The Generational Transmission of Jewish Values in Small Communities
The Utility and Magic of Thinking Small

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Abstract

As with other groups, Jewish identity salience levels are higher within those Jewish communities which have a smaller share of the overall population than those communities which enjoy a larger share; this is true even among those individuals who do not engage regularly in religious practices. Based on this foundation as well as my own mixed-methods research I argue that those who live in small Jewish communities have different patterns of identity development and maintenance, community structure, and – most importantly – generational transmission of values than those who live in the large urban centers. Behaviors such as assimilation and out-migration may also be less likely among those who reside in small Jewish communities. If this is true, it could be that in 100 years' time the non-Orthodox Jewish world will be more accurately and strongly represented by Charleston, WV, Ashland, OR, and Colorado Springs, CO, than Boston, MA, Washington, DC, or Los Angeles, CA. In order to fully understand life in small Jewish communities and the future impact they may have on American Jewry as a whole, I am calling for a nation-wide survey focused specifically on these important yet under-studied communities.

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The Generational Transmission of Jewish Values in Small Communities: The Utility and Magic of Thinking Small

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A Brief Historical Note

At some point in 2004, when my daughters Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel were 13, 9, and 5, respectively, two questions entered my mind about the same time:

Will I have Jewish grandchildren?

What am I going to do with the rest of my life?

The pursuit of these questions took me to Dr. Arnold Dashefsky, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life at the University of Connecticut. In a matter of a few months, I found myself back in graduate school in order to obtain a Ph.D. in Sociology that would allow me to pursue research on American Jewry and Jewish families as well as teach full-time at the university level. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Dr. Dashefsky for explaining to me the satisfaction of teaching sociology and the joys of research within the American Jewish community. I have never regretted the decision to make this commitment.

In 2006 I made contact with Dr. W. Bradford Wilcox after hearing him discuss issues concerning American families and religion on a popular nation-wide radio talk show. He put me in touch with Dr. Steven Nock, then one of the leading sociologists of the family in America. Dr. Nock met up with Dr. Dashefsky in Washington, DC, where the two agreed that it would be best if I continued my Ph.D. work at the University of Virginia once I completed the M.A. at UConn. In August of 2007 my family moved to central Virginia in order to take advantage of this new opportunity. Unfortunately, Dr. Nock passed away before I had the opportunity to formally sit under his expert tutelage.

After taking a brief respite from academic life and trying my hand at local politics, I re-entered graduate studies at the UVa Sociology Department in 2010 under the guidance of Brad Wilcox. The past few years have been comprised of steady progress made in academic learning, research skills building, as well as teaching and mentoring opportunities. I have made lifelong friends and learned what it is like to be star struck when meeting an academic hero in person. To Dr. Wilcox I owe a debt of gratitude for the patience, encouragement, guidance, and friendship he has shown me for over a decade.

In 2013 Dr. Wilcox was encouraging me to come up with a solid idea for my dissertation. I knew that it needed to be something surrounding the recently release Pew report, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," and the source data set. I knew that I wanted to do something that would continue the research on Jewish identity that I had started at UConn when I worked with Dr. Dashefsky at the Berman Jewish Data Bank. One Saturday morning, during services at Congregation Beth Israel in Charlottesville, the idea to study small Jewish communities was presented in the form of the guest speaker, Martin Greenberg, Executive Director of the Network of Independent Communities of the Jewish Federations of North America. As I sat listening with fascination to Mr. Greenburg's stories of struggle and joy in these (mostly) small Jewish communities, I knew instinctively that this was to be the world of my professional future.

Acknowledgements

My first note of thanks goes to Russ Linden who invited and sponsored Martin Greenberg's visit to Charlottesville in 2013. Without his concern for American Jewry and desire to share with his own community what is happening in other small Jewish communities across the country, this project may have never taken shape.

My family deserves the majority of thanks and appreciation during the 13 years since I decided to go back to graduate school. Amy, Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel came with me from Connecticut to Virginia so that I could pursue my academic and professional dreams. I thank you for your love, patience, encouragement, and personal sacrifice. A special word of thanks is also due my mom, Sandy, who not only volunteered her administrative skills to the project, but constantly worried about the amount of sleep I have not be getting these many months.

The members of my dissertation committee, Brad Wilcox, Rae Blumberg, Tom Guterbock and Ira Bashkow each played a unique and significant role in my education. Brad not only filled the very large shoes of Steve Nock, but also provided me opportunities for personal development I had not anticipated when I came to UVa. I will always be grateful to Rae for her gentle way of correction and teaching by personal example. She is the only professor I have ever sat under who actually applauded at the conclusion of one of my seminar presentations – and that was a critique of her own signature theory of the family! Tom gave me a place to sit and work when I had no personal space at UVa, as well as an opportunity to get to know how a real research center conducts business. I got to know Ira by constructing with him a Torah talk for delivery at our synagogue in Charlottesville. Little did he know that our shared personal interests would include his professional guidance and encouragement during my dissertation-writing phase of life!

Since embarking on this adventure, what I have come to call The Small Jewish Communities Project, I have had the privilege of working with some very special undergraduate assistants who not only volunteered their time and individual expertise, they have only added to the joy of this project. Rachel Nelson was the first to volunteer and was invaluable as we worked through the initial states of the research project, from methodology to required readings to travel expenses. Luis Gutierrez was a never-ending source of perspective and encouragement from the first time we sat down to discuss what we had in common as "non-traditional" (read: old-er) students. Minh Tran's heart of gold and desire to learn new things was deeply inspiring. I simply cannot say enough about Anya Dallah and Meredith Stanley, my last two and longest-serving assistants. Through the frustrations of transcribing and coding audio files, to the puzzling analysis of three different data sets, to sending out hundreds of survey invitations, to the daunting task of talking me down from the brink – I owe you both so much more than you will ever know.

Melissa Kenney and Christine Kennedy are two very talented people served as my tireless proof-readers. They asked terrific questions and pulled no punches when it came to ensuring that my writing passed muster. Thank you, both, for the tremendous effort, often at odd hours, you contributed towards this project.

Dan Reid probably didn't know it, but he was a source encouragement on an almost daily basis. Thank you, my friend.

Additional words of thanks go to the following outstanding individuals: Dr. Steven Lamy for convincing me in 1984 that I had more to offer than I thought, Sam Pinchus for his timely and solid wisdom and advice, Tom Esposito for his enduring friendship during all seasons of life, John Michael Kelley for his steadfast patience and love, Gerald Canon who helped me change my context, and Rabbi Royi Shaffin who stood with me through two of the most difficult years of my life.

There was a point in this process where I was not sure if or how I would make it to the end. Four very special men – two rabbis serving small Jewish communities, a political commentator, and a former movie producer now specializing in helping people understand themselves better – agreed in November of 2016 that they would hold me accountable to write regularly and finish on time. They endured multiple emails from me each week as I provided status reports on the writing of this volume, as well as the joys and pitfalls that come with such undertakings. Without knowing that they were on the other end of each email, willing to provide words of encouragement when possible and rebuke when necessary, I know that my dissertation would have remained unfinished. You guys know who you are.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,
for having made me one of the people of Israel.
- The Siddur

Let these matters that I command you today be upon your heart.
Teach them thoroughly to your children…
- Deuteronomy 6:6-7a

These are the precepts whose fruits a person enjoys in this world
but whose principal remains intact in the World to Come.
They are: Honor due to father and mother…
- Talmud, Shabbat 127a

For my dad.

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Introduction: The Nature of the Question, "How Do Small Jewish Communities Survive and Thrive When Common Sense and Historical Data Indicate Otherwise?"

A Brief History of American Jewry Research

Per the archives of the Berman Jewish Databank, since 1971 there have been eight nation-wide surveys of the American Jewish population; the last was performed by the Pew Research Center in 2013. In the same time frame, there have been over 200 surveys of medium and large local Jewish communities within 35 states.[1] Each of these endeavors led to the discovery of new and significant knowledge about Jews in America. The drawback to these studies, however, is that there has been a marked neglect of the smaller Jewish communities (those with between 1,000 and 3,000 known Jewish individuals[2]) throughout the United States. The result of this deficit is an incomplete picture of the American Jewish landscape. As far back as the mid-19th century, surveys of the American Jewish landscape have focused on the major Jewish centers and "chief towns in each state" (Weissbach 2005:26).[3] With regard to the most recent nation-wide survey, *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, conducted in 2013 by the Pew Research Center (N=4,884), while each record is geographically identifiable by zip code, only 140 cases (.0287%) correspond to a known and active small Jewish community.[4] Given that my

[1] Berman Jewish Databank: A Project of the Jewish Federations of North America. US National Studies tab (http://jewishdatabank.org/Studies/results.cfm?CategoryID=1) and US Local Communities tab (http://jewishdatabank.org/Studies/us-local-communities.cfm). Accessed February 23, 2014.
[2]The question of "who is a Jew?" is one that has burdened demographers and researchers in the American Jewish community since the end of the 19th century. For the purpose of this project, I define as Jewish someone who self-identifies as Jewish and who would be considered Jewish by the Jewish community in which they live.
[3]Weissbach 2005 quoting The Jewish Encyclopedia from 1907 which also admitted that the figures provided were "incomplete."
[4] This list is comprised primarily of the Jewish Federations of North America's Network of Independent Communities – minus the communities of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands (also excluded by Pew) – and those which are geographically located near a large community so as to receive excessive influence (e.g Bayonne, NJ). I have also added those of which I am aware and are not Federation members. While most of these communities are comprised of less than 1,000 Jewish individuals and, thus, do not meet the definition of "small community," in order

conservative estimate of the aggregate population of Jews living in small Jewish communities[5] is roughly 3% of that total estimated Jewish population in the US (Pew, 7; AJYB 2015, 74), this sample size seems appropriate. However, as I will demonstrate in the pages to follow, those who live in small Jewish communities have different patterns of identity development and maintenance, community structure, and – most importantly – generational transmission of values. Thus, small community members should either be *oversampled* so as to account for their counterintuitive resilience and longevity or, preferably, a nation-wide survey targeted on small Jewish communities should be conducted so as to capture the wealth of unique data currently unaccounted for in the aggregate American Jewish population.

Common sense dictates that, all else being equal, a Jewish family in Oak Ridge, Tennessee or Boise, Idaho would look and live differently than a Jewish family in New York, Los Angeles or Miami. It is no surprise, then, that the research points in that direction as well. Alper and Olson (2013) found that, as with other groups, Jewish identity salience levels are higher among those Jewish communities which have a smaller share of the overall population than those communities which enjoy a larger share; this is true even among those individuals who do not engage regularly in religious practices (97). The net effect of small Jewish communities on American Jewry as a whole, therefore, could be greater than expected. To consider the core issues of assimilation and out-migration among non-Orthodox Jews, if such behaviors are less likely among those who reside in small Jewish communities (due to a stronger

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to provide a large enough sample distinct from "medium" and "large" Jewish communities, they have been considered to be "small communities" for the sake of the quantitative portion of the study. Those with Jewish populations over 3,000 have been included in the pool of larger communities. The total number of communities included in my listing is 308, representing approximately 171,000 Jewish individuals. See Appendix A.

[5] Most of these communities have not had the privilege of participating in any recent surveys considering the Jewish population and, thus, a cursory review of what Jewish demographics are available (congregational web sites, etc.) suffices to provide a rough estimate of the Jewish population.

salient identity), it could be that in 100 years' time the non-Orthodox Jewish world will be more accurately and strongly represented by Charleston, WV, Fort Collins, CO, and Tacoma, WA than Boston, MA, Washington, DC, or Los Angeles, CA.

In addition to the social facts associated with general Jewish demographics, it should be noted that the individuals and families which comprise small Jewish communities have, at some point, specifically chosen to leave – or bypass completely – the primary centers of American Jewish life and reside in what some would consider the periphery of Jewish communal life. Indeed, Weissbach (2005), considers these communities to have historically suffered from a *dual invisibility* vis-à-vis the academic and larger American Jewish community: on the one hand, along with all those living in small communities, they have been largely ignored by those chronicling the changing nature of American society as a whole, while on the other hand, they have been disregarded by researchers seeking to understand the American Jewish experience (7). However, just as Jews in the larger metropolitan areas of the United States have reacted to marginalization, secularization, and assimilation through innovative developments in community interaction, networks, and institutions (Goldscheider 2010: 118), those residing in communities of more modest proportions have created their own forms of family and social networks and cultural constructions of Judaism and Jewishness (Goldscheider 2004) which suits their (often) non-urban and micro-share situation.

In order for these communities to both endure and survive there must be, by definition, a deliberate building of group quality as well as a conscious understanding of what a coherent community looks like (Kanter 1972). Furthermore, neither the intention nor the understanding of community can exist merely in a philosophical discussion over drinks or a theoretical lecture on a Sunday afternoon. Rather, all idealizations of what the members would like their community to

be must be lived out in real-time within the context of actual twenty-first century problems, while simultaneously taking into account the history and mythology of the group (54-55).

It is this story that I will be exploring in the following pages: the historical life and continual emergence of living and breathing small Jewish communities as told by the (sometimes overly-idealistic) people who struggle to live within them. It is my desire to discover the bonds, boundaries, and ties – both strong and weak – which maintain communal commitments within small Jewish communities and thereby assist Jewish families in transmitting Jewish values to the next generation. Hopefully, the patterns revealed and lessons learned will prove useful for other communities and families desiring to pass along a similar quality of communal life and Jewish identity to their children and grandchildren. Sociologically, I propose that the patterns will also prove heuristic for the study of any religious or religio-ethnic minority living away from larger concentrations of their own group.

Focus of Inquiry

The questions considered in this study can be grouped into four primary threads:

1) Compared to communities in areas with larger concentrations of Jews, do families in smaller communities employ strategies for religio-ethnic continuity between generations that are more relational in nature than institutional?
2) Do families comprising small Jewish communities demonstrate a measurable parent-child affective solidarity that compensates for the lack of financial resources and professional educators found in larger communities?
3) In the face of pressures to assimilate and reduce the efficacy of traditional boundaries (dealt with by parents of all religious traditions), do small Jewish communities

intentionally empower parents with strategies for raising the next Jewish generation in ways significantly different from larger communities?

4) Will the strategies currently leveraged by families and leaders in small Jewish communities be effective in ways that increase the probability of the successful transmission of values across generations?

Finally, working under the presumptions that 1) secularization and assimilation have taken at least some toll on these communities and that 2) a sizeable portion of those living in these small communities desire to both foster and ensure the next several generations of Jewish continuity, I inquire as to the feasibility of discovering or constructing ideological and linguistic alternatives to the standard menu currently available to many on the fringes of American Jewish life: American Secularism, Religious Orthodoxy, Gentile Hostility and Historical Adversity (Susser 1999), and non-Orthodox sociology (Berman 2009). To put it more directly, because the American Jewish life has ceased to be viewed as 'other' by the prevailing culture and non-Jews have acquired formerly Jewish norms as their own, "pluralism has become a reality and assimilation the new Jewish norm" (Susser 1999: 45). This new 'norm of assimilation' has, on the whole, resulted in a largely uninspiring ethno-religious life within institutional denominations which refuse to abandon 20th century programmatic norms. Thus, in order to not only survive but thrive in the 21st century, American Jews deserve a contemporary language and cultural tool kit to call their own with which to pass on the multi-millennial-old values which have held Jews together as much as Jews have held them dear.

Research Path

In order to answer these questions, I conducted a mixed-methods investigation. The quantitative portion of the project utilizes the latest national survey data from the Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews (2013) to directly compare small Jewish communities to larger ones[6]. My qualitative study included three communities meeting the definition of a "small Jewish community" plus one moderate-sized community (@ 15,000 Jewish individuals) isolated from a large urban Jewish center, thus serving as a control.

Quantitative Study

In 1873 The Board of Delegates of American Israelites undertook the first attempt to systematically survey the Jewish population in America (Weissbach 2005:13). Unfortunately, the results were disappointing as the survey itself was incomplete. A second survey, conducted by the Board of Delegates with the cooperation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) from 1876 to 1878 was more comprehensive and more successful than the first. In 1880, after the Board of Delegates and the UAHC had merged, the results were published as *Statistica of the Jews of the United States* (14). It is difficult to cast any disparity upon such a grand undertaking before the age of nation-wide telephone coverage and well-funded survey projects. However, it is important to note that the 1880 *Statistica* report had issues similar to the National Jewish Population Survey of the late 20th Century (Kadushin 2005) and the most recent Pew Research Center's "Portrait of Jewish Americans." Among other issues one would expect when paper surveys had to be mailed thousands of miles without the benefit of paved highways and direct rail service, there were problems accounting for Jews who did not live in the urban

[6] Two of the small Jewish communities studied for this project were each represented in the Pew data set by 2 cases; the remaining small community and the moderate-sized community were represented in the data set by 1 case each.

centers. For example, *Statistica* contains almost no data on the Jewish population of Massachusetts outside of Boston. Regarding the "Jewish population outside of Wilmington, about 500," there is specific accounting for only 47 Jewish individuals. In other cases, the names of communities are listed but no population estimates are provided (14).

Attempts to enumerate and delineate the American Jewish community in the twentieth century proved more accurate and helpful as time moved on. Although there were problems with the data reported in both the *Jewish Encyclopedia* and the various editions of the *American Jewish Year Book*, new data collection methods and agencies[7] slowly increased the reliability of the estimates provided (16-17). By the time of the publishing of the *American Jewish Year Book* in 1919, the survey had the advantage of a staff who would send out multiple requests for responses. This compendium is considered by some to be the most comprehensive listing of Jewish organizations in the first half of the last century – and includes data on "both major Jewish communities and of smaller ones in small towns" (19).

How Many Jews is Enough?

Of special note regarding the *American Jewish Year Book* of 1919 is that this was the first time Jewish demographers placed the line of demarcation between Jewish communities with expected future viability and those without at 1,000 Jewish individuals. Table X in the section titled, "Statistics of Jews," lists all cities and towns in the United States "having one thousand or more Jewish inhabitants." This trend remained consistent in subsequent *Year Book* editions. After World War II, the authors chose to no longer list communities with fewer than 100 Jews as they were not large enough to be considered independent communities (29-30). Moving to the

[7] For example, the Industrial Removal Office, created by the Jewish Agricultural Society in 1901 to assist with the assimilation of new Jewish immigrants, shared their records and population estimates with Joseph Jacobs of the *American Jewish Yearbook*.

second half of the twentieth century, in the *American Jewish Year Book* of 1964, Erich Rosenthal posed the following question in his article on Jewish intermarriage: "How many individual Jews or Jewish families are needed for the proper functioning of Jewish communal and religious life?" While admitting there is a factor of sheer will power, Rosenthal concluded that the extant research demonstrated "that a group of fewer than 1,000 individuals necessarily lack the *esprit de corps* essential for maintaining the communal institutions needed for group survival…," particularly with regard to forming Jewish family units through endogamous marriage (Rosenthal 1964:11). When compiling his own sample of small Jewish communities, Lee Shai Weissbach followed the 1,000 individual rule of thumb to divide into two groups the communities selected for his famous 2005 qualitative study.

Likewise, in this Small Jewish Communities Project, I have chosen to define "small Jewish communities" as those with populations in excess of 1,000 individuals and as "micro Jewish communities" those with populations of less than 1,000 individuals. Arriving at upper limit of 3,000 individuals for small Jewish communities was determined by considering the population estimates of those communities which are members of the Jewish Federation's Network of Independent Communities. In this list of 300+ communities, there are nine with populations over 3,000. The lowest population of these nine is 5,000 individuals. As well, with the exceptions of Honolulu, HI and Anchorage, AL (both of which are geographical exceptions in their own right), these communities could be considered to be greatly influenced by – or even a part of – a much larger urban-based community not far away. Thus, my small Jewish communities are defined as having populations of between 1,000 and 3,000 Jewish individuals.

Moving ahead to 2013, the Pew Research Center was able to conduct its Survey of U.S. Jews with the most effective and efficient communications technologies ever available to

demographers. In addition to providing general demographic data with which to compare Jewish Americans who reside in small Jewish communities with those who live in moderate and large Jewish communities, the Pew data also provides a wide variety of data regarding attitudes and outcomes – instilling some hope for the creation and analysis of basic predictive models with which to test my various hypotheses.[8] However, as noted above, the sample of respondents from small Jewish communities it is not large enough to make firm generalizations or reliable models for those communities – the best that can be done with the data available is to take a "best guess" approach when comparing the Pew data with my direct observations. Thus, while the data from this latest national survey of American Jewry may be illustrative of the issues and potential solutions facing Jewish communities in America both now and in the future, it is insufficient for drawing stark conclusions where small communities are concerned.

Given the obvious (and not so obvious) limitations of the NJPS 2000-01 and 2013 Pew survey, I will consider the adequacy of these two data sets[9] for this Small Jewish Communities project: Do the standard measures of religio-ethnic behavior help to further our understanding of American Jewry in general and small Jewish communities, specifically? Is the methodology employed by each of these surveys suitable for the task of understanding the attitudes and behaviors of Jews who do not live in the urban Jewish centers of the United States? While I am asking questions about those who live in *small Jewish communities,* can I be certain that the research teams who created and compiled the NJPS and Pew studies were asking the same – or even similar – geographic and demographic questions?

[8] See Chapter 1

[9] At the risk of being redundant, it is important to note that these are the *only* two nationally-representative data sets compiled in the last 20 years which could be considered for this project.

Qualitative Study

The initial search for research sites took me to the Jewish Federation of North America's Network of Independent Communities. Of the 300+ member communities, approximately 55 met my definition of "small Jewish community." It became quickly apparent that a random sampling of these communities would be impractical for a number of reasons. Instead, I decided to construct a convenience sample based on 1) Location and 2) Positive response to my invitation to join the project. Dividing the communities by census region, I began to contact those communities in each region which most closely resembled my ideal type small Jewish community: 1) Between 1,000 and 3,000 Jewishly identifiable individuals, 2) Relatively isolated from a major Jewish center or other Jewish community in excess of 25,000 Jewish individuals, and 3) Having been in existence for at least 100 years. Ideally, I was looking for representation from the South, West and Northeast census regions to represent the three major routes and styles of migration as Jewish families spread throughout the US from the middle 18th through the late 19th centuries (Epstein 1997, Weissbach 2005) . Since most small Jewish communities do not have a Jewish community center, my first call was to the local synagogue with a request to speak to the rabbi or senior administrator. I explained that I would need their assistance in making initial contact with key community informants,[10] logistical support to set up focus group meetings during my on-site visit, and championing of the project within the community to get as much participation as possible.

In most cases, this early process yielded one or two interesting phone calls and a few references to rabbis and lay leaders in other communities. Only one of my cold calls – and none

[10] The ideal key informant would be described as a long-term community resident with in-depth, first-hand knowledge of the values and behaviors of the families living in their community.

of the references – developed into an opportunity for a full presentation or on-site visit. I was able to make contact with and obtain a participation commitment from one community in the Mountain West US[11] due to the "strength of weak ties" (Granovetter 1973) which were unknown to me until I made the call and discovered that the rabbi I had called attended seminary with one of the local rabbis who knows me well. Moving on to more direct tactics, I applied my powers of personal presentation combined with a somewhat convenient weak tie: I chose to visit a friend whose family resides just on the border of the South and Northeast census regions – where there also happens to be one of the oldest continuous Jewish communities in the eastern US.[12] The morning I attended services, the rabbi seemed to be engaged in a rather strong sales-pitch aimed at me, the new guy. Later, after introducing myself to the rabbi and sharing with him my project and larger vision he agreed to do all he could to help out – starting with a presentation to the board of his synagogue. Finally, my third participating small community – located solidly in the Southern US[13] – came about due to the "thousand year" rain storm of 2015. My wife and oldest daughter were driving through that storm along the I-95 corridor. As I was following their progress, it occurred to me that they were passing by and through a number of small Jewish communities. I made a list of those communities and began to call on them the next week. After a number of missed-calls and call-backs, the first community I contacted agreed to participate in the project. It must have been *bashert*.[14]

To provide a comparison community, my intention was to conduct key informant interviews, plan a site visit and hold focus groups in an urban setting within one of the largest

[11] Hereafter referred to as "Mountain City."
[12] Hereafter referred to as "Riverton."
[13] Hereafter referred to as "Green Valley."
[14] Yiddish for "destiny," "fate," or "good fortune."

Jewish communities in the country. To that end, I contacted large[15] Jewish communities in each census region. This task proved to be extremely difficult. I contacted multiple institutions (Jewish Community Centers, Federations, rabbinical associations and individual synagogues) in each major Jewish center to no avail. While I was able to get 2nd and 3rd interviews with decision-makers within many of these communities, none was able to secure for me a vote of their respective board(s) that would allow me to add their community to my project – with one exception: A single board within a very large community on the west coast, after three months of discussions, agreed to participate in the project if I would pay them $15,000. Apparently, they were not aware of how self-funded dissertation research projects work. Returning to the networking strategy, I was able to utilize contacts from my several years of living in the Northeast US to obtain support for the project from the board of a synagogue serving a moderately-sized community of approximately 35,000 Jewish individuals residing in a New England city[16] which is relatively isolated by distance and migratory history from the major east coast Jewish centers.

My background research included as much historical, cultural, and institutional information on each community as was readily available. These sources included general historical print sources such as "The Jew Store" by Stella Suberman (1998) and Epstein's "Jews in Small Towns" (1997), congregational archival rooms, such as that at Congregation B'nai Jacob in Charleston, WV, web-based resources such as the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, brief monographs by clergy and congregants, "history" sections from congregational web sites and brochures, and personal conversations with the oldest surviving community members.

[15] I define a "large" Jewish community as one with more than 50,000 Jewish individuals.
[16] Hereafter referred to as "Springfield."

Methodologically, for the initial ethnographic and follow-up interview portions of the project I utilized the Rapid Appraisal Methodology (Beebe 2001). This technique involves flexible, semi-structured "key informant" interviews, homogenous focus group discussions and personal observation of the community and families during socio-religious activities. If, at the end of the qualitative research schedule, a saturation point has not been met, a "last step mini-survey" may be implemented across all participants as an attempt to polish the list of issues and/or ensure that the estimated comprehensive responses on any given issue are accurate (Blumberg 2002). The goal of the key informant interviews was to gain a first-hand understanding of the community's history and constituent units, learn how the community understands itself and its goals vis-à-vis American Jewry as a whole, as well as validation and clarification of the concepts related to the generational transmission of values.

After conducting the background research, I re-connected with my clergy contacts[17] in each community for follow-up questions and clarification of certain facts and current community issues. Each rabbi also provided me with between 2 and 8 names and corresponding contact information. The initial key informants were then able to provide me with addition names of people they thought would be willing to participate in the initial phase of the project. A total of 10 key informants were secured for each small Jewish community and five initial informants were obtained from the moderately-sized community of Springfield. I spoke with most of these initial participants via telephone for between 55 and 65 minutes. Conversations with two of the informants in Mountain City were in excess of 2 hours over two different phone calls while I met

[17] In the case of each of the four congregations it was the local rabbi and their governing board which granted approval for my on-site visits and pledged support for the project in terms of time and effort. Where there existed more than one synagogue in a given community, the supporting rabbi contacted the other clergy on my behalf, thereby in each case gaining the interest and support of the larger Jewish community.

with one key informant in Green Valley in person after a follow-up conversation with the key informant who made that referral. I spoke with each of the informants from Springfield in person during my site visit.

Utilizing the *Rapid Assessment Process* (Beebe 2001), I asked each informant to provide me with a general understanding of those values, boundaries and behaviors which have been consistently leveraged by the community to transmit ethno-religious values, as well as provide a broad picture of the environment in which the community is situated. I was generally pleased – and in some cases extremely thrilled – with the wealth information provided. In the case of each community, the data collected from the key informants facilitated the creation of a community-relevant basket of discussion issues and questions for use with on-site focus groups. These focus groups were divided into three strata: 1) Formal and informal community leaders; 2) Parents of late teens and young adults; 3) Teens. Each group was comprised of 5-6 individuals who were recommended by the key informants, clergy, and lay leaders. In addition to some of the specific questions I posed to my interview and focus group participants regarding attitudes and behaviors, I was also intent on discovering answers to some more conceptual questions: What are some of the macro factors beyond the control of a community organization, board, or the local clergy that keep some small communities active with two or three congregations and multiple Jewish organizations while others struggle to hold even monthly services? What factors continue to maintain and even strengthen some communities which others are failing to leverage? What might be some issues small Jewish communities have brought on themselves?

There were two parallel goals associated with this qualitative exploration: 1) To come to an understanding of how small Jewish communities view themselves, their members and the task of transmitting Jewish values to the next generation, thereby facilitating Jewish continuity; 2) To

ensure that the topics I plan to cover in future research are subjects of importance to these communities, and that my theoretical indices of identity include items relevant to their lives and that the questions to be asked in a future survey will be worded in ways that will evoke accurate responses – all with a view towards producing a survey instrument with high validity.

Contribution

There is a large gap in the existing corpus of literature on the study of American Judaism: the contributions of small Jewish communities are largely ignored. If mentioned at all, small Jewish communities such as those located in Greenville, SC, Mcallen, TX, and Fairfield, IA are noted for their small numbers and, perhaps, their hospitality, but not for their contribution to the continuity of Judaism in the United States. Perhaps the obvious reason these communities are ignored – many of which have been in continuous existence for a century or more – is that they are not close enough to New York, Chicago or Los Angeles to bask in the popular glow of the larger bases of Jewish American life. However, if we look more closely at the reason tens of thousands of Jewish Americans have been overlooked by more than 75 years of sociological research, we find a definite (and sometimes unabashed) bias by researchers regarding urban studies in general and Jewish studies, in particular.[18] As well, Jewish communities of only a few hundred – or even a few thousand – residents rarely have the resources to hire a professional team to study their local or regional population. It is my intention to fill this knowledge gap with preliminary but essential information about small Jewish communities in America and institute a fresh area of investigation for those concerned with the future of Judaism in the United States.

[18] See Goldstein and Goldscheider (1968) for an example of classic sociological research which, while otherwise comprehensive, completely ignores any possibility that Jewish Americans may be found outside of the major urban centers or their suburban and bedroom communities.

A second gap in the study of American Jewry is closely related to the first: An almost exclusive reliance on quantitative data to understand the warp and woof of the American Jewish community and make prognostications about its future. The only area of Jewish studies to escape this trap in whole or in part is that of Holocaust studies. Within the domain of the Shoah,[19] regarding the detailed lives of the victims and the survivors, we have thick descriptive of the events from historical documents and first-person testimonies from those who lived through it. If we agree on the value of such qualitative work to understand the more horrific moments of recent Jewish history, how much more important is it to draw on the real-life experiences and words of those upon who we are relying to bring American Jewry through the 21st century? It is my intention to raise awareness of the necessity of bringing qualitative work – which may either support or challenge the results of large-scale surveys – to discussions of both the Jewish present and the Jewish future. Regarding the specific issue of the generational transmission of Jewish values, it can hardly be denied that how we view the future is shaped by the context and experience of our lives (Goldscheider 2004:73); how we arrive at the future is at least in part a product of the trajectory on which we find ourselves today. Therefore, a more robust understanding of that context and trajectory is required to not only more adequately plan for the future, but also to provide better tools for those who would chose to change their trajectory and destination.

In order to close these gaps, it is important to note the weaknesses (among the many strengths) afflicting prior national and local Jewish population studies (Kadushin 2005). I intend with this project to attempt to remedy three that stand out: 1) A specific lack of pre-survey qualitative work that undergirds the validity of the survey instrument; 2) A lack of post-survey

[19] Heb. "holocaust" or "destruction."

interviews delving deeper into the theoretical issues supposedly addressed by the survey; 3) Not devoting sufficient attention to the intersection of family, community, and religiosity with regard to history, current realities and future trends. By addressing these specific issues and emphasizing data triangulation so as to obtain better validity of the concepts under consideration, I believe the aforementioned gaps can be closed to a large extent.

As an added benefit of heavy reliance on qualitative data to increase the validity of future regional and national surveys, it may be that we discover the language of American Judaism has changed along with its perceptions of and strategies for transmitting Jewish values from one generation to the next. With this understanding in hand, I hope to provide not only a snapshot of the current state of American Jewry in small communities but (perhaps more importantly) also provide a language and vocabulary by which Jewish communities can communicate with their member families and each other regarding those methods best suited to facilitate generational continuity. In other words, in addition to expanding my research to include the nested nature of religio-ethnic life in small Jewish communities, it is my desire to provide an explanation of Judaism and Jewish continuity to American Jews. This explanation will, ideally, use contemporary language to convey a meaning of and for Judaism beyond the sociological to the latest generation. If Jewishness is merely a collection of social facts, then it is possible – and even plausible in the eyes and hearts of many – that there is no intrinsic meaning which justifies any boundary-keeping on behalf of American Jews at all. Indeed, such a religio-ethnicity without vital meaning is neither more valuable nor attractive for American Jews than American secular life without the religio-ethnic baggage and we need to look elsewhere for guidance on the future of American Jewry. However, if Judaism as a religio-ethnic system provides an intrinsic meaning and values with the potential to lift the human spirit and structure a community of souls

for greater human possibilities, then it is imperative that we understand and communicate Jewish values as the keys to the Jewish future (Goldscheider 2004: 84).

Moving Forward: Chapter Summaries

It is my hope that this brief introduction has served to spark an interest in and evoke a sympathy for the importance of small Jewish communities in America. To delve more deeply into the subject, the data, my findings, and some thoughts for the near- and long-term future, I invite you journey with me through the foundational five chapters of the Small Jewish Communities Project.

Chapter 1: Jewish Religious and Ethnic Identity: Theoretical Foundations

I have endeavored to provide a sufficient foundation for understanding religio-ethnic identity salience among those who live in a small Jewish community nested within a larger host population. Key to this understanding is a knowledge of the historical and symbolic nature of Jewishness for American Jews and how Jewish parents have, intentionally and unintentionally through a variety of techniques, transmitted a Jewish identity to their children. This chapter also features an in-depth discussion of the theory and research behind the concepts related to the generational transmission of values. The bottom-line here is that families continue to play a critical role in the final set of one's core values and religious identity in adulthood. Other key factors such as education and peers are also considered. Finally, I reflect on the question of "Who is a Jew?" and how the decision to define, for the purpose of this and future installments of the Small Jewish Community Project, participant eligibility as one who considers themselves to be Jewish and I also considered to be Jewish by others within the local Jewish community.

Chapter 2: The Historical and Contemporary Distinctives of Small Jewish Communities

In this chapter I attempt to paint a composite picture of the historical and more recent nature of the "typical" resilient small Jewish community in America. Nested in the ancient migration narratives and collective memory of the Jewish people, the American story told by most of these communities begins with the migration patterns that brought many Germans and other European Jews to small, out-of-the way places in America sometime during the 19th century. The 20th century brought not only technological and political changes to these communities, but social change as well. An old-world view of Jewish life came largely through the immigration of Russian Jews to communities which had already been established and were not quite ready for the challenge of integrating these "other" Jews. As happened in the rest of America, these communities not only learned to get along, but they often integrated into a singular "Jewish community," borrowing different characteristics from both the Western and Eastern European traditions to form a unique tool set which equipped these communities for entry into the late 20th century.

Chapter 3: Twenty-First Century Small Jewish Communities

As we move into the 21st century, the cold hard facts are that the majority of the micro Jewish communities in America - and at least a few of the small Jewish communities – are not going to make it through this era, but will be closing their doors. Before succumbing to what many might consider the ominous inevitable end, it would be prudent to ask some questions of depth whose answers might provide the possibility of a different trajectory for some, if not many, of these communities. Those questions noted in the Qualitative Study section above are explored in some detail – with interesting, fun, and sometimes poignant quotes and stories – along with

others of special interest to small Jewish communities. The last question addressed in chapter is one that challenged many of my focus group participants: What if we were to just disappear?

Chapter 4: Comparing Communities of Faith by Size and Attitude: New Findings from the Pew Data, Observations from the Field, and Suggestions for Better Data Collection on Those Who Live in Small Jewish Communities.

In this chapter I focus on the quantitative aspects of the project and employ my field observations to compare "on the ground" realities to the picture painted by the data gathered by the Pew Research Center's 2013 Survey of U.S. Jews. I compare the findings of those respondents reportedly living in small Jewish communities with those living in micro, medium, and large Jewish communities. While noting those surprises which have not received headline press, I also highlight certain areas of concern (e.g. intermarriage) which, when viewed in light of my qualitative field work, actually provide reasons for maintaining an *optimistic* view of the Jewish American future. Utilizing the extant data from both the NJPS 2000-01 and Pew 2013 surveys to provide some understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of those who live in small Jewish communities, I also point out the inadequacies of both data sets for answering the actual questions I am posing. Finally, I return briefly to the theoretical issue of measuring Jewish identity with quantitative survey data. Here I introduce measures based on my qualitative work and the research of others that may better capture the actual strength of Jewish identity of a given individual as well as the aggregate identity of a given community.

Chapter 5: Tactics, Strategies, and Boundaries: How Small Jewish Communities Facilitate Values Transmission Generationally and Increase the Odds of Jewish Continuity

This is where the cash-value of this project comes into focus. Judaism is not and cannot be lived out at the level of America, Israel or the globe. Rather, Jewish tradition, culture, and faith can only be lived out in real-time by real people as they relate to their families and local

communities. In addition to the unique historical and social stories they have to tell, small Jewish communities can help us understand what it is to be Jewish in America today, how to "think small" – and, thereby, how to increase the chances that our children's children will be Jewish. In the cities and larger communities where there is a significant critical mass of Jewish residents participating in the life of the community, it is easier to hide, easier to not be involved, easier to sneak out the back door and lose one's connection to Jewish life and being. The same is not so easy to do in a small Jewish community. Many, if not most, of those who live in small Jewish communities are reminded of their minority status on a daily basis; they cannot simply hide. For any given task that needs to be done for the sake of the Jewish community, a Jewish family or a Jewish individual must be that resource to step up and fulfill the need – usually without formal training, without a budget and with only limited "professional" guidance. The result of this ontological situation is that Jewish Americans living in small communities have found ways in which promote generation after generation of Jewish identity and functionality that are largely unknown in Denver or Boca. Returning to the questions posed in Chapter 1, through compelling stories and sometimes poignant anecdotes, I present from my field work those specific behaviors and attitudes which seem to play a crucial role in the transfer of Jewish values in small Jewish communities – thereby increasing their odds of surviving to the 22nd century.

Conclusion: Review of Findings, Thinking Small, The Next Jewish Language, and Final Thoughts

In the concluding chapter you will find a review of the research presented in each chapter and how each in its own way contributes to the overall understanding of small Jewish communities and the concept of "thinking small." Of primary focus is the issue of providing a foundation upon which to continue the investigation into small Jewish communities in America. Has the project, at this point, demonstrated the unique ability of small Jewish communities to

transmit Jewish values to the next generation? Are the strategies employed for effective than those used in large Jewish communities? Has the project demonstrated the long-term viability of small Jewish communities with regard to their structures, preferred values, and strategies for transmitting those values? Do the families comprising small Jewish communities play a role in the transmission of Jewish values and identity that may not be as evident in larger Jewish communities? Are there theoretical and practical gaps to close? What changes in national surveys of American Jewry might facilitate increased information on Jewish communities of all sizes as well as provide more robust information on increasing the health and viability of the Jewish community in America? Finally, I will propose the next steps required along this research trajectory so as to provide Jewish parents and communities a tool set with which to increase their chances of having Jewish grandchildren.

While it is appropriate to wrap up with a general review of the project's findings to date, I also want to lay the foundation for the future work of the Small Jewish Community Project.

As the intervening chapters and the findings discussion will demonstrate, the families and individuals who live in America's small Jewish communities are experiencing and "doing" Judaism in ways different from those who live in the largest Jewish centers. These differences may, in fact, be part of the key to the puzzle of how to instill a strong and viable Jewish identity in the next generation, reduce the numbers of Jewish young adults exiting the community for secular American life, and preserve the values we have inherited from those who came before us. While it may not be possible to "bottle" these characteristics and distribute them to Jewish parents throughout the United States in communities of all sizes, it may be possible to encourage parents and others to start "thinking small" – focus on the home, reduce the outsourcing of values-producing experiences, and consider the long-term consequences of today's decisions.

While this study has focused on the behaviors among Jews in small communities which best transmit Jewish values to the next generation, there is one are that needs further development: The study of the most appropriate language in which to teach Jewish values. In the late19th and early 20th century, most Jewish American children were receiving religious and cultural education in Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, German, English – or a mix thereof – but more importantly within a largely thick and rich religio-cultural tool kit for appropriating this knowledge. Although many chose to abandon the ways of the "old country" and assimilate fully into the American landscape, it can be argued that they did so with more or less full knowledge of what they were giving up. Today, the major language of Jewish instruction is English – the language of 20th century institutionalized and secular education in America. The context in which the instruction is being given and received, for most Jewish children not of Orthodox parentage, is that of a synagogue classroom for a very few hours a week disassociated from any personal connection, be it familial, historical, or tangible culture. The result is children who may be more Jewishly educated than their parents (Lasker 2003), but not more Jewishly engaged in the long-term (Manning 2013). Presuming that, at least in many cases, it will be more difficult to transform the Jewish home than the synagogue classroom into a venue for effective transmission of Jewish values, what would be the most effective language with which to transmit those values? What kind of tangible link to Judaism will take the Jewish American children of today through the end of the century? Is there still a role for Yiddish and Hebrew? What is the role of music? Of politics? Could a new language of Jewish education be synthesized for use among a wide variety of educational contexts? I will briefly explore these questions and provide some very tentative answers.

My final thoughts concern the gaps in the current research, opportunities for new exploration and the long-term future of the Small Jewish Communities Project. As the next generation comes online and small Jewish communities in America face new challenges, the importance of understanding these communities is greater than ever.

Chapter 1: Jewish Religious and Ethnic Identity: Theoretical Foundations

Identity Salience in Small Communities

From their research on small Jewish communities, Alper and Olson (2013) found that "the overall direct effect of population share is negative" on religious identity salience (82). In other words, on average, those Jewish individuals who reside in an area with few Jews will have a more salient Jewish identity than those who reside in larger Jewish communities. These findings complement prior research which found that larger religious communities produce lower rates of attendance, philanthropy and commitment than smaller communities (90).[20]

For those living in small Jewish communities, Alper and Olson hypothesize that it is the fact that they are forced to think about their identity more (86) due to the public nature of

Jewish observances – even those activities which are practiced by Jews who do not consider themselves religious – such as Hanukkah and Passover celebrations, Yom Kippur observances and dietary practices.

After controlling for a basket of variables that might effect a person's salient religious identity, the authors found that religious practice had the strongest positive effect on identity, followed by one's proportion of Jewish friends. Interestingly, their model demonstrates that the proportional share of the Jewish population in a given community actually has a small negative, yet statistically significant effect on religio-ethnic identity salience (96). Put directly, this research demonstrates that, holding various aspects of Jewish life (and American life in general) constant, "Jews in areas of low Jewish population share would have more salient Jewish

[20] Unlike prior research, Alper and Olson utilize the salience of religio-ethnic identity as their dependent variable, rather than religious practice, a perspective that I value and utilize in this study.

identities" than those in large Jewish areas (98). In other words, even religiously observant Jews would show a negative impact on the salience of their religious identity if they live in a larger Jewish community (99). Furthermore, their research indicates a bi-modal phenomenon in small Jewish communities: that while on the one hand the identity salience among the members of small Jewish communities is greater, on the other hand assimilation out of Judaism is more likely in less Jewish areas (101).[21]

Based on the research discussed above, I entered into this project expecting to find that that small Jewish communities will demonstrate a smaller variance in identity salience and greater reliance on informal boundary maintenance. To pose the question directly: In what ways, distinct from larger Jewish population centers, are smaller communities able to reinforce a variety of clear yet flexible religio-ethnic boundaries[22] created and maintained through family, friendships and community ties rather than through formal institutional membership and education?

The Role of Religion in Society and the Individual

In order to attempt a comprehensive understanding of the intersection of community, religion and the family, it is important to address some essential aspects of the theoretical nature of society (e.g. the formation and maintenance of human institutions) and the perceived growing secularization of American society. In other words, it is important to understand why and how

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[21] The authors propose that one explanation for this contradiction is that being the "odd man out" for Jews of low identity salience in a small community is a greater price than those of low identity salience who live in larger communities and don't face this stigma to the same degree. Therefore, those Jews of low identity salience in larger communities may continue to have their identity reduced towards zero while facing little pressure from the majority to actually abandon the Jewish community completely (101).

[22] During the course of my qualitative investigation, it become clear for each community which boundaries (e.g. endogamy, key friendships, minimum education requirements for children, etc.) – and their respective definitions – are most highly valued as well as how (or if) they are enforced. These boundaries will be presented in chapters 2 and 3 in order to provide an understanding of the depth of commitment to each value held by individual communities specifically and small Jewish communities in general.

humans form religious (and other) communities within which they and their families live out their lives provides the foundation for building a framework within which religious values are transmitted from one generation to the next with both continuity and change.[23]

So as not to diminish the importance of individual agency within community-wide structures, and to provide practical guidance for social-scientific investigators, Smith (2010) encourages the researcher to push back against the "strong constructionism" espoused by many contemporary social theorists who take the concept of social construction beyond the original intent of Berger and Luckmann (1967). Rather, Smith (2010) favors a "weak" version of social constructionism – which he denotes as the "realist" version. While the weak version concedes a "dimension of reality that humans socially construct" – primarily institutional facts that humans "think, speak and interact into existence" – Smith posits that objective reality within which social constructions are embedded should play a significant role in social scientific conceptions and research endeavors (122). In other words, Smith argues that that "reality is not flat" (31). Rather, reality is stratified into at least 14 levels – from the subatomic, through the ecological to the cosmological (35). All people, as "ontologically emergent" beings, operate at each level simultaneously and are consciously "self-transcendent," "self-reflective," "truth-seeking" beings who grasp and communicate meaning, abstractly assign value, anticipate the future, and form moral virtues which guide decision-making as well as "aesthetic judgment and pleasure" (49-64).

Based on this theoretical model, Smith assigns three specific tasks to the social scientist who would endeavor to obtain reliable (but not infallible) knowledge of the real: 1) Assume that truth exists and aim to both understand and explain what is true about what is real; 2) Evaluate

[23] I will not take the space in this work to provide a discussion on the theory of religion. Rather, it should be understood that religion, like the family, is an organic human institution which deep roots in all societies and one which occupies a notable place in American society both historically and today.

the accuracy and reliability of our indicators of truth; 3) Be prepared to rationally evaluate the coherence of internal and external knowledge (208-215). In other words, we should strive to find the rational consistency between what lies inside the community and that which is external to the community. On the one hand, Smith's model of the emergent person allows the researcher freedom to state that there *is* reality that can be known. On the other hand, the researcher has the responsibility to accurately relate and conceptually clarify this knowledge. Finally, we have a responsibility to our communities of interest to provide any ideas, insights, theoretical perspectives and research data/conclusions with an attitude of dignity – that our work may be used to enhance the moral virtues of those communities and facilitate the personal and communal good.

With these precepts in mind, it is important for any research considering the religious orientation of society to seriously engage not only in a discussion of the secularization of contemporary western society, but to examine the ways in which those within a religious community effectively retain authority to guide and speak into the lives of the latest generation. From the earliest sociological writings of Marx and Weber, the secularization[24] of western society has been considered an indicator of the demise of religion (Sorkin 2004). Indeed, much of the theoretical literature of the twentieth century predicted both the development and impact of secularization through which "sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols" (Berger 1990:107). Stark (1996), however, argues that secularization is an indicator of the transformation of religion – not its destruction – into a

[24] For the purposes of this discussion, "secularization" is defined as the process of removing supernatural assumptions from a given society and culture (Stark, 1996: 289).

generalized system of ethics with control over very few compensators and rewards.[25] Although the institution of religion retains control over specific compensators required by the members of a given society, the once powerful Deity has lost any power over the congregation to bargain for belief or obedience, will give his people all good things in time (regardless of what is given in return) and makes little demands beyond "the prevailing secular standards of behavior" (286-288). As the accepted practices and beliefs of a given religion grow less deviant from those of the prevailing society, the adherents of that faith face a doubly-dulled knife: While the religion now holds little sway over their personal thoughts and choices of the individual neither does the larger society discourage religious behavior that has been stripped of its objectionable attitudes.

Eventually, only the form of religion remains and that takes on an ethical quality with, in many cases, an ethnic veneer while the essential theological quality becomes inert. Thus, a "good Boston Irish Catholic" or a "good Brooklyn Jew" can attend their respective religious services and festivals while holding no animosity one for the other – nor any particular value for their own religious participation other than the maintenance of an ethnic tradition.

