The Importance of Residence: Goldscheider's Contribution to Explaining Orthodoxy's Vitality

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In *Jewish Continuity and Change*, the book that perhaps best articulated what, among sociologists of American Jewry, has come to be called "the transformation hypothesis," the proposition that argues that over the years Jewish life in America has not became better or worse but simply gone through a "transformation," Calvin Goldscheider suggested that, despite all other their changes, American Jews were still profoundly affected by their residential decisions. Those preferences, he argued, perhaps even more so than choices made about the character of their faith or dimensions of their ritual practice, about the extent of their Jewish education or about marriage, played a determining role in the matter of Jewish continuity and change. Specifically, Goldscheider wrote:[1]

> Where Jews reside, and the Jewishness of those neighborhoods within the broader community, are major aspects of Jewish cohesion. In particular, the greater the density of Jewish settlement, the more likely it is that Jews will interact with other Jews in schools, as neighbors, and as friends. Moreover, residential concentration maintains the visibility of Jewish community for Jews as well as for society as a whole and, thus, may be viewed as a critical factor in fostering and strengthening ethnic bonds. The ethnic factor is likely to be most pronounced when ethnics are clustered residentially. In turn, residential clustering represents a core mechanism for the continuity of the community.

While one may dispute whether or not such residential decisions are as important for Jewish continuity as other behavior, the basic truth of Goldscheider's assumption of residential clustering representing a "core mechanism for continuity" in the Jewish community seems today beyond question.

Throughout the last fifty years of American Jewish life, geographic mobility and its reflection, social mobility, have both combined to undermine that core mechanism of continuity and to propel Jews away from their core culture and an engagement with it. Moving out or moving up increasingly meant moving away from other Jews. As they followed this pattern, scores of suburban Jews–those who often led the movement trend during the last fifty years–were in a sense continuing

what many of their forebears had done by leaving the Jewish cultural centers in Europe for the far reaches of America. While the distances traveled from what were sometimes called areas of "first and second settlement" in the cities to the suburban frontier and beyond were smaller, the cultural distance and issues involved as well as the Jewish implications may have been no less critical. To be sure, the movement in the latter half of the American twentieth century was large scale. By 1965, "about a third of all American Jews left the big cities and established themselves in the suburbs."[2] Moreover, as the century drew to a close, the move from the traditional centers of Jewish communal life, the Northeast and the large cities of the Midwest as well as pockets in and around Miami and Los Angeles, to the so-called Sun Belt of the Southern and Western United States and regions where relatively few Jews had lived before only intensified this pattern. Whereas 83 percent of American Jews lived in the East in 1970, only 60 percent were there by the beginning of the next decade. While Jews at the end of the twentieth century in America were still more than two and a half times more concentrated in the Northeast than is the general population, they have been on the move.[3] During that same period the number of Jews in the West grew threefold, to 18 percent of American Jews, with a similar surge in the South. In the years since these trends have grown. The state of New York, for example, which in 1940 contained 46% of America's Jews, by the mid 1990's was home to only 28% of them, and all indications are that in the opening years of the current century this trend has not been reversed.

Some have argued that after the initial movement, Jews once again began to cluster together, re-congregating in new neighborhoods (albeit in smaller masses). But in fact, as Goldscheider demonstrated at the time he wrote *Jewish Continuity and Change*, "overall, the data indicate that most Jews (65 percent) live in census tracts classified as medium concentration, with twice as many in areas of low concentration as in areas of high concentration."[4] Over time, as Alice and Sidney Goldstein and others have shown us, the movement of Jews has maintained that inclination so that it is become even more so one of increasing dispersion that locates Jews more sparsely over a larger area; today's American Jews have moved further and further from Jewish enclaves and into the fabric of American of life and culture.[5] This, as Ira Sheskin has argued, leads to "the need to create a sense of community in relatively new Jewish communities, increases in assimilation that result from breaking long-term community ties and from living in areas with relatively few Jews, and the geographic dispersion of children from parents and grandparents."[6]

In other words, their choices of residence have increasingly moved American Jews into social orbits where they would come into close and

often intimate contact with non-Jews as well as Jews who *acted like non-Jews*. (Not surprisingly, we discover, for example, that it is the case that as a 2001 survey of American religion sponsored by my own university reported, that during the just ended decade almost 60% more Jews switched out of Judaism than switched in, for a net loss of 4%.)[7] In short, American Jews have been discovering, as Nathan Glazer put it, "less and less" of their lives is being "derived from Jewish history, experience, culture, and religion," while "more and more of it" is becoming "derived from the current and existing realities of American culture, American politics, and the general American religion."[8] This was the reason why, Goldscheider argued, Jews who have located themselves in Jewishly sparse communities have had to create "other contexts for interaction [which] seem to be replacing the neighborhood."[9]

