New Jewish Identities

Edited by
Zvi Gitelman / Barry Kosmin / András Kovács

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Contemporary Europe and Beyond

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Zvi Gitelman, Barry Kosmin, András Kovács

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Introduction

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as Communist systems collapsed in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, it became possible for peoples and states to redefine themselves and their relationships to others. Whether they are "Soviet" or Ukrainian, or "Yugoslav" or Serbian, for example, was a choice many had to make as supranational states disintegrated. Even in ethnically homogeneous states such as Poland, identity issues arose, such as whether the country should align itself with Western Europe, how it should reinterpret its history, what the role of Catholicism should be in the post-Communist state. These were not theoretical exercises. They are having a profound impact on the domestic and foreign policies of more than twenty states and on the values, attitudes and behaviors of hundreds of millions of individuals. In the USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, the three federated socialist states, the choices made led to the dissolution of the states. Of course, political choices have been made that have propelled some states toward democracy and others in different directions.

As others re-evaluated their ethnic and religious commitments, Jews were compelled to do the same. An upsurge of nationalism, attempts by various religious groups to claim public roles, and a redrawing not only of state borders but of social and ethnic boundaries compelled Jews to rethink who and what they are. They have been deciding whether and how to redefine their national identities, what their relationship to the post-socialist states and to world Jewry should be, whether and how to reconstruct public Jewish life, and whether to stay or emigrate. For all peoples, the re-evaluation became a much more public affair than it could have been under the restrictions characteristic of Communist regimes. Moreover, the opening of hitherto closed societies in East Central Europe and the Balkans made it possible for outsiders to gain access to the private thinking of

the individuals living there. For the first time in many decades it became possible to discuss freely with Jews how they felt about their ethnicity and/or religion.

In Western Europe, too, Jews have been consciously and unconsciously reassessing their identities and allegiances. They have done so under the influence of demographic and sociological trends, developments in and around Israel, and, of course, in their own countries. To some extent they have probably been influenced by trends among American Jews. But as European integration proceeds, and the former Communist states, their societies and cultures draw closer to "Europe"—which is now as much a concept as it is a place—Jews in different parts of the continent have become more aware of each other and interact more.

These developments warrant an assessment of the status of Jewish identities, commitments and aspirations in Europe. This is the purpose of this volume. It is a comparative study of European Jewish identities. Further comparisons are made with the Jewishness and Judaism(s) of Israel and the United States. As political tensions grow between Israel and the United States, on one hand, and many European states, on the other, they cannot but influence how European Jews relate to their co-ethnics in the two largest Jewish concentrations in the world. When these essays were written, prospects for Jews in most parts of Europe seemed bright indeed. Several of the chapters describe Jewish cultural revival and new religious options, and reflect upon the transformations of Jewish identity in more tolerant and multicultural societies. Since 2001, however, anti-Semitism, thought to be a thing of the past in most of Western Europe and no longer state policy in Eastern Europe, has reared its head, sometimes under the guise of militant anti-Israeli activity. Tensions with the United States, home to the world's largest Jewish community and Israel's strongest supporter, have exacerbated some Europeans' feelings that Jews are a problematic element. Clearly, global and regional developments will continue to influence how Jews are regarded in Europe and how they see their own present and future.

This volume, however, focuses mostly on developments within the Jewish populations of Europe. The authors, most of whom base their chapters on recent empirical studies, examine the Jewish consciousness of European Jews and the meanings they impute to their Jewishness. This book, more than any other, brings together concrete

information about the attitudes, values and behaviors of contemporary European Jews. In general, the authors find a weakening of collective, communal claims on individual Jews and a concomitant trend toward individualism and making choices about which aspects of Jewish tradition to preserve in one's own life. There seems to be a decline in religious commitment, or at least to the practice of Judaism, though there are significant differences among the generations in this respect. Boundary issues—who is to be included in the Jewish collective and who not—have taken on greater salience with the increase in interethnic marriage. They are crucial also to the relationship between European Jews and those in Israel and North America.

These trends and issues obviously bear directly on the future of European Jewry. The Talmud warns that since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the gift of prophecy was given to fools and small children. None of the contributors falls into either category and none would dare say with certainty what European Jewry will be like twenty years from now. But they have provided the most comprehensive empirically based portrait of a European Jewry that now includes populations once thought beyond the pale of world Jewry, one which is increasingly defining itself independently of Israeli and American Jewry, but will continue to stand under the same umbrella labeled "Jews."

CHAPTER 1

Social Identity in British and South African Jewry

Jacqueline Goldberg

INTRODUCTION

Since the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe over a decade ago, the emerging democracies have faced numerous economic, political, and social challenges; so too have the Jewish communities within them. The balance of security and freedom is changing in these countries and within their Jewish communities as well. In some of the formerly Communist countries there has been some confrontation with the past, as in Poland's Institute of National Memory, whereas in others there has not. In South Africa the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission following the fall of apartheid in 1994 marked a determination to investigate the recent past. Along with analysis of the recent pasts of within post-Communist societies have come interpretations from the West. Jewish life in the Communist era has not been as extensively researched from within as has the Communist period generally. The present volume attempts to redress the balance by presenting research and analysis that originates from within Central and Eastern Europe, while at the same time putting it in an international comparative framework. It is the latter that forms the focus of this chapter. I approach theoretical issues of Jewish identity from social and developmental psychological perspectives. I then examine these questions empirically, presenting research perspectives from the United Kingdom and South Africa on the formation of Jewish identity or identities, paying particular attention to social identity and how it relates to attitudes and behaviors in these societies with very different social and political pasts.

IDENTITY AND SELF-CONCEPT

Identity as a construct has been conceived of as global in its development and effects; as an overarching, relatively stable concept. Stuart

Hall, for example, argues that individuals have an inner core from birth that remains essentially the same if not continuous throughout the person's life.[1] This essential core of the self is the person's identity. This somewhat simplistic conceptualization of identity fails to account for any potential transactional relationships with the environment. As Andrew Sparkes argues: "In contrast, reflecting the growing complexity of the modern world…the concept of the sociological self acknowledges that the inner core of the subject [the identity]…is formed in the interaction between the self and the society."[2] It is also possible to conceive of how "identities can change or disappear, or come into being, as quickly as any kind of sign. As this happens, as people come to signify different things, the self changes."[3] Hence, it seems that the self, with its connected identities—whether innate or socially constructed by way of a reflexive process—is an ongoing accomplishment rather than something that is given once and for all.

Let us consider the applications of the concepts of identity and self-concept in the context of feeling Jewish. What would be the purpose of defining and delineating the concept of Jewish identity on an individual or group basis, or on a national or pan-European basis in the post-Communist era? I would argue that in order to progress to the national and global, we must first begin with the specific and individual; the whole (i.e. identity) in relation to the sum of its parts. There is therefore an intrinsic value in beginning by examining the structure and nature of a Jewish self-concept in relation to observable practice, belief and identification.

In theory, we tend to act as our conception of self dictates.[4] Self-concept may be broadly defined as a person's perception of him- or herself. Literature on the self has progressed conceptually over time. Research in the 1960s argued for a unidimensional construct which was best assessed by combining an individual's self-evaluations across a range of items which were given equal weightings towards a total score reflecting a global sense of self. More recently, multidimensional perspectives have been proposed, with the realization that there are important evaluative distinctions between different domains of an individual's life.[5] Harter refers explicitly to the work of William James, to whom the origins of one's overall sense of self-esteem lay in how one weighted one's competencies, with different values placed on success within the different domains of life.[6]

The hierarchical, multidimensional approach recognizes both the transactional and the individual nature of self-concept. Its flexibility can therefore incorporate the importance that different individuals place on the different domains at different points across the lifespan. While it is important to appreciate this multidimensional view of self-concept when considering an individual's Jewish attitudes, beliefs, and practices, environmental factors must be taken into consideration as well. The individual's perception of the self should therefore be viewed in terms of the physical, social, and psychological environment; in other words, an ecological perspective should be adopted. Uri Bronfenbrenner conceived of the environment as extending beyond the behavior of the individual within the environment to the dynamic transactional processes between the individual and his or her environment over time.[7] Since the fall of Communism in Eastern and Central Europe, and of the apartheid regime in South Africa, radical social, economic, and political changes have occurred and are ongoing. Furthermore, these changes are occurring at both macro and micro levels, and it would not be unreasonable to assume that this is having a significant impact upon identity and Jewish identities.

When considering Jewish identification it is important to bear in mind that there are a number of key life events, contexts, and situations throughout the lifespan, such as bar/bat mitzvah, marriage, and having children, which impact upon and are impacted by Jewish identity; this is a dynamic, transactional process. A lifespan perspective is necessary because "Homo Sapiens is a social animal and because social development occurs in relation to a person's interactions and transactions with his or her social environment."[8] Thus, self-concept, and even identity, are not fixed constructs, but are likely to evolve over time and across different life experiences, both shaping and being shaped by the social environment. In considering the contexts within which individuals might identify themselves as Jews, it makes intuitive sense that the more domains in which an individual is primed to identify himself as Jewish, the more generalized and therefore robust the identification. Domains within which individuals could choose to identify and perceive themselves as Jewish might include home life, career and working hours, schooling choices for children, how they spend their weekends, leisure choices, volunteering, parenting, and so on. The salience of an individual's Jewishness may vary from domain to

domain and event to event and be mediated across different life events throughout the lifespan. Therefore, discontinuities and continuities in Jewish identity are to be expected throughout the lifespan.

FROM IDENTITY TO SOCIAL IDENTITY

Jewish identity and identification can be seen as a dynamic, transactional relationship between the individual and the social environment over time. Social relationships form a vital part of people's lives throughout their lifespan. In fact, "infants are social beings from a very early stage of development; the propensity to be social is part of the human biological heritage and is not learned as such."[9] Judaism as both a religion and a culture revolves around the proximity of other Jews; a social group with which to express Jewishness and practice Judaism. Social identity theory's central tenet holds that membership in groups and categories constitutes an important element of the self-concept.[10]

What constitutes a group depends on the process of identification and not on any other single factor. Emerson's definition of "nation," for example, is "that it is a body of people who feel that they are a nation."[11] In the UK and South Africa, Jews have the freedom to choose any particular domain in which to identify themselves as Jewish—or not. And in a European context individuals may choose to identify themselves as a national, a European, or a European Jew depending on the context. Alternative self-concepts can exist within one individual harmoniously because each gives compatible solutions to different needs.

Individual learning and experience are insufficient to account for many of the schemata, or meanings, that we associate with particular attributes. In this context, for example, what does being "Jewish" mean? Many of our schemata are acquired from others and are then shared with yet other people. In other words, they depend on communication, and this requires systems of meanings and symbols that are held in common by the members of a community or culture. These ideas lie behind the concept of social representations; beliefs that are not only commonly held but are socially constructed and shared by members of a group. Social representations constitute a context and delimit the boundaries for identity construction, with different social identities serving different functions and motivational needs.[12]

What makes identifying as Jewish particularly interesting is that

there are a number of different and often conflicting social representations of Jewishness. Being Jewish certainly has different meanings attached to it both within and between individuals over time, and with corresponding ranges of attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. The tendency for attitudinal studies to omit issues surrounding social identity is surprising since attitudes have been portrayed as serving, amongst other needs, the need for identity.[13]

FRIENDSHIPS AND GROUPS

As mentioned above, individuals acquire, develop, and then share their systems of meanings and symbols largely from and within their social environment, through their relationships with others. But what of the behaviors and attitudes of groups, and the actions of individuals as members of a group? Experimental social psychology is peppered with studies showing that even in minimal difference situations, i.e., situations in which group membership is randomly assigned, belonging to a group influences behavior. Such groups might be formed as arbitrarily as the experimental situations dictate—for example by splitting people into groups on the basis of whether they prefer the paintings of Klee or Kandinsky, or—in a real-life setting—by looking at those who support opposing football teams.

This chapter considers the possible mediating effects of belonging to different Jewish social network groups on behaviors and attitudes. The salience of identification with the group will not, however, be consistent across all situations. Social situations can be seen to lie on a continuum from highly interpersonal to highly inter-group.[14] Towards the interpersonal extreme, individuals may be seen to relate to one another purely as individuals, with no regard to their group membership; such a situation may be rare. At the other end of the spectrum, in inter-group situations, individual attributes lose relevance, and the interaction is on the basis of group membership.

Taking a social identity approach to strictly Orthodox Jewish (e.g. Hasidic) ways of life, for example, it is clear that group membership is very explicitly delineated in ways that impact upon and propagate these life-styles. Group membership is tightly bounded, strongly reinforced, and generalized to be salient for the in-group and marked for the out-group in a wide range of situations that are both personal and interpersonal in nature. Compared with other Jewish denominations

or ways of life, the adoption or rejection of strictly Orthodox group membership is complex and not easily achieved. Once individuals interact as members of groups, they will tend to make comparisons favoring the in-group in order to attain "positive distinctiveness" from other relevant groups and to maintain a positive self-esteem. When group categories are salient, individuals accentuate similarities between themselves and fellow in-group members, and exaggerate differences between the in-group and out-groups.[15] Individuals also make social comparisons that favor the in-group when group identities are salient and when they identify with the in-group as they strive to maintain positive views of their group.[16] From the perspective of Jewish identification, the stronger the salience, the more the individual is predisposed to favor and to commit to the in-group, and to desire more for their in-group. Thus, the more invested individuals are in their identification, the stronger their beliefs about the nature of their group and how it compares to the out-group. The in-group may be British Jews, with other British nationals being perceived as the out-group. However, there are many narrower perspectives, with a particular subsection of the British Jewish population—such as Jews who are part of a tightly knit Jewish social group—perceived as the in-group, in contrast to those who spend most of their time with non-Jews.

The processes of identification with the various denominations of Judaism can differ in a number of ways. One key difference is how *Halachah* (Jewish law) could exclude the membership of an individual in an Orthodox denomination such as the United Synagogue, yet not be an issue if the same person wished to join the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues in the UK. Thus, even if an individual chooses to identify as an Orthodox Jew, if *Halachic* criteria are not satisfied, he will be unable to join particular synagogue movements, get married under Orthodox auspices, or send his children to certain Jewish schools. Moreover, satisfying such criteria is not enough in itself to signify group membership to the Orthodox in-groups. Crossing the boundaries from out-group to in-group requires a degree of immersion within the group and participation in the observable *mitzvot*—the rules of Orthodox Jewish life.

This having been said, there are consistencies and remarkable inconsistencies co-existing under the umbrella of Jewish identity. For example, surveys in the UK, South Africa, and particularly Sweden have shown that there are very small numbers of respondents who, on

the one hand, define themselves as "non-practicing Jewish" (i.e. secular) yet, on the other hand, visit a synagogue regularly. Higher proportions of these "secular" Jews also light candles every Friday night. Hence Stephen Miller, in his chapter, calls the secular "a moveable feast." At least for some, then, identity is not necessarily congruent with practice and the observance of traditions.

The thesis of this chapter is that for the pragmatic purpose of strengthening Jewish identity and identification, a social network approach may prove to be more useful than one based on religious involvement or education alone. The parameters of this grouping typology will be mapped according to religiosity, Jewish practices, beliefs, and attitudes.

METHOD

This chapter utilizes findings from two national surveys conducted by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (London) to examine the interplay between national and Jewish identities, attitudes, and group affiliation: the 1995 national survey of the social and political attitudes of British Jews (n=2,180), and the 1998 national survey of South African Jews (n=1,000).[17] The survey in South Africa replicated the core Jewish attitudes and behavior questions from the British survey, which allows us to make direct cross-cultural comparisons. Both surveys covered a wide range of issues, with specific local foci in each country, and were completed by self-identifying Jews. The questionnaires also drew on other contemporary national surveys of Jewish populations as well as items from the British Social Attitudes Survey in order to enhance the comparative international context. However, there was a key methodological difference between the two surveys; namely, the administration of the questionnaires. The British survey used a self-completed postal questionnaire (taking approximately 45 minutes to complete) while in South Africa the survey was conducted face-to-face (with an average interview length of forty to sixty minutes).

SAMPLING FOR THE 1995 SURVEY OF BRITISH JEWS AND THE 1998 SURVEY OF SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS

A self-completion postal survey was carried out among British Jewish adults between July and October 1995 with a response rate of approx-

imately 60 percent, yielding 2,180 responses. This represented the largest and most representative sample of the British Jewish community using methods designed to generate a random sample of self-identifying Jews, covering the complete spectrum from those who are actively involved in Jewish communal organizations to those who have no functional link with other Jews or Judaism other than that they identify themselves, in some sense, as Jews.[18] Sampling for the South African survey was carried out in conjunction with the Kaplan Center at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Fieldwork was carried out by a national market research company between June and October 1998. For a survey of this nature, evening interviewing is essential and as many interviewers in Johannesburg were reluctant to work at night due to personal safety concerns, data collection took longer to complete than originally anticipated. Sampling in Cape Town, Pretoria, and Durban was carried out using communal lists, ensuring proportional representation of all suburbs within each city. In Johannesburg, where an estimated 65 percent of the Jewish population lives, the 1991 census data were used in conjunction with the current suburb proportion estimates of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies to structure the sample. In total, 1,000 individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with Jewish males and females aged eighteen years and older.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Respondents were asked about a range of issues related to Jewish identity, religious outlook, and behaviors in order to offer a more holistic approach to the concept. Religious outlook was the first area investigated. Respondents were asked to define themselves subjectively in response to the question: "In terms of Jewish religious practice, which of the following best describes your position?" Table 1.1 shows the responses to this question from both the British and South African respondents.

The distribution of the samples across the religious outlook categories is quite different, with the South African sample being much more skewed to the "right" than the sample of British Jews. South Africa has twice as many "Traditional" Jews but about half as many "Just Jewish" and Progressive Jews as the UK. On the other hand, the UK has four times as many secular Jews as South Africa. This can partly be attributed to the fact that 45 percent of the South African

Table 1.1 ***Religious Outlook Groups*** *(In percent)*

Religious outlook	UK			SA		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Non-practising (i.e. secular) Jew	23	31	17	6	7	4
Just Jewish	20	19	21	12	13	12
Reform/Progressive Jew	15	14	16	7	6	6
"Traditional" (not strictly Orthodox)	32	28	35	61	58	65
Strictly Orthodox (e.g. would not turn on a light on the *Shabbat*)	10	8	11	14	16	13

sample was drawn from communal lists, and it therefore includes a higher proportion of Jewishly identifying respondents. Comparing the male and female responses, we see that higher proportions of men are likely to identify themselves as secular than women. On the other hand, more women than men in both the British and South African samples are "Traditional" in their religious outlook.

However, we are not concerned with religiosity in and of itself, but rather in the relationship between religiosity and other factors. Responses to these questions were found to correlate strongly with the observance of core rituals such as lighting *Shabbat* candles, attending a Passover *seder* meal, refraining from driving on the *Shabbat* and celebrating Christmas. This religiosity scale is therefore an effective surrogate measure for religious observance.

THE SALIENCE OF BEING JEWISH

In addition to religiosity, respondents in both surveys were questioned about their personal sense of Jewishness, and how important being Jewish was to them; in other words, its global salience in their lives. It was explicitly stated that this question was not concerned with their levels of religious observance. Table 1.2 shows how the British and South African samples were distributed across this question.

It can be seen that a greater proportion of respondents in the South African sample feel extremely conscious of being Jewish than in the British sample. This is offset by the twice as large proportion of

Table 1.2 ***Comparison of UK and South African Jews' Consciousness of Being Jewish***

	UK percentage	SA percentage
Although I was born Jewish, I do not think of myself now as being Jewish in any way	2	0
I am aware of my Jewishness, but I do not think about it very often	18	9
I feel quite strongly Jewish, but I am equally conscious of other aspects of my life	44	42
I feel extremely conscious of being Jewish and it is very important to me	34	49
None of these	2	1

British Jews who are aware of their Jewishness, yet do not think about it often. When these figures are analyzed by gender, there is a remarkable congruency between male and female responses in the South African sample. In the UK, however, 38 percent of women feel extremely conscious of being Jewish as compared with only 28 percent of men, whereas men are more likely than women to respond that they are aware of being Jewish but that they do not think about it very often.

SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP NETWORK TYPOLOGY

In a report based on the 1995 survey of Anglo-Jewry entitled "The Social Attitudes of Unmarried Young Jews in Contemporary Britain," a subsample of 193 adults were selected for further analysis.[19] Earlier reports had used religious outlook as a typology, but in a relatively small sample, like this one, the numbers in each category would have been too small to allow for meaningful analysis. Therefore, another typology was developed based on the findings of qualitative research carried out on behalf of an organization called "Jewish Continuity" (now part of United Jewish Israel Appeal) in the UK—namely, that of social network groups. The subsample was divided into three "types" of Jewish adults: "close," "halfway," and "distant." In the "Jewish attitudes, practice, and belief" section of the survey, respondents were asked what proportion of their close friends were Jewish. "Close" was defined as those who replied that "all or nearly all" or "more than half"

of their close friends were Jewish. The "halfway" category included those who said that "about half" or "less than half" of their close friends were Jewish, while the "distant" category was comprised of those who replied that "none or very few" of their friends were Jewish.

THE COMPOSITION OF SOCIAL NETWORK GROUPS

The friendship network typology is replicated here on the British and South African datasets, but the larger sample sizes allow for the full five point scale to be utilized in order to test its validity. Table 1.3 shows a comparison of British and South African Jews according to their Jewish friendships, revealing a skewed pattern similar to that of the religious outlook of South African Jews discussed earlier.

Fifty-six percent of South African Jews stated that all or nearly all of their close friends were Jewish, as compared to 41 percent of British Jews. At the other end of the spectrum, 17 percent of British Jews have no or very few Jewish friends compared with only 2 percent of South Africans. It is apparent that although a high proportion of both samples are in the "closest" group, the distribution of the remaining respondents differs between countries. The South African friendship networks are more concentrated and the concomitant high level of social segregation is evident. In contrast, British Jews are more evenly distributed among the remaining four friendship network categories, having broader social circles. It is interesting that the comparative gender distributions between the samples are similar, with proportionately more women than men reporting closer Jewish networks overall. Within the South African sample, age was found to have no effect on

Table 1.3 ***Comparison of British and South African Jewish Friendship Networks*** *(In percent)*

Friendship groups	UK	SA
All or nearly all Jewish	41	56
More than half Jewish	17	23
About half Jewish	13	13
Less than half Jewish	12	6
None or very few Jewish	17	2
Total	100	100

the likelihood of being closer to or more distant from Jewish friends. However, there was a strong age divide within the British sample; those over the age of sixty were more likely than other age groups to have closer Jewish social circles.

The concept of Jewishness is multifaceted; it is not possible to encapsulate it with the answers to just one question. The questionnaires highlighted a range of issues concerning theological outlook, religious observance, social preferences, and the interplay between national and Jewish identities, and included items on the ingredients of a personal sense of Jewishness. These are now examined in the context of social network groups. However, a complex system of transactional and reciprocal relationships over time between these behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes undoubtedly exists. It is clear that the social and psychological determinants of identity and identification operate within a wider context.

Tables 1.4 and 1.5 show the interplay between Jewish friendship networks and religious outlook, first in the UK and then in South Africa.

The use of the social network typology is supported by the cross-tabulation of religious outlook with social network groups as shown in Tables 1.4 and 1.5. There were strongly significant linear relationships between the two factors ($p<0.0001$), with post hoc Scheffé analyses indicating significant differences between consecutive social network groups on the basis of religiosity in both the UK and South Africa. However, caution should be exercised in interpreting the South African findings, as the secular and Progressive columns in Table 1.5

Table 1.4 ***Cross-tabulation of Jewish Religious Outlook with Jewish Social Network Group in the UK*** *(In percent)*

Jewish friendship groups	Secular	Just Jewish	Progressive	Traditional	Strictly Orthodox
All or nearly all	7	24	33	65	88
More than half	9	18	24	19	10
About half	14	21	17	9	2
Less than half	23	17	17	4	0
None or very few	47	20	9	3	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 1.5 ***Cross-tabulation of Jewish Religious Outlook with Jewish Social Network Group in South Africa*** *(In percent)*

Jewish friendship groups	Secular	Just Jewish	Progressive	Traditional	Strictly Orthodox
All or nearly all	22	30	26	60	89
More than half	20	25	25	26	10
About half	29	26	26	10	1
Less than half	24	12	15	3	0
None or very few	5	7	8	1	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

represent the distribution of a small percentage of the sample across the five friendship categories. The patterns of friendship groups of traditional and strictly Orthodox groups are nevertheless very similar across both British and South African samples, with a skew towards having a predominantly Jewish social network, particularly among the Orthodox. The British secular respondents are predominantly outside of the Jewish community, with 47 percent saying that they have no or very few close Jewish friends. This has clear implications for access to the Jewish community and its services; having fewer Jewish friends, compounded with a lack of interest in participation, is likely to act as a barrier to increased involvement.

The questionnaire also directly addressed the issue of types of friendships. The questions were asked as follows: "And thinking now about Jews from different backgrounds, which of the following groups do you feel most at ease with?" Not surprisingly, the patterns of responses indicated that very few in the "distant" groups (less than half to no close friends who are Jewish) were most at ease spending time with strictly Orthodox Jews. Respondents in these groups felt more at ease with uninvolved, secular or Progressive Jews. At the other end of the spectrum, the "close" group (more than half to all their friends are Jewish) felt predominantly more comfortable with Traditional Jews, with smaller percentages naming strictly Orthodox Jews. Once again the South African community emerged as having much narrower social comfort zones than the British community. Almost 80 percent of the South African sample fall in the "close" group (i.e., more than half or nearly all of their close friends are Jewish), and three-quarters of

these "close" respondents felt most at ease with traditional or strictly Orthodox Jews. In fact only 4 percent of the entire South African sample felt most at ease with Progressive Jews, 5 percent with secular Jews and only 2 percent with uninvolved Jews. In comparison, the British respondents were more evenly spread across the spectrum with 13 percent feeling most at ease with Progressive Jews, 21 percent with those who are secular, and 12 percent with those uninvolved with Jewish life.

The surveys also highlighted several different aspects of Jewish life and asked how important they were to the respondents. Table 1.6 shows the percentages of "close" and "halfway" respondents who rated these issues as being very important to them, starting with the aspect of Jewish life that was most frequently rated as the most important.

What is interesting about these findings is that although the composition of the Jewish communities in the UK and South Africa differs in social network grouping proportions, with the South African sample being skewed towards the "close" end of the spectrum and the UK sample being much more evenly distributed, the makeup within these groups is remarkably similar. Table 1.6 shows that the relative importance of a range of aspects of Jewish life was rated as "very important" by similar percentages of the close group from each sample. More differences emerge, however, between the halfway groups in

Table 1.6 ***Comparison of "Close" and "Halfway" Respondents Placing the Highest Emphasis on Aspects of Jewish Life***

Aspects of Jewish life "very important" responses	UK Close 39% sample	UK Halfway 13% sample	SA Close 56% sample	SA Halfway 13% sample
Feeling Jewish "inside"	72	41	81	54
Loyalty to my Jewish heritage	64	34	79	56
A feeling of closeness to other Jews	65	22	70	29
Involvement in Jewish home life (food, customs)	66	17	65	33
Participation in Jewish religious life	42	11	49	14
A sense of attachment to Israel	40	18	45	22
Interest in Jewish culture and the arts	20	13	25	16

each sample, with the South African respondents rating items such as "loyalty to my Jewish heritage" and "involvement in Jewish home life" as significantly more important. Nevertheless, a clear global hierarchy of importance emerged. As would be expected, there is a strongly significant difference between the ratings of "close" and "halfway" respondents on these issues within the samples. This indicates that the social network group typology works in both the UK and South Africa but that its distribution differs.

The four aspects of Jewish life that emerged as being the most important to both samples overall were those concerned with ethnicity and belonging. Religious practice generally came lower down on the scale of importance as an ingredient of a personal sense of Jewishness. Of course, when religious practice is examined according to religiosity, over 95 percent of the strictly Orthodox from both samples rated it as very important to them. It is interesting to note that a sense of attachment to Israel has a lower relative importance to all respondents. A JPR report addressed this issue in the UK and found that the basis of attachment to Israel has shifted and can no longer be taken for granted.[20] It seems that there has been a pronounced shift from a period of community-wide consensus concerning attachment to Israel, which was probably as secular in character as it was religious, and which grew out of ideological and emotional impulses, to a more narrowly based attachment linked to religiosity on the one hand and to experience on the other. Religious outlook and group identity were the key explanatory variables for individuals' levels of attachment to Israel.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Jewish identity of an individual does not develop in a vacuum; it evolves over time in transactional relationships with the influences surrounding that individual. Such influences may come from parents, friends, school and other education, work, Jewish communities if they choose to belong to one, and even their children. Jewish identity is not static or fixed in time, but instead can be more usefully regarded as being in a constant state of flux; it is a process rather than a product.

Social identity theory offers a theoretical as well as a practical way of addressing Jewish identity, and it does this by looking at it in the context of group membership. A multitude of factors impact upon

the likelihood of an individual belonging to a particular friendship network. However, membership in one friendship network rather than another can predict, although not cause, much about ideology, religiosity, and social behaviors, and this typology acts as a strong surrogate for other Jewish identity and belief variables. Social network groupings can therefore be said to constitute a coherent typology. In his chapter in this volume, Stephen Miller highlights the three key elements of Jewish identity based on factor analyses of the 1995 British survey: practice (levels of ritual observance), belief (strength of religious belief), and ethnicity (strength of belonging). He notes that to a degree these three factors are independent of one another. However, while in Catholicism belief will largely predict practice, in Judaism it is ethnicity.

Future research can usefully be undertaken to further explore how Jewish identity is formed, what it consists of, and how it translates into behavior and identification with Jewish communities. One avenue that may prove fruitful is the transtheoretical model that conceives of behaviors, but perhaps also identities, as existing along a continuum of awareness and involvement.[21] This model incorporates both stages and processes of change, encompassing both a sense of directionality and a temporal dimension, and both stability and dynamism. In this context the stage of *precontemplation* might include individuals who are either uninterested in identifying as Jewish or who deny that it is important or relevant to them. This stage is the most stable. The *contemplators* then are those who are considering taking a more active interest in their Jewishness, but who have done nothing about it. Next come those in *preparation*; they may be finding out about evening classes or a Jewish social group. This stage is unstable and individuals could go either way along the continuum. Then there are those in the *action* phase. They have taken concrete steps to effect a change and may or may not be experiencing any benefits from them. The final stage is called *maintenance*. This would include those who have changed their life-styles or identification and have been doing so for an extended period of time.

This model is particularly useful in the context of encouraging change along the continuum of awareness, identification, or behavior. A greater understanding of both the stages and processes of change can inform Jewish outreach programs and service providers in designing the most effective means of reaching individuals at different stages

along a continuum from the uninvolved and the uninterested to the strongly identified and involved.

This chapter has examined Jewish identity from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Clearly, given the complexity of these issues, there is value in utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in studying Jewish identity. In addition to methodological triangulation, a multidisciplinary approach will also shed light rather than just heat on the area. Research is needed on how social identities exist and interact in different contexts, retaining salience in one domain but not another. The research presented here is cross-sectional in nature, but longitudinal research is really the key to unraveling the evolution of identity over the lifespan, including continuities and discontinuities over time.

NOTES

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    1. In high density areas (i.e., greater than 15 percent Jewish population), questionnaires were sent to every 30th house on the electoral register, irrespective of name. It was anticipated that a given proportion would reach Jewish households, thereby producing a random sample of Jews living in such areas.
    2. In low density areas (i.e. less than 15 percent), a random sample of addresses corresponding to distinctive Jewish names was taken from the electoral register to the degree of 1 in every 3.4 names. This produces a random sample of Jews, but only to the extent that individuals with such names are representative of Jews generally.
    3. A snowball sample was developed in low density areas to reach intermarried Jewish women who would not otherwise be reached by sampling method 2.
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CHAPTER 2

Religious Identity in the Social and Political Arena: An Examination of the Attitudes of Orthodox and Progressive Jews in the UK

Barry Kosmin

INTRODUCTION

Unlike other areas of the world including Israel and the United States, Europe in the 1990s, particularly the Western part constituting the European Union, witnessed a decline in the appeal, power, authority and salience of religion particularly in the public and political realms. Undoubtedly this was linked to the fall of Communism. There was no longer the need to hold to an alternative belief system. Secularism was no longer a step on the road to "Godless Communism."

Yet, worldwide there was an apparent renewal and reinvigoration of traditional observance in Jewish communities and a growing Orthodox triumphalism aimed at marginalizing and de-legitimizing non-*Halachic* forms of Judaism. This, in turn, is thought to have polarized Jewish communities between traditionalists and modernists. The purpose of this chapter is to test how far these processes affected British Jewry and how influential this supposedly revamped Jewish religious identity was in the "real world" of public opinion. Rather than concern ourselves with the superficial and fluid area of political party preferences, we shall investigate in-depth beliefs and attitudes to specific contemporary social and political issues.

Judaism is a minority religion in the United Kingdom that does not missionize. Rarely do rabbis or the synagogue movements see a need to issue public edicts advising the general public or politicians of their views on contemporary social and moral issues. Ordinarily they consider it their task to devote their efforts solely to the needs of their own flock. Certainly it is considered unwise and irrelevant to present a Jewish religious view in political debates such as the wisdom of closer ties in Europe. This policy was broken for a few years by former Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits who had strong ties to Con-

servative Party leader Prime Minister Thatcher. However, his active political stance was regarded as a mistake by most of the community since it was seen as encouraging an anti-Semitic response.

Groups of rabbis never assemble to debate issues such as social and economic crises or European unity. There are no annual assemblies passing resolutions. They tend to issue very infrequent statements in concert with other faiths and only then on topics where there is a clear national consensus. Therefore, their statements tend to be anodyne and uncontroversial. Judaism does of course have principles that can be interpreted as producing clear positions on contemporary cultural trends but they are seldom articulated beyond the synagogue sermon. For instance, only in June 1999 did Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks feel confident enough to publicly offer his views to the world when he launched a new publication from the Office of the Chief Rabbi entitled *Renewal* which began to record his involvement in the general community and his public pronouncements.

Another reason for the tendency to ignore current issues is the fact that the majority of British Jews are affiliated with Orthodox synagogues which hold to a traditional rabbinical viewpoint. These rabbis would posit the position that the attitude of Jews towards violence, adultery etc. is the same now as in 1902 or 902, since the Decalogue was given at Sinai for all times. Current fashions and trends are largely irrelevant to their teachings.

Yet, we have a very useful and fascinating body of information available to us on Jewish attitudes towards social and political issues. This is the 1995 Jewish Policy Research Institute's Survey of the Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews (see appendix and bibliography). It is a nationally representative survey of 2,200 adult Jews. Among the two hundred or so questions were a host of questions related to contemporary debates about social problems, social integration and European identity. This survey thus contains material on the operation of Judaic values in society.

In order to assemble data comparable with most of the other surveys in this volume, which rely for their samples on lists of community members, this paper reports the answers of respondents who were current synagogue members in 1995. The sample drawn from the 2,200 respondents thus consists of 976 members of Orthodox synagogues and 354 members of non-Orthodox synagogues—from the Reform, Liberal and Masorti movements. We shall group all three

under the rubric of "Progressive" Jews. The terminology largely suggests their current theological positions regarding the origin of the Hebrew Bible and the authority of traditional Jewish Law. Progressive Judaism, in my view, places more emphasis on the prophetic vision (Isaiah, Malachi etc.) and an ethical approach, whereas Orthodox Judaism holds more to the Five Books of Moses and the disciplines imposed by the Oral Law. These nuances in approach should influence these congregants' attitudes to the outside world and general society. Thus, the analysis in this report will set out what messages these Jewish congregants have imbibed from their rabbis and the texts as they relate to contemporary political issues and cultural trends. The analysis also allows us to see where there is consensus and dissensus on issues between and within the conservative and liberal Jewish religious camps in the UK.

At the outset we must admit that neither grouping is homogeneous in its composition. For instance, the Orthodox sub-sample contains a small minority of *Haredim*, or "ultra-Orthodox," alongside many nominally Orthodox congregants who are not necessarily Orthodox in their practice. Similarly, the Progressive sub-sample contains a range of religiosity from "orthopraxis" Masorti Jews to highly secularized persons. But as Jacqueline Goldberg has stated elsewhere in the previous chapter, social identity theory suggests that group membership and categories are important markers of identity. Members of synagogue groups are primed over time to see themselves as Orthodox or Progressive with the suggestion that these identities are salient in certain domains. Voluntary paid membership in a synagogue reinforced by attendance should in theory create a positive in-group identity and feelings, which in turn are reinforced by the existence of out-groups—either non-Jews or other types of religious Jews.

The 1995 JPR survey was an instrument based largely on questions used previously in the various annual British Social Attitudes Surveys carried out by Social and Community Planning research during the 1990s. This means that we are able to compare Jewish attitudes with British national opinions on many items and so place them in a wider perspective in order to see what's Orthodox, what's Progressive, what's Jewish and what's British, as the case may be. When carrying out this comparative exercise it must be borne in mind that age and class may account for group differences as much as religious beliefs. The Jews in both religious camps are an older population—70 percent

are aged over 45 years—and have a much higher socio-economic status—64 percent of the economically active are in managerial or professional occupations—than Britons in general. Moreover, the differences between the two groups of Jews are much narrower than their differences from the nation as a whole. Nevertheless, the purpose of this chapter is not to explain why there are differences and what are the causes of those differences, but to investigate for the first time the pattern of opinions and to highlight the existing features attached to religious identity among synagogue-affiliated British Jews.

Before looking at the attitudes of affiliated Jews to socio-cultural issues it is interesting to note their view of the future of religion in British society as a whole. Respondents were asked: "Thinking of the country as a whole, do you think that religion will become more important, less important, or equally important for people in the future?" There was a remarkable degree of agreement between the two Jewish synagogue camps with a clear majority (Orthodox 57%; Progressive 62%) thinking religion was declining in importance in Britain. Only 15 percent of Orthodox and 11 percent of Progressives saw religion growing in importance, with the remainder seeing no change. This finding is important for morale. Religious Jews are not just a small minority but they see believers and all religions having a diminishing influence in British society.

THE DEBATE ABOUT THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE 1990S

Unemployment

Judaism is very concerned with unemployment and idleness. The philosopher and rabbinic authority Maimonides suggested that one of the highest forms of charity was assisting a man to earn his living through loans or teaching him a trade. Most Jewish communities even today have a free loan society for this purpose. Historically Jews have been aware of the terrible societal dislocation caused by mass unemployment, such as the Great Depression of the 1930s. The rise of Fascism in Europe during the inter-war years with its devastating effects on Jews is now part of the collective Jewish memory.

In the early 1990s for the first time since the 1930s the main centers of Jewish population in the United Kingdom were hit by unemployment. Previously, unemployment had been a problem for the

industrial labor force in areas of declining heavy industry. But the economic recession of the 1990s seemed to have a proportionately greater effect on the business and professional classes of the south of England, including many Jews, who suffered bankruptcy and redundancy on a hitherto unknown scale. In 1991 five Orthodox synagogues in London founded a job-club to help their congregants, and in 1992 Jewish Care launched an Employment Resource Center.

In light of traditional Jewish values, we should expect sympathy for the unemployed among the respondents to our survey. However, it is often suggested that inflation and unemployment have to be balanced. Respondents were asked directly to choose the priority between the two economic dangers. "Keeping down inflation" was the preference of 18 percent of Progressive Jews and 21 percent of Orthodox Jews; "keeping down unemployment" was the preference of 38 percent of Progressives and 40 percent of the Orthodox, with the remainder seeing both as equal economic priorities. Obviously, there is a common Jewish outlook on this question, with twice as many fearing unemployment as inflation.

How to treat the unemployed is also an issue. Respondents were asked whether the government should spend more on unemployment benefits. The preference of both Jewish groups was the same. "Spend the same as now" was the majority position (Progressive 58%; Orthodox 53%). Slightly more were in favor of reducing benefits (Progressive 23%; Orthodox 28%) than increasing benefits (Progressive 19%; Orthodox 17%).

Of course, these attitudes are influenced by people's perception of the welfare system. Certainly, there has been much debate about the real numbers of unemployed and the opportunities for manipulating the system. Respondents were asked their views about two statements on this topic, as shown in the table below:

Table 2.1 ***"Most People on the Dole are Fiddling [Cheating] in One Way or Another"*** *(In percent)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	8	28	26	32	6
Progressive	5	23	26	37	9
BSA 1991	6	22	33	31	8

Table 2.2 ***"In This Area Most People Could Find a Job if They Really Wanted To"***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	6	29	27	30	8
Progressive	4	32	23	29	13
BSA 1991	8	31	27	33	9

The replies show there is no one common Jewish, Orthodox, or Progressive view. There is a very slight tendency for the Progressives to be slightly more trusting of human nature but this is not statistically significant. What is more significant is that Jewish and national opinion seem so similarly distributed across the range of possible replies on this issue.

New Poverty

The crisis of the welfare state is often perceived as being created by changes in society and, as in Victorian times, there is a debate about the deserving and undeserving poor and the creation of a culture of poverty by state policies. However, despite religious people having a reputation among some for judgmentalism, they are also among those most willing to accept the duty to offer charity. Respondents were asked, "Do you believe that Jews have a special responsibility to give charity, because they are Jews?" The two Jewish groups responded very differently. Among the Orthodox 48 percent agreed that they had a special duty but only 25 percent of the Progressives believed this. There is, however, a difference between private charity and government support. There is a legitimate debate about whether the current welfare system creates a culture of dependency. Two statements were provided to elicit opinions on this political issue.

Again, there is no one position among the groups but the Progressives are rather more sympathetic to those on benefits. On this they are closer to national opinion than are the Orthodox. So whom do Jews see as victims? The new poverty is often seen as being caused by family breakdown. Respondents were asked how they would feel if they had a single mother as a neighbor. Only 4 percent of Progressives and 10 percent of Orthodox would not want a single mother as a neighbor.

Table 2.3 ***"If Welfare Benefits Weren't so Generous, People Would Learn to Stand on Their Own Two Feet"*** *(In percent)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	13	29	21	29	8
Progressive	7	22	21	36	14
BSA 1991	6	19	24	37	14

"Many People who Get Social Security Don't Deserve Any Help"

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	8	29	23	32	9
Progressive	4	22	24	38	12
BSA 1991	5	21	27	37	10

AIDS

There were no questions in this survey about drug or alcohol abuse but there were questions about HIV/AIDS which is often associated with drug abusers as well as the sexually promiscuous. The following statements reveal attitudes towards supposedly self-inflicted victims of health risks.

The two Jewish religious groups have much clearer positions on this issue than they had on the earlier economic ones. Progressive Jews

Table 2.4 ***"AIDS is a Way of Punishing the World for its Decline in Moral Standards"*** *(In percent)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	11	13	22	27	28
Progressive	4	8	10	27	52
BSA 1993	7	13	22	29	27

"Most people with AIDS have only themselves to blame"

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	14	20	19	28	19
Progressive	7	15	15	30	34
BSA 1993	18	31	19	25	6

are very clearly opposed to blaming the victim or seeing apocalyptic judgment in social trends. However, even among the Orthodox there is a clear split between a judgmental minority and a relatively tolerant majority. In contrast, British national opinion is close to the Orthodox pattern on punishment, but far harder than Orthodox Jews on AIDS sufferers.

Violence, Crime and Punishment

British Jews have a very impressive record of obedience to the law. Jews are very underrepresented in the country's prisons and violent offenders are particularly rare. In 1995 there was a total of 178 Jewish prisoners, according to the Annual Census of Religious Registrations in Prisons in England and Wales. Jews are much more likely to be victims than perpetrators of violent crime. This is particularly a problem for Orthodox Jews in urban areas on Friday nights and festival eves since *Shabbat* observance requires them to walk to and from religious services. We should therefore expect a particular concern for public safety and the maintenance of law and order. This thesis is borne out by the results below. Orthodox Jews are very obviously concerned about the increasing lawlessness and violence of British society, and the nation as a whole agrees. Progressive Jews are less enthusiastic about spending much more on this problem.

Table 2.5 ***"Do You Favor More or Less Government Spending on the Police and Law Enforcement, Bearing in Mind that There Might Have to Be a Tax Increase to Pay for It?"*** *(In percent)*

	Spend much more	Spend more	Same	Less	Much less
Orthodox	25	45	28	1	1
Progressive	15	45	39	2	0
BSA 1994	25	48	23	2	1

Though the death penalty has long been abolished in Britain there is still popular support for the ultimate penalty. Its retention in the USA for crimes of murder and the popular support for it there obviously keep this issue in public debate. Thus respondents were asked:

Table 2.6 ***"Do You Agree or Disagree that for Some Crimes, the Death Penalty is the Most Appropriate Sentence?"*** *(In percent)*

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Orthodox	62	12	26
Progressive	46	12	42
BSA 1991	58	13	29

The Orthodox community has a clear majority in favor of capital punishment, while the Progressives are very evenly divided on the issue. Once again Orthodox sentiment is closer to the nation's.

One perception of the problem of rising crime rates is that the criminal justice system is too lenient on offenders. Respondents were asked about stiffer sentences for wrongdoers.

Table 2.7 ***"How Much do you Agree or Disagree that People who Break the Law Should be Given Stiffer Sentences?"*** *(In percent)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	38	36	21	5	0
Progressive	21	33	34	11	1
BSA 1991	34	37	19	7	2

In light of the attitudes on capital punishment, it is not surprising that there is a strong consensus for stiffer penalties with the Orthodox and national samples particularly tough on criminals. So what then is the purpose of a prison sentence? Jews take a rather hard attitude to wrongdoers as befits some interpretations of the Hebrew biblical tradition. As would be expected, the Orthodox are firmer in this view though the range of views is notable. The historic Jewish tendency to consider the needs of the community above that of individuals is also apparent in the Orthodox preference for protecting society and encouraging proper behavior.

The communitarian strain in Judaism is revealed by the substantial support for the last two reasons for imprisonment.

This is a population with little sympathy for criminals so we might expect them not to welcome them back into society after an—in their eyes—all too brief imprisonment. When asked if they would like to

Table 2.8 ***"When Someone is Sentenced by a Court, What do You Think the Main Aim of Imprisonment Should Be?"*** *(In percent)*

	Orthodox	Progressive
To re-educate the prisoner	21	30
To make those who have done wrong pay for it	32	37
To protect other citizens	30	24
To act as a deterrent to others	17	9

have someone with a criminal record as a neighbor, 71 percent of the Orthodox and 53 percent of Progressives replied in the negative.

There appears to be a consensus among British Jews that there is a social crisis but they take a largely traditional view of ways to deal with it. Judaism teaches that human nature has not changed over the centuries so it requires constraints on human behavior. The highly secularized British majority seems to agree. Among Jews, the Orthodox tend to take a more judgmental and harsher line than the Progressives but the differences are perhaps milder than might be expected. Rather than blaming society there seems to be a feeling that the causes are largely related to individual human weaknesses and dysfunctionality, i.e., indiscipline, recklessness and sin. Since Judaism believes in free will and the possibility of individuals deliberately choosing an evil inclination this is a logical response.

THE DEBATE ABOUT FAMILY AND GENDER

The Family

The family is the core unit of Judaism religiously and socially. The Jewish home is where religious life is centered. Tremendous emphasis is placed on the functioning of the nuclear family unit and even the most mundane tasks are sanctified by the normative Jewish life-style. Much less emphasis is placed on kin and the extended family today. Morality and standards of behavior are closely associated in the Jewish mind and tradition with family life. This links to the concept of chosenness which has been interpreted as being "a light unto the nations" in behavior. Do British Jews still believe they have to be exemplary human beings?

Table 2.9 ***"Do you Believe that Jews Have a Special Responsibility, Because They are Jews to Maintain High Moral Standards?"*** *(In percent)*

	Yes	No
Orthodox	59	41
Progressive	40	60

Obviously, a majority of the Orthodox still believe they have a special obligation but a substantial Progressive proportion also agree.

Marriage is not a sacrament but a contract in Jewish law but it is regarded as a holy state. Respondents were asked:

Table 2.10 ***"Do you Agree or Disagree with the Statement: 'Marriage is an Outdated Institution'?"*** *(In percent)*

	Tend to agree	Uncertain	Tend to disagree
Orthodox	6	4	90
Progressive	9	6	85

The general feeling is quite clearly an overwhelming endorsement of matrimony by both religious camps. Given this response, one would expect there to be concern over family breakup. Though divorce is acceptable and legal in Judaism it has never been encouraged for social reasons. Certainly Jewish opinion seems to regard the contemporary rate of divorce in British society as high enough and is not willing to encourage more by easing the law. Yet again the similarity with national opinion is striking.

Table 2.11 ***"Do you Think Divorce in Britain Should be"*** *(In percent)*

	Easier to obtain	Should remain same	More difficult
Orthodox	9	51	40
Progressive	14	55	31
BSA 1991	10	48	35

Morality, the family and sexuality are tied together in the public mind today as well as in the Jewish tradition. Respondents were asked their views on three issues, adultery, pre-marital sex and homosexual-

ity. Jewish law is clearly opposed to all three but there is a hierarchy of religious precedence. Adultery is prohibited by the Ten Commandments, homosexual acts are specifically prohibited in two places in the Five Books of Moses but pre-marital sex is a more complicated issue and certainly not as grave an offence. In Jewish law the children of an unmarried woman are not illegitimate whereas children of adultery are. Chastity is not as emphasized by Jews as among traditional Christians.

Table 2.12 ***"What is Your General Attitude towards Sexual Relationships in the Following Circumstances?"*** *(In percent)*

Wrong:	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all
Adultery					
Orthodox	61	27	10	1	1
Progressive	34	49	14	1	2
BSA 1993	57	27	11	1	1
Same sex					
Orthodox	57	10	11	5	17
Progressive	26	12	15	11	36
BSA 1993	50	14	7	5	18
Man and woman before marriage					
Orthodox	23	16	21	10	30
Progressive	3	6	23	15	53
BSA 1993	10	9	13	10	54

The hierarchy of religious taboos is clearly marked in these answers. There is strong condemnation of adultery. Homosexuality is still unacceptable to two-thirds of Orthodox congregants, whereas the Progressives are split on the issue. Pre-marital sex is not a problem for two-thirds of Progressives but the Orthodox are clearly divided on this issue. The findings reflect the Jewish concern for the integrity of the traditional nuclear family. British opinion seems to mirror Orthodox opinions on adultery and homosexuality but is closer to Progressive Jews' more liberal stance on pre-marital sex.

Gender Relations and the Women's Movement

Traditional Judaism is very concerned with differentiating gender roles in the social as well as religious spheres. A woman's chief obligation is to marry and produce children. She reigns supreme in the home but has no synagogue role. The Orthodox synagogue segregates its worshippers by sex and does not allow any female participation in services. In contrast, Progressive Judaism is egalitarian in worship and has since the 1970s had female clergy and lay leadership.

We should expect Orthodox congregants to be more tolerant of traditional gender roles and to find Progressives more antagonistic to what they see as subordination of women. The following statements test this hypothesis.

Table 2.13 ***"How Far do you Agree or Disagree with the Following Statement: 'A Job is All Right but what Most Women Really Want is a Home and Children'?"*** *(In percent)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	5	31	28	27	9
Progressive	2	14	24	37	23
BSA 1991	2	23	26	37	12

This statement is the classic Orthodox viewpoint, at least in some interpretations, but it no longer has majority support even in this camp. The Orthodox are very much split on this issue. In contrast, the Progressives have a clear feminist majority. These answers of course reflect a representative sample in which women comprise 55 percent of the Jewish respondents. Interestingly, national opinion seems to lie between the Jewish samples. Undoubtedly, much of the change in women's roles in British society has been forced by economic necessity, particularly a need to work for money outside the home, as by the search for personal fulfillment. This obviously has costs for family life and parenting. Thus, respondents were asked:

Table 2.14 ***"How Far do you Agree or Disagree that All in All, Family Life Suffers when a Woman Has a Full-time Job?"*** *(In percent)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	8	30	17	35	10
Progressive	6	20	20	35	19
BSA 1991	11	25	20	32	12

This slightly more practical and less ideological statement tends to narrow the gap between the two sets of Jewish congregants. The BSA sample shows that there is a national pattern to this distribution of attitudes.

How then do Jews feel about government attempts to prevent discrimination against women in the workplace?

Table 2.15 ***"There is a Law in Britain against Sex Discrimination, i.e., Giving Unfair Preference to Men—or to Women—in Employment, Pay and So On. Do You Generally Support or Oppose the Idea of a Law for this Purpose?"*** *(In percent)*

	Support	Not sure	Oppose
Orthodox	75	15	10
Progressive	85	8	7
BSA 1992	85	2	13

There is overwhelming support for laws against sex discrimination by British Jews and nationally. This issue seems to be seen more as one of justice, which is a strong Jewish theme, rather than anything to do with feminism. So how do respondents organize necessary tasks in their own households? Are there still clear gender roles in the Jewish and British home?

The Progressives are far more egalitarian than the Orthodox in the home, with every item having majority for sharing tasks or having no gender preference. There are more Progressive "new men" than Orthodox ones. The Orthodox are clearly "sexist" as regards washing and DIY tasks. The two groups are closest on allocating who pays the bills and doing the dishes. Interestingly, the Orthodox are more egalitarian on the dishes than the shopping, presumably because the shop-

Table 2.16 ***"Below are Listed Some Typical Household Responsibilities. You May Feel That Some of These Tasks are More Suited to Women and That Others are More Suited to Men. Can You Say Who You Think Should Take on Each One in a Family?"*** *(In percent)*

	Mainly men	Shared equally	Mainly women
Washing and ironing			
Orthodox	1	36	63
Progressive	1	63	36
BSA 1991	1	40	58
Household shopping			
Orthodox	1	60	39
Progressive	2	79	19
BSA 1991	1	76	22
Doing the evening dishes			
Orthodox	2	82	16
Progressive	4	87	9
BSA 1991	12	76	11
Organize the household money and pay the bills			
Orthodox	22	69	9
Progressive	13	78	9
BSA 1991	17	66	14
Repair household equipment			
Orthodox	65	34	1
Progressive	45	54	1
BSA 1991	66	31	1

ping is a more publicly visible role. Yet they are more egalitarian on the financial front than might have been expected. Interestingly, British Jews are not very different from other Britons in their allocation of gender roles within the home.

THE DEBATE ABOUT THE NATURE OF SOCIETY

The Environmental Movement

There are over two thousand Jewish social, religious, educational, welfare, health, and recreational organizations and clubs in the UK. There are Jewish cricket clubs, scout groups and socialist societies but there is no Jewish environmental group of any kind. By contrast, in the USA and Israel there are specifically Jewish environmentalist groups based upon biblical injunctions to nurture the land. The most obvious case is the Jewish "New Year for Trees" (*Tu B'shvat*) widely celebrated with plantings. Among British Jews this minor festival is hardly celebrated.

As an overwhelmingly urban population British Jews could be thought of as not seeing the environment as a Jewish issue. Yet when asked about more government spending on this issue they seem quite positive, though again the Orthodox are slightly less enthusiastic for this "modernist" fad. Nevertheless the Orthodox profile almost exactly mirrors the distribution of British national opinion on environmental spending.

Table 2.17 ***"Do you Favor More or Less Government Spending on the Environment, Bearing in Mind That if You Say More there Might Have to be a Tax Increase?"*** *(In percent)*

	Spend much more	More	Same as now	Less	Much less
Orthodox	11	36	47	5	1
Progressive	14	50	32	3	1
BSA 1994	10	38	43	3	1

Relations with People of Other Ethnic Origins and Religious Faiths

Historically ethnic and race relations in British society have been set within the paradigm of prejudice and discrimination. As a minority who themselves have suffered discrimination and hatred, we would expect Jews to be particularly aware of this issue and opposed to it. To that can be added the ethical injunctions in the Bible calling for proper treatment of the stranger. The laws against racial discrimination and incitement to racial hatred obviously protect Jews so we would

again expect strong support. On this item national opinion is different from Jewish opinion. There is a hard core of around one in five Britons who oppose such laws.

Table 2.18 ***"There is a Law in Britain Against Racial Discrimination, i.e., Giving Unfair Preference to a Particular Race in Housing, Jobs and So On. Do You Generally Support or Oppose the Idea of a Law for This Purpose?"*** *(In percent)*

	Support	Not sure	Oppose
Orthodox	82	10	8
Progressive	84	9	7
BSA 1991	76	3	21

Only a few Jews, presumably civil libertarians, seem to oppose the present law but how do they feel about stiffer penalties for racial harassment?

Table 2.19 ***"To What Extent do you Agree or Disagree that there Should Be Stiffer Penalties for Racial Harassment?"*** *(In percent)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	38	50	11	1	0
Progressive	24	61	12	3	0

We have now found an issue where the Orthodox seem to take a slightly more liberal position than the Progressives though it is in intensity of feeling rather than difference in opinion.

This begs the question of how prejudiced Jews actually are against other minorities in Britain, bearing in mind that Jews are part of the white majority for these purposes. In fact they are more willing than other Britons to admit they are a little prejudiced.

Table 2.20 ***"Thinking Now About Your Feelings Towards People of Other Races and Colors, Would You Say You Were…?"*** *(In percent)*

	Not at all prejudiced	A little prejudiced	Very prejudiced
Orthodox	49	48	3
Progressive	47	51	2
BSA 1991	68	29	2

This question is, of course, a self-assessment and we cannot know the truth but the answers of the two Jewish groups are almost identical in distribution. Perhaps we could learn more if we consider whether they believe Jews have a special obligation in this area. The two religious groupings are nearly identical in their views, with a majority (58–59%) stating that they have this religious obligation.

What does all this mean in practice? Respondents were asked if they would object to certain types of neighbors because of their lifestyles. The responses show that Jews are much more concerned by religious cultists than people's skin color. Again, there is a remarkable Jewish consensus position with 47–50 percent saying they would not like to have members of minority cults as neighbors, but only 3–4 percent saying they would not want neighbors of a different race.

Though Jewish commitment to inter-faith initiatives remains low key and reliant on traditional structures such as the National Council of Christians and Jews, there were signs of a change in the 1990s. In June 1999 Chief Rabbi Sacks was guest speaker at a mass meeting at the Royal Albert Hall for the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Sikh faith.

In the debate on social integration there appears to be a strong degree of Jewish agreement on what the important issues are and the remedies required to deal with problems that arise. The Orthodox take more conservative positions on private, family and sexuality issues than the Progressives but in most matters of public policy there is a strong Jewish consensus.

THE DEBATE ON EUROPEAN UNITY

Europe is more of an economic than moral or religious issue for British Jews. Nevertheless, we might expect above-average interest in the issue among Jews because most Jews have their roots in Europe and go back in Britain for only three or four generations. Second, many of Britain's partners in Europe have a decidedly worrying recent record of anti-Semitism during World War II. Third, Jews are much better educated and politically aware than most Britons. It turns out that about two-thirds of both Orthodox and Progressive Jews claim to be interested in the European Community (EU), but the real political divide remains British membership.

Table 2.21 ***"Do You Think Britain Should Continue to be a Member of the European Community (EU) or Withdraw?"*** *(In percent)*

	Continue	Unsure	Withdraw
Orthodox	56	23	21
Progressive	65	20	15
BSA 1991	77	6	17

The overall Jewish position is to remain in Europe but Progressive Jews are more enthusiastic Europeans than Orthodox Jews. Nevertheless, the Jews are less enthusiastic EU members than other Britons. Here, of course, there may be period or political events in effect since Jews were answering this question in 1995, not 1991. Nevertheless, there can be both general political and specifically Jewish reasons for these patterns of opinions. First the general issue which relates to Britain's place in the world.

Table 2.22 ***"Do You Think that Continued Membership of the European Community Would Give Britain…"*** *(In percent)*

	More influence in the world	Make no difference	Less influence
Orthodox	30	51	19
Progressive	35	51	14
BSA 1991	32	47	12

Jews believe that the EU helps Britain, but there does not seem to be a tremendous association with global issues in this debate, according to most Jews. However, unlike on the item above, Jewish opinion is exactly in line with national sentiment.

What then of specifically Jewish concerns? We have seen that economic uncertainties and dislocation worry Jews because they cause tension in society.

There appears considerable skepticism that the EU, presumably as a bulwark for European prosperity, is a safeguard against a revival of anti-Semitism. Again there is a remarkable similarity in the pattern of response among both religious groupings. What of the reverse sit-

Table 2.23 ***"How Much do You Agree or Disagree that the European Community is a Safeguard Against a Rise in Anti-Semitism?"*** *(In percent)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	2	12	46	34	6
Progressive	3	11	46	33	7

uation? Does the EU, which includes member nations with much stronger anti-Semitic traditions and political parties than Britain, endanger British Jews?

Table 2.24 ***"Do you Agree or Disagree that British Jews Would be Safer if Britain Were to Leave the European Community?"*** *(In percent)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Orthodox	3	8	53	32	4
Progressive	2	4	51	35	7

There does not seem to be much support for a specifically anti-European position on grounds of anti-Semitism. This is presumably positive news for Europhiles. Even more than on other public policy issues we seem to have obtained on Europe a remarkable degree of Jewish unity of opinion. Religious differences among Jews seem irrelevant in this domain. Presumably, European identity is an area where the ethnic dimension outweighs any differences in religiosity or theology.

CONCLUSIONS

We have examined a range of social and political issues where one would expect religious education and moral outlook to shape people's ideas. In theory, the Orthodox congregants should have more coherent attitudes and be more conservative and unchanging in outlook, while the Progressives should demonstrate a greater degree of pluralist understandings and individual autonomy. Yet, we have discovered that on most issues there are very similar profiles in the balance of opinions among Jews who are affiliated with Orthodox and Progressive synagogues. Neither grouping is homogeneous and unanimity is

rare. There is no suggestion here that theology or ideology has much influence on attitudes.

We have also learned that no unique package of attitudes specific to Jews exists but rather the range and balance of Jewish opinion overwhelmingly mirrors that of national opinion in Britain. This suggests that British Jews are well integrated into British society both socially and politically. It also suggests that Judaism and religious identity are of marginal influence in forming the social and political attitudes of British Jews. Orthodox synagogue members are not very Orthodox in their opinions and Progressive congregants are not particularly progressive in their attitudes. Thus there is no evidence here to suggest that separate Orthodox and Progressive Jewish worldviews are emerging in Britain. Nor is there much evidence to suggest that two separate communities of Jews with differing communal standards exist. This lack of a religiously inspired politics in 1990s Britain seems to suggest the salience of secularization.

Jewish attitudes appear inherently mainstream British and so moderately nonjudgmental.

British society in the 1990s along with much of the EU was dominated by market capitalism along with liberal democratic ideas. This system stresses the value of the autonomous individual consumer and undermines traditional authority and hierarchies. An inevitable result is a decline in the prestige and power of traditional religion and the clergy. So although we may have witnessed an apparent return to tradition among religiously affiliated British Jews, it appears to have been limited to the area of practice and ritual forms—the private familial and personal spheres rather than the public square. Certainly, Judaism in Britain is not counter-cultural in its effects and does not—apart from the *Haredi* minority—produce differentiated communities of interest who see, understand and interpret the world through uniquely Judaic eyes grounded in norms and ideas based upon the authority of religious sources and texts. There is no evidence in these findings of a trend towards a particular, or particularist, moralization of British Jewish society.

APPENDIX 2 AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Methodology of the JPR 1995 Survey of the Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews

The findings presented in this report are based on 2,194 self-completed questionnaires obtained through a postal survey of adult British Jews between July and October 1995. The methodology was designed to generate a random sample of self-identifying Jews using three sampling strategies stratified according to the density of the Jewish population. The overall response rate was approximately 60 percent, which compares well with other questionnaire-based mail surveys. This represents the largest and most representative sample yet obtained of the British Jewish community. It was also the first nation-wide survey of its kind not based on organizational lists. The data was weighted for age and sex on the basis of the known demographic profile of the population.

The survey has been used to provide data for the following publications:

Stephen Miller, Marlena Schmool and Antony Lerman, "Social and political attitudes of British Jews: Some key findings of the JPR survey," *JPR Reports*, no.1 (February 1996).

Barry Kosmin, Antony Lerman and Jacqueline Goldberg, "The attachment of British Jews to Israel," *JPR Reports*, no. 5 (November 1997).

Jacqueline Goldberg and Barry Kosmin, "Patterns of charitable giving among British Jews," *JPR Reports*, no. 2 (July 1998).

SCPR's *British Social Attitudes* (BSA) series is designed to monitor changing social values. It interviews face-to-face around 3,000 respondents a year. They are a representative sample of adults 18 and over living in private households. Core questions are asked of all respondents and the remaining questions are asked of a random half of all respondents.

Roger Jowell et al, eds, *British Social Attitudes,* the 9th report (London, Social & Community Planning Research, 1992).
10th report, 1993
11th report, 1994
12th report, 1995

CHAPTER 3

Changing Patterns of Jewish Identity among British Jews

Stephen Miller

INTRODUCTION

There are at least two ways to investigate Jewish identity from an empirical standpoint. The first is to try to characterize the identity of a population of Jews (e.g., British Jews) seen as a relatively homogenous grouping, ignoring—or at least de-emphasizing—variations between individuals or sub-communities. I will call this level of analysis a "population" approach. The second is to look specifically at variations in identity between Jews and to try to explain or model these differences; that is, to focus on "individual differences" in Jewish identity. In both cases, it is possible to examine identity at a single point in time, or to investigate trends over time.

The population approach seeks an explanation for the nature of Jewish identity that is rooted in socio-political and historical circumstance. Thus, contemporary British Jewish identity will have been influenced by national trends towards pluralism and multiculturalism; by growth in educational opportunities; by the diminution of anti-Semitism; and by the growth of secularism in society at large. It may also have been affected by trends in the Jewish community's religious, cultural, and educational structures (for example, the increased availability of Jewish schooling).

While such macro-level factors may have something to do with the "typical" expression of Jewish identity at a population level, they cannot explain variations between individuals *within* the population. This is simply because, broadly speaking, all members of the population within a given age cohort will have been exposed to the same trends towards secularism, pluralism, and the like. It follows that the explanation for *differences* in Jewish identity—the focus of this paper—must lie in the specific environmental and genetic influences to which individual Jews have been exposed; for example, differences in the

intensity of Jewish family life or type of Jewish schooling, or variations in genetic predispositions towards religious or ethnic behavior.

In part I of the paper, I attempt to characterize the underlying dimensions of Jewish identity (e.g., intensity of religious belief, strength of belonging) along which individual Jews may be said to differ. I also examine changes in the dimensional structure of Jewish identity across different age groups, and thereby seek to evaluate the way in which identity is changing over time. In the second part, I briefly examine some of the biographical variables that may influence a person's place on these newly emerging dimensions of Jewish identity. I also examine the relationship between these dimensions and indices of assimilation. The dataset used in these analyses comes from the 1995 Institute for Jewish Policy Research Survey of British Jews.[1]

PART I. MEASURING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN JEWISH IDENTITY

1.1 Simple Classifications of Jewish Life-Style

A seemingly convenient way of characterizing an individual's position in the matrix of attitudes and behaviors that make up Jewish identity is by means of his or her synagogue affiliation. However, for British Jews, this approach is singularly unhelpful for at least two reasons. First, a significant proportion of British Jews (between 10 percent and 30 percent, depending on the sampling methodology) does not belong to a synagogue and therefore cannot be categorized on this measure.[2] And secondly, for those who do belong, the correspondence between synagogue type and religious life-style is very misleading indeed. For example, the vast majority of British synagogue members affiliate with one of the Orthodox movements (71 percent), even though only 14 percent actually observe the *Shabbat* (Table 3.1).

Whether this mismatch arises for reasons of convenience, nostalgia, or family loyalty, it means that synagogue affiliation says little about a person's Jewish attitudes and behavior.

The self-classification of Jewish life-style shown above (Orthodox, Traditional, Progressive, etc.) is a more promising metric. It discriminates quite well between sub-groups of the population in terms of religious practice (see Table 3.2), but that is, after all, only one aspect of Jewish identity.

Table 3.1 ***Synagogue Membership and Self-reported Religiosity (JPR survey; N=2164)*** *(In percent)*

Synagogue Membership		*Self-reported Religiosity*	
Orthodox	71	Orthodox (*Shabbat* observant)	14
Conservative	2	Traditional (not strictly observant)	44
Progressive	27	Progressive	21
		Just Jewish	15
		Secular/Non-practising	6

Table 3.2 ***Observance of Key Rituals in the Self-rated Religious Groups (JPR survey; N=2080)*** *(In percent)*

	Strictly Orthodox	Traditional	Progressive/ Just Jewish	Secular
Attends a *seder* every/most years	100	96	87	19
Refrains from work on Jewish New Year	100	96	86	10
Fasts on Yom Kippur	100	93	79	12
Buys kosher meat (excl. vegetarians)	100	80	17	5
Lights candles every Friday evening	100	69	37	2
Refrains from traveling on *Shabbat*	100	18	1	1

And even on the religious practice dimension, the labels probably obscure an underlying continuum of observance from strict adherence to no observable Jewish practice at all.

Even the self-description "secular," which one might expect to signal an absence of any religious ritual, turns out to be used in a variety of ways; in some cases by people who observe a number of common rituals. Indeed, depending on how one chooses to define the concept of secularism, one finds that between 16 percent and 70 percent of British Jews fall into this category (Table 3.3). If "secular" is construed as doubting the existence of God, or the divinity of the Torah, then the majority of British Jews are properly classified as secular, whereas if complete avoidance of ritual and synagogue membership is the criterion, then only a small minority qualifies.

Both for the secular category and for others, then, it is clear that simple self-classification scales—at least those that have been used in recent research—provide a very crude metric of Jewish identity.

Table 3.3 ***Proportion of British Jews Who Qualify as "Secular" under Various Definitions*** *(JPR survey; N=2150 approx.)*

Criterion	Percent who qualify
Rejects or is uncertain about God's role in creation	70
Rejects divine origin of the Torah	56
Regards Jewish religious life as "not at all important" to one's Jewishness	45
Classifies oneself as "non-practising, i.e. secular"	26
Self-classifies as secular and avoids key rituals	19
Self-classifies as secular, avoids key rituals and does not belong to synagogue	16

1.2 A Factorial Approach to Jewish Identity

A common approach to the examination of Jewish identity is to use a statistical technique known as factor analysis to try to identify its underlying dimensions. Essentially, this method looks at the pattern of responses to questionnaire items that measure Jewish attitudes and behaviors of all kinds. Respondents are asked about their ritual observance, friendship patterns, beliefs about God and the Torah, synagogue membership, cultural and charitable involvement, attachment to Israel, loyalty to Jews, feelings of Jewishness, and so on. Factor analysis then seeks to determine which groups of questions tend to elicit similar patterns of response, and thereby to "boil down" the original set of questions into a number of underlying common variables or *dimensions.*

A Simple Model of Jewish Identity

Using this technique, previous studies of British Jews have established a consistent and relatively unsurprising finding.[3] Jewish identity appears to be made up of three main components:

- Practice, meaning level of ritual observance;
- Belief, meaning strength of religious belief or faith;
- Ethnicity, meaning strength of one's sense of belonging/identification with other Jews.

Some studies have also found additional factors such as "commitment to Israel," but these tend to explain a very small proportion of the overall variation in Jewish identity. For practical purposes, then, the most efficient way to characterize the Jewish identity of a British Jew would be to give his or her position on each of the three main dimensions (for example, the conjunction *moderate level of practice*, *low score on belief*, *high score on ethnicity* is common among British Jews).

Although these three dimensions are separable, they are not entirely independent of each other. As one might expect, level of practice is correlated with strength of belief; but what is surprising is that for British Jews the strongest relationship is between ethnicity and practice ($r = 0.8$, with belief held constant), rather than between belief and practice ($r = 0.1$, with ethnicity held constant).[4] This suggests that variations in religious practice among British Jews reflect differences in the intensity of ethnic involvement rather more than they reflect differences in religious faith. Put more starkly, Jewish observance is an expression of belonging rather than an act of religious faith, and this contrasts strongly with, say, Catholicism, where the reverse is the case.[5]

1.3 Problems with the Simple Model

While the simple, three-dimensional model of Jewish identity has emerged in a number of separate studies of British Jews, there is some evidence that the structure of Jewish identity is beginning to change. A hint of this is obtained by examining age trends in some of the common indicators of religious practice and ethnicity. Age trends are, of course, difficult to interpret. They may represent life-cycle changes or genuine generational shifts. In the former case, the younger respondents will come to resemble the older respondents on a particular measure once they themselves age; in the latter, the age differences are preserved as the younger cohorts grow older. It is impossible to escape such ambiguity, but if the directions of the trend vary across different types of identity measure, it seems less likely that a simple life-cycle effect is at work.

For example, Figure 3.1 shows that the observance of very common ritual practices, such as fasting on Yom Kippur, are not diminished in the younger age groups, whereas the more demanding *mitzvot* (such as eating only kosher meat) trail off. It is logically possible that

Figure 3.1 ***Ritual Observance as a Function of Age***

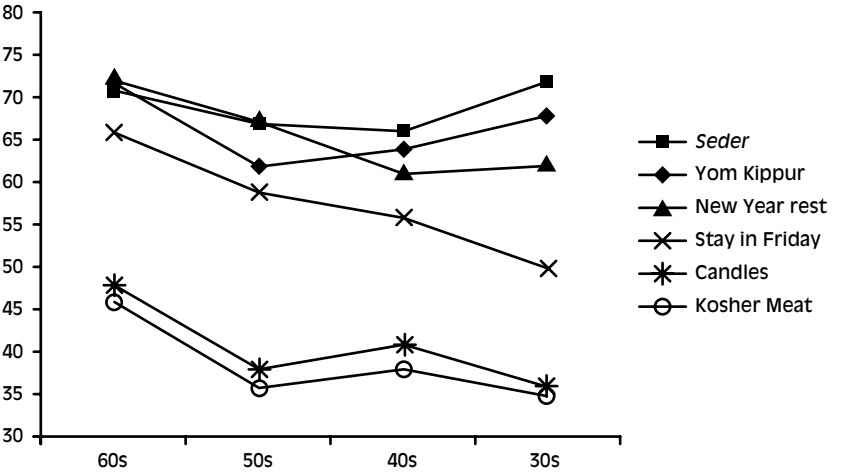
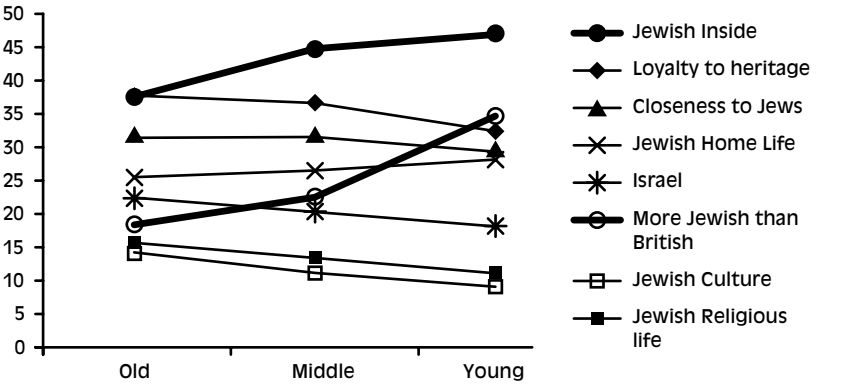


Figure 3.2 ***Agreement with/Importance of Various Aspects of Jewishness as a Function of Age***



the stability of one measure and the decline of the other are *both* life-cycle effects, but it seems more plausible to conclude that the tougher practices are dying out while the key ritual expressions of ethnic identification are preserved across generations.

Similarly, we see (Figure 3.2) that identity measures that capture a *feeling* of Jewishness ("feeling Jewish inside," "feeling more Jewish than British") are actually stronger in the younger groups, while more

behavioral expressions of ethnicity ("Jewish religious life," "closeness to other Jews") are relatively stable or declining in younger groups.

All this suggests that the underlying structure of Jewish identity may vary as a function of age. By aggregating over a wide age range, we generate the simple three-factor model described above; but a separate analysis of older and younger respondents may reveal more subtle models of Jewish identity.

1.4 Age Differences in Factorial Models of Jewish Identity

Tables 3.4 and 3.5 show the rotated factor matrix based on 35 questionnaire items covering a wide range of attitudes and behaviors taken from the 1995 JPR survey. The factor analyses apply to respondents aged over 50 (Table 3.4) and under 50 (Table 3.5).

Older respondents

As predicted, the disaggregation of the two age groups leads to somewhat different factorial structures. In the older group, the three-factor model works reasonably well, with the following exceptions:

1) The cluster of items that load on the first factor ("practice") include both simple rituals (*seder*, Yom Kippur) and synagogue behaviors (membership, frequency of attendance), but *not* the more demanding rituals. Bearing in mind the earlier finding that strength of ethnic identity is the best predictor of "practice," this dimension may be seen as representing the extent to which individuals express their belonging through simple rituals and ceremonies, in many cases devoid of religious commitment.