The Centrality of Family in Jewish Religio-Ethnic Identity Formation and Maintenance

While Stark's model is satisfactory for understanding the persistence of a common civil religion loosely based on ethical monotheism at the macro level, it does not explain the perseverance – specifically – of religious families within a variety of American religious traditions. Nor does this model account for the correlation between historical declines and advances in the strength of the family at the national level that are temporally concurrent with

[25] Generally speaking, a religious "compensator" is that which is provided to the faithful by the priest or the deity in return for any act of self-sacrifice on behalf of the institution. Compensators are generally provided to the faithful in the next world or the afterlife. A religious "reward" is that which the faithful are provided in return for their allegiance to the institution. Rewards may be provided in the current state of existence or in another.

declines and advances in secularization. In other words, the Stark model of secularization (as well as others) does not explain why, when an historical increase in secularization is observed at the national level a concurrent decrease in the strength of the family is also observed, and vice-versa (Martin 2005). Eberstadt (2013) proposes a model that inverts the accepted temporal chain of secularization and offers an explanation for the persistent (if not majority) belief in God throughout the West in the late-modern period. She argues that the proverbial cart has been placed before the horse. While most theorists claim that a change in the strength of secularization has historically preceded a change in the strength of the family, Eberstadt argues that it is family changes at the national level which precede changes in national secularization. She observes that there is "something about having larger or stronger or more connected families that is making people more religious, at least some of the time" (98). In other words, it is the way people live in families, the institution of marriage, the raising of children, etc. that drives people towards faith. Thus, when the family is in a growth cycle, an upsurge in the faithful throughout the nation will occur in parallel – stronger families beget stronger faith. Likewise, when the family is in decline, the markers of secularization will be more abundant throughout society.

The research of the late Steven Nock (1998) provides solid evidence – with specific reference to husbands and fathers – for changes in family strength preceding that of religious adherence. Nock observed that men who have bought into the institutional idea of marriage tend to "organize much of the rest of their lives in similar constructions" where there are clear norms of decorum and standards of conduct (108). These standards conform to the narrative of masculinity which is normative for traditional Judeo-Christian religion: leadership, independence, appropriate aggression, achievement and endurance (48-51).

Based on the foregoing discussion on the critical role of religion and family in the regulation of individual identity and growth, it should be no surprise to expect relative family solidarity to promote or otherwise discourage religio-ethnic identity. The question to be answered may be formed in this way: Do families residing in the relative isolation of small Jewish communities demonstrate higher parent-child affective solidarity than those residing in the large Jewish communities?

Supporting the theoretical understanding of "symbolic ethnicity and religiosity" as developed by Gans (1994), Rebhun (2004) identifies ten indicators of Jewish identification, representing different aspects of Jewish ethnic and religious continuity. These variables are gathered into four primary areas: Ritual Practices, Institutional Affiliation, Informal Social Networks and Attachment to Israel (352). However, as I will relate briefly below, many American Jews believe they can survive as Jews without regular ritual practice or institutional affiliation (354-357). When we add to this belief the dramatic increase in interfaith marriages and the difficulties many interfaith families have imparting religio-ethnic identities to their children, it is of little wonder that children raised in inter-faith families are much less likely to be engaged Jewishly as adults than are their peers raised by two Jewish parents (Riley 2013).

Virtually all American families of the 20th Century were affected by significant structural changes – industrialization, urbanization, mobility, communications, economic booms and busts, social revolutions and birth control. The impact of these changes was borne by communities and families alike. By the 1970s many communities – religious and otherwise – had found that the sacrifice, investment and boundary-keeping required to maintain any social group (Kanter 1972) was in decline. No longer could member families be relied upon to keep up their end of the social bargain. Moreover, within the family, the individual had begun to take precedence over

the household group. Married couples had more education, more disposable income and more personal choices than ever before. With the power of choice occupying a more central role in American life, greater emphasis was likewise placed on individual fulfilment within marriage (Cherlin 2010a). Therefore, as the importance of self-fulfillment for the average American adult grew in their own eyes, the family unit became less of a priority; to the extent that mothers and fathers no longer considered as a priority a community in which their children were raised and assisted with the task of imparting goals and keeping boundaries, the community began to atrophy.

In the midst of this re-ordering of priorities within the American family, American Jewish families of the 20th century found themselves burdened with three tasks never before placed onto the shoulders of a single institution: ensuring Jewish survival, ensuring Jewish belonging and realizing the American individualistic ideal (Berman 2010). Being forced to prioritize these tasks, many American Jews chose the path of least resistance which included integration into the American ethos at every level – intermarriage, deconstruction of Judaism from an essential way of life to symbolic personal expression, permissive parenting and social liberalism. Jewish leaders largely supported these trends, believing that their own religious, social and financial survival depended on these ideological and behavioral accommodations to modernity (Berman 2010: 99-100, Gans 1994). Very few took the stance of Rabbi-turned-sociologist, Morris Kertzer, who encouraged non-Jewish spouses to convert and intermarried couples to strengthen their Jewish expression because, he taught, "Judaism in its essential form has a vital message for the world" (Berman 2009:138). Many parents discovered too late that their approach – which had the intended effect of many social barriers Jewish participation – also resulted in unanticipated

consequences: Their children were not only open to the idea of intermarriage – many actively sought out a non-Jewish spouse (Berman 2010: 100-101).

Research in recent decades has demonstrated that a parent's religious faith and practice has a stronger and longer-lasting impact on their children than do the attitudes and behaviors of their children's peers (Riley 2013). Many parents, however, are ignorant of the facts and believe they have little to no impact over their children during their teen years.[26] Thus, rather than use this time to strengthen the religious identity of the emerging adults in their midst, many parents allow their children to "choose" their religious path[27] – even unintentionally. Some parents, believing the popular myth that they do not have the knowledge or ability to teach their children the essentials of their faith will outsource religious education to the local congregation or community center (91-92). Again many rabbis, Jewish educators, and lay congregational leaders are found to be in support of this less-than-optimal strategy of raising Jewish children to become Jewish adults. Believing, in part, that the way to get to the parents is through their children, these professionals have advocated religious school, summer camp, and trips to Israel. While these strategies have indeed inculcated Jewish children with Jewish knowledge of history, religion and practices they have also tended to foster in Jewish children a "sense of authority over their parents' Jewishness" (Berman 2010: 102-105). This attitude expressed by their children then reinforces the parents' sense of inadequacy and a belief that raising Jewish children is best left to the community alone. According to the latest research – and the common sense observed by not

[26] Riley found that religious attendance and home-based religious practices on behalf of parents are directly correlated to a teenager's decision to participate in a religious ritual specifically intended for adolescents, such as a bar/bat Mitzvah or confirmation. In other words, parents who attend religious services and demonstrate religious behaviors at home will find their children more likely to participate in a religious coming of age compared with those parents who do neither or only demonstrate religious behaviors at home.

[27] While allowing children "freedom to choose" their faith is a popular refrain among intermarried couples, Riley's data suggests that endogamous parents who do not intentionally provide a religious example for their children do not raise children with relatively strong religious identities.

a few religious professionals – the better choice for parents who desire to raise Jewish adults with a strong Jewish identity is to model, encourage and guide their children and teens in home-based rituals (prayer, textual studies, Shabbat and holiday observances, etc.) which are then supported in the larger community through institutional participation (Riley 2013: 91-93).

Interfaith couples face even more hurdles to imparting a religio-ethnic identity – even when both spouses have agreed to raise their children in a single religion. With very few exceptions, these parents have difficulties providing a singular religious upbringing that does not show signs of serious strain (Riley 2013). Some intermarried couples endure decades of consciously feeling a lack of community where they and their children fit in – and many are surprised after becoming parents that this would be an issue (59). Even for those interfaith families who do find a community where they feel comfortable – from scheduling service and religious school attendance to equal participation in home rituals to the stigmas that can sometimes be placed on children of intermarried couples – these couples are working with a stacked deck. They may indeed be doing their best to pass on their devotion to faith and tradition to their children. However, the parent's original choice to marry outside of that beloved faith instantly reduces the chances that their children will inherit that faith – and many simply give up (206). For intermarried Jewish parents, the odds of an intermarried Jewish parent producing a Jewish adult is more than 25% less than two Jewish parents (Bengtson 2013:115).

It would seem that common sense, as well as the research described above, makes it obvious that parents who provide intentional public and private examples of living their religio-ethnic values and faith are more likely to have children with a stronger religious identity than are parents who allow their children to "choose" their own path. Building on this assumption, I embarked on this research expecting to find that small Jewish communities will demonstrate a

clear value for and practice of including both spouses of interfaith families in public events and services. To take it one step further, I also expected to find in these communities both a vision and strategies for enabling and empowering parents to provide a Jewish education in the home as well as in a formal institutional setting. The question to be asked is: Do small Jewish communities tend to employ a conscious and intentional strategy for empowering parents (and especially interfaith families) to provide a Jewish education in the home as well as in the synagogue or other institutional setting?

The Generational Transmission of Values

Of all the studies on American families conducted in the past half-century, perhaps the most well-known, well-documented, comprehensive and authoritative is the longitudinal study undertaken by Vern L. Bengtson. Beginning in the early 1970s with 2,044 grandparents, this complex study comprising both survey and interview data includes 3,500 participants over four generations and four decades, resulting in over 250 articles and 16 books (Bengtson 1975, Bengtson 2013). In addition to investigating the "generation effects" that comprise the identity of each individual, Bengtson and his team sought to understand the nature, magnitude and mechanisms of value transmission from one generation to the next within a family (1975: 358-359). From his earliest reports, Bengtson found compelling evidence that parents play at least an equal – but possibly greater – role than does a given generational cohort in determining the emphasis an individual places on humanism vs. materialism and collectivism vs. individualism. In other words, in the realm of basic values measurement, immediate family trumps peers and contemporary culture (367-368).

Additional conclusions from Bengtson's original work (1975: 363-369) include:

- Significant evidence for value similarity between generations - the difference lies in the inter-generational distribution and importance.

- A 'values gap' from one generation to the next cannot be substantiated.
- "Life-cycle contrasts"[28] should be considered and yet not overshadow family and generation effects.
- Individualism is increasing with each cohort, yet even in this area family effects are greater than generational effects, although the variance is small.
- The importance of sequestering specific value measures when comparing generations.

Two words of caution are also provided at this early stage in Bengtson's work: 1) Because there is a "substantial degree of individual variability in value orientations," it is not possible to impose a deterministic model of generational value acquisition and, 2) Generalizations concerning family influence should be made with caution as social location (class, ethnicity, region, etc.) may have an effect on transmission at least as great as that of the family (369).

It is important to note that Bengtson consistently illustrates the unique macro experiences affecting the lives and identities of each generation, (e.g., Silent Generation – experience of the depression and the war years; Boomers - experience of civil rights, sexual revolution, feminism;

Xers – latchkey independence; political correctness; the triumph of science over faith; Millennials – hyper-individualism; social media). As well, some of the variance in identity needs to be attributed to the fact that people are from different families (1975: 366) and that the effects of generations and families are additive (367). Finally, Bengtson's analysis shows that with regard to some values sets, there is a stronger family effect while with regard to other value sets the generational component has a stronger effect (367).[29] However, what is most remarkable for

[28] Bengtson understands "life-cycle contrasts" to be individual attributes including SES, positive or negative personal affect and experiences which frame and shape an individual's values (Bengtson and Lovejoy 1973: 907)
[29] In Bengtson's original research, he found that the generational transmission of the "humanism/materialism" value set was generally more attributable to family factors while the "collectivism/individualism" value set was generally more attributable to generational effects.

my research is that Bengtson's work consistently argues for an affective solidarity between generations which, after the first 30 years of longitudinal research, Bengtson is able to both measure and map quite effectively (Bengtson 2003:30) – including evidence that religious values which persevere into adulthood are "formed within nuclear and extended families" (323).[30]

Bengtson's data confirm the family solidarity hypothesis, a contemporary view of the family which acknowledges the dramatic and rapid societal changes which have impacted the family yet holds that the family has been and continues to be "adaptive and resilient" and whose members remain in contact and are mutually influential even over time and distance (2003: 135). Such a conclusion based on three decades of Bengtson's cumulative longitudinal research undergirds the work of a wide-range of investigators and theorists such as Erikson (1985), Myers (1996), Hervieu-Léger (2000), Wilcox (2002, 2004), Edgell (2006) and Eberstadt (2013). All of these researchers report that the family has been and remains at the forefront of both identity development and societal trends. Regarding the transmission of specifically Jewish identity, the confirmation of the family solidarity hypothesis – that the family remains the primary locus of influence for the individual over time – undergirds the work of researchers such as Lazar, et al (2002), Weissbach (2005), Goldscheider (2004, 2010), Boyarin (2013) and Riley (2013). These researchers argue that family factors are of first importance in the transmission of Jewish values and the resulting maintenance of Jewish peoplehood.

Moving beyond the family, many contemporary students of American Jewry would instinctively point towards the high rate of participation in the ubiquitous formal Jewish

[30] To place these realities within the context of my research, Susser and Liebman (1999) note that within American Judaism, at least since the time of the second great wave of immigration from Russia and Eastern Europe, it is not only four children with unique dispositions who are asking questions at the Passover table, but four generations of American Jews – each with their own unique expressions of and ties to Judaism – yet all sitting around the same table and all pledging ties to a specific people and experience thousands of years removed as well as to each other.

educational system as a primary source of religio-ethnic identity for Jews living in virtually every context. Indeed, according to the 2013 Pew Research Center Survey of American Jews, over two-thirds of all Jewish adults surveyed claimed to have participated in formal Jewish education while growing up. Even among "Jews of no religion" the participation rate in some sort of formal religio-ethnic education was 44%. However, recent research has shed light on a fact that may trouble many: Jewish education is not producing the intended results. Within the Jewish community of Great Britain (Graham 2014), it was found that, while formal Jewish education had a positive net effect on Jewish identity, the strongest correlation was with the behavioral and intellectual aspects of identity. The effect of formal Jewish education on Jewish values and community was quite low. Closer to home, Sales (2012) reviewed the actual education being received by American Jewish children and found that "Innovators in Jewish education often fail to articulate their logic model and thus do not get intended results" (317). To the contrary, what many have missed over the past several decades of the Jewish school model is that not only are parents and grandparents the single greatest influence on the lives of children (Smith 2005), with particular reference to salience of faith, the family is the most effective (Bengtson 2013).

Sampling 815 parents (368 fathers and 447 mothers) of Jewish children involved in formal religious education, Lasker and Lasker (2003) found that parents play a crucial role in the development of their children's religio-ethnic identity quite separate from the effect of acquiring Jewish knowledge in an institutionalized setting. Measuring nine dimensions of Jewish identity (People, Heritage, Knowledge, Ethics, Faith, Religious Proficiency, Community, Friends and Observance), Lasker and Lasker asked parents to score the importance of each dimension for themselves, and then to score their desired importance of each dimension for their children. Their

results demonstrated a "strong association" between how the parents perceived their own religio-ethnic identity and what they desired for their children. In seven of the dimensions a solid majority of parents' desire for their child's identity was that it eventually be equivalent to their own. The only two exceptions were the dimensions of "Knowledge" and "Friends": an overwhelming majority of parents noted a desire for their children to exceed their Jewish knowledge but have fewer Jewish friends (360-361).[31]

This dichotomy between "Knowledge" and "Friends" is quite striking for many reasons. I find it particularly fascinating that sending one's child to religious school is an attempt to accomplish one goal while at the same time defeat another. I agree with the Laskers' theory that it is possible that parents were unconsciously reflecting the ethos of American civil religion which calls for an active participation in social democratic values (363). However, for the purposes of this project, this specific finding is important in that it illustrates that Jewish parents are largely willing to forego the tacit expectations of the larger culture in order to provide their children with the tools necessary to surpass their own religious knowledge. Their general findings are foundational for my research in that strong evidence is provided supporting the theoretical concept of "parental heritage" – that parents both wish to transmit their own values to their children in a measure similar to their own and that they will make specific choices to facilitate that goal. For Jewish parents in smaller communities where formal Jewish education is a shadow of what is available in larger communities, if at all, the Lasker findings suggest that Jewish parents will find other ways in which to replicate their values in the next generation.

[31] With regard to this fascinating finding the authors hypothesize that parents could be referencing either 1) A personal reality of not liking their Jewish friends as much as they do their non-Jewish friends or 2) An ideal of nondiscrimination that works out in real-life as the intentional seeking out of non-Jews as friends (Lasker and Lasker 2003: 363).

In earlier research of my own (Richardson 2007), I have found that home ritual provides a more accurate indicator of Jewish religio-ethnic identity than public behavior such as attending services, working for social justice and volunteering for Jewish organizations – all of which are strongly associated with a formal Jewish education but not necessarily with a strong Jewish identity. This conclusion is supported by researchers of note, such as Naomi Schaefer Riley (2013) who demonstrates that home practices and rituals are more likely to have an impact on our day-to-day lives than the mere learning about religion. Riley postulates that it may be the routine of home ritual which not only enforces norms and boundaries (for both endogamous and exogamous families), but also serves as a bulwark against the tension present in many interfaith families which find themselves lacking in ritual due to the inability to prioritize the faith of one parent over another. Finally, the home ritual effect is not for children only. Ellison, Burdette and Wilcox (2010) found a small yet significant correlation between family religious activities at home (excluding prayer at meals) and the relationship satisfaction reported by the adults in the household.

These findings are not surprising given the widely-accepted theoretical nature of a child's theological relationship to his or her parents. First, with regard to the earliest and primary aspects of one's identity, parents are a child's first concept of God (Bengtson 2013, Hoge 1982, Smith 2005). Second, the nature of identity development is that it is "nested" in the hierarchical nature of intergenerational transmission (Aviv 2005): 1. Individual development; 2. Intergenerational relationships; 3. Socio-historical environment. Again, Bengtson's findings underscore the research of others. In 2008 his team reported that religious transmission from parents to children was stronger than political attitudes, social status or psychological well-being (310), that grandparent influence was strongest in religious transmissions (320-322) and that "parents and

grandparents simultaneously [serve] as independent and joint agents of religious socialization" (323).

It is noteworthy that Alper (2013) argues that it is neither the size of the community, the advantage of a formal Jewish education nor even the proportion of Jewish friends which strengthens salient Jewish identity, but, rather, personal Jewish religious practices – even at a minimal level. Compared with Jewish individuals who do not participate in any Jewish religious practices, regardless of the size of the community in which they live, those who do participate at any level are predicted to have a higher salience of Jewish identity (97-98). While Alper's findings seem to contradict that of other research and stand opposite of my expected findings, the distinction is that Alper is considering the salience of Jewish religious identity of the individual whereas I am attempting to map the aggregate salience of Jewish religio-ethnic identity at the community level.

I believe it is also important to note that, unlike the salience of religious for Christians, the salience of religio-ethnic identity for Jews is not as easy to parse. While there are important ethnic and doctrinal differences between Irish-Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Coptic, and American Evangelical Christians, they are not to be measured in the same way as the differences between Ashekanaz and Sephardic Jews or between the adherents of the newly-branded "Open Orthodox" movement and those of the almost two-century-old Reform movement. The difference can be aptly illustrated by observing the way an expert on American Christian identity approaches identity salience versus the methods of an expert on contemporary American and Israeli Jews. In his classic work on the religious identity of American Evangelicalism, Christian Smith (1998) utilizes an index based primarily on issues of belief and doctrine to understand the foundations of moral values and to measure levels of religious salience and resilience between different

Christian traditions (20-31). Lazar, Kravetz, and Frederich-Kedem (2002), however, devised a similarly intense survey instrument comprised of 111 items covering 10 factors of motivation for religious activity to distinguish between Jews who chose a more religiously traditional lifestyle and worldview versus those who chose a more secular expression of their Jewish religio-ethnicity. The results of their analysis would likely not be surprising to any Jewish academic or community leader: Those who self-identified as secular indicated that their primary factors of motivation for participating in religious ritual were Family and Upbringing with Ethnic Identity coming in a close third. Those who self-identified as traditional ranked their top motivating factor as Upbringing and Ethnic Identity, with Belief in Divine Order coming in fourth, just ahead of Social factors. Even those who identified as Orthodox ranked a belief in the Divine Order as the *second* most important motivating factor – behind Ethnic Identity (510-517). Thus, while it may seem that I am not delving in to the issue of religious salience as deeply as might be expected in a survey focused on a specific religious group. The reason is twofold: 1) My theory incorporates those Jewish adults who exercise certain *behaviors* as being more effective at transmitting Jewish religio-ethnic identity than those who exhibit other behaviors – regardless of actual religious belief; 2) Jews, *per se*, are not merely a religious group but one with a complexity of religious, historical, political, linguistic, ethnic, and geographical characteristics which comprise the identity of each individual.

Overall, as I ventured out into these small Jewish communities I expected to find the children more likely to be receiving their primary religio-ethnic education at home, rather than in an institutional setting. To place these expectations into a question: Will the results of a home-based strategy for religio-ethnic values transmission be that adult children will are more likely to

share their parents' religio-ethnic values than those who obtained the majority of their Jewish education in a formal setting?

The Unanswered Question: Who Is A Jew?

While it is the duty of those who focus on the Sociology of American Jewry to ask the question, "Who is a Jew?," there is no easy answer. While it is a question explored by many scholars since the Haskalah[32], and some researchers of generations immediately preceding our own were willing to provide flexible boundaries (e.g. the Lazerwitz (1953) scale provided for three hierarchical groupings and 16 qualities of Jewish identity), but virtually none today are willing to proclaim a definitive answer. Ralph Segalman's report on Jewish identity scales (1967) underscores the fact that biological and hereditary considerations lost reliability as indicators of Jewish identification around the mid-point of the 20th Century. Rather, Jewishness became a multi-dimensional phenomenon comprised of attitudes, choices and behavioral patterns which are measured in different ways, on differing scales, and are not of equal importance (95-96). Thus, it is difficult to find the relative impact and correlation between these items and Jewish identity, especially if there is a "considerable variance" between a respondent's answer to a survey item and that same respondent's actual behavior (93-94).

Based on principles of social psychological theory, Simon Herman (1989) developed a conceptual framework to describe the combination of variables which could be included in any analysis of Jewish identity. The first two general categories include: 1) The nature of the individual's relationship to the Jewish group as a membership group and 2) The individual's perception of the attributes of the Jewish group, his feeling about them, and the

[32] The "Jewish Elightenment," an intellectual movement in Europe that ran from approximately the 1770s through the late 19th century. It was during this period of national deconstruction and re-configuration that the concept of multiple measures of Jewish identities was first entertained.

extent to which its norms are adopted by him as a source of reference (39). Regarding more specific categories of belonging, Herman notes that any ethnic identity implies both alignment with members of a specific group and a differentiation, or "marking off" from other groups (40). While marking off may either have an effect on an individual (usually of a minority group) or be exercised by an individual (of any distinct group), alignment is most often an understanding of how the individual perceives himself or herself to be similar or interdependent vis-à-vis the reference group (41-44). Furthermore, Herman found that a constant juxtaposition of nonconformity (marking off) within another majority heightens awareness/salience of Jewish identity (42). As well, the perceived cohesion to the group of reference was higher based on issues of interdependence, rather than similarities of group members (43).

Thus, it would follow that contemporary Jewish identity (and the answer to the question at hand!) is more likely to be found in personal meaning constructed through interactions in the private spheres of life. Rather than looking to the traditional/institutional arena for cues directing behavior, loyalty, and norms the authority figure for the American Jew has become the "sovereign self" (Cohen 2000:2-3). This is, of course, in alignment with the larger American penchant for hyper-individualism which has impacted not only institutions such as marriage and religion (Cherlin 2009) but an entire generation of Americans (Putnam 2007). However, as the last three national Jewish surveys and their resultant global discussions regarding American Jewry have demonstrated, [33] the task of identifying and enumerating American Jews is one that scholars, clergy, and laypeople alike care about deeply. The 2000-01 NJPS actually worked with

[33] The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, 2000-1 National Jewish Population Survey, and 1993 Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews all had as one of their principle tasks to accurately and authoritatively count the number of Jews in America. As expected, the intensity and variety of the post-study release debates regarding methods, definitions, and results were not disappointing.

two distinct answers to the question of "Who Is A Jew?" – one for the purpose of enumerating the American Jewish population and other for internal use by the study sponsor, United Jewish Communities (Kotler-Berkowitz 2004a, Kotler-Berkowitz 2004b).[34] The Pew Study report, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans" (Smith 2013), did not shy away from the complexity and sensitivity of the issue, dedicating an entire page to the academic and practical aspects of the question (18), expressly comparing their study to that of the 2000-01 NJPS (79) and returning to the subject on subsequent pages regarding participant eligibility (120-122). Acknowledging that various types of readers will have their own opinions and answers to the core and periphery questions of who can or should be counted as Jewish, the Pew team cast a wide net – allowing for self-identification and subsequent classification into one of four categories: 1) Jews by religion; 2) Jews of no religion; 3) Non-Jewish people of Jewish background; and 4) Non-Jewish people with a Jewish affinity (18).

While taking into account the research and surveys discussed above, my decision as to how to determine "who is a Jew" for this project was also pragmatically influenced by the compilation of personal reflections edited by Judea and Ruth Pearl in their 2004 volume, *I Am Jewish* as a tribute to their son, Daniel Pearl. The scores of personal accounts of self-defined Judaism mirror the ethno-religious compromises espoused by Gans (1994) and Kertzer (1976), the interdependent nonconformity observed by Herman (1989), as well as the autonomy of the self-chronicled by Cohen (2000). In an attempt to adequately synthesize these theoretical and practical views into a reasonable understanding of what makes an individual "Jewish," I have landed for now on a parallel two-pronged requirement for those who would participate in the Small Jewish Communities project as a Jewish individual: 1) They must consider themselves to

[34] The United Jewish Communities organization is now the Jewish Federations of North America.

be Jewish; and 2) Others within their local Jewish community must also consider them to be Jewish. While on the one hand this standard may indeed represent a very wide door, it is not one that allows individuals to easily opt-in without some adherence to minimal communal and historical standards of what it means to *be Jewish*. On the other hand, it allows for those with a very weak or quickly deteriorating Jewish identity to opt-out in one of two ways. Thus, my hope is to capture as many Jewish individuals living in small Jewish communities as possible who at the least share a confidence in the value of Judaism for themselves, their community, and by extension, future possible Jewish generations.

Chapter 2: The Historical and Contemporary Distinctives of Small Jewish Communities

To focus one's research in an area where there are relatively few members of the general population in which one is interested is, admittedly, counter-intuitive. However, my research has found that due to their unique history, community composition, and geographic location, small Jewish communities in America have not only survived, but have thrived. These three specific small Jewish communities, Mountain City, Riverton, and Green Valley, although located in disparate regions of the United States, have demonstrated that they are imbued with similar keys for transmitting Jewish values to the next generation and beyond.

It is important to note that the phenomenon of thriving small Jewish communities is not at all universal or even a general rule. The American landscape has seen many a small Jewish community make a mark only to slowly reduce their numbers over a period of 20 or 30 years until, eventually, the last remaining member must turn out the lights. However, those which have survived – and are expected to be viable for decades to come – share some unique and interesting characteristics. My research reveals these common themes through the process of interviews, focus groups and digging into the historical archives.

Jewish Migration and the Early Establishment of Small Jewish Communities: Finding Work and Forming Families

There is a common narrative woven through the times and epochs of Jewish history – a shared memory that has shaped the development of American Jewry. This narrative begins in the early chapters of the Bible and has repeated itself throughout recorded Jewish history until the modern era. Its primary elements are: Exile, Wondering/Alienation, Settlement & quasi-Redemption. While this narrative is often considered at the macro level regarding the People of Israel, it is also found at the very personal micro level. Author and educator Francis Nataf

(2010) suggests that the individual experiences recorded in the Torah which are most relevant to those Jewish immigrants who settled in and grew the first small Jewish communities in America would be those of Jacob and Moses. Each of these men were forced to leave their family and the land of their upbringing because of a threat on their life. Each of them spent time wandering in the "wilderness" of a culture different from their own, eventually choosing to join themselves to communities with new values and theologies. During their journeys, both Jacob and Moses face challenges to their concepts of reality and their individual identities. Finally, each of these men take up positions as leaders of their people with a vision to settle in a new land with a return to *some* of the old ways.

In ways not so different from their ancient forbears, many Jewish men left Europe not only in search of a more prosperous way of life, but came to the United States after having lost family members to pogroms, community-wide and state-sanctioned anti-Semitic oppression, or very personal attacks by business leaders and political office-holders (Wisse 2007:87-96). These contemporary journeys away from the land, the people, and the culture they knew not only brought Jewish men to small American communities, they created small Jewish communities like none other in history. Indeed, during the "classic era of small-town Jewish life," the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Weissbach 2005:7), these communities would not have resembled the larger Jewish centers (8, 30) any more than they do today. Nascent small Jewish communities did not have the Jewish social and political structure of the larger eastern cities such as New York and Baltimore with which to assist newcomers with few resources. Rather, what attracted European Jewish immigrants to small communities on the east coast (e.g. Binghamton, NY) was at least as much familial and personal connections (Sussman 1989) as business opportunities. In other words, many early Jewish settlers in small communities chose their homes due to extant

relationships as well as financial opportunities or convenience. Many of those who did move to small communities with hopes of business ventures did so with either a view to serving other Jews (Kosher butchers, bakers, etc.) or to continuing circuit-peddling of dry goods much as they had done in Europe while keeping the Jewish community as the focus of their life (16). The difference, however, between circuit-peddling in Europe and that in the New World is that the experience on this side of the Atlantic was much more about wondering from place-to-place in search of a permanent trade, an unique identity and a new home – and less about working a time-worn circuit that had the Jewish community at its center. Like Jacob before them they had to be always on guard and skilled in diplomacy with the nations of people surrounding them. The skills that helped them survive (quite literally!) in the "old country," however, were not much help in a place where businessmen of import were expected to participate openly – as Jews – in both community politics and civic organizations. Golda, a 92-year-old member of the Mountain City Jewish community, told me of her father-in-law, a peddler of men's clothing. He journeyed to the west following the gold rush years and eventually settled in Mountain City. Surprisingly, he was not only welcome to join the Masons (and, in the 20th century, the Kiwanis) but that his business prospered through his participation. This young Jewish pioneer of the American West did so well that he was able to send for a wife from Poland years ahead of his original schedule!

Not only was peddling a relatively easy startup business to establish, given that it required little training, little English, and only a little help from more established Jewish families who could provide initial stock and operating capital, peddlers had an instant market wherever they found themselves in the American countryside where expansion was taking place faster than the major retailers could build brick-and-mortar stores (Weissbach, 2005: 36). In many cases, like their forefathers Jacob and Moses who took up residence among people with values different

from their own, these peddlers had to acclimate to the American landscape, political system, and widely-accepted civil religion of ethical Monotheism. In some cases, the challenge was to be able to communicate and make sales with heavily accented English (or no English at all!) and a lack of understanding regarding how Americans conducted business. In other cases, the challenge was to accept assistance in the form of capital finance, living quarters, and logistics from Christians – people who in Europe would have naturally excluded them from many aspects of public life or worse. Turning again to Golda's father-in-law as an example, because of his role as one of the prominent Jewish businessmen in the Mountain City region, he resisted selling his successful men's clothing store until he received an offer from a well-established chain store in 1948 – he was well-past retirement age!

Considering the peddler's knowledge of their customer base, access to a variety of goods, regular itinerant schedules, and value for price, they could be considered forerunners of internet retail! In many cases it was a peddler, after making his mark in a specific geographical area, who would set up the first large mercantile in the county seat;[35] although, sometimes, the reason for settling down was due to a new wife or a dead horse (Weissbach, 2005: 37).

Like Moses who found himself to be "a stranger in a strange land" during his 40 years of dwelling in Midian with his father-in-law, wife and son, Gershom,[36] Jewish immigrants to small communities often found themselves emphasizing their Jewish identity because of the "strange" customs of the area in which they settled and with which they did not want to be identified. In

[35] In the case of my own family tree, of which Daniel Boon is one of the branches, a certain peddler by the name of David Isaacs was financed by his brother, Isaiah, who also participated in the funding of Daniel Boone's surveys of Kentucky. David eventually became a well-known merchant in Charlottesville and associate of Thomas Jefferson. Through a series of seemingly random events, I made my way from birth in California, growing up in Colorado, a series of jobs on the east coast to doing my PhD work at the University of Virginia – in Charlottesville!
[36] Literally Ger-sham ~ a stranger there.

the town of Riverton, the southern stereotype of avunculate and first-cousin marriages was a source of negative press for the larger community and source of concern for the small Jewish community. Since there were so few Jewish families within hundreds of square miles, it would have been virtually impossible for a young Jewish man to find a wife locally without being matched with a first cousin. By all means, the Jewish community wanted to avoid any appearance of acquiescing to the local penchant for inappropriate coupling. Thus, no expense was spared to advertise for and acquire wives for Jewish men from well-outside of the community and without any direct family ties.[37]

In the case of the Riverton community, due to the extremely small size of the host village in the 1870s (@ 3,000) very few – if any – merchants or craftsmen would have ventured to hang a shingle in this remote location. Rather, it was the relationships between those handful of Jews who found themselves there after the end of the American Civil War who were befriended by the non-Jewish aristocracy, thereby assuming "a place of large and respected importance" (Meyer 1972: 55). From this position of social notoriety, the founders of Beit Rachel were able to lure single men, mail-order brides and entire families to the area.

While the genesis of very small Jewish community in America had something to do with people coming to the area in search of financial and/or social success, in many cases the earliest documents regarding the origins of the Jewish community appear *not* because people executed legal documents and purchased marriage license, but because of the basic human conditions of frailty and mortality. Due to the millennia-old requirements for ritual purity in life and death, the more religiously observant among new Jewish immigrants to any given town were not primarily concerned with marketing or even worship, but with adequate facilities to ritually wash their

[37] Interview with the current rabbi of Beit Rachel in Riverton.

bodies in the course of daily life and respectfully care for and bury their dead at life's end. Indeed, in those communities which could not afford – or chose not to prioritize – a synagogue building, the family in whose home the community *mikvah*[38] resided was often the Center of Jewish life (Weissbach, 2005: 248-252). Regular prayer services as well as community events would be held in this home (usually belonging to a well-off member of the Jewish community) and written about in the community archives as though it was a formal house of worship. With regard to formal organizations and legal records, it was often the *chevra kadisha* (aka Hebrew Burial Society) or Hebrew Benevolent Society which raised funds to purchase ground for a Jewish cemetery years or even decades before sufficient funds were available to purchase land for a synagogue. For example, in Green Valley the Hebrew Burial Society was founded in 1822 and established a cemetery in 1826 on land donated by a local Jewish family (Waites 2015). The importance of this permanent institution is illustrated by the fact that, while the original synagogue was destroyed in the closing days of the Civil War and not rebuilt until 1900, the cemetery was cared for in every way.

Just as the story of Jewish exile, wondering/alienation, and settlement of small Jewish communities in America has archetypical antecedents to be found in ancient Jewish history, so also the notion of quasi-redemption found within the lives of the Jewish heroes of old may be found in the later, somewhat more established lives of those who founded small Jewish communities. Although many of my key interview respondents believed that the "old timers" did not feel as much a part of the larger community as did subsequent generations, many did hold positions of social and political notoriety. From the mountain west came the first Jewish

[38] A mikvah is a bath providing ritual purification for women following the end of the monthly cycle as well as for men and also various utensils which may become ritually impure for various reasons.

governor in America, Moses Alexander (1915-1919). Out of communities such as Riverton came late 19th and early 20th century bankers and manufacturers critical to the expansion of the American manufacturing base (Meyer 1972: 32). These families saw to it that their children and grand-children were among the first American-born college graduates of the new century – many of whom returned to communities such as Riverton to establish careers in engineering.[39] Meyer observes that this trend was noted by the academics of the time. One sociologist in particular from Yale, noted that "Jews appear to have a particular preference for the non-mechanical professions such as medicine, law, psychiatry, economics, etc. (33) While this phenomenon was certainly not distinctive to small Jewish communities, it is noteworthy that the transition from peddler to respected shopkeeper to revered professional was more noticeable among those living in small Jewish communities than in the major Jewish centers. Indeed, even a review of the early telephone service listings in Riverton shows that both the shopkeepers and professionals in the community were early technology adapters: In 1883, 7 of the 43 subscribers were Jewish-owned businesses. In 1900, although the ratio of Jewish subscribers was significantly lower (23 out of 575 subscribers), the fact that these Jewish businesses and a few residences could be easily located by address and phone number indicates that they had not only "arrived" but felt secure in their new land (43-46). In other communities such as Green Valley, the first native-born generation of small Jewish community residents not only had the opportunity to attend a local university,[40] but many chose to remain in the local community and contribute to its religious, social, and economic growth. One noted example of this trend is Saul, the son of Jewish

[39] Interview with key informant, Chaim, whose grandfather was one of the founders of the Riverton Jewish community.

[40] Most residents in small Jewish communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were forced to relocate for a university education. Due to Green Valley's status as a political, military, and economic center, however, a local university was readily available and accepting of Jewish students.

immigrants from the Ukraine who attended law school locally and then chose to remain in Green Valley where his parents were the proprietors of the only Army Store in the area.[41] While there were still some hurdles to overcome, a state of partial-redemption in the form of geographic and financial stability – not unlike that which Jacob found first in Canaan and then in Goshen, Egypt[42] – was achieved by these successful families.

Inter-Ethnic Relations and Anti-Semitism

These nascent small Jewish communities were not immune to the difficult times, anti-Semitic attitudes and, occasionally, the violence endured by virtually all American Jewish communities (Sussman, 1989: 6). This is not surprising – nor unique to Jewish immigrant populations – considering the theoretical establishment of "communities" as argued by Suttles (1972). Due to the shared characteristics and "distinctive earmarks" which both community insiders and outsiders utilize to distinguish a member of one community from that of another, it is expected that "environmental challenges" would develop over issues of trust, guilt, brokered knowledge, or even gossip (15-16). While some families left their homes in search of a more peaceful or lucrative area of the country, others endured. Not only would they remain in their chosen hometown, they would send for and welcome friends and family from Europe on a regular basis (Sussman, 1989: 16). Some communities in the American south, caught in the midst of the Civil War, found themselves "reconstructing" their communities alongside their southern neighbors. The Jewish merchants of Green Valley made a choice that, while avant-garde for the day, would later be considered a model for American ethnic relations – they chose to build their new stores on Association Street – side by side with the merchants from the black

[41] Interview with Green Valley key informant Sarah.
[42] Genesis chapters 35 & 46.

community and in the only neighborhood in this Southern town where non-whites could shop freely.[43]

Many living in small postbellum Jewish communities outside of the southern US did not have as many choices to make. In some cases, they felt surrounded by non-Jews virtually to the point of suffocation and wanting "out of the fishbowl."[44] Others, such as Anat, grew up with parents who felt tremendous pressure to disavow their Jewish identity grew up thinking their religious inheritance was of a European Protestant variety and only later in life discovered from relatives that they were, in fact, born to Jewish immigrants.[45]

It must be noted that, in large part, the violent anti-Semitism that drove many Russian, Ukrainian, and other Eastern (and some Western) European Jews to the shores of the United States was not to be found in American communities. On the one hand, the discrimination to be found at the shores, in the mountains, and on the plains of the new world was more subtle. For example the "Hebrews" as they were often called in the vernacular of the time, were still considered "other" and not quite accepted as full citizens. Weissbach (2005: 229) notes one interesting 1867 editorial from the La Crosse Daily Democrat which observes that "the Jews of this city are among our very best citizens… they always mind their own business and never get into trouble." On the other hand some of the memories of anti-Semitic experiences, were in some ways more personal, especially for those living in small communities. Selma Bratman recalls starting school in the town of Saratoga Springs, NY in 1920. The other school children

[43] Historic Green Valley web site; Interview with key informant whose grandfather owned a store on Association Street who had a particularly good reputation within the black community.
[44] Interview with Golda of Mountain City regarding how her mother felt upon arriving in the community from Russia in 1904.
[45] Interview with Anat of Mountain City. Her father was a very successful businessman who later went on to co-invent the aerosol can. It could have been that the family's true ethnicity was kept hidden for fear of discrimination not by locals but at the hands of government bureaucrats making decisions regarding government research contracts.

"taunted" her and told her that she had "killed Christ." Fortunately, her father was a well-known businessman in the community and walked Selma and her sister to school. "After a time," she writes, "we seemed to be accepted, and I had friends to play with." Those friends, however, did not remain; Selma's friends in her later years were those from synagogue, not from school (Epstein 1997:364). Others relate similar stories from the pre-war years of being called "dirty Jew" (367), "Christ killer" (411), and "Jew boy" (444), or of being indirectly referred to as untrustworthy during a class discussion of *The Merchant of Venice* (541). In virtually all cases there was some sort of minimal retaliation (such as when Jan Berkman's mother told her to tell her five-year-old neighbor that "Jesus was Jewish" (437) which established a sense of equality – among the children, anyway – which remained impressed on the memories of these individuals several decades later.

Overall, throughout the interviews and focus groups of my research – as well as the stories of small Jewish communities collected in the extant literature – there is a clear lack of mentioning blatant anti-Semitic events, slurs, or outright discrimination by residents of small Jewish communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It could be that those who contributed to the history of the time did not feel compelled to tarnish the otherwise positive experience among non-Jews that stood in such contrast to the fears and terrors left behind in Europe.[46] One example of this explanation is provided by Epstein (1997) in his anthology of self-reported stories of Jews in small American towns. Vivian Bartner of Dover, NJ, writes that

[46] I make this presumption based on the similar phenomenon I found in my interviews of current-day residents in small Jewish communities. When asked directly about anti-Semitic experience in their community, the vast majority of respondents will simply say "no, nothing to speak of" or something similar. Only when pressed will they mention certain subtle phrases and actions by school children fifty years ago or the withdrawal of a child from a classroom today when a Christian parent discovers that their child has a Jewish teacher. Overall, there seems to be a desire to downplay any negative affect of being "other."

during the depression her father (who had served in the Russian Army) "didn't want to accept anti-Semitism as a fact in this, his beloved country and selected town" (286), even though his own daughters were "made to understand" that they were different. He tried very hard to fit in the community as other men of his age such as joining the Masons (but not the Jewish Lodge) and running for county office (and losing). Even when their house was raided by the police on Passover – they inspected the wine and arrested her father – he refused to believe there was any anti-Semitic motivation behind such behavior (287). Such anecdotes not only describe a new world Jewish community and family *both integrated and distinct* from their non-Jewish neighbors, they provide evidence for what has not changed over the last few thousand years of Jewish history – that Jews are just as likely to affect influence on their neighbors as they are to be influenced by their neighbors (Boyarin 2013:10). Note, however, that even though Vivian's father sought to be a full member of the larger community, due to the expectations on him as a member of the Jewish community, specifically, he participated in what Suttles (1973) terms "distancing." Distancing is the natural segmentation of one community from another into distinct levels of contact. Suttles illustrates the concept with the typical family home – that room open to the larger community is the living room; all other rooms (kitchen, bathrooms, and bedrooms) require greater levels of acceptance by the specific group, in this case, the family (176-179). Jewish communities generally mark off their territory not in hard geographic boundaries, but by providing physical structures (kosher markets, synagogues & chapels, ritual baths, etc.) into which only members of the Jewish community – and those whom are afforded a certain level of trust and acceptance – may enter. This "distancing" allows the community to preserve a sense of "choice" as they go about their business to remain in the marked-off areas or venture out into the larger communities. It also provides private space to meet with fellow

community members while not completely removing the potential of access to certain members of the larger community (179-180). Finally, "distancing" provides a mechanism of self-removal from the larger community without the need to overtly be responsible for one's actions (181-183). For example, when religious services are held on a school day, Jewish children may be made fun of by their peers and teachers may interrogate parents, but neither students nor their parents can truly be held accountable for the community decision to remain out of school. In a similar way, Vivian's father chose to "distance" himself from the larger community by holding a traditional Passover Seder in his home (something which his fellow Masons may have been reticent to join, even if invited), and by possessing wine.[47]

Community Separation / Community Cooperation

Unlike the urban flight observed in other ethnic groups, the move towards the middle class facilitated geographic entrenchment rather than mobility for American Jews in Binghamton (24) and other small communities. The nationwide prominence of anti-Semitism in the US during the inter-war years (Lipset 1995) drew the community closer in ways that might not have otherwise occurred had the members of the Jewish community been able (or chosen!) to assimilate into the local milieu (Sussman 1989: 25). What did occur due to acculturation, was an increase in the number of ethnic-focused chapters of national organizations such as Hadassah, B'nai B'rith (28), the National Federation of Temple Youth, and summer camps (Meyer, 1972: 91). These developments facilitated connections with related organizations in other parts of the US, thereby facilitating the transformation of the salient community identity from one that was largely religious to one more balanced between ethnic and religious values. A sign of this ethno-

[47] Although wine specifically intended for religious ceremonial use was permitted during prohibition, Vivian's father "distanced" himself from the larger community by allowing himself to be granted an exception for which the larger community could not claim for themselves.

religious balance was that contemporary residents and later historians could clearly observe a conscious effort on behalf of community members to reduce any tensions between the religious-leaning and ethnic-leaning organizations. The Binghamton community's 1953 yearbook noted prominently:

> …the relationship between the [community] Center and Synagogue has always been of the finest. Each has recognized the legitimate functions of the other and that those functions are not in conflict. (Sussman, 1989: 31).

Unlike those living in larger urban areas who were able to physically separate themselves from organizations (or family members!) who were either *too religious* or *too secular*, the Jewish families of the small communities were largely obligated to forge a third path that would accommodate those who preferred an emphasis on ethnic Jewish identity and those who preferred the emphasis to be on religion. Perhaps the most common theme among those I interviewed with regard to early inter-community strife is that regardless who came first – the ethnic-focused German Jews or the religiously-focus Russian Jews – eventually, they realized that neither group had the people or the resources to go it alone. In time each community – Mountain City, Riverton, and Green Valley – chose to do the more difficult thing and embrace differences in order to preserve the one small Jewish community in their area. This does not mean that there were not divisions on issues that facilitated separate houses of worship, or issues to come that would create tremendous strain in the community. Indeed, both Riverton and Green Valley maintained two houses of worship: one for the more religiously observant and one for the less observant. However, the sharp divisions within the community largely gave way as marriages between the two groups became more common. In both of these locations, it was not uncommon for one family to belong formally to both congregations, either to please both sides of

the family or for more pragmatic reasons. For example, in Riverton, it was commonplace for a member family of Beth Simcha, the Reform congregation, to send their children to Beit Rachel, the "Conservadox" congregation for early Jewish education and b'nei Mitzvah training.[48]

Rounding out the Twentieth Century: American Growth Pains and Small Jewish Communities

At the macro level, small Jewish communities in America benefitted from the post-war baby boom, economic expansion and the great migration to the suburbs along with all other Americans. Likewise, as with the Jewish communities in the large urban areas, they endured racial tensions during the civil rights era, celebrated to varying degrees the advent of Israel on the national scene (and then reversed their enthusiasm), and suffered the loss of the manufacturing-centric economy. Thus, an in-depth discussion of the general developments on the American scene would not be particularly helpful in understanding why some small Jewish communities survived until the end of the Twentieth Century while others died out. As well, while it is interesting to consider the synergistic impact of the memory of the Shoah and anti-Semitism within the black community resulting in what Lipset and Raab call the "riddle of the defensive Jew" (1995: 95-110), the almost yearly change in the rate of importance Israel has on one's religio-ethnic identity (125-137), and the overall retreat of expressive Judaism from the American scene (Cohen 2000:135-54) these factors play no decisive role in the distinctions of small Jewish communities. The economic changes of the 1970s, however, might provide some indicator that small Jewish communities were more adversely impacted than larger communities. Given that many of these communities, especially those in Southern or Midwestern states were tied to a mining or manufacturing economic base it would be expected that they would lose

[48] A number of the key informants from Riverton mentioned this phenomenon.

members who had to leave in search of work elsewhere as the mines, mills, and plants closed. Unfortunately, the zip code column for the 1970-71 National Jewish Population Survey is no longer available. Thus, no comparison to subsequent national data sets can be made. Anecdotally, we know that communities such as Asheville, NC suffered community losses as Jewish-owned businesses went under due to the collapse of the economy in western North Carolina.[49] Likewise, the small Jewish community of Ashland, Kentucky, which had been a vital part of the Ashland ethos since the 1920s – including the election of two Jewish Mayors after WWII – died very quickly between 1970 and 1975 as Jewish-owned stores closed due to competition from the chains and many were left jobless as the local steel and oil industry plants closed their doors.[50] Among the communities I focus on, both Riverton (a Midwestern community) and Green Valley (a Southern community) suffered a loss of families and key Jewish business establishments during the 1970s. The difference between these two communities and those of Ashville, Ashland, and others which did not survive is that Riverton and Green Valley are both home to major state universities. Due at least in part to this stable resource, there was an economic reorientation within the Jewish community and Jewish economic leaders. What had once been a focus on wholesale and retail trades shifted towards one of the medical, legal, and academic vocations. Indeed, considering that many small Jewish communities which not only survived but have thrived since the 1970s are in university towns, proximity to an institution of higher learning may be one of the keys to the survival of both micro and small Jewish communities in the current century.

