

Divorce in the Jewish Community: the Impact of Jewish Commitment

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... data [in this study] suggest that those Jews who have the least commitment and involvement are at the greatest risk to divorce. This group provides the most difficult challenge. Although the wholesale return to traditional Judaism among American Jewry is unlikely, the values and principles at the basis of traditional Judaism still may serve as a valuable resource for those desiring to promote family stability and integrity.

Introduction

The status of the Jewish family continues to be an important area of interest for the Jewish professional community.¹ Typically, this concern with the family revolves around its central function as a transmitter of religious and ethnic identity, so crucial for the perpetuation of the community itself. This focus inevitably leads to a concern with a particular facet of the institution of the family—its stability. Increasing marital instability and dissolution is seen as weakening the family's capacity to preserve the community. In addition, marital dissolution serves as a manifestation

of the weakening of group values. Divorce, therefore, may be seen both as a consequent of the diminution of the impact of Jewish values and commitment and as a challenge to the perpetuation of the community itself. Thus, understanding the contours and causes of divorce among American Jewry is of importance in the communal agenda of research and response.

In fact, we know very little about the details of how divorce is distributed among American Jewry. Those practitioners who serve the community directly and come in contact with the problem of divorce daily (e.g. counselors, rabbis, lawyers etc.) report an alarming increase in the rate of divorce.² Most observers argue that this increase is largely a function of assimilation and thus simply reflects the general societal trend toward greater divorce.³ Although we are safe in assuming that divorce among American Jews has been increasing since the mid 1960's, in tandem with the trend in American society as a whole,⁴ the best empirical research still shows American

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¹ Gerald B. Bubis, "Strengthening the Jewish Family as an Instrument of Jewish Continuity," this *Journal*, 59(4), 1983, 306-317; Norman Linzer and Efreim Nulman, "The Jewish Family Revisited," this *Journal*, 60(2), 1984, 120-128; Yehuda Rosenman, "Research on the Jewish Family and Jewish Education", this *Journal* 60(3), 1984, 185-192; Samuel Schafner, "The Jewish Family: Perceptions and Realities—Can They Be Changed?" this *Journal* 59(3), 1983, 248-252; Alvin I. Schiff, "On Responding to the Challenge of the Alienated and Indifferent Jew in America," this *Journal*, 60(3), 1984, 192-203.

² Bernard Weinberger, "The Growing Rate of Divorce in Orthodox Jewish Life," *Jewish Life*, Spring, 1976, 9-14; Leo Davids, "Divorce and Remarriage Among Canadian Jews," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 1982, 34-47.

³ Rosenman, *op.cit.*

⁴ Andrew-Cherlin, *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981.

Jews are *less* likely to divorce than other Americans.⁵

One difficulty with studies that compare Jews with other Americans is that they tend to treat American Jews as a monolithic group. In this analysis we wish to differentiate *among* Jews on a critical factor: their commitment to Judaism and the Jewish community. It is expected that those Jews who have the strongest connection to the Jewish community will have a lower probability of divorce. This is due to a combination of factors. First, these Jews have probably been more likely to internalize Jewish values stressing the importance of family.⁶ Relatedly, they are probably also aware of the importance of family stability to group survival and given their greater group commitment, they might have an increased stake in family stability.

Method

To get a detailed picture of the distribution of divorce and its variation by Jewish commitment we will analyze data from the 1981 Greater New York Population study. This data base of 4,505 households represents the largest

and one of the more sophisticated randomly sampled Jewish population studies of any American Jewish community.⁷ Although Greater New York Jewry is not necessarily equivalent to American Jewry as a whole, it is still the most demographically significant community in the Diaspora. The eight-county region is home to 1.7 million Jews, representing almost 30 percent of Jews in the United States.

The difficulty of conceptualizing the nature of Jewish commitment and identity is well known both in the research⁸ and practice-oriented⁹ literature. Thus, we will measure Jewish commitment broadly, with such items as: denominational affiliation, degree of ritual observance, synagogue attendance, synagogue membership, proportion of closest friends Jewish, desirability of living in a Jewish neighborhood, travel to Israel, membership in a Jewish organization, and contribution to a Jewish

⁵ Larry Bumpass and James Sweet, "Differentials in Marital Instability," *American Sociological Review*, 37 (Dec. 1972), 754-766; Andrew Cherlin and Carin Cabebuski, "Are Jewish Families Different? Some Evidence from the General Social Survey," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 45(4), 1983, 903-910; Steven M. Cohen, "The American Jewish Family Today," in M. Himmelfarb and D. Singer (eds.), *American Jewish Yearbook 1982*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1981, pp. 136-154.

