



Learning Jewishness, Jewish Education and Jewish Identity

Prepared by Prof. Sylvia Barack Fishman and Dr. Shlomo Fischer
Contributors: Rachel S. Bernstein, Dr. Dov Maimon, and Shmuel Rosner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction:

The existing research shows that the Jewish future and the continuity of the Jewish civilization depends extensively on education and enhancing Jewish identity in the generations to come. This roundtable is convened to bring together the most committed and dedicated group of entrepreneurs, leaders and decision-makers to this task. Each member in his or her operational field has made a clear and acknowledged contribution, but JPPI, in private discussions with most of them, sensed a lack of strategic coordination that could bring optimized results.

The background materials and assessment document, prepared at JPPI under the lead of Prof. Sylvia Barack Fishman (Brandeis) and Dr. Shlomo Fischer (JPPI), in cooperation with the Institute's experts in the field, summarizes the latest quantitative and qualitative research on Jewish identity formation for each point of intervention along the Jewish life cycle: early childhood, elementary and middle school, adolescence, college years, and emerging adulthood. The research findings in the paper are analyzed in light of the theoretical perspectives of social networks and social capital.

Discussion Points:

- Developing and enhancing social networking components in Jewish educational strategy.
- Structuring the educational framework of cumulative Jewish experiences and serendipities.
- Prioritizing funding for programs delivering high quality Jewish content and pride.
- Jewish educational frameworks that allow for mixed social participation of Jews and non-Jews.
- Jewish education for emerging adults and young parents supporting Jewish cultural expressions.
- Reviving Jewish "social capital" for Jewishly "identity impoverished" families through formal and informal Jewish educational experiences in neutral, non-threatening environments.

Goals of the Round Table:

- To facilitate new, creative thinking about Jewish educational initiatives in a collaborative context;
- To enable cooperation and partnering among the most active and important philanthropists and decision-makers in the field of Jewish education;
- To facilitate informed decision-making with respect to allocation of resources at different points of intervention in the Jewish life cycle.



Points of Intervention Throughout the Life Cycle

Life Cycle	Intervention Mechanisms	Social Capital/Networking
Parents Home Identification	Adult and family education, school-parent relationship programs, outreach programs.	Networking among families.
Early Childhood Education (Ages 2-6)	Jewish early childhood programs and kindergarten, programs involving parents and families.	Connections between educational program and family life reinforce one another. Networking among families.
Elementary and Middle School (Ages 6-14)	Day and quality supplementary schools, Bar/Bat mitzvah education and group programs, seasonal rituals celebration, summer camps and informal education.	Connections between educational program and family life reinforce one another. Networking among families. Multiple serendipities of programs and social connections.
Adolescence (Ages 14-18)	Day schools and supplementary schools. Youth movement organizations. Camp. Semester-length programs in Israel in cooperation with Lapid.	Networking and friendships among Jewish teenagers. Social connections and friendships among kids leads to Jewish education and more Jewish lifestyle among families. The adolescent years start the process that culminates in choice of marriage partner.
College Years (Ages 18-22)	This is the last window of intervention for those with weak Jewish ties. Jewish and Israel studies courses, Hebrew learning, universities with vibrant Jewish life, one-year programs in Israel, English-teaching Israeli universities, leadership programs. Birthright as the last point of identity/identification intervention, and Masa as a program for follow-up and identity/identification consolidation.	Continuation of pattern of social circles and friendships begun during adolescence. Emphasis on mixed social circles of Jews and non-Jews.
Emerging Adulthood (Ages 22-35)	The key period for life decisions: profession, choice of spouse, household lifestyle. Social networks, friendship circles, study groups, visits to Israel, graduate student networks, JCC, cultural habits (music, books, movies, museums, etc.), Israel and Jewish advocacy, Tikkun Olam/social justice activities, virtual communities, Israeli and Jewish websites, non-establishment structures.	Anti-tribal construction of Jewish identity. Emphasis on content as opposed to boundaries ("us and them"). Emphasis on mixed networks.

The Jewish People Policy Institute
(Established by the Jewish Agency for Israel) Ltd.

Givat Ram Campus | P.O.B. 39156 Jerusalem 91391
Tel: 972-2-5633356, Fax: 972-5635040



המכון למדיניות העם היהודי
(מיסודה של הסוכנות היהודית לא"י) בע"מ

קמפוס גבעת רם | ת.ד. 39156 ירושלים 91391
טלפון: 02-5633356. פקס: 02-5635040



Summary of Findings and Analysis:

1. **The Importance of Social Networks.** One factor which the majority of research and, hence, policy planning in the field of Jewish education has not paid sufficient attention to is social networks. Our research shows that American Jews may say they feel disconnected from other Jews; yet, they are actually influenced by their Jewish social circles. Similarly, educators have tended to emphasize the role of parents in making educational decisions for their child and overlooked the importance of Jewish social networks in motivating children to continue their Jewish education. Our research shows that Jewish friends and social networks, especially during the teen years, influence decisions to attend Jewish schools and Jewish educational programs. This new understanding of the power of social networks suggests that the direction of influence in the teen years is from friendships to education to family involvements. A strong Jewish social network in the teen years is a predictor of college friends and choice of Jewish marriage partners.
2. **The Importance of Cumulative Educational Programs.** Our research shows that the successful formation of Jewish identity through Jewish education is the result of cumulative serendipities: Jewish family connections, Jewish formal education, Jewish friends and social networks, Jewish informal education, and travel programs. All of these work together and reinforce one another to produce identified and attached Jews. The greater the number of Jewish educational activities and experiences, such as Jewish supplementary school combined with Jewish summer camp, the more impact each one of them has on the given child and on the family. The combination of youth group, camp, and Israel trips also is correlated with an 80 percent in-marriage rate. This is especially the case in the school-aged years. A major policy challenge is to seek out and support the serendipities, so that they are no longer left to chance, but become, instead, one of the primary strategies for promoting the future of Jewish life.



3. **The Most Important Point of Intervention Is the Teenage Years.** In terms of predicting adult Jewish connections, statistical studies show that every year past the bar mitzvah year "counts" more than the year before. Receiving formal Jewish education from age 16 to 17 more accurately predicts adult Jewish connectedness than receiving formal Jewish education from age 15 to 16. Quantitative and qualitative research suggest that having mostly Jewish friends in high school is a motivator for continuing formal and informal Jewish education and a predictor for marrying or partnering with a Jew and forging strong Jewish connections. Conversely, when teenagers stopped attending Jewish schools after bar and bat mitzvahs, both they and their parents (in separate interviews) reported that their family Jewish observances and activities such as Shabbat service attendance gradually declined.

4. **The Second Most Important Point of Intervention Is Emerging Adulthood (the post-college years).** This is a growing group. Successive studies have underscored the fact that in 1960, 77 percent of American women and 65 percent of men below the age of 30, had accomplished the five sociological milestones of adulthood--"completing school, leaving home, becoming financially independent, marrying and having a child." Today, fewer than half of women and one-third of men fit that fully adult profile. The proportion of Americans aged 25 to 34 who have never been married exceeds those married. The Jewish identity gains that result from a Jewish education during the teenage years are significantly undermined when young American Jews remain single for a decade or longer after college. These young American Jews between the ages of 22 to 35 require programs tailored to their distinctive form of Jewish attachment. In contrast to prior generations of American Jews, who sought out co-religionists and preferred to socialize among Jews, this generation speaks about "not wanting to be restricted to the tribe," or to divide the world into "us" and "them." For these young American Jews, content is more compelling than kinship. They define Jewish social values, religious rituals, and cultural forms of Jewish expression, such as Jewish music and literature, as the primary expressions of their Jewishness. At the same time, many of them also seek community and friendship circles—but do not want to feel these are being forced upon them.



5. **Jewish Education For Mixed Social Networks.** Young American Jews have more porous boundaries than the previous generation. The social networks of young American Jews are mixed, especially beginning in their college years. They wish to enjoy and benefit from Jewish content and Jewish culture in the company of non-Jewish friends. Fully one quarter of Jews populate Jewish Studies courses in American colleges. Jewish Studies courses are successful both because they are content-driven and because they offer a mixed social network experience. Similarly, they want to enjoy informal Jewish educational and cultural events (films, concerts, etc.) in the company of non-Jewish friends. A fourth of those who were raised in non-Jewish or mixed households, of those who had minimal Jewish education growing up, and of those who consider themselves secular Jews find their way into Jewish Studies.
6. **The Special Needs of Jewishly “Impoverished” Families.** Jewish populations are divided into two groups. One group has "high Jewish social capital," i.e., Jewish social connections, friends and networks, educational and communal activities. This group is involved in a virtuous circle: a mutually revitalizing synergy that reinforces Jewish identity. The second group has “low Jewish social capital.” For example, Jews who are geographically isolated from other Jews in childhood or do not get sent to Jewish camps, have few Jewish friendship circles. Others within this group are the children of weakly identified Jewish parents. Some are children of intermarried families, especially of families where the mother does not identify as a Jew. Weak Jewish identification often gets worse with each generation that is remote from Jewish social networks and Jewish education, creating a cycle of “poor Jewish social capital.”

