

Jewish Campus Life

A Survey of Student Attitudes Toward Marriage and Family

Rela Geffen Monson

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About the Author

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Foreword

A GREAT DEAL OF CONCERN has been expressed in recent years about the low birthrate among American Jews. The number of Jews in the United States — indeed in all Jewish communities outside of Israel — is decreasing rapidly.* One leading Jewish demographer, U. O. Schmelz, projects a 25 percent decline in the Jewish population outside of Israel by the end of this century.

Many view the low Jewish birthrate in the United States as symptomatic of a general erosion in the nuclear family. In addition, young Jews marrying much later, if they marry during their school years at all. One reason is that more and more women choose professional degrees and careers; many delay both marriage and family until they have achieved some of their professional goals.

The problem has prompted a number of groups, including the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, to consider policies and programs that Jewish organizations might initiate to reverse this dangerous trend.

The study described in these pages encompassed over 1200 Jewish college students on 14 university campuses. Though the sample is somewhat skewed (more than 50 percent of the subjects attended Jewish camps and belonged to Jewish youth groups when they were children and teenagers), we believe it represents a very large percentage of the Jewish student universe. And since more than 80 percent of young Jews attend college, we believe it tells us a great deal about the attitudes of the

*Forty percent of all Jewish children born in the world today are born in Israel, where little more than 20 percent of the world's Jews live.

next generation of American Jews toward marriage and family life.

While it is important to keep in mind the distinction between attitudes and behavior, and to remember that the behavior of young adults over the years often differs from attitudes expressed earlier, two findings of this study are of particular significance. The first, an encouraging one, is that the overwhelming majority of the Jewish students studied said they wish and expect to be married, and look forward to having two or more children. The second, more negative finding is that the majority of the respondents were prepared, for a variety of reasons, to marry non-Jews.

Previous studies sponsored by the American Jewish Committee indicate that individuals committed to Jewish values tend to have a pro-family orientation, and a greater willingness to transcend their immediate personal desires to advance certain social and communal goals. Other studies, by B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, suggest that young Jews committed to Jewish values are more likely to limit their dating and other serious heterosexual relationships to Jewish partners.

These various insights underscore the need for the Jewish community to strengthen its work with Jewish students on campus. New approaches and programs must be developed to encourage Jewish students to marry within the Jewish community, and to have children.

The cooperation in this study between the American Jewish Committee and the National B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations was a rewarding and productive experience. We hope this collaborative effort will encourage other Jewish organizations to join forces in a variety of projects that can serve the total Jewish community.

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Introduction

TODAY'S JEWISH COLLEGE STUDENTS will help shape directions and policies for future generations of American Jews. They, their spouses and children will be both the leaders and the constituents to whom these policies will be directed.

While there have been a number of attempts during the last two decades to study Jewish college students in America, there remains a paucity of information about this population. As late as 1977, one researcher complained that "despite the large number of Jewish students in college and the importance for Jewish identity which has been attributed by some writers to the college experience, there has been little empirical study of this effect."¹ The lack of empirical data was, and continues to be, attributed to the Jewish community's general neglect of large-scale studies in this area, and the difficulty of extrapolating data from national surveys because of the small number of Jewish respondents in such studies.

Who are today's Jewish college students? How do they compare to those of a decade or two ago? How do they feel about Judaism and the Jewish people? How do they express their attitudes in terms of participation in Jewish activities on campus? In particular, what are their views on marriage and the family? Do they date non-Jews? Do they accept or reject intermarriage as a personal future option? The present study attempts to answer these and related questions.

A Profile of the Jewish Freshman emerged from the national data collected by the American Council on Education and analyzed for the Jewish sub-group in 1969 and 1980.² Although Jewish students represented only three percent of the total, their large absolute number

(8,746) in the 1980 study produced some valuable data about their socioeconomic background, career aspirations, political orientations, attitudes toward family life and gender roles, and a comparison of these data with those concerning students of other religions. Nevertheless, the information is lacking in two important respects. Because the study was limited to freshmen, the findings do not encompass the full college experience; and they reveal very little about the quality of the students' attachment to the Jewish community or the intensity of their religious identity.

The most illuminating information on the Jewish identity of college students comes from a study of apostasy among college graduates of various faiths, entitled *The Religious Drop-Outs*, conducted by Caplovitz and Sherrow in the 1960s, but published in 1977. In his introduction Caplovitz writes that "to assess the future of America's religious communities, it is necessary to examine today's younger generations, for they in particular are exposed to the secularizing forces at work in modern society. This is especially the case for the college-educated among younger Americans."³ Because a number of earlier studies of college students suggested that their religious affiliations had a secular dimension, Caplovitz and Sherrow set out to examine identification with a religious group rather than with a faith.⁴ Following the tradition of Lenski,⁵ they sought to examine religious identity as a phenomenon that includes both belief and a sense of community. According to this thesis,

the major religions in America operate as comprehensive ethnic groups toward which the members experience a sense of group loyalty and from which, as in other social groups, they acquire many of their value-orientations and attitudes.⁶

Arguing that the importance of belief to religious identification varies from group to group, the authors sought to isolate what they called "germs" of apostasy which, they said, were similar for American college graduates of the three major religions. These included radicalism, intellectualism, maladjustment and poor relations with parents. There were, however, significant differences among the groups:

The data showed that the religious identities of Protestants and Catholics rested much more on religious belief than did the identity of Jews. Jews had no difficulty identifying themselves as Jews even though they were not

religious, indicating that Jewish identity rested heavily on the ... pillar of identity, communality or ethnicity.⁷

Jews tended to carry the “germs” more than members of other religious groups, yet they had a relatively low rate of apostasy.

The present study will also use a multifaceted definition of Jewish identification, based on religious and ethnic elements as well as on formal and informal Jewish community life. The “germs” it will attempt to isolate, however, will not be those of apostasy, but rather affirmations of Jewish identification and positive attitudes toward forming a family as an expression of Jewish identity.

Another study of Jewish college students, summed up in an article by Waxman and Helmreich in 1977, was based on in-depth interviews with some 50 students in six schools in the New York area.⁸ Most of those respondents viewed their membership in the Jewish group as an achieved status rather than one ascribed by *Halakhah* (Jewish tradition); they defined themselves as Jewish because they “felt” Jewish or chose to attach themselves to Judaism. One sign of the weakening hold of tradition on their lives was their attitude to intermarriage: “... 50% of our respondents were not opposed to religious intermarriage ... a figure significantly higher than the 31.7% actual intermarriages and the approximately 44% who were unopposed to intermarriage in the National Jewish Population Study for the years 1966-72.”⁹ It was evident that these students attached importance to Jewish religious values, but at the same time restricted the place of these values in their daily lives. Thus, many areas of life were “removed from the domination of religious institutions, the choice of a spouse, for example, while there was a secularization of consciousness in the sense that almost all the respondents looked upon the world and their own lives without the benefit of religious interpretations.”¹⁰

Some of the general literature on college students is also pertinent to the present investigation. Over two decades ago, Goldsen and her colleagues noted that “most students expect career to provide a major source of satisfaction, second only to the satisfaction they expect to get from family relations.”¹¹ They found also that “virtually every student wants to marry some day. Many feel that the sooner, the better... The students expect family life to be their most important source of satisfaction as adults and among women in particular it is of overwhelming significance.”¹² By far the most important criterion for mate selection was romantic love, even more than the desire to raise a family, and a

prospective partner's good appearance and social graces. Neither the authors nor the students raised the issue of a common religion or other shared values as a criterion for choosing a marriage partner.* Analyzing the role of religion in the life of the students, the study found that

with the exception of the Catholic students, the kinds of beliefs which most of these young people accept as legitimate religious values seem to center around the individual approach to religion. Personal adjustment, an anchor for family life, intellectual clarity — these are the kinds of criteria which most of the students agree are important. These are also the kinds of approaches which can be expected to appeal to everyone, which everyone can share — perhaps a least common denominator of religious belief and religious feeling; secular values rather than sacred ones.¹³

By 1971, as Yankelovich reported, family values had undergone some modification:

The number of students who believe that marriage is obsolete has increased substantially — from 24 percent in 1969 to 34 percent in 1971. Most students look forward to being married; three out of ten do not or are not sure about it. Eight out of ten students say they are interested in having children.¹⁴

About two-thirds of the sample ranked family as “a very important personal value,” with more women (73 percent) than men (58 percent) responding this way. In 1980 about two-thirds of the freshmen surveyed by the Higher Education Research Institute considered it an “essential” or “very important” objective in their lives to raise a family; there was virtually no difference between the men and the women.¹⁵

Yankelovich also asked the students in his sample what importance they attached to religion. Fewer than one-third — 39 percent of the women and 23 percent of the men — ranked religion as “a very important personal value.” Although percentages have changed from the 1950s to the 1980s, the relative ranking of family and religion as values in the lives of students did not. Family was, and still is, more central in the life students project for themselves than organized religion or religious values.

