agreed with 15 statements about Jewish identity and related issues.

A Multidimensional Approach

The responses to the Jewish components section are analyzed using a multidimensional scaling technique known as Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) (Guttman 1968). This technique makes it possible to simultaneously compare a large number of variables and to graphically portray the underlying structure of the data.

The first step in the SSA procedure involves the calculation of a correlation matrix of the chosen variables. In this case, the Monotonicity Coefficient (MONCO), a regression-free coefficient of correlation (Guttman 1986, 80–87) was used. Based on this correlation matrix, the SSA program plots points representing the variables on a cognitive “map” revealing distinct regions of correlated data (Guttman, 1968). The higher the correlation between two variables, the closer they will appear in the map. Conversely, the lower the correlation between two variables, the further, they will appear from each other on the map.

In interpreting the map, it is important to realize that while the placement of the variables in the space is objective, based on the correlation matrix, the division of the map into regions is subjective, based on the theoretical outlook of the researcher. Various valid interpretations of the same map may be made. In addition to their content, the arrangement of the regions is important. Types of configurations include polar (wedges emanating from a common center), a center-periphery structure, or axial (parallel rows or columns).

The list of components was compiled based on previous research. Individuals who identify themselves as Jewish have been found to do so in relation to a number of different components: birth, religion, culture, Israel, anti-Semitism, and so on (Cohen 2004; Levy Levinson, and Katz 2004). Based on the results of the ethnographic study, another item was added to the list of ways of identifying as a Jew: being Jewish in disagreement with Christianity.

RESULTS

Part One: An Ethnographic Approach

The following interview excerpts illustrate some of the challenges to forming a proactive Jewish identity in a strongly Christian society. Many participants expressed a reactive Jewish identity, or “not Christian” identity defined by what they don’t believe (i.e., in Jesus) or don’t do (i.e., go to Church).

Question: How does your being a Jew affect your life?

Answer: When you know that it is just a small minority, and you know the difference that it makes when a Jewish person marries a Christian woman and converts to Christianity, you have to watch out; I date Christian girls but. . .

Q: But why is it important to remain Jewish?

A: Because if everyone thinks that it doesn’t matter just because I marry a Christian. . . .

Q: Yes but what is good about being Jewish?

A: Well, I just agree with the whole idea of Judaism.

Q: Which idea?

A: Well, like the idea if Jesus was the Messiah, there wouldn’t be any wars.

After being questioned for some time, the interviewee eventually identified some positive associations, though the reference to Judaism in specific is rather vague:

A: It's also the warmth of the holidays, I go to my grandmother's house and she makes those foods. . .

Although this participant has fond emotions related to Jewish holidays spent with family, his first reactions to questions about the importance of being Jewish highlight non-identification with Christianity. Even his explanation of "the whole idea of Judaism" is presented in terms of its disagreement with Christian theology.

Almost every participant had a story of an incident in which he or she had been questioned, challenged, or pitied for having "erroneous" beliefs.

Q: Most of your friends are Jewish or not?

Jonathan: Most of my friends are not Jewish.

Q: How is the Christian influence in your town?

Jonathan: More than anywhere else, probably.

Q: How does that influence your life?

Jonathan: Sometimes it makes me feel out of place, I'm in the wrong side, but usually it doesn't have a big influence on me.

Q: When does it make you feel out of place?

Jonathan: When people talk about Jesus, burning in hell and all that stuff. They try to make me believe their way. Sometimes it makes me angry and then I tell them that I don't agree.

Q: And these are your friends?

Jonathan: Yes.

Q: Your best friends?

Jonathan: Well, usually we don't talk about religion very much. If they start talking about burning in hell, then I usually tell them that we don't believe in hell, and that is the end of the conversation.

Jonathan's answers are representative of a conflict faced by many of the participants. The challenges to being Jewish come from people they define as best friends. To avoid conflict, Jewish youth may try to avoid the subject of religion.