2) The more demanding ritual practices (e.g., *Shabbat* observance) do not load on the practice factor at all, but are more highly correlated with the belief items that form the core of the second factor. Hence this "belief" factor may be better thought of as a measure of *religiosity*, including both faith items and demanding ritual practices that reflect religious commitment.

3) The items loading on factors 3 and 4 are not well differentiated, but the strongest items under factor 3 relate to the more affective and internal aspects of ethnic identity (feeling Jewish inside, feelings of loyalty to one's Jewish heritage). Factor 4 also captures items related to belonging, but with a more behavioral or social flavor (preference

Table 3.4 ***Rotated Factor Matrix for Respondents Aged Fifty Years and Above (N=1112)***

	Factor 1	2	3	4	5
Frequency of *seder* attendance	.667				
Home New Year	.666				
Home Friday night	.648				
Frequency of lighting candles	.644				
Fast Yom Kippur	.573				
Type of synagogue belong/attend	.541			.378	
Level of *kashrut*	.528			.366	
Synagogue frequency	.524	.427			.364
Jewish paper frequency	.475				
Jewish home life important	.452		.366		
No. xmas tree etc.	.367				
Divinity of Torah		.693			
Shabbat comm. relevant		.658			
Special relationship to God		.606	.405		
Universe by chance		.579			
Prayer helps		.577			
Religious life important	.365	.522			.457
1st comm. relevant		.509	.384		
Drive on *Shabbat*		.493			
Belief not important		.492			
Loyalty to Jewish heritage			.653		.435
Feels Jewish inside			.617		
Jewish survival importance			.543		
Bond unites Jews			.514	.373	
Strength of Jewish awareness			.409		
Prefers Jewish company				.586	
Jewish friends—proportion	.518			.585	
Closeness to other Jews			.405	.496	.365
Jewish marriage importance	.418		.415	.496	
Can only depend on Jews				.430	
Jewish art important					.617
Israel important					.564
No. of Jewish orgs belonged to					.390
No. of Jewish charities					.376
Feel more British or Jewish					.355

Extraction Method: Unweighted Least Squares. Rotation Method: Equamax with Kaiser Normalization. Loadings below 0.35 have been suppressed.

for Jewish friends, belief that one can rely on fellow Jews, etc.). I have called these two aspects of ethnic identity *mental ethnicity* and *social ethnicity*.

There is also a rather weak fifth factor that seems to reflect involvement in Jewish cultural organizations, but this explains a very small proportion of the total variance.

Hence, for older respondents, the four main dimensions of Jewish identity may be summarized as follows:

Practice	= degree of involvement in simple rituals and synagogue life
Religiosity	= degree of faith in God and observance of demanding rituals
Social ethnicity	= strength of belonging expressed via social behavior and attitudes
Mental ethnicity	= strength of belonging expressed as personal Jewish feelings

Younger respondents

For the younger half of the respondents (Table 3.5), the structure changes slightly, but arguably in important ways. We see that the two most behavioral of the social ethnicity items (proportion of Jewish friends, belief in the importance of Jewish marriage) migrate to the "Practice" dimension. The other items in the "Social ethnicity" factor (feeling close to other Jews, feeling one can depend on Jews, preferring Jewish company) join the "Mental ethnicity" items (feeling Jewish inside, loyalty to Jewish heritage, etc.) to create an enlarged set of items within this factor.

This realignment suggests that the first factor, previously labeled "Practice," but now containing a mixture of social, light ritual, and synagogal expressions of Jewish involvement, is better thought of as behavioral ethnicity; that is, ritual practice is no longer the core of this factor in the younger grouping. Hence the main dimensions underpinning Jewish identity in this age group can be summarized as:

Behavioral ethnicity	= strength of involvement expressed through social and synagogal activity and the performance of "light" rituals

Table 3.5 ***Rotated Factor Matrix for Respondents Aged under Fifty Years (N=1082)***

	Factor 1	2	3	4
Frequency of *seder* attendance	.738			
Home New Year	.702			
Frequency of lighting candles	.674			
Fast Yom Kippur	.644			
Proportion of Jewish friends	.639			
Type of synagogue belong/attend	.621			
Frequency of synagogue attendance	.588	.463		.404
Level of *kashrut*	.581			
Home Friday	.577			
Jewish home life importance	.552			
Jewish marriage importance	.524		.505	
No. xmas trees etc.	.470			
Divinity of Torah		.712		
Universe by chance		.667		
Shabbat comm. relevant		.645		
Drive on *Shabbat*		.627		
Belief not important		.619		
Prayer helps		.604		
Special relationship to God		.589	.418	
Religious life important	.434	.570		.433
1st comm. relevant		.521		
Bond unites Jews			.622	
Feels Jewish inside			.579	
Closeness to other Jews			.566	
Loyalty to Jewish heritage			.551	.478
Jewish survival important			.537	
Strength of Jewish awareness			.483	.481
Prefers Jewish company			.465	
Feel more British or Jewish			.435	
Depend on Jews			.431	
Jewish art important				.567
Israel important				.500
No. of Jewish charities				.484
No. of Jewish orgs belonged to				.448
Jewish paper frequency	.406			.447

Extraction Method: Unweighted Least Squares. Rotation Method: Equamax with Kaiser Normalization.

Religiosity = degree of faith in God and observance of demanding rituals
Mental ethnicity = strength of belonging expressed as personal Jewish feelings

1.5 The Trend in Jewish Identity

Factor analysis is notoriously sensitive to the particular method used to generate the factor solution. Hence the relatively small differences in the Jewish identity structures of younger and older respondents should not be taken too seriously. Further, as noted in section 1.3, trends across age groups may reflect life-cycle effects rather then genuine differences between generations.

Nonetheless, these data provide tentative support for the view that in younger age groups the religious dimensions of Jewishness are becoming less differentiated, while the ethnic dimensions are becoming more differentiated. Specifically, what were previously separate dimensions of religious belief and religious practice now emerge as a single, combined dimension of "religiosity." And what was previously a single dimension of ethnic belonging is now expressed as two relatively distinct factors representing the behavioral and mental dimensions of Jewish identification. The behavioral aspects encompass Jewish social affiliation and synagogal involvement as well as the practice of a number of common rituals and ceremonies. And there is a clear and separable expression of ethnic identity as a purely psychological phenomenon—a "virtual" or "mental" form of identity—which is devoid of both behavioral components and the religious elements.

This distinction is important in the context of the drive to promote Jewish continuity. One implication of the present model is that initiatives that intensify feelings of Jewish ethnicity (mental ethnicity) may not have much impact on assimilation or other aspects of Jewish behavior. We begin to examine these relationships in the next section.

PART II. INTER-GENERATIONAL PREDICTORS OF JEWISH IDENTITY

2.1 Extending Previous Findings

A series of previous studies of British Jews has attempted to measure the power of biographical variables such as parental religiosity and Jewish education as predictors of the level of Jewish identity in adults.[6] These studies have produced highly convergent findings, typified by the data in Table 3.6 derived from the JPR study. In essence, the most effective predictor of Jewish identity (among those variables that have been examined to date) is the level of religiosity experienced by a respondent while living in the parental home. This factor can explain up to 27 percent of the variance in a given measure of identity, and once it has been taken into account, the impact of other factors such as Jewish education or membership in a Jewish club is virtually zero. Note, however, that some dimensions of identity are much easier to predict than others; levels of Jewish observance are easiest (34 percent of the variance), then strength of ethnic identity (27 percent), then levels of belief (16 percent) and finally marriage choice (in/out) (13 percent).

One measure of the utility of our revised model of Jewish identity is the capacity of the three dimensions—behavioral ethnicity, mental ethnicity, and religiosity—to function as predictors *of* other variables, and to be predicted *by* other variables.

Table 3.6 ***Percentage of Variance in Four Aspects of Jewish Identity Explained by Biographical Factors (JPR survey; N = 2190)***

Predictor	Practice	Belief	Ethnicity	Out-marriage
Parental religiosity	27	13	19	9
Orthodoxy of parental synagogue	3	0	1	0
Attended a Jewish secondary school	1	2	1	0
Attended a Jewish primary school	0	0	1	0
Attended a Jewish club	2	1 (neg)	3	3
Closeness to parents	1	1	2	0
Consistency of home life w.r.t. Judaism	0	0	0	1
Total variance explained	34%	16%	27%	13%

If these new dimensions are more authentic measures of identity, then they should be better able to predict the transmission of identity to the respondents' children; similarly, it should be easier to predict a respondent's status on them by using information on his or her Jewish background. Fortunately the JPR dataset allows us to test both hypotheses since it contains, for each respondent: biographical data on his or her Jewish education, parental religiosity, etc.; the raw data necessary to assess his or her status on the "old" and "new" dimensions of Jewish identity; and data on the marriage patterns of the respondents' children (if any).

2.2 Using Other Variables to Predict Jewish Identity

We turn first to the ease with which people's status on the new measures can be predicted from the respondent's biography and home background. Table 3.7 shows the outcome of the same multiple regression analyses reported in Table 3.6, but using the new measures inserted as dependent variables.

Table 3.7 ***Percentage of Variance in Four Aspects of Jewish Identity Explained by Biographical Factors***

Predictor	Behavioral Ethnicity	Religiosity	Mental Ethnicity
Parental religiosity	27	20	16
Orthodoxy of parental synagogue	4	1	2
Attended a Jewish secondary school	0	2	0
Attended a Jewish primary school	0	0	0
Attended a Jewish club	2	0	3
Closeness to parents	1	1	2
Consistency of home life w.r.t. Judaism	1	0	0
Total variance explained	35%	24%	23%

The results are not stunning, but comparison of Tables 3.6 and 3.7 shows that there is an improvement in the predictability of two of these measures compared with the dimensions in the old model; both behavioral ethnicity and religiosity are more easily predicted from respondents' biographical data than were practice and belief in the old model.

2.3 Using Jewish Identity Measures to Predict Other Variables

The JPR survey also contains data on the number of children of each respondent who were reported to have married Jews and non-Jews. Table 3.8 shows the results of a multiple regression analysis of marriage choice in which behavioral ethnicity, mental ethnicity, and religiosity are entered as predictors. The dependent variable is the percentage of each respondent's married children who are married to non-Jews.

Table 3.8 ***Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Out-marriage Rate of JPR Respondents' Children (N = 692)***

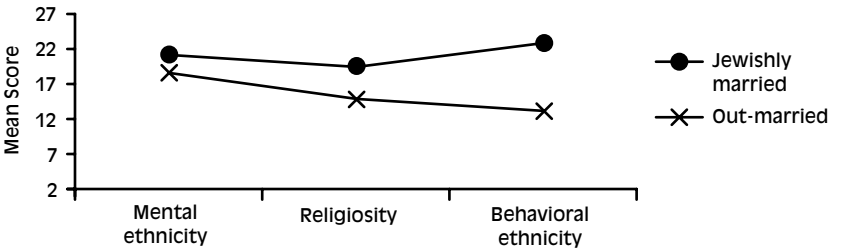
Predictor	Percent of variance explained	p value
Behavioral ethnicity	37	<0.0001
Mental ethnicity	1	<0.007
Religiosity	0	–

As we can see, behavioral ethnicity is a very significant predictor of marriage choice; parents with high levels of behavioral ethnicity are less likely to have their children marry out. Once that factor is taken into account, the intensity of their feelings of Jewishness (mental ethnicity) and their level of religious commitment and observance (religiosity) are relatively unimportant. Indeed, for non-Orthodox parents—not shown in the table—religiosity is actually associated with an increased probability of out-marriage (albeit only mildly) once behavioral ethnicity is allowed for.

These findings suggest that behavioral ethnicity is a more useful predictive tool in relation to the transmission of Jewish identity than any of the measures used in previous research. Whether one uses specific features of a person's biography, such as Jewish schooling (Table 3.6), or the dimensions of Jewish identity contained in the old model, the new behavioral ethnicity measure proves to be far more predictive.

Further, the fact that observable social and ethnic behaviors—essentially rooted in the family—seem to be more effective determinants of in-marriage than religious or "mental" factors, calls into question conventional Jewish continuity policies. Certainly, policies that seek to promote more intense *feelings* of Jewish identity may have minimal effects once the person's family involvement in Jewish social

Figure 3.3 ***Mean Ratings of Jewishly Married and Out-married Respondents on Three Measures of Jewish Identity***



and ethnic activities has been determined. A further illustration of this comes from an examination of the characteristics of the out-married themselves (*Figure 3.3*), which shows that the out-married retain relatively high levels of mental ethnicity—hardly different from those found in respondents who have married Jews. It would appear that feelings of Jewishness function much like other personal attributes—perhaps like personality, nationality, or intellectual style; they may be deeply embedded psychological characteristics, intrinsic to one's own sense of identity, but not seen as directly relevant to the choice of a partner.

CONCLUSION

To summarize: These analyses demonstrate that the simple three-factor model of Jewish identity is losing its currency. Within the older generations there are more variegated patterns of identity based on levels of practice, belief, social involvement, mental forms of ethnicity, and cultural dimensions. Among younger Jews, religious elements of identity are becoming less differentiated, while ethnic identity is growing more variegated; the behavioral aspects of ethnicity (incorporating social and synagogal involvement and common ritual practice) seem to be important for the transmission of identity, while the mental or affective components of ethnicity can be intense and personal, but virtually irrelevant to practical involvement in Jewish life.

While behavioral ethnicity is the most effective determinant of identity behaviors in the next generation (far ahead of religiosity or mental ethnicity), it is still the case that less than 40 percent of the variation in Jewish identity can be predicted from measures of parental

characteristics. Anecdotal evidence from families in which siblings have chosen highly divergent Jewish life-styles illustrates this point. It follows that more subtle family characteristics, or genetic influences, must also be at work. An important project for the next phase of Jewish identity research is to look at sibling variations in Jewish identity and to explore their relationship with the psychological and religious dynamics of individuals and their families.

NOTES

1 S. Miller, M. Schmool, and A. Lerman, "Social and political attitudes of British Jews: some key findings of the JPR survey," *JPR Reports,* no. 1 (February, 1996).

2 S. Haberman, B. Kosmin, and C. Levy, "Mortality Patterns of British Jews," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* (A), 146/3 (1983), 294–310; see also Miller, Schmool, and Lerman.

3 For example, S. Miller, "Religious practice and Jewish identity in a sample of London Jews," in Jonathan Webber, ed., *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* (Oxford: Littman Library, 1994), 193–204.

4 S. Miller, "The Practice of Judaism in Britain," in J. Neusner, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Judaism* vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 20–32.

5 E. Weiss Ozarack, "Social and cognitive influences on the development of religious beliefs," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 28/4 (1989), 448–63.

6 M. Schmool and S. Miller, *Women in the Jewish Community: Survey Report* (London: Office of the Chief Rabbi, 1994). S. Miller, "The Impact of Jewish Education on the Religious Behavior and Attitudes of Jewish Secondary School Pupils," *Studies in Jewish Education*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1988), 150–65.

CHAPTER 4

A Typological Approach to French Jewry

Régine Azria

Like other Diaspora groups, French Jewry is far from homogeneous. It is heterogeneous with regard to the geographical origins of its members and their socio-cultural and economical achievements, as well as their attitudes toward Judaism, Israel, and other central or minor Jewish and non-Jewish issues. While some Jews today still consider themselves the heirs of a Jacobin republican tradition of prejudice against Jewish separatism and ostentatious particularism, others support, with varying degrees of consent, the idea that Jews share specific Jewish interests beyond the religious sphere; that is, they support the principle of minority-group identity and togetherness.

From a typological point of view, one may say that Jews have experienced three types of togetherness in France, corresponding to three particular "moments" in their history and in the history of their host country: (1) the pre-modern period; (2) the period of the Enlightenment and the emancipation, which includes the Vichy interlude and extends through the late 1960s; and (3) the period of disenchantment.

In the pre-modern period, Jews had no alternative, other than conversion, to living primarily among other Jews. After the Babylonian and Roman exiles, and due to their ensuing and permanent diasporic situation, they were forced, within their host societies, to share specific spaces and social networks with other Jews. They remained more or less confined, enjoying greater or lesser openings to the outside world, depending on the local circumstances and the times. They considered themselves members of a separate group, both part of the surrounding world and at the same time socially relegated to its fringe. This was how Gentiles saw them as well. Jews were Jews full-time, and they did not question it. Being Jewish was simply a matter of unquestionable fact for Jews and non-Jews alike. To put it briefly and starkly: Jews lived according to their own Jewish agenda, communicated

in their own Jewish idioms, and married among their own. Their commitment to and their interactions with the outside world were limited and mainly instrumental.

The second moment, the period of the Enlightenment and the emancipation, witnessed the decomposition of the traditional Jewish holistic way of life as masses of Jews responded to the invitation to join political and civil society as full-fledged members. Increasingly, Jewish social and cultural separatism was considered illegitimate within a modern democratic secular state. The state was supposed to integrate all its citizens on egalitarian grounds with regard to their legal and political rights, and without discriminating on the grounds of religion. Accordingly, it was the duty of all citizens to consent unreservedly to be integrated into the nation. Therefore, rather than supporting Jewish separatism and confinement, legitimate Jewish togetherness and participation would gradually expand to include the broader society.

From then on, being Jewish no longer meant that one belonged to a particular people or sub-group, but rather that one was a person of the Jewish faith. In the French *laïc* context, Jewishness was to become a private matter and was to be experienced within the home or the synagogue. In fact, the same was true for Catholics and Protestants. Certainly, the mission of the Consistoire, as defined by its founder, Napoleon I, was less to manage an ethnic entity than to administer religious institutions and watch over the behavior of the flock; right and wrong behavior were no longer evaluated according to traditional Jewish standards but according to those of the larger society.

Of course, not all Jews agreed with this confessional, church-like definition of Jewishness, especially among those who came from East European *shtetlekh* and those who came, some decades later, from the North African *mellah* (ghetto). Beyond their own local or regional cultural specificities, the two groups would bring to their new homeland of France some strong collective features, including rituals, cultural and linguistic practices, intense in-group relationships, political activism, and a deep sense of their common past and memory as well as of their shared future. But, except for a recalcitrant minority, this minimal, confessional definition, which concerned individuals rather than communities, would gradually come to describe the consensual pattern, albeit nuanced, of French Jewry until the advent of what I call the period of disenchantment.

This period covers the last twenty-five years, from the late 60s or early 70s to the present. During this period many important events took place in the international arena, including the resurgence of conflict in the Middle East, with the outbreaks of the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War and the emergence of the Palestinian issue; the collapse of the Communist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War; and the acceleration of the processes of globalization and the spread of the free-market economy, with a growing awareness of their uncontrolled "side effects."

During this time many things changed in France also. First of all, the state- and nation-centered ideology declined; political party and trade-union commitments were replaced by increasing concern with social, environmental, cultural, and private issues. The dramatic political weakening of the French Communist Party and the collapse of the Communist electorate serves as an illustration. They may be interpreted as merely the logical consequence of the failure of the Communist regimes; or as part of a larger process of French citizens' disaffection with politics. As a corollary, individualism and the search for personal well-being progressed in this period.

The process of secularization was also under way during this period. Because it is so intricate, this issue, which has been widely described, analyzed, and debated, deserves further development. I will mention only two points which, in my estimation, best describe the changes that occurred in France over this period of time:

(1) Central religious institutions, such as the Catholic Church, were significantly weakened. Except for its symbolic dimension, this nation-wide, monopolistic institution lost much of its power and influence over French society and individuals. In post-revolutionary France, the Catholic Church has been relegated to a minor role in education and health; it no longer intervenes in politics or public affairs. Moreover, in recent decades it has lost much of its influence on individuals' private lives—even among observant Catholics.

A similar process has been taking place within French Jewish religious institutions. Despite the fact that it has been until now the sole official representative of French Jewry, the Consistoire, once the institutional backbone of post-revolutionary French Jewry, has lost its monopolistic status.

This loss of power, status, and ascendency over society as a whole and over individuals is due to increasing religious indifference but also

to the emergence of rival religious currents and agencies. Regarding Jewish institutions, the consistorial monopoly is now being challenged and threatened by liberal and Orthodox rivals.

(2) Parallel to the decline of central religious institutions has been the simultaneous rise of alternative religious movements. The success of these movements is largely due to their focus on the self, subjectivity, emotions, expectations of direct access to the divine, and the psychological comfort that comes from belonging to a group. The success of religious entrepreneurs and groups such as the charismatic movement, the Pentecostalists, Lubavitch, and the whole array of new religious movements that arrived in France (mostly from the US) in the mid-70s serves to illustrate this point.

These changes within the religious sphere are structurally similar to those previously mentioned in regard to the political sphere. The changes in both spheres reflect institutional deregulation, decentralization, uncontrolled diversification, and free entrepreneurship under the pressure of individualism.

During the period of disenchantment, the adult male population of foreign workers was transformed into a population of permanent settlers. Masses of workers had been brought to France in the 1950s through the 1970s in order to meet the country's manpower needs and to contribute to its industrial reconstruction. Most came from France's former colonial empire and had temporary work contracts. In the mid-1970s, the country had to face the oil crisis and a growing rate of unemployment among the French-born population. The French government then decided to allow the wives and children of those foreign workers who did not wish to return to their native countries to join their husbands and fathers and settle permanently in France. Among the many consequences of the permanent settlement of this largely Muslim population was that a twofold, traumatic reality was revealed to the French government and the nation. First, there was the revelation that the cultural and historical homogeneity of France, which until now had been unquestioned, was a myth; and secondly—a corollary of the first revelation—the actual ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of late 20th-century France was uncovered. These issues crystallized into passionate debates about French identity and *laïcité*.

Finally, during this period significant changes occurred within French Jewry. One often hears nowadays that being Jewish in a democratic liberal country is as much a matter of free will and choice as of

collective heritage. This statement may be interpreted in two ways. Some argue that the demands of integration should under no circumstances prevail over the demands of Jewish tradition and, similarly, others claim that Jewish loyalty should under no circumstances threaten the achievements of integration. Among the most noteworthy developments within the French Jewish community during this period were: the rapid and globally successful integration of the Sephardic Jews from North Africa into urban France in the aftermath of the decolonization; the steady progress of exogamous marriages—also among Sephardic Jews—and the growing number of children born from mixed marriages; and the continuing decline of religious practice and institutional affiliation and participation.

On the other hand, an important change was the rise of a renewed awareness of and concern for Judaism and Jewish culture, tradition, and history among secularized and relatively well integrated upper-class Jews as well as among lower- and middle-class Jews. This awareness and concern has been expressed in different ways, ranging from the strict "return" to religious practice and way of life (*ba'alei teshuvah*) to demands for Jewish culture and simple curiosity regarding Judaism.

In either case, formal conversion was rarely considered a prerequisite to being Jewish; nor was there a perceived need to choose between Jewish and French identity. Yet what was considered necessary by many people who felt involved was in-depth reflection on the progress that would need to be made in order to find a path between Jewish and French identity.

As a result of these changes (and other circumstances not discussed here), traditional, inherited components of Jewishness such as biological continuity within Jewish families and the transmission of Jewish ways of life and deep-rooted meanings and values from parent to child were progressively relegated to an obsolete past—if not as normative references, at least as central features of contemporary Jewish reality. Indeed, these genuine components of Jewishness, which have been part of its definition from its origin, no longer describe mainstream contemporary Jewish reality. They were largely replaced in the agenda of central Jewish institutions by topics related to exogenous identity mobilization: unconditional support for Israel, warnings against anti-Semitism, and collective commemoration of the Shoah (though with little participation by North African Jews).

Whatever their intrinsic merits and tactical adequacy in certain

situations, these issues stand in sharp contrast to the time-honored components and contents of Jewishness. Unlike the permanence and the structuring and shaping character of identities that have lasted for generations, deeply established through practice and transmission, these topics are dictated by the events of the outside world. Appropriate as they may be to inculcate a sort of "Jewish awareness," they can, however, hardly provide Jews with firm bases for constructing identity. These mobilization topics are merely instrumental and reactive. They are the last tools at the disposal of powerless shepherds whose flocks are deserting the fold. Confronted with the rapid hollowing out of Jewish identity, Jewish communal leaders prescribe them as substitutes for identity to those Jews who feel uneasy about their Jewishness, and who are eager to give concrete shape, contents, and channels of expression to an otherwise abstract and empty notion. Those who view the Jewish future with confidence do not need the support of these mass mobilizing issues to feel Jewish or to identify with Judaism. So far, these mobilization topics interfere only marginally and intermittently with Jews' everyday lives and with their professional and social activities in the global society.

Thus, two apparently antithetical processes are at work within contemporary French Jewry: a process of ongoing integration into French society, on the one hand, and on the other, following a long period of indifference, a renewal of interest in and concern for things Jewish. I prefer to speak of "a renewal of interest in things Jewish" rather than of "a renewal of Jewish identity" because the latter seems an inadequate and excessive way to describe a multifaceted and much more nuanced reality. The point is that these two processes are not mutually exclusive; they do not trace the outlines of well-defined separate groups. Rather, they are closely intertwined and may be observed in a single individual through a variety of attitudes and behaviors. This suggests that within the French context of religious freedom and communal disaffiliation, in a situation of numerous religious alternatives, concern with Jewish identity and commitment to Jewish life admit different levels, intensities, and channels of personal involvement.

In order to render as accurate an account of this diversity as possible—an account free of value judgment—I propose a typology of Jewish involvement, which, while breaking with the usual center-periphery pattern, gives precedence to the logic of the actors. This typology is open and may be enriched with additional categories. Meanwhile,

I suggest the following categories: 1) professional Jews; 2) faithful Jews, or Jews concerned with Jewish continuity; 3) militants or volunteers; 4) consumers; and 5) seekers. These categories are not mutually exclusive and may overlap. Each Jew may have different types and levels of Jewish and non-Jewish involvement, each with its specific meaning, and each corresponding to specific needs or expectations at a given moment. Let us consider them one by one.

PROFESSIONAL JEWS

This category includes men and women who make their living in Jewish institutions as wage-earners. They are identified as Jews primarily by virtue of their professional involvement, ability, activities, and status, and therefore enjoy a certain visibility. These professionals have different types of skills, levels of responsibility, and fields of competence. Besides those employed in professions related to religion and ritual, such as rabbis, cantors, Talmud-Torah teachers, *shochtim*, *mohelim*, *kashrut* supervisors, scribes, Judaica dealers, etc., they are managers, directors, secretaries, social workers, schoolteachers, technicians, watchmen, security officers, journalists, public relations agents, lawyers, researchers, shopkeepers, kosher butchers, bakers, grocers, and so on.

Despite the fact that their commitment to Jewish life is primarily professional, their personal agendas often suggest other or deeper levels of involvement and personal motivation. Since being a professional Jew does not bestow particular prestige or wealth in France, the primary motivations for making one's living within the Jewish community are of three types:

a) Personal convictions—religious, ideological, political, ethical, etc.—and a predilection for Jewish affairs. This type of motivation is self-justifying and self-explanatory.

b) Life opportunities. For example, at the end of World War II, French Jewish institutions were in ruins. A new generation of men and women was urgently needed to take over the community and cope with post-war demands. The emerging leadership and professional cadres, now retired, were composed mainly of former activists, of men and women who, as former members of the Jewish Resistance, had been involved in the rescue of their fellow Jews during the war, and who were well prepared to devote themselves to the reconstruction of

French Jewry. Thus, after having become involved in Jewish affairs voluntarily during the war, they were transformed into professionals by the post-war need for skilled and motivated people. They became involved in welfare work (assistance to Jewish orphans, camp survivors, dispossessed people), in defending Jewish collective interests, and in creating and managing new Jewish political, educational, and cultural institutions.

c) The final motivation for making one's living within the Jewish community is probably less gratifying, but it is still real and thus should not be omitted. According to the Jewish tradition of mutual assistance, it is the duty of Jews to provide the means for living to all who need it. Given this obligation, and despite the many abuses to which it may lead, French Jewish institutions employ people who otherwise would have little chance of finding equivalent positions in the competitive labor market: people, for example, who lack the diplomas, the university degrees, or the professional skills required in their expected field of activity; who have experienced professional difficulties, frustrations, or failures in the past; who have not sufficiently mastered French; or who are unable or unwilling to adjust to French standards for cultural or religious reasons. In a way, these people compensate for the shortage of qualified human resources; they fill in the gaps in a situation of community disaffiliation, decreasing volunteership, and increasing difficulty in recruiting skilled professionals.

In sum, one may say that most professional Jews have made their career choices for personal reasons.

THE FAITHFUL

In this category I include Jews who are concerned with Jewish continuity, are faithful to a certain traditional way of life, and feel the need to live among other Jews. Observant Jews—whether strictly or moderately so—are numerous in this category but there are others as well.

Whether professionals or not, observant Jews are, by necessity and by conviction, committed to the Jewish establishment and its many agencies and actors. In order to correctly fulfil the *mitzvot*, they need at least a synagogue and a Jewish congregation with a daily or weekly *minyan*, a Jewish school for their children, a *mikvah*, a *beit midrash*, and access to kosher goods. This organizational and human setting corresponds to genuine Jewish traditional life. In present-day

France, it can be found in many well-identified sections of Paris and other larger cities, as well as in the suburbs or the provinces.

At first glance, the approach of the faithful to Jewish togetherness may appear to be dictated primarily by religious, ritual, and normative imperatives. Actually, it is dictated equally by social and psychological needs, inasmuch as the observance of *mitzvot* and traditions can be interpreted in many different ways. Sociological observations and analyses have already shown that they aim simultaneously at different targets and fulfil distinct levels of need—spiritual, social, and individual.

Traditional observance appears first of all to be the primary means for formally expressing spiritual, God-oriented beliefs; that is, beliefs that take for granted that the *mitzvot* and tradition were given to men and women to help them achieve God's plan. Secondly, it appears to be the appropriate channel for expressing man-oriented faith in Jewish continuity, a faith that may or may not involve belief in God. Thus, in performing rituals and experiencing some traditional aspects of Jewish life, those belonging to this second category of the faithful are seeking to perpetuate the Jewish people rather than to carry out God's will. Finally, traditional observance (especially among *ba'alei teshuvah*) should be understood also as one of the many paths to self-fulfilment available today; as a response to psychological needs. It is a choice that reflects one's quest and longing for a human, homelike—i.e. secure and (re)structuring—social environment. In this case, being faithful to Jewish togetherness and its supposedly traditional way of life can mean returning to and finding refuge in one's parents' or grand-parents' home.

The majority of those who belong to the category of the faithful take the moderate traditionalist path. The two other routes available to observant Jews are those of social *separatism* and religious *activism* towards so-called de-Judaized Jews.

Separatists support an exclusionary conception of Jewish life. Their in-group requirements are so demanding that only people sharing their views may join them. Contrary to the activists, whose conceptions are rather inclusive, they require that non-observant (or "de-Judaized") Jews agree to transform themselves into observant Jews. This missionary view, which aims at convincing secular Jews that they should "return" to a supposedly more "authentic" Judaism, is not far from that of the militants.

Those among the faithful whose demands are most exacting com-

bine all the elements of traditional Jewish togetherness: residential proximity, which ensures easy access to religious, social, and cultural facilities and to a selective Jewish environment; professional activity compatible with a Jewish way of life; and strict endogamy.

VOLUNTEERS OR MILITANTS

The volunteers who, pressed by a deep concern about Judaism and/or Jewishness, get involved in Jewish affairs without expecting any return in terms of prestige or money, constitute the "militant" category. They devote their free time, skills, energy, hearts, and even their money (though giving money alone does not make one a militant) to the service of a Jewish cause (social, political, cultural, or otherwise).

Together with the faithful, with whom they sometimes intermingle, the militants are the very ones who give meaning to the maintenance of collective Jewish life, the necessity of which is no longer taken for granted by all Jews. Like the faithful, they participate in organized Jewish life and prompt others to do so. Without them, communal spaces and institutions would be empty, useless shells. Without them the professionals would lose part of their justification. Without them French Jewry, and Diaspora Jewries in general, would disappear as a collective reality.

However, the logic of the militant is different from that of the professional or the faithful. Indeed, militants are more eager to *act for* than to *be with* other Jews. They are more disposed to devote themselves to Jews and to stimulate their sense of mutual responsibility than to immerse themselves in Jewish life. Moreover, there are different types of militants and different levels and intensities of militantism. Militants may devote a larger or a smaller part of their time and their lives to Jewish commitments—which may also be associated with other commitments in their life agenda. Jewish concerns are not necessarily first or central in the militant's life.

One should add that the plurality of opportunities offered to a would-be Jewish militant should not suggest that the French Jewish establishment favors pluralism. It rather favors unanimity and consensus.

CONSUMERS

In the eyes of most Jews, the Jewish community is no longer the exclusive or primary arena for Jewish togetherness. It is no longer the place within which one grows up and gets married, gives birth to and educates one's children. This all-embracing, holistic framework has given way to a set of separate, specialized agencies (religious, social, welfare, educational, cultural, political), the tasks of which are to meet the demands of consumers whose main concerns are not Jewish. For example, consumers require the assistance of a religious professional for circumcisions, bar/bat mitzvahs, weddings, and burials; turn to Jewish social agencies for assistance in difficult situations such as when they need help placing an elderly parent in a Jewish home, obtaining a loan, or getting a job; send their children to Jewish summer or winter camps so that they may have a—hopefully pleasant and exciting—experience of Jewish life that they do not get at home; and attend Holocaust Memorial Day events, lectures on Jewish subjects, fund-raising meetings, street demonstrations, and so on.

These few examples illustrate the fact that the majority of Jews are only casually, occasionally, discontinuously, and selectively committed to Jewish communal life. We should therefore view them as consumers—that is, as having a consumerist attitude towards Jewish institutions—rather than as militants or faithfully committed Jews, and consider the institutions as service providers rather than as spaces devoted to Jewish togetherness. We should thus no longer consider contemporary Jewish reality exclusively as a collective reality and no longer study it solely from the point of view of community. As a matter of fact, for many, if not most Jews, Jewish life has become a private, individual, or family matter.

Thus, the community approach does not reflect the totality of French Jewry and does not take into account the many non-institutional forms of Jewish social behavior and togetherness (student groups, professional networks, leisure activities, humanitarian work, etc.). Moreover, it obscures the logic that guides people in their life choices and in their identity construction. It does not apply to the majority of Jews living in France, who fall into the category of consumers. Unlike the professionals, the faithful, and the militants, the consumers do not look for continuity, meaning, or coherence in their Jewish choices. In looking for immediate—albeit short-lived—satisfac-

tion and fulfilment of their Jewish demands, they behave as consumers rather than as committed, responsible community members.

SEEKERS

The last category refers to those Jews who are disenchanted soul-searchers. Having stood aside from Jewish affairs for a long time and having had all sorts of life experiences, including political activities, initiation into oriental movements or religions, mystical journeys, sex- and drug-related experiences, they finally look for a Jewish experience. This category is mostly composed of middle-class, relatively cultured men and women in their fifties, for whom May 1968 was a formative experience. Though disenchanted, they are still curious and demanding; they are in search of meaning and self-construction. They are eager to share their ideas, values, and expectations with others. Thus, they wander from place to place: Jewish study-circles, conferences, debates, *ongai Shabbat*, Passover *seder*s, klezmer festivals, and so on—until they find a place with people they can listen to and learn from, or, even better, with people who are ready to listen to them, with whom they can have true and sincere exchanges. These are the seekers, and they are quite numerous in France.

Once again, the logic that motivates the seekers is quite different from that of the previous categories. The seekers' concerns are not primarily Israel and Diaspora Jews; they are less concerned with the fate of their fellow-Jews than with their own. They are interested in how they can reappropriate a lost identity and give coherence and meaning to a life made up of discontinuities. However, in trying to return to tradition, to rebuild a symbolic affiliation, to exhume their Jewish memories, they contribute to the creation of spaces where new forms of Jewish social behavior are being knitted together.

It is interesting to note that these demands create new opportunities. Indeed, quite a large number of Jewish circles, short lived or long lasting, were created in the last two decades. Unlike the conventional religious and militant ones, these newly created institutions have no ready answers. Their mission is precisely to provide a forum where questions may be freely raised, elaborated, and discussed—questions that were addressed previously to religious authorities and/or to secular Jewish leaders, but were answered unsatisfactorily. Unsurprisingly, most of the questions are concerned with identity issues: they

have to do with conversion, the status within the Jewish community of children born of mixed marriages, the acceptance of homosexuals, women's issues, new rituals, substitute secular rituals, and so on.

Additional categories could probably be included in this schematic overview of French Jewry. One of these is the vanishing category of "notables," the descendants of *shayne yidn* who accumulated great personal prestige and wealth, and whose last representative in France is the Rothschild family (which is still deeply involved in Jewish affairs).

I do not pretend to have presented an exhaustive typology here. My purpose is rather to suggest that new tools are needed for the analysis of the complexities of contemporary Jewish identities and to identify the different types of logic at work.

CHAPTER 5

"Jewishness" in Postmodernity: The Case of Sweden

Lars Dencik

INTRODUCTION

As *post*modernization—namely, a continuous process of social transformations—follows the modernization of Western societies, and as conditions of social life change, so do people's identity formation. How do identities of Jews, regarded both as a minority group and as individuals living in these societies, become transformed? How do they live as Jews in contemporary society? How, if at all, does their "Jewishness" manifest itself?

The main empirical basis for this chapter is a study conducted in 1999–2001, entitled "Jewish Life in Contemporary Modernity." The data come from a questionnaire of about a hundred questions that focus on Jewish life and attitudes towards Jewish issues[1] that was sent to members of the Jewish communities in Sweden.

The data show that most Swedish Jews[2] today identify strongly as Jews. The vast majority also consider the Jewish group in the country "part of the Jewish people" rather than as a "religious group." Most members of the Jewish communities in Sweden do not object to being considered an official Swedish "national minority." "Feeling Jewish inside," "loyalty to the Jewish heritage," and "a sense of belonging to the Jewish people" are the main components of their Jewish identity, whereas religious activities play a minor role in their personal sense of Jewishness.

Secular tendencies in Western societies seem to have a strong influence on the life-style and attitudes of members of the Jewish communities in Sweden. Thus, a majority of Swedish Jews agree that women should be given a role equal to men in Jewish life, including in synagogal life. Most reported holding an open and tolerant attitude towards "mixed" marriages. A majority of affiliated Jews agree that the Jewish Diaspora and Israel are moving towards different kinds of

Jewry. Only a small minority agree with the proposition that only by being Orthodox can Jewry survive. Further, a majority of respondents *dis*agreed with the proposition that "in the long run Jewry has a chance only in Israel." On the contrary, a vast majority of the members of the Jewish community stated that the future of Jewish life lies in supporting Jewish cultural and social activities in the country where they reside, Sweden.

The results of the study can be understood as emanating from the impact of postmodernization on the Western societies. Additional explanations are sought in demographic, political, social and cultural changes—among them a recent rise in post-Shoah (Holocaust) European Jewish cultural self-awareness—that have taken place in Europe in the wake of the collapse of Communism.

POSTMODERNIZATION: CHALLENGES TO TRADITIONAL JEWISH IDENTIFICATIONS

Globalization and new technologies such as biotechnology and digital information technology, by reinforcing each other, profoundly reshape the conditions of social life in highly developed countries. Furthermore, the pace of change is accelerating. These continuous processes of social transformation challenge the individual. Whatever used to be does not prevail for very long. The social lifetime of almost everything—traditions, technologies, production methods, communication systems, family patterns, sex roles, scientific "truths," values, customs, life-styles—become shorter and shorter. More than ever before, change becomes the natural order of life. Social collectives also have to find ways to cope with this ongoing *post*modernization. One has to become what one is not: this seems to be one of the challenges postmodernization poses to the individual.[3] One of the few things one can be sure of in this situation is that there is nothing one can be really sure of. Nothing is automatically valid just because it *used* to be so. Contemporary Western societies are characterized by "reflexive modernity" and can be described as "post-traditional" societies.[4] In order to cope adequately with their situation, individuals can no longer merely carry on the cultural traditions transmitted to them because they are no longer automatically socially relevant. This does not imply that all traditions have become obsolete, but that individuals will need to reflect

upon and make their own decisions about which traditions to keep and how to keep them. Postmodernization[5] places people in a situation of "cultural release/freewheeling" ("*kulturelle Freisetzung*") as Thomas Ziehe[6] has labelled it.

Judaism, based on ancient myths and codes of behavior, is one of the oldest and most profoundly tradition-based cultures in existence. But Jewish issues in the Western world have been undergoing fundamental and rapid transformation in the last century, not only because of major events in Jewish history, such as pogroms and the Shoah, but also because of the modernization process itself—with all that it has brought: *rationalization*, *secularization* and *individuation* of social life. Rationalization implies that effectiveness and profitability become superior considerations in all kinds of social affairs. Secularization creates opportunities for critical questioning of established values and traditions. The idea of equal rights for all, regardless of race, sex and social background has become widely accepted across the Western world. Individuation means that individuals have become singled out socially, "disembedded" from their social background—as Anthony Giddens puts it[7]—and nowadays ideally are treated as representatives only of themselves (and not of any ascribed collective, be it kinships, ethnic belongings, or the like). How do the adherents of one of the most traditional religions cope with the challenges of these ongoing transformations? How do members of the Jewish communities in one of the countries where this process of continuous *post*modernization is most pronounced, Sweden, cope with these challenges?

Additionally, recent developments such as the fall of fascist dictatorships in Southern Europe, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, the rise of the European Union, and the *intifadas* and other political developments in and around Israel have affected Jewish life in Europe. How are members of the Jewish communities in one of Europe's most developed but also most peaceful countries—Sweden—affected by these? Do Jews change their way of "being Jewish"? If so, how? Do they give up their traditions? Or do they perhaps attach new meanings to them? Modern life-patterns, including the rise in interethnic and interreligious ("mixed") marriages, make it difficult to define "*who* is a Jew." But the impact of postmodernization processes also makes it increasingly relevant to ask "*How* do you Jew?"

THE SWEDISH CONTEXT

Sweden is one of the so-called Scandinavian welfare states. Three significant features of these societies, relevant to this chapter, are:

a) a longstanding tradition, based in a hegemonic social democratic ideology, of intervening in the civil sector of social life. Attempts on the part of authorities to regulate the lives of citizens (by laws and fiscal policies, for example) in order to erase what are perceived as injustices and inequalities, are largely accepted in these societies;

b) a positive, even aggressive, attitude towards social modernization. Accentuated rationalization, enhanced secularization and increased individuation are seen as both unavoidable and appealing;

c) a third feature, more manifest in Sweden than in the other Scandinavian states, is rapid ethnic "pluralization" of its population. In the last three decades, Sweden has changed from extraordinary ethnic homogeneity—that served as the social basis for quite effective collectivistic measures—towards heterogeneity, with a considerable number of immigrants and refugees from many countries and several ethnic groups. Today, approximately 15 percent of the Swedish population is of non-Swedish heritage. Sweden has recently also officially proclaimed itself as a multicultural and multiethnic society. When ratifying the European Council's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1999, the Swedish Parliament also passed a law granting rights to five officially acknowledged national minorities, among them Swedish Jews.[8] In connection with the simultaneous ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority languages, Yiddish was also acknowledged as a minority language in Sweden.[9]

Adopting liberal criteria for who might be included in the group of "Jews," according to recent estimates, approximately 30,000 Jews live in Scandinavia (including Finland). Of these, approximately two-thirds may be counted as a "core" group of Jews, meaning that they are born Jewish or have converted to Judaism and—even if not religious—to some extent observe Jewish practices.[10]

The history of the Jewish population differs considerably among

the Scandinavian countries. In particular, the situation for Jews in these countries during and after World War II was quite different. Due to Sweden's neutrality during the war, Swedish Jewry escaped the Shoah. Norwegian Jewry, on the other hand, lost close to half of its members in the Nazi death camps. Danish Jewry was miraculously saved by the gentile Danish population. In Finland, on the other hand, Jews enrolled in military units of the Finnish army that fought against the Soviet Union, in fact, on the same side as the Germans. Different historical experiences and different demographic situations play a role in shaping Jewish life. The population of Jews living in the Scandinavian countries is as follows:

Table 5.1 ***Number of Jews Living in the Scandinavian Countries Today***[11]
(per thousand of the population)

Denmark	6,400–8,000;	≈	1.2
Finland	1,100–1,500;	≈	0.2
Norway	1,200–1,500;	≈	0.3
Sweden	15,000–19,000;	≈	1.7

These figures should be compared to the number of Jews in these countries just before World War II, and the number of persons lost in the Shoah in each of the countries:

Table 5.2 ***Number of Jews in the Scandinavian Countries in 1937 and the Number Who Perished in the Shoah***[12]

	Pre-war Jewish Population	Persons Perished in Shoah
Denmark	7,500	60
Finland	2,000	7
Norway	1,700	762
Sweden	7,500	0

When the Nazis seized power in Germany in 1933, there were 7,044 Jews living in Sweden.[13] At the outbreak of the war in 1939, the number had increased by approximately 3,000, mainly due to political asylum given to refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Comparing the two tables presented here, one may notice some striking facts:

a) With the exception of Sweden, the number of Jews living in the Scandinavian countries is lower today than it was before the war. This decrease, with the possible exception of Norway, cannot be explained by losses attributed to the war or Shoah.
b) Swedish Jewry has doubled in size as compared with the pre-war period. This can most likely be attributed to the effects of the Shoah. Many Jews living in Sweden today are survivors of the Shoah or their children. They, or their parents, came to Sweden shortly after World War II from other parts of Europe—a considerable number directly from the death camps.
c) Swedish Jewry today is approximately *twice as large* as the Jewry in all the other three Scandinavian (Nordic) countries *taken together*. This explains some of the differences in Jewish life among the countries. Numbers matter when it comes to social life: a "critical mass" is often necessary to make things possible. The larger the number of Jews in one location, the more intra-group social interaction is possible (including the possibilities of meeting potential partners), the more variation in life-style, in religious orientation and cultural customs can be manifested and tolerated.

Jewish life in Sweden—at least in Stockholm, where more than two-thirds of Swedish Jews live—can be characterized as vital, self-assertive, open to society, and visible.[14] In the 19th century, laws resulting in the emancipation of the Jews were passed. In 1870, when Jews were granted full citizenship and civil rights, there were about 3,000 Jews living in Sweden, who organized themselves in "*Mosaiska Församlingar*" (Communities of Believers in the Mosaic faith). Judaism as a religion—as opposed to Jewishness as a belongingness to a people-hood—was stressed.

In the early 20th century Jewish refugees from pogroms in the Russian Empire resettled in Sweden. During World War II, some 100 Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Norway managed to escape to Sweden. In October 1943 almost all Jews residing in Denmark were given asylum in Sweden after having been assisted by the local Danish population to cross the sea in small fishing boats. Almost all returned to Denmark at the end of the war. Immediately after the war, of the approximately 21,000 people rescued from Nazi camps by Swedish

"White Buses," some 5,500 were Jews. Through the Red Cross and UNRRA a further 10,000 Jews were brought to Sweden. In all, 7,000 survivors remained in Sweden, while the majority left for the USA or Israel.

In 1951, the law that every Swede must belong to an acknowledged religious denomination was abolished. Jews living in Sweden are no longer forced either to belong to "The Community of Believers in the Mosaic Faith" or to convert to Christianity. Approximately 350 people cancelled their membership in the Jewish community.

As a result of political migrations from Eastern Europe after 1956, by 1970 approximately 14,000 Jews—twice as many as in 1933—lived in Sweden. Strange as it may sound, one may say that contemporary Jewish life in Sweden has been "fed" by Nazism and Communism.

In the 1980s, "The Communities of Believers in the Mosaic Faith" changed their name to "*Jewish* communities." As modernity made secularism socially more acceptable, the conception of Jews as a mainly religiously distinct group weakened, and the idea that Jews are a people became stronger. Hence the shift of name to "*Jewish* community."[15]

Finally, in 1999 the Jews of Sweden were legally acknowledged as a Swedish *national* minority according to the European Council's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and Yiddish became acknowledged as a Swedish national minority language, with schools required to include discussion of Jews as one of Sweden's ethnic groups.

Yet, Sweden, according to a law dating to 1937, is the only country in the European Community (EU) that prohibits *shehita* (the slaughtering of animals according to the religious prescriptions).[16] In 2001 the Swedish parliament also passed a law aimed at restrictring and ultimately prohibiting circumcision of boys. Sweden grants Jews the status of an officially acknowledged national minority—including the right to autonomy and to pursue their own specific culture—but prevents them from practising central elements of their religion and culture. Both can, however, be seen as expressions of the same politically popular value, the desire to strengthen human and animal rights. The tradition of state intervention in the civil sectors of social life plays a role here.

There are three Jewish communities in Sweden, located in the three major cities, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmoe. Each is what has been called an *Einheitsgemeinde*, i.e. open to membership for any

Jew regardless of his or her religious or political orientation.[17] Today they constitute a Jewish civil society within the larger society. This includes a wide variety of community activities such as religious services, kosher food supplies, burial societies, social work, elderly services, service- and nursing homes, kindergartens, youth groups, summer camps, educational programs, a school, sports activities, periodicals and cultural events, and so on.

On the whole, "Jewish culture" has high standing in today's Sweden.[18] At least in part, this is due to the Swedish government's recent involvement in and support for "Jewish issues." In 1997, the "Living History Project," a research and educational campaign focusing on the Shoah and its legacy, was launched. In January 2000, the Swedish government convened an International Holocaust Conference attended by top-level politicians and scholars from all over the world. This was followed a year later by a large grant given to establish a European Institute for Jewish Studies in Stockholm (*Paideia*)and by declaring January 27, the day of the liberation of Auschwitz, an official "Holocaust Memorial Day against intolerance and racism."

Swedish Jewry itself, after years of displaying the traditional mentality of the Jewish ghetto—and for the last fifty years also living in the mental shadows of the Shoah—has begun to move to self-awareness, and perhaps also more and more out of the grips of Jewish nostalgia. Hence, many affiliated Jews now stress the need for outwardly directed activities as seen in the priority they attach to issues that should deserve attention in the future.

Table 5.3 ***Attitudes towards Jewish Communal Activities***
"When you think about the Jewish congregation, you may think that too little attention is paid to certain activities, while others get too much attention. What do you think deserves more or less attention?" (In percent)

Activity[19]	Good as it is	Needs more attention	Needs less attention	Don't know
Campaigns against anti-Semitism	24	68	1	6
Participation in public debate	31	54	2	13
Jewish cultural activities, theater, film festivals, etc.	35	52	3	10
Information service, *Judisk Krönika,* local radio, etc.	54	38	3	8

THE STUDY: "JEWISH LIFE IN MODERN SWEDEN"

Sociologist Karl Marosi of Copenhagen, Denmark, Professor Sigvard Rubenowitz of Gothenburg, Sweden, and I conducted the study, starting with a questionnaire developed by the Jewish Policy Research Institute in London (JPR) that had already been used to survey social attitudes of British Jews.[20] In shaping our questionnaire, we used several questions dealing with Jewish identity, attitudes towards religious practices, anti-Semitism and Israel. We developed another set of questions to trace possible impacts of postmodernization processes on respondents' life-style, adherence to traditions and to the (activities of the) Jewish community. Hence, the questionnaire also included questions relating to issues such as secularization, assimilation, gender equality, culture, ethnicity, and so on.

The boards of the Jewish communities were consulted to formulate questions about issues of interest to them and they distributed the questionnaires, asking their members to fill them in and send them back within a fortnight.

THE RESPONDENTS

It should be borne in mind that this study is an investigation of *the registered members* of the Jewish communities in Sweden. Membership in these communities is voluntary but requires one to be *Halachically* Jewish, i.e. have been born of a Jewish mother or to have converted to Judaism with an acknowledged rabbi. Recently, the entry criteria to the Stockholm community (but not to the Gothenburg and Malmoe communities) has been changed so that a person who has a Jewish father, but not a Jewish mother, may also become a member. Registered members are required to pay tax to the community, amounting on average to about 2 percent of a person's yearly net income.

All registered members who had reached age 18 at the time of the survey were sent a mail questionnaire. Where several people in the same household were members, each was asked to respond individually to the questionnaire. Anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed. Data collection took place in the summer and autumn of 1999 (Gothenburg and Stockholm) and in Malmoe in spring, 2001. In all, 5,991 questionnaires were sent to the members of the Jewish communities: 2,581 of them were completed and returned, a response rate

of 43 percent. Subsequent investigation of the social composition of the respondents and non-respondents showed no systematic differences between the two groups. Hence, it is likely that our data are representative of affiliated Swedish Jews. Looking at the social composition of the respondents, we observe that 56 percent are women and 44 percent are men. Their mean age is 54. Close to a fourth of the members are below the age of 40, more than a third are between 40 and 60, and more than four of ten are 60 or more. Twenty percent of the members are 75 years old or older, similar to the proportion of members who are 35 years or younger.

Swedish Jews have more formal education than Swedes in general—fewer than 10 percent of the Jews have 10 years or less of education, whereas 70 percent are college graduates. Little more than a third of affiliated Jews live as singles—one-third of these have never lived with a partner, another third have separated from a partner, and a third are widows. Of the approximately two-thirds of Jewish community members in Sweden who live in a family relationship,[21] one of three does so with a non-Jewish partner.[22]

As has already been indicated, many Jews in Sweden today came from other countries. Those who were either themselves not born in Sweden and/or whose parents (both of them) were not born in Sweden we label "immigrants." Those born in Sweden and both of whose parents were also born in Sweden we call "Vikings." Those with one Swedish-born parent and one "immigrant" parent we call "half-Vikings." By these criteria, a third of Swedish Jews are "Vikings," close to one-fourth are "half-Vikings," and 44 percent are "immigrants."

Nearly 90 percent of members of the Jewish communities are born Jews, and the others have converted to Judaism. Closer scrutiny revealed that more than 80 percent of the converts have some kind of Jewish family background.

How religious are our respondents? Looking at Table 5.4, below, we observe that somewhat more than a third of the members of the Jewish communities in Sweden today are what we may label "secular Jews" (if we combine in a single category those who indicate either that they are "non-observant" or "just Jewish").

The "traditional" and "Orthodox" groups are equal in size, and we refer to them as "religious Jews." Approximately a fourth define their position as lying between these groups and we call them "moderately observant."

Table 5.4 ***Religiosity of Swedish Jews***
"How would you describe your relationship to Jewish religious practice?"

Options	In percent
I am non-observant	9.2
I am Jewish, but just "in general"	27.6
I am "liberal" ("reform"/"conservative")	26.3
I am "traditional" but not Orthodox	33.9
I am Orthodox	3.1

FEELINGS OF "JEWISHNESS"

"Jewish identity" is a perpetually debated issue. What is it? Where does it stem from? How should it be preserved? Why is it lost? These are but a few of the many questions that seem inexhaustible topics for discussions in Jewish circles, though no unambiguous and definite answers are ever given.[23] Here I want to elaborate how those who identify themselves as Jews actually *handle* their Jewishness in the postmodern world, that is, how Jews in Sweden actually conceive of their Jewishness. A basic question is: How "Jewish" do the Swedish Jews feel they are? Tables 5.5 a) and 5.5 b) in different ways give an answer to this:

Table 5.5 a) ***Feelings of "Jewishness" among Members of Swedish Jewish Communities***
"There can be various senses of being 'Jewish.' Which of the following best describes your feelings?"

Options	In percent
Even though I have a Jewish background I don't consider myself a Jew	0.3
I am aware that I am a Jew but don't think about it that frequently	9.5
I feel rather Jewish, but other aspects of my life are also important	34.2
I am very aware that I am a Jew and that is very important to me	54.7
None of these alternatives, hard to say	1.3

These data show that Jews in Sweden today identify very strongly as Jews—close to nine out of ten indicate they feel quite Jewish, and more than half say it is very important to them. Every second member also claims to feel more Jewish than Swedish and the proportion

Table 5.5 b) ***Feelings of "Jewishness" among Members of Swedish Jewish Communities***
"Do you feel more Jewish or Swedish?"

Options	In percent
I feel more Swedish than Jewish	7.6
I feel equally Swedish and Jewish	38.9
I feel more Jewish than Swedish	49.2
Difficult to say, not sure	4.3

doing so is larger than the sum of those who say either that they feel more Swedish or feel equally Swedish and Jewish. Interestingly, among the "Vikings" many more state that they feel Jewish rather than Swedish when forced to choose between these options.

However, this does not mean that the Swedish Jews do *not* identify as Swedes. Almost all of them are Swedish citizens, Jewish children all go to regular Swedish schools,[24] young men do their military service like all others. The level of participation in public affairs and in general elections is at least as high among Jews as among other Swedes. In fact, the classic question often put to Jews—whether one is Jewish *or* Swedish—is becoming increasingly obsolete in a more multicultural world. One is not "either-or," nor "half-half." Jews in Sweden feel they are fully Jewish and fully Swedish.

How, then, are they Jews? What constitutes their personal sense of "Jewishness"? How do they conceive of the Jews as a group in the Swedish society?

Table 5.6 ***Factors Constituting a Personal Sense of "Jewishness"***
"How important is each of the following aspects for your personal feeling of 'being Jewish'?" (In percent)

	Very important	Of certain importance	Not at all important
Feeling of being Jewish in essence (e.g. as a personality, way of thinking, etc.)	80.8	16.8	2.4
Loyalty to my Jewish inheritance	78.3	19.7	1.9
Feeling of belonging with other Jews	76.1	22.5	1.4
Feeling of solidarity with Israel	61.0	31.7	7.4
Jewish culture (music, literature, arts, etc.)	57.1	37.8	5.1
Jewish atmosphere at home (food, customs, etc.)	52.2	39.1	8.7
Religious activities, going to the synagogue, religious customs, etc.	23.8	56.4	19.7

Clearly, one element—e.g., a feeling of having a "Jewish personality"—is the strongest factor contributing to the feeling of "being Jewish." But this is closely connected to a certain collective orientation, loyalty to one's Jewish inheritance and a feeling of belonging with other Jews. Religious activities are of considerably less importance to their personal sense of "being Jewish." Whereas less than one of four members of the Jewish communities attribute high importance to such activities, and close to one out of five declare that religious activities are of no importance to their "being Jewish," approximately eight out of ten state that a feeling of being Jewish in essence, loyalty to the Jewish inheritance and a sense of belonging to the Jewish people is very important to their personal feeling of "Jewishness." We may conclude that modern Swedish Jews have a primarily *ethno-cultural* conception of what it means to be Jewish.

JEWS AS A "NATIONAL MINORITY"

When asked how they regard Jews as a group, affiliated Jews answer as follows:

Table 5.7 a) ***Conceptions of the Jewish Group in Sweden***
"How would you describe the Jewish community in Sweden? Mainly as a religious group or as part of the Jewish people?"

Options	In percent
Mainly as a religious group	4.5
Mainly as part of the Jewish people	65.3
Both equally	24.5
Don't know	5.7

Jews in Sweden, while identifying strongly with their "Jewishness," regard this mainly as an ethnic matter. While Jewish communities from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, tried to become regarded as just another religious community—and generally were regarded as such—today Jews tend to down-play the religious aspect and to stress the ethno-cultural aspect of what it means to be "Jewish."

In the wake of the European Council's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995, the Swedish Parliament concluded that Jews in Sweden could qualify as a "national

minority." This triggered an intense debate among Jews. The deliberations ended in the Jewish Central Council of Sweden accepting the proposition. (Cf. the response of Hungarian Jews to a similar proposal made by the Hungarian government.) Shortly after that, we asked how they saw this.

Table 5.7 b) ***Conceptions of the Jewish Group in Sweden***
"A government report has proposed that Swedish Jewry acquire the status of a 'Swedish national minority.' 'National minority' indicates the group in question has been in Sweden so long that it has become an integral part of the nation; yet, it has such an ethnic and/or cultural identity that there is general concern for preserving it. What is your opinion about the concept 'national minority' being used for the Jews of Sweden?"

Responses	In percent
I think it is correct	22.4
I don't mind	40.8
I don't like it	18.4
I don't know	18.3

More affiliated Jews think that being defined as a 'national minority' is correct than those who don't. Almost two-thirds of the members either don't mind or think it is right that Swedish Jewry acquire the status of a "Swedish national minority." Among those who don't like it there are more elderly people than in the other groups. Thus, it seems that Emancipation in Sweden has reached what may be called a new, perhaps *post*-emancipatory phase. While earlier the aim was to be accepted as equals, now there seems to be an ambition to be acknowledged not only as "equal," but also as "different"—while, of course, keeping all equal rights and privileges as fully respected citizens.

OBSERVANCE OF JEWISH PRACTICES

How, then, do members of the Jewish communities live *as Jews* in Sweden? Which Jewish laws and traditions do they observe, and to what degree?

One interesting observation is that although more than a third of the respondents are "secular Jews" (cf. Table 5.5), and only 3 percent declare themselves Orthodox, the level of observance of traditional

Table 5.8 ***Degree of Observance of Jewish Practices***

Proportion of members of the Jewish communities that	In percent[25]
Have their sons circumcised	84.7
Attend the *seder* ceremony	84.0
Celebrate Hanukkah	83.8
Have a mezuzah on the door-post	79.8
Avoid work on Rosh Hashanah	59.8
Fast on Yom Kippur	47.6
Light *Shabbat* candles	32.4 + 40.1[26]
Keep kosher at home	18.1 + 20.1[27]
Avoid driving and traveling on *Shabbat*	10.0

and religiously prescribed Jewish customs is quite high. Almost three-quarters of the respondents light *Shabbat* candles at least once in a while and more than one-third of the members keep some level of kosher household.[28] In answer to another question, 42 percent of the respondents say that outside their homes they may eat any kind of meat, including pork. Few insist on kosher food, some (12%) go for vegetarian food or fish, whereas a proportion equal in number to those that eat all kinds of meat, eat meat even if it is *not* ritually slaughtered, but avoid pork. That is to say, a majority of the members—again one should remember that approximately one-third of them can be classified as "secular"—do keep some kind of Jewish traditional and religiously-dictated eating rules in mind even when they are "outside the walls."

Note that the vast majority of the members have a mezuzah and that nearly everyone participates regularly in the yearly *seder* and Hanukkah celebrations. With the exception of having one's sons circumcised, no other Jewish practices are observed to that degree. Why? These practices are certainly not religiously the most significant in Judaism, but they are "national" in character. There is hardly anything "transcendental" about them. What is celebrated through them is belonging to a peoplehood rather than a relationship to a Divinity. The astonishingly frequent use of mezuzah seems to serve as a discreet marker of Jewish belongingness. Hardly any Swede would know what such a small sign on the door-post signifies, if they would notice it at all, whereas all Jews are able to "read" it as a symbol signifying that behind these walls resides a Jewish family.

It may also be noticed in this context that prescriptions relating to the "holiest" of Jewish holidays, such as fasting on Yom Kippur and avoiding work on Rosh Hashanah, are not assigned the highest priority in observance of Jewish traditions.

JEWS AS MODERN SWEDES

Modern Sweden is a basically secular and at the same time profoundly Lutheran society. Whereas religious practices such as attending church or religious ceremonies have a quite low standing in everyday life, a strong work ethic, industriousness, and efficiency based on dispassionate calculations color the way of life. Rationalism and egalitarianism, individualism and tolerance are in many respects superordinate values in contemporary Swedish society. Are these signs of postmodernity reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of the Jews in Sweden? One way of assessing this is to look at how the members cope with tendencies towards gender equality prevailing in contemporary Swedish society. Traditional and Orthodox Judaism prescribes a different role to women than men have in religious life. According to *Halachah* (Jewish law), women cannot sit together with men in the synagogue; they do not count in the *Minyan* (the quorum of ten required for a religious service); they are not called to the Torah as part of the service; where Biblical scriptures are read. A woman is also not entitled to become a rabbi.[29]

We asked about attitudes to the position of women in Judaism.

Table 5.9 a) ***Attitudes to the Position of Women in Judaism***
"The position of women in Judaism is not satisfactory" (In percent)

Agree completely	21.3
Agree by and large	31.1
Neither–nor	23.6
Disagree in part	10.0
Disagree completely	13.9

A bare majority of the Jewish community members find the position of women in Judaism unsatisfactory. Interestingly there are only slight differences between younger and older members, and between

the male and the female members. The largest proportion of dissatisfied members (59%) is found among middle-aged women, the smallest proportion is found among the young male members (47%), and the largest proportion of members who do not disagree (24%) with the present position of women in Judaism is found among the young male members. It is also remarkable that even within the sub-group of "religious Jews" there are more (42%) who find that the position of women is *not* satisfactory than there are who find the position of women completely or by and large satisfactory (32%).

With respect to particular functions the picture looks like this:

Table 5.9 b) ***Attitudes to the Position of Women in Judaism***
"Do you think that Jewish women should…" (In percent)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Be able to sit among men in the synagogue	68.7	24.8	6.5
Count in a *Minyan*	42.4	41.1	16.5
Be called to the Torah	49.1	35.1	15.8
Be a rabbi	50.7	33.1	16.2

Clearly, more people want to change synagogue life in an egalitarian direction than want to stick to the traditional rules of sex differences. It seems that the strong tendency towards egalitarianism in Sweden has repercussions in the Jewish community.

Acceptance of egalitarianism in religious matters is in some ways parallel to acceptance of the status of a national minority because in a truly multicultural setting all minority groups ideally have equal rights. While in a *pre*-multicultural setting *assimilation* as in the first phase of Emancipation in Europe often was the only road towards emancipation, in a postmodern multicultural setting *ethnification*—promoting the ethno-cultural particularity of the group and simultaneously being granted non-discriminatory and equal rights with other groups, including the majority—becomes a new, viable option for movement towards emancipation.

Do other tendencies in social postmodernization processes, such as increasing respect for individual choices, tolerance for deviation, and giving individual subjectivity priority over ascribed formalities, also show up in our data?

We have previously noted that one-third of married members of the Jewish communities, or those living with a partner, do so with a non-Jew. How do Jews feel about "mixed marriages?"

Table 5.10 a) ***Attitudes to "Mixed Marriages"***
"A Jew should marry a Jew" (In percent)

Agree completely	20.6
Agree by and large	30.0
Neither–nor	19.2
Disagree in part	12.4
Disagree completely	17.8

Only half agree in principle that mixed marriages should be avoided. But how would they handle this in their personal life? We asked all members, including those presently married to a Jewish partner, the following:

Table 5.10 b) ***Attitudes to "Mixed Marriages"*** *(In percent)*

	Yes	No	Don't know
"Could you, as a matter of principle, consider marriage to a non-Jew?"	51.6	35.3	13.1

Half don't mind marrying a non-Jew, and analysis shows that a dividing factor here is degree of religiosity. More than two-thirds of the secular members could consider marriage to a non-Jew, whereas "only" one-fourth of the religious members could do so. The fact that even a quarter of the religious members could consider doing so is most remarkable.

Having asked about what they would do, we asked respondents about attitudes toward their children's possible intermarriage.

Again, only one out of four members would intervene to prevent a child from marrying a non-Jewish partner. The modern idea that individual choices and preferences should be respected, even within the family and even when they are in opposition to traditional values, has evidently become widely accepted among Swedish Jews.

Not only is *individualism* a prominent value in postmodernity, but so is *subjectivity* of individuals as a legitimate base for action.

Table 5.10 c) ***Attitudes to "Mixed Marriages"***
"If I had a son/daughter[30] who wanted to marry a non-Jew I would do all in my power to prevent it." (In percent)

Agree completely	12.3
Agree by and large	13.2
Neither–nor	16.9
Disagree in part	15.4
Disagree completely	42.3

While formerly what people "objectively" were—e.g. noblemen, unmarried, "Jewish"—determined how they were treated, today what seems increasingly to matter is how the individual subjectively thinks of him- or herself.

We can see this in attitudes of Jews towards who should be entitled to membership in Jewish communities. Traditionally, this is open only to those who are "objectively" (*Halachically*) Jewish, i.e. born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism by a recognized rabbi. How do members regard alternative options, for instance, those who identify as "Jewish," that is, "feel Jewish" subjectively, even if they are not *Halachic* Jews? Should they be entitled to membership in the Jewish community?

Table 5.11 ***Attitudes towards Membership in the Jewish Community***
"In your opinion, who could be a member of a Jewish congregation?"

Indicate which of the following options you support[31]	In percent
A person who has a Jewish father should also be allowed to be a member	51.5
A person married to a Jew should also be allowed to be a member	36.0
Only a person born to a Jewish mother or who has converted	28.6
All persons who so wish should be allowed to be members, irrespective of background	27.4

There is no marked difference in support for the most "liberal" and the most "Orthodox" standpoints: little more than a quarter of the members support each of these two radical standpoints. A purely subjective criterion for membership in the Jewish community is obviously not any more acceptable than a purely objective criterion. The relatively moderate standpoint, which still contradicts the established

code of Orthodoxy,[32] is that a subjective feeling of belongingness is not enough for a person to become a member, and that one should also have some kind of "objective," though not necessarily a *Halachic,* relationship to Judaism. This is supported by approximately half of Swedish Jewry.

FROM *"GALUT"* TO DIASPORA

In modern Jewish history there have been two attitudes towards emancipation, "the nationalist solution," opting for a "national home" for the Jewish people in the land of Israel, and "the integrationist solution," aiming for Jews to become equal to other citizens wherever they live. The Holocaust raised questions about this option, while the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 made the nationalist option viable for Jews all over the world.

How do Swedish Jews relate to these options? Few Swedish Jews have settled in Israel in recent years. By far most Jews in Sweden have chosen to stay in Sweden. Does this mean that they consciously favor the integrationist option? In Europe until World War II the integrationist solution meant a road towards assimilation—which ended in a catastrophe. But in the era of multiculturalism, it is possible for people to be "hyphenated-Swedes", e.g., "Jewish-Swedes." Diaspora is a viable choice and Jewry should be seen as divided into a Diaspora Jewry and an Israeli Jewry. Do Swedish Jews perceive the situation that way?

Table 5.12 ***Attitudes to Assimilation***
"Assimilation is a Greater Danger to Judaism than Anti-Semitism."
(In percent)

Agree completely	26.3
Agree by and large	32.0
Neither–nor	16.9
Disagree in part	11.4
Disagree completely	13.4

When asked what activities deserve more attention by the Jewish congregation, "campaigns against anti-Semitism" scored highest (cf. Table 5.4). Yet, assimilation is perceived as an even greater threat. Still,

most Swedish Jews don't find it too problematic to live there. Perhaps their understanding of Jewish life does not coincide with what a Jewish life would be, for instance, in Israel. More respondents agree than disagree that two different kinds of Jewry are emerging, Diaspora Jewry and Israeli Jewry. This does not mean that ties with Israel are weak. On the contrary, our data clearly show that the Jews in Sweden maintain very close ties with Israel: 95 percent of them have visited Israel, and 83 percent of them have close relatives or friends in Israel. Fifty-eight percent indicate they "feel strong solidarity" and an additional 37 percent "feel some solidarity" with the State of Israel. But Israel is not, even ideally and potentially, their country, and their Judaism is a different Judaism.

What, then, do they see as the options for the future of Swedish Jewry?

Table 5.13 ***Attitudes towards the Future of Jewry***
"Today there is considerable discussion concerning the future of Jewry in Sweden. What is your view?" (In percent)

	Agree[33]	Doubtful	Don't agree[34]
With conscious investment in cultural and social activities, Jewry can survive in Sweden	78.9	14.6	6.5
In the long run, Jewry has a chance only in Israel	28.7	26.1	45.2
Only as Orthodoxy can Jewry survive	11.1	19.1	69.9

Relatively few believe Jewry can survive only in Israel. A large majority also reject the idea that Orthodoxy would be the way to Jewish survival. The "integrationist solution" clearly prevails. Swedish Jews obviously don't find themselves living in *Galut,* and living in the Diaspora seems to be a conscious choice, as it is for most Jews today.

"VIRTUALLY JEWISH" OR JEWISH REVIVAL?

European Jews have until very recently dwelled in the dark shadows of the Shoah. But there are signs of a Jewish revival. In *Virtually Jewish*, Ruth Ellen Gruber writes: "More than half a century after the Holocaust, in countries where Jews make up just a tiny fraction of the population, products of Jewish culture (or what is perceived as Jewish

culture) have become viable components of the popular domain… Across the continent [Europe], Jewish festivals, performances, publications, and study programs abound. Jewish museums have opened by the dozen, and synagogues and Jewish quarters are being restored, often as tourist attractions…klezmer music concerts, exhibitions, and cafés with Jewish themes are drawing enthusiastic—and often overwhelmingly non-Jewish—crowds in Berlin, Kraków, Vienna, Rome and other cities."[35] Stockholm could certainly be added to that list. To which extent are the Jews themselves interested in this Jewish culture?

Table 5.14 ***Participation in Jewish Cultural Activities***
"Have you during the past year?" (In percent)

	Yes	No
Seen a film because it had a Jewish connection	83.3	16.7
Read a book because of its Jewish content	78.6	21.4
Been to a Jewish museum/exhibition	57.9	42.1
Attended a lecture on a Jewish topic	57.5	42.5
Been on a trip or excursion with a Jewish theme	55.9	44.1
Gone to a play because it had a Jewish connection	52.9	47.1

Swedish Jews seem to have a very strong interest in Jewish culture. More than three-quarters claim to have seen a film and read a book during the past year "because of its Jewish connection," and a majority have even made the effort to participate in less accessible aspects of Jewish cultural life. This interest is fairly evenly distributed among the age groups, as well as between the religious and secular.

There are those who fear that this interest in "cultural Judaism" is a substitute for involvement in Judaism as a religious practice.[36] But is it? We consider more than one-third of the affiliated Jews as "secular Jews" (cf. Table 5.5), but we have also noted (cf. Table 5.12) that they generally perceive assimilation as a major threat to Judaism. How do these jibe?

Secularization may mean to abandon religion, but assimilation means to leave Jewishness. Jews who do not practice religion have not necessarily become "assimilated," and those who adhere to, or even take on, some traditional Jewish customs—most of which are based in Jewish religion—are not necessarily "religious."

Is the strong interest in Jewish culture just a sign that even Jews themselves are becoming "virtually Jewish," that their Judaism is merely "for external use only," nothing but a *chic* facet of their image? Or does the "Jewish revival" go deeper? To what extent have Sweden's Jews abandoned or resumed the Jewish customs that they were brought up with?

Table 5.15 ***Assimilation or Revival?***
"To what extent did your family observe Jewish customs and traditions during your childhood compared to what you do today?" (In percent)

We were more observant than I am today	41.0
There is no real difference between my parents' home and what I do today	30.1
I am more observant of customs and traditions than we were in my parents' home	19.5
The question is not applicable to me	9.4

Four of ten affiliated Jews say they are less observant today than they were in childhood. As we noted, four out of ten are also 60 years old or more. Closer scrutiny of those who say they have abandoned Jewish traditions show that almost all of them belong to this older segment of the members. When they grew up—most of them before World War II in Eastern Europe—practicing Jewish traditional customs in many cases was part of the conventional way of life. In Sweden today most of these customs are not part of the social conventions and are not observed. This does not necessarily mean that those who no longer observe them have become "assimilated." In fact, our data show that many of them both feel very "Jewish" and engage in Jewish affairs. More than one-third of the affiliated between 30 and 60 years old say they are *more* observant of Jewish customs and traditions in their present homes as compared to their childhood homes. This should not be taken as a turn towards "religiosity"—many of those we speak of here are "secular Jews." Rather this "revival" may be a manifestation of "*symbolic Judaism,*" consisting in partly and selectively adhering to traditional customs, but giving them new and subjective meanings.

CONCLUSIONS: ENJOYING THE ETHNO-CULTURAL SMORGASBORD

Swedish Jews are an officially acknowledged national minority. They are a distinguishable ethno-cultural group in society, and at the same time quite integrated into it. From this position, affiliated Swedish Jews also exhibit:

- strong Jewish self-awareness;
- clear-cut ethno-cultural identification as "Jews;"
- a high level of activity, especially within the field of "Jewish Culture;"
- a free choice and combination of Jewish practices;
- a tendency to attribute new meanings to those traditional Jewish practices that are observed.

Many Swedish Jews therefore wish to give equal value to all kinds of Jewish affiliation and to increase tolerance for differences among them. An interesting and challenging aspect of their way of "being Jewish" is their tendency to combine the traditions they choose to observe in a personally relevant way: for instance keeping a kosher or partly kosher household at home (38%), but enjoying shrimp in restaurants (67%), or sometimes lighting *Shabbat* candles (73%) but also giving Christmas gifts (35%), or having a mezuzah on the door to one's house (80%), but having a Christmas tree inside it (15%). In this selective choosing among the customs one often attaches new subjective meanings to these practices, meanings socially relevant to the individual in contemporary society. With all societal changes, traditions become transformed—not just now, and not just in Europe.[37] This is not assimilation but making traditional cultural patterns and customs relevant to one's contemporary social situation. This is nothing new in Jewish history; in this respect, Jews have always been modern.