⁶ Menachem M. Brayer, "The Role of Jewish Law Pertaining to the Jewish Family, Jewish Marriage and Divorce," in Jacob Freid (ed.), *Jews and Divorce*. New York: Ktav, 1968, pp. 1-33; Walter S. Wurzbarger, "Jewish Values and the Crisis of the Family," in Gilbert Rosenthal (ed.), *New Directions in the Jewish Family and Community*. New York: Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, 1976, pp. 31-40.

⁷ Paul Ritterband and Steven M. Cohen, "Sample Design and Population Estimation: the Experience of the New York Jewish Population Study," in Steven M. Cohen, Jonathan S. Woocher and Bruce A. Phillips (eds.), *Perspectives in Jewish Population Research*. Boulder: Westview, 1984.

The results reported here are based on weighting of responses to correct for undersampling of certain segments of the community (though all statistical tests are based on unweighted data). A detailed explanation of the sampling and data collection strategy is offered by Cohen and Ritterband in the above book. This volume, an outgrowth of the Workshop in Jewish Population Studies held at the Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, focuses on improving the quality and utility of current Jewish population research. It features detailed essays on every step of the research process, written from the perspectives of both planners and researchers.

⁸ Harold Himmelfarb, "Research on American Jewish Identity and Identification: Progress, Pitfalls and Prospects," in Marshall Sklare (ed.), *Understanding American Jewry*. New Brunswick: Transaction, pp. 56-95.

⁹ Judith Lang, "Jewish Identity and the Function of the Family and Children's Agency," this *Journal*, 60(2), 1983, 138-141.

charity. Given the range of behavior encompassed by these items, we can be assured that a wide variety of styles of expression of Jewishness is being covered. These items will be used to divide the sample into subgroups, e.g., Conservatives, those not belonging to a synagogue, etc.

In this analysis we will focus on the proportion in a particular subgroup who have *ever* been divorced, including those listing themselves as currently separated. Using this measure of marital dissolution, rather than the currently divorced, we avoid the problem of differential subgroup remarriage rates. In addition, this way of measuring divorce gives us the most comprehensive indication of marital instability in the community.

Divorce and Jewish Commitment

Let us now examine in greater detail the extent of divorce in this community, with particular attention to its relationship to Jewish commitment. Table 1 (appendix) presents a breakdown of percentage ever-divorced for the various sub-groups of Jewishness. The first variable is the respondents' self-identification in terms of denomination. As one might expect, we see the lowest rate of divorce among the Orthodox. In comparison, we see a slight rise among the Conservative, a doubling among the Reform, and a quadrupling for those who do not identify themselves as members of the major denominations. It is the Orthodox community that is most frequently held up as the most effective transmitter of traditional Jewish family values,¹⁰ and these results are consistent

with our thesis of a relationship between Jewish commitment and divorce.

A similar pattern occurs when we look at religious observance more directly. Respondents were asked ten questions about religious observance in their homes. These included observance of various holidays (Passover, Chanukah, Yom Kippur), Shabat, Kashrut, having a mezzuzah, and fasting on the Fast of Esther. Respondents were divided into three groups according to the extent of their ritual observance. Inspection of Table 1 reveals a dramatic relationship between ritual observance and divorce. The percentage of ever-divorced is lowest among the high observers, nearly quadruples among the medium group, and the proportion of ever-divorced among the low ritual group, where one out of three reports having been divorced, is nearly eight times the proportion found among the highly observant group.

This trend also appears among synagogue membership and attendance. Synagogue members are half as likely to have been ever-divorced. Similarly, the proportion ever-divorced declines with frequent synagogue attendance. Thus, the overall pattern revealed by these variables indicates that religious observance has an impact on divorce rates.