The interviewing ethnographer asked Kevin if he was ever confronted on the issue of his Jewishness:

Kevin: It doesn't happen often, but it still happens, I used to hate it, and I still hate it, but I react differently now.

Question: How did you use to react, and how do you react now?

Kevin: Well, when I was younger . . . first of all I didn't know what was going on. Someone would ask me if we killed Jesus and so on. And I would reply, "I can't believe you asked me that!" Now I just blow it off. They just don't know any better, I guess. So, you really find yourself in the Kibbutz, you really find out what is important to you, and even if somebody says something that can offend you, it doesn't matter any more, because you know what's real and what's right, and they can't take it away from you.

Kevin's remarks represents a common trend in many participants' answers. Many reacted very strongly to their first encounter to this religious pressure, but the tendency in later years is to deny, ignore, or suppress these encounters. This change in attitude over time will be seen again in the discussion of the results from the questionnaire. A very typical response to the threat of burning in hell is "Jews don't believe in hell."¹ Kevin's remark about how the Kibbutz experience helps him "know what's wrong and what's right" is another example of how minority groups may utilize temporary communities to reinforce identification with their own cultural and religious myths.

Q: Did you ever encounter a situation in which any of your friends was sorry for your future burning in hell?

Rachel: Not really my friends, but my best friend's mother goes to this big Baptist church. She told me that she was sorry that my parents didn't raise me Christian, because I was destined to burn in hell.

Another camper, Sarah, spoke about her sense of alienation. Sarah said that she was not used to being only among Jews, since she comes from a small town in Texas.

Sarah: I have this friend, who is really a good friend, and she came into my house crying. When I asked her what's wrong, she said that she couldn't stand the fact that I'm going to go to Hell, because we reject Jesus. (Tears were rolling from Sarah's eyes).

Q: And what did you tell her when she said those things?

¹It is not the purpose of this article to discuss historical and theological attitudes about hell in Judaism, but rather to interpret the attitudes of this study population.

Sarah: Nothing, I couldn't speak, I felt so bad, and I know that many of her friends feel the same way.

Q: Do you belong to a synagogue?

Sarah: Yes, but we don't go very often, it is very far from our town, we have only one more Jewish family in C [a small town in Texas].

Sarah: I wish I could find someone among the people here [i.e., other camp participants].

Q: Well, you must give it some time.

This excerpt emphasizes the impact that peers can have on each other at this age. Sarah wasn't sure that she belonged to the group at camp. She might have accommodated her views to those of the majority had she not integrated into this temporary community. In the following conversation that took place between the interviewer and Sarah toward the end of camp, the difference in Sarah's feelings about her place in the camp community and her heritage in general may be seen.

Sarah: I like it so much here. I wish it would never end.

Q: Well, that sounds a little bit different than two weeks ago, doesn't it?

Sarah: [Doesn't answer, just smiles and after a pause continues] I just wish I could still be in contact with all these people.

Q: You can, you know about the TOFTY . . . [Texas–Oklahoma Federation of Temple Youth]

Sarah: [Interrupting] Yes I know, I plan to go to the August event, I'm going to stay at M's house.

Q: Do you plan to go to Israel next year?

Sarah: I don't know; hopefully, if I convince my mom.

Rabbi Lawrence Jackofsky, the director of the Southwest Regional Council of the Union for Reform Judaism also noted, in an interview with the research team's anthropologist, that he saw many Jewish youngsters who believe that Christianity is the norm and noted the frequency with which Jews in his region are challenged about their beliefs.

