

ed. 1118979

FINDINGS FROM THE 1991 NEW YORK JEWISH POPULATION STUDY*

Bethamie Horowitz

CUNY Graduate Center and UJA-Federation of New York

(*Contemporary Jewry* v.15 1994)

A brief overview of NYJPS methodology and of some of the demographic findings regarding the New York Jewish population, with comparisons, where possible, to the national Jewish population are presented.) Characteristics of New York Jewry are discussed that seem to offer a counterpoint to the current image of American Jewry, which holds that the American Jewish experience is one of continuing erosion over time. A "New York effect" is also identified and discussed. Policy implications of the study's findings are examined.

Some would argue that New York is more of an exception than a rule regarding the overall picture of American Jewry. The New York community's sheer size, its larger and more diverse Orthodox population, and its longer history as a Jewish population center all suggest that in some fundamental way "New York is not America." Yet, of course New York is an essential part of America: New York Jewry represents between a third and a quarter of the national Jewish population. By virtue of its size alone, the "view from New York" offers an important corrective to any overgeneralized picture of American Jewry. With the publication (Horowitz 1993) of the 1991 New York Jewish Population Study (NYJPS), we have an opportunity to compare the profile of New York area Jewry with the portrait of Jews in America which emerged from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey or NJPS (Kosmin, Goldstein, Waksberg, Lerer, Keysar, and Scheckner 1991). The two surveys overlapped substantially. However, since the New York study included some questions about the Jewish background experiences of adults which the NJPS did not, the New York study has important things to suggest about American Jews in general.

The goals of this paper are two-fold. First, I will present a brief overview of NYJPS methodology and of some of the demographic findings regarding the New York Jewish population, with comparisons, where possible, to the national Jewish population. Second, I will discuss the characteristics of New York Jewry that seem to present a

counterpoint to the view which holds that the American Jewish experience is one of the continuing erosion of Jewish identity.

METHODOLOGY

The Jewish population of the greater New York area has been the object of study at numerous times since the turn of the century.¹ The boundaries of the "New York Area" have varied, depending on the research sponsors' purviews. The Greater New York Area served by UJA-Federation (referred to in this paper as "the Area") includes the five boroughs of New York City, The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and the nearby counties of Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester. Until 1981, studies were limited to estimates of the size and distribution of the Jewish population in the Area. The 1981 study (sponsored by The Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York) marked the first time that a sample of Jewish households was interviewed to determine, in addition to overall estimates of the size and distribution of the population, the *nature* of the Jewish population, i.e., its socio-demographic profile, the extent of its religious practice, its connection to Jewish philanthropy, and its need for social services.

Sponsored by UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, the 1991 NYJPS was designed to facilitate comparisons of Jews nationally to Jews living in the New York area (thus it overlapped significantly in design with the 1990 NJPS sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations), as well as to provide a temporal perspective on New York Jewry provided by comparisons with the earlier 1981 New York study. New York Jewry, thus, can be refracted through two lenses at once: 1) at different points in time (1981 and 1991); and 2) in comparison to Jews located in different points in space (New York and elsewhere in the nation).

The 1991 NYJPS drew a random representative sample of 4,006 Jewish households by screening and interviewing more than 40,000 New York area residences in New York City, Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties. Households were contacted by telephone to locate Jewishly-connected households (defined as households containing at least one person who currently is or previously was Jewish). The telephone numbers were drawn using a Random Digit Dialing method which did not rely on any existing list of published phone numbers or on Distinctive Jewish Names. All residential phone numbers, both listed and unlisted, had an equal chance of being included in the sample.

The sampling and interviewing were conducted by ICR Survey Research Group of Media, PA, the company which conducted the telephone survey for the 1990 NJPS. As in the national study, the New York study used four questions in the screening process to identify Jewishly-connected households:

1. What is your religious affiliation?
2. Do you or does anyone else in the household consider themselves to be Jewish?
3. Were you or was anyone else in the household raised Jewish?
4. Do you or does anyone else in the household have a Jewish parent?

A "yes" to any of the four questions qualified the household as "Jewishly-connected."