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[49] "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities – Asheville, North Carolina." 2014. Goldring-Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. Retrieved January 30, 2017 (http://www.isjl.org/north-carolina-asheville-encyclopedia.html)

[50] "Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities – Ashland, Kentucky." 2014. Goldring-Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. Retrieved January 30, 2017 (http://www.isjl.org/kentucky-ashland-encyclopedia.html)

Chapter 3: Twenty-First Century Small Jewish Communities

The new century – and particularly the past several years – has brought to the forefront of the American Jewish corporate consciousness the fact that intermarriage is not the only issue threatening the future of Jewry in the United States. Although small Jewish communities began shutting their doors and selling off synagogue buildings in the 1970s, when it began to happen with some regularity in the 1990s, the demographers started to take notice. In fact, the official documents of the National Jewish Population Survey of 2000-01 include a special presentation to the Federation Small Cities Institute, "Jews in Small Communities" (2003). As the plight of the smallest Jewish communities in America became commonplace in the early years of the twenty-first century, their history became fodder for academic research and publication by some at the forefront of American Jewish research (e.g. Weissbach's *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History* (2005) & Hoberman's *How Strange it Seems: Jewish Cultural Life in Small-Town New England (2008)*). With the advancement of technology and the awareness of what was being lost as these communities faded from the fabric of Jewish-American life, caring individuals and historical foundations[51] took up the charge of recording the history and distinctives – particularly of Jewish communities in the south – so that their memories and lessons would not be lost.

In time, the issue of how small Jewish community dynamics plays out on Jewish identity was picked up by a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Boxer 2013) – which was about the same time this author received his epiphany to research and write about

[51] The most impressive and useful of these internet-based sources include: The Southern Jewish Historical Society (jewishsouth.org), The Institute of Southern Jewish Life's Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities (http://www.isjl.org/encyclopedia-of-southern-jewish-communities.html), the Columbia Jewish Heritage Initiative (http://www.historiccolumbia.org/cjhi) and the Jewish Heritage Collection of Oral Histories (http://bit.ly/2ij9eVC).

these small communities[52] so often overlooked in the academic and popular literature.[53] Finally, *There Are Jews Here*, a movie following "the untold stories of four once thriving American Jewish communities that are now barely holding on" was released in 2016. Producers Lichtenstein and Johnson demonstrate their core interest in the project by observing the root issue facing small Jewish communities: "For them, Jewish identity is a daily urgent challenge; if they don't personally uphold their communities and live affirmative Jewish lives, they and their legacies could fade away forever."[54]

The stories told by the residents of these communities were expressed overwhelmingly with enthusiasm and pride in what had been built by great-grandparents, grandparents and distant aunts and uncles – people with names and pictures and stories that the community and the membership thereof owned as a part of who they are today. As I interviewed key informants – people who had grown up and lived in these communities for many decades – and listened to the focus group discussions comprised of those who had their pulse on the community, several key domains of community identity came in to focus in each case:

- Values – what makes "our community" special.
- Family – the core identity of small Jewish communities.
- The Rabbi – whom everyone cites as the core inspiration for their community.
- Knowing they are different – marking off from the larger community.
- Issues to face and problems to resolve.
- Comparing the small communities to the large ones.
- What if we were to disappear?

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[52] See page i.
[53] After all, when was the last time you read a Jewish novel that was not at least partially – and with key scenes – in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago or Miami?
[54] Noted on the film web site on the "About" page. Retrieved February 5, 2017 (http://therearejewshere.com/about/about-film/).

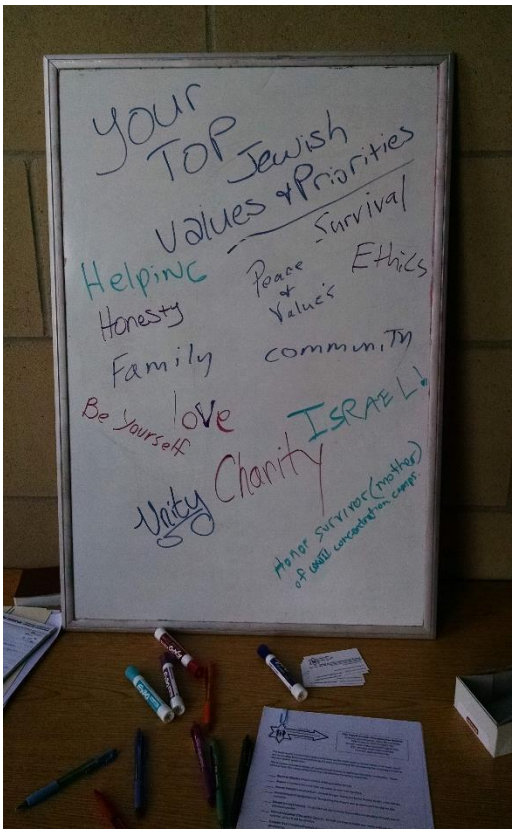


Photo 3.1: White Board from Mountain City Information Table at a large Jewish community fund-raiser.

Our Values

My visits to Mountain City, Green Valley, Riverton, and Springfield included opportunities to set up an information station in high-traffic areas. I took the opportunity to talk with people about their community, their families, and their Jewish values. I was also able to collect some tangible information about the values held close by these communities in two ways. In three communities I was able to collect values information via an informal, convenience-sample survey.[55] In Mountain City and Springfield I put up a white board asking people to write out their Jewish values and priorities.[56]

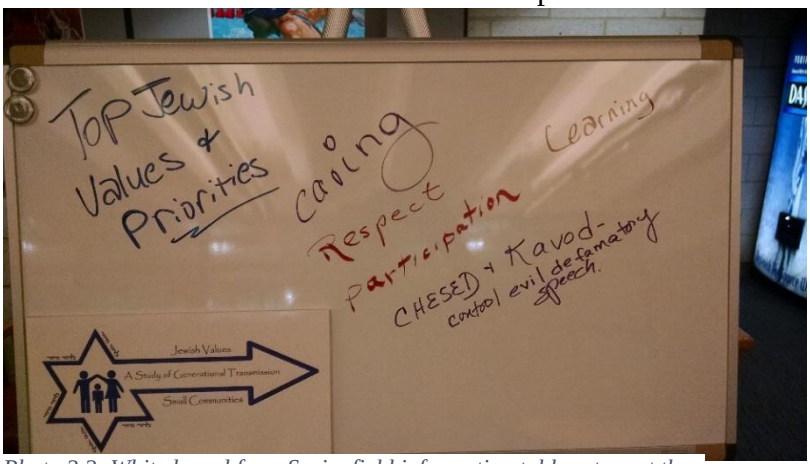


Photo 3.2: White board from Springfield information table set up at the local Jewish Community Center.

[55] See Appendix B. The survey listed 12 values in Hebrew (with English translation and brief definition) and asked the respondent to chose, but not necessarily order, five vlalues.

[56] The information table, informal survey, and white board were components of my site visits that developed over time. My visit to Riverton was the first of my site visits and was a terrific learning opportunity but with no thought to any centralized display. The idea for the informal survey and information table did not come to mind until after I had made a short visit to Green Valley and toured the JCC in that community. While I had hoped for a white board at the Green Valley JCC there was not room in the space provided.

Table 3.1

	COMMUNITY		
	Mountain City	**Green Valley**	**Springfield**
Top Values	Lovingkindness	Lovingkindness	Respect/Dignity/Honor
	Loving the Stranger	Righteousness	Love of Israel
	Respect/Dignity/Honor	Respect/Dignity/Honor	Faith/Trustworthiness

I was able to have a number of significant conversations with community members at each location. I was able to speak with parents about their children, with grandparents about the parenting and values-transmission skills of their children, and with non-Jews about their impressions of the Jewish community. I took brief comments on many of the conversations, including some key quotes from people who seemed to have a unique perspective on their community. While I did gain some insights into these communities – and may receive greater participation in this and future research due to taking such a public posture, my takeaway is that the sum benefit of these information stations seemed to be better for the community as a whole than the research project. Although not directly bearing on my research, I am glad to have been able to introduce the concept of values *as Jewish values* to people with whom I may have not otherwise had the opportunity to speak. Thus, I believe spending a portion of my site-visit time this way had a long-term benefit that may not be realized in the short-term.[57]

Taking a brief look at the values placed on the white boards (Photos 3.1 and 3.2 above) and the results of my informal survey (Table 3.1 above), recall that both Mountain City and

[57] I have since heard from Mountain City that starting with next year's Jewish Food Festival (the occasion of my information booth), they will have a similar booth to answer questions from the community. In this specific context, I found myself to be more of an ambassador for Judaism (to both Jews and non-Jews) and was answering as many questions about the local Jewish community, Jewish traditions, Jewish history, Jewish theology, and the related texts as I was Jewish values.

Green Valley are communities whose Jewish population places them firmly with in the definition of a "small Jewish community" while that of Springfield makes it a moderately-sized, though not a large Jewish Community. Perhaps the most interesting takeaway from this exercise was that while all three communities placed "Respect/Dignity/Honor" among their top three values, the small Jewish communities both selected "Lovingkindness" as their number one value. This distinction can also be seen in the different wording on the white boards for Mountain City ("helping," "love," and "charity") and Springfield ("respect," "learning," "and participation," "kavod/honor"). This tangible distinction between small communities and their larger sister communities may reflect the theoretical foundation noted in Chapter 1 that members of small communities would be more aware of their own "otherness." Due to this awareness and, as we shall see below, the desire to promote an environment in their general community of good will and mutual appreciation among faith traditions, there may be a natural tendency to prefer values that emphasize outward behaviors that are more giving and other-focused. Members of larger communities, on the other hand, may be able to present themselves as more confident in themselves and more deserving of respect (as opposed to help or kindness) from the non-Jews in the larger community.

It may also be, however, that the outward service orientation of many who reside in small Jewish communities is a result of something older and deeper than mere "otherness." As Lipset and Raab (1995) observe in their comprehensive discussion of what comprises and drives the identity matrix of Jewish Americans, the central organizing feature of Judaism is *peoplehood*. And this is not just any ethnic grouping – common and distinctive cultural characteristics, religion, and language shared among the various members (49) – but a group defined by the Deity. In other words, the question of how American Jews in any context live out (or don't) their

status as a "chosen community" must be considered a possible motivating factor for both attitudes and behaviors. Even if the myth of chosenness has no actual root in a divine-human covenant, Lipset and Raab point out that Durkheim saw Jewish chosenness as an "important mechanism for Jewish survival" while Arnold Eisen believed that chosenness aided in the construction of Jewish identity "…because it seems to confer ultimate meaning" (65). Lipset and Raab combine these two concepts founded in chosenness and add a third – the communal impulse – to conceptualize the "tribal cohesion" found among Jews of all varieties. While it is often presumed that such cohesion based in a desire to protect the group would lead to defensiveness, the authors note that "defensiveness is not a long-range prescription for tribal cohesion in option-rich America" (71). In other words, to reinforce the meaning of one's life and community through negative imagery and behavior not only takes a lot of work, but there are more attractive options available. However, if the meaning-conferring factor itself has any salience within the group, for the Jewish community that might include the biblical call to justice and righteousness; and that call is for appropriate behavior not only towards those within the group, but also towards those outside the group. Based on the presumption that the Divine covenant has a place in shared Jewish memory – for there can be no Jewish continuity without some continued attachment to the core religious elements of Judaism (ibid.) – then perhaps Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel is correct to note that it is from the Hebrew prophets that the world received the notion that "the existence of the world is contingent upon right and wrong" (Heschel 2001:274). Moving from the general to the particular, each member of Israel, contends Heschel, is instructed to:

> "Seek justice,
> Undo oppression;
> Defend the fatherless,
> Plead for the widow." – Isaiah 1:17

In the pursuit of such justice and righteousness, Jews live out their religion not defined by their own concerns, but "God's concerns" (619).

I am not saying that many – or even some – of those who live in small Jewish communities are thoroughly steeped in the concepts of justice and righteousness as written by the Israelite prophets of old. Rather, I am suggesting that, perhaps, just as there has been a universalization of the Holocaust among Americans, yet a particularity to the remembrance of the Six Million by American Jews has entered into the communal conscience (Magid 2012:113), so there is a particular way of living according to the ancient terms of the covenant which have also been generalized throughout American civic religion. Will Herberg, in his classic mid-twentieth century volume on American religious sociology, "Protestant, Catholic, Jew" (1983), provides some evidence for the generalization of an other-directed, biblically-based moral code observed in the character of religious Americans. Herberg notes that, until the time of his writing, Americans have been largely *inner-directed* and motivated, having inherited goals and principles from the majority religious traditions (57-58). The post-WWII period of prosperity and expansion has, however, created a suburban middle class and with it "far-reaching consequences for the social and cultural life of our time" (59). Among those consequences are the "peer group signals" which causes the individual to be more concerned with issues of personality, tolerance, and cooperation, rather than personal, inner-directed goals. Whereas inner-directed person is willing to stand up against his or her environment, the other-directed person is emotionally drawn in to embracing the environment (and members thereof) and "dreadfully afraid" of being too different (58) and an enhanced need for belonging (60). Herberg goes on to write that the expression of that belonging in 1955 was the joining of a congregation of faith where all manner of good deeds towards one's neighbor could be fulfilled, thus bringing peace into the world. More than 60 years since Herberg's revelatory – and somewhat prophetic –

words found their way into the academic mainstream, I believe outer-direction and the need for belonging has increased at least to the same degree as the atomization and organic solidarity-focus of western society. What has changed, however, is that today the politically-appropriate and socially expected method for expressing this need is to venture beyond one's faith community and bring peace (e.g. kindness, caring, love, etc.) to the world at large.

In order to gain clarity and focus on those values and resultant behaviors cherished by each community I had the opportunity, either one-on-one or in a group situation, to ask about the *Jewish values* respondents believed their community as a whole had considered the most important over the years. In most cases, the answers came quickly. In others, there was some thought and even some clarification involved. Only within the focus groups did questions arise as to the qualifier "Jewish" when speaking of the noun, "values." I found this at once interesting and disturbing. Interesting that the group situation, but not the individual one, should bring to consciousness the possibility that there may be a distinction between *Jewish* values and any other types of values. This is most likely due to the rich nature of the focus group process that allows ideas to be built one on top of another through relating shared memories and common goals. I found the phenomenon disturbing because at the individual level, where choices are made in real-time, parents specifically and adults in general are *not conscious of needing any Jewish antecedent to the values they are teaching their children and elevating in their communities*. My supposition is that at the individual level people are taking their cues from the larger culture rather than their Jewish traditions and experiences. If I am correct, this observation underscores the need to bring together community members – and especially parents – for clarifying conversations about what their long-term values are, the foundations of those values, if those

values or foundations need to be re-aligned with Jewish tradition and/or history, and how to consciously and intentionally increase their chances of meeting those goals.

Moving towards the qualitative data collected in my key informant interviews and the focus groups, in each case, the primary value that stood out among others was a sense of extended family among the community members.

When discussing with a group of moms with young children in Riverton, they shared the following singular statements about the values cherished by their community. These comments reflect the same type of other-consciousness as do the white boards and informal survey responses:

> **Woman 1:** "Hospitality – everyone is welcome."
>
> **Woman 2:** "Charity."
>
> **Woman 3:** "Faith."
>
> **Woman 4:** "Raising your children Jewish – but not shielding them from the Christian side of the family."

A focus group comprised of lay leaders in Mountain City provided some more specific answers that align heavily with the history and current programming opportunities within the community:

> **Man 1 (Speaking about inclusivity):** "Although there used to be two congregations, and although there is Chabad, we have had to serve all dimensions of Judaism - from Orthodox to completely secular. We're the only game in town. We must be inclusive of everyone."
>
> **Woman 1:** "Welcoming the stranger – there is a significant outreach to the Somalian refugee community, homeless community and LGBTQ community."

Woman 2: "Even those who might not support the majority opinion on a given topic are embraced (add the words campaign)

Man 1 (changing to interpersonal exchanges): "I would say *Tzedakah*[58] and *Gamilut Chasadim*[59] – we are 'those kind of Jews'…"

Man 2: We practice intentionality regarding service projects, refugee tutoring, homeless food service, 'green faith'…"

Woman 1 (breaking in): "And intentional kindness – our children are not mean to one another."

Woman 3 (concerning a lack of Lashon Hara[60] in the community): "I am a better Jew and a better person because of the zeitgeist about not talking badly about people."

The key informants from Green Valley seemed to be a bit more focused on the Jewish aspects of community and personal values than those from the other communities:

Woman 1: "We work hard to keep a strong Jewish community – there is a bond among the members as we look out for one-another…"

Man 1: "I would say that the key values are marriage and family… also education and a work ethic… these may have had an impact on the number of graduates of the class of 2000 who have returned to Columbia – I would say anywhere between 33 and 40%. That number is somewhat lower now at about 25%. But I also have to say that this is mostly the girls - coming back with Jewish husbands

Woman 2: "[One of our highest values is] *Tzedakah* – there is a strong spirit of giving among the many Jewish institutions... And Jewish culture is very strong."

[58] "Charity."
[59] "Acts of kindness"
[60] Translated loosely, "Gossip"

> **Woman 3:** "…welcoming the stranger - try to get them involved and wanting to participate…. blending/assimilating (into the larger community) is not wanted because there are so few new Jewish families and individuals…" This informant was also very specific about her value of hope for the Jewish future: "Jewish [Green Valley] will be here long after I am gone… in some way, shape or form. And the synagogue will be here in some way, shape or form."

Although each community expressed it somewhat differently, there seems to be strong support for the notion that being palpably a member of the "other" small community in the midst of a larger majority focuses one's values on goals of combined appeasement and protection: An outward focus on hospitality, inclusivity and welcoming strangers, combined with an inward focus on looking out for one-another and concern for Jewish families and relationships. All three of my small Jewish communities felt that, at the corporate level, this is what made their communities special and notable.

When I asked the key informants from the middling-sized Jewish community of Springfield about the values cherished by their community that made them stand out from the pack, the three women and one man who had specific opinions on the matter listed "care for the elderly" and "Jewish philanthropy" a the top of their lists. Only when asked about other possible values did items such as "inclusiveness" and "Jewish education" find their way into the discussion. As we will see below, those who grew up in larger Jewish communities yet chose to raise their families in smaller Jewish communities noted that in the larger contexts being Jewish is "too easy." From this evidence it seems that ease of Jewish living impacts the salience of one's values.

We Are Family

While most Jewish communities would claim the value of family at or near the top of their list, these small Jewish communities often take the meaning of "family" to an intentional level driven by the awareness that if they do not create family in the community, there may not be a next Jewish generation to create family biologically, communally, or otherwise. Excerpts from a Riverton focus group comprised of dads with younger children support my direct observation in this community, as well as statements from the rabbi, that parents and grandparents in this community take an active part in the formal Jewish education program as well as the raising of children in the community:

> **Man 1:** "I grew up in Detroit. My wife is Jewish and grew up here. Her parents are here and we are close to them. This is a huge part of the Jewish influence on my girls."
>
> **Man 2:** Continuing the theme of extended family with specific regard to religious school and Hebrew school: "There are some parents who go to help out now, so there's a whole family interaction. For years and years it was just a drop-off and pick up but this year things have really changed. It's not just classes – there are also grandparents there now."
>
> **Man 3:** "I think it's good to have the parents there because they are learning alongside their children. It's made me realize that we need to do more at home because the kids won't remember what they did – a 10-year- old boy won't be able to tell his mom what he learned."

As the conversation continued, it was apparent that this particular group of men started to hone in on the Jewish foundations of the value of family. Those familiar with Passover – the most

popular of Jewish family holidays[61] – will note the allusion to the refrain from the opening pages of the Haggadah, "Let all who are hungry, come and eat."

> **Man 1:** "We are a close-knit community. Everybody is accepted. I come from big family, but everybody is family. There is no qualm about calling anybody for any type of a favor."
>
> **Man 3:** "If you come to this congregation, you're family."
>
> **Man 1:** "If you're a Jewish student and you need a place to be for any Jewish holiday, we'll find out and that kid will get an invitation."
>
> **Man 3:** "Everyone who comes here will have a place to eat."

The key informants I spoke with in Mountain City were very verbose about their thoughts on the specific value of family. Rather than provide long quotes for each respondent, I have provided here a summary paragraph of their thoughts on the topic:

> **Woman 1:** In the 80s, most things were done at the synagogue, but now through the education program, we are trying to bring Judaism into the home. The children are making connections together through the variety of programming at the community level, they see their Jewish friends in these various settings, then go home and these values and behaviors are reinforced. Families are inviting each other over for Shabbat and other Jewish events.
>
> **Woman 2:** Parents have always been the ones to be responsible for the children's education within the religious school. Our success has been based on the fact that all directors and teachers have been those who step forward from the community. Having a professional educator would detract from the "small" ethos of the community – and that

[61] According to the 2013 Pew survey, a full 70% of American Jews participated in a Passover Seder the previous year – the highest participation rate of any religious activity.

person would not be allowed to be "just" an educator, but they would have to become as involved as everyone else.

Woman 3: We are trying to work on reinforcing in the home what the children are learning in religious school.

Man 1: It feels like I am surrounded by family… that completely threw me to feel that way about complete strangers. Whether or not we like each other, we will show up for the important things. This extends to the Chabad community. People are having Shabbat dinner and services in their home - people are very comfortable doing that. Home Seders are common and life cycle celebrations in the home. This definitely transmits Jewish values. When invited to a home, we know what is going to happen Jewishly.

The way family is expressed in each of these communities seems at one level to be yet another affectation of being the "other" in the midst of a majority culture. However, there is also movement beyond a basic understanding of "being other." The realization by families in both Riverton and Mountain City that there was a need for parents to be specifically and intentionally involved in the Jewish education of their children (and not merely recruited and given materials) speaks to the objective reality that Smith argues for the emergence of individuals and the community which they comprise (2010). The members of these communities are not only aware of the reality of their situation, but they have allowed that reality to shape them – and their way of "doing Judaism" in ways not considered by those living in larger communities. As mentioned above, those living in the early manifestations of these communities had to learn to live without inter-community partitions found elsewhere – even as they were, even subtly, segmented from the larger community. Eventually, for those communities which survived until the twenty-first century, that negative reality which initially forced them to behave more cooperatively became

entrenched in the positive Jewish value loving the stranger – even the "stranger" who is "one of us."

The Rabbi Makes Us Special

The Rabbi as a Jewish value – ? While the notion of having pride in one's rabbi has long and deep roots in Judaism,[62]to find that many members of any given community would attribute a significant amount of their past, current, and future success and viability to a single rabbi was most unexpected by this researcher. While many rabbis write books, few books have been written about rabbis. Indeed, even the premier tome written for clergy and lay leaders to "deal with the revolutionary changes" currently impacting the American Jewish community, Jewish Megatrends (Schwarz 2013), admits that many – if not a majority – of the graduates of American rabbinical seminaries will enter their pulpits filled with passion and idealism but eventually become frustrated. As these young men and women seek to maintain institutions that many American Jews no longer connect with, in the words of one Southern California rabbi, they will "have answers to the questions that Jews no longer ask" (36-37). While I have witnessed this phenomenon of the irrelevant rabbi first-hand in the larger Jewish communities of New Jersey, Florida, California and eastern Colorado, the words spoken of the rabbis serving the small Jewish communities to which I paid a visit depicted beloved clergy who were anything but irrelevant.

For two of the three small Jewish communities in this study – whether key informant, focus-group member, or happenstance encounter – there was a clear consensus that the rabbi was at the center of the community's success. Even when there may have been more than one rabbi in town, there was one that was deemed to be the anchor of the (sometimes recent) past and the

[62] Since the advent of the early modern era, the leading eastern European rabbis such as the Baal Shem Tov, Dov Ber of Mezeritch, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, and the Kotzker Rebbe have enjoyed a place of extreme reverence and devotion from the members of their community.

current visionary of how to keep their small community viable and accessible for the next generation.

My first visit to the community in Riverton was unplanned – I happened to be visiting a friend in the area and, as is my custom when available, went to the synagogue for the Monday morning service. As I walked in the door to the small chapel an older gentleman, shook my hand, welcomed me, and said, "You're going to love our rabbi!" Since that day the compliments on Rabbi Adam have been consistent and similar to these comments provided by the focus group of fathers with older children:

> **Man 1:** "The rabbi keeps us going – he won't give up."
>
> **Man 2:** "This rabbi is community-centric. He has churches come in to discuss Judaism and about half of the people attending his Talmud and Torah classes are not Jewish."
>
> **Man 3:** "I come to minyan because of my commitment to the community." Almost before the word 'community' was out of Man 3's mouth, the next one said, "***I do it*** because of my commitment to the rabbi."
>
> **Man 1:** "Rabbi Adam is the glue – he puts out a tremendous effort."
> "He's a pied piper with the kids."

While I did not have such a "first timer" experience at Beth Ahavah in Mountain city, the key informants with whom I spoke heaped as much praise on their rabbi, but took it multiple levels deeper:

> **Woman 1:** "We are very fortunate in Rabbi Ben. He serves the community wonderfully, reaches out to the other religious groups. "He's a great guy… I feel toward him almost like he's my son."

> **Man 1: "**The rabbi is what attracts people to our Jewish community. Rabbi Ben is the main reason for (us) being involved – he is more than we could ever have dreamed of in a rabbi: smart, writer, good heart, and wise. "He has established the culture" we all love in our Jewish community.
>
> **Woman 2 (who made it clear that she does not share the rabbi's political views):** "Rabbi Ben is able to speak to the community without angering people. He doesn't convince people to do things but is leading."

From the other small community of Green Valley, and the moderately sized community of Springfield I did hear the normal and expected compliments toward the rabbi. One couple in Green Valley explained to me over a meal how the rabbi saved their marriage. Two of the teens I spoke with spoke of how their rabbi is the inspiration for their goal of one day becoming rabbis themselves. In Riverton, one of the lay leaders opined in detail on how the rabbi's children, though placed under the proverbial microscope are yet examples to everyone at Beit Rachel. In addition to other positive traits, these young adults are "accomplished and connected to the greater world, yet committed to the Jewish community." Yet this was still *average* for how most congregations express love for and devotion to their rabbi.[63] To explain this phenomenon I can only posit a guess: The rabbis of the Green Valley, Mountain City, and Riverton communities were considered to be "one of us" by the community members. In the case of Rabbi Adam in Riverton, when hired he came from an upbringing and denomination much more observant than that of Beit Rachel and the Riverton community members – and he and his wife were very young, fresh out of rabbinical training. In the case of Rabbi Ben from Mountain City, he grew

[63] Having been an involved member of five different synagogues in the past 30 years and knowing many Jews spread over the United States and Israel, I can vouch for the "averageness" of the compliments paid towards the rabbis of Green Valley and Springfield in comparison to the lavish compliments given to the rabbis of Mountain City and Riverton.

up in a rather small community on the opposite coast, so he had an idea of what he was getting himself into with Mountain City and Beth Ahavah – one of the oldest Jewish communities west of the Mississippi. He literally became the voice of the Jewish community in their city and state, forging never-before-known alliances with other faith communities and establishing the Jewish community as a leader among equals with regard to the major Christian denominations in the area.

In the context of a small Jewish community, these rabbis are not simply "spiritual leaders" who maintain an open door for those in need of pastoral counseling or lifecycle events. Nor are they merely paid professionals who are contracted to set standards, ask good questions and give good answers, and provide a good sound clip regarding Israel or a Jewish holiday when called on by the local news outlet. Rather, these rabbis are long-term community members who provide not only an example of what it is to be a rabbi, but what it is to be a religious school teacher, a Bar or Bat Mitzvah tutor, a small business person, a civic-minded and civically-engaged citizen, a community volunteer, a parent, and a spouse. In a large and well-funded community, parents and other community members are free to partake of the services offered by the paid Jewish professional class without much thought as to the theory, practice and hard work of sustaining a vibrant Jewish community that meets a wide-variety of seen and (often) unseen needs. Due to the relative lack of resources in small Jewish communities, those working to ensure Jewish vitality and continuity depend on their rabbi (often one of a small number of paid employees in the community – and often the only paid employee with a post-graduate Jewish education) to be *one of them*, so that they, in turn, can be all they need to be in both the Jewish community and the larger community. In a large community where synagogue budgets are funded with millions (or more) dollars per year and staffed with highly trained and experienced

professionals, the rabbi may be somewhat more equal than others, but he or she is still relatively easy to replace in terms of qualifications and skills; in the event of a tragedy or other unexpected event that removes the rabbi from service for a time, the other staff members can pick up the slack and things continue moving – often without many knowing that there is any problem unless they are specifically told. In a small Jewish community, the roots of the rabbi into the community must run at least as deep as the roots of the local multi-generational families in order to just get through a normal week of Jewish life.

It may very well be that these two congregations are not representative of "small Jewish communities" as I have defined them. If this is the case, any comments regarding their respective rabbis and their impact on the long-term viability of these communities is to be discounted. However, if I am correct that these two communities (and also Green Valley) are more like other "small Jewish communities" than different, it could also be that these rabbis are more similar than different. It could also be that, combined with the complimentary values found in these small Jewish communities of *inclusivity* and *family*, it may be that these two rabbis would simply not have done as well with larger communities carrying large-community attitudes, behaviors, and expectations for their clergy and professional staff. Or, it may be that they hit a sweet spot at the right place and time. At this time, given all of the possibilities listed, my hunch is that among the small Jewish communities with a vibrancy and vitality to make it through to the twenty-second century, more will consider their rabbis to be a *local son* than do not.

We Know We Are Different

While I have not emphasized anti-Semitism in this research project – as indeed there is a plethora of data on the topic covering the history of the Jewish experience in America – I would be remiss to have not included specific instances in which the members of my focus

communities overtly expressed the palpability of being "other." Placed in theoretical terms, Simon Herman (1989) writes that "sensitivity to exclusion at certain points from, or non-acceptance by, the majority society" leads a person to feel an increased need to belong (148). Since the quality of being "excluded" in this case is "Jewish," the concept of anti-Semitism naturally arises. However, the label really is not as important as the structure "otherness" creates for the members of the community.

In her landmark book on Jewish otherness, "Jews and Power," Ruth Wisse (2007), explains the socio-historical roots of this corporately-held emotion are firmly planted in the concepts of a nation without a state and a people without a land. These ideas are not merely theoretical precepts for the purposes of interesting academic dialogue. Rather, these notions of corporate "otherness" – whose implications are felt most strongly on the personal level – are renewed over and again in the consciousness of each and every Jewish man, woman, and child throughout the year.[64] The Hebrew prayer book, Jewish Holy Day traditions, and even Jewish birth and mourning rituals remind us that we live both theologically and actually in diaspora; although our hosts may tolerate, welcome, befriend, and even intermarry with us, it is they who enjoy a political structure of their own choosing and reside in a land of their own while we do not (4-6).

Moving from the particular to the general, Jewish self-awareness of "otherness" manifests itself in ways long-common to humanity. Adhering to long-understood social structures, Goffman (1982), notes that it was Adam Smith who first observed that during the course of normal human interactions, the individual is obligated by societal rules to act in such a

[64] Although a topic of some debate, even citizens of the modern State of Israel remain to some degree in diaspora depending on how one defines concept of the "Land of Israel" and understands the current form of government with respect to the ancient theocratic-monarchical form.

way as to make his own concerns, feelings and interests "maximally usable by the others as a source of appropriate involvement" (116). The same obligations are placed on the second party to the interaction. Generally, these interactions continue in relative balance, with both parties concerning themselves with the external transaction. The ground-rules of these transactions (acceptable language, gestures, assumptions, etc.) are established by that reference group to which both participants belong. However, if it becomes apparent to one of the participants that the other party has started to operate by a different set of standards (e.g. a different reference group), their attention will be turned inward as the individual becomes *self-conscious* of their difference and the resultant possible threat to their self-definition. While some people may respond to their own self-conscious "otherness" by becoming more involved in the transaction (thus, possibly, challenging the self-definition of the second party), most will feel a sense of alienation and seek to remove themselves from the transaction (117-124). To place it in more common language, Strauss (1997) explains that when finding one's self in a difficult inter-personal situation, "a person must not only identify the current other, he must *pari passu*[65] identify his current self" (49). Thus, while calling into questions the actions and motives of the transaction partner, the individual must also examine their own actions and motives (50-51). Eventually, sufficient numbers and patterns of difference between members of one reference group and another are accumulated so as to reinforce both the salience of group membership and of being "other" when confronted with members of other groups (151-154).

Such is the social-psychological distinction of the individual living in the midst of a small Jewish community versus those who live in larger urban Jewish communities. Due to the variety of groups found in a metropolitan environment there may be a general acceptance of differences

[65] Latin: "on equal footing." Emphasis in original

among the general population. A social superstructure organized in such a way will provide few opportunities for members of any single group to become self-conscious of otherness through routine daily social transactions. It may also be that there are so many members of one's group in an urban area that one rarely encounters members of other groups on a regular basis. In the majority of places where small Jewish communities find themselves, however, where the ratio of Jews to Christians may be 200:1 or greater,[66] it is virtually guaranteed that the members of the Jewish community will encounter members *of one specific group* which, through a variety of attitudes and behaviors unique to that group, will be a continual reminder of Jewish "otherness" at all levels of community interaction.

As noted in the introduction, I posit that the nested structures of these small Jewish communities – including the palpable "otherness" encountered on a regular basis, empowers parents in ways that parents in other communities are not. In fact, the Jewish parents raising Jewish children in these small Jewish communities are doing virtually the opposite of what has been prescribed for Jewish American parents for the past 75+ years. Steven Cohen's (1983) tome on Jewish identity observes that in order to integrate into the American landscape and reduce the "clannishness" among Jews within their communities, American Jews "needed to create alternatives to traditional Judaism" – that alternative was the large and well-funded institutional network (42-43) which came to replace the religious and ethnic ritual activities found in the small communities of the "old country." However, as Cohen and Eisen observe almost two decades later in their book on the contemporary Jewish self, family and community in America (2000), there was – and continues to be – a narrowing of the base of support for

[66] The ratio of the number of Jews to Christians in Riverton is roughly 220:1; in Mountain City the ratio is 260:1; in Green Valley the ratio is 500:1. Source: Sperling's Best Places (www.bestplaces.net), an aggregator of data from a variety of US Government sources. Accessed April 14, 2017.

Jewish institutions (152-153). In recent times, even the institutions themselves are failing to support Jewish causes. Elise Bernhardt reports in her (2013) essay entitled, "Jewish Culture: What Really Counts?" that American Jewish institutions give more dollars to secular cultural endeavors than to all Jewish endeavors, and more dollars to Israeli endeavors than American Jewish endeavors (47-48). All considered, it is no wonder that over the past six decades the majority of American synagogues have lost membership to the large national institutions, and most recently those institutions have lost membership to the general American cultural ethos – in the first case the people were not willing to invest in the institution; in the second case, the institutions were not willing to invest in the people!

Small Jewish communities, however, are qualitatively different. Most often, these folks are surrounded by Christians who daily live out their religious rituals. As one Riverton mother of young children relayed in a focus group, "…it is very noticeable to be in the minority, though not in a disrespectful way. Even this morning on a pop radio station a commercial for a car dealership began with 'we all know the savior'." In order to truly stand as "other," these parents and community members must partake of and reinforce for themselves and their children Jewish ritual. In order to be heard in the community – without the resources of any large, encompassing institutions – they must be willing to be noticed as "other." Even if there is a JCC and/or Jewish Federation to compliment the local synagogue, the same people comprise all institutional membership and giving and they are all speaking with their own voices as personal representatives of their Jewish community.

Of course, not everyone is willing to publicly express their Jewish identity 24 hours a day, seven days a week. One woman in the same focus group whose children are very aware of being the only Jewish kids at their school remarked,

> "There are different dynamics around the area… I get a lot of questions asked. I don't tend to wear a Star of David, because I feel like I need to be a little cautious about who I am talking with. I need to feel comfortable with someone before I will disclose that I'm Jewish. I've been in situations where there's been things said – not anti-Semitic, but just comments that I don't get."

Although she often holds back, this same young mom also insisted that she does talk with the friends of her children about what makes them "different" and that,

> "…during Hanukkah I have done a lot of reading to the class. And at other holidays I go in during my week and talk about the Jewish holidays."

And then this mom (and, certainly, the others) must make choices that will reflect in the eyes and the lives of the children. She continued,

> "My son is asking a lot more questions and figuring out what is different and how he is different. He said, "A lot of my friends study the Bible every Sunday, but we don't really study the Bible," I said, "Well, actually, we do." It's not introduced the same way. There are different names and I have to take the time to explain the differences and how they are a lot the same."

This little boy doesn't make it easy on his mom. She could follow her instincts and stand down, unwilling to expose her children to potentially more harmful comments or she could take a somewhat easier path, emphasize the "otherness" of their Jewish identity and insist that theirs is a very different religion from those around them. However, this mom took the more difficult third way: she embraced the "otherness" as a positive, identity-affirming opportunity to instill in her son the distinctly Jewish value of inclusion (e.g. they are in some ways a part of "us" as we are a part of "them") as well as a sense of pride and self-inclusion in Jewish history.

The other moms who comprised this particular focus group were a bit more forthright:

> **Mom 3:** "I like it when people know me and then I spring it on them that I'm Jewish and they're like, 'Oh wow, Ms. Redmond is Jewish and I still like her.' "
>
> **Mom 4 (regarding coming into the classroom at Hanukkah):** "I do the same thing at my school… this is how I try to expand the horizons of the other kids."

During the Mountain City lay leader focus group, one retired school teacher had a unique way of challenging the subtle anti-Semitic jabs thrown her way:

> "I made a point to let people know I was Jewish. Always took off Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Occasionally I would get a remark from a school administrator when I took those days off. I never let them think that I 'needed' the job. They thought I was rich. Until one time I said, "Jim, why don't you join the synagogue and then you can be rich, too."

Later in that same session, she encouraged other Jewish teachers and government workers to follow her lead!

The members of the Green Valley community seemed to be the most reticent to discuss incidents of "otherness" in their community. While they all acknowledged that they lived in the Bible belt and the road on which their synagogue is located is "the buckle" (e.g. there's a church at every intersection), there was a virtual normalization of otherness. As one mother of grade-school children put it, within somewhat ironic syntax, compared to when she was growing up in Green Valley, "…being Jewish now is different – now it's normal. Back then I was the "different" Jewish student. When my youngest started at public school, he thought it was "Christian school" because before he went to "Jewish school."

The life of being "other" is clearly salient for the members of the small Jewish communities I visited. And the distinction between these communities and their larger sister communities is worthy of note. While one of the teens in the Springfield focus group did speak

of some questionable comments, none of the adults I spoke with indicated any concern for being "other" in this New England municipality. When asked about any obstacles at all to raising Jewish children in Springfield, one member of the men's focus group stated that there were "none" and that it is a "good time for raising Jewish kids" in their community. One of my key informants, an older gentleman, told me that since the late 1970s there had been no personal or institutional incidents of anti-Semitism in Springfield. "We have very good relations." He said. And continued, "Many of the board members of the large cultural agencies tend to be Jewish." As we shall discuss briefly below, it is the perception of those in small Jewish communities – and I don't disagree with them – that it is "easy" to be Jewish in a large Jewish community. Unfortunately, what those living in those large communities are missing is the opportunity to intentionally and consciously navigate and socialize "otherness" in ways that strengthens one's Jewish identity and that of their children.

We Have Issues To Face

The small Jewish communities of the early twenty-first century are, of course, not without their problems. Aside from the theoretical issues of generational values transmission, these are very practical issues on which each of my three communities is focused. They realize that they are not alone in facing these issues, but they also know that for all practical purposes they are alone in resolving them. They have seen the doors of synagogues shut in virtually every community that used to be just an hour's drive away… places where they used to attend lifecycle celebrations and observe Holy Days with extended families. Today, in many of these places, there are not even any funerals to attend.

In Riverton, the focus group of lay leaders were very vocal with regard to the issues they face. These comments may seem strange when compared to the positive observations and stories

of personal and familial "Jewish success" made by some of the very same people. This fact of contrasting realities for many – and cognitive dissonance for some – is theoretically supported by Smith's (2010) "weak" social constructionism discussed in Chapter 1. What these people are experiencing and relating is a reality that is not "flat" but stratified and emergent and filled with decision-making challenges.

> **Man 1:** "We are all worried about the future of the community. This has been a new focus in the past year – asking people to come together and step up because it was really starting to dwindle. This is what Rabbi talked about during the High Holy Day services."
>
> **Man 2:** "We are not as successful financially as our parents were. Can we continue the building upkeep with less people? There's only so much we can do with this problem."
>
> **Man 1:** "There has been a change in this synagogue over the past 5-10 years: how difficult it is to get a minyan, how much harder it is to get participants for any activity, and how fewer people there are around in general. The rabbi tries really hard to get a few people to show up where it used to be that there were just more people around."
>
> **Man 3:** "This is not a Jewish problem, it's a [state] problem – there just aren't any jobs; unless you are a professional, there's not a lot here. We are losing our youth along with our industry. There are not a lot of locally-owned businesses."
>
> **Man 2:** "We go to the same well a little too often."

For the Jewish residents of Mountain City, the lay leadership who attended the focus group were quite specific with the internal issues to be addressed. Yet their comments were not without notes of hope and knowledge of intentional ways to address the issues:

> **Woman 1:** "Intermarried are sometimes uncomfortable with other families when they interact with others at home." However, "…it is the non-Jewish spouse [who] tends to be the one to pick up the ball and become super-involved. But non-Jewish spouses who feel

> comfortable will eventually feel as though they have become part of the group and actually go through conversion."
>
> **Woman 2:** Parents sometimes "dump and run," especially on Wednesday nights.
>
> **Woman 3:** <Big Sigh / Pause> "People lack knowledge - part is one's own upbringing and part is the time of life… it feels like we are exponentially busier and busier as a family and society. There are so many other things done with intensity that Jewish values as an extension of community involvement takes a back seat to everything else."

The lay leadership of Green Valley also got right to the point: Their community is in direct competition with the Jewish centers for people, money is becoming a serious issue, and parents are not focused:

> **Woman 1: "**People are leaving, which is disheartening and makes it difficult for some to feel connected to Jewish Green Valley – they say that they have to go to NY/DC/Boston to have a Jewish life rather than creating one here."
>
> **Man 1:** "I am concerned for the next generation. The 35-40 year olds are not giving (today) at the same level as others did at the same age. We have 300 members in our congregation. Forty percent [give] below minimum dues while thirty percent give above the minimum. [For our] young people giving is out of tradition.
>
> **Woman 2:** "Parents don't intentionally make Jewish life a priority… I see this in the 30-year-old mothers that are always on their phones even though they are volunteering in something Jewish."

In some very real ways, these small Jewish communities are going through issues of social structure emergence as the next Jewish generation is emerging even before the current Jewish generation has determined the nature of its own existence (Smith 2010: 339-345). While the purpose of this project is not to prognosticate on the actual structure of a small Jewish

community which makes its way into the twenty-second century, one of its purposes is to call out those factors which either inhibit or facilitate the vibrancy of a given small Jewish community in order to increase the chances of today's Jewish children having Jewish grandchildren. By becoming aware of the issues they face, these communities are taking the steps required to be conscious of – and thereby the possibility of guiding – the "collective activity currents" and "objective material fixity" which are today shaping the future of their community (347-351).

We Cause Some Of Our Own Problems

It is one side of the proverbial coin to know what serious issues need to be acknowledged and dealt with by one's community. It is the other side of that coin to know for which of those issues the community itself should be held responsible. While many of my key informants in Riverton mentioned the issue of conflicting opportunities, one of them framed his observation in terms of generational change:

> "Hebrew school used to be 3x per week when my dad was growing up here. It was 2x per week when we were growing up and now it's just once per week. It's just another activity that I have to schedule. I remember growing up when I thought about Hebrew school 2x a week and that I couldn't do something else because I had to go to Hebrew school- that was the priority and the more important thing. Now, for my kids, I hate to say it, it's important and I make sure that they go to Hebrew school, but there are four other days of the week for them to do other things."

When I mentioned this phenomenon to the focus group of mothers with younger children, they jumped right on it:

> **Mom 1:** "Our generation has now become aware that there is a problem… so we need to take it upon ourselves as a group to form a committee and do what we need to do in our generation."

Mom 2: "Everybody does care and wants it – there is no apathy and there is action."

Mom 1: "Generational responsibility – our parents have been doing everything, they have been planning the meals and they have been running the committees, and that has been a given, so we are now taking things on in our generation. The older generation is very supportive of that. If I am doing something with the synagogue or a Jewish group my parents will babysit and the kids can stay overnight."

Mom 3: "'Community' is a value. Tradition is a value for the older people, but not the younger people, and that is somewhat of a divide. They want to preserve that very badly and we want to infuse new things."

What the young mothers in this particular focus group did not seem to observe among themselves was the different perceptions of what specific values should be preserved and what "new things" could be introduced while building a new Jewish community.

In Mountain City the empty nester moms put their fingers solidly on three seemingly contradictory items:

Woman 1: "The barrier is Israel" with the 20-somethings and younger. There is not the automatic connection. For older generations the values coincided, but now they don't and feel that they are "choosing Judaism vs. Israel."

Woman 2: "It is hard to prioritize Judaism in families due to competition with sports, the arts, and [everything else]."

Woman 3: The children, in general, are more Jewishly literate than their parents – and some of the children know this.

The Green Valley lay leadership came back to the issue of the occupational choices of the current generation and their finances:

> **Man 1:** "There is a lack of leadership among the young professionals – young adults are just not stepping up."
>
> **Man 2:** "[There are] too many Jewish institutions to support out of the same number of families in the community. The more wealthy families do not have as much to give as the current generation is comprised of professionals, not capital-creating business people."

From my viewpoint during and across these discussions, there was a clear *inter*- and *intra-generational* communication gap. Many issues are seen by different people. Yet, perhaps because these conversations are just starting, or because of the inherent cultural differences between generations, communication is and will be difficult. In the concluding chapter, I will argue for the emergence of a new Jewish language in which the current and newest Jewish generations will be able to more clearly speak to one another to more adequately discuss issues of generational values transmission, competing priorities and values, and how to increase the chances of the latest Jewish generation making it to the year 2200.

Compared To Our Larg(er) Sister Communities, We're In Pretty Good Shape Jewishly

Small Jewish communities in America have at least two fronts on which to consider themselves to be "other": 1) A small minority in the midst of a different majority ethnicity and/or religion and 2) A type of Jewish community quantitatively and qualitatively different than what will be found in any large American city such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, or Denver. As I listened to my respondents from Riverton, Mountain City and Green Valley speak in very specific ways of how they were "different" and "other" than their colleagues, friends, and family who live in the large urban Jewish centers, it was as if they were channeling Eberstadt (2013), Nock (1998), and Riley (2013) when in somewhat braggadocios ways they highlighted how their

families received the benefit from having to endure "difficult Judaism" as opposed to the "easy Judaism" of the larger communities.

From a Riverton key informant:

> "This is a special community – and people from the outside say that, as well, when they come here. It's much more relaxed and casual compared to the synagogue in Detroit where my husband grew up. It's not the big city competition thing."

But then another informant from Riverton makes it more personal:

> "I grew up in Chicago in a very Jewish area. I am not a good Jew. We have to put forth a conscious effort to just get a little Jewish. Where there was a bigger Jewish community it was easy to be Jewish. You didn't have to put any effort into it. Just for my kids to have a little experience is a lot of effort."

Note that the second comment included both a personal disclaimer as well a statement of intentional Jewish-affirming activity. What you need to know about this informant is that he moved with his wife to Riverton to be close to her family. And this is where we see the cash-value of inter-generational values transmission – especially in the nested context of small communities. Bengtson (2013) demonstrates through his longitudinal research that while the identity of an individual such as this may be much more ethnic than religious, where multiple generations of family gather, there is high intergenerational solidarity resulting in higher overall identity salience and valence than compared to families without consistent intergenerational contact. Thus, in this case, the father in question can be both a "bad" (e.g. non-religious) Jew but be conscious of the need to transmit Jewish values and identity to his children.

Some of my focus group moms from Green Valley were able to very clearly articulate a felt difference between their small community and the larger Jewish centers:

Woman who moved to Atlanta for a time and then back to Green Valley: "It's too easy to be Jewish in the big cities… you can do what you want to do and not do what you don't want to do." "[Here], we are more connected to the Jewish community here because in Atlanta it wasn't special. When I went to synagogue in Atlanta for the first time, I don't think anyone realized I was there because there were like 200 people in the synagogue. Any other time I have been (to a smaller town), when I go to synagogue the people swarm you and you have dinner invites for 2 weeks… there's something special about being Jewish in a small place."

Woman who went to college in a city with a large Jewish population: "Here it's hard… everything that you do or participate in is important because if you're not there that's like 1/50th of the community who isn't there. I feel an obligation… pressure… an expectation. It's not easy."

And the mom who sees the difference in her children: "You can go to a Maccabeats concert with only 150 people – the kids can see that they are a part of a larger world."

