Jewish Communal Transformation:

A look at what's happening & who's making it happen

Submitted to:
CLAL's
New Paradigm Spiritual Communities Initiative

by
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The Jewish organizational landscape has seen significant structural, financial, and cultural changes in the past two decades. Jewish leaders and scholars have written scores of articles, books, op-eds, and reports analyzing these influences:

Unprecedented **geographic mobility** has led to Jews' ever-increasing dispersion throughout the United States, influencing the size and shape of local Jewish communities.[1] Young adults today have come of age in an increasingly pluralistic and global society. They have been exposed to multiple cultures and worldviews, and educated with ideals of tolerance and acceptance of difference.[2] Jewish adults tend to strongly identify with universal values.[3]

Sociologist Richard Alba argues that the "most significant feature of the contemporary situation of American Jews …is the very significant **blurring of boundaries** between Jews and other Americans.[4] According to researchers at the Steinhardt Social Research Institute, Jewish millennials are the most diverse generation of American Jews.[5] The Pew Research Center observed that "intermarriage rates seem to have risen substantially over the last five decades.[6] Numerous Jewish thought and institutional leaders see intermarriage as "the singular defining issue" that will (negatively) transform the Jewish community in the United States.[7]

The development of a new life-cycle stage, **emerging adulthood,** has also contributed to communal shifts.[8] Post-boomers are completing major life transitions (such as leaving home, completing their education, financial independence, finding a partner and having a child) at later ages than members of the previous generation.[9] These shifts have had major consequences across American religious groups, since religious involvement is influenced more by "whether people are married, when they get married, whether they have children, and how many children they have than anything else."[10]

Changes to rates of American **religious affiliation** are widespread. The rise of the "nones" (Americans who do not identify with any religion) and the growing numbers who identify as "spiritual but not religious" are well documented phenomena.[11] Jewish identification is similarly changing: the percentages of those who identify as "Jews of no religion" has steadily increased along generational lines.[12]

The unparalleled numbers of individuals pursuing **higher education** is also having a strong influence on communal composition, since the educational experience creates social networks and strongly shapes individuals' sense of self. This is particularly the case for Jewish young adults, since twice as many Jewish millennials (ages 25-34) have earned college degrees than other US adults age 25 and older overall.[13]

Technology has transformed the nature of social relationships, and the unlimited instant access to information has had a cultural impact. Young adults today are the first generation in history to be "digital natives".[14]

Post-Boomers' **differing conceptions of legitimate authority** have been transformed by the democratization of knowledge production. This in turn has affected the kinds of authority they see as legitimate and the types of organizations and institutions they engage with and create.[15] The "failure and hypocrisy of corporate, political and religious institutions to act ethically and in more than the most crass self-interest" has also been a major formative influence on post-boomers.[16]

Philanthropic shifts have both strongly influenced, and been influenced by, these generational, structural and cultural changes. Steven Windmueller described a "new economic reality" in which mega-donors have emerged as major forces fueling "counter-establishment trends."[17] He points to mega-donor funded initiatives "designed to reinvent aspects of Jewish religious and communal life and to have an impact through their giving on the larger society."[18]

The impending **widespread retirement of Baby Boomer** Jewish leaders means that within the next five to ten years, 75%–90% of Jewish community agencies will likely need to find new executive directors.[19]   Rather than stepping into existing roles, many post-boomers are creating new organizational forms. Historian Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett identified "Jewish youth subcultures" as "a laboratory where new kinds of community are being formed, aided by the latest technologies, and participants are engaging in innovative cultural and artistic expression—and forming a distinctive sense of themselves in the process."[20]

All of these changes have given way to the single largest growth of new Jewish institutions since the late 19th century and early decades of the 20th century.[21] According to Windmueller, the "emerging model of community" that began to take hold in the mid-1980s is characterized by the following: 1) driven by the marketplace; 2) niche-oriented in both content and age/lifecycle stage of target audience; 3) innovative and experimental; 4) offers episodic modes of engagement rather than ongoing involvement; and 5) is both localized and virtual.[22]