Those, however, for whom Jewish identity and involvement continued to be a salient concern found that far easier than creating these 'other contexts' and a proven way to resist these assimilationist trends remained simply to live close to or among a critical mass of their co-religionists. There they would far more naturally engage in Jewish behavior and the institutions that support it. That was why Goldscheider found, for example, that "areas of higher Jewish density have a larger proportion [of inhabitants] who are members of synagogues than areas of lower Jewish density...."[10]

For Orthodox Jews, this was the action of choice. While their fellow Jews accepted migration and mobility as an inevitable element of life in America and made their peace with and even embraced it enthusiastically, often at the expense of assimilation or at the very least, as Goldscheider might put it, profound transformation, Orthodox Jews have always had a problem with these insofar as they have led away from living with other Orthodox Jews in such residential concentrations. They thus have always been the last in the line of migrants. Many tried to stay behind, first in the European heartland of tradition where their leaders urged them to stay away from the flow of those joining the stream toward the "*trefe* medina" where they argued that at best Jewish lives might be saved but Judaism, the Jewish *neshama* or spirit, would die. Coming to America in large numbers only when the world they valued was destroyed, they once again concentrated themselves, this time in the cities of the Northeast, most prominently New York where they found a few institutions and communities that appeared to them to provide a framework into which they could fit and on which they could build.[11] When the migration away from these places began, they once again did not want to leave from where they had rebuilt many of their institutions and patterns of religious community. They have been among the most tenacious in

remaining in the New York area and in those places where other Jews like them live.

They also eschewed social mobility in the sense that they believe ideologically that the riches to be gained by moving up the social ladder of the host society did not compare favorably with the scale of values within the domains of Jewish life. What they sometimes referred to as "*goyim nachas*" was not worth pursuing in place of Jewish pride of place and prestige.

To be sure, the reasons for the Orthodox being slow to leave these areas of settlement were many. One of course was economic. As a group, the Orthodox Jews were the poorest of all Jews. Moreover, because large numbers of them were new immigrants or refugees who had come just before or after the end of World War Two, they did not qualify for the G.I. Bill loans that enabled many of their co-religionists to buy the suburban house necessary for the move out which was just beginning. At the start of the suburban exodus and even when other Jews began to move further a field, the Orthodox were still trying to establish themselves in this country and did not have the resources available for relocation yet again. Secondly, the Orthodox who came to America at this time were far more rooted in their pieties and Jewish commitments than many of their immigrant forbears. They had been forced out of their Jewish enclaves by the firestorm of Nazism and still felt the attachments to the traditional way of life that they had been forced to leave behind. For some and their children, these feelings were buttressed by a survivor guilt that made leaving Orthodoxy or the community of the Orthodox for greener fields feel like a betrayal of those who had been killed. In a sense, they discovered on their own, the truth of the Goldscheider principle with which I began: that density of Jewish population was if not the *sine qua non* of fostering Jewish bonds at the very least among its most likely guarantees. Of course, they lived in Jewish neighborhoods and places of high Jewish density because their practices and religious commitments were more easily satisfied in such an environment. That is to say they were there first and foremost because of the *content of its community life*. But the clustering was what made everything else happen. Moreover, because they always were (and continue to be) the Jews with the greatest number of institutional and communal needs, they found those neighborhoods with a relatively a small geographic area into which a maximum of people and institutions could be contained the ideal. Thus, for example, because of their commitment to strict Sabbath observance, they needed synagogues within walking distance of their homes. And because often they paid a lot of attention to custom and tradition, this necessitated not infrequently more than one synagogue or at least more than one sort of service. Furthermore, they insisted on establishing

their own schools in which to train their children as religious Jews, and if possible several representing a variety of religious and educational philosophies. They demanded places where they could readily obtain kosher food, often with a diversity of rabbinic endorsements, places to buy holy books, and so on. In addition, the more of their institutions they created in an area, the more powerful was these Jews' sense of attachment to that area.[3] For the most part these sorts of places were urban enclaves. Orthodox Jews therefore have remained in Jewish urban enclaves long after their non-Orthodox counterparts removed themselves to elsewhere, and even when they were in suburban areas, they often transformed these into virtually identical to the urban enclaves. Put differently, Orthodox Jews could not easily live as isolated individuals in places where there were but a few who shared their Jewish commitments. The density of their Jewish communities became not simply a reflection *of* these values of Orthodox Jewish life with Orthodox Jewish people but as well an instrument *for* its perpetuation.