Part Two: A Questionnaire Approach

Components of Jewish identity. Respondents were asked to define themselves as Jewish in relation to 15 different possibilities. This

TABLE 1. The Components of Jewish Identity^a

"I consider myself Jewish. . ."	2002	2004	Age 12–13	Age 14	Age 15–16	Total
By birth	89	88	90	88	87	88
By family	86	89	91	88	86	88
By religion	84	84	88	82	83	84
By commitment	70	69	69	74	67	69
By choice	69	67	60	67	75	68
By loyalty	63	63	60	64	63	63
By culture	62	71	71	69	64	68
By education	61	67	59	64	70	65
In relation to other Jews	57	57	50	65	55	57
By hope	48	45	39	53	46	46
In relation to Israel	44	35	32	42	40	38
By language	41	37	33	42	40	38
In reaction to anti-Semitism	36	33	31	39	33	34
In disagreement with Christianity	24	26	18	31	25	25
In reaction to the Shoa (Holocaust)	15	19	15	19	18	18
I don't consider myself Jewish	2	5	2	7	4	4

^aCommitment and Family between Male and Female had $p < .05$; Culture, Loyalty, and Religion between the various age groups had $p < .07$.

section of the questionnaire represents a cognitive, highly reflexive approach to ethnic identity. Table 1 shows responses to each of these items in 2002 and 2004 as well as differences between age groups for the combined 2002–2004 data.

Birth and family were the most common components chosen by the campers. Although the most personal of the components, they are the least optional. They are inherited rather than chosen. These campers regard themselves as linked, through the fact of being born into the same ethnic group, to people with whom they have very different religious beliefs, political views, lifestyles, and experiences. Over half see a link to other Jews as a component of their Jewish identity.

Approximately a quarter of the campers identified as Jews out of disagreement with Christianity. This represents a reactive and externally motivated aspect of Jewish identity. Nevertheless, 84% identify as Jewish by religion.

The only significant difference between the 2002 and 2004 responses was in relation to Israel. The percentage of campers who selected "Jewish in relation to Israel" dropped by almost 10%. During the years of intense violence in Israel, the number of tourists visiting Israel and high school students participating in tours to Israel fell dramatically. Because personal visits are an important factor in instilling feelings of connection to Israel, fewer youth visiting may account for

the change in attitude. It is also possible that politically liberal youth are critical of Israel's policies toward the Palestinians, or that they were influenced by negative images of Israel in the press and therefore felt reluctant to express solidarity with Israel. Although American Christians are generally supportive of Israel, to understand the reasons for this shift in attitude, it would be necessary to further investigate portrayals of Israel in these communities.

As these youngsters get older, many of the factors binding them to their Jewishness fade. This is borne out in the results for "culture," "family," "loyalty," and "religion." There was a corresponding decrease in the percentage of campers who said they identify themselves as Jewish in "disagreement with Christianity." We attribute this trend to the greater need of adolescents to conform within their surrounding milieu. The percentage of campers who selected the components "education" and "choice" gradually increased with age. The percentage that identified as Jewish by religion and by culture dropped with age. For 11 of the components we see a U-turn, in which identification with a component is highest among the middle age group, then drops again among the oldest campers. Although in some cases (birth, family, loyalty, Israel, language, Shoa) the drop is very slight, only one or two percentage points, in other cases (commitment, relation to other Jews, hope, reaction to anti-Semitism, disagreement with Christianity) it is more significant, and the overall trend is notable. The persistent decline in identification as Jews by religion and by culture, the drop among the oldest campers in their identification as Jews in reaction to anti-Semitism and in disagreement with Christianity, and the rise in identification as Jews by choice and education are particularly important in our analysis of these adolescents' adaptation to their social milieu and will be discussed further in what follows.

The Components of Jewish Identity: Toward a Structural Analysis. Although there is much to learn from the cross-tabulation of the data, the complex relationship between the components of the campers' Jewish identity cannot be fully understood by looking at each piece of data in isolation.

Figures 1 (2002) and 2 (2004) graphically portray the correlations between the components of identity. Although not identical, the same basic structure can be recognized in both maps. Both maps have a polar structure with four main regions arranged in sets of opposed concepts with a conceptual center.

