

# THE BOUNDARY OF JEWISHNESS: SOME MEASURES OF JEWISH IDENTITY IN THE UNITED STATES

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Facing significant rise in the intermarriage rate and affected by declines in birthrates, the Jewish community of the United States increasingly has become concerned with problems of Jewish identity and survival. Indeed, these concerns stem not solely from demographic elements; a long-standing desire to improve the quality of Jewish life, as well as its quantity, has motivated considerable public and private polemic, unfortunately much of it based on folklore and ill-supported hearsay. To establish a substantive basis for future deliberation, the U.S. National Jewish Population Study (NJPS), sponsored by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, provides a major resource, containing considerable amounts of data bearing on the issues of Jewish identity and survival. This report focuses on selected characteristics of a cross-section of the U.S. Jewish population, reached by the National Jewish Population Study<sup>(1)</sup>.

## 1. "Who is a Jew"? Survey Concept and Concept Boundary

To address, for purpose of survey design, the issue of "Jewishness", the NJPS needed to answer, at a practical level the recurring question: "who is a Jew?" An interview "Screening Section" provided a formal baseline as 'boundary' for determining whether a given household was to be included in the NJPS. If an affirmative answer was provided for one or more household members to one of the following questions: (1) "Was person born Jewish?", (2) "Is person Jewish now?", (3) "Was person's father born Jewish?", (4) "Was person's mother born Jewish?", - the household was deemed eligible for inclusion.

Beyond this formal definition, in practice the interview situation often provided an overall affirmation that the household was "Jewish", particularly if all household members were characterized by affirmative replies to the questions noted. Alternately, the interview sometimes yielded prompt elimination from consideration of households if for all members all replies to the screening questions implicitly were negative.

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(1) The U.S. National Jewish Population Study, based on a stratified multi-stage probability sample, reaching both households known and not known to the organized Jewish community, consists of seven-thousand-five-hundred-and-eighteen interviews in households including one or more persons identified as "Jewish", - with an average interview length of near one-and-one-half hours.

Table 1. Distribution of NJPS Households by Number of Members; "All Persons" and "Jews" in Household

All persons (a)		Jews (a)	
Number in household	Per cent	Number in household	Per cent
Total	100.0	Total	100.0
1	14.7	1	18.4
2	30.8	2	31.1
3	15.7	3	14.1
4	23.6	4	20.7
5	10.5	5	9.8
6	3.7	6	3.1
7	0.4	7	0.3
8	0.1	8	0.1
9 or more	0.2	9 or more	0.0
Not reported	0.3	Not reported	0.4
		0 <sup>(b)</sup>	2.0
Average size	2.98	Average size	2.76

(a) Data based on households interviewed only; no adjustment for presumed smaller household size among households not reached in survey interview phase. "All persons" includes non-Jewish and Jewish household members.

(b) In two per cent of all households reached, respondents revealed in the course of the interview that, reflecting current attitude, the household contained no "Jewish" persons. Here, non-Jewishness is defined by the respondent's description, though some Jewish ancestry or heritage may be reported.

This survey definition of Jewishness is intentionally comprehensive; it is sociologically inclusive rather than "halakhic" or restrictive by other criteria. A narrower definition would exclude households that are "Jewish" only in a marginal sense, particularly those who, in spite of Jewish roots, do not now identify with Jewish life. By the scope of the definition, the NJPS provides an opportunity for examining separately (or for excluding) these marginally-Jewish households, and/or non-Jewish persons residing in 'Jewish' households.

On this basis, the phrases "persons residing in households included in the Study" and "*Jewish* persons in households included in the Study" are not synonymous. The former category includes persons who may not be Jewish by *any* definition - such as non-Jewish intermarried spouses and/or assertedly non-Jewish children in intermarriage. Further, "Jewish" persons may vary widely in intent and extent of their Jewish identification.

Previous estimates of the U.S. Jewish population have made no distinction between *all* persons residing in households that might be termed 'Jewish', by some criterion, as contrasted with persons who, individually, are identifiably Jewish. Exploring the extent to which non-Jewish persons are resident in NJPS households Table 1<sup>(2)</sup> presents a comparative analysis of household sizes reflecting this distinction.

We find that two per cent of all households reached by the Study fall at the very borderline of inclusion in (or exclusion from) the Study; in this small percentages of households it was shown that, per current description, the household contained no "Jewish" persons, in spite of Jewish antecedents.

In line with the contrasting modes of definition, the difference in average household size: 2.98 ('all persons') versus 2.76 ('Jews' only), - has the effect of 'counting' a highly marginal category -, including non-Jews, - consisting of 7.4% of the population if the Study's more comprehensive definition is adopted. In interpreting estimates of 'Jewish' population, therefore, careful attention must be given to the distinction between counting the *total* number of persons living in "Jewish Study" households and the number of persons residing in these households who specifically meet clear criteria of Jewishness. Apparently discrepant Jewish population estimates may result if this distinction is not kept in mind.

A more refined analysis of Basic Jewish Identification, by Age/Sex, is shown in Table 2 (Parts 1, 2 and 3). The table reveals higher proportions of persons "not born Jewish, not Jewish now" in the youngest age categories, particularly for those under five years of age. As suggested by other findings<sup>(3)</sup>, this "not Jewish" group is associated

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(2) Adapted from Fred Massarik "Jewish Population in the United States, 1973". In: *American Jewish Year Book 1974/75*. Vol. 75. New York, The Jewish Publication Society of America. p. 299.