As indicated earlier, we do not wish to equate Jewishness strictly with religious affiliation and practice. A frequent index of what might be called the ethnic component of Jewish identity is the nature of one's friendship network.¹¹ An item asked the respondents: "Of your three closest friends, how many are Jewish?" Almost three-quarters of ever-married respondents report that three out of their three closest friends

¹⁰ Schiff, *op. cit.* Also, Fredda M. Herz and Elliott J. Rosen, "Jewish Families," in Monica McGoldrick John Pierce and Joseph Giordana (eds.), *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*. New York: Guilford, 1982, pp. 364-392.

¹¹ Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier*, 2nd edition. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979.

are Jewish. Turning to Table 1, we see that the percentage of ever-divorced is lowest among this subgroup. Although the percentages in the other groups do not progress in strict linear fashion, the overall pattern is consistent with the trend observed so far. Combining together all those who do not report that all three of their closest friends are Jewish we find that 25.5% of this subgroup report having been ever-divorced, which is twice as high as the 12.5% of those whose three closest friends are Jewish.

Additional evidence on this dimension can be garnered from an attitudinal item which assesses the respondent's perception of the importance of living in a Jewish neighborhood. Respondents were asked how important "a sizeable number of Jews in the neighborhood" is as a factor "in making a neighborhood attractive to you and your household?" In examining Table 1, we see a direct relationship between the degree of importance attached to a Jewish neighborhood and a lower percentage of ever-divorced. The lowest percentage (11.5%) is among those who perceive this factor as "very important," which is once again about half the percentage of those who see it as only "somewhat" or "not important" (22.1%, as a combined group). When we compare subgroups at the extremes we see that those who view the Jewishness of a neighborhood as not important have two-and-one-half times the proportion of ever-divorced as those who see that factor as very important.

Other behavior was also used to assess Jewish commitment. Respondents were asked whether they belonged to a variety of Jewish organizations (e.g. B'nai B'rith, Hadassah, Zionist groups, or Jewish organizations of their own specification). We see in Table 1 that those who belong to at least one such organization report an ever-divorced rate that is lower than those who do not belong to

any such organizations. Similarly, those who have travelled to Israel at least once and those whose household has contributed a total of at least 100 dollars to Jewish charities over the previous twelve months have a relatively lower proportion of ever-divorced than those who have not. The difference in proportion of ever-divorced for those who do or don't donate a total of at least \$100 to all charities is smaller (16.2% vs 19.5%) than the difference observed for Jewish charities. Thus, this difference probably does pick up some variation in Jewish commitment, and not just some other factors like income.

Thus, a consistent trend is reflected by the data presented in Table 1 of a lower percentage of ever-divorced among the most Jewishly identified segments of the sample. Often times, group differences in divorce patterns are eliminated when one takes into account differences in social status.¹² The analysis presented in Table 1 was rerun using Multiple Classification Analysis and controlling for the respondent's education. Education was used because income would be too confounded with marital status. In almost all cases, the percentages adjusting for education were identical to the percentages depicted in Table 1; in the few cases where differences occurred they were never larger than one percentage point. Thus, we are safe in claiming that these subgroup differences among New York Jewry are not an artifact of differences in education.

Age and Sex Differences

It is important to ask whether these differences hold across age, and age and sex groups. In considering age, we

¹² Bumpass and Sweet, *op.cit.*, Also, John Wilson, *Religion in American Society*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1978.

would not expect the younger respondents to have an ever-divorced rate equal to their older counterparts who have had a greater opportunity to be "at risk" to divorce. Similarly, we would not expect the oldest age groups to have as high a percentage of ever-divorced as some of their younger counterparts, since their cohort was not marrying during the rise in divorce rates which started in the mid sixties. Indeed, we do find a curvilinear relationship between age and having been divorced. It turns out that those ever-divorced are: 14.1% of all respondents under the age of 35, 22.8% of those between 35 and 54, and 11.9% of those 55 years or older.