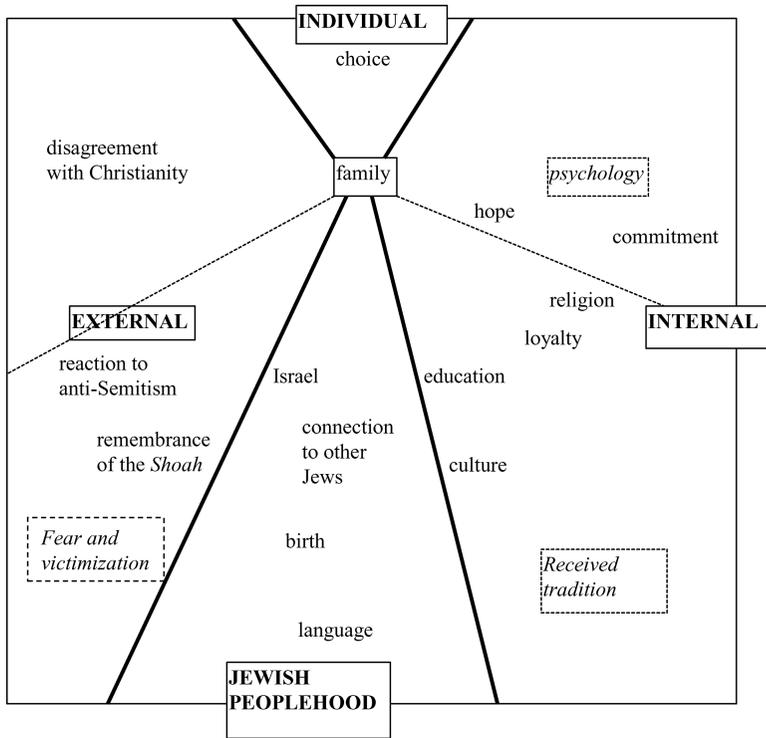


FIGURE 1. Smallest space Analysis map of campers' responses to components of Jewish identity, data from 2002.

1. Individual, consisting of the single component Jewish by choice.
2. Jewish Peoplehood, consisting of the components Jewish by connection to other Jews, by birth, by language, in relation to Israel and, in the 2004 map, by family and remembrance of the Shoah.
3. Internal: This region is subdivided into two parts: *received tradition* containing the components Jewish by education, by culture, and by religion; and *psychological* containing Jewish by hope and by commitment. The component by loyalty was located in the received tradition region of the 2002 map and in the psychology region of the 2004 map.
4. External: This region may be divided into two sub-regions, one referring to a fearful and victimized type of relationship with non-Jews (Jewish in reaction to anti-Semitism and, in the 2002 map, in remembrance of the Shoah), the other referring to a benign relationship with the surrounding culture (disagreement with Christianity).

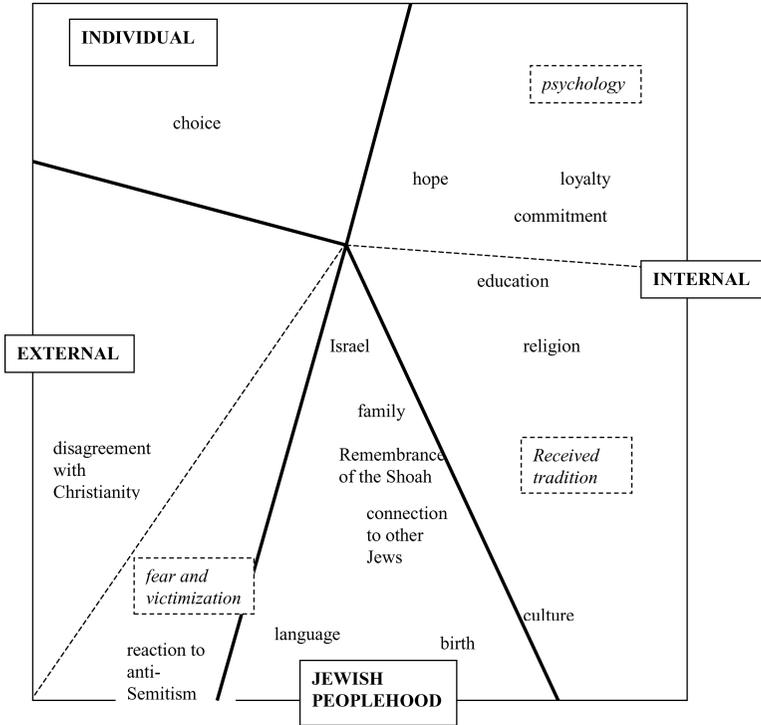


FIGURE 2. SSA map for data 2004 (dimension 4, projection 1×2)