(3) Massarik, Fred. *Intermarriage: Facts for Planning*. New York, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

Table 2. Persons by Basic Jewish Identification, Age and Sex

Age	Part 1. Males										Part 2. Females						Part 3. Percent now Jewish	
	N	%	Born J		Not born J		N	%	Born J		Not born J		Male	Female				
			now	not J	now	not J			now	not J	now	not J						
Number	17,584	16,186	250	175	973	18,828	16,984	157	345	1,342								
Total		100.0	92.1	1.4	1.0	5.5	100.0	90.2	0.8	1.8	7.1	93.0	92.0					
0-4	946	100.0	77.2	0.3	0.2	22.2	1,060	100.0	76.3	0.5	0.3	22.9	77.4(a)	76.6(a)				
5-9	1,162	100.0	90.9	0.3	2.1	6.7	1,221	100.0	90.0	0.0	4.1	5.9	93.0	94.1				
10-14	1,819	100.0	92.6	1.9	0.2	5.3	1,773	100.0	93.0	0.3	0.1	6.6	92.8	93.1				
15-19	1,802	100.0	89.2	0.4	0.3	10.1	1,755	100.0	93.9	2.1	0.2	3.8	89.5(a)	94.1				
20-24	1,561	100.0	91.6	3.3	0.6	4.5	1,633	100.0	84.9	0.2	8.6	6.3	32.2	93.5				
25-29	981	100.0	91.5	0.9	1.2	6.3	1,112	100.0	72.0	1.0	2.0	25.0	92.7	74.0(a)				
30-34	837	100.0	92.4	1.0	0.4	6.2	900	100.0	85.4	0.6	2.4	11.6	92.8	87.8(a)				
35-39	936	100.0	92.7	0.7	0.6	5.9	1,143	100.0	90.6	0.3	1.1	7.9	93.3	91.7				
40-44	1,065	100.0	98.1	0.4	0.5	1.0	1,187	100.0	90.1	3.2	3.5	3.1	98.6	93.6				
45-49	1,245	100.0	93.1	3.5	0.1	3.3	1,448	100.0	88.1	2.3	0.4	9.1	93.2	88.5(a)				
50-54	1,291	100.0	96.4	2.9	0.1	0.7	1,242	100.0	96.2	0.2	1.0	2.6	96.5	97.2				
55-59	1,220	100.0	91.4	0.8	0.2	7.6	1,135	100.0	98.0	0.1	0.7	1.2	91.6	98.7				
60-64	925	100.0	98.7	0.4	0.0	0.9	918	100.0	95.2	0.2	1.0	3.6	98.7	96.2				
65-74	1,199	100.0	89.0	2.1	8.4	0.5	1,588	100.0	98.1	0.5	0.6	0.9	97.4	98.7				
75 or more	595	100.0	99.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	713	100.0	98.6	0.1	0.4	0.9	99.8	99.0				

(a) Less than 90% Jewish.

with the rising intermarriage rate: these young people primarily are offspring of intermarriages and, in accordance with their parents' concept, are not now nor have ever been Jewish. Other sizeable "non-Jewish" clusters appear at ages 11 and 12 and in the teens, particularly age 16 (for both boys and girls), and at age 17, primarily for boys<sup>(4)</sup>.

Non-Jewish concentrations, again as linked to intermarriage, appear especially for ages in the mid-twenties (primarily females), and to a lesser extent in the early twenties and early thirties. (Throughout we find, of course, variations in the proportions, both due to statistical fluctuation and due to historical variations in intermarriage and Jewish identification trends.)

As to movement into and out of Jewishness (see Table 2), for males the extent of out-movement: "born Jewish - *not* Jewish now" (1.4%) is almost exactly counterbalanced by the extent of in-movement "not born Jewish - *now* Jewish" (1.0%). For females the extent of in-movement to Jewishness significantly exceeds out-movement (as long as *any* identification with Jewishness on part of any member of this female's household is reported), - with 0.8% indicating that they were "born Jewish, (but are) *not* Jewish now", while 1.8% indicate that they were "not born Jewish, (but are) *now* Jewish".

For the total population reached by the NJPS (recalling the Study's comprehensive view of Jewishness), the extent of addition to the Jewish population (viz. "not born Jewish - *now* Jewish") exceeds the proportion of "loss" ("born Jewish - *not* Jewish now") by a very slight margin (1.4% versus 1.1%)<sup>(5)</sup>.

Figures for household heads, regardless of age/sex indicate that a higher proportion of household heads are identified as consistently Jewish ("born Jewish - now Jewish"), than are 'all persons' included in the Study. This undoubtedly reflects the impact of age differences and particularly the effect of excluding youth age categories with their higher proportions of "not born Jewish - not Jewish now". Again, the balance between those moving *into* Judaism from non-Jewish birth as contrasted with those moving *out* of Judaism, away from Jewish birth is nearly even.

Table 3 generally follows the pattern suggested by findings of previous tables. 95% of household heads report that all their grandparents were/are Jewish. A mixed pattern of two or three Jewish grandparents characterizes slightly less than 2%, and an additional 3% trace their origins to entirely non-Jewish grand-parental ancestry.

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(4) Relatively small numbers of cases indicate need for caution in interpretation.

(5) "Jewishness" as reported in Table 2 refers to Jewishness by broad definition, and *identification*, rather than exclusively by formal conversion.

Table 3. Heads of "Jewish Households", by Number of Jewish Grandparents

Jewish Grandparents	%
Total	100.0
0	3.1 (a)
1	0.0
2	1.8
3	0.1
4	95.0

(a) Including small proportion of "no data" and doubtful cases.

## 2. Religious Identification and Congregation Membership

An important aspect of Jewish identity is that of "religious ideology". Such ideology indicates how people *describe themselves* in terms of religious orientation. Thus, it is ideological self-description, not necessarily formal congregational affiliation, that is reported in Table 4.

Table 4. Household Heads, by Religious Ideology and Age

Age	Or- tho- dox	Con- serva- tive	Re- form	Just Jewish	Other Jewish	Athe- ist/ag- nostic	Not Jew- ish	Un- known	Total
Total	11.4	40.4	30.0	12.2	1.3	1.5	2.6	0.7	100.0
29 or less	4.2	35.2	28.2	22.0	1.5	4.4	3.2	1.2	100.0
30-49	6.0	39.1	35.1	12.9	2.1	1.3	2.9	0.7	100.0
50-64	11.0	44.5	27.6	10.9	0.9	1.2	3.3	0.5	100.0
65 or more	24.5	39.1	26.2	7.8	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.6	100.0

Among household heads, the predominant ideological identification is that of Conservative Judaism; 40.5% so identify. Next in frequency is Reform, with nearly 30%.