In Table 2 we extend the analysis of divorce to account for the impact of age. When we look at age and denomination, we see that the basic pattern identified in Table 1 holds across all age groups. Further examination reveals that among the oldest group, those 55 and older, the denominational differences are least noticeable, especially between Orthodox and Conservative Jews. Denominational differences appear to be inversely related to age, possibly an example of what some observers of American Jewry have called the trend of "denominational divergence".¹³ The data would also seem to indicate that the increase in recent cohort divorce rates has affected Orthodox Jews to a lesser extent than other Jews. (These data would not support Bubis' speculation¹⁴ of a narrowing of divorce rates between Orthodox and other groups.) The relative standing of Orthodox and Conservative Jews has remained similar in the two younger age groups, whereas the relative difference between Reform and other denominations has widened with the latest cohort. These are data collected at only

one point in time, so we have no way of knowing whether the younger Reform cohorts will wind up having a much greater relative divorce rate or whether they are just divorcing earlier.

In turning to ritual observance, synagogue attendance, and synagogue membership, we see that the strong relationship with divorce noted in Table 1 persists. It is often most striking among the middle age group—where most of the divorce has taken place. In this age group, for example, one out of two persons who report a low level of ritual observance also report having been divorced. In addition, the impact of religious attendance is especially noticeable among the youngest group. In this age group only one percent of those who attend synagogue at least once a week have been divorced in comparison to 21% of those who report never attending synagogue services.

In moving to the measures which do not focus exclusively on the religious dimension and consider the impact of age, once again, the basic pattern holds up. With respect to Jewish friends, both the relatively low level of divorce among those who report that three of their closest friends are Jewish and the non-linear relationship of this variable with divorce holds up across all ages. For the item assessing attitudes about the importance of a Jewish neighborhood, there seems to be a direct relationship to age. That is, the relationship between this attitude and divorce is weakest among the young and becomes a more important differentiating factor as age increases.

The last three items have the least dramatic relationship to divorce though it is present across all age groups. Travel to Israel loses its differentiating power among all but those in the youngest age group. Membership in a Jewish organization has a greater impact among the middle-aged. Contributing at least 100

¹³ Steven M. Cohen, *American Modernity and Jewish Identity*. New York: Tavistock, 1983.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*

dollars to a Jewish charity differentiates divorce among the young to the greatest degree.

Table 2 (Appendix) also presents divorce broken down by age and sex simultaneously. It is important to note that the basic overall relationship between divorce and Jewishness still persists. However, several points should be highlighted. When we look at denomination we see that the proportion of ever-divorced among the youngest Reform men is unusually high relative to other denominationally-identified younger males. Thus, the increase in the relative standing of youngest Reform respondents discussed above appears to be largely due to the males. It is possible that this is reflective of denominational differences in intermarriage¹⁵; unfortunately, these data do not allow for a test of this hypothesis, since we do not know the religion of ex-spouses. The gap in ever-divorced among the middle age group is greater between Conservative and Orthodox women than between Conservative and Orthodox men.

With respect to some of the other variables we see that ritual observance, synagogue and organizational membership all have a relatively large impact on middle age women. Men over age 35 who feel that a sizeable number of Jews in the neighborhood is not an important factor in attracting them to the neighborhood have an unusually high proportion of ever-divorced. Synagogue attendance does not seem to have the differentiating power among women in the youngest group that it has among the others; young men who report attending services only on the high holidays report an unusually low rate of divorce (4%) relative to their peers; and,

an unexpectedly high proportion (16.4%) of men in the middle age group who attend weekly or more have been divorced.

All things being equal, there ought not to have been differences in ever-divorced by sex. However, there could be several reasons for such differences: interaction between divorce and sex differences in intermarriage, differential migration and differential mortality, for example. Attempting to understand the reasons for these differences is beyond the scope of this paper. However, they are presented in Table 2 in order to describe in greater detail the distribution of divorce in this community and to underscore the point that the basic relationship between divorce and Jewishness holds across age and gender.

The Ethnic Dimension

Overall, we find a consistent relationship between the percentage ever-divorced and the respondent's Jewishness. This pattern appears in a variety of different variables which relate to different dimensions of Jewish identity. Inspection of Tables 1 and 2, however, reveals that the items assessing the religious dimension exhibit the most consistent and dramatic results. One can ask, therefore, whether the relationship to divorce is strictly a function of religious orientation; that is to say, is there an ethnic component to this phenomenon? As indicated earlier, the separation of Judaism into religious and ethnic components is a difficult matter, but further inspection of the data can shed some light on this matter.