Once a Jewishly-connected household was identified through the screening process, an interview was conducted with a Jewishly-connected adult in that household. In the 1991 NYJPS, Jewishly-connected households were both identified, through the screening questions, and interviewed (using the full questionnaire) at more or less the same point in time, in contradistinction to the 1990 NJPS for which households were screened and interviewed in three stages over the course of 12 to 18 months. The interview, averaging 30 minutes in length, was conducted in English, Russian, Yiddish or Spanish, as needed, so as to avoid bias against non-English speakers. The interview included questions in the following areas: 1) household and demographic information; 2) residence and mobility; 3) religious education; 4) Jewish identification and practice; 5) voluntary and cultural practice; 6) philanthropy (general, Jewish and UJA-Federation); 7) community services and assistance. The screening and interviewing phase began November 15, 1990 and was completed on May 8, 1991.

Fifty-eight percent of potential respondents to the screening process were willing to participate in the telephone screening process, a very good response rate by market research standards, particularly given the sensitive nature of the questions in the study. Among Jewish respondents, the response rate after they had been screened was 69%. In other words, once a person was willing to tell the interviewer that he or she is Jewish, in seven cases out of ten that person completed the half-hour interview. An additional effort was made to follow-up with those individuals who refused to be interviewed, in order to determine the proportion of Jews among them.

The telephone sample yielded 4,006 qualified, Jewishly-connected households, containing 10,501 individuals. The household and

population estimates reported in NYJPS are based on a scientific weighing of two samples: the Jewishly-connected sample of 4,006 households, and a subsample of one quarter of the non-Jewish households identified in the screening process. These two samples were then combined and subjected to statistical procedures through which we estimate a total of 668,000 Jewishly-connected households in the eight-county greater New York area.

In addition to overall household information, the interview included questions about all individuals living in the household, so that with statistical techniques, the household sample projects to 1.6 million individuals, some of whom are not Jewish, reflecting the mixed composition of Jewishly connected households (Methodological Appendix in Horowitz 1993).

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Definitions of the Jewish Population: The 1991 NYJPS, like the 1990 NJPS, identifies a variety of connections to Jewishness, (see: Table 1): 1) Jews-by-religion; 2) Jews-by-Choice (converts); 3) secular Jews; 4) people who were once Jewish but no longer see themselves as Jewish (and may belong to another religion); 5) adults of Jewish parentage or Jewish background who were raised in another religion; 6) children being raised in another religion; and 7) Gentiles living in households with any of these types of Jews.²

The total Jewishly-connected population of 1,633,000 people can be divided into two groups: the *core* Jewish population, made up of people who clearly identify themselves as Jewish by religion or by ethnicity (types 1-3 in Table 1); and a *peripheral* Jewish population of people who have a connection to Jewishness (such as living with a Jewish person, or having a Jewish background), but who are not themselves currently Jewish (types 4-7 in Table 1). In 1991, the eight-county greater New York area had a core population of Jews who identified as Jews, either by religion or in secular-ethnic terms, estimated to be 1.4 million, and a periphery of approximately 80,000 people who have Jewish ancestry or parentage but do not currently identify themselves as Jews, in addition to 134,000 Gentile adults living in Jewishly-connected households.

Population Trends: In 1991, approximately 1,027,000 Jews lived in New York City and about 393,000 resided in the suburban counties. Of

the eight counties or boroughs, Brooklyn (371,000) ranked first in Jewish population size, followed by Manhattan (308,00), Queens

Table 1. Comparison of Greater New York Jewish Population and U.S. Jewish Population: Percentage Distribution.

	<u>NY Area^a</u>	<u>U.S. Nat'l^b</u>	
		<u>Overall</u>	<u>ex NY</u>
1. BJ ^c : Religion Judaism	81	51	48
2. Jews by Choice	1	2	3
Jews by Religion	83	53	51
3. BJ ^c : Secular	4	14	15
CORE JEWISH POPULATION	87	67	65
4. BJ ^c : Raised Jewish			
Currently not Jewish	1	3	3
5. Adults of Jewish Background:			
Other Current Religion	1	5	6
6. Children < 18 Being			
Raised in Other Religion	3	9	9
TOTAL: ETHNIC OR			
RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND	92	84	83
7. Gentile Adults Living			
in Jewishly Connected			
Households	8	16	17
TOTAL	100	100	100

^a 8 Counties: New York City, Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester. Does not include the institutionalized or unenumerated population. Total: 1,633,000.

^b Source: Kosmin et al 1991.

^c Born Jew.

(233,000), Nassau (203,000), Suffolk (98,000), Westchester (92,000), the Bronx (82,000) and Staten Island (33,000).

In 1991, one out of every eight people in the New York area (13%) was Jewish. In contrast, Jews constituted 7% of the New York State population, and 2% of the nation's. Of the counties, Manhattan had the highest concentration of Jews, 21%, while the Bronx had the lowest concentration, 7%.