This propensity to adapt to new conditions has become increasingly penetrated by a general tendency towards rationality, i.e. organizing one's life and choosing among alternatives according to what is pragmatic in the particular situation. This presumes considerable flexibility in the ways one hangs on to what one regards as basic values in Judaism. Seen in this perspective, what we have found are particular expressions of another phase of modernization, more precisely of "postmodernization." In line with this we may label the kind of Jewish

life that we see emerging in Sweden, and, as this volume shows, also in other parts of the Diaspora, a "postmodern 'Swedish smorgasbord' Judaism." It is important to understand that this is not only a way of being "postmodern," but also a new way of being *Jewish*.

Our investigation of contemporary Swedish Jewry points to a simultaneous transformation and revival of Jewish identities. From a previously largely negative pre-Shoah and Shoah-imprinted social identity there seems to be a movement towards more positive Jewish self-awareness accompanied by a strengthened perception of being a distinct ethno-cultural group in society. In a liberal democratic society like Sweden *all* members of a Jewish community are "Jews *by choice*." There are no institutions or significant social actors to enforce their position as "Jews," neither from within—no sanctions accompany those who leave the Jewish group—nor from the outside: there is in Sweden no officially sanctioned anti-Semitism, nor any significant political forces attempting to promote anti-Semitism in society that would serve to "remind the Jews who they are." Today to be a member of a Jewish community and/or to practice anything that is in any way "Jewish" is truly voluntary.

Living in the Diaspora always means to be an outsider and insider. This duality has often served as a source for both intellectual creativity and social criticism. It requires of the "diasporic person" or organized diasporic group a well-developed ability to cope with ambiguity[38] and a pronounced willingness and ability to make oneself at home within a certain kind of homelessness. Sociological analyses indicate that processes of postmodernization remarkably enhance these requirements. Whether European Jewry will be able to handle them is an open question. Swedish Jewry demonstrates a partly new, interesting and perhaps even path-breaking possibility.

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NOTES

1 An English version of the questionnaire called "Questions about Jewish Life" can be ordered from *lade@ruc.dk*. Together with my colleague and co-worker, the sociologist Karl Marosi in Denmark, we have applied the same questionnaire in studies of the members of the Jewish communities in Finland and Norway. Parallel studies have recently also been carried out in other countries such as Great Britain, Hungary, the Netherlands and South Africa. The Jewish Policy Research Institute in London is coordinating some of these studies.

2 "Swedish Jews" is used to describe those Jews in Sweden who are tax-paying members of a Jewish community there. It should, however, be noted that most Jews in Sweden (or Swedes of Jewish descent) have not enrolled as members in any Jewish community.

3 Lars Dencik, "Transformation of Identities in Rapidly Changing Societies," in M. Carleheden & M. Hviid Jacobsen, eds., *The Transformation of Modernity, Aspects of the Past, Present and Future of an Era* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 183–221.

4 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); U. Beck, A. Giddens, S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); M. Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture,* Volume II: *The Power of Identity* (London: Blackwell, 1997); A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

5 H. Arvidsson, L. Berntson, L. Dencik, *Modernisering och välfärd—om stat, individ och civilt samhälle i Sverige* (Modernisation and Welfare—on State, Individuals and Civil Society in Sweden) (Stockholm: City University Press, 1994). See also S. Crook, J. Pakulski, M. Waters, *Postmodernization. Change in advanced society* (London: Sage Publications, 1992).

6 T. Ziehe, H. Stubenrauch, *Plädoyer für ungewöhnliches Lernen* (Hamburg: Rohwohlt, 1982); Ziehe, *Kulturanalyser: ungdom, utbildning, modernitet* (Cultural analysis: youth, education, modernity) (Stockholm: Symposion, 1989).

7 Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity.*

8 The other groups are the Same people, Roma, Finnish Swedes and Tornedalians—a group living in the valley of the river Torne along the border of Sweden and Finland at the bottom of the Baltic Sea. They speak *meänkieli*, a variation of Finnish. Cf. *Statens Offentliga Utredningar*, 1997a & 1997b.

9 Of the other European states, only the Netherlands has also done so.
10 Estimated by demographer Prof. Sergio Della Pergola at the Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.
11 By the year 2000. The lower figure refers to the "core" group and the larger figure to an estimate of an "enlarged" group of Jews in each of the countries.
12 Based on research at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.
13 According to a Swedish law not abolished until 1951, every person living in Sweden had to belong to an acknowledged religious community. That is how we know the exact number of Jews living there at the time. Jews who had formally converted to Christianity are not included in these figures—hence, according to the race criteria of the Nazi Nuremberg laws the figure would be somewhat higher.
14 A French Jewish magazine in the year 2000 presented contemporary Jewish life in Sweden under the heading "*Vivre son judaïsme en toute liberté*" (*Euro J magazine* No 8, 2000). These tendencies are in sharp contrast to what was found in a study of Swedish Jewry 30 years ago. Cf. H. Gordon and L. Grosin, *Den dubbla identiteten. Judars anpassning i historisk och psykologisk belysning* (Dual identity. The adaptation of Jews in Historic and Psychological Light), (Stockholm: Dept. of Education, Stockholm University, 1973).
15 Similar tendencies at the same time surfaced also in other parts of Europe, i.e., in France where the previously derogative notion "*Juif*" gradually became socially accepted as a replacement for the religious category "*Israélite*". Cf. Dominique Schnapper, 1980; 1994.
16 Among the European countries Norway and Switzerland also prohibits *shehita*. These two countries, however, are not members of the EU.
17 The Stockholm Jewish community—by far the largest of the three in Sweden—runs three synagogues. The Great Synagogue is Masorti ("Conservative") and the two smaller have Orthodox services. There are also egalitarian services in the Community Center. The Gothenburg Jewish community defines itself as liberal, but for the time being both of the two synagogues there are Orthodox. The Malmoe Jewish community defines itself as an Orthodox community.
18 The periodical *Judisk Krönika* (Jewish Chronicle) is regarded one of the leading cultural magazines in Sweden, there is a high quality institutional Jewish Theater (*Judiska Teatern*), an active Jewish Museum featuring exhibitions of Jewish art, a Jewish Library, a yearly Jewish Film festival, annual appearances at the Swedish national book fair, several Klezmer music bands, etc.
19 Respondents were asked to react to 17 options. In this table only the 4 clearly directed to an outside audience are listed. It should however be noted that they all scored higher on "need more attention" than such options as "religious activities," "the synagogue," "maintenance of cemeteries" and "support for Israel."
20 See J. Goldberg and B. Kosmin, *The Social Attitudes of Unmarried Young Jews in Contemporary Britain* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 1997)

and S. Miller, M. Schmool and A. Lerman, *Social and Political Attitudes of British Jews: Some key findings of the JPR Survey* (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 1997).

21 In Sweden today it is socially accepted and also quite common that a couple live together as a family without being married. Approximately half the children born in Sweden today are born to parents who are not married. More than 90% of the children, however, in their early years live together with both parents.

22 While observing that one-third of the married *members* of the Jewish communities cohabit with a non-Jewish partner one should remember that most Jews in Sweden are *not* members of any Jewish community. It is likely that among those, the number married to or cohabiting with a non-Jewish partner is considerably higher.

23 See L. Dencik, "Hemma i hemlösheten" (To be at home in Homelessness) in J. Jakubowski, ed., *Judisk Identitet* (Jewish Identity) (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1993).

24 There is one Jewish day-school in Stockholm comprising grades 1–7. After that the students attend regular Swedish schools. The communities offer Hebrew classes and Jewish religion and Jewish history classes for children to prepare them for their *Bar-* and *Bat-mitzva*s ceremony at the age of 13 for boys and 12 for girls. These classes take place outside regular school hours.

25 The figures in the column indicate the proportion that state that they regularly participate in the activities mentioned in the table.

26 Every Friday night in a Jewish family the housewife is supposed to introduce the *Shabbat* by lighting candles. The first figure in the row refers to the proportion of members who state that this is done "every Friday" in their home; the second tells how many say they do so "sometimes."

27 To keep kosher means to follow Biblical prescriptions about food. The first figure in the column refers to the proportion of members who state they follow these rules at home; the second figure tells how many say they "partly" do so.

28 It should be remembered that this is not so easy in Sweden, where *shehita* is prohibited and the only place to get kosher products is at the premises of the community centers.

29 Some Reform communities accept women as rabbis and women and men are not assigned separate places in the synagogue. Swedish communities are not Reform; they do not acknowledge female rabbis and only in the last few years has "mixed seating" been permitted in the major synagogue in Stockholm—but not in any other synagogue in Sweden.

30 We asked separately about sons and daughters. Only very slight differences were found in the way the members look at possible mixed marriages of sons compared to daughters.

31 The respondents were instructed to mark the alternatives they support—some marked only one, some marked two or more. Thus, the sum of the figures in the column is larger than 100.
32 Only quite recently the Stockholm Jewish community decided to accept also those who have a Jewish father, but not a Jewish mother, as members. None of the other communities in Sweden accept that, nor do any of the communities accept marriage to a Jew as a sufficient criterion for membership.
33 This column includes those who "agree completely" and "agree by and large."
34 This column includes those who "hardly agree" and "don't agree at all."
35 Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. From the book jacket.
36 Jonathan Webber, "Modern Jewish Identities," in Webber, ed., *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization), 74–85.
37 Calvin Goldscheider and Alan Zuckerman, *The Transformation of the Jews* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).
38 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

CHAPTER 6

Becoming Jewish in Russia and Ukraine

Zvi Gitelman

INTRODUCTION

For over a decade Jews in Russia and Ukraine have been free to define their ethnic identities and the meaning of being Jewish. They have inherited conceptions of ethnicity and of Jewishness from the Soviet system, however. Their conceptions of Jewishness are radically different from those that prevail in Israel and in western countries, and so raise questions about the nature of reconstructed Jewish communities and public life in formerly Communist countries, and whether these conceptions will impede or facilitate the integration of Russian and Ukrainian Jews into Israel—should they choose to immigrate there—into the rest of world Jewry, and into the states in which they live.

In this essay I explore the nature of the Jewish identities of Russian and Ukrainian Jews and how, absent conventional institutions and informal mechanisms of ethnic identity transmission and typical ethnic "markers," a sense of Jewishness nevertheless was transmitted over many decades in the Soviet Union. I shall not provide an ethnography and trace individual life stories; that shall be done in the larger project of which this essay is a part. But the data at hand do permit inferences about the circumstances and factors that were more and less conducive to acquiring a sense of Jewishness. Though much is explained by individual choice, and two people with very similar backgrounds and socio-economic characteristics might choose to relate to Jewishness quite differently—it happens among siblings quite often—there may be circumstances and characteristics that systematically predict greater or lesser ethnic consciousness.

How is Jewish consciousness acquired in these former Soviet republics? Aside from state-imposed identity—both Ukraine and Russia have abolished the Soviet practice of registering each person by his/her nationality—the following are possible stimulants of Jewish consciousness, whether positive or negative, strong or weak:

a) childhood socialization;
b) anti-Semitism and other life experiences;
c) physical appearance (*vneshnost'*) that leads others to identify one as Jewish;
d) the activity of ethnic entrepreneurs.

On the individual level, Jewish consciousness can be a consequence of negative, positive or both negative and positive experiences. What are the long-term consequences of acquiring ethnic self-consciousness through negative and positive experiences? What is the combination of experiences and characteristics, or what are the contexts, associated with the development of strong and weak Jewish consciousness? Shifting focus to the collective, the Jewish populations of Russia and Ukraine, we ponder how ethnic consciousness is affected by history and society. Do we discern different levels of ethnic consciousness in different age cohorts, and if so should one attribute them to the social and political contexts in which those cohorts spent their formative years? For example, do people who came to maturity in the 1940s and 1950s, when anti-Semitism was at its height, have a different level of Jewish consciousness and a different attitude toward their Jewishness than the post-Soviet generation, or those who grew up in the 1920s and 1930s, when there was little governmental anti-Semitism, some Soviet Yiddish institutions remained, and there were living family members whose Jewishness was formed in the pre-Soviet period? Does geography make a difference: did Jewish consciousness develop differently in Ukraine and in Russia and in the cities within the two states?

In the post-Soviet era, when Russia and Ukraine do not require citizens to register nationality, on the one hand, and when "ethnic entrepreneurs" seek to stimulate a Jewish revival, on the other, what is likely to be the future of Jewish identification? Do some "return" to Jewishness because, whereas it was once a burden, it now brings access to food, jobs, contacts, medical assistance, and admittance to Israel and Germany (and, to a lesser extent, the United States)? If there are material incentives for reasserting or even discovering Jewish identity and becoming openly Jewish, does this "instrumental Jewishness" last, does it lead some to develop a non-instrumental commitment to their ethnicity, or is it a fleeting phenomenon that disappears once material needs are met? For example, if Jewishness facilitates immigration

because Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany grant easy admission to those who can demonstrate some Jewish ancestry or lateral connection, do immigrants ignore or neglect their Jewishness once safely in Israel (where it is very difficult to do so), in Germany, the United States, or Canada?

In a separate essay I address the way in which Jewish ethnic consciousness affects the attitude of Jews toward their respective states. Does ethnicity serve as an alternative focus of loyalty or is it additional to and compatible with identification with the Russian or Ukrainian state? How do Russian and Ukrainian Jews, with their specific understandings of what it means to be Jewish, relate to Jews outside their countries and to Israel?

Here I attempt to trace the development (or lack of it) of Jewish consciousness among Russian and Ukrainian Jews and to suggest some of the consequences for them and for world Jewry of the identities that have evolved in the former Soviet space.

ACCULTURATION, ASSIMILATION AND LATENT ETHNICITY

By the 1950s most Soviet Jews were thoroughly acculturated. They had lost their original ethnic culture—a compound of Judaism, Yiddish and to a lesser extent Hebrew, a distinct style of life deriving in part from the *shtetl*—and had adopted the language, usually Russian, and the urban styles of those among whom they lived. In 1897, 97 percent of the Jews in the Tsarist Empire listed Yiddish as their mother tongue; by 1926, the percentage had declined to 71.9; by 1959 to 21.5 percent (the figure includes Jewish languages other than Yiddish); by 1970 to 17.7 percent; and by 1979 to 14.2 percent. In the last Soviet census (1989) only 11.1 percent declared a Jewish language as their mother tongue. This trend is not surprising in light of the disbandment of the Yiddish school system in the late 1930s, the very high proportion of Jews who were urban dwellers and highly educated—most Soviet higher education was in Russian—and Jews' desire for upward social and economic mobility.

Yet, relatively few Soviet Jews succeeded in assimilating. Though they had abandoned their original culture and adopted those of others, they had not lost their identities as Jews. Some would have been glad to do so, whether to escape anti-Semitism, because they associated

being Jewish with being part of a backward *shtetl* culture, or because they would rather be identified with ethnic majorities than with a minority. But, ironically, the very Soviet state that ostensibly aimed at the mutual assimilation and full fusion (*sliianie*) of peoples, insisted, beginning in 1931–32, that each urban Soviet citizen carry an internal identification document ("passport") that would declare one's ethnicity (*natsional'nost'*). This document was to be produced when applying for a job, applying for admission to higher education, mailing a package, or buying an airplane ticket. The holder of the passport and those to whom it was shown were constantly reminded of the nationality of the bearer. Moreover, the people of the Soviet Union were highly sensitive to ethnic identities. Despite all the propaganda about "*druzhba narodov*" (friendship of the peoples), ethnic distinctions, often invidious, were drawn in Soviet society. By the 1950s there were informal and sometimes official—though secret—ethnic quotas in higher education and in various fields of employment, not to mention in sensitive areas such as the military, the secret police, foreign affairs, areas of scientific research, and ideologically tinged fields such as journalism. Jews were thus Russians culturally, but Jews socially and officially. This produced what I call a "latent ethnicity," one not often expressed through the usual instruments of language, food, dress, the arts, literature, and religion, because the Jews had ceased to be distinct in these. Ethnic identity was private, and except for the state's insistence on its registration, not usually publicly manifested or expressed.

True, for some generations Jews retained subtle but unmistakable ethnic markers—for instance, in the ways they used their leisure time and spent their disposable incomes. It was widely believed by both Jews and others that Jewish men did not beat their wives; that they spent relatively little on alcoholic drinks and preferred to buy fine furniture than strong vodka; and that they placed very high value on higher education and were prepared to sacrifice a great deal in order to obtain it. Jews were thought to be overrepresented—in the view of some, dominant—in the professions and, in the 1920s through the mid-1930s, in political life and the organs of power. But these attributes were less tangible than the "thick culture" that many ethnic groups possess. "Thick culture" may include a distinctive language, cuisine, dress, and/or religion. But there is another form of culture, which I label "thin." I have in mind culture as a "common and distinct system of understandings and interpretations that constitute nor-

mative order and world view and provide strategic and stylistic guides to action."[1] A crucial question, perhaps for most of Diaspora Jewry, is whether without substantive, manifest, "thick" cultural content, ethnicity becomes merely "symbolic," much like the ethnicity of most Polish-Americans or Swedish-Americans; or whether "thin culture" is sufficiently substantive and sustainable to preserve a group's distinctiveness on more than a symbolic level.[2]

Marxist-Leninists saw Jews as the vanguard of the assimilationists, a progressive group leading the way to the new socialist world where religion and ethnicity, which were nothing more than tools of capitalist exploitation, would vanish. As early as 1903, Vladimir Lenin denied that the Jews were a nation, "for a nation without a territory is unthinkable," and claimed further that "modern scientific investigation" had shown that Jews were not a race.[3] The Bolshevik leader commended the Jews for providing "a relatively high percentage of representatives of internationalism compared with other nations."[4] Jews were well on their way to losing their ethnicity, and were thus showing the way to the other nations and ethnic groups ("nationalities," in Soviet terminology). Lenin advocated assimilation as a solution to the "Jewish *problem*." For a Marxist who saw no intrinsic worth in particular ethnic cultures and traditions, Jewish distinctiveness was a "problem" which caused Jews to suffer, but which would be resolved by Jewish disappearance. Other groups would follow in the path of the Jews and the future world would be without nations.

In his first theoretical essay, published in 1913, Joseph Stalin defined a nation as a "historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture… It is only when all these characteristics are present that we have a nation."[5] Obviously, the Jews were not a nation for they lacked a common language, territory, and economy.[6] Thirty-five years later, Stalin was to condemn Jews as "rootless cosmopolitans." Instead of praising them for their acculturation and even assimilation, as traditional Bolshevik ideology would have suggested, the Soviet dictator condemned them as people lacking in loyalty to the USSR and insufficiently attached to any territory or culture. Of course, this was not the only revision of Communist ideology that the "father of all the peoples" permitted himself. Even before the outbreak of World War II, when specifically Russian patriotism was encouraged, Stalin had shifted official emphasis from "proletarian internationalism"

to "socialism in one country" and from condemning "great power [i.e., Russian] chauvinism" to viewing "petit bourgeois [non-Russian] nationalism" as the cardinal sin. It was Stalin and his associates, of course, who defined what was praiseworthy "patriotism" and what constituted despicable "nationalism." Russian nationalism was encouraged, whereas other nationalisms, including Jewish, were punished. In the late 1970s, some Soviet analysts confidently asserted that Jewish nationalism had been eliminated: "The Jewish population should be considered a national group that finds itself in a process of intensive assimilation with other socialist nations."[7]

However, by the late 1960s Soviet scholars and, to a lesser degree, politicians, were admitting that the goal of the "amalgamation of peoples" (*sliianie*), or assimilation, had to be postponed to an indefinite future. Instead, Soviet peoples were going through a prior stage called *sblizhenie*, or drawing closer (rapprochement). *Sblizhenie* was characterized by the "mutual enrichment of languages"—in practice, this meant the penetration of Russian into other languages and the adoption of a few non-Russian food terms by Russians—the decline, if not total disappearance, of ethnic, religious, and racial tensions, marriages between people of different nationalities, and the migration of peoples within the USSR. Cultural Russianization (acculturation), far more than Russification (assimilation), was perhaps the most advanced of these processes.[8] Ethnic tensions came into full public view in the late 1980s in the Baltic republics, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Central Asia, Ukraine, and elsewhere. Intermarriage rates, especially between Asians and Europeans, rose only slowly. In 1959, 10.2 percent of all families in the USSR were defined as mixed, and twenty years later the percentage had risen to 14.9.[9] However, "mixed" families, while mostly involving marriages between people of different nationalities, could include households where a third person, a grandmother, for example, might be ethnically defined differently from either spouse.[10] Lenin would have appreciated that here Jews were once again in the "vanguard." By 1970, nearly half of all married Jews were married to non-Jews. The percentage of Jewish intermarriages ranged widely, from 77 in Estonia (1965, 1968) to the northern Caucasus (Makhachkala, 1959–68) where it was only 28.[11] Since mixed marriages were twice as frequent among the urban population compared to the rural, and nearly the entire Jewish population was classified as urban, it might be expected that Jewish intermarriage rates would be higher than aver-

age in a Soviet population in which urban dwellers became a majority only in the 1960s or so. In 1988, 48 percent of Soviet Jewish women and 58 percent of Jewish men who married, married non-Jews.[12] In 1993 in Russia, only 363 children were born to two Jewish parents. In 1996 in Russia, Jewish mothers gave birth to 930 children, only 289 of whom had Jewish fathers.[13] In the 1980s, for every 100 Jews there were an additional 60 non-Jews in the households. In the 1990s that ratio increased to 80 non-Jews for every 100 Jews. These trends should signal a profound weakening of Jewish commitment, and perhaps consciousness. Can a sense of Jewishness be transmitted in families composed of other nationalities as well? This is much debated today among Western sociologists who confront the undeniable reality of extensive Jewish intermarriage, but even the "optimists" and those advocating "inclusion" and "outreach" would have to acknowledge that in Soviet and post-Soviet conditions, where religious and cultural instruction and transmission were non-existent or just beginning, and conversion to Judaism very rare, the survival of Jewishness is more dubious than where Jewish instruction, literature, and culture are easily accessible.

Nevertheless, one should not underestimate the power of ethnic *identity* even where ethnic *culture* is weak or non-existent. First, as Stephen Cornell argues, ethnicity is defined not only by cultural content but also by boundaries.[14] In the USSR the official registration of nationality was a state-constructed boundary that set people off from each other, Jews among them. Second, anti-Semitism was an effective social boundary keeping Jews "in their place." In many other societies Jews themselves construct the "other side of the boundary wall," choosing to define themselves off from their Jewish neighbors; this was rarely the case in the European USSR, though it was more frequent in Central Asia and Georgia.

Moreover, as some Soviet scholars began to acknowledge in the late 1960s: "Even while losing the mother tongue and even cultural characteristics, national consciousness is often preserved (Russianized Germans and Jews, Tatarified Bashkirs)."[15] In the following years a debate of sorts went on between Soviet scholars, and especially politicians, who argued that the Soviet peoples were proceeding on the road to *sliianie*, and those who emphasized the persistence and viability of ethnic consciousness even in socialist societies. Communist Party Secretary Leonid Brezhnev proudly asserted, "Leninist nationality policy…can truly be put on the same level as the achievements in the

construction of a new society in the USSR such as industrialization, collectivization, and the cultural revolution."[16] The official line was that "the Soviet people is a fundamentally new social and international community of people" based on "friendship, complete equality, multi-faceted fraternal cooperation, and mutual…assistance."[17] This "Soviet people" (*Sovetskii narod*) was "not a nation or an ethnic category, but a new historical form of social and international unity of people of different nations,"[18] and as such represented a long step forward on the road to the merger of nationalities.

Other scholars, while acknowledging that "objective conditions" for *sblizhenie* and perhaps even *sliianie* had been created, warned that ethnic relations were dependent "in increasing measure on subjective factors."[19] They argued that it was necessary to shift from studying the "results of national processes and relations" to "discovering the internal mechanism of such phenomena." This would require empirical studies of ethnic relations, rather than citation of Communist leaders' hortatory declarations about the state of those relations.[20] Such studies were carried out in the USSR, though there were significant political constraints on their design and, especially, on the reporting of their findings. Less constrained were studies of ethnic relations based on interviews with Soviet émigrés, though these too had their limitations.[21]

Events proved the empiricist school right. Ethnic tensions did not cause the breakup of the USSR but did contribute to it, especially in the Baltic states and in the Caucasus. It became crystal clear that ethnic consciousness had survived the "emergence of the Soviet people," but what the cultural content and political and social implications of that consciousness would be remained for the peoples of the former USSR—including the Jews—to define for themselves.

STUDYING JEWISH IDENTITIES IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost'* campaigns gave researchers opportunities to look into subjects hitherto considered sensitive or completely taboo. The breakup of the USSR opened the doors even wider to empirical research. I was fortunate to work with Professor Vladimir Shapiro and Dr. Valery Chervyakov of the Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences, in investigating the values, atti-

tudes, and behaviors of Jews in Russia and Ukraine. The first phase of our study was a survey of Jews in three Russian and five Ukrainian cities in 1992–3,[22] and again in 1997–98 in the same cities: Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Ekaterinburg (formerly Sverdlovsk) in Russia; Kiev, Kharkiv (Kharkov), Odessa, Lviv (Lvov, Lwów, Lemberg) and Chernivtsi (Chernovtsy, Cernauti, Czernowitz) in Ukraine. We interviewed 1,300 people in Russia and 2,000 in Ukraine in each of the two waves of the survey. Respondents had to be at least 16 years old but there was no upper age limit. In 1992–93, our sample replicated very closely the gender and age distribution of the Jewish population over 16 years of age in each city using 1989 census data. Because of the lack of updated information, in the second wave we structured the local samples according to the 1989 and 1994 Russian microcensus' age-gender distributions. The only important change from 1989 is the dramatic aging of the Jewish population owing to the very unfavorable birth-death ratio and the emigration of younger people.

In the absence of a list of Jewish residents of each city, we created the sample by using a "snowball" technique. First, in each city we created a group or "panel" of several dozen Jewish men and women of different ages and socio-economic status. We did not interview them but asked them to name several of their relatives, friends, and acquaintances whom they considered Jewish and who would tentatively agree to be interviewed. Then we asked these friends and relatives for their agreement to be interviewed and asked them to identify, in turn, *their* friends and relatives who might be interviewed. Only one member of a family could be interviewed. The "panels" informed us of the gender, age, type of employment, and professional background of potential respondents. This allowed us to adjust the sample structure constantly in order to conform to the parameters of the overall Jewish population over 16 in each city. The Russian and Ukrainian samples conform very closely to the profile of the Jewish population in general as reported in the 1989 census and the 1994 Russian microcensus.

BECOMING JEWISH IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Leaving aside state-determined ethnic identity, which probably played the biggest role of all in "making" and "keeping" Jews ethnically conscious, of the four stimulants to identity mentioned earlier—child-

hood socialization, anti-Semitism, outward appearance, and efforts by ethnic entrepreneurs—we find that childhood socialization is the single most powerful, despite the absence of the formal mechanisms of socialization we are familiar with in most societies. Though much of the literature has focused on anti-Semitism as the salient aspect of Soviet—and in some places post-Soviet—Jewish life, we find that it has only a mild effect on the Jewish public and private behaviors we investigated and on many important attitudes and values. However, our measures of anti-Semitism do not cover the life span so we cannot be certain of the role anti-Semitism plays in the formation and retention of Jewish identity. Physical appearance, mostly ignored in studies of Jewish identity despite the current fashionability of "the body" in "cultural studies," correlates rather highly with Jewish attitudes and actions.[23] The impact of ethnic entrepreneurs is intriguingly difficult to ascertain because some measure success by the number of people they stimulate to leave the FSU (former Soviet Union) while others aim to reconstruct Jewish life within it.

Much time, effort, and money have been spent on Jews in the FSU, particularly by foreign groups, trying to "make them Jewish." The aim of many has been not to rebuild Jewish life in the FSU but to remove Jews to Israel and other countries. The Jewish Agency and *Nativ (Lishkat HaKesher)* are two Israeli agencies whose explicit aim is to promote *aliyah*. Chabad-Lubavitch, Karlin-Stolin, and other Hasidic groups have more ambiguous aims: most of the people they reach successfully seem to emigrate, but they also serve populations, especially the elderly, who are not leaving. The goal of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Hillel, and, of course, FSU groups such as Va'ad and the Russian Jewish Congress and its (competing) equivalents in Ukraine is to reconstruct Jewish life within the FSU.

Are those who emigrate leaving because ethnic entrepreneurs or other stimuli have succeeded in "Judaizing" them? Our research, and other research among those who have immigrated to Israel,[24] suggests that those who leave the FSU are not motivated primarily by Jewish impulses but rather by family ties to those who have already gone, economic stimuli, and the search for personal security. Russian and Ukrainian Jews have generally positive attitudes toward Israel, born not of classic Zionist ideals but of a perception that Israel is a fairly prosperous country that offers Jews security (our surveys were taken

between the first and second *intifada*s, after the Gulf War, and at a time when the Oslo "peace process" had aroused hopes for a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict). Less than one percent of respondents in Russia or Ukraine in either year the survey was taken pick "subscribing to the ideals of Zionism" as one of the crucial components that define one as a "genuine Jew." Though not imbued with Zionist ideology, Russian and Ukrainian Jews see Israel as a place where one can fulfill one's professional aspirations better than in Russia or, especially, Ukraine, and where there is a higher standard of living than in the former Soviet republics. We inquired about these only in 1997; no doubt in 1992 we would have gotten an even more favorable picture of Israel. Of course, large majorities agree that one can better live a full Jewish life in Israel and a somewhat smaller majority agrees that it is easier to establish a Jewish family in Israel, but Israel also comes out well in areas that have no Jewish dimension, as can be seen in the table below.

Table 6.1 ***Where Can One Better Fulfill Professional Aspirations, Achieve a High Standard of Living, and Feel Secure?*** *(In percent)*

	Russia 1997	Ukraine 1997
Fulfill professional aspirations		
Better in Russia/Ukraine	24.6	13.8
Better in Israel	20.7	44.4
The same in both	35.4	28.1
Don't know, no answer	19.4	13.7
Raise one's standard of living		
Better in Russia/Ukraine	13.3	7.1
Better in Israel	37.7	65.1
The same in both	30.5	17.6
DK, NA	18.5	10.3
Feel oneself secure		
Better in Russia/Ukraine	6.9	8.6
Better in Israel	44.6	41.1
Same in both	36.0	39.2
DK, NA	12.5	11.1

The key explanation for emigration may lie in economic and professional aspirations, though the pull of family and friends is strong. Ukrainian Jews see Israel as much more promising professionally or vocationally than economically depressed, corrupt Ukraine, but Russian Jews, whose economy has performed substantially better than Ukraine's over the long haul, view Russia as somewhat more professionally, but not economically, promising than Israel. Respondents aged 16–29 are more sanguine about Russia than Israel, but their peers in Ukraine do not have the same confidence in Ukraine's future. Muscovites are most positive about Russia, while those in St. Petersburg are the least confident. Perhaps this is connected to the fact that only 9.5 percent of the "core" Jewish population in Moscow emigrated in 1994–98, whereas in St. Petersburg 17.7 percent did so.[25]

Nevertheless, those we call "ethnic entrepreneurs," whether domestic or foreign, seem to have been quite successful in providing attractive Jewish-sponsored welfare services, events, and institutions. The former appeal mainly to the elderly and the disadvantaged, the latter mainly to young people, as we shall see. Of course, the establishment of these institutions and services has been made possible by broader changes in the political and social systems of post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine.

INFORMAL SOCIALIZATION TO ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is usually transmitted across generations ("time") and across a single generation ("space") by both formal and informal means. The former include schools, language, customs, holiday celebrations, religious institutions, summer camps, ethnic media, literature, art, and music. Informal transmission mechanisms include styles of life, household practices, social contacts, and values or attitudes absorbed from relatives and ethnic activists. The formal means of transmission of Jewish ethnicity ("Jewishness") or Judaism were almost completely absent in the USSR and began to be recreated only in the late 1980s. Nevertheless, informal socialization seems to have been at least partly effective. We reach this conclusion partly on the basis of our data and partly on the basis of much wider and longer observation of Soviet and post-Soviet Jews.

The most general form of transmission of Jewish identity is through style of life. As mentioned above, "typically Jewish" behaviors

can be identified by Jews and non-Jews alike. The level of consumption of alcohol, the character of marital relations, and patterns of spending disposable income are reputed to be indicators that differentiate between Jews, on the one hand, and Russians and Ukrainians, on the other. These differences between Jews and others are said to hold in many Western countries as well. There are even more subtle differences that would escape the notice of the casual observer. For example, a Soviet-born resident of England, recalling his childhood in the 1950s and 1960s in a provincial Ukrainian city, observed that his family would refer to certain colors as "*goyishe kulirn*," [Gentile colors] or to particular furniture styles as "*goyish*," much as Jews elsewhere might. Pink, for example, was considered a "*goyish*" color for reasons that are not clear. Living in Moscow later, he and his wife were astounded that their highly acculturated young Jewish neighbors, who observed no Jewish traditions and displayed no interest in things Jewish, were shocked that they had invited a non-Jewish friend to their home.[26] The sense of being different and apart prevailed even among some younger people living in cosmopolitan Moscow and apparently having no connection to Jewishness other than feeling themselves "not-Russian." Back in the 1970s a prominent dissident expressed this eloquently: "Who am I now? Who do I feel myself to be? Unfortunately, I do not feel like a Jew. I understand that I have an unquestionable genetic tie with Jewry. I also assume that this is reflected in my mentality, in my mode of thinking, and in my behavior. But…a more profound, or more general, common bond is lacking, such as community of language, culture, history, tradition… I am accustomed to the color, smell, rustle of the Russian landscape, as I am to the Russian language… I react to everything else as alien… And nevertheless, no, I am not Russian, I am a stranger today in this land."[27]

A second informal means of transmission is Jewish holiday celebrations. Rarely observed according to the letter of Jewish law—celebrating Passover might have meant having a festive meal at which matzah would be eaten alongside non-kosher food and drink and even bread—these observances reinforced a sense of Jewish identity, brought Jewish family and friends together, and set the celebrants apart from the rest of the population—and, for once, not in an invidious way. In Russia (1997), for example, we see that those who celebrated holidays with some frequency in childhood score twice as high

on our "index of Jewishness" as those who did not.[28] Those who observed holidays in childhood score higher on measures such as having Jewish objects at home and attending synagogue and cultural-educational events. They also score higher on an index of identification with Israel, and are more likely to oppose the marriage of their children or of others to non-Jews.

One of the consequences of anti-Semitism was that Jews had to try harder to get ahead. Many Soviet Jews report that their parents admonished them to work and study harder than their peers because it would be more difficult for a Jew to be admitted to his or her school of choice, or to find suitable employment, than it would be for others. Many in the United States and Israel have commented on how ambitious and hard-working immigrants from the FSU are. This drive probably derives in part from the fact of having to start over in a new country, but also likely reflects lessons learned "at home."

A fourth means of transmitting identity is through connections to the past. This may be in the form of photographs of ancestors that arouse questions about where and how they lived and "why did they look that way;" books in Hebrew or Yiddish that no one can read but which are kept as mementoes, or even of the very popular Russian editions of the works of Sholem Aleichem; or a Jewish ritual object. In many households a grandparent was the connection to a more intensely Jewish past—speaking Yiddish or even praying—though by the 1980s most grandparents were themselves ignorant of these. We found that those in whose childhood homes "Jewish" food was often served are somewhat more active Jewishly in adulthood than others.

A "collective memory" of many Jews is the Holocaust. Soviet publications generally did not highlight the Jewish tragedy, but treated it as part of the catastrophe in which nearly 30 million Soviet citizens died.[29] But precisely that treatment led some to inquire about the Jewish fate: if they could not learn much from publications, they could turn to family members and friends who had lived through the period. One activity of the new wave of Jewish activists in the 1960s and thereafter was to discover and mark the places of mass murder and to hold ceremonies and meetings there. Jews realized that even if they were no longer a manifestly cultural community, they remained a community of fate, as their experiences in the Soviet system demonstrated.

Israel and its welfare had been part of Soviet Jewish consciousness at least since the late 1940s and especially after 1967.[30] Many

Jews identified with Israel in the same way as their co-ethnics in other countries. Their relationship to Israel was complicated by official Soviet hostility to the Jewish state but, paradoxically, that only strengthened their interest in a country that was so small yet seemed to bother the regime so much.

Finally, there were aspects of Soviet culture that were identified as "Jewish." The many anecdotes about "Rabinovich and Abramovich," the material of comedians such as Arkady Raikin and Mikhail Zhvanetskii, who enjoyed enormous popularity, and even compositions of composers such as Sergei Prokofiev or Dmitri Shostakovich on Jewish themes were celebrated as part of the Jewish heritage. This was made very clear to me in June 1966 when, after attending three concerts of Shostakovich's music in his native city of Leningrad, I witnessed the local premiere of his Thirteenth Symphony ("Babi Yar"), which had been removed from the repertoire by Khrushchev. Unlike the previous evenings, on this night hundreds of Jews, including many young people, crowded the hall. Evgenii Evtushenko, author of the poem that is included in the first movement and was a rare Soviet public protest against anti-Semitism, was in the hall. At the end of the concert, the fire department had to be called to empty the hall because the crowd remained to applaud poet, conductor, and composer for what seemed to be an hour. As an elderly conservatory professor explained to me, "today is a Jewish holiday."

ENVIRONMENT AND ETHNICITY

Though the USSR was a highly centralized system, it did not eliminate regional and local differences. Becoming Jewish in Georgia and Central Asia was a very different process from that in the European USSR. Judaism and Jewish traditions survived much better in the traditional societies of the Caucasus and Central Asia than in European USSR. In the Baltic states, western Belarus, and western Ukraine, areas annexed to the Soviet Union in 1939–40, Jews who had lived amidst vibrant secular and religious cultures were able to some degree to preserve and transmit their religiosity, Yiddish, Zionist and other political ideas, and generally Jewish ways of life. Moreover, in small towns in Ukraine and Belarus, intensely Jewish ways of life survived into the 1960s or as late as the massive emigration. In towns such as Shargorod and Djurin in Ukraine, Yiddish was spoken on the streets,

Communist Party members observed Jewish holidays, and intermarriage rates were low.[31]

In conducting our research in major cities in Russia and Ukraine, we selected our sample cities so as to reflect the diversity we assumed existed. Moscow and St. Petersburg are known as the "two capitals," while Ekaterinburg is an industrial city in the Urals. Kiev is not only the capital of Ukraine but culturally lies between its Russianized east, where Kharkiv is located, and its more Ukrainian west (Lviv). Lviv was part of Poland until 1939, and Chernivtsi part of Romania until 1940. Odessa, which was mostly Russian and Jewish in population before 1941, was reputed to be the most cosmopolitan city in Ukraine and somewhat "wild." Do such differences influence the process of becoming Jewish?

Overall, there are few significant differences in Jewish attitudes and behaviors among the three Russian cities. However, the differences among the Ukrainian cities are sometimes dramatic. In general, according to our findings, Chernivtsi has the most active, religiously observant, Jewishly conscious population, while Kharkiv is at the other end of the spectrum. This holds true for such items as possession of Jewish objects, attendance at Jewish educational and cultural events, identification with Israel, observance of Jewish traditions, and attitudes toward intermarriage. (Kievans score highest on attending Jewish events, probably because there are more such events in the capital.) The differences are summarized by the Index of Jewishness as seen in the table below.

Table 6.2 ***Index of Jewishness by Ukrainian City*** * *(In percent)*

	Weak		Medium		Strong	
	1992	1997	1992	1997	1992	1997
Kiev	30.0	21.6	36.2	48.4	33.8	30.0
Kharkiv	35.0	34.8	36.6	45.0	28.4	20.2
Odessa	26.3	17.6	36.3	45.8	37.6	36.8
Lviv	19.0	25.7	30.7	43.0	50.3	31.0
Chernivtsi	8.0	7.0	29.0	33.0	63.0	60.0

*Combines scores of "very weak" and "weak," "very strong" and "strong."

As we can see, there is no great change in the scores over the five years, though there is some shift from "strong" to "medium." This may mean that the efforts to intensify Jewish consciousness have not been very successful, or that the success is masked by the disproportionate emigration of those who became more intensely Jewish (we did not re-interview the same people in the two years of the survey since many emigrated and others passed away in the interim). Lviv shows the steepest decline and the most likely explanation is the emigration of the most Jewishly conscious. In both years, scores for Chernivtsi are highest and for Kharkiv lowest. Clearly, the traditions of the local population, when the region became part of the USSR, and whether the city had long been a major center of Jewish population, play a role in socialization to Jewish identity.

AGENTS OF SOCIALIZATION

Discovering that they were Jewish was not a happy experience for most Russian and Ukrainian Jews. As we can see in Table 6.3, negative emotions were associated with the discovery of Jewishness far more often than positive ones. About half of all respondents associate their discovery of Jewishness with negative circumstances.

Table 6.3 ***Circumstances under Which One Became Aware of Being Jewish***[32] *(In percent)*

	Russia 92	Ukraine 92	Russia 97	Ukraine 97
Positive	11.1	27.8	26.8	32.0
Negative	45.0	59.8	52.5	51.6
Both or other	38.0	12.4	17.7	12.0
Don't know	5.9	0	2.9	4.6

Note that in Ukraine in each year there were more positive feelings associated with discovering Jewishness than in Russia. In Russia in 1992, only 11 percent had a positive experience, and the reason the proportion more than doubles by 1997 is probably that those who had had negative experiences emigrated disproportionately. In a pattern we shall observe later, it is the youngest (ages 16–29) and the oldest (60 and above) cohorts who associate their Jewishness with positive feelings more than the other groups. It is the 50–59 year olds

(born around the time of World War II) who have the most negative memories. In Ukraine in 1992 the most positive are those from Chernivtsi and the most negative from Kiev; in 1997, Chernivtsi residents are by far the most positive and those from Kharkiv and Kiev the most negative.

Getting beyond the initial experience of being Jewish, we inquired whether people were more often proud or ashamed of their Jewishness during their lifetimes. Pride in Jewishness was experienced somewhat more often than shame, though as might be expected, most people report feeling both or feeling neither, as can be seen in the table.

Table 6.4 ***Pride and Shame in Being Jewish*** *(In percent)*

	Russia 92	Ukraine 92	Russia 97	Ukraine 97
Proud	24.8	22.8	27.0	28.8
Ashamed	17.8	19.6	9.8	10.4
Sometimes one, sometimes the other	30.9	38.0	28.1	26.5
Neither	23.7	18.3	29.6	30.4
Other	–	–	4.8	3.0
Don't know	2.8	1.4	0.7	1.0

The proudest in all four data sets are the youngest and oldest cohorts. Residents of the three Russian cities do not differ much on this question, though Muscovites are proudest and residents of Ekaterinburg least proud. In Ukraine, as might be expected by now, Chernivtsi residents are most proud and Kharkivites least. Lviv residents were as proud as Chernivtsi people in 1992, but the face of Lviv's Jewish population apparently changed quite radically in the five-year interim. Of course, the prouder one is of Jewishness, the higher one scores on our "Index of Jewishness" and on identification with Israel.

Despite some obvious reservations about their Jewishness, if they had a choice, most people would like to be born as Jews. Fewer than 10 percent wish they could be born as non-Jews, but significant proportions are not sure about this (from 20 percent in Ukraine in 1992 to a third in Russia in both years). Ukrainian Jews are more positive than Russian Jews about being born Jewish. The oldest cohort consistently ranks highest in the desire to be born Jewish. This may be telling

us that though being Jewish has its difficulties, there is no strong desire to be something else.

We observe that those who are most positive about being Jewish score higher on the index of Jewishness. They also attend Jewish cultural and educational events more than others, so feeling does translate into action. However, there is no difference in attendance between those who feel negative and those who are neutral, and the same holds for synagogue attendance and having Jewish objects at home. In general, we find that attendance at Jewish events is not as strongly linked to feelings about Jewishness as are other behaviors, perhaps because these events offer incentives—usually food or entertainment—and one does not have to be strongly motivated Jewishly in order to attend them.

When one acquired Jewish identity makes a substantial difference for Jewish behaviors. First, those who came to Jewish consciousness before or shortly after 1917 score highest on the index of Jewishness, and those who acquired Jewish identity in the 1920s to the mid-30s also score high. These are the people who inherited pre-revolutionary culture and traditions. There is a sharp falling off among those who came to maturity in Stalin's reign, for obvious reasons, but there is an interesting upturn in Jewishness among the very youngest group, which is perhaps surprising but may be quite significant. Close scrutiny of the data reveals no meaningful differences among age groups overall on Jewishness in either year or either country. However, the younger one was when learning of his or her Jewishness, the higher the score on the Index of Jewishness. This is true in all the samples. This suggests that childhood socialization plays a crucial role in later Jewish behavior and thinking.

How does this socialization come about? Grandparents are sometimes identified as the major transmitters of Jewish consciousness, but more often it is the parents. Spouses and children play a much lesser role. Nearly half of those scoring high on the Jewishness Index say their mothers played a major role in the formation of their Jewish consciousness, but only a quarter of those who say their mothers did not play such a role score the same. The same difference in the same proportions applies to fathers. This may not be as obvious as it appears. In Soviet conditions parents may not have promoted Jewishness; Jewish consciousness could have come from elsewhere. We do observe

that those with a non-Jewish mother, whether she was officially registered as Russian or simply considered herself non-Jewish, score somewhat lower on the Jewishness index than those with Jewish mothers.[33] In Ukraine in 1992, those with Jewish mothers score twice as high on the index as those with non-Jewish mothers. The same applies to fathers, though the differences are not as great as they are with mothers. Interestingly, the differences observed between having Jewish and non-Jewish fathers are greater in Ukraine than in Russia. We also see a direct and strong relationship between having a "Jewish national spirit in the childhood home" and high scores on Jewishness, identification with Israel, and attending Jewish events. For example, in Russia in both years, nearly half of those who score "low" on Jewish national spirit in their childhood home, score "low" on present-day Jewishness, whereas only 8 percent of those with a strong Jewish childhood score "low" on Jewishness. The same pattern is observed regarding Jewish observances in the childhood home. The stronger the Jewish spirit in one's childhood home, the greater the reluctance to see one's own child or other Jews marry non-Jews. We can infer the effects of childhood socialization once more.

The exception to this is attending Jewish cultural-educational events: in both Russia and Ukraine (1992) those with Russian mothers actually attended such events slightly more often than those with Jewish mothers, perhaps for the reason suggested earlier. This is true to a lesser extent of those with non-Jewish fathers. Moreover, there is no difference in attendance between those whose childhood homes were infused with a strong Jewish spirit and those whose homes were not, though this is a highly subjective measure and we should treat this finding with caution.

We can observe the effects of childhood socialization more directly when we look at responses to whether parents explained what it meant to be Jewish. In both Russia and Ukraine (1997), the more explicit parents were about Jewishness, the stronger one's present identification. People whose parents "explained in detail" what it means to be Jewish participate more in Jewish activities, are more opposed to marrying non-Jews, and identify more with Israel. There is a linear decline in present-day Jewish activity and identification as one moves from parents who explained in detail what being Jewish means, to those who explained it to some extent, to those who explained a bit, and, finally, to those who "tried to avoid the subject."

Spouses do not seem to directly socialize their partners very much, but a spouse's nationality is strongly correlated with the partner's score on the Index of Jewishness. Those with non-Jewish spouses score lower on the Jewishness index than those with Jewish spouses, and those with partly Jewish spouses fall in between. Those with Jewish spouses are much more likely to have Jewish objects at home, attend Jewish events, and identify with Israel.[34] One may ask about causation here: is it that if one marries a non-Jew one will become less interested in things Jewish, or is it that one who is not very interested in the first place will be more likely to marry a non-Jew? I tend to the latter explanation. Intermarriage does have consequences for Jewish attachments and actions but probably reinforces previous dispositions. In other words, weaker Jewish commitments make it more likely that one will marry a non-Jew, and then the household created by that union further weakens Jewish commitments and consciousness. It turns out that those who have Jewish spouses are far more likely to identify themselves as "genuine Jews" than those who have partly or wholly non-Jewish partners.

Our measures of anti-Semitism focus on the individual's experience in the recent past and therefore cannot serve as an accurate measure of the impact of anti-Semitism on Jewish consciousness over the life span. In our measures there is a consistent tendency for those who score high on Jewishness to report more anti-Semitic experiences. Again, causality is problematic: those with higher Jewish consciousness and who are more active in Jewish affairs may be more sensitive than others to anti-Semitism, or those who experience anti-Semitism may have their Jewish consciousness raised. In any case, recent encounters with anti-Semitism in our samples does not have a great impact on Jewish behaviors except in two instances. Those who report more anti-Semitic encounters are more opposed to interethnic marriage than others (they are more skeptical of the intentions of non-Jews, perhaps) and those who have had no anti-Semitic encounters are less likely to participate in Jewish activities.

Physical appearance as an ethnic marker is not often discussed in regard to Jews these days, perhaps for fear of offending and reverting to racist stereotypes. Nevertheless, many Jews in the FSU are identifiable as non-Slavs—and are sometimes mistaken for Georgians, Tatars or Armenians. We asked our respondents whether strangers usually recognized them as Jews. In both years, those who feel they

"look Jewish" score higher on the Jewishness measures than those who do not. They attend Jewish events and synagogue more often, identify more with Israel, oppose marriage to non-Jews, and see themselves as "genuine Jews" more frequently than those who do not appear Jewish. Those who look Jewish are more likely to experience anti-Semitism, which is not surprising. True, perhaps those who are Jewishly conscious and active are more likely to *perceive* themselves as looking Jewish, but it may be more likely that the logic is: "I look Jewish, others see me as a Jew, why don't I act like one?" A number of years ago a very Slavic-looking student from Central Asia told me she was interested in Jewish studies since she was Jewish. Some probing elicited the fact that only her paternal grandfather was Jewish and she was aware that according to *Halachah* she is not Jewish. However, since she has a distinctly Jewish family name, "my friends assume I am Jewish, so why not be one?"

Two factors that are not "agents" of socialization but are relevant to it are sex and age. On the vast majority of questions there are no significant differences between men and women. However, men are somewhat more inclined to attend cultural-educational events in Russia (twice as frequently in 1992, when 42 percent of the women said they never attended), but not in Ukraine, and to attend synagogue in both countries, though the overall level of synagogue attendance is very low.

Age differentiates among respondents much more powerfully. Strikingly, in Russia in 1992 the youngest people score highest on the observance of Jewish traditions now, and the oldest score lowest. This counter-intuitive finding may be explained by the activities of ethnic entrepreneurs and the availability of Hanukkah and Purim parties, Hillel-sponsored *sedarim*, and other events that the young see as observing Jewish traditions. The oldest people find it difficult to attend such gatherings. The youngest also have the most Jewish objects at home because they have been given these by the many agencies who try to raise their Jewish consciousness. Some older people destroyed Jewish objects and books during the "black years" (1948–53) to avoid charges of Jewish nationalism. The paradox is that the youngest—presumably those with the weakest Jewish backgrounds and, as we discover, those with the most mixed parentage—are the most frequent participants in Jewish events (about a quarter say they participate "frequently" and another quarter "sometimes"). They even go to synagogue more fre-

quently than others (though they may go not to pray but to celebrate and socialize). The oldest group attends such events least (though in Ukraine the next oldest group, 50–59 years old, also attends infrequently). Their Jewish contacts, which are very meaningful, are mostly with welfare activities such as Jewish-sponsored soup kitchens, medical assistance, and income supplementation. Thus, we should not write the elderly off as Jewishly non-participant; it is just that the different age groups have different forums for participating in public Jewish life.

Finally, attitudes toward marriage with non-Jews vary significantly by age. The general tendency is for the oldest to be most opposed and the youngest most tolerant. One should bear in mind that there is a generally high tolerance of interethnic marriage among FSU Jews, and our surveys show this very clearly.[35] According to a recent survey by the American Jewish Committee, American Jews seem to be "catching up" in this regard since over half of the respondents in a survey conducted in 2000 disagree with the statement that "It would pain me if my child married a Gentile."[36] In Russia in 1992, 46 percent of the 16–29 year olds are not opposed to their own children intermarrying, and only 21 percent would be disturbed; a quarter are indifferent. Among the oldest people, 43 percent would be disturbed. Speaking in more general terms, nearly half of the youngest group says it does not matter whether a Jew chooses a non-Jewish spouse but nearly 60 percent of the oldest group say Jews should take Jewish partners. Of course, those who grew up in more Jewish homes are more opposed to intermarriage. By 1997, opposition to intermarriage is even weaker than in 1992, as can be seen in Tables 6.5 and 6.6 below.

Table 6.5 ***Reaction to Child Marrying a Non-Jew, by Age, Russia 1997**** *(In percent)*

Age	Positive	Indifferent	Negative	Other	Don't know
16–29	20.0	40.0	0.0	2.0	20.0
30–39	6.2	60.0	13.8	3.1	16.9
40–49	5.3	57.4	22.3	7.4	7.4
50–59	12.2	58.5	14.6	7.3	7.3
60+	0.0	73.3	20.0	0.0	6.7

*N's are small because only those who have children responded

Table 6.6 ***Jews Should Marry Other Jews, Russia 1997*** *(In percent)*

Age	Jews	No difference	Others	Don't know
16–29	35.3	58.3	2.2	4.3
30–39	37.2	55.8	0.0	7.1
40–49	41.6	52.8	0.5	5.1
50–59	41.3	52.3	1.1	5.3
60+	48.8	48.5	0.2	2.5

As can be seen, there is a fairly steady decline in opposition to intermarriage as one goes from the oldest to the youngest cohorts.

We observe that four-fifths of those who have non-Jewish mothers in Russia (1997) and three-quarters in Ukraine (1992) feel that Jews need not marry other Jews, whereas only 48 percent in Russia and 42 percent in Ukraine who have Jewish mothers agree with this. Those with Russian fathers are even more willing to have Jews marry others. (In Russia in 1997 not a single person with a Russian father or mother would object to his/her child marrying a non-Jew.) Once again, childhood socialization affects attitudes. And intermarriage in one generation makes it much more likely that there will be intermarriage in the next.

If one is married to a non-Jew or part-Jew, one is far less opposed to intermarriage generally or to the intermarriage of one's own child, as we should expect. But there is a curious, consistent discrepancy in attitudes toward intermarriage. In all four samples there is greater opposition to intermarriage *in general* than to the intermarriage of one's own child. One might have thought that what matters most is one's own child being more firmly in the Jewish fold. But perhaps the thinking is that Jews should marry Jews insofar as that is possible, "but if my child wants to marry a nice Russian, I would not oppose it."

TOWARD A CONCLUSION

Becoming Jewish in Russia and Ukraine has been a subtle process, largely invisible to public view, but effective in maintaining a sense of Jewish identity—albeit often a negative one. The collapse of the Soviet Union has removed state-imposed identity, but has opened the pos-

sibility of infusing what had become a hollow identity with cultural and religious content. Whether the efforts to do that will succeed is complicated by the desire of many engaged in the process to remove the Jews from the FSU to Israel or elsewhere. Nevertheless, the combination of possible improvement in the political and economic situations in Russia and Ukraine, the deterioration of Israel's security and economic positions, and ongoing closure of the United States to immigration from the FSU may turn Jewish energies further inward. Some of the old agencies of socialization are disappearing and new ones are appearing. The demographic trends are not encouraging, to put it mildly, but the rapid growth of Jewish organizations and activities is. Thus, the future of Russian and Ukrainian Jewry hangs in the balance. For once, these Jews will be able to determine their own fates rather than have them thrust upon them.

APPENDIX 6

Index of Jewishness

These are the questions used to construct the Ukraine 1997 "Jewishness index"; indices for the other three samples used the same questions (except for those that were either not asked in 1992/93 or that were specific to Ukraine); the results should be considered comparable.

1. By what nationality are you registered in your passport?
    1. Jewish
    2. Other
    3. I have a new-type passport, nationality is not an entry

2. What nationality do you feel you belong to now?
    1. I feel myself a Jew
    2. I feel myself a person of another nationality
    3. I do not feel I belong to any particular nationality
    4. Other

3. During your life, were you more often proud or ashamed to be a Jew?
    1. More often proud
    2. More often ashamed
    3. Both equally

4. Neither
5. Other
9. Difficult to answer

4. To which of the residents of our city do you feel closer spiritually and culturally: Ukrainians, Russians or Jews?
   1. Ukrainians
   2. Russians
   3. Jews
   4. Both Jews and Ukrainians, but not Russians
   5. Both Jews and Russians, but not Ukrainians
   6. Both Russians and Ukrainians, but not Jews
   7. All of them equally close
   8. All of them equally distant
   9. Difficult to answer

5. To whom do you feel closer spiritually: the Ukrainians of this city, the Russians of this city or Jews in Russia?
   1. The Ukrainians of this city
   2. The Russians of this city
   3. Jews of Russia
   4. Both Jews in Russia and Ukrainians in this city are close, but not Russians
   5. Both Jews in Russia and Russians in this city are close, but not Ukrainians
   6. Both Russians and Ukrainians in this city are close, but not Jews in Russia
   7. All of them equally close
   8. All of them equally distant
   9. Difficult to answer

6. Who are more close to you spiritually: the Ukrainians of this city, the Russians of this city or Georgian Jews?
   1. The Ukrainians of this city
   2. The Russians of this city
   3. Georgian Jews
   4. Both Georgian Jews and Ukrainians in this city are close, but not Russians

5. Both Georgian Jews and Russians in this city are close, but not Ukrainians
6. Both Russians and Ukrainians in this city are close, but not Georgian Jews
7. All of them equally close
8. All of them equally distant
9. Difficult to answer

12. If you could be born anew, would you like to be born a Jew or non-Jew?
    1. A Jew
    2. Non-Jew
    9. Not sure, don't know

13. Is your national self-consciousness mostly Jewish/mostly non-Jewish/both?
    1. Mostly Jewish
    2. Both (for example, Ukrainian or Russian)
    3. Mostly non-Jewish
    4. Neither one nor the other
    5. Other
    9. Don't know

15. In your view, is there much/little/nothing typical Jewish in you?
    1. Much
    2. Little
    3. Nothing
    9. Do not know

16. Irrespective of clichés, how would you describe your ethnic identity? Which is most important to you? Choose only one answer
    1. Ukrainian
    2. Russian
    3. Jew (by religion)
    4. Jew (by ethnicity)
    5. Ukrainian Jew
    6. Russian Jew
    7. Israeli
    8. Cosmopolitan ("*kosmopolit*")

9. Citizen of the world
10. Other
11. Don't know

30. What nation's traditions and customs are closest to you?
    1. Jewish
    2. Other nation
    3. Both Jewish and other equally
    4. Other
    9. Don't know

31. What nation's culture, art and literature are closest to you?
    1. Jewish
    2. Other nation
    3. Both Jewish and other equally
    4. Other
    9. Don't know

32. What nation's history is closest to you?
    1. Jewish
    2. Other nation
    3. Both Jewish and other equally
    4. Other
    9. Don't know

174. In your opinion, is it necessary for Jews to choose a spouse of the same nationality or does it not matter?
    1. Choose a spouse of the same nationality
    2. Choose a spouse of another nationality
    3. It does not matter
    9. Don't know

175. Generally speaking, is your home primarily Jewish, Ukrainian or Russian in its spirit and way of life?
    1. Primarily Jewish
    2. Primarily Ukrainian
    3. Primarily Russian
    4. Primarily Jewish and Ukrainian, but not Russian
    5. Primarily Jewish and Russian, but not Ukrainian

6. Primarily Russian and Ukrainian, but not Jewish
7. All of these to the same degree
8. Our home has no national/ethnic character at all
9. Don't know

196. How would you react if your child were to marry a non-Jew?
1. Positively
2. Makes no difference
3. Negatively
4. Other
5. DK/NA

In your view, what is absolutely necessary, what is desirable, and what is unimportant for one to consider oneself a genuine Jew? [1=Necessary; 2=Desirable; 3=Makes no difference; 9=Difficult to answer]

197. To demonstrate openly one's belonging to the Jewish people, and 17 other items

198. Which of the above-mentioned items is the most important in order to consider someone a genuine Jew?
Score 1 if respondent answered "To demonstrate openly one's belonging to the Jewish people,"
Score 0 if other answer given. Do the same for the other items.

199. Can you or can you not call yourself a real Jew?
1. Unhesitatingly yes
2. Yes, but with some reservations
3. I think not
9. Don't know

NOTES

1 Stephen Cornell, "The Variable Ties That Bind: Content and Circumstance in Ethnic Processes," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 19, 2 (April 1996), 271.

2 For an elaboration of this argument, see Zvi Gitelman, "The Decline of the Diaspora Jewish Nation: Boundaries, Content and Jewish Identity," *Jewish Social Studies*, 4, 2 (Winter 1998).

3 V. I. Lenin, *Sochineniia* (2nd ed., Moscow and Leningrad, 1924), XVII, 291.

4 Speech in Zurich (n.d.) in *Lenin on the National Question* (New York: International Publishers, 1934). The speech is not included in the fifth Russian edition of Lenin's works.

5 Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (New York: International Publishers, n.d.), 8–9. In 1966 a leading Soviet scholar of nationalities issues reiterated that "by virtue of its historically established dispersal and social composition, the Jewish nationality cannot develop into a nation." M. S. Dzhunosov, "Natsiia kak sotsial'no-etnicheskaia obshchnost' liudei," *Voprosy istorii*, April 1966, 28.

6 In the late 1960s Soviet scholars began to question Stalin's definition of the nation. See various issues of *Voprosy istorii* for 1966 and 1967, and a summation of the debate by Grey Hodnett, "The Debate over Soviet Federalism," *Soviet Studies*, XVIII, 4 (1967). See also his "What's in a Nation?" *Problems of Communism*, XVI, 5 (September–October, 1967). A Polish social scientist stated flatly, "Formulating one single definition of a nation is not only highly complicated; it is probably almost impossible." Jerzy Wiatr in *Z Pola Walki*, IX, 3 (1967), 87.

7 I. P. Tsamerian, *Natsii i natsional'nye otnosheniia v razvitom sotsialisticheskom obshchestve* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 105.

8 This useful distinction is made by Vernon Aspaturian, "The Non-Russian Nationalities," in Allen Kassof, ed., *Prospects for Soviet Society* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 143–198.

9 A. A. Susokolov, *Mezhnatsional'nye braki v SSSR* (Moscow: Mysl', 1987), 40.

10 For example, a Jewish woman may have married a Russian man and registered their son as a Russian. If the son married a Russian woman, the marriage would not be considered "mixed" but the "family" might be if the grandmother lived with her son and daughter-in-law—a common situation in the Soviet Union. See Susokolov, 28.

11 Mordechai Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry Since the Second World War* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 28–9.

12 Mark Tolts, "Jewish Marriages in the USSR: A Demographic Analysis," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 22, 2 (1992), 8.

13 Mark Tolts, "Recent Jewish Emigration and Population Decline in Russia," *Jews in Eastern Europe*, 1 (35) (Spring 1998), 21.

14 See note 1.

15 S. Gurvich, "Some Problems of Ethnic Development of Peoples in the USSR," *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 5, 1966, quoted in Zvi Gitelman, "The Jews," *Problems of Communism*, XVI, 5 (September–October, 1967), 38.

16 L. I. Brezhnev, *Leninskim kursom* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1974), vol. 4, 50.

17 P. N. Fedoseev, et al., *Lenin and the National Question* (Moscow: Progress, 1977), 327, 334.

18 P. N. Fedoseev, *Izvestiia AN Kirghiz SSR* (Frunze), 6 (1975), 22, quoted in M. I. Kulichenko, et al., *Osnovnye napravleniia izucheniia natsional'nykh otnoshenii v SSSR* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 65–66. E. A. Bagramov engages in a relatively frank discussion of the concept of "Soviet people" in "Chto oznachaet poniatie 'Sovetskii narod'?" in *Otklik,* vyp. 6 (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1989), 67–74.

19 Kulichenko, et al., *Osnovnye napravleniia izucheniia natsional'nykh otnoshenii v SSSR.*, 96.

20 *Ibid.*, 26.

21 See, for example, Zvi Gitelman, "Are Nations Merging in the USSR?" *Problems of Communism*, XXXII, 5 (September–October 1983); Juozas Kazlas, "Social Distance Among Ethnic Groups," in Edward Allworth, ed., *Nationality Group Survival in Multi-Ethnic States* (New York: Praeger, 1977); and Rasma Karklins, *Ethnic Relations in the USSR* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986). One could argue that studies based on émigrés are biased because they may be more ethnically conscious than others. This would not apply to the post-1989 emigration; in any case, the study on which this essay is based is a survey not of émigrés but of people living in Russia/Ukraine. Some Soviet studies are: Iurii Arutiunian, *Sotsial'noe i natsional'noe, Opyt etnosotsiologicheskikh issledovanii po materialam Tatarskoi ASSR* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973); Iurii Arutunian and L. M. Drobizheva, "Etnosotsiologicheskie issledovaniia v SSR," *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, 1, 1981; L. M. Drobizheva and A. A. Susokolov, "Mezhetnicheskie otnosheniia i etnokulturnye protsessy (po materialam etnosotsiologicheskikh issledovanii u narodov SSSR)," *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, 3, 1981. An interesting though uneven analysis is found in Natalia Daragan, "Soviet Ethnography and the 'Jewish Question,'" *Jews in Eastern Europe* 1 (35), Spring 1998.

22 Some of the findings of the first phase are reported in Z. Gitelman, V. Chervyakov, V. Shapiro, "Iudaizm v natsional'nom samosoznanii rossiskikh evreev," *Vestnik Evreiskogo Universiteta v Moskve*, 3 (7) 1994. The revised and expanded English version is "Religion and Ethnicity: Judaism in the Ethnic Consciousness of Contemporary Russian Jews," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20, 2 (April 1997); Zvi Gitelman, "The Reconstruction of Community and Jewish Identity in Russia," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 24, 1 (1994); Zvi Gitelman, "Language, Ethnicity, and the Reconstruction of Jewish Identities in Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine," paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, November 1996; Valeriy Chervyakov, Zvi Gitelman and Vladimir Shapiro, "The Ethnicity of Russian and Ukrainian Jews," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 31, 2 (Fall 2001) 1–17; Gitelman, "Pristratie, prichastnost', otchuzhdenie: Evrei, Evreiskie obshchiny v Ukraine i Rossii," *Egupets*, 8 (Kiev: Institut Iudaiki, 2001), 252–275.

23 For an excellent survey of nineteenth and early twentieth century academic work on Jews' purported physical characteristics and their impact on Jews' character, see Klaus Hoedl, "Physical Characteristics of Jews," *Jewish Studies at the Central European University: Public Lectures, 1996–1999* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000), 59–70.

24 See Zvi Gitelman, *Becoming Israelis: Political Resocialization of Soviet and American Immigrants* (New York: Praeger, 1982); Zvi Gitelman, *Immigration and Identity: The Resettlement and Impact of Soviet Immigrants on Israeli Politics and Society* (Los Angeles: Wilstein Institute, 1995); Tamar Horowitz, ed., *The Soviet Man in an Open Society* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989). Interestingly, most Israeli research on the immigration ignores the issue of motivation. See, for example, Moshe Sicron and Elazar Leshem, eds., *Dioknah shel aliyah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998) and Elazar Leshem and Moshe Lissak, eds., *MeRusiyah leYisrael: zehut vetarbut bema'avar* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 2001).

25 Tolts, op. cit., 190. By "core" Jewish population Tolts means "the aggregate of all those who, when asked [in the census] identify themselves as Jews, or, in the case of children, are identified as such by their parents. It does not include persons of Jewish origin who report another ethnic nationality in the census." (184)

It may surprise Israelis that their country is perceived as more secure than Russia or Ukraine. One should bear in mind that the question was "where do you feel yourself more secure," and respondents may have understood that to mean where they *as Jews* would feel safer. Israel may be intermittently or more frequently engaged in some kind of war, but Jews are not discriminated against.

26 Conversation with Dr. Gennadi Estraikh, Oxford, England, fall 1998.

27 Larisa Bogoraz, "Do I Feel I Belong to the Jewish People?" in Aleksandr Voronel, Viktor Yakhot and Moshe Decter, eds., *I am a Jew: Essays on Jewish Identity in the Soviet Union* (New York: Academic Committee on Soviet Jewry and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, 1973), 63–4.

28 The index consists of 19 questions that were coded so that we get a five-point range from "very low" to "very high" on Jewishness. Details in Appendix 6.

29 See Zvi Gitelman, ed., *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), especially chapter one.

30 See Yaacov Ro'i, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewish Emigration, 1948–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), and Benjamin Pinkus, *Tehiyah utekumah leumit* (Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 1993).

31 See the forthcoming book on Shargorod by the late Charles Hoffman.

32 The question was "What were the circumstances that made you feel that you were Jewish?" It was an open question, later coded.

33 In 1992 in Russia, 94 mothers were registered as Russians, and four respondents did not know their mothers' nationalities. In 1997, 140 were registered as Russians and 17 as other non-Jews, and four respondents did not know how their mothers were registered. Asked what their mothers considered themselves, 100 in 1992 (113 in 1997) said Russian, 40 (42 in 1997) were not sure. In 1992, 78 had non-Jewish fathers, 12 were not sure what was on their fathers' passports. In 1997 in Russia, 116 had non-Jewish fathers, 21 had other non-Jewish fathers, and 14 did not know their fathers' nationalities. Note the increase in the number of non-Jewish parents from 1992.

34 There is no difference on identification with Israel between those who have partly and wholly non-Jewish spouses (Ukraine 1992).

35 In 1992, only 55 percent in Russia and 53 percent in Ukraine agreed that Jews should choose Jewish spouses; in 1997, only 43 percent in Russia and 37 percent in Ukraine advocated this.

36 American Jewish Committee, *2000 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion* (New York, 2000), 3.

CHAPTER 7

The Jewish Press and Jewish Identity: Leningrad/St. Petersburg, 1989–1992[1]

John D. Klier

> *Does a Jewish community exist in St. Petersburg? Does a community exist as a unified spiritual organism, with common values, with common responsibilities, with a common fate? What unifies today's Petersburg Jews, what makes them Jews? The spiritual inheritance of their forefathers? A determination to oppose the growing fascist danger? Or the opportunity to receive humanitarian aid "from the Joint?" And perhaps the chance to "dump" (svalit') this country and to go…wherever?*
>
> (*Ami/Narod moi,* 17/46:20/IX [1992])

The only generalization about modern Jewish history that might command a scholarly consensus is the assertion that it is the history of changing Jewish self-identification. The dynamic nature of this phenomenon is overt in Zvi Gitelman's exhortation to explore, *apropos* post-Communist Jewry, "what has changed and what has remained." This task, complicated in the best of circumstances, is made more troublesome by conflicting claims of "authenticity" and pretensions to greater proximity to an imagined "core" Jewish tradition. We are dealing with real, living human beings, after all, whose multilayered perceptions of identity are often difficult to fit into the boxes of a survey questionnaire. Research is made no easier when the subjects are cognizant of the observation: one of my Petersburg friends lamented the difficulty of being a laboratory animal that knows it is the subject of a scientific experiment. Just such an awareness prompted an article in the Russian Jewish press to claim, tongue in cheek, that the Jews must be "one people" because a majority of respondents to a sociological survey agreed that they were.[2]

This essay uses the Soviet and post-Soviet press to explore the nature of Russian Jewish identity in the last years of the Soviet Union and the first years of post-Communist Russia. The mere existence

of a Jewish press, whatever its content, was significant, given that for many surveys the rubric "reads a Jewish newspaper" is considered a quantifiable marker of a level of Jewish identity. A content analysis of the Jewish press, moreover, provides insight into "what remained" of Jewish identity in the twilight period of Communism, serving as the raw material from which a post-Communist identity was constructed. Focusing on one newspaper—*Ami/Narod moi* ("My People," in Hebrew and Russian)—in one Soviet Russian city (Leningrad/St. Petersburg) provides a specific case study that can be compared and contrasted with other Jewish communities in Russia, Eastern Europe, and the wider world.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESS FOR SOVIET/RUSSIAN JEWRY

The circulation of periodical publications was one of the most visible forms of Jewish activism in the late-Soviet and early post-Soviet periods. The underground press (*samizdat*) served as the major means of communication within the Jewish dissident movement, while also providing a passive outlet for a readership that wished to avoid overt political activity. In the twilight period of Communism, such activity became less dangerous, and periodicals began to make the transition from prohibited *samizdat* to quasi-tolerated publications. In 1990–91, there were approximately 90 Jewish periodical publications in the Soviet Union, falling to 79 in 1992–93, and rising to 124 in 1994–95.[3] Even when conditions improved, however, the tasks of registering, editing, printing, and distributing periodicals demanded a blend of political, entrepreneurial, and administrative skills.[4] Any Jewish newspaper was consequently the product of a significant commitment.

The physical and emotional exertions required for publication ensured that the actual content was often of less immediate concern. As a consequence, many Jewish newspapers lacked a strong editorial line. An almost universal, open invitation to readers to serve as *de facto* journalists guaranteed that many papers did indeed represent a diverse *vox populi*. The financial needs of the Jewish press, and the need to fill the column inches, made them an inviting target for the "ethnic entrepreneurs," as Gitelman calls them in his chapter in this volume. The chief concern of most ethnic entrepreneurs in the transition period of 1989–92 was *aliyah*, or emigration to Israel. Bodies

such as the Jewish Agency were well positioned to encourage *aliyah*, and were helped by the anti-Semitic rhetoric and rumors of impending pogroms that marked the last days of the Soviet Union.

There was another side to this process, however. Numerous letters to the Jewish press claimed that Soviet Jews were "sitting on their suitcases." On the basis of private discussions held during this period, I would hypothesize that the regular appearance of the Jewish press, and its copious information about Israel and the rich possibilities of *aliyah*, actually worked to prevent a panicked wave of departures. By creating a climate wherein up-to-date information and commentary were readily available, the press made it possible to postpone the crucial decision to depart until the last possible moment. Suitcases were kept under the bed, rather than serving as furniture in an empty apartment.

In the absence of an all-union or national Jewish press, periodicals displayed a local character, even when they had wider aspirations. Since most good-sized Jewish communities produced a periodical, some with extended runs, and because they are readily available to researchers, the press is a key source for the comparative study of Jewish activism and identity across the former USSR. But before the task of comparison can begin, there must be individual case studies.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LENINGRAD/ST. PETERSBURG

Leningrad was not a typical Soviet Jewish community—but then, no such "typical" community existed. Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, Vilnius, Sverdlovsk, and Zaporozh'e all displayed features that were uniquely their own. This was to be expected: strong differences had appeared among activists of the Jewish national movement even before the breakup of the Soviet Union introduced a whole new set of nationality-inspired factors.

The city of Leningrad displayed a number of distinctive features. It had a large Jewish population, constituting a human critical mass. Estimated at 106,000 in 1991, it was the second largest Jewish concentration in the Soviet Union. The pre-revolutionary capital of Jewish activism, under Communism it had lost that role to Moscow. The city nonetheless boasted a long tradition of communal activism, not only in the form of the *otkaznik* (refusenik) movement, but also in a variety of informally tolerated and semi-official educational and heritage

groups formed in the more lenient atmosphere of *perestroika*. In the 1980s, the city boasted an underground Jewish press, exemplified by the *Leningradskii evreiskii al'manakh*. Leningrad Jews were active in the opposition to the Putsch of August 1991, using communication techniques that had been perfected in the struggle of the Jewish dissidents against the KGB.

It was clear to any observant visitor to Leningrad that many of its Jews participated in a distinct Jewish subculture.[5] It was no coincidence that the 1966 "Jewish holiday" described by Gitelman in his chapter took place in a Leningrad concert hall on the occasion of the premiere of the Thirteenth Symphony of Leningrad's native son, Dmitri Shostakovich, who was widely seen as friendly to the Jews. "*Kul'turnost*" (being cultured) was one of the stereotyped attributes which Leningrad Jews attributed to themselves, while sharing the general scorn of their Leningrad Russian neighbors for the "*nekul'turnye*" inhabitants of Moscow, "that big village." Undoubtedly, many members of the audience would have learned of the occasion, and secured their tickets for it, through the Jewish "*blat*" network (the Soviet system of "pull" and favors).[6] I frequently noticed this network at work in the city, as Jacqueline Goldberg's chapter on social network groups would suggest.

The reconstruction of Jewish life here shared with Moscow the influence of "professional Jews" (i.e., individuals who made a living out of their Jewish activities) and ethnic entrepreneurs, but never attracted the attention or the resources bestowed upon the Soviet capital. Leningrad Jewish activists were also less likely to be the "pocket Jews" (*karmannye evrei*) whose role was critiqued by one editorialist. These were Jews who were "in the pocket" of the leadership of the national republics, such as Ukraine, fulfilling the function of making the national government look good to the outside world.[7] Leningrad Jews also had close to hand the example of the burgeoning activism of Jews in the nearby Baltic states, especially Lithuania, where independence-minded authorities actively encouraged the emergence of a non-Russian Jewish identity.