As Steven Cohen put it in his *A Tale of Two Jewries: The "Inconvenient Truth" for American Jews*, "The intermarried homes with school-age children stand in sharp contrast. As compared with the in-married, only half as many of the intermarried observe Passover, Chanukah or Yom Kippur, or belong to a synagogue. Just 7% have mostly Jewish close friends (as compared with 53% of the in-married). Only handfuls (from 9-14%) attend services at least monthly, have been to Israel, light Sabbath candles, keep kosher at home, or volunteer in



Jewish contexts as compared with about four times as many among their in-married counterparts."

One of the largest challenges facing Jewish educational policy is to formulate programs that can appeal to these low Jewish social capital groups.

7. **Research Gaps on Critical Issues.** Our research suggests that there remain critical research gaps in the field of Jewish education. Some of the most crucial questions include: What is the impact of post-denominational by design schools on Jewish identity? What is the relative impact of Jewish education versus family on Jewish identity? To what extent do Jewish educational enterprises focus on incorporating Jewish approaches to meaningful issues preoccupying contemporary Jewish students? Do traditional Jewish pedagogical techniques – argumentation, hevruta learning – increase Jewish identity? How do we overcome resistance to learning Hebrew?

Suggested Policy Directions for Discussion

In light of our analysis of the quantitative and qualitative research on Jewish education and Jewish identity formation, our conversations with key figures in the field of Jewish education, and the theoretical literature we have reviewed, we suggest the following policy directions as a basis for discussion at the round- table.

- Each Jewish educational program should aim to include a social networking component as part of its Jewish educational strategy. For example, early childhood programming should include programs for joint activities and networking among families. High school programming could include trips to Israel that create stronger existing and new social networks.
- Cumulative Jewish educational experiences must be structured into the educational framework and not left to chance. For example, Jewish supplementary schools should sponsor Jewish summer camp experiences or promote youth group attendance.
- Jewish educational programs delivering high quality Jewish content should become a funding priority, especially beginning with the high school years.

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- Jewish educational programs that can be enjoyed by a mixed social network should be expanded, especially for college and young adult populations.
- Jewish education for emerging adult populations should be conceived as necessarily including support for Jewish cultural expressions.
- A primary goal of formal and informal Jewish education should be the revival of **Jewish social capital for Jewishly “impoverished” families through the** establishment of new Jewish social circles. Priority should be given to programs that offer high quality intellectual content or experiences, such as Jewish Studies courses in universities or Birthright trips in Israel, in a neutral and non-threatening environment.
- Funds should be allocated for further targeted research on Jewish education to close the critical gaps in knowledge listed in point 7 above.



Full Assessment Document

Introduction:

This paper addresses an informational lacuna concerning the impact of various kinds of Jewish education along the life cycle upon diverse segments of the Jewish community, as the basis for systematic discussions and examinations of this complicated landscape. While much research concerning educational programs aimed at diverse age groups exists, it is dispersed and not easily accessible. The paper examines research¹ on educational strategies aimed at diverse age groups—pre-school, primary school, secondary school and university age, emerging and mature adults-- and also considers the behavior and values of different subgroups in the American Jewish community. The analysis of the effectiveness of Jewish education at various points of intervention along the life cycle is informed by the theoretical literature on social networks and social capital. Part I explains the importance of constituting Jewish social circles through educational strategies. Part II examines the quantitative and qualitative research on the effect of Jewish education along the stages of the life cycle. Part III surveys new trends in Jewish education and outlines the critical areas and issues in Jewish education that remain open questions and require further research.

I. The Importance of Social Networks

Individual Identity and Values Influenced by Surrounding Social Contexts

Why be Jewish? For individuals to feel connected to a particular religious system or ethnicity when living in an open society where ethnoreligious identifications are a matter of choice, the individual must believe such identification is

worthwhile. Social scientists, from the foundational writings of Durkheim and Weber onward, have insisted that the social group defines which connections, beliefs, and activities are and are not valuable and worthwhile,ⁱⁱ and creates, maintains, transmits, and changes the values and behaviors that define a given ethnicity or religion. Religion, with its various activities and rituals are one important (but not the only) way to “bring individuals together, to increase contacts between them,”ⁱⁱⁱ according to Durkheim, and these daily and weekly contacts help to build ethnic social capital.

When Jews lived in societies in which they had a lot of contact with each other (and very little with non-Jews) they and others usually thought of themselves as "born into" Jewishness. Jews amassed ethnic social capital^{iv} through daily experience, in the form of ethnic languages, food, music, stories, texts, arts and culture, religion and rituals. These individuals who shared ethnic social capital also tended to value similar things, and to feel an affinity for each other. Some Jews living in densely Jewish societies may have felt ambivalent, and some negative about their Jewishness, but they still believed they were linked to other Jews. After immigration, even American Jews who were not particularly interested in religion still often created primarily Jewish social circles (although they valued the freedom to create friendships with a broad spectrum of people) because they felt most at home with Jews. Many continued to be deeply concerned about the wellbeing of Jews and the survival of Jewish culture.

Today the relationship of young Jews to their Jewishness and to other Jews has changed: Jewish identity—placing "Jew" at the core of one's identity, and identifying with other Jews in a kind of familial or kinship relationship—has become

more voluntary, symbolic, and arguably complex since the 1960s, in part because it is so easy to be Jewish in America today. Ethnic “types” are celebrated (rather than discriminated against) in American culture, and Jews have become acceptable (some would argue indistinguishable) as business colleagues, friends, and romantic partners in secularized liberal Christian America. Ironically, Jews—one of America’s tiniest minorities—are often not seen as a “minority” by others or by many younger Jews, because they no longer seem to suffer from prejudicial practices.

Younger American Jews are less motivated than many older Jews to identify with and worry about other Jews, because they don’t perceive the world in “us and them” categories.^v Many Jews in their twenties and thirties do not see the point of being concerned about the survival of Jewishness. The newest research reveals that Jewish identity is only salient for many younger Jews if they feel Jewishness helps to provide their lives with: (1) meaning, including intellectually and/or spiritually compelling encounters; (2) peer group and a sense of community; (3) opportunities for social activism that have a Jewish rationale or organizational focus; and (4) intense experiences and activities—including cultural, artistic, or religious activities—that capture their imaginations and become cherished memories. For many, the Jewish experiences that forge connections are provided by the combination of a parental home with strong Jewish values and activities, successful formal or informal educational interventions, and interactions with a peer group that also values Jewishness.

Although they may not realize it, younger Jews are also deeply influenced by the values of their social circles (family, school friends, work colleagues, and others). Even those Jews who are convinced that they are utterly independent of other Jews, as brilliantly described by Cohen and Eisen in *The Jew Within*,^{vi} have been (and continue to be) shaped by the Jewish societies that they encounter. To give just two examples

of how diverging Jewish societies today continue to define what activities are "worthwhile" to spend one's time on which are not, many inclusivist American Jews in their twenties and thirties value music with Jewish content only if a concert attracts many non-Jews along with Jews. In contrast, many exclusivist *haredi* (ultraOrthodox) Jews think Jewish learning is more rigorous and valuable if it excludes female learners. In each of these cases, the social circle defines values. Individuals internalize those values and think of them as their own: Jews around outside influence the Jew within.

Thus, even though recent literature places great stress on identity as individualistic and personalized, utilizing the concepts of rational choices in a marketplace of ideas, this is only part of the story. Sociologist of religion Robert Wuthnow warns that rational choice theory undervalues the profound impact of social and cultural norms on what real people actually believe and do--especially when looking at "the current patterns of religious belief and practice among young adults."^{vii} Journalist Malcolm Gladwell argues that researchers miss critical dimensions of "an individual's personal choices or actions in isolation" without studying their community. To fully understand the outstanding individual, one must "look *beyond* the individual," and understand the culture he or she was a part of, and who their friends and families were, and what town their families came from. The values of the people we surround ourselves with--or find ourselves surround by--have a profound effect on who we are.^{viii}

Jewish educational settings, both formal and informal--as this paper suggests--can constitute Jewish social circles that help to create Jewish social capital and more connected Jews. But which educational interventions actually succeed in creating social capital and changing attitudes and behaviors--and for which populations? Advocates of particular formal and informal educational approaches--early childhood

education, day school, supplementary classes, camp, youth groups, Birthright Israel, Masa and other extended educational Israel trips, college Israel studies classes, adult education--often argue passionately about the best uses for Jewish communal resources, and which interventions can, and cannot, successfully create meaningful engagements with Jewishness and attachments to other Jews.