Table 2. Percent Change in Population by County: 1981 to 1991.^a

	General Pop.	Jewish Pop. ^b	Percent Jewish	
			1981	1991
Bronx	3.0	-12.5	8	7
Brooklyn	3.1	-9.3	18	16
Manhattan	4.1	15.0	19	21
Queens	3.2	-25.7	17	12
Staten Island	7.6	8.9	9	9
NYC Subtotal	3.5	-7.9	16	14
Nassau	-2.4	-33.3	23	16
Suffolk	2.9	-5.5	8	7
Westchester	1.0	-23.1	14	11
Suburban Subtotal	0.4	-25.5	15	11
8-County	2.5	-13.5	16	13

^a Between 1980 and 1990 for General Population; 1981 and 1991 for Jewish population.

^b Core Jewish population but does not include institutionalized population. Total 1981: 1,642,300; Total 1991: 1,420,000.

The overall New York area Jewish population decreased by 14% between 1981 and 1991 (Table 2).³ News of the decrease was first treated by some as auguring the decline of New York Jewry in a qualitative sense. Thus, it became all the more important to examine New York's Jewish population changes in a broader context, in relation to 1) national Jewish population trends; 2) historical trends about Jewish population in New York City; and 3) the population patterns of other groups in the Area, in this case, other white non-Hispanics.

National Trends: Between 1970 and 1990 the national core Jewish population increased only slightly, from 5.4 million to 5.5 million, while during the same period the U.S. population grew more quickly. In 1990, Jews made up 2% of the U.S. population compared to 3% in 1970. In New York, the Jewish population declined by 14% despite the immigration figures of the past 10 years.

The 1990 NJPS showed that Jews have migrated away from the Northeast region. In 1900, 57% of the nation's Jews lived in the northeast, rising to 68% in 1930. In 1970, the percentage dropped to 64%, and by 1990 only 44% remained (Goldstein 1993), a shift which mirrors the trend for the U.S. population as a whole. In this context, the decrease in New York's Jewish population can be seen as part of a drift away from the traditional areas of Jewish concentration to the Sun Belt and the Western states, much as the general population has moved from the Northeast to the South and West.

However, Goldstein's (1993) analysis of the national data revealed that not all Jews were equally likely to leave. For example, Jews-by-Religion may be less likely to leave the Northeast. In any case, they are more likely to be found in the Northeast than elsewhere in the United States. Whether their greater number is a cause or a consequence of New York's greater Jewishness is hard to determine. A strong case can be made that New York both attracts certain types of Jews and it also creates them by virtue of the social climate in the New York area. Another way of expressing it is: Jews who leave the Northeast/N.Y.C. area may be less Jewish than those who stay, or they may become less Jewish as a consequence of leaving the region (Horowitz 1994).

Local Trends: The 1950s were the peak years for Jewish population in the New York area, when more than two million Jews lived in New York City. By 1957, 2.5 million lived in the eight-county area. However, by 1970, the City's Jewish population had decreased by 43%, while the area's Jewish population declined by 25% during the same period. The flow of Jewish population away from its initial point of settlement to other parts of the country continued between 1970 and 1991, although at a slower rate. Between 1981 and 1991, the Jewish population in the eight-county area decreased by 14%, a continuation of an historical trend which has characterized Jews, as well as other white, non-Hispanics, since the 1950s. In this regard, the growth of Jewish population in Manhattan from 1981 to 1991 is all the more significant. It represents a reversal of the historical trends for both the Jewish and the general population in Manhattan for the first time in three decades (see: New York City Department of Planning 1991).

Jews Compared to Non-Jews: Compared to other white, non-Hispanics during the 1981-1991 period, Jews were *slower* to leave New York City (although not the suburban counties). From 1981 to 1991, the Jewish population of New York City declined by 8%, but the white,

non-Hispanic, non-Jewish population decreased by 18%. As a result, as of 1991 Jews constituted a larger share of the New York City's white, non-Hispanic population than ever before (32%). It would be important to compare Jews with other white subgroups such as Italians, Irish, Protestants or Catholics, in order to develop a more refined image of population movement in and out of New York City and its environs.⁴

In contrast, Jews left the suburban counties much more quickly than anyone else. They may well have moved to places beyond the scope of the eight-county UJA-Federation catchment area, such as northern New Jersey, southern Connecticut, and other New York counties (Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Sullivan). They may also have moved South and West, a trend which is well documented in the 1990 NJPS.

