

# CHAPTER 1

## THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

### RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION

Jewish continuity is at risk in the contemporary United States. The future of American Jewry is jeopardized by the erosion of the cultural integrity of the group and the blurring of its boundaries in an open society. For the purpose of our discussion, Jewish continuity is defined as the retention and enhancement of the quality of Jewish life. This is accomplished by the teaching of Judaism, its values and beliefs, as well as concern for the unity and continuation of the Jewish people. The problem of maintaining continuity is not unique to Jews; it challenges all minority groups that confront the problem of raising their young people in a unique heritage within a diverse larger society. Most minority communities want their children to maintain their identity over time while fully participating as Americans and enjoying the benefits and the opportunities this country offers. Being at home in two societies and cultures is a difficult challenge that creates multiple tensions—within the larger society, the subculture, the family, the individual, and particularly across the generations.

In the 1930s, in a less pluralistic America, Stonequist developed the concept of the “marginal man.” He suggested that these “dilemmas are most difficult to resolve in the case of the Jews . . . the marginal Jew oscillates forward and backward, out of his group and then back into his group. . . . The marginal Jew tends to remain persistently in the psychological center of the cultural conflict” (Stonequist 1937, 133). The portrait of the marginal Jew was very much bound up with the issue of immigration and the clash between the first and second generations. In the 1990s Jews are primarily third and fourth generation Americans. Moreover, the social environment for Jews is more welcoming, and individual Jews are no longer marginal in American society. In fact, contemporary Jews are largely acculturated and assimilated Americans. Thus, from the community perspective the main concern is now boundary maintenance in the pursuit of group survival. In the light of these new circumstances, our research approach in this volume, which is structural and ecological rather than psychological, is perhaps more relevant to the challenges facing American Jewry at this time.

In the American Jewish context one has to be aware of the distinction between Jewish identity and Jewish identification. According to Himmelfarb (1982, 31), “Jewish identity is one’s sense of self with regard to being Jewish,” whereas “Jewish identification is the process of thinking and acting in a manner that indicates involvement with and attachment to Jewish life.” Liebman (1973) shows that the early studies of Jewish identity were concerned with integration, whereas later studies, stressing group survival, have focused on Jewish identification. Our assessment focuses essentially on the Jewish identification of the younger generation since cultural continuity is maintained by the transmission of values from one generation to the next.

The continuity of any religious or cultural group depends on the socialization of its members and their children. Individuals learn religious values, attitudes, and sentiments which become part of their own personality patterns. Socialization begins in infancy and ends only at death. Throughout this process the group exerts an influence upon the personalities of the individual members. As people acquire their identities, they accept, reject, or remain neutral to religious ideals. Religious value systems attempt to channel personal responses to religious ends. Yet, these responses must be learned and internalized. Generally, religious socialization attempts to develop a basic sense of discipline so that one learns to postpone, modify, or even forego gratification in order to reach some religiously sanctioned future goal. This is particularly true of Judaism, which more than other religions tends to emphasize behavior and ritual (*mitzvot*) rather than faith.

The role of religion is of greater importance to those who have the responsibility of raising the younger generation. "Most modern parents claim that they look to religion as an ally in instilling morals and values in a society . . . many are concerned that they do not have control over their children's lives, and they seek a community that supports them in protecting children from society's evils, such as drugs, gangs, teen-age pregnancies, and the loss of academic motivation" (Kosmin and Lachman 1993, 237). However, religious socialization goes beyond behavior to encompass the teaching of religious roles and their supporting values. As people continue their involvement in religious institutions, they learn specific skills of particular value to their religious group, such as language, prayers, and music. Strong institutional socialization leads to membership conformity; socialization brings assimilation to the specific religious culture. A complicating factor for American Jews compared to other religious groups in the United States is the ethnic component of their identity. This means that some Jews self-identify as nonreligious or secular Jews. The transmission of secular Jewish culture is a difficult task for parents and for social scientists. It is also difficult to measure on a separate scale from religious socialization. Rather than exclude this population, we have chosen to follow historical precedent and include it in the overall Jewish population.

## SOCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN

Social science literature asserts that parents are the primary agents for transferring cultural and religious elements across generations. Much of the earliest stages of the process is conceptualized in both psychology and sociology as a child's *socialization*: the process whereby individuals acquire the skills, motives, standards, and behavioral style that will enable them to conform to the expectations of their present and future social environment (Hetherington and Morris 1978).

Children's lives are shaped by encounters with others who define a socially organized world. Socialization is also defined as "the process by which we learn the ways of a given society or social group so that we can function within it" (Elkin and Handel 1984, 4). The learning process is not limited to specific kinds of knowledge or modes of learning: some, such as the use of language, are overt and observable, and

others are covert. The resulting behaviors are guided through a process of social learning for membership in the cultural group, which is characterized by their language, foods, rituals, folklore, and patterns of child rearing (Elkin and Handel 1984, 14).

The primary agent in the child's socialization process is the immediate family. Although the family is not the sole socialization agent, it has special importance in immediately placing the newborn child in a certain social position in terms of class, status, culture, and geographic area. The child's peer group and school also have important functions. All these elements prescribe specific values that are transmitted to the child, and even affect the type of interactions the child will have with others.

In American society of the 1990s, there is a political and philosophical debate over moral questions that focus on education and family values. Children today live in a global society with unfettered mass communication. They are exposed from their earliest years to a greater number and a wider assortment of messages from powerful mass media than any previous generation. This study, and previous studies in the monograph series, show the difficulties of preserving a minority culture in this situation. Whether we categorize the contemporary American society, in which the present generation of Jewish children are raised, as secular, or Christian, or even a mixture of the two, it certainly provides neither a Jewish ambience nor a Jewish environment. This makes socializing Jewish children far more challenging and complex.

Children perceive the other people they are in contact with as role models for behavior. For minority group members, will the reference group come from the majority or the minority culture? For example, a Jewish child who sees his or her parents going to the synagogue every Sabbath may be more inclined to go to synagogue later in life. By their behavior, adults define for the children how to respond to the social reality. Peers also can reinforce prosocial behavior (Strain et al. 1976). Socialization takes place in numerous settings—at home, in the playground, in youth groups, in camps, at school, or in the synagogue. These settings can represent either the majority or the minority culture.

Central to the normal cognitive and emotional growth of children is the development of self-identity through processes of social cognition: differentiation of the self from others, of one set of humans from another by gradations of closeness and salience to one's own being (Flavell 1985). The historical development of the Jewish population requires the distinction between public identity, which is a person's traits as they appear to others, and self-identity, which is the person's private version of his or her pattern of traits (Miller 1963). For Jewish children growing up in a Christian society, this distinction may evoke conflicts on an individual level, in a family setting, and in the larger society—in the neighborhood or at school.

Beyond the formation of the self is the formation of roles. Like identity and the self, roles are not fixed but change throughout the individual's life. Moreover, one always has multiple roles at any point in time. The individual is not a passive actor in socialization; the relationship between the individual and the socialization process is dynamic, and individuals can modify the outcomes of their socialization. The individual's identity arises from the social context, or more specifically, the social categories into which the child is socialized. The child can be socialized simultaneously to different social categories—the ethnic group to which he or she belongs, the national iden-

tity, and the religious group. These categories form the individual's various identities—as a citizen, as part of a specific religion or ethnic culture, gender, social class, etc.

The identity of the individual child is a complex web of cognitions, conceptions, emotions, motives, values, and role repertoires stored as symbolic knowledge that can be accessed on cue. Yet many of the factors that contribute to the development of this complex web and its basic organization are still but partly understood (Harter 1983). Family, neighborhood, and school provide children a chance for contact and experimental identification with other children and adults of all ages. A child begins early to build a hierarchy of expectations of what it will feel like to be older. These expectations become part of an identity and are verified, step by step, later in life (Erikson 1968).

The process of socialization itself entails specialized learning components, such as psycho-emotional identification with significant others (e.g., parents and siblings), acquisition of norms, roles and values, and the adaptation of the self to social boundary definition (Perry and Perry 1983). Jewish society has its own culture, its body of “knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor 1958). As Jewish children learn the culture of their society, they become socialized beings. A norm is an “implicit rule defining the appropriate pattern of behavior in a recurring situation” (Elkin and Handel 1984, 10). While Jewish values, like other values, are more general than norms, they are not behavior directed, but general concepts that serve as social criteria for distinguishing between “right” and “wrong.”