Those who view themselves as "just Jewish", affirming their Jewishness without choosing a specific ideology (but including an apparently small percentage of avowed "secular" Jews) constitute about 12% of the total. Orthodoxy is in fourth place, with slightly more than 11% professing Orthodox ideology.

Other categories receive but a scattering of response. Still, it

may be worthy of note that 1.4% regard themselves as atheist/agnostic "Jews"!

Major differences in religious ideology appear with age. Relatively, the proportion of household heads identifying as Orthodox is greatest among the aged, with about 25% reporting Orthodox religious ideology. By contrast, among young household heads - 29 years old or younger -, only about 4% so identify. Likewise, the "just Jewish" ideological orientation is most frequently reported by the younger household head, though here also, as for other ages, Conservative and Reform ideologies are most prevalent. (The small Atheist/Agnostic group tends to fall disproportionately within the youngest household head category, but still accounts for only some 4% of this age group.)

As one considers each of the age categories specified in Table 4, it is found that Conservative ideology predominates at *all* levels. In every instance, it is the Reform ideology that appears next most frequently.

Major inter-age differences are found in the relative frequency of the Orthodox ideology, of the "just Jewish" viewpoint and for Atheists/Agnostics (6).

While Table 4 shows that some 83% identify with specifiable Jewish religious ideologies, a much smaller proportion reports congregation membership as such; see Table 5. About 46% of household heads indicate that they belong to at least one congregation; (among these are some 2% who claim membership in *two* or more congregations).

Table 5. Household Heads, by Congregation Membership and Age

Age	Belongs to one Congregation	Belongs to two or more Congregations	Total belonging	Not belonging	Total
Total	44.0	2.3	46.3	53.7	100.0
29 or less	23.7	1.6	25.3	74.7	100.0
30-49	48.7	2.0	50.7	49.3	100.0
50-64	46.9	2.0	48.9	51.1	100.0
65 or more	42.9	3.3	46.2	53.8	100.0

(6) Small differences may appear among tables in data reporting Religious Ideology; these differences reflect somewhat varied respondent statements of their identification.

Two patterns of difference appear in the relationship between congregation membership and age of household head. First, among young household heads 29 years old or younger, only a bit more than 25% report that they belong to any congregation at all, compared with an overall figure of about 46%. Second, the proportion of congregation membership reaches its highest point for household heads in the mid-years of life; among those ages 30-49 nearly 51% report congregation membership. However, the figure declines slightly, to about 49%, for the 50-64 group and drops further to near 46% for the aged, 65 years old and up.

Reasons underlying these variations in congregation membership are complex, and present analyses deal with net effects rather than with possible causes. The following hypotheses, however, may be stated: (i) in the 'Twenties' age range, the household head's life course often is committed to the completion of advanced education, initial career building and early stages of family formation; in the resulting hierarchy of needs and commitments, congregation membership ranks comparatively low; (ii) congregation membership reaches its high point as children require Jewish education, which typically is associated with the congregation. Some dropoff in congregation membership results (though partly offset by other factors) when the children's Jewish education is completed; (iii) income is a factor affecting the proportion of congregation membership; generally, higher income levels and congregation membership are positively associated; (iv) religious ideology is a factor in determining congregation membership; proportions of membership among Orthodox, for example, are inclined to be higher than proportions among Conservative and Reform; (v) for aged, while Orthodoxy is more prevalent than for other age categories, lower income, and patterns of social withdrawal and "alienation" somewhat reduce proportions of congregation membership.

In interpreting congregation membership figures, it must be observed (a) that there is a slight to moderate tendency in matters of Jewish affiliation for respondents to overstate membership; and (b) that particularly as pertains to membership in Orthodox congregations, (though in others as well) some ambiguity exists in the meaning of the "membership" concept. For instance, household heads who buy admission tickets for High Holiday services only, may consider themselves "members", though their affiliation is highly limited.

If we assume that the immediate potential for congregation membership is constituted by those identifying with a Jewish religious ideology (83% of household heads), then a maximum of about 56% of this present potential (46/83) is now being tapped. In the U.S., organized congregation life thus appears to reach somewhat more than half of those heads professing a distinguishable Jewish religious orientation, but less than half of *all* heads of 'Jewish' households<sup>(7)</sup>.

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(7) The phrases 'Jewish' households and 'households included in the NJPS', while not entirely synonymous, are used interchangeably for ease of expression.



Table 6. Household Heads, by Religious Service Attendance in Prior Year

Yearly frequency	Age of household head				
	Total	29 or less	30-49	50-64	65 or more
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0	26.7	30.5	28.8	23.1	26.7
1- 4	27.8	42.3	24.7	27.5	25.6
1	5.9	12.8	7.8	4.0	2.0
2- 4	21.9	29.5	16.9	23.5	23.6
5-49	35.5	21.8	36.7	40.0	34.3
5- 9	13.8	9.7	16.1	14.4	11.5
10-19	11.5	9.7	13.0	12.4	8.8
20-29	6.3	1.7	4.8	8.3	8.2
30-49	3.9	0.7	2.8	4.9	5.8
50 and over	8.0	4.4	8.2	6.5	11.7
50-99	3.7	1.0	3.3	3.5	6.3
100-360	3.0	1.3	3.9	2.1	3.6
360 and over	1.3	2.1	1.0	0.9	1.8
Not reported	2.0	1.0	1.7	3.0	1.7

Table 6 shows the number of times per year that heads of Jewish households attend Jewish religious services, per their survey response. About 27% report no attendance at all at services for the specified year. Near 28% report attending one to four times; (presumably this category includes primarily "High Holiday" attenders and those who may attend some High Holiday services and perhaps on one or two other occasions during the year). A small minority, about one in twelve, claim very frequent attendance.

