

**UNITY AND POLARIZATION
IN JUDAISM TODAY**

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FOREWORD

Over the past three years no issue on the internal Jewish agenda has captured as much attention in the Jewish public as that of conflict among the various religious movements within Judaism. On one level, much of the conflict has been rhetorical. Orthodox Jews routinely castigate the non-Orthodox as noncommitted or weak Jews. Conversely, the Orthodox have become identified among other Jews with obscurantism and rigid fundamentalism. On another level, the conflict has centered on a number of specific issues related to Jewish family law, notably divorce and remarriage, patrilineal descent, and rabbinic officiation at intermarriages.

In recent years several initiatives have been launched to limit the effects of this conflict. Rabbinic and lay leadership groups have begun dialogue programs to moderate the tone of intradenominational rhetoric and to seek communal solutions and halakhic guidelines for resolving the divisive issues. Public education programs have been held in many Jewish communities on the assumption that the more attention is focused on intra-Jewish relations, the less likelihood there will be of schism.

Others, however, have questioned the seriousness of the degree of polarization. This school of thought underscores the degree of cooperation among the movements and questions how many Jews will actually be deemed "problematical" in their Jewish identity because of remarriage or patrilineality.

Still a third viewpoint argues that division is not harmful because it permits the various movements to meet the religious and spiritual needs of their adherents in creative and autonomous ways. Moreover, some ideological clashing is desirable for at least it indicates that people care about such issues.

In the present report, Steven M. Cohen questions the extent to which ideological disputes among leadership groups are affecting the

Jewish public at large. In particular, he asks which groups of Jews are most concerned about the potentially divisive effects of intermarriage, patrilineality, and religious-secular tensions in Israel. He concludes that in both Israel and the United States the attitudes of the Jewish laity are not nearly as polarized as those of the leadership. On the contrary, he argues that continued cooperation among lay Jews acts as a strong bulwark against irreparable schism. Most American Jewish laypeople have managed to make their peace with patrilineality; only the Orthodox remain implacably opposed. Conversely, most Israelis understand the distinctions among Israeli Orthodoxy and oppose only religious extremism, not Orthodox Jews as such.

To be sure, Cohen's questionnaire by no means exhausts the range of divisive issues. Further data are necessary concerning the implications for Jewish unity of remarriage without a get, or Jewish bill of divorce. Perhaps more tellingly, we require greater deliberation concerning the importance for intracommunal harmony of stereotypes Jews have of one another.

Survey research of this nature may cast light on only one facet of a complex phenomenon. First, these issues weigh much more heavily among leadership groups, who are, in general, far better informed on the complexities and details of the intradenominational disputes. Nor may one underestimate the importance of these disputes among those committed to Jewish law as the primary preservative of Jewry. In that sense, Cohen observes that Modern Orthodox and observant Conservative Jews share the greatest concern lest these disputes herald an irreparable schism within the Jewish body politic.

Moreover, the widely noted Modern Orthodox "shift to the right" both in America and in Israel has exacerbated the problem. Designed to create a distinctive synthesis of Jewish tradition and Western culture, Modern Orthodoxy built bridges between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews. In recent years, however, the Modern Orthodox camp has experienced growing pressures to reduce its ties with non-Orthodox movements and to retreat into greater isolation. The net result has been increased intracommunal tension.

The American Jewish Committee continues to regard pluralism and diversity of opinion as sources of strength for Jewish life. Through a variety of programs it seeks to promote pluralism and prevent religious polarization and schism. The present paper is a product of an ongoing program of dialogues, publications, research, and conferences designed to guide public discussion on ways to enhance Jewish unity amid diversity.

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UNITY AND POLARIZATION IN JUDAISM TODAY

In the last few years, the issue of Jewish unity has captured the attention of Jewish publics and policymakers around the world. In the United States, rabbis of all denominations have been arguing whether offspring of certain sorts of mixed marriage are Jewish. In Israel, rigorously Orthodox demonstrators and their opponents have clashed repeatedly over a variety of issues. On several occasions, Israeli religious parties and their right-wing allies in the Knesset have sought legislation to extend the power of the Israeli rabbinate over matters of personal Jewish status, only to be thwarted by razor-thin majorities consisting of left-of-center Jewish parties and Arab members.