The family is a primary social circle shaping Jewish identity

The first social group children encounter is the family unit. When parents, siblings, if they exist, and extended family members value Jewish activities and are connected to other Jews, babies and very young children are educated that Jewishness is worthwhile. Of course families vary greatly on the centrality of Jewishness to their quotidian lives: some families incorporate daily Jewish activities--others encounter Jewishness only a few times a year. Another factor is what we might call the "religious narrative(s)" of the home, a reflection of the religious identification of parents. Virtually all children of two Jews are "raised as Jews," and the home has only one ethnoreligious narrative; any activities reflecting ethnicity and/or religion informally educate children to care about Jewishness. However, children of one Jew and one non-Jew, in contrast, have what sociologist Mary Waters calls "ethnic options."^{ix} Fewer than half of intermarried Jewish parents say they are raising their children with some Jewish connections.^x Percentages "raising children as Jews" vary by location, greater or smaller in particular cities. The Jewishness of the home also varies dramatically by the gender of the parent: intermarried Jewish mothers are substantially more likely than intermarried Jewish fathers to say Jewishness is important to them, that they are raising children as Jews, that they insist on the ritual circumcision of their sons, and that they provide sons and daughters with Jewish education.^{xi} However, even with "raised Jewish" children, in intermarried families

there is often a competing religious narrative in the home (the famous "December dilemma" is typical) and families often create new combinations of merged or syncretic traditions. Social life further reinforces the difference between inmarried and intermarried families: inmarried Jews tend to have mostly Jewish friendship circles, while intermarried Jews tend to have predominantly mixed married and non-Jewish friendship circles.

Throughout their growing up years, children's Jewish education is linked to the Jewish activities--or lack of them--within the family. The influence goes in both directions. Many people are aware that families profoundly affect children's Jewish connections--but fewer realize that from preschool through the teenage years children's Jewish connections profoundly affect families. When parents from even Jewishly under-connected or inactive families enroll their children in formal or informal Jewish educational programs, the Jewish connections and activities of the whole family increase. When children or teens leave Jewish educational settings, the Jewish behaviors of the whole family decline. Clearly, Jewish education creates an ecology, or mutually revitalizing synergy, that reinforces Jewish identity. Moreover--again from pre-school through the teen years--the greater the number of Jewish educational activities and experiences, the more impact each of them have on the given child and on the family. When Jewish education succeeds, it is most often a story of the more, the more.

Jewish education is part of the ongoing building of Jewish social capital. No one educational strategy provides a permanent Jewish inoculation for all Jews, but all educational strategies work best when they include the reinforcement of a social network. As we have discussed, the social circles like the family also have a huge influence in defining an individual's values and influencing behaviors. Other social circles have important influence on values and behaviors as well, in school,

extracurricular activities, and later in the workplace. American Jewish lives are mobile and fluid. As we document in the next section, Jewish social capital is built by early childhood education, elementary school formal and informal educational experiences, teen classes and activities with peers, college Jewish studies and Israel trips, community-building, cultural, and social-justice activities for emerging adults (twenties and thirties), family education, and adult education. The combination of formal and informal Jewish education and strong Jewishly connected social circles produces the most strongly connected Jewish adults, especially in day school that lasts from elementary through teen years, supplementary school when combined with Jewish summer camps and teen programs, and colleges with many Jews and Jewish educational opportunities. Jewish social circles plus multifaceted Jewish education effectively nourishes Jewishness: the more the more.

But for some Jewish populations who miss these serendipities, the story is more like, the less the less. Some Jews are geographically isolated in childhood, and have few Jewish friendship circles, and do not get sent to Jewish camps that might enrich their Jewishness on many levels. Some are the children of weakly identified Jewish parents; some of these Jewishly "impoverished" families, in terms of Jewish social capital, are intermarried families, especially where the mother does not identify as a Jew. Weak Jewish identification often gets worse with each generation that is remote from Jewish social networks and Jewish education, creating a cycle of poor Jewish social capital.

Early childhood informal educational efforts such as the "P.J. Library Project,"^{xii} youth groups that make few demands on the family and are available to geographically isolated youth like BBYO, for college students Birthright Israel and

popular Jewish studies courses, and some outreach programs can capture the interest of less connected Jews. "One size fits all" doesn't reflect diverse individual realities. But one thing is true of the interaction between social circles and formal and informal Jewish education--educational serendipities create added value that far surpasses the sum of the parts.

II. Jewish education and the Jewish life cycle

Early Childhood

An initial window of educational opportunity occurs with marriage, child-rearing, and the search for Jewish-content child care programs, not only for children but for the parents and other family members. Ruth Pinkenson Feldman discovered this dynamic in her study of Philadelphia children almost twenty-five years ago: the Jewish observance level of the entire household rose when children entered Jewish nurseries, as a passive or second-hand result of the children's schooling.^{xiii} In a study for JECEP, Beck observed 9 schools and "interviewed 90 families with children attending the school," finding that "most families were initially not primarily concerned with providing a Jewish education for their children." Afterwards, "16 percent of the Jewish preschool graduates continued in Jewish day schools," and 52% "continued their formal Jewish education in synagogue-affiliated religious schools." The impact on the family was even greater: "Nearly 70 percent of the interviewed families were 'doing something different' as a result of their child's Jewish preschool experience," and "prior to their child's preschool experience, only 40 percent of the families were synagogue members. In contrast, at the time of the interviews, 80 percent of the families were members."^{xiv} (Many schools require membership for enrollment.)

Shaul Kelner's more recent study of the impact of early childhood Jewish education further refines the nuances of the family effect: Having a child enrolled in a Jewish school builds connections to an important Jewish social network: other Jewish parents and the Jewish community, helping parents to create Jewish social circles that may reinforce their own and their family's connections to Jews and Jewishness. This social network additionally supports home-based Jewish behaviors. Parents with young children in Jewish schools may become more amenable to providing their children with substantive Jewish education in the future.^{xv}

Elementary school and middle school

Providing one's children with formal Jewish education during the pre- bar/ bat mitzvah years is one of the most universal Jewish behaviors of American Jews. About three-quarters of America's adult Jews received some type of Jewish education. Four out of five children raised as Jews receive some type of formal Jewish education--the highest levels of current enrollments--between the ages 10 to 13. Today girls are slightly more likely than boys to be enrolled in the pre- bar/bat mitzvah years.^{xvi}

The most intensive type of schooling (hours and the extent of Jewish materials) is the all-day Jewish school, often called "Day School," a.k.a. "Parochial School" or "Yeshiva." In some communities, day school education is available from kindergarten through middle school and high school, in other communities only for some portion of that time. Some day schools affiliate with particular wings of Judaism. Conservative and Reform schools have increased in the past two decades, but many suffered setbacks during the American economic crisis. The majority fall under Orthodox auspices. A growing phenomenon is the community Day School, not affiliated with any wing of Judaism. Day schools are most likely to have enough time

to emphasize the Hebrew language (although not necessarily with any sophistication or attention to grammar and conversational skills) and traditional text study. Some are marketed as Jewish "prep" schools aiming to produce students who can compete for the most prestigious universities. Not within the purview of this discussion is the emergence of Charter Schools with Hebrew curriculums.

The most common form of American Jewish education, "Supplementary School," also referred to as "Talmud Torah" or "Hebrew School," consists of several hours of Jewish education, afternoons after regular school hours and/or Sunday mornings. Curriculum offerings depend on the location and educational philosophy of the sponsoring institution(s). Periodically, educational reforms are undertaken to improve the dynamic environment and pedagogical standards of supplementary schools. In some locales congregations cooperate to create community supplementary schools. In recent years, the "elites" within the Conservative movement have chosen Day School education for their children. The vast majority of Conservative and some Reform Jews, however, continue to send their children to supplementary schools, and almost half of non-Orthodox American Jewish adults received most of their Jewish education from a supplementary school.^{xvii} During the elementary school and middle school years, as noted, supplementary schools enjoy a type of captive audience because they offer pre-bar/ bat mitzvah preparation. After age 13, however, attendance at supplementary schools plummets--especially for boys. Special high school supplementary programs, which are discussed in the next section, are typically structured independently.

The least intense form of American Jewish education for school-age children is the one-day-a-week program, often called the "Sunday school." Some Sunday schools are offered outside of Jewish denominational and synagogue settings in

private, free-standing schools. Additionally, some parents home school or hire tutors to provide Jewish education.

The most recent national data show (NJPS 2000-01 data) 11% of non-Orthodox Jewish adults attended Jewish day schools in their childhood; 33% attended two-day-a-week (or more) supplementary schools; 20% one-day-a-week Sunday schools; 5% received “other forms of schools (e.g., tutoring)” and 31% received “no formal Jewish education.” The percentage of students choosing day school education has increased, supplementary school attendance has declined, and Sunday school and no Jewish schooling levels remained stable across the age groups. Outside of Orthodox communities girls are much more likely than boys to continue with Jewish schooling after bar/bat mitzvah. Among American Orthodox Jews rates of continuance (although not necessarily the subject matter) are roughly equal for boys and girls. The majority of Orthodox youth attend day school into their high school years.