Beginning on July 6, 1990, Leningrad/St. Petersburg was served by a regular Jewish newspaper, with the dual title of *Narod Moi* and *Ami*, "My People" in Russian and Hebrew respectively. The paper was published in Russian, with the occasional Hebrew or (more rarely) Yiddish word or phrase thrown in for flavor. The eight-page paper

appeared twice a month, on newsprint whose quality succinctly illustrated the deteriorating economic conditions of the late Soviet Union. The paper had a number of foreign sponsors and advertisers. Among the former was the "Bay Area Committee for Soviet Jewry," while the most dependable of the latter was the Jewish Agency for [the State of] Israel. Israeli sponsorship increased at the end of 1992 when the Israel Discount Bank took out a number of attractive full-page ads aimed at potential *olim* (immigrants to Israel). The paper's founding editor, Boris Neplokh, made *aliyah* following the twelfth number (March 14, 1991), after which the paper was edited by Iakov Tsukerman. *Ami/ Narod moi* had a stated press run ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 copies.[8] While it did face occasional problems of distribution, the editors seldom failed to produce an issue.

An examination of the contents of *Narod moi* offers insights into the processes of institution- and community-building in Leningrad, while revealing the immediate concerns of Jewish activists. The paper repeatedly declared itself outside the struggles of parties and factions, as in the case of the fight for control of the main choral synagogue waged between the Soviet-era "Committee of Twelve" and a Chabad/ Lubavitch-inspired rival board in 1989–92 (1/30:9/I/1992). It also refused to take sides when the rabbi of the Leningrad Choral Synagogue, E. Z. Levitas, was accused of being an agent of the KGB (19/ 27:1/XII/1991). The paper reported, but did not comment on, persistent complaints of irregularities in the administration of the Jewish (Preobrazhenskii) cemetery (5/34:13/III/1992). These complaints, incidentally, suggest that for some Leningrad Jews—undoubtedly the pre-war generation—a Jewish burial was still seen as desirable.

Local coverage in general was marked by a "not in front of the Gentiles" approach to anything that might serve to discredit the community. Consequently, *Narod moi*'s role was more that of chronicler than interpreter. The paper did share the stock in trade of editors of Jewish newspapers worldwide: complaints against the apathy of the local Jewish population.

The diversity of Leningrad Jewry ensured that *Narod moi* could not pretend to speak for all. It is harder to determine the extent to which it represented the viewpoint of the Jew in the street, the *riadovoi leningradskii evrei*. Yet it was more than just the mouthpiece of the traditional activists. Most interviews with veterans of the Jewish national movement were conducted in Israel, where they had made *aliyah*.

Consequently, their evaluation of the present situation often had a sense of detachment. Contributors were largely self-selected; they wrote because they had something to say, rather than because they were commissioned or were covering a beat. Many contributors sought to provide information about past or future Jewish events, or to spark some communal initiative. The openness of *Narod moi*'s columns lured the hesitant into action. Some future activists published their first efforts under a pseudonym. A common rubric was "This is my first letter to a newspaper." It seems a fair assumption that every contributor to *Narod moi* already had some awareness of a Jewish identity.

The paper also had national aspirations. It encouraged correspondents to write from the far-flung corners of the dying Soviet Union, and rewarded them by placing their articles on the front page. The paper carried stories from Central Asia, the Caucasus, Ukraine, and many Russian provincial cities. Ironically, the one center that did not initially attract extensive attention was Moscow. A special focus of attention was the Baltic region, where Jewish communities, though small, generated a good deal of activism and met a sympathetic response from the state. As one correspondent explained, the authorities believed that no civilized foreign state would recognize the independence of Lithuania if there were anti-Semitism there (8:20/XI/1990). Of Latvia it was said, "Free Latvia needs Latvian Jews as an indicator of a well-treated minority, as a bridge between business and political circles in the West and Latvia" (15/23:18/X/1991). The struggle against anti-Semitism was a major activity of the paper, as exemplified by Ol'ga Ryzhenkova's valuable, multi-part investigation of anti-Semitic groups in Leningrad ("*Istoki*" [Sources] 8:20/XI/1990 et seq.).

Narod moi was never a significant source of hard news or investigative journalism—such roles were obviated by its fortnightly publication schedule and lack of resources. The Putsch and presidential and Duma politics were almost entirely missing from its pages, as opposed to complaints about economic policies which one of my Leningrad friends described as "shock therapy without the therapy." Such national news stories as were published—information about the Gulf War, or an interview with Vladimir Zhirinovskii—were usually cribbed from foreign papers such as *The Jerusalem Report* (7/37:5/IV/1992). The newspaper's magpie quality allowed it to locate and refute anti-Semitic news items that appeared in the national press, demonstrating a self-confident willingness to take anti-Semites to task in a

national forum.[9] This was especially significant since their targets began to respond by bringing suits against authors and publications.[10]

The newspaper was also filled, by its own admission, with "bricks": long articles not really appropriate for a popular newspaper (19/48:16/X/1992). On the other hand, many of these articles were of historical interest, and provided the first outlet for the publications of scholars who are today important historians of Russian Jewry, such as Viktor Kel'ner and Dmitri El'iashevich, as well as a whole host of dedicated non-professionals such as Valerii Gessen. Ultimately, the most important function of *Narod moi* was as a forum for readers' views, and as a commentator on purely Jewish topics and especially the activities of the *Va'ad*—the umbrella organization for Jewish communal organizations.

The period from 1989 to 1992 was filled with high drama, marked by episodes that grew out of the ethnic tensions of the late Soviet Union. The events of the August 1991 Putsch and the rivalry between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian president Boris Yeltsin have tended to obscure the importance of ethnic tensions in the breakup of the Soviet Union. Yet it should be remembered that Gorbachev's failure to recognize or to deal with rising ethnic tensions in the union republics did much to undermine his position. It also cost him the support of potential allies of a national democratic orientation. The Putsch itself coincided with a new union treaty designed to satisfy the complaints of a number of the constituent republics. Among the first responses to the coup were declarations of independence by Estonia and Latvia. Previously there had been clashes between Armenians and Azeris in Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh (1988–90), the deaths of 30 demonstrators in Tbilisi (April 9, 1989), 90 riot victims in Uzbekistan, and 15 people in Vilnius (January 13, 1991). Many of these events were described at the time as "pogroms," and in the case of the Baku disorders, attempts were made to include Russian Jews among the victims of Armenian Christians killed by Azeri Muslims (18/26:25/XI/1991).

Jews were not isolated from these rising tensions. In early 1990 there were widespread rumors that Jews would be targeted for pogroms in major Soviet cities, including Leningrad. The aggressively anti-Semitic *Pamiat'* movement received widespread publicity, and was especially active in Leningrad.[11] The stretch of pavement on Nevskii Prospekt outside the shopping arcades of Gostinyi Dvor became the

main gathering place for right-wing nationalists and anti-Semites, who sold their brochures, books, and newspapers alongside crude home-made banners with anti-Semitic slogans. The Putsch was of special significance for Soviet Jews, who saw it as a putative return to the days of state anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. As a consequence, Jews were noteworthy participants in resistance to the Putsch, both in Moscow and in Leningrad (14/22:3/IX/1991). One of the three victims of the Putsch in Moscow was Il'ya Krichevskii, who was Jewish. Russian Jews took melancholy pride in the fact that Kaddish was said at the national service of mourning for these heroes of the "new Russia" (15/23:18/X/1991). The fear that gripped many Jews when they first heard of the Putsch was quickly transformed into pride at the activist response. According to one *Narod moi* correspondent, "for me, 'Jew' is not a notation in a passport, a word formulated to give offence to the whole world, but an essential differentiation from everybody else. Such a turn to Jewry was not a product of today, but arises from the period after August when it really became possible to talk about it" (16/45:30/VIII/1992).

NAROD MOI'S SEARCH FOR JEWISH IDENTITY

The first task the paper set for itself was to call upon Jews to recover their lost sense of identity. As the paper's statement of purpose explained: "We look around—and resentment rises in our hearts. We look at ourselves—and weep. Who are we—ignorant of our languages, our history, forgetful of the faith of our ancestors and the taste of *Shabbat challah*? Do we sing our songs? Do we name our sons after our great forefathers, our military and spiritual heroes? Do we remember that we are Jews? Consider what the past decades have stripped away. But is it only the sponsors of state anti-Semitism who brand us 'rootless cosmopolitans' and 'Zionists' who are to blame? Haven't we erred in thinking that the only way to get close to other nations is to abandon our own? We have done that and we stand like a tree without roots. We must undertake the difficult task of making the tree fruitful again" (1:6/VI/1990).

What exactly was the reconstructed Jewish identity to be? The choice of attributes available from the Jewish tradition in Eastern Europe led logically to another question: Was this new identity to be that of "Russian Jews" or "Russian *olim*?" Should Jews be learning

Hebrew, in preparation for *aliyah*, or Yiddish, as a link to the immediate Jewish past, or Russian, the language of a significant Diaspora group? Should the focus of *Narod moi*'s coverage be "here" (the Soviet Union and its successor states), or "there" (Israel or the West). Should biographies focus on the lives of the Russian-born founder of Zionist Revisionism, Ze'ev Jabotinsky (5/34:13/III/1992) or Moisei Beregovskii, the great collector of Jewish musical folklore (18/47:30/IX/1992)? Mordechai Altshuler has contended, *apropos* this period, that "the majority of readers of these [Jewish] publications, like the majority of participants in various Jewish undertakings, were preparing, in a very short period of time, to emigrate (chiefly to Israel), and wanted to know more about the country itself." [12]

Despite the departure of its original editor to Israel, *Narod moi* never felt constrained to make such an overt choice. To be sure, there was no shortage of coverage of Israel, most of it highly favorable. The paper carried publicity about the opening of cultural and emigration advice centers and ads from Israeli institutions (telephone companies and banks). The Jewish Agency had ads in every issue, often on the front page. There was a regular column entitled "*Aliyah*." At the same time, there was extensive coverage of Jewish communal construction within the Soviet Union and the FSU. A regular mantra was the declaration that, even in the era of mass migration, there would be many who would choose to stay, and the infrastructure must be created to allow them to live an authentic Jewish life. The paper's resident feuilletonist, I. Ashkenazi, while broadly supportive of the need for *aliyah*, urged his readers not to be railroaded. They should make their decision on the basis of their own critical calculation, not the importuning of the Jewish Agency or an outbreak of mass hysteria (5/34:13/III/1992). It is noteworthy that very few of the reader's letters and articles were devoted to Israel or emigration issues. It could almost be said that those who decided to write had decided to stay, and were more concerned about events in the surrounding environment. Whenever there was discussion of emigration, the topic was invariably related to *aliyah*. There was one striking exception in the form of a sharp exchange about emigration to Germany, condemned by one correspondent (18/26:25/XI/1991) and justified by another (20–1/28–29:16/XII/1991).

If *Narod moi* thus catered to would-be *olim,* on the one hand, the needs of those who remained were also served. As one correspondent

declared, those left behind also wanted to feel themselves Jews and to pass this awareness on to their children (18/26:25/XI/1991). Writers demanded Jewish "self-emancipation," whereby "every Jew must become aware of belonging to Jewry and free himself from the fear of being a Jew" (5:12/IX/1990). "Those left behind" were offered extensive coverage of the *Va'ad*. The meetings that created the body were greeted with banner headlines. The deliberations were given (initially favorable) attention, and leading personalities such as Chairman Mikhail Chlenov were interviewed at length. Space was invariably found for the contents of their letters and speeches to the Jewish community (2/10:20/I/1992; 7/15:30/IV/1992).

Any fear that such coverage might merely continue sycophantic coverage of leading institutions, as was the case in Soviet times, was quickly dispelled. The failure of the *Va'ad* to maintain unity, especially after the breakup of the USSR, or to satisfy the myriad hopes of its constituency, produced a running stream of critical commentary largely focused on the body's perceived lack of democracy. One critic complained that the activities of the *Va'ad* confirmed the veracity of a new proverb, "Work with Jewish organizations for three years and you'll become an anti-Semite" (11/40:15/VI/1992).

The demise of the Soviet Union provided a moment of truth for Jews. They had been major beneficiaries of the policies of Gorbachev—especially the relaxation of barriers to free emigration. As noted above, Jews and Jewish organizations were instant and active opponents of the Putsch. Jews were dispersed throughout the Soviet Union, and its imminent dissolution threatened future problems. For example, the Lithuanian authorities had been happy to permit Jews to organize communal structures in the last years of Communism, the more so if these structures and publications were in Yiddish. Much of the Jewish population of Lithuania and the other Baltic states was not "native"—these communities had been largely destroyed in the Holocaust—but were Russian speakers who had settled in the Baltic region after the war. As such, they were simultaneously "Jews," to whom much was permitted, and "Russians in the near abroad," who were a much more problematical group. *Narod moi*'s contributors were also concerned with the fate of Ukrainian Jews, especially with what they saw as efforts to dominate the community through "*karmannye*" Jews (as noted above) (6/35:29/III/1992).

The *Va'ad* defined its own role in 1990 as the outgrowth of a "national consensus": 1) to resurrect the Jewish communities of the country; 2) to support *aliyah* and "civilized absorption"; 3) to oppose anti-Semitism; and 4) to re-integrate the Jews of the Soviet Union into world Jewry (11/40:15/VI/1992). As one commentator summarized this agenda: "either live in a civilized fashion or leave" (4/33:28/II/1992). A growing confidence could be seen in the exhortation of one correspondent that Jews should "feel themselves a part of their people" and create the third largest Jewish community in the world (3/32:5/II/1992). *Va'ad* Chairman Mikhail Chlenov described his vision of a strong Russian Jewish Diaspora, not only confident in itself, but able to provide strong support for Israel (1/30:9/I/1992). The vision of Russia as the third axis of a world Jewry comprised of Israel-America-Russia demonstrated a growing Russian Jewish self-confidence, although it still did not resolve the question of the actual content of the Russian component of the triad.

Time and experience added to the self-confidence of *Va'ad* activists and their supporters. They began to tire of the supplicant status that derived from their dependence on Israeli and American sponsors, ever mindful of the saying, "He who pays the piper, calls the tune" (4/33:28/II/1992). This was especially noted in lingering bad feelings between "native" teachers of Hebrew and those brought in from Israel (18/26:25/XI/1991). Tensions were also apparent in the field of higher education. Leningrad Jewish activists had a long tradition of providing Jewish adult education, exemplified by the Leningrad Free Jewish University, and of carrying on serious research projects, such as anthropological expeditions to the territories of the prerevolutionary Pale of Settlement. They now faced competition from world-class scholars in the field of Jewish studies, who did not always see them as equals, or respect their accomplishments that had been achieved under difficult circumstances.

With the rise of new forms of activism came the conflict between generations. The feuilletonist of *Narod moi* was quite capable of condemning members of the older generation for their indecision and the illusions that had led them to accept the Soviet system for seventy-four years: "You are children of the system; you carry it around with you, and you are dangerous to the outside world" (20–1/28–9:16/XII/1991). But the young people, entering the national movement filled

with the excitement of national self-assertion, also had something to learn: "As a rule, they are intellectually developed, energetic and businesslike. But often their assumptions about the realities of the life of groups and communities are marked by primitive banalities. They copy received wisdom, often not having confidence in their own experience… They have little knowledge of Jewish traditions, and if they know anything, it is usually from second-hand sources. And what they don't know most of all is the history of the contemporary Jewish movement in the country" (18/26:25/XI/1991).

Narod moi sought to rectify these perceived shortcomings with interviews with former refuseniks and Jewish activists, as noted above. In the columns of the paper there remained a slight tension between enthusiasm and experience, youth and age. Nor was this tension relieved by the growing number of young Leningrad (and Soviet) Jews who received training in community activism from the Jewish Agency and other Israeli and American groups, in contrast to those whose training consisted of bitter experience. (See Claire Rosenson's chapter for the analogous situation in Poland.)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOLOCAUST

Numerous studies have revealed the importance of the Holocaust as a unifying component, for good or for ill, of American Jewish identity. A survey of *Narod moi* indicates that Holocaust awareness played a similar role among Soviet and post-Soviet Jews. There was scarcely an issue of the paper that did not devote some attention to the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. The very first issue announced a regular column on the subject: "Under the rubric 'SHOAH' (the Hebrew word for the Catastrophe) we plan to publish materials about the tragedy of individual *shtetlekh*, about the fate of Jews who survived the war, and about those who fell. The tragic chronicle of the Catastrophe should be written" (1:6/VII/1990). The paper was true to its word, and the column, indicated by a special symbol, appeared in almost every issue of the paper.

The paper also devoted attention to Yom Ha-Shoah, the day of mourning for Holocaust victims widely observed by world Jewry. This form of Holocaust commemoration had special significance for the Jews of Leningrad, because it had been a specific feature of the Jewish

dissident movement in the city dating to the first attempt at commemoration in 1981. From private apartments in 1981, to the Piskarevskii cemetery in 1982, the annual meeting finally moved to the Jewish (Preobrazhenskii) cemetery in 1983. The number of participants increased over the years from about 40 to 60 in 1981, to 500 in 1988, to three thousand in 1990. As the paper noted in 1992, "in the suffocating atmosphere of those days people were to be found for whom a feeling of solidarity with the fate of their people and its history and its Catastrophe was stronger than the fear and passivity that paralyzed society" (8/37:27/IV/1992).

Material published under this rubric provides information about the memorialization of the Holocaust in the USSR that is not generally discussed in the literature on the subject. *Narod moi*'s correspondents reported on the practice of removing the remains of Holocaust victims from execution sites to a mass grave in the Jewish cemetery which had served the martyred community, an act that clearly asserted the *Jewish* identity of the victims. The first such report, published in 1990, described the re-interment of the remains of the victims of the *shtetl* of Chausy, Mogilev region, in 1955 (7:30/X/1990). This report sparked similar accounts, including a description of the reburial of the murdered Jews of Surazhe in the Briansk region in 1961, after a petition had been submitted to Leonid Brezhnev himself (3/11:17/II/1991). (All the re-interments apparently took place with the cooperation of the local authorities.)

The well-known difficulty of the question of memorialization was exemplified by the controversy surrounding the mass-murder site of Babi Yar in Kiev. One of the most long-standing complaints of Soviet Jews against the authorities concerned the submerging of the specific suffering of the Jews under the "twenty million victims of fascism."[13] A dramatic repudiation of this policy was the international commemoration of Babi Yar, including the erection of a new, specifically "Jewish" monument (a menorah) in Kiev in October 1991. This was one of the few occasions when *Narod moi* had a special, and rather critical, correspondent assigned to cover a Jewish event (16/24:31/X/1991). (Meetings of the *Va'ad* were the other exception.) The paper carried an extensive illustrated story about other, earlier efforts to erect Jewish Holocaust memorials in the Soviet Union (1/30:9/I/1992). A number of stories elucidated the fate of Evgenii Evtushenko's famous poem

"Babi Yar" and Dmitri Shostakovich's Thirteenth Symphony, which incorporated the text of the poem (4/12:14/III/1991). The paper even hosted a rare literary polemic when the author of a notorious poetic response to Evtushenko, A. Markov, wrote to defend himself against charges of anti-Semitism (12/20:30/VII/1991; 15/23:18/X/1991).

The first issue of *Narod moi* also carried a note that revealed how the Jews of Leningrad sought to link themselves directly to the fate of the victims of the Holocaust. The author of an article on the Shoah donated his honorarium to the "Fund for a Monument to the Victims of the Catastrophe in the City of Pushkin." Most Nazi mass-murder actions took place far away from the Russian heartland, in the cities and towns of the former Pale of Settlement. But the German Wehrmacht had also reached the environs of Leningrad, including the town of Pushkin (formerly Tsarskoe Selo), which is less than an hour by commuter train from the heart of the city. In October 1941, the Germans rounded up the Jews of Pushkin and executed them in one of the city's parks. A group of Leningrad Jewish activists commissioned a monument from the sculptor V. Sidur, entitled "Expression of Grief," to mark the site. Fund-raising for the project became, for *Narod moi*, an indicator of the Jewish consciousness of Leningrad Jewry, and a frequent subject of exhortation and reproach when sufficient support did not appear to be forthcoming (10/18:11/VI/1991). The paper greeted the erection of the monument in 1992 with undisguised pride.

Each Yom Ha-Shoah became an opportunity to emphasize Jewish identity. In 1992 the paper editorialized that "in the contemporary Jewish communal life of the city there is no other event able to gather together and unite thousands. Such is the unhappy but natural paradox of history—the memory of the Catastrophe, like nothing else, serves as the basis for the unity of a people, the basis for its spiritual resurrection" (8/37:27/IV/1992). In the aftermath of the 1992 commemoration, the paper noted with pride that local television had carried a report on the meeting in the Preobrazhenskii cemetery, and that the national news program had reported on such ceremonies from around the world. Each celebration of this annual event, the paper declared, "was a further stage in the rebirth of Jewish national self-consciousness, of the historical memory of the nation" (10/39:25/V/1992).

THE MISSING ROLE OF JUDAISM

The results of a survey of Russian Jews were presented at a seminar I attended at the Russian Academy of Sciences in the mid-1990s; among the findings reported was that less than 5 percent of Soviet Jewish respondents agreed with the statement that "a belief in God is an essential part of being a Jew."[14] Like the scholars around the table who shook their heads in knowing agreement, readers of *Narod moi* would have had no reason to dispute such figures. Here was yet more evidence of how thoroughly Russian Jewry had been Sovietized. Under the influence of a society that rejected religious belief, Soviet Jews had become decoupled from Judaism.

As Judith Deutsch Kornblatt makes clear in her chapter in this volume, Russian Jews were as likely as their Russian neighbors to engage in a spiritual search in reaction to the sterile materialism of Communist ideology. Some—the so-called *baalei teshuvah* (those who return [to religion])—adopted a strictly observant form of Judaism.[15] In the main, however, they came out of the refusenik movement, and already possessed a strong sense of Jewish identity. But in the absence of any prior grounding in Judaism, and in the midst of a non-Jewish environment, spiritual seekers were just as likely to turn to Buddhism, Russian Orthodoxy, or New Age movements for spiritual satisfaction, as Kornblatt makes clear.

This situation was reflected in the treatment of Judaism in the Jewish press. Authors could make no assumptions about the level of their readers' knowledge, resulting in articles with titles such as "Why Do Jews Not Eat Certain Kinds of Meat?" or even "What Is Pesach (Passover)?" Articles in *Narod moi* presented Jewish religious festivals as though they were principally the commemorations of historical events, including those, like Simchat Torah, which are ahistorical. There was little information about fulfilling *mitzvot*, unless one includes an article providing a pattern for knitting a kipa, or skullcap. There was almost no discussion of Judaism as an ethical-religious system. While this may have been inevitable in a general circulation newspaper, the space devoted to "bricks" of Jewish history suggests that an occasional article of more sophisticated content would have been welcomed. Using *Narod moi*'s contents as an indicator of religious awareness makes it clear that any strong identification with Judaism must

fall into the category of "what has changed." What there was of religious "thick culture" had to be consciously imported into a Jewish identity.

EXTREMES TOUCH

It is perhaps obvious that the Jews of Leningrad were first and foremost *Russian* Jews. This helps to explain a phenomenon that strikes the eye when one reads the contemporary nationalist Russian press for this same period: the startling symmetry between the Russian and the Russian Jewish national movements. Russians, after all, were also in the process of constructing a new national identity in the period of the decline and fall of Communism. Russian nationalists, like their Jewish counterparts, saw their national culture and their ethnicity as a major victim of Communist internationalism. The most extreme experiments, they claimed, had been carried out on the Russian people. The symbols and narratives they developed to "resurrect" the Russian people had striking parallels with those of the Jewish national movement in Russia in the late- and post-Communist eras.

One of the most powerful symbols of the stolen past of the Russian people, for Russian nationalists, was the destruction of the huge Cathedral of Christ the Savior, built in the 19th century to commemorate the defeat of Napoleon in the war of 1812. The building was destroyed by the Soviet authorities in the 1930s in a conscious act of cultural vandalism. The demand for the reconstruction of the cathedral became an icon of Russian nationalist rhetoric. Nationalist newspapers carried coupons that readers could clip and send in with their donations, and no nationalist rally was complete without the circulation of a box for donations to the project. So powerful did this symbol become that it was co-opted by Russian President Boris Yeltsin: in a presidential decree of 1992, he placed the reconstruction of the Cathedral high on a list of state-sponsored projects that were necessary to the "resurrection" of Russian culture. The visitor to contemporary Moscow is aware of how fully the project has been carried out.

The campaign to raise funds for the monument "Expression of Grief" served a similar function for the Jews of Leningrad. Their national awareness was directly linked to the commissioning of the monument and the securing of permission to place it in Pushkin. The attainment of this goal—largely with internal funding—was hugely

symbolic, especially given the importance of the Holocaust as a unifying element of Jewish identity.

The importance of the Holocaust for Jews is, in many ways, mirrored by the importance of the Stalinist repression for Russian nationalists. The nationalists emphasize that Stalinism was something done *to*, not *by*, the Russian people. (This is why, in nationalist discourse, it is convenient to claim that Stalinism was the creation of the Jews, an expression of their "Russophobia" in reaction to the imagined wrongs imposed upon them in the tsarist past. The Jews were able to carry out such monstrous crimes against the Russian people because they were "*chuzhoi*" [alien].)

Important components of Stalinism, for Russian nationalists, were collectivization, de-kulakization, and the destruction of the physical and spiritual environment of the Russian village—which was seen as the primary locus of Russian national values. Emergent Russian nationalists in the last decade of Communism returned symbolically to the village. They did this in particular through their support and patronage of a group of Russian writers known as the "*Derevniki*"—or "Village Prose Writers"—who sought to idealize the village and mourn its destruction.[16]

A similar role was played by a group of young Leningrad Jewish scholars who participated in an "unofficial" (i.e., underground) seminar in Jewish history. Their studies inspired them to make annual ethnographic expeditions to the territory of the former Pale of Settlement in search of traces of the Jewish past there. They collected tombstone inscriptions and other artifacts, and mapped the territory of now-vanished *shtetlekh*. In name and intent these expeditions mirrored the famous expedition headed by S. An'sky through the Pale on the eve of the Great War (15/44:20/VIII/1992). And like the stories and essays of the Village Prose Writers (some of whose work appeared in the form of travel accounts of trips through a ruined countryside), these expeditions represented a direct challenge to Soviet ideology. In the Soviet view, the Russian village and the Jewish *shtetl* alike were symbols of backwardness and superstition that had to be destroyed on the march to modernity. There was nothing romantic about them. Both Russian and Russian Jewish nationalists sought the recovery of their national identities in what might be described as "nests of ethnicity." The similarity of these respective quests were, as our Communist colleagues used to say, "not accidental."

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter has been to demonstrate the utility of the Jewish press as a tool for charting some aspects of the construction of a modern Jewish identity in post-Communist Russia. The press helps us to evaluate what remains and what has changed after seventy years of Communism. The contents of the Leningrad press suggest that "thick culture" (religion, language) has been stripped away, although a surprisingly vital "thin culture" remains. Perhaps the most striking accomplishment of the Communist experiment has been to replace the religious culture of Judaism with a Soviet-style ethnic identity for Jews, which has persisted even in the face of the disappearance of many ethnic markers. A notable aspect of the recent history of the Jews of Leningrad/St. Petersburg has been the attempt to reconstruct a Jewish identity from the wreckage of the past. This article has examined the beginnings of this process, which is conscious, dynamic, and ongoing.

NOTES

1 Preparation of this article was assisted by the Graduate School Research Fund and the Dean's Fund at University College London. I would like to thank Dr. Viktor Kel'ner of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg for assistance in assembling research materials.

2 *Narod moi*, 11/40:15/VI/1992. All subsequent citations in the text are from *Narod moi*, unless otherwise indicated.

3 M. Beyzer (Beizer), "Contemporary Jewish Periodicals in the USSR," *Jews and Jewish Topics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, 2,12 (Fall 1990), 71–72; A. Zeltser, "Jewish Periodicals in the former Soviet Union, 1994–1995," *Jews and Jewish Topics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, 2, 20 (Fall 1996), 58–83.

4 All publications had to be registered with the authorities in the name of an authorized body. As the Soviet Union began to weaken and break up, "front" organizations could serve this purpose, but the entire process had to be handled with care and was subject to official caprice. Yet this very confusion made it possible to publish, albeit with an ambiguous legal status.

5 For aspects of Jewish sub-culture before and after *perestroika*, see the articles by Fran Markowitz, "*Russkaia druzhba*: Russian Friendship in American and Israeli Contexts," *Slavic Review*, 50, 3 (Fall 1991), 637–45; and "If a Platypus Is Both a Reptile and a Mammal, Can a Person Be Both a Russian and a Jew? Post-Soviet Teenagers' Constructions of Russian Jewish Identity," *East European Jew-*

ish Affairs, 26, 2 (Winter 1996), 27–40; and, more generally, her book *Coming of Age in Post-Soviet Russia* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

6 Alena Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking, and Informal Exchanges* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

7 The reference here was to the founder of the Congress of the Jews of the Ukraine, seen as a body controlled from the top with the sole objective of blocking the rise of an independent Jewish national movement. See *Narod moi* (6/35:29/III/1992).

8 The paper ceased to list its press run (*tirazh*) after the sixth issue (October 8, 1990).

9 For example, the paper condemned an article in *Sovetskaia Rossiia* which claimed that the Lubavitch Hasidim were determined to recover the archives of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe because they contained compromising material about the practice of ritual murder by Jews (4/33:28/II/1992). By the end of the period under review, *Narod moi* had developed a special critical relationship with the major right-wing newspaper *Den'*, "the favorite newspaper of anti-Semites and Jews."

10 *Narod moi* carried numerous stories about the vogue of individuals who were accused of anti-Semitism to bring lawsuits for "insults to one's personal honor." See 10/18:11/VI/1991; 11/19:30/VI/1991; 19/27:1/XII/1991.

11 For a number of contemporary views on *Pamiat',* see a special issue of *Nationalities Papers*, XIX, 2 (Fall 1991).

12 Mordechai Altshuler, "Evrei SNG na poroge tret'ego tysiacheletiia," *Acta Slavica Iaponica*, XVI (1998), 132.

13 See Zvi Gitelman, ed., *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997); and Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey Gurock, eds., *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Armonk and London: M. E. Sharpe, 1993).

14 This is the finding of a survey taken in 1992–93 by Valeriy Chervyakov, Zvi Gitelman, and Vladimir Shapiro, and replicated in 1997–98 with similar results. See their article, "Religion and Ethnicity: Judaism in the Ethnic Consciousness of Contemporary Russian Jews," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20, 2 (April 1997), 280–305.

15 Benjamin Pinkus, "The *Hazara Bitshuva* Phenomenon among Russian Jews in the Post-Stalin Era," *Jews and Jewish Topics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, 2,15 (1991), 15–30; K. Joseph Lourie, "Soviet 'Refuseniks' Turn to Orthodox Judaism," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 22,1 (Summer 1992), 51–62.

16 See Yitzhak Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953–1991* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

CHAPTER 8

Patterns of Jewish Identity in Moldova: The Behavioral Dimension

Malka Korazim and Esther Katz

INTRODUCTION

Moldova, once a republic of the former Soviet Union (FSU), gained independence in 1991. Since then, the country has experienced a serious economic crisis, its standard of living declining from one of the highest in the FSU to one of the lowest in Eastern Europe. At the same time, Moldova has enshrined minority rights in law, and the Jewish community has had the opportunity to engage in spiritual and cultural renewal.

The Jewish population of Moldova has a rich history as a well-organized community. During World War II, the community was destroyed physically; later, Soviet policy destroyed it spiritually. During the 1970s and again during the 1990s, the Jewish population of Moldova declined due to emigration. At the end of the 1990s, the leadership of the Jewish community of Moldova, with the assistance of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's FSU Division, began to develop a strategic plan aimed at community development and the renewal of Jewish life in Moldova. In the Jewish communities of the former Soviet Union, strategic planning represents an innovation. In Moldova, the process was aimed at bringing together leaders, professionals, and members of the Jewish community to define future directions for the development of Jewish life. As part of this effort, a survey was conducted to gather baseline information regarding the characteristics, service utilization patterns, and needs of the Jewish population of Moldova. The survey was an applied study, and was designed to provide information that would be useful to the local planning committee in making recommendations regarding the future development of Jewish life in Moldova. This chapter is based on selected findings from the survey, which was conducted in 1999.

Using surveys as the basis for Jewish community planning in an effort to match services with needs represents a new approach in the FSU. This survey looked into various characteristics of the Jewish population: its socio-demographic structure; the components of its Jewish identity; its use of services provided by the Jewish community; and its expectations and needs. Data were collected from a random sample of households in which one Jewish adult was interviewed. The sample included 791 adult respondents representing persons living in 3,941 households with 9,240 family members in three cities: Kishinev, Beltsy, and Bendery.[1]

THE BEHAVIORAL DIMENSION

Behavior is an active and visible way of expressing identity. Attending a Jewish school, visiting a Jewish community center, reading a Jewish newspaper, and attending a Passover *seder* are examples of behavior that reflects Jewish identity. This survey examined a broad range of behaviors related to Jewish identity, many of which have been emphasized in other studies: observing Jewish holidays; attending services in synagogue; having Jewish items—religious or non-religious—in the home; participating in secular Jewish activities in the community and at home; having Jewish friends; and volunteering in the Jewish community.

Table 8.1 ***Percentage of Respondents Reporting at Least One Activity in Various Types of Behaviors Reflecting Jewish Identity***

Type of behavior	Percentage reporting at least one activity of each type
Observing Jewish holidays	62*
Attending synagogue services	41**
Having Jewish religious items in the home	45
Having non-religious Jewish items in the home	87
Practising non-religious behavior in the community	64
Practising non-religious behavior at home	92
Having Jewish friends (at least one)	84
Volunteering in the Jewish community	10

* Often or always
** 4 times a year or more

As we can see in Table 8.1, some of these behaviors (such as having Jewish friends or having non-religious Jewish items in the home) are more common than others (such as volunteering in the community).

We would like to examine the behavioral aspect of Jewish identity in a broader way, and particularly to focus on social-service utilization as a new aspect of Jewish identity. There is reason to believe that especially in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, but increasingly in other countries as well, social services are becoming one of the most important linkages between individuals and Jewish communities. One of our key questions is whether the utilization of a social service provided by the Jewish community can also be regarded as a behavior that reflects Jewish identity. For example, if a person turns to the Jewish community because he or she is having economic difficulties and has heard that the Jewish community distributes food packages to needy Jews, can we say that this person is engaging in behavior that reflects Jewish identity? Is this type of behavior by itself sufficient to signal Jewish identity? How does this behavior relate to, and overlap with, other types of behaviors; or, more specifically, does consideration of service utilization expand the number of people who will be viewed as identifying with the Jewish community?

In analyzing the use of services as a behavioral indicator, we also examine the relationships between this indicator and two other types of activities usually regarded as related to Jewish identity: observance of Jewish religious practices and participation in non-religious Jewish cultural activities.

UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

To obtain information on the utilization of social services, respondents were asked whether, in the last two years, they or other members of their household had used any social service or other program provided by the Jewish community. We found that almost three-quarters of the population (71 percent) used at least one social service and 15 percent used three or more services. Sixty-eight percent reported that they had received food packages, making this the most commonly used social service. The next most commonly used services are health-related, such as doctor visits (22 percent), general medical services (14 percent), and the provision or subsidy of medication (13 percent).

Table 8.2 ***Number of Jewish Social-Medical Services Utilized, Composition and Presence of Children under Age 18 in the Household***
(In percent)

		Age Component		Presence of Children	
Services	TOTAL	No one in household age 55+	At least one person in household age 55+	At least one child in household below age 18	No children in household below age 18
	100	100	100	100	100
None	30	73	15	62	19
1 service	25	16	29	17	28
2 services	30	8	38	14	36
3–5 services	15	3	18	7	17

We analyzed the utilization of these services by household with respect to age (at least one member of the household under 55 or at least one 55 or over) and by the presence of at least one child under the age of 18 in the home (Table 8.1). We found that both variables are related to the extent of utilization of services. The percentage of users of social services is much higher in households with at least one member aged 55 and over (85 percent) than in those without (27 percent). Households with older members also use a greater *number* of services (56 percent use two or more services, compared to 11 percent among younger households).

One question arising from these data is the extent to which service utilization is solely a reflection of need, in which case it would not matter that the services are provided under Jewish auspices. Alternatively, application for services provided by the Jewish community can be viewed in itself as an act of self-identification as a Jew. In post-Soviet Moldova, where people were not accustomed to expressing their Jewish ethnicity/nationality openly, and some even hid their Jewishness, taking advantage of services does represent open expression of an affiliation with the Jewish community.

The survey provides some preliminary indications as to the possible meaning of service utilization. One question posed was to what extent the Jewishness of the service, alongside other factors, affects the respondent's decision to use services. The other factors include: proximity to one's home, the quality of the service, the professional

level of the staff, and their attitude toward the client. The question was posed as a general one without reference to a particular type of service. The findings reveal that the level of importance attributed to the Jewishness of the service is high, and is similar to that attributed to quality-related factors. Nearly three-quarters of those interviewed (73 percent) attributed importance to the fact that the service was Jewish; 17 percent said that it had a little effect, and only 10 percent said it had no effect at all. This finding further strengthens the possibility that social-service utilization is an aspect of behavior that expresses Jewish identity.

To examine service-utilization behavior as a reflection of Jewish identity, we will look into two other types of behavior traditionally used as indicators of Jewish identity: Jewish religious practices and participation in non-religious Jewish activities.

JEWISH RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Jewish religious practice includes, above all, the celebration of Jewish holidays. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they or anyone in their household observed this or other religious practices.

Table 8.3 ***Percentage of Respondents Reporting Observance (Often or Always) of Jewish Practices, and Distribution by the Number of Practices***

Jewish Practices	Pct. Observing (often, always)
Light *Shabbat* candles	22
Celebrate Purim	54
Participate in Passover *seder*	40
Fast on Yom Kippur	33
Visit a *sukkah*	7
Celebrate Simchat Torah at the synagogue	11
Light Hanukkah candles	30
Number of Practices Observed	100
No practices	38
1–3 practices	46
4+ practices	16

The table shows that the most common Jewish practices are celebrating Purim and Passover and fasting on Yom Kippur.[2] The vast majority (62 percent) observes at least one Jewish holiday. There is no significant difference between younger and older respondents concerning the observance of Jewish practices, with the exception of Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah. Only 20 percent of the younger respondents fast on Yom Kippur, as compared to 37 percent among the older age group.

We also examined the *meanings* attached by the respondents to the observance of these holidays. Such behaviors are usually considered religious activities. The question was posed as a general question relating to all the holidays and not asked separately for each holiday.

Table 8.4 ***Meanings Attributed to the Celebration of Jewish Holidays***
(In percent)

Meaning of the Jewish Holidays	Total	Great extent	Some extent	Small extent or not at all
A religious activity/event	100	15	40	45
A cultural activity/event	100	44	43	13
A way to express your sense of belonging to the Jewish people	100	49	41	10
An essential way to maintain your Jewish culture and tradition	100	58	33	9
An activity that links you to other Jews	100	39	42	19
An important activity for maintaining Jewish tradition in your family	100	37	35	28
An occasion for a family gathering	100	39	28	33

As the data in Table 8.4 indicate, the respondents attribute primarily cultural and ethnic meaning to practices related to Jewish holidays. Only about half viewed the holidays as religious events (55 percent), and most of these said that they were religious only "to some extent." It is also interesting to note that the role of holidays in facilitating family reunions or maintaining Jewish tradition in the family is important, but is emphasized less than the general cultural and ethnic meanings, such as maintaining Jewish culture and links to other Jews. Altogether, if we use the "great extent" and "some extent" criteria, and count the number of meanings attributed, we find that 70 per-

cent of the participants attribute five or more meanings to the observance of holidays. These findings raise an important issue regarding the interpretation of Jewish holiday observance: the motives for and meanings of practices that we call "religious" are not necessarily perceived as such by members of the group studied. Further investigation is necessary in order for us to better understand which holidays are perceived as having greater religious meaning, the specific reasons for celebrating each holiday, and the significance of holiday celebration as a cultural event.

PARTICIPATION IN NON-RELIGIOUS JEWISH ACTIVITIES

A third behavioral aspect of Jewish identity is participation in activities that are non-religious in nature, yet still have Jewish elements (Table 8.5).

Table 8.5 ***Respondents Participating in Activities with Jewish Content in the Past 12 Months*** *(In percent)*

	Participating
Attended a play, film, concert with a Jewish theme	52
Attended a lecture with a Jewish theme	30
Visited a Jewish museum	14
Visited a Jewish club	27
Went on a visit/tour of Jewish interest	9
Read a book with a Jewish theme	70
Read a Jewish newspaper	78
Watched Jewish TV shows	54
Listened to Jewish radio	33
Number of activities	100
None	5
1–2 activities	24
3–4 activities	39
5+ activities	32

The activities undertaken most frequently in the past year were those in the home: reading books with Jewish themes (70 percent) or

Jewish newspapers (78 percent), and watching Jewish TV programs (54 percent). The main activities that take place outside the home were attending plays, films, or concerts with Jewish themes (52 percent), attending lectures with Jewish themes (30 percent), and visiting Jewish clubs (27 percent). Going on tours of Jewish interest and visiting Jewish museums or exhibitions were the least frequent activities (9 percent and 14 percent, respectively), probably due to the fact that there are few such institutions and events in the region.

In general, almost everyone (95 percent) participated in at least one of these activities; 24 percent participated in one or two; 39 percent participated in three or four; and 31 percent participated in five or more. The percentage of those participating in at least one home-based activity was much higher than the percentage of those participating in at least one activity in the community (92 percent versus 64 percent). Naturally, there are differences in the frequency of these activities with respect to age. Younger respondents participate much more frequently in activities outside the home, and older respondents participate much more frequently in those that take place in the home. All groups read books with a Jewish theme to the same extent.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND OTHER FORMS OF JEWISH BEHAVIOR

After discussing each type of behavior separately—utilization of social services, observance of Jewish holidays, and participation in non-religious Jewish activities—we will address the overlap between the three types of behavior. Our goal is to demonstrate how this type of analysis can help us address a range of questions concerning the behavioral dimension of Jewish identity.

One question has to do with the extent to which broadening the range of behavior examined expands the size of the population that is viewed as expressing Jewish identity. The assumption here is that these three types of behavior do not necessarily overlap; the less they overlap, the more the addition of new behavioral aspects expands the size of this group. Similarly, the extent of overlap also illustrates the degree to which different activities can be viewed as complementary or alternative forms of the expression of Jewish identity.

First, we examine the relationship between holiday observance and participation in non-religious Jewish activities. We define each of

these variables based on observance of at least one holiday and participation in at least one non-religious activity in the community. For this analysis we use only communal activities and not those undertaken in the home.

Table 8.6 ***Link Between Two Types of Behavior: Observance of Jewish Holidays and Participation in Non-religious Jewish Activities in the Community*** *(In percent)*

Observance of Jewish Holidays	Participation in Non-religious Jewish Activities in the Community	
	None	At least one
None	"None" 18	"Only participants" 20
At least one	"Only observers" 18	"Both" 44

When we create a combined variable using these two types of behavior, we find that a significant percentage of respondents (18 percent) are what we call "Only observers," meaning that they only observe the holidays and do not participate in any of the non-religious Jewish activities in the community (Table 8.5). On the other hand, we have a second group of 20 percent whom we call "Only participants," meaning that they only participate in communal events and do not observe religiously. About half do both. This indicates that for some people, these two types of behavior act as substitutes for each other, while for others they are complementary. Combining the two expands considerably the overall proportion who have some behavioral expression of Jewishness.

We now examine the relationship between the utilization of social services and observance of holidays (Table 8.7). Here we again focus on the percentages using at least one service and observing at least one holiday.

A significant percentage of respondents (23 percent) fall into the group we label "Only users," meaning that they express their Jewish identity only through the use of at least one social service (Table 8.6). In other words, if we did not define service utilization as an expression of Jewish identity, this group would have been regarded as lacking the behavioral dimension of Jewish identity.

Table 8.7 ***Link Between Two Types of Behavior: Observance of Jewish Holidays and Utilization of Social Services*** *(In percent)*

Observance of Jewish Holidays	*Utilization of Social Services*	
	None	At least one
None	"None" 15	"Only users" 23
At least one	"Only observers" 16	"Both" 46

We reach the same conclusion when we examine the utilization of social services together with participation in non-religious Jewish activities (Table 8.8). Here we have even a slightly higher proportion of "Only users" (27 percent).

Table 8.8 ***Link Between Two Types of Behavior: Participation in Non-religious Jewish Activities in the Community and Utilization of Social Services*** *(In percent)*

Participation in Non-religious Jewish Activities in the Community	*Utilization of Social Services*	
	None	At least one
None	"None" 9	"Only users" 27
At least one	"Only participants" 21	"Both" 43

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis presented above, we would like to raise four major issues regarding the use of behavior as an indicator of Jewish identity. The first is whether it is legitimate to use social and health service utilization as an indicator of Jewish identity; and, further, whether it is equally effective as an indicator in communities with differing economic conditions. Our analysis shows that this indicator "expands" the Jewish population. In a country that has suffered a prolonged economic crisis, people take a practical and individualistic approach to Jewish identity: they avail themselves of the medical and social assistance provided by the Jewish community. Formal affiliation with the

community is not necessarily required. Moreover, this approach is based on a feeling of Jewishness that is not necessarily accompanied by other, more traditional Jewish behaviors. From the supplier's point of view, providing medical and social assistance is a new mode of intervention aimed at enhancing Jewish life. The "ethnic entrepreneurs" described by Zvi Gitelman in his chapter in this volume provide material incentives for identifying as a Jew. But does this "instrumental Jewishness" last, and does it lead to a non-instrumental commitment to ethnic identity, or does it disappear if and when material needs are met?

Régine Azria's typology of French Jewry in this volume categorizes individuals according to their manner of involvement in the community: the five types are the professional, the faithful, the militant/volunteer, the consumer, and the seeker. The consumer is "casually, occasionally, discontinuously, and selectively committed to Jewish communal life." This is sporadic, private behavior. In Moldova, however, consumerism seems to be working differently. It is grounded in the most basic needs and thus may have a longer life span. Moldovan Jews may be thought of as people in need, rather than as consumers, which means that they devote more energy to searching for sources of support and have less choice in the process. Indeed, respondents in our study saw the provision of material assistance, such as food and medicine, as the primary role of the organized Jewish community. In sum, these forms of Jewish involvement and expressions of Jewish identity need to be investigated further, with a focus on their motives, roles, and duration in various countries.

The second question is, how can we better understand the meaning of different types of behaviors? The issue of meanings needs to be further investigated so that we may understand the new perceptions of these behaviors. We should examine what people have in mind when they say that a Jewish holiday has cultural meaning, and the extent to which there are variations in the perceptions of different holidays. It could be that the high rate of participation in Purim celebrations (54 percent) or in the Passover (*sedarim*) (40 percent) derives from the nature of the holiday and its meaning to the participant. These holidays are of a collective nature and are usually arranged by the community as special events. Besides, a holiday like Passover is accompanied by a good meal, which in Moldova could be an additional reason for participation. This brings us back to the issue of service utilization as a behavioral aspect of Jewish affiliation. In other words, attending

a Passover *seder* in Moldova could involve both service utilization and participation in a cultural or ethnic event.

Other issues that need to be considered are: How much importance should we attribute to the behavioral dimension, and should that level vary among different Jewish communities? Do we have a satisfactory set of questions on the range of relevant behaviors reflecting Jewish identity? We do not pretend to be able to offer definitive answers to these questions, but we offer them as items to be considered as we grapple with new types of Jewish identities in contemporary Europe. Answering some of these questions might require new approaches to the study of Jewish identity. We may have to refresh our terminology as well as our methods of inquiry in order to measure and understand the variations in Jewish identity. In the first stage, we should conduct qualitative studies to deepen our understanding of the meanings of the various types of behaviors expressing what we currently call "Jewish identity."

NOTES

1 The study was conducted by the JDC-Brookdale Institute in consultation with Professors Sergio DellaPergola, Yaakov Ukeles, and Jack Habib, and in cooperation with the Jewish community of Moldova, the Ziv Institute, and the St. Petersburg Training Institute for Communal and Welfare Workers.

2 Purim is a minor holiday but its observance is very easy and attractive. Moreover, in the former Soviet Union this and other holidays are often celebrated communally, with a festive meal, and that no doubt greatly increases the number of those who observe the holiday.

CHAPTER 9

Jewish Identity and the Orthodox Church in Late Soviet Russia

Judith Deutsch Kornblatt

One damp afternoon in the spring of 1998, I sat in a small Jerusalem apartment with a thin, balding man I will call Viktor, and talked religion.[1] Viktor was currently out of work, with plenty of time to drink tea and relate to me his path of faith. Although talk of spiritual quests in Israel is not unusual, the details of this particular path will seem curious to many observers of contemporary Jewry. On that March day, a former Soviet Jew narrated to me the story of his baptism into the Russian Orthodox Church, a baptism that took place in 1977, at the height of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, when he himself taught Jewish history to hopeful *olim*. Even more curious is the fact that Viktor was not alone; I heard similar stories repeatedly, from what has been called a wave of Russian Jewish intellectuals who joined the Church beginning in the latter half of the 1960s, when Viktor's own involvement began.

The circumstances of baptism in late Soviet Russia can be understood as an extreme version of trends in Jewish identity observed by researchers represented in this volume: an increasing emphasis on ethnic, rather than religious terms of identity; and a greater tolerance of practices such as intermarriage, implying the weakening control of traditional religious restrictions. The latter trend may be a result of individual values overtaking communal ones in the wake of a failed Communist social experiment, or, as many in this volume discuss, an increasing emphasis in Western Europe and America on individualization and what Barry Kosmin calls "market mentality," or Charles Liebman "personalization." Thus, as a radical case of the loss of traditional, communal religious authority over today's Jewish population, the baptized Russian Jews are worthy of inclusion in a study of contemporary European Jewry, despite their relatively small number.[2]

But these Jews are also worthy of study in their own right, for

they are different from Jews of Western Europe and even from Jews of other former Soviet or Soviet-bloc countries. As historians of Russian Jewry have long noted, the unique circumstances of the last half century of Imperial Russia and the development of the Soviet Union sharply focused debates on the Jewish question in a way that differed from the treatment of Jews in countries that were influenced much earlier by Emancipation and had long experienced an integration of Jews into the legal, economic, and cultural mainstream. Well into the 19th century, as John Klier has written, "for the average educated Russian, Jews were unknown aliens."[3] Officially confined to the Pale of Settlement, Jews only slowly made inroads into the larger cities of Russia, and their image as exotic—and dangerous—aliens persisted into the 20th century.

Among the differences between contemporary Russian Jews and others examined in this volume, we must note that ethnic, rather than religious, categories dominated Russian Jewish identity throughout the Soviet period, and that intermarriage was far from the exception among the intelligentsia in Soviet Russia. Thus, trends noted in other chapters are by no means new in Russia in the late and post-Communist era. Another, and crucial, point that distinguishes the specific situation of Jews who entered the Orthodox Church in the decades before the fall of the Soviet Union from Jewish converts to Christianity in the pre-revolutionary period, as well as in other countries of Europe and America, is that there was no political or economic advantage to them in conversion. Instead, belonging to the Church brought added difficulties, even dangers, in place of easier access to the privileges of the majority, officially atheist population. In all cases, the baptism of Jews in the late Soviet period was a spiritual, not a practical, choice.

Even more significant for the questions of identity posed here, the Church into which these Jews chose (and continue to choose) baptism is different from the Catholic and Protestant Churches of Western and Central Europe in fundamental ways. On the most basic level, the Russian Orthodox Church has both a religious, denominational meaning (Eastern Christian) and a national one (Russian). The Church and Russian identity have been intertwined for centuries, confirmed in the 16th century with Moscow's assumption of the self-description of the "third Rome", after the fall of both Rome and Constantinople.[4] As one scholar of Russian nationalism has stated, citing

the Slavophiles of the 19th century, "practically no other Russian identity existed except that given Russia by the Orthodox Church."[5] Reciprocally, Russian Orthodoxy became increasingly "national", and distinguished in character from the Serbian, the Romanian, the Greek, the Georgian, and other Eastern Christian Churches. A Jew who embraces Russian Orthodoxy (*pravoslavie*) thus confronts both religious and ethnic sides of his or her own identity. Therefore, what these Russian Jews say about their new identity can be revealing for questions of Jewish identity in general, not despite, but because of their differences from Jews in Western Europe and America.

This chapter looks at the phenomenon of voluntary Jewish baptism into the Orthodox Church in the post-Stalinist period largely through the case study of Viktor, in order to understand how these contemporary Jews narrate their own identity. Although I began my series of in-depth interviews of so-called Russian Jewish Christians with the assumption that entrance into the Church would make Jews feel more *Russian*, I heard over and over that the experience actually increased their sense of *Jewish* identity. In a way, not their religious choice but their hereditary chosenness as Jews takes on added meaning in the Church, as these Russian Jews find a positive, if conflicted, new and internal identity. Rather than simply losing a weak religious identity for another, stronger one, independent of their ethnic self-definition, these Russian Jews reclaim, in a way, a previously lost, intense relationship between both the religious and ethnic aspects of their Jewish identity. It is this renewed, if un-Orthodox, combination of ethnic and religious identities that makes the Russian Jewish Christians interesting.

Viktor grew up in Riga with Russian-speaking Jewish parents who moved to Latvia after World War II, when Viktor was only two. As he related: "I grew up in an entirely atheist family. Not believers. We had absolutely no traditions. Not *pravoslavnye* [Russian Orthodox] and not Judaic. We didn't even have Yiddish. ...An average Soviet upbringing." Yet the family nonetheless retained a Jewish identity. "I accepted the fact that I was Jewish simply as a fact. Not exactly as a negative fact—although I had met with anti-Semitism—but simply as a fact." Viktor had the advantage, perhaps, of being a minority in a city with many minorities. "Riga is an international city. Poles, and so forth. And all the children knew who was who. But they accepted it rather neutrally. Someone had one nationality, someone had another."

We learn from the statements above that Viktor, like most Soviet Jews, identified his Jewishness solely with ethnicity. (Like other interviewees, Viktor did not distinguish between nationality and ethnicity.) He was not Latvian, and not Polish, but Jewish. Furthermore, outsiders identified him as a Jew with no difficulty. "And all the children knew who was who." For Viktor himself, this sense of Jewishness was "not exactly [...] negative", but it was ever-present and non-transparent. A young woman now living in New York told me, "I always felt myself to be Jewish. My family was Jewish. ...But I had no religion. Maybe it was something genetic." For most, as for Viktor, the feeling of Jewishness was reinforced by anti-Semitism, at least at some level. The dissident writer Feliks Svetov wrote in his autobiography, "I felt myself to be Jewish only because they reminded me of the fact."[6] "They", of course, were the majority Russians among whom he lived. Another Russian Jewish Christian now living in New York described his experience of Jewishness before baptism as follows: "It usually happens that others tell you that you are Jewish."

In fact, having lost its relationship to religious and most other cultural traditions (as Viktor put it, "We didn't even have Yiddish"), the "genetic" or ethnic sense of identity persisted largely because of external factors. The separation of ethnic from religious identity, and the loss of the latter along with most cultural marks of the former began in the second half of the 19th century. At that time, many of the so-called "answers" to the Jewish "question" in Russia, both on the part of the Russian state and, ironically, on the part of the Jewish intellectuals in the late imperial period, were based on a theoretical separation of ethnic from religious identity that had not previously been part of the Jewish experience. Much of the debate was carried on in terms of language, with Hebrew being the symbol of religious tradition, Yiddish of ethnic and cultural identity. Ultimately, both were lost as Jews acculturated in Soviet society, to the obvious impoverishment of a more multivalent, traditionally connected Jewish identity.

Internal Jewish debates about ethnic and/or religious identity ran parallel to those of the Russian officials.[7] In the Russians' terms, if the Jews were "only" a people, they could be either assimilated into Russian society or granted equal minority status among other peoples in the empire. If they were "only" a religion, their faith could be allowed within limited strictures so as not to contaminate the dominant Orthodox faith, but its adherents should be considered Russians, just like

the majority. Their culture and nationality could be Russian, with a few concessions made for eccentric ritual practices. The latter became the norm in Poland, for example, as we can see in the chapter by Marius Gudonis in this volume; Polish Jews were encouraged to consider themselves "Poles of the Mosaic religion," and in post-Communist Poland many have little trouble seeing themselves as fully Polish as well as fully Jewish. In Russia, however, neither extreme ultimately emerged, so that Jews were neither assimilated as a people nor preserved as a religion. At the height of the Soviet period, Jews had no religious identity, no "Hebrew," but they also had few cultural traditions, no "Yiddish." The Jews of the Soviet Union were, largely, culturally Russian, but still known to everyone as Jews, and, unassimilated, they remained the victims of anti-Semitic (earlier called "Judeophobic") discrimination.[8] The establishment in 1932 of the "fifth point" on internal passports, where individuals were required to state their nationality, solidified the external basis of a one-sided Jewish identity. Everyone knew, as did Viktor's schoolmates, "who was who."

Thus, it is largely through pressure from without—anti-Semitic discrimination and national identity indicated on passports—that Jewish identity continued in the Soviet period completely divorced from its historical and religious tradition. Jewishness (*evreistvo*) and Judaism (*iudeistvo* or *iudaizm*) were separated, and Jewishness as a nationality was defined from without. Although all interviewees would identify themselves as *evrei,* all equally felt alienated from the term *iudei*. In addition, we should note that the Soviet state classified the Jews not as a "people" (*narod*), and not as a *narodnost'*, a term used to refer to small tribes, principally in Siberia and the Caucasus, but as a *natsionalnost'* or nationality, a term with purely political meaning. According to Benjamin Pinkus, they were actually a "negative nationality," "a status that holds no rights, but only restrictions."[9] Externally reinforced restrictions were virtually all that remained for many Jews when the religion and ethnic/cultural aspects were lost.

The restriction of Jewish identity to national and externally reinforced categories among Russian Jews of the post-Stalinist period was not necessarily reproduced in the more recently Sovietized republics, so that many Russian Jews in what is now called the "near abroad" felt alienated from local *evrei* as well.[10] Viktor related the following about his childhood in Riga: "It was difficult for me to become friends with the so-called local Jews. Latvian Jews. They were a kind of clan.

The majority of the Latvian Jewish community was destroyed during the war, but those who remained preserved some of the traditions. They knew Yiddish. And I felt alien among them." The preservation of Yiddish and, presumably, some other religious or cultural connections to the Jewish past by Latvian Jews was sufficient cause for this Russian Jew, who identified through externally reinforced national affiliation alone, to feel excluded.

Viktor's parents apparently felt strongly enough about some aspect of Jewishness to send their child to a school that was at least half Jewish. "Why precisely in that school there were so many Jews, I don't know. Both students and teachers. It is possible that my parents sent me to that school precisely because there were so many Jews. Maybe it was considered better. For primary school, I had gone somewhere else." But the Jews at the school were "local Jews," so that, "it just didn't feel like my group." In general, "I had a strong feeling of loneliness in school. I didn't have my own group. My own kind. Not until I was 18 years old. I found a group not because of faith at that time, but because I began to write poetry. I found friends of my age, also Riga poets, although for the most part Russians, it is true. But also Latvians. And some Jews, of course. But, again, Russian speakers. There were no Latvian Jews in the group."

Viktor related an interesting incident that had occurred not long ago in Israel: "I met recently with one of my former classmates. Almost all of the Jewish community from Riga came to Israel. Fairly early, in the 70s. Anyway, she said a rather strange thing. She said that when I showed up in the school, in fifth grade, there was a debate. They couldn't decide whether or not I was Jewish. Their families retained some Jewish traditions. The fact is that there was a Jewish gymnasium in Riga until 1940. They preserved what had already been destroyed in the Soviet Union. They preserved their sense of Jewishness more than I had."

Viktor's observation about the strength of Latvian Jewish identity—"more than I had"—clearly refers to the more multifaceted Jewish self-definition—cultural/religious as well as national identity—that his schoolmates held. The Latvian Jews had trouble recognizing him as one of their own because of the impoverishment of the layers of his Jewish identity.

With ties to a historical and culturally rich Jewish tradition severed, it is not surprising to find that Viktor did not feel drawn to

Judaism as he began his path to faith. Indeed, as we know well, and as my interviewees reminded me frequently, "Judaism almost did not exist" in the Soviet Union of the 60s, precisely the time when many intellectuals began to seek a way out of what has been called the "spiritual prison" or "mental vacuum" of Soviet ideology.[11] A Russian Jewish Christian now living in New York asserted: "There was one synagogue [in Moscow]. And it was under the complete control of the state. The rabbi was afraid. It was not at all an option. It became a possibility only later in the 70s. Only with the possibility of Israel and the emigration."

Thus, entrance into the Church was not a way to leave Judaism in the post-Stalin period at all, for there was virtually no religious, *iudeskoe* option at the time. Rather, it was a way to escape the "mental vacuum" of the Soviet Union at a time when physical emigration was still impossible.

This escape was especially important for the intelligentsia, at first aroused by the cultural thaw following Stalin's death, but soon disillusioned not only by subsequent freezes under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, but even more by the loss altogether of ideological optimism. Soviet citizens of the 60s either believed blindly in the now clearly tainted state "religion" or believed in nothing at all. Hope disappeared, and Brezhnev's long rule became known as the *zastoi*, or Stagnation. Remembering the atmosphere in the 60s and early 70s, an interviewee explained: "It was an issue of how to maintain your difference. How not to be absorbed. To have the inner power to stay yourself. To stay a spiritual personality. Not to be completely engulfed. In this sense, the Church helped to support the human personality, the personality of the intelligentsia, for whom personhood is extremely important. Not to be completely dissolved into the aggressive Soviet mass. To withstand this aggressiveness of Soviet civilization. We were so threatened by this. From all sides. You need some kind of strength from within that gives you power to survive. And that is exactly what I felt in the 60s. It was the power that I found to stay myself. The pressure of this Soviet aggressiveness cannot be underestimated. You needed all the powers of your personality just to survive."

Indeed, the phenomenon explored here was largely an intelligentsia movement (although this may be changing now, in the post-Soviet period, as Jews continue to join the Church). As educated Soviets looked for meaning beyond the gray mass of Soviet culture,

many came to the forbidden writings of the Russian religious renaissance from the early 20th century. For Viktor: "I came, to a large extent, through Russian religious philosophy. First of all I began to read [Nikolai] Berdiaev. That is traditional. Almost everyone started with him. Perhaps because of the question of freedom in his writings. Perhaps for that he was closest to my generation." For Marina: "I read a lot: [Vladimir] Solov'ev, Berdiaev. Some libraries were open. And people would have the books. They were a kind of 20th-century apostles. They lent out the books for a night, a day. There was an unbelievable thirst for knowledge. We had everything, typed and retyped." For her, too, "I was most attracted to Berdiaev, and to the theme of freedom in his work. We were rather obsessively focused on the issue. In truth, our understanding of freedom actually didn't at all coincide with Berdiaev's, but at the time we didn't even notice."

Father Michael, a baptized Jew now officiating at a small parish largely of Russian Jews in New York, also notes the importance of the recovered writings of Vladimir Solov'ev. He tells of a meeting in 1970, on the seventieth anniversary of Solov'ev's death: "One was a convinced Marxist-Hegelian, won over by the dialectical rigor of Solov'ev's exposition; his rationalistic mind accepted the Good News of faith precisely through Solov'ev's logic. Another came to Christian vision through Solov'ev's religious aesthetic, having become acquainted with it during a period of youthful enthusiasm for theurgic projects for the aesthetic salvation and transfiguration of the world. A third was attracted by the universalism of Solov'ev's understanding of Christianity and his criticism of national provincialism. A fourth, tormented by the history of Christian-Jewish antagonism that he had himself experienced, entered the Church thanks to Solov'ev's interpretation of the historical mission of Judaism before and after the advent of the Savior.

Only God knows how many people in the past and the present are obligated to Solov'ev for their conversion, how many he brought to the Church with his pen and witness of life, and how many more he will bring."[12]

At the time, many of the Jews reading Berdiaev and Solov'ev were the same Jews who sought out information on Israel and Jewish history. The Six-Day War marked the beginning of a specifically Jewish patriotism for many Russian Jews, and coincided with increasing repression at home, spiritual and otherwise. Father Michael told me, "My Jewish awareness started to grow around 1968. I was networking.

From the same underground came the dissident movement and the Zionist movement. Discussions would take place in the same house. ...I didn't hide the fact that I went to church. For those Jews in those days the fact that we were Christians was not an issue. Most of them had been in Stalin's camps. Christians were not enemies. They were all allies. In those days we were a minority of outcasts."

Viktor was one of these outcasts, seeking knowledge of the spirit in both the Church and his own history. With the opening up of emigration for Jews in the 70s, he was asked to give lectures on Jewish history to emigrants. " I told you that I began to be interested in Jewish history at the end of the 1960s. And in the 70s, many Jews were leaving. They established a series of seminars for the study of Jewish culture. For the most part, they were taught by refuseniks. And many people would come. Some who were planning to leave and others who were not planning to leave. My brother dragged me there. Since I knew a few things about Jewish history, I gave some lectures."

These seminars, too, were lacking in the religious side of Jewishness. "It wasn't a question of faith at all. In the Riga seminars, there were a few people who had come to Jewish faith, but for the most part it was a purely secular atmosphere. At that time. It changed a bit later. In the beginning of the 1980s. [...] Earlier, the seminar had existed on its own. There were some ties with the Moscow Jewish community, but not too strong. In the beginning of the 1980s, the ties became tighter. Riga began to receive material from there. And in Moscow, as far as I understand, there was strong influence from religious Jews. Now, earlier some people had known that I am Christian, but had accepted it rather neutrally. But a rather severe notice came from Moscow, I don't know from whom, that stated that if this man continues to read lectures for you, we will play no more role in your organization. Moscow was always, well, more 'Orthodox'," he said with a laugh, recognizing his paradoxical pun.

For several years, however, Viktor's interest in Christianity had not bothered the Russian Jews in Riga to whom he taught their own history. And when it did begin to be an obstacle, it was only because of pressure from Moscow religious circles, which, in the 80s, meant mostly Chabad, supported by, and largely staffed by *non-Russian* Jews. In fact, despite the strict word sent up from Moscow in the 80s about Viktor's Christianity, a large percentage of Russian Jews continue even to this day to view baptism neutrally. Valery Chervyakov, Zvi Gitelman,

and Vladimir Shapiro have found no more than 3 percent of Jews in Russia and Ukraine in recent years that would say that practicing Judaism defines "being a Jew."[13] And when asked "Which religious faith is most attractive to you?" only 26.7 percent of respondents in Russia in 1997 responded "Judaism", and an astonishing 13 percent answered the question with "Christianity." No doubt, not all of the respondents preferring Christianity went so far as baptism (it took Viktor eight or nine years to take that step), but if they did, they would find little opposition from their Jewish neighbors. A full 60 percent of Chervyakov/Gitelman/Shapiro's respondents claimed that they would neither condone nor condemn Jews who become Christians. This is in contrast, of course, to the situation in the United States, where researchers have found that Jewishness is often defined by the fact that it is not Christianity: "The only way to lose this Jewish birthright is to choose a different religion for oneself."[14] Clearly, in contemporary Russia, Jewish religion has virtually nothing to do with Jewish identity, and the adoption of Christianity does not alter the core identity as a Jew.

In the course of my interviews, I asked the Russian Jewish Christians about the reaction toward their baptism not of their neighbors, but, even closer to home, of their mother. Even here, the religious aspect was almost non-existent. Boris's mother was concerned less about the religious questions, and more about the physical deprivations that accompanied his decision to become an assistant in a small rural church. "No," he answered my query, "she was not upset that a Jew had joined the Church. No. She was upset that I was living in such an 'uncultured' way. That I didn't have a refrigerator. That it isn't a life. The terrible cold. Poverty. That is what she was upset about." Viktor's mother was also concerned about factors other than the Judaic one: "Well, of course it didn't delight her, but there was no protest, no uprising either. She wasn't delighted not only from the Jewish angle, but also the Soviet. She was brought up on atheism. Faith of any kind was foreign to her. It is very difficult to re-educate that generation."

Viktor's brother chose Zionism over Christianity, and strongly encouraged him to leave for Israel. Indeed, the pressure to emigrate was quite strong. "There was a very intense atmosphere there. The sense of departure. And it was very difficult to be there if you, yourself, were not leaving." Although Viktor himself didn't begin to think

realistically about *aliyah* until quite late and ended up facing arrest and several years in prison before being allowed to leave, the question itself weighed heavily on most Russian Jewish Christians in the 70s and 80s. And the possibility of being a Christian in the Jewish homeland put their hybrid identity into relief.

In the 60s, as we saw, *Judaism was not an option*. Furthermore, there was still no possibility of emigration. According to Father Michael, "There was no choice. To leave the Soviet Union was not an option. Just for some fearless freaks, just to jump in the ocean and swim somewhere," so he chose what he called "inner emigration" in the Church. By the 1980s, however, most Jews had at least one relative living in the West. By then, knowledge of Jewish culture, of Jewish history, of Israel was readily available, and the Jewish religious options in Russia were increasing as well. In the 80s, Jews seeking a spiritual path could, indeed, choose Judaism. A small percentage did, again largely under the influence of *non-Russian* Jews who had come from abroad to re-educate Soviet Jewry. At the same time, the Jews of Russia were not so much leaving a Soviet identity as it was leaving them. Who were they now? Not Soviets. Not Russians. They were *evrei*, but what did that mean?

In fact, Jewish identity as *evreistvo* and ethnicity became even more important than it had been in the 60s, but in a new way. Religious identity had been successfully separated from ethnicity, so that the term "Jewish Christian" did not seem an oxymoron. Religion itself had been fully divorced from Soviet reality, so that David, an intense young man who was baptized in the late 80s in Moscow, admitted, "I was raised on atheism, and religion was a very, well, obscure place, not because I didn't know, but because I didn't, well, want to know." In addition, *national* identity became an increasingly major topic of conversation. The Soviet Union was disintegrating. Latvians, Georgians, Ukrainians were all reasserting their unique traditions. And Israel was an actual, attainable homeland that had already absorbed friends and relatives. The Jewish identity of my interviewees was now more than a simple point on their passports; it was a ticket to the West. And the West welcomed them, simply because they were Jewish, with money, apartments, host families, English and Hebrew-language instruction, and job counseling. At the same time, Judaism remained foreign to them.

When emigration became not only an option, but an expectation,

the question arose for many whether or not they could continue to be Jews, Christian or otherwise, in Russia. Many Russian Jewish Christians left for Israel. Surprisingly, they related that their Christianity was not an obstacle, but an aid in *aliyah*. For Osip, "faith gave me the surety that I could do this, that I could leave for Israel. I think that without my entrance into faith, I would not have left so easily. I would have left in any case, but I would have come to that decision much later. I felt that I could fulfill my Jewishness. I didn't need to fear."

Osip's statement about fulfilling his Jewishness sounds odd to a Western ear, knowing that he planned his *aliyah* as a Christian. But I heard similar statements from Russian Jewish Christian after Russian Jewish Christian. Boris: "There could be no questions. I knew. A monastery for a monk. The priesthood for a priest. And Israel for someone who feels himself to be a Jew." The Russian Jewish poet Aleksandr Galich, baptized in the early 70s, is quoted as saying about his identity and his decision to emigrate: "I am a Jew. A baptized Jew. [...] I took on baptism most of all because I believe in the word of God. I believe in God. I believe that lack of faith is destructive and fatal. I believe in and proclaim my great ancestors the Jews Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Matthew, and John, those who wrote the best of all humankind's books and left them for the sake of that same humankind: the Bible and the Gospels. Do I want to go to Israel? It goes without saying."[15]

According to Avraham, "the Church helps people understand their Jewishness." Boris, who came to Israel, but moved away from the Church toward a more ecumenical religious practice, claimed that "When I read the Gospels, I understood what it meant to be a Jew. [...] This was the first Jewish book *(evreiskaia kniga)* that I ever read." For these Russian Jews, it is clear that Israel, Jewishness, and Christianity were all related. Indeed, for David, "Only after baptism did we feel ourselves to be Jews. Before then, to be a Jew was a negative. When someone in Russia calls you a "Jew" he means to put you down. It's interesting that in the course of our study of Christianity, of Orthodoxy, we entered deeper and deeper into a different understanding, that Jews are precisely the chosen people. After baptism, we began to feel ourselves more deeply Jewish. Why? It wasn't a kind of pride, but simply an internal feeling." And for Avraham again: "I got a copy of the Torah in Hebrew, with Russian translation. When I began to read

Torah, I became a religious person. I don't know how much of my feeling was Judaism *(iudeistvo)*, but I felt myself part of the Jewish people (*evreiskii narod*). Considering how much cynicism there was then in Soviet society, this gave me the strength to consider myself significant. For me it was both a sort of nationalization and an approach to faith." For Pasha, "the more I am a Christian, the more I feel myself a Jew," and for Avraham, again, "the deeper I went into the Church, the more deeply I felt myself as belonging to the people of Israel." Avraham, like Boris, like Aleksandr Galich, and many others, made *aliyah* both as a Jew and as a Christian.[16]

Osip's testimony is revealing in this light. He, like many of the others, sought baptism to escape the spiritual vacuum of Soviet life: "Living in the Soviet Union, and always feeling the constant lie that is always bothering you, and the sensation that there must be a great deal that they are simply hiding. ...I was led to a sense of readiness, readiness to believe in something else. I don't know what that something was, but the readiness was there." Like most, as well, it is books that led him to Russian Orthodoxy, in his case first the writings of the charismatic priest Father Aleksandr Men' (himself born Jewish, but baptized in childhood). "In the course maybe of a half year of reading and meeting with people, I came to the realization of faith." There were then three years between his entrance into the Church and emigration. As indicated above, "I am sure that it is faith that gave me the confidence to accomplish the emigration. It gave me a surety, the sense that there is a higher power, so that the possibility of things working out more or less correctly was much greater than if it were all left up to arbitrary chance. That influenced my internal decision very early."

But *aliyah* was not only an escape from the Soviet Union for Osip. It was also a way to "fulfill my Jewishness." As he told me, "I had this idea that Israel, insofar as it is being reborn, that there would be a rebirth of some kind of Jewish-Christian communities, outside of the Church. Something new. A reborn apostolic kind of Church." A number of other interviewees had this vision of Jewish-Christian rapprochement in Israel as well, but, as Osip admitted, "It didn't happen. Life doesn't always work out. Especially in Israel. [...] I believed in it for quite some time. For many years I believed it was possible. At least for five years. That it would occur in some way." Despite his disillusionment about a new apostolic Church, Osip continues to feel both Jew-

ish and Christian in Israel. He did not baptize his Israeli-born children, with whom he speaks in Hebrew, but does not regret his own entrance into the Church.

Viktor's experience of *aliyah* was both similar and different from many of the other Russian Jewish Christians I interviewed. The fact that he remains an active Orthodox Christian is one of the differences. I asked if he had anticipated any difficulties with coming to Israel as a Christian. "I hadn't thought of this at the time, but there are certain purely technical problems. Sunday is a workday." He laughed, and invited me to attend a church service with him, given that he was currently out of work. In addition, Viktor has no children in Israel, and has not been faced with the question of how to raise them Christian in a Jewish state.

What is similar in Viktor's story of faith and *aliyah* is his search for "home," or, as Father Michael said, "the power to remain myself." The Orthodox Church gave him this power, and sustained him through both "inner emigration," as explained by Father Michael, and actual emigration as well.

In fact, Viktor was arrested before being allowed to emigrate: "I decided to leave, but too late. In 1983, as I understand it now, a case was being prepared against me. Of course, the basis for it had been founded much earlier. It was inescapable. If I had been simply a person involved in literature, I would have been investigated. Anyone who was a writer was investigated. But with me, the situation was more complicated. I simply operated in too many spheres. In the Church sphere. Just about everyone my age who showed up in church sooner or later fell under investigation. So, the Church sphere. And the literary sphere. And the Jewish sphere. Since I read those lectures. But for some time, they simply didn't have anything specific against me. Then something changed in 1983. [...] In fact, I could have received a longer sentence than I did. I served for a year and a half. I was in a camp, but in Riga, itself. In an ordinary camp. Not the best, because the ordinary camps were worse on account of the petty criminals. But my faith helped a lot. It is interesting that when the other inmates found out about my faith, they were curious. [...] When I got out, there was a sort of pseudo-freedom [*glasnost'*]. There was no real freedom, something was destroyed. So in 1986, I decided to leave."

