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Chapter 12

Ethnicity, American Judaism, and Jewish Cohesion

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Socioeconomic transformations, and changes in family structure, residential concentration, and mobility patterns, have resulted in new forms of Jewish community networks and associational ties. As an ethnic group, the community has changed its character. As a group sharing a religious tradition and culture, we ask: What changes have occurred in the religion of modern American Jews? How has secularization affected Jewish continuity? Have new forms of Jewish expression emerged to serve as anchors for cohesion among America's Jews? We focus on two themes: (1) the patterns of secularization in Jewish religious behavior and identification and (2) the emergence of alternative forms of Jewish expression. The overriding concern is with the ways in which Jewish cohesion and continuity are manifest in the community.

Previous research has documented extensively the decline of religious behavior, ritual observances, and traditional Orthodox identification among American Jews. The transformation of the more religiously oriented immigrant generation to the secularized second and third generation has been one of the master themes in the sociology of Jews in the United States. In turn, these changes have been associated with broader processes of assimilation and acculturation. Some of the fundamental patterns are well known. There is, however, less consensus in the interpretation of the evidence and the inferred connections to assimilation.

The most widespread interpretation of these patterns of generational change in the various dimensions of religiosity derives from the secularization-modern-

ization framework. The argument is that changes in religious behavior and attitudes are part of the assimilation process. As Jews become more American and more modernized in America, they shed their religious particularism. They become less religious in their behavior, view religion as less central in their lives, and mold their religious observances to fit in with the dominant American culture. What remains, therefore, of traditional Judaism are forms of religious expression which do not conflict with the Americanization of the Jews. Family rituals predominate; dietary regulations are observed less frequently; Chanukah and Seder celebrations fit well with children and family-centeredness and parallel Christmas and Easter; Sabbath observances and regular synagogue attendance are more difficult to sustain, since they compete with leisure and occupational activities. In sum, one argument is that Judaism declines with modernization. The residual observances reflect acculturation and imitation of dominant American forms. Alternative activities, such as participation in Jewish communal organizations, are viewed as poor substitutes for traditional religious institutions and behavior. Indeed, these are often included under the rubric "civil religion." In this context, therefore, changes in religious identification and behavior are interpreted as the weakening of the religious sources of Jewish continuity. Religious leaders and institutions are the most likely to equate the decline of Judaism with the demise of the Jewish community.

There is another view which understands the processes of secularization as part of the broader transformation of Jews in modern society. In this perspective, the decline in the centrality of religion must be seen in the context of the emergence of new forms of Jewish expression. Before one can equate the decline of traditional forms with the loss of community, it is important to examine whether alternative ways to express Jewishness emerge. In the past, religion and Jewishness were inseparable. Changes in Judaism were indeed threatening to Jewish continuity and cohesion. However, in the process of expansion of community size and institutions, and the integration of Jews in the social, economic, political, and cultural patterns of the broader society, opportunities for new forms of expressing Jewishness have developed as alternative ways to reinforce Jewish cohesion, even as links between religion and Jewishness have weakened.

These new forms provide a wide range of options for expressing Jewishness among those at different points in their life cycle. For some, religion remains central; for most, Jewishness is a combination of family, communal, religious, and ethnic forms of Jewish expression. At times, Jewishness revolves around educational experiences; for families with children, the expression of Jewishness is usually in synagogue-related and children-oriented celebrations. For almost all, it is the combination of family, friends, community activities, organizations, and reading about and visiting Israel. Many ways have developed to express Jewishness, and some have become more important than others at different points in the life cycle, in different places, and with different exposures to Jewishness.

In this perspective, the examination of changes in one set of Jewish expressions must be balanced by an investigation of other Jewish expressions. Hence, a decline in ritual observance, synagogue attendance, or Jewish organizational

participation must be viewed in the context of the total array of Jewish-related activities and associations. It is the balance of the range of expressions which allows for the evaluation of Jewish continuity. Thus, connections between secularization (in the sense of changing forms of religious expression and declines in ritual observances) and broader Jewish continuity (including a wide range of Jewish-related attitudes, values, and activities which are not necessarily religiously oriented) need to be studied directly rather than by inference.

Two methodological considerations emerge from this view. First, since the ways in which Jews express their Jewishness vary over the life cycle, we cannot use life cycle variation as the major indicator of generational decline. Variation in Jewishness over the life cycle may imply the different ways young singles, married couples, and older people relate to Judaism and Jewishness. Inferences from cross-sectional age variation about the "decline" in a particular dimension of Jewishness need to be made with caution. Disentangling life-cycle from generational effects is very complex using cross-sectional data. Longitudinal studies are needed to fully investigate these patterns as they unfold. In their absence, retrospective longitudinal designs (i.e., asking about past behavior and earlier generations) are appropriate.

A second methodological issue relates to the emergence of new forms of Jewish expression. While we can identify the decline of traditional forms of Judaism, we have no clear way of examining the development of new expressions of communal activities. For example, we have identified in the Boston study, as in previous research, declining Orthodox identification and observances of dietary regulations of Kashrut. But the changing concerns about Israel, Jewish communal activities, and other forms of Jewish expression which are new on the American scene cannot be measured against the past, where they did not exist. As a result, the tendency is to focus on those items which are traditionally associated with Jewishness. We shall attempt to move beyond that focus to include some different dimensions. Nevertheless, much more research needs to be carried out on these alternative forms of Jewish expression which are not continuous with the past but may have a major impact on Jewish continuity in the future.