Not giving one's children any Jewish education whatsoever--especially in the pre- bar/bat mitzvah years (ages 10-13)--is associated with alienation from things Jewish. Students who do not receive Jewish education during these years typically grow up in very weakly identified or connected Jewish families, many of them the children of mixed marriage, especially with a non-Jewish mother, despite the fact that since 1983 American Reform temples accept children of Jewish fathers as normative Jewish children in their congregations. They are also unlikely to have a bar or bat mitzvah ceremony or event. In the United States, not "being bar mitzvahed" (sic) has great symbolic significance. Although according to Jewish law any Jew becomes bar or bat mitzvah--that is, responsible for one's own religious life and actions-- at the appropriate age (traditionally 13 for males and 12 for females, respectively), non-Orthodox American Jews tend to think of the bar/ bat mitzvah as a ceremonial rite of

passage which makes one a bona fide member of the Jewish club. It is this centrality of bar mitzvah that gave the phenomenon of adult bar and especially bat mitzvah ceremonies such importance and sweeping popularity in recent decades. When frustration with the pallid success rates of supplementary school education sometimes leads critics to declare, "They'd be better off with no formal Jewish education!" this is not factual: the sociological reality is that Jewish education during the elementary and middle school years is the foundation upon which both simultaneous and later Jewish experiences are built.

The pattern of mutual reinforcement we observed in Jewish pre-school education continues in the elementary school and middle school years: having children enrolled in Jewish schools both affects and reflects the Jewishness of their entire family, increasing engagement with Jewish activities, home holiday rituals, and Jewish institutions.

By the 1990 NJPS, children not receiving formal Jewish education were unlikely to attend Jewish camps or participate in Jewish youth groups.^{xviii} Thus, although for previous generations camping was Jewish education for some, and some researchers suggest the camping experience in particular provides "an abstract feeling of solidarity with a worldwide community beyond one's immediate experience,"^{xix} for the past two decades almost all children attending Jewish summer camp also receive some formal Jewish education. Like other types of Jewish education, camping is linked to the family, as Keysar, Kosmin and Scheckner point out.^{xx}

Nevertheless, mathematically, education itself has a measurable impact when familial factors are held steady. Day school from elementary through high school graduation yields dramatically positive results, as does supplementary school when combined with (or followed by) informal education such as youth group, camp, and Israel trips. For adults ages 18 to 54 who were raised as Jews but not Orthodox,

among those attending Jewish day schools 80 percent married Jews, as did 73 percent of those who attended supplementary school for seven or more years, 65 percent who attended supplementary school for one to six years, and around half of those who attended Sunday schools. The combination of youth group, camp, and Israel trips also is correlated with an 80 percent inmarriage rate.^{xxi} Educational combinations are serendipitous and even more effective. “Intensive education” (i.e. day school or multiple-day supplementary school) and “education of longer duration” have a greater impact; and “more Jewishly engaged homes” promote more education, as well as providing family-based, home-centered informal education. Sunday Schools (one day programs are actually about two to three hours a week) are also divided, showing “positive, negligible, or even somewhat negative” results on Jewish identity. Jewish youth groups had either strong long-term effects or “more modest effects”; Jewish camping--especially those camps that were “educationally intensive,” such as the Ramah camps, had “fairly robust effects.”^{xxii} Israel trips may be “second only to day schools in terms of overall impact,” Cohen suggests.^{xxiii} The more formal and informal Jewish education before age 18, the more measurable adult Jewish connections. Classrooms, camps, and youth groups each provide contexts for Jewish socialization, an effect magnified by multiple reinforcement.

Adolescence and post bar/bat mitzvah – the most critical years

Recent research shows that the teen years are the most critical years for Jewish education, building on the foundations of supplementary or day school education leading up to bar/ bat mitzvah, and forecasting Jewish involvements--or lack of them--in the college years. Statistics show that in terms of predicting adult connections every year past the bar mitzvah year "counts" more than the year before. Receiving formal Jewish education from age 16 to 17 more accurately predicts adult Jewish connectedness than receiving formal Jewish education from age 15 to 16.

Perhaps the most striking finding of research on the impact of Jewish education on teenagers and their parents is the interrelatedness of positive Jewish elements in the lives of teenagers. Quantitative and qualitative research suggest that having mostly Jewish friends in high school predicts marrying or partnering with a Jew and forging complex Jewish connections. In the interviews we conducted, teenagers described how their friendships with other Jewish teens influenced them to continue formal and informal Jewish education. Friendships affected Jewish connections and promoted additional Jewish education.

Jewish education influences not only teenagers, but also the ritual practices and other Jewish connections of the entire family. When teenagers stopped attending Jewish schools after bar and bat mitzvahs, both they and their parents (in separate interviews) reported that their family Jewish observances and activities such as Shabbat service attendance gradually declined without the reinforcing effect of Judaic discussion in classes and invitations for holiday celebrations with classmates' families. In contrast, when teenagers continued attending Jewish schools after bar/ bat mitzvah, family Jewish activities remained constant. The more conventional understanding is that the impact goes from parents to children-- "parents make the decisions regarding Jewish education for their children."^{xxiv} Influence flowing from friendships to education to family involvements represents a new understanding of the power of social networks, particularly in the teen years. The two-directional influence is very useful in making sense of the statistical predictive power of Jewish population density in childhood for the Jewish connectedness of adults. One should not underestimate the enculturating effectiveness of simply spending time with other Jewish teenagers in both formal and informal Jewish educational settings. Formal Jewish education, no less than informal Jewish activities, provides settings in which Jewish friendship circles can be

enhanced, and in which not only the friendship circles but also the emerging sexual interests of Jewish teenagers can be channeled toward Jewish peers.

Qualitative (interview) studies reveal^{xxv} what teenagers most liked about their Jewish classes and youth groups, was (1) studying, intellectual enjoyment; (2) substance—they disliked classes with no rigor; (3) sports with COOL JEWS; (4) transdenominationalism—no barriers between different flavors of Jews; (5) being part of a group within a group—belonging; (6) related to that, but not identical, seeing their friends from various places. One very common pattern is that initially parents encouraged their teens to join, and later the teens themselves take ownership and internalize education as a value. Being part of a group was a big plus for students. Going to Jewish camps made one more likely to continue with Jewish schools.

Jewish teens come from many types of family environments, and all have a need for Jewish education. Students whose families are currently unaffiliated or who are geographically isolated find secular Jewish youth groups such as BBYO important opportunities for Jewish connection, non-pressured place to meet Jewish friends, as do children from divorced or financially struggling families, because of logistical problems. (Jewish families who send teenagers to day schools and to supplementary Hebrew high schools are also diverse, and include many blended, divorced, or atypical families.)

Teens like a peer society, in addition to family, to share their rituals with. When they don't have proximity, they use technology to create a virtual society. Recognizing the importance of social networks does not imply a commensurate decrease in the importance of the parents and other family members in the process of educational decisions. On the contrary, parents comprise the primary social network, and add to the significance of social networks in Jewish educational decisions. Teens perceived their parents as being influential in the initial decision to continue—or not

to continue--with Jewish education after bar/ bat mitzvah. Parental encouragement was especially important in getting youngsters started in post bar/bat mitzvah classes. Later the teens made the decision for themselves, but initially parental involvement and encouragement were key. Many teens reported that their parents had forced them to continue, and then, after a year or two, they had—grudgingly or graciously--come to enjoy the experience. While parents may feel that their influence is eclipsed by that of peer relationships, psychology of religion studies show that parental values and behaviors continue to exercise great influence in the teen years and beyond.^{xxvi}

Gender plays a huge role in the likelihood of continuing Jewish education after bar/bat mitzvah, with girls overwhelmingly more likely than boys to be the ones continuing, almost regardless of the type of program. The "Moving Traditions" program's Deborah Meyer argues that the Jewish community should provide better services for educating and discussing gender with Jewish boys, arguing, “Ironically, boys are given fewer opportunities than girls to consider gender and the possibilities of adulthood, including what roles work and relationships will play in their lives.” For Meyer, the Jewish community is missing a “golden opportunity” to create a “meaningful and lasting connection with Judaism” for teens through educating them and encouraging them in “making positive life choices.”^{xxvii}

Parents were divided on the subject of the guidance they gave their teens about college: some reinforced looking for a campus with dynamic Jewish life. However, for many--perhaps most--Jewish life on campus plays virtually no role in decision-making. Some teens—like their parents—feel ambivalent, not wanting Jewish isolation, but also not wanting a college campus that seems “too Jewish.” Patterns established in high school repeated themselves in college.

College years: Jewish studies, Birthright Israel, and beyond

College and graduate and professional schools led to acculturation for many American Jews during the first half of the twentieth century, and high levels of education and occupational achievement sometimes meant outright assimilation. However, for twenty-five years the opposite is true: highly educated Jews are more, not less, Jewishly involved, yet college still has the inaccurate reputation for diminishing Jewish observance and involvement, because for all young Americans--not just Jews--experience temporary decline in religious observance during college. However, the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health from 1994-1995 and 2001-2002 argues that higher education does not cause a decline in religious beliefs but, rather, emerging adults in college reduce their religious practice. Other studies find transformations, rather than decline, in interest in spiritual matters among college students.^{xxviii} Of the ethnic and religious groups in the study, Black Protestants, Catholics, and Jews were the least affected by the transitions of early adulthood in their religious affiliation and the importance of their religious beliefs in their lives, and they “drop out of their religion at the lowest frequency.” The researchers also found that, “Black Protestant and Jewish respondents have higher odds than mainline Protestants of maintaining their religious salience in early adulthood.”