I asked Viktor why he chose to leave specifically for Israel, rather than somewhere else.

I could have gone to the States. Or to many of the countries of Europe. I had friends there. One friend from Leningrad who had gone to Paris. And in Germany I had an acquaintance. But I decided to go to Israel. And here is why. Very early, in the 1970s, when I did not want to leave, I said, and sincerely meant, that if I were to leave, I would go to Israel. Why Israel, even though I knew that Israel is not the best place for a Christian? And even more for a Jewish Christian? I knew that I would not be welcome. [...] Why Israel? I said that I never had any intense national identity. I can say that I felt myself more Russian than Jewish. All the same, I had a different reason. I had always envied the Latvians. Why? I understood that they lived in an occupied country. In contrast to many Russians who lived in Latvia, I *knew* that I lived in Latvia. Although I don't know Latvian very well, all the same I know it. And I was interested in the culture and the history of Latvia. I understood that I was living precisely in Latvia. I sympathized with them. I sympathized with the nationalists there. Not that I considered myself one of them. No. But I understood the justice of their position. And I envied them for the fact that they lived in their own country. On their own land. When I said, and even wrote in an article in response to the question about what I would do if I had the chance to be born anew, which nation I would want to belong to, I said that I consider that no nation has priority over another, that there are bad nations and good nations, so I don't care which nation I would belong to. But, in any case, I would want to be born among my own people on my own land. I wanted what I didn't have then. In Latvia, the problem was doubled. It wasn't my country as a Russian and as a Jew. And thus, I considered that if I were to leave, I would go to a country that I could, at least nominally, call my own. It wasn't as much a national feeling as a feeling of the soil."

Viktor laughed again, no doubt recognizing the similarity of his desire for a connection to the soil to 19th-century Slavophile (and often anti-Semitic) doctrine.

For Viktor, then, Israel fulfilled his Jewish identity. He became reconnected with the "soil," of his very being, with an internal sense of himself as a Jew. What is more, that identity is not diminished by his position in the Russian Orthodox Church, but, as for many others, in fact enhanced. As David confessed, "only after baptism did we feel ourselves to be Jews." Today, Viktor is a person of faith, living on the land of his ancestors.

Is it easy? Certainly not. "I had a sober enough understanding to know that I would never feel fully at home here, in contrast to those who were born here, the "sabras," but it would be better than being in a totally alien country, with nothing that tied me there. [...] For me, indeed, much is foreign to me here. It is a country that, unfortunately, turned out to be very 'Asiatic.' *Very* 'Asiatic.' Only here did I understand how European I am." And again Viktor laughed, in acknowledgment of his hybrid "European" Russian/Jewish/Christian identity.

No doubt, most Jews who bemoan assimilation and the loss of Jewish identity throughout the world would not recommend baptism into the Orthodox Church as a solution. But the case of Viktor and his fellow "outcasts" can nonetheless tell us much about Jewish identity in general, and the results of a bifurcation between ethnic, or national, and religious identity in specific. This bifurcation took place decades earlier in Russia than in most of the other countries of Europe; Viktor and Osip and Boris and Marina and the other Russian Jewish Christians I interviewed experienced the success of official and unofficial efforts to separate religious and other cultural traditions from *evreistvo* in Russia during the late imperial and into the Soviet period. Jewishness remained as a national category, or a "negative nationality," as Pinkus asserts, and most Russian Jews easily acculturated in the majority society. But anti-Semitism remained, as did other markers of Jewish identity, so that the Jews of Soviet Russia were "acculturated without being assimilated," in Gitelman's words.[17] They were externally and negatively marked as Jews. When intelligentsia Jews sought to regain a sense of spiritual personhood in the post-Stalinist world, they turned to the Orthodox Church. Not only was Judaism not at all an option, but the Church appealed to the sense of Russianness that they had acquired through acculturation. However, instead of reinforcing that Russianness, baptism increased these Jews' sense of Jewishness, and allowed them to reconnect with an ancient religious tradition. As Avraham said, "I came to Jesus through those gates as to a Jew. As a representative of the Jewish religion. I related to him as to a Jew. I saw in him a Jew (*iudei*). [...] And the deeper I went into the Church, the more deeply I felt myself as belonging to the people of Israel."

Anya summed up the experience of many Russian Jewish Christians. She lives now in New York, where her Orthodox parish has helped her feel welcome. As she told me: "I am today more Jewish

than I was at home [in the Soviet Union], when I didn't have any religion at all. [...] You know Moses' story about the exodus from Egypt? It became my history."

NOTES

1 This paper is drawn from my book, *Doubly Chosen: The Question of Jews in the Post-Stalinist Russian Orthodox Church* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, forthcoming). Interviews for the study were conducted between 1997 and 2000. Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the interviewees.

2 Estimates of the number of Jews in the Russian Orthodox Church run from the thousands to the tens of thousands.

3 John Doyle Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855-1881* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11.

4 Moscow was first called the "Third Rome" in a letter of an Orthodox monk to Grand Prince Vasily II: "Listen and attend, pious tsar, that all Christian empires are gathered in your single one, that two Romes have fallen, and the third one stands, and a fourth one there shall not be." Quoted in Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1961), 38.

5 D. Pospielovsky, "Some Remarks on the Contemporary Russian Nationalism and Religious Revival," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, XI, 1 (Spring 1984), 73.

6 Feliks Svetov, *Opyt biografii* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1985), 206.

7 For an excellent discussion of the debates on Russian Jewish identity in the 19th century, see Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question*, especially Chapter 15: "The dilemma of the Russian Jewish intelligentsia."

8 As Zvi Gitelman has suggested elsewhere, Soviet Jews "were acculturated without being assimilated." Zvi Gitelman, "Jewish Nationality and Religion in the USSR and Eastern Europe," in Pedro Ramet, ed., *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 67.

9 Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews 1948–1967: A Documented Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 16.

10 This would probably not be true of Ukraine and Moldova, examined in this volume, with their large populations of Jews that had been part of the Russian Empire long before the Revolution.

11 Cf. Simon Markish, "Passers-by: The Soviet Jew as Intellectual," *Commentary*, LXVI, 6 (Dec. 1978), 31; and Yuri Glazov, *The Russian Mind since Stalin's Death* (Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1985), 121, 122.

12 Mikhail Aksenov-Meerson, "Solov'ev v nashi dni," in S. M. Solov'ev, *Zhizn'i tvorcheskaia èvoliutsiia Vladimira Solov'eva* (Brussels: Zhizn' s Bogom, 1977), x.

13 See the chapter by Zvi Gitelman in this volume.

14 Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 23.
15 Quoted by Benjamin Pinkus in "The *Hazara Bitshuva* Phenomenon Among Russian Jews in the Post-Stalin Era," in *Jews and Jewish Topics in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, vol. 15, No. 2 (Fall, 1991), 19.
16 In this study, I make no judgment about these individuals' possible violation of the Law of Return.
17 See note 8, above.

CHAPTER 10

Looking Out for One's Own Identity: Central Asian Jews in the Wake of Communism

Alanna E. Cooper

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the USSR's demise, some 45,000 Central Asian Jews lived in the republics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Like most of the Jews of the Soviet Empire, their contact with the wider Jewish world was severely limited during the 70 years of Communist rule. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, however, the iron curtain, which let few in and few out, has been thrown wide open. Both outward movement, in the form of mass emigration, and inward movement, in the form of travelers and emissaries, have reconnected Central Asia's Jews with the wider Jewish world.

For Central Asian Jews, this moment exemplifies postmodern globalization, in which the rapid pace of travel, the ease of migration, and the immediacy of communication have broken down cultural, social, and geographical boundaries. In the context of this movement and change, the once stable givens of social existence have suddenly become pressing questions. Now, families who have lived together for generations in the same cities, and even in the same courtyards, cannot avoid asking themselves whether to emigrate or not, and if so, where and with whom.

So too, the givens of identity have been thrown into question. Prior to the dissolution of the USSR, rates of intermarriage and geographical mobility among Central Asian Jews were low. Accordingly, community ties were close-knit and tightly grounded in neighborhood life. Answers to the questions of who belonged and who did not belong to the Jewish community were clear and unchallenged. Furthermore, due to civil identity documents on which Jewish identity was marked, social boundaries designated within the community were reinforced by boundaries designated by the state. All of this has changed, how-

ever, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union for those who have emigrated as well as for those who remain in Central Asia, as they are exposed to new and competing definitions of identity.

In Central Asia, the given assumptions about selfhood have been challenged by competing emissary organizations, which offer a variety of new definitions of Judaism and Jewishness that are often at odds with each other. With many new options at hand, Central Asian Jews, whose identities had long been shaped for them by the tight-knit communities of which they had been a part, are now afforded the opportunity to choose and shape their identities.

For Americans, the story of self-construction is a familiar one. It is one told by contemporary social scientists who have focused on the impact that the dissolution of society's "sacred canopy" has had on individual identity.[1] These observers have pointed out that in the past decades, geographical mobility and social fluidity have increased dramatically, and community belonging has lost its quality of inevitability. Now more than ever, individuals can and do exert their freedom to choose and re-choose which aspects of self they wish to highlight and which they wish to suppress.

This approach to understanding contemporary identity in America has provided an important frame of reference for scholars engaged in the study of American Judaism. Charles Liebman in this volume points to the personalization of Judaism in America. So too, Sara Bershtel emphasizes that Judaism—like other religions in America—has lost its compelling force and become subject to consumer preferences, as the individual is now free to choose whatever Jewish practices are meaningful to him, "without regard to religious law or cultural coherence."[2] He may pull these practices out of context, and then reweave them into a design that reflects his own unique individuality. And just as the individual builds his own repertoire of Jewish "traditions," so too he constructs a personal understanding of his own Jewish identity. "The modern individual has choices," Bershtel writes; "He decides for himself who he is."[3]

In *The Jew Within*, Steven Cohen and Arnold Eisen point out that the proliferation of choice in the contemporary American Jewish scene has freed individuals from their "inherited identities and obligations." Newly liberated, their interest in public and organizational Jewish life has waned. Today's American Jews, the authors argue, have "turned inward in the search for meaning" and their principal reli-

gious authority has become the "sovereign self." In this new age of religious freedom and choice, individuals are said to "seize hold with a vengeance of the autonomy afforded to them" in the project of constructing their own particular and authentic sense of Jewish identity.[4]

Is this a uniquely American phenomenon? Or is this an inevitable and natural response to the loss of the tight hold of community on the individual, and the concomitant proliferation of religious options? Is it human nature to select (and reject) from among the choices available, in an effort to build a unique repertoire of religious activity and belief that reflects what the individual believes to be his or her authentic self?

Dramatic change in the Soviet Union—which includes the influx of religious emissary groups and the rise of a wide range of grassroots religious organizations—provides fertile ground to explore the answers to these questions. In particular, examination of religious change among the Jews of Central Asia provides an opportunity for comparison with the American case.

Just over a decade ago, the tight-knit Central Asian Jewish community still had a strong hold over the individual (as it did throughout the Soviet era). The individual's religious options were close to none, and the identity given to her at birth—by her family, by her community, and by the state—was relatively inescapable. With the advent of *glasnost'* and the ultimate demise of the Soviet Union, that solid and overarching framework that informed the individual's sense of self was shattered suddenly and completely. In her new, fluid, fractured, and dynamic social setting, how does the individual negotiate a renewed sense of self? In fact, unlike her American counterpart, she is not choosing from among the various religious options that are now at her disposal. While she does acknowledge and respond to them, it is in a manner quite foreign to the creative labor of self-construction so characteristic of the American way.

DAWN OF THE SOVIET ERA: A COSMOPOLITAN COMMUNITY INCARCERATED

Popular literature tends to portray Central Asian Jews (generally referred to as "Bukharan Jews") as an ancient community, isolated from the wider Jewish world during the course of their 2,000-year-long Diaspora history. These depictions not only overlook the Central

Asian Jews' involvement in the glorious era of silk route trade, but also ignore the cosmopolitan connections formed in the 19th century between the Jews in Central Asia and those in Moscow, Western Europe, and Palestine.

During the 19th century's large-scale "Great Game" of adventure and military glory, Russia encroached upon Central Asia and turned the region into an important source of raw materials and an expanded market for manufactured products. Central Asia's Jews, who had long been skilled craftsmen and traders with well-developed business connections, quickly became an integral part of this new economy. Taking advantage of improved communication and travel conditions, as well as the trading rights that Russia's tsars conferred upon them, the Jews of Central Asia became known as a well-traveled, wealthy, and cosmopolitan community.

Moscow, France, England, and India became popular destinations for business voyages, and as travel and communication improved, Palestine became a common destination for religious pilgrimage.[5] Wealthy businessmen, who became important community leaders, displayed their piety by voyaging to Jerusalem. Upon their return, the honorary title of "Haji" was conferred upon them.[6] They often distributed religious books, which they had printed in memory of their trips.[7] Some brought home religious teachers from Palestine, whom they hired to set up schools in their homes for the children of the community's wealthy families.

By the end of the 19th century, their connections to Palestine had become so strong that Central Asian Jews decided to fund and build their own neighborhood in Jerusalem. Seeing the community's great wealth, leaders of various religious organizations in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias began sending emissaries to Central Asia to collect donations in support of their communities in the Holy Land. These emissaries often stayed for extended periods of time, serving as teachers and as rabbinic authorities.[8]

Through this activity, Central Asian Jews were brought into intense contact and dialogue with world Jewry and with religious leadership abroad. This contact and dialogue, however, was abruptly halted in the 1920s when the Soviets carved new boundaries in Central Asia, established Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and incorporated them into the USSR. Heavy restrictions were placed on emigration and

travel, mail was monitored, and it became close to impossible to gain access to religious books printed abroad.

The transnational connections with the global Jewish community in which the Central Asian Jews had become heavily involved were suddenly severed. Those who had traveled regularly back and forth between Central Asia and Palestine were forced to settle in one place or the other. In Central Asia, wealthy Jews lost their money and property, charitable connections that bound them to the Jews in Palestine were severed, and the active religious dialogue between authorities in the two areas suddenly ceased.

And so boundaries were drawn around the Jewish community of Central Asia, which were hardly permeable to Jewish life outside. What follows is the story of how a transnational community very quickly became grounded in local community space.

LOCALIZATION OF JUDAISM AND JEWISH IDENTITY

Soviet rule brought with it a rise in industrialization and urbanization in much of the European region of the USSR. In Central Asia, however, these changes were much less pronounced, and the traditional organization of society remained intact.[9] People had little incentive to leave their home villages and towns in search of employment, education, or high culture. Geographic mobility, therefore, remained low and social boundaries remained high. Intermarriage between Uzbeks and non-Uzbeks was rare[10] and the locals maintained use of the native language as their first language.[11]

Similar patterns were found among the Jews of Central Asia. Almost every city and town in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan that was home to a Jewish community had a Jewish *mahalla* (residential quarter). Throughout the Soviet era, Central Asian Jewish populations remained concentrated in the *mahalla*s, which continued to function as centers of Jewish life. The communities' physical boundaries reinforced their social boundaries, and rates of intermarriage with non-Jews remained low.[12]

Due to Central Asian Jews' weak inclinations both to Russification and to assimilation within the local populations, their Jewish identity remained strong throughout the Soviet era. Furthermore, they managed to preserve many of their religious practices due to the fact

that Soviet anti-religious campaigns were not as harshly executed in Central Asia as they were in the western parts of the empire. Throughout the Soviet era, they tended to eat only meat that was ritually slaughtered and to observe key Jewish holidays. Additionally, religion continued to structure their rites of passage, such as circumcisions, weddings, and mourning rites.[13]

It is, however, significant to note that despite the fact that the practice of Judaism continued without severe persecution during much of the Soviet era, there was no freedom of religion *per se*. Soviet authorities would turn a blind eye to religious observances in the *mahalla*s as long as they were conducted quietly and privately. Displaying Communist loyalties on the outside, Jews (like Muslims) could continue practising their religion on the inside.

Weddings, for example were conducted publicly in Soviet style, and privately according to Jewish tradition. On the day that a couple registered their marriage with state authorities, family and friends would join in a lavish celebration replete with food, drink, music, and dancing. When the party was over, however, the bride and groom would part. Not "really" married, he would return to his parents' home and she to hers. A few days later, a rabbi would conduct a religious wedding ceremony late at night, in the presence of only the closest of relatives, and in the privacy of the groom's family's home. Only after this event was the marriage recognized by the community.

Jewish study took place in this same secretive manner. School-aged students dressed in their red scarves would walk through the streets as though going to attend a *Komsomol* (Communist youth group) meeting. When they arrived, they would put aside their Communist trappings and gather together to learn from their religious teachers.[14] Kosher meat, too, was obtained covertly. A woman in Samarkand explained: "There was a rabbi who lived in the *mahalla* who would slaughter our chickens. When we went to him, we would not let people see that we were bringing chickens with us. And when the rabbi went to slaughter a cow, he went as though he was not a rabbi. He would go just pretending as though he was helping the butcher to slaughter."

Religion was not officially allowed, but it went unnoticed as long as Jews continued to practice in an "underground" fashion. As a consequence of going underground, religious practice became highly localized, tied closely to local space and communities. Unlike the Central Asian religious leaders of the 19th century, who were in dia-

logue with world-renowned Jewish scholars, the religious leaders of Soviet Central Asia were trained locally and were cut off from contact with religious leaders outside their own region.

So too, observing *kashrut* became a highly localized affair. For Central Asian Jews, "keeping kosher" during the Soviet era meant salting meat prior to cooking in order to drain out the blood, and separating meat and milk. But first and foremost, keeping kosher was about buying kosher meat, which meant buying meat via Jewish avenues, rather than in the large, impersonal marketplace. This understanding of *kashrut* is well illustrated by one woman's straightforward response to the question of whether her family kept kosher during Soviet times. "Yes we did," she answered. "We would not get our meat from the bazaar."

Buying meat via Jewish avenues meant buying it in the Jewish *mahalla* from a butcher who sold meat that a local ritual slaughterer had killed. The fact that Jewish ritual slaughtering was not done outside the Jewish *mahalla*, meant that the Jews living inside the *mahalla* stayed within Jewish grounds when they bought their meat. Jews who were living outside the neighborhood, on the other hand, had to come to the *mahalla* to buy their meat.

Unlike Jews in America, who can buy kosher chickens in supermarkets across the country, Central Asian Jews knew whether the meat they bought was kosher only if it was purchased through personal and local channels. Keeping kosher, then, was not about an abstract set of guidelines, or about large, impersonal religious institutions. Instead, it was about eating meat made fit for consumption through its connection to local religious authorities and community space.[15]

The tight links between local community, religious practice, and Jewish identity were further reinforced by demographic patterns. In each of the cities in which Central Asian Jews were concentrated, they tended to marry Jews only from within their city.[16] So, although the Jews of the region generally identify themselves as belonging to a common group often referred to as "Bukharan Jews,"[17] a strong sense of local community identification prevailed.

In interviews and discussions, Central Asian Jews living in the three cities where they were most concentrated—Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara—highlighted strong local loyalties and expressed only tenuous feelings of connection to Central Asian Jews living in other cities. In Bukhara, for example, one woman spoke with pride

about the women of her local community: "The [Jewish] women of Bukhara cannot be compared with the [Jewish] women of Tashkent or Samarkand because we observe the [Jewish] customs most carefully in Bukhara." An informant from Samarkand, on the other hand, distanced herself from her fellow Jews in Bukhara in her description of an imaginary visit there. Surprisingly, she compared such a trip to immigrating to the United States. "[Traveling to Bukhara] is what it would be like for us if we were to move to America," she said. "We wouldn't know the place and we wouldn't know the people." Although only a four-hour drive away, the Jewish community in Bukhara is seen as far away and foreign, whereas Samarkand is home.

Another factor in the localization of religious identity was the strong overlap between Jewish identity as defined within the community and as defined by state authorities. Like the Jews in the rest of the Soviet Union, Central Asian Jews had "Jew" inscribed as their nationality on their internal passports. However, unlike the Jews of the rest of the Soviet Union, this label was not viewed by its bearers as a "hollow identity" devoid of cultural and religious content (see, for example, chapters by Gitelman and Kornblatt in this volume). Instead, for the Jews of Uzbekistan who continued to practice Judaism throughout the Soviet era, and to identify strongly with their respective Jewish communities, this label retained its meaning.

Furthermore, people's own understanding of their Jewish identity as a religious identity became tightly linked to the state definition of Jewish identity as a "national" identity. In other words, their understanding of themselves as "Jews" implied that they engaged in the practice of Judaism and belonged to a community of faith *and* that they were part of a Soviet "national" group. The intertwining of the state definition of "Jewish identity" and the community definition of "Jewish identity" is well illustrated by an examination of notions surrounding the transmission of Jewish identity from one generation to the next.

When cases of mixed parentage arose in the Soviet Union, a child could choose which nationality should be printed on his or her passport, but in general, the census administrator was instructed to give preference to the nationality of the child's mother.[18] In situations of mixed marriages in Central Asia, however, the unofficial rules differed. In this region, where the majority of the population is Muslim, religious identity is transmitted patrilineally. The patriline is also given

preference in residence patterns. When a woman married, she would go to live in her husband's courtyard with his family. Her children, therefore, would grow up in their father's house, governed by the rules of their father's kin. Children, in this sense, belonged to their father's family rather than their mother's. Not surprisingly, therefore, Central Asians' Soviet ascribed nationality (such as Uzbek and Tajik) was also understood as transmitted through the father. Although calculating nationality through the father was not instituted as official policy in Central Asia, it did become the prevailing norm.

Central Asian Jews also accepted the notion that nationality is transmitted patrilineally. Hence, they understood a child's Jewish national identity—as assigned by the state—to be derived from that child's father's Jewish identity. In turn, they came to view the child's religious identity as being derived from the child's father, despite the fact that this understanding runs contrary to Western Orthodox interpretation of Jewish law.[19]

A final element in the localization of religious identity was the fact that the Central Asian Jews' religious identity and state-assigned national identity also became tightly linked to their sense of "ethnic" identity. The terms "ethnic group" and "national group" are often equated in scholarly discussions about identity in the Soviet Union (see, for example, Gitelman and Kornblatt in this volume). Use of the term ethnic identity here, however, takes its frame of reference to be the Jewish people rather than the peoples of the Soviet Union. As such, the term "ethnic group" denotes a sub-group within the Jewish multicultural world.

In the West, Central Asian Jews (or "Bukharan Jews") are regarded as one "brand" of Jews within a multiethnic Jewish world. Museum exhibits, folk-festivals, cookbooks, films, and popular magazines highlight the "ethnic" qualities of this group; their special music, dance, cuisine, language, and dress. Indeed, in late 19th-century Palestine, Central Asia's Jews also emphasized their ethnic distinctiveness as a means to justify the building of their own neighborhood, schools and printing press in Jerusalem.[20]

During the Soviet era, however, Central Asian Jews' contacts with other Jewish groups were severed. Confined in Central Asia, they began to compare themselves to the only other Jews they knew: Ashkenazi Jews, most of whom arrived in Central Asia during World War II, after escaping or being evacuated from their homes in Eastern Europe.[21]

Unlike the local Jews, they tended to be highly assimilated—both structurally and culturally—into Uzbekistan's Slavic, mainly Russian, population.

In comparing themselves to Ashkenazi Jews, Central Asian Jews did not distinguish themselves by pointing to particular ethnic customs or traditions. Rather, they tended to characterize themselves as the "real Jews," because they continued to practice Judaism throughout the Soviet era, and continued to strongly identify themselves as Jews, whereas Ashkenazi Jews—Central Asian Jews say—are not *chistiye evrei*, that is, pure Jews. Indeed, one Central Asian Jewish teenager told me that growing up she had always thought that "Ashkenazi Jew" meant "half-Jew."

The clear division between Central Asian Jews and the region's Ashkenazi Jews is expressed in the low rates of intermarriage between them.[22] Central Asian Jews' identity as Jews was so tightly linked to locality, that marriage with those Jews who are not "of Central Asia" was not considered a Jewish marriage at all.

In sum, unlike the Jews in most of the rest of the Soviet Union, Central Asian Jews managed to continue practising religion throughout the Communist era. Sealed off from contact with the wider Jewish world, and forced "underground," they developed highly localized understandings of Judaism and Jewishness. Further reinforcing the local nature of their Jewish understandings was the fact that the community's definition of Jewish identity and the state's definition—both of which exerted tight control over the individual—overlapped. In this context, individuals knew exactly who they were. Looking at themselves from the outside or from the inside, their identity was an unquestionable given and reinforced by all.

THE UNRAVELING OF JEWISH IDENTITY IN THE POST-SOVIET ERA

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian Jews' highly localized understandings of their Jewish identity have been thrown wide open, subjected to the disembedding forces of globalization. This rupture of the tight link between place and identity is due first and foremost to massive emigration. Within a decade after the flood of emigration began, 90 percent of the Central Asian Jewish population had left their homes, most having moved to the United States

and to Israel. Now family groups and communities that were once tightly knit and grounded in a common space are scattered and distant from one another.

For those who remained behind, occupying the same homes and neighborhoods that they had prior to the dissolution of the USSR, the link between place and identity has also come undone. With kinship ties and friendships now stretched across oceans, their sense of "home" has been torn asunder. As one woman poignantly explained: "Half of my heart is with my daughter here in Samarkand, but the other half of my heart is in Israel with my children there."

Through letters, telephone calls, and visits, those left behind remain in close touch with their friends and family members who have emigrated. No longer sealed off from contact with the wider Jewish world, their long-held views of what it means to be Jewish and what it means to be a "Bukharan Jew" are challenged by what goes on abroad. More immediate, however, are the challenges posed by Jewish emissaries (or "ethnic entrepreneurs") who come to Uzbekistan from abroad in an effort to reshape the locals' understanding of their Jewishness.

The discussion that follows focuses on two organizations that have a particularly strong presence in Samarkand, and on their efforts to introduce abstract and global definitions of Judaism into a system of highly localized understandings.[23]

JEWISH AGENCY FOR ISRAEL (JAFI)

The Jewish Agency for Israel, a non-governmental organization based in Israel, became highly active in the USSR as the Soviet Empire stood on the brink of dissolution. Since then, JAFI has remained active in the former Soviet Union, working to disseminate a positive image of Israel and to encourage all of those who have the right to immigrate to Israel to do so. Hebrew classes, educational activities, seminars, summer camps, and family retreats organized by JAFI are targeted to those who have the right to immigrate to Israel, as stipulated by Israel's "Law of Return," which includes anyone who is Jewish (defined by the law as having been born to a Jewish mother or having converted to Judaism), and anyone who has a Jewish spouse, Jewish parent, or Jewish grandparent.

JAFI programs, which are aimed at generating a feeling of group solidarity and commitment among individuals who—according to the

"Law of Return"—are only very loosely defined as a group, do not distinguish in any way between Central Asian Jews and Ashkenazi Jews. Furthermore, as a non-religious organization interested in promoting the State of Israel, JAFI is unconcerned that an individual may be from an assimilated family that never observed Jewish holidays and traditions, or is from an intermarried family (so long as he or she has the minimum relationship necessary to be included within the "Law of Return").

For Central Asian Jews, JAFI's active presence in Samarkand has blurred the boundary which once so clearly separated those who are Jewish from those who are not. During the Soviet era, the Central Asian Jews' social networks, kinship networks, places of residence, religious community, and individual self-identity as "Bukharan Jew" (which also carried the meaning of "real Jew") all strongly overlapped. That organic relationship has come undone through JAFI's strong influence in the city.

Many of the people who take part in JAFI programs, for instance, did not have "Jew" listed as their nationality on their identification documents and may never have called themselves or thought of themselves as Jewish before the dissolution of the USSR. Several Central Asian Jewish young adults told me that since JAFI has become active in Samarkand, however, students with whom they had gone to school for years, who had never identified themselves as Jewish, suddenly began declaring themselves to be Jews. One young man explained: "When I was growing up, I thought I was the only Jew in my class and the kids used to tease me and beat me because of it. Now, years later, I found out that there were other Jewish kids in my class, but they never said then that they were Jewish. One girl's father is Tatar and her mother is Jewish. She always said she was Tatar, but now she wants to go to Israel so she says that she is Jewish."

In addition to the desire to emigrate, people, particularly youth, take part in JAFI activities because they are "fun" social events. Sometimes the reasons overlap, as in the case of Sabina. A young woman in her early 20s, whose mother is Armenian and whose father is Uzbek (according to the nationality written on their passports), Sabina participates in JAFI's weekly enrichment program for young adults and runs JAFI after-school programs for young school children. She hopes to immigrate to Israel one day, where her Jewish grandmother lives—or so she says.

Artur, a young Central Asian Jew who is active in JAFI activities, is certain that Sabina has no grandmother in Israel. He says that Sabina began participating in JAFI activities because she found them interesting and fun. Through her participation, Artur claims, she became interested in moving to Israel because she has heard the standard of living is better and life is easier there. She has, therefore, "made up" her Jewish grandmother in Israel in an effort to legitimize her participation in JAFI, hoping that through some connection, friendship, or romance, she will be able to find a way to Israel.

While Artur seems relatively confident that Sabina is not Jewish, there are many others who participate irregularly in JAFI events whom Artur does not know well. Artur has also participated in many educational seminars, some of which are attended by youth from cities all over Central Asia, and others that are attended by youth from all over the former Soviet Union. In such settings, where contact is not contextualized in terms of community, family, or shared history, Artur, like the others, has no real way of knowing who is Jewish and who is not.

Through JAFI activities and programs, and through the organization's encouragement of immigration to Israel among all those who "have the right to repatriate," JAFI has grouped together people who have never been grouped together before. For Central Asian Jews, those who were Jewish used to be those who ate together, mourned together, prayed together, lived together, and married one another. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union JAFI has contributed to the severing of those intertwined and overlapping relationships.

CHABAD LUBAVITCH

Chabad Lubavitch, another emissary organization with a strong presence in Samarkand, is a Jewish ultra-Orthodox Hasidic sect. Chabad Lubavitchers, known for their "missionary" work (to Jews),[24] are encouraged to venture out across the globe from their centers in New York and Israel to remote Jewish communities with weak religious infrastructures. Working within these communities, their primary concerns are to help local Jews maintain religious practice and to bring them closer to Orthodox Judaism.

In Samarkand, Chabad emissaries help organize daily prayer services in the synagogues, ensure that kosher meat is available, oversee the *mikvah* (ritual bath), and organize religious programs for youth

and adults, as well as summer camps and after-school enrichment activities for children. Chabad's main target audience in Samarkand is the Central Asian Jewish community, most of whom are Jewish according to Jewish Orthodox law. Among the Ashkenazi population that JAFI includes within its target group, on the other hand, the rate of intermarriage is so high that very few are considered Jewish according to Orthodoxy and are thus of little interest to Chabad.

In their interactions with Samarkand's Central Asian Jews, Chabad emissaries speak with respect about the tenacity with which this group continued to observe Jewish tradition despite Soviet obstacles. Nevertheless, the prevailing assumption among Chabad emissaries is that the local Jews were cut off from the wider Jewish world for so long that much of their knowledge of Jewish law was lost, and faulty local notions contaminated their understanding of how to practice Judaism properly.

Chabad activities are therefore designed to teach "correct" Judaism and to encourage religious practice. Classes for women, for example, focus on practical laws of keeping kosher, laws pertaining to the use of the *mikvah*, and laws regarding the observance of the holidays. In the men's classes emphasis is placed on attendance at daily morning prayers, and much of class time is spent reading the weekly portion from the Torah.

sIn children's classes, students are taught the practicalities of daily Judaism. One emissary-teacher summarized his goals as follows: "Most important is that they learn to make *broche*s [blessings] on their food. Other things that are important are *benching* [blessing after meals], *davening* [praying], and [wearing a] *yarmulka* [skullcap] [and] *tzitzis* [four-cornered garment worn by men and boys]."

Through such programs and classes, emissaries of Chabad Lubavitch introduce Jewish law as an abstract and universal system. In this way they reconnect Samarkand's Central Asian Jews with the wider world of Judaism. As they do so, they contribute to the undoing of the relationship between religious practice, local social organization, and community space.

Many women, for example, who learned how to salt meat during the Soviet era from their mothers, expressed surprise to find out from Chabad emissaries that what they had learned mimetically in the home was often not correct. They reported that there were certain details of law they had never learned, and that there were other details that their

mothers and grandmothers had added, which were superfluous. After a class on meat-salting, Nina, a woman in her 40s commented: "My mother-in-law was very religious and very strict with the laws. She would not use the same hand to put the salt on the meat as the one she used to take the meat out of the water. One time my mother-in-law saw my mother not following this [she used the same hand for both] and she yelled at her. 'You are an old woman! How is it that you do not know how to do this properly?' When I think about this today, I feel very sad that my mother-in-law spoke to my mother like this, especially since it was all nonsense [there is no prohibition against using the same hand for both tasks]. They lived in the *mahalla* for 150 years and they did things all wrong."

Another woman, also in her 40s, expressed similar sentiments as she reflected on the not-too-distant past. She uses the adjectives of darkness to describe their religious state then, and adjectives of enlightenment to describe their religious state now: "In 1990 the guys [Chabad emissaries] started to come from Israel with books. My daughters started to go to [Chabad] school…They started to learn: how many minutes, what kind of salt, for what and why. The girls would come home…and I would ask them exactly [how to salt the meat] according to the law. Of course we did these things already, but we did not understand why or how. We were blind. We didn't see: mother said, mother did it this way, and I did it this way too. Why? Because in the Torah it's written that way? Because there is *Halachah* [Jewish law]? This we didn't know! What is *Halachah*? What is *Shulkhan Aruch* [Code of Jewish laws]? We didn't know. Now we know."

In this statement, the speaker clearly articulates the difference between learning from books and learning from grandmothers. Knowledge transmitted orally ("mother said") and mimetically ("mother did it this way") is grounded in an intimate social context. It is local and provincial. Knowledge transmitted through texts, on the other hand, is shared across vast spans of time and space. It is abstract and universal. The reference she makes to learning Jewish law from her daughters is powerful because it indicates a rupture in the system of knowledge transmission. When religious law and observance are thought of as universal, the younger generation can just as easily teach "tradition" as they can receive it. So too, young foreign emissaries can serve as teachers to locals who are as old as their parents and grandparents.

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON JUDAISM

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian Jews' localized understandings of their Jewishness have been dramatically challenged. Whereas the individual's Jewish identity was once unquestioned, he or she is now presented with a variety of options among which to choose. How have the Central Asian Jews responded? Have they taken this chance to "seize hold with a vengeance" of the new opportunities to choose their own Jewishness and to build their own authentic sense of Jewish identity?

While doing fieldwork among the Central Asian Jews in Samarkand, I listened to the stories they told as they navigated through the new ideas about Jewish identity that they were confronting. Of particular interest were the issues that evoked emotional and heated discussion, because they pointed to ideas that were not taken as "givens" but, rather, as unresolved and open for debate. Among them were issues surrounding the identity of Ashkenazi Jews (such as Sabina, discussed above), and issues related to individuals who had converted or intermarried.

Prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Central Asian Jews had a shared understanding and a clear sense of how to categorize such people, who highlighted where the boundaries of group belonging lay. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as emissary groups have brought in new definitions of where these boundaries lie, the positions these people occupy have been called into question. Not surprisingly, therefore, such cases provide a framework for debate about what Jewishness is and what it is not.

Yura, for example—a man whose father is a Central Asian Jew and whose mother is Tatar—grew up practising Judaism and believing himself to be Jewish. In the late 1990s, a year after his father passed away, he went to the synagogue to say Kaddish in his father's memory. The emissary rabbi, however, would not permit him to take an active role in the service, claiming he was not Jewish. This incident created heated discussion as people invoked the new understandings they had gained from JAFI and from Chabad, as well as their long-held understandings, to debate this individual's identity.

How did Yura deal with this challenge to his own identity? Did he continue to view himself as Jewish, or not? When asked this question, he avoided answering directly, explaining instead that his Muslim

neighbors refer to him as Jewish, but the emissary rabbi does not. Rather than self-reflection, the focus of his conversation was on the definitions that others had ascribed to him.

This conversation foreshadowed what I was to discover through a standardized set of questions administered to examine how people navigate between the multiple versions of Judaism with which they were presented. Respondents were asked to read a set of fabricated scenarios, which were based on true stories I had often heard people discussing, and to respond to a series of questions asked about them. One such a scenario, for example, was as follows:

Fifty-one year-old Grisha was born and raised in Samarkand, which is where his parents met and married after fleeing from Poland during World War II. Grisha's parents are both Jewish by nationality. However, they never talked about religion to their children, and never told them that they are Jews. At home, they did not observe any of the Jewish holidays or traditions. When Grisha was 16 years old, he found out that his parents were Jewish. But, like his parents, he was not interested in religion and did not observe any of the Jewish traditions or holidays. When Grisha was 23, he married a Russian woman. Now Grisha has two children.

> *Is Grisha Jewish? Are his children Jewish? Why or why not? And if more information is needed to answer the question, explain.*

Grisha's sister Larissa is married to Yevgeny and they have two children. Yevgeny is Russian by nationality. Larissa and Yevgeny do not observe any of the Jewish religious traditions or holidays.

> *Is Larissa Jewish? Are her children Jewish? Why or why not? And if more information is needed to answer the question, explain.*

In preparing these questions, the working assumption was as follows: since local notions about Jewishness have been torn asunder, and a variety of competing definitions of Judaism have been introduced by influential emissary organizations, people would no longer be able to look to the outside for a stable, and integrated sense of identity. They would, therefore, be forced to turn inward. As such, respondents' answers would reflect a new understanding that Jewish identity depends on what one feels or believes oneself to be. In fact,

this was not the case at all, as explained in the findings presented below:

1) *Ten out of the seventeen*[25] *respondents did not have internally consistent theories to explain whether an individual is Jewish or not Jewish.*

Forty-seven-year-old Soffa, for example, explained that Grisha's children are not Jewish because their mother (Grisha's wife) is not Jewish, and Jewish identity is transmitted through the mother. In answer to the question about Larissa's children, however, Soffa turned away from the notion that identity is transmitted genetically. Instead, she explained that Larissa's children are not Jewish because they do not know the Jewish traditions and they do not observe them.

The answers of seventeen-year-old Rivka provide another example of inconsistency. She explained that Grisha's children are not Jewish because their mother is not Jewish, and Jewish identity is transmitted through the mother. Or as she put it, "children are considered Jewish according to their mother." On the other hand, when I asked Rivka whether Larissa's children are Jewish, she answered, "They are not Jewish because their father is Russian." Although both of Rivka's theories cite genetic ties as the essential marker of Jewish identity, they are at odds with one another. The first posits the transmission of Jewish identity through the mother only, whereas the second posits the transmission of Jewish identity through the father only.

2) *People switched frames of reference as they answered the questions.*

For example, Rivka (above) who is highly active in Samarkand's emissary group activities, began defining Jewish identity through the perspective espoused by Chabad (through matrilineal descent). She then switched to defining Jewish identity through the Central Asian perspective (through the patrilineal line).

3) *As people switched frames of reference, they did so fully cognizant of the fact that their definitions of identity are contingent upon the social framework in which the individual finds himself or herself.*

Twenty-year-old Sioma, for example, gave the following answer to the question "Are Larissa's children Jewish?"

"It depends. In Israel it [a child's Jewish identity] goes according to the mother. So, if she lives in Israel, then her children are Jewish. But here [in Uzbekistan], it goes according to the father."

Unsatisfied with this answer, I pressed Sioma, to find out what *he* believed the children's identity to be. "I know what the laws are,"

I told him, "I want to know what *you think*. Are Larissa's children Jewish?" He answered: "It will be a shock for them when they move from one country to the other [to find out that they were Jewish in one place, and not Jewish in another place]. But if they know the laws, this is how it will be."

According to Sioma, one's Jewishness is defined by others and is, therefore, subject to change, if these "others" do not share a common understanding of what Jewishness is. This view of identity was also expressed by forty-one-year-old Arkady. In response to the question of whether Larissa's children are Jewish, he answered, "If Larissa changes her passport and takes her husband's last name, then her children will not be Jewish." Jewishness, from this perspective, is not an essential or inalienable aspect of self. Rather, it is unstable and fluid, subject to the individual's changing social context.

4) *Only three of the seventeen respondents used the criteria of "feeling" or "believing" to define the characters as Jewish (or not Jewish).*

Seventeen-year-old Rivka, for example, said that regardless of the fact that both of Grisha's parents are Jewish, he is not Jewish because he "does not want" to be a Jew. "But," she continues, "if he goes to a rabbi to learn what a Jew is supposed to do, and what a Jew is not allowed to; and if he follows [what the rabbi says], and if he wants to be a Jew, then he is a Jew."

Rivka's ideas were echoed by seventeen-year-old Stella. "Grisha is not Jewish," she explained, "because he did not recognize his Jewishness." Twenty-two-year-old Riva expressed similar sentiments. "According to the religion he is Jewish. But what does he himself think? What does he feel inside? This will determine if he is Jewish or not." In their answers, Rivka, Stella, and Riva distinguish between how others define Grisha and how Grisha defines himself. Furthermore, they argue that it is Grisha's own perception and definition of self that determines who he authentically is.

The answers provided by Rikva, Riva, and Stella, which sound characteristically American, are the exception to the norm. Worth noting is that all three of these respondents are young adults. Although they lived their years of childhood during the Communist era when the givenness of their Jewish identity was not open to question, they have grown into adulthood in an atmosphere of new freedoms, which has allowed them to question who they are.

CONCLUSION

Social scientists who have focused on identity in contemporary America have argued that as a result of the loosening of the hold that religious institutions and communities have had on individuals, and as a result of the massive proliferation of choices of religious expression, each *particular* option has lost its authority. Robert Wuthnow notes that this pluralism and relativism "so widely evident in our culture" have caused the "turn inward" prevalent in American religion today.[26]

Americans (and the scholars who study them) often take for granted that this quest for authenticity—the sense of knowing "who I really am"—is natural and spontaneous. The case of the Jews of Central Asia suggests otherwise. Although bereft of given and stable social moorings, they continue to gaze outward, looking to the cues provided by others to define their Jewish selves. Perhaps the next generation, which will be raised and socialized with religious choices in place of givens, will, like Americans, turn inward in a search for religious authenticity. With these freedoms, they may fashion new understandings of what it means to be Jewish and emerge with a deeper and fuller sense of who they "really" are. If so, they will also surely emerge with new crises of identity as they each face the task of defining themselves without the dictates of nationality policies and without the authority of a tight-knit, localized community, but rather on their own.

NOTES

1 See, for example, Robert N. Bellah, *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985); Mary Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identity in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Robert Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey* (New York: Free Press, 1996); Peter Berger, *Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Random House, 1973); and *id.*, *Sacred Canopy*: *Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1967).

2 Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard, *Saving Remnants: Feeling Jewish in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 6.

3 *Ibid.*, 287.

4 Steven Cohen and Arnold Eisen, *The Jew Within: Self, Family and Community in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

5 See first-hand accounts of travelers: Eugene Schuyler, *Turkestan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkestan, Kokand, Bukhara and Kuldja*, Geoffrey Wheeler, ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 259; Elkan Adler, *Jews in Many*

Lands (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1905), 219; O. Olufson, *The Emir of Bokhara and His Country, Journeys and Studies in Bokhara* (London, 1911), 207; Ephraim Neumark, *Travels to the Lands of the East* (Hebrew), Avraham Ya'ari, ed. (Jerusalem: Lewin-Epstein, 1947), 104, 108–109; Annette Meakin, *In Russian Turkestan: A Garden of Asia and its People* (New York: Scribner, 1915), 178.

6 See Adler, *Jews in Many Lands*, 219.

7 See Avraham Ya'ari, *Sifrei Yehudei Bukhara* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1942).

8 See Abraham Rabin, "Emissaries from the Land of Israel to Bukhara, 1881–1914," *Pe'amim: Studies in the Cultural Heritage of Oriental Jewry*, 35 (1988), 139–55, and Albert Kaganovitch, "Shlomo Tagger: Chief Rabbi of the Jews of Bukhara and Turkestan," *Pe'amim: Studies in the Cultural Heritage of Oriental Jewry*, 80–81, (1999).

9 Sergei Poliakov, *Everyday Islam: Religion and Tradition in Rural Central Asia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1992).

10 In 1979, only 6 percent of the married Uzbeks living in Tashkent, Uzbekistan's capital city, had married non-Uzbeks. See Iu.V. Arutjunian, *Uzbekistan: Inhabitants of the Capital* (Moscow: Russian Academy of Sciences, 1996), 186.

11 Survey data from 1991 indicate that 39 percent of the Uzbeks living in Tashkent spoke Russian either with some difficulty or with great difficulty, and 5 percent did not speak Russian at all. See Arutjunian, *Uzbekistan*, 89.

12 In 1962, some 8 percent of Central Asian Jews in Tashkent were married to non-Jews. See Mordechai Altshuler, "Some Statistics on Mixed Marriages among Soviet Jews," *Bulletin on Soviet and East European Jewish Affairs*, 6 (1970), 30–32.

13 The picture of Jewish life during the Soviet era presented here was compiled from the recollections of individuals interviewed in 1992 during fieldwork among Central Asian Jewish immigrants in New York, and in 1993 and 1997 among Central Asian Jews in Uzbekistan.

14 Many of these teachers had been the students (or students of students) of religious emissaries from Palestine who taught in Central Asia in the 19th century.

15 In another article, which addresses the Central Asian Jews' elaborate customs surrounding death, I argue that the obligation for daily prayer became deeply connected to the memories of particular individuals and the honor of particular families. As such, Central Asian Jews did not experience prayer as part of an abstract and universal system of religious law, but rather as a localized religious practice connected to the community. See Alanna Cooper, "Feasting, Memorializing, Praying and Remaining Jewish in the Soviet Union: The Case of the Bukharan Jews," in Zvi Gitelman, ed., *Jewish Life After the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

16 Based on a survey of 113 couples. See Alanna Cooper, "Negotiating Identity in the Context of Diaspora, Dispersion and Reunion: The Bukharan Jews and Jewish Peoplehood," Ph. D. thesis (Boston University, 2001), 247–48.

17 Bukhara is not only the name of one of Central Asia's best-known cities, but was also the name of an important emirate (loosely governed territory) that was home to most of the region's Jews. The emir of Bukhara was deposed and its boundaries were carved up by the Soviets when the region was incorporated into the USSR.

18 Mordechai Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry Since World War II: Population and Social Structure* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).

19 Central Asian Jews regarded a child born to a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father to be Jewish. A child born to a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father, on the other hand, was not regarded as Jewish.

20 This was in response to pressure exerted on Jerusalem's Central Asian Jews to donate money to the existing Sephardic institutions, rather than channeling funding into their own private community organizations. See Alanna Cooper, "Negotiating Identity," 149–57.

21 According to demographic statistics gathered by the Jewish Agency for Israel, the population of Ashkenazi Jews in Uzbekistan in 1989 numbered 60,000. They were concentrated in Uzbekistan's most populous cities; most lived in Tashkent. In Samarkand there were 7,000 Ashkenazi Jews, according to M. Zubin, "The Jews of Samarkand in the Year 1979—A Statistical Survey," *Pe'amim: Studies in the Cultural Heritage of Oriental Jewry*, 35 (1987), 170–77; fewer lived in Bukhara (personal communications with Ashkenazi and Central Asian Jewish residents in Bukhara, as well as local community leaders).

22 Although official statistics on intermarriage between Central Asian Jews and Ashkenazi Jews are unavailable, during the course of five months of ethnographic research in Samarkand, I learned of six cases of Central Asian Jews in Samarkand who had married non-Jews and only two cases of Central Asian Jews in Samarkand who had married Ashkenazi Jews.

23 Although the section that follows is written in the ethnographic present, information was collected in 1997 and changes have occurred since then.

24 Their missionary work is only with Jews.

25 Five respondents were between the ages of 17 and 22, six between the ages of 41 and 49, and five between the ages of 50 and 63 (information on one is lacking). Among them were eleven women and six men.

26 Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey*, 40.

CHAPTER 11

Jewish Groups and Identity Strategies in Post-Communist Hungary

András Kovács

BEYOND THE CONCEPT OF ASSIMILATION

Accounts of the history of the European Jewish Diaspora in the modern era usually concentrate on the dramatic changes in the relationship between Jews and the societies surrounding them. After the collapse of the walls of the medieval ghettos, the Jews of Europe rapidly established new forms of coexistence and contact with the adjacent societies as the latter moved towards modernization. These forms of contact were primarily dependent upon the specific characteristics and modernization potential of the majority society in each of the European countries. In countries where the feudal order was replaced by modern capitalism after the French Revolution, and where the emancipation of the Jews was realized as a stage in this process, the breakup or transformation of traditional Jewish communities was soon under way. As Viktor Karády's analyses have shown,[1] as part of this process, the social and cultural capital accumulated by Jewish communities in the course of their former ghetto existence—capital that had previously been of value only within the community itself—suddenly appreciated in value. This development provided Jews with exceptional opportunities for mobility in the new meritocratic society.

The new network of relationships between Jews and non-Jews that arose as a result of modernization, as well as changes in these relationships, are usually described in terms of assimilation. This category indicates, on the one hand, a process that affects various dimensions of society, resulting in an increase in social interaction between Jews and non-Jews and a substantial reduction in the social and cultural distance separating the Jewish community from its immediate environment. Based on statistical data, social historians have elaborated a whole series of indicators that may be used to measure the extent of the reduction in the social distance between the two groups.[2]

Nevertheless, the term "assimilation" is not merely descriptive, for it also embodies the characteristic political and moral expectations of the era of the nation-states. The liberal politicians of the 19th century, a group that produced some of the staunchest supporters of Jewish emancipation, expected that the dismantling of the ghetto walls and the granting of political equality to Jews would lead to the disappearance not only of the bad "Jewish characteristics" that were condemned by opponents of emancipation (see the various pamphlets on the "improvement of the Jews") but also of the Jews themselves, who would be swallowed up by the communities surrounding them. This expectation, however, was never realised. As Jacob Katz, the celebrated historian of the transformation of Jewish societies in the 19th century, has argued, the traditional Jewish societies broke up, indeed, because they took advantage of the possibilities offered by emancipation and submitted to the pressures of assimilation. Nonetheless, even though Jews became a part of the modern European world, they accomplished this without dissolving into the surrounding society. "The Jews entered new European society, without becoming absorbed in it. Instead, they became a new and unique social entity, a changed but recognisable version of the traditional Jewish community. In terms of its internal structure and appearance, this version differed fundamentally from what the supporters of the integration of Jews imagined. Instead of becoming a new religious community integrated into the surrounding society, they became a new social sub-group." [3]

According to Katz, the process of modernization dismantled many of the boundaries that had once separated Jewish communities from external society. Still, some of the factors that had formed the basis of the group continued to exist: e.g., the adherence to Judaism, a concentration of Jews in certain professions, a high level of endogamy, and a network of relationships stretching across national boundaries. While such factors were indeed characteristic of Jews in Western Europe in the mid-19th century, various processes began to weaken them in the last third of the century. Such processes included secularization, apostasy, and an increasing number of mixed marriages.

One of the most influential theories of assimilation has taught that the processes observable from the end of the 19th century must lead inexorably to full assimilation. According to the American sociologist Milton Gordon,[4] there are seven phases of assimilation. Gordon calls the first phase *cultural assimilation* or acculturation. In this phase

the minority learns the language of the majority and becomes acquainted with its culture and rules of behavior. According to Gordon, assimilation may stop at this point, providing perhaps a sufficient basis for a regulated coexistence between majority and minority, as in the case of several of the national, religious and racial minorities of the United States. However, if the assimilation process continues and reaches the second phase, which Gordon called *structural assimilation*, complete assimilation will take place. Structural assimilation amounts to the regularization of interactions between majority and minority within the institutions and civil networks of society at the level of the primary groups. If assimilation reaches this level, a substantial increase in mixed marriages, *marital assimilation,* is an immediate consequence. This development leads in turn to *identificational assimilation*, i.e., an expressed feeling of belonging to the same people. Thereafter discrimination ceases to exist and prejudices disappear. This final phase of assimilation sees a brushing aside of all value conflicts and power conflicts between one-time majority and minority.

The authors of modern historical works about the assimilation of the Jews of Hungary are agreed that the assimilation of the country's Jews definitely reached stage three or even stage four on the Gordon scale, i.e., "identificational assimilation." What happened after that, however, failed to confirm the predictions of Gordon's theory. Instead, Katz's diagnosis continued to hold, that is, a demonstrable reduction in social distance was not followed by full assimilation. Despite fundamental changes, the Jews continued to comprise a recognizable (and identifiable) sub-group in Hungarian society. According to Viktor Karády,[5] there were three basic reasons for this: a continuity of historical memory preserving an awareness of difference, a subconscious transmission of certain mental and cultural attributes in the course of socialization, and finally the fact that in many instances assimilation took place in the most modern minority segments of majority society.

Nevertheless, on its own all of this would have been insufficient to maintain the social distance between Jews and their environment as well as their minority consciousness. There had also to be changes over the decades in the political-ideological environment surrounding the long-term and spontaneous processes. The political climate in Western Europe in the 19th century was generally favorable from the perspective of the social and cultural integration of the Jews. In the era of the liberal nation-state, acculturation (i.e. the adoption of the

majority language and culture), identification with the political nation, and a reform of religion removing obstacles to day-to-day interaction and communication, appeared to be leading irreversibly to social integration, within the given favorable circumstances.[6] The Gordon theory also implicitly presupposes the presence of favorable socio-political conditions: its predictions can be valid only where there is a stable socio-political climate permitting an acceptance of minorities. In the case of the Jews of Hungary, the deadlock in the assimilation process is linked to the increasingly defensive position of 19th-century Hungarian liberalism and its crisis at the beginning of the 20th century, when liberalism in Hungary, which was once open for inclusion of Jews into Hungarian society and even campaigned for assimilation, suffered a decisive and conclusive political defeat.

Of course, the change in political conditions—though in the long term of considerable effect on the changes in Jewish society—did not immediately halt socio-cultural processes that were already under way or cancel the results of these processes. In Hungary, the cultural assimilation of the Jews continued even after World War I; intermarriages became more frequent and, with changes in the social climate, there was an increase in Jewish apostasy.[7] Moreover, as earlier, during this era, too, Jewish national ideology, or Zionism, was still incapable of attracting the support of the more numerous groups.

Nonetheless, the change in the political-ideological environment did alter the system of measuring and evaluating the "achievements" of assimilation. Whereas anti-Semitism in the Austro-Hungarian Empire had considered the "caftan Jews", i.e. Jews who were reluctant to become part of mainstream society and who resisted assimilation, to be the main threat and adversary, the anti-Semitic ideology of the post-1918 period focused its hostility on assimilated Jews, those who had "disguised themselves" as Hungarians and sought to form the Hungarian society in their own image. Thus, for example, the significance of baptism was not the same after 1918 as it had been before; the "Jewish laws" after 1938 subsequently expressed this formally. Whereas earlier a mixed marriage had increased the public moral capital of the Jewish partner, after World War I it merely decreased the public moral capital of the non-Jewish partner. There was little to be gained from a reduction in the distance between Jews and non-Jews, arising out of a greater intimacy in their relationship towards Hungarian culture, if overall the ruling ideology stigmatized that segment of Hungarian cul-

ture in which the rapprochement was made. The change in the fundamental conditions thus separated the *meaning* of the term assimilation from the factors with which it had been linked in earlier periods. The new ideologies viewed assimilation in a different light or even considered it to be impossible: e.g. the "race theory."

This upset and disoriented those people who believed they had gone the whole way towards assimilation. The loss of orientation led to forms of behavior that may be seen as reactions to the new situation, e.g. efforts to design "behavior strategies" to conceal one's original background completely. Such forms of behavior had nothing at all to do with the original identity of the group, but became nevertheless a means of group identification.[8] In the decades after World War II, the identification of the Jews' social sub-group did not take place (primarily) on the basis of how Jews spoke the Hungarian language, which festivals they celebrated, which churches they attended, and which names they bore. After the Shoah, the boundaries between Jewish and non-Jewish groups were marked by Jewish identity strategies that are impossible to analyze by any category of assimilation. A more suitable conceptual framework for the analysis of such identity strategies appears to be provided by Henri Tajfel's theory of minority behavioral strategies.[9]

Tajfel defines minorities as groups with group consciousness that are stigmatized by the environment, and suffer social disadvantages as a result. The behavioral strategies of such groups are aimed at eliminating or counterbalancing the economic, social, symbolic and psychological disadvantages associated with the minority condition. These strategies are based either upon a *rejection of the minority condition* or upon an *acceptance of it*, depending on which strategy seems to be more realizable at the given time. An obvious example of the *acceptance strategy* is the establishment of a closed community and the strict defense of its boundaries, as in the case of ultra-Orthodox and Hasidic Jewish groups. In such cases, the group acknowledges its stigmatization by the outside world, but considers the stigmatizing norms—like anything else originating in the outside world—to be irrelevant and invalid. Meanwhile, the psychological disadvantages suffered by the group are counterbalanced by mechanisms based on exceptionally strong group cohesion. Among other groups, the consequences of the minority stigma may be counterbalanced by minority ethnocentrism or the development or strengthening of national minority (or national) conscious-

ness—modern Jewish history offers several examples of such strategies. The strategy of acceptance, however, does not exclude the possibility of processes arising within the group that are normally considered to be indicators of assimilation. The increasing use of Hungarian by the Hasidic Jews of Szatmár or the rapid instrumental adaptation to modern civilization and culture of the Lubavitcher Hasidic groups, are cases of adaptation rather than assimilation. Indeed one of the functions of such strategies is sustaining the group through a reduction in the interaction tension with the environment.

The strategies associated with a *rejection* of the minority status are similarly diverse. One sub-strategy is assimilation, the final stage of which is complete absorption into the majority group. In certain cases, neither the receiving community nor the emitting community prevents this from happening; indeed they even support the process: e.g., the history of Armenians and Poles who were Hungarianized. Complete absorption may be possible even where a departure from the minority group meets with the resistance of the recipient community or indeed the resistance of the minority community. Tajfel has called this phenomenon illegitimate assimilation, because it is often accompanied by dissimulation, that is, an effort to conceal one's real background. Illegitimate assimilation may be successful in individual cases, but even where the new identity is over-compensated for in a spectacular manner, the possibility of exposure remains a danger for several generations—for example, the case of the extreme right-wing Hungarian prime minister, Béla Imrédy.[10]

Nevertheless, more often than not the former members of the minority may take part in the interactions of their new group without limitation. Still, in the eyes of other members of the group, under certain circumstances they may still appear to be representatives of their old stigmatized group. Continued acculturation or "rapprochement" cannot change this, because the group boundary is a symbolic construction established and maintained by the majority. When, for a variety of reasons, the majority has a vested interest in the continued existence of the symbolically constructed boundary, the societal processes described as assimilation no longer offer an escape from the minority stigma, even if they do continue to exist. Indeed the significance of such processes also changes. Thus, for instance, the passing of anti-Semitic legislation changed the significance of the assimilation processes and gestures that had previously held sway.

Under such circumstances, members of the minority group face difficult decisions concerning their identity strategies. The task is not to decide whether or not to continue assimilation. In any case, forms of behavior previously considered assimilatory may no longer count as such or may be of no significance when it comes to marking out the symbolic boundaries of stigma. Under such circumstances, members of the minority group must determine which dimension of their status is stigmatizing and whether or not they wish to alter their position within this dimension. If the stigmatizing factor is religious adherence, an abandonment of religious ties may promote a release from the stigma. This may even be regarded as a continuation of assimilation. On the other hand, a strategic decision may be the demonstrative expression of religious ties coupled with efforts to change the stigmatizing evaluation. In Hungarian Jewish politics, examples of such attempts are the reception movement, which campaigned for the legal equality of the Jewish religious community, and the policy of Jewish cultural autonomism in Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th century.

In general, two factors determined the behavioral strategies of the various sub-groups of Jews. The first was clearly the change in the external circumstances, while the second was the social position reached under the strategy pursued in the previous period and its significance under the new circumstances. In the 20th century, the Jews of Hungary experienced several historical turning points that radically altered the local value of the previous identity options: after 1918, at the time of the Shoah, during the decades of Communist rule, and finally in the course of the change of political system in 1990. After 1918, the former paradigm of assimilation was badly shaken. During the years of persecution and immediately afterwards, the whole issue of Jews' relationship with the Hungarian nation was raised as a dramatic question, and assimilation came to be seen as a tragic offence. The shared fate of members of the community promoted a homogenization of identity. Identity options arose that had hardly attracted Hungarian Jews before, e.g., Zionism. Subsequently, after the Communist takeover, the framework of conditions changed yet again: the release from Jewish stigma that was promised by Communist ideology appeared to permit a continuation of the previous behavioral forms of "rejection" without forcing an interpretation of them within the compromised conceptual framework of "assimilation into the nation."[11] Later on, in the years before and after the change of political system, these forms

of behavior became questionable once again, because many realized that they are incapable of eradicating the stigma. Under democracy and at a time of renewed ethnic awareness throughout the world, this realization encouraged various Jewish groups to apply a strategy of "acceptance and revaluation," i.e. the rediscovery of the various interpretations of Jewish consciousness. These great historical changes thus prompted those involved to develop new identity strategies, but their choices of strategy were clearly dependent on earlier identities and the extent to which they had moved away from traditional Jewishness.

Today in Hungary, one end of the spectrum is filled by groups that continue to observe strictly Jewish religious traditions and whose ways of life are determined by tradition. At the other end of the spectrum, there are those for whom Jewish background is at most a fact of origin stored in the backroom of family memory and possessing no public significance and little personal relevance. The majority of Jews living in the country are to be found somewhere between the two extremes. The content of their identity may be the preservation of tradition at some level or other, or it may be a secular or ethnic-national consciousness of identity, or it may even be the preserving of the memory of forebears, ties with Jewish culture, or the feeling of being at home and of protection in a Jewish environment within Hungarian society. Jews who preserve traditions are clearly following the strategy of acceptance, while those at the other end of the spectrum have chosen the strategy of rejection. Between the two extremes, both strategies are present, and positions are dynamic: in this group it is possible to observe strategies providing a release from the stigma of the Jews as well as strategies providing a rescue from the stigma. Often these strategies are employed alternately by successive generations. The aim of our survey was to chart these identity strategies.

Our basic supposition was that generation has a great influence on identity strategies. In the course of the examination, we divided the four generations of Jews living in Hungary today into separate groups. The first group comprised the generation born before 1930, who were already adults at the time of the Shoah. The second group was the generation born between 1930 and 1944, whose life-forming experiences came during the era of Stalinist Communism. The third group comprised those born between 1945 and 1965, i.e. the generation that grew up under consolidated Communist rule and Kádárism.[12]

Finally, the fourth group comprised those born after 1966, whose most powerful experiences as a generation may have been the disintegration and collapse of the Communist system. First, we shall examine the extent to which each of the various generations has moved away from the Jewish community. Second, we shall examine the presence of Jewish religious-cultural tradition in the different Jewish groups.[13]

ETHNIC HOMOGENEITY AND RELIGIOUS TIES

Almost all definitions of Jewish identity start out with Jewish ancestry and adherence to Jewish religious community. Definitions emphasizing other factors—for example, that whoever professes to be a Jew is a Jew—arose as a reaction to the reduction in ethnic homogeneity and an end to the self-evident nature of adherence to the organizations of the Jewish religious community. Thus, in the course of our survey, our first aim was to form an impression of ethnic and religious background.

Given the subject of the survey, almost all of the survey participants were of Jewish descent, except ten people who were followers of Judaism but were not Jews by descent. However, only 65 percent of the sample considered themselves to be adherents of Judaism. Eight percent of survey participants indicated adherence to some other religion, while the others belonged to no religious denomination. Adherence to Judaism does not mean that two-thirds of Hungary's Jews are currently members of Jewish congregations: indeed only 26 percent of survey participants stated that they are such.[14] For purposes of our research, the religious ties of survey participants were determined on the basis of their response to the question concerning adherence to Judaism rather than their response to the question concerning membership in a Jewish congregation.

Those interviewed were asked whether or not six immediate forebears (two parents and four grandparents) had been of Jewish descent and followers of Judaism.[15] We developed a religious-ethnic homogeneity index based on the data for the four grandparents. Respondents whose four grandparents were considered (by survey participants) to be Jewish in terms of both descent and religious adherence, were placed in the "homogeneous group." Respondents with one non-Jewish grandparent (in terms of descent or religion) were placed in the "partially homogeneous" group. Finally, a group of "mixed descent" was formed comprising respondents with at most two Jewish grandparents. Based

on the index established in this manner, *Table 11.1* below presents data for the whole sample and the various age groups.

Table 11.1 a) ***Religious-ethnic Homogeneity in the Total Sample and According to Age Group: Four Age Groups*** *(In percent)*

	Sample	18–34	35–54	55–69	Over 70
Homogeneous	72	39	69	85	89
Partially homogeneous	6	12	8	3	2
Mixed descent	22	49	23	12	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 11.1 b) ***Religious-ethnic Homogeneity in the Total Sample and According to Age Group: Seven Age Groups***

	Sample	18–25	26–35	36–45	46–55	56–65	66–75	Over75
Homogeneous	72	40	39	56	79	84	88	89
Partially homogeneous	6	11	13	10	5	5	1	3
Mixed descent	22	50	48	34	15	11	11	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

As Table 11.1 shows, almost three-quarters of the population belong to the "homogeneous" group. Nevertheless, there are large generation differences. The ratio is considerably higher among the older age groups and significantly lower among the younger age groups, particularly from the age of 50 down. It seems that the breakthrough occurred in the generation born after 1955: the ratio of respondents with homogeneous backgrounds falls only a little among those born in the first decade after the war, but it is already considerably lower among those born after 1955. Among the groups aged under 35, the proportions of completely homogeneous, partially homogeneous, and mixed descent backgrounds are almost identical. This demonstrates that the trend has failed to accelerate among the youngest age groups.

The great change observable after 1955 is explained by the development of the ratio of mixed marriages. As Table 11.2 indicates, the proportion of mixed marriages among the 56 to 75 age group—i.e., among the parents of most of the 36 to 45 age group—is about 20 percent higher than among the previous generation.

Table 11.2 ***Marital Homogamy in the Parents' Generation, among Married Couples, the Development of Homogamy by Gender and Age Group***[16] *(In percent)*

	Homogamic	Non-homogamic	Total
Parents' family	79	21	100
Married	51	49	100
Male	44	56	100
Female	58	42	100
18–25	48	52	100
26–35	37	63	100
36–45	44	56	100
46–55	48	52	100
56–65	44	56	100
66–75	51	49	100
Over 75	70	30	100

The data presented so far also indicate the existence of significant generational differences among the surveyed population in ethnic background and religious adherence. But it is also clear that the average figures applying to the whole population conceal more subtle structures. It is obvious that the positions of the older generations significantly influence the indicators for the following generation. If one generation sets out on the path towards assimilation, then it may be supposed that the next generation will proceed down this path, perhaps at even greater speed. Thus, we may suppose that the chance of a mixed marriage or loss of religious bonds is higher among respondents whose families have seen mixed marriages or apostasy in the parents' generation. In order to explore these more delicate structures, we established generational indicators based on data concerning the ethnic background and religious adherence of respondents' parents and grandparents. Our goal was to reconstruct characteristic family backgrounds.[17]

Table 11.3 presents the breakdown of survey participants based on the ethnic and religious backgrounds of respondents' parents. Thus, the homogeneous group comprises respondents with two parents of both Jewish descent *and* religion. The secular group contains respon-

dents with two parents of Jewish descent, at least one of whom declared being "without denomination." In the "converted" group, at least one parent has converted to another religion; while in the "mixed" group at least one parent is of non-Jewish descent. Finally, in the "assimilating" group, one parent is of non-Jewish descent, while the other parent has converted to another faith or has no allegiance to any denomination.

Table 11.3 ***Ethnic and Religious Background of Parents, by Age Group***
(In percent)

	Sample	18–34	35–54	55–69	Over 70
Jewish homogeneous	70	34	63	85	90
Secularized	7	12	9	4	2
Converted	3	5	6	2	1
Mixed	13	27	14	8	7
Assimilating	7	22	8	1	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The assimilation gradient is clearly shown by the table: the homogeneous Jewish group comprises about 70 percent in both generations, but the differences among the various age groups are considerable: in the youngest age group, the proportion of those with a homogeneous family background is only slightly greater than one-third of the population. The data also clearly indicate that where the process of assimilation began in the grandparents' generation, it accelerated in the parents' generation. As many as 16 percent of the children of secularized grandparents are to be found in the "converted" group, 11 percent in the "mixed" group, and 4 percent in the "assimilating" group. Furthermore, 71 percent of the children of grandparents in "mixed" families have non-Jewish spouses, and 19 percent of them are to be found in the "assimilating" group. And more than three-quarters of the children of "converted and non-Jewish" grandparents belong in this group.

In order to demonstrate the generational structure, we established a bi-generational model. Families were considered to be *stable Jewish* where both parents and grandparents belonged in the homogeneous Jewish group. Nearly 70 percent of the population fell into this cate-

gory. Families in which either or both parents no longer belonged to any denomination or had been converted were referred to as *secularizing*, while families in which a detachment from Jewish religious life could be observed among both grandparents and parents were considered *stable secular*. The *stable mixed* category comprised those families that had seen mixed marriages both among grandparents and parents. The *assimilated* category included families in which mixed marriage and conversion had taken place among grandparents, and in which one parent was non-Jewish and the other parent a converted Jew. Finally, the *reverting group* indicated those families in which parents were followers of Judaism, even though one or more of the grandparents had rejected religion.

Table 11.4 ***The Bi-Generational Model: Grandparents-Parents, by Age Group*** *(In percent)*

	Sample	18–34	35–54	55–69	Over 70
Stable Jewish	69	30	63	84	91
Secularizing	8	14	10	4	2
Stable secular	5	11	8	2	1
Stable mixed	10	22	11	7	5
Assimilated	5	16	5	1	0
Reverting	3	7	3	2	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The generational differences are clearly visible in Table 11.4. The bi-generational model demonstrates that more than two-thirds of the current Jewish population have homogeneous Jewish family backgrounds, but this applies to less than one-third of the younger generation. Moreover, predecessor generations that have begun to assimilate completely and rapidly are most characteristic of this age group. In the "stable mixed" group, at least one grandparent on both sides of the family was non-Jewish, and thus much of this group, together with the "assimilated" group, will probably be swallowed up by non-Jewish society. At the same time, the largest proportion of "reverts," i.e. those who revert to Judaism, is to be found among the parents of the youngest age group.

THE PRESENCE OF RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL TRADITION

Thus, on the basis of ethnic and religious belonging, a differentiation may be made between groups stably embedded in the Jewish ethno-religious community; secularized Jewish groups; and groups which seem to have begun to separate off irreversibly from the Jewish community. Obviously, these groups, which have been established on the basis of ethnic and religious adherence, exhibit characteristic differences in their relationship towards Jewish religious and cultural traditions. Still, despite the obvious connection, this dimension of the acceptance or rejection of belonging to the group is clearly different from a categorization based on purely formal or institutional attributes. Even among families with homogeneous backgrounds, there may be differences in the extent to which traditions are practised and followed, and religious and cultural traditions may be strongly present even in families with mixed backgrounds. Therefore, we continued our analysis with an examination of attitudes toward tradition.

The questionnaire included questions about ten customs rooted in Jewish religious and cultural tradition. We were curious to find out whether or not these customs were present in the parental families or current families of respondents.

A comparison of the childhood (parental) and current family samples clearly indicates a weakening of Jewish religious and cultural customs in Hungary over the last 50 years. At the same time, the right side of the above table, comparison by age groups, permits a more subtle impression to be formed. The table shows that processes of secularization were the strongest in what are now the older age groups. Here there are sharp differences between childhood and current family practices. In the older age groups (56 years and above) the erosion trend is very noticeable in childhood but since then it has become more moderate. The currently middle-aged, those aged between approximately 40 and 55, met already with little religious tradition even in their parental families, and reached the period of religious and cultural renewal at an age when people are less open to such changes. The youngest age groups, however, exhibit clear signs of a return to tradition: religious and cultural traditions occur more frequently in respondents' current families than in their childhood families; they are more commonly practised than among the older age groups.

In the next part of our survey, using nine elements of the above

Table 11.5 ***Religious and Cultural Traditions in Respondents' Childhood and Current Families for the Whole Sample and for Various Age Groups***[18] *(In percent)*

	Sample		18–25	26–35	36–45	46–55	56–65	66–75	Over 75	
	Childhood family	Current family	Ch. f. C. f.	Ch. f. C. f.	Ch. f. C. f.	Ch. f. C. f.	Ch. f. C. f.	Ch. f. C. f.	Ch. f.	C. f.
Observing *Shabbat*	30	14	8 11	6 18	11 14	20 14	38 10	49 14	58	19
Fasting on Yom Kippur	52	34	33 44	14 34	23 33	41 38	60 26	80 27	84	40
Observing *seder*	41	29	24 37	13 35	20 34	33 35	46 24	61 21	49	24
Kosher food	20	8	5 13	6 14	10 9	13 8	19 5	32 3	42	10
Cooking *sholet*	59	38	44 50	40 31	50 38	57 43	64 38	73 34	77	35
Mezuzah	37	21	25 31	13 26	17 25	24 26	37 11	59 13	66	22
Observing Bar Mitzvah for boys	36	15	20 25	10 12	16 17	21 16	37 11	59 13	69	16
Burial in Jewish cemetery	64	44	58 51	46 41	58 44	59 50	68 34	79 40	80	45
Circumcising boys	41	17	21 23	13 18	19 17	29 12	47 13	65 15	72	22
Observing Hanukkah	43	32	27 39	13 41	22 38	33 36	47 26	67 23	69	28
Average (nos.)	4.27	2.48	2.56 3.19	1.78 2.61	2.25 2.62	3.30 2.71	4.56 1.94	6.15 2.01	6.73	2.54

questions (the cooking of *sholet* was excluded), we constructed a bi-generational model. According to the answers, *in 26 percent of parental families and 45 percent of current families, none of the nine traditions was present*. At the other end of the scale, *in 17 percent of parental families and 4 percent of current families, eight or nine elements of religious and cultural tradition were retained—i.e. these families may be considered strict observers of tradition*. Between the two extremes we find families with only very weak ties to tradition (in most of these families, the only customs observed are Jewish burial and the celebration of an odd annual

festival, i.e., 1–2 items) as well as families that ignore the day-to-day rules of tradition (observance of *Shabbat*, kosher food) but whose lives exhibit elements of tradition (such as the celebration of major holidays and having a mezuzah), serving as symbolic expressions of Jewish identity.

By combining the data for the two generations, we formed the groups that are shown in Table 11.6. Eighteen percent of the total sample fell into a group in which neither the parental family nor the current family exhibited any elements of tradition at all. In the case of 11 percent of respondents, traditions were observed by both generations (at least five traditions were present). In the group abandoning traditions (28%), although parents still observed traditions, the respondents themselves indicated the presence of at most two traditions. The "secularizing" category that was breaking away from tradition (15%) comprised the group whose parents observed traditions and who celebrated festivals. In the "symbolic tradition-preserving group" (15%), both generations were characterized by the symbolic expression of tradition. In the "reverting" group (13%), Jewish traditions were stronger in the current family than they had been in the parental family.

Table 11.6 ***The Relationship of Parents and Respondents to Tradition: Bi-Generational Model*** *(In percent)*

	Sample	18–34	35–54	55–69	Over 70
No tradition	18	27	24	16	6
Abandonment of tradition	28	17	18	35	41
Secularizing	15	3	9	20	27
Tradition as symbol	15	23	19	14	6
Reverting	13	20	21	7	4
Preserving traditions	11	10	9	8	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100

A graphic impression may be formed on the basis of the data: the loss of tradition and the abandonment of tradition were the most far-reaching among the generations between 55 and 70. Thus, in comparison with the oldest generation, the proportion of families in which both generations exhibited an observance of religious traditions

declined considerably. But the data also show the development of an opposing trend among those who were born after World War II. On the one hand, there was an increase in the number of those who sought to "symbolically preserve tradition," i.e. those who, rather than proceeding down the path of detachment, preserved—as an expression of their identification with Jews—the traditions they had inherited from their parents. On the other hand, the group of those reverting to tradition is largest in these two generations.