Those who did not want to move from the urban neighborhoods where Jews had been concentrated even after many of their co-religionists had begun to leave discovered that, as culturally risky moving might be, staying behind was difficult too. In many of the urban neighborhoods where they remained after significant numbers of their Jewish neighbors had gone elsewhere, the ones who stayed behind found that maintaining all the old institutions was not as easy as it had been. First there was the change in the character of the neighborhoods. Many had devolved into poverty, with all the decay that brings. Moreover, other ethnic minorities–most commonly African-Americans–often filled the places of those Jews who had departed. Relations with them, good at first, began to deteriorate rapidly, along with the urban economic atmosphere, in the 1960's. The blacks found the Jews who remained their neighbors were not the integrationist liberals who had stood shoulder to shoulder with them in the struggle for civil rights but rather people who kept to themselves, and the Jews discovered the blacks who were now their neighbors no longer looked at them as a minority with whom they shared much in common. Jews and blacks, erstwhile allies in the struggle for civil rights and acceptance in America, more and more confronted one another not as allies in a struggle but rather as uncomfortable and alienated neighbors, both at the economic bottom of their respective ethnic groups though not equal.[12] By the late 1960's, when the movement of Jews away from what sociologists have called the "second-settlement areas" where Jewish residence was dense was in full swing, more often than not, particularly in cities like Boston, Detroit, New York, and Newark that exploded in riots, many Jews found themselves landlords in distressed

neighborhoods where blacks were tenants or shopkeepers where blacks were among the rioting customers. Or else, Jews were the ones selling their homes to blacks. Among the few who remained their actual neighbors, however, the Orthodox were most prominent, and many times they felt beleaguered by surrounding hostility and abandoned by the rest of Jewry.[13]

For some of the Orthodox precisely this hostility served as an aid to their Jewish continuity. It would serve as a barrier to Jewish assimilation and force them to restrict themselves to interaction with people like themselves. This included at times displaying characteristics that might appear to set them apart from America, such as celebrating distinctively Jewish religious observances or emphasizing the knowledge (and use) of Hebrew or Yiddish, pursuing Jewish education with relatively greater intensity, and living with and maintaining special relationships with (and marrying only) other Orthodox Jews. Because of their Jewish commitments, Orthodox Jews were far more tightly dependent on Jewish institutions. While they could and did rebuild many of them, they realized that they could not do so nor could they sustain such institutions unless they remained in a location where there was a critical mass of like-minded Jews. This too inhibited their mobility.

Jews for whom Orthodoxy was not simply a significant but rather *the* central feature of their sense of self, those who hewed more tightly to the tradition, were convinced that only a densely populated Orthodox Jewish community assured continuity. Only in such places did they believe they would find like-minded Jews and the institutions that sustained them. They were convinced that any movement they made away from the dense Orthodox enclaves–even if only temporarily while they prepared the ground for others to follow–were steps onto the slippery slope of assimilation.[14] This was because these Jews, who as of the end of the twentieth century numbered about 200,000 or about 42 per cent of American Orthodoxy, looked upon the American culture they were *in* but not *of* as a contaminating civilization.[15]

Increasingly they distinguished themselves from their modern Orthodox counterparts, and as such overwhelmingly forswore suburban living. Part of this came from a cultural ideology in which the American "dream" and allied acculturative factors that moved many of their modern and nominally Orthodox counterparts to abandon the city were disparaged. The values of Americanization from which the urban emigration and suburban migration flowed were only marginally relevant to *haredim*, who increasingly prided themselves on establishing their own life apart.[16] They remained part of tightly knit communities of like-minded people and a network of extended families. More than any other group of Jews they affirm in their behavior and

attitudes the truth of the Goldscheider principle of the importance of residence with which I have begun this paper.

For these haredi Orthodox Jews, the appeal of living in a typical suburb or where they are few in number, where the living arrangement emphasizes individuals in small nuclear families or even as singles, is lost upon them. Haredim continue to prefer living within dense communities, where the likelihood of interaction with other like-minded Jews in schools, as neighbors and friends is greater. They want to live within easy walking distance of a yeshiva or a variety of synagogues, close to the many institutions a dense community can sustain, desiring this density to looking out from their windows on a bucolic suburban vista of lush lawns and open spaces (in fact when they do live in what is nominally suburbia–places like Rockland or Orange counties in New York–their lawns are the often quite neglected). Nor do they need the "better public schools" with their favorable student-teacher ratios that suburbia offered since they had their own school systems. As for the famous Beth Midrash Govoha, when this premier Lithuanian-style yeshiva in America did establish itself in rural southern New Jersey in the city of Lakewood, it did so in part to insure their students would be insulated from the contaminating effects of American cultural life that at the time was most prominent in the city.[17] Most other *haredi* yeshivas, however, eschewed this sort of location and established themselves in *haredi*, urban districts.[18]

There were of course not only ideological but also economic reasons for the continued *haredi* stay in the cities. By and large, as a class of people, *haredim* are among the poorest of an already poor Orthodox Jewry. For example, the 1990 United States Census reveals that about 27 per cent of the people living in the *haredi* Jewish precincts of Borough Park are below the poverty level.[19] In Crown Heights, where Lubavitcher Hasidim make their homes, there are about 25 percent of them below the poverty level. While in Williamsburg, the urban neighborhood where Satmar Hasidim are concentrated, that number rises to about 56 percent.