This brief overview of available data indicates that while commitment to marriage and family life is less intense today than it was in the 1950s, it still remains an important value for two-thirds of American college

*This may be because marrying within one's faith was much more prevalent and taken for granted in the 1950s.

students. Religion, too, has become less important to students than it was in the 1950s. For most, religion is a matter of personal belief and does not explicitly influence crucial life decisions. Furthermore, commitment to family life and to religion, the data indicate, are separate values, which may or may not be linked by any one student.

The research to date has not paid sufficient attention to how students view religion in their future lives, and particularly to the role they ascribe to religious values in selecting their mates. The present study will attempt to fill this gap by measuring Jewish identity and identification through a combination of ritual, ideological and associational criteria. After all, communality and ethnicity, no less than religion, are important components of Jewish identity.

Methodology

Participating Campuses

THE STUDY INVOLVED 14 campuses across the United States during the 1981/82 academic year. The campuses reflected great geographic diversity — Brandeis, Hofstra, and the Universities of Pittsburgh and Rochester in the Northeast; Virginia Commonwealth University in the South; the University of Wisconsin in the Midwest; the University of California at Los Angeles, Stanford and the University of Southern California in the Far West. Some, such as Brooklyn College and Washington University in Saint Louis, are in the heart of urban areas; others, like the University of Florida, are located in less densely populated areas. Princeton is an Ivy League school, Swarthmore is a smaller, private school. While most of the schools studied are residential campuses, Hofstra and Brooklyn College are predominantly commuter schools.

The cooperation of Hillel directors and staff on each of these campuses was enlisted to locate suitable subjects, distribute the questionnaires and monitor the returns. Every director was given a project summary describing the goals and procedures of the study and providing guidelines for data collection, a sample cover letter to accompany each questionnaire, and copies of the questionnaire.

The Questionnaire

A self-administered eight-page questionnaire was designed, which consisted of 33 questions and additional space for comments. It solicited information about the students' family background the kind of Jewish

education they had received, their current Jewish affiliation, their friendship patterns, their attitude toward marriage and childbearing, and ways in which they expressed their Jewish identity.

Composition of the Sample

To determine how gender influences attitudes toward marriage and childbearing, an equal number of unmarried male and female students were sought. The study was also designed to include both undergraduate and graduate students to shed light on the differences in attitudes between the students at the beginning and end of their university experience.

Efforts were made to include students who were not formally involved in Jewish student life (even though Hillel personnel generally have greater access to those who are affiliated with organized Jewish campus groups). The sampling guidelines specified that half of those receiving questionnaires be randomly selected from lists of Jewish students at a given school. On campuses where such lists did not exist, researchers were instructed to make their selections from the general college student directory, utilizing a prepared list of typical Jewish names to guide them. The other half of the sample was drawn according to a randomizing procedure from lists of students known to Hillel through their membership in Hillel, participation in Jewish student activities and involvement with Zionist organizations or advocacy groups for Soviet Jewry.

The goal was to gather 100 completed questionnaires from each campus. In all, 3,109 were sent out and 1,300 returned. Of these, 70 were invalidated because the respondents were no longer students, were married, or were not Jewish. Of the 1,230 who made up the final group — a return rate of 40 percent — 634 (51 percent) were women and 596 (49 percent) were men. Seventy-five percent were undergraduates; each of the undergraduate years was well represented in the sample.

The Respondents

About 45 percent of the respondents reported that they were members of Hillel or had participated in Jewish activities on campus — probably a higher affiliation rate than the general Jewish student population of the United States. With only one exception, the study involved schools with full-time Hillel personnel who generated a wide variety of Jewish activities. It is quite possible that students who seek active Jewish

involvement during their college years deliberately enroll in such schools in order to be assured of an available Jewish student community. Thus, some care should be taken in making generalizations for all Jewish students in the United States. On the other hand, the sample was large and varied enough to enrich and enhance the knowledge available until now about Jewish student life on campus.

Life Before College

Childhood, Family and Environment

APPROXIMATELY 70 PERCENT of the respondents were raised in suburbia, and attended high school there. Twenty-five percent had graduated from city high schools and four percent from schools in rural areas. Their college choices were partially linked to the state and region in which they had attended high school. Half had attended high school in the Northeast (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts) and roughly the same number were attending colleges in these states. California was an exception, however. One-fifth were enrolled in that state's colleges, though only 13 percent had grown up there.

Three-fourths of the respondents were undergraduates, with a fairly even distribution for each of the four school years. There were more women than men in three of the four undergraduate groupings, but more men among the graduate students (Table 1).

Table 1
Student Distribution According to Year in School

	Percent		
	All	Men	Women
Freshman	16	15	17
Sophomore	17	15	20
Junior	18	18	18
Senior	23	21	24
Graduate	26	31	21

The overwhelming majority (95 percent) came from families with more than one child. Of these, 36 percent had one sibling, 41 percent had two siblings and 18 percent had three or more. Four-fifths (79 percent) had two living parents who were still married to each other; 10 percent had lost one or both parents, and the natural parents of the remainder were either separated (3 percent) or divorced (8 percent).

The students were asked to describe their parents' educational background (Table 2). Four-fifths of the students' fathers had had at least some college education; two-fifths held graduate degrees. The mothers, too, had attained an impressive educational level. Three-fourths had attended college for some period, and one-fifth held graduate degrees. The parents' high educational attainment was matched by their occupational achievement: Over 75 percent of the fathers and 43 percent of the mothers were in professional or managerial positions.¹

Table 2
Educational Levels Attained by Respondents' Parents

	Percent	
	Mothers	Fathers
Elementary or less	1	2
Some high school	3	4
High school graduate	20	12
Some college	25	14
College graduate	25	24
Some graduate school	5	6
Graduate degree	21	38

Seventy percent of the mothers were in the labor force.² Having role models of women who combined a home and a career probably played an important part in shaping the students' views about their own future. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of the respondents said that their mothers had worked outside the home when their children were teenagers — 44 percent holding part-time positions and 56 percent working full time.

The findings also indicate that the working mother was an ongoing reality in the respondents' family life, not a sudden change. The increase in the number of women with small and teenage children who work outside the home is clearly evident in this sample. For example, 72 percent of the freshmen reported that their mothers had worked while the

students were in high school; but only 58 percent of the seniors and 60 percent of the graduate students reported a similar situation. Working mothers of students at all educational levels were more likely to have worked full time than part time.

Jewish Socializing Factors in Adolescence

The observance of Jewish home rituals, the institutional contacts of the parents with the Jewish community, and the formal and informal Jewish educational experiences of the respondents were major aspects of religious and communal involvement measured in the survey. The respondents were asked if, while they were growing up, their parents had ever lit Sabbath candles; hosted or attended a Passover Seder; bought kosher meat; lit Hanukkah candles; used separate dishes for meat and dairy foods; eaten *matzah* on Passover; had a *mezuzah* on the door; and fasted on Yom Kippur.

The home ritual most commonly observed was eating *matzah* on Passover (97 percent), followed by hosting or attending a Seder (95 percent) and lighting Hanukkah candles (95 percent). Also quite frequent were fasting on Yom Kippur and having a *mezuzah* on the door (both 84 percent). In descending order of frequency were lighting Sabbath candles (66 percent) and using separate sets of dishes for meat and dairy products (31 percent). The order of these responses roughly parallels that in general Jewish population surveys (as for example, the 1976 study in Greater Boston), though the percentage replying affirmatively to some of the items is higher in this survey.³ The high percentages may be attributed to the growing popularity of home rituals in American society in recent years. The promotion of some home rituals (e.g. the *havdalah* ceremony at the conclusion of the Sabbath) by the Reform movement in its educational institutions and publications in the last decade has also resulted in their greater acceptance.