SECULARIZATION AND THE DECLINE OF RITUAL OBSERVANCES

One implication of the secularization-modernization thesis is that there have been shifts in the denominational identification of American Jews. The linear model of assimilation predicts the change from Orthodox identification among first-generation Jewish immigrants to Conservative and Reform Judaism among their children and grandchildren. If followed to its logical conclusion, the fourth generation, growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, should be heavily concentrated among the nondenominational. Nonaffiliation with one of the three major denominations within Judaism is interpreted as the final step toward total assimilation.

There are three ways to document and analyze these changes in religious denomination: (1) comparisons of the two cross-sections 1965 and 1975; (2) changes inferred from age variation in religious denominational identification; and (3) changing denominational affiliation by generation from retrospective longitudinal data. Each has methodological limitations; together they present a consistent pattern.

In 1965, the Boston community was characterized by a larger proportion of Orthodox and Conservative Jews and a smaller proportion of Reform and nonaffiliated Jews than in 1975. During this decade, the proportion Orthodox declined from 14 percent to 5 percent, while the proportion nonaffiliated increased from 14 percent to 25 percent. The age data in 1965 showed a drop in Orthodoxy and an increase in the nondenominational. Some of the changes relate to the changing composition of the community, its demographic structure, migration patterns, and marriage formation patterns, as well as the continual secularization and change of the population. By 1975, most of those age 20–29 in 1965 will be married; some will have moved out of the community, others will have moved in, and those remaining will have been exposed to a wide range of personal, community, and Jewish changes. These cannot be easily disentangled. Comparing, for example, those age 21–29 in 1965 with those age 30–39 in 1975 shows that the proportion with no denominational affiliation was about the same (22 percent), while the proportion Orthodox declined from 6 percent to 3 percent and the proportion Conservative declined from 43 to 35 percent. The proportion Reform increased from 26 percent to 39 percent. Although the net expected pattern appears, it is difficult to understand what actually happened, and thus predict with any confidence future trends from cross-sectional comparisons over time at the aggregate level. Such an analysis cannot adequately deal with whether these changes reflect life cycle effects, the differential impact of selective migration streams into and out of the community, the changing attractiveness of Reform Judaism, or hundreds of events and alterations in individuals or communities during this decade. We therefore focus our attention on the most recent study for a detailed analysis.

The data from the 1975 survey show that one-fourth of the adult Jewish population did not identify with any of the three major denominations within Judaism, only 5 percent identified as Orthodox, and the rest were about equally distributed between Conservative and Reform. It is difficult to argue assimilation and disintegration when three-fourths of the adult Jews identify denominationally. Similarly, while synagogue attendance is not high for most Jews, only 23 percent never attend. Turned around, over three-fourths attend synagogue services sometime during the year, mainly high holidays and some festivals or family-social occasions. Furthermore, fully 80 percent observe at least some personal religious rituals—keeping kosher, reciting prayers, lighting Sabbath candles, fasting on Yom Kippur, affixing a *Mezzuzah* on the door, or observing dietary rules on Passover.*

*A factor analysis disclosed that a single scale emerges from the combination of the six items: (1) keeping Kosher at home; (2) reciting a daily prayer or worshipping at home or at a synagogue; (3) lighting Sabbath candles; (4) putting a *Mezzuzah* on the door; (5) fasting on Yom Kippur; and (6) observing dietary rules on Passover. These were each given equal weight in one overall index of religious ritual observances.

Indeed, in cross-section, the Boston Jewish community exhibits a high level of religious commitment. The only serious indication of low levels of religiosity is the extent of membership in synagogues and temples: only 37 percent of the adult Jewish population are synagogue or temple members. Twice as many Jews identify denominationally as join synagogues. Nevertheless, formal membership is a reflection much more of life cycle and communal attachments than of religiosity *per se*. There is no basis for arguing that nonmembership indicates the lack of commitment to Jewish continuity.

The issue of changing religious vitality is of course a question of change relative to the actual past, not necessarily to an ideal. In this regard, the data by age show clear patterns of decline in Orthodox identification, some decline in Conservative identification, general stability in the proportion identifying as Reform among those 18–60 years of age, and a monotonic increase in the proportion nondenominational. The data for the youngest cohort are difficult to interpret, since there is a life cycle effect on religious-denominational identification. The level of identification increases with marriage and childbearing. Hence, it is reasonable to expect an increase in denominational identification as those age 18–29 marry. A general estimate of the level of nondenominational identification among the young would be around 25 percent, *i.e.*, the level of those age 30–39. That is the same proportion characteristic of those age 21–29 in the 1965 study. We are thus tempted to see this level as a reasonable estimate for this cohort, suggesting that even among the young, between two-thirds and three-fourths are identified with a specific religious denomination within Judaism. The same set of assumptions would characterize synagogue attendance and membership and the observance of religious rituals.

If we take the cohort age 30–39 as the level of religiosity of young Jewish families, we can infer that only about 20–25 percent are religiously secular, *i.e.*, do not identify denominationally, never attend the synagogue, and observe no personal religious rituals. An even larger number (perhaps the majority) are not members of religious institutions.