At the suggestion of Green Valley's Rabbi David, I spoke with an academic at the local university. He put the distinction this way: "Southern culture is more about people engaged in community. Urban culture is more about transactional relationships." I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that there is something about "southern culture," or "small town living," or the "rural environs" that facilitates salience of minority – and specifically Jewish – identity. However, to boil everything down to a Durkheimian binary of mechanical vs. organic society would be to dismiss the nested nature of a people's shared history within multiple generations spread across a variety of households who know each other as "family" and live out common experiences as the same yet unique representative of the "other" to their neighbors. To accept such a primary and "strong" construction of small Jewish community identity would also be to dismiss the unique Jewish nature of this identity and this experience.

If We Were To Disappear

As I was sitting with a focus group comprised of fathers with older children in Riverton, I went off-script. It occurred to me that the men at that table had never known their community to be without a Jewish presence. Indeed, Riverton has had a Jewish presence for over 6 consecutive generations. Thus, nobody living in Riverton today would know a time when there were not Jewish contributors to the larger community. Out of the blue I asked, "If the Jewish residents of Riverton were to disappear, what would be lost?"

In a way, to ask what would happen in the case of an entire Jewish community simply up and vanishing is the other side of the "being other" coin. What I was really asking these community members was to articulate their own sense of contribution to and importance in the larger community. In other words, "Do you think you matter?" To ask such questions as a minority population is also the positive aspect of what would otherwise be a negative reinforcement of religio-ethnic identity.

Two of the dads in Riverton came up with interesting thoughts:

> **Dad 1:** "Diversification. This synagogue has enough people that are involved in enough things in this town, there would be a void in [Riverton]. Even though there aren't many of us, we are all involved in doing things for this community."

> **Dad 2:** "The option of the Jewish thought process, ethics, education and everything else… we don't drink or beat our wives, we just overeat."

While the first response was somewhat academic in nature, the second has a poignant ring to it – as if the negative characteristics to be found among the men of the Jewish community somehow brings a sort of redemption to the larger community. Unfortunately, I did not have the presence of mind to explore that particular aspect of the statement with the men gathered.

Yet the same type of responses were to be found in my other communities. When I asked parents of younger children (both moms and dads this time) to name something important that would be lost if the Jewish residents of Green Valley were to completely disappear, one person responded rather flippantly, "Yes, the 'other' would be lost." But there was some push-back to this response from the other participants:

> **Mom 1:** "A flavor would be lost – a different approach to life… We have a very uniquely Jewish perspective. .. the way we talk about God is different… very unfamiliar to non-Jews."
>
> **Mom 2:** "There's also a self-consciousness that would be lost. I'm a hospice worker… a number of people are religious from a Christian point of view… I can bring a different perspective to some people. It's the same at school, I can ask the questions like, "What is the academic justification for having a [Christmas] tree in the classroom?" It's difficult to explain abstract concepts to children…" And then she conceded, "It ***would be*** the loss of 'the other'."

These Jewish parents are expressing an identity-affirming aspect of being "other" through a recognition of what would be missing if they did not exist – and some of them are using religious language and concepts to relay those thoughts. Arguably, the most redemptive-oriented comments came from the parents of teens in Mountain City:

> **Mom 1:** "There would be fewer arguments because we would not be there to bring out the curiosity of seeing the other side."
>
> **Dad 1 (somewhat flippantly):** "Fifteen points in IQ (would be lost)."
>
> **Mom 2:** "An ability to reflect on every situation and bring in aspects of social justice… to help our state see the rest of the world."

In future research I hope to explore the possibility that this self-descriptive redemptive language is helpful to explain, in part, the longevity, resilience, and vitality that will take these small Jewish communities into the next century. For now, it seems to play a significant role in the structuring of social actions between distinct members of a given community (Smith 2010: 368-378). At the least, to ask community members to consider what would be lost if they cease to exist may sharpen the resolve to tackle the issues they face in order to avoid knowing if their answer to the question is accurate.

These few pages have provided an incomplete, yet colorful and hopefully helpful composite of the small Jewish community of our own day. As discussed in the previous chapter, how these communities came to be is at least as important as why they are still here; yet their future status is wrapped up in how the past is owned, articulated, communicated and preserved in those values currently being expressed and lived out in real-time in small Jewish community space.

Chapter 4: Comparing Communities of Faith by Size, Attitudes, and Behaviors: New Findings from the Pew Data, Observations from the Field, and Suggestions for Better Data Collection on Those Who Live in Small Jewish Communities

In the course of my research it was a joy to discover works that documented with thick descriptions Jewish life in small communities (Epstein 1997, Meyer 1972, Suberman 1998, Sussman 1989, Weissbach 2005). These tomes not only provided a glimpse into the historical and contemporary challenges and strengths of small Jewish communities, but also provided anecdotal data from which to test the theories discussed and outcomes predicted in Chapter 1. I also discovered that many small Jewish communities take it upon themselves to document their own history and contributions to their larger communities in ways not often addressed by their sister communities in the large urban areas.[67] I was also pleased (and relieved) to find a few other scholars (Boxer 2013) and cultural documentarians (Lichtenstein 2016) who were fellow travelers with a similar mission to highlight these often unheard of Jewish populations. What I found surprising – and not a little disheartening – was to hear from many in these communities that they felt as though they were not only unknown by the larger Jewish world, but that they were "just like Jews everywhere else in America."[68]

Given the richness, if not the volume, of information available on small Jewish communities in America, it is somewhat surprising that more attention has not been paid to these populations by the well-funded and highly popularized national and regional surveys of the past

[67] See Chapter 5, p. 16 references to the Riverton community "scrapbook."
[68] Quote from a conversation with the rabbi of a small synagogue located in a very popular American vacation destination. He told me of the plethora of businesspeople, politicians, entertainers, and vacationers who expect his small community to provide "full service" whenever they show up for a lifecycle event, but don't understand that the infrastructure is not available to provide those services, on call, without (what his community would consider to be) a significant financial contribution on behalf of the tourists.

several decades. After all, many of those very individuals who raised the required funds, designed, implemented, supervised, tabulated, distributed, and eventually wrote both academic and popular pieces using the data gleaned from these past surveys, were themselves descended from Jewish families hailing from small Jewish communities in Europe, Russia, and elsewhere.[69] Yet with regularity the national surveys largely omit residents of small Jewish communities. As well, those regions selected for close examination by demographers and sociologists are often those with the largest populations which can raise the funds to pay for a full research staff (Sheskin 2001). On second thought, however, perhaps we should not be surprised that those descended from families who came to the United States seeking greater opportunities among the masses were not so keen on possibly reliving in the New World the often grim and sometimes tragic stories of life surrounded by European anti-Semites. To give the question further thought, perhaps the pragmatic answer is the best: There simply is not enough time or funding to adequately study the three percent of American Jews who live in three-hundred-and-seven communities spread across the continent.[70]

My goal in this chapter is to not only utilize the most recent data to demonstrate the very real differences between those who live in small Jewish communities and those who live in larger groups, but also to highlight the inadequacy of that same data. I will also endeavor to provide an explanation for why, if a more complete and accurate study of small Jewish

[69] For example, Mandell "Bill" Berman si knabataD hsiweJ namreB eht dna noitadnuoF namreB eht fo rednuof ,ז״ל descended from eastern European immigrants. As well, Erich Rosenthal, who determined 1,000 to be the critical number of individuals to sustain a small Jewish community was from the Allenstein area of Prussia.

[70] In fact, most of the regional studies utilizing the resources of professional research firms and well-known academics are funded by the largest institutions found in the region to be surveyed. Often, their purpose in conducting the study is to track attitudes and behaviors of the Jewish families and professionals in their service area so as to maintain and grow membership lists, thereby increasing the funds flowing into the institutions.

communities were to be undertaken, many of these communities would be understood to be vibrant and viable for decades to come.

The National Jewish Population Survey of 2000-01

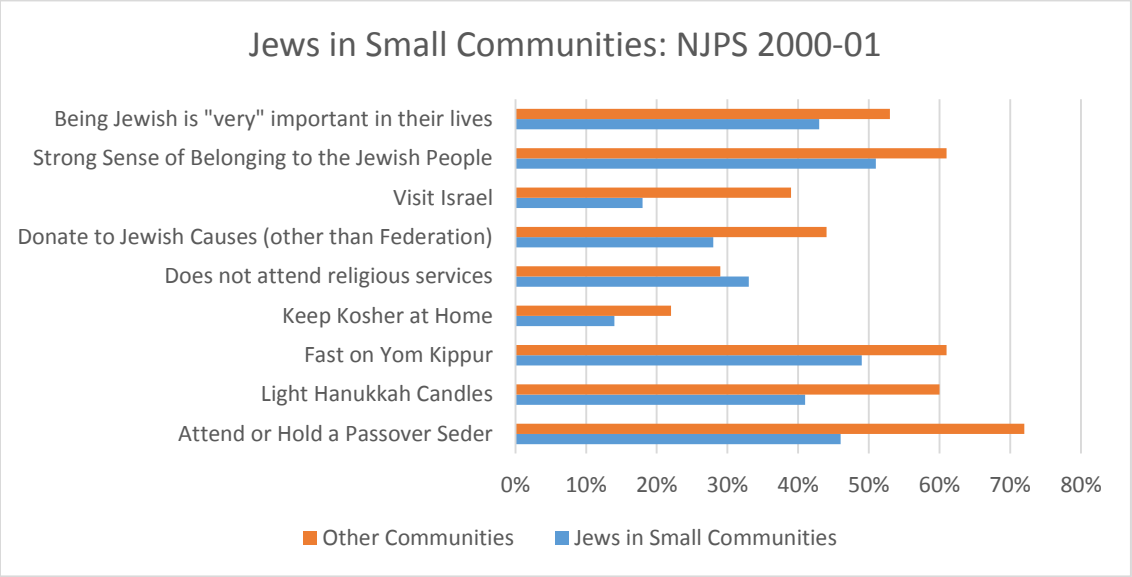
To give credit where credit is due, both the last National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS 2000-01) and the 2013 Pew Survey of U.S. Jews did take into account the existence of Jewish life in small communities. In its flagship report, Strength, Challenge And Diversity In The American Jewish Population (Kotler-Berkowitz 2004b) the last NJPS took special note of the "challenges of all survey research, *especially with respect to particularly small populations.*"[71] However, the report did not go to any great lengths to explain those challenges or provide an explanation as to how the 361 NJPS respondents from small communities are representative of those living in small Jewish communities nation-wide. While the authors did provide a definition of "small communities" as those "areas outside the forty largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in the United States" in their slide presentation, *Jews in Small Communities* (Kotler-Berkowitz 2003), my impression is that the approach taken towards these respondents was as if they lived in relative isolation from the larger Jewish world with only askance acknowledgement that viable, vibrant communities of less than 3,000 Jewish individuals exist and thrive in the U.S.

The highlights of the *Jews in Small Communities* report includes an estimate that, at the time, 15% of the total U.S. Jewish population, or 802,000 Jews lived in small communities. Considered at the household level, the NJPS 2000-01 reported that Jewish households in larger communities are "more Jewishly-connected"[72] than those in small communities. With regard to

[71] Emphasis added.
[72] 69% of Jewish households in the forty largest metropolitan areas were considered to be "more Jewishly connected" compared to 41% of those living outside those areas.

those behaviors which tend to reflect, maintain, and transmit Jewish values at an individual and family level, Jews in small communities were reported to: be less likely to attend or hold a Passover Seder, light Hanukkah candles, fast on Yom Kippur, keep kosher at home, attend religious services, donate to Jewish causes, visit Israel, or report that they have a "strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people" (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1



As noted in Alper (2013), among those who live in small communities there may indeed be *both* a higher proportion of people with a Jewish background who are no longer affiliated with the Jewish community, nor consider themselves to be Jews, *but also* a stronger salience of identity among those who are affiliated and consider themselves to be Jewish – primarily by religion but also by culture or ethnicity. Unfortunately, the publicly available NJPS 2000-01 data set does not include respondent zip codes, only MSA codes, the relative location of the

respondent to the MSA,[73] and census regions. Thus, it is possible to duplicate the NJPS 2000-01 authors' stratification of "Jews in Small Communities," it is not possible to determine which respondents actually live in small Jewish communities. While the conclusion that the aggregate number of respondents were "less Jewishly connected" than those living in larger communities may be accurate, there is no way to know if the data was skewed due to a proportion of those respondents possessing a salience of Jewish identity lower than average for what would have been found had the survey included a representative sample of Jews living in small communities. In fact, even the designation "Jews in Small Communities" is problematic for these may have been respondents living geographically distant from any actual Jewish community. Had the NJPS 2000-01 attempted to instead include a proportional sample of Jews living in *small Jewish communities* (and then provided researchers with the zip code table in the public data), their findings would have carried much greater weight. Therefore, the report as a whole would have been more valuable for clergy and lay leaders serving small Jewish communities, not to mention providing valid data and possible insights regarding this population for researchers such as myself.[74]

The 2013 Pew Survey of Jews in the United States

The 2013 Pew Survey of U.S. Jews took a more serious approach towards the inclusion of Jewish respondents from non-metropolitan areas and small Jewish communities. The Pew team based their sampling plan, in part, on the distribution of "Jews by religion" who

[73] One of the variables available for geographical stratification of the NJPS 2000-01 data is metstat. The values possible are "In Center City of MSA," "Outside Center City but inside MSA county," "In Suburban County of MSA," "In MSA with NO Center City," and "Not in an MSA."
[74] I sent two request via email to the Berman Jewish Databank requesting the zip code files. There was no response.

participated in Pew Research Center surveys since the year 2000. This population data was supplemented by county-level demographic information provided by Abt SRBI[75] and county level information regarding Jewish educational organizations provided by JData.com[76] (Smith 2014:9). Using small area estimation techniques, Abt SRBI estimated the proportion of "Jews by religion" for each county in the United States, as well as information on the Orthodox Jewish share of the Jewish population,[77] as well as the share of the population born in Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and the Ukraine.[78] From this information the Pew research team divided the United States into eight strata (10-12):

- Excluded: 1,431 counties in which Jews by religion clearly account for less than .25% of the population. No survey calls were placed to these counties.

- Very low density: 1,574 counties in which either Jews by religion are estimated to account for between .25% and 1.49% of the population or this demographic accounts for less than .25% of the population yet was also home to Jewish educational institution, synagogue or a Jewish respondent in a previous Pew survey or found in the JData.com database.

- Low density stratum: 80 counties where Jews by religion are estimated to account for 1.5% - 2.9% of the population.

- Medium density stratum: 32 counties in which Jews by religion are estimated to account for 3%-4.9% of the population, excluding the Russian stratum.

[75] Abt SRBI is a leading survey, opinion, and policy research consulting firm.
[76] JData.com aggregates self-reported data on Jewish day schools, overnight camps, day camps, part-time schools, and early childhood centers in North America. This database is sponsored by and located at the Brandeis University Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.
[77] From the NJPS 2000-01
[78] From the American Community Survey

- High density stratum: 17 counties where Jews by religion are estimated to account for 5%-9.9% of the population.

- Very high density stratum: Six counties where it is estimated that Jews by religion constitute 10% or more of the county population.

- Orthodox stratum: Three counties in which Jews by religion are estimated to account for at least 5% of the population and Orthodox Jews account for 35% or more of the Jewish by religion population.

- Russian stratum: Census tracts where 10% or more of the population is estimated to have been born in Russia, Belarus, Moldova, or Ukraine.

After identifying the strata, the Pew research team used an algorithm to optimize the number of expected complete interviews across strata. This methodology had the net effect of *oversampling* the high-density Jewish areas and *under sampling* the low-density areas (14):

- 45% of the interviews with Jews by religion were conducted with respondents in the Russian, Very high, and Orthodox stratum.

- 25% of the interviews with similar Jews were conducted with respondents in the Medium, Low, and Very low stratum.

While the advantage of this sampling strategy was a more efficient survey design with regard to both time and money, the researchers admit that this benefit came at a "cost in statistical power" (14). To account for this cost the team applied custom data weighting[79]

[79] See Smith, G. (2014). Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project 2013 Survey of U.S. Jews Background and Codebook Version 1.1. Washington, DC, Pew Research Center: 23-29 for the detailed explanation of the weighting procedures followed by the research team.

designed to provide an accurate representation of the Jewish population of the United States when analyzing the characteristics of individual survey respondents.[80] The research team concluded that they were "quite confident" that their sampling plan would "cover virtually 100% of the Jewish-by-religion population," but are unsure about Jews of no religion, people of Jewish background, and people with a Jewish affinity who are also a part of the final respondent data set (16). This mix of confidence and uncertainty casts a shadow of doubt on any research that ventures outside of the boundaries presumed and set by the Pew research team.

Such restrictions and limitations are to be expected with any data set – and I am grateful to the Pew Research Center for being willing to share the ZIPALL (5-digit zip code) table with me so that I could define my own geographic boundaries within the data set.

It is important to note, however, the 2013 Pew survey seems to have made the same mistake as the 2000-01 NJPS – equating Jews living in small communities with those living in *small Jewish communities*. It is as though the research team did not consider the possibility that there would be towns within low-density counties whereby there would be gatherings of Jewish individuals and families to comprise communities of many hundreds or a few thousand. Another possibility is that there are several counties of low or very low Jewish density that contribute to a single community of a few thousand. The reverse must also be considered when considering the behaviors and structure of small Jewish communities – that in some counties of high Jewish density there may very well be small Jewish communities of less than 3,000 Jewish individuals.[81] In classifying these communities for the project, I was careful to include only those which are relatively isolated geographically and culturally from a large Jewish community in order to

[80] Unless otherwise noted, all of the statistics presented in this document relay on weighted data.
[81] Note in Table 4.2 there are a total of 28 respondents from micro Jewish communities and small Jewish communities which are classified as being part of medium, high, or very high density strata.

accurately compare their attitudes and behaviors with their sister communities in low-density counties rather than with those found in the urban centers. Finally, it could also be that a high-density county is rather small on average, with a small general population that simply happens to have a disproportional share of Jewish residents than do other counties of similar dimensions. The impression given by stratification method of the Pew team is that Jewish individuals outside of high-density areas are uniformly spread thin throughout these strata. However, we know this to not be the case. Furthermore, by using my list of 251 micro Jewish communities and 56 small Jewish communities[82] as a foil when considering the number of completed interviews, it is easy to understand how problematic and non-representative are the respondents found in the Very low, Low and Medium strata.

Table 4.2

Stratum from which respondent was sampled – All Respondents

		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Orthodox	Russian	TOTAL
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	545	786	778	866	836	576	357	4744
	Micro < 1000	56	4	6	4	2	2	1	75
	Small > 1000	35	13	9	5	2	1	0	65
% from small/micro communities		14.3%	2.1%	1.9%	1.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	2.95%

NOTE: Non-weighted data representing the total number of respondents according to small community classification. N=4,844

From Table 4.2 it is evident that, while the Pew research team estimated that the Very low, Low and Medium strata would contain 24%, 20%, and 20% of all Jews, respectively, the vast majority of those included in the data set actually do not live in small Jewish communities. Rather, the respondents are largely located outside communities with less than 3,000 identifiable Jewish individuals. This is a combination of people who are living outside of any organized

[82] See Appendix A

Jewish community as well as those living in larger Jewish communities that have the resources allowing the individuals and families therein to act more like those living in larger Jewish communities than small Jewish communities. To put the matter in more direct terms, as illustrated in Chapter 2, Jews in small communities enjoy both historic and contemporary distinctions from larger communities – and those who live outside of community all together are likely to produce Jewish offspring with even a small portion of Jewish identity salience relative to their own. Thus, to focus on Jewish population density rather than Jewish community size ignores the primary factor distinguishing non-urban Jews from their city-dwelling cousins and does not provide sufficient data for reliable analysis.

Table 4.3 considers the same distribution of only "Jews by religion" for which the Pew team was "quite confident" their sampling plan would cover 100% of the American Jewish landscape. Again, while it may be an accurate estimate that 37.8% of all who are "Jewish by religion" live in the Very low and Low density stratum (Smith, 2014:14), the Pew survey accounts for less than 1 in 25 in these strata who live in micro and small Jewish communities. Again, to account for the vast majority of those "Jews by religion" who live outside of micro Jewish communities and small Jewish communities, I think it is safe to assume that they are largely living outside of a daily/weekly/monthly interaction with a Jewish community of any size. While I will agree with the Pew research team that it is much more likely to find "Jews of no religion" in such a situation, since the survey was self-assessed, it is not surprising to see such a high number of respondents classifying themselves as "Jews by religion" although they may not be in a position to participate religiously and regularly with a Jewish community of any size. While it is possible to perform a deeper analysis on this data set to determine the exact location

and behaviors of those Jews not included in my micro Jewish community and small Jewish community listing, it is beyond the scope of the current project to do so.

Table 4.3

Stratum from which respondent was sampled
Only "Jewish by religion" respondents

		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Orthodox	Russian	TOTAL
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	141	329	378	520	557	422	271	2618
	Micro < 1000	12	2	2	2	1	0	0	19
	Small > 1000	3	4	4	3	2	0	0	16
% from small/micro communities		9.6%	1.8%	1.6%	1.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.34%

NOTE: Non-weighted data representing the total number of "Jewish by religion" respondents according to small community classification. N=2,653

The picture improves only slightly when considering only those respondents which I included in my analysis of the Pew data based on my original definition of "Who is a Jew?" (See section on Aligning the Pew Data Set below). As noted in Table 4.4, while this method of case selection results in more respondents from all strata as well as micro and small Jewish communities, there are still only 31 respondents from the Very low and Low density stratum qualified for my analysis.

Aligning the Pew Data Set with Small Jewish Communities

As noted in Chapter 1 section titled, "The Unanswered Question: Who Is A Jew?" for the purposes of this project a unique definition was conceived in order to take full advantage of the theoretical foundations of what makes for a long-term viable small Jewish community and effective generational transmission of Jewish values.[83] As I considered the Pew data, I was able

[83] To remind the reader, for the purpose of this project, I define as Jewish someone who self-identifies as Jewish and who would be considered Jewish by the Jewish community in which they live.

to apply this definition to the data set by removing selected groups of those respondents who self-identified as other than "Jewish by religion." I completely removed those classified as "People of Jewish background" as they either "identify with a religion other than Judaism" or "do not consider themselves Jewish in any way" (Smith, 2014: 8). Regarding those who classify themselves as "Jews of no religion" or those with a "Jewish affinity," I was able to use the subsequent Pew screening question[84] to further pair down the respondent pool. I eliminated respondents based on the following answers:

- Used to be Jewish
- Believe in God
- Read the Old Testament
- Through Faith
- General Beliefs
- General Values
- Jesus was Jewish
- Other reasons
- Admiration of / sympathy for Jews
- Feel close to Jews
- Support for Israel
- Everyone is Jewish
- Appearance (e.g. I look Jewish)
- Not Jewish
- Other
- Don't Know / Refused

[84] The question, "In your own words, could you please tell me in what way do you consider yourself Jewish?" was asked of all screened respondents who indicated that they were Jewish by something other than religion.

In my estimation, each of these responses would disqualify an individual from meeting the second criteria of my innovative definition of "Who is A Jew"? In other words, I am confident that someone living in a small Jewish community and espousing any of the above reasons for being Jewish would *not* be considered Jewish by a large majority within the Jewish community in which that person lives. The resulting raw numbers of respondents according to community classification and strata appear in Table 4.4. Note the small number of respondents from both micro and small Jewish communities (which combined is only 45% of the original representation of 140 respondents from these communities) hardly seems viable for providing any type of valid analysis.

Table 4.4

Stratum from which respondent was sampled
Only respondents who meet the study-specific definition

		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Orthodox	Russian	TOTAL
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	262	495	537	691	686	487	315	3473
	Micro < 1000	20	2	4	3	1	2	1	33
	Small > 1000	12	7	5	3	2	1	0	30
% from small/micro communities		10.9%	1.8%	1.6%	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%	0.3%	1.8%

NOTE: Non-weighted data representing number of respondents estimated to have met my original definition of "Who is A Jew," according to small community classification and population density strata. N=3,536

Table 4.5 provides the estimated number of respondents by community and stratum once the data weighting has been turned on:

Table 4.5

Stratum from which respondent was sampled
Only respondents who meet the study-specific definition

		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Orthodox	Russian
Jewish Community	Not SJC	1373016	1023388	980165	849444	536506	280984	116058
	Micro < 1000	109864	5759	5733	2270	824	1827	185
	Small > 1000	78449	43907	15136	7345	2601	863	0
% from small/micro communities		12.1%	4.6%	2.1%	1.1%	0.6%	0.9%	0.2%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the estimated number of respondents in a nation-wide sample based my original definition of "Who is A Jew" according to small community classification and population density strata.

A Note on Small Jewish Community Representation in the Pew Data

In order to further clarify the insufficient coverage of Jews living in small Jewish communities by the Pew study, it is important to note the actual communities included in the Pew data set. Of the 56 small Jewish communities identified as having between 1,000 – 3,000 identifiable Jewish individuals,[85] twenty-six are without any representation in the Pew data set. This includes communities in cities such as Greenville, NC, Monterey and San Bernardino, CA, Macon, GA, Frederick, MD and Nashua, NH which were completely left out of the Pew data. This is unfortunate as cities such as these – home to long-term and vibrant Jewish communities – would have added rich data to the pool. Of those 30 which were included in the data set, some were over-represented. Cities such as Bakersfield, CA, Colorado Springs, CO, and Northampton, MA are each represented by 4 respondents. Tallahassee, FL, Amherst MA, Tacoma, WA are represented by 3 respondents each. The remaining communities had either 1 or 2 respondents each. At the state level, every state with a defined small Jewish community except Georgia, Iowa, New Hampshire and New Jersey are represented in the data.

[85] See Appendix A.

Sixty micro Jewish communities are represented in the Pew data set – which leaves one hundred ninety-one which are not represented. Certainly, communities such as Green Bay, WI, Petersburg, VA, Hendersonville, NC, Rochester, MN, Grand Junction, CO, and Storrs, CT would have been excellent additions to the data. Those micro Jewish communities receiving 3 cases in the data include Stockton, CA, Winston-Salem, NC, and Red Bank, NJ. Only 8 communities presented 2 cases. Those states without any representation at all at for their micro Jewish communities are Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, and Wyoming

While both the lack of representation and over-representation is often the natural result of a random survey such as Pew conducted, had the survey stratification method considered (or included) the size of Jewish communities rather than (or in addition to) the Jewish population density by county, there may have been greater equality of representation by those who live in small Jewish communities. As well, considering the diverse geography of small Jewish communities, it may have been possible for the Pew team to have conducted only a few hundred more interviews and not so drastically under-sampled those living in small Jewish communities – in which case there may have been more robust data with which to perform analysis for this and other projects.

To further illustrate my point regarding the inadequacy of the Pew data set, consider the following three tables regarding only those who classify themselves as “Jewish by religion” (the most reliable portion of the data, according to the codebook):

Table 4.6

Categorization of Jewish status of respondent's spouse/partner

		Jewish by religion	Jew of no religion	Jewish background	Jewish affinity	Not Jewish
Jewish Community	Not SJC	57.6%	0.8%	0.9%	4.3%	36.4%
	SJC < 1000	37.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	62.7%
	SJC > 1000	82.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.0%
Total		58.0%	0.8%	0.9%	4.2%	36.2%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the estimated number of "Jewish by religion" respondents and how they classified the Jewish status of their spouse/partner.

Table 4.7

Thinking about your parents, which if either of them were Jewish?

		Mother	Father	Both mother and father	Neither mother nor father
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	8.9%	5.6%	81.2%	4.2%
	SJC < 1000	22.0%	9.2%	68.8%	0.0%
	SJC > 1000	16.3%	8.2%	72.4%	3.0%
Total		9.4%	5.7%	80.7%	4.0%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the number of "Jewish by religion" respondents and the Jewish status of their parents.

Table 4.8

How many children under the age of 18 live in your household?

		None	1	2	3	4	5	6
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	71.6%	12.1%	8.9%	2.7%	1.4%	1.4%	0.4%
	SJC < 1000	88.4%	0.0%	11.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	SJC > 1000	83.0%	0.0%	17.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total		72.3%	11.6%	9.1%	2.6%	1.4%	1.3%	0.3%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the number of "Jewish by religion" respondents and how many children they reported living in their home. While the number of children for those note in a micro or small Jewish community includes options for "7," "8," "9," and "10 or more," those respondents living in micro and small communities did not report any of those values.

Consider the topics of each of these tables: the Jewish status of the respondent's spouse/partner (Table 4.6), the Jewish status of the respondent's parents (Table 4.7), and the number of children under the age of 18 living in the respondent's household (Table 4.8). How likely is it that any of the possibilities presented would have a zero (0) found in any column for almost any grouping of adult Jews of marrying age in the United States? Could it be that those in micro and small Jewish communities are somehow conspiring to marry only either Jews by religion or non-Jews? What is the likelihood that *none* of the Jews living in micro Jewish communities had both a father and a mother who were not Jewish? Some stroke of luck there. Finally, it is fascinating that of all those living in either a micro or small Jewish community, 86% have no children under 18 in their household while only 14% have two children under 18 – and there are no households with more than 2 children! While it would be tempting to explain this statistical phenomenon with a skew in the age distribution to either the high or low end, this is not the case. For those living in micro Jewish communities, 43.9% of the respondents are between the ages of 31 and 50. For those living in small Jewish communities, 64% of the respondents are between 31 and 50 years of age. A full 48% of respondents from small Jewish communities are between the ages of 31 and 40. Additional examples of data gaps are in ready supply.

With regard to the generational transmission of values – a key driving issue of this work – it is difficult to use any snapshot-in-time data set to make viable arguments one way or the other regarding a process that happens over the course of decades. The best way to study the phenomenon of intergenerational values transmission would be to perform a longitudinal study involving a consistent group of multi-generational respondent families. Family and values researchers are very fortunate to have available the 8-wave longitudinal study by Silverstein and

Bengtson (2016) which follows the generational changes, relationships and nuances of 300 families over 30+ years. While on the one hand this valuable data does contain a few Jewish families, on the other hand this study was located in Los Angeles, California – hardly a small Jewish community. Thus, while this unique study does offer apt anecdotes for understanding multi-generational values transmission within a typical Jewish family whose ancestors arrived at American shores around 1900 (173), it is not at all helpful when attempting to paint a picture of generational dynamics in small Jewish communities – which have been a stable, if not well-known, feature of America Jewry throughout our nation's history.

Obviously, there is a deficiency in the Pew data with regard to those living in small Jewish communities, micro Jewish communities and the generational transmission of Jewish values. My hope is that this brief discussion has provided a foundation of evidence supporting the need for a nation-wide scientific survey of American Jewry specifically directed at small Jewish communities. Additionally, in order to accurately understand the generational dynamic of Jewish values transmission, a longitudinal study is required. However, this researcher would settle for comprehensive surveys at predictable intervals over the next three-to-four decades (beginning as soon as possible) which include questions on the location in which the respondent grew up, the level of observance in the home where they grew up relating to specific home rituals, traditions and attitudes,[86] and the nature of the relationships between generations. For now, the data we have is the best there is. Therefore, I would like to continue the discussion on a more positive note utilizing this very data.

[86] Denominational affiliation is often not helpful in this area. Individuals will not only romanticize their childhoods, but may also over-report their denominational affiliation (e.g. "Orthodox" instead of "Conservative" or "Reform" instead of "none") due to a feeling of either wanting to impress or not disappoint the interviewing agent.

How the Data Describe Those Who Live in Small Jewish Communities

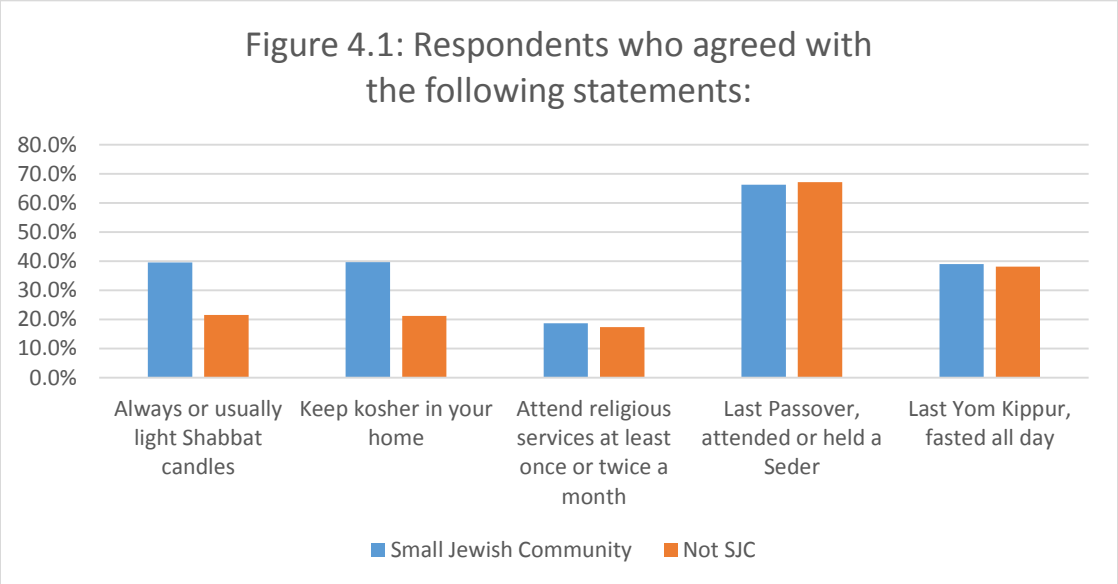
Basic Quality of Life and Attitudes

To begin a comparison of those who live in small Jewish communities, it seems natural to start with opinions about their communities. When asked, "How would you rate your community as a place to live?" those who live in small Jewish communities responded with "excellent" or "good" at a rate of 69.4% while those who do not live in small Jewish communities responded the same at a rate of 88.1%. While it does not seem to be a huge negative that only 17.2% view their community as only "fair,"[87] there are some reasonable explanations for the discrepancy between the two groupings. While some may want to consider income differences between those Jewish households in urban areas and those in non-urban areas, they may be surprised to discover that households found in small Jewish communities are much more likely (47.0%) than their city-dwelling cousins (35.8%) to report incomes of over $100,000 per year. This counter-intuitive negative relationship between community satisfaction and income is supported to some extent by comparative research from Diener and Biswas-Diener (2002) who conclude that subjective well-being[88] is not increased significantly once basic needs are met. These conclusions run contrary to the more recent quantitative research from Oswald and Wu (2011) who analyzed a sample of 1.3 million Americans from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, finding statistically significant increases in happiness[89] for each marginal increase in income (1123). However, Diener and Bisas-Diener note that subjective

[87] Just over 13% refused to answer the question.
[88] While it is evident that "subjective well-being" and considering one's community a "good place to live" are not necessarily synonymous, Diener and Biswas-Diener argue that the standard methods for measuring income against subjective well-being are too narrow and needs to include the ability of people to meet their desires apart from income (122).
[89] Again, while self-reported "happiness" is not synonymous with feelings for one's community, the analogy seems to be appropriate for this project.

well-being needs to be measured better than is currently practiced. Specifically, they argue that a cultural component needs to be accounted for in respondents' self-assessment of their well-being – Diener and Bisas-Diener contend that one's subjective well-being is more closely tied to engaging in "behaviors that are valued within the culture" (149). Thus, when comparing two individuals within a given culture (e.g. community), while one may earn more and therefore have a slightly higher subjective well-being score, if both individuals see themselves as "participating in valued and respected activities" the difference in their scores will be negligible. Therefore, before attempting to explain the difference in attitudes towards one's local community, we need to investigate at least a few of those cultural items.

Common sense would tell us that Jews who live in small Jewish communities, micro Jewish communities, or other-sized Jewish communities would place similar aggregate value on certain behaviors and their antecedent beliefs or philosophies. However, when we look at the proportional responses from the Pew data on certain well-known and long-valued Jewish behaviors, an interesting pattern appears:



NOTE: Weighted data comparing the proportions of respondents from small Jewish communities with those of other communities with regard to the frequency of specific behaviors.

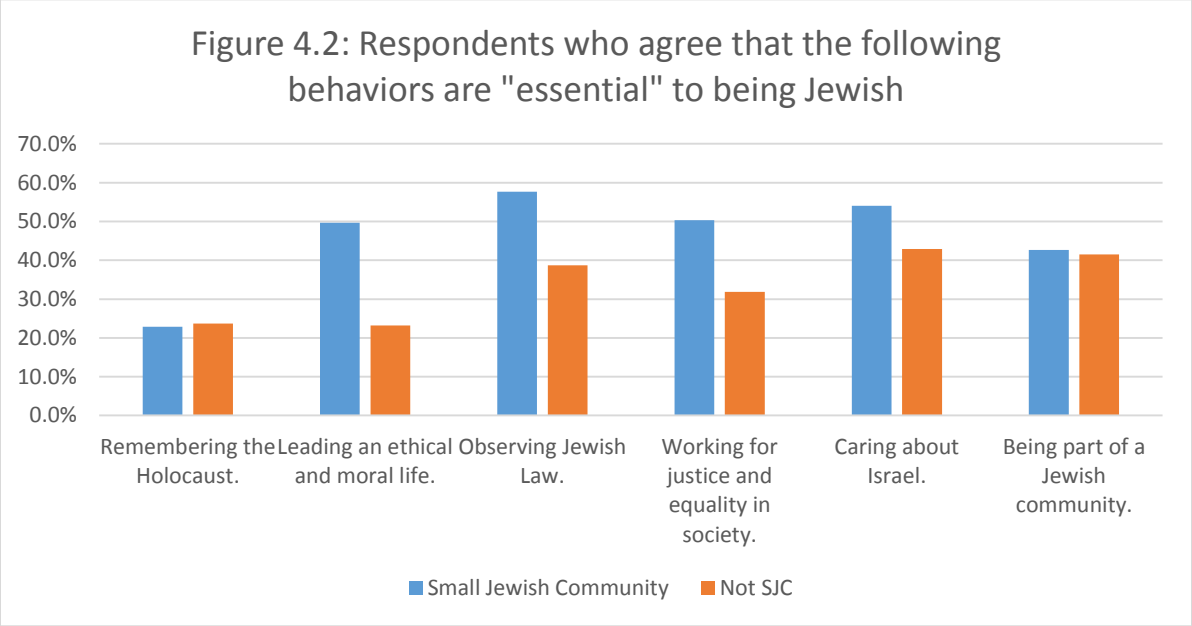
Figure 4.1 graphically illustrates how comparable those who live in small Jewish communities are with those who live in other Jewish communities[90] with regard to the three of the most popular Jewish activities in America.[91] At almost identical rates do those who live in small Jewish communities attend religious services, attend or hold a Passover Seder and fast all day on Yom Kippur. When it comes to the more home-bound activities (e.g. those which are more conducive to both identity reinforcement and the generational transmission of identity), those who live in small communities actually participate at significantly higher rates than those in other communities. At this point, we have not been able to provide a cultural explanation for why Pew respondents in small Jewish communities are not as enamored, on the whole, with their community as are those in other communities.

Turning to the religious and philosophical antecedents of Jewish behaviors, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with specific statements. Figure 4.2 demonstrates that, once again, respondents from small Jewish communities are not very different from their cousins in other community arrangements. They are just as likely to consider remembering the Holocaust and being a part of a Jewish community as are those in other communities. However, when considering philosophical statements that carry with them an implied activity that may have a bit more personal investment and financial cost attached, they exceed the other respondents. Those in small Jewish communities are more than 2x as likely to value leading an ethical and moral life (49.7% vs. 23.2%), almost 50% more likely to consider observance of Jewish law to be "essential" to being Jewish (57.7% vs. 38.74%), greater than 50% more likely

[90] The respondents from micro Jewish communities are not represented in figures 4.1 and 4.2 due to their small proportional representation in the data set. In some cases

[91] While most surveys of American Jews find that lighting Hanukkah candles is the most common Jewish activity, surprisingly, the 2013 Pew survey did not include a question on lighting Hanukkah candles.

to note that *working*[92] for justice and equality as an essential part of their identity (50.3% vs. 31.9%), greater than 25% more likely to agree that "caring about Israel" is essential to being Jewish, and slightly more likely to agree that being a part of a Jewish community is indispensable for those desiring to live a Jewish life. Thus, we still do not have a cultural answer for why our friends living in small Jewish communities are less satisfied with their community than are others.



NOTE: Weighted data comparing the proportions of respondents from small Jewish communities with those of other communities with regard to the frequency of agreement with certain attitudes.

Perhaps if we take a more mundane approach to the cultural differences, some clarity will be forthcoming. Considering education, those living in small Jewish communities are only about half as likely to hold a four-year degree as those in other communities (14.8% vs. 27.9%) and a little more than one-third as likely to hold a postgraduate or professional degree (16.8% vs.

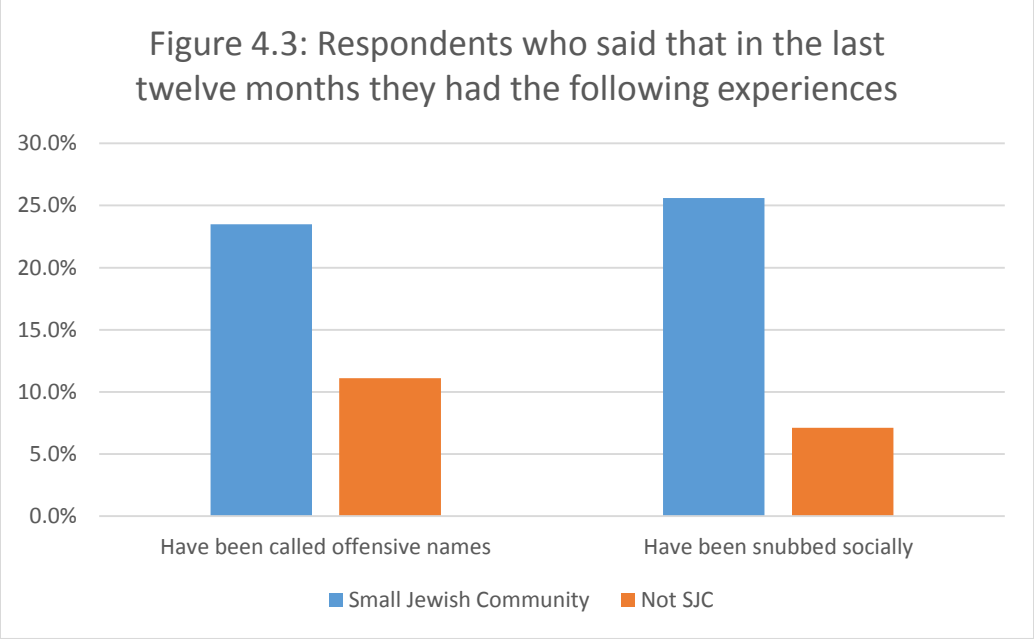
[92] Emphasis added.

26.9%). This factor also does not bear out as helpful due to the aforementioned income gap favoring by a wide margin those living in small Jewish communities.[93] Homeownership might provide some answers. Only 39.2% of those living in small Jewish communities can boast of owning (or making payments on) their own home. This compared to 59.6% of respondents in other communities may be a key indicator as to lower overall satisfaction with the community – if one does not have skin in the game, so to speak, perhaps one feels less sanguine towards the surrounding community. There is some data to support this notion. While researching low- and moderate-income homeowners, Grinstein-Weiss, et all (2011) found that home ownership is an important predicator of neighborhood satisfaction. Specifically, the predicted odds of a "favorable rating for homeowners" are 1.63x the odds for renters after controlling for neighborhood characteristics and socio-economic factors (259). This current variable discussion begs the question of why a group with greater relative income should have lower rates of home ownership. It could be due to relatively shorter longevity in the community, presuming new arrivals are more likely to rent than long-time residents. Unfortunately, there is no data of this type to be found in the Pew 2013 survey. Again, we need to look elsewhere.

The last possible piece of data from this survey which might shed some light on the issue of community satisfaction considers medium- and soft-incidents of anti-Semitism. While the Pew survey instrument does not directly ask the respondents about anti-Semitism, per se, it does ask respondents the following two questions (Smith 2014:50): 1) In the past twelve months, have you been called offensive names because you are Jewish? 2) In the past twelve months, have you been snubbed in a social setting or left out of social activities because you are Jewish? As

[93] The real question here is how a population with significantly less education can have significantly more income over a comparison group that is in other ways very comparable. My suspicions return to the discussion above regarding the lack of a valid sample of respondents from small Jewish communities.

illustrated in Figure 4.3, it is evident that those living in small Jewish communities have these experiences at significantly greater rates than those living in other types of Jewish communities. As we discussed in Chapter 2, many of those who live in small Jewish communities are reminded in a variety of ways – on a weekly basis or more often – of their *other-ness* in terms of religion, ethnicity, and even politically.



NOTE: Weighted data comparing the proportions of respondents from small Jewish communities with those of other communities with regard to the frequency of experiences with anti-Semitism.

During the course of my qualitative work, I asked both types of questions – what my respondents thought of their community and if they had endured any experiences of anti-Semitism – or knew anyone in their community who had such experiences – either recently or in the memorable past. Most people responded similarly: on the one hand, the respondent would laud the positive aspects of their community – the climate, the outdoor activities, the cost of living, or the cultural opportunities; on the other hand, they would note the negative – sometimes in the same breath or sometimes before I had the opportunity to explicitly ask about anti-Semitism. One key informant from Green Valley, speaking of the current barriers to effective

generational transmission of Jewish values, mentioned that today's parents seem more intent on their children fitting in than with Jewish education, "…but people are now aware that anti-Semitism is still around; Israel is threatened and people are thinking about these things," she added. The implication was clear – parents *cannot* just allow their children to "fit in" because the larger community will not allow them to.

Even when there is no mention of even the softest forms of anti-Semitism or labeling, there can be less than warm and fuzzy feelings towards the larger community in which one lives. On the one hand, having a high salience of *being other* contributes to a stronger Jewish identity (the "difficult Judaism" in small Jewish communities vs. the "easy Judaism" of the cities as discussed in Chapter 2) than may otherwise have occurred in the life of a given individual; although counter-intuitive, for the purposes of Jewish continuity, this is a good thing. On the other hand, however, when one intentionally chooses the more difficult path of forming Jewish identity in the midst of a strong majority religious culture, it can result in subtle – but very clear – negative impressions towards that community. Parents from both the fathers' and mothers' focus groups in Riverton mentioned that they sent their children to the local Catholic school – and all added that they were there "just for the academics," as though this were a line rehearsed and repeated many times over. One of the Riverton fathers mentioned somewhat off-handedly that there was no Jewish restaurant, "so we have to concentrate all of our efforts here at the synagogue" he added. The tone was of an interesting quality that was not particularly positive.

The mothers of Riverton seemed to take more notice of – and had greater negative reaction to – the soft forms of labeling found within the larger community. One mom mentioned that those who "fight the battle over Christmas" in the public schools will be labeled as the "bad person." She then defended those who would be labeling with, "They don't get it." Another

mom in the same focus group chimed in to note that her children have to deal with similar ignorance. She observed that, while most of the time they are treated as special, she paused and said, "Sometimes, they are treated viciously."

These are situations which would be difficult for any parents. And to know and understand that you, the adult, are making choices which will have some negative impact on your children is a difficult truth to live with day after day, year after year. It is, therefore, not surprising at all that even with the extra income, greater adherence to traditional Jewish behaviors, and stronger assent to traditional Jewish values, some people living in small Jewish communities appreciate the larger community less than do those in other communities who may be living "easy Judaism." As we will discuss in Chapter Five, these parents make the difficult choices because they believe that their children who may suffer a little in the short-term will be much better off in the long-haul.

An Attempt at Predictive Analysis Through Regression

I have already demonstrated above that this particular data set was not compiled in a way so as to provide an accurate understanding of the differences between those who live in small Jewish communities and those who live in other types of Jewish communities. However, I was interested to know if there was any potential value the data might have to offer predictive outcomes. In other words, is the Pew data set in any way helpful in predicting that certain behaviors and attitudes would predict that a respondent lived in a small Jewish community versus a different type of community – particularly with regards to parent-child activities and the transmission of values?

Considering the variables available, I settled on a set of 10 items which seemed to be directly related to the values and behaviors noted in my qualitative work:

The first two are directly related to the heightened sense of being "other" in one's larger community:

- In the past twelve months, have you been called offensive names because you are Jewish?
- In the past twelve months, have you been snubbed in a social setting or left out of social activities because you are Jewish?