In different societies, children experience different socialization processes, thereby developing a variety of personal traits for participation in society. This process influences parents and other child-rearing agents to use particular techniques in raising their children. “Child-rearing is culturally organized formulae which generally enable parents to successfully teach their children those language, cognitive, motivational and social competencies, i.e. the nature of the personal attributes, required to function competently in their culture” (Ogbu 1979, 10).

Children from any culture learn social roles and the statuses that are attached to these roles, i.e., their position in the social structure, and the obligations and rights that are related to specific statuses. All children also learn to identify themselves and others by social class and cultural group, which according to Max Weber, are associated with specific values and a way of life.

In our complex contemporary society, multiple socialization agencies, particularly extrafamilial institutions such as the media and advertising, play roles in forming children's religious outlooks. Consequently today's parents have less of a monopoly and control on their children's worldview.

## ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

The adolescent years are a time of significant physical, emotional, and cognitive growth. A crucial aspect in the transition to adolescence is the transformed relation-

ship between parent and child, who must renegotiate the sense of control, responsibility, and autonomy. This is a transitional period in which adolescents gradually convert childhood roles and orientations to those characterizing adulthood (Erikson 1977). Adolescents encounter new demands as the childhood milieu, namely parents and family, is replaced by "society" (Erikson 1968). The transitional period, which is complicated in all societies, is especially difficult for young people who are members of a minority group considering the diverse and complex roles they need to assume. Adolescents in such societies have to learn to perform a variety of roles that often clash with one another, primarily with those roles associated with the majority group.

In the search for self-definition, the adolescent interacts with his or her environment and seeks out those to whom to relate. The peer group, rather than the family, increasingly dominates the adolescent's thinking and behavior, and begins to serve as a catalyst for identity development. The peer group is another socialization agent whose influence grows stronger as the child advances in age. "In the American society the child's own contemporaries have great importance. The child learns to give great weight to what other children think of his behavior, to want to gain their approval and avoid their disapproval. In societies in which the peer group is an important socializing agent, there may be greater conformity to age group standards. Undoubtedly the use of peer group as a socializing agent by Americans produces a different sense of self, a person who always pays attention to what others are doing in order to get a signal for what he himself should do" (Martin and Stendler 1959, 195–196).

Young people acquire different personal resources from different socialization agencies. Psychological development, mainly identity formation, is attributed to the intimate family context, while the instrumental-based school contributes to the development of general cognitive skills and information. The informal peer group and youth association are more effective in developing interpersonal skills and fostering universal norms and moral orientations (Rapoport 1989). Following Rapoport's overview, these resources can be translated into the Jewish realm. Simply, the home environment is responsible in passing the tradition and building Jewish identity, whereas Jewish schools teach religious skills, Jewish history, and culture, and Jewish youth groups and the summer camps embedded in them provide Jewish role models and peers, thus accommodating further Jewish social contacts.

An influential aspect of the peer group is the socio-economic, ethnic, and religious background of its members. While there is a tendency for adolescents, like people of all ages, to share the most with those of similar backgrounds, the ethnic or religious character of a peer group can either solidify or weaken the individual's attachment to it. While it is natural to move away from parental domination, the adolescent may also resent the parents' culture and religious beliefs. For example, a youth from a particular religious group may intentionally associate with a peer group composed of individuals who are not from his or her religious background. When this occurs, the pressure to assimilate to the standards of the new group may be accentuated.

Yet in some ways, for the current generation of American Jews, peer pressure poses less of a problem than in the past. We do not now find the conflict between immigrant parents and American children, since over 90 percent of Jews are U.S. born

and therefore there is no "new society" to stimulate the young to rebel (Eisenstadt 1956). Furthermore, Eisenstadt claims that the greater the "familism" the smaller the "adolescent problem." For such reasons and on the basis of contemporary evidence, Perry London asserts that "Jewish kids in the United States are . . . for the most part, not much involved with drug addiction, delinquency, crime, and dropping out of school. They are among the highest achieving groups in the United States in school grades, scholarships and college attendance. They are well socialized to American middle class society's ideals" (London 1990, 7). The pattern of college enrollment and SAT scores supports this claim (Kosmin and Lachman 1992).