Overall, therefore, these data show some systematic variation, largely over time and partly over the life cycle, in Jewish religiosity. They also show patterns of continuity and vitality in Jewish religious identification and behavior.

Another aspect of the secularization theme focuses on the education-religiosity connection. Again the simple argument is that higher levels of educational attainment result in lower levels of religiosity. This connection is based on the assumed process of liberalization associated with education, exposure to ideas which challenge traditional beliefs, and the role of college and university education in changing family attachments and particularistic attitudes and behavior. The data in Table 1 only partially support these connections. There is a systematic inverse relationship between educational attainment and the nonobservance of religious rituals and synagogue membership. However, there are no significant differences in the proportions nondenominational among those with high-school, some college, and completed college educations. Differences between those with the highest level of education and others reflect age factors, since when it is

TABLE 1. Proportion—Low Jewishness on Selected Measures by Education

	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	COLLEGE GRADUATE	POST- GRADUATE
<i>Percent</i>				
Nondenominational	20.2	19.0	22.7	33.0
Never attending synagogue	22.8	20.0	23.0	24.3
Nonmember of synagogue	57.6	57.8	60.5	73.6
Nonobservance of rituals	11.7	18.2	21.8	21.9
Low Jewish values	12.2	16.5	27.9	26.4
Nonobservance of family rituals	8.9	12.0	6.7	12.6
No community-ethnic association	44.7	47.0	41.0	36.5
Mostly non-Jewish friends	19.0	15.4	12.4	11.6

controlled, no systematic differences emerge. The same is true for the relationship between educational attainment and synagogue attendance. In short, life cycle and generational factors affect these measures of religiosity more than educational attainment. Moreover, it is clear from these data that higher levels of educational attainment are not an important threat to Jewish religious continuity.

GENERATIONAL DENOMINATIONAL ROOTS AND CHANGES

These cross-sectional data focus on aggregate changes inferred from age variation. Most previous research has used that or a generational model to highlight changes over time in religiosity. Another way to examine these changes is to compare the denominational identification of respondents directly with that of their parents. In the Boston study, a question was included on the religious denomination of the respondent's parents. This question measures a subjective dimension imputed by the respondent. It should not be taken as an unbiased distributional measure of the denominational affiliation of the parental generation. A series of methodological limitations makes this assessment of parental denominational affiliation problematic.* There are differences between the denominational affiliation attributed by children to parents and the self-identification of parents. Children may ascribe more-traditional affiliation to parents, particularly in periods of rapid change. Moreover, denominational affiliation is not an ascribed characteristic, constant throughout the life cycle. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that changes in denominational affiliation characterized parents over their life cycle, and perhaps the religious denomination attributed by children to parents varies over the children's life cycle. Taken together, we assume that there is some error in treating attributed identification as equivalent to self-identification. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of these data for an assessment of generational change and the denom-

*Differential fertility, mortality, and migration have effects on survivorship. These limitations apply as well to our discussion of generational changes in socioeconomic and demographic processes.

TABLE 2. Comparison between Religious Denominational Self-Identification and Imputed Identification, Selected Ages

	<u>ORTHODOX</u>	<u>CONSERVATIVE</u>	<u>REFORM</u>	<u>TOTAL PERCENTAGE</u>
Religious denominational identification ^a of those currently age 40–59	4.0	46.8	49.1	100.0
Parental denominational identification imputed by children age 18–29	3.5	49.5	47.0	100.0
Religious denominational identification ^a of those currently age 60+	19.5	53.5	27.0	100.0
Parental denominational identification imputed by children age 30–39	26.1	46.8	27.2	100.0

^aEliminating the proportion who currently are nondenominational.

inational roots of current religious identification at the individual level, argue strongly for the analysis of these data.

Furthermore, comparing the denominational distribution attributed to parents by children age 18–29 and 30–39 to the distribution of the self-identification of those currently age 40–59 and 60 and over reveals striking parallels (Table 2). Eliminating the nondenominational, the data show almost identical distributions of those currently age 40–59 with the parents of those 18–29 and of those currently age 60 and over with the parents of those age 30–39. Including the nondenominational makes the comparison less similar but still a reasonable approximation.

What are the denominational roots of those who currently identify themselves as Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or other? For the total sample in 1975, 25 percent identified their parents as Reform, and the remainder were equally divided between Orthodox and Conservative. There were so few who identified their parents as nondenominational (or “other”) that we did not have enough cases for analysis. Perhaps the children of parents who were nondenominational disproportionately migrate out of Boston or no longer identify as Jews; or, perhaps, those who identified as “others” were childless. We do not have sufficient evidence to confirm any of these explanations. On the basis of the nondenominational of the current generation, neither their Jewishness nor their fertility or migration patterns provide much support for those arguments. The low proportion nondenominational imputed by children to their parents probably reflects nothing more than the tendency to place parents (and others) into convenient categories. If these parents had been asked directly, a larger proportion would probably have responded “other.” Indeed, 12 percent of those age 60 and over in the sample did not identify with one of the three major religious divisions within Judaism.