To some extent then, the decrease in Jewish population between 1981 and 1991 may be an artifact of the artificial boundaries of the greater New York metropolitan area defined by the UJA-Federation service area. If the study's boundaries had included the full metropolitan area, we would have a more comprehensive picture of Jewish population in the area. For instance, a substantial Jewish population now resides in Rockland County in New York (90,000 in 1991) and in Essex and Morris Counties in New Jersey (109,700 in 1986). Unfortunately, except for the studies of these three counties, no surveys of the Jewish populations in the newer areas of settlement have been conducted.

Changing Age Structure: The issue of population decrease raises the question of who left and who arrived in the New York area. The overall decrease in Jewish population was not spread evenly across all age groups, as is clear when we examine the changes in population size by age cohort shown in Table 3. Older people were more likely to leave the Area, while baby boomers (ages 25-44 years old) were less likely to leave than anyone else. The baby boomer population declined by approximately four percent, compared to an overall Jewish population decline of nearly 14%, while the age group composed of more mature adults (age 45-64 in 1981) declined by nearly a third. These changes relate to the Jewish growth of Manhattan, which can largely be attributed to the influx of baby boomers during the 1980s.

Between 1981 and 1991, the age distributions of the Jewish population shifted. There were more young children (children under age 10; now 13% of the population) and their parents (adults ages 35-44) than

Table 3. Percent Distribution and Change in Age Groups: 1981 to 1991.^a

<u>1981</u>		<u>1991</u>		Change
Age	%	Age	%	
0-4	4	10-14	6	12.6
5-9	5	15-19	5	-16.0
10-14	7	20-24	6	-14.1
15-24	15	25-34	15	-11.2
25-34	15	35-44	18	3.4
35-44	12	45-54	11	-13.9
45-54	13	55-64	10	-30.7
55-64	15	65-74	11	-33.3
65-75	9	75-85	5	-62.0
Subtotal	95		87	-15.1
Total ^b	100		100	-10.8

^a This table summarizes in- and out-migration and deaths for each age group. For example, in 1981, there were 70,900 children ages 0-4; in 1991, there were 79,000 children ages 10-14. Thus, net in-migration exceeds death and out-migration for this cohort.

^b 1981 data excludes non-responses; thus, the 1981 population of 1,590,900 is 3.1% lower than the total (1,642,300) for Table 2.

there were 10 years ago. However, there are fewer teenagers and young adults (ages 10-24) and their parents (ages 45-64) than there were in 1981. The age distributions among Jews in New York and across the nation are very similar: 19% of the New York Jewish population and 19.0% of the national Jewish population is under age fifteen, while among New York Jews 16% are age 65 or older, compared to 17% among Jews nationwide (Goldstein 1993).

Born in the USA: The vast majority (87%) of New York Jews were born in the United States. Between 1981 and 1991, generational status in America of New York Jews shifted towards the third and fourth generation, despite the steady inflow of Jewish immigrants to New York, especially from the former Soviet Union.

Table 4. Educational Attainment of Adult Jewish Men Aged 25+:
Percent Distribution by Counties.

MEN				
	High School or less	Some College	College Graduate	Post Grad
Bronx (29,100)	32	18	18	32
Brooklyn (106,600)	35	20	22	24
Manhattan (108,100)	11	13	35	42
Queens (81,400)	22	23	27	29
Staten Island (9,400)	14	26	26	34
Nassau (69,500)	11	16	34	39
Suffolk (30,000)	15	21	20	45
Westchester (29,400)	10	10	30	50
Total (463,500)	20	17	28	35
U.S. Jewish Pop.*	23	17	29	32
1981 NY Jewish Pop.	26	15	35	24
WOMEN				
	High School or less)	Some College	College Graduate	Post Grad
Bronx (35,400)	34	22	18	26
Brooklyn (123,200)	43	21	18	18
Manhattan (133,900)	12	18	33	37
Queens (93,700)	33	21	22	24
Staten Island (10,000)	21	29	21	29
Nassau (72,200)	19	21	29	31
Suffolk (30,800)	19	21	27	32
Westchester (33,300)	11	17	33	40
Total (532,500)	26	20	26	28
U.S. Jewish Pop.*	31	21	24	24
1981 NY Jewish Pop.	34	19	29	18

* Source: Kosmin et al 1991 Table 3B. Jews-by-Religion only.