These and other events have propelled the issue of Jewish unity to the top of the Jewish communal agenda. Jewish newspapers abound with reports of conferences on Jewish unity, statements by leading rabbis and communal professionals, and resolutions of annual meetings of major Jewish organizations calling for diminished interdenominational tension.

The differences among Jewish denominations and their public positions are by now well known. Whether in Israel or the United States, it has been Orthodoxy and Reform that have clashed most bitterly. Most Conservative leaders, meanwhile, have joined with the Reform movement in opposing new Knesset legislation on conversion (as have many American Orthodox leaders). At the same time, Conservative rabbis have sided with the Orthodox on the issue of patrilineal descent, albeit with some qualifications and some dissent.

Clearly, these interdenominational conflicts have occupied the attention of rabbis, many lay leaders, and Jewish newspaper editors. But it is unclear whether, as some have suggested, these rabbinical differences have the potential for splitting the Jewish people. Does the bitterness -- such as it may be -- really extend to the entire Jewish community? And, if it does, does it divide Jewry somewhere down the middle, or is the cleavage (or potential cleavage) off to one side of

the traditionalist-modernist spectrum?

Of course, asking the questions in this way presumes that the Jewish public matters. Some students of Jewish history might claim that, in struggles such as these, the decisions of rabbis and lay leaders are ultimately decisive. If the views of average congregants carry any weight, it is only by way of influencing or framing the actions of their leaders. The analysis offered here essentially brackets (or, maybe, skirts) the question of popular influence. If one believes that the Jewish public's opinions are of little significance in these conflicts, then this paper may be dismissed as largely irrelevant. However, if one believes (as I do) that such opinions lie at the heart of questions of Jewish unity and diversity, then understanding the views of the larger Jewish public is essential for predicting the future of the conflict, and (if the dire predictions of some are accurate) the future of the Jewish people as well.

Despite the salience of interdenominational issues for Jewish elites, we have little hard data on the attitudes of Jewish publics in Israel and the United States on questions of unity and denominational conflict. In the fall of 1986, the Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations of the American Jewish Committee sponsored simultaneous public-opinion surveys of Israeli and American Jewries. Those studies focused primarily on American Jewish-Israeli relationships and were reported extensively in two publications of the American Jewish Committee -- Steven M. Cohen, Ties and Tensions: The 1986 Survey of American Jewish Attitudes Toward Israel and Israelis (1987) and Mina Zernach, Through Israeli Eyes: Attitudes Toward Judaism, American Jewry, Zionism and the Arab-Israeli Conflict (1987). However, the survey data also contained a few revealing questions on denominational conflict, data that can begin to give us some inkling of both the depth and location of the division over denominational issues. (To be clear, since the studies were not constructed with the denominational conflicts of paramount interest, the data presented below address only a small portion of this very large subject.)

In other words, this report tries to at least begin to answer two related questions: (1) To what extent do Israeli and American Jews really care about the denominational conflicts? (2) Where is the principal "fault line" in Jewish public opinion, the place in the spectrum of Jewish ideology and identity where a rupture is likely to occur if the denominational in-fighting continues to grow? Does the traditionalist camp on a given issue embrace only "right-wing" Orthodoxy? (There is no neat, widely accepted term to distinguish the rigorous, insular, and right-wing Orthodox from their more modern counterparts; in Israel, many but not all in this group are called haredim.) Alternatively, does the traditional camp sometimes include the Modern Orthodox and perhaps even some Conservative Jews? And, as deep as the divisions may be over certain issues, is the rancor so deep as to preclude harmony and unity around other issues?

Unfortunately, the data presented here cannot fully address all these questions. But, as far as they go, they lend some credence to the view that the state of relations among the denominations' lay people may not be as dangerous (at this point) as some have suggested. In different ways, we shall find evidence of interdenominational harmony both in Israel and the United States. We begin with the American case.