Generational changes away from Orthodox affiliation are striking when examined by current denominational identification. Of those who are currently

Orthodox, almost all described their parents as Orthodox. In contrast, less than half of those who are Conservative describe their parents as Conservative; the same characterizes the Reform Jews. What are the denominational origins of Conservative and Reform Jews? Most of the Conservative Jews are from Orthodox families; Reform Jews are equally divided between parents who are Orthodox and Conservative. There is a clear general tendency intergenerationally to move from Orthodox to Conservative or Reform, and from Conservative to Reform.

The denominational sources of the nondenominational identified are complex. They do not overwhelmingly come from Reform parents. Indeed, more identify their parents as Conservative than Reform, and a substantial number define their parents as Orthodox (21 percent). The nondenominational are, therefore, not mainly the children of Reform parents, although they disproportionately identify their parents as Conservative and Reform compared to the total population.

Viewed from the perspective of generational outflows, these data suggest that most Orthodox parents have children who are either Conservative or Reform. The low levels of generational inheritance of Orthodox identification (only 14 percent of the parents who are Orthodox have children who are Orthodox) imply major declines over time in this traditional category. In contrast, there is a much higher level of generational inheritance among Reform and Conservative Jews. Fully 70 percent of the parents who are Reform have children who are Reform, and 46 percent of the Conservative parents have children who identify as Conservative Jews. The outflow generationally is therefore clearly away from Orthodoxy; most of the Orthodox (and most of the Conservative) Jews have shifted to Conservative identification. There is the same outflow to nondenominational identification from Conservative and Reform parents: about one-fourth of Conservative and Reform parents have children who do not identify with one of the three religious denominations within Judaism.

Thus, the Orthodox have shifted generationally much more to Conservative than to Reform, and few have become nondenominational. The children of Conservative Jews who are not also Conservative tend to be equally divided between Reform and nondenominational. In contrast, Reform parents are more likely to have children who are nondenominational than children who are Conservative or Orthodox and are most likely to have children who identify themselves as Reform Jews.

In general, these patterns characterize males and females. Denominational continuity is weaker among males than females: the proportion of women who are two-generational Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform is higher in each case than that of men. Similarly, the number who shift generationally from one of the three denominations to nondenominational is higher among males than females. For example, about 20 percent of Conservative and Reform parents had daughters who do not identify denominationally; about 30 percent had sons who did not identify denominationally.

More important, there is a much higher level of generational continuity in denominational identification among the youngest cohort. Most young Conservative Jews identify their parents as Conservative Jews (86 percent); most young Reform Jews have parents whom they identify as Reform Jews (71 percent). Those

who do not identify denominationally are about equally from Conservative and Reform families. One implication of this generational continuity parallels our argument about education, occupation, fertility, and family processes: there is a growing homogeneity among younger Jews, which forges bonds of continuity and interaction between generations and among age peers. The data for younger cohorts suggest little generational conflict in religious identification. Even the backgrounds of those who are nondenominational (i.e., equally from Conservative and Reform families) do not split them away from their age peers who have similar religious backgrounds.*

These patterns of generational continuity are characteristic of the youngest cohorts and are relatively new. In the past, generational differences in denominational identification were much greater. For example, only 20 percent of Conservative Jews 60 years of age and older identified their parents as Conservative Jews; this proportion increases to 32 percent among those age 40–59, 56 percent among those age 30–39, and 86 percent among the youngest cohort. There is a similar pattern among Reform Jews: from 21 percent among those 40–59 years of age to 71 percent among the youngest cohort.

An examination of the changing denominational roots of nondenominational Jews reveals an increasing equal distribution between Conservative and Reform parents. In the older generation, almost all of those who are nondenominational identified their parents as Orthodox. For the next age group (40–59), there was a greater balance toward Orthodox and Conservative parental roots. Comparing the two youngest cohorts reveals clearly the shift toward a more equal division between Conservative and Reform parents away from mostly Conservative parents.

Most of those who are Orthodox identify their parents as Orthodox. Data on the Orthodoxy of the younger generation are not complete because of the small number included. Generational continuity among those who are currently Orthodox is significant precisely because of the major shifts generationally away from Orthodoxy. While there have been major outflows from Orthodox to non-Orthodox denominations, those who are currently Orthodox are almost exclusively from Orthodox families. There is no evidence from these data of inflows to Orthodoxy from the non-Orthodox.

The critical variable in the continuity of denominational identification between generations is age. That is expected, given the age variation we noted earlier in the cross-section and the patterns of denominational changes in the aggregate from Orthodox to Conservative and Reform. The patterns are striking: of those who are currently 60 years of age and over, three-fourths describe their parents as Orthodox, 15 percent as Conservative, and 9 percent as Reform. These attributed denominations decline among the younger cohorts: 56 percent of those age 40–59 identified their parents as Orthodox, compared to 26 percent among those 30–39 years of age and less than 4 percent among those age 18–29. Concomitantly, the proportion Conservative

*It should be noted that the level of Jewish education is high in the Jewish community of Boston and has remained high in both the 1965 and 1975 studies. Indeed, most Jews receive some Jewish education, and there has been a slight increase among young adults (cf. Fowler 1977). This pattern should also be viewed in the context of generational continuities.

and Reform increases monotonically with age: from 15 percent to 50 percent Conservative parents among those age 60 and over to the youngest cohort; from 9 percent to 47 percent Reform parents for the same age comparisons.