How likely are adolescents to adopt a value system somewhat similar to that of their parents? As discussed earlier, adolescence is a period of searching for a separate and personal identity, the time for emancipation—to become emotionally independent from parents and other adults. Emancipation theory explains the generational gap by asserting that adolescents reject their parents' religious values and become less traditional. In contrast, social learning theory holds that religious values are transmitted by the modeling and internalization of moral standards, such that adolescents' values tend to resemble those of their parents (Dudley and Dudley 1986).

Parents typically teach their children religious beliefs and further shape their beliefs and practices through the selection of a denomination and the intensity of their religious commitment (see Ozorak 1989). During the course of adolescence, when young people question, reason, and have greater social opportunities to exchange ideas and compare their beliefs to others', changes in religious outlook and behavior often occur. Research has recognized the important role parents play in transmitting religious beliefs to their children into adolescence (Parker and Gaier 1980). There is less evidence that peers influence adolescents' religiousness, although members of church youth groups seem susceptible to peer pressure (Hoge and Petrillo 1978). Ozorak (1989) attempted to weigh the relative impact of parents' religiousness, closeness to peers and parents, and affiliation on religious commitment and change among adolescents. She reported that parents' religious affiliation and practices were positively related to religiousness among early and middle adolescents. Family closeness was also negatively associated with modification of religious practices, she found, concluding that "parents' affiliation and their faith in that affiliation act as cognitive anchors from which children's beliefs evolve over time" (Ozorak 1989, 460).

Hoge et al. (1982) compared the effect of parental values on children's values with the effect of membership in the Catholic, Baptist, and Methodist churches. They found that denominational membership had a slightly stronger effect, concluding that young people are influenced by the larger social structure because over time they obtain their values from extrafamilial culture as much as from their parents.

Joseph Erickson developed a model in which familial influence was hypothesized to act indirectly through the adolescent's religious education. Looking at the three critical social influences in young people's religious developments—parents, peers, and religious education—he argued that adolescent religious development is triggered by home religious habits and education. Following Cornwall's (1988) concept of "channeling," that is, the indirect social influence parents have over their children, Erickson argues that "parents direct their children to other social influences, and

it is these influences which are more salient. Of particular interest is the strength of the religious education variable" (Erickson 1992, 149).

Thus, the adolescent's attitude toward his or her ethnic or religious background in relation to the peer group is fashioned by a number of factors, including "his sense of personal security, the warmth and constructiveness of the family constellation in infancy and childhood, the attitudes prevailing in the immediate neighborhood and how they are fostered in the schools and religious institutions . . . and the strength and nature of the individual's feelings of belonging to his minority group" (Rothman 1965, 12). Theoretically, the more traditional the home environment, the more likely the adolescent will associate with peers of similar background or join a youth group with the same type of individuals.

The formation of a specifically Jewish identity has its roots in the home and the tradition of the individual, and depends on whether the parents provide a clear and positive feeling of belonging to Judaism, and whether that feeling is carried through in peer group interaction and enhanced through a support system like a Jewish youth group. "Peer groups are frequently used as a vehicle for training pro-social behaviors. Not only is group training more convenient but the dynamics of the interaction between members of the group may also provide particular opportunities for learning that cannot be derived from dyadic interaction. Thus peers serve as stimulators" (Rubin and Ross 1982, 157).

Jewish youth groups and summer camps are among the informal socialization agencies that can facilitate the passage to adulthood by providing multiple opportunities for trial and error behavior (Rapoport and Kahane 1988). This exploratory behavior, which enables adolescents to experiment with a variety of rules and roles, is essential for youth development (Coleman 1974). In addition, these informal socialization agencies within a peer context allow adolescents to experience the transitional passage to adulthood on their own terms with little adult supervision (Kahane 1975; Rapoport and Kahane 1988). In the Jewish context, members of Jewish youth groups and participants in summer camps learn to select, reformulate, and integrate concepts of social reality and thereby shape their own Jewish identity.