Asked about their parents' ties to the organized Jewish community during the students' high school years, the respondents reported that a large majority (85 percent) had belonged to a synagogue and nearly as many (82 percent) had contributed to their local Federation of Jewish Philanthropies or the United Jewish Appeal. A smaller group of respondents said their parents had belonged to a fraternal (45 percent) or Zionist (36 percent) organization. There was some "affiliational linkage." Those parents who belonged to synagogues were more likely than others also to belong to fraternal or Zionist organizations.

In addition to the home observance they experienced and their parents' communal affiliations, the students were queried about their own Jewish education (Table 3). Most of the respondents, both male and female, had been exposed to some kind of formal Jewish educational experience during their elementary school years, usually after public school hours. Fewer girls than boys had received religious training three times a week. (Though the Conservative movement insists on a three-times-a-week preparation for Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah, parents are less likely to follow this route with their daughters than with their sons.)

Table 3

Exposure to Jewish Educational Experiences
in Childhood and Adolescence

	Percent		
	Men	Women	All
<i>Elementary School</i>			
Supplementary 1-day-a-week	54	54	54
Supplementary 3-day-a-week	69	54	62
Day-school/yeshivah	14	13	13
<i>High School</i>			
Supplementary	32	32	32
Day-school/yeshivah	9	9	9
<i>Informal Experiences</i>			
Member of a youth movement	52	60	56
Attended Jewish summer camp	50	59	54
Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah	90	49	69
Confirmation	37	40	38

The high percentage of students who had experienced Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah or confirmation is linked to their parents' high rate of synagogue affiliation, reported earlier. Synagogue membership is closely related to the Jewish family's life cycle, especially to the presence of children old enough for religious school education. More than one-third of the respondents continued their Jewish education while in high school. Many had one or more siblings of pre-Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah age.*

*In fact, 37 percent were firstborns. Though at any one point in time fewer than half of American Jewish adults are formally affiliated with a synagogue, nearly all have joined for some period of time in their lives. This survey taps information about that peak affiliation period in the life of the parents of these college students.

Jewish education taking place in informal settings can also have a profound impact on adolescent identity. Sleepaway summer camps and participation in youth movements are among the most encompassing of these experiences. Camping is effective because the experience lasts up to eight weeks, and is often repeated for several summers. Youth group participation provides an ongoing peer-group support system so crucial to adolescents. Over half the respondents had attended a summer camp or youth movement with significant Jewish content or values while in high school.

To sum up, the students in the study were fairly representative of Jewish young people who graduated from high school in the late 1970s. They came from urban and suburban, middle-to-upper-middle class homes and from intact families with generally no more than three children. Their parents were of high educational attainment and occupational status, and both mothers and fathers usually worked outside the home. Their families were likely to identify with the organized Jewish community in some way, particularly through synagogue membership, and to observe a number of home rituals, such as having a Passover Seder and lighting Hanukkah candles. Most of the students had been exposed to some formal Jewish education, though for two-thirds instruction ended when they passed Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah age. (Fewer than 15 percent had ever attended a Jewish day school or a yeshivah.) On the other hand, over half of the respondents had intensive informal Jewish educational experience in youth groups or summer camps.

The World of the Campus

The Way They Live

WHAT DO JEWISH COLLEGE STUDENTS think about, and how do they behave today? What are their living arrangements, friendship and dating patterns? Do they participate in Jewish life on campus? How did their childhood and adolescent experiences influence the extent of that participation? How are these experiences reinforced on campus? How do they feel about marriage, intermarriage, family life and childbearing? Finally, is there any connection between their attitudes toward family life and their earlier Jewish experiences?

The majority of the respondents lived away from home; only 17 percent, a few more women than men, were living with their parents, most of them in New York City.¹ Most of the students (40 percent) lived in college dormitories, usually with roommates. Another large group shared off-campus apartments with a roommate of the same sex (25 percent) or with a partner of the opposite sex with whom they had an intimate relationship (5 percent). Seven percent lived off campus on their own. Women students were less likely than men to be living alone, but slightly more likely to be living in an apartment with a mate with whom they shared an intimate relationship.

Friendship and Dating Patterns

Eighty-nine percent of the respondents reported that they had some close friends who were not Jewish. Even among the Orthodox students, who might be expected to be the most segregated in their friendship patterns, 63 percent reported that some of their close friends were non-Jews. On

the other hand, over half of the respondents (56 percent) indicated that all or most of their close friends were Jews, while only 3 percent said that none of their close friends were.

Reporting on their social life, nearly one-fifth — 22 percent of the men and 16 percent of the women — said that they were not dating at the time. Many of the respondents (43 percent) were going out with different people from time to time, and about one-third were seeing one person regularly. A small group (6 percent) were formally engaged to be married. Thirty-five percent — 31 percent of the men and 38 percent of the women — reported that all of their “serious” dates were Jewish, a discrepancy far smaller than that noted in past research. Twenty-three percent said that most were Jewish, 25 percent said that some were; and 17 percent said that none of their serious dates until now had been Jewish.

An effort was made to determine the correlation between the students’ behavior and their expressed attitudes in this area (Table 4). Fewer than one-fifth of the students said they would never date a non-Jew. (Obviously, propinquity and a willing attitude are two factors making such interaction possible, but the findings are somewhat surprising in light of the students’ relatively traditional family backgrounds.) As in their actual dating patterns, women students were less likely to view interfaith dating positively. However, the closeness between the response patterns of the men and women students indicates a social change.*

Here are the candid words of one woman student:

Being raised as a caring and committed Jew, I cannot foresee marrying out of the religion. Especially since my grandfather was a rabbi and my grandmother was a past president of Hadassah and a devoted Zionist. Yet the sparse number of Jews on campus, combined with their devotion to academics, makes dating Jewish males difficult. In addition, I tend to like the jocky, fun-loving type of guys. Unfortunately, because of this I have yet to date a Jew ... I only hope that when I’m ready for marriage I will meet a “nice

*Some time ago, I suggested that the lower rates of female exogamy were, in fact, dictated by changing structural factors. I predicted that, given similar parental attitudes toward the socialization of sons and daughters, greater exposure to the non-Jewish world, the availability of mentors outside the family and increased opportunities for higher education, the female exogamy rate would rise in the next decade. See my article, “The Case of the Reluctant Exogamists,” *Gratz College Annual of Jewish Studies*, V (1976), p. 20. Some evidence supporting such a trend is apparent in the present data about interfaith dating, the stage that precedes intermarriage.

Jewish boy" ... but I can't say that I wouldn't marry someone because he was not Jewish.

Table 4
Attitudes Toward Dating Non-Jews

	Percent				
	All	Men	Women	Undergraduate	Graduate
Would never do so	15	12	17	15	12
Would under certain circumstances	25	23	27	25	25
Would do so regularly	32	35	29	31	35
Religion not a factor	28	30	27	29	28

General Attitudes Toward Future Family Formation

The continuity of the Jewish people in America is related to the existence of a critical mass of Jews who care about Jewish life and institutions. Many factors enter into this population equation, and speculations about the future of marriage and childbearing in the present decade abound in the popular Jewish press. The common wisdom, only partially borne out by statistics, is that young Jews are marrying later, divorcing more often and having fewer children,² and there is an ongoing debate about the relative salience of these factors.³ Most people agree, however, that the rates of intermarriage and conversion, and the depth of commitment and affiliation of born Jews are vital factors in the Jewish future. A trend toward singlehood could drastically affect the overall number of Jews in the next generation.

Marriage

The respondents were asked whether marriage was part of their future plans (Table 5). Three-fourths of the respondents were definitely planning to marry; fewer than three percent were definitely planning not to. It is useful to explore the motivation of those who said they had no definite plans to marry (Table 6).