In addition, there was the aversion to suburban living that was particularly strong in the case of *haredi* women, for whom the family, home, and community has been the dominant arena of existence and personal expression. Unlike the adult men and children who were "protected" inside the schools and yeshivas or in a job that often connected them to a Jewish domain beyond the home, the *haredi* women were expected to build their lives between home and shopping, in a far more traditional division of labor in the family. But the suburban milieu or indeed any place where the Orthodox population of like-minded others was sparse, which left one alone in the house or traveling about by car, was not ideal for the young woman who was

suddenly saddled with babies and a husband who was otherwise engaged. She needed a large support community and peers with whom she would meet in the street while she pushed her stroller about. That was part of her protective environment. The station wagon (and later the van), so much the vehicle of suburbia, which might have helped (and which became the tool of her suburban, modern Orthodox counterparts) represented independence and mobility that haredi women were not expected to embrace. To this day relatively few haredi women are drivers. The city therefore became both practically and ideologically a more appropriate place for the women to live.

Haredi neighborhoods are areas where households with seven or more persons in them are far more common than elsewhere. The proportion in Borough Park in such large households is almost four times greater than in New York City or Nassau County, while in Williamsburg it is almost eight times greater. Since 1990, the New York Building Department issued 822 permits for private construction projects–new homes and additions–in Borough Park than in any other residential neighborhood in Brooklyn. The area, with a birthrate in 1990 that was slightly more than twice as high as the rest of New York City, has virtually been reconstructed since mid-century and the arrival and growth of this Orthodox population.

Indeed, if we look at those neighborhoods where haredi Orthodox Jews have made their homes in the New York City area, we discover that they grew by about 10% between 1990 and 2000. For these Jews, the neighborhood, if they could find affordable housing there, was were they wanted to–and often did–stay.[20] Williamsburg and Boro Park reveal this sort of growth. On the other hand, when the *haredi* Orthodox sought to remain inside their densely populated enclaves and were unable to find affordable housing, they were forced to move out. To solve this problem, however, they chose not to move out as individuals but rather as a group, creating an outpost of their community elsewhere.

Accordingly, when, for example, the Satmar and Skvirer Hasidim found themselves in such a position, they did move out of the cities and established what some might call suburban enclaves. However, they did so *en masse* and made their new territories densely populated new American *shtetls* rather then copies of the classic American suburb. Here they created provinces that reproduced many of the features of their urban enclaves, places that stressed the grouping together of ever more people in walking distance of one another, and the Orthodox institutions to sustain them. Here the disproportionate presence of young people, a characteristic of the post-world war two American Jewry (in contrast to the pre-world war group that was an aging population) were even more in evidence. Two neighborhoods that

illustrate this most vividly are the Satmar Hasidic village of Kiryas Joel and the Skvirer Hasidic village of New Square, both in suburban New York. Founded for a variety of reasons, not least of which having to do with the need to find housing for young couples who could no longer be squeezed into the urban enclaves that had become their home territory, Kiryas Joel with a population of just fewer than 7200 Orthodox Jews in 1990 grew in the last ten years by about 80 per cent to slightly over 13,000, while New Square which in 1990 numbered just over 2700 grew to just under 4500 or about 67 per cent. (For comparison purposes, the population in Rockland, the suburban New York county in which these villages are found, grew by just 8 percent during the same ten-year period.)

To be sure, the Orthodox who remained in their urban enclaves were also increasingly marked by a presence of many young among them. Indeed, they exemplify the point which Goldscheider reported, that "areas of high Jewish concentration have a disproportionate number of young people."[21] With a median age of 19, during the 1980's and 18 by the 1990's, in places like Williamsburg, (about half the median age for New York), and 28 in places like Crown Heights, haredi Orthodox urban neighborhoods were places that were marked by the presence of large numbers of the young. Even Boro Park, where a more mixed Orthodox population was to be found, albeit with a large haredi component, the median age was 27, still below the median of 35 for all of metropolitan New York.