Denominational changes between generations do not vary systematically by education. The general transformation of religious identification is not specific to an educational level. Nor are the recruitment or inheritance patterns more pronounced among the more- or less-educated. As socio-economic patterns have been transformed, so has denominational identification between generations.

In an attempt to capture in summary form the details of these patterns, we calculated the proportions who had the same religious denomination as the one they attributed to their parents, i.e., two-generational Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. We subdivided the remainder into those who generationally moved "up" (from nondenominational, Reform or Conservative to Orthodox, from nondenominational or Reform to Conservative, and from nondenominational to Reform) and those who moved "down" (from Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform to none, from Orthodox or Conservative to Reform, from Conservative to Reform). We do not want to convey any judgment in this classification except a direction away from, or toward, traditional Jewish religious identification. (We use *traditional* in its social-normative, not Halachic, sense.)

There is a built-in bias, however, in that so few are reported by their children as nondenominational in the parental generation, and therefore, those who are currently nondenominational must be placed in the "down" category. In this way, each generation feels it moves "down" by comparing its reality with remembered ideals. Nevertheless, this situation is at least in part a reflection of reality and cannot be totally dismissed.

Overall, the data show that 40 percent of the adult Jews have the same denominational identification as their parents (Table 3). Almost none moved "up" religiously, and 59 percent moved away generationally from more traditional religious identification. (When the nondenominational are eliminated, there is a 50 percent continuity level between generations.) The age patterns are most revealing. Over time, there has been a substantial *increase* in the extent of generational continuity in denominational affiliation. Three-fourths of those age 40–59 had a different denominational identification from that of their parents, and almost all moved away from tradition. Among the youngest cohort, the number who identify with the same denomination as their parents exceeds 50 percent; excluding those who are not yet identified, the proportion generationally similar of the three denominations among the young is 77 percent. Hence, at the same time that there are clear indications of secularization away from religious tradition, there are powerful signs of increasing generational continuity. There are also some indications, although slight, of an increase in the proportion who have moved "up," from less than 1 percent among the oldest cohort to over 2 percent among the young. The change from a pattern of 75 percent downward mobility away from religious traditional identification among the older generation to 77 percent of the younger generation who have the same religious denomination as their parents (if they identify denominationally) is nothing less than a radical transformation. We

TABLE 3. Generational Denominational Identification: Summary Patterns

	PERCENT SAME	PERCENT "UP"	PERCENT "DOWN"	TOTAL PERCENT	N
TOTAL	40.0	1.5	58.5	100	1,818
<i>Sex</i>					
Male	36.2	0.7	63.1	100	840
Female	43.4	2.0	54.6	100	978
<i>Age</i>					
18-29	52.7	2.2	45.1	100	624
30-39	44.6	1.4	54.0	100	291
40-59	25.3	1.0	73.7	100	509
60+	35.1	0.8	64.9	100	366
<i>Income</i>					
\$10,000	47.8	3.2	49.0	100	474
10-20,000	45.7	0.3	54.0	100	368
20-35,000	45.0	1.3	53.7	100	315
35,000+	26.9	0.4	72.7	100	270
<i>Education</i>					
High school	32.3	0.4	67.3	100	477
Some college	37.8	1.8	60.4	100	338
College graduate	43.1	2.9	54.0	100	511
Postgraduate	46.3	0.6	53.1	100	483

postulate that this increasing level of generational continuity in religious denominational identification has become an additional source of Jewish cohesion. It is reinforced by other forms of generational continuity, including socioeconomic status and family patterns. Taken together, these social processes are powerful sources of American Jewish continuity in the 1980s.

We note in addition that stability generationally is somewhat higher for women than for men, as is the proportion who move "up." Of greater importance is the higher proportions generationally similar among the more educated. The positive relationship between generational denominational continuity and educational attainment partly reflects age patterns but operates even within age groups. This pattern supports the general findings that generational continuity is high among the younger cohorts and the most educated. These are the future of the American Jewish community.

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF JEWISH COHESION

Religiosity is only one of the ways in which Jews express their Jewishness. In the past, Judaism and Jewishness were intertwined, so that any change in religious expression represented a threat to Jewish continuity. That is no longer the case

TABLE 4. Selected Measures of Jewishness by Age (Percent)

	TOTAL	18-29	30-39	40-59	60+
<i>Jewish Values</i>					
Low	21.6	30.5	26.0	17.3	7.3
High	58.6	45.9	48.9	63.9	74.7
<i>Family Observances</i>	71.2	68.2	64.2	75.6	75.8
<i>Ethnic-Community Associations</i>					
None	42.0	53.0	38.9	39.6	27.7
Many	30.2	21.3	27.1	31.6	46.3
<i>Proportion Jewish Friends</i>					
Most	49.7	32.4	46.7	62.8	68.9
Few or none	14.8	24.5	13.6	3.7	12.1

among contemporary Jewish communities. Our focus here is on tapping the Boston study for clues about some of these alternative sources of Jewish cohesion which are not religious forms in the narrow sense. We shall focus on Jewish values, family observances, ethnic-community associations, and Jewish friends. These measures of cohesion indicate contexts of interaction, sources of particularistic values, and anchors of ethnic identity. As such, they complement the religious dimension of Jewish cohesion.