Informal socialization agencies have the potential to create the transition in terms of role development. These type of agencies are likely to provide a context in which the transition period to adulthood is institutionalized, the role repertoire is expanded, whereby child-oriented roles are replaced by adult-oriented ones (Rapoport and Kahane 1988). Jewish youth groups and summer camps are valuable because they enable young people to meet positive Jewish role models, particularly their counselors. These staff serve as accessible young Jewish models who are relatively close to the teenagers in age and who chose to adopt a positive Jewish identity. Furthermore, summer camps and in particular the Israel Experience, a teenage educational summer program in Israel (Chazan 1997), are intense group experiences in which Jewish teens spend several weeks together as part of a tightly knit group of like-minded peers. They eat, sleep, engage in sports, and socialize with this group and develop intense loyalty to the other teens and to the Jewish group as a whole. Long-term connection between different forms of formal and informal Jewish education and increased adult Jewish identity and involvement are suggested in several Jewish studies (Cohen 1995; Mit-

telberg 1994; Phillips 1997). If the community is interested in maximizing the possibilities of increased Jewishness of its youngsters as they become adults, such experiences are a worthwhile investment.

Moreover, reinforcing young people's Jewish identity is especially advantageous during adolescence since adolescents are gifted with the ability to adjust to new ideas and ideals. This is the time to expose them to new role models so they can accept a more explicitly Jewish outlook.

## SOCIALIZATION INTO A SUBCULTURE

George Mead argued that the self is fully developed only when the person is socialized to his or her social group and its institutional manifestations (Mead 1934, 155). Just as the individual depends on the social group for development, the group relies on the socialization of the individual roles in the community. "The complex cooperative process and activities and institutional functioning of organized human society are also possible only insofar as every individual involved in them . . . can take the general attitudes of all other such individuals with reference to these processes and activities and institutional functioning . . . and can direct his own behavior accordingly" (Mead 1934, 155). If individuals are not socialized according to community norms and values, the community will eventually experience disorganization and finally disintegrate. Thus, the continued existence of the social community depends on the effective socialization of its members.

Modern societies generally include many subcultures, each with a unique way of life, but all part of the same society and sharing important common elements. As we have shown above, the concept of culture is central to socialization. The relationship between the subculture and the larger society is complex and the lines between a specific subculture and the larger society are not always clearly drawn. This complex relationship raises important questions: How do those involved in the subculture participate in the larger society? How is the community defined and where are its borders? What are the distinguishing elements of the subculture, and how are they transmitted to new members? Is the subculture undergoing assimilation?

In some cases, such as that of Orthodox Jews, the boundaries are distinctly defined and observable. Kallen, who studied Orthodox Jews in Toronto, found that "traditional Judaic prescriptions and proscriptions provided strong boundary-maintaining mechanisms ensuring that social relationships with outsiders were confined to the public sphere . . . primary relationships were confined to fellow Jews, and private Jewish institutions remained largely insulated from the cultural influences of Anglo-Canadian society" (Kallen 1977, 66).

Transmission of cultural practices occurs at different stages of the socialization process. Children come to understand their ethnic or cultural group first in terms of external manifestation such as customs, choice of clothing, holiday celebrations, food, neighborhood, and rituals; as they grow older they internalize the substantive aspect of their culture, such as the belief system and the norms and values that are related to it.



Another important stage in socialization to a subculture is when the child learns to distinguish between members of his or her cultural group and others. This marks an important step in the development of cultural identification with one's group, and the sense of borders between "us" and "them." At this stage, the child feels that he or she belongs to a certain collectivity, and internalizes the collective identity. The process of internalizing collective identity can be reinforced by participation in activities that are unique to the subculture, such as holiday celebrations, learning a special language, participating in ceremonies, and learning values, legends, stories, etc. The child develops what Gordon Allport named "ego extension," the identification of the collective as "mine." An example of this is the interest of American Jews in Israel (Elkin and Handel 1984, 102).

Elkin and Handel also point to three important aspects of subculture. First, the individual's status in the society is partly determined by his or her subculture. Second, the child's earliest role models are usually members of the social group to which the child belongs. Third, the child's significant others, the primary socialization agents, are mostly adherents of the same subculture, and therefore the development of the child's self is based in this subculture. For example, the religious identity of a Jewish child is derived from the group. From the child's point of view, being a Jew is a religious and cultural identity; from society's point of view, the individual's identity also implies a specific social position and a set of statuses that are related to this position.