Similar numbers are to be found in such enclaves as the neighborhoods connected to the Lakewood Yeshiva in New Jersey where according to the 2000 U.S. census the median age is just under 23 (compared to the 42 of non-Hispanic whites in Ocean County, New Jersey in which it is located and the 39 of nearby Monmouth County) and more than half (58%) the families having children under 18 (compared to the 32% rate for Ocean County), indeed about a quarter having children under 6 years of age (compared to just under 8% for the county), according to the 2000 U.S. census. In Monsey, New York, a suburban town heavily populated by the Orthodox (including a large haredi component), the median age is just under 19 (about half that of the Rockland county median age of just under 38 in which it is situated).

To be sure these phenomenal growth rates in these haredi Orthodox enclaves are in part explained by a high birth rate–the median age in Kiryas Joel is 15 and in New Square is 14 with about 20 per cent of the population under five years of age of five in each–precisely what one would expect to find in an outpost for the young *haredi* family. The fact is that increasing numbers of young couples and families who want to make their lives in a *haredi* enclave have moved to these two

places not because they were ready for suburban sprawl but because they were seeking a densely populated Jewish neighborhood they could afford and in which they could find space.[22] Of course today, in Kiryas Joel 99.8 percent of the housing units (69 per cent of which are rental and the rest owner-inhabited) are occupied, while in New Square the respective rate is almost identical (except that, reflecting a greater poverty, there 83 percent are renters).[23] What this will portend for the next ten years remains to be seen. The fact that there is expansion in the home territory of Williamsburg as a result of rezoning of the surrounding area and consequent new housing going up may lead the next generation of young Satmar families to choose to stay in Brooklyn rather than moving to Rockland. And the reason is because, given the choice of living anywhere, they prefer a greater density of Jewish settlement for they have learned and believe, in Goldscheider's words, that "residential clustering represents a core mechanism for the continuity of the community."

In an open America with its tremendous and incessant endorsement of mobility, some Orthodox Jews, however, found that there were those among them who did share in at least some of the American Jewish dreams of *social* mobility. These were the "modern Orthodox" who chose to get a university education and degree, ostensibly to "better themselves," and who pursued the economic improvement as well as social prestige this offered. As much as they appreciated Jewish learning and its own associated scale of values, they did not want to turn away from many of the American ones, echoing the cultural-integrationist attitude that a generation earlier German neo-Orthodoxy had embraced: the idea of '*Torah-im-derech eretz*' or, as the motto (if not always the reality) of New York's Yeshiva University translated it, "*torah u'madda*.' Some modern Orthodox Jews adopted this dualistic stance, and it became for a time the dominant ideological trend for much of the middle years of the twentieth century.

While haredim hewed to the city and densely Orthodox suburban village neighborhoods that in many ways reproduced it, modern Orthodox Jews *were* willing to move out to the suburbs as individuals and nuclear families, in a manner that appeared to mimic the rest of the American middle classes. Most prominent among them in the first wave of those to move were those who were nominally Orthodox. These were people who chose to call themselves "Orthodox" but whose practices and ways of life bonded them in only the most minimal way to this identity.[24] Fundamentally acculturative in their orientation, these people remained sentimentally attached to Orthodoxy, even though they sought wherever possible to accommodate themselves to the cultural demands of America and its open and increasingly appealing society. They gave new meaning to the now-familiar characterization: "the

synagogue they did *not* regularly attend was an Orthodox one." In time, fewer and fewer of these Jews identified themselves as Orthodox–especially as those who continued tightly to embrace this identity raised the ante of required behavior and commitments of contemporary American Orthodoxy.

In the second wave of migrants were the so-called "centrist Orthodox" Jews, those powerfully attached to Jewish traditions and practices, whose improved economic circumstances (often a result of their university degrees and training) and style of life nevertheless allowed for a public face and outer identity of acculturation and kept the "inner identity" of traditional practice and beliefs relatively camouflaged.[25] They believed that, in spite of their Jewish commitments, they could move out on their own (as they had when they went to college), live among other sorts of Jews (they did choose areas to live where there were others of their co-religionists), and yet maintain an Orthodox pattern of life. In a relatively short time, however, they recognized that in order to maintain their Orthodoxy they needed other Orthodox neighbors who shared their interests and concerns, who wanted to worship in the Orthodox style and provide for an Orthodox Jewish education for their children.