In the map for the 2002 data, the semantic center for the structure for each of these wedgelike sections is family. In their teenage years, youth still consider their families the locus of their lives. In the map for the 2004 data, family is near the center of the map, but slightly further into the Jewish Peoplehood region.

The four regions are arranged in two sets of opposing pairs. The Individual and Jewish Peoplehood regions lie opposite each other on the map, reflecting two inversely related views of Judaism. The first is defined by choice, the second by birth. Similarly, the Internal region lies opposite the External region. The former represents a pro-active type of identity, the latter a reactive type of identity. The sub-regions may also be seen in terms of opposing conceptual pairs. The psychology sub-region lies opposite the fear and victimization sub-region. The received tradition sub-region lies opposite disagreement with Christianity. The significance of this particular structure will be further explored in the discussion section, in the context of other findings.

Statements about Jewish Identity. In the second part of the questionnaire, campers were given a list of statements and were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree). The results were analyzed in percentages by age. Table 2 shows the percentages of campers in 2002 and 2004 who responded affirmatively (agree/strongly agree) to these statements.

Only a small number feel awkward among their Christian friends, think their friends want them to accept Jesus as the Savior, or said that they sometimes hide the fact that they are Jewish. Even fewer said that they did not feel accepted by their Christian peers, or that they find it difficult to be a Jew in the South, or that it would be socially easier for them to convert to Christianity. These findings testify to the comfort level of these young Jews in their milieu.

TABLE 2. Responses to Statements about Jewish Identity (Agree/Strongly Agree)

	2002	2004	Age 12–13	Age 14	Age 15–16	Total
1. Sometimes I feel awkward among Christian friends.	10	13	12	11	13	11
2. I've been told by Christian friends that I'm going to burn in Hell, for not accepting Jesus.	23	30	19	33	31	27
3. It's difficult to be a Jew in the South.	6	10	8	10	9	9
4. In a way, I feel that my Christian friends do not fully accept me.	4	4	3	5	6	5
5. Being at camp in the summer gives me strength to maintain my Judaism.	66	72	69	71	69	69
6. I wish I could be surrounded by Jews during the rest of the year, like at camp.	38	34	24	38	44	35
7. Socially speaking, it would be much easier for me to convert to Christianity.	5	6	9	1	6	5
8. Most of my Christian friends would like me to accept Jesus.	11	10	10	10	15	11
9. My parents support my efforts to remain Jewish.	78	86	81	86	84	83
10. I prefer to hang out with other Jews.	22	16	14	19	22	18
11. It's easier to be a Jew in Israel than in the Diaspora.	31	32	30	31	33	31
12. I wish I could move to an area where there are more Jews (Israel, NYC, etc).	24	19	18	20	24	21
13. Sometimes I hide the fact that I'm Jewish.	10	7	7	8	12	9
14. I consider myself very religious.	17	17	11	22	18	17
15. My Christian friends are more religious than me.	14	24	23	18	21	21

On the other hand, in 2002, 23% of agreed with the statement "I've been told by Christian friends that I'm going to burn in Hell for not accepting Jesus," and this percentage increased to 30% in 2004. We can also see in the responses to statements 6, 10, 11, and 12 that despite their friendships with non-Jews, some campers feel a special bond with others who share their heritage.