The Issue of Patrilineal Descent

The key issue that recently has sharply divided the American rabbinate along denominational lines is the question of "patrilineal descent," whether Jewish identity can be traced through the father.

Historically Jewish law has regarded as Jewish anyone whose mother was herself born Jewish or who was properly converted to Judaism. In effect, this principle of matrilineal descent means that children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers are regarded as non-Jews. Conversely, offspring of a Jewish mother and non-Jewish father are viewed as Jews.

In March 1983, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the organization of the Reform rabbinate, announced that it would regard as Jewish children of both kinds of mixed marriage (where either the father or the mother was Jewish) provided those children identified with Judaism and the Jewish people by positive acts.

This decision conflicted with the traditional position in two respects. It meant that Reform rabbis would regard the children of mixed-married Jewish mothers as non-Jews if they failed to undertake such actions as circumcision, Jewish schooling, bat or bar mitzvah, and confirmation. But, far more troubling to adherents of traditional Jewish law (halakhah) was that the Reform position would consider unconverted children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers as Jews provided they were, in effect, raised as Jews and identified as such. Orthodox rabbis, in particular, vehemently protested the Reform innovation, claiming that Orthodox Jews would now hesitate to marry their Reform counterparts (if not Conservative Jews as well) because their legitimacy as Jews according to halakah would henceforward be in doubt.

How deeply has this conflict touched American Jewry, and where does the Jewish public stand on the issue of patrilineal descent? Answers to these questions (or partial answers, at least) can be found in responses to questions we posed to the national sample of 1,133 Jews who participated in the 1986 survey of American Jews that provided the data for Ties and Tensions. The sample was drawn from members of the Consumer Mail Panel maintained by Market Facts, Inc., a survey research company. To join the panel, members first complete a personal-data form indicating, among other things, their religious identity.

We asked: "Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis have been

arguing over the definition of who is a Jew. Have you heard anything about this dispute?" Over two-thirds (70 percent) of the sample responded affirmatively (Table 1). There was a noticeable distinction between what may be called the denominationally affiliated and the nonaffiliated. That is, only a minority of respondents claimed to belong to a synagogue and, of these, most -- but not all -- identified as Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform (as opposed to "Just Jewish"). Of the denominationally identified synagogue members, over 80 percent in each case had heard about the "Who is a Jew?" conflict compared to about 60 percent of the nonaffiliated. Synagogue involvement, obviously, brings one into touch with the major denominational conflicts in Jewish life. If this question is any indication, the dispute over patrilineal descent certainly has touched the lives of the vast majority of American synagogue Jews.

We then got to the heart of the matter, asking respondents for their position on the definition of Jewish identity. Because of the complexity of the issue, we were forced to compose this lengthy and somewhat complicated question:

Traditionally, membership in the Jewish faith was transmitted through the mother. Now, Reform rabbis say that someone who identifies as a Jew, but whose mother was a non-Jew and whose father was Jewish, is to be considered Jewish. Orthodox and Conservative rabbis would require such a person to convert. Do you accept the Reform rabbis' definition of a Jew?

About three in five (60 percent) said yes, less than half as many (29 percent) rejected the Reform definition, and the remaining 12 percent were uncertain. Thus, by a two-to-one margin, the sample favored patrilineality.

To be sure, a differently worded question on the same issue might well have elicited either more or less support for patrilineal descent. Reform rabbis could argue that the wording above failed to include the condition that children of one Jewish parent must undertake specific public acts of Jewish involvement. Moreover, contrary to the implications of the question as phrased, Conservative rabbis' opposition to patrilineal descent is softer than that of their Orthodox colleagues. Had respondents been given these elaborations, perhaps even more than 60 percent would have assented to the Reform rabbis' position. On the other hand, Orthodox spokesmen could argue that the question failed to warn of the destructive impact the patrilineal innovations may have upon the unity of the Jewish people. With such an argument before them, perhaps more respondents would have rejected the Reform view. The problem with survey research is that one can never probe matters very deeply, nor elicit highly nuanced replies. One can hope to get only a very broad picture of public opinion across important population segments.