One of the most sophisticated attempts at further conceptualizing this ethnic component is Sklare's concept of "associational Jewishness." Sklare and Greenblum¹⁶ used this concept to ex-

¹⁵ Bernard Farber and Leonard Gordon, "Accounting for Jewish Intermarriage: An Assessment of National and Community Studies," *Contemporary Jewry* 6(Spring/Summer) 47-75.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*

plore bases of Jewish commitment among the religiously unaffiliated. We have combined the two measures of ethnic identity discussed earlier into one measure of associational Jewishness. Those who responded that all three of their closest friends are Jewish *and* that living in a Jewish neighborhood was very important were seen as high on associational Jewishness. This measure provides us with a basis for seeing whether associational Jewishness has an impact on the divorce experience of Jews whose religious involvement is minimal.

Table 3 (Appendix) presents the extent of divorce among those Jews whose religious observance is minimal while taking into account their level of associational Jewishness as well. The overall pattern indicates that associational Jewishness does make a difference in divorce even when the level of religious observance and affiliation is low. Among those who report little or no ritual observance, Jewish associational ties and attitudes result in a 16% reduction in the proportion ever-divorced, nearly halving that proportion from 37.5% to 21.5%. A separate analysis reveals, as one would expect, that a mid-group of this variable: those whose three closest friends are Jewish or who feel that living in a Jewish neighborhood is very important place between the two reported categories in proportion ever-divorced. We get a similar result when we look at religious attendance: among those Jews who report that they "never" attend synagogue services there is an appreciable difference based on their level of associational Jewishness—30% of that group who do not meet our definition of associational Jew report having been divorced, whereas only 17% of the same group who do qualify under our definition report having ever been divorced. A similar trend is present when we examine

the denominationally non-affiliated. Among those who report that they don't consider themselves as belonging to any of the major denominational groupings, the proportion ever-divorced decreases from a high of 37.1% to 17.2%¹⁷ Similarly, among those who do not belong to a synagogue, the proportion ever-divorced is reduced from 29.6% among the non-associators to 13.5% among those who do. To sum up, associational Judaism results in halving the proportion ever-divorced among religiously inactive Jews. Thus, it is unlikely that the basis for the relationship between Jewish commitment and low divorce is based exclusively on matters relating to religious practice: there still is an impact of associational Jewishness even among those we feel comfortable as categorizing as non-religious.¹⁸

Summary and Implications

We have shown that a clear relationship exists between Jewish commitment and divorce. The subgroups of New York Jewry that can be identified as Jewishly committed: those who are ritually observant, belong to and attend synagogues, are denominationally affiliated (and which denomination is a fac-

¹⁷ The denominationally unaffiliated is a combined group representing those who see themselves as "secular" Jews and those who view themselves as "something else." Their divorce rate is similar; however, associational Jewishness has a larger impact among those calling themselves "secular" reducing their percentage of ever-divorced from 36.1% to 13.4% whereas the percentages among the "something else" group was reduced from 38.5% to 21%. It is probable that secular Jews who are high in associational Jewishness come closest to the conception of the areligious "purely" ethnic committed Jew.

¹⁸ Although not considered here, associational Jewishness has an impact on the religiously committed as well, but the differences are not as large. It does reinforce the basic point that both factors, observance and association, have an impact.

tor), whose friends are Jewish, who see living in a Jewish neighborhood as very important, who join and contribute to Jewish organizations, and who have travelled to Israel, are consistently less likely to have experienced divorce. Furthermore, although the biggest differences occur among subgroups differentiated on the religious axis, we have shown that "associational Jewishness" can have an independent effect as well.¹⁹ Such results lend credence to the assertion that Jewish family stability continues to be a particular concern for Judaism and for those segments of the community who have a high commitment to Judaism and the Jewish community.

What are the implications of such findings? Most obviously, it is important to recognize the broad diversity of experience with divorce that exists in various segments of the Jewish community. Thus, whereas nearly six out of ten women in the 35-54 age range who perform very few Jewish rituals have been divorced, only four out of a hundred similarly aged women who perform all or most of the listed rituals have been divorced. Such dramatic differences make it incumbent upon all of us to avoid assumptions of homogeneity when we research, plan, and program for divorce and related issues in working in the community.