Judaic Studies departments, or at least programs and classes, in most major universities have also changed the college experience for many, making college into a location where students can encounter the Jewish intellectual and cultural heritage on a very different level than most experienced in their home communities. A Brandeis study described by Amy Sales and Len Saxe showed that 45% of the students at the colleges and universities in the study “had taken at least one Jewish studies course by the time they were seniors.” The likelihood of taking a Jewish studies course was

strongly increased by previous exposure to Jewish education--“the stronger a student’s Jewish upbringing, the more likely s/he is to take a Jewish studies course.” However--and we emphasize this because it is critically important--“a fourth of those who were raised in non-Jewish or mixed households, of those who had minimal Jewish education growing up, and of those who consider themselves secular Jews **find their way into [Jewish Studies] courses.**” Sales and Saxe suggest Jewish Studies courses are perceived as a “safe environment for self-exploration” due to their academic nature. Their “bottom line” is that “those who take Jewish studies courses have significantly higher levels of Judaic knowledge; they place significantly higher weight on Jewish values; and they report a significantly greater connection to the Jewish people, a greater pride in being Jewish, and a greater importance of Judaism in their lives.”^{xxix}

Of course, the Israel trip phenomenon has profoundly changed the equation between secular America and Jewish peoplehood during the college years. Birthright Israel, launched in 2000 with 9,500 participants, in its first decade (through 2010) brought 250,000 young Jews from 54 countries to Israel in a ten day, subsidized program. Evaluations and research papers published by Brandeis University scholars Len Saxe, Ted Sasson, and others vividly demonstrate the powerful and lasting positive impact of Birthright Israel trips on participants. Mostly notably, about three quarters of Birthright Israel participants marry Jewish spouses, compared to fewer than half of non-participants. Feelings of kinship with other Jews, Jewish peoplehood, and concern about Israel are also measurably strengthened.^{xxx} How this process works is explained by Shaul Kelner in *Tours That Bind*. American Jewish policy planners and educators look to Israel trips to “strengthen Jewish identity”--but, unlike their Israeli counterparts, they aim for a “specifically diasporic” identity, rather than the centrality of Israel to American Jewishness. Thus, while Israeli sponsors may hope

participants will be "better" Zionists, their American planners and supporters hope they will be "better" Jews and even better Americans.^{xxxii}

" Emerging adulthood " – the second most important point of intervention

After the teen years, the most critical point of intervention along the life cycle is emerging adulthood. Successive studies have underscored the fact that in 1960--when the parents of today's young adults were young--77 percent of American women and 65 percent of men below the age of 30 had accomplished the five sociological milestones of adulthood--"completing school, leaving home, becoming financially independent, marrying and having a child."^{xxxiii} Today, fewer than half of women and one-third of men fit that fully adult profile. Instead, young adults go back to school, compete for unpaid internships, teach for America or serve in the Peace Corps. The proportion of Americans aged 25 to 34 who have never been married exceeds those married, Justin Wolfers noted in a recent *New York Times* op-ed (October 13, 2010). As well-educated post-collegiate Americans postpone marriage, childbirth, and sometimes career choices well into their thirties and sometimes later, social scientists have named a new stage of life: "emerging adulthood," and have studied the tasks and characteristics defining that stage.^{xxxiii}

American Jewish young adults conform to their educational and socioeconomic cohort, but pre- or "emerging" adulthood stage has special resonance for American Jews and the communities they live in. A new study of younger American Jewish leaders^{xxxiv} reveals that the leadership cadre among American Jews ages 22 to 40 are not less attached to their Jewishness than previous generations, but they are differently attached. Older American Jews, whether or not they were formally religious, typically felt less self-conscious among Jewish co-religionists, who they regarded as a kind of family. In contrast, younger American Jewish leaders, writers,

artists and entrepreneurs in their twenties and thirties, speak about "not wanting to be restricted to the tribe," or to divide the world into "us" and "them."

On the other hand, in greater depth than their parents, younger American Jewish leaders embrace the cultural "nucleus," the particulars of Jewish culture, intellectual heritage, social values, and religion. Sociologists have long argued over whether firm boundaries are the most important element, or whether, instead, cultural content defines ethnic distinctiveness even when boundaries are low or porous. Many among today's young American Jews have found their own resounding answer to that question: cultural content is compelling, kinship less so. They defined Jewish music, food, books, comedy and cultural performance, family styles, social values, and religious rituals as the primary expressions of their ethnicity. This preference has strong implications for an exploration of "Jewish education." Clearly, the definition of "Jewish education" must be expanded to include books, films, music, and other cultural expressions when one is dealing with adult Jewish populations. The recent demise of a cultural enterprise like J-Dub records, important not only in producing and promoting Jewish music, but also in nurturing the careers of young Jewish musical artists whose incorporation of Sephardic and Mizrahi music won alienated young Jews over to new Jewish connections, has particularly ominous significance.

Despite the stability of Israel attachments among children of two Jewish parents, the qualitative nature of those attachments has changed. Younger American Jews inhabit a different Jewish world than their parents and grandparents. Some view social justice as the *raison d'être* of Judaism as a religious culture. Their unromantic assessment of Israel is often accompanied by a romantic fascination with the Jewish Diaspora experience and a revival of interest in ethnic Jewish languages, literatures, and cultures, and especially Jewish music from around the world. Although they do not minimize Diaspora history, many young American Jewish leaders defiantly

declare that the Jewish future must be equally supported within Diaspora Jewish communities and Israel. Here then is a profound challenge to today's establishment leaders and institutions: younger American Jews respond to Jewish culture and Jewish activities, but many are unengaged by perceived differences between Jews and non-Jews. Some are attracted to Jewish social justice and educational activities, but unresponsive to activities to "protect" Jews, since they don't feel vulnerable or different. As a result, we can't expect to push the buttons of ethnic solidarity that worked so well--and so easily--for earlier generations (and often spanned the religious-secular divide). We need complex educational approaches to all three groups: those young adults who are dynamic "defenders of the State," those who are attached but critical, and the majority, who run the gamut from passively--if not deeply--pro-Israel to apathetic or uninvolved.

Adult education and Jewish journeys across the adult life cycle

Adult education has taken on a new cache in many communities, with increasing numbers of non-Orthodox men and women hungrily acquiring new Jewish intellectual skills and navigating familiarity with classical Jewish texts. Bethamie Horowitz sees adult learners as the most ideal possible students. Horowitz argues that what goes into Jewish education and what a student can take from it are influenced by Jews' position in society and the general atmosphere and attitudes toward education in society. She defines the new, contemporary frontier of Jewish education as adult learners because Jewish activity is "*voluntary*," they are highly educated, and are "living in a American [*s/c*] societal milieu that views Jews and Judaism in a favorable light." Horowitz concludes, "It all comes down to consciousness (the opposite of indifference) and how to encourage that consciousness as much as possible. Consciousness involves a series of mental processes (i.e., awareness, reflectivity, ongoing learning, and meaning making) as well as a sense of will that arises from

feeling that being Jewish will help you find your way or it will take you somewhere you want to go.^{xxxv}

In some cases, this pursuit culminates in rabbinical study. For most adult learners, however, the fascination with Judaic materials, while deeply meaningful,^{xxxvi} does not change life so dramatically.^{xxxvii} It is worth noting that adult education undertaken after children have left the home has less impact on the next generation.

III. Need for new research on Jewish education

Numerous studies have revealed how Jewish education helps to create Jewishly identified adults. However, the childhood-education-equals-adult-identity formula has recently been challenged by several powerful critiques, which expose the need for new research on Jewish education.

(1) **Life journeys.** Are statistical snapshots of adult behavior adequate to measure the "success" of Jewish education, or should researchers rather analyze Jewish journeys across the entire life cycle?^{xxxviii} Charme and Horowitz argue for new research that can serve as the basis for "a postmodern analysis" of "multiple forms of Jewish identities, cultures, and spiritualities" which can, depending on the person, include such points of engagement as "Zionism, spirituality, politics, art, ritual, klezmer [music], seders, synagogue," and other experiences.^{xxxix}

(2) **Family environments.** Does family environment trump Jewish education for predicting adult Jewishness? The sense of urgency in studying the impact of Jewish education was, no doubt, intensified by the high rates of intermarriage suggested by 1990 NJPS data. Jewish community leaders, and the researchers they commissioned, often seemed to be looking for a unilateral "fix" for the "problem" of intermarriage, premised on the historical fact that intermarriage has been synonymous with assimilation in many prior Jewish societies. Researchers often tried to untangle the admittedly complex symbiosis between the Jewish connections of the household

of origin and the Jewish education provided to children in that household--the more Jewishly connected the parents, the more intensive and sustained the Jewish education they provided their children. But which was really creating the next generation of Jewishly identified adults, Jewish education--or the Jewishly connected parents who arranged for that Jewish education? Researchers like Bruce Phillips concluded that the family was the ultimate predictor of the Jewish identity of the children; to the extent that Jewish education appeared to be responsible, that education was more or less a proxy for the family behind the enrollments.^{xl} Subsequent studies have lent indirect support to this assumption: an analysis of Modern Orthodox day school graduates, for example, found that children from homes with Orthodox observance and parental Jewish educational patterns had very high rates of success in producing Jewishly identified inmarried children, while homes with less consistency--less Orthopraxy--had much lower rates. While schooling, camp, etc., each have a measurable impact, they do not compare to the combined impact of home and formal/ informal education with consonant goals. Adult children tended to replicate the values and behaviors of their parents. New research should interrogate the relative impact of family and education.