The lesser extent of participation in organized Jewish life by young household heads is confirmed in Table 6. Compared to the older, those in the younger age group are somewhat more inclined to entirely ignore religious service attendance (about 31%); and - if they attend at all - their frequency of attendance is less, clustering heavily in the "High Holidays" attendance category.

Very frequent religious service attendance, though it characterizes a small sub-group only, is relatively more evident among the aged; near 12% report attendance about weekly (50 times per year) or more often. However, a small proportion of aged may fail to attend at all, or may attend less frequently, due to reasons of health and physical disability.

### 3. Jewish Education

Perhaps no aspect of the U.S. Jewish experiences is seen as more saliently related to Jewish identity and survival than is Jewish education. While the cause-and-effect link is complex, ("does more positive Jewish commitment in the home lead to placement of children into more intensive Jewish education, and/or does more intensive Jewish education lead to more positive Jewish commitment?"), measures of extent and kind of Jewish education constitute a necessary baseline in the study of Jewish identity.

Table 7 shows the proportions within specified age/sex categories now receiving Jewish education; (finer age breakdowns are reported for the years in which most current Jewish education occurs).

For the most part (though there are exceptions), the proportions of males enrolled in Jewish education exceed the corresponding proportions for females. For ages 6-13 about two-thirds of the males and somewhat less than half of the females are receiving Jewish education; thus a total of some 56% of all Jewish children are receiving some Jewish education at the time specified. (When the age range is expanded to ages 6-16, the resulting percentages reflect the decline in enrollment in the post-Bar Mitzvah period, with enrollment for males and females respectively at 54% and 41%, for a total of about 48%.)

Considering enrollment for Jewish children as a group, (for the moment disregarding differences in this respect between males and females), ages *eight to eleven* constitute the plateau of relatively highest enrollment. In this age span, 60% or more attend a Jewish school.

Table 7. Now Receiving (Any) Jewish Education (All Persons), Per Cent of Each Age/Sex Group<sup>(a)</sup>

Age	Male	Female	Total
0-4	17.7	16.1	16.8
5	34.9	21.9	27.5
6	40.7	49.8	45.2
7	52.7	41.4	48.2
8	60.3	66.5	63.3
9	70.3	49.6	60.0
10	89.9	44.9	66.7
11	88.0	43.9	65.4
12	70.4	40.3	54.9
13	47.7	34.3	41.6
14	30.8	36.6	33.5
15	42.7	25.7	35.1
16	10.6	25.6	18.5
17	7.7	7.7	7.7
18-19	6.6	4.1	5.3
20-21	3.4	3.1	3.2
22-24	4.0	1.1	2.4
25-29	0.9	1.6	1.3
30-34	2.8	6.8	4.9
35-39	2.1	8.3	5.5
40-44	3.8	3.3	3.6
45-49	2.7	2.4	2.6
50-54	2.4	6.9	4.6
55-59	5.6	3.3	4.5
60-64	2.5	2.8	2.7
65-74	2.4	3.7	3.1
75 or more	1.3	0.4	0.8
Not reported	2.0	1.7	1.8
Total 6-13	66.9	45.6	56.2
Total 6-16	54.3	40.6	47.5

(a) E.g. 17.7% of males 0-4 are now receiving Jewish education, etc.

The peak is reached at age ten, with nearly 67% attending. This finding is at odds with the contention that Jewish school enrollment peaks just before and at age thirteen, - the Bar (Bat) Mitzvah year. Particularly boys at ages ten and eleven show considerably higher enrollments (88 to 99%) than at ages twelve and thirteen (respectively 70 and 48%). For girls the differences of enrollment in the eight to eleven year age range show a peak at age eight (with about two-thirds enrolled), with declines thereafter into the 40% range.

For boys, following the Bar Mitzvah age, a further decline in enrollment occurs at age fourteen, followed by an upswing at fifteen, perhaps in anticipation of possible Confirmation (an additional observance implemented in Religious Schools of variously non-Orthodox orientation). However, by age sixteen, the final decline in the percentage of enrollment occurs and then continues progressively throughout the rest of the age distribution.

For girls the pattern in enrollment percentage traces a persistent gradual declining path, following the peak at age eight. A somewhat higher percentage of girls than boys continue their Jewish education to age sixteen; however, thereafter the enrollment differences between the sexes become minor and, - with a numerically-small but significant resumption of adult education in the thirties and early fifties, - the Jewish educational experience is concluded.

Viewing the data in another perspective, a majority of Jewish boys are enrolled in a Jewish school of one or another kind, for ages seven through twelve. At age thirteen the enrollment proportion slips below the fifty-percent mark.

Among girls, beyond the peak for eight year olds, age differences in enrollment are less distinct with 40 to about 50% reporting enrollment in the 6-12 year age span.

Adult Jewish education appears somewhat more prevalent for women than men, especially in the 30-39 age group, and again at ages 50-54. Somewhat older men, ages 55-59 are more inclined to be enrolled in an Adult Jewish educational program than women of corresponding age.

The issue of "exposure" to Jewish education also may be examined in terms of the proportion of persons in the Jewish population who *at any time in their lives* have received some Jewish education. Figures are reported in Table 8.

Among males thirteen years old and up, nearly 84% have had some Jewish education at some time in their lives; the corresponding figure for females is about 63%. On this basis, it is estimated that nearly three-fourths, (73%), of adult Jewish persons in the U.S. have had some Jewish education.