In his 2013 book, *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Community*, Rabbi Sidney Schwarz articulates four "propositions" that he identified as holding "the key to a renaissance of Jewish life": wisdom/*chochmah*; social justice/*tzedek*; community/*kehillah*; and sacred purpose/*kedusha*.[23] He also shares examples of innovative spaces where these principles are being manifested.[24]

The 2009 report, *The Innovation Ecosystem: Emergence of a New Jewish Landscape*, described how "American Jewish life has evolved dramatically over the past decade as an entire landscape of new Jewish organizations and initiatives have emerged and taken root". [25] Based on data from the "2008 Survey of New Jewish Organizations," the authors produced a snapshot of the innovation ecosystem by describing the size, reach, funding sources, expenses, structure, governance, and challenges facing 187 organizations that were founded after 1998 and had a budget of $2 million or less.[26] These organizations have increased the number and diversity of niche-based avenues for Jewish involvement.

The subsequent report "Jewish Innovation Economy: An Emerging Market for Knowledge and Social Capital" offers findings from the second survey of its kind: the 2010 Survey of New Jewish initiatives.[27] By 2010, the authors had identified at least 600 Jewish startups in North America. [28] They note that such organizations are "disproportionately invested in building Jewish identification and activism through self-expression, whether cultural, social, or political.[29]

The growth of "emergent Jewish spiritual communities" around the country has been another organizational development that has significantly affected the nature of Jewish community. The 2007 report, "Emergent Jewish Communities and their Participants: Preliminary findings from the National Spiritual Communities Study," added to our understanding of the growth of "emergent Jewish spiritual communities". [30] Based on responses from 1354 respondents who identify as "part of or a member of" or "connected to" one of the 58 qualifying communities the authors described the characteristics of both the communities and their participants. [31] The authors created a typology of contemporary communal forms based on 1354 survey respondents who are participants of: independent minyanim (59%); "rabbi-led emergent communities" (24%); and "alternative emergent communities" (17%). [32]

These new communal forms have parallels outside of the Jewish milieu. The language of "Jewish emergent" was taken from the emergent church movement. [33] Shawn Landres explained:

> My colleagues and I at Synagogue 3000 call this phenomenon "Jewish Emergent," because of similarities with a Christian movement known as the Emerging Church. Partly in response to the "church-growth" and "seeker-sensitive" movements that have fueled the expansion of megachurches ..."Emergent" Christian theologians and pastors have united to create new spiritual communities based on ritual innovation (including a return to traditional liturgical forms) and a renewed commitment to social justice."[34]

Beyond the Jewish world, scholarly and communal attention has similarly turned toward better understanding projects and organizations that are using innovation to engage those who might not otherwise affiliate with conventional churches and synagogues. In their report, "Something More," Harvard Divinity School Ministry Innovation Fellows, Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston, profile ten "imaginative religious

communities" that are "leading the way" toward appealing to young adults.[35] That report built upon the findings of their first publication "How We Gather," which similarly profiled secular organizations that aim to foster "personal spiritual growth and social transformation."[36] ter Kuile and Thurston identified seven "key experiences that unaffiliated Millennials seek," which "comprise the cultural DNA of this growing movement."[37]

Social scientists at the University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture are currently conducting a large-scale study on religious innovation. Funded by the John Templeton Foundation, the Religious Competition and Creative Innovation project (RCCI) is seeking to understand the development of innovative forms of religious belief, practice and organization. The research team intends to "move beyond the well-worn discourse around the factors that contribute to an increase or decrease in a given religious movement's 'market share'."[38]

New Paradigm Spiritual Communities Initiative

The New Paradigm Spiritual Communities Initiative (NPSCI), led by Rabbi Sid Schwarz, is an outgrowth of the ideas put forth in *Jewish Megatrends*. Based on his observations, Schwarz articulated the need for a "forum where the contemporary efforts to re-define Jewish life and community can come together, learn from each other and be supported in their efforts to create sustainable communities of meaning."[39] NPSCI is sponsored by Clal: The National Center for Learning and Leadership and supported by funding from the William Davidson Foundation.