If we examine these same trends in a detailed breakdown by age group, it becomes apparent that detachment from tradition and the abandonment of tradition were most frequent among the 65 to 67 year-olds (27 and 43%), i.e. among the young survivors of the Shoah who were born between 1924 and 1933. This is the age group that, remaining in Hungary after the period of persecution, experimented with new and radical means of exiting the Jewish community (see Kovács, 1988) and was most exposed to the anti-religious policies of the Communist regime. The complete lack of tradition is particularly characteristic of the children of this generation, who were born between 1954 and 1974 (31%). But this same age group, which experienced the collapse of Communism, aged between 15 and 35, has the highest proportion of reverts to tradition (24%). This trend is well demonstrated by the fact that the proportion of re-discoverers of tradition is far higher among the younger age groups than among the older age groups. Indeed, if we include those who continuously have preserved tradition and those who adhere to the symbolic forms of expression of belonging to the Jewish community, we may state that a majority of those aged between 18 and 54 have a conscious attachment to Jewish tradition, compared with just one-third of the older generation.

This places the relationship between family background and the observance of traditions in an interesting light. As we have seen, respondents with homogeneous Jewish family backgrounds comprise about three-quarters (72%) of the whole sample, but this figure is far lower among the younger age group than among the older age group. On the other hand, we have seen that the conscious fostering of tradition is more common among the younger age groups. Table 11.5 shows that the trend was reversed among groups aged less than 45 years: in these groups the average number of traditional customs is higher in the current family than in the parental family, whereas among the older age groups this situation is the reverse. Table 11.7 demonstrates a divi-

sion of families into those with homogeneous and with non-homogeneous Jewish family backgrounds, in accordance with the models of adherence to and detachment from tradition.

Table 11.7 ***Background Homogeneity and the Relationship to Tradition: Tri-Generational Model, by Age*** *(In percent)*

	Sample	18–34	35–54	55–69	Over 70
Homogeneous traditional	18	15	21	13	19
	25	38	30	25	21
Homogeneous secular	24	12	23	30	30
	33	31	33	35	34
Homogeneous without traditions	30	12	25	42	40
	42	31	36	50	45
	100	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Non-homogeneous traditional	7	15	9.00	2.00	1
	25	25	29	13	10
Non-homogeneous secular	6	14	6	4	3
	21	23	19	27	27
Non-homogeneous without traditions	15	32	16	9	7
	54	53	52	60	63
	100	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Total	100	100	100	100	100

A homogeneous family background clearly slows down the process of abandonment of traditions: while a complete absence of traditions characterizes more than one-half of non-homogeneous families, the corresponding figure is 42 percent in the case of homogeneous families. Since the proportion of tradition-preservers is 25 percent in both groups, this discrepancy is rooted in a considerable difference in the proportion of symbolic followers of tradition (the "secular" group): this latter group comprises one-third of respondents with homogeneous family backgrounds but less than one-quarter of respondents with non-homogeneous family backgrounds.

Here too, the generational data show that in the homogeneous families the abandonment of traditions was quickest among the over-55 age groups. In the generation aged 35 to 54, the proportions of followers of tradition were the same in both the heterogeneous and the homogeneous family groups. A possible explanation is that the end-

ing of a homogeneous family background was not accompanied by an immediate abandonment of traditions. The other reason is obviously a return to the observance of traditions. Although there was no substantial increase in detachment from traditions among young people (aged 18–34) from non-homogeneous families, a return to the observance of traditions was nevertheless more common among those with homogeneous family backgrounds. Overall, we may state that the influence of family background on the relationship towards tradition is weaker among the younger generations than among the older generations, but that among the very youngest age groups a homogeneous family background does tend to promote a rediscovery of tradition.

Each of the six groups taking shape under the tri-generational model (see Table 11.6) exhibits a distinct impression—particularly if generational differences are taken into account. The impression gained of the various groups, including the various generations, may be used to describe the processes underlying the observed structure.[19]

As we have seen, the *first group* (18%) is characterized by a *complete absence of tradition* among both the parents of respondents and respondents themselves. Almost two-thirds of this group belong to the younger generations and one-third to the older generations. The most striking characteristic of this group is the rapid increase in educational mobility among predecessor generations—this applies primarily to the younger age group. In this age group, most parents have a university education; the leap in mobility took place between the grandparents' generation and the parents' generation. In addition, most respondents in this group also have a university education. As regards employment, intellectual professions are characteristic of the whole group. Older members of the group tend to hold management positions or are public servants, while younger group members tend to be independent entrepreneurs. Thirty-eight percent of the older members of the group are former members of the HSWP (Hungarian Socialist Workers Party = Communist Party), while just 9 percent of the younger members are former members of the party. A gradual breaking away from Jewish identity is well demonstrated in the choices of identity characterizing the group as a whole, as well as the various age groups within the group. On the "Hungarian–Jewish" continuum, members of the group typically choose the identities of "Hungarian" and "first and foremost Hungarian." When they were classified into a constructed

identity model among the options of "strong—traditional—moderate—aggrieved—assimilated,"[20] young members of the group tended to opt for "assimilated." Older members of the group, on the other hand, sometimes chose the "aggrieved" or "moderate" categories of identity. The whole group is characterized by a heterogeneous and open network of social relations, and this is particularly true of younger members of the group: a large number of other Jews, either in the neighborhood or in their personal relations, is not characteristic.

As shown by the data, the nature of this group is determined by members of the generation that was born after the war and whose parents—fathers—made up for the disadvantages of mobility suffered in the 1930s and 1940s during the decades that followed the era of persecution. Still, the compensatory mobility of the first decades of Communist rule—e.g., obtaining a university education, progress in the employment hierarchy, or even making a career in the political organizations—could be realized only at the cost of a rapid abandonment of Jewish identity. Rapid progress along the mobility path was facilitated by identification with party ideology as a new type of assimilation ideology.[21] Previous analysis has indicated that the most extreme form of assimilation, i.e. dissimulation, or a denial of Jewish identity, was most frequent in this generation. In the course of research carried out in the early 1980s, we discovered that one-quarter of those interviewed had found out that they were Jews from non-family members, while one-fifth had become aware of their parents' secret only as adults. This group was clearly dominated by children of the Communist "cadre generation."[22] This phenomenon is characteristic of the group currently under examination: significantly few members (43%) of the group that had broken off from tradition as early as the fathers' generation found out in "natural" circumstances that they were Jews, and significant numbers of them (12%) became aware of their background only as adults. In this group, the proportion of respondents answering questions about their relationship towards the Jewish community and Jewish identity in terms of rejection is significantly higher than average: they grant little or no significance to their Jewish backgrounds, and consider it desirable that Jews should assimilate into society as completely as possible. They have either no feelings about Israel or negative ones. The group contains the fewest numbers of those who would like to live in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods, whose friends are mostly Jews, and who think that Jews are better at sticking together

than other groups. All things considered, it seems likely that a significant part of this group is *following an identity strategy of "rejection"* and is moving towards a permanent exit from the Jewish community and full assimilation into adjacent society.

Jewish tradition is also absent in the *second group* (28%) that we have identified. Still, in this group the *abandonment of tradition* has taken place in the last two generations—the respondents' generation and their parents' generation. Two-thirds of this group belong to the older age groups and one-third to the younger age group. Mobility in this group was rapid, but took place later than in the previous group. In this group, the fathers' generation of younger respondents does not usually have a university education. Upward mobility began among the fathers and continues among the respondents. Among the older members of the group, both fathers' and grandfathers' generations are not highly educated. Several items suggest that many of those in the sub-group of older respondents who have abandoned tradition broke away from Jewish tradition because of changes in their conditions of life, rather than rapid mobility. We found in this sub-group relatively large numbers of poor people living in small country settlements and having little education, who, unlike the obviously "assimilated" younger members of the group, tend to fit into the "moderate" or "aggrieved" identity types. Many members of this group were obviously induced to abandon tradition by the disappearance of the local Jewish environment. The proportion of former party members is also high in this old age group. Indeed, it is the highest among the older age groups (45%).

The nature of this group is determined by the parents' generation of those belonging in the previous group. The older age group that comprises the core of this group is one whose members took advantage of the opportunities for mobility that arose after 1945 and who, adjusting to the conditions, broke away from Jewish tradition. The descendants of the sub-group of "rejecters" from rural areas are also present in this group (we found a greater than average number of people from rural areas in this group). The combined effect of the two factors, mobility and a detachment from the Jewish environment, appears to have accelerated the process of breaking away and the development of the strategy of rejection. In this group, despite a higher than average number of people who consider their Jewish identity insignificant, there are more people with an affinity towards Jews and Israel and with mostly Jewish friends than in the previous group. But this

may be explained by higher age. The responses to questions concerning assimilation and separation clearly identify this social environment as one in which an abandonment of tradition became a life strategy: in this group, the number of people who think that Jews still have to do more to fit in and who would advise young people to "choose assimilation rather than anything else" is significantly greater than average. The position of a significant (relative) majority of the group on mixed marriages is characteristic: they consider more such marriages to be desirable, even though they do not reject in large numbers the statement that such marriages "threaten the survival of Jewish community." Thus, the majority of the group may be categorized as following the strategy of rejection.

The *third group* comprises those who no longer strictly follow tradition but have yet to break away completely. We called this group, which accounts for 15 percent of the sample and which is composed of one-quarter younger people and three-quarters older people, the *secularizing* group. There are considerable differences between the younger and older members of this group. Many of the young people are university or college educated, and members of the group are noticeably more educated than their fathers. Large numbers live in Budapest and are relatively wealthy business people. Nevertheless, the older people determine the image of the group. They, like their parents, are less educated, and there has been little mobility in this subgroup. A larger than average number of them are minor government officials and skilled workers. More than a third are former party members. The whole group is characterized by "strong" identity. The identity models of the younger members of the group do not differ from those of the whole population, but among older members of the group, "traditional" identity is more frequent than on average. Still, it is the younger members of the group who sense disturbances in their relations with the non-Jewish environment.

Most of this group belongs to the same generation as the majority of the previous group. The difference between them is that members of this group took less advantage of the opportunities for mobility that arose after World War II than members of the group abandoning tradition. Accelerated mobility tends to be characteristic of the younger generation within the group. The group mainly comprises those survivors who remained "small Jews" even after the war. They have a relatively strong emotional affinity for Jews and the Jewish state. Most

live in a Jewish environment since more than half have mostly Jewish friends.

In the *fourth group,* comprising 15 percent of the population, in which *tradition is present as symbol,* the first stage of secularization, i.e., abandonment of strict tradition, took place already in the parents' generation but it then ground to a halt: respondents in this group therefore continue to maintain and practice certain elements of tradition. Older people make up a third of this group and younger people two-thirds. Most members of the group live in Budapest, although among the older age groups the proportion of rural dwellers is greater than average. In the younger age group, the great mobility leap was taken by the grandfathers' and fathers' generations. Thus, both parents of many respondents in the group are college or university educated. Office work is the characteristic form of employment among the older age groups, whereas younger members of the group tend to be independent entrepreneurs. In this group, the younger age group enjoys higher living standards than the older age group. Among the older age groups, a "traditional" identity is more frequent than average, while young people in the group experience a greater than average number of communication difficulties with the non-Jewish environment.

In certain respects, this group resembles the first one: it includes primarily members of the generation born after the war whose parents have already taken the first mobility leap, acquiring a university degree. The basic difference from the first group, which has completely broken away from tradition, is that in this group traditions were much more alive among the parental generation than in the first group. Although a lack of tradition characterizes much of both groups—obviously due to age—the difference between the two is still rather considerable. Thus, whereas in the first group a "Jewish atmosphere" was completely lacking in 62 percent of childhood families and partially lacking in a further 22 percent of childhood families, in the group symbolically preserving tradition only 20 percent of childhood families were "not characterized by a Jewish atmosphere" (and 30% less so).

The *fifth group* is *those who have reverted to tradition* (13%). This is a young group—four out of five in the group belong to the younger age groups. This is the first group in which the gender ratio differs from the average: the proportion of women in the group is higher than in other groups. The return to tradition is a Budapest phenomenon. Usually, the parents of members of the group are university or college

educated, and the mobility leap occurred between the grandparents' generation and the parents' generation. Members of the group generally live in favorable circumstances. The employment structure of the group includes significantly more academic professions than that of the other groups. Members of the group move in closed Jewish circles and their identity on the Hungarian–Jewish continuum is "Jewish" and "traditional." They do not sense any difficulties in their relationship with their environment.

This young group emerged during the era of the disintegration and collapse of the Communist system. Although the group's Jewish identity is undoubtedly strong, it is an acquired identity. The family background of young intellectuals belonging to this group is very similar to that of the younger members of the first group (i.e., the group that has broken away from tradition completely): tradition was absent already in the parental family. It is characteristic of the group that 15 percent were already adults when they discovered they were Jews, while only 49 percent found out "naturally" and from family members. In the families of a significant majority of the group, Jews "were almost never mentioned." Still, "reverting to tradition" does not mean the revival of all religious traditions. Just 10 percent of members of the group strictly observe religious tradition and 41 percent observe major holidays only. Other members of the group interpret their Jewish identity in different ways. In general, members of the group oppose assimilation and strongly sympathize with Israel. A significant proportion of the group opposes mixed marriages, and although many (69%) have mainly or exclusively Jewish friends, they would still prefer to live in an environment where there are more Jews. This group is the group of "voluntary Jews"[23]; the possibility of "exit" had been open to them, but instead of "rejection" they chose the strategy of "acceptance."

Finally, we have the *sixth group* or *tradition-preserving group*. Constituting 11 percent of the total sample, half of this group are younger people and half are older. Compared with the total population, the social status of this group is relatively low: older members of the group tend to have primary education only, and even younger members of the group tend to have no more than secondary education. The parents of respondents are also generally poorly educated: a significant part of the group comes from families that are stagnating in educational mobility. The group includes higher than average numbers of people living either outside Budapest or in the poorer districts of the

city. Among the older age groups, physical forms of work as well as unskilled work performed in the family enterprise and homemakers are more frequent than average. The standard of living of members of the group, reflecting the indicators of social status, is far more modest than average. Both older and younger generations tend to exhibit "traditional" and "strong" Jewish identity—the latter is particularly characteristic of younger members of the group. Young members of the group live in a more closed Jewish environment than do the old. This implies that they are more isolated within their age group than the previous generation. None of the age groups have any communication problems with their environment.

This group is the remnant of the religious Jewish community within Hungarian Jewish society. One-quarter of the group is religious in a strict sense, while more than half observe Jewish festivals. The group, which forms a closed network, is characterized by low social status and limited mobility—at least in comparison with the other groups.

If we examine the groups and their employment of identity strategies of both "rejection" and "acceptance," it becomes apparent that three factors have a special role in the selection of strategy: *age, mobility within the family,* and *strength of Jewish tradition at the time of generational changes*. The effect of marital heterogamy appears to be dependent upon these variables. The mobility that took place between the grandfathers' generation and the fathers' generation was accompanied by an increase in the frequency of mixed marriages: in upwardly mobile families, mixed marriages are significantly more frequent than average. This, however, is not characteristic of those families in which the mobility leap took place between the fathers' generation and the respondents' generation.

In the "old" groups (groups 2 and 3), mobility is clearly the strongest underlying factor. Indeed, it was the mobility of three generations that directed members of the group towards the strategy of "rejection." The extent of their progression down this path—i.e., whether they completely abandoned tradition or retained certain symbolic elements—depended from which social status the parents' generation departed, for in this generation tradition was present in equal strength in both groups.

In the "young groups" (groups 1 and 4) mobility had merely an indirect effect: in both groups higher social status was characteristic

even of the parents' generation. The main factor influencing the first group to choose a strategy of complete rejection and the second group to choose a strategy of "symbolic acceptance" appears to have been the extent to which Jewish tradition was still alive in the family after the path of mobility had been closed off. Obviously, this was also linked to many other factors—for example, whether or not the grandparents were living with the family.

The fifth and sixth groups cannot be accommodated within this explanatory model, because in "reverting to tradition" the strategy of acceptance is a conscious choice rather than the consequence of characteristic family variables. Nevertheless, perhaps one may state that, with regard to the youngest generation, the probability of a symbolic affinity for tradition or a return to certain elements of tradition is greatest where family mobility reached its highest point in the parents' generation.

SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

As a result of several peculiar features of Hungary's historical development, from the early 19th century conditions in Hungary greatly favored the social integration of Jews, most of whom belonged to the "Western Jews." This process led to the famous "Jewish-Hungarian" symbiosis.[24] This symbiosis was shattered by the changes after World War I, as a result of which "a country [that had been] previously 'good for the Jews' is transformed, almost overnight, into a country… permeated with anti-Semitic hysteria," and by the Hungarian Holocaust.[25] It was apparent that the inter-war years and the events of the Shoah were bringing about a radical change in the identity strategies of significant numbers of Hungarian Jews. The Zionist movements which had been hovering on the margins of Hungarian Jewish public life for some decades became accepted by a substantial part of the survivors. According to data at our disposal, in 1948 the Zionist parties may have had between 11,000 and 15,000 members, and the Zionists collected more than 58,000 shekels; that is, about one in four survivors supported a political movement that offered a secular and modern version of the rejection strategy.[26]

The development of a new acceptance strategy, that is, the possibility of a national-secular reconstruction of Jewish identity, was nipped in the bud by the Communist takeover. In the years after 1948 the

Communists pursued a policy of ruthless suppression of national and ethnic ambitions. Within the framework of their anti-religious policy, the Communist authorities then restricted the work of the Jewish religious institutions to such a degree that even the traditional option of religious self-identification, the second alternative of the acceptance strategy, became highly restricted. This repression, and the simultaneous lure of full assimilation, resulted in the image of the generation born between 1935 and 1950 that our survey demonstrates. Members of this generation, especially those who had moved up the social ladder, went further than any other generation group along the path towards a rejection of Jewish identity.

This fading away of Jewish identity considerably influenced the next generation's relationship to the Jewish community, but it did not prevent the resurgence of the demand for a redefinition of the substance of Jewish identity, especially among those born after 1970. As our study has shown, about 40 percent of the 18 to 34 age group come from homogeneous families and 30 percent adhere to traditions. In the 35 to 54 age group the share of homogeneous families is 69 percent and about 30 percent adhere to traditions. On the other hand, in the older age groups more than 85 percent are from homogeneous families, but only 20 percent have preserved tradition to any extent. The giving up of tradition is not therefore as rapid as the growth in the proportion of people from mixed marriages. In sum, some elements of Jewish tradition are present substantially or symbolically in the families of about half of all those aged between 18 and 34.

The process whereby Jewish identity was reconstructed began among the younger generation as early as the late 1980s and accelerated after the collapse of the Communist system. One reason for the resurgence of Jewish identity is a general strengthening of the demand for ethnic and religious identities. This is a natural phenomenon at a time of great social change which generally plunges acquired social identities into a crisis. This search for identity was enhanced by the growing acceptance of multiculturalist orientations. Finally, the choice of the "acceptance" strategy was facilitated by the opening of borders and above all by rapidly developing relations with Israel and Jews in the United States. But, as I have shown elsewhere,[27] the main motive behind the new identity strategy has been the desire to throw off the stigmatized identity of the older generation. There are many Jews in Hungary who consider themselves Jewish only when faced with anti-

Semitism. They feel that the boundaries separating them from others are externally defined; however, this definition, that is, the stigma, infiltrates their thinking and behavior. As Erving Goffman has analyzed it, stigmatized individuals, even if they think that their stigmatization has no real foundations, try to develop behavior patterns and communicational rules that make it easier to live with the stigma.[28] As a result, they also draw, often involuntarily, boundaries between their own group and others. They are afraid—and in this respect it is unimportant whether with good reason or not—of social conflicts, political phenomena and rhetoric that do not invoke fear in others. They behave and communicate differently and assign different meaning to certain gestures, words and behavior within the group and outside it. Consequently, it is easy for members of both the in-group and out-group to identify this behavior developed in order to cope with the stigma. Identification in this case, however, develops into identity and this identity is often a painful and burdensome one. For the young generation of Jews who in the last ten years have lived without the political restrictions placed upon their parents in the Communist system such identity has been not simply unattractive but absolutely unbearable.

Thus, the majority of those who search for a new identity are not subject to the same pressures to assimilate that once bore down upon their predecessors. Their social mobility may be considered to be complete and the expectations of the world around them have changed considerably. The changing circumstances have important consequences: it seems likely that, for the foreseeable future, a relatively large number of Hungarian Jews will retain an identity that expresses itself through Jewish tradition.

Similar developments may be observed among the Jewish populations of the other former Communist countries of East Central Europe. Nevertheless, in an extremely important respect, the situation of the Hungarian Jews differs from that of the Czech, Slovak or Polish Jews. In Hungary, where according to various types of estimates there are between 80,000 and 140,000 Jews, the size of groups searching for a new acceptance strategy probably exceeds the critical point that is indispensable if change is going to occur in the attitudes of the whole Jewish population. In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland, owing to the small size of the Jewish communities, "revival movements" seem unable to prevent the gradual disappearance of the Jewish Diasporas.

In Hungary, however, they are strong enough to slow down or even counterbalance the process of attrition at the margins.

Nevertheless, a complete revival of religious tradition affecting all aspects of life will probably be the new identity strategy of only a small number of groups. Just as in the Swedish[29] or French case ("Judaism à la carte"), the elements of tradition seem destined to serve as the group identity token of ethnic group consciousness. Ethnic groups have primarily a political function. Their political aims perhaps include the struggle against discrimination, the attainment of better positions during the division of social goods, but first and foremost the securing of conditions necessary for the self-maintenance of the group as an important social identity source. The stability and strength of the ethnic group depends upon its level of institutionalization as well as the ability of its institutions to focus in the course of their work on the problems considered by the group they represent to be its own problems, or the ability of these institutions to convince members of the group that the pursued goals are also important to the group.[30] Unless a strong emigration wave occurs due to a dramatic deterioration in external conditions, it is these factors that shall determine the extent to which Hungarian Jews develop an ethnic group consciousness and identity.

NOTES

1 Viktor Karády, *Zsidóság Európában a modern korban* [Jews in Europe in the modern era] (Budapest: Uj Mandátum), 191–242.

2 *Ibid.*, 249–286.

3 Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 216–217.

4 Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964). Ch. 3.

5 Viktor Karády, op.cit., 255–257.

6 *Ibid.*, 257.

7 Viktor Karády, *Zsidóság, modernizáció, polgárság.* (Budapest: Cserépfalvi), 132–150.

8 András Kovács, "Identitás és etnicitás. Zsidó identitásproblémák a háború utáni Magyarországon" [Identity and ethnicity. Jewish identity problems in post-war Hungary], in Ferenc Erős, Yichak M. Kashti, Mária M. Kovács, eds., *Zsidóság, történelem, identitás* (Budapest: T-Twins Kiadó, 1992); in English: "Anti-Semitism

and Jewish Identity in Post-Communist Hungary," in Randolph L. Braham, *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

9 Henri Tajfel, "The Social Psychology of Minorities," in *Human Groups and Social Categories* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), ch. 15, 309–344.

10 Imrédy, who was the head of government when the second series of anti-Semitic laws were passed in Hungary, had to resign because it turned out that he had Jewish ancestors.

11 See András Kovács, "A zsidókérdés a mai magyar társadalomban," in *Zsidóság az 1945 utáni Magyarországon* (Paris: Magyar Füzetek). In English: "The 'Jewish Question' in Contemporary Hungary," in R. L. Braham, B. Vago, eds., *The Hungarian Holocaust. Forty Years Later* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). See also András Kovács, "Asszimiláció, antiszemitizmus, identitás. A zsidóság a modern magyar társadalomban" [Assimilation, anti-Semitism, and identity. Jews in modern Hungarian society], in Mónika Víg, ed., *Hogyan éljük túl a XX. századot*? (Budapest: Századvég Kiadó, 1992).

12 János Kádár was the leader of the Hungarian Communist Party from 1957 to the late 1980s and, beginning in 1961, introduced economic and, to a lesser extent, political reforms.

13 Between November 1999 and July 2000 we conducted personal interviews with 2,015 individuals. The group surveyed consisted of members of the Hungarian Jewish population aged over 18 years. The survey was carried out by the Institute for Minority Research at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. It was sponsored by the Alliance of Hungarian Jewish Communities, the Hungarian Jewish Heritage Foundation, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Lauder Foundation and the American Jewish Committee.

14 Even this proportion appears to be exaggerated. Owing to the circumstances of the survey—subjects were contacted by interviewers in a letter that was signed by the religious community and mentioned that the results of the survey might be used by Jewish organizations in matters of compensation—some non-members of the religious community may have stated that they were members.

15 As regards the Jewish descent of parents and grandparents, negative responses and doubtful cases (thus mixed descent) were placed in the "other" category. As regards religious adherence, in addition to the answer "yes," the questionnaire permitted the following responses: "other faith," "non-denominational," and in cases of dispute "other." The question concerning conversion included the responses "yes" and "no" as well as the supplementary category of "other."

16 The table takes account only of those parents (mothers and fathers) who are considered Jewish. We regard marriages as "homogamic" where the partner is considered Jewish in either an ethnic or a religious sense. We took no notice at this point of whether or not the Jewish respondent was also possibly of partly

mixed descent. From the present generation, the respondents placed in the groups on the table were those who were currently married (or had previously been married). Where there have been several marriages, it is the last one that counts.

17 This reconstruction, however, is not flawless, because, first, the subjects of the interview do not always have sufficient information about earlier generations and, second, the layout of the questionnaire meant that we had to ignore such factors as forced conversion or the age at which forebears changed their religion.

18 The index scores are based on the simple adding of the occurrence of 10-10 practice. In both cases, the maximum score is 10 and the minimum score is 0.

19 In the course of the following analysis, we applied a model comprising two age groups: we compared those born before 1945 with those born after 1945.

20 On the basis of their answers to several questions the respondents were classified in five identity groups. The ground for classification was whether in the identity of a person "positive" identity factors like religion, tradition, historical memory, etc., or mainly the fear of anti-Semitism were salient. In cases in which both factors were strongly present we speak of *strong* identity; in which the positive and traditional factors are salient; of *traditional* identity; if both are weakly but observably present we speak of *moderate* identity; if anti-Semitism is the main determinant of identity then we call it *aggrieved* identity; and if none of the identity factors were salient we speak of *assimilated* identity.

21 See Viktor Karády, "Szociológiai kísérlet a magyar zsidóság 1945 és 1956 közötti helyzetének elemzésére" [A sociological analysis of the situation of Hungarian Jews between 1945 and 1956], in *Zsidóság az 1945 utáni Magyarországon*, op. cit., 110–121; András Kovács, "A zsidókérdés a mai magyar társadalomban," in *ibid*. In English: "The 'Jewish Question' in Contemporary Hungary," in *The Hungarian Holocaust. Forty Years Later*, op. cit.

22 See Ferenc Erős, "A zsidó identitás szerkezete Magyarországon a nyolcvanas években" [The structure of Jewish identity in Hungary in the 1980s], in Ferenc Erős, Yichak M. Kashti, Mária M. Kovács, eds., *Zsidóság, történelem, identitás,* op. cit., especially 89–93. Ferenc Erős, András Kovács, Katalin Lévai, "Hogyan jöttem rá, hogy zsidó vagyok?" *Medvetánc*, 1985, no. 2–3, 129–145. In English: "How did I find out that I was a Jew?" *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, vol.17, no.3. (1987). András Kovács, "Identitás és etnicitás. Zsidó identitásproblémák a háború utáni Magyarországon," [Identity and ethnicity. Jewish identity problems in post-war Hungary] in Erős, Kashti, and Kovács, eds., *Zsidóság, történelem, identitás*, op. cit. In English: "Anti-Semitism and Jewish Identity in Post-Communist Hungary," in *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Post Communist Eastern Europe*. Op.cit., especially 101–104.

23 Diana Pinto, "The Third Pillar? Toward a European Jewish Identity," in András Kovács, ed., *Jewish Studies at the Central European University. Public Lectures 1996–1999* (Budapest: Central European University), 188–189.

24 For a vivid description of the process, see Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983) 84–129, esp. 87–99.
25 Mendelsohn, *ibid.*, 98.
26 See Attila Novák, *Átmenetben. A cionista mozgalom négy éve Magyarországon* [In Transition. Four Years of the Zionist Movement in Hungary] (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő Kiadó, 2000), 43, 151.
27 András Kovács, "Jewish identity and Jewish politics in modern Hungary," in Kovács, ed., *Jewish Studies at the Central European University. Public Lectures 1996–1999*, op.cit., 105–114.
28 Erving Goffman, *Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), especially 57–128.
29 See the analysis of Lars Dencik in this volume.
30 For the effect of these factors both in general and specifically—e.g., in the case of Polish Jews—see in this volume, Claire A. Rosenson, "Polish Jewish Institutions in Transition: Personalities over Process."

CHAPTER 12

Particularizing the Universal: New Polish Jewish Identities and a New Framework of Analysis

Marius Gudonis

INTRODUCTION

Jews have always been influenced to a greater or lesser extent by their surroundings; how for instance could one explain modern movements in Judaism like the Reform and Conservative without reference to the European Enlightenment? And when Jews constitute a tiny minority characterized by both a physical break in the transmission of Jewishness (the Shoah) as well as a cultural one (Stalinist Polonization), it becomes more important than ever to recognize and investigate how general societal processes affect the construction of emerging Jewish identities. These identities are different both in scope and content from those expressed in the Communist period, not to mention those in evidence before World War II.

Due to the absence of so-called thick Jewish cultures, the differences in these identities are quite subtle. As a result, I have found the traditional dualistic framework that describes a Jewish identity solely in terms of the degree of its "ethnicity" and "religiosity" inadequate. In its place I propose an alternative conceptual framework in four dimensions. These more accurately reflect not only the diverse ways in which individuals understand their Jewishness, but also how recent social trends impact on identity construction. The trends that I believe are most influential in the new articulation of Jewishness in the post-Communist era are individualism and consumerism. Both trends are revealed in my research, which is comprised of 12 semi-structured interviews conducted in April 2000. I focused on the youngest generation of Polish Jews: eight of the twelve interviewees were born between 1970 and 1980 and thus have spent a large proportion of their lives in a free-market, liberal, democratic environment.

In constructing an "ethnic" identity from scratch (as is the case with many Eastern European Jews), the ethnic *bricoleur*—consciously or unconsciously—"particularizes the universal." In other words, he expresses the universality of the trends mentioned above in particular terms (which in this case are Jewish). Since individualism and consumerism are inevitably affecting all the former Communist states, it is reasonable to predict that the types of identities manifested by young Polish Jews today will also appear elsewhere. Initially, though, local historical factors may continue to shape Jewish identities in a particular direction. For example, the legacy of internal passports that ascribed ethnicity to each citizen in the Soviet Union may explain the persistent ethnic nature of Jewish identities in Russia and Ukraine.

THE ETHNIC-RELIGIOUS FRAMEWORK: JEWISH IDENTITY IN TWO DIMENSIONS

Since most descriptions of Jewish identity as it is observed today and in other periods are put in terms of nationhood (or "ethnicity") and religion, any change in identification is perceived as a modification of the ratio between these two components. Hence, early Reform Judaism is seen as high on religion and low on ethnicity; the Bundists, high on ethnicity and low on religion; Zionism, high on ethnicity with varying religiosity; and Orthodox Judaism, high on both.[1] We can trace such a dualistic framework to the manner in which Jews were emancipated in Europe, beginning with the French Revolution. The French state granted equal civil rights to both Jews and Gentiles so long as any religious or ethnic particularity was confined to the private sphere. In addition, these rights were granted to individuals only; no recognition (even to this day) was given to group identity. As a consequence, the ethnic and religious components of traditional Judaism were separated and Jews in France became French citizens of the Jewish religion, otherwise known as *Israélites* (and not *Juifs*). Similarly, the Jews of Hungary were able to enjoy civil rights on a par with their Gentile co-citizens during the Habsburg period so long as they accepted the "Compromise" of 1867, which required full acceptance of the Magyar culture. Again, as in France, they were *Izraeliták*, Hungarians of the Israelite or Jewish religion.

Between the onset of Jewish emancipation in the 19th century

and the beginning of World War II, there was a wide range of Jewish identities reflecting a variety of views concerning the extent to which assimilation was desirable. Each of these identities can be defined in terms of their degree of commitment to Jewish peoplehood and to Jewish religious law. Even after the Holocaust, the few Jewish organizations allowed to operate under Communism appeared to favor either the religious or the ethnic component. In Poland, for example, the Religious Union of the Mosaic Faith represented the former, while the Socio-Cultural Association of Jews in Poland represented the latter. For all the "Poles of Jewish origin" not affiliated with these organizations, such was the extent of their assimilation to Polish culture that "Jewish identity" was quite simply a non-issue. (Incidentally, and paradoxically, some of these same people are today at the forefront of constructing new Jewish identities after the fall of Communism.)

In the 1990s, researchers investigating the renaissance of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe continued to use the dualistic framework in studying emerging identities. Hence the 1991 decision of the National Representation of Magyar *Israelites* to change its name to the Alliance of Hungarian *Jewish* Religious Communities was seen as a shift towards ethnicity; the rising numbers of young people appearing in Warsaw's Nożyk Synagogue was interpreted as a religious revival; and the mass campaign by former Leningrad Jewry to erect the Holocaust memorial "Expression of Grief" was described as an expression of national awareness and a continuation of the intrinsically ethnic nature of Soviet Jewish identities. In fact, most of the new Jewish institutions in Eastern Europe can be classified according to their ethnic or religious dispositions. However, people's actual identities, as revealed through interviews, are not always characterized by clear religious or ethnic inclinations.

In Poland, for example, my interviewees generally describe themselves as either "religious," "non-practising," or "secular." Yet such labels are profoundly ambiguous: on deeper examination I found that one person's "religiosity" often turned out to be no different from another person's "secularity."

TYPES OF JEWISH IDENTITY AMONG YOUNG POLISH JEWS

Orthodox

Despite their high visibility in the Jewish enclave around Twarda Street in Warsaw, the Orthodox remain a tiny minority. One of my interviewees, himself an Orthodox Jew, estimates the number of young fellow practitioners in the Warsaw *kehillah* (community) at no more than six or seven. While this is a miniscule figure, it should be borne in mind that barely a decade ago there were none. Also, the two most prominent "unofficial" representatives of the Jewish community, Stanisław Krajewski and Konstanty Gebert, are themselves Orthodox. The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, which has probably done more than any other organization to revive the community, advocates the Orthodox Jewish way of life. If one accepts Claire Rosenson's thesis that internal conflict maintains the cohesion of a group by effectively drawing members into a perpetual debate on certain core issues, then the presence of Orthodox Jews, no matter how few, is important for the survival of the community. The profound disagreement about whether Orthodox religious practice is necessary for Jewish identity in Poland's particular circumstances has gone beyond communal confines: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the largest national daily newspaper, has published articles by Szoszana Ronen (a proponent of the "secular" position) and Konstanty Gebert (a proponent of the Orthodox position).[2] Following this polemic, the sides confronted one another in a tumultuous debate held in a packed hall in October 1999. Analogous views were expressed by my interviewees, who frequently asserted that the "other side" was manifesting an anti-model of Jewishness.

Symbolic

When interviewees describe themselves as "religious but non-practising" or "secular" I have found that their identity more often than not corresponds to what Herbert Gans calls symbolic religiosity[3]: individuals search for easy and intermittent ways of expressing their Jewishness that do not interfere with their everyday lives. Any engagement deemed inconvenient or excessively time-consuming is avoided because identity is not considered a product of cultural and religious erudi-

tion. On the contrary, since identity is a goal in itself, any activity that results in a feeling of Jewishness is acceptable no matter how minimalist it may seem to the outside observer. Symbols are extracted from the complex mosaic of religious practice and used primarily to foster a sense of group distinctiveness rather than to signify a particular belief. Examples of such behavior among the interviewees include the wearing of a necklace with the Star of David, the occasional utterance of Hebrew expressions (when in the company of other young Jews), attending synagogue on Yom Kippur, and refraining from eating pork.

Cultural

"Jewish cultural identity" is understood here as an intense interest in all things Jewish, especially Jewish history, language, and traditions. Such an identity is manifested principally by the consumption of commodified cultural products, for example attending the annual Festival of Jewish Culture in Kraków or purchasing the Jewish magazine *Midrasz*; some of the more adventurous "culturalists" may even attend courses taught in Polish universities and Jewish organizations to learn a little Yiddish or Hebrew. Karina S. exemplifies this sort of identity when she remarks[4]: "I believe in something called cultural Jewishness with a religious background not practised, with a Jewish awareness, with a well-developed Jewish identity, with knowledge of literature and art—and at the same time with a low level of assimilation."[5]

Cosmopolitan

Liberal values have become popular in many sectors of Polish society. If the young libertarian happens to be of Jewish origin, a Jewish identity may serve as a natural and convenient vehicle for these liberal perspectives. The declaration "I am Polish and Jewish" is in itself a very powerful statement in the context of traditional nationalism: it serves not only as an advertisement for Polish pluralism but also as its living proof. All but one of the interviewees agreed that their Jewish identity was manifested consciously in order to demonstrate a pluralistic form of Polishness. Ania Z. is explicit about this instrumental use:

> "[Jewishness] makes a person more sensitive to various injustices and intolerance. It sensitizes you to minority problems—as well

> as stereotypical thinking.... If there is a conversation in which I admit intentionally that I am Jewish, I certainly do this to show people that they can be tolerant and that they can live with other minorities, nations, or...cultures, because unwittingly they are already doing so by contacting me."

Jewishness as cosmopolitan Polishness is also implicit in Małgosia S.'s explanation of the differences between herself and non-Jewish Poles: "[The difference is] mentality—a lack of openness towards the world. Most Poles have an invasive attitude to religion. They are unable to tolerate that someone can believe differently or that someone may not believe at all."

"Symbolic," "cultural," and "cosmopolitan" Jewish identities are not mutually exclusive. They are presented here as ideal types, and only some individuals will reflect one or the other in pure form. It is assumed that most individuals will manifest elements of more than one type, though with one clearly predominating.

INDIVIDUALISM AND AUTHENTICITY

The type of individualism that is increasingly characterizing Poland's youth, based on personal autonomy and responsibility, appears to resemble its Western counterpart. This, as we shall see, is having a profound effect on contemporary Polish identities, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. However, the trend is far from uniform and not all types of behavior are motivated in the same way. Given that collectivism was strong in Communist societies, meaning that an individual's decisions were a function of what his peers thought or did, regardless of his personal outlook or history, one would expect it to persist in some form even after 1989. Collectivistic thinking, after all, is especially important in Poland where, since the partitions, there has been a long tradition of social consensus among the gentry to oppose authoritarian states.[6] On the other hand, while the Communists played down individuality in favor of social groups, the living standards of those very groups declined dramatically during the 1970s and 1980s, with the inevitable consequences of disillusionment and the rise of Solidarity. The trade union not only demanded social justice (which, perversely, was quite in line with Communist collectivist ideology) but also civil rights and hence the right of individual freedom. Therefore,

with the collapse of Communism, one would *equally* expect that the introduction of a free market underpinned by the notion of individual freedom should be congenial to the sort of individualism commonly observed in Western societies.

Indeed, two recent studies have shown that ten years after the "round-table talks" *both* collectivist and individualistic orientations are prevalent among Polish youth—although clearly the latter is gaining ground. The first study, analyzing students' decisions to participate in a survey, revealed collectivist tendencies, while the second, analyzing the decision to purchase material goods, revealed individualistic ones.[7] In light of these results, how can we understand the decisions of Polish Jews regarding identity? My research suggests that Jewish *identification*—the process by which the individual comes to see himself as Jewish—is heavily influenced by the collectivistic "social proof" principle, whereas Jewish *identity*—the actual form their Jewishness eventually takes—is largely the result of the individualistic "commitment/consistency" principle.

Unlike their parents' generation, young Polish Jews are keen to manifest their Jewishness openly. Both the journal *Jidełe* and the organization PUSŻ (the Polish Union of Jewish Students) were started and organized by young Jews themselves, which demonstrates the mutual influence of Jewish peers. However, non-Jewish peers are just as important, if not more so, given that Jews represent only some 0.01 percent of the population. The classroom has to some extent become a microcosm of the newly revealed plurality of Polish society. If media reporting of major social divisions on controversial issues shatters the myth of a homogeneous Catholic nation, it not only *reflects* diversity but also *creates* it by encouraging readers and viewers to take positions of their own. When asked why "I am for/against X" the answer will often take the form "Because I *believe* Y" or "Because I *am* Z." Debates surrounding such issues as abortion, catechism in school, and the affair of the cross at Auschwitz (especially those issues touching on essential social categories) provoke personal reflection and, consequently, kick-start the identification process. The plurality of new social identities among their peers may equally stimulate Poles of Jewish origin to develop their own Jewish identities.[8]

Although the collectivist principle may operate in the prior decision to "become" Jewish, it does not predict the form that this Jewishness will take. Rather than conforming to one particular model, as

collectivist behavior would suggest, members of PUSŻ and the staff at *Jidełe* manifest a variety of Jewish identities. What they do all appear to have in common is a clear lack of reference to Jewish ethnicity. Interestingly, exactly the same form of "de-ethnicization" is taking place in Polish identity. Having analyzed three surveys from 1988, 1991, and 1998, Ewa Nowicka describes how the substantive concept of Polishness has evolved into a conventional one; whereas the national identity used to be defined by real or imaginary physical criteria, it is now primarily a matter of self-assessment. In fact, "feeling that one is Polish" turns out to be the most important criterion, supported by 86.3 percent of college and secondary-school students; substantive factors like "having at least one ethnic Pole as a parent" and "being born in Poland" secured strong agreement from only 24.9 percent and 24.6 percent respectively.[9]

Individualism—the emphasis on personal autonomy—is a crucial factor in the de-ethnicization process. An ethnic identity based on common ancestry, inherited culture, and blood ties does not fit comfortably with the liberal paradigm of free civil association. "The feeling that one is Polish" is mirrored by "the feeling that one is Jewish"; these are the single most important criteria for their respective identities. With all the interviewees stressing the importance of choice in their newly acquired Jewishness, we find increasingly that the element of choice is not merely descriptive but also plays a legitimizing role: the fact that an identity is chosen freely is in itself sufficient to make it authentic. Of course, this is not to say that ethnic roots are irrelevant—they are after all the reason why most of my interviewees *feel* Jewish or have *chosen* Jewishness; but it is only the actual subjective feeling or the personal decision that ultimately confers identity, not objective factors behind it. The fact that many, perhaps most, young Polish Jews are not *Halachically* Jewish naturally leads them to de-emphasize the significance of ethnicity. However, the process is dialectical, for they are equally careful not to go too far down this path: in the absence of cultural knowledge or religious observance, a Jewish grandfather, for instance, may be the only tangible link to Jewishness that they have.

A NEW CONCEPTUALIZATION: JEWISH IDENTITY IN FOUR DIMENSIONS

If there is a cautious move away from Jewish ethnicity it might be logical to expect its correlate, Jewish religiosity, to show a "compensatory" rise in importance. The historical precedent for this type of shift is the second generation of Jewish immigrants to the United States. Overwhelmingly, they committed themselves to the religious expression of Judaism in light of the country's bias against ethnic separatism and, especially, in light of the "churched" nature of American society, in which one is expected to have a religious affiliation. Indeed, on a superficial level, most Polish Jews, and all of my interviewees, exhibit some form of religiosity. More importantly, even the least religious accept religious Judaism as the ideal type of Jewish identity, though for whatever practical or ideological reason they themselves choose not to conform to it.

However, if we analyze the contents of the various Jewish identities in Poland today, it becomes clear that any description in terms of religious or ethnic categories not only oversimplifies the nature of these identities but only helps reify the categories themselves. When a researcher studies a phenomenon in terms of certain constructs, he necessarily has to interpret any change in the same terms. Clearly one cannot observe the development of a phenomenon without using the same conceptual framework over a period of time, but, equally, one cannot escape the problem that what appears to be change may be more epistemological in character than ontological. Similarly, I would suggest that the continued use of the ethnic-religious continuum may channel our explanations of change in certain limited directions. Where, for example, would one position the cosmopolitan or the culturalist along the aforementioned continuum? The Jew who never goes to synagogue yet practises *gemilut hasadim* (acts of charity and kindess) in his daily life may be described as "partially religious" (according to our traditional framework); yet the same description would also apply to someone attending every major religious festival without actually believing in God.

Constructs like "more/less religious" or "more/less ethnic" are inadequate in comparing the variety of Jewish identities now emerging in Eastern Europe, or anywhere else in the contemporary world. The same limitations are evident when the researcher tries to describe

changes in Polishness in terms of level of Catholic belief. Catholicism, like Judaism, does not constitute some measurable, uniform quantity in which an individual partakes to some degree or other. Two "partially religious" Jews or Catholics may have identities that are nonetheless *qualitatively* wholly different. For example, a recent survey of Polish eighteen-year-olds, virtually all of whom would describe themselves as Catholic, has shown that while 55.4 percent agree with the statement "I know that God really does exist," the rest were divided into atheists, agnostics, pantheists, and "occasional" theists.[10]

To gain a more subtle understanding of the nature of post-Communist Jewish identities I shall adopt the model of religious identity first set out by Danièle Hervieu-Léger.[11] In this way, the dual ethnic-religious conceptual framework can be expanded to four dimensions (see Figure 12.1):

(i) The *communal* dimension involves setting the social boundary of the group and providing a formal definition of membership.
(ii) The *cultural* dimension assembles knowledge and *savoir faire* relating to the group's collective memory.
(iii) The *ethical* dimension constitutes the definition of a value-system shared by members of the group. These values are then transformed into behavioral norms.
(iv) The *emotional* dimension refers to activity that is able to produce a collective feeling of belonging—a clear understanding of "we."

Today, outside Israel, only Orthodox Jewish identity can be truly described as global; that is, permeating every aspect of an individual's daily life and permanently dominating any competing sub-identity. Here, all four dimensions are strongly present.

However, the secularization of society in late modernity has brought about a disjunction of the different dimensions. Without the presence of a regulatory religious authority, these dimensions will almost inevitably separate because, as Hervieu-Léger points out, they constitute two pairs, each with opposing poles. The communal-ethical axis incorporates tension because "community" provides markers of what is particular to the group while "ethics" provide universal values. The emotional-cultural axis is also in tension because "affectivity" corresponds to the immediacy and basic sensibility of belief while "culture" tries to insert the "here and now" experience dispassionately and intellectually into a meaningful historical tradition. Therefore, if

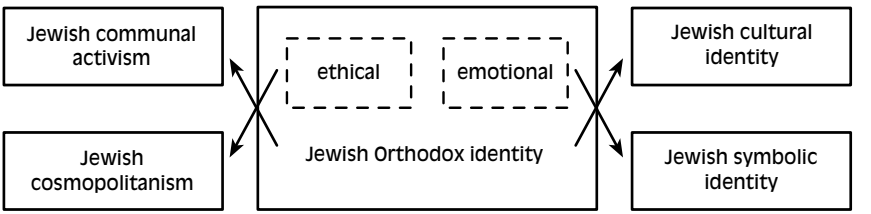
we extend this logic to the new unidimensional Jewish identities of young Polish Jews, we would expect those emphasizing one pole (in one of the axes) to *de-emphasize* the opposing pole. A more detailed and extensive study is needed to reveal whether such tendencies really do exist, but already in the few interviews I conducted I have noted that those with a very strong sense of Jewish history also tended to be least spiritual in their beliefs.

Just as secularization has fractured traditional religious identities, economic modernization has left the individual isolated and bereft of any collective identity. According to Alberto Melucci, modern societies have become networks of complex bureaucratic organizations; these have failed "to provide forms of membership and identification to meet individuals' needs for self-realization, communicative interaction, and recognition." The homogeneity of individual cultures (including, one would imagine, ethnic ones) is destroyed by the "multiplication of contacts and the constant flow of messages." Hence migration, mass tourism, and media transmission of standardized models all help extinguish distinct cultural practices. Eventually, the growing differentiation (and specialization) of roles tears social groups apart, forcing their members into atomized and purely functional relationships.[12] Melucci concludes that such is the force of today's homogenizing bureaucracy, that these atomized individuals *do* escape the Weberian "cage of rationalization" through so-called de-differentiation—the reconstruction of ethnic groups. But the reconstructed ethnic-religious identities are very different from those of previous generations.

Regarding the return to Jewishness, de-differentiation does not, in all but a tiny minority of cases, involve rejoining the aforementioned dimensions of traditional Orthodox identity. Rather, the four dimensions have crystallized into new "Jewish" identities in their own right (see Figure 12.1). It is precisely these former constituents that form the different modes of Jewishness observed in post-Communist societies. For example, Zvi Gitelman's study of Jewish reconstruction in the former Soviet Union reveals identities grounded in what he calls "thin" culture; what makes the identities "thin," of course, is that they involve only one of the four dimensions. Thus, when some Russian Jews consider their high esteem for education or high moral standards defining features of Jewishness, it is indicative of the centrality of the *ethical* dimension in their identities. "Thick" culture on the other hand can be understood as containing all four dimensions; apart from reli-

gious Orthodoxy, the Bundists' Yiddishist identities could also be described as "thick" in that they were similarly multi-dimensional.

Figure 12.1 ***Consumerism and "Jewish Cultural Identity"***



According to Ronald Inglehart's "hierarchy of needs," the individual will focus on "self-actualization" (where attention shifts to aesthetic, intellectual and social pursuits) once the physiological needs of safety and sustenance are met.[13] Any income in excess of that needed for simple survival can then be spent on "cultural consumption." A cultural product, whether a book, a theater performance or a piece of fashionable clothing, can be consumed simply for personal pleasure or for the purposes of demonstrating a social marker. This second function of cultural consumption is not a peculiarity of today's complex urban societies. For example, in a Galician *shtetl* of the 1930s, Toby Fluek describes how the *oshier* (rich man) would distinguish himself from the *kaptzen* (poor man) by the type of *shtreimel* (fur hat) he wore to religious services: whereas the latter wore "skimpy *streimels* fashioned from wild mink tails" the former wore hats made of "expensive, specially raised minks."[14] Equally in Communist Poland (though paradoxically for a state professing social egalitarianism) one could make a statement about oneself through material possessions if lucky enough to belong to the right network[15]: buying even the smallest item from the prestigious state department store, *Pewex*, which sold exclusively Western products, bestowed an aura of "cultured" distinction to the "refined" shopper. Such symbolic consumption is no different from wearing Levi jeans in place of a cheaper unbranded equivalent in Warsaw in the 1990s.

However, the nature of symbolic cultural consumption has changed in two fundamental ways after the collapse of Communism. First, it is taking place on a far wider scale: the embourgeoisement of society characterized by greater prosperity and increased leisure time

enables more people to engage in "self-actualization." Second, the social markers conferred by symbolic consumption have diversified beyond mere reflection of the consumer's status and wealth: products can symbolize a whole raft of sub-identities such as ethnicity (e.g. a mezuzah), altruism (e.g. a London marathon t-shirt) or environmentalism (e.g. merchandise from the Body Shop). Increasingly, therefore, it has become possible to define oneself purely by virtue of what one consumes.

I believe Jewish *cultural* identity, as manifested in the last decade or so, is largely the product of the consumer society that has only recently evolved on a large scale in post-Communist states. But what exactly is meant by "cultural" today and how does it differ from what was "cultural" in other eras? Were not the pre-war Bundists and the post-war Yiddishists cultural? Following our four-dimensional framework, we can argue that both the Bundists and the TSKŻ-niks exhibited a cultural dimension, but unlike the *Cultural Jews* of today theirs was a "thick" identity, comprising other dimensions as well. But there is in addition a more profound difference closely connected to the process of rationalization in modern society. With the specialization of roles, the world of "ethnic" culture has become separated between that of consumption (for the mass of identity-seeking ethnics) and that of production (by a small elite group of experts who need not even share such an identity). Today's Polish Jews can visit Kraków's Ariel restaurant to taste *kreplach*, *drelis* or *charoses*; they can go to Warsaw's Jewish State Theater to hear Yiddish dialogue and attend the Jewish Cultural Festival to hear the singing of traditional *zemirot*. Yet before the war all these aspects of Jewish culture would have been reproduced daily by the ordinary Jews themselves even if not to the professional standards of today's experts. Contemporary Jewish cultural identity is therefore based almost entirely on consumption.

THE DECLINING RELEVANCE OF ETHNIC BOUNDARIES: DISTINCTION WITHOUT DIFFERENCE

Barth's influential theory stressing the social constructivist dimension in boundary maintenance between ethnic group and majority society has been the basis of much subsequent investigation into the nature of ethnicity.[16] Indeed, numerous studies on the "ethnic revival," especially in the United States, stress the importance of "external" symbolic

activity rather than substantial changes in everyday life. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether such symbols are truly equivalent to the ethnic boundaries Barth had in mind when studying the ethnicity of Southern and Northern Pathans in Afghanistan. As I have described in a previous article, external differentiation in young Polish Jews is weak, fluid, barely visible, and established largely at the whim of the individual.[17] Given that most young Polish Jews feel (or want to feel) both Polish and Jewish at the same time they are unwilling to set clear-cut boundaries which separate them from "the rest"—in this case "Poles." They want to feel in some way distinct in relation to other Poles, yet without feeling completely different.

Two strategies appear to be used to resolve a potentially anomalous state of affairs. First is the adoption of a unidimensional Jewish identity that can comfortably (in time, commitment and knowledge required) penetrate those social collectivities the individual also desires to be a part of. Second, young Polish Jews are eager to position their identity in the context of a multicultural society. This is demonstrated by *Jidełe*'s decision to publish a special edition on Poland's ethnic and religious *minorities* (including a section on Roman Catholicism!). Such positioning helps them express their distinction in the specific dimension they choose without feeling "different" because everybody else is also seen as belonging to some minority or other, larger or smaller. If heterogeneity is perceived as the norm, Jewish distinction, far from distinct, is characteristic of the multitude of distinctions visible in Polish society.

Karina S.'s identification clearly shows the need to complicate the notion of ethnic boundary: while recognizing her distinctiveness based on cultural knowledge and consumption she still affirms that "I never felt different [in relation to Poles] and to this day I don't feel different...I try hard not to construct [ethnic] barriers." It appears, therefore, that the case for interpreting ethnic behavior in the context of modern pluralist urban environments as little more than differential boundary maintenance has been overstated. Given how thin, or one-dimensional modern ethnic identities are, there is a fine line between what constitutes the "content" of an identity and its "boundary": one may be easily confused for the other. Claire Rosenson is therefore quite right to shift our attention back to the *contents* of Jewish identities. The controversial "core set of issues" on which group members feel obliged to take a position are not discussed in order to

differentiate oneself from non-Jews. Yet the ensuing internal conflict actually unites them (i.e. makes the group distinct) because they all hold at least one common belief, namely that there *should* be unity on these specifically *Jewish* issues. This is hardly surprising given that the vast majority of Rosenson's interviewees were activists or members of rival Jewish organizations. Whereas her model is not necessarily representative of the broad range of Jewish identities in Poland, one can concede the point that it may be representative of those *actively* involved in identity construction: it is a model of *identification* rather than *identity*. Their actual identities probably constitute (as well as one of the others) an extension of the communal dimension as set out in Figure 12.1.

Jewish identities like Orthodoxy, symbolic religiosity or "communal activism" exhibit unambiguous Jewish content, albeit in different ways and to different extents; one can argue that they are distinctly Jewish. But can the same be said of the cosmopolitans or culturalists? After all, non-Jews equally consume Jewish culture and can be equally cosmopolitan. In fact, differences do exist but, as Piotr G. points out, they are "internal—for instance, you walk down the street and know that you have a bigger chance than anyone else of being hit on the head." The same explanation is true of cosmopolitan and cultural identities. Regarding the latter, though one can find some basis for cosmopolitanism in classic Jewish texts, the Jewish bearers of such identities do not make any biblical or Talmudic references. Quite simply they link their Jewishness (which is associated primarily with oppression) to sensitivity vis-à-vis other cultures and any manifestation of intolerance.

Internal subjectivity is also what makes the consumption of Jewish culture different between Jews and Gentiles. When a non-Jew reads Isaac Bashevis Singer or listens to the songs of Mordechai Gebirtig he is doing it for entertainment purposes no different from reading Charles Dickens or listening to Edith Piaf. When a Jew engages in the same activity of Jewish cultural consumption it is in addition an affirmation of his Jewishness. By consuming the product he is identifying with the producer of this culture in personal terms. Alternatively, one can describe the Gentile's consumption as hedonistic and the Jew's as *empathetic*: he is projecting his own personality into the object of contemplation. A couple of my interviewees demonstrate the empathetic dimension of cultural consumption. In the first case, Małgosia S. describes her experience of witnessing a rare Jewish marriage cere-

mony outside Warsaw's Nożyk Synagogue in April 2000. "As I watched it, [in] my heart rose [the feeling] that this is a *Jewish* wedding, a real Jewish wedding in Poland... and in this moment I could feel myself a member of the community and rejoice with them."

On a rather more sombre note, but what has nonetheless become a cultural experience (and even a fundamental part of identity construction for Israeli youth and many American Jews), is the visit to Auschwitz. The Gentile's response may be sympathetic but not empathetic, at least not to the same extent. Piotr G. compares his visit to Auschwitz with that of a London museum exhibiting tortures from the Middle Ages: "The majority of Poles do not visit Auschwitz and even if they do, it's different when you see something directed against your own nation—I have visited in London a museum of tortures from the Middle Ages—it was genuinely a mini-holocaust…They showed people being pierced, burnt, persecuted etc.—*but*, if you are in Auschwitz and you see a room full of human hair and you know that *your* hair would equally have been there had you been born at a different time, that hits you."

To borrow Benedict Anderson's classic phrase, empathetic cultural consumption evokes an "imagined community" not only among the diverse Jews who are currently consuming the same product but also between today's consumers and those previous generations who were the originators of the culture: consumption acts as both a spatial and temporal link to other Jews.

CONCLUSION

The inter-war period was characterized by a plurality of "thick" Jewish identities. After the Shoah had all but extinguished these "thick" cultures, the Communist authorities made certain that any return to these was virtually impossible: in some countries only one or two forms of Jewish expression were permissible and even these were tightly controlled and curtailed, leaving most of the remaining Jews to opt for complete assimilation. The post-Communist environment does, however, portend a new era of Jewish identity: a return to plurality—albeit a plurality of thin sub-identities. In the new web of group affiliations a thin Jewish identity is one of many identities juxtaposed within the same individual, while simultaneously intersecting those of Gentiles outside him. Jewishness, for all but the Orthodox or those active in

Jewish organizations, no longer furnishes a global perspective. It has become a specialized identity, a sub-identity, addressing only particular needs.

Interestingly, the post-Communist Jewish press reflects this particularization. Miriam Gonczarska, in an editorial comment in *Jidełe*, makes the point that today's Jewish papers in Poland resemble trade journals.[18] They tackle only what are overtly Jewish topics just as a computer magazine deals exclusively with information technology. Just as the latter would not discuss Holocaust Memorial Day, so the former will not review the latest CD-Rom drive. In contrast, the prewar Jewish press was also a source of general information. Hence, Gonczarska argues that "results of parliamentary elections, entry of Poland to the European Union or the question of religion in schools, are matters which for a member of the Jewish community may take on a different meaning" and therefore "deserve comment in the columns of our press." The fact that these general issues (albeit from a Jewish perspective) do not appear is highly indicative of the fractional and specialized nature of contemporary Jewish identity.

Using Hervieu-Léger's four-dimensional framework of analysis, more detailed studies may help reveal the subtle shades of difference comprising the plurality of newly emergent Jewish identities. The framework, by isolating the most essential dimensions of traditional Judaism, may allow the researcher to investigate the mechanism by which universal social trends may be influencing an individual's sense of Jewishness.

APPENDIX

List of Interviewees

KARINA S. (interview conducted April 12 and 14, 2000) was born in 1974 of mixed parentage. She identifies herself as "Polish of Jewish origin" and is not religious, emphasizing strongly her "cultural Jewishness." Today Karina works for the Polish branch of the Joint Distribution Committee.

ANIA Z. (interview conducted April 10, 2000) was born in 1976. Her father is Jewish but she was brought up by her Catholic mother and Catholic stepfather. She discovered her Jewish origins unexpectedly from her aunt two years ago. Ania is "religious but not Orthodox" and intends to undergo a religious conversion. She is a member of the Polish Union of Jewish Students.

MAŁGOSIA S. (interview conducted April 11, 2000) was born in 1980 of atheist parents: father Jewish, mother non-Jewish. She considers herself "Polish of Jewish origin" but "completely secular." Currently a student, Małgosia works for the Polish Union of Jewish Students.

PIOTR G. (interview conducted April 12, 2000) was born in 1980 and is the only interviewee from Łódź; the others are from Warsaw. When he was fifteen, he became aware of his Jewish origins on his father's side. He is currently an active member of the Polish Union of Jewish Students.

NOTES

1 Leonard Mars, "Anthropological Reflections on Jewish Identity in Contemporary Hungary," in András Kovács, ed., *Jewish Studies at the Central European University* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000); Valery Chervyakov, Zvi Gitelman and Vladimir Shapiro, "Religion and Ethnicity: Judaism in the Ethnic Consciousness of Contemporary Russian Jews," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20, 2 (April 1997), 280–305.

2 Szoszana Ronen, "Jak być w Polsce Żydem" [How to Be a Jew in Poland], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, September 8, 1999; Konstanty Gebert, "Proszę nie urządzać nam życia" [Please Do Not Organize Our Lives], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, September 23, 1999.

3 This concept is very closely related to Gans' original notion of "symbolic ethnicity" described in his classic 1979 article. However, in the case of young Polish Jews any symbolic behavior is more religious than ethnic. This may be due to the fact that the Ronald Lauder Foundation, which has been by far the most influential organization in bringing young Jews back into the community, actively promotes Orthodoxy as the ideal form of Jewish identity. See Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity: towards a comparison of ethnic and religious acculturation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 17, 4 (1994).

4 For biographical notes on Karina S. and other interviewees quoted, see Appendix.

5 By most sociologists' criteria, Karina S. would be identified with a very high level of assimilation. She speaks Polish as her mother tongue, comes from a mixed marriage, feels Polish as well as Jewish and does not practise Judaism except occasionally and symbolically. Yet she associates Jewish cultural identity with a *low* level of assimilation. This is indicative of the downward shift in meaning of what is now considered a "strong Jewish identity" or a "low level of assimilation." Such judgments appear to be the product of comparisons in the immediate milieu rather than by historical standards.

6 Bogumiła Puchalska, "Structuring of Identities in Relation to Material Possessions in Poland of the 1990s," *Journal of Law and Society*, 26, 4 (1999), 454.

7 See chapters 2 and 12 of Wilhelmina Wasinska, *et al.*, *The Practice of Social Influence in Multiple Cultures* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001).

8 A similar process of peer imitation may be taking place in the United States: "The greater visibility of the new ethnic and racial minorities may also persuade some later-generation ethnics who are now satisfied to be Americans to become Italian-American or Scotch-Irish again…." Gans, "Symbolic ethnicity," 588.

9 Ewa Nowicka, "Jak być Polakiem" [How to be Polish], *Więź*, November 1998, 55–8.

10 Eva Zamojska, *Kultura tożsamości młodzierzy* [The Culture of Youth Identity] (Poznań–Toruń: Adam Mickiewicz University, 1998), 53.

11 Danièle Hervieu-Léger, " 'Renouveaux' religieux et nationalistes: le double dérégulation," in Pierre Birnbaum, ed., *Sociologie des nationalismes* (Paris: Puf, 1997), 174–5.

12 Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), 89–92.

13 Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 42.

14 Toby Knobel Fluek, *Memories of My Life in a Polish Village, 1930–1949* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1990), 24

15 Janine Wedel, "The Ties that Bind in Polish Society," in Stanisław Gomułka and Antony Polonsky, eds., *Polish Paradoxes* (London: Routledge, 1990).

16 See Introduction in Frederik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Oslo, 1969).

17 Marius Gudonis, "Constructing Jewish Identity in Post-Communist Poland. Part 1: "Deassimilation Without Depolonization," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 31, 1 (Summer 2001).

18 "*Hucpik*" (Editorial Comments), *Jidełe,* January 3, 1998.

CHAPTER 13

Polish Jewish Institutions in Transition: Personalities over Process[1]

Claire A. Rosenson

INTRODUCTION

In the field of ethnic identity studies, a primary objective has been to develop a model of ethnic identity that focuses not just on group boundaries or shared symbols or behaviors, but on the actual content of ethnic identities. In order to be meaningful, such a model must do more than simply list or describe the symbols or characteristics shared by group members. It must be capable of explaining both the continuities within a group identity as well as the evolution of that identity over time. At the same time, it must move beyond the simple description of what distinguishes members of one group from members of another to examine also the ties that bind the group together.

The model I have proposed departs from traditional theories, which posited a unity of beliefs, values, or behaviors within an ethnic group, and builds instead on the "process" theories that view ethnicity as something fluid and constantly evolving. It shifts the focus of study from the boundaries of ethnic groups or their shared, static symbols, to major areas of conflict within groups. According to the model, the driving force behind ethnic change and communal organization is conflict over issues that are deemed relevant in some degree to all members of the group. In choosing to identify, members of ethnic groups accept as "their own" a specific set of issues that are both important and controversial for the group, and on which they feel obligated to take a position. The set of controversial issues relevant to a given group at a given time, the model posits, is largely determined by three factors: formative experiences, such as war or periods of persecution, which give rise to differences between generational cohorts; input from outside groups, which gives rise to differences between sub-groups based on their varied responses to this input; and existing communal institutions, which create differences between sub-groups by present-

ing competing messages about the identity they claim to represent. In creating differences between sub-groups, each of these factors gives rise to the contested issues that will take the forefront in communal dialogue. It is precisely in the process of attempting to resolve these conflicts that the evolution of group identity takes place. According to this model, then, the appropriate focus for the study of ethnic identity is the areas of conflict that are under discussion in the communal forum. It follows, too, that the ability to place issues on the group's agenda is what constitutes real power to influence ethnic identity.

The case of the Polish Jewish community very effectively demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of the model. The active community is small and fairly clearly defined. There can be little disagreement about the formative events in the life of the community in recent decades: the Holocaust, the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968, and the fall of Communism. Further, Polish Jews tend to be highly conscious of the effects of the ambient Polish culture on their identity as Jews and are able to articulate them. Finally, with a limited number of institutions operating in the communal arena, the effectiveness of institutional messages is relatively easy to tease out. Earlier research has demonstrated that these factors do contribute to the formation of sub-groups, and thus to the emergence of contested issues within the community. However, the Polish Jewish case also brings to light some complexities in the area of institutional influences on ethnic identity that are specific to the circumstances of post-Communist social transformation. I will focus here on these refinements to the model.

TOWARD A MODEL OF THE EVOLUTION OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

In the traditional view of ethnicity in the social sciences, "the sharing of a common culture is generally given central importance."[2] Cultural commonalities are referred to as "cultural forms," values, beliefs, traditions, practices, behavior patterns, and so on. The chief difficulty in defining ethnicity in terms of common culture or behavior, as most theorists recognize, is that "it is exceedingly difficult to specify exact criterial components of its contents."[3] In his landmark work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, Fredrik Barth argues that group identity is formed as group members define themselves relative to others outside of the group. That is, eth-

nic self-conception develops through a process of "continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders."[4] The persistence of ethnic groups is thus explained in terms of the *maintenance of boundaries* between groups. Barth's concept of boundary maintenance, or "the need to define the ethnic self always in the context of some 'outside' group," has become dominant in the study of ethnicity.[5] By focusing on the boundaries between groups, Barth removes the theoretical imperative of finding universal traits or behaviors within groups.

The emphasis on process rather than on the continuity of beliefs or values, and on boundaries rather than content, provides a much more dynamic model of ethnicity. However, Barth's approach does not speak to the positive content of ethnic identity and how it evolves over time. There is more to being Italian, for example, than simply "not being French or German." In an attempt to address this problem, Anthony Cohen suggests that ethnic groups are bound together by shared symbols or emblems. Like Barth, he views ethnicity as the process of maintaining identity, with boundary maintenance one of the key elements of the process. However, rather than viewing the boundary as a line dividing "A" from "not-A," he views it as a collection of distinctive symbols that sets one group apart from another. "Much of the boundary-maintaining process," he writes, "is concerned with maintaining and further developing this commonality of symbol."[6] The advantage of using common symbols rather than common beliefs or interests in theorizing about ethnicity is that it allows for disunity within a particular group: "Although [members of a community] recognize differences among themselves, they also suppose themselves to be more like each other than like the members of other communities. This is precisely because, although the meaning they may attach to the symbols may differ, they share the symbols."[7]

By emphasizing common symbols, Cohen makes it possible to account for more of the ethnic phenomenon than the dichotomization that takes place at its boundaries.

However, Cohen's model leaves the impression that individual members of an ethnic group are connected through symbols, rather than directly. If this is so, then differences of interpretation should not have important consequences for the ethnic group as a whole. But much of the observable behavior that can be categorized as ethnic is characterized by intra-group debate and reflection, often at a high level of emotion. What is missing from Cohen's model, it seems, is the feel-

ing on the part of group members that there *should* be agreement within the group. This expectation of solidarity in the interpretation of symbols is what provides the impetus for direct interaction.

In her study of the Russian immigrant community in Brighton Beach, New York, Fran Markowitz proposes that ethnicity is more than identification with static symbols. In her view, it is continuously created through the interaction of group members in a process called "ethnogenesis." Like Barth, she assumes that the "historically based idea that some people are more alike than others" is at the heart of ethnic identity.[8] According to Markowitz's description of the process, individuals try to bring their own attitudes and behaviors into line with those of their group. In a sense, her approach is the inverse of Barth's: while he directs the focus of study outward toward the group's distinctiveness from other groups, she directs the focus inward to areas of agreement within the group. But because Markowitz emphasizes the maintenance of commonality and consensus within a group, her approach may be less useful in explaining why real differences between sub-groups persist.

In my research, I propose an approach to the study of ethnicity that takes advantage of the strengths of all three "process theories" discussed above. In keeping with Barth, I view dichotomization or the contrasting of one group with another as an important factor in the process of identity construction. Like Cohen, I posit that certain elements, such as symbols, may be held in common without requiring the unity of beliefs or behavior that is rarely (if ever) observed in the real world. And like Markowitz, I view interaction between individuals as the primary means by which ethnicity evolves. The difference is that in this study, the focus of investigation is shifted from boundaries, symbols, or areas of agreement to the *set of core issues or questions* that the members of an ethnic group consider "their own"—in other words, those questions that are more or less relevant to each member, but more relevant to members of the group than to outsiders in general.[9] Far from searching out areas of agreement within a group, the suggestion here is that it is precisely the areas of controversy that drive the evolution of ethnicity, and that these should therefore be the focus of our attention. The question of membership, or boundary maintenance, can be controversial and represents one very important area of identity confirmation or construction, but it is not the only one. Like boundaries, the content of an ethnic identity evolves with changes in

circumstances and attitudes. The engine of this process is the commonly held belief that group members *should* be unified on important questions, and the recognition that such unity does not exist.[10]

Many factors may determine what a community's contested issues are at a particular time. As mentioned above, the model posits that the most general and influential of these factors are: formative experiences such as war or other catastrophes on ethnic self-conceptions;[11] encounters with other groups and their influence on self-conception;[12] and the messages of communal institutions that claim to represent the group. Of these three factors influencing the group's set of core issues, the institutional factor involves the most conscious and explicit construction of identity. The influence of formative experiences is more general, providing the individual group member with an overarching worldview—for example, the view that being Jewish means surviving persecution or overcoming discrimination. Likewise, confronting stereotypes in the ambient culture tends to influence group members' general affect—positive or negative—towards their own ethnic identity. These influences on ethnic self-perception are, of course, very powerful. But it is in the institutional arena that assumptions about the meaning of a particular ethnic identity are most clearly articulated. In developing a mission statement and policy explanations, every institution claiming to represent a particular ethnic group must constantly and consciously refine its conception of what it means to belong to that group. Moreover, institutions provide a ready forum for debate between group members. It seems reasonable to suppose that communal institutions would play a powerful role in placing key issues on the agenda for communal discussion.

THE CASE OF THE POLISH JEWISH COMMUNITY

Before turning to the main topic of institutional influences on identity, it is worth briefly describing the effects of the two other key factors posited in the theoretical model: formative experiences and interactions with outside groups. As noted above, there can be little argument as to the major events in the life of the contemporary Polish Jews' community. The community can be divided into three sub-groups: those whose earliest associations with Jewish identity were connected to the Holocaust; those who came of age Jewishly as a result of the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968; and those who have discovered their Jewish

identities since the fall of Communism. Forty interviews with members of the community indicate that, generally speaking, the Holocaust generation has tended to view Jewish identity as *survival*: in the minds of these people, openly identifying as a Jew brings with it discrimination and persecution. For those who became aware of their Jewishness as a result of the government's use of anti-Semitism and discrimination as political tools in 1968, Jewish identity tends to be at least partially associated with the assertion of civil rights and the protection of minorities. Finally, for the youngest generation of Polish Jews, Jewish identity tends to mean membership in an attractive—and even "exotic"—culture; it is less about persecution or discrimination and more about personal spiritual fulfilment. As Marius Gudonis has found, to a certain extent this latter group shares with the middle generation a commitment to liberal values—or what Gudonis labels "cosmopolitan" Jewish identity.

In terms of the proposed model, it is when these differing assumptions about Jewish identity become explicit that conflicts can arise; the resulting dialogue between the sub-groups drives the evolution of Polish Jewish identity. For example, many among the younger generations have reported that members of the Holocaust generation at first did not welcome them into the community. The older Jews' reasoning seemed to be that, since surviving the Holocaust was central to Polish Jewish identity, those Jews born after the war were somehow inauthentic. They were surprised by (and suspicious of) the younger Jews' interest in cultivating their Jewish identities. As the prominent journalist Konstanty Gebert reported: "What puzzled the 'old Jews' most was 'Why?' For what conceivable reason would young people…actively pursue a fate they themselves had spent their lives avoiding?"[13] Thus, the difference between the generational sub-groups gave rise to at least one "contested issue": the question of how central suffering is to Polish Jewish identity; or, to put it another way, who "counts" as a Polish Jew. Gebert goes on to describe how communal identity evolved as a result of the dialogue between sub-groups: "This cognitive dissonance had some long-term effects…. I believe we have helped to infuse the old-timers' community with some pride and assertiveness…. We also learned from the 'old' Jews and finally gained their acceptance and a sense of belonging."[14]

The second major influence on the evolution of ethnic identity, according to the model, is the input of outside groups. The two groups

that appear to have the most influence on Polish Jewish identity are Polish society and, perhaps less obviously, Jews who visit Poland from the United States, Israel, and elsewhere. The interviews indicate that the influence of the ambient Polish culture on today's Polish Jews is rather general; that is, many respondents reported that when they were young, the infamous Polish anti-Semitism created in them a negative affect towards Jewishness. In deciding to identify as Jews, they had to consciously overcome this conditioned negativity. On the other hand, Polish Jews are also very much aware of a strong strain of philosemitism in Polish culture—according to which Jews are spiritual, exotic, intelligent, and so forth. Moreover, several respondents reported that some Poles within their social circles were extremely supportive of their choice to cultivate a Jewish identity. One young woman put it this way: "My friends just accept [the fact that I'm Jewish]. The majority of them helped me along my path of returning to Jewishness. They were with me at every stage. Some of them remember the moments along the way when I said my parents were Jews, and then when I said, with a lot of emotion, that *I* was a Jew."[15] Thus it seems that the ambient Polish culture affects the individual Polish Jew's general affect towards his or her Jewishness, providing both positive and negative stereotypes to draw on. It does not, however, provide messages about the specific content of Polish Jewish identity. That is, in terms of the model, the messages about Jewish identity absorbed from Polish culture do not appear to give rise to "contested issues."