For males, beyond differences associated with the pre-school years, proportions of those *ever* exposed to Jewish education fall within a rather narrow range: generally from 75 to 90%. For females the data are somewhat more variable, showing enrollment percentages from 53 to 88%. This increased variability may be due to cultural influences which,

Table 8. Any Jewish Education (Ever), Per Cent of Each Age/Sex Group<sup>(a)</sup>

Age	Male	Female	Total
Total	78.6	61.3	69.7
0-4	18.7	18.2	19.4
5	37.1	26.2	31.4
6	38.1(b)	52.3	45.4
7	56.4	49.2	53.9
8	62.8	72.7	67.5
9	73.7	88.3	81.0
10	92.3	87.1	89.6
11	88.6	69.0	78.5
12	86.1	72.2	78.9
13	80.1	74.7	77.6
14	89.4	70.1	80.1
15	89.5	62.6	77.4
16	78.6	64.2	71.2
17	78.5	83.8	81.0
18-19	87.2	74.3	80.5
20-21	83.6	83.5	83.5
22-24	90.3	58.9	73.9
25-29	87.0	52.8	68.9
30-34	80.2	67.7	73.7
35-39	84.0	61.9	71.8
40-44	88.1	63.4	75.1
45-49	74.4	54.2	63.6
50-54	88.4	66.1	77.5
55-59	77.9	59.2	69.3
60-64	88.0	64.3	76.2
65-74	79.9	63.3	70.5
75 or more	89.1	54.8	70.4
Not reported	75.2	52.3	59.5
Total 13 or more	83.8	63.4	73.2

(a) E.g. 18.7% of males 0-4 have had some Jewish education, now or in the past

(b) Inconsistent: less than 'now' Jewish education (40.7%).

at various times, may place differential emphasis on Jewish education for the female. Rather higher proportions of exposure to Jewish education appear for girls ages nine and ten, reflecting current relative equality of the sexes in this respect. The preponderance of male over female exposure to Jewish education is highest in the older age groups.

The findings suggest that, while sex differences in the prevalence in Jewish education continue to exist, usually favoring enrollment by males, these differences are less distinct now than in the past; indeed, for some ages (six, eight, nine and seventeen) the proportions of females ever enrolled in a Jewish school are greater than corresponding proportions of males.

If one wishes to examine historical trends, answering the question "are Jewish young people nowadays more likely to have some Jewish education than their elders?", one may examine the figures shown in the first column of Table 9 (Parts 1 and 2). Using age ten as starting point (an age at which, for the most part, some Jewish education has been commenced), we note that among persons ages 10-14, some 87% of males and 75% of females have had some Jewish education. For the next age group 15-19, the corresponding figures are 84 and 72%, while among those in their early twenties the results for males and females respectively are 87 and 70%. Thereafter, the historic enrollment levels tend to decline for females to the 50 and 60% range, while remaining fairly constant for males, at 80% or higher. On this basis, we may conclude that Jewish girls currently are somewhat more likely to receive Jewish education than in the past, but there has been rather little increase in the already-high proportion of enrollment for boys. However, as a net effect, the trends suggest development of a somewhat expanding reach by Jewish educational institutions, mainly due to cultural and systemic changes leading to more widespread Jewish school enrollment among girls.

Table 9, Parts 1 and 2, show, respectively for males and females, the kinds of Jewish education in which persons of specified ages are/or were enrolled. As noted, the first column, Column A, indicates the proportion within the specific age/sex category who have had any Jewish education, now *and/or* in the past. Columns B, C, D and E specify the *kind* of Jewish education reported. For ease of reference, these Jewish education types are identified by their popular labels, though these lack technical precision. For instance, Column B is headed "Sunday School", though in some instances the person may attend on Saturday, and/or the one-day-a-week schooling may be augmented by periodic mid-week meetings. Column C, headed "Hebrew School" refers to week-day afternoon (part-time) school experiences meeting more than once a week, and to Cheder. Column D, "All-Day School", refers to full-time Jewish educational experiences, variously at elementary, secondary or more advanced levels (other than Rabbinic training). Finally, "Early Jewish Education", Column E, denotes Jewish Nursery School and/or Kindergarten<sup>(8)</sup>.

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(8) Individual tutoring and specialized professional education, such as Theological Seminary, are not shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Patterns of Jewish Education<sup>(a)</sup>

Age	Any Jewish education	Sunday School	Hebrew School	All-Day School	Early Jewish education	Multi-use index <sup>(b)</sup>	
	A	B	C	D	E	B+C+D+E/ A = F	
Part 1. Males							
0- 4	18.7	2.2	1.0	1.9	16.1	21.2/18.7	1.13
5- 9	54.8	33.9	17.9	6.5	13.7	72.0/54.8	1.31
10-14	87.3	56.3	60.5	13.1	10.2	140.1/87.3	1.60
15-19	84.1	52.2	61.3	11.1	5.6	130.2/84.1	1.55
20-24	87.1	43.3	49.0	17.7	5.5	115.5/87.1	1.33
25-29	87.0	43.3	63.1	18.0	1.4	125.8/87.0	1.45
30-39	82.2	28.3	64.1	7.3	1.4	101.1/82.2	1.23
40-49	80.7	21.4	61.4	6.8	1.2	90.8/80.7	1.13
50-59	83.3	17.5	55.8	6.4	0.9	80.6/83.3	0.96
60-64	88.0	15.4	65.3	7.1	0.6	88.4/88.0	1.00
65-74	79.9	12.1	56.2	8.6	0.9	77.8/79.9	0.97
75 or more	89.1	8.7	59.9	11.9	1.0	80.6/89.1	0.90
Part 2. Females							
0- 4	18.2	7.9	1.8	2.5	16.7	28.9/18.2	1.59
5- 9	58.6	34.1	18.4	8.1	12.7	73.3/58.6	1.25
10-14	74.6	45.2	38.5	7.2	7.9	98.8/74.6	1.32
15-19	71.7	50.2	32.9	9.1	4.0	96.2/71.7	1.29
20-24	69.8	43.1	24.2	7.7	4.7	79.7/69.8	1.14
25-29	52.8	29.9	25.5	5.2	3.4	64. /52.8	1.21
30-39	64.5	37.6	27.0	5.2	1.3	71.1/64.5	1.10
40-49	58.4	34.4	21.0	7.4	0.8	63.6/58.4	1.09
50-59	63.2	28.2	22.6	5.0	0.8	56.6/63.2	0.90
60-64	64.3	32.7	32.2	4.5	0.7	70.1/64.3	1.09
65-74	63.3	20.6	19.1	2.8	0.3	42.8/63.3	0.68
75 or more	54.8	14.5	20.0	4.1	1.1	39.7/54.8	0.72

(a) Percent for each sex and age group.