(3) **Social networks.** Are social networks the untold secret to Jewish identity? Charles Kadushin, among others, faults Jewish educational studies for virtually ignoring the pervasive effect of social circles or networks.^{xli} The organizations that Jews get involved with may "have no direct Jewish connection," Kadushin points out, and yet they serve to express and reinforce Jewish identity.^{xlii} Organizations themselves, overtly Jewish or not, are critical to the existence of social networks--without them the Jews do not find each other, develop relationships, and strengthen their sense of Jewishness. "Non-school ethnic networks are heavily dependent on the embeddedness of social relations in organizational contexts," Shaul Kelner warns.

"Without them, the chances for Jewish community in ethnically sparse areas are slim."^{xliii} Formal and informal Jewish educational settings at all ages may succeed not because of their curricular excellence or pedagogical strategies but because they bring Jews together to form social circles. New educational research should directly examine the role of institutions and organizations in creating social networks that reinforce Jewish identity--and should also examine the failure of existing frameworks to do so. Organizational and educational frameworks themselves may arguably be in need of critical attention and revisioning. Arnold Dashefsky suggested that **new research should "develop one or more theoretical frameworks within which an examination of the relationship between Jewish education and identification can be more fruitfully explored."**^{xliv}

(4) Post-denominationalism. Jewish schools that deliberately create a post-denominational culture, and encourage self-examination and choice in the construction of Jewishness, are a relatively new phenomenon on the Jewish educational scene. In many communities they are thriving, and are more successful than Conservative or Reform schools. A few studies of individual institutions suggest that Jewish education proceeds in a very different way in many of these schools. New research should examine the impact of post-denominational community schools on the Jewish lives of their alumni.

(5) Meaning, not survival. Is the conviction that Jewishness must survive because it must survive an axiom--or a tautology? What is the ultimate point of Jewish education? Younger American Jewish adults and some educators and thinkers argue that the success of Jewish education should be measured by its ability to enhance the qualities of meaning and community at each stage of life--rather than viewing education as a means to the end of creating adults who will make new generations of identified Jews. For example, the pursuit of social justice as the *raison*

d'etre of Jewish education is echoed by many of the young leaders and educators, including a young Conservative rabbi who has served in a variety of chaplaincy and rabbinic and educational positions and participated in Project Otzma, American Jewish World Service, Hazon and Jumpstart. This rabbi sees fighting for justice as the only non-negotiable, quintessential, core Jewish activity, and says: “Don’t keep kosher, that’s fine, don’t keep Shabbat, that’s fine, marry a non-Jew—whatever. But understand that it will take away your Jewish identity if you don’t fight for justice.” The interaction between Jewishly rigorous education, meaning, and Jewish morality was articulated across denominational lines not only by young leaders working in social justice enterprises, but by artists, intellectuals, and various types of Jewish communal professionals, including educators. For these younger leaders, the Jewishness of these connections was key. For example, another rabbi, a ROI leadership program veteran who supports the work of organizations like Teva, Adamah, and the Avodah program, urges the integration of moral and Judaic values into daily behavior—“quotidian Judaism”—to give a wide spectrum of young Jewish Americans the cultural literacy to imbue their social justice lives with Judaic knowledge. This rabbi's education venues are blogs and other Internet sites like jewityourself.com.^{xlv}

In a philosophical piece that defines contemporary culture after the Enlightenment by choice, rationality, and disenchantment, following from Weber's "disenchantment of the world" and Berger's "the heretical imperative," Malamet outlines two paths of Jewish education that try to impress students—the Shoah and making education entertaining, underlining its relevance, and making it “marketable.” Malamet argues, however, that “the benchmark for contemporary Jewish identity should not be continuity, but purpose.” He cites Dr. James Orbinski’s notion of “living your question”--or in the case of Jewish education, teaching Jews to live their

Jewish question. "As every corner of the Jewish world is slowly learning, 'Jewish continuity' does not produce identity, it is the outcome of such."^{xlvi} New research should examine the extent to which Jewish educational enterprises incorporate Jewish approaches to social justice, and other "making meaning" issues so important to contemporary Jewish students.

(6) Research on effective curricula. Lee S. Shulman suggests that new research should focus on a variety of curriculums and pedagogical techniques, including traditional Jewish educational pedagogies, emphasis on argumentation, or the *chevruta* study dyad, their use in contemporary settings, and Jewish educational philosophies which inform them. Obsessed with the end-result efficacy of education, we have mostly ignored the way in which Jewish educational techniques themselves can work to increase and nurture Jewish identity.^{xlvii}

Conclusion: Reflections on Jewish education and Jewish identity

Research focused on the link between Jewish education and Jewish identity was for decades occupied with pragmatic questions. In recent years, however, research horizons have broadened, partially in response to the existential challenges posed by researchers and by younger generations of American Jews. New research has begun to explore--but must further examine--basic questions: How can contemporary Jewish societies create norms, behaviors and values that support dynamic and sustainable Jewish life? How can adults in these societies transmit meaningful Jewish norms, behaviors and values to the next generation? What moments in the life cycle are particularly propitious for Jewish cultural transfers? What are the factors working for and against the effective transmission of Jewish culture and/or religion--and a sense of Jewish peoplehood and connection to Jews and Judaism?

Decades-long research and repeated studies demonstrate that various types of Jewish education contribute differentially to the social capital upon which Jewish identity is built. Research also makes it clear that there is no "silver bullet." No one form of Jewish education can guarantee--or maintain--uniformly Jewishly identified adults. Each type of Jewish education makes contributions to the Jewish identity of particular segments of the population. Young Jewish leaders are disproportionately day-school educated, and many have attended elite leadership programs. In contrast, young Jews who come from Jewishly impoverished backgrounds are often most affected by cultural venues or by interventions like Birthright Israel. In each of these scenarios, however, an often unappreciated role is played by social factors such as family and peer group influence, larger contexts such as school, work, political and cultural trends. Under the best of circumstances social networks such as family and peer group circles, and formal, and informal Jewish educational associations, settings, and activities reinforce each other--sometimes in unanticipated and serendipitous ways.

Jewish communal leadership faces a series of related challenges to dynamically sustain and develop Jewish educational enterprises in all their diversity. One challenge is to sponsor important new research efforts that will help us understand how Jewish educational enterprises can be improved, to seek out and support the serendipities, so that they are no longer left to chance, but become, instead, one of the primary strategies for promoting the future of Jewish life. Today's American Jewish world consists of Jewish "haves" and "have nots"--and Jewish education must nurture both groups in different ways. New research can help us ensure that the future includes both dynamic leaders and a spectrum of diverse and connected laity.