Indeed so connected did these Orthodox Jews discover themselves to be to one another and the institutions they re-created in their new places of residence that to this day, although they generally live in areas of highest Orthodox Jewish density, when personal circumstances have led them to move to the periphery of Jewish districts or out of them altogether, they have managed to do something that few other of their co-religionists could: they have changed the communities into which they have moved rather than to become changed by them. In a sense, when they have migrated they have often done precisely what Sidney Goldstein suggested might be a conceivable outcome of Jewish migration: "positive effects on the vitality of Jewish life by bringing additional population to smaller communities or to formerly declining ones, thereby providing a kind of 'demographic transfusion' needed to help maintain or develop basic institutions and facilities essential for a vital Jewish community."[26] They therefore became institution and community builders in their new places of residence, factors that had the consequence of attracting other Orthodox to these areas. In a sense, they did some of what their haredi counterparts did when they moved out of the city. They simply did it more gradually, the result of what appears at first blush to look like individual decisions about residence rather than a group move and decision so characteristic of the haredim.

To be sure, the more the Orthodox sought to re-root their distinctive ways (even in an adapted form) in these new areas of residence, where the geographic conditions of what was most often a

suburban setting limited the number of them who could live within close proximity to one another, the more they often ran into resistance to their efforts. When they entertained the possibilities of moving out of the inner city enclaves which they had made their new homes in America, the actively Orthodox Jews, whose difference from the Christian majority was relatively obvious and explicit and who tended to stay together, were more likely to experience the brunt of such restrictions against Jews as did exist. This came in part from the fact that, even with their modernist adaptations, they often did not blend in easily to the American melting pot. They did not always attend the public schools, did not eat the same food, tended to maintain their closest friendships with other Orthodox Jews, and generally began to constitute a separate community.[27] Indeed in many cases, their movement into a neighborhood new to them was opposed by their fellow non-Orthodox Jews who associated these newcomers with much they had fled when they made their own migrations away from the former Jewish enclaves.[28] The transformed Jews did want to live with the Orthodox who many believed would reverse or at the very least reject the transformation. In a number of places the clashes became quite hostile and focused around such symbolic issues as the construction of an *eruv* or a new Orthodox synagogue, both of which were seen as instigating even more movement of Orthodox into a neighborhood.

This resistance on the part of the non-Orthodox paradoxically stimulated many of the Orthodox who had come to try to attract even more of their own kinds of Jews to join them and to create ethnic and religious enclaves whose character was even more exclusively Orthodox. Thus a process was put in place that led to increased Orthodox clustering and all it led to. Opponents sometimes called this process "Brooklynization" of the neighborhood, the transformation of new suburban or ex-urban settings into an image of the old urban Orthodox enclaves.[29]

In fact, the initial resistance to Orthodox in-migration led to some modern Orthodox choosing not to move too far from their enclaves at first. "I would rather be surrounded by my own," as one such Jew put it explaining why he had given up the idea of leaving his Brooklyn Orthodox community.[30]

When, at last, they left the inner city American enclaves that they had called home during the mid-twentieth century they selected at first neighborhoods that were semi-urban rather than fully suburban.[31] This led to such areas as Kew Gardens Hills in Queens in New York, still nominally part of the city but further out on Long Island than Brooklyn. Similar choices were made in metropolitan Boston by those who moved to the "streetcar suburb" of Brookline, in Philadelphia when some chose

the suburb of Lower Merion just over the city line, and in Toronto's outskirts along the Bathurst Street corridor. But within less than a generation these areas rapidly became concentrated Orthodox neighborhoods, similar to the Orthodox enclaves in the city from which these residents had moved.

The construction of an *eruv*, the Judeo-legal boundary-marking device that serves as a basis for enabling certain Sabbath observances but has the consequence of paving the way for young Orthodox families to move into a neighborhood, has become a symbol and reflection of this change. The *eruv* effectively created a bounded region in which Orthodox Jews concentrated, a ghetto within the suburb.

"We have had a number of families move in since the *eruv* was erected," said Rabbi Tzvi Kramer of Congregation Zichron Eliezer located in just such an emerging Orthodox suburb in Nassau County on New York's Long Island. "It's one of the first things they ask about before they move."[32]

This tendency was threatening to many of the non-Orthodox. They saw the *eruv* not as a ritual device meant to make it possible for the Orthodox to carry or wheel baby carriages to the synagogue and one another's homes on the Sabbath–which is what the Orthodox claimed it was. Rather, they saw the *eruv* as a symbolic expression of an Orthodox to create a separatist enclave that would attract yet more Orthodox and would relentlessly exclude all those who did not share their way of life. For many of those who opposed the *eruv*, the political activity that was necessary for convincing the local authorities to permit it was perceived as a stalking horse for the Orthodox acquisition of even greater political power.