A series of questions was included about Jewish values and the meaning of being Jewish. A statistical analysis selected four elements that combined to yield one overall factor. These included the following values: (1) It is important for every Jewish child to be given a serious continuing Jewish education; (2) It is important to observe traditional Jewish religious practices; (3) I feel proud of being a Jew when I hear or read about accomplishments of Jews; (4) The existence of Israel is essential for the continuation of American Jewish life.

A high proportion of Jews expressed most of these values (Table 4). About 60 percent agreed with at least three out of four of these items. The critical issue is, of course, some indication of change. The age data show some increase in the proportion scoring low and a decrease in the proportion scoring high. Still, 70 percent of those age 18-29 had medium to high scores on this scale.

An equally impressive level of Jewishness emerges from an examination of the celebration of Jewish holidays with family.* Over 70 percent of the adult Jewish community participate in religious holiday celebrations with family. There is some indication of decline, from 76 percent among the two oldest cohorts to about 65 percent among the youngest cohort. Nevertheless, the overwhelming impression is that most adult Jews, young and old, connect up with other family members for

*This index combines two questions which were isolated in a factor analysis as a single dimension of family observances: (1) taking part in a Passover Seder; (2) getting together with relatives to celebrate any Jewish holidays in the past year.

Jewish-family-related celebrations. In turn, these celebrations have become major sources of group cohesion and anchors of Jewish continuity.

A third set of items which also emerged out of a factor analysis relates to ethnic-community issues. These included: (1) attending lectures or classes of Jewish interest; (2) visiting Israel; and (3) reading newspapers or magazines of Jewish content. Again the pattern is similar: some indications of decline in identifying Jewishly through Israel and direct involvement with the community, but nevertheless an impressive level of some type of community identification.

A final item is the extent to which Jews interact with Jews and non-Jews. The question was: "About how many of your friends are Jewish—all, most, about half, or are most of your friends not Jewish?" Fully 85 percent of the respondents said that at least half of their friends were Jewish, and 50 percent said that most or all of their friends were Jewish. There is a decline in the proportions who say most of their friends are Jewish, and an increase in the proportion with few or no Jewish friends, with decreasing age. Nevertheless, three-fourths of those age 18–29 and 85 percent of those age 30–39 indicated that at least half of their friends were Jewish. (See Figure 1, where these patterns are compared to the changing observance of Jewish ritual.) For the older age cohorts, there is a more exclusive pattern of ethnic friendship, where about two thirds had mostly Jewish friends. The pattern among the younger cohorts seems to be a greater balance between Jewish and non-Jewish friends. It is inconsistent to argue on the basis of this evidence that younger Jews do not have important networks of friendship which tie them to other Jews. These networks may be less linked to the organized Jewish community, to formal Jewish organization, or to religious institutions. However, they are tied to new forms of Jewish continuity, and have important relationships to economic, residential, lifestyle, and related values.

How are these ethnic-community aspects of Jewishness related to education? The expression of traditional Jewish values is clearly linked inversely to education—the higher the education, the lower the proportion expressing Jewish values (Table 1). These patterns characterize the youngest cohort but reverse among those age 30–39. In that cohort, only 22 percent of the most educated express low Jewish values, compared to 36 percent among the college-educated. For family ritual observance and ethnic-community associations, the patterns by education either are unclear or show that the most educated have the greater links to Jewishness. For example, the more educated rank higher on the community-ethnic dimension than the less educated, and these findings are accentuated within age controls. Detailed data not shown reveal that over three-fourths of the most educated ranked medium to high on this dimension, compared to 40 percent of the college-educated.

A similar pattern may be observed with the proportion with mostly non-Jewish friends. Those with postgraduate educations have the *lowest* proportion who said most of their friends are not Jewish. These patterns are even clearer by age. While one-fourth to one-fifth of the college-educated age 18–29 had mostly non-Jewish friends, only 13 percent of the postgraduates had mostly non-Jewish friends. Similarly, for the 30–39 cohort, 38 percent of those with some college