By contrast, the messages absorbed from interactions with Jews from outside Poland are highly specific and provoke extremely emotionally charged reactions within the Polish Jewish community. The respondents in this survey clearly indicated that many foreign Jews are very forthcoming with their opinions of Polish Jewish life, often to the point of insensitivity. As reported by the Polish Jews interviewed for this study, the expectations of foreign Jews about Polish Jewish life consist of three distinct but related beliefs. The first is that Polish Jewish culture died at the time of the Holocaust, never to be revived. The second is that Poles are rabidly anti-Semitic, and that the hostility of the social environment must be the primary factor—if not the only one—shaping the identities of Polish Jews born after the war. Finally, because of Polish anti-Semitism and the destruction caused by the Holocaust, *Jewish life is not possible in Poland*; it follows from this that young people who assert their Jewish identities while remaining in

Poland are not "real" Jews. In repeatedly challenging young Polish Jews' right to cultivate Jewish identities while living in Poland—that is, in challenging their authenticity—foreign Jews are placing certain highly contested issues on the communal agenda. The questions raised have concrete consequences for members of the community. The most obvious question raised by these encounters is whether one must emigrate from Poland in order to cultivate a Jewish identity. For those who answer that question in the negative, the question becomes: How is it possible to blend Polish and Jewish aspects of their identity? Thus, in considering how they fail to meet foreigners' expectations, Jews who choose to remain in Poland are forced to examine and develop the content of their specifically *Polish* Jewish identities.[16]

POLISH JEWISH COMMUNAL INSTITUTIONS IN TRANSITION

The third key influence on identity construction—and the focus of this study—is that of communal institutions. In the Polish Jewish context, each communal organization has had a specific mission and has emphasized a particular aspect of Jewish identity as central, in effect offering a different view of what it means to be Jewish. Under the Communist regime, the range of options was limited to those institutions approved and supervised by the government. In the absence of independent institutions, there were essentially two modes of Jewish communal life: participation in government-approved institutions and at least tacit acceptance of their policies on the one hand, or underground activity based on opposition to these institutions on the other. In the post-Communist era the previously existing organizations, no longer backed by the government, have had to adapt to the new conditions of pluralism. Whereas in the past they promoted the Communist conception of what Jewish culture should be, since 1989 they have had to articulate new missions. Likewise, foreign organizations that have set up operations in Poland have come with specific, if usually unstated, agendas. Thus, the Jewish organizations now operating in Poland represent a set of fairly clearly defined and differing conceptions of the essence of Jewish identity. Of course, they do not exist in isolation from each other, but compete for influence within the community. The newcomer to the formal community encounters organizational approaches which sometimes complement each other, but which

all too often are in conflict. One institution may have primacy in shaping the individual's ethnic self-conception, but because there is constant interaction between institutions, other institutional approaches must be confronted and either assimilated or rejected.

One of two central Jewish organizations of the Communist era was the Religious Union of the Mosaic Faith (*Związek Religijny Wyznania Mojżeszowego*). In the Communist period, the Union focused primarily on charitable work and on the preservation of Jewish cemeteries and monuments in Poland. In addition, it served as the main liaison organization for foreign sources (specifically, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee) in distributing financial aid. The Union did not consider community outreach desirable, much less a priority. The attitude of its members towards Jews born in Poland after the war was generally hostile and unwelcoming. For example, in its annual report for 1988–89, the Union lists among its goals for the coming year better care for sick and elderly people who have no one to look after them; participation in all governmental and foreign projects for preserving Jewish cemeteries and renovating "monuments of Jewish culture;" and increasing efforts to establish formal ties with European and world-wide Jewish organizations.[17] Elsewhere, the report refers with pride to the success of "cultural activities" such as public concerts of recorded cantorial music organized "with the aim of acquainting Polish society with Jewish music."[18] Another recurring theme in the Union's yearly reports was the need to remain vigilant in the face of an apparent increase in anti-Semitic incidents in Poland, and particularly anti-Semitic graffiti. Except for its concern with the needs of elderly Jews, then, the Union seemed to focus outwardly, gearing itself toward improving relations with the surrounding Polish society and the world Jewish community. This orientation was not lost on the younger Jews. In the opinion of one young observer, "The Congregation is just a bunch of very Orthodox old men who gather in the Nożyk Synagogue in Warsaw."[19]

In the early 1990s, the Union began to take some note of the increase in the number of young Jews who had taken an interest in their heritage. The first mention of young Polish Jews in the Union's annual reports occurs in the report for the year 1990–91. Interestingly, the report refers to these young people not as Jews, but as "young people of Polish-Jewish background [*rodowód*]."[20] This label may have reflected the Union's ambivalence about whether to embrace the

younger generations as true members of the community. By the time the report for 1992–93 was published, however, the administration was willing to take some responsibility for the future of the community. The administration notes the failure of the community to draw in middle-aged and younger people, commenting that: "This is a particularly important issue in light of the unfavorable demographic structure and the proposed program of internal changes aimed at the renewal of the Jewish community in Poland."[21] The turning point for the Union came at an assembly of delegates in May 1997. For the first time, a significant number of delegates to the assembly were members of the post-war generation. The transition from one generation to the next was not entirely smooth, however. According to a report in the Polish Jewish journal *Midrasz*, the necessity of drawing in the younger groups was one of the main topics of discussion, with older delegates "expressing concerns that the 'younger' people would excessively dominate the Union."[22]

The members of the post-war generation who are now at the helm of the Union (renamed the *Związek Gmin Wyznaniowych Żydowskich* [ZGWŻ—Union of Jewish Religious Congregations]) are breathing new life into the institution. According to the new president of the Union, rewriting the institution's bylaws to reflect its independent status and more liberal membership requirements is a priority.[23] Jerzy Kichler stressed that the status of the Union was greatly changed by a 1997 decision of the Polish government to recognize it as the official representative of the Jewish religious community. Board member Stanisław Krajewski explains that by selecting the Union as its official partner in dialogue, the government "has made the *kehillahs* and the Union much more important than they had been before."[24] The government's relationship with the ZGWŻ is now equivalent to its relationship with the Catholic Church. Among other consequences, this means that of all the Jewish organizations in Poland, the Union alone is party to negotiations on the restitution of communal Jewish property. The reasoning behind this arrangement is that the ZGWŻ, alone among the existing communal institutions, has roots going back to the pre-war period of Polish independence.

The other indigenous Jewish institution that has existed throughout the post-war period is the Socio-Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (*Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalny Żydów w Polsce*). The TSKŻ dates back to the early post-war years, when the Communists were in

the process of consolidating their power over all social institutions. By 1949, Jewish communal life, along with virtually all other previously independent organizations, had come under the control of the state.[25] Throughout the Communist period, the TSKŻ was responsible for overseeing the Yiddish Theater, Jewish publications, and the Jewish Historical Institute.[26] Its monthly publication, *Folksshtimme* (issued simultaneously in Polish as *Głos narodu*) was considered the official voice of the Polish Jewish community. Although the formally independent Jewish religious congregation continued to exist, the state-sponsored TSKŻ dominated Jewish affairs. According to one observer, "the Jewish Communists were the dominant element of Jewish life in post-war Poland. They decided which traditions were important and which were less important, and they developed the Yiddish-language culture, with its Communist-Stalinist variant."[27] On all questions, the leaders of the TSKŻ dutifully repeated the party line, at times even going beyond what seemed necessary to appease the authorities. In general, the membership of the TSKŻ consists of those who were convinced Communists at one time, or their children, who maintain membership out of habit or for reasons of family loyalty. On the positive side, the appeal of the TSKŻ is that it has served as a kind of social club; for many years, the TSKŻ offices in the larger cities around the country and the retreats it organized in the countryside were the only places where Jews could gather and socialize *as Jews* without risk of provoking official disapproval. Beyond that, its emphasis on Yiddish culture allowed members to explore secular Jewish culture without commitment to religious observance. Nevertheless, the well-educated young people who began to explore their Jewish heritage as a result of the traumatic events of 1968 were generally disinclined to turn to official organizations for guidance. Not surprisingly, the ideological stance of the TSKŻ made it unappealing to young Jews who were just learning about their Jewish heritage.

The reputation of the TSKŻ remains tainted in the eyes of liberally inclined young Jews for the simple reason that its leadership has remained unchanged. The organization continues to be headed by Szymon Szurmiej, the director of the Yiddish Theater and a man whose Communist credentials include serving as a member of the Sejm during the period of martial law. The continuity of leadership has meant that even the youngest members of the community associate the organization with the continuation of Communist methods of operation.[28]

A related problem for the TSKŻ is that, because its leadership has not changed, the programming has also remained relatively unchanged. The theater's repertoire and the supplemental programs for the community continue to emphasize the Yiddish-language culture of the interwar years and before, with occasional reference to the Holocaust and its aftermath. Even within the area of Yiddish-language culture, the theater narrows its focus to the folkloric aspects of life in the *shtetl*, side-stepping the complex and dynamic subject of Jewish politics before the Holocaust. The result of continued focus on these areas is that many "new" Jews have little to relate to in the TSKŻ's offerings.

In an attempt to balance the shift of power to the ZGWŻ after the Polish government's 1997 decision, the TSKŻ joined with some smaller groups (for example, the Association of Jewish War Veterans) to form the Union of Jewish Associations. Though this union was formed apparently to compete with the ZGWŻ for resources and influence, it does not enjoy a similar status with the Polish government and so is not perceived as an "official" representative of the Jewish community to the same extent. But the establishment of this organization has increased the division and tension between the two institutions.[29] In theoretical terms, the underlying "contested issue" raised by this competition between institutions is whether Polish Jewish identity is primarily secular or religious. This question is not a new one in the Polish Jewish public arena. However, these recent events have renewed the intensity of the debate.

In addition to the Union and the TSKŻ, one other organization has been involved with the Polish Jewish community on and off throughout the post-war period. When it has been allowed to operate in Poland, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, or "Joint," has been the primary source of financial and material aid to needy Jews. According to the Union, as of 1988 more than four thousand people were receiving financial assistance from the Joint, and many also received medicines that were unavailable in Poland.[30] Of course, under the Communist regime, the Joint had to work through officially sanctioned organizations or risk being ejected from the country. The Joint's operations were indeed closed down for political reasons for several years after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Cooperation with the authorities allowed the Joint to provide some much-needed support, but the drawback was that it appeared to be legitimizing the official organizations as the true representatives of the community. As

former dissident Stanisław Krajewski remarks: "[The Joint] wanted only to contact people who were officially supported because they said they didn't want to get into politics. But of course it meant that they *did* get into politics supporting one side."[31]

For its part, the Joint has taken steps to meet the needs of younger Jews in Poland since the fall of Communism made such efforts less politically dangerous. In 1994, the Joint sent a representative to set up a permanent office in the Union's headquarters in Warsaw. Through this office, the Joint has sponsored a new library and educational center, and has met with young Jews to discuss potential youth programs. Among other types of seminars, the Joint has organized workshops for employees of Jewish communal organizations—for example, on how to attract and organize volunteers. These programs are evaluated very positively by those who have participated in them. Helena Datner, formerly president of the Warsaw *kehillah*, remarks that "after such a seminar, I feel that what we are doing here makes sense. I returned in much better spirits than I had been in before."[32]

In addition, the Joint has initiated a restructuring of the community's system of social assistance. In the past, the Joint's policy had been to serve only Holocaust survivors. Now it has broadened its view of who may classify as needy to include those who are unemployed, mentally ill, or struggling with alcoholism, for example. On the initiative of the Joint's representative in Warsaw, Yossi Erez, a new Social Welfare Commission has been founded; its purpose, according to one observer, is to "transform 'charity' into 'social welfare.'" Though largely funded by the Joint, the Commission technically falls under the aegis of the Union. The same observer notes that "the miracle of the Social Welfare Commission is that it is from all the organizations: the ZGWŻ, the TSKŻ, the Joint...."[33] Given the tensions between the ZGWŻ and the TSKŻ, the creation of a commission in which all Jewish organizations participate is a step towards healing the rifts in the community.

The organization that appears to have done the most in terms of preparing Polish Jews to incorporate Jewish religious practice into their lives and futures is the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation. Established in the mid-1980s by Ronald Lauder, son of cosmetics magnate Estée Lauder, the Foundation opened permanent offices in Warsaw in 1992. With its lectures, youth programs, and biannual retreats, the Foundation is the first Jewish organization in post-war Poland to treat education as its primary goal. As such, it was the first to take seriously the

possibility of a future for the Polish Jewish community. For the majority of its participants, the Foundation provided the first opportunity for exploring Jewish identity from the perspective of religion. In addition to teaching the basics of Jewish religious practice, the Lauder Foundation is much praised by young Jews simply for providing them with a place to gather and meet others like themselves. Overwhelmingly, the respondents in this study credit the Lauder Foundation with the revitalization of Jewish life in Poland. In contrast to the Communist-era organizations, they feel, it provides educational and social programs that serve as preparation for the future. One young newcomer to the community even went so far as to call the Lauder Foundation the "salvation of the Polish Jews."[34]

On the other hand, some members of the community have some reservations about the Foundation stemming from the fact that it is not an indigenous organization. Rather than reflecting the needs and desires of the community, it entered into the community with the specific mission of teaching about Orthodox religious life. In this respect, it is not terribly different from the institutions that survived the postwar era by promoting the regime's views rather than the community's. The Foundation's emphasis on teaching the basics of Judaism has been welcomed, particularly since no other organization was prepared to take on the task of Jewish religious education. And yet, its uncompromising emphasis on Orthodox practices is sometimes problematic for young Polish Jews, the overwhelming majority of whom grew up in assimilated homes. Respondents of the earlier study displayed a certain ambivalence arising from the fact that Orthodoxy, possibly even in its Hasidic variant, appeared to them to be appropriate given the history of Polish Jewry, yet Orthodoxy is not really in keeping with the life-styles and philosophy of today's Polish Jews. Many respondents expressed a strong sentimental attachment to the outward form of Orthodox religious services and a fascination with Hasidism, which they believed to have great "mystical depth."[35] However, when asked to categorize themselves as Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform Jews, only two of forty respondents identified themselves as Orthodox.[36] Another four said they believed Orthodoxy to be the "correct" mode of Jewish worship, but that they themselves were not observant enough to apply the label to themselves. In their philosophy of religion, then, the respondents as a group are closer to Reform than to Orthodoxy. On the other hand, when it comes to actual practice, to services in

the synagogue, they have many reservations. Of the thirteen who categorized themselves as Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist, eight mentioned (without being asked) that they would not accept women rabbis, women reading from the Torah during services, or men and women praying together. These practices and others (real or imagined) were rejected as alien to the Polish-Jewish tradition.[37] In sum, it appears that what the majority of respondents (other than those who call themselves atheists) feel comfortable with is a religious practice that is Orthodox in form but Reform in content. The Lauder Foundation thus fulfils many of the religious needs of the Polish Jewish community, but does not entirely accurately reflect the community's existing religious tendencies.

One other organization should be mentioned in connection with the Lauder Foundation's teaching role. The monthly journal *Midrasz*, dedicated to a broad range of issues of interest to the Polish Jewish community, is not technically part of the Lauder Foundation; its funding, however, comes almost exclusively from the Foundation. Konstanty Gebert, founder and former editor of *Midrasz*, explains: "We're not affiliated with the Lauder Foundation, but obviously we maintain a kind of friendship with them." Though a publication is not an institution in the same sense as the other communal service organizations mentioned here, this particular journal was founded with the intention of educating Polish Jews about the meaning of being Jewish and thus must be considered an influence on identity. Gebert states that "Our basic idea is that we are in the business of selling *yiddishkeit* (but not any particular brand);" further, the goal of the magazine is to make readers "more Jewishly aware."[38]

INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCES ON IDENTITY

Earlier research has suggested that the communal institutions discussed above shape conceptions of identity by defining a range of options available, or models of Jewish life from which to choose. The process by which an institution influences an individual's views is complex; it involves more than the individual's choice of one option from a menu and the subsequent exclusion of all other options. Rather, the evidence suggests that the *tensions* between organizations are what shape the individual's thinking about the meaning of being Jewish. Just as two points define a line, the presence of two organizations with dif-

ferent messages about the essence of Jewish identity define a particular issue and a spectrum of possible opinion. For example, competition between the Union and Lauder Foundation, on the one hand, and the TSKŻ on the other, has meant that the question of whether Jewish identity is fundamentally religious or secular continues to be a central question of communal debate. One could argue that this question is simply "out there," existing in the abstract, independent of institutions. However, the terms used by Polish Jews in their consideration of this question seem to reflect the influence of the particular institutions they encounter. That is, the religious end of the spectrum is conceived of in terms of Orthodox religious practice as taught by the Lauder Foundation, and the secular end of the spectrum is conceived of in terms of the folkloric Yiddish culture presented by the TSKŻ. The Union, as a fundamentally religious organization which is trying to incorporate aspects of secular Jewish culture into its programming, appears to be trying to occupy a more central position along this spectrum.

Another focus of communal debate has been the question of whether Polish Jewish identity is fundamentally backward-looking, involving commemoration of the Holocaust and preservation of monuments, or rather future-oriented, involving investment in the next generation. In the past the spectrum of opinion on this "contested issue" was defined by the Union, which viewed Jewish life in Poland as reaching its end, and the Lauder Foundation, which entered the arena with the intention of reviving and maintaining Jewish life. With its transformation in 1997 (as a result of generational turnover), the Union has become committed to a Jewish future in Poland. At about the same time, a new player entered the arena. In its negotiations over the restitution of communal property, the World Jewish Relief Organization clearly took the position that the Polish Jewish community was neither authentic nor viable. For its representatives, Jewish life in Poland was clearly a thing of the past. Being Jewish in Poland meant being a Holocaust survivor. There was no room in this conception of Polish Jewishness for Jewishly committed young people who insisted upon their right to participate in negotiations.

According to the model presented here, identity construction occurs when competition between institutions makes assumptions about identity explicit and open to debate, forcing individuals to make considered choices. In the case of the Polish Jewish community, ten-

sions between institutions clearly present the individual with specific questions to consider, and in this manner help define for the individual the universe of "Jewish" issues. Given that the active Jewish community is small and relatively clearly defined, and that there are just a few highly visible institutions operating in the communal arena, it seems reasonable to expect that these institutions would have enormous influence on conceptions of Jewish identity. As sociologist Stephen Cornell puts it in discussing institutional influences on ethnicity, "control over the interpretive schemes groups use and over the realization of those schemes in action is a source of power."[39] Indeed, as we have seen, existing institutions do seem to have enormous influence in forming the most general characteristics of group members' ethnic self-conceptions (e.g. religious vs. secular, past-oriented vs. future-oriented). However, certain factors stemming from the difficulties of transforming Communist-era institutions tend to dilute this influence.

THE WEAKNESS OF POLISH JEWISH INSTITUTIONS

Generally, institutions are viewed as the inevitable formalization of the pursuit of group interests. Cornell describes this process as follows: "Given a perceived set of common interests, group members begin to organize in their pursuit.…They begin to fashion systematic, more or less formalized patterns of relationships and action—in other words, institutions—designed to solve the problems they face."[40] The sense here is that institutions arise organically, and that they accurately reflect the perceived interests of the group in question. In the case of Communist-era institutions, however, the regime's need to exert control outweighed the particular group's genuinely felt needs; as a result, institutions were disconnected from the communities they ostensibly served and failed to reflect their interests. In the post-Communist era, the primary task of new leadership is to make the communal service organizations genuinely responsive to the needs of the community. To the extent that they will be able to do so, they will strengthen institutional influences on conceptions of Jewish identity.

The chief obstacle to the transformation of the Union and other organizations, in the opinion of some community leaders, is their lack of real independence. Both Kichler, president of the Union, and Datner, formerly president of the Warsaw *kehillah*, point to the lack of independent sources of funding as the primary problem facing Polish

Jewish institutions today. When asked to discuss educational programs and other types of programs run by their organizations for the community, both were able to mention only programs initiated by outsiders to the community: the Lauder Foundation's educational programs and the Joint's new social welfare initiative, for example. "The problem today is that the Union itself has no program at all," Kichler remarks. "Education is funded by the Lauder Foundation and partly by the American Jewish Committee." Datner went on at length about a series of lectures on Jewish religious philosophy organized for the Polish Jewish community by an Israeli woman, Joy Rochwarger. "At the moment any educational programming we have is thanks to Joy," she says. "This is her effort. We are the guest."[41] Gebert puts it straightforwardly in remarking that: "We are an assisted community.…A community that does not control the source of its existence hangs on somebody's coattails, right? And it corrupts. Intellectually, morally, whatever."[42]

Clearly, these community leaders have no illusions about their lack of independence. Not surprisingly, when asked about institutional missions, foremost in their minds is achieving institutional *stability*, meaning, specifically, material independence. The outcome of negotiations on the restitution of communal Jewish property is thus of vital interest. "The restitution of property is not itself the purpose of the Union," Kichler explains, "but it is the only way to re-establish ourselves as living congregations." Because of this immediate focus on acquiring the means simply to survive in the new political circumstances, none of these leaders is able, when pressed, to articulate a specific long-term mission for their institution. Kichler reluctantly recognizes this when he remarks that "we discuss a lot but 'til now we have no results, perhaps because our efforts are too much in restitution."[43] This is not to say, of course, that they had no answer at all when asked about the institutional mission. For Krajewski, "the mission of [the Union] is to be the institutional focal point for Polish Jews." Datner adds that "we want to recreate the *kehillah* on the model of the Jewish religious community before the war: a social-organizational entity which plays many roles." For the moment, it seems that the specifics of this broad mission will be set aside until the Union and its member organizations can be established on a more secure footing.

Related to the focus on material survival is a desire to serve the broadest possible range of Polish Jewish modes of being. Kichler,

Krajewski, and Datner all expressed the strong sense that in order to achieve this goal, the popular image of the Union and the member *kehillah*s would need to be radically transformed. They recognize that the Union is still perceived by many as an exclusively religious organization, and as a strictly Orthodox one at that. Krajewski explains: "Our hope was to change this and to say that of course it has a strong religious dimension, but that other dimensions are also present and we are open to all dimensions as we are to all Jews."[44] The difficulty in bringing about this change in perception is that the new leadership hopes to represent the full spectrum of Jewish life-styles in Poland, though the extremes of this spectrum are sometimes mutually exclusive. Recognizing that some Polish Jews will stay away from any organization they perceive to be too strictly Orthodox, they are also very much aware that any attempts to liberalize the religious practices will result in the alienation of a core group of religiously observant members. "We are afraid to reform the synagogue," Datner remarks, "because then the people who are accustomed to the very traditional won't come and the synagogue will be empty. This is the real danger in a small community where there is one synagogue. Such experimentation is very dangerous."[45]

A concrete example of the difficulty of enacting any type of reform is the story of the *mekhitsa*.[46] Both Krajewski and Datner report that on December 31, 1999, at Krajewski's initiative, the Warsaw *kehillah* set up a *mekhitsa* in the Nożyk synagogue so that women could sit on the main floor, closer to the *bima*. In deference to the more traditional-minded, the upstairs gallery was kept open as well. The responses were immediate and vehement. According to Krajewski, "the fact was that for the old people the idea was too novel to consider. Of the young people, some were for it, some were against it. Everyone who opposed it had a different reason why it was not acceptable." Among the reasons given were that the cloth used for the screen was too transparent, and that between the posts it dipped below the height required by Jewish law. Discouraged by the response to this attempt to make the synagogue more welcoming to less traditional Jews, the *kehillah* board withdrew the *mekhitsa*, promising to revisit the issue after further research. The story of the *mekhitsa* points up one of the key weaknesses of Jewish communal institutions in post-Communist Poland: though the new leaders are an extraordinarily talented and Jewishly educated group

of people, they have no experience as administrators of service organizations. Chosen for their visibility as opinion leaders in the community, they are unfamiliar with institutional processes. This should not be read as a critical evaluation, however; in the circumstances of post-Communist society it is difficult to see how the situation could be otherwise. There are as yet no formal channels for training cadres for communal service, and there is no tradition of service-oriented institutions.

In the case of the *mekhitsa*, the problems arose not from a lack of commitment, but rather from the lack of a sense of process. The decision to introduce the *mekhitsa* was made initially by the three members of the Warsaw *kehillah*'s religious committee (including Krajewski) and approved by the *kehillah*'s board. Krajewski reflects in hindsight: "Some people felt there had not been enough talking about it, discussing, consulting and deciding together—which I grant. Perhaps that had not been done enough." He offers another example of the absence of established procedure in describing the Union's efforts to hire a rabbi. After the retirement of Rabbi Menachem Joskowicz, who had been brought to Poland by the Israeli government in the early 1990s, and the departure of the Lauder Foundation's Rabbi Michael Schudrich, the Union had the opportunity to select its own rabbi for the first time. One of the Union's board members had met a young rabbi who appeared to meet the requirements. As Krajewski tells it, "We hired a guy who seemed to have all the credentials. We considered only this one [candidate]. We were very naïve in a way. We had a committee but we didn't really think about the proper procedure. We heard about him, we met him, we liked him, he said all the right things...." In the end, though, it was "a disaster." After only three months, the new rabbi and the Union board mutually agreed that he would leave. Rather than beginning a new search after the first hire ended so badly, the Union turned to Schudrich—a known quantity who is familiar with the community—and asked him to return.

The lack of formalized procedure is also apparent in the Union's mechanism for responding to important events as they come up. As the institution that is designated by the government to speak for the Jewish community of Poland, one would expect the Union to be prepared to respond to any problem of concern to that community. When pressed to describe how the Union responds to current problems—for

example anti-Semitic statements made in the public arena—Union president Kichler reported that the board does not normally meet to discuss a formal response. "It is enough for two or three persons to talk about it," he explains. He does recognize, however, that it would be helpful to have a designated spokesman for the Union. Here again, the problem is lack of available cadres. "It's not because we don't want [a spokesman]," he says. "We can't get anyone to do it. We begged one person to do it, but he is busy."[47]

Given the shortage of resources, cadres, and formal procedures for decision making, it is not surprising that the handful of dedicated communal service workers in the Union respond to various needs and problems on an *ad hoc* basis. What this means, though, is that the Union and its member *kehillah*s are not setting the agenda for the Polish Jewish community; rather, their general stance is *reactive*. For example, the most important current issue for the Polish Jewish community is the restitution of communal Jewish property. In keeping with the theoretical model presented above, this question can be viewed as a controversial issue that serves as a focus for debate on an aspect of Jewish identity. According to the reports of the Polish Jews interviewed here, the representatives of the WJRO entered into negotiations with the assumption that the Polish Jewish community had no future and thus did not deserve to be a party to the talks. As Krajewski put it in a report in *Midrasz*, "They came with the conviction that we did not exist, and that the Polish government would be their partner. We did not agree to this—especially to the proposition that we do not exist."[48] Datner reports that in personal conversations with members of the Polish Jewish community, representatives of the WJRO were startlingly offensive, referring to the Union and the *kehillah*s as "*Judenräte*."[49] In stepping up to refute the international organization's belittling claims, the leaders of the *kehillah* organizations are taking the position that it is possible to be Jewish—legitimately, authentically Jewish—while living in Poland. In the context of the negotiations with the WJRO, Kichler argues: "We are the inheritors of the enormous legacy of the Jews in Poland before the war."[50] These communal leaders are taking a strong position on the question of what it means to be Jewish in Poland today. It is the WJRO, however, not the Union, which through its actions has placed the question on the agenda.[51]

THE INFLUENCE OF OPINION LEADERS ON CONCEPTIONS OF JEWISH IDENTITY

Though the indigenous Polish Jewish institutions may not be taking the lead in setting the communal agenda, it cannot be denied that there are highly visible opinion leaders among their cadres. This handful of influential members of the community, who were sought out for interviews for this research project, clearly has an influence on the communal agenda. Perhaps the best example of the ability to influence group dialogue on identity is a series of articles that appeared in the pages of *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Midrasz*.[52] In addition to writing an article on why he feels that Orthodox religious practices are right for the Polish Jewish community, Gebert led discussions on this question in an open community forum. In describing the debate in a later interview, Gebert explained, "The point I'm making is not normative but descriptive. We are a small and assimilated community. Outside of a religious identity there is simply no foundation for thriving Jewish culture. This is a historical development."[53] Naturally, there were those in the community who disagreed with him—even vehemently at times. The point here is that Gebert's personal stature within the community made it possible for him to focus communal attention on the question and to provide a forum for debate on this particular aspect of Jewish identity. In this case, then, an individual rather than an institution has exercised influence over the communal agenda.

The power of a handful of individuals to influence conceptions of Jewish identity is apparent in other spheres as well; these people are visible not just within the Jewish community but also in the broader Polish arena. For example, on one night in March 2000, during the two-week period when data were being gathered for this paper, Helena Datner was giving an interview on one Polish television station while Stanisław Krajewski was simultaneously giving one on another national station. The subject of discussion was the pope's historic visit to Israel specifically, and, more generally, Catholic-Jewish relations. From the point of view of the model of ethnic identity presented here, what is interesting about such appearances is that these individuals are sought out not necessarily as representatives of particular communal institutions, but as known and respected experts on matters related to Jews. Krajewski appears to be identified sometimes as the co-chairman of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews, and sometimes in his capac-

ity as a Union board member.[54] In his case, as in Gebert's, it is clear that his stature as an opinion leader and representative of the community attaches to him personally, and not to his position in the Union. Both Krajewski and Gebert write frequently on Polish Jewish topics, and in this way exercise influence not just over the communal agenda but over Polish public opinion as well.[55] Datner recognizes the relative strength of personalities and weakness of institutions in remarking that: "We don't ask for Polish TV to come to us. They are looking for someone to comment on something and they can find us in the *kehillah*.... And they are asking for us as a person, happily or unhappily, not as a representative of the *kehillah*.... They contact persons—not organizations, but persons."[56]

Finally, now that Rabbi Michael Schudrich has returned to Poland, his name must be added to the short list of those whose opinions carry great weight within the Polish Jewish community. Although Schudrich is foreign, and like all community leaders has both loyal followers and detractors, he is generally credited with reviving the Polish Jewish community in the 1990s in his capacity as director of the Lauder Foundation. In 2000 he returned to Poland as an employee of the Union.[57] Throughout his years of service in Poland, he has been highly visible, both as a religious teacher within the Jewish community and as a representative of the Jewish community to broader Polish society. For many of the young people who began to explore their Jewish roots after the fall of Communism in 1989, Schudrich's steady emphasis on Orthodoxy and strict religious observance has been the primary influence in the formation of their Jewish identities. But in this case as well, the individual's personal authority is separable from his formal organizational position; Schudrich's influence is equally strong regardless of whether he is an employee of the Lauder Foundation or the Union.

CONCLUSION: ADJUSTMENTS TO THE MODEL

According to the model presented above, communal institutions influence conceptions of ethnic identity by presenting a model of what it means to belong to the particular ethnic group they claim to represent; the competing messages of different institutions bring to light areas of disagreement, and it is around these contested issues that communal discussion—and thus identity formation—takes place. The

influence of institutions on ethnic identity is stronger to the extent that they can clearly articulate their messages and place issues on the public agenda for discussion. In the case of the Polish Jewish community, it appears that the central indigenous organization, the Union of Jewish Religious Congregations, is still too much in a state of flux to articulate its mission. Rather than actively setting forth issues for discussion, the Union is still for the most part reacting to problems that have arisen in the course of the transition from a Communist organization focused on limited, "safe" issues to a genuinely responsive communal service organization. Though it was generally evaluated as progress, the generational turnover within the Union in 1997, which led to a reconsideration of the institution's fundamental orientation, points up the structural weakness of the institution. That is, the existing formalized procedures were not entrenched enough to preserve the stated mission of the organization in the face of extensive personnel turnover. Among the problems faced by the reconstituted organization are a dearth of experienced community service cadres and an absence of formalized procedures for making decisions and responding to problems. For the moment, it seems, the Union's mode of operation is more crisis management than agenda setting or pursuit of clearly defined interests.

However, as we have seen, there are opinion leaders within the community who exert influence over group conceptions of ethnic identity by placing issues in the public forum; it seems, then, that the ability to influence the agenda attaches not so much to institutions as to certain individuals. The model must be corrected to incorporate this very important influence on conceptions of ethnicity. In sum, these findings suggest that in small communities, *leading personalities* may exert an influence that is equivalent to that of formal institutions in larger communities. Further, it may be that this is true particularly in the context of post-Communist societies, where ethnic organizations are in the process of transition and may be generally weak. This is not to say, of course, that the influence of institutions is negligible. As we have seen, the Jewish communal institutions operating in Poland today represent a range of views of what it means to be Jewish. Competition between them forces individual Polish Jews to constantly reconsider their options and choices. The point is that in this small community, there are a few individuals who have the status and authority to frame the questions that are relevant to the community and to

focus attention on them. According to our model, it is this ability to set the communal agenda that constitutes real influence over conceptions of ethnic identity.

NOTES

1 Research for this article was supported by a grant from the International Research and Exchanges Board, with funds provided by the US Department of State (Title VIII program) and the National Endowment for the Humanities. None of these organizations is responsible for the views expressed.

2 From Frederik Barth's introduction to Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Oslo, 1969), 11.

3 Talcott Parsons, "Some Theoretical Considerations on the Nature and Trends of Change of Ethnicity," in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 60.

4 Barth, 9.

5 John W. Bennett, ed., *The New Ethnicity: Perspectives from Ethnology* (St. Paul, 1975), 6.

6 Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (New York, 1985), 16.

7 *Ibid.*, 21.

8 Fran Markowitz, *A Community in Spite of Itself: Soviet Jewish Émigrés in New York* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1993), 260.

9 The "core set of issues" is not enough by itself to define the term "ethnic group." Many types of groups have a set of issues considered important by virtually all members. What distinguishes the ethnic group from other groups is the belief that the members share a common ancestry. The definition of an ethnic group, then, for the purposes of this study, is as follows: an ethnic group is a group of people who subjectively identify themselves as members according to the criterion of ancestry and who identify a particular set of issues as "their own."

10 On this point see Georg Simmel, *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*, trans. Kurt Wolff and Reinhard Bendix (New York: The Free Press, 1955), 43–5. I am grateful to Marius Gudonis for drawing my attention to Simmel's argument.

11 Claire Rosenson, "Jewish Identity Construction in Contemporary Poland: The Dialogue Between Generations," *East European Jewish Affairs*, 26:2, 67–78.

12 Claire Rosenson, "Jewish Identity Construction in Contemporary Poland: Influences and Alternatives in Ethnic Renewal," Ph. D. thesis, (University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, 1997).

13 Konstanty Gebert, "Jewish Identities in Poland: New, Old, and Imaginary," in Jonathan Webber, ed., *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994), 165.
14 *Ibid.*, 165.
15 Interview with Teresa O., age 24, 1994.
16 See Rosenson, "Inter-Group Interactions and the Construction of Jewish Identity," chap. 5 in "Jewish Identity Construction in Contemporary Poland: Influences and Alternatives in Ethnic Renewal," 117–46.
17 *Kalendarz Zydowski 1988–89* (Warsaw: Zwiazek Religijny Wyznania Mojzeszowego) 192.
18 *Ibid.*, 188.
19 Interview with Janina B., age 22, 1994.
20 The report does not distinguish between young people who are *Halachically* Jewish (i.e. through their mothers) and those who are Jewish on their fathers' side only.
21 *Kalendarz Zydowski 1992–93*, 158.
22 Konstanty Gebert, "Mlodzi w srednim wieku," *Midrasz* 1997:2, 4.
23 Interview with Union President Jerzy Kichler, March 27, 2000.
24 Interview with Stanisław Krajewski, March 21, 2000.
25 Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory: The Jew in Contemporary Poland* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 51.
26 Jaff Schatz, *The Generation: the Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 233–4.
27 Interview with Stanisław Krajewski, September 13, 1994.
28 Rosenson, "Jewish Identity Construction in Contemporary Poland: Influences and Alternatives in Ethnic Renewal," 90.
29 *Ibid.*
30 *Kalendarz Zydowski 1988–89*, 188.
31 Interview with Stanisław Krajewski, September 13, 1994.
32 Interview with Helena Datner, former president of the Warsaw *Kehillah*, March 27, 2000.
33 The person who gave this interview (March 22, 2000) on the workings of the new Social Welfare Committee wishes to remain anonymous.
34 Interview with Józef D., age 24, 1994.
35 Interview with Artur S., age 37, 1994.
36 The breakdown is as follows: Do you consider yourself to be Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or perhaps something else? (Total n=40): Orthodox (n=2); Believe Orthodoxy is right, but cannot claim it personally (n=4); Conservative (n=3); Reform (n=9); Reconstructionist (n=1); Atheist (n=8); Don't Know (n=13).
37 Rosenson, "Jewish Identity Construction," 99.
38 Interview with *Midrasz* founder (and until early 2001, chief editor) Konstanty Gebert, March 29, 2000.

39 Stephen Cornell, "The variable ties that bind: content and circumstance in ethnic processes," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 19:2 (April 1996), 281.
40 *Ibid.*, 275.
41 Interview with Helena Datner, March 27, 2000.
42 Interview with Konstanty Gebert, March 29, 2000.
43 Interview with Union President Jerzy Kichler, March 27, 2000.
44 Interview with Stanisław Krajewski, March 21, 2000.
45 Interview with Helena Datner, March 27, 2000.
46 In Orthodox synagogues, men and women do not sit together. Traditionally, in East European synagogues (including the Nożyk Synagogue in Warsaw), women were seated in an upstairs gallery overlooking (but removed from) the *bima*, where the services were led. In some synagogues, women are seated on one side of the hall and men on the other, with a divider, or *mekhitsa*, in between.
47 Interview with Union President Jerzy Kichler, March 27, 2000. I suspect that the person in question is Stanisław Krajewski.
48 Stanisław Krajewski, "Nareście," *Midrasz* 7–8 (39–40) (July–August 2000), 61.
49 Interview with Helena Datner, March 27, 2000. This is, of course, a reference to the Jewish organizations formed by the Nazis in the ghettos during the Holocaust. It is difficult to imagine a more disparaging and painful way to refer to today's institutions.
50 Interview with Union President Jerzy Kichler, March 27, 2000.
51 In June 2000 the Union entered into an agreement with the WJRO and the Polish government to establish the Foundation for the Preservation of the Jewish Heritage in Poland (*Fundacja Ochrony Dziedzictwa Żydów w Polsce*) to jointly deal with restitution issues.
52 See Szoszana Ronen, "Jak w Polsce być Żydem," *Gazeta wyborcza,* September 8, 1999: 18–19; Konstanty Gebert, "Proszę nie urządzać nam życia," *Gazeta wyborcza*, September 23, 1999: 16–17; Kazimiera Szczuka, "Będziemy się wtrącać," *Gazeta wyborcza,* October 5, 1999: 20–21, 23; and Piotr Paziński, "Kafka ważniejszy od Tory?," *Midrasz* 1(31) November 1999: 39–41.
53 Interview with Konstanty Gebert, March 29, 2000.
54 See, for example, Steven Erlanger, "Soul-Searching at Another Polish Massacre Site," *The New York Times*, April 19, 2001; Monika Scislowska, "Nazi-Type Ammunition Found in Grave," *Associated Press*, June 6, 2001. In both of these articles, Krajewski is identified as co-chairman of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews. See also Ruth E. Gruber, "Unhappy with Massacre Memorial, Jews Planning Their Own Ceremony," *JTA Electronic Edition*, June 28, 2001. Here he is identified as a board member of the Union.
55 Krajewski is the author of, among other things, a monograph titled *Żydzi—Judaizm—Polska* [Jews—Judaism—Poland] (Warsaw, 1997).
56 Interview with Helena Datner, March 27, 2000.
57 I am not privy to the details of Schudrich's employment contract, but according to several sources, Schudrich's salary is paid at least in part by the Lauder Foundation.

CHAPTER 14

Jewish Identity in the United States and Israel

Charles S. Liebman

INTRODUCTION

Strong Jewish identity, for the purposes of this chapter, is understood as the effort to express the Judaic tradition in one's own life (living one's life in accordance with Jewish rhythms), and a strong sense of attachment to the Jewish people, leading to a concern with their welfare. These components are theoretically measurable and allow us to compare levels of Jewish identity among individuals, among communities, and over time. Although they are analytically distinct they tend to be closely related. In fact, at least for the past three generations in the United States, and in Israel today, observance of Jewish law (religion) and commitment to the Jewish people (ethnicity) are correlated. This is especially true of those who are strongly observant of Jewish ritual. They tend to be the most strongly committed to Jewish peoplehood. (Arguably, the ultra-Orthodox are an exception). More recently, as a result of the decline of secular Zionism as an ideology competing with religion for hegemony in the understanding of what it means to be Jewish, those who remain strongly committed to Jewish peoplehood tend to be those who are also strongly committed to ritual observance. There are, of course, exceptions.

Many, if not most, students of contemporary Jewish life in the United States are not ritually observant but do see themselves as strongly committed to Jewish peoplehood (ethnicity). Hence, the fact that religion and ethnicity are correlated is an unpleasant finding as far as they are concerned. My own suspicion is that some social scientists and some communal leaders have sought to muddy a clarity that, heretofore, existed in the definition of Jewish identity and the measures of Jewish identity. They do so, I believe, because the declines in the level of Jewish identity, at least in the US, challenge them and their values at both the personal and the institutional level. However, none

of this relieves us of asking how Jewish identity expresses itself at lower levels of Jewish commitment, where associations between ethnicity and religion are less powerful—where we find, for example, a moderate level of commitment to ritual observance but an absence of commitment to Jewish peoplehood or a moderate level of ethnic commitment but virtually no commitment to ritual observance. We need to look carefully at the measures we use. Sweeping observations may be correct but measuring Jewish identity is no simple matter and, as I have noted elsewhere, is the subject of serious debate.[1] Nevertheless, when we observe any given community of Jews over time or when we compare one Jew with another, we are able to make fair judgments about relative levels of Jewish identity. Common sense and judicious observation provide us with a generally accurate picture of changes taking place in Jewish identity.

I am more confident about my reflections regarding US Jewry than I am with regard to Israel. The topic of the Jewish identity of Israeli Jews has engaged fewer scholars and there are fewer studies of Israeli Jewish identity. Furthermore, most of the studies that do exist are written from a different perspective than studies of Jewish identity in the Diaspora. There are different types of studies of Israeli Jewish identity. An analysis of these studies and a comparison between these studies and studies of Jewish identity outside Israel would yield important insights. What I say here is a result of first impressions rather than extended study.

Studies of Jewish identity in the US tend to focus on the issue of the intensity or strength of Jewish identity among individual Jews; on whether it is declining or expanding. The question of "assimilation" generally hovers in the background. The specter of assimilation does not haunt studies of Jewish identity in Israeli society. Most studies of Israeli Jewish identity tend to focus on Jewish identity as a handle by which to understand other aspects of Israeli society and politics. The impetus often comes from an exploration of tensions between religious and secular Jews or of attitudes toward the democratic versus the Jewish nature of the state and its implications for Arab-Jewish relations or even Israeli-Palestinian relations. As these issues have gained wider currency in the past decades, studies of Jewish identity along these lines have multiplied.[2] But they do not facilitate comparisons between Jewish identity in Israel and the US or for that matter other Diaspora communities.

The studies that most closely resemble those conducted abroad were pioneered by Simon Herman, who sought to measure the religious behavior and beliefs of Israeli Jews.[3] However, unlike the American studies, Herman also asks respondents about the strength of their Jewish as compared to their Israeli identity.[4] I know of no comparable studies in the US. Perhaps such questions would be deemed objectionable on the grounds that the results, indeed the very posing of the question, raises the notion of dual loyalty—a fear that no longer assumes the massive importance that it once did on the Jewish public agenda, but still remains a sensitive issue.[5]

In this chapter, my observations about Jewish identity in Israel and the US are painted in broad strokes. There are many exceptions to the generalizations made here. I try to describe the forest but the description not only overlooks individual trees but even clumps of trees. For example, the paper ignores those groups of Jews in both the US and Israel who, contrary to developments described here, have strengthened their commitment to Jewish continuity and survival. The assimilation of an individual or the acculturation of a communal leadership often generates a counter-reaction. All I can hope to do in this chapter is briefly describe trends in Jewish identity in the US and in Israel by focusing on the issues that other authors in this volume address: the nature of ethnic and religious boundaries, who sets them and how they change, the relationship of ethnicity and religion, and how ethnic and religious minorities relate to the state and the wider society. This last question assumes, of course, a peculiar twist in Israel. Since my discussion touches on some of the questions more fully than on others, I provide a capsule response to those questions I deem most relevant at the conclusion of each section.

JEWISH IDENTITY IN THE UNITED STATES

The systematic study of American Jews and their Jewish identity originates with the work of Marshall Sklare, who began publishing his studies in the 1950s. Articles that explored specific aspects of Jewish identity and behavior[6] and some studies of specific Jewish communities were published as early as the late 19th century, but Sklare was the first to undertake the study of American Jewry, with a special emphasis on Jewish identity, in systematic fashion. His keen intelligence combined with his knowledge and understanding of American Jews and

an ability to disassociate his own values from his scholarly research was unparalleled. His first book, *Conservative Judaism: An American Religious Movement*,[7] described the Conservative movement and, *inter alia*, the mass of American Jews as possessing a Jewish identity that was basically ethnic. Although one can always find greater emphasis on one or the other component, religion and ethnicity are intertwined in the Jewish tradition. The ties had begun to unravel in Western Europe in the 19th century but this was less true in Eastern Europe, home of the masses of Jews who emigrated to the United States between the late 19th century and 1924. However, the more religious East Europeans, to whom the observance of religious commandments was a primary factor in their lives, were least likely to immigrate to the United States and if they did they were the most likely to return to Europe once they saw how inhospitable the cultural climate was to strict observance. The vast majority—those who did immigrate and who remained in the US—were by and large a highly adaptable group. They gave primacy to their ethnic identity but, over time, they learned to translate their ethnic identity into religious terms since America was far more hospitable to immigrant groups who insisted on differentiating themselves religiously than to immigrant groups who insisted on defining themselves ethnically. In other words, American Jews adopted a new meaning system, probably in an unselfconscious manner, which suited the cultural climate of the United States, at least until the late 1960s. In the last two decades of the 20th century, especially in the 1990s, this has changed.

Sklare's conceptualization of the basic nature of American Jewish identity in the first half of the 20th century as ethnicity wrapped in a religious package may be overstated. It may be a consequence of research carried out in the period following World War II and the Holocaust and under the impact of Zionism on American Jews. There is every reason to re-examine the question from a historical perspective. But memory alone—my own and those of colleagues my age and even somewhat younger, whether we grew up in Orthodox or Conservative homes, or of course in circles with no synagogal affiliation—argues strongly that ethnicity and not religion was the driving force of Jewish identity. This may be less true of those who grew up in Reform homes. Many if not most Jews grew up in neighborhoods with substantial Jewish populations and a variety of local Jewish institutions, from bakeries and delicatessens to synagogues. Until World War II,

the pervasive presence of anti-Semitism in higher education and professional and social settings, as well as the physical threats to Jewish survival in so many parts of the world, resulted in Jews looking to other Jews for assistance. They tended, therefore, to follow the educational and occupational paths set by other Jews. But whereas it was ethnicity, not religion, that energized American Jews, it was religion, not ethnicity, that provided the cloak under which American Jews presented themselves to the American public.

Under these conditions, with Judaism understood as a matter of birth rather than choice, and more disadvantages than advantages accruing to being Jewish, there was little debate over Jewish boundaries. Marginal cases always existed and they are interesting cases. But by and large, subjective definitions of oneself as a Jew coincided with definitions that both the Jewish world and the non-Jewish world offered. These boundaries, never officially defined by either the Jewish or the non-Jewish community, least of all by the American government, were rarely, to the best of my knowledge, the subject of dispute. The exceptions were, as indicated above, in marginal cases: high profile non-Jews (often entertainers) who converted to Judaism for the sake of a marriage and were subsequently divorced from their Jewish partner (Marilyn Monroe); low status groups who claimed Jewish ancestry (the Black Jews); or high status individuals who were baptized or, short of being baptized, denied any tie to the Jewish people (Walter Lippman). This condition was coincident with clear lines of demarcation between Jewishness and non-Jewishness and reinforced very low rates of intermarriage. Although some attention was directed to a rise in intermarriage rates in the 1960s, rates among Jews remained extraordinarily low compared to other minority groups. The argument that ethnicity rather than religion drove this opposition to intermarriage is supported by the fact that in popular Jewish parlance the term intermarriage meant a marriage between a born Jew and a born non-Jew regardless of whether or not the non-Jew had converted. Jews wondered why a non-Jew would want to convert to Judaism. The convert remained an outsider since Judaism was basically a matter of birth. Conversion, in the minds of Jews, took place only for the sake of marriage, most often to placate Jewish parents. The notion of conversion based on religious conviction was foreign to the thinking of most Jews. In addition, a good part of the opposition to intermarriage stemmed, I suspect, from the Jewish parents' sense that they would be uncomfortable interrelating

with the parents of the non-Jewish spouse.[8] Despite their increasing acceptance in the business and professional world, Jews were still not accepted, nor did they feel comfortable, in the social presence of Gentiles.

The foregoing is misleading if it suggests that American Jews sought to isolate themselves from the non-Jewish world. On the contrary. They were anxious to enter that world, although they assumed that the price for such entry would not include surrender of their Jewish identity. That, after all, is what they thought made America different and a true paradise for Jews. Nothing reflects this orientation better than the political proclivities of American Jews.

A pure survival strategy would dictate that Jews and certainly Jewish organizations abstain from political activity that does not affect them. If Jews did engage in political activity other than in defense of Jewish interests, a strategy of survival would dictate that they do so as individuals and not under a Jewish banner. Furthermore, if Jewish organizations were to engage in politics, other things being equal, it would make sense for them to seek a platform attractive to most other Americans. But American Jews have not done so. Indeed, in the political realm, especially in matters of religion and state, Jews behave like missionaries seeking to coerce unbelievers to the true faith.[9]

Since the time of FDR and the New Deal, but especially since World War II, Jews have been deeply committed to the political agenda of American liberalism. In fact, they did as much as any group in the US to shape that agenda. Its major planks included strict separation of religion and state, support for the civil rights of minority groups (when civil rights was a major issue in American politics), government intervention in the economy (this is less true today), and a latitudinarian policy, i.e., an emphasis on individual rights in matters involving abortion, sex, and pornography. American Jews insist that their liberalism is an extension of their Jewish tradition. It is clear to me that the liberal political agenda is not an extension of the Jewish tradition nor is there a relationship between adherence to political liberalism and adherence to the Jewish heritage. It seems equally clear to me that the liberal political agenda, most especially the emphasis on individual autonomy, undermines Judaism and Jewish continuity. Nevertheless, Jews believe the opposite to be true. In fact, the commitment to liberalism is the major tie, in the minds of many Jews, that links them to Judaism.[10] In pressing the liberal agenda, American Jews are con-

vinced that they are pressing a just and fair agenda of benefit to the vast majority of Americans, whether other Americans know it or not. Liberalism, in the eyes of American Jews, is the universalistic message of Judaism and is at least equal in importance if not superior in importance, to any aspect of Jewish particularism.[11] This commitment to liberalism runs very deep. It is less true of Orthodox Jews but my own impression is that only the ultra-Orthodox reject it. Modern Orthodox Jews whom I know, with a few exceptions, support the liberal agenda with only a drop less enthusiasm than the non-Orthodox. (See Barry Kosmin's chapter for a comparison with British Jewry).

Commitment to liberalism has remained central to the Jewish identity of many American Jews. But other aspects of Jewish identity have undergone dramatic change. These changes are related, as both cause and effect, to the personalization and privatization of religion in the United States, a phenomenon well documented among non-Jews[12] and vividly illustrated in a number of studies of American Jews.[13] It is best described as the notion that it is proper and even desirable for an individual to construct his/her own pattern of religious belief and behavior choosing only that which suits the individual. Personalization of religion has been accompanied by greater emphasis on the spiritual quality of one's life. In the case of Jews, the immediate consequence has been a radical decline in ethnic commitments (feelings of attachment to the Jewish people, concern with Israel or the fate of Jews outside one's own community),[14] and a decline in the importance of the systematic observance of Jewish ritual viewed as a mandate imposed from without. It does not mean a decline in the observance of one or more rituals which the individual finds personally appealing. This form of observance may well have increased.[15]

Personalism or privatization, as these terms suggest, focus religious life on the actual experiences of the individual person. Even when the experience takes place in the company of others, indeed, requires others for its consummation, it remains the individual's experience of the group encounter that is central. "Immediacy," "authenticity," "the here and now," the "face-to-face" encounter, the "actually lived moment," the "meaningful experience"—all the verbal insignia of personalism—run against the grain of responsibilities to either an abstract collectivity or to an impersonal code of do's and don'ts. If it is not meaningful, there is little sense in doing it, customary duties notwithstanding.

Hence, the personalist "life-style" is indeed a "style," that is, a form of life given to sharp fluctuations and not a structure that is stable and continuous. It tends to be constituted of episodic and exceptional experiences that light up the workaday and lackluster routine, rather than of a fixed position that encourages disciplined regularity or patterned coherence. Jewishness has increasingly become an acquired taste, not a historical obligation. Personalism and privatization detach individuals from the larger social collectives of which they are a part, release them from the binding duties these collectives impose, and lead them toward self-directed lives that pursue rare moments of meaning and growth. It should be stressed, however, that these "moments" might constitute periods of intense involvement. Folk festivals, musical happenings, even emotional prayer services evoke strong impressions among participants, however episodic these impressions may be. They are not, in my opinion, signals of Jewish revival, although some observers have chosen to interpret them as such.

This privatization process takes place in an open, universalizing, almost syncretistic context. Although many Jews feel far more "spiritual" and are far more open to "spiritual" moods than their parents—for example younger Jews are more likely to attest to a belief in God than older Jews—spiritual matters are not necessarily associated in their minds with Jewish matters. The synagogue and even attendance at *Shabbat* services has remained an important institution for many Jews, but it is the communal and social aspects of the synagogue that attracts the "worshippers."[16] Under these circumstances, barriers to intermarriage are rapidly disappearing. From this personalist perspective, true love, the ultimate immediate personal experience, far supercedes the historical weight of ethnic ties. Indeed, to the degree that love needs to overcome obstacles (ethnic or religious) in order to be realized, it is considered the more authentic and marvelous.

This is well illustrated in the year 2000 survey of American Jews conducted by the American Jewish Committee.[17] Only 30 percent of those surveyed agreed that "it would pain me if my child married a Gentile;" only 12 percent voiced strong disapproval of intermarriage (an additional 30 percent said they were disappointed by intermarriage); and half the respondents indicated that "it is racist to oppose Jewish-Gentile marriages." What all this points to is the fact that not only are boundaries between Jews and non-Jews rapidly disappearing,

but that the maintenance of such boundaries is no longer considered legitimate. What is taking place among a majority of American Jews is a process of group assimilation. Assimilation is not simply a process whereby individuals distance themselves further and further from their own roots. It is also a process in which the group increasingly internalizes conceptions that prevail in the general culture about itself, about others, and about God. This form of acculturation and coalescence is probably inevitable in an open society. Whatever may be said on its behalf, it certainly threatens the survival and continuity of a recognizably Jewish community in the United States.

To briefly summarize the answers to the questions posed by this volume:

1. Jews in the US set the boundaries to their community. Non-Jews seem rather indifferent to the question of who is or is not a Jew. In the US, unlike in Israel, there are no governmental constraints or even guidelines in this matter. At no time in the history of American Jewry have the boundaries defining who is a Jew been more open and less clear. The rising rate of intermarriage means that children raised in such homes increasingly identify themselves as half-Jewish or partially Jewish. Furthermore, whereas in the past non-Jews who married Jews were generally lapsed or religiously indifferent Christians, this is no longer the case. The Jewish community is increasingly inclusive and uncomfortable with the notion of boundaries. This is, in part, a function of a climate of opinion which has made inclusivity into a virtue and exclusivity into a cardinal sin. In addition, parents and grandparents have a strong desire to feel that their offspring are Jewish. Rabbis and communal leaders want the money and the membership numbers that the half-Jews, or partial Jews, bring with them and they fear the consequences of offending intermarried constituents or the families of intermarried Jews. Given the breakdown of communal norms which heretofore rejected intermarriage, the community, including most synagogues, has no patience with leaders who voice objections to intermarriage, much less act upon their convictions.

2. Boundary changes take place in accordance with changes in the urban middle-class cultural and political climate in the United States. Jews are very much a part of this cultural and political climate and generally adopt its tenets without being conscious of the impact of these changes on their own assumptions and behavior. Nothing, in

my opinion, is more destructive of Jewish life than the assumption that the regnant cultural climate in the United States is necessarily consistent with Jewish continuity and survival.

3. Religious observance and ethnicity remain closely intertwined at the level of deepest commitment but the religion-ethnicity package has unraveled at lower levels of Jewish commitment. It is, however, significant, that many Jews insist on redefining what it means to be a good Jew with emphasis on subjective factors such as feeling Jewish. The fact that they bother to do so, however mistaken the observer may deem this redefinition, points to continued vitality in Jewish life.

JEWISH IDENTITY IN ISRAEL

Conditions in Israeli society in the last few decades would lead observers to anticipate a radical decline in Jewish identity; to anticipate that a growing number of Israeli Jews would feel increasingly detached from the Jewish people and less anxious to express the Jewish tradition in their own lives. There is an abundance of anecdotal evidence to support this. A recent incident illustrates what seems to be happening to the Jewishness that once characterized Israeli society. Many organizations, institutions, and politicians and other public figures send holiday greetings to their members and constituents twice a year. Greetings on the Jewish New Year are most common, but Passover greetings are not unusual. A few days before Passover my wife and I received three greetings on the same day. One was from an Arab, a student in my department who is an official in an Arab town. The printed card wished the recipient a happy Passover (*hag Pesah sameah*). My Internet provider also emailed wishes for a happy Passover to subscribers. The third greeting came from the local branch of the Civilian Guard (*Mishmar Ezrahi*), the civilian arm of the police department in which my wife is very active. The Passover greeting card she and all other members of the *Mishmar Ezrahi* in our town received wished them a "happy spring festival" (*hag aviv sameah*). Although the holiday of spring is one of the names given to the Passover holiday, one almost never heard it used in the recent past as a form of greeting. I interpret its usage as an effort to neutralize the overt Jewishness and religiousness of the traditional Passover greetings. I find its current usage (for example in radio greetings from the National Health

Insurance system (*Kupat Holim L'eumi*) suggestive of developments taking place in Israeli society.

These developments owe their origin to a number of interrelated and reinforcing factors. They include:

1. The influx of FSU *olim* (estimates are that whereas up to a third of those who arrived in the early 1990s were non-Jewish, over half of the recent arrivals are non-Jews). The majority of the Jewish *olim* seem to show little interest in Judaism and Jewish culture.

2. The influx of foreign workers. Most have yet to form families. Nevertheless, their children constitute a majority in some elementary school classes in south Tel Aviv. The presence of guest-workers from Thailand, Romania, the Philippines, and African countries (unofficial estimates place their number at more than a quarter of a million, of whom an estimated 90,000 are in Israel illegally) has altered the human horizon that was, at one time, almost uniformly Jewish.

3. The disintegrating sense of community among the masses of veteran Israeli Jews due in part to the differentiated impact that globalization and the growth of high-tech industries have had on Israeli society. The process has enriched one segment and impoverished (at least in relative terms) another.

4. The loss of legitimacy that once accrued to the "nation state," a point to be elaborated upon below.

5. The declining capacity of the state to control and supervise the process of socialization as a consequence of greater privatization of the educational system, the increase in the number of television channels—most of them carrying foreign programs—and, of course, the Internet.

6. Perhaps most important of all, the penetration of a consumer culture into Israeli society and the elevation of individual aspirations, individual autonomy, and individual self-fulfillment to the level of ultimate values.

It would be quite surprising if these factors did not undermine Jewish identity and a sense of Jewish cohesiveness in Israel. A colleague and I have written about this.[18] We noted that *kashrut*-observing restaurants are harder and harder to find in resort sections of Tel Aviv or Netanya. The immigration of ex-Soviet immigrants in recent years has also meant the opening of about 600 pork-selling shops around Israel to meet their demands. In line with dominant Western proclivities, indi-

vidualist and careerist trends have intensified greatly and the readiness of the young to sacrifice their interests for the sake of the community is increasingly unusual. At the fringes, Christmas parties, replete with Santas and trees, have become quite the vogue. Whether in terms of dress, daily habits, the music that is listened to, food that is eaten, TV programs that are watched, leisure activities that are pursued, shopping malls that are frequented (and so on), it becomes more and more difficult to distinguish between the lives of many Israelis—especially those in the younger age cohorts—and their counterparts abroad.

Individualist careerism and dwindling commitment to national causes are perhaps nowhere better epitomized than in the decline in motivation to serve in crack combat units in the Israeli army. This unprecedented phenomenon is so arresting that students of Israel's strategic position in the Middle East have begun to argue that it must be factored into the country's ability to maintain its security posture over time. Israeli society, one analyst wrote, "displays signs of fatigue and is more reluctant to pay the price for the protracted conflict with the Arabs."[19] Moreover, so far as we can tell, the chic qualities associated with Western practices are distinctly more attractive than those of Jewish or Israeli origin among large parts of the secular youth. (For example, disco is far "cooler" than the traditional Israeli evenings of communal singing.) This raises the troubling question: Can Jewish secularism, with its openness to world culture, resist assimilation into the global village?

This is a speculative question, one that cannot be settled conclusively by simply compiling empirical data. One arresting method of advancing the inquiry is to focus on that group of Israeli publicists, scholars, and ideologues who, to one degree or another, repudiate the Jewish character of Israel. Far from representing a problem for them, the de-Judaization of Israel lies at the heart of their program. To be sure, this group of protagonists, who go under the catch-all and somewhat misleading label "post-Zionists," represent only a minuscule fraction of Israeli public opinion. The post-Zionists are important not because they are poised imminently to capture the Israeli mainstream, but because they present, with verve and without apology, a position that is already latent in Israeli society.[20]

Israel has, in large part, already become a "post-Zionist" state. Even if the doctrine of post-Zionism is disdained in principle, the actual world many Israelis inhabit has long ago left recognizable Zion-

ist substance behind. Zionist discourse is rarely heard. When it is, it rings strangely outmoded and dowdy, perhaps even somewhat comic. The image of the *halutz* is only minimally more relevant to the Israeli teenager of the 1990s than the Western pioneers of the United States are to their American counterparts. Zionist youth movements—the erstwhile hothouses for ideological self-dedication—have turned into nondescript social clubs that are avoided by those young people concerned with cutting a dashing figure. Hebrew is giving way to English in advertising promotions because the latter radiates a worldly aura which the former does not.

Post-Zionism as an idea system may, therefore, be understood as a radical extrapolation of post-Zionism as a social reality—one that carries existing elements to their logical and psychological conclusions. If there is truth in this analysis, a careful study of post-Zionism's central tenets is likely to handsomely reward the effort. It promises to sharpen our ability to assess Israeli Jewish durability.

Not surprisingly, many post-Zionists applaud the advent of Westernism and the erosion of Jewish particularism it brings in its wake. One respected journalist, who is broadly sympathetic to post-Zionist themes, expressed satisfaction with the growing attenuation of Jewish identity. Finally, he asserted triumphantly: "…we are ridding ourselves of that old bother; clarifying our national identity. In the past, so many efforts were made to examine what it is, what happened to it, how it was formed, whether it exists at all, and if it exists why isn't it visible… It now appears that just as this old question threatened to bore us to death, it has begun to be resolved." Commentators, he goes on to say,… "…have noted the growing tendency to move from nationalist slogans to simple individualism…. The lust for life…is not the self-destructive inclination of a declining nation, as the ideologists of the right see it…. Madonna and Big Mac are only the outer periphery of a far-reaching process whose basis is not American influence but a growing tendency throughout the West, especially among its young people…. Israeli young people are naturally gravitating to these fresh tendencies—they are not aping the West, they are part of it. Their new forms of cultural consumption and leisure activities have become supra-national. This is true of popular music, movies, trips abroad, dress, and even the style of speech." Those who wring their hands over these changes, he says, are becoming increasingly anachronistic.[21]

In the eyes of many secular-cosmopolitan Israeli Jews, their coun-

try is being hijacked by a band of crude obscurantists, relics from the Jewish past. Jewishness, so recently emancipated and brought into the enlightened ambit of Western history, has risen, in its most primitive form, out of the dark corners of history, to threaten them with (in a reference to the rise of the religious party Shas), a "state of Ayatollahs." Insofar as Jewish culture is equated with religion and religion remains a highly divisive issue, secular Jewishness faces a difficult uphill struggle, and the post-Zionist program of de-Judaizing the State of Israel gains a certain degree of attractiveness among those who would not call themselves post-Zionists—who indeed may not even know what that label means.

The depth and virulence of anti-religious feeling among many secular Israeli Jews, albeit still a minority of them, will scarcely be comprehensible to a Western non-Israeli. It involves such a profound delegitimizing and demonizing of the religious that what in other contexts would be condemned as scurrilous anti-Semitic vulgarity passes here without remark.

Israeli theater has been a leader in emphasizing secular-religious schisms. *Hametz*, honored as the best play of 1995, makes an overt plea for Israeli society to forget its past, ignore its mythical heroes, even forget the Holocaust and its victims, and live as a normal society bereft of any Jewish attachments. The popular play *Fleischer* prompted great involvement on the part of the audience, who laughed and applauded at the anti-religious jokes. One of the play's actors described his role as that of a catalyst for "venting all those expressions of anger that the secular have against the religious." Audience responses to the play's rancorous message were tested by questionnaires distributed at a number of performances. Most believed that the play provided a faithful representation of contemporary Israel: "Religious spectators sensed such hostility and even hatred directed toward them that they felt inclined to take off their skullcaps."[22]

Proposals, made only half facetiously, to create "two states for two peoples," one secular, the other religious, have gained a certain redundant currency in the press. A colorful and savage variant on the same theme is presented by a well-known novelist who reminds us that there is a Biblical precedent for two states: Judah and Israel. He tells the Orthodox that their "religion has fossilized, become idolatrous. And when a religion that has become racist and political confronts a democracy—the opposite of dogmatic, open and compromising—a

barrier is erected, one that cannot be camouflaged by sweet talk.... If you wish to curse menstrual intercourse, do so in your state. With the money we save from not supporting your thousands of idlers [read: Yeshiva students] we will reduce income tax by two-thirds and raise the salaries of school teachers.... If a woman is *Halachically* forbidden to you, do as you see fit. We will fuck just as much as we please.... We do not want Jewish values, because there are no such things; there are [only] universal values."[23]

When anti-religious sentiment goes this deep, the temptation to throw out the Jewish baby with the religious bath water becomes, for some at least, too powerful to be resisted. Oddly, there is a striking symmetry here between the Orthodox and the post-Zionists. Both argue for the indistinguishability of Jewishness and Judaism. Whereas the Orthodox argument is entirely familiar, the post-Zionist position is quite novel. For the post-Zionists, Jewishness as a nationality and Judaism as a religion form a unity—and they are both to be rejected. Having little concern with either, and arguing, moreover, that religion is the sole basis of Jewish nationality, they are only too happy to grant custodianship over Jewishness to the religious. Echoing the religious position, they contend that there is no secular Jewish alternative to religiously based Jewishness. Secular Jewish culture is a contrived and flimsy construct, either tending to revert to its deeper religious and insular sources or to dissipate itself naturally in the course of its exposures to the non-Jewish world. As such, the choices that face Israel are two and only two: either a Jewish state in the fully religious sense, or a non-national, non-confessional state of all its citizens.[24]

In the past, the "Jewishness of Israel" issue was the conflict over the degree to which the Jewish heritage, including the Jewish religion, was to be incorporated into the character of the state. Voices arguing for a state that was Jewishly neutral were not heard. Few if any were then concerned with the underlying contradiction between a Jewish state and a "normal" state. For all the heat it generates today, this was not an issue that exercised the creators of Zionism.

Nor should this be surprising. The era in which the Jewish national movement developed took for granted that nations, as well as the states associated with them, linked individuals sharing ethnic roots and a common past. Nation-states were precisely what this hyphenated unity implied: states representing distinct nations. The conspicuous exceptions to the rule such as the United States and the many multiethnic

European states were glossed over. America was exempted because, despite its heterogeneous population, a common social vision was said to unify its people. Multiethnic societies such as that of the English, Scots, Welsh, and Irish, were collapsed into one over-arching ethnic unit and labeled "British." Following these assumptions, a Jewish state intended as a homeland for all Jews would naturally bear the attributes of the Jewish people and the symbols of the Jewish heritage. Such a state would be both Jewish and "normal"—or, in other words, the latent tensions between a nationally Jewish and a "normal" state were entirely obscured.

These assumptions have changed dramatically in the past half-century. Ethno-national states—and even those that are integrated around a shared vision of a society's ultimate purposes—have fallen into bad odor. In their place, an alternate, individualist-liberal-democratic conception has arisen. In this intellectually regnant image, the state does not possess a moral vocation; it is not in the business of embodying collective ethical purposes, national or otherwise. Indeed, the identification of the state with a specific ethnic group is understood to be fundamentally unacceptable.[25] Even less palatable is a "confessional" state, one in which public power is in the service of a particular religious creed. The state legitimately represents citizens as autonomous individuals; its primary purpose is to service their interests and enforce the "rules of the game" by which they are to live.

Virtually everywhere in the West the liberal democratic idea, now formulated as "multiculturalism," has replaced the older conception of the nation-state. If they were once allies in the struggle against aristocratic government, today the democratic urge in its liberal pluralist form increasingly undermines nationalist visions of the political community.[26] Liberal democracy has fared so well because it is the only regime that accords with the contemporary valuation of personal autonomy—the separateness of the individual as a moral agent—as the *ultimum desideratum*. Today, therefore, "normal" states avoid doing just what was once considered the central duty of nation-states: pursuing goals specific to the dominant ethnic group who comprised the "real" nation or defining themselves in terms of the characteristics of the dominant ethnic group. Governments refrain from taking sides between ethnic communities that compose the polity. Under these conditions a democratic Jewish state becomes a contradiction in terms.

One might argue that problems of security prevent the serious

erosion of national unity or compromising of national loyalties. National identity, whatever its cultural poverty, is easily expressed in terms of a common enemy. The vision of a tiny people in a hostile sea threatened with extinction resonates with a paradigmatic sense of Jewish history, but it may do no more than slow the de-nationalizing thrust of the global village. It does not seem to have had much of an effect since the outbreak of the current *intifada* following the failure of the Camp David talks in September 2000. This is the first time Israeli society has been threatened from without—the Gulf War included—where there is no substantial evidence of the society pulling together, of individuals and even groups minimizing their differences and their separatists demands. Security is no longer as effective a slogan of national unity as it once was. Strikes occur, even those that seriously inconvenience the public, such as the garbage workers' strike in late 1999 and renewed in early 2000. No economic sector has moderated its demands for public funding in light of the security situation and the resulting strain on the national budget. Intra-Jewish ethnic and religious strains have not abated. On April 20, 2001, eight months into the *intifada*, a period in which mortar shells were being fired at Israeli settlements in the south, the Shas daily newspaper, *Miyom L'Yom,* in a play on initials, labeled the IDF "the army that promotes Ashkenazim" (they translated the letters TzHL as standing for *Tzava Hamekadem L'Ashkenazim*).[27] In the summer of 2001 a new issue emerged. The heads of religious Zionist schools threatened to prohibit their students from serving in the army as long as women served in the same combat units as religious soldiers. Women's organizations, in turn, have shown no willingness to compromise their demands that women be allowed to serve in such units. Although a compromise will likely be reached, it is remarkable that both sides allow the issue to emerge at a time when Israel confronts a most serious external threat.

Nevertheless, despite the anecdotal evidence and the social analysis, survey data fail to provide evidence of a dramatic decline in Jewish identity. The most recent survey of the religious attitudes and behavior of the Israeli Jewish population was conducted in 1999–2000 by the same team that conducted the Guttman survey in 1991.[28] (The full report of the results is not yet published.) The table that follows compares those who felt it "very important" to observe certain religious ceremonies as reported in the two surveys:

Table 14.1 ***Declaring it "Very Important" to Observe the Following Rituals*** *(In percent)*

Ritual Observance	1991	1999
Observing the *Shabbat* according to religious tradition	32	30
Circumcision	74	70
Bar Mitzvah ceremony in a synagogue	63	66
Wedding ceremony performed by a rabbi	69	64
Having a religious burial ceremony	70	66
Reciting Kaddish for parents	71	69

In a separate set of questions, 96 percent in 1991 and 95 percent in 1999 answered "definitely yes" or "yes" to feeling part of the Jewish people (of those who answered "definitely yes" the figures were 65 percent in 1991 and 68 percent in 1999).

The results point to a slight decline in religious observance and mixed results with regard to ethnic ties. This is quite remarkable since the 1991 survey did not include recent FSU immigrants, who are less religious than most Israeli Jews and whose Jewish identity, most observers feel, is more attenuated, or at least highly secular. The most recent survey includes these Jews. It also provides separate tables for the FSU immigrants and demonstrates their lower levels of Jewish identity. Table 14.2 below compares Jews from the former Soviet Union with the national sample (excluding FSU respondents). The table compares the percentages who gave the Jewishly strongest or most positive responses.

But despite the relatively low Jewish identity score of the FSU immigrants who constitute 13 percent of the 1999 sample, there is relatively little decline over the eight-year period. How are we to account for this?

It is possible that the survey was poorly conducted or that the respondents are unrepresentative of the Jewish population. It is also possible that whereas real attitudes and even behavior have changed, respondents are reluctant to admit the changes. Hence, it could take another decade before the kinds of changes to which the previous analysis alluded finds expression in survey data. I do not know how much of this is true but I think that there is an additional factor which plays an important role in maintaining nominal Jewish identity at a

Table 14.2 ***Percentage of Jewish FSU Immigrants and All Other Israeli Jews Offering the Most Positive Responses to Questions of Jewish Identity (N=373 [FSU] and 2,466 [national])*** *(In percent)*

Jewish Attitude or Behavior	FSU	National Sample
Life conducted in spirit of Jewish values	7	26
Very important to observe circumcision	28	70
Very important to have *Aliyah letorah* in Bar Mitzvah	23	66
Very important to have religious burial ceremony	27	66
If born again would want to be born a Jew	29	61
Important to feel part of the Jewish people	31	62
Israeli Jews and Diaspora Jews share a common fate	11	28

high level. This has to do with the alternative to not strongly identifying oneself as a Jew.

Israel is a Jewish state. This is reflected in a number of ways. The symbols of the state are Jewish; it is Jewish holidays that are celebrated as national holidays; it is Jewish history, not the history of Palestine, that youngsters learn as their history; and it is the Holocaust that continues to serve as the central myth of Israeli society and forms the prism through which the present is understood. Israel is also, as Sammy Smooha calls it, an ethnonational state in the sense that public policy favors the Jewish sector of the population.[29] The stark reality of one's Jewishness and the importance of one's Jewishness are reinforced by growing demands by Israeli Arabs for greater benefits and by demonstrations of empathy with the Palestinians in the occupied territories. The alternative to being Jewish in Israel is not the same as it is in the US or many parts of Western Europe. Israeli society, even middle-class high-tech globalized Israeli society, hardly recognizes a neutral or a cosmopolitan or global identity. The real alternative that strikes everyone but a small coterie of intellectuals as the alternative to being an Israeli Jew is to be an Israeli Arab. This is a powerful force in maintaining the Jewish population's sense of Jewishness in the face of other tendencies that act to trivialize it.

To briefly summarize the answers to the central questions of this chapter:

1. Boundaries between Jews and non-Jews are of two kinds—legal and informal. Legally, boundaries are set by the official (Orthodox)

rabbinate but the authority of the rabbinate and the manner in which the rabbinate sets these boundaries have been under increasing challenge in recent years. The challenge comes from two directions: first, from the Conservative and Reform movements, which have challenged the authority of the rabbinate in the courts. Court rulings favorable to the non-Orthodox have had little impact on the boundaries themselves, but they serve to further undermine the legitimacy of the rabbinate's behavior. The other challenge to the boundary-setting activity of the rabbinate is probably more significant in the long run. Increasing numbers of Israeli Jews are indifferent to the boundaries the rabbinate sets, or for that matter to any claims the rabbinate makes. This would seem to be inconsistent with our earlier point that the alternative to being Jewish is being an Arab. It should make Israelis sensitive to boundaries. But Israeli Arabs, whether Moslem or Christian, do not seek to be Jews. They constitute no danger to the identity of Israeli Jews. Those who do seek recognition as Jews—potential converts for example—are generally Europeans or Americans, most of them FSU *olim* who seek entry into the Israeli Jewish collectivity. Raising bars to their entry on religious grounds strikes increasing numbers of Israelis as unreasonable. A significant segment of its cultural elite and many at the secular leftist end of the continuum have adopted a more relaxed attitude toward *Halachic* boundaries separating Jews and non-Jews and this probably portends a major revolution on the issue of Jewishness in Israel and the Jewishness of Israelis, especially when coupled with the decline of Jewish identity. Having said that, it should be clear that we are talking about trends to which most Israeli Jews are still not party. Continued and even growing concern over national security may dampen such trends.

2. Levels of ethnic identity and levels of religious identity continue to be strongly correlated. The more religiously observant are more likely than the non-religiously observant to feel part of the Jewish people throughout the world. Simon Herman found this to be the case as early as the 1960s.[30] At the time this finding seemed surprising since Zionism, which emerged from a powerful sense of ethnic identity, was a secular movement. Virtually all Zionist leaders defined themselves as secular Jews. (Religious Zionists were a tiny minority and their own leaders were never acknowledged as the real leaders of the Zionist movement.) Attitudes of Zionist leaders toward the religious tradition ranged from acknowledgment that the Jewish religion

was, after all, a central component of Jewish culture to militant hostility. Since then the tie between ethnicity and religion has strengthened as the Jewish identity of secular Jews attenuates. The 1999 Guttman Report supports this observation. Although that report did not find a radical decline in the sense in which Israelis felt part of the Jewish people throughout the world, intensity of ethnic identity was nonetheless correlated with religious observance.