(b) The 'multi-use index' provides a measure of the extent to which *more than one* Jewish education type is reported. Thus, it constitutes an indication of the variety of Jewish education in use in each age/sex group, or of persons 'moving about' among Jewish education types. As a rough index only, a score greater than 1.00 typically denotes multiple use, a score of 1.00 use of one Jewish education type predominantly, and a score below 1.00 a gap in reporting of relevant information.

Figures of Column A, restating by modified age categories data reported in Table 8, provide a baseline, indicating the total prevalence of Jewish education *regardless of type*. While results reported in Columns B, C, D and E specify the education types, the total of figures for these latter four columns does not necessarily add to the figure shown in Column A. In most instances, particularly among the younger persons, *more than one* education type may be reported. For instance, a child may have attended "Sunday School" for a year or two, and then may have transferred to "Hebrew School", or vice versa<sup>(9)</sup>.

Though the proportion reached by Jewish education is relatively constant for males in categories beyond age 10, - varying generally between 80 and 89%, - the *kind* of Jewish education noted varies, particularly with reference to "Sunday School". In the younger age groups, whose educational experience either is in "full swing" or who have completed Jewish education in recent years, the proportion reporting Sunday School enrollment is progressively higher than the corresponding proportion for those who completed their Jewish education in the more distant past. However, the proportion of enrollment in "Hebrew School" with rather minor fluctuations, maintains a steady profile for different age groups, - mostly between 50 and 65%.

For "All-Day Schools", enrollment figures beyond 10%, and ranging up to 18%, are reported for Jewish young men, between the ages of 10 and 29. Highest percentages of "All-Day School" attendance appear for those who completed their Jewish education some years ago and who now are in their twenties.

"Early Jewish Education" is reported for those under the age of nine (with a probable cutoff for the types specified at age six), at 13-17%. However, for older persons this Jewish education type is reported less frequently, possibly in part due to the assumption that subsequent Jewish education experiences have "superseded" early childhood education.

Among females, - Table 9, Part 2, - "Sunday School" also is more prominent among the younger, - those in recent and current peak Jewish education ages, (45-50%). As compared to males, "Sunday School" appears to have been an education type relatively more preferred for women whose Jewish education took place some 25 or more years ago. By contrast, the proportions of "Hebrew School" and "All-Day School" enrollment generally are lower for females than for males.

The data reported show neither a major expansion in the scope of Jewish education in recent years, - though somewhat more females are now reached -, nor a significant decline. However, greater variety in the kinds of Jewish educational experience offered prevails, with "Sunday School" playing a more substantial role than in the past, and with "All-Day Schools" reaching modest but significant proportions among males

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(9) In some instances, older persons do not report the kind of their Jewish education, or do not recall it, leaving 'gaps' in the percentages.



Table 10. Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation<sup>(a)</sup>

Age	Bar Mitzvah only	Confirmation only	Both Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation	Neither, Unknown	Total Bar Mitzvah	Total Confirmation
	A	B	C	D	A + C	B + C
Part 1. Males						
13-14	75.2	0.5	0.5	23.8	75.7	1.0
15-19	64.2	4.1	10.8	20.9	75.0	14.9
20-24	71.7	4.0	10.1	14.2	81.8	14.1
25-29	67.9	1.8	14.6	15.7	82.5	16.4
30-39	75.0	2.1	6.9	16.0	81.9	9.0
40-49	73.9	2.2	4.5	19.5	78.4	6.7
50-59	75.8	3.3	3.3	17.7	79.1	6.6
60-64	71.5	1.4	1.9	25.1	73.4	3.3
65-74	72.5	2.7	1.4	23.3 <sup>(b)</sup>	73.9	4.1
75 or more	85.0	1.5	2.4	11.1	87.4	3.9
Part 2. Females						
13-14	18.2	6.4	4.6	70.8	22.8	11.0
15-19	20.4	12.6	5.6	61.4	26.0	18.2
20-24	7.6	15.2	3.1	74.2	10.7	18.3
25-29	5.3	15.1	2.2	77.3	7.5	17.3
30-39	4.1	20.9	3.6	71.3	7.7	24.5
40-49	2.5	12.9	7.1	77.4	9.6	20.0
50-59	2.9	18.7	0.5	77.9	3.4	19.2
60-64	1.9	20.2	0.8	77.2	2.7	21.0
65-74	3.0	8.8	0.6	87.7	3.6	9.4
75 or more	2.1	4.9	0.8	92.2	2.9	5.7

(a) Percent for each sex and age group.

(b) 11.9 don't know.

(11 to 18% of those between the ages of 10 and 29), but rather smaller proportions of the females. In interpreting these results it must be recalled that we speak of percentages *within* specified age/sex categories, rather than of raw total numbers. With effects of declining birth rates of the late sixties and early seventies, the total *numbers* of young men and women constituting near-term potential for Jewish School enrollment is below the potential levels of earlier periods of high rate and resulting large child population.

Table 10, Parts 1 and 2, shows, for males and females respectively, the incidence of Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation by age. The observance of Bar Mitzvah among males has remained relatively high - in the 75 to 83% range - through the years. Current levels, near the range's lower end, at about 75%, are somewhat below the peak reported by the very old (75 years old and up) for whom an 87% Bar Mitzvah rate is reported.

Among females, Bat Mitzvah reveals its relatively recent origins and emphasis: about one-fourth, more-or-less, among Jewish young women between the ages of thirteen and nineteen report the observance of Bat Mitzvah. For older age categories, the percentages are progressively lower.

As to Confirmation, some 15% of males report this observance, particularly in the age group below thirty. For females the percentages tend to be somewhat higher, both among younger people but also among older women. Confirmation for women appears to have reached about one in five at most age levels. For males, the proportions are considerably smaller, about 15 or 16% among the younger with progressively lower figures with rising age.