The major rationale offered by those (about one-fourth) who were uncertain that marriage would definitely be part of their lives was the belief that a long-term relationship with one person is impossible to

sustain. Another frequent explanation, offered by respondents who said they believe in marriage, was their conviction that it would be very difficult to find the right mate. A very small number of respondents mentioned the fear of divorce, suggesting that for these students the rising divorce rate may support the belief that finding a suitable mate is difficult.

Table 5
How Definitely Respondents Plan on Marriage

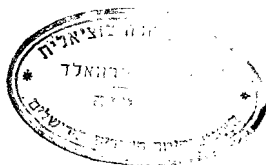
	Percent		
	All	Men	Women
Very definitely	52	50	53
Definitely	24	25	23
Probably	22	22	22
Probably not	2	2	2
Definitely not	0	1	0

Table 6
Reasons for Not Definitely Including Marriage in Future Plans

	Percent		
	All	Men	Women
	(N = 278)	(N = 136)	(N = 142)
Lack of eligible Jewish mates	11	9	12
Marriage will impede career	12	8	15
Fear of divorce	2	1	3
Won't find someone to live with long-term	29	30	29
Other (combination of reasons and difficulty in finding "Ms. or Mr. Right")	46	52	41

Women were somewhat more likely than men to be concerned about the conflicts between career and family life, and about the lack of eligible Jewish mates. Both of these concerns are realistic. In dual-career families, it is more often the woman who sacrifices her professional advancement when children are born. And statistics do show that there is a shortage of Jewish males in every marriageable age group.⁴

The sample as a whole did not view marriage as an end in itself. Most said they would marry only if they found the right mate:



I am not looking, but neither am I not not looking. If I met someone I wanted to marry and he me, I would, but I will not marry just to marry.

Marriage is in my plans but it is not assured that I will meet the right person.

I will not marry for the sake of being married; rather I will marry if I meet the right person.

Can't make a decision regarding marriage until I meet someone I think I'd want to marry — love and compatibility being major factors.

A less extreme alternative to remaining single indefinitely is obviously that of delaying marriage. To probe this further, the students were asked to indicate their most likely reason for delaying marriage (Table 7).

Table 7

Most Likely Reasons for Delaying Marriage

	Percent		
	All	Men	Women
Wanting to be sure found right person	51	46	56
Incomplete career training	25	25	25
Concern about earning a living	10	16	6
Enjoy being single	5	5	4
Other	9	8	9

Most of the respondents who marked "other" as the reason for delaying marriage indicated that their decision stemmed from a combination of reasons. A few mentioned their lack of maturity; others noted that they were dating non-Jews and that their parents opposed the arrangement. Contrary to popular speculation, the attraction of the single life was not mentioned by any significant group of respondents as a reason to delay marriage. Women were more likely to discuss the possibility of not finding the "right" mate; men were more likely to cite concern about earning a living.

To probe the students' feelings more deeply, they were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements: "It is possible for a woman to combine career and motherhood successfully"; and "Marriage provides the best opportunity for love and personal growth" (Table 8).

Men and women students responded almost identically to these statements, with one exception: 75 percent of the men, but only 63

percent of the women “definitely agreed” that a woman can successfully combine career and motherhood. It is significant, however, that such a possibility was acknowledged by a large proportion of men *and* women.

Table 8

General Attitudes Toward Marriage and the Family

	Percent			
	Definitely Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Definitely Disagree
Marriage provides best opportunity for love and growth	34	41	15	10
A woman can successfully combine career and motherhood	69	24	4	3
Couples with children shouldn't be allowed to get a divorce	1	3	19	77

Three-fourths of the respondents endorsed the idea that “marriage provides the best opportunity for love and growth.” (They did not, however, favor preserving a marriage at any cost.) In fact, their general attitudes were more “pro-marriage” than the national samples of students cited earlier, which showed that about two-thirds ranked family as a very important personal value. In the Yankelovich survey, for example, 61 percent of the students had said that they looked forward to marriage. Seven percent were already married. In that study, more single women (72 percent) than men (51 percent) looked forward to marriage.⁵

Childbearing and Family Size

Just about all of the students expected to be parents some day. Only four percent advocated a childless life, and seven percent said that they themselves expected to have no children. These figures were similar for men and women, and for undergraduate and graduate students. Even less popular, either as an “ideal” or as an expectation for themselves, was the prospect of having only one child. Fewer than one percent of the sample cited this as their ideal, and only two percent as their real expectation — a pattern that remained the same for those who were older, and probably closer to marriageable age. In contrast, in the 1971

Yankelovich national survey, 79 percent of the students polled — 75 percent of the men and 83 percent of the women — were interested in having children.⁶

Apart from their own expectations, more than half of the respondents thought that having only one child was generally a bad idea. But fewer than half agreed with the statement, “Every Jew should have children,” and only 14 percent agreed with the statement, “A family that has no children is not a real family.” On the other hand, nearly two-thirds — 70 percent of the men and 59 percent of the women — agreed that “for a Jew, family is more important than career.” This view was shared equally by undergraduate and graduate students.

The majority of these students expected to replicate the patterns of the families in which they had grown up. Most of the students (43 percent) viewed a family with two children as the ideal size, with the three-child family running a close second (38 percent). About 15 percent said they would like to have four or more children, preferably four. Their real expectations closely matched their ideals: 41 percent anticipated having two children; 31 percent, three children, and 18 percent, four children or more. Here, too, there was no significant difference between men and women.

Participation in Jewish Life on Campus

Student involvement in Jewish life on campus was measured by listing seven possible types of campus Jewish activity and asking the respondents if they participated in them. These included: religious services, Hillel, demonstrations in behalf of Jewish causes, Zionist groups, reading periodicals or books of Jewish interest, taking Jewish Studies courses and eating in a kosher dining facility (Table 9). One form of activity that was not listed, but which a number of students added, was working for the Jewish community in such jobs as teaching religious school and leading youth groups.*

The most common mode of participation in campus Jewish life was attendance at services, particularly on High Holy Days, which often fall during the academic year at times when it is difficult to leave school. Even the one-third who listed their religious affiliation as “secular” reported attending services on campus. As in the case of many adult

*Two other indicators of close involvement in Jewish life are the proportion of one's social circle of close friends who are Jewish and the proportion of Jews one has dated seriously. These two factors have already been touched upon and will reenter the analysis later.

Jews, attendance at High Holy Day services may represent a tribal attachment or base line of Jewish identification rather than a religious expression.

Table 9
Participation in Various Aspects of Jewish Life on Campus

	Percent						
	Religious Services	Jewish Books	Hillel	Jewish Studies	Demonstrations	Kosher Food	Zionist Group
All	79	59	45	42	30	22	20
Men	78	57	43	38	31	23	20
Women	78	60	47	46	29	22	20
Orthodox	93	88	73	80	67	70	53
Conservative	87	60	49	48	35	28	22
Reform/ Reconstructionist	80	52	42	33	21	9	13
Secular	39	32	15	19	10	7	8

Over half the respondents said they read Jewish books and periodicals and nearly half had enrolled in Jewish Studies courses — two activities that have proved an innovative yet normative way for Jewish students to express and intensify their Jewish identity in an academic setting. Nearly half had participated in Hillel. About one-fourth belonged to Zionist groups, or had signed up for a kosher dining plan, or had taken part in Jewish demonstrations.

An index of participation was computed from the responses to the seven items. The 31 percent of the students who reported taking part in none of the listed activities, or in only one of them, were ranked as “low”; the 34 percent who participated in two or three activities received a “medium” rating; the remaining 35 percent, who participated in four or more activities, were rated “high.”

It was obvious that the students’ participation in Jewish activities was significantly influenced by their experiences and home environment before attending college. The number of rituals observed in the students’ home, the degree of their parents’ involvement in Jewish communal life, the extent of their formal Jewish education, and their informal Jewish educational experiences such as a youth group or summer camp (discussed above) were measured for their impact on present Jewish involvement on campus. (Table 10).