In further bringing to bear the importance that family stability plays in our tradition, these results may alert those of us who are in a position to counsel on family-related issues to be

sensitive to the value-related issues that may be involved. An emphasis on family stability may be at the core of what has motivated persons to seek help, and an appreciation of the role Jewish commitment plays in the process is a useful resource to draw upon as well as affecting a couple's responsiveness to various types of treatment.²⁰

Similarly, programs that seek to promote family stability through family life education would do well to emphasize and draw upon Jewish sources. To the extent that such programs also establish links to the Jewish community and provide some exposure to Jewish tradition, the results may help in coping with the problem of divorce. Indeed, one could argue that the promotion of family stability and the maintenance of Jewish commitment go hand in hand. We need, of course, to distinguish between family stability and the quality of family life. Family stability and cohesion, as indicated by lowering of divorce rates, is a crucial goal in the communal agenda. It is important to recognize, however, that such stability does not always indicate strong and positive familial relationships.²¹

Finally, these data suggest that those Jews who have the least commitment and involvement are at the greatest risk to divorce. This group provides the most difficult challenge. Although the wholesale return to traditional Judaism among American Jewry is unlikely, the values and principles at the basis of traditional Judaism still may serve as a

¹⁹ It may be argued that the causal ordering presented here is incorrect—that this relationship between Jewish commitment and divorce results from a diminution in Jewish commitment after people divorce. While it is likely that such a process occurs, a more detailed analysis shows that such an explanation probably does not account for this relationship.

²⁰ Fredda M. Herz and Elliott J. Rosen, *op. cit.*

²¹ Chaim Waxman, "The Family and the American Jewish Community on the Threshold of the 1980s; an Inventory for Research and Planning" in M. Sklare (ed.), *Understanding American Jewry*. New Brunswick: Transaction, pp. 163-185; R. A. Lewis and G. B. Spanier, "Theorizing about the Quality and Stability of Marriage," in W. R. Burr *et al.*, (eds.), *Contemporary Theories About the Family*, Vol. 1. New York: Free Press, 1979.

valuable resource for those desiring to promote family stability and integrity. This is the strategy advocated by Gerald Bubis²²—the search for “informing principles” drawn from traditional Judaism which could serve to strengthen home and community, even among Jews who would not choose to make a commitment to a traditional Jewish life. It appears that family cohesion and stability are an area ripe for this type of approach. In addition, we have presented evidence that a Jewish commitment that is associational rather than religiously based is also related to lower divorce rates. It is possible that programs and approaches that help shore up the associational dimension of Jewish commitment might also have an impact on divorce.

We have only begun to outline the implications of our findings. Although we have stressed values and attitudes in our discussion of divorce and Jewish commitment, it is certain that values without a communal infrastructure to support them will have only a limited impact. An overall policy implication of these results would indicate that those who are interested in maintaining a high level of Jewish commitment and a community worthy of such a commitment and those who desire to keep family dissolution due to divorce to a minimum are working toward compatible goals. Thus, it is likely that further work, both in researching in greater detail the relationship between Jewish commitment and divorce and in translating these results into policy and programs, is a promising and useful communal goal.

²² *Op. cit.*

APPENDIX

Table 1. Percent Ever-Divorced by Jewish Variables

	Percent Ever-Divorced	Base N
DENOMINATION		
Orthodox	7	562
Conservative	10.8	1388
Reform	18.1	1057
No Denomination*	28.8	771
RITUAL OBSERVANCE		
Low	32	438
Medium	16.2	2282
High	4.6	862
SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE		
Never	25.9	1066
High Holidays	15.3	961
Throughout Year	11.1	1303
Weekly or more	6.1	441
BELONG TO A SYNAGOGUE		
No	20.9	2063
Yes	9.8	1708
CLOSEST FRIENDS JEWISH		
0 out of 3	22.7	131
1 out of 3	31.6	246
2 out of 3	23.8	612
3 out of 3	12.5	2788
JEWISH NEIGHBORHOOD		
Not Important	28.7	549
Somewhat Important	18.8	1043
Very Important	11.5	2165
BELONG TO JEWISH ORGANIZATION		
No	18.5	2473
Yes	11.2	1367
HAS BEEN TO ISRAEL		
No	17.7	2341
Yes	13.3	1433
CONTRIBUTE JEWISH CHARITIES		
No	20.8	1249
Yes	13	1312

Note: All differences within variables are significant with a chi square $p < .0001$.
Unweighted N's of ever-married for each category.