Indeed, reactions to patrilineality vary sharply by denomination.

As might be expected, Reform temple members heavily supported patrilineality (over 80 percent in favor to only 8 percent opposed). As also

Table 1
Attitudes of American Jews Toward Patrilineal Descent, by Synagogue Membership and Denomination (in percentages)

Questions and responses	Synagogue members				Non-members	Total
	Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Just Jewish		
Have you heard about the dispute?						
Yes	81	82	83	63	61	70
Accept patrilineal definition?						
Yes	12	47	83	72	69	60
Not sure	2	14	9	14	13	12
No	86	39	8	15	19	29
Upset if child married non-Jew?						
Yes	85	68	39	38	22	42
Upset if child married patrilineal Jew?						
Yes	78	33	11	11	7	21
Not sure	5	22	13	23	14	15
No	17	45	77	66	80	64
Upset with Reform rabbis?						
Yes	80	19	2	11	8	18
Not sure	7	17	4	10	9	10
No	14	64	94	78	83	72
Opposition to patrilineal descent *						
High	68	11	0	5	2	11
Moderate	22	30	12	11	9	15
Low	10	58	87	83	88	73

* "High" = upset with Reform rabbis and upset were child to marry patrilineal Jew; "Moderate" = upset with either, but not both; "Low" = upset with neither.

might be expected, the Orthodox distributions were almost precisely the reverse: 86 percent rejected the Reform stance and only 12 percent accepted it. Perhaps most intriguing are the views of the Conservative "swing vote," as it were. Among Conservative synagogue members (who are, in turn, more traditional than Conservative nonmembers), 47 percent accepted the patrilineal definition, while 39 percent rejected it.

The practical rejection of the patrilineal definition of Jewishness -- that is, in a "real life" situation -- may be even less prevalent than the theoretical rejection elicited by the previous question. To explore the issue further, we asked about reactions to various sorts of out-marriage. First, we asked if respondents would "be upset if a child of yours were to marry a non-Jew." Here the sample split down the middle: 42 percent would be upset, 40 percent would not, and the rest were undecided. Naturally, the proportion deeply opposed to their children's intermarrying varied directly with traditionalism. Fully 85 percent of the Orthodox would be upset, as would 68 percent of Conservative synagogue members; but only 39 percent of the Reform shared this view (in fact, slightly more -- 40 percent -- stated outright that they would not be upset).

We then asked about marriage to a patrilineal Jew:

Would you be upset if a child of yours were to marry someone who identifies as a Jew, had a Jewish father, but had a non-Jewish mother and does not intend to undergo a formal conversion to Judaism?

Here only 21 percent of the sample objected outright to such a marriage. In other words, opposition to marriage with a patrilineal Jew was only half as widespread as that to marriage with a non-Jew. Moreover, the variation by denomination was much sharper here than in the case of simple out-marriage. Thus the vast majority of Orthodox Jews (78 percent) opposed a "patrilineal intermarriage," almost as many as those opposed to a conventional mixed marriage. At the other extreme, hardly any (11 percent) Reform Jews would be upset by their child's marriage to a "patrilineal Jew" (or, as some may prefer, a "matrilineal Gentile"). Here, Conservative opinions were much closer to the Reform than to the Orthodox stance. While most Conservative Jews would be upset were their children to marry ordinary Gentiles, only a third (33 percent) would feel that way about marriage to a patrilineal Jew. While most opposed conventional out-marriage, a plurality (45 percent) stated outright they would not be upset by marriage to a patrilineal Jew. (Conservative Jews who kept kosher -- that is, were more observant -- were more often opposed to intermarriage, whether to an unambiguous Gentile or to a patrilineal Jew, as well as more uncomfortable with the Reform rabbis' position.)

In other words, patrilineal identification considerably dampens the opposition to intermarriage among Conservative and Reform Jews but not among the Orthodox. Roughly a third of Conservative and Reform Jews

moderate their opposition to intermarriage when the prospective son- or daughter-in-law is the Jewishly identifying child of a Jewish father (and Gentile mother).