The most important agent of cultural identity socialization is the family. "Unless children learn and experience their basic ethnic identity within the family or other primary groups, it is unlikely that they will ever strongly feel it thereafter" (Elkin and Handel 1984, 110). This has crucial implications for social policy, especially for families that are not religiously endogamous.

Among Roman Catholic families, a marked gap between traditional and modern expectations of family responsibility was identified several decades ago (Thomas 1951). The decline of home religious training was seen as posing a threat to the continuity of traditional religious ideals. The solution suggested, if the religious group was not to lose its younger members, was a revitalized program of religious education through parochial schools. This policy shifted the onus for intergenerational religious and cultural transmission from the family to a formal institution. Faced by similar challenges and with the acknowledgment that schooling is an important agent of religious socialization, the Jewish community's response has been to replicate the Catholic model by revitalizing and intensifying religious education through greater investment by the community and parents. This is reflected in the 1990 NJPS, which showed that the proportion of children receiving a Jewish day-school education had risen considerably.

The general trend today is a division of labor between socialization agencies and gradually for institutions to take over from the family more of the responsibility for socialization of children and adolescents. This research will demonstrate that the American Jewish family is not immune from the stresses that have undermined the traditional nuclear family, and as a result, the Jewish family today has less capacity for socializing children and preserving the minority Jewish subculture without external assistance from communal institutions.

The insights from socialization theory, when applied to the specific needs of Jewish continuity in the contemporary United States, suggest that the Jewish community faces a complex crisis on a number of levels: the individual, the household and family, and the local and national communities. Before providing an overview of the current social and cultural environment of American Jewish children, we describe the data that provide insights into the Jewish population whose characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes we will be examining.

## THE 1990 NJPS SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The decennial national census has never collected data on the American Jewish population either as an ethnic or religious group. This infrastructural void has disadvantaged the institutions of American Jewry in planning for their constituency. In 1970 and 1990 the federation system commissioned national sample surveys to resolve this problem.

The overall research design for the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey incorporated a pretest as well as a multistage survey over a period of fifteen months, which included an initial screening phase lasting sixty-two weeks, a recontact phase, and a final in-depth survey of 2,500 households. In April 1989, the Council of Jewish Federations, a national organization of the Jewish voluntary sector, commissioned the ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pennsylvania, to begin collecting data in a multistage telephone survey utilizing their twice-weekly national omnibus survey, EXCEL. The data were collected only for the civilian noninstitutional population in telephone households.

The first stage, designed to identify a potential sample of Jewish households, involved sampling over 125,000 households using the GENESYS random digit dialing (RDD) system. One thousand households were contracted in each of 125 successive rounds over the period from April 1989 to July 1990. An adult respondent was chosen in each household, using the last birthday method of selection. The procedure allowed for equal probability of Jewish and non-Jewish households to be selected from every state in the continental United States. Representation of Alaska and Hawaii was incorporated into the national sample in the third stage of the survey. In all, among the 125,000 households screened, 5,139 households containing one or more "qualified" Jews were identified by the first screening phase. Individuals could qualify on the basis of any of these four criteria: religion, "considering" themselves Jewish, raised Jewish, or having a Jewish parent. (See Appendix, p. 109, for the screening questions and more details about criteria for qualification.) Only 2.3 percent of the respondents refused to reply to the question regarding religion.

Beginning in June 1989, qualified Jewish households were recontacted. The goal of this phase was to minimize losses due to attrition of the sample between the initial screening and the in-depth Jewish survey planned for the spring and early summer of 1990 and to ascertain the qualification of each member in the household, since the in-depth survey required a randomly selected adult Jewish respondent.

The National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) database consists primarily of

the in-depth household survey conducted in the third stage. Of the previously screened households, qualified households were interviewed during May–July 1990, using an extensive questionnaire, which included socio-demographic and economic questions alongside a wide array of attitudinal and behavioral characteristics related to the Jewish identity and practice of all household members.

## DEFINITIONS AND QUALIFYING POINTS

For purposes of this monograph, we have defined the child population as those individuals aged 0–17. Several questions in the NJPS survey instrument requested information on the age of household members and their relationship to the respondent. By focusing on households with children under 18, we are able to undertake a descriptive analysis of these households and to assess the behaviors of the children present.