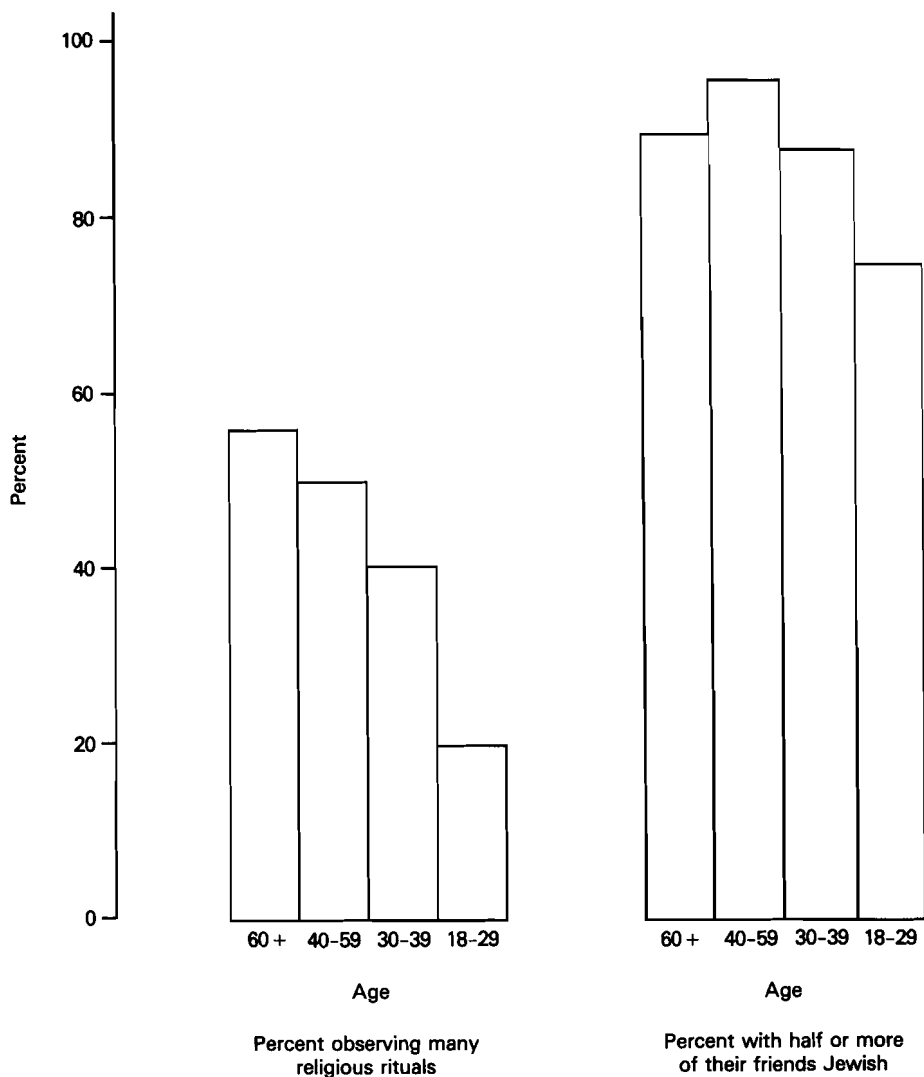


FIGURE 1. A comparison between religious rituals and Jewish friends by age.

education had mostly non-Jewish friends, compared to 11 percent of the college graduates and less than five percent of the postgraduates.

These ethnic-associational patterns by education are consistent with the earlier data on religiosity. Educational attainment is not the source of Jewish secularization, nor does it lead to alienation and disaffection from the community. The data support the argument that new Jewish networks have emerged which are based less on traditional modes of behavior and institutional associations. They are based on lifestyle and jobs, education, residence, and family; they are reinforced

by religious observances which have become family-community-based. While religion has lost its centrality and dominance in the modern, secular American community, it continues to play a supportive role in linking educational, family, economic, and lifestyle issues to broader communal, ethnic (Israel), and Jewish continuity issues.

JEWISH CONTINUITY OF THE NONDENOMINATIONAL

The nondenominational represent about 25 percent of the adult Jewish population and are more concentrated among the younger age cohorts. Are they "lost" to the Jewish community? Does religious nondenominationalism imply the absence of alternative ways of expressing Jewishness?

The evidence suggests that significant segments of the religiously nonaffiliated are linked to Jewishness in a variety of ways. The overwhelming majority of the nondenominational are not synagogue members, and those that are belong to Reform temples. The proportions who are members and who attend religious services are significantly lower among those who do not identify themselves with a religious denomination than among those who are denominationally identified. Nevertheless, almost half of those who are nondenominational attend religious services sometime during the year. Those who do not identify denominationally also are less likely to express traditional Jewish values and will observe fewer religious rituals. Nevertheless, again, fully three-fourths of the nondenominational participate in religious family celebrations, and half are involved with some ethnic-community activities. Only 25 percent of the nondenominational have mostly non-Jewish friends—a slightly higher proportion than among Reform Jews. This tendency is more characteristic of younger Jews age 18–29, where one-third have mostly non-Jewish friends. Nevertheless, for the cohort age 30–39, the percentage of nondenominational drops off very rapidly, and the proportion of those who have mostly non-Jewish friends is lower than among Reform Jews of that age cohort.

In short, the patterns are relatively clear and consistent: most Jews have a wide range of ties to Jewishness. The overwhelming majority have some connections to Judaism and religious institutions. Those whose religious links are weakest have alternative ties to Jewish friends, family, and communal-ethnic activities. While the young tend to have weaker links to religious and social dimensions of Jewishness, they exhibit strong family ties, friendship patterns, and ethnic-Jewish attachments. It is of significance that these ties are not only generationally but life-cycle related. That suggests that the Jewishness of the young is not an ascribed characteristic, nor is it constant over time. They will change as marriages occur and families are formed, as new households are established and new communities are settled, and will continue to change as new educational, occupational, and residential networks emerge.

RELIGION AND ETHNIC FACTORS

Religion and ethnic factors are particularistic features of the Jewish community. They are the defining quality of American Jewish life and the source of communal consensus. The secularization of Judaism and Jews has long been observed in America. The critical issue, however, is whether alternative sources of group cohesion have emerged as religious centrality has declined. Religious and ethnic forms of Jewishness have changed in America. Interpreting these changes and understanding their link to the future of the American Jewish community are a key analytic concern.