One other question gauged the extent of discomfort with the Reform decision to advance the patrilineal definition of Jewish identity. We asked, "Are you upset with the Reform rabbis for advancing this definition of who is a Jew?" In all, fewer, than one in five (18 percent) claimed they were upset, and these, as might be expected, were heavily concentrated among the Orthodox. Hardly any (2 percent) of the Reform were upset, in stark contrast with 80 percent of the Orthodox. The Reform rabbis' action upset only a small minority (19 percent) of Conservative Jews.

Of course, people could be upset with the Reform reversal of traditional practice even if they personally accept patrilineal Jews into their own families. And there may be those who would not want their children to marry patrilineal Jews but have no particular problem with the Reform movement's setting its own standards for Jewish identity. Committed opponents of patrilineality would have to make both statements: they would have to be upset both with the Reform decision and with the prospect of their children marrying patrilineal Jews.

It turns out that only 11 percent of the national Jewish sample meets this test of complete opposition to patrilineality, and most of these are Orthodox. Among the Orthodox, over two-thirds (68 percent) were this deeply antipatrilineal. At the other extreme, no Reform temple members in the sample took this view. Among Conservative synagogue members, only 11 percent were opposed to patrilineality publicly and personally -- that is, against the Reform action and against their children marrying patrilineal Jews.

Comment: Resolution for Most, Tension for Some

These results seem to indicate that the tension over how to define patrilineal Jews is confined to a particular region of the Jewish-identity spectrum: that populated by Modern Orthodox and observant Conservatives. The vast majority of American Jews (perhaps almost 90 percent) is already at peace with patrilineality -- 73 percent had no problem with it on either of the key questions, and most of the rest were only weakly opposed; 16 percent had a problem on only one question. Just as the growth in intermarriage has occasioned a softening of opposition to the phenomenon over the years, so the increasing number of patrilineal Jews (as well as the growth in conventional intermarriage per se) promises to weaken the opposition of those only partially opposed to patrilineal Jewish identify.

The right-wing Orthodox are already decidedly opposed to Conservative and Reform Judaism in institutional and personal terms. It is safe to say that most right-wing Orthodox Jews "would be upset" were their

children to marry non-Orthodox Jews, quite aside from the question of patrilineality. The new definition of Jewishness advanced by Reform rabbis certainly may strengthen the right-wing Orthodox animus to non-Orthodox, but it does not much change the character of that animus. In any event, members of Hasidic and Misnagdic communities (such as those that comprise the Agudas Israel movement) were already unlikely to marry non-Orthodox Jews.

To the modernist left of observant Conservative Jews are the vast majority of American Jews. These, as we have seen in the data presented here, are relatively untroubled by marriage to a patrilineal Jew. Indeed, only 42 percent of the entire population said they would be upset by a child's marriage to a non-Jew. But opposition shrinks to half that size -- 21 percent -- when the prospective son- or daughter-in-law is the unconverted but Jewishly identifying child of a Jewish father and Gentile mother.

To some, indifference to a child's outright intermarriage would constitute evidence of just how far a Jew has moved from traditional norms (or "assimilated," as some would say). But we ought to recognize that indifference to intermarriage is part of the glue that holds the Jewish community together. Contrary to the civics-textbook view of American democracy, social scientists have noted that American society is able to resolve conflicts precisely because not everyone is a passionate political actor; deeply committed to a particular view.

In the critical region between the right-wing Orthodox minority and the vast modernist majority are the Modern Orthodox and observant Conservatives who are most deeply affected by the issue of patrilineality. They urgently require resolution of the problem because they are attached to both the secular and the religious worlds. Unlike the vast majority of modernized American Jews, they largely accept the authority of halakhah and of its leading rabbinic interpreters. At the same time, unlike the right-wing Orthodox, they maintain significant ties with non-Orthodox Jews.