The comparison between New York and the nation regarding generational status is also noteworthy: while six percent of New York Jews are fourth generation (i.e., individuals all four of whose grandparents were born in the United States), nationally 11% of Jews are fourth generation. Conversely, 68% of Jews nationally have no grandparents born in America, while the comparable number for New York is 78%. New York Jews are more recently arrived in the United States than Jews living elsewhere in the nation.

A Highly Educated Population: As a group, New York Jews, like Jews nationally, are very well educated (Table 4). Twenty-eight percent of New York area Jewish men have completed college and an additional 35% have had schooling beyond the B.A. Among adult Jewish women,

Table 5. Marital Status of Core Adult Jews Aged 18+: Percent Distribution by Counties.

	Never Married	Divorced/ Married	Separated	Widow
Bronx (69,100)	65	18	6	12
Brooklyn (260,900)	63	18	9	10
Manhattan (267,600)	47	36	10	7
Queens (192,800)	65	19	6	10
Staten Island (23,700)	69	22	4	5
Nassau (159,600)	72	19	5	4
Suffolk (71,500)	71	20	6	4
Westchester (71,000)	68	20	5	7
Total (1,116,200)	62	23	7	8
U.S. Jewish Pop. ^a	64	21	7	8
1981 NY Jewish Pop.	66	15	8	11

^a Source: Kosmin et al 1991: Table 12. Jews-by-Religion only.

26% have completed college and an additional 28% have gone on to graduate school (Table 4). For both men and women in the New York area the 1991 levels of educational attainment have moved up from the 1981 levels, and are slightly higher than the 1990 national Jewish

figures. For Jews nationwide and in New York the levels of educational attainment remain substantially above those of the general (and white) population.

Marital Status: Nearly two-thirds of adult Jews (18 years or older) in the Area are married, as shown in Table 6. Compared to the New York Jewish population of 1981, there has been an increase in the percentage of never-married adults in the 1991 Jewish population (from 15% in 1981 to 23% in 1991), and slight decreases in the percentage of adults who are married, divorced or separated, or widowed (Table 5). The 1991 New York Jewish population looks very similar to the 1990 national Jewish population in terms of current marital status.

Table 6. Household Composition and Household Type: Percent Distribution.^a

	All Households	All Core Jews	Core Jew & Others	US Jewish HHs ^a
One person alone	29	100	—	23
Married couple	26	84	17	27
Married couple with children	31	80	20	30
Married couple, children and others	1	45	56	3
Single parent and children	6	93	7	4
Single parent, children and others	1	66	34	3
All relatives: no spouse or minor children	1	84	16	2
Unmarried couple	3	51	49	3
All non-relatives	4	57	44	6

^a Total of 638,000 households include at least one core Jewish person.

^b Source: Kosmin et al 1991.

Household Composition: The percentages of married couples with children and single person households have held constant between 1981 and 1991 at approximately 30% each (Table 6). The percentage of married couples without children has declined from 35% to in 1981 to

26% in 1991, while single parent households increased substantially from 27,000 to 40,000, from 4% in 1981 to 7% of all households in 1991. The NJPS findings for American Jewry are similar.

JEWISH IDENTIFICATION AND PRACTICE

Overall, the demographic profile of New York Jewry converges with the national picture in terms of age structure, generational status, educational attainment, marriage patterns and household composition. However, turning next to various measures of Jewish involvement and practice, we shall see that New York Jewry differs from the rest of American Jews in terms of the ease and extent of their Jewish identification. In the aggregate, the New York Jewish population appears to be somewhat more robust in Jewish terms than their counterparts nationwide. In many ways, in fact, the Jewishness of New York Jewry resembles the Jewishness of Israeli Jews (see: Levy, Levinsohn and Katz 1993).

New York is not America: In contrast to the portrait of American Jews which emerged from the 1990 NJPS, the NYJPS showed that New York area Jews are notably more likely to identify themselves as Jewish and to view this as being their religion, not merely their ethnicity or cultural background. The vast majority of New Yorkers with any sort of Jewish background describe themselves as Jewish by religion (83%), while only 53% of the national Jewishly-connected population identify this way (and only half of the national Jewish population when New York is excluded. See Table 1.). Outside New York, more than three times as many Jews answer "none" or "agnostic" or "atheist" regarding their religious affiliation, but still consider themselves to be Jewish. Clearly, although there is no one form of Jewish identity in New York, as a group New York Jews are more at ease in describing themselves as Jewish by religion when compared to Jews elsewhere in America.