The data document the changing manifestation of religious forms of cohesion. They also clearly indicate how forms of religious and ethnic cohesion provide a wide range of options for Jews at different points in the life cycle. For some, religion in its Americanized form is of central importance in their Jewishness; for most Jews, social, communal, ethnic, and religious dimensions of Jewishness are combined. It is most problematic to specify and measure the "quality" of Jewish life, since there is no theoretical or empirical consensus about it. Nevertheless, it is clear that the decline in religiosity per se must be viewed in the context of the emergence of these alternative forms of Jewishness. Secularization in the religious sense is not necessarily equal to the decline of the Jewish community, to its assimilation or demise. By treating Jews as members of a community in the broad sense, we recognize religion as one dimension of the total array of factors, but not as equivalent to the whole.

Despite the evidence of secularization, there remains a strong sense of religious identification among Jews. Fully three-fourths of Boston Jewry define themselves denominationally, attend synagogue sometimes during the year, and observe some personal religious rituals. This high level of religious identification is not matched by formal membership in religious institutions. Hence, membership per se is not an adequate indicator of religious identification. Life-cycle- and family-related factors determine membership patterns. Nonmembership does not seem to imply the lack of commitment to Jewish continuity.

These patterns characterize the younger as well as the older generations, men and women, and appear to be a pervasive feature throughout the Jewish community. In particular, there are no clear relationships between educational level and religiosity or between other social class indicators and Jewishness. Hence, neither the attainment of high levels of education nor upward mobility can be viewed as a "threat" to Jewish continuity.

For recent generations, there are high levels of religious denominational continuity, albeit in less traditional and usually less intense forms. Similarities in affiliation across generations forge bonds of interaction and reduce conflict over religious issues. Even those not affiliated denominationally are similar in background to the denominational, thereby not splitting them from their age peers. The increasing generational homogeneity in religious denominational affiliation, in

which three-fourths of the younger generation have the same denominational affiliation as their parents, while three-fourths of the older generation were "downwardly" religiously mobile, is an additional source of cohesion in the community.

This generational continuity in religious denominational affiliation parallels the continuity in social class and family life. Over and above the effects of religious affiliation on Jewish continuity, generational continuity per se has become an additional basis of Jewish cohesion. This socioeconomic, family, and religious continuity implies high levels of consensus between generations in lifestyle, interests, kin networks, economic linkages, values, and norms. It also implies fewer sources of generational conflict. Again, we argue that the more the bases of cohesion, the stronger the community and the firmer the anchors for continuity. This continuity takes on particular significance, since it characterizes the young and most-educated, the future of the American Jewish community.

These indicators of religious continuity and the importance of religion as one distinguishing feature of Jewish communal life are reinforced by ethnic-communal forms of Jewish cohesion. Jewish networks have emerged which are based not on traditional modes of behavior but on lifestyle, jobs, residence, education, and family ties—cemented by religious observance and identification. The new forms of Jewishness are family- and community-based. While religion has lost its centrality and dominance in the Jewish world, it continues to play a supportive role in linking educational, family, economic, and lifestyle issues to broader communal issues.

Among those who are religiously anchored and who share family, social-class, and residential ties with other Jews, the issues of continuity are not problematic. In this context, the question of the future of the nondenominational, those not affiliated or identified religiously, has been raised. Most of the conclusions in previous research about the nondenominational have been inferential: if Jews do not identify religiously, they are lost to the community. Nondenominationalism is an indicator of (or a first step toward) total assimilation.

The evidence does not confirm this inference. The causal connections between nondenominationalism and other social processes are difficult to establish. In particular, nondenominationalism is linked to life cycle changes. Hence, higher rates among the young do not necessarily imply generational decline, but life cycle effects which will change as the young marry and have children. Most important, there is no systematic relationship between nondenominationalism and the variety of communal and ethnic ties characteristic of the Jewish community.

The incomplete and limited data which we have analyzed together with the body of previous cumulative research lead to the overall conclusion that there is much greater cohesiveness in the Jewish community than is often portrayed. It is consistent with the data (although beyond its power to confirm fully) that the Jewish community is characterized by multiple bases of cohesion. On both quantitative and qualitative grounds, the American Jewish community of the late twentieth century has a variety of sources of continuity. The changes and transformations over the last several decades have resulted in greater ties and networks among Jews. These connect Jews to each other in kinship relationships, jobs,

neighborhoods, lifestyles, and values. Change—whether referred to as assimilation or acculturation—has reinforced ethnic-communal identification. The modernization of American Jews has been so far a challenge, not a threat, to continuity.

The longer-range question is whether these social networks and the emerging constellation of family, ethnic, and religious ties will persist as bases of cohesion for the Jewish community in the twenty-first century. How much secularization and erosion of traditional religious practices can occur without having a major impact on the Jewishness of the younger generation? Are the new forms of Jewish ethnicity able to balance secularization? Will the “return” to Judaism or the development of creative expressions of Jewish religious fellowship become the new core of generational continuity? These questions emerge from our study, although they cannot be addressed with any data available.

Nevertheless, the response to modernization as threatening, as the road to total assimilation and the end of the Jewish people, is not consistent with the evidence. The Jewish community in America has changed; indeed has been transformed. But in that process, it has emerged as a dynamic source of networks and resources binding together family, friends, and neighbors, ethnically and religiously. As a community, Jews are surviving in America, even as some individuals enter and leave the community. Indeed, in every way the American Jewish community represents for Jews and other ethnic minorities a paradigm of continuity and change in modern pluralistic society.