Current patterns suggest that just below 80% of Jewish young men, - at a percentage level slightly below that found in the past, - have been either Bar Mitzvah or Confirmed, or both. For women the corresponding figures range from about 23 to 40%.

These findings suggest that, in spite of the increased enrollment in Jewish schools by young women, a "double-standard" continues to exist with reference to ceremonies marking impending adulthood in a Jewish and spiritual sense, with males more likely to partake in the specified ceremonial observance.

We have reviewed aspects of the Jewish educational experience as manifest by "objective" measures, such as Jewish school enrollment, Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation. A further consideration relates to the attitudes underlying Jewish education in the future: is Jewish education regarded as an important value? The NJPS inquired whether, in the opinion of the adult respondents, Jewish children "must" have Jewish education or whether they "should" have Jewish education. Results appear in Table 11.

The level of support for Jewish education, as revealed by expressed attitudes, is very high. Among those thirty years old and older, the compulsory "must" attitude predominates, as compared with

Table 11. Attitudes Regarding Necessity of Jewish Education<sup>(a)</sup>  
(Respondents Only), Per Cent

Age	"Must"	"Should"	"Must"/"should" ratio: "strictness"
Total	83.3	76.7	1.09
20-29	70.5	85.6	0.82
30-49	84.7	67.7	1.25
50-64	85.8	80.0	1.07
65 or more	91.3	80.6	1.13

(a) "Must" responses are defined as "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" to statement "Jewish children *must* have some Jewish education", "should" responses of "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" to the statement "Jewish children *should* have some Jewish education if they really want to".

the more permissive "should" attitude<sup>(10)</sup>.

Only among young respondents, ages 20-29, is the view that Jewish children *should* have some Jewish education, relatively more prevalent than the view that such education *must* take place, if necessary over the child's possible objection.

However, whether it is the permissive or the compulsory view that is espoused, the attitudinal support level for Jewish education appears firmly established at all ages, including the 30-49 bracket, encompassing a substantial proportion of parents with children of Religious School age. (It is noteworthy that for this group, the proportion of "must" significantly exceeds the proportion of "should", suggesting a *relative* urgency of commitment, greater than that found when the "must" versus "should" proportions at other age levels are compared; see ratio of "strictness".)

#### 4. Observances and Home Atmosphere

A significant expression of Jewish identity is the nature of the Jewish atmosphere prevailing in the home. One tangible form of this expression is that of the observance of Holidays and customs. Table 12 summarizes data concerning observances including the Sabbath, Passover, Hanukah and Kashruth<sup>(11)</sup>.

(10) Respondents could provide affirmative replies to *both* "must" and "should" questions.

(11) Aspects of High Holiday observances are considered separately to religious service attendance, in an earlier analysis.

Table 12. Reported Observances, by Age (Respondents Only), Per Cent

Age	Sabbath	Passover	Hanukah	Kashruth
Total	36.7	83.4	75.2	25.9
20-29	23.4	73.7	66.0	13.3
30-49	36.4	87.1	84.8	22.3
50-64	38.6	84.8	76.5	26.2
65 or more	44.6	82.6	60.8	42.6

A review of the findings suggests that Jewish observances are significantly age-related, and intertwined with other expressions of Jewishness. For instance, observance of the Sabbath and Kashruth follows a pattern rather in line with some measure of relative Orthodoxy and traditional concepts of Judaism. Here, observance is significantly less among the younger, and becomes progressively more prevalent with advancing age. (It is not appropriate, of course, to assume that the observance patterns of those presently young will - as years go by - necessarily follow the patterns now in evidence for aged and foreign born, who are disposed toward traditional patterns.)

Passover is very frequently observed, typically by the Seder<sup>(12)</sup>.

Differences in Passover observance among age categories are relatively small, although there appears some tendency for lesser observance among young respondents, under the age thirty.

Hanukah appears to be a family observance centered significantly on the child; accordingly, the most prevalent observance level appears for respondents (often parents) in the 30-49 age group, (85%). However, in the youngest adult ages, 20-29, and among the aged, the frequency of Hanukah observance is somewhat lower, around 61-66%.

Whatever the specific "objective" nature of the observances, the data suggest that certain family and home oriented observances, particularly Passover and Hanukah, are reported to be highly prevalent, significantly asserting an attitude of Jewish identification. This attitude, no matter what the actual behaviour, is highlighted further when we note that about 37% report Sabbath observance and 26% report the observance of Kashruth. These statements, though the "Halakhic" conformance may be in question, present an attitude constituting an affirmation of a traditionalistic form of Jewish identity by a sizeable minority of the Jewish population.

As a generic indication of Jewish identity in the home, we may examine the responses to the statement "I live in a very Jewish home", see Table 13. The resulting pattern again follows age lines and, as

(12) The NJPS contains details as to the specific nature of the observance; however, this detailed analysis is beyond this paper's scope.

Table 13. Jewishness of Home Environment

Age	"I live in a very Jewish home" (total agreeing)	"My upbringing was . . ." (strongly Jewish)
Total	52.0	50.3
20-29	34.0	23.7
30-49	55.7	47.3
50-64	52.4	55.7
65 or more	60.3	71.8

a whole, is mixed: slightly more than one-half of adult respondents respond affirmatively to the statement, while the balance disagree or (in minor proportion) have no opinion.

The highest level of assertion that the home is "very Jewish" appears for the aged, 60% concurring. But among the youngest group, those under 30, only 34% regard their home as "very Jewish". This age-related pattern once more bears out the hypothesis that among the younger the *intensity* of Jewish involvement, - the prevalence of Jewish education notwithstanding, - is at a lesser level than appears for the older.

By way of summation, (and a detailed analysis appears elsewhere)<sup>(13)</sup> one observes that, whatever the nuances of difference, the American Jew overwhelmingly asserts his/her commitments to "being Jewish" *in some sense*, though the form and quality of this commitment differs.