In the aggregate, as shown in Table 7, New York Jews are slightly more observant than other American Jews. New York Jews as a group, whether living in entirely Jewish or in mixed (Jewish-Gentile) households, are more likely to practice religious rituals than are Jews nationally. They are more likely to attend a Seder, not to have a Christmas tree, to light Hanukkah candles, and to celebrate Purim than Jews nationally (although their observance of Israeli Independence Day was no different). While New York Jews are more likely than other Amer-

Table 7. Selected Jewish Household Practices in New York and the Nation: Percent Distribution.

	New York		National ^a	
	Mixed Entirely Jewish	Jewish- Gentile	Mixed Entirely Jewish	Jewish- Gentile
Attend Seder ^b	93	80	86	62
Never has Xmas tree ^c	93	31	82	20
Light Hanukkah Candles ^c	83	69	77	59
Light Shabbat Candles ^b	49	18	44	19
Purim Celebration ^d	35	15	24	12
Celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut ^d				
Israel Independence Day	20	8	18	6
Synagogue Membership ^d	43	15	41	13
Contributed to Jewish Charity ^d	68	38	62	28
Contributed to Non-Jewish Charity ^d	68	67	67	66
Contributed to UJA- Federation ^d	37	14	45	12

Households: 543,000 96,000 1,111,000 867,000

^a Source: Kosmin et al 1991. ^b "Sometimes, usually, always"

^c Yes ^d during past year.

ican Jews to contribute to Jewish charities, they are equally likely to contribute to general (non-Jewish) charities, and somewhat less likely to donate to UJA-Federation.

In terms of personal religious practice, New York Jews are slightly more likely than Jews nationally to fast on Yom Kippur and to attend synagogue weekly (Table 8). In general, the social milieu of Jews in New York is more Jewish in terms of friendship networks and in terms of exposure to Jewish newspapers or magazines. In addition, contact with Israel is higher in New York than elsewhere in America: a larger proportion have visited Israel or have close family or friends living there.

Finally, the intermarriage rates among New York Jews are lower. In New York, 13% of the spouses of first marriages were Gentile. The

**Table 8. Selected Jewish Individual Practices: Percent Distribution
New York and the Nation.^a**

	New York	Nation ^b
Religious Practice		
Fast on Yom Kippur	68	61
Attend Synagogue on high holidays	61	59
Attend Synagogue weekly	16	11
Israel Ties		
Visited Israel	42	31
Has close family or friends in Israel	45	35
Jewish Social Ties		
Most of my close friends are Jewish	63	45
Read Jewish periodicals, books ^c	39	28

^a Figures for New York are based on all core Jewish adults whereas National are based on a subset of core Jews: Jews by Religion only.

^b Source: Kosmin et al 1991.

^c NYJPS asked which periodicals and books "Do you regularly read ...?", whereas NJPS asked to which periodicals "Do you subscribe ...?"

percentage is double that (26%) elsewhere in the nation. Moreover, while in New York, the percentage of first spouses who were Gentile increased fivefold, from five percent in marriages which occurred before 1965 to 25% in post-1985 marriages; nationally, excluding New York, the incidence rose from five to forty-seven percent in the same time period, over ninefold. Again, the New York rate is about half the national rate. Overall, only 15% of the households in New York are mixed Jewish and Gentile, whereas nationally nearly three times that proportion are (44%).

The differences between the Jews in New York and Jews living elsewhere in the United States have been termed the "New York effect" (Horowitz and Solomon 1992). They are intriguing, because they raise the question of "why is New York different?" Clearly the "New York effect" as it relates to intermarriage may be explained simply in terms of the propinquity of large masses of Jews there. In other words, the sheer numbers of Jews who live in the New York City area, coupled

with the high density of Jews in relation to the overall population of the Area, make it more likely for Jews to interact with other Jews just by chance, which would lead us to expect a lower intermarriage rate (see: Blau and Schwartz 1984; Rabinowitz 1989). However, propinquity alone does not explain the more extensive Jewish practice among New York Jews.

New York Jewish practice may stand out from the profile of the rest of American Jewry because New York's population is so different: perhaps they are older or more Orthodox or more recently arrived in America (thus closer to the "old country" or to the experience of overt anti-Semitism). Yet as we have seen, New York Jewry is remarkably similar to the rest of American Jewry in terms of the basic demographic characteristics of age structure, educational attainment and household composition. Although New York Jewry is somewhat more recently arrived in America compared to Jews nationwide, it is not different enough to account for the discrepancy in New York and national rates.