The next set are related to Bengtson's (2003) findings that parental values modeling and relational affirmation are more accurate predictors of values transmission than parents' socioeconomic statuses. It is clear from my local, on-site research that parents and their children are involved in each of the following activities. Many parents spoke of going out of their way to ensure their children are able to have certain foods at specific times of year, or when travelling to larger cities if they are unable to purchase seasonal items locally. Regarding religious/Hebrew school, which many of my informants lamented that a portion of parents are guilty of "drop and run," in many cases, even if a child's parent is not teaching the religious/Hebrew education class attended by their child, the child is often taken to the school and the parent stays to teach or is otherwise involved in the school:

- How often, if at all, does anyone in your household light Sabbath candles on Friday night?
- Did your child attend formal education other than Yeshiva (Hebrew school, congregational school or Sunday school)?
- Do you keep kosher in your home?
- Please tell me how important eating traditional Jewish foods is to what *being Jewish* means to you.
- Aside from special occasions like weddings, funerals and Bar Mitzvahs, how often do you attend Jewish religious services at a synagogue, temple, minyan or Havurah?

The final set concerns at least a portion of the values that undergird the behaviors above, either from a sense of history, importance of tradition and boundaries, or a sense of right and wrong from a distinctly Jewish perspective. As with the groups above, each of these values were spoken of in high regard by my key informants and local focus-group respondents:

- Please tell me how important Jewish law is to what *being Jewish* means to you.
- Please tell me how important remembering the Holocaust is to what *being Jewish* means to you.[94]
- Please tell me how important leading an ethical and moral life is to what *being Jewish* means to you.

As the reader will note from the frequencies of these variables provided in Appendix D, the data for micro Jewish communities (those with fewer than 1,000 identifiable Jewish individuals), is a bit erratic – sometimes providing more positive responses for a given item than that of small Jewish communities (e.g. importance of Jewish law and leading an ethical and moral life) while at the same time having very low scores for items such as lighting Shabbat candles and keeping kosher at home. As well, the respondents from micro Jewish communities reported many fewer incidents of being called names and being socially snubbed over the past 12 months than did those in small Jewish communities (10.8% vs. 23.5% and 2.7% vs. 25.6%, respectively) or other types of communities. There were many other items in the Pew data set which showed similar wide variances from the expected proportions for this population. In an attempt to remove this population, and in order to provide an ordinal dependent variable[95] with which to attempt regression analysis, I re-coded the Zip code field to include only those small Jewish communities

[94] This variable may also be connected to the first group, playing a role in the salience of being "other" – at least once a year (e.g. Holocaust Remembrance Day, which many communities observe with 24-hour long memorials including several opportunities for remembering and honoring those who perished in the Shoah), or more.
[95] Each of the data set variables was also re-coded to be ordinal in order to properly measure correlation.

identified in Appendix A (coded 1) and all other communities (coded 0) and removing all identified micro communities.

I began regression testing by group (non-weighted values) against the dependent variable described above. The results as presented in Table 4.9 were somewhat surprising, but not unexpected:

Table 4.9

Group 1	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.008	0.002		5.113	0.000
Called offensive names in past 12 months	-0.004	0.006	-0.013	-0.723	0.470
Socially snubbed in last 12 months	0.010	0.007	0.023	1.327	0.185

a. Dependent Variable: SJC + All but micro

Group 2	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.005	0.005		0.861	0.390
Shabbat Candle Frequency	-0.004	0.004	-0.064	-1.027	0.305
Children's Education	0.006	0.007	0.031	0.883	0.377
Keep Kosher at Home	-0.007	0.005	-0.081	-1.458	0.145
Jewish food Importance	0.007	0.004	0.062	1.673	0.095
Service attendance frequency	0.003	0.003	0.057	1.132	0.258

a. Dependent Variable: SJC + All but micro

Group 3	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.021	0.007		3.147	0.002
Jewish Law Importance	-0.001	0.002	-0.007	-0.374	0.708
Shoah Remembrance Importance	1.499E-05	0.003	0.000	0.005	0.996
Leading an ethical and moral life	-0.007	0.003	-0.040	-2.178	0.029

a. Dependent Variable: SJC + All but micro

From these tests, the only items of any statistical significance are the importance of eating "traditional" Jewish food and leading an ethical and moral life ($p \leq .10$). Unfortunately, with unstandardized coefficients of 0.003 and -0.007, respectively, neither of these items has much of an impact on predicting if one lives in a small Jewish community. However, in order to be certain that not a single item has any value in determining small Jewish community residency, I ran a bivariate regression of each item independently against the independent variable. The results as shown in Table 4.10 were uninspiring:

Table 4.10

Independent Variable	Unstandardized B	R^2
Offensive Names	-.002	.000
Socially Snubbed	.008	.000
Shabbat Candles	-.002	.001
Formal (non-Yeshiva) education	.008	.001
Keeping Kosher at Home	-.002	.000
Traditional Jewish Foods	.003	.000
Service Attendance	-.001	.001
Jewish Law	-.002	.000
Holocaust Remembrance	-.002	.000
Leading an Ethical and Moral Life	-.007	.002

Dependent Variable: SJC + All but micro

Due to the extremely low unstandardized coefficients and virtually non-existent values for R^2, I can confirm that no model comprising these items with this data set is going to be statistically helpful. It was, however, interesting to note that being Socially Snubbed is the most likely candidates for a factor that could predict if one is living in a small Jewish community. Somewhat counter-intuitive is the largest (though still very, very small) negative factor, that of Leading an Ethical and Moral Life.

Not wanting to give up too soon, I decided to make another attempt at making the Pew data set look like my ideal comparative set: small Jewish communities vs. large Jewish

communities. To that end, I utilized a table from the Berman Jewish Data Bank, "Jewish Population in the United States, 2015" (Sheskin 2015), listing the top 20 Metropolitan Statistical Areas by Jewish population[96] to create one final independent variable. This new ordinal variable coded 0 = Large Jewish Communities and 1 = Small Jewish Communities contained only 722 cases from the two combined groups, compared to the 3,536 cases in the original independent variable This produced a slightly higher proportion of responses from small Jewish communities: 4.2% instead of only .9%.

This time, starting with Bivariate Correlations I found that it would not make much sense to go farther as the only Pearson Correlation significant at the $p > .05$ level is the "Importance of Eating Traditional Jewish Food" at .091 – hardly a number worth investigating.

In my final attempt to increase the correlation between my chosen independent variables and the dependent variable, I decided to lower the number of large Jewish communities represented in the data set. Considering my list of known small Jewish communities (Appendix A), I found that there is a reasonable proportion of very old and stable small communities located in both the Southeastern (Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida) and middle-West Coast United States (central and northern California, Oregon, Washington and Colorado[97]). From my field work, it was apparent that many – if not most – of those living in small Jewish communities compare themselves not to New York,[98] but to that Jewish urban area closest to them. Based on this knowledge, I combined with the small Jewish

[96] See Appendix C

[97] While I realize that Colorado is not on the Pacific coast, there has been significant migration from California to Colorado over the past 40 years, which may mean that those living in small Jewish communities look more like each other than different from each other.

[98] From my experience, in the northeastern US, particularly those in Connecticut and Pennsylvania often refer (usually in jest) to the Brooklyn and Queens sections of New York City as "The Holy Land" whereas Jews living in most other parts of the US (Florida may be an exception) try to *not* refer to New York at all.

community populations only those respondent zip codes from the Atlanta and San Francisco Metropolitan Statistical Areas. The resulting sample was a proportion of 54.6% respondents from large Jewish communities and 45.4% respondents from small Jewish communities. Although some of the correlations were larger, as in the prior attempt, this model produced only one variable with a Pearson Correlation that was significant at the $p > .05$ level – those who had been Socially Snubbed in the past 12 months at .227.

Towards A Better Statistical Solution

As stated above, the best way to get reliable data from small Jewish communities in the United States is to write and distribute a survey intended for just that purpose. As a proof-of-concept, I utilized my interview and focus group data to draw up just such a survey that is designed to not only get to the core issues of what makes the residents of small Jewish communities survive from generation to generation, but also the attitudes and behaviors that facilitate the generational transmission of Jewish values. This concept survey was sent to each community on our list of 307 micro and small Jewish communities via email; the leaders of each community were asked to distribute the survey link (via the project web site) as widely as possible within their community. While this distribution technique is far from ideal and the sample of respondents and their responses do not represent what would be possible with a well-funded and staffed survey project, I believe that it provides a foundation from which to launch a nation-wide survey of small Jewish communities in the near future. Select samples of the responses will be presented below.

With regard to an actual and adequately-funded survey focused small Jewish communities, the respondents would be selected through a scheme of multiple stratification by community size, general geography and, finally, locality. For example:

Stratum 1 – Community populations: A) Small communities with a Jewish population estimated at less than 1,000 individuals. B) Small communities with a Jewish population estimated to be at least 1,000 but less than 3,000 individuals. C) Small communities with a Jewish population estimated to be at least 3,000 but less than 6,000 individuals.[99]

Stratum 2 – Geographical distribution: Each of the four census regions. A random sample of each community population size would be drawn from the West (13 states), Midwest (12 states), Northeast (9 states), and South (17 states, including Washington, DC)

Stratum 3 – Local populations: Due to the advent of cell phones and the demise of land lines, an intermarriage rate that has greatly lowered certainty of selecting Jewish names from phone listings, and the difficulty in obtaining a sufficient sample size from rare groups, it is not recommended that the traditional random digit dialing (RDD) method be utilized for this population. Rather, two methods could be employed in parallel, both with the cooperation and enthusiasm of the local Jewish community leadership: 1) An address-based sampling (ABS) mail survey and 2) A targeted multiplicity sample.

Before addressing the sampling methods, I would like to offer a brief aside regarding the involvement of local Jewish leadership in any survey of the type I am proposing. Indeed, most

[99] While this third grouping goes beyond the scope of the current project, there may be important information to learn about communities who potentially have double the resources of what I have defined as a "small Jewish community." Perhaps they look more like medium and large communities due to their additional resources. Or, perhaps they look more like small communities due to other factors. Either way, adding this group will help to refine the distinctive characteristics of small Jewish communities by narrowing the gap between small Jewish communities and other community sizes.

local surveys are performed with not only the active cooperation of Jewish community leaders, but with their financial assistance, as well. However, as this survey is targeting a large number of communities with fewer resources than those normally surveyed by social scientists for marketing and fund-raising purposes, while community leaders should be asked to raise funds to help defray the cost of surveying their particular community, the assistance they provide will be much more practical and moral/emotional than may be found in well-funded local or regional surveys of large Jewish communities. My experience with the proof-of-concept survey invitations – sent to most of the small Jewish community leaders without any prior personal relationship with me or knowledge of the project – has been quite overwhelming. I have had very personal and encouraging responses from several rabbis, congregation administrators and secretaries, lay leaders, and survey respondents who were not only glad to hear of the project, but also more than happy to help spread the word regarding the project (as well as the link!) to communities I did not have on my master list. Most of the emails I have received include a line sounding something like, "We had no idea anyone knew we are here." I take that to mean that many of the members in these communities (even the leaders who should be well-connected through denominations and other national Jewish organizations!) feel isolated and unheard. They seem to be genuinely grateful for the opportunity to have their voice heard, their stories told, and their pin on the American Jewish map secured in place.

Presuming sufficient funds are available for a survey of this type, reaching at least 2,208 individuals[100] living in small Jewish communities should not be difficult using a combination of ABS and targeted multiplicity. As noted by Elkasabi, et al (2014), ABS surveys have been proven to be a viable and reliable alternative to traditional RDD telephone surveys. Although

[100] Approximately 2% of the estimated number of individuals living in small Jewish communities.

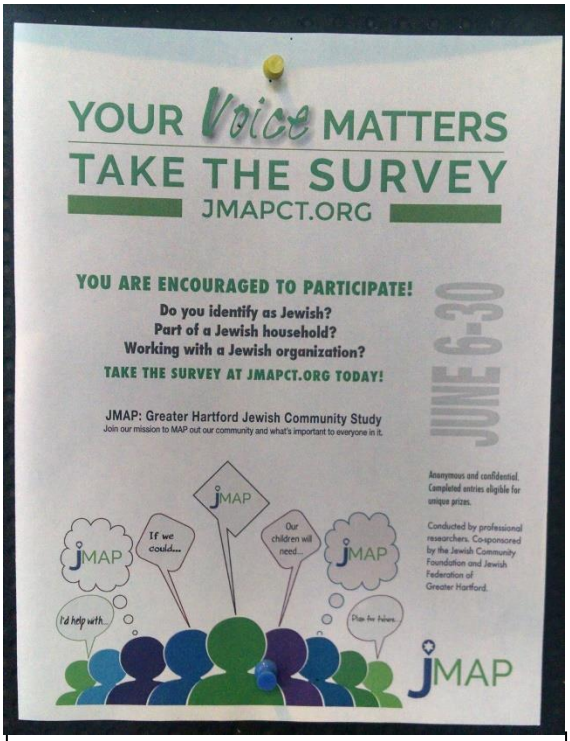
there are some conditions introduced through a hard-copy survey that are not present in an interview conducted by a live person on the other end of a telephone line (e.g. random social and cognitive conditions, as well as more limited question wordings and response categories) that could lead to "differential reporting or measurement bias between modes," the greater likelihood of privacy and convenience afforded the respondent could yield higher accuracy (739). This group of researchers also noted that respondents to non-landline based surveys also tended to be younger (745). This result would be of specific benefit in comparison to survey data like that from the 2013 Pew project for which respondents in their 20s accounted for only 10.4% of the total, while those in their 30s accounted for almost half of all respondents. Such an ABS sample mailing would be undertaken in each community with the assistance of the local Jewish congregation and other organizations. They would provide geographical mappings and mailing lists of their memberships – this avoids the name-guessing of RDD surveys. The survey administrators would then distribute the hard-copy instrument[101] by a random sampling of the addresses provided.

Multiplicity sampling is often used with rare communities (e.g. veterans of specific wars or battles, cohorts of specific generational groups, or people who live in small Jewish communities) and those who might not be amicable to either responding to a survey agent or respond to a hard-copy or emailed invitation on their own. This type of sampling utilizes "nominators" who recommend others who meet the specific respondent requirements (Rothbart, Fine and Sudman 1982). In this case, clergy and other community leaders would be the primary nominators who would distribute information on obtaining the survey (either on line or

[101] The instrument could – and should – also have an option for taking the identical survey online.

hardcopy) to qualified[102] respondents who would then become secondary nominators. Nominators would provide their contacts with both encouragement (e.g. positive social pressure) to take the survey as well as a unique code number to verify their eligibility with the survey team. The nominators would then return to the survey team demographic information regarding their nominees which would be matched with the same information provided by respondents so as to properly weight the final data (411).

While multiplicity sampling would be the most cost-effective method, there is a danger of over coverage bias for some locations and under coverage bias for others.[103] If funds allow, multiplicity sampling could be used in parallel with ABS sampling – the results compared or otherwise combined for population penetration, survey completeness, and statistical viability. In either case, once the survey closes, weighting techniques would be leveraged to ensure that different age groups were represented according to general population statistics.



The Greater Hartford Jewish Community Study, conducted during the spring and summer of 2016, received 1,251 responses from a community estimated to be between 24,000 – 28,000 Jewish people. The survey was marketed primarily through posters, organizational newsletters and email.

This first-of-its kind nation-wide survey would need to account for things lacking in prior surveys of American Jewry. Besides a focus on small Jewish communities, this survey would need to address issues of multi-generational values transmission in the context of a

[102] "Qualified" in this instance describes someone who 1) Meets the definition of "Jewish" as discussed above and 2) Is considered to be a resident of the community by the nominator.
[103] This is the case with my proof-of-concept survey as there is no control in place for which leaders will distribute the survey link or provide the moral/emotional marketing required to get a reasonable proportion of the community to respond.

cross-sectional (e.g. snapshot, not longitudinal) survey. At a minimum, this survey would need to do the following:

1) It would need to get at issues of *where* and *how* grandparents, parents, and children were raised, not merely their denominational affiliation and frequency of service attendance. What traditional rituals and with what frequency were these rituals observed in the home (Bengtson 2013:65-67, 174) and which would require one-on-one parent-child involvement (Wilcox 2002)? What was the proportion of friends during each of their life stages who were Jewish and how was this facilitated by the parents and grandparents (Lasker 2003)?

2) There would need to be questions specifically written toward an eye for operationalizing attitudes. In other words, what is going on in the home and the community which reflect (or do not) the attitudes espoused by the respondents? What are the values that parents hold not only for themselves, bur for their children, as well (Bengtson 2003:111-16, Hoge 1982, Smith 2003)?

3) Because this survey is presumed to be cross-sectional and not longitudinal, yet we are looking for inter-generational effects, while asking respondents about the values they would like their children to hold later as adults, in order to gauge the relative efficacy of values transmission over the long-term, they should also be asked about their perception of the quality of relationship they have with their children. Conversely, children should be asked about the values they hold compared to those they believe are prioritized by their parents and also their perception of the relationship quality they have with their parents (Bengtson et al. 2002, Bengtson 2001).

4) The survey should account for those activities which demonstrate either parental responsibility for modeling of certain values and behaviors or parental inclination for outsourcing their children's religio-ethnic education and identity (Bengtson 2003, Wilcox 2002).

5) The survey should seek to clarify, define, and validate those values held by the respondent so as to determine alignment within and between both community members and generational cohorts (Bengtson 2003, Bengtson 2008). Since this is a survey focused on small Jewish communities, there should also be an attempt to validate held values *as Jewish values*, rather than values held by people of the major religious traditions or Americans in general.

My proof-of-concept survey accomplishes each of these objectives in what is (hopefully) for the respondent an economical and interesting way.[104] The survey is built on the Qualtrics© survey platform, which is available to students, staff, and faculty of the University of Virginia. The survey is constructed with 10 blocks:

- Introduction (3 questions)
- Demographics (10 questions)
- Religious Identity / Jewish Identity (20 questions)
- Non-Jewish Ascribed Identity (1 question)
- Non-Jewish Self-Identity (1 question)
- General Values (3 questions)
- Jewish Values (4 questions)
- Children's Education and Values (9 questions)
- Respondent's Childhood (21 questions)
- Expanded Survey (38 questions)

Immediately after answering the general demographic questions, the respondent was asked to self-classify their Jewish status by answering two questions that would qualify them for the survey according to the study-specific definition of "Who is a Jew?" as presented in Chapter 1. If the respondent did not meet this definition, they were asked either (if they did not classify

[104] I have received a number of emails from respondents who not only found the survey interesting, but asked for hard-copies of the instrument so that they could use the survey to facilitate family discussions.

themselves as Jewish) with which religious tradition they most closely identify or (if they could not affirm that others in their community would consider them to be Jewish) how others in their community would classify them religiously.

Specific logic was employed throughout the survey to ensure the following:[105]

- Those who were not classified as Jewish were taken to the end of the survey after first answering three questions on general values. This is to provide some analysis on the alignment of values of those within the Jewish community who are not Jewish with the rest of the community.

- Those who did not indicate that they had any children were not asked questions about children.

- Those who did not indicate that they are currently married were not asked any questions regarding a spouse.

- Certain follow-up questions regarding topics such as divorce, travel to Israel, and experience with anti-Semitism were not asked if the antecedent was not answered accordingly.

In order to get at issues of "where and how" (requirement #1 above), I asked my respondents to provide the name of the town or zip code where they spent the majority of their formative years and a bit about that community with regard to the formation of their Jewish identity. I also asked about specific rituals and behaviors practiced in the home as a child as well as in their current home as an adult. These behaviors include the standards like keeping kosher lighting Shabbat candles, but also indicators that are conducive to parental modeling such as praying at home, saying a blessing before and/or after eating, and refraining from handling money on

[105] All of the logical steps are included in the Survey Instrument in Appendix F

Shabbat. I also ask about their Jewish experiences while growing up, focusing on their Bar or Bat Mitzvah in order to create an index which may be useful in predicting future strength of Jewish identity.

In order to meet the second requirement regarding the operationalizing of individual, family, and community attitudes, I ask respondents to prioritize *for themselves* general values such as personal appearance, patriotism, freedom, career, family, ethics, and material goods. I then ask the respondent to prioritize *for their children* general values such as respect from others, community involvement, friendships, and family. Finally, I cut to the chase and ask the respondent to prioritize these four values with respect to desirability for their child: Smart, Successful, Good, and Happy.

I address the third requirement (relationship perception) through two devices. The first is a set of questions which ask the parent to state their future hopes for their children vis-à-vis how many Jewish friends they will have, their relative degree of Jewish literacy, and relative strength of Jewish identity. I then ask a series of questions regarding the frequency of parent-child activities within a 12-month period.[106] My hope is that these two indices will provide some insight as to the intentionality of parental values transmission. In other words, I theorize that more parent-child interactions will be correlated to higher parental expectations for their child's Jewish future.

Attacking the fourth requirement (parental modeling behaviors) is accomplished a bit obliquely, and in parallel with the household behaviors listed in the first requirement. Initially, I ask what they and their children need in order to effectively develop a strong Jewish identity in

[106] This relationship index is based on the Longitudinal Study of Generations employed by Silverstein and Bengtson (2016). I have added an "Other" (and fill in the blank) option that was not a part of the LSOG survey.

their children. I then ask respondents to rank the order of importance of learning contexts for children: Professional Educators and Clergy, Parents, Extended Family, and Others. Finally, I ask respondents to identify from a 10-item list 3-to-5 important things a child needs in order to obtain a strong Jewish identity:

- Jewish nursery school
- Formal Jewish education
- A strong Jewish home
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Jewish summer camp
- Synagogue attendance
- Jewish youth group in HS and/or College
- Trip to Israel
- Extended Jewish family
- Lots of Jewish friends
- Other: _____

My goal in this section is to gain an understanding of the respondent's general attitude towards the building of their child's Jewish identity leans more towards taking personal responsibility or outsourcing.

The fifth requirement – to clarify, define, and validate respondent *Jewish* values – is the most "fun" in both a research and practical sense. This requirement is also fulfilled in both a conceptual and practical manner. Utilizing the Jewish Values Survey[107] I had developed for

[107] See Appendix B

working on-site in high-traffic areas as well as for use with a seminar I have developed for Jewish parents and teens, twelve values are listed with both Hebrew and English names:

1. Nekudot Bechirah (Choice Points)
2. Anavah (Humility)
3. Ahavat Yisrael (Love for Israel)
4. Kavod (Respect/Dignity/Honor)
5. Chesed (Loving-kindness)
6. Shimrat HaLashon (Thoughtful Speech)
7. Emunah (Faith/Trustworthiness)
8. Bakesh Shalom v'Rodfehu (Seek Peace and Pursue it)
9. Ahavat Ger (Loving the Stranger)
10. Pikuach Nefesh (The Saving of Life)
11. Tzedakah (Righteousness)
12. Tzedek Tirdof (Pursuit of Justice)

After the respondent has had the opportunity to digest these values, they are asked to select between 3 and 5 values which are most important to them. Once those values are selected, they are asked to rank them in order of importance. A large portion of respondents will note that the most common Jewish value named in the current day, Tikkun Olam,[108] is not on the list. This omission – and the placing of the Hebrew before the English – should have the effect of forcing most respondents to slow down, read the choices and make a more careful selection than might otherwise occur. My hope is also that the respondent will be thinking of these as Jewish

[108] Literally, "repairing the world." This value is used for a variety of otherwise contemporary American values such as social justice, environmental protection, and general philanthropy.

values apart from the other, general values, which have already been covered. Immediately following the values selection and prioritization, I give the respondent and opportunity to take these conceptual values and consider how they would be put into concrete practice by asking their level of agreement with each of the following statements:

- A Jewish person may live out Jewish values without personal study in traditional Jewish sacred and historical texts.
- Jewish sayings and expressions are a source of wisdom.
- A Jewish person may live out Jewish values without being involved in a local Jewish community.
- Being Jewish implies certain obligations on behalf of the individual.
- It is important for Jews to remember the Shoah (Holocaust) as a community at specific times.

Ideally, respondents will be thinking through the logical ramifications of each statement in relation to the others. Realistically, however, respondents will most likely answer each question on its own. Either way, the index on the operationalization of Jewish values created from these statements should provide some insight into the values lived out in real-time among the members of small Jewish communities.

In addition to meeting my own five requirements or a satisfactory survey of small Jewish communities, I added to my proof-of-concept survey[109] an expanded set of questions. In return for completing this expanded survey (either at the time or at a later date), respondents have the opportunity to give me their email from which I will randomly draw one winner of a $50 Amazon.com gift card. These questions ask the respondent to provide more detail (both in free-

[109] The proof-of-concept survey was launched on February 9, 2017 and is scheduled to close on May 22, 2017. Email invitations were sent to clergy and lay community leaders of those communities listed in Appendix A. The estimated combined population of these communities is 171,005. The survey instrument is available in Appendix E.

form text and item selection) on their family life, their relationships with their children, attitudes about various aspects of Judaism, their local community, anti-Semitism, Jewish food, and Jewish jokes.

While I understand that, for the reader, this chapter may have been less than fascinating with regard to the statistical data currently available on small Jewish communities and how members therein compare to Jews living in other communities and urban centers, my hope is that I have demonstrated from the extant data that not only are there differences, but that a new and very different type of survey is required to get at the heart of generational values transmission within small Jewish communities. I am confident that the proof-of concept survey and its requisite distribution method(s) would not only account for the gap in statistical data regarding American Jewry, but new knowledge would be created through a more thorough understanding both of those who comprise small Jewish community as well as how those Jewish values they hold are best transmitted from one generation to the next. We may also gain some insights as to the possible future of American Jewry.[110]

[110] Some of the preliminary findings from the proof-of-concept survey are presented below in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Tactics, Strategies, and Boundaries: How Small Jewish Communities Facilitate Values Transmission Generationally and Increase the Odds of Jewish Continuity

What is it that families (and individuals) who live in small Jewish communities do differently from other, larger communities that sets them apart? What is the secret to the longevity and perpetual vitality of small Jewish communities? At the risk of providing the reader an excuse to prematurely disregard this portion of the manuscript, I shall begin at the end and give you the proverbial punch line: Parents in small Jewish communities tend to do much less outsourcing of their children's Jewish education, Jewish memory, and Jewish identity than do parents in larger communities.

In his acceptance speech upon winning the Templeton Prize in 2016, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks spoke eloquently about the dangers of outsourcing cultural memory:

> "Are there things we can't or shouldn't outsource? There is one form of outsourcing that tends to be little noticed: the outsourcing of memory… Memory is the answer to the question, 'Who am I?' History is his-story. It happened to someone else, not me. Memory is my story, the past that made me who I am, of whose legacy I am the guardian for the sake of generations yet to come. Without memory, there is no identity. And without identity, we are mere dust on the surface of infinity." (2)

Rabbi Sacks goes on to discuss the recent history of outsourcing in the western academy and the resultant loss of external, objective morality to that of the market of emotions and the reduction of ethics to economics without consideration of the consequences of these choices: failed relationships, neglected children, the collapse of marriage, the collapse of birthrates in Europe, and "the loss of family, community and identity, that once gave us the strength to survive unstable times" (3). As a man of wisdom rooted in historic faith, Rabbi Sacks offers a solution for western civilization taken from the history of the Jewish people: the internalization of what had once been external. Why have the Jewish people and Judaism survived for two

thousand years after the destruction of the Second Temple, the loss of their land and homes, their kings, prophets, and priests? Because wherever Jews settled in the world and prayed, the prayer was a sacrifice, the individual a priest, and the community a fragment of Jerusalem (4). Rabbi Sacks concludes by stating without apology that it will be those who are inner-directed through reclaiming collective memory and identity who will restore the dimensions of freedom, morality and traditional spirituality to our society: Those who know the difference between the value of a thing and its price, those who know that some responsibilities should not be delegated, and those who will restrain themselves in the present for the sake of a viable future (5).

As I travelled to three specific small Jewish communities throughout the United States (and have subsequently been in touch with many more), I have had the pleasure to meet and get to know clergy, lay leaders, and parents who understand the problem and solution as defined by Rabbi Sacks yet spoken in their own words. The most oft-repeated phrase is that of living a Jewish life in a small Jewish community as "hard Judaism" – which is then immediately compared to living a Jewish life in a large Jewish community as "easy Judaism." Certainly, many of these parents would not complain if their community suddenly had the resources to build and staff a Jewish day school for their children, hire sufficient synagogue staff to provide a professional educator to each grade level or age group, and at the same time deliver high-quality adult education through engaging guest speakers and resident scholars. Yet these parents have made the more difficult choice to remain in a small Jewish community and fill in with their own time, energy, and resources what is lacking in community funding. To know if this choice was prudent for the future as Rabbi Sacks suggests is beyond the scope of this project. I shall, however, attempt to demonstrate the more immediate ramifications of that choice, and how Judaism is lived out in real-time in small Jewish communities.

In order to frame this discussion of how the choice to live Jewishly and raise Jewish children in small Jewish community is manifest on a daily basis, it is appropriate to return to the questions posed in Chapter 1:

1. In what ways, distinct from larger Jewish population centers, are smaller communities able to reinforce a variety of clear yet flexible religio-ethnic boundaries created and maintained through family, friendships, and community ties rather than through formal institutional membership and education?[111]

2. Do families residing in the relative isolation of small Jewish communities demonstrate higher parent-child affective solidarity than those residing in the large Jewish communities?[112]

3. Do small Jewish communities tend to employ a conscious and intentional strategy for empowering parents (and especially interfaith families) to provide a Jewish education in the home as well as in the synagogue or other institutional setting?[113]

4. Regardless of the consciousness and intentionality for empowering parents, will the results of a home-based strategy for religio-ethnic values transmission be that adult children will are more likely to share their parents' religio-ethnic values than those who obtained the majority of their Jewish education in a formal setting?[114]

[111] Chapter 1, page 2.
[112] Chapter 1, page 6.
[113] Chapter 1, page 10-11.
[114] Chapter 1, page 17.

Question 1: Religio-ethnic boundaries created and maintained through family, friendships and community ties

During the course of my travels for this project, I have had the opportunity and pleasure to sit down with a number of clergy and influential lay leaders in a variety of communities across the country. One such fascinating discussion was with Rabbi David Small (2016) of The Emanuel Synagogue in West Hartford, CT. Having lived a number of years in Western Massachusetts, Rabbi Small described the mindset of those who live in small Jewish communities as "imagined communities… because each little village and burg thought of themselves as a unique place. The people from Southern Berkshire and the people from Northern Berkshire didn't think of themselves always as the same community. Even if they are neighbors, they are not part of the same community." This description is fascinating in at least two ways relevant to this project: 1) That even though people might be living in close proximity to each other and share such significant characteristics as religion, culture, and values, they might not think of themselves as a single community, and 2) That our personal perception and intentional creation of what constitutes "community" may be influenced by factors more base than those topics covered in this volume. Indeed, in his thick description of urban communities, Gerald Suttles (1972) contends that people "cultivate one's neighbors" to look out for each other and, thereby, provide each other immunity from suspicions or provocations which might be directed at those considered to be outside the local community (235). Suttles also argues for a "master identity" (e.g. "Southern Berkshire" vs. "Northern Berkshire") which binds individuals and families together, transcending characteristics that might otherwise cause division (250). Considering the standard historical narrative of small Jewish communities (see Chapter 1), it is reasonable to presume that both the original Jewish immigrants forming these communities – as

well as the current residents – were participants in such cultivation of their Jewish neighbors. This cultivation of safety in and immunity for community may have taken a very conscious and intentional form when these communities were founded – the memories of economic, emotional, and physical oppression at the hands of non-Jews was still fresh and the American landscape largely untested. While there is (largely) little need for fear of physical or economic oppression in Bakersfield, CA, Flagstaff, AZ, or Spokane, WA, as was demonstrated in Chapter 2, there often remains an emotional and social toll for choosing to become and remain a part of a small Jewish community. Thus, the need for vigilant cultivation of community remains in fashion. The "master identity," however, is somewhat built-in and requires less attention as the otherness of the small Jewish community is nested within the distinctive identity of the surrounding general community and is known as "the Jewish community of My Town."

Looking closer at the concept of "imagined communities" as developed by Anderson (1991), Kanno and Norton (2003) provide contemporary definition as "groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination" (241). Specifically, with regard to building community through learning a shared language,[115] the imagined community may clarify issues of identity for the members. Furthermore, as members increasingly share knowledge, skills and behaviors, their sense of responsibility for the community increases (242). As enmeshment with the community increases, the learner's (a child or parent in our small Jewish community context) imagined identity may "compel learners to seek certain kinds of educational opportunities they might otherwise not

[115] Due to the need for shared vocabulary, practices, and above all a common recognition for what constitutes the sacred (Durkheim 2008), comparing a religio-ethnic community such as our small Jewish communities to a community of language learners who are also learning about the history and cultural of their language of focus is apt.

seek" (246). This phenomenon is strikingly evident from the Pew data set as members of small Jewish communities are more likely seek out formal religious education for their children than are those in micro Jewish communities or other Jewish community sizes (See Table 5.1).

Additional research on language learners by Pavlenko and Norton (2007) demonstrates that they imagine certain types of communities for themselves which forms a fascinating unique identity as some learners become "legitimate" speakers of their language while all others are outside of the imagined world. As these speakers take on the distinctive characteristics of the language under study, the worlds imagined are flush with these images (594-595). The acquisition of legitimation within the imagined world is not lost on outsiders. Pavlenko and Norton also note that those with a second language may often be labeled as *second class citizens* by those outside the imagined world – thus reinforcing the need for those who are occupying the imagined world to not only bond together more closely but to work to bring the imagined world into reality (596). Such secondary socialization within an educational setting is similar to Berger's social construction of worlds whereby the individual can temporarily "leave" one world in favor of another, yet as one begins to be able to *think* the new language and culture of the imagined world, a break is made from the original "home" world (Berger 1967:144-47). This concept is also closely related to Bourdeiu's (1984) structuring structures of the habitus, whereby social class is constructed from a taste for the necessity of behaviors which have "survived the disappearance of the conditions which produced it" as well as the principle of conformity within the group (372-376).

Table 5.1

Children's Education - Formal besides yeshiva or day school

		No	Yes
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	77.3%	22.7%
	SJC < 1000	80.4%	19.6%
	SJC > 1000	61.2%	38.8%
Total		76.9%	23.1%

Note: Weighted data representing the proportion of Jewish parents who responded that they did send their children to formal religious school other than yeshiva or day school.

The value of this theoretical understanding of how small Jewish communities – nested as they are within a larger ethnic community and viewed as "other" from two directions – is that we can understand the vocabulary with which both Jewish children and parents describe the acquisition and maintenance of Jewish identity.

While discussing the topic of generational values transmission with parents and their teens in Green Valley, one young mother – after I asked what it takes to instill a strong Jewish identity in children today – broke a deafening silence by stating emphatically that

"To *want to* pass down traditions, you [first] have to know you're a part of something."

One of the lay leaders in Green Valley (the parent of an adult child) put it another way,

"Parents have to be proud of [their] Jewishness so that their kids will be proud of it."

Both of these parents know what they are looking for by way of generational values transmission, but the language sounds a bit vague without the clarification provided by the theoretical framework of the imagined community. Within the framework, these parents are claiming that in order to produce grown children with a strong Jewish identity, parents themselves must first clearly conceive of the type of community in which they desire to live and then *in real time* become the kind of person who can successfully inhabit that community. When

this world and identity creation have been accomplished at the level of the parents, then the generational transmission can begin.

At least some of the teens in Green Valley agree with their parents. During the teens-only focus group, I asked the young men and women gathered at the JCC how they know if someone their age has a strong Jewish identity. One young man piped right up with,

> "You only know if they tell you outright."

However, one of the young ladies retorted with,

> "No, you have to see that they are doing something Jewish – they have to be willing to show that they are Jewish."

Both statements, I believe, reflect the theoretical framework as well as the on-the-ground intentions of their parents. To openly speak of pride in one's ethno-religion – especially while living in the "Buckle of the Bible Belt"[116] – is not something that can necessarily be done lightly or without attracting attention that may be negative. Such speech is representative of the language learning required by the imagined community. Although many of these children attend Jewish preschool, kindergarten, after-school programs and summer camp, "Jewish" is still considered to be a "second language" by their peers and even by some of the parents. Once this language is internalized, however, and the speaking becomes second nature and the translating (inside one's head) is no longer necessary, it is the behavior which sets one apart as a "legitimate" speaker of the language and a bona-fide member of the community.

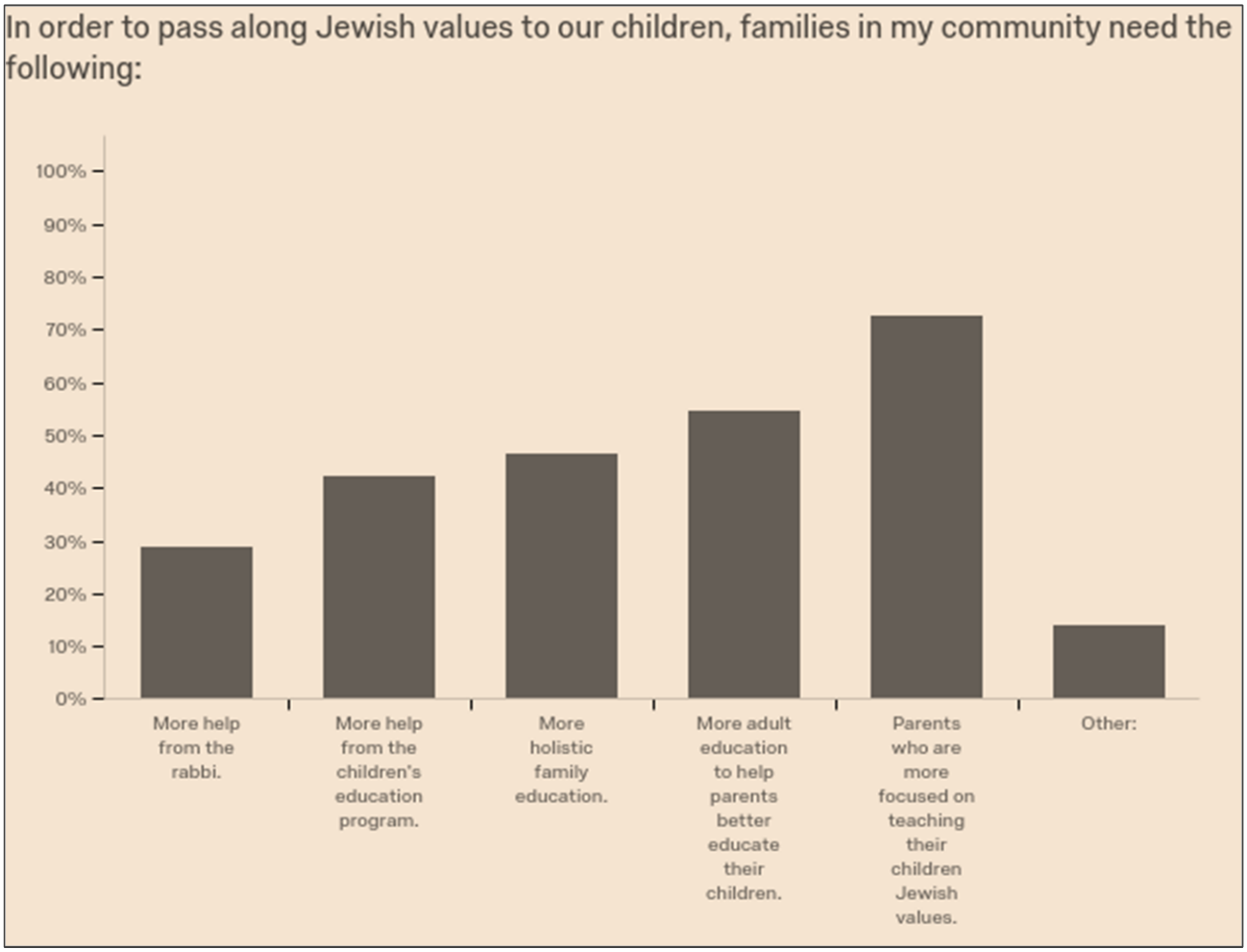
[116] On more than one occasion, I had study participants in Green Valley tell me that they not only lived in the "Bible Belt," but that *their* synagogue was found in the buckle! Indeed, while this town exhibits a palpable Christian ethos, all three synagogues are located on or near a long boulevard along with several churches of a variety of denominations. Interestingly, one way this community keeps up good relations between the Children of Abraham is to have a community-wide Thanksgiving dinner, each year hosted by one of the congregations on this thoroughfare.

To compare these comments with those of teens from the larger community of Springfield is revealing. I asked the same questions of high school juniors and seniors from this community as I asked those from the small Jewish communities which I visited. This group, composed of active United Synagogue Youth (SUY) members, was much more divided on how to identify those who had a strong Jewish identity and were not certain that they could. In fact, the question was not directly answered as it was by the teens in Green Valley. One of the young women in this group said that she doesn't really think about being Jewish, even when hanging out with her Jewish friends. It seemed that this participant was somewhat confused in her own identity. On the one hand, hanging out with her Jewish friends she labeled "Jewish culture" and likes to learn about other cultures as well; on the other hand, she stated that she would like to be a "little more Orthodox" as well as being Conservative because she "likes some of their ideologies." Although this young woman was invested enough in her Jewish identity to participate it the focus group,[117] comparing her comments to those of the Green Valley teens demonstrates both a lack of fluency in the language she has presumably been learning her entire life[118] as well as discounting the behaviors that mark one off as being Jewish in favor of more generalized American teen practices. While it would be difficult to base any community dynamics on the statements of this one respondent, it is also of import to note that a recent survey of the Springfield Jewish community[119] found that 74% of parents responding agreed that it is important that "my children are knowledgeable about Jewish heritage, traditions, and culture." However, what the survey *did not ask* was the context and method of that education.

[117] Although, her interest could have been in the early-20s USY sponsor who joined us for the conversation.
[118] This participant stated earlier in the conversation that her mother had been raised Reform and her father Orthodox; her parents had raise her and her sisters in the Conservative movement.
[119] Reference withheld to protect community anonymity. The full report and reference is available upon request.

As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the major gaps in the history of Jewish community surveys is the lack of operationalizing attitudes. It should be of no surprise that, when asked specifically in a Jewish context, most Jewish parents are going to agree that they want their children to be above average with regard to Jewish knowledge and behavior. What is missing is how they *think* this is going to happen – and *how* it should happen. The proof-of-concept survey does just that. Figure 4.1 illustrates data collected specifically among parents living in small Jewish communities. It is clear that a majority (over 72%) believe that the #1 needs in their community in order to transmit Jewish values to their children is to have parents who are more focused on the teaching of Jewish values. The #2 need identified by survey respondents (over 54%) is for institutional assistance rendered to the parents so that they may be more effective educators. It is telling that less than 30% of respondents wanted more help from the rabbi – the institutional and community figurehead – and only slightly more than 40% wanted more help from the institutionalized children's education program.

Figure 4.1



NOTE: Data taken from the Small Jewish Community Project (advertised by direct community invitations and social media in the spring of 2017) internet-based self-administered survey. Participants responding to the prompt, "In order to pass along Jewish values to our children, families in my community need the following (select all that apply):" N=270.

While not an exhaustive review of the options available to parents and community leaders in small Jewish communities, it seems clear that – at least with regard to the parental intent to transmit Jewish values – the home is indeed where the heart is as parents seek to direct the Jewish linguistic skills of their children, thereby sustaining and maintaining their imagined community.

Question 2: Parent-child affective solidarity and the expectations placed on families to be involved outside the home and congregation

In his provocative yet sanguine book on Jewish families, Boyarin (2013) touches on the topic almost every Jewish family talks about in secret but few are willing to discuss publicly when speaking of children and grandchildren: How Jewish is Jewish enough? The question is much more than rhetorical, although everyone knows that there is no "correct" answer – and the answers that are given are complex, multi-faceted, and laden with emotional baggage which spans not only generations, but often centuries. Aside from those who convert in, every family relies at least to some degree on genetics – the simple fact that (according to traditional/rabbinic Judaism) those who are born of a Jewish mother are, plain and simple, Jewish (Klein 1992:446-47). This is only, however, where the conversation often begins, and is usually of little comfort to those wringing their hands over the strength of Jewish identity demonstrated by one or more generations of progeny. Indeed Boyarin, in his brief discussion of Jewish genetics, throws fuel on the fire when he notes that one of the most important scientific findings in the study of Jewish populations from around this world is that "Jews in different places in the world are far more likely than random chance to be genetically related to each other… but Jews everywhere, and to varying degrees, are also related to their co-territorial non-Jewish populations." On the one hand, the rabbis and sages of old, however, had considered the realities of the issue of non-Jewish genes in the bloodlines of the Patriarchs as they were living through persecutions, forced migrations, and forced assimilation – and thus we have the ancient ruling on Jewish identity through one's maternity. On the other hand, however, the questions asked by those on the receiving end of the genetic code may not be helped by this knowledge. In fact, it may be a hindrance to the pursuit of what many in America today believe to be a virtual divine-right of

personal identity choice. In Boyarin's words, he suggests that "Jewishness in some sense [is] being passed on against the inheritor's will" (2013: 107-109).

As a brief aside, I would like to point out that very little first-person research has been done to determine how those who may be "inheriting Jewishness against their will" perceive the discussion adults (parents, clergy, researchers, etc.) are having *about* them and not necessarily *with* them. As noted by Bengtson, et al (2003) and a plethora of other scholars, it is during the period of late adolescence when humans make values-based decisions that will impact the rest of their lives. And, as the research demonstrates, families still comprise the largest share of impact on the lives of developing adolescents. While the most simple and direct illustration of this impact is in the areas of family structure and household stability (35-37), other aspects of family life such as parent-child solidarity have a significant and lasting impact on the future of any given child (42-47). Thus, we must ask the question: Why do we not spend more time considering the attitudes and values *of those for whose future we are most concerned*? For Bengtson, his longitudinal research, in part, was to better understand directly the impact of the parent-child relationship (before the child's emancipation) on future values and behaviors. For me, the importance of speaking directly with teens in my on-site research – and to continue to gather first-person information on this age group – is paramount to both understanding where American Jewish teens and those in their early 20s *think* they are going, where they *think they would like* to be going, and how parents can by empowered to help guide those trajectories. Moving forward, I believe it to be imperative to include respondents in their late adolescents and early 20s in any studies of American Jewry, focusing on their current place in life – and asking

questions relevant to that place – rather than simply considering them to be younger versions of older adults without consideration for the effects of age, relationships, and experiences.[120]

Returning to the issue of hand-wringing by Jewish grandparents for their children's children, in the comedy Passover film, When Do We Eat (2006), the members of the Stuckman family are a larger-than-life (yet almost believable!) caricature of how contemporary Jewish families cope (or don't) with the question of whether their children are "Jewish enough" or, even, "too Jewish." As the story unfolds, the viewer is left early on with the distinct impression that none of the four children[121] in this family have met with their father's expectations: The "wise child" has become too Jewish (more than a little for the taste of the parents), the occupation of the "wicked child" is unspeakable[122], the "simple child" spikes his father's Passover cup with ecstasy, and the child "too young to ask" is hiding his actual superior intellect. Although it is the more traditional grandfather who seems to accept each one as they are, by the time we get to know the children a little better, it is obvious that each one is trying to escape the dysfunctions (and genes? and heritage?) in their own way, but cannot help but to reproduce these very dysfunctions. The parents are horrified at what (they finally realize) they have created! Presumably, the parents had not thought too much when their children were little, of the Judaism and Jewish values (or lack thereof) they were transmitting down the line. In so far as this story is merely a hyper-dramatic rendition of every family Passover in America, more diligence is

[120] As noted in Chapter 1, the Pew (2013) data set under-sampled Jews of all ages in places other than urban areas. The under sampling of those in their late teens was also remarkable. While the American Jewish Population Project at Brandeis University (2016) estimates that 9.6% of the Jewish population in America is between 18 and 24 years of age, the raw data from Pew include only 5.9% of respondents from this age category. Those from small and micro Jewish communities represent only 6.2% of the age cohort.

[121] Without giving away the plot trajectory, I can tell you that the story is based on the traditional reading of the Passover Haggadah, specifically with regard to the often embellished characteristics of the four children who ask the traditional four questions.

[122] Just in case the reader is wondering, no, this child does not work for a Republican administration.

required to get into the hands of Jewish parents strategies that will increase the chances that their children will be "too Jewish" instead of not Jewish enough.

Boyarin (very well respected as a Jewish scholar, leader, and all-around mensch), himself allows some self-revealing angst to be reflected in his discussion of generational transmission of family identity and the concepts of voluntary and involuntary family connectivity (2013: 128). As he is sitting before the 90-year-young Rebetzin Chaja (related through marriage) – who represents generations of rabbinic leaders from Lithuania – he gets a feeling of inadequacy. His scholarship is of the secular, not the Yeshiva, variety. Will he be considered to have wasted his heritage on secular "foolishness"? Fortunately, she welcomes him into the family, although she could just as well have ignored him (129-130). Unlike the characters presented in a movie, we often have no way to know exactly how family matriarchs and patriarchs feel about the choices their descendants have made. While those of us who are Jewish parents (especially those who are parents of older children who have started making life-long choices) in the present generation can understand silence in the face of regrettable decisions, what we are thinking is often tragic. Boyarin quotes from the diary of Derrida who writes,

> I am the end of Judaism…
> Of a certain Judaism…
> Like a son not bearing my name,
> Like a son not bearing his name,
> Like a son not bearing a name. (142)

A number of the parents I interviewed were concerned that they might, indeed, be the last – or next-to-last – Jewish generation from their family line. One lay leader from Riverton spoke of the "battle" between he and his wife over the Bat Mitzvah of their youngest daughter.