This overview of being Jewish is indicated by the finding that among all respondents, about 89% agree with the statement "I am happy to be Jewish". Almost 94% would *not* "switch from being Jewish to something else", even if they could do so easily. These results point to a basic affirmation of Jewishness by the American Jew, granting that the expression of this affirmation varies widely across the age and ideological spectrum defining the Jewish condition in the United States.

## 5. Conclusion

We may echo the title of Philip Klutznick's book of some years ago: "No Easy Answers", as we contemplate findings, and projected trends, revealing Jewish identity of the U.S. Jew. In the first place, the U.S. Jewish population is too heterogeneous by far to reflect any

(13) See: Massarik, Fred. *Jewish Identity: Facts for Planning*. New York, Council of Jewish Federations & Welfare Funds, 1974; and *Attitudes towards Jewish Community Services*. New York, Council of Jewish Federation & Welfare Funds, 1975.

single, simple line of development. In the second place, new forces are emerging that importantly require a re-thinking of the nature of Jewish identity and of its implications for Jewish survival.

A generic view may regard 'Jewishness' as an expansive, permeable membrane enclosing a widely - mixed congeries of particular Jewish expression. This boundary line - (as defined by the "four questions" in the NJPS 'screening section') - reveals that some 95% of the NJPS household heads are, and always were, Jewish. The shifting into and out of Jewishness - as long as there is any tie whatever to "being Jewish", appears to result in little by way of net loss; among affected adults, no massive stream away from Judaism appears to have taken hold. However, among the very young, there now appears a significant minority, - some one-fifth of young people age 5 and under, - who though residing in households with some Jewish identification are described as *non-Jewish*, from birth on. This percentage of the children of intermarriage is formidable, but one must recall that the process of intermarriage may generate a greater number of marriage *units*, than complete in-marriage; viz. unless significant proportions of males and females single, the marriage of a Jewish man to a non-Jewish woman, and the marriage of a Jewish woman to a non-Jewish man potentially creates two units rather than one. As a result, the chances of somewhat more off-spring ultimately resulting is somewhat greater than otherwise. On the other hand, declining birthrates exert negative numerical impact on total Jewish population size, no matter what the effects of the intermarriage pattern.

At present, little is known as to the relative fertility of intermarriages as contrasted with in-marriages, particularly as affected by social cross-currents such as "zero population growth" (pleas by groups in the Rabbinate for resumption of higher birthrates, etc.). And, importantly, the long-term religious and ideological commitment of the children of the intermarried still is uncertain. Nor is it clear as to what the style of Jewishness will be, to be adopted by those who are now teen-agers, and who are increasingly buffeted by the varied forces of ideological liberalism, environmentalists' opinion, admonition for return to basic value and conservatism stemming from economic necessity.

Certain Jewish institutions broadly maintain the encompassing boundary of Jewishness and, with little controversy, affirm its validity. Jewish education continues to be widespread, reaching more than 80% of males and upward 70% of females in Jewish households. At any one time, in accordance with recent findings, for ages 6-13, two-thirds of Jewish young males and about 50% of young females are enrolled in a Jewish school. Sunday School plays an increasing role and, for a significant minority of males, All-Day-School constitutes the Jewish education experience of choice.

Further, not only is present Jewish education pervasive - at least in its ultimate capability for "touching" in some way some seven or eight of every ten, - but also commitment to *future* Jewish education is high. There are few indeed who assert that there should be *no* Jewish education. In the crucial years of parenthood, a more compulsory view of the need for Jewish education predominates over a more permissive

view. And, as attitudes are examined, there are few Jewish people (among those who have any relationship whatever to a Jewish present or past) who would wish to deny their Jewishness, or who would seek to flee from it. On the contrary - by most, Jewishness is viewed as a positive and 'happy' aspect of their lives.

However, the NJPS data clearly indicate the highly significant differences among age groups with a respect to the *kind* of Jewishness now prevailing. The home is regarded as "very Jewish" in much higher proportion by the aged than by the young. In turn, the older are more typically identified with Orthodoxy and with corollary observances such as Kashruth and the Sabbath. The young are less likely to attend religious services; they are less likely to be members of congregations, and they are more likely to identify as "just Jewish", or even as "Jewish agnostics and atheists". Still, it is the broad middle-band of Jewish life, - the Conservative and Reform ideologies - that predominate at all age levels.

Jewishness becomes an expression of individual choice and of *Lebensstil*. Thus, various holidays, as characteristic expression of Jewish identity in the home, follow patterns much related to the household's age and life pattern. "Child-centered" holidays, such as Hanukah are somewhat more prevalent in age groups with children in the home. Others, such as Passover, are observances relating to the *entire* family, while as noted, still others reflect specific ideological and age differences, such as the Sabbath and Kashruth.

The guiding themes, then, may be described as two-fold: first, as broad Jewish *boundary* as support for *some kind* of Jewishness, no matter what, and, second, as significant *variability in the specific expression of Jewish identity* itself. Intermarriage increasingly becomes a major force, modifying both the quantity (as in Jewish population numbers) and the quality (as in the nature of the home environment) of Jewish family and community. The majority strands of Conservative and Reform Judaism continue to define the central thrust of American Jewish life. But beyond these major forces, considerable variety emerges in ideological "islands" of Orthodoxy (and even in minute returns to Chasidic pattern); in passivity toward (and in some cases active rejection of) Jewish institutional life, and in the development of manifold forms of Jewishness. Variety, rather than homogeneity of ethnic-religious patterns become key trends, though a generalized 'conventional' pattern continues as central tendency. But the forces of change are 'in the wings'...

Future studies of the Jewish condition in the U.S. thus must address the essence of emerging change. Studies are required of the dynamics of family life *within* intermarriage itself, and their implications for Jewish survival, and it becomes necessary to identify the potential for change, toward and away from Jewishness, as manifest by the varied sub-groups in the Jewish population as a whole. The future of the organized Jewish community, and of new modes of Jewish identity now crystallizing, depends on evolving knowledge, and on creative institution-building and Jewish educational enhancement flowing from this knowledge.