The Jewish world that the Modern Orthodox and observant Conservatives inhabit is heavily populated by nonobservant Conservative, Reform, and secular Jews. The Federation movement, for example, embraces Jews from almost the entire spectrum of Jewish life. The oppressed-Jewry movements (for Soviet Jews, in particular) draw heavily on Jews from the Modern Orthodox and observant Conservative segments, but also include both more and less traditional types as well. In smaller cities in particular, Modern Orthodox parents send their children to the Conservative movement's Solomon Schechter day schools, just as observant Conservative parents often enroll their children in Modern Orthodox yeshivas and day schools.

For these and other reasons, the tensions over patrilineality are particularly acute for Modern Orthodox and observant Conservative Jews. As the camps polarize, many such Jews must fear they will be compelled

to choose sides, thereby severing their connections with a part of the Jewish community that is very dear to them. If they accept the liberal position of the modernist majority, they cut themselves off from the halakhic community; if they reject that position, for example, by demanding genealogical documentation of their prospective spouses, they risk opening a chasm with non-Orthodox Jews. It therefore comes as no surprise that the greatest alarm about the unity of Jewry and the greatest sense of urgency about resolving the issue of patrilineality emerge precisely from those sectors of American Jewry most torn by the issue: Modern Orthodox and observant Conservative Jews.

Religious Antagonism in Israel: The Center Against the Extremes

Since nontraditional Jews started settling in large numbers in Israel almost a century ago, the Jewish community there has experienced considerable tension between the rigorously Orthodox minority and the modernized, largely secularized majority. While this is not the place to review the entire history of religious/secular antagonism in Israel, certain features of that conflict are worth noting. If anything, these serve to make the religious/secular conflict sharper, wider, and more enduring in Israeli than in American Jewry or, for that matter, in any Diaspora Jewry.

To the Orthodox Jew, the religious transgressions perpetrated by the Jewish state and by the nonobservant majority are particularly troubling and offensive. Unlike a Jewish minority in a non-Jewish state, Orthodox Israelis are (or feel themselves) implicated in the actions of the state; and given their unavoidable contact with nonobservant Jews, they are forced regularly to confront and recognize the life of religious transgression followed by most Jews in the Jewish state.

To the nonobservant Jew, the positions of the Orthodox are far more consequential (and, hence, more irksome) in Israel than they are in the Diaspora. The Israeli rabbinate (which is Orthodox) has legal powers to regulate marriage, divorce, and (through their customary control of the Interior Ministry) other matters of personal status. By virtue of long-standing political arrangements often embodied in legislation, public services are virtually shut down on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, as are most places of entertainment by the Israeli equivalent of "blue laws." The recent conflicts have been precipitated by attempts of nonobservant Jews to circumvent or reinterpret such arrangements so as to permit the opening of more places of entertainment on the Sabbath.

Whatever the level of antagonism between traditional and modernist Jews in the United States, it is far higher in Israel. Moreover, to some extent, the condition of religious/secular relations in Israel influences those relations in the United States. For these reasons, learning about the feelings of religious and secular Jewish Israelis toward one another may not only be significant in its own right but may also be relevant to the intrareligious disputes among American Jews.

In 1986 Mina Zemach interviewed a representative sample of 1,277 Israeli Jews not serving in the army or living in kibbutzim (for further details, see Zemach, Through Israeli Eyes). One set of questions in particular bore upon the religious/secular conflict. She asked (in Hebrew), "What is your impression of each of the following groups?" Among the groups listed were four that are relevant to our concerns here: haredim, the Hebrew term for what most Americans call the ultra-Orthodox (Israeli haredim use the term haredi to describe themselves; they and their American counterparts find the term "ultra-Orthodox" offensive); Modern Orthodox Jews; hiloni (or secular) Jews; and anti-dati Jews (in Hebrew, yehudim anti-dati'im; the word dati means "religious" and refers to Orthodox Jews). Respondents were offered six answer categories: don't know; no clear impression; enthusiastically sympathetic; sympathetic in a limited way; unsympathetic in a limited way; very unsympathetic. The analysis below combines the two unsympathetic responses.