Table 10**Relation Between Early Jewish Experiences
and Participation in Campus Jewish Activities***

	Percent		
	Student Participation Level		
	Low	Medium	High
<i>Home Ritual Observance</i>			
Low	48	32	20
Medium	30	37	33
High	29	44	27
Very high	14	26	60
<i>Parents' Jewish Communal Involvement</i>			
None	66	19	15
Low	45	34	21
Medium	34	34	32
High	23	39	38
Very high	14	33	53
<i>Formal Jewish Education</i>			
Low	45	32	23
Medium	31	30	39
High	23	38	39
<i>Informal Jewish Education</i>			
No camp or youth group	48	32	20
Camp or youth group	31	37	32
Both	15	32	53

*Tables 10 and 11 are statistically significant at the .0001 level, where there is less than one chance in 10,000 that the distribution occurred by chance.

The table clearly shows that greater exposure to each of these factors increased the probability that students would involve themselves in some form of Jewish life at college. Thus, a student whose parents were highly involved in Jewish communal life was more than twice as likely to be highly involved in Jewish life at college than one whose parents had little involvement. The same is true for home observance of Jewish rituals, and for formal and informal Jewish education. The reverse was true as well. Students who lacked these early predisposing experiences were less likely to be involved in Jewish life when they came to college.

The study also paid attention to some other factors reinforcing participation in Jewish activities on campus (Table 11). The “Jewishness” of the social circles in which a student moved, as indicated by the proportion of close friends and serious dates who were Jewish, as well as the denominational affiliation claimed by the student, also influenced the degree of involvement in Jewish campus life.

Table 11
Relation Between Social and Religious Participation
in Jewish Student Life

	Percent		
	Student Participation Level		
	High	Medium	Low
<i>Proportion of Close Jewish Friends</i>			
All	52	31	17
Most	46	29	25
Some	21	40	39
None	16	32	52
<i>Proportion of Serious Dates with Jews</i>			
All	55	29	16
Most	37	33	30
Some	22	41	37
None	16	32	52
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>			
Orthodox	81	12	7
Conservative	42	37	21
Reform/Reconstructionist	23	42	35
Secular	9	24	67

The correlation between moving in Jewish social circles and participation in Jewish student life was equally powerful for undergraduate and graduate students, and for men and women. It was also maintained within denominational groups. For instance, students who called themselves Conservative and had predominantly Jewish friends and dates were also more likely to be active participants in Jewish activities on campus. Faith and ideology may sustain the identity of a Jewish student, but informal ethnic community is also a significant reinforcer.

Role of the “Jewish Dimension”

Influence on Friendship Patterns

THE STUDY ESTABLISHED that the childhood and adolescent Jewish experiences described in the previous pages increased the students’ propensity to identify as Jews and to mix in predominantly Jewish social circles on campus. Yet most of them also had some close non-Jewish friends. It was decided to measure the relationship of these early experiences to the students’ current proportion of close Jewish friends (Table 12).

Perhaps the most striking finding was the high percentage of students who moved in predominantly Jewish circles even though they had *not* had these Jewish experiences. But there was a significant difference. About two-thirds of the students who had been exposed to home observance of rituals, parents’ communal involvement, formal Jewish education, and informal camping and youth group participation had all or mostly Jewish friends. A much lower percentage of those who did not have these experiences had such friends.

Impact on Interfaith Dating

While a higher proportion of close Jewish friends correlates with a lower rate of interfaith dating, it is interesting to note that the students themselves did not perceive their friends’ attitudes about interdating as affecting their own dating patterns one way or another.

As noted earlier, 62 percent of the women and 69 percent of the men in the sample reported that at least some of their serious dates had been with non-Jews. At the same time, 17 percent of the women and 12

Table 12
Relation Between Early Jewish Experiences
and Proportion of Jewish Friends

	Percent			
	All	Most	Some	None
<i>Home Ritual Observance</i>				
Low	7	34	53	6
Medium	9	49	40	2
High	12	42	42	4
Very high	16	54	29	1
<i>Parents' Jewish Communal Involvement</i>				
None	11	26	58	5
Low	10	36	51	3
Medium	9	48	39	4
High	12	46	40	2
Very high	14	49	34	3
<i>Formal Jewish Education*</i>				
Low	12	39	45	4
Medium	13	44	41	2
High	9	48	40	3
<i>Informal Jewish Education</i>				
No camp or youth group	7	31	57	5
Camp or youth group	12	46	39	3
Both	13	54	31	2

*Statistically significant at the .04 level.

percent of the men said they would never date a non-Jew. Table 13 illustrates the relationship between childhood and adolescent Jewish experiences and interfaith dating in college.

Most revealing were the responses to the statement, "Religion is not a factor for me in choosing whom I date." Students with little exposure to three of the four pre-college Jewish experiences were more than twice as likely as those with high exposure to say that religion did not influence their dating preferences.

As for the current environmental and ideological factors, 64 percent of the students who considered themselves Orthodox said they would never date non-Jews; of those calling themselves secular or "unattached" to Judaism, only 3 percent said so. Attachment to any denominational identity made students much more likely to limit their interfaith

dating. Ideological commitment to Jewish survival through the creation of Jewish families also correlated with a negative view of interdating. This was evident in their reaction to two statements about marriage and childbearing: "Marriage and childbearing are essential for the survival of Jews since we are a minority" and "Events of Jewish history require me to marry and have children." Seven percent of the students who considered both statements meaningful, in contrast to 46 percent of those who found meaning in neither, said that religion had no effect on their choice of dates. On the other hand, only six percent of those who found neither statement meaningful, in contrast to 31 percent of those who found both meaningful, said that they would never date a non-Jew. Clearly many students concerned about Jewish peoplehood perceived a progression from interdating to intermarriage.

Table 13
Relation Between Early Jewish Experiences
and Willingness to Date Non-Jews

	Percent			
	Never	Under Certain Conditions	Would Date Non- Jews Regularly	Religion not a Factor
<i>Home Ritual Observance</i>				
Low	6	16	33	45
Medium	10	27	37	26
High	12	22	38	28
Very high	30	35	22	13
<i>Parents' Jewish Communal Involvement</i>				
None	8	14	30	48
Low	11	18	34	37
Medium	14	24	31	31
High	15	27	35	23
Very high	19	34	29	18
<i>Formal Jewish Education*</i>				
Low	13	21	29	37
Medium	16	26	33	25
High	14	27	33	26
<i>Informal Jewish Education</i>				
No camp or youth group	9	15	36	40
Camp or youth group	15	26	30	29
Both	19	34	30	17

*Statistically significant at the .02 level.

This is also borne out in the responses to statements in the questionnaire pertaining to such factors as parental attitude toward interdating, the small number of Jews on campus, an inability to relate to other Jewish students, having interdated in high school, the belief that interdating leads to intermarriage, the attitudes of closest friends toward interdating, and the universalistic belief that “a person is a person regardless of his or her religion.” The students were asked to state whether these factors had made them more or less willing to interdate or had no bearing at all on their decisions.

Three types of factors were seen as influential by at least one-fourth of the respondents: parental attitudes, personal beliefs and the personal experience of interdating in high school. Twenty-six percent of the students agreed that interdating in high school made them more willing to do so later; 38 percent endorsed the belief that interdating leads to intermarriage; and 41 percent said that the belief that a person is a person regardless of religion affected their current willingness to interdate. The impact of various factors was intensified when a student identified with a religious denomination.

Two factors — interfaith dating in high school and universalistic egalitarian beliefs — seemed to make those students who deemed them important more willing to interdate. The universalism expressed in the statement that “a person is a person regardless of his or her religion” is part of the American ideal, a rhetoric likely to be heard in most American Jewish households. This belief, even more than high school interdating experience, lent legitimacy to out-of-faith dating. Sklare argues that parents are helpless when their offspring decide to intermarry, precisely because of the rhetoric they themselves defended during their children’s socialization — that the same liberal, egalitarian ideology that has characterized the Jewish middle class in America is a double-edged sword.¹ It is impossible to tell whether, in the present investigation, the students were rationalizing their action after the fact or were actually influenced by this ideology in deciding to date non-Jews. In either instance, the argument is powerful, as the following comment from one student illustrates:

Even though I do not attend Temple regularly, I still have a strong feeling for the Jewish religion and heritage. However, Judaism never has and probably never will dictate who my friends are and whom I date. In fact, I *almost* resent people who feel that they can only be friends with, date and, in general, associate with people of their own religion. This type of feeling is a

type of reversed prejudice and unfortunately is the popular feeling of the Jewish people.