> "We made sure that her Bat Mitzvah was the whole thing," he said, and continued, "…she led the whole service and read Torah and Haftarah."

He was obviously feeling some angst with regard to the aggregate Jewish identity and observance among his three children. He added with pride,

> "She outshone the older two. She can still *chant* Torah and is the president of Hillel at her school."

However, he ended his comments with,

> "It's a crapshoot regardless of what you do,"

thus demonstrating that his pride was tempered with a feeling of apprehension for his children's Jewish future.

An older woman at that table broke the dead silence and remarked,

> "Keep up the Yiddishkeit – don't rob them of family history and Jewish history. Let them know what [their great-grandparents] did for a living, how hard it was, how they escaped the holocaust and the family that was lost."

Another man joined in with the now more positive tone exclaiming,

> "Be sure to tell them the stories about "crazy Uncle Mo" who went up river for a while."

The woman, giving the last man a bit of a look to the side turned to her own story:

> "I was raised in a house where there was Yiddishkeit – my father from Romania and my mother from Ukraine. I heard the sweetest and most painful stories. My mother would cry and cry as she told of how her family fled from the Pogroms. My father would tell us how his family was Sephardic because in 1492 they had to go east from Spain and landed in Romania. I was born and raised in Baltimore – and growing up in a large Jewish community, I never thought about being Jewish because it surrounded me. And then my life changed. I have been here (in Riverton) since 1969. I realized that if I wanted anything that I had growing up, I had to (intentionally) bring it into my life. I had to make it a part of my children's lives."

Then turning from her own experience to one method of implementing the principle of generational identity transmission in this particular community, she continued,

> "In our community, we make sure that all of the children get to know the scrapbook – it provides faces and context for what life was like in the community. It gives you roots[123] and lets them know that they are the next generation for this community."

I soon found out that the "scrapbook" she was referring to was not an old hand-sewn bounded volume with yellowing photos, but an entire room dedicated to the history of the community. As you can see in photos 4.1 – 4.4, the scrapbook room plays an important role in the familial, educational, and religious life of the community.

Photo 4.1

Just inside the door of the "scrapbook" at Beit Rachel in Riverton. In addition to the photos and plaques and golden shovels (noting the start of historic new construction), a variety of mezuzot representing the history and families of the community are on display.

[123] It may be that the change in person in this quote, from second to third, is an unconscious recognition of the need for the parents to have internalized their identity (at least logically) before attempting to pass on identity and values to the child, as discussed above.

Photo 4.2

Looking back toward the entrance of the "scrapbook" room at Beit Rachel, one can admire the Jewish community's strong tradition of sports and other extra-curricular activities.

Photo 4.3

The second row of photos and documentation of community events, lifecycle celebrations, membership rosters and other memorabilia in the "scrapbook" of Beit Rachel in Riverton.

Photo 4.4

The same row in the "scrapbook" room from the other side. All families in the Riverton community are encouraged to add their own mementos to the scrapbook.

Another man at the table of this particular focus group picked up on the theme of history and the "scrapbook":

> "The scrapbooks are phenomenal – they provide faces and context for what life was like in the community. It gives you roots and lets them know that they are the next generation for this community. To my niece, Rachel, when she got married, I gave my grandmothers Shabbat candle sticks that she brought from Europe. It was very hard for me to let go of those. My grandmother gave them to my mother and my mother gave them to me. I had a jeweler clean them up – they were the real deal. I put a note in there, "this is from your Bubbie[124]… your Bubbie adored you, and if you have a daughter (which she does now), they will belong to her." This is the stuff that really does it. I have told my wife that if anything happens to me, there are certain things that go to [kids in the next two generations]. I want them to have their grandparents' stuff."

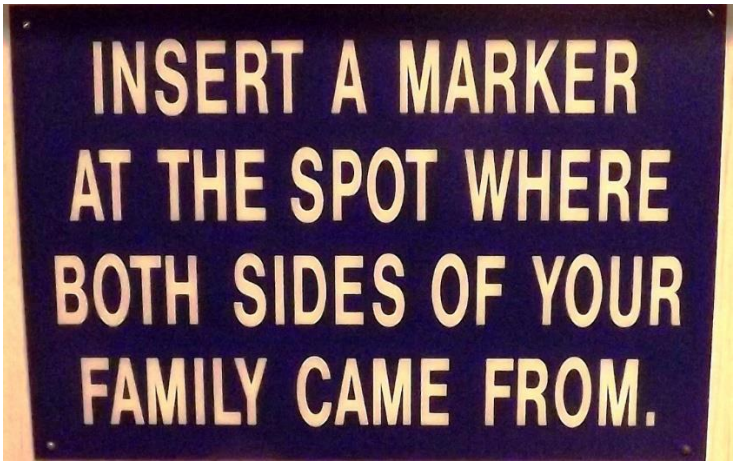
[124] Yiddish for "grandmother."

As an aside, this gentleman added an adorable and very real personal understanding of how the process works:

> "I hated my mother's stuff – I didn't like to polish it – but that's something good for children to do – while they are cleaning the Hanukkah menorah you can tell them the stories."

Photo 4.5

Photo 4.6



By looking closely at the back wall in Photo 4.4 you can see this map hanging with the sign below underneath it. In this way, even families who may not have anything physical to contribute to the scrapbook room can know that their family and history are permanently represented in the Riverton community. Such permanence (a pin in a map, a captioned photo, or a name on a roster) allows the current and future generations to not only hear from their parents and grandparents about their family history, but encourages them to make their

own inquiries and construct for themselves an imagined family of sorts which then transcends what is merely inherited by way of choices made by others (Boyarin 2013:143-144).

Returning to the focus group of lay leaders in Riverton, it was apparent here – as elsewhere – that those who moved from large Jewish communities to small Jewish communities had to make intentional choices to impart a historical narrative to their children and grandchildren. One couple in the focus group summed up this portion of our conversation fittingly:

> **Husband:** "There are a lot of shiny objects out there in the world that will distract our children. Even in families that try hard, their children just don't take to it because of the modern world."
>
> **Wife:** "It's easier to hide from it in the big cities than here."

All of these conscious, intentional actions on behalf of parents toward their children should tend to increase the parent-child solidarity index attributed by Bengtson (2003) to be one of the keys to the generational transmission of religious (and other) values. This index is determined by four domains of transmission: family structure, the net socioeconomic status of each parent, the modeling of values for each parent and the affirmation of each parent toward the child. According to Bengtson's theory of generational values transmission, each of these values work on each other and in the aggregate to produce the child's value set.[125] With regard to family structure, Bengtson found that intact families had higher positive rates of intergenerational values transmission than those which had experienced a divorce. Likewise, those with a mother working outside the home had higher negative rates of intergenerational values transmission than

[125] The values under examination by Bengtson's team were economic values (materialism vs. humanism) and community values (individualism vs. collectivism).

those with a mother working outside the home. As expected, the exception to this rule would be for families of divorce, in which case parental SES played a positive role in values transmission. With regard to parental modeling, within intact families, a father's modeling of values was associated with a positive net transmission of values; yet for children of divorce a father's modeling was associated with a negative net transmission of values. A mother's modeling of values also plays less of a role in values transmission for children of divorce than children living in an intact family. The most interesting conclusion reached by the research team was that, with regard to affirmation by and solidarity with mothers *and* fathers towards their children, there was a negative association with the transmission of community values for children of divorce but a positive association for the transmission of economic values compared to children living with two married parents (109-133).

With the data provided by the Pew Research Group (2013), we can attempt to partially account for two of the four domains, family structure and SES. With regard to family structure, from the data presented in Table 5.2 it is apparent that those living in defined small Jewish communities seem to have the highest rate for marriage and lowest rates for cohabitation and divorce. Interestingly, those from small and micro Jewish communities also *appear* to be much more likely to have never been married (over 2/3 in both cases) than those who live in Jewish

Table 5.2

Current marital status

		Married	Living with a partner	Divorced/ Separated	Widowed	Never been married
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	50.5%	7.4%	10.8%	7.0%	24.1%
	SJC < 1000	26.7%	0.6%	31.6%	3.9%	37.3%
	SJC > 1000	57.1%	1.8%	1.2%	3.8%	36.2%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married?"

communities of other sizes. Also of note is that those who live in micro and small Jewish communities are less likely to be widowed than those living in communities of other sizes. Other than the uneven age distribution of respondents from small and micro Jewish communities compared to the Pew data set in general, which could be skewing the weighted results, it appears that the generational transmission of Jewish values may be receiving a boost in small Jewish communities.

Table 5.3

Highest Level of Education

		HS	Some Col	2-yr	4-yr	Some Post-grad work	Post-grad Degree
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	14.1%	14.8%	11.0%	27.9%	2.7%	26.9%
	SJC < 1000	46.9%	12.5%	0.0%	18.8%	2.7%	19.0%
	SJC > 1000	9.7%	55.9%	3.0%	14.8%	0.0%	16.8%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?"

Table 5.4

2012 total family income from all sources, before taxes

		Less than $10,000	$10K to under $20K	$20K to under $40K	$4K to under $75K	$75K to under $100K	100 to under $150K	$150K or more
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	5.0%	6.1%	13.6%	14.7%	12.2%	14.8%	21.0%
	SJC < 1000	26.4%	4.2%	6.7%	25.4%	8.0%	8.3%	18.1%
	SJC > 1000	13.4%	1.8%	5.6%	3.7%	6.7%	19.2%	27.8%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "Last year, that is in 2012, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes?

The two indicators of socioeconomic status available in the Pew data set are education and income. Unlike the data set used by the Bengtson research team (Silverstein and Bengtson 2016), however, respondents were not asked to provide their spouse's level of education. As well, the income question was with regard to the total family income, not that of the individual.

However, it may yet be helpful to consider the SES of the Pew respondents with regard to the generational transmission of Jewish values. As presented in Table 5.3, the Pew data shows that those who live in larger communities are almost twice as likely to have a four-year college education as those who live in small Jewish communities (27.9% vs 14.8%) and are 60% more likely to have a post-graduate degree than those living in small Jewish communities. One of the more fascinating aspects of this data is that it appears that those who live in small Jewish communities are most likely to have only some college and *more likely to have an advanced degree than a BA*. While I can imagine a given community where an education distribution of this sort would exist, I believe it is highly unlikely.

My doubt is reinforced by the income data provided by Pew as presented in Table 5.4. According to this weighted data, while those who live in small and micro communities are much more likely than those who live in communities of other sizes to have a household income of under $10,000, how do we explain the fact that it appears if one wants to make over $100,000 annually, the better choice is to live in a small Jewish community rather than an urban area? If we expand these categories to include incomes above $75,000, which is often 2x the median income in many counties across the United States, the Pew data reports that over 53% of residents in small Jewish communities will have such resources while only 48% of those living in larger communities will be able to compete. Unfortunately, since the SES data show lack of internal viability, it cannot be used to provide any support for the first two dimensions of Bengtson's generational values transmission theory.

With regard to the modeling/values dimension, the Pew data does have some substantive contributions. Referring to the frequencies of various items in Appendix D, we could look at the rates of lighting Shabbat Candles, keeping kosher at home, and service attendance as items that

might be indicative of parental modeling Jewish values (e.g. children see their parents' behavior aligning with verbal statements). If the data can be trusted as accurate, we could argue that something about living in a small Jewish community facilitates parental modeling of lighting Shabbat Candles and keeping kosher at home, at rates almost double that of what occurs in the larger communities in the data. Considering service attendance, there is less than a 2% difference between those in small Jewish communities and other communities among those who attend at least 1 or 2 times per month. Unfortunately, we have no data on similar values and behaviors for the children of these respondents. While the respondents were asked about participation in a "Jewish sleep away camp," (Smith 2014:78) the item was combined with "Jewish day care or nursery school, Jewish youth groups" and "Jewish day camp." Besides the fact that these activities are structured for children of very different ages, each activity requires a different type and level of buy-in and commitment from the child. Thus, it would be difficult to use this composite item in the Pew data set as a proxy for the lived-out values of a child as they relate to parental values modeling.

What is required to actually test the Bengtson theory on generational values transmission within small Jewish communities is to do the following:

1) Ask respondents about their home practices and attitudes both growing up and at the current time.
2) Include a representative sample of respondents from the late adolescent and early adult life stages.
3) Replicate the same type of parental affection/solidarity index created by Bengtson's research team for the Longitudinal Study of Generations (Silverstein and Bengtson 2016).

In order to comply with the first requirement, my proof-of-concept survey did just this. In addition to querying respondents about their parents' and grandparents' attitudes towards Judaism, they were also asked about their Jewish education and activities as children.

Additionally, respondents were asked the frequency[126] for the following activities which are often performed in the home and/or on Shabbat and Holy Days in the context of family and community:

- Keeping kosher
- Lighting Shabbat candles on Friday night
- Refraining from handling money on Shabbat
- Refraining from writing on Shabbat
- Praying at home
- Reciting a blessing before eating
- Reciting a blessing after eating
- Attending or hosting a Passover Seder
- Fasting on Yom Kippur

Considering the data presented in Table 5.5, comparing the rate at which those who kept kosher at home when growing up currently keep kosher in their own home, while it is most striking that those who kept kosher "on occasion" and "often" while growing up seem to have increased their rate of this observance, those who did so "regularly" seem to have reduced their rate of observance. Table 5.6 considers the observance of lighting Shabbat candles on Friday night. In this case, for those who did so "regularly" when growing up, there seems to be a similar falling off of the practice. For those who "never" lit Shabbat candles, however, over 40% now do so at least "often" while only 28% still "never" do. To get deeper into this question, it would be necessary to compare the other items, account for the number of children currently in the home as well as for those who grew up in a large Jewish community versus those who grew

[126] The frequencies provided to the respondents for this survey item are: never, rarely, on occasion, often, or regularly.

up in a small Jewish community. It could be that what we are seeing here is the effect of small Jewish community on the religio-ethnic practices within Jewish families.

Based on the Longitudinal Study of Generations, respondents to the proof-of-concept survey were also asked to rate the frequency[127] of their interactions with their oldest child on the following items:[128]

- Recreation outside the home of any type
- Brief in-person conversations
- Large family gatherings like reunions or holiday dinners
- Small family gatherings for other special occasions
- Talking over things that are important to you
- Religious activities of any kind
- Exchanging emails
- Exchanging text messages
- Talking on the phone about anything
- Dinner together
- Exchanging gifts

The results from this survey item are displayed in Table 5.7. A full analysis would include the creation of an index on adult-child solidarity for each respondent which would then be compared to the current values of the child for which the respondent was indicating their frequency of activity. In this proof-of-concept survey, we lack the second component of

[127] The frequencies provided to the respondents for this survey item are: almost never, about once a year, every other month or so, about once a month, about once a week, several times a week, and almost every day.
[128] In a more comprehensive survey, this item would be posed for all children and the list would be customized to the age of the reported child(ren).

analysis. However, we can glean some information from this data with regard to parents who live in small Jewish communities and their children, regardless of age. While on the one hand it seems that parents and children are relatively independent when it comes to chores – almost half of all respondents very seldom either receive help from or help their children with chores and just less than 15% experience chore cooperation several times a year but less than once in two months. On the other hand, almost 50% of all respondents discuss important things with their children at least once a week, and almost one-third discuss important things with their children at least several times a week. Although the joint participation in religious activities seems to be on the low side, with only 22% of respondents reporting that they participate with their child in religious activities once a month or more, overall these proportions would seem to indicate relatively high parent-child solidarity indices across the population of respondents.

Table 5.5

I/We currently keep kosher at home

		Never	Rarely	On Occasion	Often	Regularly
When growing up, we kept kosher at home:	Never	72.9%	3.8%	6.8%	6.0%	10.5%
	Rarely	35.7%	28.6%	21.4%	7.1%	7.1%
	On occasion	33.3%	13.3%	6.7%	13.3%	33.3%
	Often	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%
	Regularly	21.6%	8.1%	16.2%	8.1%	45.9%
Total		57.1%	7.4%	9.4%	7.4%	18.7%

NOTE: Proof-of-concept survey participants responding to the prompt, "Please let us know how often you engage in the following practices:" and the resultant frequency responses for "keeping kosher at home." Crosstab with responses to the prompt "How often did you observe the following rituals while growing up?" N=203

Table 5.6

I/We light Shabbat candles on Friday night.

		Never	Rarely	On Occasion	Often	Regularly
Growing up, we lit Shabbat candles on Friday night:	Never	28.0%	12.0%	17.3%	13.3%	29.3%
	Rarely	26.7%	13.3%	20.0%	13.3%	26.7%
	On occasion	15.6%	25.0%	28.1%	12.5%	18.8%
	Often	16.0%	8.0%	36.0%	20.0%	20.0%
	Regularly	8.8%	19.3%	15.8%	12.3%	43.9%
Total		19.1%	15.7%	21.1%	13.7%	30.4%

NOTE: Proof-of-concept survey participants responding to the prompt, "Please let us know how often you engage in the following practices:" and the resultant frequency responses for "light Shabbat candles on Friday night." Crosstab with responses to the prompt "How often did you observe the following rituals while growing up?" N=204.

Table 5.7

	Frequency of Activity							
Activity with Oldest Child:	Almost Never	About once a year	Several times a year	Every other month or so	About once a month	About once a week	Several times a week	Almost every day
Child helping with chores	32.1%	16.7%	14.8%	6.2%	6.7%	8.1%	10.0%	5.3%
Helping child with chores	34.0%	13.3%	14.8%	4.4%	8.9%	6.9%	8.9%	8.9%
Having dinner together	6.2%	6.7%	35.7%	9.0%	13.8%	5.7%	7.6%	15.2%
Religious activities	24.8%	16.2%	30.5%	6.7%	6.7%	10.5%	3.8%	1.0%
Talking over important things	4.3%	5.7%	14.3%	5.7%	21.9%	19.0%	17.1%	11.9%

NOTE: Proof-of-concept survey participants responding to the prompt, "Thinking about your oldest child - whatever their age - indicate how often you do the following activities together:" and the resultant frequency responses for "your child helping you with chores" (N=209), "helping your child with chores (N=203), "having dinner together" (N=210), "religious activities of any kind" (N=210), and "talking over important things" (N=210).

In light of the data we have been able to obtain in the proof-of-concept survey, if similar data were to be collected from parents in larger Jewish communities across the country, we may be able to provide some support for the notion that families residing in the relative isolation of small Jewish communities demonstrate higher parent-child affective solidarity than do Jewish parents in the larger communities. Taken on its own, however, I believe the qualitative and sample quantitative data I have presented here demonstrate that small Jewish communities and

their families do intentionally *promote* and *achieve* relatively high levels of parental involvement in the Jewish development of their children.

Question 3: Are there conscious and intentional strategies for empowering parents (and especially interfaith families) to provide a Jewish education in the home?

Over and over again, during the course of my interviews, focus groups, and proof-of-concept survey invitations I have had people ask me why I have chosen to study *small* Jewish communities and the people who call them home. Anecdotally, the extraordinary choice I have made regarding the context in which I have chosen to consider the generational transmission of Jewish values was demonstrated in January of 2015 at the American Enterprise Institute. I was on hand for a conference highlighting the release of "Soul Mates: Religion, Sex, Love, and Marriage among African Americans and Latinos" (Wilcox 2016). Because this book takes a serious look at the impact of religion on Black and Latino families – especially Black and Latino men – the room was filled to capacity with Christians concerned with American families in general, the role of Christianity in the life of minority families, and, specifically, practical ways to bring Black and Latino men back to their families. Having the opportunity to speak with a number of attendees, I was asked about my own research and how it was related to "Soul Mates." When I mentioned "intergenerational values transmission" I received in return some thoughtful questions and observations. When I mentioned "Jewish values," I received smiles and encouragement. When I mentioned "small Jewish communities," however, I received looks of confusion and requests to clarify what I meant by "small" and why I was considering those specific communities. On that particular day and at that stage of my research, it was difficult to provide a response that assuaged the doubts of anyone with whom I shared the topic of my project.

Although somewhat disappointing, these reactions did not strike me as particularly surprising. While there are news reports at least monthly of synagogues in small towns shutting their doors for the last time, unless you are looking for it (most likely because you live in a small town or a small Jewish community or, like me, are concerned about the future of small Jewish communities), you probably won't know that it's happening. Even among Jewish authors and researchers, only a few are aware of the issues outlined in the Introduction regarding small and micro Jewish communities – and even fewer (as discussed in Chapter 3) are willing to dig into the phenomenon to find out what is going on and why. Among those who are writing well-received books about contemporary religion (including Judaism), virtually all place the context for any sort of American religious renewal within urban centers. In her very popular book, "Got Religion? How Churches, Mosques and Synagogues Can Bring Young People Back" (2014) Naomi Shaefer Riley notes the troubling statistics regarding the small numbers of Millennials embracing traditional religion, the continuing rise of the "religious nones" in American society, and the general decline in the authority of institutional religion in American life as the impetus for her research into these issues and discovery of possible ways to reverse the trends (5-11). The preface to "Got Religion?" opens in Riley's own synagogue and briefly recounts the sad story of discussions taking place in virtually every synagogue in America: how synagogues can compete with the demands of contemporary culture on parents and their children (vii-ix).

While reading through Riley's case studies of what models seem to be working to bring young Americans back into the fold of traditional faith, what is striking is the fact that none of the proposed solutions have much at all to do with cities or urban living. In fact, the strategies and tactics which seem to be successful are not qualitatively different from what parents and community leaders in small Jewish communities are doing – and have been doing – to increase

their odds that their Jewish children will grow up to be Jewish adults who will produce yet the next Jewish generation (e.g. *their grandchildren*!). At times, it's actually a bit humorous to compare the suggestions of those working in urban areas with the reality of what I have discovered in small Jewish communities. One example is that of a pastor in New Orleans who has rejected the popular Protestant "megachurch" model and has set out, instead, to re-create neighborhood churches within the city. These churches would be modeled after the Catholic parishes that once created "tight-knit communities" of people in New Orleans (22). This pastor's desire is that his neighborhood church would serve only people within a defined community, that those attending the church would "run into each other outside of church," and that the community would create accountability for behavior "when they expect they will run into their fellow churchgoers" (23).

Virtually by definition, small Jewish communities *serve their community*. While there may be some who drive in from some distance (e.g. 15 or even 25 miles), these populations of Jewish families, couples, and singles are largely caring for each other in relatively close proximity. And they are not seeing each other only at work and in services – they are seeing each other and working with each other as they are serving as teachers and helpers in their child's religious school class. As one lay leader in Green Valley observed, "It's a mix of parents using institutions and educating in the home... some parents depend more heavily on institutions because they may not have gotten that knowledge when they were children to be able to pass it on." In other words, some parents are able to be the teacher while other parents step up to be the classroom assistant. This synergism creates the exact type of inter-community accountability (e.g. peer pressure) that the urban-based pastor was hoping to create within a few city blocks.

Unlike their urban counterparts, where parents may volunteer to be classroom assistants to a professional educator, parents are involved in their children's *secular education* as well as their religious instruction. As noted by two mothers from Green Valley, parents in small Jewish communities are not so much *encouraged* to get involved as they realize the *necessity* of being involved. One mom, whose children attend their neighborhood public school, put it this way:

> "My relatives in New Jersey and Philadelphia – they take their Judaism for granted and we don't here. Our kids are special when they go to school – there is something different about them. We have to work a little harder, so we don't miss things – we make sure we're at all of the cultural celebrations and we take advantage of all the opportunities here and we don't take it for granted."

Another mom, whose children attend a non-Jewish parochial school, had a slightly different perspective, but one that makes the point clearly:

> "Our kids go to Catholic school, so that's an interesting paradox, but it's been good for them. The perspective there is moral and ethical development, so they bring their Judaism in to their education every day. Their teachers ask them to bring Jewish thought into the class. They have something very special within their religious life."

Notably, responsibility for the Jewish community and Jewish continuity are not felt only by parents in Green Valley. One of my key informants for Green Valley was a young professional whom I will call "Ben." I asked Ben to summarize what he learned from his parents about being Jewish. Without a pause he stated emphatically,

> "Fulfilling my role as a Jew to not only make the world better than I found it, but to share with other Jews - communal responsibility. I need to live up to my potential as a Jew in order to support the community and not let the community down."

Another one of my key informants, an older single gentleman I will call "Zach," discussed with me the importance of generational involvement in the general community. He noted that Jewish families are often found at community events such as concerts, sporting events, and film festivals – which is good so that others see that the Jewish community is a part of Green Valley. "However," he paused, and then continued,

> "Some people are taken aback when I tell them that not only do I go to events in the general community, I go to Christian events to promote cross-cultural socialization."

I took both of these single Jewish men to be expressing the two-sided coin of self-motivation for community involvement and, thereby, Jewish community continuity which provides context, content and external motivation for people to be involved. One man approaches the task from the inside (although as a prominent attorney the first young man is able to speak with authority for the Jewish community), and the other from the outside (I do wonder what the Christians think when he shows up!). Both are fulfilling an important need for community empowerment that parents may otherwise not have the time or vision to accomplish in their present context *as parents*.

Perhaps the most significant difference between those projects highlighted by Riley and the small Jewish communities I have come to know is that each of the case studies in "Got Religion?" has outside funding providing much-needed energy and encouragement for both the workers and project recipients. Be it neighborhood church renewal in New Orleans, sending Jewish kids to Israel for free via Birthright, the establishment of an Islamic Center in Los Angeles, or the training of Catholic Priests for a new generation at Notre Dame – each of these endeavors is well-funded by dollars coming from outside sources. This is not the case for small Jewish communities.

In many ways, parents, lay leaders and clergy in small Jewish communities are subject to the same twenty-first century challenges facing those trying to build communities anywhere else in America. The difference is, while those larger communities may battle to get 50 or 100 people to an event, they have ten times that number internally from which to raise funds, and perhaps one hundred or one thousand times that number available on an institutional mailing list who are donating regularly to their cause which in many cases (but certainly not all) allows them to go from month-to-month and year-to-year with a plan for slow-growth or even flat numbers without fear of losing the entire project. For some projects there are benefactors who guarantee funding on a multi-year basis. In a small Jewish community, while there may be building endowments left by wealthier generations of the previous century, there is no outside funding to be had and all must be accomplished with the funds raised internally.

It is actually quite amazing that some small Jewish communities, like Green Valley, with fewer than 3,000 Jewish individuals, support multiple synagogues and Jewish institutions. I was told on more than one occasion by my contacts in Green Valley that throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, all of the institutions of the community (including synagogues, Jewish Community Center, Federation, historical society) were funded by the same four or five families. Today, those family fortunes have been largely split among several siblings – none of which have the same types of jobs or incomes as their parents and grandparents had. While they are professionals – doctors, lawyers, professors, and small business proprietors – they do not have the freedom to support all of the community's institutions to the same degree their family was once able to do.

The solution? Build into the new young professionals a sense of responsibility as demonstrated by Ben *and* an understanding for outreach to the larger community in ways similar

to that spoken of by Zach. While the jury is still out as to the survival of all the institutions currently serving the Jewish community in Green Valley, I can say with some confidence that the Jewish Community Center (JCC) will be around for some time to come. What happened was quite unexpected, though not surprising: While the JCC still receives core funding from the more wealthy families in town as well as other members of the Jewish community a significant source of funding comes from non-Jewish JCC members who both pay dues *and* contribute to the institution.

This unplanned funding structure has allowed the JCC to operate on a scale larger than would otherwise be possible for any institution located in a small Jewish community. From its extra-large parking lot which is filled for concerts and adult-education classes to the playground and sports field in the back, this JCC has something for everyone.

Photo 4.7

The emblem of the Green Valley JCC (Photo 4.7) is a contemporary sculpture fountain of the word "Shalom" (peace) in Hebrew. This is a fitting symbol as the membership is 80% non-Jewish. Every day Jews and non-Jews enjoy the amenities of the facility together. Inside the complex is a full-size basketball court, 1/5 mile track, full-equipped weight and cardio exercise room, floor-exercise rooms, a large pool with wheelchair-accessible ramp, a lounge, classrooms, and office space!

For two days I took up a position just inside the front door of the JCC, asking people if they were Jewish and, regardless of their answer, what they thought of the JCC and the Green Valley Jewish community. From the non-Jewish members there was a fascinating dichotomy of reactions: 1) They either personally "know and love" one or more of the Jewish families in Green Valley all their life or 2) Had never met anyone Jewish until either just before or just after joining the JCC.[129] For many of those non-Jewish members of the JCC, their commitment to the Green Valley Jewish community is substantial in many ways. One young man who stopped by my table, David, told me that through the JCC he has come to understand the local Jewish community as one that is very giving of their time and resources – and was especially impressed by the warmth showed to him personally by the Jewish community that hosted the interfaith Thanksgiving dinner at one of the synagogues. Some of the non-Jewish members take it even a step further, making a significant investment of time and money into the JCC. As one older man told me,

> "I live near the YMCA, but I am a founding member here.
> I could go to the 'Jesus gym,' but I choose to go to the 'Jewish gym.'"

The impact of a majority non-Jewish membership is not lost on the Jewish members of the JCC. One middle-aged homeschooling mom who stopped by my table told me that she had lived in a number of small Jewish communities over the years, and that Green Valley was "more balanced" than in other places. Although she was not affiliated with any particular congregation, she noted that the JCC acts as an "impetus to other Jewish activities" – in part due to the supportive non-Jews she had met at the JCC.

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[129] One man shyly admitted that, after joining the JCC and discovering this was, indeed, a Jewish institution, carefully chose one of the staff members to ask, "Is it true that you have horns?"!!

From the data presented on the preceding pages, I believe there is evidence to support the argument that these small Jewish communities – by definition of being "small" as well as the desire to be effective in generational values transmission – have successfully empowered and encouraged parents to provide a Jewish education and, thereby, a Jewish identity for their children. Clearly they are not relying on the institutions of their community to do this work. I have, however, neglected the first part of the question: do small Jewish communities leverage "conscious and intentional strategies" which empower parents to raise Jewish children with a relatively strong Jewish identity? The answer to this question, I must admit, is "no." There is no indication of any conscious or intentional strategy to empower parents. Rather, there seems to be some sort of synergistic cooperation between the felt needs and imagined community emanating from the parents, and the institutional need to be self-perpetuating even in the face of limited internal resources.

There is also an observed gap in any distinction between how these small communities empower endogamous Jewish families and those families where the husband and wife are of different religious traditions. Of course, there is plenty of talk about interfaith families and questions of how to help them feel welcome and appreciated. However, there seem to be very few suggestions that get enough traction to be implemented. Returning to the neighborhood of Green Valley, only two of my informants had anything positive to say about steps the community was taking to bring interfaith couples and their children closer to the Jewish community: 1) An Interfaith Thanksgiving Dinner; 2) Changing synagogue membership to be based on families (with at least one adult Jewish member) rather than individuals. My other communities, Mountain City, Riverton, and even Springfield, did not have much to say with regard to specific outreach to interfaith families and their children. In some ways, when the non-

Jewish spouse is very supportive and does not have a strong religious identity of their own, these families are coming along organically alongside the endogamous families. As in the case of the father from Riverton I reported on above, whose wife did not finish converting, but the children do not know their mother is not Jewish, many of these interfaith families function as though they are endogamous – and in some cases the community treats them as such. Jewish demographer Steven Cohen has recently expressed concern about the increasing numbers of non-Jewish parents passing themselves as Jewish to their children and the community (2015). The possibility, Cohen notes, is that children who believe they are Jewish, but are not recognized as such by significant portions of the American Jewish community, will have difficulty with marriage and family later in life when they discover that millions of American Jews exclude them from the larger Jewish community. There does not, however, seem to be much concern for this future possibility in small – or any sized – Jewish community. As one key informant from Mountain City told me,

> "We reach out to them the best we can. Some of the [intermarried] families are very engaged."

Question 4: Will adult children share their parents' religio-ethnic values?

Returning to the concept of imagined communities, I would like to focus on their potential future impact on the values and identity of children growing up in small Jewish communities. Writing more than 20 years after his landmark thesis on the social construction of reality (1967), in his classic volume on the sociological theory of religion, Peter L. Berger (1990) states that, unlike the other animal species which populate our planet, humans are "curiously unfinished at birth." Unlike the closed world of the primates and lower animals, whose instinctual drive has maintained their "societies" in a steady-state for millennia, humans

continually invent and create new worlds in which objective society "directs, sanctions, controls, and punishes individual conduct" (11). Within this subjective reality, the individual's own life is considered to be "real" insofar as the self reflects upon and objectifies that society which in turn acts upon the individual and serves as the "formative agency for individual consciousness" (15). Ideally, the end process of socialization (e.g. "successful socialization") is one in which the individual possesses an identity congruous and continuous with the host society (15-19). In layman's terms, the ideal result for Jewish parents who desire to have Jewish grandchildren is for their children to become adults with a strong and verifiable Jewish identity – one that the parents recognize as having come from them and their efforts.

Above all, according to Berger, society provides a "meaningful order" to the various aspects of an individual life (19). Society may be understood to be ultimately protective of the individual as it provides the self with a way to explain one's past biography, the present situation and the unknowns of the future. Indeed, the human creation of society resulting in a protective mechanism of order and explanation could be considered to be the end result of the mythic search for meaning, quite possibly the strongest of humanity's few instincts (22). In order to explain that which is unknowable, yet imminent, humans have created 'religion' as part of the social order – that aspect of society which creates the sacred and projects explanations into the cosmos (25). Put simply, Berger defines religion as "the audacious attempt to conceive of the entire universe as being humanly significant" (28). When applied to traditional religious communities, Berger appears to be saying that when humans look to their traditions for meaning, they will find them.

But is this a realistic expectation? Especially for families in small Jewish communities – in 2017? Corresponding with the dramatic increase in divorce (Cherlin 2008), cohabitation

(Cherlin 2010b, Cunningham 2005), and lower desired fertility (Last 2013), overall religious identity and affiliation in the United States is down in virtually all categories since at least 1974. The General Social Survey (ARDA 2010) data show that the number of individuals with no religious affiliation has increased by 165 percent to almost 19 percent of the entire population, while those who feel strongly about their religious affiliation have declined by 11 percent. According to the 2008 ARIS report (Kosmin 2009), since 1990 every major religious group in the United states has lost ground in terms of the proportion of Americans claiming affiliation, even though raw numbers for most have actually grown. Thus, the outlook for families passing on their religio-ethnic values does not appear to be positive.

Bengtson, et al (2008), however, disagree. In their chapter titled, Religion and Intergenerational Transmission Over Time in Schaie's compiled volume, "Social Structures and Aging Individuals," they claim that "Parental influences on youth's achievement orientations and values have not decreased over time" (307). To provide specific encouragement to parents of traditional faiths who strive for close relationships with their children, the team writes that, "…the moral agency of American families has not declined significantly." For those with grandparents nearby, they add, "Even with the considerable social changes of the latter 20th century, we suggest that today's multigenerational families represent a stock of religious capital sufficient to influence the religious traditions and involvement of successive generations." And, speaking specifically to parents of young adults who actively participated in their religio-ethnic education of their children when they were young, they offer the reassurance that, although complex family structures of the twenty-first century create a wider variation of possibilities for the socialization of the younger generation into religion, "…early family influences on religiosity are enduring... if people do switch from their childhood religion, they tend to adopt a religion

similar to the one with which they are familiar" (308). So, we are encouraged – a bit. But what about the practical value of what we have observed occurring in small Jewish communities? Are the children who grew up in these communities buying into the imagined communities of their parents' generation? Have they bought into any form of the traditional religion of their grandparents and great-grandparents?

In Bengtson's 2013 tome, "Families and Faith," the issue of Jewish values transmission generationally is addressed directly. Bengtson's research team (utilizing the Longitudinal Study of Generations data) found that the type of friendships which can develop in small Jewish communities was one factor assisting parents in the reinforcement of a long-term viable Jewish identity (174). I found the same phenomenon present in my discussions with teens in Riverton, and Mountain City, and among some of the young adults I interviewed in Green Valley.

The most tangible and verifiable confirmation that Jewish friendships have long-term impact not only on the religio-ethnic trajectory of Jewish adults but on their choice of location for building a family came from Ben, the Green Valley attorney I introduced above. I listened intently while he told me that of his year-2000 high school graduating class, "about 33-40% are back in Green Valley." While I have no information on the graduating classes just before and after Ben's, it should be safe to presume that, unless the Class of 2000 is a complete anomaly, the same effect of friendship (plus other factors) would bring back similar proportions of other young adults in Ben's age cohort. I asked Ben how much like each other these friends are. He told me that they get together often – especially the singles – and discuss "the important issues." While he does not consider himself to be "religious," Ben told me "The Tanakh[130] is the book

[130] "Tanakh" is an acronym for "Torah," "Nevi'im," and "Ketuvim" – the three sections of the Hebrew Bible – "Teaching," "Prophets," and "Writings."

closest to the bed." He also said that while he does not pray, he spends time in "daily communication with God." This sounds like solid evidence of "adopting a religion" similar to that in which he was exposed in his parents' home. When the conversation turned to marriage, Ben said that his intention was to "marry Jewish." However, when I pressed him on this intention, he clarified, stating, "I could care less what my wife believes, so long as she keeps a Jewish home. I want my children to be raised Jewish." After a pause, he added, "I would be fine with a woman who is more observant than I am."

I was fascinated to hear this from a young, influential professional who had returned after his university and post-graduate education to live in the small Jewish community where he grew up. However, it was not as surprising as one might think. I had already heard something similar to this from a group of teen girls in Riverton. During this focus group of seven young women – all of whom save one grew up together in Riverton and knew each other since they were young children – I was presented with quite a mind-opening revelation: These young women were open to the idea of intermarriage, but not an inter-faith family. Although they had all attended the synagogue their entire lives, they did not consider the boys in the community as "cute enough" – certainly not as cute as the non-Jewish boys at school. However, if one came along that was Jewish, that boy would become the first option. One even exclaimed quite intensely, "Yeah! I'd like it if he was Jewish!" We then entered into a rather serious conversation about the kind of non-Jewish man who would or would not be considered by this group of girls to be "marriage material." Most of the girls agreed that a young man with a strong Christian identity (interestingly, they used "Catholic" and "Baptist" almost interchangeably to stand for "Christian") would not be a good match, even if some compromises in the religious education of the children could be agreed upon. Then it came out that one of the older girls is specifically

looking for a college with a large Jewish student population in order to find a Jewish husband. Another girl related that her sister had been

> "…dating a boy who wasn't [Jewish] and she right off the bat told him she was not gonna marry him because he was not Jewish."

This experience seemed to make an impact on how she viewed her education and family future. Towards the end of this conversation, I got the impression that these young Jewish women had been thinking through some very significant issues of family and child-rearing. Our discussion seemed to help them clarify some of the issues and help in their decision-making. While I may never know the outcome of this cohort of friends, I am optimistic that there are other such young Jewish women who are committed to a "Jewish home" (and can define what that looks like) even if they are open to intermarriage.[131]

Further evidence from Green Valley for the combined effects of family, and friends came from focus group dedicated to mothers of young children. When I asked about the people these moms grew up with – who stayed in the area and who left – most of the women in the group shook their heads to indicate that nobody had stayed around. One of these young women, however, took my question to the intended, logical end:

> "Most of my Sunday school class lives here now with their children. They moved away to college, married someone (maybe) Jewish and got pulled back in by their family. It's easier to feel connected here in some ways – it only takes 15 minutes to get to the JCC."

The fascinating syntactical combination of phrasing, "most of my Sunday school class" with "pulled back in by their family" indicates a complex, synergistic effect of family, friends

[131] As a small personal revelation, my own 22-year-old daughter has made this very choice for her own life. Later in 2017 she will be marrying a young man who, though not Jewish, is very open and supportive of their building a Jewish home together.

and education that drew these Jewish women back to the small Jewish community where they grew up.

Bengtson (2013) also emphasizes the importance of a religious education to a viable religious identity as an adult. The research team points to multiple generations of Jewish families in the LSOG who sent their children to religious school – and who then sent *their* children to religious school (175). I would contend that, at some level, measuring only religious education without including the friendship component is a bit of a shallow analysis.[132] Data from the Pew (2013) survey does not support this contention: While over 60% of all respondents (not only those in small Jewish communities) meeting my original definition of "Jewish" reported that when growing up they participated in "some kind of formal Jewish educational program, such as Hebrew school or Sunday school," only 23% of the respondents reported that their oldest child also participated in a similar type of Jewish educational program. Considering educational programs with more of an organic "friendship" component such as youth groups, day camp and sleep-away camp, there was more correspondence between what the respondent experienced growing up (39.3% had attended an overnight summer camp) and what they provided for their oldest child (33.6% indicated their child participated in an "organized Jewish youth program."

Data from my proof-of-concept survey seem to indicate that parents in small Jewish communities are simply not thinking of formal Jewish education as a primary vehicle for building and maintaining a Jewish identity in their children. As noted above in Figure 4.1, my respondents reported that what is needed in their communities is not more formal education for the children, but more parents willing to focus on teaching their children. If there is to be any

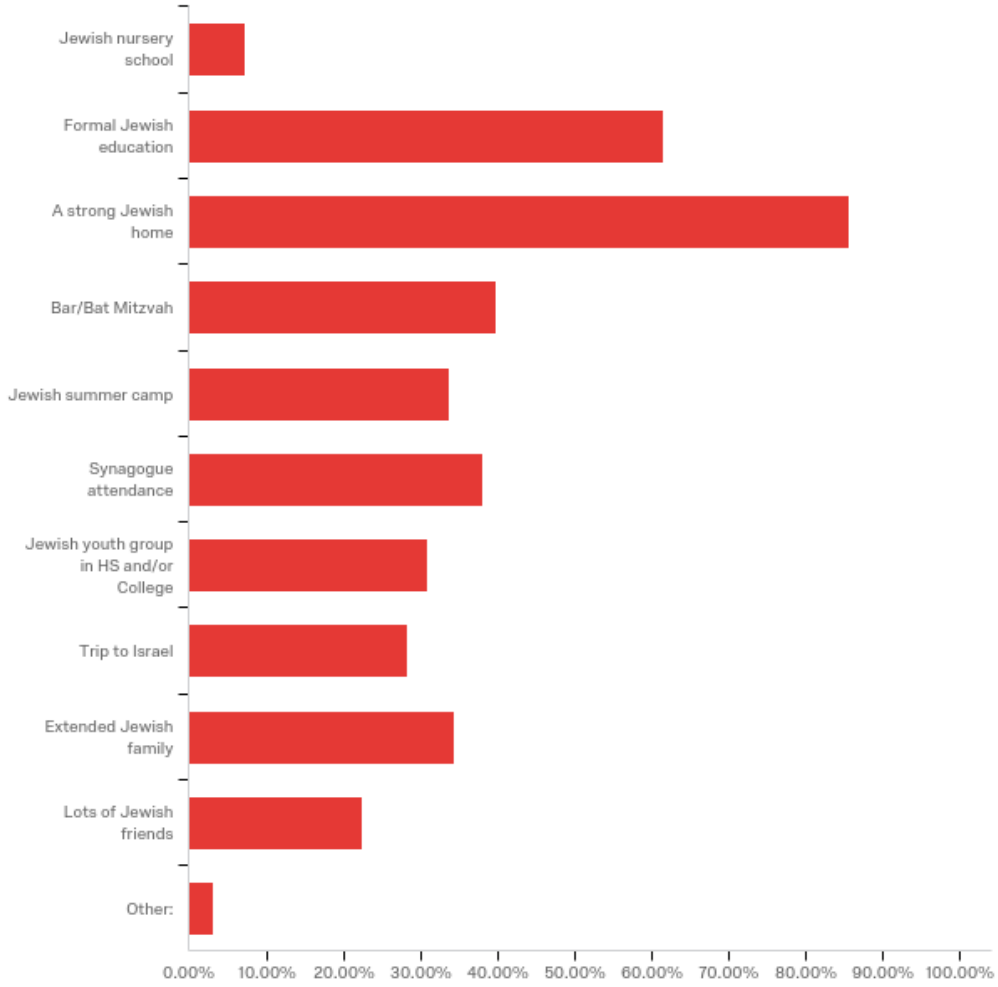
[132] In my proof-of-concept survey, due to economics of time, I also left out the friendship component for children of respondents.

formalized education, it would be for the parents, not the children. Turning to a slightly different question, Figure 4.2 represents the top choices for parents when asked to select 3-5 things a child needs "in order to obtain a strong Jewish identity." Of the 275 responses, almost 90% included "A strong Jewish home" in their basket of items. Although 60% included "Formal Jewish education" in their basket, the difference in selection proportions indicates that, for these respondents who live in small Jewish communities, living in a home where parents are exhibiting a strong Jewish identity already is more relevant to the desired outcome than is a formal/institutional Jewish education. The fact that "Lots of Jewish friends" comes in at just under 25% is a bit surprising. On another item asking parents of their hopes for their children's circle of Jewish friends[133], well over 2/3 (69.3%) reported that they hoped their children will eventually have at least as many or more Jewish friends as they do today. It is possible that the positioning of the identity question with "Jewish friends" as an option primed the respondents to give more robust answers when the future hope item was presented a few moments later.

Qualitative evidence for the superior force of friends in the lives of Jewish teens and young adults abounds at Jewish summer camps and community youth groups. In Mountain City I found the evidence during the community's #1 fund raiser of the year – the Jewish Food Festival. I arrived early at the synagogue the day before the festival was to begin. I was surprised – and happy – to see many teens among the senior citizen volunteers. I thought, perhaps, they would stay a couple of hours and then take off. To my amazement, many of them stayed all day, not leaving until most of the work had been done.

[133] Possible responses to the question, "Thinking of the proportion of your friends who are Jewish, which statement most closely represents your hopes for your children?" included "as many," "a few more," "many more," "some," and "the number is not important"; N=254)

Figure 5.2 – The most important things a child needs for a strong Jewish identity:



NOTE: Data taken from the Small Jewish Community Project (advertised by direct community invitations and social media in the spring of 2017) internet-based self-administered survey. Participants responding to the prompt, "Please drag and drop the three-to-five most important things a Jewish child needs in order to obtain a strong Jewish identity." N=275.

In Photo 5.7, you can just make out some of the teens from Beth Ahavah in Mountain City who volunteered their time to not only help raise funds for the Jewish community, but to spend the day with their friends. Many more teens were outside setting up tables, tents, and the soft drink stand. I was hoping to be able to meet with some of the teens that evening but it was not to be – they had planned to all hang out together that night, sans adults.

Photo 5.7

Considering directly the question of a Jewish education and who should be providing the instruction – the proof-of-concept survey returned some very interesting data that confirms my assertion that formal Jewish education is not at the forefront of the minds of these parents – and provides some indication that parents, themselves, believe Bengtson's theory that families are the primary factor behind the creation and maintenance of a religious identity. Table 5.8 presents the number of times survey respondents placed a given item in rank order of #1, #2, #3, or #4 for the importance of that particular educational method. The vast majority of respondents believe that parents should be the most important method of Jewish education in the life of a Jewish child – barely 1 in 8 believe a professional educator should get the job. In fact, only one-quarter of those responding believe the professional should be runner-up. Indeed, the backup Jewish child educator of preference is the grandparents. This result also indicates that parents know something about educating their children that Bengtson merely discovered and published.[134]

[134] One of my Sociology professors at the University of Connecticut was want to repeat the phrase, "Sociology, most often, discovers the obvious." While at first skeptical, over the years, I have come to agree whole-heartedly!

Table 5.8

Ordered Importance for Educational Methods

	% Ranked 1	% Ranked 2	% Ranked 3	% Ranked 4
Professional Educator	12.4%	25.7%	44.6%	17.3%
Parents	81.9%	14.1%	4.0%	0.0%
Grandparents/Ext. Fam	4.4%	54.2%	32.1%	9.2%
Other/Jewish Community	1.2%	6.0%	19.3%	73.5%

NOTE: Data taken from the Small Jewish Community Project (advertised by direct community invitations and social media in the spring of 2017) internet-based self-administered survey. Participants responding to the prompt, "Thinking about religious education for Jewish children in general, please drag-and-drop the following methods into order of importance for the average Jewish child." N=275.

The decision for parents to either move back to or remain in a small Jewish community to raise their family cannot be understated. Although each of these communities has a core group of families which can trace their roots back to the founding of the local Jewish community – well over 100 years and four generations in each case – historical roots are not sufficient. As demonstrated by the LSOG data, each generation must make their own decision to accept the values of their parents or move on and find their own way. According to Bengtson (2013), a wide variety of religious values are determined by the closeness of the parent-child relationship – especially the values of religious tradition and religious participation – which are more strongly influenced by the presence of a warm and loving father than by a warm and loving mother (76-77). Regardless of the gendered nature of the effect, however, the results can be either devastating to a community as children leave or revitalizing as they return. One young woman from Green Valley summed up her inheritance of her parents' religious values this way:

> "It is one of the ten commandments – that's a Jewish value – a lot of our parents are here in Green Valley… and that's a reason that we all moved back here… to a place that we belong, but also out of respect for our elders. We care about the synagogue because our parents were here and we are stepping up as the next generation to help our parents maintain the community."