The survey also asked respondents to classify themselves on a religious-secular spectrum frequently utilized in Israeli random-sample surveys. They were asked to define themselves as haredi, dati, masorti, or hiloni. (The term masorti literally means "traditional," but in common Hebrew parlance refers to people who are less observant and religiously traditional than dati'im but more so than the hiloni'im or secular Jews. In fact, the Conservative movement in Israel has taken the name Masorti, indicating its self-conception as a non-dati but traditionally oriented religious movement and its aspirations -- thus far largely unfulfilled -- of appealing to the vast numbers of masorti Israelis.) In this sample, 3 percent called themselves haredi (apparently an underrepresentation of this group), 13 percent said they were dati, 35 percent said masorti, and half (50 percent) defined themselves as hiloni.

If it is true that antagonisms between religious and secular Jews in Israel are now causing a profound cleavage in that society, a certain pattern in the results should emerge. We should find that the hiloni Jews dislike Modern Orthodox and haredi Jews; moreover, they should dislike the haredim more than the dati'im, and the dati'im more than the masorti'im. Moreover, if religious strife is indeed tearing Israeli society apart, the hiloni half of the population should have great sympathy for the anti-dati'im.

Similarly, we should expect the haredim to have the most sympathy for their own kind, a little less for the dati'im, much less for the hiloni Jews, and least for the anti-dati'im.

But the real question concerns the sympathies of the dati Jews in the sample. Do their views of other Israelis resemble those held by their more religious counterparts, the haredim? That is, if a deep wound has separated the dati'im from more secular Israelis, we should expect the dati'im to hold the hiloni'im in much lower regard than they do either the Modern Orthodox or the haredim.

Table 2
 Jewish Israelis with "Somewhat Unfavorable" or "Very Unfavorable" Impressions of Four Israeli Jewish Groups, by Respondents' Self-Classification (in percentages)

Groups unfavorably appraised	Respondents' self-classification			
	Haredi ("Ultra-orthodox")	Dati (Orthodox)	Masorti (Traditional)	Hiloni (Secular)
Haredim	3	42	65	81
Modern Orthodox	13	29	24	23
Hiloni'im	48	14	9	3
Anti-dati'im	65	79	62	56
	(N = 31)	(N = 159)	(N = 414)	(N = 603)

Last, we would expect the masorti third of the sample to be caught between the dati'im to their ideological right and the hiloni'im to their left. Their views of different segments of the Israeli population ought to be somewhere between the dati'im and hiloni'im.

In fact, except for the haredim, the data do not confirm these expectations. Rather, the following points emerge (Table 2):

(1) Dislike of haredim is found throughout the population, though it increases with secularism. Thus, as many as 42 percent of the dati'im said they had an unsympathetic impression of haredim, while almost twice as many (81 percent) of the hiloni'im had the same view.

(2) Unsympathetic views of anti-dati'im are widespread through all levels of religiosity. Majorities of all four groups of respondents, including the hiloni'im, reported unsympathetic impressions of anti-dati'im, although, as one would expect, more dati members of the sample (79 percent) were unhappy with anti-dati'im than the sizable number of hiloni'im (56 percent) who were unsympathetic to the most extreme secularists. (To be fair, twice as many dati respondents as hiloni respondents -- 55 percent versus 25 percent -- said they were "very unsympathetic" to the anti-dati'im. The hiloni respondents were more likely to report the more mildly unsympathetic reaction, "unsympathetic in a limited way," than were the dati respondents.)

(3) Only about a quarter of the population held negative views of Modern Orthodox Jews. Fewer haredim in the sample held such views than others; but among the others, negative impressions were no more frequent among hiloni'im than dati'im (in fact, it seems, the reverse was true). At the same time, the proportion of dati'im who were "very sympathetic" to Modern Orthodox Jews was higher than among masorti or hiloni Jews.

In other words, secular Israelis, while very much opposed to haredim, are not unsympathetic to the Modern Orthodox. Israelis are adept at making distinctions among the Orthodox, often labeling them by the style of the men's headgear ("black hat" and "knitted kippah" are the two most common modifiers). Apparently, this ability to make fine distinctions facilitates secular Israelis' acceptance of the Modern Orthodox at the same time they reject the haredim, or right-wing Orthodox.