The conventional wisdom is that New York's profile is more observant than the rest of America's due to the preponderance of Orthodox Jews living there. Indeed, New York has twice the proportion of Orthodox Jews as America at large (14% compared to 7%). A comparison of Jewish practice by denomination revealed that New York's Orthodox Jews are in fact more observant than their non-New York Orthodox counterparts (Horowitz 1994). However, New York's non-Orthodox Jews are more practicing than their national counterparts as well, but only on measures tied to the greater salience of Jewishness in New York's social environment: never having a Christmas tree, fasting on Yom Kippur, giving to Jewish charities, having close friends or family living in Israel, having participated in adult Jewish education in the past year, and having mostly Jewish friends. The large Jewish presence in New York is the underlying variable giving rise to each of the specific behaviors which continue to distinguish New York non-Orthodox Jews from their national counterparts. For the non-Orthodox, New York's Jewish advantage arises from the kind of setting it offers, rather than from the greater piety of its populace. While New York Orthodox are more observant because they are in fact more *frum*, the more extensive observance of New York's non-Orthodox Jews arises in large part from the New York Jewish social context, which itself appears to activate them.

One of the most important results of the 1991 NYJPS, with its articulation of "the New York effect," is to focus the attention of social analysts of American Jewry on the importance of place or locale in

defining the nature of Jewishness. In the case of New York, the Jewish social environment is itself both a cause of enhanced identification and practice among New York Jews, as well as a consequence of these. Jewishness in New York has become a social category of consequence, over and above the private lives of individuals who live there. As such, New York appears to offer a climate which makes it easier for Jewish people to identify with Jewishness and Judaism, in contrast to the social forces which may work against such identification elsewhere in the nation.

An Emerging Set of American Jewish Experiences: Much of the picture of American Jewish identification and practice which emerged from both the NJPS and the NYJPS can be taken as supporting the conventional wisdom that American Jewish life is getting worse. The data on the impact of generational status give the most support for the *erosion model* of American Jewish life, i.e., that Jewishness decays simply with the effects of longer time spent in America. However, in light of the strength of the relationship between the New York context and ease of Jewishness, a greater effort should be made to identify the other sorts of contextual features which seem to enhance (or at least correlate with) the ease and strength of Jewish connection. We need to identify fertile local contexts for Jewishness, whether defined in terms of geographic boundaries or in programmatic terms.

In this regard, the notion of social context as a factor in Jewishness emerged out of the NYJPS data in another way, aside from the New York-national contrasts. The NYJPS analysis showed that there is a group of American Jewish experiences which have been on the upswing over time (Table 9). In strong contrast to many of the other indices of Jewish identification and practice analyzed in the 1991 NYJPS, most of which declined with each passing generation in America, younger and American-born Jews are more likely to have received formal Jewish education than older or foreign-born Jews, and they are more likely to have become bar/bat-mitzvah. They are also more likely to have experienced Jewish summer camp, Jewish youth groups, and, because they are more likely to have attended college, they are more likely to have had college-related experiences like Hillel and courses in Jewish studies. Of course, they are also more likely to have intermarried than American Jews of previous generations, but this fact reflects the changing American socio-cultural context (which, in recent decades, has come to embrace the value of inter-ethnic if not interracial

Table 9. Jewish Background Experiences of Adults by Age, Generation and Gender: Percent Distribution.

	Age			Generation			Gender		Total
	18-34	35-49	50+	1st	2nd	3+	Male	Female	
Received Formal Jewish Education as a Child	79	74	73	66	78	76	87	64	75
Had a Bar/Bat-Mitzvah or Confirmation	62	54	45	44	51	59	85	24	54
Activities Supporting Israel or Soviet Jewry	48	47	51	55	52	44	50	47	49
Attended/ Worked at Jewish Summer Camp	45	31	17	24	28	34	31	31	31
Belonged to a Jewish or Zionist Youth Group	38	30	20	26	25	33	27	30	29
Attended a College-level or Adult Jewish Studies Course	31	28	23	23	30	27	24	31	27
Participated in Jewish College Activities like Hillel	30	22	16	14	21	27	23	23	23
Participated in Organized Educational Trip to Israel	16	11	13	12	15	13	11	15	13

intermarriage) more than the power (or lack of power) of these types of experiences.

CONCLUSION

The social analysis of American Jews has tended to dismiss the New York experience as inapplicable to the rest of American Jewry, and has missed altogether the existence of the set of American Jewish experiences (not limited to New York), perhaps because of a preoccupation with the infinitely more dramatic effects of generation in America. However, generational status is a peculiar variable for American Jews. Most social scientific analysis treats it ahistorically, when, in fact, it is strongly tied to the massive American Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe which occurred between the 1880s and the 1920s. Thus, when measuring the effects of generation, we are, for the most part, charting the changing historical and societal context as much as the effect of being an immigrant or the child or grandchild of an immigrant.