At the core of NPSCI is an annual, invitation-only Consultation of between 50-60 organizational leaders from diverse sectors (e.g. social justice, food movement, spiritual practice, Jewish learning, and independent *minyanim*).

The Consultations, which will take place every March for newly identified communities, aim to provide opportunities for participants to identify and understand points of extant synergy and potential opportunities for collaboration. A follow-up training program (called *Kenissa*) will be held each December for teams organized by Consultation participants. With these offerings, NPSCI seeks to develop a body of usable knowledge while broadening participants' networks and perspectives in an effort to catalyze the replication of effective communal models.

The initial Consultation took place at Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, CT from March 6-8, 2016.

2016 NPSCI Consultation participants are affiliated with almost 60 communities, organizations and networks:

Abundance Farm, Northampton, MA
Adamah, Falls Village, CT
ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal
Ayecha
Ayni Institute
Base Hillel
Bend the Arc
Beth Am Synagogue, Baltimore, MD
ChaiVillageLA, Los Angeles, CA
Center for Jewish Nonviolence
Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills, CA
Congregation Beth Elohim, Brooklyn, NY
Congregation B'nai Israel, Northampton, MA
Detroit Jews for Justice/Congregation T'chiyah, Detroit, MI
Experiment in Congregational Education, an initiative of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Farm Forward
Garin Shuva, Israel
Gather the Jews, Washington DC
Grassroots Shabbat, Toronto, Ontario
Hakhel - The Jewish Intentional Communities Incubator
Hazon
Hebrew College, Newton, MA
Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program at Brandeis University,
IKAR, Los Angeles, CA
Institute for Jewish Spirituality
Institute for the Next Jewish Future/Judaism Unbound
Jewish Initiative for Animals
Jewish Farm School, Philadelphia, PA
Jewish Meditation Center, Montclair, NJ
Jewish Social Service Agency, Rockville, MD
Jewish Wellness Center of Northern New Jersey, NJ
Jews for Racial & Economic Justice, New York, NY
Jews United for Justice, Washington DC
JOIN for Justice
Keshet
Kohenet: Hebrew Priestess Institute
Kol Hai: Husdon Valley Jewish Renewal
Lefty Shabbaton
Lippman Kanfer Foundation for Living Torah
MAKOM - The National Council of Mission-Driven Communities in Israel
Mechon Hadar, New York, NY
Mishkan Chicago, IL
Mishkan Shalom, Philadelphia, PA
Moishe House
Orthodox Union
Pearlstone Center, Reisterstown, MD
Rabbis Without Borders (CLAL)
Rimon Resource Center for Jewish Spirituality, Berkshire County, MA
Selah: Seattle's independent *minyan*, WA
Selah Leadership Training Program
Sixth & Historic Synagogue, Washington DC
Svara: A Traditionally Radical Yeshiva, Chicago, IL
The Innovation Incubator (CLAL)
The Kirva Institute, Boston, MA
ThriveRI, Providence, RI
Toronto Jewish Community Fund
Tribe 12, Philadelphia, PA
Washington DCJCC

This study was designed to provide a foundation with which to begin a broader communal mapping of what Schwarz refers to as "New Paradigm Spiritual Communities." The current research uses the 2016 NPSCI Consultation as a starting point for understanding the texture and nuance of the communities, organizations, and networks that are the forefront of Jewish communal change. Data was collected from among the 55 Consultation participants to begin to describe the qualities and characteristics of these emerging communal forms and to gather information about some of the individuals who are engaged as practitioners and/or thought leaders in this arena. In total, the perspectives and characteristics of 44 respondents, along with data about 41 communities are included in this report.* Findings are drawn primarily from data collected via a 60-question survey, which garnered a response rate of 80%. Data collection also included interviews, participant observation, and content analysis of program related-documents. (See *Appendix A: Methods* for further details).