Endnotes

ⁱ Recent research builds upon the groundbreaking work of earlier researchers on Jewish education and its impact on Jewish identity. From the first systematic examinations of the impact of Jewish education in the 1950s and 1960s, American researchers have been influenced by theories and methodologies in the fields of anthropology and psychology as well as education and sociology. Greeley and Rossi's pioneering study, *The Education of Catholic Americans* in 1966, examined the effect of various types of childhood Catholic schooling on adult Catholics attitudes, affiliation, and behavior (Andrew Greeley and Peter Rossi, *The Education of Catholic Americans* (Chicago, IL: Aldine, 1966). This approach was adopted in Himmelfarb's (Harold Himmelfarb, "Jewish Education for Naught: Educating the Culturally Deprived Jewish Child," in *Analysis* (The Institute for Jewish Policy Planning and Research of the Synagogue Council of America), No. 51 (September, 1975) and Bock's (Geoffrey E. Bock, *Does Jewish Schooling Matter?* (New York: Jewish Education and Jewish Identity Colloquium Papers of the American Jewish Committee, 1976) studies of the impact of elementary school Jewish education on adult behavior which created a formula: Bock said one thousand and Himmelfarb said three thousand hours of Jewish education produced "successful" indoctrination into Jewish identity and identification--clearly a goal only attainable in a Jewish Day School setting. Researchers working from limited samples like Ribner (Sol Ribner, "The Effects of Intensive Jewish Education on Adult Jewish Lifestyles," in *Jewish Education* (Spring, 1987): 6-12), or from the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) like Fishman and Goldstein (Sylvia Barack Fishman and Alice Goldstein, *When They Are Grown They Will Not Depart: Jewish Education and the Jewish Behavior of American Adults* (Brandeis University Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and JESNA: Research Report 8, March 1993); and Alice Goldstein and Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Teach Your Children When They Are Young: Contemporary Jewish Education in the United States* (Brandeis University Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and JESNA: Research Report 10, March 1993) compared childhood and teen education to adult behavior, as did a team of Israeli scholars for the Guttman Institute Mordechai Rimor and Elihu Katz, *Jewish Involvement of the Baby Boom Generation: Interrogating the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey* (Jerusalem: Louis Guttman Israel Institute of Applied Research, Publication No MR/1185B/E, 1993). Cohen (Steven M. Cohen, "The Impact of Varieties of Jewish Education Upon Jewish Identity: An Inter-Generational Perspective," *Contemporary Jewry* 16 (1995): 1-29) and then Cohen and Kotler-Berkowitz in (Steven M. Cohen and Laurence A. Kotler-Berkowitz, "The Impact of Childhood Jewish Education on Adults' Jewish Identity: Schooling, Israel Travel, Camping and Youth Groups." United Jewish Communities, 2004. Accessed online 17 June 2011 <<http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=2814>>) made a point of seriously exploring the effects of informal education--such as Jewish camping and youth groups--as well as formal education, and reinforced their analysis with sophisticated statistical controls. These and subsequent statistical studies of Jewish education reinforced the dictum of "the more, the more, measuring "success" by transmission to the next generation, measured by whether adults replicated patterns by providing their own children with Jewish education. See, for example: Ariela Keysar, Barry A. Kosmin, Nava Lerer, and Egon Mayer, "Exogamy in First Marriages and Remarriages: An Analysis of Mate Selection in First and Second Marriages among American Jews in the 1990s, and Theoretical Implications," *Contemporary Jewry* 12 (1991): 45-66, in their respective analyses of NJPS 1990 data, drew similar conclusions. Other researchers found Jewish education's effects inconsistent, although the consensus is that long duration is most effective, including Peter Y. Medding, Gary A. Tobin, Sylvia Barack Fishman, and Mordecai Rimor, "Jewish Identity in Conversionary and Mixed Marriages," 3-76 in *American Jewish Year Book 1992* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1992); and Bruce Phillips, *Re-examining Inter marriage: Trends, Textures and Strategies* (Boston: Susan and David Wilstein Institute of Jewish Policy Studies and American Jewish Committee, 1997). Studies finding minimal effect either failed to control for type of education, such as Yisrael Ellman, "Inter marriage in the United States: A Comparative Study of Jews and Other Ethnic and Religious Groups," *Jewish Social Studies* 49 (1987): 1-26; or duration, such as Barry A. Kosmin, Nava Lerer, and Egon Mayer, *Inter marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage among American Jews* (New York: North American Jewish Data Bank, 1989)" (208); Arnold Dashevsky and Cory Lebson. 2002. "Does Jewish Schooling Matter? A Review of the Empirical Literature on the Relationship Between Jewish Education and Dimensions of Jewish Identity." *Contemporary Jewry* 23(1):96-131.

ⁱⁱ Among other social scientists who have stressed the impact of the group on the individual, anthropologist Clifford Geertz suggested that human beings naturally seek out symbols "of some transcendent truths" in social contexts: It is not only that "man depends upon symbols and symbol systems with a dependence so great as to be decisive for his creaturely viability," but that human beings look to social contexts--families, communities, and religious groups--to create these symbolic systems and to give life order and meaning. Society alone, has the power to imbue "a certain specific complex of symbols" with metaphysical meaning. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books/ Perseus Books Group, 2000; rpt. 1973), "Religion as a Cultural System," pp. 87-125, pp. 98, 112. Sociologist of religion Peter Berger says people yearn for ethno-religious contexts because of mortality itself: aware of one's own ephemerality, individuals seek out religious groups and beliefs in order to feel that they are connected to an order that is larger and more permanent than themselves. In words that effectively prophesy the language of today's younger Jewish adults, Berger writes that the "human craving for meaning" brings people to "socially defined" religious groups. Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 22-23.

ⁱⁱⁱ Emil Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; rpt. 1912), p.258 .

^{iv} James S. Coleman, 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), one of the primary proponents of this approach, summarizes the development of social capital theories: "Loury (1977; 1987) introduced the term 'social capital'... In Loury's usage social capital is the set of resources that inhere in family relations and in community social organization and that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or young person." (300) "Just as physical capital is created by making changes in materials so as to form tools that facilitate production, human capital is created by changing persons so as to give them skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways. Social capital, in turn, is created when the relations among persons change in ways that facilitate action." (304) Social

capital can benefit the individual, but more broadly, social capital and the maintenance of social structures and norms benefits everyone invested in the social structure. (316) See also: Gary S. Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1964); Lawrence R. Iannaccone, "Religious Practice: A Human Capital Approach," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29:297-314

^v Jack Wertheimer, ed. *The New Jewish Leaders: Reshaping the American Jewish Landscape* (University Press of New England/ Brandeis University Press, Forthcoming, 2011), especially chapters by Steven M. Cohen, "From Jewish People to Jewish Purpose: Establishment Leaders and Their Nonestablishment Successors," (pp. 45-83); Steven M. Cohen, "Expressive, Progressive, and Protective: Three Impulses for Nonestablishment Organizing among Young Jews Today," (pp. 84-111) and Sylvia Barack Fishman, with Rachel S. Bernstein and Emily Sigalow, "Reimagining Jewishness: Younger American Jewish Leaders, Entrepreneurs, and Artists in Cultural Contexts" (pp. 159-213).

^{vi} Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, *The Jew Within* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

^{vii} Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 157.

^{viii} Malcom Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 10-11.

^{ix} Mary C. Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

^x Data on children in diverse types of Jewish families according to the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) analyzed in Ariella Keysar, Barry A. Kosmin, and Jeffrey Scheckner, *The Next Generation: Jewish Children and Adolescents* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); Data from the 2000-01 NJPS, conducted by the United Jewish Communities (UJC) in Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Double Or Nothing? Jewish Families and Mixed Marriage* (Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press, 2004). See also, Steven M. Cohen, *A Tale of Two Jewries: end citation*.

^{xi} Sylvia Barack Fishman and Daniel Parmer, *Matrilineal Ascent/ Patrilineal Descent: The Gender Imbalance in American Jewish Life* (Waltham, MA: Hadassah Brandeis Institute and Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2008), working from NJPS 2000-01 data.

^{xii} The P.J. Library project, funded by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, sends free children's books to families of Jewish background beginning when the child is 6 months old.

^{xiii} Ruth Pinkenson Feldman, *The Impact of the Day-Care Experience on Parental Jewish Identity* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1987).

^{xiv} Pearl Beck, "Jewish Preschools as Gateways to Jewish Life." *Contact* 5:1 (2002): 6-7. Accessed online <<http://bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=5288>>

^{xv} Shaul Kelner, "Who Is Being Taught? Early Childhood Education's Adult-Centered Approach," in *Family Matters: Jewish Education in an Age of Choice*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2007), pp. 59-79, p 72. However, early childhood education does not "teach"--convey much actual information to--parents. Moreover, the two kinds of parents who benefit most are (1) those who themselves already have impressive Jewish social capital, gained through a positive, substantive basis of Jewish education, and (2) those who come into the experience "Jewishly willing and able" to upgrade their family's Jewish connections. Thus, Kelner cautions, while Jewish early childhood education often successfully provides Jewish community and can provide a receptive matrix for further education, it is "less successful in engaging parents as Jewish learners," and should not be considered a form of family education.

^{xvi} Fishman, *Jewish Life and American Culture*, p. 70, adapted from Goldstein and Fishman, *Teach Your Children*, and using NJPS 1990 data.

^{xvii} Steven M. Cohen, "The Differential Impact of Jewish Education on Adult Jewish Identity," in *Family Matters, op. cit.*, pp. 34-56, p. 42.

^{xviii} Goldstein and Fishman, found that of the one in five children attending Jewish summer camps about 40 percent were currently enrolled in Jewish day school, and another 28 percent attended supplementary or Sunday schools. See discussion in Fishman, *Jewish Life and American Culture*, pp. 63-64, 72.

^{xix} Steven M. Cohen, Ron Miller, Ira M. Sheskin, and Berna Torr, "Camp Works: The Long-Term Impact of Jewish Overnight Camp," p. 14 (Foundation for Jewish Camp, 2011). Accessed online <<http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=8694>>

^{xx} The concept of the *broker*, who creates a connection between two sets of people and two sets of value systems and behaviors, is drawn from social network theory. See Kadushin, *op. cit.*

^{xxi} Cohen, "Impact of Jewish Education on Adult Jewish Identity," p. 43.

^{xxii} Amy L. Sales and Leonard Saxe, *How Goodly Are Thy Tents: Summer Camps As Jewish Socializing Experiences* (Waltham, MA.: UPNE/ Brandeis University Press, 2004), provide a particularly "thick" and useful description of the vivid camping

"bubble" of Jewish experience--and how easily that bubble can be burst by the bland, boring synagogues students find when they return home.