Embedded in the interpretation of generational status are really two competing images of American Jewry: one, the erosion model, which holds that people slough off their Jewishness with each passing generation in America; the other, a picture of remarkable socio-economic achievement and cultural integration into America, in the space of two generations. These two images may be flip sides of the same coin. Certainly they are tied to the changing face of America, which has shifted from socially restricted to more open, multicultural. Both America and American Jewry have changed in the past 50 years. Intermarriage rates are increasing, but so too are the number of members of Congress who are Jewish.

The 1991 NYJPS shows that the erosion model of Jewishness in America does not fully explain the high rates of Jewish identification in New York. After all, New York is one of America's oldest Jewish communities, yet Jews and Jewishness persist there in abundance. In addition, the erosion model is further challenged by the evidence of the growth of a uniquely American Jewish set of experiences which are home grown and not simply European transplants unable to flourish within the American context. Some might dispute the importance of this set of experiences in the face of the overwhelming power of generational status. It may seem akin to holding a finger in the dike to stem the tide. However, although generational status shows the most consistent effect of all the background variables, it is a fact of life that lies beyond

the range of social engineering; it is something that cannot be changed. For policy purposes, we need to identify the variables that are subject to social intervention. In this regard, the implications of the 1991 NYJPS are two-fold. First, we need to move from the broad sociological picture to a socio-psychological level of analysis which sees in the mass of American Jews a plethora of subgroups of people living in specific American Jewish subcultures, each with particular socio-cultural and historical characteristics. The result would be a more colorful picture of the range of Jewish lifestyles and lifespaces in America, and would provide a more refined picture of the success or failure of various American Jewish lifestyles.

A second implication of the NYJPS is the value of carrying out both local and national studies in a comparable way. New York and American Jews gain more from the contrast and comparison of their respective profiles. In various ways, New York is both exception and rule. However, the question of which it is can not be addressed without the juxtaposition of the two portraits of New York and the nation.

NOTES

* Much of the material in this paper first appeared in Horowitz (1993).

¹ Ritterband (1991) has compiled a list of these studies, dating from 1900-1981. Population estimates are also presented in Horowitz and Kaplan (1959).

² This typology of connections to Jewishness is based on the four screening questions described in the Method section above, combined with four other questions from the in-depth interview regarding: 1) each individual's current religion; 2) religion raised; 3) religion born; and 4) religious identity of the respondent's parents.

³ In considering these changes it is worth remembering that different methodologies were used in sampling Jewish New York in 1981 and in 1991, and that the two data sets are not fully comparable. First, the methods of identifying and sampling and interviewing Jewish New Yorkers differ in the two studies. The 1991 study drew a random representative sample using Random Digit Dialing. For the 1981 study, where interviews were conducted both by phone and by mail, several different sampling strategies were used. In the case of telephone interviews, numbers were drawn by two methods: 1) selecting phone numbers from the phone book using the Distinctive Jewish Names (DJN) approach; and 2) through a Modified Random Digit Dialing (MRDD) approach. In the case of the DJN numbers, it was presumed that the household was Jewish. In the MRDD sample, a filter question was used, "Is anyone in the household Jewish?". For the mail survey, recipients were presumed to be Jewish. It is not clear from the Report and Methodological Appendix of the New York Jewish Population Study (New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies 1981) how the recipients of mailed questionnaires were selected.

Thus, the 1991 NYJPS casts a wider net and pulls in a broader range of Jewishly connected New Yorkers than the 1981 NYJPS. However, in defining the "Core Jewish Population," the 1991 study probably draws a tighter circle than the more loosely defined 1981 study. Despite these problems, comparisons will be made between the two studies in certain parts of the findings. However, in interpreting the similarities and differences between 1981 and 1991, caution must be urged: although we are not comparing apples and oranges, we are probably not comparing apples and apples either. In other words, the reader should pay more attention to the trends and less attention to the actual percentage differences in comparing the findings from 1981 and 1991. (The methodology for the 1981 study is described in *New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies (1981)* as well as in Ritterband and Cohen (1984).)

⁴ Ritterband (1991) has, for example, compared Jews and Italians and finds that historically they have similar patterns of geographic scatter across the United States.

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