The *Core Jewish* child population referred to consistently throughout this monograph belongs to three subgroups: (1) *Born Jews* whose religion is Judaism (BJR); (2) converts, known as *Jews by Choice* (JBC); (3) and secular Jews, or *Jews with No Religion* (JNR). While all three groups are considered Core Jews, only the first two are counted as *Jews by Religion* (JBR). The non-Core child population is referred to as *Jewish Children of Other Religions* (JCOR). These are children with some Jewish background in terms of descent or ethnicity, but who were not considered Jewish at the time of the survey. In an attempt to report on all the children identified in NJPS, we begin our descriptive analysis in chapter 2 with a quantification of these different types, and provide some basic characteristics, such as population numbers and geographic distribution. It is important to begin with an inclusive analysis of the total NJPS child population. Although not part of the Core, JCOR children may be considered part of the Jewish population in a broader sense; they may be exposed to some degree of Jewish practice in their homes which could lead to a sense of Jewish identity later in life. However, the primary concentration in this volume is on the Core Jewish population, as it is this group on which the theme, socialization of the Jewish child, is based. It is also the Core Jewish population that is the primary focus and concern of most Jewish communal organizations' attempts to encourage Jewish practice and Jewish continuity.

There were 1,489 cases of children (Core and non-Core) among the total NJPS enumerated population, and this universe is used for particular discussions. Of these cases of children, 927 qualified as Core and 562 as non-Core.

NJPS provided data on individual household members and on household characteristics. Some variables that we analyze—such as gender, age, and education—refer to characteristics of individual household members. Other variables relate to the household unit, such as geographic location, family membership, practices, and living arrangements. The linkage, especially for children, between the individual and family environment is particularly crucial, and neither aspect should be seen in isolation. The Jewish religious variables utilized in this study reflect this linkage; for example, fasting is a personal decision and the rates of its occurrence can be counted individually. In contrast, candle lighting (Sabbath or Hanukkah) is a household practice,

as is dietary observance (kashrut) in the home. The negotiation between individual and collective decisions is part of the process of socialization.

Data from our survey are available for up to twelve household members, but details on Jewishness, affiliation, etc., were collected for up to four children and up to four adults.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, to estimate the number of children participating in a particular activity, our statistics rely on children on whom we have data, rather than all the children in the surveyed households. For purposes of analysis, the child population has been divided into four age cohorts; 0–4, 5–9, 10–14, 15–17. Because of the three-year span of the final age cohort and the statistical unreliability when there are too few cases once these data are cross-tabulated with other variables, for some analysis we have collapsed the last two groups into a broader group, those aged 10–17.

We caution that the numbers for the Jewish population are estimates based upon a sample that has an overall 3 percent margin of error and a greater sampling error for subcategories. One other caveat needs stressing; we did not interview the children themselves. Rather, the respondents were adult household members, usually one of the parents, who answered on behalf of other adults and the children living in the household. Further, the respondents' answers reflect how they interpreted the questions. For example, if the respondent reported that his or her child had converted to Judaism, we accepted this answer and did not investigate the authenticity of this conversion.

Because NJPS data gathering took place in the spring and summer of 1990, it essentially provides a snapshot in time of American Jewry as it entered the last decade of the millennium. Therefore, we cannot talk about trends; this is a cross-sectional rather than a longitudinal study. Further, we do not know in sufficient detail about most earlier characteristics of the individuals or households. There is no claim made of causality. What produced a certain behavior or affiliation pattern can only be suggested or hinted at.

Unless, in response to a related question, the respondent provided specific information that he or she is the stepparent or adoptive parent of the child present, we assume that the children are the respondent's biological offspring. Except where noted, data provided in this report are based upon an unweighted sample that reflects the actual percentages determined by NJPS responses, e.g., percentage of children who lived in a home where Hanukkah candles are lit. Where we need to project an actual population, e.g., children presently receiving a Jewish education, we use weighted data. Nevertheless, because the size of the sample imposes certain limitations once cross-tabulations are made, we do not report on any characteristic when the number of cases in the particular cell are excessively low (e.g., Orthodox, single-parent households living in the West).