As Orthodox Jewish residence concentrated increasingly into a limited set of suburbs–often those with an *eruv*–these places took on many of the characteristics of an enclave culture. Most prominent in this was a burst in the growth of Orthodox sponsored or utilized institutions that in a sense became outgrowths of the community. Thus, for example, suburbs that might once have had only one Orthodox synagogue, which served as the locus of most or all of the religious, social, and educational activities of the entire community established a variety of synagogues, day schools, other religious institutions (most prominently *mikvehs* or ritual baths), and centers of communal or social activity. Similarly, where perhaps a suburb might in the early years of its Orthodox settlement not have many businesses dependent upon an Orthodox economy, in its later years, stores that catered to a wide array of particularly Orthodox needs developed. These included, perhaps most prominently, places to purchase kosher food–everything from kosher butchers, supermarkets, and restaurants (especially of the fast food variety which mimicked the local non-kosher ones that were so

ubiquitous on the main streets and malls of American suburbia), to bakeries and kosher caterers. Along the suburban commercial strips kosher pizza, kosher Chinese and even kosher sushi outlets might coexist with Dunkin' Donuts, Domino Pizza and Carvel's. Increasingly, these suburbs also included Jewish bookstores, where ritual items as well as holy books could be acquired. In some places, they even included women's clothing shops that carried garments that conformed to the "modesty" requirements of Orthodox attire. Other businesses tried increasingly to appeal to the Orthodox who constituted a growing block in these suburbs. The Carvels and Dunkin' Donuts shops became kosher. Often they did so by closing their doors on the Sabbath in the hopes that this would attract the patronage and loyalty of the Orthodox. This could result in some unusual situation. Thus, for example, a cab company or a gas station–both crucially important in the automobile dominated suburb–might advertise the fact that they were closed for business on the Sabbath, a claim that in most places would be fatal for business success but in an Orthodox enclave could signal a special relationship with the local population and its values and therefore lead to increased trade.

Near the century's end, a reporter describing such a Jewish suburban neighborhood on the border between Queens and neighboring Nassau county New York that had become very much such an Orthodox enclave, replete with institutions and a visibly Orthodox population, where nearly everyone in the area seemed to share a common worldview and lifestyle noted that, "many in the community say they derive a clear, almost palpable comfort from living in the absence of malice–or stares. One resident spoke of shedding her self-consciousness as if it had been a cloak...."[33]

To be sure, the modern Orthodox enclaves are not quite as distinctive as the haredi ones. One important difference tends to be the matter of age. We have already seen that in haredi enclaves outside the cities the median age as of the 2000 census is–as we have seen in the examples of the villages of Kiryas Joel and New Square–in the low teens (in great measure because of the high birth rate but that in turn is also a sign of large numbers of people in the child-bearing years making the enclave home). However, when we look at Orthodox communities that are overwhelmingly populated by the modern or centrist Orthodox, these numbers begin to change. Here when we look at such growing modern Orthodox neighborhoods as New Rochelle in New York's Westchester County or Woodmere In Nassau County the median ages are actually near 40 which is also the county-wide median in Westchester and Nassau Counties according to the 2000 census. And even in the heavily Orthodox Monsey, in its more modern Orthodox

neighborhoods, the median age rises from 19 to 20, still quite low but higher than among the haredim.[34]

The reasons for this are not mysterious. For all of their attachments to Orthodox life patterns, modern Orthodox Jews, not unlike others middle class university educated Americans which they also are, tend to have a relatively low birthrate, that is lower than the haredim albeit higher than the rest of American Jewry. While the modern Orthodox have about three children per family, their slightly higher birthrate than that of their neighbors is generally insufficient to make them stand out from them demographically.[35] However, while their demographic distinctions from those in their surroundings may not be as stark as those of the haredim, in the ambience of their neighborhoods and their clustering, they have very much emulated the latter, and increasingly so in the last ten years. Indeed, the phenomenon of the solitary or very few Orthodox Jews sustaining themselves and their way of life in America, which may once have been a reality for a short time around mid-twentieth century, is difficult to find at the dawn of the twenty-first. One suspects that even the modern Orthodox will become more like their haredi counterparts as their residential clustering intensifies. There are already signs that they are.

In sum, we discover that in the case of Orthodox Jews in America, unlike the case for other contemporary Jews for whom Goldscheider suggested, "other contexts for interaction seem to be replacing the neighborhood," neighborhood, residential clustering, and the creation of enclaves are increasingly the basis for all other ties. In spite of some transitional periods of mobility when they moved further a field and tried to leave the enclaves behind, they have–even in suburbia and in places not associated with such clustering–re-created the dense community of like-minded and similarly behaving Orthodox Jews. And these neighborhoods and communities have become the key variable guaranteeing growth, continuity, and–to use Goldscheider's words–"a critical factor in fostering and strengthening ethnic bonds."[36] They may, in the final analysis play a greater real in determining the future character of Orthodoxy than any other single variable

NOTES

[1] Calvin Goldscheider, *Jewish Continuity and Change* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) p. 29.
[2] Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989) p. 321.