A few changes in attitude between the first and second survey may be noted. There was an increase of 10% in campers who said that their Christian friends are more religious than they are, perhaps indicating an increase in religiosity among Christian youth in the region. Parallel with this, there was an increase of 7% in campers that said they have been told by friends they will burn in Hell for not accepting Jesus and slightly higher percentages of campers said they feel awkward among Christian friends (increase of 3%), and that it is difficult being a Jew in the South (increase of 4%). On the other hand, fewer said they prefer to hang out with other Jews or wish they could move to an area with more Jews. More campers said their parents support their efforts to remain Jewish.

There was a significant increase with age in the desire to be part of a Jewish peer group (statements 6, 10, 11, and 12) as well as an increase in selection of some of the statements indicating discomfort with Christian friends (statements 4 and 8). The trend noted in relation to the components, showing a U-turn with the highest percentage of selection among the 14-year-old campers, is seen here in responses to statements 2, 3, 5, 9, and 14. The inverse of this trend, in which the 14-year-olds were the least likely to agree with a given statement is seen in response to statements 1, 7, and 15.

DISCUSSION

The ethnographic and quantitative studies conducted at the same camp portrayed different aspects of life for Jewish youth in the Baptist South. In the interviews, the camp participants discussed the difficulties they face as Jews, the pressures from their Christian friends, their anxieties and questions. Their responses to the survey questions, on the other hand, indicate that young Jews attending this camp in Texas feel generally comfortable in their surroundings, but with some desire for a stronger Jewish support system. The temporary community of the camp serves as a substitute in the absence of a year-round Jewish milieu.

Even within the narrow range of ages in the study population, it is possible to see various adaptation strategies and attitudes toward ethnicity expressed by adolescents at various levels of development. Age 14 seems to be a particularly critical period. The large number of components of identity that peak at this age indicates an age of exploration of identity that subsequently drops off. The support system offered at the camp and from parents is most keenly felt at this age, just after Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It also may be that Christian teens of this age, also coming to terms with their own religious views, are more vocal than their older peers. Despite their desire for a larger Jewish peer group, voiced most strongly among the oldest campers, the 15–16-year-olds seem to have negotiated a sort of compromise with the surrounding social situation, seen in the drop among those who identify as Jews in reaction to anti-Semitism and disagreement with Christianity. Adaptation to the environment seems to involve avoidance of sensitive issues, as discussed in the interviews, as well as a distancing of themselves from many aspects of Judaism, particularly the religious and cultural. We also see an increase in the number of older students who hide the fact that they are Jewish. The desire for a larger Jewish peer group is strongest among the oldest students. Concern about dating non-Jews was mentioned in the interviews and may at least partially explain the increase in 15–16-year-olds who said they would like to be surrounded by Jews all year, who prefer to hang out with other Jews, and who feel it would be easier to live either in Israel or areas of the United States with larger Jewish populations.

These differing results highlight the importance of using multiple research methods, particularly when dealing with a complex issue such as religious identity among adolescents. The results are not contradictory. Rather, they provided the respondents with the means to express the conflicted and complicated set of feelings they have about their daily lives. In personal discussions these teens were more likely to raise concerns and voice difficulties, while they were nevertheless hesitant to agree with broad statements in the questionnaire that cast doubt on their place in their home communities.

Typology of Jewish Identity

The typology developed in this study is similar to those found in similar studies conducted among other populations of Jewish youth (Cohen 2004, 1997, 1992).

The *inherited* versus the *chosen* represents a fundamental dichotomy in identity. A belief in common ancestry is one of the fundamental elements in the definition of an ethnic group. A voluntary and individualistic attitude toward identity, however, is increasingly widespread. Choice has been described as the quintessential feature of identity in Western society today (Berger 1979; Gans 1979).

The second set of oppositions, Internal versus External, shows another important piece in the puzzle of Jewish identity. The addition of the component “disagreement with Christianity,” which this study has added to the cumulative knowledge being compiled from numerous studies of Jewish youth, helped clarify the existence of a type of identity that is not based on fear or prejudice, yet is formulated in reaction to the surrounding society rather than on the content of the religion and culture.