On the other hand, negative parental attitudes toward interdating and the belief that interdating leads to intermarriage do inhibit some students from interdating. Those who espoused a survivalist perspective, and therefore worried about the possibility of intermarriage, opposed interdating. Those who defined themselves as secular were most likely to espouse a universalist ideology, and those who considered themselves Orthodox or Conservative were most likely to believe that interdating leads to intermarriage.² Some respondents cited other factors that deterred them from interdating. The one recurring most frequently (among nearly 10 percent of the respondents) was feeling a special compatibility with other Jews, and some discomfort in relating to non-Jews.

Social discomfort between Jewish men and women has recently been a subject of inquiry in both the popular literature and the literature of the relatively new field of ethnotherapy.³ The reverse of this phenomenon is a “tribal” feeling of comfort, or kinship, in the presence of other Jews of the opposite sex, and an uneasiness in social interaction with non-Jews. Respondents described both of these emotions in a variety of statements.

On feeling especially comfortable with other Jews:

I really want to marry a Jewish girl because I know certain things would be easier right off the bat.

As far as marriage is concerned, I would probably not marry a non-Jew simply because of all the differences in thought and upbringing which would cause problems.

I want to raise my children Jewish. I have found a deep cultural boundary in relationships of Jew/non-Jew.

I date Jewish students because of attraction to and compatibility with mostly Jewish students.

I wouldn't interdate because of an inability to share the most meaningful experiences and interests of my life — namely Jewish experiences.

I have most in common with Jews.

Judaism is so much a part of my life that interdating makes little sense.

I want to marry a Jewish girl because I want to share my Judaism with her

and with our children, if we have any. This is very important to me.

I'm attracted to Jewish guys 99 percent of the time and feel more comfortable with them.

On feeling uncomfortable with other Jews:

Religion stopped being one of my criteria for dating when I realized that I was going out with Jews I would never have gone out with if they were non-Jews. Let's face it — by numbers alone, it is hard to find someone within the religion that is really right ... especially since I am not an obsessively materialistic person, as unfortunately *a lot* of Jews are. And if you do meet a nice Jew you don't have the luxury of getting to know them slowly. Immediately there is the pressure from Jewish family and friends for you to start having a relationship — after all, how many Jews are you going to find that you are compatible with?

Finding a “nice Jewish girl” is a good idea, if you can find one who will settle for someone who is *not* a doctor, lawyer, dentist, etc. If you can find a mate who understands that a relationship between two human beings who love each other is more important than money or social status, you have a rare person. Far too many JAPs want beautiful homes instead of loving mates.

Let us not forget, we are *people*. God does not ask that we love only Jews, or that we surround ourselves with Jewish friends. We are *not* better, we are just *different*. Consequently, as long as Jewish men believe the myths their mothers tell them (“You are a *prince!* You are so much better than others!”) I will date more down-to-earth, loving and unspoiled gentiles. P.S. As a non-JAP, I find it repulsing (sic) to socialize with women whose biggest concern in life is to get designer jeans on sale at Saks.

Have attended Hillel, Chabad House and taken Hebrew, but it seems like I can't relate to many of the Jewish students. Many seem cliquey or “JAPpy.” As I date more and more non-Jews, I get more and more upset about this.

I am not a typical Jew. From what I've seen, the typical teenage or college-age Jew is spoiled, vapid and totally incapable of expressing an honest feeling and having an original thought. I say this with regret, but because I love my religion: We have reached the point where Judaism is too serious a business to be left up to Jews.

Impact on Ideas About Future Family Life

In addition to the students' personal motivations in viewing marriage and childbearing, is there a “Jewish dimension” influencing their

attitudes and behavior? If so, does it derive from a particular stance toward Jewish tradition acquired before college? And do ties to Jewish tradition and community go hand in hand with a stronger commitment to marriage and childbearing?

Possible Jewish rationales for affirming marriage and childbearing include the Biblical command to procreate; the survivalist demographic argument; the historical imperative; the obligation of parents to ensure family continuity; and finally, the view that having a spouse and children gives meaning to existence. The respondents were asked if they endorsed one or more of these rationales, or if they felt there was no relationship between Judaism and commitment to marriage and childbearing (Table 14).

Table 14
Statements Relating Judaism to Marriage and Family Life

	<u>Percent</u>
Having a spouse and children is an affirmation of life	64
Marriage and childbearing are essential for Jewish survival since we are a minority	61
I see little if any relationship between Judaism and commitment to marriage and childbearing	40
Being married and having children is a commandment	24
Events of Jewish history require me to marry and have children	19
We owe it to our parents to provide grandchildren	18

Over one-third of the respondents saw little relationship, if any, between Judaism and their commitment to marriage and childbearing. Family formation was seen by nearly a fourth of the students as a Jewish commandment, and arguments pertaining to Jewish survival touched a chord among 61 percent. Both Elazar and Woocher, among others, characterized this as the predominant ideology among leaders of the American Jewish community today.⁴ Woocher put it this way:

As a world-view and ethos, "Jewish survivalism" focuses on threats to Jewish security and well-being, and seeks to mobilize Jewish resources to

meet these threats. Over the past several decades, the quest for “Jewish survival” has become the keynote of polity activity in a broad range of functional areas ... including generating new concern for Jewish education and family life (as the keys to Jewish continuity) ... The overriding value of Jewish survival ... emphasizes the struggle for survival in a world at once too hostile and too hospitable.⁵

The students’ version of this ideology emerges from some of the comments they added on the back of the questionnaires. The following section illustrates some contrasting points of view on the link between Jewish identity and future family life.

On the survivalist-minority connection:

While I believe that if Jews don’t keep having children, then the survival of Jews (since we are already a minority) may be questionable, I do not believe that anyone should be forced or required to have children *simply* to keep the religion going. That is the *wrong* way to decide whether one should take on the great responsibility of raising another human being.

I feel that Jews should have children since we are a minority and are not entirely safe from persecution.

I feel that it is important for Jews to have several children per family to insure the existence and strong survival of the Jewish people.

I feel that Jewish (and other minorities that have been subject to extermination) should not be bound by the principles of ZPG [zero population growth]. If I thought my financial position would permit it, I would have four children.

I feel that marriage is a very personal matter and an individual should have the right to decide when and to whom they want to get married ... I think it is wrong of people to put the idea of “growth of the Jews” on us. People blaming and pressuring others are only causing the few Jews there are to lose their minds completely, and that will get us no place!

On the Holocaust as a motivation for marriage and childbearing:

Your questions were at times biased. For instance, those relating to childbearing and the Holocaust and Jewish history. I *do* feel that Jews should have more than two children, but not because of our history. It is, instead ... because of our future. I don’t feel that any part of Jewish history requires me to have children.

There were once 18 million Jews. After the Holocaust, there were only 12 million ... In the U.S. we are now *less* than 3 percent of the population. Therefore, Jews should have at least three children and should stop following liberal platitudes about reducing population growth.

The Holocaust was a catastrophe unparalleled in the history of mankind. I cry, lament, remember and get angry and swear it will never happen again. *But the Holocaust is no reason or basis* upon which people should decide to marry, have kids, support Israel, or make *aliyah*.

My own feelings about marriage are that not everyone should get married; and many persons are unfit to be parents. This goes for Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, arguments such as: 1. the Holocaust; 2. God's commandment; 3. low Jewish birthrate — don't bother me. I am a ZPG person.

On the inadequacy of the survivalist perspective:

Children and family are essential for Jewish survival; they are not sufficient, however. As future parents, we must seek to transmit to our children a Judaism that is intellectually and emotionally viable in terms of our and their experience. We must break away from the excessive dependence on nostalgia which has characterized American Judaism heretofore.

The cumulative data make it apparent that the students are family-oriented, but not necessarily committed to creating *Jewish* families. Although nearly two-thirds acknowledged an explicit connection between Judaism and family life, most had not seriously worked it out for themselves. Raised on the pluralistic principles of American society, many students expressed the belief, for example, that a non-Jewish mate would be able to rear their children Jewishly, or that love would ultimately triumph over religious differences. All in all, love and family life were linked together more solidly than Judaism and family life. And when the time came for the students to make the decisive choice of a partner, the Jewish component might well be sacrificed in favor of "real" life. This finding in the present sample of 1,230 respondents is consistent with the conclusion reached by Waxman and Helmreich for their group of 50, i.e., that secularization has reduced the influence of religion even on students with a positive Jewish affirmation.