[3] Ira Sheskin, "The North American Urban Kaleidoscope: American Jews," in *The American Ethnic Geographer,*" vol. 5 #2, p. 10.
[4] *Jewish Continuity and Change*, p. 32.
[5] Alice & Sidney Goldstein, *Jews on the Move: Implications for Jewish Identity* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press 1996).
[6] Sheskin, p. 11.
[7] American Religious Identification Survey, GSUC, exhibit 7. 171447 switched in and 291390 switched out.
[8] Nathan Glazer "On Jewish Forebodings," *Commentary* 8/85, p. 36.
[9] *Ibid.* p. 30.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[11] See, Heilman, *Portrait of American Jews* [forthcoming].
[12] See Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon, *The Death of An American Jewish Community* (New York: The Free Press, 1992) for an example of a case study in Boston.
[13] Paula Hyman "From City to Suburb: Temple Mishkan Tefila of Boston," in Jack Wertheimer *The American Synagogue* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 185-205.
[14] The notable exception here are the Lubavitchers whose outreach and missionizing requires their journey to the Jewish periphery, but whose goal in principle (if not always in fact) is to bring Jews back to the Jewish heartland rather than to colonize.
[15] The source for this number is an estimate based on the 1990 U.S. Census that lists 213,064 speakers of Yiddish at home as well as a serious of other data which will be more fully discussed later in this paper. A majority of this number live in New York and are most likely the haredim for whom Yiddish is the common language. This would make them about 43% of all American Orthodox Jewry in 1997. I would like to thank my research assistant Susan G. Weber for help in assembling this data.
[16] For an interesting discussion of this see Oren Rudavsky and Menachem Daum's film 'A Life Apart.'
[17] This strategy has been somewhat undone as Lakewood has moved into the radius of suburbia.
[18] Exceptions like the Lubavitcher yeshiva in rural New Jersey sought in part to mimic the Lakewood model and in part to be close to the population among whom they might do outreach work.
[19] While the U.S. Census counts people by race, it does not count people by religion–and certainly does not identify them by their levels of orthodoxy–it is possible to look at the figures for certain neighborhood blocks and make informed guesses about the Jews. Since in many cases such as Williamsburg or Crown Heights, *haredim* live in

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neighborhood where their neighbors are black or Hispanic, a look at the census figures that focuses on the white, non-Hispanic population gives a fairly good estimate of the number of *haredim*. In the case of places like Borough Park, a census of those blocks where *haredim* make up almost the entire population allows similar estimates. These are the sources for the figures here

[20] My thanks go to David Pollock for his use of the 2000 census data for this information.

[21] Jewish Continuity and Change, p. 35.

[22] An important reason for this movement is economic, the housing being somewhat less expensive here than in the city, and the availability of housing. The size of houses in the suburban settings is about three times greater when measured by number of bedrooms when Williamsburg and Kiryas Joel are compared.

[23] 2000 U.S. Census.

[24] See Stephen Sharot "The Three-Generations Hypothesis," [forthcoming].

[25] Samuel Heilman, "Inner and Outer Identity," Sociological Ambivalence Among Orthodox Jews," Jewish Social Studies, (Summer) 1977, vol. 39, #3, pp.227-240.

[26] Sidney Goldstein, "Profile of American Jewry: Insights from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey," *American Jewish Yearbook*, 1992, pp. 172-173.

[27] See S.C. Heilman and S.M. Cohen *Cosmopolitan Parochials: : Modern Orthodox Jews in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, December 1989).

[28] See Samuel G. Freedman, *Jews Versus Jew* [forthcoming].

[29] Gannet news reports from New Rochelle [forthcoming].

[30] Deborah Sontag, "Orthodox Neighborhood Reshapes Itself," *New York Times* January 7, 1998, p.1, B4.

[31] See Etan Diamond *And I Will Dwell in their Midst: Orthodox Jews in Suburbia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

[32]. July 20, 1997, *The New York Times* "Searingtown, L.I.: Classic Suburb Keeps its Appeal in the 90s" by John Rather.

[33] Deborah Sontag, "Orthodox Neighborhood Reshapes Itself" *New York Times* January 7, 1998, p.1, B4.

[34] The blurring of boundaries here and the nature of suburban life may account for the relatively low median age even among the modern Orthodox.

[35] Heilman and Cohen, *Cosmopolitan Parochials*.

[36] *Jewish Continuity and Change*, p.29.