^{xxiii} Cohen, "Impact of Jewish Education on Adult Jewish Identity," pp. 36-38.

^{xxiv} Charles Kaddushin, "Social Networks and Jews." *Contemporary Jewry* 31 (2011): 55-73..

^{xxv} Fishman, "Generating Jewish Connections," *op. cit.*, pp. 191-192.

^{xxvi} Ralph W. Hood, Jr., Peter C. Hill, and Bernard Spilka, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach, 4th Edition* (New York and London: The Guildford Press, 2009), reporting on the research of Elizabeth Ozorak, "Influences on Religious Beliefs and Commitment in Adolescence," 1989, pp. 112-113.

^{xxvii} Deborah Meyer, "Teens, Gender, and Identity." *Sh'ma*. February 2009. Accessed online 22 June 2011

<http://www.movingtraditions.org/images/stories/shma_journal_2.09_-_deborah.pdf>

^{xxviii} Hood, et. al, *The Psychology of Religion*, pp. 120-123.

^{xxix} Amy L. Sales and Leonard Saxe, "Engaging the Intellect: Jewish Studies on the College Campus." *Contact*. (Winter 2005): 5-6. Accessed online <http://bir.brandeis.edu/bitstream/handle/10192/22955/Contact.winter_2005_Engaging%20the%20Intellect.pdf?sequence=1>

^{xxx} Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel* (Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2008); Leonard Saxe, Benjamin Phillips, Theodore Sasson, et. al., *Generation Birthright Israel: The Impact of an Israel Experience on Jewish Identity and Choices* (Waltham, MA.: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2009); Erik H. Cohen, "Particularistic Education, Endogamy, and Educational Tourism to Homeland: An Exploratory Multi-dimensional Analysis of Jewish Diaspora Social Indicators." *Contemporary Jewry* 29:2 (2009): 169-189; Steven M. Cohen and Judith Schor, "The Alumni of Five Israel Experience Programs and Their Distinctive Jewish Identity Profiles." Florence G. Heller-JCC Association Research Center (2004). Accessed online <<http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=1100>>

^{xxxi} Shaul Kelner, *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism* (New York: New York University Press, 2010). Israel and various sites in Israel are sacralized, and tour professionals structure and frame the sightseeing, leisure activities, lectures, experiences and shopping with the goal that attachments to Israel and Jewish social capital will both be enhanced. Kelner explains: "To the extent that they are successful, these diaspora-building projects foster a symbolic identification with Israel as a foundation on which pro-ethnic actions and relationships can then be built." Indeed, Kelner says, these round-trip tours enhance the "aesthetic engagement" and enjoyment of young diaspora Jews, asking nothing of them, and downplaying the contrast between the values of their home communities and those of Israeli societies, making them less critical of Israeli society and of their own diasporic communities. Israel and the diaspora are lifestyle choices. The tours are structured to help participants own the Zionist narrative, especially "Israel's ashes to redemption story," marketing a range of Israel experiences and aspects of Israeli culture in vivid ways.

^{xxxii} Robin Marantz Henig, "The Post-Adolescent, Pre-Adult, Not-Quite-Decided Life Stage," *New York Times Magazine* (August 22, 2010).

^{xxxiii} See: Jennifer Sinclair and David Milner, "On Being Jewish: A Qualitative Study of Identity Among British Jews in Emerging Adulthood." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 20:1 (2005):91-117; Laura B. Koenig, Matt McGue, and William G. Iacono, "Stability and Change in Religiousness During Emerging Adulthood." *Developmental Psychology* 44:2 (2008):532-543; Miri Scharf, Ofra Mayseless, and Inbal Kivenson-Baron, "Adolescents' Attachment Representations and Developmental Tasks in Emerging Adulthood." *Developmental Psychology* 40:3 (2004):430-444; Shmuel Shulman, Benni Feldman, Sidney J. Blatt, Omri Cohen, and Amalya Mahler, "Emerging Adulthood: Age-Related Tasks and Underlying Self Processes." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 20:5 (2005): 577-603.

^{xxxiv} Unless otherwise cited, discussions of the attitudes of young adult American Jews and quotes illustrating those attitudes are drawn from interviews that were conducted by Sylvia Barack Fishman, Rachel Shaina Bernstein, MA, and Emily Sigalow, MA, in 2009-2010 for an Avi Chai Foundation-funded research project directed by Prof. Jack Wertheimer, studying young American Jewish leaders. A fuller analysis appears in Fishman et. al., "Reimagining Jewishness: Younger American Jewish Leaders, Entrepreneurs, and Artists in Cultural Contexts," in Wertheimer, ed. *The New Jewish Leaders, op. cit.* (pp. 159-213).

^{xxxv} Bethamie Horowitz, "New Frontiers: 'Milieu' and the Sociology of American Jewish Education." *Journal of Jewish Education* 74:s1 (2008):68-81.

^{xxxvi} See also, Lisa D. Grant, et al, *A Journey of Heart and Mind: Transformative Jewish Learning in Adulthood*. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2004).

^{xxxvii} Diane Tickton Schuster, "Adult Jewish Learners: Entering the Conversation." *Journal of Jewish Education* 71(2), 2005: 245-247. In her studies of adult Jewish education, Schuster found that students are excited to master Jewish content, but such education does not change behavior (246). Schuster cites Cohen and Eisen 2001 defining adults as "explorers in Judaism, people in perpetual quest of Jewish meaning" (245). She highlights meaning making and empowerment as key aspects of adult Jewish education: "Many of my interviewees describe their learning experiences as 'transformative,' meaning that, more than just acquiring information, they find themselves thinking about Judaism and themselves as Jews in new ways" (246). She also cites Menachem Brinker 2003 and his theory of "'educating to freedom,'" which for her means teachers who "'pull back'" and are "'empowering'" and "help their students...to move beyond a conformist or compliant stance to a position of confidence and ease in the larger world" (246-247).

^{xxxviii} Stuart Charme, Bethamie Horowitz, Tali Hyman, and Jeffrey S. Kress, "Jewish Identities in Action: An Exploration of Models, Metaphors, and Methods." *Journal of Jewish Education* 74:2(2008): 115-143. Charme and Horowitz satirize what they call the "drink your milk" model of studying Jewish education and Jewish identity, which assumes that the childhood

consumption of adequate types and quantities of Jewish education--"a healthy diet of Jewish experiences and education"--is the formula for producing "a strong Jewish identity." Thus fortified, the well-educated adult Jew can resist the triad of evils: "assimilation, intermarriage, antisemitism." This interpretive framework is not only simplistic but actually misleading, the authors charge, because it "flattens" the realities of lived Jewish identity both vertically and horizontally, obliterating the fluidity of individual lives and the effect of shifting relationships between individuals. Horowitz champions the concept of Jewish identity as a life journey, rather than as a destination that once arrived at is fixed for all time. Working with qualitative and quantitative data on New York Jews, she shows Jews moving in and out of various kinds of engagement. Cubbyholing them as "Orthodox," "Conservative," "Reform"--or "Core" or "marginal"--doesn't really capture the reality of this fluid relationship. She divides her group into "Orthodox" and "Non-Orthodox," with a typology of "Intensively Engaged," "Mixed Engagement," and "Otherwise Engaged."

^{xxxix}Charme, op. cit., p. 119.

^{xi} Bruce A. Phillips, *Re-examining Intermarriage: Trends, Textures, Strategies*. (New York: American Jewish Committee and Susan and David Wilstein Institute of Jewish Policy Studies, 1997).

^{xii} Kaddushin, *op. cit.* Kadushin discusses "social circles" which "serve to integrate apparently disconnected entities such as Jews into larger societies," as defined by Simmel. (The easiest way to understand the impact of such "social circles" is to think of the "Jewish geography" phenomenon which by apparent "coincidence" brings Jews who have much in common into interaction with each other.)

^{xiii} *Ibid.*, p. 61.

^{xiii} Shaul Kelner, "School friends and camp friends: The social networks of Jewish teenagers," in *Annual Meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies* (Los Angeles: 2002), p. 14.

^{xiv} Arnold Dashefsky, "What We Know About...The Effects of Jewish Education on Jewish Identification." In *What We Know About Jewish Education*. (Eds.) Roberta Louis Goodman, Paul Z. Flexner, and Linda Dale Bloomberg (City: Torah Aura Productions, 1992) pp. 103-114, p. 109.

^{xv} Fishman, et. al., "Reimagining Jewishness," pp. 165-166.

^{xvi} Elliott Malamet, "The Disenchanted Student; Reconstructing Jewish Identity in a Modern Context." *Jewish Educational Leadership* 7:2 (2009):11-14.

^{xvii} Lee S. Shulman, "Pedagogies of Interpretation, Argumentation, and Formation: From Understanding to Identity in Jewish Education," in *Journal of Jewish Education* 74 (2008): 5-15.