The structural opposition of the sub-region further emphasizes this point. The disagreement with Christianity sub-region in the SSA map represents a nonviolent co-existence with non-Jews, but a negative, reactive relationship with Jewish identity. It is not rooted in religious, nationalistic, emotional elements, nor is it rooted in choice—all aspects of a proactive Jewish identity. Rather, it is defined by its relationship to the Other, in this case Christianity. This region lies opposite the *received tradition* sub-region, which represents Judaism’s intrinsic content, independent of relationships with non-Jews. It could be said that a Jewish identity rooted in its own culture may have disagreements with other religions that are not necessarily rooted in fear of violence. The *psychology* sub-region of the Culture and Feeling region represents a more emotional type of relationship with Jewish identity, less based on the religious or cultural tradition. It lies opposite the *fear and victimization* sub-region, which represents an emotionally charged relationship with non-Jews, focused on anti-Semitism, past and present.

CONCLUSION

The typology developed from the survey helps in understanding the complex emotions expressed by the respondents in the interviews and questionnaires. The Jewish youth surveyed seem to operate well under conditions of great ambiguity, which is characteristic of cross-cultural encounters. They learn to adapt and live with contradictions. The fact that there are no indications that violent strains of anti-Semitism are active in this region enables the Jewish youth to co-exist in the predominantly Christian surroundings.

Several techniques are described by interviewees to alleviate the cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957) between their Jewish identity and the negative attitudes toward Jewish belief held by their friends. These include ignoring or minimizing their peers' religious statements, avoiding talking about religion with friends, or distancing themselves from Judaism either by hiding their Jewishness or by being nonreligious. Such avoidance techniques may be successful in enabling friendship to continue, but such friendship, in which discussions of fundamental beliefs are off-limits, create a dissonance between the Jewish students' values and the values held by the most meaningful group of people, their peers.

Participation in the temporary community formed at the camp enables these youth to explore and develop a more proactive type of identity. Away from camp, they find themselves defining and defending Jewish beliefs in response to questions posed or accusations made by their Christian peers. At camp, they are able to discuss such challenges and possible responses to them with their peers and the staff of the camp. The informal religious education provided at the camp gives participants tools to address questions and difficulties raised in their home communities.

Membership in the temporary community formed at camp continues to have major impacts during the time away from it. Continued contact among camp participants throughout the year may increase the impact of the camp experience and the temporary community. As the campers move through adolescence, they go through a period of identity crisis, which seems to be partially resolved among the older teens, by adaptation to the surrounding society and membership in the temporary community of the camp.

In future research, the reactive identity expressed by the Jewish youth in this study could be contrasted with the identity of Jews living in Israel, where living among a Jewish majority shapes their identity, or in areas such as New York City, where a significant Jewish community exists and alongside so many other groups that one group cannot dictate the cultural environment. Few of the respondents in this survey have had any experience in religious Jewish communities, either in Israel or in the United States.

This article only begins to explore the issues facing Jewish adolescents in the Southwestern United States. Much data was collected and analyzed but which was beyond the scope of this discussion. We hope that in future articles we will be able to further examine differences between sub-populations such as male and female participants, and those

living in small towns versus those living in cities. The long-term impact of periodic informal religious education may be contrasted with other types of religious education such as enrollment in Jewish day schools, membership in Jewish youth organizations, and visits to Israel.

The applicability of these findings and the typology to other minority groups may be further explored. For example, a strikingly similar sentiment was expressed in a report from a Muslim summer camp: "What was crucial was that the 'weirdness' of Islam was taken away at these camps. I was no longer one of the few visible Muslims in my school. I was a Muslim amongst many. I did not feel strange" (Siddiqui 2004).

The maintenance of beliefs, culture, and myths of minority groups seems to be linked to the establishment of communities, even temporary communities, in which members feel welcome and invited to participate and search for their particularistic communal identity.

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