Again, the students' own words best express these realities:

I feel very strongly that I want to get married and have children. The person I wish to marry is not Jewish, though. He is very interested in the customs, culture and identity of Jews. He is not a religious person and has no desire to

convert. We feel that if we have children we will *compromise* (by teaching them about both of our religions). We both believe very strongly in God and have high moral codes. We both pray and thank God often. Therefore I feel that we share and agree on the most important aspects of what religion is all about.

I was once very seriously planning *aliyah*, marrying a Jew (possibly Israeli) and keeping a kosher home and attending a Conservative synagogue (although I was brought up Reform and am content as such). However, love does strange things. Although I am marrying a non-Jew and living in the U.S., I still plan to have a Jewish home and raise my children "Jewishly." While this is very difficult, I am very committed to my people/culture/nation as well as to my fiance (it's a tough life!).

Ten years ago I wouldn't have thought that I'd marry a non-Jew. Now that I've fallen deeply in love with an areligious Christian "by accident of birth," I realize how ludicrous it is to prescreen anyone. My boyfriend and I approach religion from a scientific viewpoint. I consider the history of the Jews to be my heritage. I value Jewish ethics (which happen to be Christian ethics too!) as well as Jewish culture. And I intend to expose my children to what I've learned.

I never really thought I would interdate. At present I am seriously involved with a non-Jew. I did not ask his religion until I had known him for some time. The only problem in our relationship is religion, i.e., how to bring up our children. We are both devoted to our religions, but it seems to be working out.

I am very proud of my heritage and culture. I am proud to be a Jew ... Marriage and children are things I want very much for my life. It would be nice to marry a Jewish person to have a basis or starting foundation for a happy life. It would be one more thing a couple could share together. However, love is first over religion. If I were to fall in love with a non-Jew, I would definitely marry him. This may lead to some dissension with grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc., but I do not care.

I am not a religious Jew, but I feel "Jewish" very strongly. The survival of Judaism is essential for the expression of basic principles of human existence like liberty and freedom of choice. I am engaged to a Christian girl who has accepted to bring up the children Jewish. Even though I love her very much, I would not have been able to marry her if she had not acquiesced to have a Jewish home even though she is *not* converting to Judaism.

I plan to be Jewish all of my life and my children will be raised Jewish. It would be nice if my husband was Jewish but this is not a prerequisite.

These statements may not represent a majority of Jewish students on American campuses, but they are common enough to alert the Jewish community to the dangers accruing from successful integration in the larger society.

A few of the answers showed students grappling with the dilemma of their situation:

At this moment I am dating a non-Jew and have been dating him for four years. At first I thought that if we got married, everything would be fine. He told me we could raise our children Jewish. However, as I get older I realize that for a child to realize that this is the best way of life (which I feel it is), both parents need to participate in the child's feelings about his/her religion. I am, therefore, beginning to reconsider my relationship.

If I had answered this survey a year ago, my answers would have been much more liberal toward dating non-Jews. At the time I was seriously dating a non-Jewish female for several years. Subsequently, things fell apart, and I realized then, as I do now, how important it is to date Jewish people.

I don't think that interdating leads to intermarriage (not necessarily). In my case, it was interdating that led me back to Judaism. Before, I was very secular and thought that a person's beliefs are his own. However, after dating a born-again Christian for seven months, I now realize how important are certain *fundamental* religious issues in picking an appropriate mate.

I think that marriage and family are once again becoming important values in contemporary college society. I am presently engaged, and although for many years have not looked toward marriage, it seems now that this route is the best way to *enjoy* the rest of my life. I've interdated and almost married a Lutheran woman, but since then I've found a new importance in my religious feelings. I started attending Hillel and met my fiancée there, much to my chagrin. What I'm trying to say is that I have found a new awareness and importance in Judaism, and through this have shifted toward a feeling of family importance. I enjoy very much the Jewish lifestyle and customs and want to see these traditions passed on over the generations.

Ironically, the words "to my chagrin" in the last excerpt may aptly reflect the complexity of the connection between Judaism and family life for most college students in America today.

Conclusions

THIS SURVEY OF 1,230 JEWISH STUDENTS on college campuses across the United States focused primarily on their attitudes toward marriage and forming a family. The questionnaire they filled out attempted to probe their feelings about marriage as an expression of personal fulfillment, dating out of the faith, intermarriage, the influence of Jewish values, the relative significance of career and family, the importance of having children, and other related matters. Among the conclusions that emerged were the following:

- ▶ Jewish students were usually integrated into the non-Jewish environment in which they were studying. In contrast to the general college population, the overwhelming majority lived away from home. Almost 90 percent of both men and women students had some close friends who were not Jewish.

- ▶ This integration extended beyond the realm of informal socializing. Two-thirds of the students reported that at least some of their “serious” dates were not Jewish. The gap between women and men who date non-Jews has narrowed considerably in the last decade, as findings of this study attest when compared to those of previous investigations.

- ▶ The students’ attitudes toward interfaith dating conformed with their behavior. Only a very small minority stated that they would never date a non-Jew, and over one-fourth indicated that religion did not influence their choice of dating partners.

- ▶ The great majority of students said they planned to marry and raise a family. Those who expressed some doubts explained that these were motivated by the fear that they might not be able to find the “right”

person and by the shortage of eligible Jewish mates. Some — women especially — worried that marriage might conflict with their careers.

▶ Most students expected that theirs would be a two-career family, and that the ensuing obligations and chores would be shouldered equally by both partners. Women seemed more aware of the tensions and conflicts of such a situation. Ninety-one percent of all students agreed that it was possible for a woman to successfully combine career and motherhood. In fact, two-thirds had been raised in families where mothers were gainfully employed outside the home.

▶ Three-fourths of the students viewed marriage as “the best opportunity for love and growth.” Only 5 percent said they would delay marriage because they enjoyed the single life. As many as two-thirds agreed that “for a Jew, family is more important than career.” Thus, these students were more in favor of marriage than the national sample polled by Yankelovich.

▶ Almost all the students in the study expected to be parents some day. Both the men and the women expected to have two or three children of their own, replicating the patterns of the families in which they had been reared.

▶ About three-fourths of the students had participated in some formal Jewish activity on campus — but this activity was limited to attending High Holy Day services. The only other activity that engaged more than half of them was reading Jewish books or periodicals. Some of them had enrolled in Jewish Studies courses — another significant way of showing identification.

▶ There was a positive correlation between the degree of exposure to a variety of Jewish experiences before coming to college and the intensity of participation in Jewish life on campus. The influential childhood and adolescent experiences included rituals practiced in the home, the Jewish communal involvement of the parents, formal Jewish education and such informal educational experiences as membership in Jewish youth groups and attendance at summer camps with a Jewish orientation.

▶ The more involved a student was with a network of close Jewish friends and Jewish dates, the more likely he or she was to be an active participant in campus Jewish life.

▶ The students’ denominational affiliation had an impact on the extent of their participation in Jewish activities in college. Affiliation with Conservative or Orthodox Judaism was associated with greater participation. While self-designated secular Jews were the least likely to

demonstrate their Jewishness on campus, their participation in Jewish activities increased if they had many Jewish friends and dates.

► Students who came from homes where Jewish rituals were observed, whose parents were involved in Jewish communal life, and who had been exposed to formal and informal Jewish education, were much more likely *not* to date non-Jews.

► Those who had dated non-Jews in high school and those who subscribed to the universalistic belief that “a person is a person regardless of his or her religion” were more prone than others to date non-Jews in college. On the other hand, students who reported that their parents were opposed to interdating, and who agreed that interdating leads to intermarriage, were less likely to interdate. Those who thought of themselves as secular Jews were the most likely to espouse universalistic ideology, while those who considered themselves Orthodox or Conservative were the most inclined to believe that interdating leads to intermarriage and to act on this belief in managing their social life.

► Some students said they felt especially at ease with Jews and uncomfortable with non-Jews. But others reported that they did not relate well to Jews and invoked the stereotype of the “Jewish prince” or “Jewish princess” in describing students of the opposite sex. The former were more likely to date Jews and the latter were more inclined to interfaith dating.