(4) Few Israelis, except the haredim, harbor ill feelings toward hiloni Jews. True, the number with unsympathetic views mounts with traditionalism, rising to 9 percent among the masorti'im and 14 percent among the dati'im. But even 14 percent is a small figure, and it represents a sharp divergence of the dati respondents from the haredi respondents, of whom almost half (48 percent) reported unsympathetic views of hiloni Israelis.

The substantive conclusion one can draw from this is that there is no evidence (in these data, at least) of a deep division among Israelis over religious matters anywhere near the middle of the religious/secular continuum. The haredim and their most impassioned opponents may feel especially bitter toward one another, but their conflict does not appear to have generated bitter feelings between Modern Orthodox and secular Israelis.

Conclusion: The Limits of Interdenominational Antagonism

The public-opinion survey is only one of many useful tools for the analysis of currents and directions in Jewish life. Nevertheless, it adds an important dimension to our understanding of Jewry and, in this case, of the cleavages that divide the Jewish people. Appreciating the limits and opportunities presented by public-opinion research, we can examine the tentative conclusions drawn below.

Many commentators have suggested that the interdenominational conflicts over a variety of issues severely threaten the unity of the Jewish people. One respected observer has suggested in all seriousness that the next century may witness the split of the Jewish people into two groups over the issue of patrilineal descent. Others have suggested that internal strife in Israel may spell disaster for the Jewish state. In fact, in the 1986 AJC survey of American Jews, a plurality endorsed the statement "Internal divisions within Israel are more dangerous to her survival than the external threats posed by the Arabs" (38 percent agreed, 27 percent disagreed).

There is nothing in the data that can flatly contradict these unsettling forecasts of the Jewish future. We can examine only the current situation, and then only through the limited perspective of survey research. With these qualifications in mind, we can say that the general import of the findings presented here is to suggest that inter-

denominational antagonisms -- in Israel or the United States -- may be less severe than some have suggested.

In the United States, the key divisive issue has been patrilineal descent. Here we find that the vast majority of American Jews are prepared to accept so-called "patrilineal Jews" into their families and are not all that upset with the Reform rabbinate for advancing the innovation. Of the minority who are decidedly opposed to patrilineality, some (particularly the right-wing Orthodox) already have little to do with non-Orthodox Jews, a preference dating back well over a century.

Thus it is only among Modern Orthodox and traditionally inclined Conservative Jews that the patrilineal issue raises anxieties, and these Jews are the ones most active in efforts to resolve the conflict, in part to maintain ties with both the halakhic and modernized segments of American Jewry. In any event, if a break within Jewry over patrilineality occurs (a dubious proposition), the fault line is likely to run through the region of the Jewish identity spectrum populated by Modern Orthodox and observant Conservative Jews, more like a 10-90 than a 50-50 split. (Nevertheless, increased antagonism between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews is still a serious matter; that is, a further deepening of the 10-90 split in American Jewry is still a matter of some consequence for Jewish policymakers.)

In Israel, where intrareligious Jewish antagonisms are much deeper, more bitter, and certainly more apparent than they are in the United States, the conflicts thus far have not had the effect of dividing the bulk of traditional from the mass of secular Jews. Both camps condemn each other's extremes (and extremists), but, generally, those on one side of the religious divide bear no special animus toward those on the other side. Numerous family ties across the religious/secular boundary, to say nothing of a sense of shared community and destiny, may well serve to mitigate whatever ill feelings secular and religious Jews in Israel harbor toward one another.

In short, the state of intrareligious relations certainly bears watching. Leadership groups may continue to urge ideological warfare across a traditionalist/modernist divide. In Israel, many social institutions (families, neighborhoods, schools, youth movements) are indeed divided along religious lines -- and many, such as the army, are not -- suggesting the potential for serious division. However, of the limited contemporary evidence available here, little points to a deepening gap -- at this time -- between religious and secular Jews, in either Israel or the United States.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street, New York, NY 10022-2746

March 1988

Single copy \$2.00
Quantity prices on request