* The denominationally unaffiliated category represents those who did not check off one of the major denominations but rather indicated that they were “secular” (27.9% ever-divorced) or “something else” (30% ever-divorced). These two categories have been combined for these analyses.

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Table 2.
Percent Ever-Divorced by Jewishness Variables, Age, Age & Sex^a

	Age and Sex								
	Age			Under 35		35-54		55+	
	<35	35-54	55+	M	F	M	F	M	F
DENOMINATION									
Orthodox	3.4	7.8	8.3	1	4.2	12.4	6	10.1	7.5
Conservative	7.9	17.8	7.1	2.9	11.3	18.8	17.6	7.8	6.8
Reform	18.9	23.2	13.3	17.5	20.2	24.7	23	15.9	11.6
Non-Affil.	25.9	37.9	22.9	25.8	26	33.9	41.6	23.3	23.7
RITUAL OBS.									
Low	27.8	51.3	23.5	37.2	23.4	47	57.8	24.3	23.8
Medium	15.1	22.6	11.2	9.8	18.9	22.1	23	11.1	11.7
High	2.2	6.4	4.9	1	2.8	14.8	3.8	6.4	4.1
SYNAGOGUE ATT.									
Never	21.7	38.4	19.1	25.8	19.5	39.5	39.3	21.9	18.1
High Hol.	10.9	23.8	10.8	3.9	15.5	25.9	22.6	14.8	8.8
Throughout yr.	13.8	13.3	8.9	12.4	14.6	12.6	14.4	10.8	7.6
Weekly ^{3/4}	1.1	9.5	6.2	0	2.2	16.4	4	5.4	7.2
BELONG SYNAGOGUE									
No	17	32.7	15	14.9	18.8	31.2	34.4	18.8	13
Yes	8.5	13	8.3	6.6	9.6	15.9	11.9	8.1	8.5
FRIENDS JEWISH									
0/3	11.3	32.6	19.5	—	—	29	37.7	—	—
1/3	22.4	39.1	31.1	7.3	35.8	30.9	47.1	23.2	40.2
2/3	20	31.9	14	20.8	19.9	37.4	29.2	23.3	7.9
3/3	10.2	17.1	10.7	8.8	11.2	17.5	17.1	11.7	10.3
JEWISH NEIGHBORHOOD									
Not imp.	23.9	36.7	26.1	21.1	26.7	41.1	32.9	34.5	21.7
Some imp.	12.7	29.1	11.3	13.2	12.6	24.8	32.3	13.8	9.6
Very imp.	12.7	15.4	8.7	8.5	14.6	16.4	15.3	8	9.3
BELONG ORG.									
No	15.3	26.6	13.7	13.4	16.9	26.5	27.3	16.3	12.2
Yes	10.1	14.9	9.5	9	10.7	18.4	13.8	10.1	9.4
ISRAEL									
No	16.6	24.8	11.8	16.9	16.9	24.7	25.9	14.4	10.5
Yes	9.4	18.9	12.1	3.6	12.9	23	17	12.9	11.6
CHARITY									
No	17	29.3	15.6	14.8	19.2	27.3	32.2	19.8	13.4
Yes	5.6	16.7	11.5	4.6	6.5	17.1	16.6	11.9	11.4

Note: All differences within variables and sub-categories are significant with Chi square $p < .05$ unless otherwise indicated on top of relevant column: * $.05 < p < .10$, ⁺ $p \geq .10$.

Table 3.
Percentage Ever-Divorced of Religiously Non-Observant Jews by Associational Jewishness

Associational Jewishness	No Denominational Affiliation	Low Ritual Observance	Never Attends Synagogue Services	Doesn't Belong To a Synagogue
Low ^c	37.1 (291)	37.5 (177)	30.0 (382)	29.6 (526) ^a
High ^b	17.2 (190)	21.5 (61)	16.7 (276)	13.5 (742)
x ² p level	.0000	.0214	.0000	.0000

^a Unweighted N's, number of Ever-Married in each category.

^b Both 3 out of 3 closest friends Jewish and Jewish neighborhood 'very important'.

^c Neither 3 out of 3 closest friends Jewish nor Jewish neighborhood 'very important'.