These findings do not purport to speak for the entire Jewish college student population in the U.S. Moreover, the data pertaining to the respondents’ projections for the future should be evaluated with some caution, since it is known that life experience often alters the best-laid plans. Despite these limitations, the study points to trends that policy makers ignore at their peril as they consider the American Jewish community of tomorrow.

Policy Implications

THE SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION of Jewish students into the general campus milieu is at once gratifying and challenging to their parents and to Jewish community leaders. At the same time, there is the fear that Jewish identity will be abandoned by young Jews. Even the majority of students who continue to identify as Jews do not always make the connection between that personal identity, their present patterns of social life and their future projections of mate selection.

The study points up several programmatic decisions for policy planners to consider. First, it seems that a variety of Jewish adolescent experiences help to promote Jewish identity in young people. The vast majority of Jewish youth, even those who attend day schools on the elementary level, do not continue their formal Jewish education beyond Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah age. Contact with other Jews, reinforcement of Jewish values and exposure to meaningful Jewish experiences may not take place for most high school students unless they are nurtured within informal peer frameworks. Thus, instead of focusing all of its energies on supporting any one type of educational institution, the Jewish community should promote a wide range of formal and informal schooling, camping and youth-movement programs that are geared especially to teenagers.

Second, the family has a powerful influence on the Jewish identity of the young. The observance of ritual traditions in the home and the active involvement of parents in the Jewish community predispose children to greater identification and involvement with Jewish life themselves. A healthy parent-child relationship makes youngsters receptive to parents' opinions. Working to strengthen the Jewish family, to enhance its role as

a model of emotional closeness and as the prime channel for transmitting Jewish values from generation to generation, should be an important goal of the Jewish community to ensure minority group survival.

Third, when adolescents go on to college, they should have access to open and supportive Jewish social frameworks, in addition to the intellectual opportunities they find on campus. Jewish campus professionals should see as one of their primary tasks the creation of a variety of Jewish social circles with which students can associate. The study found that even those who lacked meaningful exposure to Jewish experiences before coming to college were more likely to date and to plan to marry Jews if they had a high proportion of Jewish friends. Certainly the social aspects of Jewish campus programming should be strengthened in imaginative and innovative ways.

Fourth, the most popular Jewish activities on the campus are those that are compatible with the academic setting. They involve reading books and periodicals of Jewish interest, and taking Jewish Studies courses for credit. Synagogues and other Jewish institutions should maintain contact with college students by sending them subscriptions to Jewish periodicals or to a Jewish book of the month, as well as appropriate ritual materials to help celebrate Jewish holidays.

Fifth, most students expect to be part of a two-career family, though many women are worried about the difficulties of combining career goals and family life. The Jewish community should create institutional mechanisms to support these family patterns, which are increasingly becoming the norm in American life.

Finally, ideology plays a pivotal role in accepting the link between one's personal dating patterns and Jewish identity, and between Jewish identity and Jewish group survival. Students with a strong commitment to Judaism as a religion were more likely to recognize that marriage and childbearing were essential to Jewish group survival and were likely to limit their choice of prospective marriage partners to Jews. This commitment should be encouraged for all Jewish students on campus, both to meet their spiritual needs and to help make explicit the link between personal identity and group survival.

Notes

Introduction

1. Abraham D. Lavender, "Studies of Jewish College Students: A Review and a Replication," *Jewish Social Studies*, XXXIX (1977), p. 39.
2. David E. Drew, *A Profile of the Jewish Freshman: 1970* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1970); David E. Drew, Margo R. King and Gerald T. Richardson, *A Profile of the Jewish Freshman: 1980* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, 1980). These two studies were commissioned by the American Jewish Committee.
3. David Caplovitz and Fred Sherrow, *The Religious Drop-Outs: Apostasy Among College Graduates*, Sage Library of Social Research, 44 (Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage Publications, 1977), p. 28. The study was sponsored by the American Jewish Committee.
4. See, for example, Rose K. Goldsen, Morris Rosenberg, Robin M. Williams, Jr., and Edward A. Suchman, *What College Students Think* (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Company Inc., 1960). This was confirmed by Daniel Yankelovich, *The Changing Values on Campus: Political and Personal Attitudes of Today's College Students* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1972).
5. Gerhard Lenski, *The Religious Factor: A Sociologist's Inquiry*, revised edition (New York: Anchor Books, 1963).
6. Caplovitz and Sherrow, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

8. Chaim I. Waxman and William B. Helmreich, "American Jewish College Youth — Changing Identity," *Forum*, 2/27 (1977), pp. 35-44.
9. Waxman and Helmreich, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
11. Goldsen et al., *op. cit.*, p. 23.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
14. Yankelovich, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
15. Drew et al., *op. cit.*

Life Before College

1. As of 1980, 16.3 percent of the population aged 25 or over in the United States had completed college. Sixty-eight percent of those employed in professional or technical occupations were college graduates and 38 percent had done graduate work. Among those in managerial and administrative positions, 34 percent were college graduates and 13 percent had done graduate work. Of white women in professional and technical occupations, 63.5 percent had completed college, as compared with 71.6 percent of white men. See Andrew Hacker, ed., *U/S: A Statistical Portrait of the American People* (New York: Viking Press, 1983), pp. 252-53. According to the Census Bureau of October 1979, "among the students enrolled full-time at college 35.3 percent had parents who completed college; 16.6 percent's parents attended but did not finish; 31.7 percent had parents who graduated from high school; and the remaining 16.3 percent had parents who never finished high school." *Ibid.*, p. 248.

2. According to Hacker, 60.7 percent of all married mothers had some work experience, but only 21.8 percent had full-time year round employment. "Among white children under 18 who lived with two parents, 51.9 percent had mothers in the labor force." The percentage of married working mothers declined with the rising income of the husband. Thus, in families where the husbands' income was \$15-20,000, some 55 percent of the wives who had children under 18 were in the labor force; in families with incomes of \$35-50,000, almost 39 percent were employed. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-34. Clearly more mothers of the respondents of this study were employed while their children were in high school than the national norm.

3. Floyd J. Fowler, Jr., *A Study of the Jewish Population of Greater Boston*, Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston (1977).

The World of the Campus

1. In contrast, "the most recent report by the Census Bureau, for October 1978, showed that among full-time college students, 56.3 percent lived at home, 29.6 percent lived on campus, and the remaining 14.1 percent resided away from home but not on their college campus." Hacker, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

2. Steven Martin Cohen, "The American Jewish Family Today," *American Jewish Year Book* (1982), pp. 136-54.

3. U. O. Schmelz and Sergio DellaPergola, "The Demographic Consequences of U.S. Jewish Population Trends," *American Jewish Year Book* (1983), pp. 141-88.

4. Alvin Chenkin, *National Jewish Population Study: Demographic Highlights* (Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, 1972).

5. Yankelovich, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

6. *Ibid.*

Role of the "Jewish Dimension"

1. Marshall Sklare, *America's Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 192-93.

2. Jewish communal concern about interfaith dating stems from the conclusions of the extant literature on how intermarriage affects transmission of a Jewish way of life to the next generation. Intermarriage in which the non-Jewish partner has converted to Judaism may sometimes produce a family with strong Jewish identification. But interfaith marriage where no such conversion has taken place often results in marginal Jewish identification of the family, or none at all. While interdating does not *always* lead to intermarriage, it arouses concern because it is a precondition of intermarriage. See Egon Mayer and Carl Sheingold, *Intermarriage and the Jewish Future: A National Study in Summary* (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1979) and Egon Mayer, *Children of Intermarriage: A Study in Patterns of Identification and Family Life* (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1983).

3. For an example of the latter, see Monica McGoldrick, John K. Pearce and Joseph Giordano, *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1983).
4. Daniel J. Elazar, *Community and Polity: The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980); Jonathan Woocher, "Civil Judaism in the United States" (Center for Jewish Community Studies, 1978) and "The Changing Character of American Jewish Leadership: Some Policy Implications" (Unpublished paper, 1983).
5. Woocher, "The Changing Character of American Jewish Leadership," *op. cit.*, p. 7.