However, others have made the decision to not pursue career opportunities and lucrative salaries in the urban centers because they believe that the small Jewish community is the best choice for their child(ren). As one Green Valley dad related to our focus group, he is not sure when his son will realize the choice to choose synagogue over soccer is an important life lesson – but it is one that he learned and chose, himself, as an adult.

With regard to the warmth of the parent-child relationship, the proof-of-concept survey allows us to compare the relative participation in a variety of activities between fathers and mothers. Unlike the LSOG this is not a comparison of parents within the same family, nor is it broken down by the level of religiosity for each parent.

Table 5.9a

	Frequency / Parent					
	Almost Never / Annually		Several times a year / Bi-monthly		About once a month	
Activity with Oldest Child:	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Parent helping child with chores	51.9%	40.2%	16.7%	22.6%	7.4%	8.5%
Child helping parent with chores	57.1%	40.8%	17.9%	23.1%	3.6%	8.3%
Having dinner together	14.3%	12.4%	47.3%	42.4%	11.6%	12.4%
Religious activities	42.0%	42.6%	37.5%	30.8%	8.9%	5.9%
Talking over important things	11.5%	10.1%	24.8%	18.3%	24.8%	16.0%

Table 5.9b

	Frequency / Parent					
	About once a week		Several times a week		Almost every day	
Activity with Oldest Child:	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Parent helping child with chores	8.3%	7.9%	9.3%	10.4%	6.5%	10.4%
Child helping parent with chores	9.8%	10.1%	8.9%	10.7%	2.7%	7.1%
Having dinner together	5.4%	7.1%	8.9%	7.1%	12.5%	18.8%
Religious activities	7.1%	14.8%	3.6%	4.7%	0.9%	1.2%
Talking over important things	19.5%	18.9%	15.0%	22.5%	4.4%	14.2%

NOTE: Proof-of-concept survey participants responding to the prompt, "Thinking about your oldest child - whatever their age - indicate how often you do the following activities together:" and the resultant frequency responses for "your child helping you with chores" (N=272), "helping your child with chores (N=281), "having dinner together" (N=282), "religious activities of any kind" (N=281), and "talking over important things" (N=282).

As indicated by Tables 5.9a and 5.9b, mothers are equal to or exceed fathers in every parent-child activity and at every frequency except three – "parent helping child with chores" and "talking over important things" about once a week, "talking over important things" about once a month and once a week, and "having dinner together" several times a week. Unfortunately, the first two do not tell us much about the father-child relationship other than, perhaps, there are regularly-scheduled weekly chores common to many families which are taken care of by fathers and their children. And, perhaps, this is when they have their talks. With regard to "having dinner together," however, there may be something here. Could it be that fathers are relieving mothers on occasion in the evenings? Or could it be that fathers are simply over-reporting their involvement on a weekly basis for chores and dinners? Without a comparison of mothers and fathers in the same household, as well as breaking down parent/child involvement by the age and residency of the child, it is difficult to say. However, overall, it does appear that moms have the edge over dads in the amount of time spent with their children in common activities.

The LSOG not only documents the import of grandparents in the lives of Jewish children (175-176), an entire chapter is dedicated to the alignment of religious attitudes between children and their grandparents. Although the LSOG data indicates that the similarity between grandparent and grandchild generations has decreased significantly among Jewish families in America between the years 1970 (Generation 1 – Generation 3) and 2005 (Generation 2 – Generation 4),[135] they are faring better in the generational transmission of religious values than Mainline protestants and Catholics (103). In the aggregate, the strength of religious values

[135] Mormons have the greatest rate of increase in the 35 years of data recorded by the LSOG, with "nones" seeing slight gains, as well. Evangelical Protestants have largely held their own.

transmission from grandparents to their grandchildren is highest among the "very religious" and those who attend services at least weekly. In support of Wilcox's research (2004) demonstrating the superior strength of a father's influence on a child's values, the LSOG also reveals very religious grand*fathers* as having a stronger effect on religious values transmission than very religious grandmothers. In all other areas of religiosity – moderate, slight, and not at all – grandmothers still hold more sway over their grandchildren. In an attempt to build a causal chain, Bengtson's research team argues effectively that it is the warmth of relationship often found between American grandparents and their grandchildren which explains the efficient and effective transmission of religious values (106-109).

My findings from interviews and site visits confirm those of the LSOG. In Riverton, those same young ladies who were hoping to build a single-faith Jewish home even if intermarried gave significant credit to their grandparents:

> **Girl 1:** "We always like to go to my grandma's house for holiday dinners… When I say I'm having family dinner, it's definitely like not just the people I'm related to. It's like, we have a group that's like us and like two other families that like, that's like our family dinners, is like with them, so like it's not just like my direct family."
>
> **Girl 2:** "I feel like at my house we don't have as much [tradition]. But I go to my grandma's house – we live really close to her – and at her house we have much more of that."

The memories of grandparents who have passed are also regularly on the minds of these young women. Most of them have learned to recite the Kaddish – the traditional memorial prayer – and they all light memorial candles with their parents, on holidays and the anniversary of a grandparent's death. Of course, it is not the same as having a grandparent present, as one young lady put it,

> "It (saying the Kaddish prayer) means something to me, but it would mean more if I had known my grandfathers."

I also encountered grandparents who understood the impact of their relationship as well as their behavior modeling on their children's children. During the Community Leaders' focus group in Riverton, one of the men at the table made the observation that,

> "The more you do, the higher your probabilities are for having children who embrace your values. The less you do, the lower your probabilities. Still, we know children who go out and fall in love with non-Jews. But there is a return on the investment you make."

One of the older ladies extended this sentiment to the third generation:

> "I demonstrate Judaism in my home – my grandchildren say the ha motzi[136] before every meal – that's a good way reinforce Judaism. It maintains the responsibility to thank God for what one has. On Friday night at my house we light candles and say the blessing over the wine. The grandchildren see this with me."

At the end of this section, Bengtson agrees that social science has "ignored the role of grandparents in religious transmission" for the last several decades, and that his research team, with the help of the LSOG has "rediscovered religious grandparents" (112).

Overall, I believe the qualitative data is strong in its support of my expectation that adults who grew up in small Jewish communities with fewer formal educational resources than would be available in urban areas will, in sufficient numbers to sustain the community, accept the inheritance of their parents' (and grandparents') religious values. While the numerical data is weak in this regard, there is evidence from the proof-of-concept survey that parents are indeed

[136] A brief blessing recited before eating bread.

thinking along the lines that have demonstrated to be true in the major longitudinal family study of our day, the LSOG – that parents are the best instructors for a child's religious education.

The strategies and attitudes presented in this chapter are, of course, no guarantee that any given child will grow up to inherit and live out the values intended by his or her parents. They do, however, form a logical and loving structure for raising children in an environment where parents are not only concerned for their child's Jewish future, but are willing to make conscious and, perhaps personally painful, decisions regarding that future. In the concluding chapter, we will consider how those painful decisions could be perceived by some as magical.

Conclusion: Thinking Small, Review of Findings, The Next Jewish Language and Final Thoughts

The November, 2015 issue of Commentary Magazine (Abrams et al. 2015) asked a cornucopia of Jewish leaders and thinkers "What will be the condition of the Jewish Community 50 years from now?" Out of the 70 respondents, all but a very few (most notably Jon D. Levenson, Jacob J. Schacter, Lynn Schusterman, and Motti Seligson), answered the question from a macro perspective. In other words, their responses dealt primarily with how American, Israeli and Global Jewry might look one-half century from now. While each respondent provided a snippet of wit, wisdom and even clarification of the problems facing Judaism today and how they might be solved over the course of five decades, I believe these responses to be less than helpful in planning for the Jewish world of 2065. In truth, Judaism is not – cannot be – lived out at the level of America, Israel or the globe. Rather, Jewish faith and culture can only be lived out in real-time by real people as they relate to their families and local communities.

Thus, when considering the future of Judaism, we should <u>think</u> <u>small</u>. We should not be asking how American Jewry will be changed in the course of 50 years, but how the Jewish community of Grand Junction, Colorado, will fare: What must the current compliment of some 700 parents, children, and leaders do to increase their chances that a viable community will be there for the generation yet to be born? Rather than ask about the state of Israel in 2065, let us consider the challenges facing the small Israeli communities of Giv'at Ze'ev, or Karmiel and the families who comprise these communities. Rather than wring our hands over the prospects for world Jewry, I suggest that our efforts would be more effectively spent considering how Jewish families in micro Jewish communities found in the Balkans, Italy, or New Zealand will be able to increase their chances of seating at least three or four generations at the Seder table in 2065.

The past 50 years of Jewish history have been largely about growth – growth that quite often comes at the expense of those families for whom our institutional bricks, budgets and professional personnel are intended to serve. From elementary education to birthright trips, from interfaith dialogue to domestic and international policy issues we have been trained to think globally without consideration for how the individual units (communities, families and individuals) might bend unnaturally, break or run away (!) under the weight of the superstructure.

Now is the time to think small. How might changes in economics, technology and government policy be leveraged to enhance the Jewish lives of the 14-year-olds, single moms, and 100% lay-led congregations in our midst? How can over-scheduled families be encouraged to make intentional Judaism a priority? Such bite-sized visions of the future are more manageable in real-time than grand visions of what might be for world Jewry. Finally, a strategy of *thinking small* just might have a better chance of turning out more Jewish people in 2065 than in 2015.[137]

The focus of this research project involved a close look at small Jewish communities in America, their attitudes and behaviors vis-à-vis contemporary Jewish life and the strategies they employ in the never-ending struggle to transmit Jewish values to the next generation. As we have heard in their own voices and seen in their own actions, those who live in these small Jewish communities do not see generational values transmission as the goal, but as a tool. The goal, often stated overtly by Jewish grandparents, and sometimes much more subtly by Jewish teenagers – is to ensure the vitality and viability of Judaism in America, the kind found in small

[137] The first four paragraphs of this chapter – based on the initial research for this project – originally appeared in Jewish Values Online, Dec 31, 2015 (http://jewishvaluescenter.org/jvoblog/21st-century-Jews).

Jewish communities. The realization of this task will not be known by the grandparents, or perhaps even the parents, of this current generation, but by those who are gathered around the family table on the 14th of Nisan, 5827 (March 30, 2067) for the traditional Passover Seder.

Project Summary and Review of Results

As noted in the Introduction,[138] my focus in the course of this study was to understand how parents, though lacking the financial resources, professional educators, and formal institutions found in larger communities, are able to face the growing challenges of societal pressures and increase the probability that their grandchildren will be Jewish. As I now reflect on my research and this volume which has presented my findings, I am confronted with mixed emotions as I set out to offer a brief evaluation of this work. On the one hand, I am confident that I have provided a unique perspective and insights into the attitudes and behaviors of those who make their homes in small Jewish communities and must make daily decisions regarding the Jewish living, education, and values for themselves, their families, and their children. They have mastered the art of "thinking small." On the other hand, I know that this study has but scratched the surface of a depth of yet uncollated information regarding the distinct nature of religio-ethnic identity formation and maintenance in these communities – and how they differ from the more studied and well-known large Jewish centers. Thus, while there is still a long way to go towards a complete understanding of why these small Jewish communities even continue to exist – much less thrive – in the face of contemporary challenges, I am happy to have completed one of the first steps on what will certainly be a very long journey.[139]

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[138] Introduction, p4.

[139] I would be remiss if I did not take note of those projects which are also taking similar first steps towards greater understanding and awareness of small and micro Jewish communities in America. Of particular note is the Small

Chapter 1: Jewish Religious and Ethnic Identity: Theoretical Foundations

This chapter was an attempt to consolidate the wealth of social theory on the formation and maintenance of religio-ethnic identity into accessible, appropriate, and useful nuggets of knowledge that would support a research path that included evaluation of both quantitative and qualitative research data. While I believe this chapter was generally useful for supporting the historical, quantitative, and qualitative research presented in subsequent chapters, there is a gap in the *sociology of small town America*. While it has been at the forefront of my mind – and many others with whom I have spoken – that one of the more significant variables regarding the generational transmission of Jewish values in small Jewish communities is the unique nature of the small towns and cities where these communities are found, I chose to not pursue this particular variable at this time. Not only must a researcher narrow the scope of work to that which is manageable within the time and resources available, priorities and objectives must also be weighed and decisions made. While the "small town effect" might play a role in many small Jewish communities, it is not a variable that would necessarily enter into the suite of factors for all small Jewish communities. Indeed, some small Jewish communities find themselves in the midst of moderately-sized cities of 200,000 or more residents (e.g. Boise, ID, Tallahassee, FL, or Winston-Salem, NC). Thus, I chose to exclude this factor in my research.

The variable I thought would be the most problematic was that which determines "who is a Jew." Although both the NJPS 2000-01 and 2013 Pew surveys utilized multi-item pre-screening to scope Jewish participants into and non-Jewish participants out of their surveys, I utilized a simple, though not simplistic, two-factor gateway.[140] To this point (limited though it

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Town Jewish History Project sponsored by the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, PA, Brad Lichtenstein and his team at 371 Productions who created "There Are Jews Here," and the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

[140] Chapter 1, p. 21.

is), I have not received any push-back or even askance looks from fellow sociologists, Jewish clergy or other professionals, or research participants on this method for determining Jewish participation in my research. In fact, the utilization of a straight-forward two-factor gateway definition provided much more efficient screening of participants for the proof-of-concept survey. I consider the development and leveraging of this theoretical definition to be one of the unexpected successes of this project and a direct result of my own efforts to "think small."

Chapter 2: The Historical and Contemporary Distinctives of Small Jewish Communities

I view this chapter as foundational both historically and conceptually. Historically, it is vital to have a solid grasp on how small Jewish communities came to be established in the United States, how the social dynamics differed from small Jewish communities in Europe and how these communities distinguished themselves from the coastal Jewish centers during the early days of the nation as they had to transform "thinking small" from how it was applied in shtetl life to how it would best serve new communities in America. Conceptually, it is important for the reader to grasp the unique place of small Jewish communities in the fabric of their host communities and the challenges faced by the community as a whole as well as the individuals and families therein. Of particular note are the internal struggles between specific groups (e.g. German Reform vs. Russian Orthodox) whose city-based cousins did not have to make compromises with each other so quickly, or as fundamentally as did those who chose to stay in small Jewish communities. In parallel to these historical developments is the very important realization of the intentional decision-making by parents to remain in small Jewish communities – and to remain Jewish! Just as the easier choice today would be to move to an urban Jewish community where "being Jewish" is much easier than in small communities, so it would have been much easier for those early peddlers, merchants, and businessmen to return to those cities

where the infrastructure, economics, and social norms were already in place for Jewish success. However, they chose to stay and build Jewish success and Jewish community in their own way.

This chapter and volume would have benefited from a more in-depth telling of the story of how small Jewish communities in America came to be and how "thinking small" became Americanized. Rather than provide a general overview of the planting and growth of small Jewish communities, I could have provided a composite, detailed account of the quintessential small Jewish community. However, where the field of Jewish knowledge is strongest today is in this particular area. My hope is that, for the reader who wishes to know more about the founding of small Jewish communities and their subsequent growth and coping with the dramatic changes of the twentieth century, they will seek out those references I have provided. Authors such as Sussman (1989), Weissbach (2005), Meyer (1972), and others have told this story much better than could I in this space.

Chapter 3: Twenty-First Century Small Jewish Communities

This chapter highlights my research on-the-ground with key informants, focus groups, clergy, and anyone else who would discuss with me their beloved small Jewish community. On the one hand, I believe I did a good job of representing the realities of living in a small Jewish community today, including the blessings and challenges – and the magic of "thinking small" that has produced generation after generation of Jewish families in small Jewish communities. I was able to present their values in a holistic, if not unified, manner that illustrates the messy reality of how individuals and communities think of Jewish values in the twenty-first century.

Although I believe most people will focus on the "We Know We Are Different"[141] section, the more important findings are to be found in other places.

In the first section, "Our Values,"[142] I have illustrated that small Jewish communities do rely much more on relationships than institutions for both the generational transmission of Jewish values as well as inter-community dynamics.

In the sections, "We Have Issues to Face,"[143] and "We Are Family,"[144] I believe I have successfully illustrated the reflective nature of life in contemporary small Jewish communities with regard to the generational transmission of Jewish values. It is quite evident that the values of "Lovingkindness" and "Respect/Dignity/Honor" which were found across a spectrum of communities is noticed by those outside the small Jewish community as well as those within. Regarding the unique way in which small Jewish community members regard family – that everyone has a seat at the family table and that parents are responsible for creating Jewish life – it is evident that without this value and its definitional nuances, there would be fewer small Jewish communities and their future would be in doubt. Not only is there evidence to support parent-child affective solidarity, but their choices in the face of pressures to assimilate and relegate Jewish life to second-tier priority behind secular education, sports, and social options are clear, if not difficult and not always consistent.

"We Cause Some of Our Own Problems,"[145] and "Compared To Our Larg(er) Sister Communities, We're In Pretty Good Shape Jewishly"[146] are those sections which highlight the

[141] Chapter 3, p. 79.
[142] Chapter 3, p. 63
[143] Chapter 3, p. 86
[144] Chapter 3, p. 72
[145] Chapter 3, p. 89.
[146] Chapter 3, p. 91

issues most relevant to the distinctions between small Jewish communities and those larger Jewish communities with greater financial and professional resources. The people who live in Green Valley, Riverton, and Mountain City are very self-aware of the decisions they have made, the problems they face due to those decisions (or lack thereof), and the choices they need to make now and in the future. They are also aware of how impacting each of those choices are on the ultimate goal of providing a strong religio-ethnic identity for the next Jewish generation. As often repeated by those who had previously lived in larg(er) Jewish communities, "it's easy to be Jewish in the big cities," "here it's hard," and "we have to put forth a conscious effort just to get a little Jewish."[147]

Looking back on the qualitative portion of my research, the depth of knowledge and breadth of information could have been greatly enhanced by the inclusion of the following:

1) More focus on singles. While in Green Valley I did obtain some rich data from two single men who also happened to be key informants. I was also able to glean some useful information from one single older woman in the same community. Their input should have been a signal for me to include more singles in my research:

> "If we want to keep Judaism alive, we need to focus more on singles."
>
> "Jews need to meet other Jews - this needs to be facilitated."
>
> "The rabbi in each town should encourage families to welcome singles into their homes."

And the clincher:

[147] Chapter 3, pp. 92-93

> "We used to have specific weekends for singles where folks would sponsor… [We then] ended up with couples who got married."

Had I specifically set out to obtain information from singles in each community, I would have obtained a more complete picture of the social dynamics providing structure to these small Jewish communities. During the lay leadership focus group in Mountain City, one young professional woman came up to me after the discussion to expressly ask why I had not included a group for singles. I admitted that she had a good point and I would be happy to make time if she could help organize the group and venue. Unfortunately, she was unavailable and I was unable to find anyone else willing to take on the task. In and of itself, this particular development in Mountain City may be indicative of one of the problem areas facing small Jewish communities that could negatively impact the next Jewish generation – especially if singles in some communities are feeling left out of the "family portrait" and are provided an excuse through negative experience to move the priority of having a Jewish family, children, and grandchildren down a few notches.

Inquiry of those who chose to leave a small Jewish community. Due to time and financial limitations of my own, I was unable to seek out and sit down with those who grew up within the community and then left in one of two specific ways: 1) Those who moved to another geographic area yet maintained the same level of commitment to Judaism and generational Jewish continuity; and 2) Those who remained in the local community where they grew up yet chose to disassociate from Judaism. Information from the first group would be invaluable towards gaining deeper understanding regarding the drawbacks to small Jewish communities aside from the financial and professional resource issues – or perhaps because those issues represent other matters of which I and others (even those living in small Jewish communities?) are unaware or are unable to discern with our current set of assumptions. Information from the

second group may resemble the information we have already gleaned from those who have left the larger, more religiously observant communities: family or community pain perceived to be caused by Judaism, the call of "comfort" from the secular world, and standards which seem impossible to keep (Margolese 2005). However, it may also be that there are some distinctive characteristics of small Jewish communities that facilitate disaffiliation. While some of my interview respondents were very willing to discuss their children who had left their small Jewish community for a job or other opportunity that did not negatively impact their Jewish life, they were reticent to discuss children who left Judaism. To understand those individuals, it is necessary to speak with them directly.

Chapter 4: Comparing Communities of Faith by Size and Attitude: New Findings from the Pew Data, Observations from the Field, and Suggestions for Better Data Collection on Those Who Live in Small Jewish Communities.

Utilizing quantitative data from the NJPS 2000-01 and 2013 Pew surveys, and my own qualitative data, and common sense, Chapter 4 was an attempt to determine if the extant numerical data was sufficient to make generalizations about those who live in small Jewish communities nation-wide. I was quite disappointed to find that the data available from both surveys is unusable to answer very many questions – substantive or otherwise – with any sufficient confidence about those who live in small Jewish communities. While I addressed the methodological difficulties associate with both studies, the root-cause as to why these data sets are insufficient is because, in my opinion, they are asking the wrong question. Both the NJPS 2000-01 and 2013 Pew survey were asking questions of Jews who live in small communities. I am asking questions of Jews who live in small *Jewish* communities. These are, of course, two conceptually different contexts. As I demonstrated with the Pew data, not only does the under-sampling of those who do not live in large urban centers skew the expected (and likely!) results

for common demographic indicators such as family structure, education, and income, it renders impossible any attempt to apply a statistical model demonstrating possible causation or even correlation to ethno-religious behaviors that would impact the generational transmission of Jewish values.

I believe I did a satisfactory job in providing an alternative methodology and survey instrument that would not only obtain sufficient data in order to test my theories on generational values transmission in small Jewish communities, but one that would also provide information on the actual mechanisms of such transmission (e.g. "thinking small") per the theories of Bengtson (2013, 2008), Lasker & Lasker (2003), Sacks (2016), and others. As a proof-of-concept survey, this instrument is not without its weaknesses. To begin at the highest level, I neglected to include standard measures of socioeconomic status: income and education. While my presumption is that these factors are going to weigh less in the context of small Jewish communities than in larger communities, nonetheless, these items should have been included in the instrument and will be in future iterations. These factors will be combined with family structure and the parent-child affectation index to better understand the full mechanism of generational values transmission. Also at the most basic level of demographic items, I neglected to include questions regarding social and political affiliations and attitudes. While we know from the 2013 Pew survey that Jews are much like the rest of the country – those who are more religiously observant tend to be more conservative (Smith 2013:96) – by including this factor in future editions of proof-of-concept survey, I may be able to provide evidence for or against a "small community" effect independent of the Jewish-related factors for a portion of my small Jewish community population.

At a lower analytical level, yet nonetheless important, single respondents are missing from this survey. As would have been the case with the qualitative work, singles may give unique insights into the role they play in the general generational transmission of values within a small Jewish community as well as greater understanding of what these communities may be doing well – or not so well – to encourage singles to form Jewish families. In a similar fashion, it would have been useful to attempt to receive responses from both mothers and fathers in the same family, as well as the children of respondent parents and the grandparents of those children. This would have more closely modeled the methodology of the Longitudinal Study of Generations (Silverstein and Bengtson 2016), providing a more robust understanding of the actual behaviors and mechanisms driving – or alternatively prohibiting – generational values transmission in small Jewish communities. Finally, as was noted by some of the respondents to the survey, I only asked parents about their relationship with their oldest child.[148] Certainly for those with more than one child, there could be different types and quality of relationships and, thus, correspondingly different rates of values transmission within each relationship. Due to the length of the survey, I chose to limit the parent-child affection items to just the oldest child. In future editions, I will provide opportunity for parents to provide responses for each of their children. This will undoubtedly provide for more robust data on the effectiveness of generational values transmission within specific parent-child affective contexts.

I would like to note a completely unanticipated effect of the proof-of-concept survey: People from the small and micro Jewish communities who were invited to participate not only

[148] Although the parents were asked for the zip code of their oldest child to account for physical distance, for those living locally, we did not ask if they were living in their parents' home.

responded at a rate double of that expected,[149] I also received very personal and emotional emails and phone calls from rabbis, secretaries, parents, and grandparents thanking me for my interest in their community, offers of help with this and future surveys, requests for the data, suggestions for improvement, and desire to be kept up-to-date on project activities. This, in and of itself, testifies to the need for a nation-wide survey that allows the voice of those who live in small Jewish communities to be heard and speak into the current and developing world of American Jewry.

Chapter 5: Tactics, Strategies, and Boundaries: How Small Jewish Communities Facilitate Values Transmission Generationally and Increase the Odds of Jewish Continuity

In this chapter I demonstrate that my research does provide evidence to support my research objectives and theoretical assumptions sufficient to warrant further research. I also demonstrate that the model presented in Chapter 4 for survey research is a suitable way to conduct the next study, in whole or in part. I was able to demonstrate that my proof-of-concept data aligns fairly well with Bengtson's (2003, 2013, 2008) theoretical approach and the design of the LSOG (Silverstein and Bengtson 2016). As noted above, by including the required demographic items for SES, as well as including more items regarding generational and parent-child affection, the proof-of-concept survey may have provided even stronger evidence for effective generational values transmission in small Jewish communities. Overall, the evidence provided regarding my expectations for "conscious and intentional strategies for empowering parents," and the probabilities that "adult children will share their parents' religio-ethnic values" is, at best, weak. While I believe I can report with confidence thoughtful reflection from my

[149] As of April 28, 2017 there were 507 respondents or approximately 3% of the total estimated population of those communities to which invitations were emailed.

parent respondents as to the need for generational values transmission and their ability to consistently "think small," there is a lack of specific and intentional strategy statements from them. Largely, such intentionality can only be inferred from their answers to my questions.

Contribution to the Field

As noted above, I am not the only researcher to focus on small Jewish communities in recent times. However, there are very few of us and the work to be done is vast and deep. Therefore, while this project only scratched the surface of what needs to be understood about small Jewish communities and the magic of "thinking small," I believe I have provided some important knowledge that had not previously been discussed:

1) Clarification of the question leading to relevant information – the difference between Jews who live in small communities and small Jewish communities. This clarification has enabled me not only to target those communities about which we know little, but to focus on their methods for values transmission (family-centric, not institution-centric) as well as their unique contextual issues (e.g. common "otherness" translated into personal care for the larger community) which have been previously unexplored in a Jewish context of any sort.

2) Bringing qualitative work to the table of understanding American Jewry in the context of small Jewish communities. The extant historical and contemporary work on small Jewish communities (with the noted and specific exception of the film, "There Are Jews Here") is largely of an informative and documentary nature with very little by way of inquiry into the actual thoughts, ponderings, and personal worries of those who have, are, and are looking forward to raising families in small Jewish communities. As well, while some researchers are concerned with issues of economics and an aging Jewish population (particularly in micro communities), I have not encountered another project which aims to test sociological theory with

a goal of providing strategies for building a stronger Jewish identity in the next Jewish generation. This pre-survey qualitative work also helps to create better surveys to increase the validity of concepts posed to respondents and the reliability of the data collected.

3) I have provided very preliminary insights into what may be the best hope for the future vitality of the American Jewish community: Young men and (especially) young women who desire to raise Jewish families in small communities. These future parents and community leaders saw their own parents modeling roles in their lives that those growing up in cities knew primarily to be filled by highly educated professionals. In other words, they were taught to "think small" and have seen its success in their own lives. This current Jewish generation of young adults may hold the key to ensuring the continuity not only of small Jewish communities; they might also be influential role models for young Jewish parents everywhere who aspire to have Jewish grandchildren.

4) The first effort (of which I am aware) to place values and the study of generational values transmission into Jewish language and concepts that resonate with Jewish parents of all observance levels. For all of my interview, focus group, and informal interview respondents, I started with the presumption that they would understand the Hebrew terminology and antecedents for what I anticipated would be values held in common by residents of small Jewish communities. The initial product of this pre-site-visit research was the informal survey presented in Chapter 3. This survey proved instrumental in helping both focus group respondents and informal respondents clarify the values they observe in the community as well as their own values. Often my respondents were unaware of the Jewish terms or the Jewish historical antecedents of the values they held close to heart. On the periphery of my research, I was able to take the informal survey and turn it in to a

90-minute seminar for parents and their teenage children.[150] Although to date I have only been able to present this seminar to families in Mountain City (largely Reform) and one other location (largely Conservative) not included in this project, the response from both parents and teens was very positive. The focused trajectory and scope of the seminar provided opportunity for these families to discuss Jewish values – values employed in the home, the community, and in personal interactions – in a way that these families had not done before. In both instances, I was able to step back from the conversation and merely observe for more than 15 minutes at a time as these families engaged in "thinking small" together. It is my hope that I will have more opportunities to present this seminar in more venues – thereby increasing the opportunities for parents and teens to contemplate together their Jewish values and how those values form their decision-making processes. Within the context of small Jewish communities, I may also gain additional insights as to the priorities of these families and how they intersect with those mechanisms employed by parents to transmit their Jewish values to their children and, eventually, their grandchildren.

Opportunities for Further Research

The Next Jewish Language

Although this research has discussed a number of approaches for transmitting Jewish values to the next generation, they have been largely nested in close family and community relationships. Yet in any relationship, a language that both participants understand is essential. In order to relay Jewish values more effectively, parents need to effectively communicate with their children affectively, conceptually, and verbally. I will briefly consider three options for

[150] See Appendix F.

what might be considered an appropriate language for transmitting all that is Jewish to the next generation: Music, Humor, and English.

Music

Perhaps the most "obvious" answer that came to the minds of most parents when I asked them informally about the language of their teens was music. Indeed, my conversations with teens in both Riverton and Green Valley, they pointed to the social aspects of gathering for community time with their peers. In Mountain City, the teens who were so eagerly helping out with the Jewish Food Festival[151] came back later that day (and the next!) in order to hear the Josh Niehaus band play a variety of musical styles including rock, reggae, klezmer, and country – all inclusive of traditional Jewish lyrics taken from the bible, the prayer book and even the Passover Haggadah (Photo C1). I was able to have a number of informal conversations with many of the teens who were relaxing, taking in the music and just enjoying a Jewish-themed spring day in their town.[152]

[151] Chapter 5, pp. 46-47.
[152] Photo C2. Permission was received from both of the teens pictured with me. They were also participants in the parent-teen values seminar earlier in the week and especially helpful in understanding the teen culture of Mountain City.

Photo C1

Jewish teens, their parents, and grandparents from the small Jewish community in Mountain City (as well as many non-Jewish folks from the larger community) enjoy and evening at the Jewish Food Festival.

Since many of the teens from Beth Ahavah had been at the values seminar with their parents earlier in the week, I asked them what they thought about how Jewish values were

Photo C2

learned and passed on from generation to generation. While many of them agreed that parents played a key role, they also had a lot to say about their peers and how spending "Jewish time" with their peers was important to their identity and how they thought of their futures as Jewish adults. I then specifically asked them about music as a language suitable for transmitting Jewish values. They all agreed, at first, that music was important and essential, but not sufficient. The young man you see sitting next to me in Photo C2 above, Chaim (with his sister, Abby), was particularly interested in the topic and articulately argued that, for his generation, music was more of a flow in life, rather than a specific vehicle of communication.

I later had the opportunity to speak with the band leader, Josh Niehaus, about the efficacy of music as a language in which to communicate Jewish values. Since I had heard that Josh had

a LOT of recent experience with teens and music in a variety of settings, including serving as the director of Camp Solomon Schechter in Olympia, Washington, I put a lot of stock into what he had to say on this topic. Josh was especially concerned with the way music can get into the heart of the individual as the lyrics and melody are memorized and stored long-term for later use. As our conversation was winding down, Josh suggested that I listen to the twenty podcasts he made during the last year's camping sessions to get an idea of how music was used to teach Jewish values to the up-coming Jewish generation. As I listened to the podcasts, I heard rich descriptions from campers and counselors alike about all of the activities at Camp Solomon Schechter. From food-focused activities to physical fitness and games, nighttime skits and campfires – everything involved music and the internalization of that music into the hearts and minds of the campers. However, I came to the conclusion that Chaim was right – while music was essential, it was not sufficient. It was in the relational basis of the activities – the modeling of the counselors and the relationships between the counselors and the campers – and the reinforcement of those values within the relationships formed between campers where Jewish values were actually communicated. Music was merely the vehicle, not the mechanism. Thus, for parents who are already "thinking small" and utilizing the relational and modeling mechanisms already found in small Jewish communities, adding contemporary Jewish music ripe with traditional themes may indeed be very helpful to the learning process.

Humor

According to the 2013 Pew survey, 42% of those surveyed related that "having a good sense of humor" is essential to what it means to be Jewish while only 28% consider "being part of a Jewish community" to be of equal importance (14). These numbers are incredibly counter-intuitive given the fact that if one is *not* a part of a Jewish community – and especially if one's

parents have not been a part of a Jewish community – it is highly unlikely that one will understand virtually any Jewish joke they are likely to hear. In my proof-of-concept survey, the results were more than flipped: Only 27.7% of my respondents considered "having a good sense of humor" to be essential while almost 60% believe that "being a part of a Jewish community" is essential.[153] Furthermore, in response to the question, "In your opinion, is there a distinctive "Jewish" sense of humor?" only 45% responded "yes" while 42.6% responded "maybe" and 12.4% responded "no." I wonder if the Pew respondents were reflecting on the depth of their answers to this question enough to understand that the reason why Jewish humor was a core element of their Jewish identity[154] is not because of humor, per se, but because of the meaningful Jewish history, shared experiences, and traditions.

To illustrate, the following joke is placed by Dr. Ruth Wisse at the front of the introduction to her 2013 tome on Jewish humor:

> Four Europeans go hiking together and get terribly lost. First they run out of food, then out of water. "I'm so thirsty," says the Englishman. "I must have tea!" "I'm so thirsty," says the Frenchman. "I must have wine." "I'm so thirsty," says the German. "I must have beer." "I'm so thirsty," says the Jew. "I must have diabetes." (1)

In order to evoke a laugh from this and most Jewish jokes, the teller must be certain that the audience will understand the joke: The history, geography, biology, syntax, theology, and in some cases even the accent required to properly tell the joke. Within a contemporary American cultural context, we consider a joke failed if one has to explain it. This is not, however, the case with Jewish humor – and Ms. Wisse has a joke to explain:

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[153] I would argue that my respondents are "thinking small"!

[154] I am willing to admit that Jewish jokes and humorous anecdotes are not necessarily synonymous with "having a good sense of humor." However, I would argue that without the weight of knowledge required to unpack a Jewish joke, humor alone becomes irrelevant to a Jewish identity of any relative strength.

> When you tell a joke to a peasant, he laughs three times, once when you tell it to him, the second time when you explain it to him, and the third time when he understands it. The landowner laughs twice. Once when you tell it to him and again when you explain it, because he never understands it. The policeman laughs only once when you tell it to him, because he doesn't let you explain it so he never understands it. When you tell a Jew a joke, he says, "I've heard it before. And I can tell it better." (3)

In other words, Jewish humor often "works" within different functions of a joke. For the purposes of our discussion, the most important function is that of values transmission. Placed within the framework of "thinking small," parents who learn to tell Jewish jokes to their children in their entirety will be providing them with a multi-level education in social expectations (laughing the first time), field studies in a variety of topics (laughing the second time), and critical-logical thought (laughing the third time). I would anticipate multiple payoffs for this type of "language" leveraged in the pursuit of Jewish values transmission: 1) For the child the immediate reward is in the laughter and a fun time of learning spent with family; 2) For the parent the reward is in the educational journey from A → B → C; and 3) For the Jewish community the reward is in the natural tendency for humans to re-tell the jokes they love from generation to generation to generation.

English as a Jewish Language

Due to the influence of Jewish culture within the general American landscape, most Americans are aware of the Yiddish language as a "Jewish" language – that most of its historical and current speakers are Jewish and that it uses Hebrew letters in written form. At the same time, there has been within the American Jewish community an *integration* of language – not only Yiddish, but Hebrew has well, into American English. Sarah Benor (2009) utilizes the concept of "loaner words" to explain how English may become the next Jewish language.

Providing a singular example, Ms. Benor shares a story of a conversation she had with a number of American Jews and one Israeli regarding a variety of religious topics. As they were leaving the group, her Israeli friend exclaimed that she had never heard of the word "halachically." Upon reflection, Benor, who had used the word often and for most of her life, had never thought that this was a Hebrew word, but realized it was the Americanization of a Hebrew word into English.[155] Providing a more detailed example, Benor asks if the following paragraph is Hebrew or English:

> Shalom, Hevreh,
> This year at my shul, balabatim will be davening musaf on the high holidays. They (and I) are curious about how precisely hazzanim and shlichei tzibor have traditionally handled the logistics of falling kor'im during aleinu—and, for the baal musaf on YK, the avodah service— i.e., what happens to their mahzor, what about the lectern, how are they helped up, etc. I'd appreciate a quick conversation with someone who can answer these questions. Please let me know asap.
>
> Todah,
> Rabbi[156]

I am unable to answer the question of which language the paragraph above represents – and so admits Ms. Benor. However, it is a classic example of how Jews infuse their English with Hebrew and Yiddish words as though they are English words. I had not thought of how often this is done within Jewish community until asking my (all non-Jewish) undergraduate assistants to transcribe the audio files taken from focus groups and in-person interviews. To say that they

[155] From the word "halakhah" meaning literally "way" but referring to Jewish law. The Americanization turns a noun into an adverb.
[156] Translations: shalom (hello), hevreh (group of friends), shul (synagogue), balabatim (lay people / homeowners), davening (leading / praying), musaf (additional service), hazzanim (cantors), shliche tzibor (prayer leaders), falling kor'im (bowing to the floor), aleinu (upon us prayer), baal musaf (musaf leader), YK (Yom Kippur—Day of Atonement), avodah (service), mahzor (holiday prayer book), todah (thank you).

had difficulty with the transcriptions would be an understatement. Even if the Hebrew or Yiddish insertion was just a single word in a paragraph, because of the historical and religious baggage associated with that one word, the entire paragraph was rendered almost meaningless. Often, they would come to me seeking the meaning of an entire phrase which they would then attempt to either shorten or summarize so as to re-use elsewhere. Such practices proved to be frustrating for them as well as me since I had to go back through and re-write most of their attempts at "Hebrish" syntax.

On the occasion of a more casual interview with a young Jewish adult in Green Valley he insisted that for many in his community, "Southern" is more important than "Jewish." In some ways, I saw his point with regard not only to interpersonal behaviors and speech patterns (e.g. men are *expected* to always hold the door for a lady and everyone has time for whatever is needed – there is *no rush*). However, considering the use Hebrew and Yiddish terms that I heard among a variety of observance levels in Green Valley (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform) as well as that picked up by some of the *non-Jewish* members of the JCC, it seems that English is well on its way to being the next Jewish language in many, if not all, Jewish community contexts. I would agree wholeheartedly with Boyarin (2013) that the American Jewish community has impacted the host culture at least as much as host culture has impacted the American Jewish community. In the context of the Jewish family within a small Jewish community (or those who wish to experience the magic of "thinking small"), I would encourage parents to use "Hebrish" as much as possible to communicate Jewish history, culture, religion, tradition, and values as much as possible. The natural explanations and conversations that must follow such syntax would go a long way towards transmitting Jewish values, reinforcing the parent-child relationship, and improving the chances of the parent having Jewish grandchildren.

While each of these "languages" are ripe for more investigation as to their utility and efficacy with regard to raising up the next Jewish generation, the most likely scenario for the most effective language in which to transfer Jewish values to the next generation is a strategic combination of all three. It may also be valuable to create seminars devoted to providing basic instruction for parents on how to use these languages in the religio-ethnic education of their children and within the wider local Jewish community.

Additional topics ripe for research arising out of this project:

1) An in-depth look at the factors motivating the outward service orientation of small Jewish community residents: A direct analysis of why they feel responsible towards the host community

2) A study of Rabbis (and their families) who serve small Jewish communities. Are all such clergy as loved and cherished as much as those who serve Mountain City, Riverton, and Green Valley? If so, what are the personal and corporate factors that bring them to where they are needed? If not, what might be the distinctive characteristics of those small Jewish communities who have such rabbis and those who do not?

3) An examination of the independent effect host communities (especially those which are more socially and politically conservative) might have on small Jewish communities.

4) An investigation into the features which distinguish small from micro Jewish communities – are raw numbers and resources the determining factors, or are there others? Lidji's (Irwin 2017) initial research on micro local communities indicates that there is more to it than just bodies and bucks.

5) Research into the impact of Chabad on small Jewish communities. During my site visits, a number of people in those communities with a Chabad presence remarked on how the Chabad "competition" forced the rest of the community to step up and do a better job of "being Jewish."

It would seem that the Chabad advice to their emissaries to "Keep the rules, but push the edge of the creative envelope, maintain a strong fidelity to Jewish tradition, yet at the same time be innovative" (Eliezrie 2015:75) is good advice for everyone desiring to build Jewish community. As suggested by more than one rabbi with whom I have spoken during the course of this project, a non-Orthodox type of Chabad – a Jewish outreach organization that refuses to compromise on standards yet appeals to a broad range of Jewish people – may be a part of the institutional answer to the issues facing Jewish communities of all sizes.

While it is my intention to follow-up personally in each of these areas, I will be grateful for anyone with a love and concern for small Jewish communities to take hold of one or more these ideas and run with them.

A Final Thought

This project has been inspirational to my own Jewish identity and desire for Jewish grandchildren. My hope, with Heaven's help, is to also inspire others to take up the cause not only of small Jewish communities but the perspective of "thinking small" so as to help ensure of the future vitality and viability of American Jewry – for the sake of the future generations we will never know.

Appendix A: Small Jewish Communities in the United States

A non-exhaustive list of Jewish Communities in the United State Identified as Numbering between 50 and 3,000 Jewish individuals, this list is comprised primarily of the Jewish Federations of North America's Network of Independent Communities – minus the communities of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands (also excluded by Pew) – and those which are geographically located near a large community so as to receive excessive influence (e.g. Bayonne, NJ). The bulk of the population estimates were provided by the office of the director for the Jewish Federations of North America's Network of Independent Communities. Other estimates provided by the *American Jewish Year Book* (2015). Where noted, some estimates were by the author consulting various internet sources. As noted in the text, a "micro Jewish community" is one with fewer than 1,000 identifiable Jewish individuals within a given geographic area. A "small Jewish community" is one in which there are between 1,000 and 3,000 identifiable Jewish individuals within a given geographic area.

In order to compare the responses by people from micro and small Jewish communities with the rest of the data set, zip codes were collected for each community included in the list. Those zip codes were matched against the zip codes provided by the Pew Research Center for each case. A new nominal variable of SJCZip was created in the data set. Those zip codes matching micro Jewish communities were given a value of 1 in SJCZip. Those zip codes matching small Jewish communities were given a value of 2 in SJCZip. All other zip codes were given a value of 0 in SJCZip.