COMPARING JEWISH IDENTITY IN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES

One important point of comparison remains to be stated. The phenomenon of "personalization" or "spiritualization" sweeping US Jewry has also made an impact on Israeli society, especially on younger Israelis.[31] Trips to India or other exotic and "spiritual" places, the special popularity of transcendental meditation, or scientology, or even the widespread use of "ecstasy" pills among the young, point in this direction. If meaning is to be derived only from within oneself rather than by virtue of membership in an ascribed community, then the search for meaning becomes more intense because it is no longer a given, and is likely to take spiritual forms. In the US this has led some heretofore marginal Jews into practising a more intense Jewish life. But more commonly, the phenomenon lends itself to religious syncretism, to a breakdown of boundaries between Judaism and non-Jewish practices and beliefs.[32] Some would speculate that because Israel is a Jewish state the phenomenon is less threatening. Since Judaism is the dominant religious culture, the spiritual quest is more likely to lead Israelis to look for sources within the dominant religious tradition. This remains to be seen.

The most important factors in maintaining a high level of Jewish identity among Israeli Jews probably have to do with the nature of the population and of the policies of the state. Israeli Jews constitute an overwhelming majority of the Israeli population. Most Israeli Jews live in totally homogeneous neighborhoods. The national culture is rooted in Jewish symbols and memories. Israeli public policy discriminates in favor of the Jewish population. The Arab minority has increasingly voiced its dissatisfaction with this state of affairs in militant and aggressive terms, further emphasizing differences between Jew and Arab. Moreover, Arab leaders joined by post-Zionists have begun to demand

the de-Judaization of the state. All this serves to remind Israeli Jews of the significance of their Jewishness.

Can these factors outweigh the trivialization of Jewishness because of its taken-for-granted status and the pressures of Western culture referred to earlier? The answer may be no different than the answer to the question of whether European nations, the smaller ones in particular, can retain their cultural identity and their particular national characteristics under the pressure of European unity.

In the United States, on the other hand, Jewish life has always been built around the assumption that the prevailing set of values—the cultural climate of opinion shared by urban, middle-class, well-educated Americans—is consistent with the essential values of the Jewish tradition. This cultural climate of opinion at present emphasizes the values of individual autonomy, communal inclusiveness, and non-judgmentalism. I would speculate that, more than any other factor, the internalization of these values by American Jews and by the organized Jewish community account for the decline in Jewish identity among American Jews.

What all of this portends for the future is beyond the scope of this essay. One's pessimism is balanced by the glaring failures of social science to analyze the human condition and by the expectation that the external forces now driving Jewish identity are likely to change. Whether this will be a change for the better or for the worse remains to be seen.

NOTES

1 Charles S. Liebman, *A Research Agenda for American Jews* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University-Argov Center for the Study of Israel and the Jewish People, 2000). A revised version of this article will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Contemporary Judaism*.

2 See, for example, Yochanan Peres and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar, *Between Consent and Dissent: Democracy and Peace in the Israeli Mind* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 1998), especially chapter five, "Religiosity and Political Attitudes," 147–74; Michal Shamir and Asher Arian, "Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel," *The American Political Science Review*, 93 (June 1999), 265–77; Michal Shamir and Yaacov Shamir, "Value Preferences in Israeli Public Opinion," *Megamot* 37 [Hebrew] (June 1996), 371–93.

3 See, for example, Yehuda Ben-Meir and Peri Kedem, "A Measure of Religiosity for the Jewish Population of Israel," *Megamot* 24 (1979), 353–62. The most com-

prehensive study of the religious beliefs, attitudes, and behavior of Israeli Jews was conducted in 1992 by the Guttman Institute of Applied Social Research. See Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn and Elihu Katz, *Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews* (Jerusalem: Louis Guttman Israeli Institute of Applied Social Research, 1993). Its major findings are reported in Charles S. Liebman and Elihu Katz, eds., *The Jewishness of Israelis* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997). In addition to the highlights of the study, the volume includes an analysis of the findings and a variety of responses to the original study by leading Israeli intellectuals. See also Hanna Levinsohn, *Attitudes of the Israeli Public on Issues of Religion and Jewish Tradition* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Louis Guttman Israeli Institute of Applied Social Research, 1990).

4 Simon Herman, *Israelis and Jews: Continuity of an Identity* (New York: Random House, 1970); *Jewish Identity: A Social Psychological Perspective* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, new edition, 1988). Unusual in this respect is an important study by Uri Farago, "The Jewish Identity of Israeli Youth 1965–1985," *Yahadut Zmanenu: Shnaton L'iyyun V'mehkar* 5 [Hebrew] (1989), 259–285. It is a continuation of Herman's work and incorporates many elements that are found in traditional studies of Jewish identity in the Diaspora.

5 For a contrary view which argues that fears of dual loyalty still drive American Jewish responses to communal issues, see Jerold Auerbach, *Are We One? Jewish Identity in the United States and Israel* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

6 Many of these are to be found in the collection by Marshall Sklare, ed., *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957).

7 Marshall Sklare, *Conservative Judaism: An American Religious Movement* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1955). The book was reprinted a number of times including an augmented edition published by Schocken Books in 1972.

8 For more on the social discomfort of Jews—even economically successful Jews—with non-Jews see Marshall Sklare, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier* (New York: Basic Books, 1967), chapter 8.

9 For an opposing view see Jerome Chanes, "Who Does What? Jewish Advocacy and Jewish 'Interest': A Contextual Review and Analysis," in L. Sandy Maisel and Ira Forman, eds., *Jews in American Politics* (Boston: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001). According to Chanes, a long-time participant in and a very knowledgeable observer of Jewish organizational life in the US, anti-Semitism, Israel, and the security of Jewish communities abroad are the priority issues in Jewish political advocacy. The secondary issues, such as separation of church and state and civil rights, and even welfare issues, are important to Jewish leaders because they affect the welfare of Jews and it is the welfare of Jews which dictates the particular positions which the Jews adopt. I would argue, contrary to Chanes' position, that it is because American Jews, their organizational leaders in particular, are liberal that they interpret the welfare and security of Jews through a liberal prism. The best example, in my opinion, is the issue of separation of

church and state. Separation in my opinion is disastrous for the interests of Jewish continuity and survival, but Jews and their leaders in particular insist that the separation of church and state is in the Jewish interest.

10 Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

11 A major finding of a recent survey was that "American Jews remain strongly supportive of predominantly liberal social justice causes." Fifty-six percent claimed that social justice was more important to their Jewish identity than Torah or text study. Combined with the fact that 74 percent do not care whether their own social activism falls under Jewish or non-Jewish auspices, this bodes poorly for Jewish continuity. See the *JTS Weekly News Digest* (April 13, 2001), 4.

12 Kaspar Schwenkfeld, a follower of Martin Luther, argued that since each soul has a unique destiny, each man and woman can frame his or her creed within the common Christian religion: "They deserve to have faith custom-tailored to their needs. Today, when Individualism has turned from a fitful theme to a political and social right this seer deserves to rank as the Reformer with the greatest following—millions are Schwenkfeldians *sans le savoir.*" Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 33.

13 See, for example, Sara Bershtel and Allen Graubard, *Saving Remnants: Feeling Jewish in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1992); Bernard Susser and Charles S. Liebman, *Choosing Survival: Strategies for a Jewish Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Cohen and Eisen, *The Jew Within.*

14 Steven M. Cohen, *Religious Stability and Ethnic Decline: Emerging Patterns of Jewish Identity in the United States* (New York: The Florence G. Heller JCC Research Center, 1999).

15 On this phenomenon along with many examples see Charles S. Liebman and Steven M. Cohen, *Two Worlds of Judaism: The Israeli and American Experiences* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

16 See, for example, Riv-Ellen Prell, "Communities of Choice and Memory: Conservative Synagogues in the Late 20th Century," in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *Jews in the Center: Conservative Synagogues and Their Members* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 269–358, and Cohen and Eisen, *The Jew Within.*

17 The data regarding intermarriage were published separately under the title *Responding to Intermarriage: Survey, Analysis and Policy* (New York: American Jewish Committee, January 2001).

18 Susser and Liebman, *Choosing Survival*, 124 ff.

19 Efraim Inbar, "Contours of Israel's New Strategic Thinking," *Political Science Quarterly*, 111 (1996), 56.

20 Most of the New Historians fall under the rubric of post-Zionist but the post-Zionist literature is not confined to New Historians such as Benny Morris, Ilan Pappe, or Avi Shlaim. For a selected sample of post-Zionist essays see Laurence

Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates* (London: Routledge, 1999); Uri Ram, *Changing Agenda of Israeli Sociology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995). The most important post-Zionist journal is *Teoria U'bikoret* and appears under the imprimatur of the Van Leer Institute. An important collection of post-Zionist essays in Hebrew is Uri Ram, ed., *Israeli Society: A Critical Approach* [Hebrew] (Tel-Aviv: Breirot, 1993).

21 Gideon Samet, "The Nation Goes Up a Grade," *Ha'Aretz*, July 28, 1995, 1B.

22 Dan Urian, "The Stereotype of the Religious Jew in Israeli Theater," *Assaph C*, No. 10, 1994, 131–54.

23 Yoram Kanyuk, "Let's Divide," *Ha'Aretz*, November 12, 1996, B2.

24 For a presentation of the arguments by post-Zionists that there is no meaningful secular Jewish culture see Charles S. Liebman, "Reconceptualizing the Culture Conflict Among Israeli Jews," *Israel Studies*, 2 (Fall 1997), 172–89.

25 Recently, post-Zionists have argued that since this is the case, Israel cannot be considered a democracy. See, for example, Oren Yiftachel, "Ethnocracy, Geography and Democracy: Comments on the Politics of the Judaization of the Land" [Hebrew], *Alpayim*, 19 (2000), 78–105.

26 This notion is developed in Bernard Susser and Eliezer Don Yehiya, "Israel and the Decline of the National State in the West," *Modern Judaism*, 14 (1994): 187–202. The most important study questioning the compatibility of democracy and the nation-state is probably John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971). On the notion that globalization leads to the weakening of national loyalty see also J. Fulcher, "Globalisation, the Nation State and Global Society," *The Sociological Review*, 48, 4, 522–43; Z. Bauman, *Globalisation: The Human Consequences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Polity Books, 1998); and M. Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

27 The story was reported on Israeli radio's Second Channel.

28 On that survey, see *Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews* (Jerusalem: Louis Guttman Israeli Institute of Applied Social Research, 1993). The results are analyzed in Liebman and Katz, *The Jewishness of Israelis*.

29 Sammy Smooha and Theodor Hanf, "The Diverse Modes of Conflict: Regulation in Deeply Divided Societies," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 33 (1992), 26–47.

30 Simon Herman, *Israelis and Jews*, and the first edition of his book *Jewish Identity: A Social Psychological Perspective* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977).

31 There is a paucity of scholarly studies of this phenomenon. Virtually alone, to the best of my knowledge, is Benjamin Beit-Halahmi, *Despair and Deliverance: Private Salvation in Contemporary Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). At least one doctoral dissertation is now being written on the subject. There is more material at the popular level. In addition to many newspaper articles on the subject see, for example, Tom Sawicki, "Inside the World of the

Mystic Healers," *The Jerusalem Report*, January 27, 1994, 10–16; or Micha Oppenheimer, "In the Backyards of the [Hasidic] Courts" [Hebrew], *Eretz Acheret*, 1, (October–November, 2000), 10–22.

32 Needless to say, religious syncretism and the breakdown of barriers between Judaism and Christianity are facilitated in homes of mixed married couples. For some poignant examples of this, see Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Jewish and Something Else: A Study of Mixed-Married Families* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001).

CHAPTER 15

Notes Towards the Definition of "Jewish Culture" in Contemporary Europe

Jonathan Webber

INTRODUCTION

At a lecture in May 1999, given under the auspices of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) in London, Richard Segal, executive director of the (American) National Foundation for Jewish Culture, declared: "Being Jewish today means, most of all, the identification with Jewish culture. Jewish culture has replaced the synagogue, Israel, and philanthropy to become the major Jewish concern. This…is a major shift in Jewish identity and has major new multidimensional possibilities, particularly because it is not tied to institutions." In the question-and-answer session that followed the lecture, someone asked whether non-Jews can do Jewish culture. "Yes," Segal replied, "although to the extent that they do so there may be implications, which we cannot yet foresee, regarding the relationship between Jewish culture and Jewish identity." "Is Jewish culture enough to prevent intermarriage?" came another question. "I don't know," he answered, "that's a difficult one."[1] "What about the influence of non-Jewish culture on Jewish art or music? came another question. "Is this good for the Jews or bad for the Jews?" Mr Segal was very emphatic on this point: "If Jewish culture shows hybrid forms, such as for example in klezmer jazz, this is a very good thing and should be encouraged. Jewish culture is now being very productively created, especially by playwrights, film-makers, singers, and others—people who are marginally Jewish: and we, at the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, have the talent, wealth, and vision to develop all this."[2]

Discussions of this kind, as promoted by the JPR in London, are unquestionably a sign of the times. At another meeting held in 2000, the leading British Jewish artist David Breuer-Weil pointed out that there were probably 300 Jewish artists in the UK today, but that there

was no space—nothing like what in another context Diana Pinto has called Jewish Space[3]—where they could express and develop a collective contribution to Jewish culture. The JPR not only went on to publish Stanley Waterman's excellent paper "Cultural Politics and European Jewry,"[4] but also in 2001 sponsored a new organization called the European Association for Jewish Culture, specifically to respond to the belief that Jewish cultural creativity can provide a key to the Jewish future. Jewish culture, as it says in the Association's brochure, is a living heritage with immense creative potential; and Jewish culture, as it says, also plays an important role in representing Judaism to the wider world.

This discourse is itself worthy of note: it is almost as if certain Jewish identities would become obsolete without the backup of Jewish culture; and the speed of change here is equally remarkable. The phrase "Jewish culture" has clearly entered the language and is now being used routinely. But it was only in September 1999 that the "European Day of Jewish Culture" [*sic*] was first launched in five European countries for the purpose of presenting Europe's rich Jewish culture and patrimony to both Jews and non-Jews. Britain joined in 2000, and in 2002 there were as many as twenty-two countries that participated in this scheme, which mounted 500 events in 230 cities; it is fully covered by local television and supported by local tourist boards in conjunction with national heritage organizations.

It should be here at the outset that by and large, Jewish cultural events promoted by Orthodox Jewish sources do not use the word culture; Orthodox Jews in Western countries, much like prasticing Jews of other Jewish denominations, are still probably committed to philanthropy as their major additional focus of Jewish self-expression, i.e. beyond the routinized activities within their principal institutional or sub-communal affiliations. But the Jewish world is today characterized by far wider concerns: numerous organizations and websites now promote what is called Jewish culture, Yiddish culture, and Sephardi culture. The events and activities that they sponsor may include language classes, literary seminars, folklore, dance, music, theater, and film. One prominent adult education center in London has recently renamed itself the London Jewish Cultural Centre, and in Budapest (to give a Central European example) a walking tour of the Dohány Street Synagogue and Jewish Museum advertises itself as "Cultural Jewish Heritage in Budapest." The promoters of this new mass phe-

nomenon include cultural affairs departments at Israeli embassies, B'nai B'rith (a world Jewish organization which specifically sees itself as having always been a promoter of Jewish culture), and the European Council of Jewish Communities, as well as museums, bookshops, Jewish studies departments at universities, Jewish cultural festivals, radio and TV stations, and many others.

But what does all this mean? What is Jewish culture, and how can we define it? Do we know what we mean when we use the term "Jewish culture" in the contemporary Jewish context?

JEWISH CULTURE AS SEEN FROM SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

For an anthropologist, the notion of "Jewish culture" raises many difficult questions. What is meant by the word "culture"? Strictly speaking, the classic anthropological definitions of culture refer to an abstraction: namely, the total social heritage or socially acquired life-style of a group of people. As the early anthropologist Edward Tylor prescribed in 1871, culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities acquired by people as members of society. Culture in this sense is something like the grammar of a language: everyone possesses it in their heads but could not really articulate what it actually consists of. The job of the anthropologist is to assemble it by observing it in action—and thus is similar to what the linguist does in writing the grammar of a language.

Outside the field of social anthropology, however, the notion of culture was used originally to refer not to an entire society but rather to a specific superior class; "culture" came to have a strongly elitist meaning. Culture was broadly speaking the same thing as civilization—and especially the product of superior (Western) societies and their cultured classes. These are the people who think of themselves as having refined manners with a cultivated sense of aesthetic taste and a wide range of learning; culture, as the 19th-century English poet Matthew Arnold described in his famous work *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), is a form of social perfection. Culture is the ideal of the cultured person; other people in society have culture only insofar as they participate in this superior culture.

In recent years this elitist tradition has been almost completely reversed, in favor of a reversion to something much closer to the orig-

inal anthropological idea. The term culture is now commonly used to refer to any cluster of common concepts, emotions, and practices of any group of people who regularly interact.[5] As the Swedish anthropologist Ulf Hannerz wrote in 1996, "Suddenly people seem to agree with us anthropologists; culture is everywhere. Immigrants have it, business corporations have it, young people have it, women have it, even ordinary middle-aged men have it, all in their own versions.... We see advertising where products are extolled for 'bed culture' and 'ice cream culture'...."[6] In short, the elitist view of culture is unquestionably no longer the dominant mode; instead, the underlying idea here is difference—difference for its own sake.

Is it, however, used in an elitist sense in the context of Jewish culture? It is probably useful to recall these various usages of the term "culture" because it seems that the contemporary Jewish world, in diverse contexts, oscillates in its understanding of itself according to how it conceptualizes the nature of Jewish culture. Probably all three usages coexist simultaneously in the Jewish world. This is not to say that Jews spend time and energy debating the meaning of the word "culture"; rather, there are some fundamental assumptions about different approaches to the nature of culture that characterize different strategies underlying diverse Jewish identities, and to some extent explain them too. For example, "Jewish culture" notionally includes religion, language, and knowledge of history. But in practice, what many Jews would see as their "culture" is often a rather arbitrary selection, and indeed in some "postmodern" contexts it seems to bypass all of these things. For some, one could say it is a form of Jewish consciousness, a state of mind. One does not, so to speak, have to buy the total package, but merely voluntaristically partake in and consume those commodified cultural products that happen to appeal. And of course some of those products, whether in poetry, painting, music, or food, are made by non-Jews—but then, it needs to be said, Diaspora Jewish culture, in the original anthropological sense of the total Jewish lifestyle, has always included non-Jewish elements of the environment.

In fact, there would seem to be at least two contradictory assumptions, sometimes held simultaneously, about the nature of Jewish culture. One is that it is "under construction" (in the postmodern sense); the other is that it already exists, and it is merely the task of the individual or the community to serve it up, promote it, and develop it. This latter view, often dismissively termed by anthropologists "cultural

fundamentalism," assumes the basic belief held by its users that the world consists of a mosaic of distinct cultural heritages, all taken to be clearly different from each other, and probably inherently antagonistic to each other as well. Although everyone is supposed to have culture nowadays, the cultural fundamentalist variant supplies culture with some sort of mystical substance or ethos that suffuses a given group of people as well as the individual carriers of its culture. Most anthropologists today would reject all this as nonsense, partly because the boundaries around a given culture are not at all sharply defined in either space or time. Hence to demarcate one culture from another on the basis of what may well turn out to be fuzzy-edged clusters of social habits shared inconsistently by people supposedly belonging to a single culture is in practice not at all straightforward—even though of course it is true that in the real world people are indeed aware, or made aware, of boundaries and also of shared culture; and that in practice (perhaps because of pride in their sense of "belongingness") they may choose to overlook a lack of homogeneity within their society and to ignore internal contradictions, ambiguities, self-doubt, or incompleteness. Cultural fundamentalism (or "essentialism," as it is also known) would ignore such subtleties and insist on clearly bounded cultures; in so doing, it constitutes a way of thinking which encourages political xenophobia and so has become a part of reactionary political discourse.

In the Jewish context, which certainly has its cultural fundamentalists, it also leads directly into the idea that there is a clearly defined Jewish culture which is known to a group of people who regard themselves as Jewishly cultured, while others—and here I am thinking of the vast Jewish masses in the former Soviet Union—consider themselves by contrast "ignorant of Jewish culture." Certainly the feeling that one does not know or understand Jewish culture is encountered often and indeed is very much a part of the ethnography of today's Jewish world. The anthropologist would say that one should not really treat the uneducated or ignorant like some sort of tribe of ignorant savages to whom we, the cultured ones, have to deliver the true faith. Outside agencies such as Jewish outreach organizations that reform and direct Jewish life in many such places should perhaps better be described as providing activities through which the local Jewish culture expresses itself. The point, once again, is that in this view culture is an abstraction; like a grammar, it cannot be altogether brought to

consciousness, and the culture we are conscious of is never the whole of culture.

Another way of putting all this is to say that Jewish culture, as understood in its different ways today, has very little by way of an established discourse at its disposal. In fact we know little about the ordinary life of Diaspora Judaism. The hegemonic discourse of rabbinic Judaism emphasized exile from Jerusalem as the key element of Jewish Diaspora existence; it was not interested in systematically recording any of the sense of at-homeness in exile that Jews certainly felt, for example as regards the local languages Jews spoke, their love of the local landscape, or their cooking of food using local recipes. What we know from informants that did get recorded, indeed embedded, in the collective cultural memory, were the pogroms and the anti-Semitism—a stereotype of the past with obvious factual truth but which is far from being the whole cultural truth. The result is that the whole process of negotiating and renegotiating the details of Jewish cultural distinctiveness in its non-Jewish Diaspora settings is something we know very little about; this most important dimension of Jewish culture has hardly been transmitted, except of course for the rabbinic decisions on specific legal and ritual points.

If there are cultural realities, such as this sense of close interaction with non-Jewish neighboring society, which do not get recorded, the opposite is also true: not everything that takes place in a cultural domain is necessarily relevant to identity formation. Perhaps, for example, there are trivial things such as familiarity with certain brands of soap, commercial slogans, or TV stars, which might bind people together nowadays, rather than an ever-present awareness of their common history and heritage. What people see as "their culture" is often, when viewed from the outside, a rather arbitrary selection. In recent times, the collapse of the synagogue and the yeshiva as the principal public domains of Jewish life is a good example. What came in their place, as we know, was the rise of Jewish sporting, recreational, philanthropic, political, and cultural associations and private societies, the principal Jewish *raison d'être* of which was the creation of a social framework for the exclusive recruitment of Jews rather than the pursuit of specifically Jewish aims or cultural goals (as traditionally defined). This has left Jewish culture, at least as seen at ground level in the anthropological sense, with a highly composite approach to Jewish self-definition. Today's voluntary Jews are to a great extent self-made

cultural *bricoleurs*, constructing their Jewishness, and indeed their attitudes to non-Jews and non-Jewish culture, as they go.

THE PROBLEMS, THEN, OF NAVIGATION

Diana Pinto has drawn our attention to the problems that Jews face today in navigating the meeting-places she calls Jewish Spaces, where Jews and non-Jews interact in contexts where Jewish themes or Jewish voices are heard.[7] In effect, as I would reword this point, navigation through such Jewish Spaces is difficult where Jews express themselves as cultural fundamentalists, for example through an exaggerated "pride in being Jewish," to cite the phrase often encountered. But are there alternative strategies? Is it possible, for instance, to bring to public Jewish consciousness the hitherto unarticulated quotidian discourse of Diaspora Jewish society? For this may constitute the key to the new Jewish cultural identities.

The way forward is not at all easy. Local anti-Semitic traditions certainly have to be dealt with, and there are certainly instances—especially in Ukraine or the Baltic states—in which Jews will feel distant from the way those of their neighbors who have a record of collaboration with the German occupation during the Holocaust think about their national history. Altogether the notion of "at-homeness in exile" needs to be problematized: Jewish cultural distinctiveness has in any case often been eclectic and structurally incoherent. Jewish cultural assimilation to local realities has historically been exceptionally uneven; if one examines the full range of Jewish cultural practice, including such features as dress, food, architecture, liturgical music, and knowledge of the vernacular language (which was also variable at the level of gender), it has been marked by a notable lack of consensus. But perhaps the biggest set of internal inconsistencies and contradictions concerns the survival, simultaneously, of what the American sociologist Herbert Gans calls Jewish "symbolic religiosity," i.e., residual, minimalist Jewish observance, on the one hand, and the quasi-mystical, mythological, and essentialist view of Jewish peoplehood on the other.[8] Of course, this can be explained by the force of Zionist ideology, which has continued to assert both the essentialist nature of Jewish peoplehood and the fundamental cultural irrelevance of local diasporic values to Jews as Jews.[9] Still, countless studies of contemporary Jewish life continue to record the ability of people to have a quasi-subliminal

belief in Jewish identity, regardless of the absence of substantive Jewish ritual or other cultural practice. Anthropologists of course know this from Africa and elsewhere: the sense of ethnic belongingness lingers on well beyond the point at which cultural practice has all but disappeared. As Zvi Gitelman's chapter makes clear, this is the case among Jews in the former Soviet Union. Surface realities are simply not to be relied upon. Hence what happens at the level of assimilation, inconsistent though it may be, is not a reliable guide to the passions in people's heads. "At-homeness in exile," for example, can survive for centuries even after the people have left the country, as the poetry put out by Spanish Jews long after 1492 readily attests.[10]

My point here is that navigating a Jewish cultural self-confidence through all this is a complex challenge and can be understood at many different levels. In the old days, the lived Judaism of Eastern Europe had its own name: *Yiddishkeit*. Today the nearest equivalent to this word in English would be "Jewishness" or of course "Jewish culture." Certainly, "Jewish culture" is not the same as *Yiddishkeit*, though there are certain points in common. *Yiddishkeit* included the world of Torah but in some sense it was in opposition to it; it was closer to the anthropologist's idea of Jewish culture, in that it was about what people did and how they lived, and not necessarily about what people were supposed to do or how they ought to live.[11] "Jewish culture," on the other hand, may be less directly related to the world that is actually lived by Jews: it is more of a reconstruction, more of a transformation into modern idioms, even perhaps more of an elitist model of Jewish art forms. And commodified "Jewish culture" is also intended for non-Jewish consumption: indeed, non-Jews are much welcomed in this context, even as producers of this culture (as Richard Segal said at that JPR meeting in 1999). It also, almost by definition, has a distinctly uneasy relationship with the world of Torah, as I noted earlier.

Hence the navigation is to be charted past many an iceberg. Let me give one brief example, drawn from the Festival of Jewish Culture that took place in 2001 in Kraków, Poland (to which I return in further detail below). There were concerts every evening, three of which were held in the recently renovated Tempel Synagogue, now a truly magnificent building. The venue was certainly Jewish; skullcaps were handed out at the door. The *aron hakodesh* where the Torah scrolls are kept was lit up by theater spotlights in different colors, thus rendering

the place a theater rather than a synagogue narrowly defined. One of the three was a concert of *hazanut* (liturgical cantorial music)—clearly an instance of Jewish culture that includes religion, and thus blurs the distinction between culture and religion. It was high-class *hazanut*, and therefore clearly elitist in that sense.[12] Another of the concerts held there was a performance by a klezmer group: their music was based on traditional *Yiddishkeit* forms and melodies but was totally transformed into another, highly contemporary musicological medium. Strictly speaking, such transformations are not intrinsically problematic—cultural borrowings are normal everywhere; and certainly *Yiddishkeit* regularly adapted native Jewish forms to what could be supplied from the neighboring environment (Jewish ritual objects, for example, were, and indeed still are commonly manufactured by non-Jews), even though the purist might feel uncomfortable or even alienated when confronted with an imported cultural form at an early stage of assimilation. But the point is that this was all an elite model of Jewish culture. One of the *hazanim* (cantors), in introducing to the audience the *Shabbat zmirot* (songs sung at table) he was about to sing, patiently explained that authentic Jewish music such as this has survived to the present: walking down any street in a religious neighborhood in Jerusalem (he said), one can hear even ordinary Jewish families singing their Friday-night *zmirot*. What he neglected to add, however, was that in the real world such families might sing out of tune, forget some of the words, simplify the melody, or interrupt in the middle; but at this Festival of Jewish Culture these same *zmirot* were being sung on stage, and in that sense were given an idealized representation—not at all the sort of lived culture that Ulf Hannerz meant when he talked about "bed culture" or "icecream culture."

We are inching forward to a definition now: Jewish culture combines traditional forms together with outside influences and—also most importantly—a sense of occasion, an event for the cultured person, someone who is deemed to have the taste and knowledge to appreciate it as an art form. The Israeli ambassador to Poland was present, clearly lending the event this sense of occasion; and indeed none other than the President of the Republic wrote the foreword to the festival's official program. The public nature of Jewish culture nowadays is clearly inscribed into how it is presented.

DEFINITIONAL PROBLEMS

Stanley Waterman refers in his JPR paper to the case of Iceland—"a little country, small but perfectly formed"—and he wonders whether the Jews could follow this model.[13] I would not think so myself: Jewish culture reconstructing itself after the Holocaust could certainly aim to become perfectly formed, but in the meantime it should recognize the need to do two quite contradictory things. These are: a) to receive and assimilate outside influences; and b) to go back and learn from its own sources. It is an interesting and important paradox, which I cite here from the English poet and essayist T. S. Eliot's book, first published in 1948 and entitled *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*,[14] that inspired me to write this essay (and hence the title I have given it). I should add straight away that the British scholar and critic George Steiner, in a critique of Eliot's book published in 1971, wrote that although he found Eliot's central arguments to be persuasive, he was severely critical of Eliot's failure to include a discussion of the Holocaust in his theory of culture—an omission that Steiner correctly found "acutely disturbing."[15] Still, T. S. Eliot's main point that there is a paradox embedded in any attempt at the reconstruction of culture (after all, this was a major preoccupation for European culture generally in the years following the war) is a helpful reminder, since this has now become almost standard in today's postmodernism. Mass culture today almost routinely mixes conventions and plays with them, putting high and low styles beside each other, using whatever cultural symbols, quotations, and clichés are at hand. Intertextual dialogue between them, one might say, is one of the main rules of the postmodern game. In writing about culture today the anthropologist must blend everything: reality, dreams, memories, fantasies. It is a tangled and chaotic reality, often lacking clear chronological sequence. I find much of all this in the way Jewish culture, for example in the heritage tours, approaches the Polish Jewish heritage: the simultaneities of Holocaust sites, graves of the Hasidic rebbes, places of the imagination in what is sometimes called Yiddishland,[16] the nothingness of destroyed cemeteries, or the silences of market squares in *shtetl*s once heavily populated with Jews: all these places pass before the visitor in a tangled web of experience that does not have to be disentangled in order to be authentic. This is not the perfection of Iceland; far from it.

But perhaps the most challenging definitional question here concerns the relationship between all this culture and the world of religion, of Torah. What is to be done with those two—do we let them remain entangled, or should they be disentangled somehow? In practice it would surely be too simplistic even to attempt a strict cleavage between religion and culture. Eliot argued strongly for the contrary: no culture, he wrote, has ever appeared except together with a religion; and according to one's point of view, the culture will appear to be the product of the religion, or the religion the product of the culture. There is a dialectical relationship between the two: religion and culture are aspects of one unity, but they are also two different and contrasted things.[17] All this would seem to fit the Jewish case very well.[18]

On the other hand, we do, of course, need to be aware of the tensions between Jewish culture and the world of Torah. In this essay I can only hint at this important issue, which would otherwise require substantial elaboration all to itself. Here I can mention just a few points, and only very superficially. Perhaps the most important characteristic of Jewish culture, studied historically, is that it is significantly hybrid in its cultural origins. What is "Jewish" must surely be defined in terms of what Jews as a group do or believe, regardless of the origin of the belief or custom. In view of the exceptionally long, complex history of the Jewish people—as a sovereign state in both ancient and now modern times, and as scattered, transnational, diasporic societies in exile for two millennia in between—any micro-level study of Jewish life taking into account all these highly disparate, indeed overlapping circumstances will undoubtedly yield the conclusion that there is no *a priori* way of saying which beliefs or practices are possible or impossible within Judaism. In effect, it is sociology (and thereafter history) that decides what is Jewish. In ideological terms, however, the native Jewish sense of an unbroken continuity—the "chain of tradition," to cite the classical phrase—has in the first instance been left to the rabbis of each generation to determine. Hence, for example, the notion in Jewish law of *hukot hagoy* (foreign habits), the identification and rejection of those specific ideas or practices which, the rabbis say, have to be treated as alien. However, as we have seen, it is precisely the populist cultural borrowings and quotidian blending of forms, without any notion of rabbinic *hukot hagoy*, which characterize much of modern Jewish culture. It is this which would be the source of purism and alien-

ation by traditionally minded Jews; and it is no wonder that the Torah world barely acknowledges the notion of Jewish culture. The rabbis have no control over what passes as "Jewish" nowadays.

But, secondly, and following from this, established customary practice—"sociology"—is in any case not supposed to be a guide to Torah values. A good example is Maimonides' in explanation of why Jews practice circumcision: circumcision is done, he says, because it is an obligation in Jewish law (*mitzvah*) specifically commanded by God to Moses in the Torah—and not because it was instituted by Abraham and thereby had become established practice.[19] Cultural realities thus have no formal, let alone normative status in rabbinic Judaism: Jewish "culture" in that sense does not exist. It may be, sociologically speaking, that feelings of Jewish belongingness are less and less determined today by religious criteria, but from a rabbinic point of view there is not, and cannot be, any such thing as a "non-*Halachic* Jew." All these so-called Jewish cultural revivals, if they are supporting an ethnic rather than a religious Jewish identity, may be little more (in this view) than an artificially sustained antiquarianism. Interestingly enough, T. S. Eliot had a similar view: he thought that cultural revivals that were not directed towards political and economic reform were a waste of time; the rabbis similarly would find merit in them only if they could be thought to lead to religious revival. But as ends in themselves? Of doubtful value, though of course any rabbi would acknowledge that a concert of *hazanut* could certainly offer an opportunity for meditative prayer for some in the audience, even though it might be "Jewish culture" for others in the audience and mere musical entertainment for yet others.

But I am not sure we need to take our cue from the rabbis here in formulating analytically this hostile or potentially hostile relationship between religion and culture, even though in the real world there are frictions and tensions. In any case, frictions and tensions probably assist cultural creativity rather than diminish it. More to the point, perhaps, is the political manipulation of this supposed cleavage. Zvi Gitelman has written on the fascinating point that religion was more important than ethnic culture in certain countries of Eastern Europe under Communism.[20] The cynical decision of the state to offer limited encouragement to religious communities in a social system which had little regard for the intrinsic values of religion did not, as we know from the former Soviet Union, completely undermine Jewish identities, even

after three generations. In the process of Jewish re-identification taking place in Eastern Europe today, the heritage of the Communist era is thus marked by an unashamed interest in both religion and culture.

Once again, then (and in this case from quite an unexpected direction), it is the hybrid, composite use of both religion and culture that comes to be publicly acknowledged. Some of the manifestations of contemporary Jewish culture indeed exhibit the aesthetic in a religious context, as well as the spiritual Jewish dimension in the aesthetic context. Not a bad specification, I would say, of the Jewish cultural ideal.

THE JPR PROJECT TO MAP CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN JEWISH CULTURE

In offering such generalizations about the nature of recent developments in the broad area of "Jewish culture," it must be repeated that very few of its public manifestations—Jewish "cultural events"—have hitherto been closely studied specifically as a single category. In acknowledgment of the fact that very little is actually known about Jewish cultural events in present-day Europe, the JPR agreed to set up a long-term project whose brief in the first instance was to attempt a map of some kind, if only for the purpose of listing and counting the events—at least, on the provisional methodological assumption that they indeed form a single category. This project (on which I am acting as an academic consultant) has thus far completed an initial data collection phase.[21] These data, as well as an account of some of the problems encountered in collecting it, are of sufficient interest and relevance in the present context to warrant some brief remarks.

An initial field trip I made to the island of Crete in the autumn of 1999, to witness the re-dedication one Sunday morning in the town of Hania of the restored synagogue known as Keilat Kodesh Etz Hayyim, conveniently illustrates the scope of the problematics. It was a Jewish cultural event not wholly classifiable as either religious or secular but embodying elements of both. Nor was the event entirely local in character: the two-year restoration project attracted substantial sponsorship, both local and foreign; English was consistently used as a second language, in the ceremonies as well as in the official program. At the re-dedication ceremony there were many VIPs (senior politicians and senior Jewish community officials and rabbis); and indeed the very fact of such patronage indicates that such Jewish cultural manifesta-

tions are taken seriously well beyond the boundaries of Jewish communities traditionally defined. In this case the intention was to inscribe this corner of Jewish life into the world cultural heritage. Thus, after the opening speech given by the president of the Central Board of the Jewish Communities in Greece came three other speeches: by the director of the restoration project, by a representative of the World Monuments Fund (one of the principal foreign sponsors), and by the local mayor. The audience was likewise highly diverse, including local people, Jews from other parts of the country as well as foreigners who came over specially for the occasion, and a few tourists who happened to chance by. Local Greek restaurants, with their folklore performances, were used as an integral part of the event. There was a definite Holocaust element: the restored synagogue was clearly intended as a unique monument to the now completely vanished Jewish community of Crete.[22] But the building was also seen as providing what the organizers (somewhat vaguely) imagined would be a suitable venue in the future for seminars and concerts and as a meeting-place and focus for interfaith activities. In short, this one "Jewish cultural event" embodied eclecticism and neologism, commemoration and celebration, clear reference to the past as well as to the future, and declarations of hope—albeit without any self-evident set of connectives to a future program.

And yet, the project director, Nicholas Hannan-Stavroulakis, remarked: "We are the new community of Keilat Kodesh Etz Hayyim of Hania."[23] But what can this mean? A synagogue service was indeed tacked on (on Saturday, the day before the official ceremony), but otherwise, once everyone had gone home, the place returned to a new desolation—though certainly quite different from the desolation the building had endured in a state of ruin for the past fifty years. Though the details may differ, it is likely that the ceremonies in Crete offer a useful paradigm for the many synagogue restorations and re-dedication ceremonies that are taking place nowadays in many other parts of post-Holocaust Europe. But at a deeper level they are a paradigm also for the problems of analyzing the new "Jewish culture." Do such well-prepared, complex events, skilful reconstructions, and self-conscious reinventions actually mean anything beyond themselves? Perhaps they are the organic reflection of a totally new kind of ethnic Jewish self-expression?

The statistical material offers little help in answering these questions; on the contrary, it creates additional difficulties. Four countries

were chosen for the JPR mapping project: Poland, Sweden, Italy, and Belgium. All that they have in common is that they have small Jewish communities,[24] but they otherwise provide a geographical spread (east, west, north, south) and a range of experiences of World War II (occupied, not occupied, neutral, etc.). Relying on local correspondents, the researchers attempted to chart all Jewish cultural events in these countries during a twelve-month period, May 2000 through April 2001.

The results are simply astonishing, although it is not at all clear what can be made of them. Altogether, in this twelve-month period, over 450 separate cultural events were identified in these four countries taken together, including a remarkable twenty-eight festivals of Jewish culture. It amounts to an average of one event for every 225 Jews. There is clearly no correlation between the considerable size of this cultural production and the percentage of Jews in the total population of a particular country. For example, the Jews of Belgium, at 3 per 1,000 of the total population, are six times larger relative to the total population than the Jews of Italy, at 0.5 per 1,000 inhabitants[25]; but their Jewish cultural output was 30 percent lower than the Italian Jewish cultural output. The overall figures are heavily distorted by the extraordinary Jewish cultural production taking place in Poland, with its tiny Jewish population (196 single events as well as 7 festivals of Jewish culture), compared with 70 events and 5 festivals in Belgium, 70 events and 3 festivals in Sweden, and 99 events plus an amazing 13 festivals in Italy.

One might have thought that Jewish cultural events would require a critical mass of Jews, though what is clear (also from Crete) is that a very large percentage of the consumers are non-Jews. Doubtless there are many non-*Halachic* Jews among them, for example spouses of Jews who do not appear in the Jewish community's official population figures but who do turn up at Jewish cultural events. Another interpretation could be that one does not need a critical mass of Jews, but rather that there is a critical mass of sustainable Jewish cultural events regardless of the absolute size of the Jewish population or its percentage of the total population. In other words, once one starts to have public Jewish culture, it simply continues to generate further events without any correlation to the local Jewish population. The success of the annual Festival of Jewish Culture in Kraków, which in 2001 reached its eleventh consecutive year, seems to have encouraged other towns in Poland also to attempt Jewish culture festivals each year; it is unques-

tionably a growing phenomenon. Even small towns in Poland are beginning to stage their own festivals, often at the initiative of non-Jewish local enthusiasts. In Italy, similarly, Jewish culture festivals can be found in many places, even in those without local Jewish communities. Not only is there anti-Semitism in countries without Jews, one has to say; there can also be Jewish culture without Jews![26]

As for the ostensible content of Jewish culture, the survey yielded few surprises: far and away the largest theme (at 25 percent of all cultural production in all four countries taken together, whether books, films, theater productions, or exhibitions) is the Holocaust, and the Holocaust is also the largest theme in each country taken singly. Of course, other themes are also well represented, including such broad categories as Judaism, local history, anti-Semitism, politics, etc. The performing arts constitute one-third of all events (i.e. dance, theater, and musical recitals), the visual arts are one-quarter (films and exhibitions), and one-eighth is literary (principally book launches). Music on its own accounts for one-quarter of all events.

The Festival of Jewish Culture in Kraków in July 2001 was the largest and most important event of the year. Lasting a full week, it included exhibitions, theater performances, klezmer concerts, liturgical recitals, lectures, Yiddish language classes, screenings of Yiddish films, meetings with authors, heritage walking tours, and workshops on Jewish calligraphy, dance, paper cutting, and Jewish cooking. I counted approximately 500–600 people at the main concerts, and between 50 and 100 at each of the lectures. Unsurprisingly (in the light of the Cretan paradigm), the festival was supported financially by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the city of Kraków, and other local authorities, together with LOT Polish Airlines, Polish Telecom, local banks, and local hotels and restaurants. And again, typically, the official program contained three forewords—by the President of the Republic of Poland (Aleksander Kwaśniewski), by the Prime Minister, and by the president of the Jewish Religious Community of Kraków. President Kwaśniewski's foreword included the remark that this Jewish culture festival "has staked a lasting place for itself in the cultural tradition of this city," and that it shows that Jewish culture itself "continues to develop…[and] offers inspiration to growing numbers of new artists, not all of whom are Jewish. This is an outstanding sign of our times." Indeed so.

So much for some of the concrete results of the project so far.

Hidden away behind them, however, are the problems. The main difficulty, let it be said, was the definitional one: what, in fact, is a Jewish cultural event? The figures are meaningless without a specification of what one was counting. Some examples may be useful here by way of illustration. Does a performance of Israeli music count as Jewish culture? Does any performance by a Jewish composer automatically count as Jewish music? How much Jewish content does one need to have in order to determine whether, say, a play is a "Jewish" play? What is "Jewish art" (at least, for the purposes of this project)? Do events that are specifically organized for people from abroad (heritage tours, for example, or the Jewish Cultural Center in Kraków hosting conferences for foreigners) count as local Jewish cultural production? If (for the purposes of this exercise) all religious ceremonies were excluded from the count, would a Holocaust commemoration ceremony nevertheless count as a Jewish cultural event?

These examples make it very clear just how difficult it is in practice to specify what Jewish culture actually consists of. We also came up with quite a long list of Jewish cultural events which had to be excluded, merely because of operational difficulties. The project did not cover Jewish sporting events, television and radio programs, or the screening of films of Jewish interest; nor did it cover architecture, cemeteries, permanent museums, restaurants, cafés, Jewish heritage tourism, or Jewish studies departments at universities. It is a long list of exclusions indeed.[27] The statistics pertaining to commodified Jewish culture, then, are certainly interesting in themselves but are deeply misleading if taken literally. Evaluative field research is undoubtedly needed in order to understand the processes through which the consumers of Jewish culture engage in these activities and interrelate them (or otherwise) with the other forms of behavior—modes of religious practice, ethnic belongingness, patterns of belief, etc.—that characterize their social lives.[28]

CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary public Jewish culture in Europe is unquestionably a movement, and indeed a very fast-growing movement. It demands careful scholarly attention in the future, in particular as regards its relationship with existing models of Jewish society. It can be seen both as a new phenomenon—including the emergence into public space

(particularly in Poland) of cultural expressions formerly either taboo or severely restricted to the home—and also as a revival. Far from being a minimalist, symbolic religiosity, it consists of a creative, multidimensional compound of highly diverse and hybrid elements. It is hard to quantify (as our project has shown), and the surface appearances are deceptive. There is clearly considerable emphasis on the exotic aspects of the Jewish tradition, though this is balanced by a strong input from non-Jewish cultural sources. Some Jewish culture is clearly motivated by a sense of hostility towards religion, though there is evidence that religion can be—and is—strongly represented also (albeit in new transformations according to the contemporary idiom). It may also be that the very marketing of Jewish cultural products, much of which is undertaken by non-Jews without any particular vested interest in Jewish survival as such, is leading to false impressions: I attended a jazz recital at the Festival of Jewish Culture in Kraków that had no evident link with anything recognizably Jewish at all. Jewish culture, then, is a moving target hard to pin down, a fluid, tangled category that is not necessarily defined by its content. Claire Rosenson has made the important point that in Poland, Jews are the fundamental "other;" that is, in talking about their relationship with Jews, Poles are really thinking about themselves—for example, about whether or not they have a tolerant culture.[29] One way of dealing with this would be to suggest (in a manner reflective of the realities of present-day Jewish demography comprising both "core" and "extended" Jewish populations, for example including both *Halachic* and non-*Halachic* Jews), that Jewish culture may similarly possess both "core" and "extended" characteristics, attracting and encompassing a wide range of performers and consumers. For contrary to the common assumptions of cultural fundamentalists, it is unquestionably the case that Jewish culture draws in meanings to itself generated from the outside, especially given the acceptability of ethnic assertiveness in today's multiculturalism; and this is itself part of the reality that needs to be acknowledged, along with the non-Jewish gatekeepers and culture brokers—not to mention the high proportion of non-Jewish consumers themselves. After all, Jewish consciousness and Jewish identity are by no means the same thing. "Jewish culture" sociologically facilitates a bifurcation between an interest in Judaism and the actual practice of Judaism. Attending or even promoting a Jewish cultural event is often a personal, not a communal, Jewish activity as such (witness the podium speakers at the

ceremonies described above). Hence, it does not necessarily imply in and of itself a future institutional affiliation or commitment to the ethnic community, let alone a sense of membership in it—but this needs to be researched, as noted above. It is not at all clear, for example, whether this new phenomenon (or revival) signifies new evidence for the long-term viability of the Jewish Diaspora; it may well be that a drift towards Jewish "cultural identity" may in practice conflict with, if not undermine, previous modes of ethnic and religious affiliation. Certainly there is evidence now that the latter two categories may require re-specification in light of these developments.

We also need to be aware of controversial issues that Jewish culture has raised, and which reduce it to another domain entirely—here I am thinking of the way in which arguments over restitution have highlighted the politicization of the Jewish cultural relationship with the local environment. Do Jewish artifacts belong to the local country, the local Jewish community, or to Israel? To whom, in fact, does Jewish culture belong? In the contexts of artifacts in dispute, lawyers will determine the answer; sociologically, however, multidimensional Jewish culture probably belongs in all these domains simultaneously. One can only wonder, though, about critical mass: how many Jews are needed for a cultural *minyan*?

So, finally, one can be only very provisional in attempting a definition of the nature of Jewish culture. As George Steiner put it, even the term "Notes" is probably too ambitious for an essay on culture.[30] At most, one can try to get certain perplexities into focus, but we should all pause to examine what we mean by this word when we use it. Culture can be dissected, but it is more than just the sum of its arts, customs, and beliefs. Jewish culture after the Holocaust is, paradoxically, both quite strong and also quite frail: you cannot build a tree, as T. S. Eliot wrote; you can only plant it, and care for it, and wait for it to mature in its due time.[31]

NOTES

1 If exposure to Jewish culture can be taken as a form of Jewish education, then there would appear to be no statistical effect on the intermarriage rate (see the chapter by Stephen Miller in the present volume).

2 I do not know whether there is a published version of this lecture. In addition to specific published sources cited below, the material on which this essay is

based derives from anthropological fieldwork conducted in recent years, partly in Poland and in part through a collaboration with the JPR in the framework of its ongoing project, "Mapping Jewish Culture in Europe Today," reported on in more detail below. Other than the pioneering and indeed indispensable work of Ruth Ellen Gruber (in particular her *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002]), there is unfortunately little published scholarly material on this subject, except for media reports, magazine articles, community newsletters, and the like—with the result that this essay, consisting of reflections on material which is still highly provisional in nature, can be taken only as work in progress. Given the considerable topicality of "Jewish culture" (as the essay attempts to demonstrate), it is likely that much more scholarly attention will be directed to the topic in the near future. Meanwhile I am grateful to Zvi Gitelman and his co-convenors at the JPR and the Jewish Studies Program of the Central European University for organizing a conference in Budapest in July 2001 at which an earlier version of this chapter was presented; and I am grateful to my fellow conference participants, in particular Marius Gudonis, and also to Lena Stanley-Clamp of the JPR, for a number of very helpful comments.

3 See Diana Pinto, "The Third Pillar? Toward a European Jewish Identity," in András Kovács and Eszter Andor, eds., *Jewish Studies at the Central European University* (Budapest: Central European University, 2000), 181–201, especially 198–200.

4 Stanley Waterman, "Cultural Politics and European Jewry" (JPR Policy Paper, no. 1) (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 1999).

5 There is a large literature on all these developments; for a useful recent survey of the debates over the meaning and usefulness of the concept of "culture" in current anthropological theory, method, and ethnographic description, see Christoph Brumann, "Writing for Culture: Why a Successful Concept Should Not Be Discarded," *Current Anthropology*, 40, Supplement (February 1999), 1–13.

6 Cited in *ibid.*, 9.

7 Pinto, "The Third Pillar?" 199. It should be made clear, however, that there are some well-established discourses governing Jewish Spaces—for example, meetings devoted to interfaith dialogue (where delegates are usually specifically mandated to represent Jewish religion and culture) and, of course, Jewish museums. Both, now very much expanding phenomena in contemporary Europe, often rely on implicit presuppositions of cultural fundamentalism and as such possess strong constitutive power in offering self-evident definitions of Jewishness to the wider world, usually highly "cultured" (on the early history of Jewish museums, in the late 19th and the early 20th century, see Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett's important essay, "Exhibiting Jews," in her *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 99. 79–128). While

it is necessary to note these cases, which on the whole respectively stress the theological and ritual dimensions of the Jewish experience, full discussion of their impact in present-day quotidian trends lies beyond the scope of the present essay.

8 See Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity and Symbolic Religiosity: Towards a Comparison of Ethnic and Religious Acculturation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 17/4 (1994), 577–92. For further discussion of this topic, see my "Jews and Judaism in Contemporary Europe: Religion or Ethnic Group?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20/2 (1997), 257–79.

9 The contribution by Alanna Cooper in the present volume covers the topic with a very helpful case-study, proposing a center-periphery model which to some extent could also be mapped onto the tension between official rabbinic Judaism and the "lived Judaism" of quotidian *Yiddishkeit*, as discussed below.

10 For these and other illustrations of the need to problematize what I have called here the hegemonic rabbinic discourse of exile (particularly in the medieval period), see Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Exile and Expulsion in Jewish History," in Benjamin R. Gampel, ed., *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World, 1391–1648* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 3–22.

11 For a good ethnographic description, see Barbara Myerhoff, *Number our Days* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 96.

12 *Hazones (Hazanut)* was, however, a very popular, mass form of entertainment in Eastern Europe, among immigrants to the Americas, Western Europe, and South Africa. It was one of the most vivid expressions of *Yiddishkeit*.

13 Waterman, "Cultural Politics and European Jewry," 23–4, citing an article about Iceland in *The Economist,* January 3, 1998. Specialists in the anthropology of Iceland would almost certainly contest this image of the country, however; see Gísli Pálsson and E. Paul Durrenberger, eds., *Images of Contemporary Iceland: Everyday Lives and Global Contexts* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), especially the editors' introduction and the chapter by Durrenberger.

14 T. S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948).

15 George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Re-definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 34.

16 Gérard Silvain and Henri Minczeles's work *Yiddishland* (Paris: Editions Hazan, 1999), although primarily a collection of several hundred photographs of prewar daily Jewish life, is clearly intended (as the introductory essays make clear) as an evocation of a Jewish space both geographical and cultural, both mythical and real.

17 Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, 13.

18 See, for example, the view of Emil L. Fackenheim, who suggests that, at least as far as history is concerned, the divide between "secular" and "sacred" is inapplicable in a Jewish context but derives rather from Christianity; contem-

porary Jewish existence *ipso facto* manifests a form of Jewish secular holiness (*The Jewish Return into History: Reflections in the Age of Auschwitz and a New Jerusalem* [New York: Schocken Books, 1978], p. 52). A rather different type of example (from the chapter by Zvi Gitelman, in the present volume) is that it is quite possible that in Eastern Europe, young people lacking a formal Jewish education or commitment to Jewish practice may today attend a synagogue service but think of it also as a cultural experience; and Malka Korazim and Esther Katz, reviewing a wide range of "religious" events in Moldova, come to a similar conclusion in their paper.

19 This important principle, as Maimonides puts it, emerges in his commentary (*ad loc.*) to the *Mishnah*, tractate *Hullin*, 7: 6, in which he cites the case of circumcision as an additional example to the case being discussed in the text of the *Mishnah*, namely the contrary view of R. Judah that the prohibition on Jewish consumption of the sinew of the thigh vein derived from a practice first recorded (at Gen. 32: 33) in the context of the patriarch Jacob. The majority view of the rabbis of the *Mishnah* disagreed with R. Judah on this point. In providing his further example of circumcision (based on the law given to Moses at Lev. 12: 3, even though it is first referred to at Gen. 17: 10–14 as established by Abraham) and elaborating on this as a principle, Maimonides is saying in effect that historical origins or sociological practice do not constitute an appropriate source for Jewish religious law, defined for this purpose as the law given by God to Moses.

20 See Zvi Gitelman, "Reconstructing Jewish Communities and Jewish Identities in Post-Communist East Central Europe," in Kovács and Andor, eds., *Jewish Studies at the Central European University*, 35–50.

21 See Rebecca Schischa and Dina Berenstein, *Mapping Jewish Culture in Europe Today: A Pilot Project* (JPR Report, no. 3) (London: Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2002). Most of the statistic given below, relating to the data on the cultural events collected in this project, can be found in this publication (pp. 14 ff.); certain other figures (notably the percentages) derive from early drafts of this report which were not included in the final version. I am grateful to my colleagues at the JPR for permission to cite these findings.

22 Jews had lived in Crete for perhaps 2,500 years and had developed a civilization of considerable literary, rabbinic, and philosophical distinction. In 1944 the Germans rounded up and deported the last 265 Jews of the island, loading them onto a ship bound for the mainland (and then presumably Auschwitz). The ship never reached its destination: it was sunk on June 9, a short distance out of port. Contrary to other theories, it now appears that this was the work of a British submarine attacking what was thought to be a German supply ship; see Judith Humphrey, "The Jews of Crete under German Occupation 1941–44," *Bulletin of Judaeo–Greek Studies*, 5 (1989), 18–26; and "The Sinking of

the *Danae* off Crete in June 1944," *Bulletin of Judaeo–Greek Studies*, 9 (1991), 19–34.

23 Central Board of the Jewish Communities in Greece, ed., *Etz Hayyim Synagogue Commemorative Album* (Athens: Talos Press, 1999), 18.

24 As is conventional to note, Jewish population figures (especially those used for comparative purposes) are difficult to rely on literally, given that membership in the group is not always a social absolute and that in any case there are no uniform criteria from country to country by which these measurements are or can be made. See Sergio DellaPergola, "An Overview of the Demographic Trends of European Jewry," in Jonathan Webber; ed., *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994), 57–73. DellaPergola's figures for 1990 for the Jews of Italy are 31,000; Belgium 32,000; Sweden 15,000; and Poland 3,800 (*ibid.*, 64–65). The 2000 edition of the *Jewish Year Book*, ed., Stephen W. Massil (London: Vallentine Mitchell), gives increased figures for all of these countries: Italy 35,000; Belgium 40,000; Sweden 18,000; and the significantly higher figure for Poland of 6,000 (194–195).

25 Following DellaPergola's figures ("An Overview of the Demographic Trends," 64–5).

26 Jewish heritage tourism in Poland, especially its service industries such as kosher-style cafés and restaurants, is a particularly good example. There is no reason to suppose that the greater part of its consumers and patrons, let alone festival organizers, are Jewish; quite the contrary, in fact (Ruth Gruber calls them "virtual Jews": see *Virtually Jewish*, 43–50). Gruber writes that Janusz Makuch, the director of the Kraków festival, "sees no contradiction in his role as a non-Jew directing a Jewish culture festival for other non-Jews in a former Jewish neighborhood that today is a Jewish ghost town" (*ibid.*, 47).

27 To give just one example, there are nearly 300 university departments and institutions in Europe where Jewish studies are currently taught, by nearly 1,000 university teachers. See Annette Winkelmann, ed., *Directory of Jewish Studies in Europe* (Oxford: European Association for Jewish Studies, 1998), ix.

28 The chapter by Jacqueline Goldberg in this volume draws attention to the significance of developmental processes of change in the life trajectories of individuals, who from childhood socialization onwards constantly re-form their social identities, especially in the context of their changing personal experiences and changing social networks such as friendships and other peer groups (and one might add the influences of events in wider society—outbreaks of anti-Semitism, for example—that may bring about changes in stigma management strategies, as noted by András Kovács and Claire Rosenson in this volume). There is no question, then, but that the statistics need to be carefully reassembled in a wider frame of reference.

29 Cited in Gitelman, "Reconstructing Jewish Communities," 40–42; see also Rosenson's essay, and that of Marius Gudonis, in the present volume. See also: Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory: the Jew in Contemporary Poland* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989).

30 *Bluebeard's Castle*, 107.

31 *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, 119.

CHAPTER 16

Jewish Identity in Transition: Transformation or Attenuation?

Charles S. Liebman

What do the essays in this volume tell us about Jewish identity? This concluding essay is based primarily upon and refers to the work presented here. But I also draw upon a few recent and related publications: the books *Jewish Identities in the New Europe*[1] and *Jewish Studies at the Central European University*,[2] and three unpublished papers under the title "The Future of Jewish Life in the Former Soviet Union," by Mikhail Chlenov, Mikhail Krutikov, and Zvi Gitelman.[3] These were prepared for and circulated by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture in July 2001. Finally, any effort at synthesizing various assessments of Jewish identity in the post-Communist era must confront, in one form or another, Bernard Wasserstein's very pessimistic portrait of European Jewry's future.[4] Remarkably, none of the studies upon which I have drawn take note of Wasserstein, perhaps because the pessimism which informs Wasserstein's narrative may render the study of Jewish identity, at least in Europe, superfluous.

No one definition of Jewish identity informs the chapters. A few authors briefly explain what they mean by Jewish identity (Barth is frequently cited) and one author (Claire Rosenson) builds her chapter around an effort to construct a new definition of Jewish identity; but the theoretical question of what identity means, Rosenson aside, occupies little attention. Nevertheless, and despite some differences in definition, the term is clear enough in all the essays to enable some comparative analysis. The use of the term "identity" has been repeatedly challenged, most recently in a very scholarly, if verbose, article titled "Beyond 'identity'."[5] But the present volume demonstrates, I think, the continued utility of retaining the term, especially when authors and their audience have a general understanding of what it is they mean even if they are unable to agree on a precise definition. The question,

after all, is not what exactly we mean by Jewish identity, but whether it is a fair term under which we can group studies of *Jewish consciousness*—how strongly Jews feel about Judaism and/or Jewishness, and how much space these feelings occupy in their lives; and *Jewish meaning*—how Jews define the Judaism to which they subscribe and how they define their Jewishness, how they relate to the organized Jewish community, what are the implicit or explicit boundaries of Jewishness, and so on.

This essay is divided into three parts. I describe, very briefly, how the authors study Jewish identity, I raise what I feel are the critical questions which many of the authors explore even though in some instances they offer different answers, and finally I reflect on the implications of these studies for the prospects for Jewish continuity and survival.

RESEARCH METHODS

With the exceptions of Goldberg, Kosmin, and Miller, all of whom utilize the same survey of Jews in the UK, none of the chapters rely upon a questionnaire administered to a random sample of the Jewish population. There are no reliable lists of Jews in any country so a truly random sample of Jews would have to be drawn from the total population. Given the small percentage of Jews in the total population of every European country, such studies might be prohibitively expensive. Nevertheless, the authors have been able to draw samples themselves or rely on the sample surveys of others, where the population surveyed seems to replicate the known characteristics of Jews in the society being surveyed. Other studies rely more heavily on personal interviews with respondents who are especially knowledgeable about their own Jewish communities or who seem to be representative of these communities. Finally, a few of the studies are based on participant observation of particular communities or communal institutions. More often than not, the authors have combined a variety of research methods. Purists will certainly question the scientific validity of many such studies, first because they are not easily replicable and secondly because they do rely heavily on the judgment of the authors. My own conclusion is that at this stage in the study of Jewish identity, especially in Europe and most especially in Eastern Europe, this is the best that can be done. Nevertheless, the nature of our knowledge is somewhat random and

the gaps in our knowledge are great. Hence, many of the statements that follow need to be qualified. However—and this is no small accomplishment—we are able at least to formulate the things we do not know and need to know. In other words, we now know enough to be able to mount an intelligent comparative study of European Jewish identity.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Many of the studies note the impact of the environment on Jewish identity, a point to which Lars Dencik and András Kovács devote extensive discussions. As Kovács notes, one can respond to the environment by abandoning or affirming one's Jewishness but also, and this seems to be the most common occurrence in the post-Communist era, by redefining the meaning of Jewishness. But in no instance does one find patterns of behavior among Jews that differ markedly from patterns found in the general society.

The most notable impact of the surrounding culture may well be the growth of privatism (personalism) and individualism, an important explanation for the weakened allegiance to central communal institutions, on the one hand, and to the force of tradition on the other. Jewish institutional leaders have become "powerless shepherds whose flocks are deserting the fold" (Azria). And whereas the tradition is attractive to many Jews, they increasingly sense that it is they who choose the tradition or whatever aspects of the tradition they choose to celebrate; the tradition does not have the force of an imperative and cannot impose attitudes and forms of behavior. This, in turn, is related to the finding that Judaism, i.e. the practice of the Jewish religion, appears to be on the decline (at least outside the US), although it is less clear that it is being replaced by ethnic commitment. However, before turning to the question of what replaces religion, the "decline" itself merits some consideration. It would appear that the decline is not a function of Jews who formerly observed religious practices now ceasing to do so, as much as of the fact that the religiously observant are found primarily among the elderly, so that their number is naturally declining. In fact, in some areas of Eastern Europe (Gitelman, Kovács), the authors find a growth of religious practice among the youngest age group. Nevertheless, among the majority, religious practice may be admired, as Rosenson points out, but this admiration does not extend to the adoption of a religious way of life. Indeed, in the for-

mer Soviet Union, the Jewish religion is so weak that (as Judith Kornblatt shows), Jews who seek a religious experience turn to other religions. In one study, only 55 percent of the respondents thought the celebration of holidays was a religious event, 86 percent thought of it as a cultural event, and 90 percent thought of it as a way of expressing belonging to the Jewish people (Korazim and Katz). In the UK and Sweden as well, observance of Jewish ritual and Jewish practice is associated with an ethnic rather than religious consciousness (Miller, Dencik)—and I suspect that the same holds true in Israel and the US Insofar as the Jews of the former Soviet Union are concerned, having retained the ethno-national sense of Jewishness from the Soviet period, they continue to define themselves and even take pride in their Jewishness. This separation of Judaism and Jewishness seems characteristic of all the Eastern European countries surveyed and, as I suggested, it may be true in Western societies as well. Our authors do not discuss this point, but there is some survey evidence pointing in this direction. The difference between Western and Eastern countries is that the communal leadership and those most active in the Jewish community in the West are unlikely to recognize this distinction. I return to this point in the concluding section.

In the past, the Jewish religion played a major role in defining the content of Jewishness. What has replaced religion? It is not ethnicity in the traditional sense of the term. In this case as well, age differences are important. For the elderly, ethnic symbols such as Israel and the Holocaust are important components in their understanding of what it means to be Jewish. This is less true of the middle-aged. How do they construct their Jewish identity? In many cases, so it would appear, they "construct their ethnic identities from scratch" (Gudonis), from bits and pieces of personal memory (pictures of grandparents, stories told by their parents or grandparents, or friends), from a Jewish consciousness stimulated by schoolmates and friends who identify them as Jews (not necessarily in an anti-Semitic fashion), from contemporary cultural events of a Jewish nature ("public displays of Judaism"), which, as Jonathan Webber shows, are now widely celebrated throughout Europe, and from "ethnic entrepreneurs," especially representatives of foreign organizations and institutions (ranging from the Jewish Agency to Lubavitch emissaries to the Lauder Foundation), all seeking in one way or another to intensify the Jewish identity (or consciousness of Israel) among those they can reach. This might be called the

privatization of ethnicity. Absent are the old identities built on birth, practice, and "the transmission of Jewish ways of life and deep-rooted meanings and values" (Azria).

The topic of boundaries—how one is defined as Jewish and who defines one as Jewish—is raised in many of the papers. Boundaries among Jews are becoming increasingly fluid. Israel remains the only country in which there is official or governmental identification of Jews. But paradoxically, the Israeli Law of Return recognizes the immediate family members of any Jew as entitled to benefits, and the Jewish Agency emissaries abroad, whose prime focus is attracting immigrants to Israel, seeks to appeal to all those entitled to benefits under the Law of Return, including large numbers of non-Jews. Communities of Jews differ among themselves as to the boundaries of Jewishness. Strictly ethnic definitions are still pervasive among Jews in the former Soviet Union, *Halachic* definitions prevail in other communities, and under the impact of the Moslem environment, patrilineal descent is the criterion for Jewish identification in at least one former Soviet state. But it would seem that large numbers of Jews are prepared to accept others as Jews if they so identify themselves, as Dencik found in Sweden. In other words, identity as a Jew is, in many places and among many Jews, a matter of choice. When coupled with the material inducements to become Jewish, especially in the former Soviet Union, chaos ensues. Over the long run the absence of boundaries not only renders the maintenance or construction of a community impossible, but also undermines efforts to inject meaning or substance into one's Jewishness. It seems unlikely that such a condition can perpetuate itself over the long run—a point to which I return in the final section.

This discussion returns us to the stickiest problem of all in describing Jewish identity. What is the content or meaning of Jewish identity? Virtually every chapter in this volume, at some point, refers to Jewish culture. Whether Jews do or do not share one culture, it seems clear that a major component of Jewishness or Jewish identity is the belief that Jews not only share a culture but that it is rooted in the/a Jewish tradition. There is no question that tradition evolves and in the process of evolution transforms itself. There is no question that Jews differ from one another, not only from country to country but even from community to community. But it seems no less clear to me that whatever transformation may have taken place, that which most Jews believe to be tradition is at least recognizably part of the Jewish heritage, and

that which is called Jewish culture, even if this means not beating one's wife or choosing to spend one's money on fine furnishings rather than alcohol, or supporting humanitarian causes, is shared by Jews from other societies and is thought to be peculiarly Jewish. Postmodernist anthropologists may describe this as "cultural essentialism" and label it reactionary (Webber). But this, after all, is what defines Jews as one people. It is not only a concern for Jewish survival that directs us to look for the essentialist elements of Jewish culture; the question of which cultural elements are shared and which are not shared by all or most Jews and which cultural elements are or are not rooted in the Jewish tradition is what defines the research program for the social scientific analysis of Jewish identity. I cannot imagine allowing our scholarly agenda to be dictated by a postmodernist mood.

But what is Jewish culture? Many of our authors distinguish "thick" and "thin" culture[6] (Cooper, Klier, Gitelman, Gudonis). Their specific definitions differ but they point in the same direction. In many respects "thick" and "thin" identities might be a better term. With due recognition that the term culture is being used with less than perfect precision I want to offer my own definition. "Thick" culture, as Gudonis—borrowing from Hervieu-Léger—notes, is multidimensional. It includes commitments of a communal, cultural, ethical, and emotional nature. I think of it as not only multidimensional but multilayered. I can imagine the difference between a Jew whose Jewish culture is thick and a Jew whose Jewish culture is thin. Both may sit down to the Passover *seder*. For one, however, the *seder* evokes a plethora of associations. The anticipation of the holiday and the elaborate preparations. The reading of the *Hagadah* and the rescue of the Jews from Egypt. The *midrashic* references and the stories one has heard or hears, especially from those, seated at the table, who are knowledgeable in Jewish sources. The songs one sings at the meal and the memories it evokes of one's own childhood, of learning and then reciting the "four questions," of hiding the *afikoman*, and of receiving a gift. The family sitting down together, even the family squabbles so often associated with annual family meals. This is a particularly apt example of thick culture. The *seder*, when coupled with other holiday celebrations, other rituals, other public and private events, each of which evoke their own layers of meaning and associated memories, render Judaism or Jewishness the major part of one's life space. This is how I understand thick culture. For the Jew whose culture is thin, these memories and asso-

ciations are absent. The *seder* becomes a meal, a family gathering, and little more.

The *seder*, of course, is only one event. It is the most widely celebrated of Jewish festivals but I can imagine thick Jewish culture *sans seder*. Ben Gurion, we are told in a forthcoming article by Zvi Zameret, never celebrated a *seder* when the exigencies of his office did not require his presence at a public *seder*. Ben Gurion was totally secular in his own life but the Jewish culture in which he participated was certainly a thick one.

Thin Jewish culture, as Judith Kornblatt notes, is the product of "impoverished layers of Jewish identity." Those whose Jewish culture or identity is thin "are reluctant to accept any binding definition of Jewishness." Jewishness is a matter "of choice or cultivation rather than birth or fate" (Krutikov in the Memorial Foundation paper). It is well defined by what Herbert Gans refers to as "symbolic ethnicity." Writing about ethnicity in the US, he notes that: "Given the degree to which the third generation has acculturated and assimilated, more people look for easy and intermittent ways of expressing their identity, for ways that do not conflict with other ways of life. As a result, they refrain from ethnic behavior that requires an arduous or time-consuming commitment either to a culture that must be practised constantly, or to organizations that demand active membership. Second, because people's concern is with identity rather than with cultural practices or group relationships, they are free to look for ways of expressing that identity which suits them best, thus opening up the possibility of voluntary, diverse, or individualistic ethnicity."[7]

Thick culture, it seems to me, consumes the life of the individual and in certain (many) respects imposes attitudes and behavior. In other words, it is not really suitable to the culture of personalism and voluntarism, to the "voluntary, diverse, and individualistic ethnicity" which pervades Western society.

What are the building blocks upon which a thick culture is built? As Jacqueline Goldberg notes, social networks—and I would add familial networks—are crucial. This makes it impossible to sustain a thick culture in an intermarried household. Goldberg also points to home life, career and working hours, leisure time and leisure choice, volunteering, parenting, and schooling. Schooling is probably the most important activity in which we find, in the United States and many European countries, signs of Jewish revival. Gitelman mentions lan-

guage and religion and it is the topic of religion to which I will return in my final section.

THE FUTURE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

What do our studies tell us about the future of the Jewish people, European Jewry in particular? The powerful influence the environment exerts on Jewish identity, on whether one defines identity as the intensity of Jewish consciousness or as the meaning one attributes to Jewishness, means that the politics and culture of the societies in which Jews live will, as much as any other factor, determine their future. And so, as is so often the case, our discussion proceeds from the unrealistic assumption that the moods that presently prevail in Western culture will continue unabated: the decline of powerful, attractive, and pervasive collectivities (civil as well as governmental); the celebration of multiculturalism and the construction of individualized ethnic and religious identities; the prestige accorded to Jewish identity and the recognition accorded to Jewish culture in the history of the various European societies; the general absence of powerful anti-Semitic forces; and the postmodernist mood that celebrates individual autonomy and decries efforts at fixing boundaries of ethnicity, religion, tradition or culture. The greatest mistake of the postmodernists is to believe that the absence of definitions, of boundaries, of meaningful traditions and fixed loyalties, is a permanent feature of our lives.

These currents challenge Jewish identity in a manner that is radically different from previous challenges. Some are obviously helpful. If nothing else, they heighten "curiosity regarding Judaism" (Azria). But most of these challenges are at best problematic. If Judaism is to meet these challenges successfully, it will have to undergo some transformation. This is not the same as suggesting that any transformation that Judaism undergoes is helpful. I believe it is too soon to tell whether Jews, individually and collectively, are responding successfully to the challenges. To restate the matter more precisely, I am not certain whether the present responses of Jews to these currents are strengthening or weakening Jewish identity (in this case defined as Jewish consciousness). It is not only too early to say (the fact that Jewish identity is in a state of flux does not mean that it will remain so permanently), but we also lack the evidence we need to arrive at a balanced conclusion. To the best of my knowledge, in every Jewish

community in the world, certainly in every community surveyed in these studies, there are signs of Jewish revival, especially among some young Jews. As our authors point out, this too is related to currents in the larger society. On the other hand, I know of no Jewish community in the world where Jewish consciousness appears to be growing among a majority of Jews and where Jewish culture *increasingly* guides the life patterns of a majority of Jews.

There are some major troubling developments. First, it seems clear that the separation of Judaism and Jewishness empties Jewish peoplehood of significant and lasting content. It either defines Judaism in racist terms, focuses on recent events (the Holocaust in particular) which will inevitably lose force as time passes, or on Israel, whose importance is already declining. A prominent historian of modern Judaism, Paula Hyman, has observed that: "It is now clear that religion provides the only culturally affirmed basis for distinctiveness within white populations in the various societies of the West. An ethnic Jewish identity divorced from religious concerns has shown no basis for survival beyond the immigrant generation in any of the Western Diaspora societies that I have surveyed. The problem confronting Jewish leaders and educators is how to transmit a Jewish identity that melds ethnic and religious characteristics to a Jewish population that is distanced from its ethnic roots and fundamentally secular in its outlook."[8]

Second, the blurring of boundaries between Jew and non-Jew—and it is unimportant for this purpose whether or not one relies on an *Halachic* definition—renders the construction of communal organizations, of Jewish families, and of the transmission of any kind of Jewish heritage from one generation to the next, highly problematic. Finally, the concept that Stephen Miller calls "mental ethnicity," the notion that what is important is not what one does in terms of Jewish participation, but how one feels about being Jewish, is entirely consistent, as Stephen Miller shows, with assimilation and out-marriage.

These are developments that must be confronted. Rabbis, Jewish educators, communal professionals and volunteer leaders, even scholars who study the Jewish community, may not be successful in challenging them. But what seems equally clear to me is that the tendency on the part of some to celebrate these trends, to welcome the separation of Judaism and Jewishness, the blurring of boundaries between Jews and non-Jews, and the assertion of "mental ethnicity" as a legiti-

mate form of Jewish expression, undermines efforts to strengthen and assure the continuity of the Jewish people.

NOTES

1 Jonathan Webber, ed., *Jewish Identities in the New Europe* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994).

2 András Kovács and Eszter Andor, eds., *Jewish Studies at the Central European University* (Budapest: Central European University, 2000).

3 Forthcoming in *East European Jewish Affairs* (London).

4 Bernard Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora: The Jews in Europe Since 1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

5 Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'identity'", *Theory and Society* 29 (February 2000), 1–47.

6 I am not clear as to the origin of the term. Zvi Gitelman was the first to use these terms in the preliminary paper he prepared for the Budapest conference and it is clear from the essays that many of the authors found them most useful and incorporated them into their own papers. Gitelman himself does not recall where he heard the term although he acknowledges the influence of Clifford Geertz. Geertz, however, uses the terms "thick" and "thin" as "descriptions of culture." I used the terms recently in a public lecture and after one panelist mistakenly attributed it to Clifford Geertz, a second suggested it is to be found in the work of Michael Walzer. I mention all this because I think it is a useful concept in describing contemporary Jewish identity.

7 Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Culture in America," in Herbert Gans, *et. al*, eds., *On the Making of Americans: Essays in Honor of David Reisman* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 203–4. See also, "Symbolic Ethnicity and Symbolic Religiosity: Towards a Comparison of Ethnic and Religious Acculturation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17 (1994).

8 Paula Hyman, "National Contexts, Eastern European Immigrants, and Jewish Identity: A Comparative Analysis," in Steven M. Cohen and Gabriel Horenczyk, eds., *National Variations in Jewish Identity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 120.

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