State	City	Pop. Estimate	Zip Codes	Pew Responses
ALASKA	FAIRBANKS	600	14	2
ALABAMA	DOTHAN	150	5	1
	GADSDEN	150	6	
	HUNTSVILLE	750	25	1
	MOBILE**	1,100	38	1

	MONTGOMERY**	1,100	37	1
	SELMA	100	3	2
	THE SHOALS	100	2	
	TUSCALOOSA	200	11	
ARKANSAS	FORT SMITH**	1,100	13	
	LITTLE ROCK	150	24	
ARIZONA	FLAGSTAFF**	1,500	5	1
CALIFORNIA	BAKERSFIELD**	1,600	24	4
	BARSTOW	100	2	
	FRESNO**	2,300	59	1
	LAKE TAHOE	100	2	
	MERCED	190	5	
	MODESTO	500	10	1
	MONTEREY**	2,300	4	
	RIVERSIDE**	2,000	17	2
	SALINAS**	1,000	8	
	SAN BERNARDINO**	3,000	19	
	SAN LUIS OBISPO**	2,000	8	1
	STOCKTON	850	19	3

	VALLEJO	900	4	1
	VICTORVILLE	100	4	
COLORADO	ASPEN	750	2	1
	COLORADO SPRINGS**	1,500	55	4
	FORT COLLINS**	2,000	9	
	GRAND JUNCTION	700	6	
	GREELEY	100	7	1
	PUEBLO	425	12	
	VAIL	650	2	
CONNECTICUT	DANIELSON	100	1	
	PUTNAM	100	1	
	STORRS	400	2	
	TORRINGTON	580	2	
	WILLIMANTIC	300	1	
FLORIDA	FORT PIERCE**	1,060	12	
	FORT WALTON BEACH	100	3	
	GAINESVILLE**	2,500	17	2
	KEY WEST	650	3	
	LAKELAND**	1,000	13	2

	OCALA	500	13	
	PASCO COUNTY**	1,000	39	3
	PENSACOLA	975	23	1
	ST AUGUSTINE**	2,200	6	1
	TALLAHASSEE**	2,200	20	3
	UPPER KEYS	100	5	2
GEORGIA	ALBANY	200	9	
	ATHENS	600	10	1
	BARNESVILLE	< 100	3	
	COLUMBUS	600	14	1
	MACON**	1,000	21	
	VALDOSTA	100	7	
HAWAII	KIHEI^{0} **	1,500	5	2
IOWA	CEDAR RAPIDS	420	14	1
	FAIRFIELD	250	3	
	IOWA CITY	1,300	6	
	OTTUMWA	< 100	4	
IDAHO	BOISE**	1,500	29	2
ILLINOIS	AURORA	750	9	1
	BLOOMINGTON	500	10	

	DANVILLE	< 100	3	
	DECATUR	930	6	1
	DEKALB	180	3	
	ELGIN	500	5	
	GALESBURG	100	4	
	JOLIET	210	7	
	QUINCY	100	3	1
	WAUKEGAN	300	3	
INDIANA	BLOOMINGTON**	1,000	8	1
	EVANSVILLE	400	32	
	LAFAYETTE	550	7	1
	MICHIGAN CITY	300	3	
	MUNCIE	120	8	1
	TERRE HAUTE	100	10	2
KANSAS	LAWRENCE	200	6	
	TOPEKA	400	35	
KENTUCKY	ASHLAND	100	5	
LOUISIANA	ALEXANDRIA	175	8	
	LAKE CHARLES	200	11	
MASSACHUSETTS	AMHERST**	1,300	4	3

	ATHOL	150	3	
	ATTLEBORO	800	1	
	CLINTON	100	2	
	FITCHBURG**	1,500	1	
	GARDNER**	1,500	1	
	GREENFIELD**	1,100	3	1
	HOLYOKE	600	2	
	LEOMINSTER**	1,500	1	1
	MARTHA'S VINEYARD	375	1	1
	NANTUCKET	500	2	
	NEWBURYPORT	280	3	1
	NORTHAMPTON**	1,200	3	4
	PLYMOUTH**	1,000	4	1
	TAUNTON**	1,000	7	2
	WEBSTER	500	3	
MARYLAND	ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY**	3,000	2	1
	CUMBERLAND	275	5	
	FREDERICK**	1,200	6	

	HAGERSTOWN	325	7	
	HARFORD COUNTY**	1,200	3	1
	SALISBURY	400	4	
MAINE	AUGUSTA	140	5	
	BANGOR**	3,000	2	1
	LEWISTON	600	3	
	ROCKLAND	300	1	
	WATERVILLE	225	4	1
MICHIGAN	BATTLE CREEK	150	6	
	BAY CITY	150	3	
	BENTON HARBOR	150	3	
	JACKSON	200	3	
	KALAMAZOO**	1,500	5	1
	LANSING**	2,100	10	
	MARQUETTE	150	23	
	MIDLAND	120	2	1
	MOUNT CLEMENS	200	7	
	MT. PLEASANT	200	4	1
	MUSKEGON	210	6	1

	PETOSKEY	150	1	
	SAGINAW	115	11	
	SOUTH HAVEN	100	1	1
	TRAVERSE CITY	150	4	
MINNESOTA	DULUTH	485	14	1
	HIBBING	<100	2	
	ROCHESTER	550	6	
	VIRGINIA	<100	2	
MISSOURI	COLUMBIA	400	11	1
	JOPLIN	100	5	
	SPRINGFIELD	300	16	1
	ST JOSEPH	200	8	
MISSISSIPPI	BILOXI	250	8	
	CLEVELAND	100	3	
	GREENVILLE	120	4	
	GREENWOOD	100	2	1
	HATTIESBURG	130	7	
	JACKSON	400	27	
	TUPELO	<100	5	

	VICKSBURG	<100	4	
MONTANA	BOZEMAN	500	6	
	BUTTE	<100	5	
	HELENA	100	8	
NORTH CAROLINA	ASHEVILLE**	2,500	11	
	FAYETTEVILLE	300	10	
	GASTONIA	250	5	
	GOLDSBORO	<100	0	
	GREENVILLE	240	4	
	HENDERSONVILLE	250	6	
	HICKORY	260	4	
	HIGH POINT	150	7	
	JACKSONVILLE	<100	0	
	NEW BERN	150	6	
	STATESVILLE	100	3	
	WHITEVILLE**	1,200	1	
	WILMINGTON**	1,200	12	1
	WINSTON-SALEM	400	25	3
NORTH DAKOTA	BISMARCK	<100	8	

	FARGO	150	13	
	GRAND FORKS	150	6	
NEBRASKA	LINCOLN	700	28	
NEVADA	RENO[0]	3,000	24	2
NEW HAMPSHIRE	CLAREMONT/UPPER VALLEY	600	5	1
	CONCORD	500	1	
	HANOVER	600	1	1
	NASHUA**	2,000	45	
	SEACOAST/PORTSMOUTH**	1,950	7	
NEW JERSEY	RED BANK	1,100**	2	3
	ROOSEVELT	250	1	
	SALEM	1,890	1	
	WILDWOOD	500	1	
NEW MEXICO	LOS ALAMOS	250	4	
	SANTA FE	2,500	11	2
	TAOS	300	2	
NEW YORK	AMSTERDAM	100	2	
	AUBURN	115	3	
	BINGHAMTON**	2,400	5	1

	CANANDAIGUA	300	1	
	CATSKILL	200	2	
	CHATHAM	150	1	
	CHAUTAUQUA	100	2	
	CORTLAND	150	2	
	DUNKIRK	100	2	
	ELLENVILLE[0]	<100	1	1
	ELMIRA	700	7	1
	FALLSBURG/SOUTH FALLSBURG[0]	100	3	
	GENEVA	300	1	
	GLENS FALLS	800	4	
	GLOVERSVILLE	300	4	
	HERKIMER	130	4	
	HUDSON	500	2	
	ITHACA	2,000	5	2
	MALONE[0]	<100	1	
	MONTICELLO[0]	<100	1	2
	NIAGARA FALLS	150	8	1

	NORWICH[0]	<100	2	
	OLEAN	100	2	
	ONEONTA	300	1	1
	PLATTSBURG	250	2	
	POTSDAM	200	2	
	ROCK HILL[0]	150	1	
	ROME	100	4	
	SENECA FALLS	300	2	
	STAMFORD[0]	<100	2	
	WATERTOWN	100	3	
	WOODRIDGE[0]	<100	1	
OHIO	EAST LIVERPOOL[0]	<100	2	
	LIMA	180	6	
	LORAIN	600	5	
	MANSFIELD	150	7	1
	MIDDLETOWN**	1,500	5	1
	SANDUSKY-NORWALK	105	2	
	SPRINGFIELD	200	6	1
	STEUBENVILLE	115	2	

	WOOSTER	175	1	1
OREGON	CORVALLIS	500	2	2
	EUGENE**	3,000	10	2
	MEDFORD-ASHLAND**	1,000	1	1
PENNSYLVANIA	ALTOONA	550	3	
	BUTLER	250	4	
	CHAMBERSBURG	150	3	
	ERIE	500	26	1
	HAZLETON	300	2	
	INDIANA[0]	<100	2	
	JOHNSTOWN	275	8	
	LANCASTER**	3,000	12	
	LEBANON	350	2	
	LEWISTOWN[0]	<100	1	
	LATROBE	100	1	
	LOCK HAVEN	225	1	
	MEADVILLE[0]	<100	3	
	NEW CASTLE	200	6	
	OIL CITY[0]	<100	1	1

	POTTSTOWN	650	0	
	POTTSVILLE	120	2	
	SHENANDOAH[0]	<100	1	
	STATE COLLEGE	900	1	1
	STROUDSBURG[0]	900	5	1
	SUNBURY	200	3	
	TITUSVILLE[0]	<100	4	
	TOWANDA[0]	<100	3	
	UNIONTOWN	150	1	
	WASHINGTON[0] **	1,000	2	
	WAYNE COUNTY**	3,000	2	
	WILLIAMSPORT	225	4	
	YORK	1,800	9	1
SOUTH CAROLINA	AIKEN	100	8	
	BEAUFORT	100	6	
	COLUMBIA**	3,000	38	2
	FLORENCE	220	6	
	GEORGETOWN	100	2	
	GREENVILLE	1,200	17	

	HILTON HEAD[0] **	2,400	5	
	MYRTLE BEACH	475	10	1
	SPARTANBURG	500	9	
	SUMTER	100	4	
SOUTH DAKOTA	ABERDEEN[0]	120	2	
	RAPID CITY	100	4	
	SIOUX FALLS	195	15	
TENNESSEE	JACKSON	100	6	
	OAK RIDGE	250	3	
	TRI-CITIES[0]	500	8	
TEXAS	BAYTOWN	300	4	
	BEAUMONT	500	14	
	BROWNSVILLE	450	5	
	BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION	400	13	
	CORPUS CHRISTI	140	30	1
	GALVESTON	400	6	1
	HARLINGEN	450	4	
	LAREDO	130	8	

	MCALLEN	500	8	
	TEXARKANA[0]	<100	7	
	TYLER	400	15	1
	WACO	300	16	
UTAH	OGDEN	150	13	
	PARK CITY	600	3	
VIRGINIA	CHARLOTTESVILLE	1,500	12	1
	DANVILLE	100	3	
	FREDERICKSBURG	500	9	1
	LYNCHBURG	275	10	1
	MARTINSVILLE	100	5	
	N SHENANDOAH VL	370	4	
	PETERSBURG	200	4	
	ROANOKE	900	43	1
	WINCHESTER	270	4	1
VERMONT	BRATTLEBORO	350	4	
	BURLINGTON	2,500	8	2
	RUTLAND	300	2	
	ST JOHNSBURY	140	2	
WASHINGTON	BELLINGHAM	525	5	

	SPOKANE	1,500	29	2
	TACOMA	2,500	35	3
	YAKIMA	150	7	
WISCONSIN	APPLETON	100	9	
	BELOIT	120	2	1
	GREEN BAY	500	2	
	KENOSHA	300	6	1
	LA CROSSE	100	4	
	MANITOWOC[0]	<100	3	
	OSHKOSH	170	6	
	RACINE	200	8	1
	SHEBOYGAN	140	5	
	WAUSAU	300	3	
WEST VIRGINIA	BLUEFIELD	200	1	
	CHARLESTON	975	47	1
	FAIRMONT[0]	<100	2	
	HUNTINGTON	250	40	2
	LOGAN[0]	<100	1	
	MORGANTOWN	200	8	

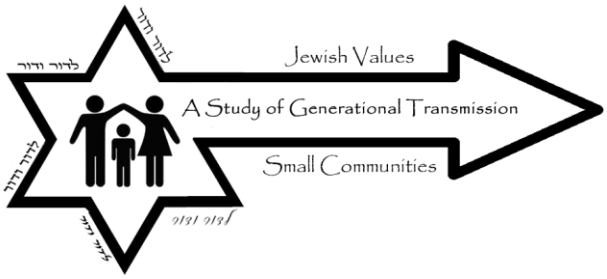
	PARKERSBURG	110	5	
	WHEELING	290	2	
WYOMING	CASPER	150	5	
	CHEYENNE	500	8	
	JACKSON HOLE	300	2	
	LARAMIE	200	4	
TOTAL	**308 Communities**	**171,005**	**2,394**	**144**

NOTE: 63 Pew responses came from those areas meeting the definition of "Small Jewish Community" as used in this project and 76 responses came from communities with less than 1,000 Jewish individuals.

**Meets the definition of “Small Jewish Community” as used in this project

[0] Population estimate based on internet information search November-December, 2016

Appendix B: Informal On-Site Survey



The Small Jewish Communities Project
Principal Investigator: Sam Richardson
IRB Protocol #2014-0203-00
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The Small Jewish Communities Project is focused on the clarification of Jewish values, how these values are transmitted from one generation to the next, and strategies for overcoming the challenges of raising the next Jewish generation.

The list below includes a variety of Jewish values* shared by Jewish communities worldwide. Please choose at least five values which form your top priorities for living a Jewish life.

_____ **Nekudot Bechirah** (Choice Points): Making positive choices

_____ **Anavah** (Humility): No more than my space, no less than my place.

_____ **Ahavat Yisrael** (Love of Israel): Acting in a loving fashion toward fellow Jews and all human beings.

_____ **Kavod** (Respect/Dignity/Honor): Recognizing the respect due to others and the dignity due ourselves.

_____ **Chesed** (Lovingkindness): To do what we can to make the world a better place through acts of *gemilut chasadim*.

_____ **Shimrat HaLashon** (Thoughtful Speech): To hold our speech inside our heads until we determine whether or not it will be of value.

_____ **Emunah** (Faith/Trustworthiness): A quality of reliability based on integrity, honesty and consistency.

_____ **Bakesh Shalom v'Rodfehu** (seek peace and pursue it): The obligation to actively reduce conflicts, advocate for peace and prohibit violence against the innocent

_____ **Ahavat Ger** (loving the stranger): Empathy for those who are "outsiders" and the inclusion of those who are different from us.

_____ **Pikuach Nefesh** (the saving of life): The highest Jewish obligation.

_____ **Tzedakah** (Righteousness): The giving of charity (money and time) to those in need.

_____ **Tzedek Tirdof** (pursuit of justice): Actively pursuing justice.

**Please use the other side to list values not on this page.*

Appendix C – NJPS 2015 Top 20 Metropolitan Statistical Areas with Jewish Population Estimates

Jewish Population in the United States, 2015 by Metropolitan Statistical Area				
MSA Rank	**Metropolitan Statistical Area Name**	**Population 2014 Total**	**Population 2015 Jewish**	**Percentage Jewish**
1	New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	20,092,883	2,118,800	10.5%
2	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	13,262,220	617,480	4.7%
3	Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	9,554,598	294,280	3.1%
4	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	6,954,330	75,005	1.1%
5	Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	6,490,180	45,640	0.7%
6	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	6,051,170	292,350	4.8%
7	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	6,033,737	217,390	3.6%
8	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	5,929,819	565,025	9.5%
9	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	5,614,323	119,800	2.1%
10	Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	4,732,161	238,560	5.0%
11	San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	4,594,060	295,850	6.4%
12	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	4,489,109	82,900	1.8%
13	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	4,441,890	25,625	0.6%
14	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	4,296,611	67,000	1.6%
15	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	3,671,478	61,100	1.7%
16	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	3,495,176	44,500	1.3%
17	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	3,263,431	100,000	3.1%
18	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	2,915,582	58,350	2.0%
19	St. Louis, MO-IL	2,806,207	61,300	2.2%
20	Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	2,785,874	115,400	4.1%
	Total	**121,474,839**	**5,419,280**	**4.5%**

Appendix D: Selected Frequencies from Pew 2013 Data Set

Respondent called offensive names in past 12 months

		No	Yes	TOTAL
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	88.90%	11.10%	100%
	SJC < 1000	89.20%	10.80%	100%
	SJC > 1000	76.50%	23.50%	100%
Total		88.60%	11.40%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "In the past twelve months, have you been called offensive names because you are Jewish?"

Respondent has been socially snubbed in last 12 months

		No	Yes	TOTAL
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	92.80%	7.20%	100%
	SJC < 1000	97.30%	2.70%	100%
	SJC > 1000	74.40%	25.60%	100%
Total		92.40%	7.60%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "In the past twelve months, have you been socially snubbed because you are Jewish?"

Shabbat Candle Frequency

		Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Total
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	55.10%	23.30%	5.70%	15.90%	100%
	SJC < 1000	51.60%	42.80%	5%	0.60%	100%
	SJC > 1000	49%	11.50%	36.70%	2.80%	100%
Total		54.90%	23.40%	6.50%	15.20%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "How often, if at all, does anyone in your household light Sabbath candles on Friday night?"

Children's Education
Formal besides yeshiva or day school

		No	Yes	Total
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	77.30%	22.70%	100%
	SJC < 1000	80.40%	19.60%	100%
	SJC > 1000	61.20%	38.80%	100%
Total		76.90%	23.10%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "Aside from the Yeshiva or Jewish day school, did this or any other children in your household receive any formal Jewish education during the past year, such as in Hebrew school, congregational school or Sunday school, or not.

Keep Kosher at Home

		No	Depends	Yes	Total
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	76.40%	2.40%	21.20%	100%
	SJC < 1000	92%	0.00%	8.00%	100%
	SJC > 1000	60.30%	0.00%	39.70%	100%
Total		76.30%	2.30%	21.40%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "Do you keep Kosher at home?"

Importance of traditional Jewish food

		Not Important	Important	Essential	TOTAL
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	46.60%	39.60%	13.90%	100%
	SJC < 1000	37.50%	55.20%	7.40%	100%
	SJC > 1000	33.90%	23.90%	42.10%	100%
Total		46.00%	39.50%	14.50%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "Aside from special occasions like weddings, funerals, Holy Days, and bar/bat mitzvahs, how often do you attend Jewish religious services at a synagogue, temple, minyan, or Havurah?"

Respondent service attendance frequency

		Never	Seldom	HolyDays	1-2/mo.	Once/Wk	Weekly+	Total
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	25.30%	19.10%	33.10%	11.50%	5.80%	5.30%	100%
	SJC < 1000	12.50%	42.50%	34.80%	7.80%	2.40%	0%	100%
	SJC > 1000	25.40%	16.60%	38.20%	16%	2.70%	1.10%	100%
Total		25%	19.50%	33.20%	11.60%	5.60%	5.00%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "It is important for Jews to remember the Shoah (Holocaust) as a community at specific times."

How important is Jewish Law

		Not Important	Important	Essential	TOTAL
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	39.90%	39.60%	20.50%	100%
	SJC < 1000	34.10%	62.10%	3.80%	100%
	SJC > 1000	36.80%	57.70%	5.50%	100%
Total		39.70%	40.60%	19.70%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "How important is observing Jewish law to what being Jewish means to you?"

Importance of remembering the Holocaust

		Not Important	Important	Essential	TOTAL
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	2.10%	23.90%	74%	100%
	SJC < 1000	8.90%	22.30%	68.90%	100%
	SJC > 1000	11.70%	22.90%	65.40%	100%
Total		2.50%	23.80%	73.70%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "How important is remembering the Holocuast to what being Jewish means to you?"

Leading an ethical and moral life

		Not Important	Important	Essential	TOTAL
Small Jewish Community	Not SJC	5.60%	23.50%	70.90%	100%
	SJC < 1000	0%	26.60%	73.40%	100%
	SJC > 1000	13.10%	49.70%	37.20%	100%
Total		5.70%	24.30%	70%	100%

NOTE: Weighted data representing the proportion of select data set respondents who answered the question, "How important is leading an ethical and moral life to what being Jewish means to you?"

Appendix E: Proof-of-Concept Survey Instrument

Jewish Values Main Survey

Welcome to the Jewish Values Survey, sponsored by the Small Jewish Communities Project at the University of Virginia. This survey should not take more than 15 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, if you qualify, you may have the option of completing additional questions and an opportunity to enter a drawing for a $50 Amazon.com gift card. Either way, we are happy to provide you with a small gift as a token of our appreciation. No personally identifying information will be collected unless you choose to be entered into the gift card drawing or ask us to contact you. All information provided for the drawing or response from the research team will be kept strictly confidential and used for no other purposes.

NOTE: If you wish to view the approved Institutional Review Board Informed Consent Agreement, please click here. You may keep a copy for your records, but it is not necessary to send in a copy to the research team. If you have any question, please contact the Primary Investigator at sam.richardson@virginia.edu.

If you were provided with a unique community ID, please enter it in the box below.

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC BLOCK

Please let us know your geographic location by entering your 5-digit zip code:

Please select your age range:

- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 or older

Your gender:

- Male
- Female

What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Living with partner
- Widowed

Display This Question:
If What is your marital status? Married Is Selected
How many years have you been married?

Display This Question:
If What is your marital status? Married Is Selected
At what age did you get married?

How many children do you have?

- I have no children
- I have one child
- I have two children
- I have three children
- I have four or more children

Condition: I have no children Is Selected. Skip To: End of Block.

What is the age of your oldest child?

Condition: What is the age of your old... Is Less Than 18. Skip To: End of Block.

What is your oldest child's zip code?
(NOTE: If your child lives outside of the US, please enter 00000)

How far do you live from this child in whole miles?

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY BLOCK

Next, we are going to ask you some questions about your religious identity.

Do you consider yourself to be Jewish?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Block.

Would others in your local community consider you to be Jewish?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: End of Block.

In what way(s) do you consider yourself to be Jewish (select all that apply)?

- ❑ I was raised Jewish and one or more of my parents is Jewish.
- ❑ I have one or more Jewish grandparents.
- ❑ I converted or am in the process of converting to Judaism.
- ❑ I have a Jewish spouse.

Display This Question:
If What is your marital status? Married Is Selected

What is your spouse's religious identification?

- Jewish
- Christian
- Other _____

Display This Question:
If What is your spouse's religious identification? Jewish Is Selected

In what primary way does your spouse consider him/herself to be Jewish?

- She/He was raised Jewish and one or more parents is Jewish.
- She/He has one or more Jewish grandparents.
- She/He converted or is in the process of converting to Judaism
- Because they married you.

Thinking of the role Judaism plays in your life, how important is Judaism to you?

- Judaism is not at all important in my life.
- Judaism is somewhat important in my life.
- Judaism is moderately important in my life.
- Judaism is important in my life.
- Judaism is very important in my life.

Thinking about the various aspects of a Jewish identity, please provide a proportion in each box so that the total adds up to 100%

_____ Being Jewish is a matter of religion.

_____ Being Jewish is a matter of ancestry.

_____ Being Jewish is a matter of culture.

_____ Other

Thinking about what being Jewish means to you, how important are each of the following items?

	Essential	Important, but not essential	Not important
Remembering the Holocaust	❍	❍	❍
Leading an ethical and moral life	❍	❍	❍
Observing Jewish law / halakha	❍	❍	❍
Having a good sense of humor	❍	❍	❍
Working for social justice	❍	❍	❍
Being intellectually curious	❍	❍	❍
Eating traditional Jewish foods	❍	❍	❍
Caring about Israel	❍	❍	❍
Being a part of a Jewish community.	❍	❍	❍
Other	❍	❍	❍

Thinking some more about what being Jewish means to you, please indicate your level of agreement with the following phrases:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am proud to be Jewish.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Judaism is relevant to my life.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am emotionally attached to Israel.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Judaism plays a vital role in American life.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
There are important truths to be found in Judaism.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Which of the following statement best reflects your view of intermarriage?

- ❍ Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews is a not a problem and should be encouraged.
- ❍ Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews is not necessarily a problem but should not be encouraged.
- ❍ Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews is a problem, but there is little or nothing that can be done about it.
- ❍ Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews is a problem, and there are specific steps that should be taken to address the issue

Please rate your level of Jewish literacy (how much you have read, how confident you would be in a conversation) in the following areas:

	Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low	Zilch
Bible	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
History	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Music	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Theology	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Regardless of whether you attend religious services, do you consider yourself to be a religious person?

- ❍ I am not at all religious.
- ❍ I am somewhat religious.
- ❍ I am moderately religious.
- ❍ I am very religious.

Regardless of whether or not you are religious, do you consider yourself to be spiritual?

- ❍ No, I am not at all spiritual.
- ❍ I am somewhat spiritual.
- ❍ I am moderately spiritual
- ❍ I am a very spiritual person.

Please let us know how often you engage in the following practices:

	Never	Rarely	On Occasion	Often	Regularly
I/We keep kosher at home:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I/We refrain from handling or spending money on Shabbat:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I/We refrain from writing on Shabbat:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I/We davven (pray) at home:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I/We recite a bruchah (blessing) before eating:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I/We recite Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals) after eating:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I/We attend or host a Passover Seder:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I/We fast on Yom Kippur:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I/We light Shabbat candles on Friday night.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Aside from special occasions like weddings, funerals, Holy Days, and bar/bat mitzvahs, how often do you attend Jewish religious services at a synagogue, temple, minyan, or Havurah?

- ❍ I attend services more than once a week.
- ❍ I attend services about once a week
- ❍ I attend services maybe once or twice a month.
- ❍ I attend services only a few times a year.
- ❍ I seldom attend services.
- ❍ I never attend services.

Have you ever been to Israel?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Display This Question:
If Have you ever been to Israel? Yes Is Selected

How many times have you been to Israel? Have you ever lived in Israel?

- ❑ I have been to Israel this many times: _____
- ❑ I have lived in Israel

Display This Question:
If Have you ever been to Israel? No Is Selected

If money were no object, would it be important to you to visit Israel?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe
- ❍ No

Thinking about Jewish denominations, do you consider yourself to be:

- ❍ Conservative
- ❍ Reform
- ❍ Orthodox
- ❍ Just Jewish
- ❍ Something else: _____

NON-JEWISH ASCRIBED IDENTITY BLOCK

Display This Question:
If Do you consider yourself Jewish? No is Selected

With which religious tradition do you most closely identify?

- ❍ I most closely identify as a Catholic.
- ❍ I most closely identify as a Protestant
- ❍ I most closely identify as just a Christian
- ❍ I most closely identify as a Muslim
- ❍ I most closely identify with another religion: _____
- ❍ I do not closely identify with any religious tradition.

In a few words (280 characters), please tell us how others in your community would classify you religiously:

GENERAL VALUES BLOCK

For the personal values listed below, drag-and-drop them into the order you believe to be the most desirable for your life:

_____ Attractive appearance.

_____ A world at peace.

_____ Loyalty to and from your family.

_____ Loyalty to and from your religious community.

_____ An ethical life.

_____ Possessions you enjoy.

_____ Patriotism.

_____ Personal freedom.

_____ Working in an area you enjoy and are very good at.

_____ Career advancement and recognition.

Display This Question:
If How many children do you have? I have no children Is Not Selected

Thinking about your hopes for your child(ren), for the personal values listed below, please drag-and-drop them in the order you believe to be the most desirable for your child(ren):

_____ An exciting life.

_____ Working for social justice.

_____ A sense of accomplishment.

_____ Financial comfort.

_____ Respect and recognition from other people.

_____ Active participation in a religious community.

_____ Active service to others through volunteering or philanthropy.

_____ Meaningful friendships with others who really care.

_____ A strong family life.

Display This Question:
If How many children do you have? I have no children Is Not Selected

For the general values listed below, please rank them numerically in the order you believe to be the most desirable for your child(ren) - 1 being the most desirable and 4 being the least desirable:

_____ Smart

_____ Successful

_____ Good

_____ Happy

JEWISH VALUES BLOCK

The following is a list of Jewish values. Please take a few moments to read over these values and their descriptions:

- Nekudot Bechirah (Choice Points): Making positive choices.
- Anavah (Humility): No more than my space, no less than my place.
- Ahavat Yisrael (Love for Israel): Acting in a loving fashion toward fellow Jews and all human beings.
- Kavod (Respect/Dignity/Honor): Recognizing the respect due to others and the dignity due ourselves.
- Chesed (Loving-kindness): To do what we can to make the world a better place through gemilut chasadim (lit. “acts of loving kindness”).
- Emunah (Faith/Trustworthiness): A quality of reliability based on integrity, honesty, and consistency.
- Ahavat Ger (loving the stranger): Empathy for those who are “outsiders” and the inclusion of those who are different from us.
- Tzedek Tirdof (pursuit of justice): Actively pursuing justice.

Now, please select between 3 and 5 values which are most important to you personally.

- ❑ 1. Nekudot Bechirah (Choice Points)
- ❑ 2. Anavah (Humility)
- ❑ 3. Ahavat Yisrael (Love for Israel)
- ❑ 4. Kavod (Respect/Dignity/Honor)
- ❑ 5. Chesed (Loving-kindness)
- ❑ 6. Shimrat HaLashon (Thoughtful Speech)
- ❑ 7. Emunah (Faith/Trustworthiness)
- ❑ 8. Bakesh Shalom v'Rodfehu (seek peace and pursue it)
- ❑ 9. Ahavat Ger (loving the stranger)
- ❑ 10. Pikuach Nefesh (the saving of life)
- ❑ 11. Tzedakah (Righteousness)
- ❑ 12. Tzedek Tirdof (pursuit of justice)

Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Now, please select between 3 and 5 values which are most important to you personally. "

Now, please rank the values you chose in order of those which are most important to you.

_____ 1. Nekudot Bechirah (Choice Points)

_____ 2. Anavah (Humility)

_____ 3. Ahavat Yisrael (Love for Israel)

_____ 4. Kavod (Respect/Dignity/Honor)

_____ 5. Chesed (Loving-kindness)

_____ 6. Shimrat HaLashon (Thoughtful Speech)

_____ 7. Emunah (Faith/Trustworthiness)

_____ 8. Bakesh Shalom v'Rodfehu (seek peace and pursue it)

_____ 9. Ahavat Ger (loving the stranger)

_____ 10. Pikuach Nefesh (the saving of life)

_____ 11. Tzedakah (Righteousness)

_____ 12. Tzedek Tirdof (pursuit of justice)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below:

	Definitely yes	Probably yes	Maybe	Probably not	Definitely not
A Jewish person may live out Jewish values without personal study in traditional Jewish sacred and historical texts.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Jewish sayings and expressions are a source of wisdom.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
A Jewish person may live out Jewish values without being involved in a local Jewish community.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Being Jewish implies certain obligations on behalf of the individual.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is important for Jews to remember the Shoah (Holocaust) as a community at specific times.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Being Jewish implies certain obligations on behalf of the individual.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

JEWISH EDUCATION AND VALUES BLOCK

The next set of questions concern Jewish education and values for your children and the children in your local Jewish community.

In order to pass along Jewish values to our children, families in my community need the following (select all that apply):

- ❑ More help from the rabbi.
- ❑ More help from the children's education program.
- ❑ More holistic family education.
- ❑ More adult education to help parents better educate their children.
- ❑ Parents who are more focused on teaching their children Jewish values.
- ❑ Other: _____

Thinking about religious education for Jewish children in general, please drag-and-drop the following methods into order of importance for the average Jewish child:

_____ Children should learn about Judaism from a professional Jewish educator.

_____ Children should learn about Judaism from their parents.

_____ Children should learn about Judaism from their grandparents and other extended family members.

_____ Children should learn about Judaism from other, non-family members of the Jewish community.

Please drag and drop the three-to-five most important things a Jewish child needs in order to obtain a strong Jewish identity.

What a child needs to grow up with a strong Jewish identity:
_____ Jewish nursery school
_____ Formal Jewish education
_____ A strong Jewish home
_____ Bar/Bat Mitzvah
_____ Jewish summer camp
_____ Synagogue attendance
_____ Jewish youth group in HS and/or College
_____ Trip to Israel
_____ Extended Jewish family
_____ Lots of Jewish friends
_____ Other:

Display This Question:
If How many children do you have? I have one child Is Selected
Or How many children do you have? I have two children Is Selected
Or How many children do you have? I have three children Is Selected
Or How many children do you have? I have four or more children Is Selected
Or Please select your age range: 18 - 24 Is Selected
Or Please select your age range: 25 - 34 Is Selected

Thinking about your level of Jewish literacy (Bible, history, music, theology), which statement most closely represents your hopes for your children?

- I hope that my children will eventually have the same level of Jewish literacy than I do.
- I hope that my children will eventually have a somewhat higher level of Jewish literacy than I do.
- I hope that my children will eventually have a significantly higher level of Jewish literacy than I do.
- I hope that my children will have some Jewish literacy, but necessarily as high as my own.
- The level of Jewish literacy for my children is not important to me.

Display This Question:
If How many children do you have? I have one child Is Selected
Or How many children do you have? I have two children Is Selected
Or How many children do you have? I have three children Is Selected
Or How many children do you have? I have four or more children Is Selected
Or Please select your age range: 18 - 24 Is Selected
Or Please select your age range: 25 - 34 Is Selected

Thinking of the proportion of your friends who are Jewish, which statement most closely represents your hopes for your children?

- I hope that my children will eventually have as many Jewish friends as I do.
- I hope that my children will eventually have a few more Jewish friends than I do.
- I hope that my children will eventually have many more Jewish friends than I do.
- I hope that my children will have some Jewish friends, but not necessarily as many as I do.
- The number of Jewish friends my children have is not important to me.

Display This Question:
If What is the age of your oldest child? Text Response Is Less Than 23

Thinking of the strength of your Jewish identity, would you hope that your children have:

- A Jewish identity as strong as my own.
- A Jewish identity somewhat stronger than my own.
- A Jewish identity much stronger than my own
- A Jewish identity, but not necessarily as strong as my own.
- The strength of Jewish identity for my children is not important to me.

Display This Question:
If What is the age of your oldest child? Text Response Is Greater Than or Equal to 23

Thinking of the strength of your Jewish identity, would you rank the strength of your oldest child's Jewish identity as:

- Much stronger than my Jewish identity.
- Somewhat stronger than my Jewish identity.
- About the same strength as my Jewish identity.
- Slightly less stronger than my Jewish identity.
- Much less stronger than my Jewish identity.
- My oldest child does not have a Jewish identity.

Display This Question:
If How many children do you have? I have no children Is Not Selected

Thinking about your oldest child - whatever their age - indicate how often you do the following activities together:

	Almost Never	About once a year	Several times a year	Every other month or so	About once a month	About once a week	Several times a week	Almost every day
Recreation outside the home of any type:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Brief in-person conversations:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Large family gatherings like reunions or holiday dinners:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Small family gatherings for other special occasions:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Talking over things that are important to you:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Religious activities of any kind:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Exchanging emails:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Exchanging text messages:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Talking on the phone about anything:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Dinner together:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Exchanging gifts:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
You helping your child with chores or errands:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your child helping you with chores or errands:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other activity:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

CHILDHOOD QUESTIONS BLOCK

This section concerns questions about your childhood community, home, parents, and Jewish upbringing. Please provide the name of the town, state and zip code where you spent the majority of your formative years:

Thinking about the Jewish community in which you spent the majority of your formative years, select the statement with which you most closely agree:

- The Jewish community played a very significant role in the formation of my Jewish identity.
- The Jewish community played a strong role in the formation of my Jewish identity.
- The Jewish community played a moderate role in the formation of my Jewish identity.
- The Jewish community played some role in the formation of my Jewish identity.
- The Jewish community played virtually no role in the formation of my Jewish identity.

While you were growing up, did your parents identify as Jewish (in any way)?

- Both of my parents identified as Jewish.
- Only my father identified as Jewish.
- Only my mother identified as Jewish.
- Neither of my parents identified as Jewish.

Aside from special occasions like weddings, funerals and bar/bat Mitzvahs, about how often did you attend religious services while growing up?

- I attended services more than once a week.
- I attended services about once a week.
- I attended services maybe once or twice a month.
- I attended services only a few times a year.
- I seldom attended services.
- I never attended services.

What was your parent's marital status while you were a child:

- My parents were married my entire time of living at home.
- My parents were divorced when I was age _____
- My biological parents were never married to each other.

Display This Question:
If What was your parent's marital status while you were a child: My parents were divorced when I was age Is Selected

After your parents divorced, please select all the accurate options below:

- ❑ My parents both remained single.
- ❑ My mother remarried someone Jewish.
- ❑ My mother remarried someone not Jewish.
- ❑ My father remarried someone Jewish.
- ❑ My father remarried someone not Jewish.

While you were growing up, did your grandparents identify as Jewish (in any way)?

- ❑ My maternal grandmother identified as Jewish.
- ❑ My maternal grandfather identified as Jewish.
- ❑ None of my grandparents identified as Jewish.
- ❑ My paternal grandmother identified as Jewish.
- ❑ `My paternal grandfather identified as Jewish.

Thinking about your parents and grandparents as you were growing up, what was your impression as to the significance of Judaism in their life?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
Your father	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your mother	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your paternal grandmother	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your paternal grandfather	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your maternal grandmother	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your maternal grandfather	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How often did you observe the following rituals while growing up?

	Never	Rarely	On occasion	Often	Regularly
We kept kosher at home:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
We refrained from handling money on Shabbat:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
We refrained from writing on Shabbat:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
We davvened (prayed) at home:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
We recited a bruchah (blessing) before eating:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
We recited Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals) after eating:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
We attended or hosted a Passover Seder:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
We fasted on Yom Kippur:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
We lit Shabbat candles on Friday night:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other:	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

While growing up, did you family identify with any particular branch of Judaism?

- ❍ Conservative
- ❍ Reform
- ❍ Orthodox
- ❍ Just Jewish
- ❍ Other _____

When you were growing up, did you ever participate in some kind of formal Jewish educational program, such as Hebrew School or Sunday school?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe/Not sure
- ❍ No

Display This Question:
If When you were growing up, did you ever participate in some kind of formal Jewish educational program, such as Hebrew School or Sunday school? Yes Is Selected

About how many years did you participate in a formal Jewish education program?

When you were growing up, did you ever attend an overnight summer camp with Jewish content?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe/Not sure
- ❍ No

Display This Question:
If Your gender: Male Is Selected

Did you have a bar Mitzvah?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe/Not sure
- ❍ No

Display This Question:
If Your gender: Male Is Selected

Thinking back on your bar Mitzvah experience, please select the phrases below which you would affirm:

- ❑ I wish I would have paid more attention to what was being taught.
- ❑ It was a very fun social experience.
- ❑ I wish my parents had not forced me to go through that experience.
- ❑ I am still able to read Torah and/or Haftara and/or speak on Jewish subjects.
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ There was a lot of rote memorization.
- ❑ I have many fond memories of my rabbi and/or tutor.
- ❑ I grew a lot through the experience.
- ❑ I am still close with some of my b'nei Mitzvah classmates.

Display This Question:
If Your gender: Female Is Selected

Did you have a bat Mitzvah?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe/Not sure
- ❍ No

Display This Question:
If Your gender: Female Is Selected

Thinking back on your bat Mitzvah experience, please select the phrases below which you would affirm:

- ❑ I wish I would have paid more attention to what was being taught.
- ❑ It was a very fun social experience.
- ❑ I wish my parents had not forced me to go through that experience.
- ❑ I am still able to read Torah and/or Haftara and/or speak on Jewish subjects.
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ There was a lot of rote memorization.
- ❑ I have many fond memories of my rabbi and/or tutor.
- ❑ I grew a lot through the experience.
- ❑ I am still close with some of my b'nei Mitzvah classmates.

Display This Question:
If Have you ever been to Israel? Yes Is Selected
And How many times have you been to Israel? Have you ever lived in Israel? I have lived in Israel Is Not Selected

Did you travel to Israel before age 25?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Display This Question:
If Did you travel to Israel before age 25? Yes Is Selected

Was your Israel visit sponsored by Birthright?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No
- ❍ Other _____

Display This Question:
If What is the age of your oldest child? Text Response Is Greater Than or Equal to 12

This brings us to the end of the main survey. Thank you so very much for sharing your thoughts with us. Your answers have qualified you for the extended survey! Would you be willing to answer a few more in-depth questions about your Jewish identity? You may do this now or at a later time. You will be entered in a drawing for a $50 Amazon.com gift card.

- ❍ Yes, I would be willing to answer some in-depth questions now.
- ❍ Yes, I would be willing to answer some in-depth questions, but at a later time.
- ❍ No, I would just like to exit the survey.

EXPANDED SURVEY BLOCK

Thank you for agreeing to answer a few more questions! Please keep a copy of the survey URL (https://virginia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2oCbLGdDIgiNoJD) and come back to this page at any time. You may also re-access the survey from our web site at http://www.smalljewishcommunities.org. When you are ready to continue, please click the arrow.

Thank you for taking the time to answer these additional questions. If you provide us with your email address at the end of the survey, you will be entered into a drawing for a $50 Amazon.com gift card.

Now we are going to ask you some general questions about Judaism, your family, and community.

In what ways did your parents have the greatest impact on your Jewish identity?

Thinking about what it means to be Jewish, are your attitudes about being Jewish closer to your parents or your grandparents? Please explain in a few words.

In a few sentences, please complete the following sentence: The Bible is a book about _____.

Thinking about your parents, was there anything specific about your their ethnicity or religiosity that attracted you to Judaism?

Thinking again about your parents, was there anything specific about their ethnicity or religiosity that drove you away from Judaism?

Thinking about your local community, if all of the Jewish residents were to just disappear one day, what would be lost?

With which of the biblical families listed below do you most identify?

- ❍ Adam and Eve
- ❍ Abraham and Sarah
- ❍ Isaac and Rebekah
- ❍ Jacob, Rachel and Leah.
- ❍ Noah and Mrs. Noah.
- ❍ Other: _____

In what ways are you and/or your family involved with the local Jewish community today? Please select all that apply.

- ❑ Members of a congregation.
- ❑ Members of the local JCC.
- ❑ Members of the local Federation.
- ❑ Serve on a board or committee.
- ❑ Children attend the religious school or Hebrew school.
- ❑ Support local Jewish charities.
- ❑ Other: _____
- ❑ Help with building maintenance.
- ❑ Help with events.
- ❑ Teach children's education.
- ❑ Teach adult education.
- ❑ Involved in special community programs/events.
- ❑ Help leading services in some way.

If time and resources were no issue, what additional ways, if any would you be involved?

In a few words, please list some important truths, values, or principles that can be found in Jewish literature such as the Bible, the Talmud, historical texts, etc.

How confident are you that your extended family would stand by you during uncertain or tragic times?

- ❍ Not at all confident.
- ❍ Somewhat confident.
- ❍ Confident.
- ❍ Very confident.

Thinking about the members of your extended family, please tell us in a few sentences who among them has the most influence on your nuclear family (you, your spouse, and children) and why, including if they are Jewish or not:

Thinking about your circle of friends, please tell us in a few sentences who among them has the most influence on your nuclear family (you, your spouse, and children) and why, including if they are Jewish or not:

How confident are you that your local Jewish community would stand by you during uncertain or tragic times?

- ❍ Not at all confident.
- ❍ Somewhat confident.
- ❍ Confident.
- ❍ Very confident.

Have you personally - or know someone personally - who has encountered anti-Semitism in your local community in the past year?

- ❍ No, I have not, nor has anyone I know encountered anti-Semitism in the past year.
- ❍ Yes, I have encountered anti-Semitism in the past year.
- ❍ Yes, someone I know has encountered anti-Semitism in the past year.

Display This Question:
If Have you personally - or know someone personally - who has encountered anti-Semitism in your local community in the past year? Yes, I have encountered anti-Semitism in the past year. Is Selected
Or Have you personally - or know someone personally - who has encountered anti-Semitism in your local community in the past year? Yes, someone I know has encountered anti-Semitism in the past year. Is Selected

In a few sentences, please let us know how many times you experienced anti-Semitism locally in the past year and any details you care to share.

Is there such thing as "Jewish food"?

- No.
- Maybe.
- Yes.

Display This Question:
If Is there such thing as "Jewish food"? Yes. Is Selected

Please provide some examples of "Jewish food" and how you know that it is "Jewish food."

In your opinion, is there a distinctive "Jewish" sense of humor that is distinct from "Jewish jokes"?

- No.
- Maybe.
- Yes.

Display This Question:
If In your opinion, is there a distinctive "Jewish" sense of humor that is distinct from "Jewish jokes"? Yes. Is Selected

In a few sentences, please provide a description or explanation of a "Jewish" sense of humor.

This section concerns your relationship with your oldest child. Please select the answer that comes closest to your gut feelings about the question. Please go as rapidly as possible, giving the first answer that seems to fit.

How well do you feel this child understands you?

- ❍ Not well.
- ❍ Not too well.
- ❍ Some.
- ❍ Pretty well.
- ❍ Very well.
- ❍ Extremely well.

How well do you feel your child trusts you?

- ❍ Not much.
- ❍ Not too much.
- ❍ Some.
- ❍ Pretty much.
- ❍ Very much.
- ❍ As much as they possibly could.

How fair do you feel your child is toward you?

- ❍ Not fair.
- ❍ Not too fair.
- ❍ Fair.
- ❍ Pretty fair.
- ❍ Very fair.
- ❍ Extremely fair.

How much affection do you feel your child has for you?

- ❍ Very little.
- ❍ Not too much.
- ❍ Some.
- ❍ More than some.
- ❍ A lot.
- ❍ Very much.

How well do you understand your child?

- ❍ Not well at all.
- ❍ Not too well.
- ❍ Somewhat
- ❍ Pretty well.
- ❍ Very well.
- ❍ Extremely well.

How much do you trust your child?

- ❍ None at all.
- ❍ Not much.
- ❍ Some.
- ❍ A little.
- ❍ Very much.
- ❍ Completely.

How fair do you feel you are toward your child?

- ❍ Not fair.
- ❍ Not very fair.
- ❍ Somewhat fair.
- ❍ Pretty fair.
- ❍ Very fair.
- ❍ Extremely fair.

How much do you respect your child?

- ❍ Not at all.
- ❍ Not too much.
- ❍ Some.
- ❍ A little.
- ❍ Very much.
- ❍ Completely.

How much affection do you feel toward this child?

- ❍ Very little.
- ❍ Not much.
- ❍ Some.
- ❍ A little.
- ❍ Very much.
- ❍ Extremely much.

Taking everything into consideration, how close do you feel is the relationship between you and your child?

- ❍ Not close at all.
- ❍ Not very close.
- ❍ Somewhat close.
- ❍ Close.
- ❍ Very close.
- ❍ Extremely close.

How is the communication between you and this child? How well can you exchange ideas or talk about things that really concern you?

- ❍ Nonexistent.
- ❍ Poor.
- ❍ OK.
- ❍ Good.
- ❍ Very good.
- ❍ Extremely good.

In general, how similar are your views about life to those of your child?

- ❍ Completely different.
- ❍ Not very similar.
- ❍ Some similarities.
- ❍ Quite a few similarities.
- ❍ Very similar.
- ❍ Virtually the same.

How often do you do things together with this child?

- Never.
- Seldom.
- Not often.
- Occasionally.
- Very often.
- Extremely often.

Generally, how well do you and your child get along together?

- Not well at all.
- Not very well.
- Somewhat.
- Pretty well.
- Very well.
- Extremely well.

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to our expanded survey questions. Please enter your email below to be entered into a drawing for a $50 Amazon.com gift card. Your email address will be used for no other purpose. The drawing will be held on May 22, 2017 and the winner will be notified by 10:00pm that day.

FINAL BLOCK - ALL

We at the Small Jewish Communities Project greatly appreciate your time and assistance. Later in 2017 we will be releasing specific aspects of the data. If you would like to be notified of this release, please like our SmallJewishCommunities Facebook Page. If you would like, please feel free to leave our research team some feedback, including your contact information if you ask a question.

Thank you for taking the Jewish Values Survey. As a token of our appreciation, please download a copy of the Jewish Values Quiz from the Small Jewish Community Project web site: click here

Appendix G – Qualitative Methodology

The methodological guide for the qualitative portion of this project was that of Beebe's (2001) Rapid Appraisal Methodology.[157] As far as realistically possible the methods outlined by Beebe have been adhered to:

- Semi-structured "key informant" interviews. Ideally, ten key informant interviews were to be obtained from each community. Key informants were provided originally by the local rabbi and then additional names were provided by the initial interviewees. The data collected from these interviews was used to construct focus group discussion guides unique to each community as well as provide descriptions of community life and values, personal attitudes and behaviors, as well as rich descriptions of community history and current struggles.
- Focus groups for the following demographics were attempted within each community:
    - Parents with younger children (mothers and fathers)
    - Parents with older children (mothers and fathers)
    - Empty nesters (men and women)
    - Teens (young men and young women)
    - Lay leaders (without gender distinction)

- Although the original project plan called for a "super" focus group drawn from the original stratified groups, there was insufficient time at any location to conduct such a discussion.

[157] See Introduction, pp. 12-15

The discussion Per Blumberg's (2002) recommendations, the ideal situation for the parent and teen focus groups is to segregate by gender so as to remove any issues of physical, financial, or emotional power. While this strategy was largely successful in the more socially conservative community of Riverton, it was more difficult for reasons of timing and culture to obtain gender-segregated focus groups in the other communities. The data collected from these focus groups was used in part to construct the proof-of-concept survey, as well as provide detailed insights into community life, values, and priorities. This data was also useful to help refine concepts used in this paper; as the group participants would banter and discuss, a certain synergy would draw participants to agreed-upon conclusions which are represented in the preceding pages by key quotes and observations.

The original project research path called for a total of five small Jewish communities (one in each census zone) and three large Jewish communities (one on each coast and one in the central US), due to constraints of time I was unable to expand my qualitative research beyond three small Jewish communities. With regard to the large communities, I placed over 100 phone calls to synagogues, rabbinical boards, Federation offices, and Jewish Community Centers across the country. While I received positive response from some individuals, I was unable to secure assistance from any large community. The closest I was able to come was Alpharetta, GA (a suburb of Atlanta) and Los Angeles, CA. After I had completed one key informant interview in Alpharetta, I received notice from the administrator of the synagogue with whom I was working that their board had not approved my request to contact other members of their congregation and, by extension, members of the larger Atlanta Jewish community. Although the board of one synagogue in Los Angeles did vote to approve the project and my request to contact their members, they requested a cash payment of $15,000 to offset any costs they might incur. It was

at this point that I dropped the large community section of the project and instead was able to make an arrangement with the Springfield community in the northeast to represent a medium-sized Jewish community. This community, like most small Jewish communities, is rather isolated from an urban center, has its own cultural ethos, and is more homogenous than would be a New York, Boston, or Baltimore – the primary difference being the Jewish population within the geographical area.

Key Informant Statistics:

Mountain City	**Riverton**	**Green Valley**	**Springfield**
Woman 1: Age 60+	Woman 1: Mid-50s	Woman 1: Mid-50s	Woman 1: Mid-60s
Woman 2: Age 45	Woman 2: Mid-50s	Woman 2: Late-60s	Woman 2: Late-50s
Woman 3: Age 92	Woman 3: Mid-60s	Woman 3: Late-80s	Woman 3: Late 60s
Woman 4: Mid-50s	Man 1: Mid-40s	Woman 4: Late-40s	Woman 4: Mid-80s
Woman 5: Mid-50s	Man 2: Mid-70s	Man 1: Mid-40s	Man 1: Mid-30s
Woman 6: Late-60s	Man 3: Mid-60s	Man 2: Mid-60s	Man 2: Mid-50s
Man 1: Age 19	Man 4: Mid-80s	Man 3: Late-70s	Man 3: Late-50s
Man 2: Age 52	Man 5: Mid-60s	Man 4: Early 80s	Man 4: Late 40s
Man 3: Mid-30s	Man 6: Mid-70s	Man 5: Mid-40s	Man 5: Late-50s
Man 4: Late-60s	Man 7: Mid-50s	Man 6: Late-40s	
Man 5: Early 50s		Man 7: 62	
		Man 8: Early 50s	

Focus Groups:

Mountain City	**Riverton**	**Green Valley**	**Springfield**
Empty Nester Women	Teen Young Women	Lay Leaders Mixed	Teen Young Women
Parents and Teens Mixed	Lay Leaders Mixed	Teens Mixed	Older Male Parents
Lay Leader Men	Empty Nester Men	Empty Nester Men	
Lay Leader Women	Empty Nester Women	Parents of Younger Children - Mixed	
Teen Young Men	Fathers of Older Children	Parents of Older Children - Mixed	
	Mothers of Older Children		
	Fathers of Younger Children		
	Mothers of Younger Children		

Key Informant Outline

- Brief biography and current personal situation
- Date and reason for arrival in the community
- Historic and contemporary roles in the community

Given your history with this community, what would you say is the most interesting aspect of living in _____?

From your recollection, what are the top 2 or 3 things that attract people to this community?

- What are the top 2 or 3 things that keep people in this community?
- What might lead them to leave for another community?

Thinking of Jewish values, which would you say your community has considered the most important over the years?

- Do you think most people could articulate these values, or do they just know them in their "kishkes"?

- Are there any events that have reinforced these values?

- How these values have been transmitted from one generation to the next within families?

- How has the community in general supported these values?

- Which of the local institutions have been most supportive of these values?

- Can you think of any ways in which a violation of any of these values would be met with sanction by the community?

Do the families in your community seem to spend as much time creating Jewish space at home as they do attending public events sponsored by institutions?

Thinking of public events, do you tend to see more families turn out, more adults without children or more children?

Can you think of any ways that your local community specifically empowers parents to provide their children a Jewish education?

Thinking of the intermarried families in your community you are familiar with, do they tend to feel as though the non-Jewish partner is generally included in community activities and issues?

- Can you provide specific examples?

Thinking about barriers to transmitting Jewish values to the next generation, in your opinion what are the major obstacles faced by this community?

Can you recall for me any significant issues, organizations or events that caused inter-community strife?

- How were these issues resolved?

What options does the _____ community offer by way of formal Jewish education?

- In your estimation, have these options delivered on their promise vis-à-vis the next generation?

- What might others say?

What is your sense of the relationship between the Jewish community and the larger community?

- Can you point to any examples of inter-community influence, cooperation or antagonism?

Are you aware of any formal or informal ties that this community has to the larger American Jewish community or Israel?

Can you tell me about the experience of this community with anti-Semitism today or in the past?

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