This study is exploratory; the communities described may be loosely representative of the larger field. Consultation participants were invited to attend based on a referral/reputational sampling method. Sid Schwarz, along with advisory committee members from four communities and organizations - Hazon, Institute for Jewish Spirituality, Bend the Arc and Mechon Hadar – invited colleagues from around the country to attend the Consultation. Advisory committee members were chosen because they represented the five sectors (e.g. social justice, spiritual practice, Jewish learning groups, independent *minyanim*, eco-sustainability/food justice), that Schwarz identified as seeding the bulk of the new communal forms. Invitees were also asked to nominate others. Potential participants were required to complete two essays. They were first asked to describe their experience building a spiritual community. The second essay invited them to respond to the thesis of Schwarz's essay in *Jewish Megatrends*, which describes the emergence of communities and organizations that are successfully utilizing one or more of Schwarz's four portals – wisdom/*chochmah*; social justice/*tzedek*; community/*kehillah*; and sacred purpose/*kedusha* – to engage Jews who might not otherwise participate in organized Jewish life.

Much like the 2009 report "The Innovation Ecosystem: Emergence of a New Jewish Landscape" and its 2011 follow-up "The Jewish Innovation Economy: An Emerging Market for Knowledge and Social Capital," this report provides a snapshot of the emerging communal landscape by describing the size, reach, activities, funding, and organizational structure of the 41 organizations described by respondents. The current study also includes information about the 44 respondents who are professional and lay leaders in the communities they described. Additionally, this report draws upon findings from "Emergent Jewish Communities and their Participants: Preliminary Findings from the 2007 National Spiritual Communities Study," "The Innovation Ecosystem: Emergence of a New Jewish Landscape" and "The Jewish Innovation Economy: An Emerging Market for Knowledge and Social Capital," for comparative purposes.

*Some Consultation participants' work takes place within organizations rather than communities. In some cases, communities and networks exist within organizations. For example, the Selah Leadership Program is a thriving network within the organization Bend the Arc. Likewise, a close knit, informal community exists among people who have participated in the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's intensive educational programs. For the sake of brevity, "communities" will be used throughout the report to refer to the communities, organizations, and networks that are the focus of the current research.

Communities: Stages of Development

Most communities are in the "growing" stage.

15%
Established/Experienced
- Long-term programs
- Long term plans shaped by experience Early professional

20%
- **Early professional:**
- Established programs
- Sustainable funding
- Long-range strategic planning

37%
Growing
- Programs becoming established
- Need for greater capacity

17%
Start-up/Incubation
- Some funding
- Small or simple programs,
- Few (if any) collaborators

7%
Grassroots/Invention
- Little or no funding
- One or no active programs
- No collaborators

75% of the communities were founded since 2000. The largest percentage were established since 2010. Among the oldest are synagogues and legacy organizations where leaders are innovating.

2010-2016	41%
2000-2009	34%
1992-1999	12%
1980s	2%
1925 or before	10%
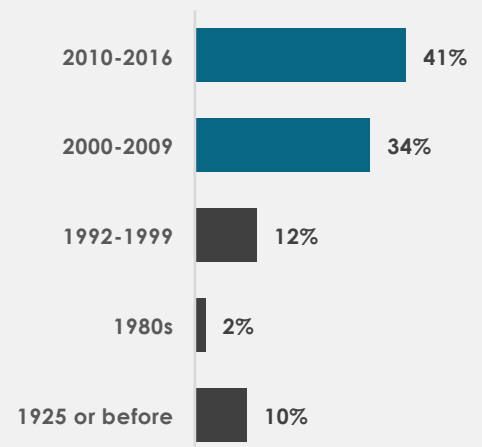
Communities: Organizational Structure

Most communities are led by Jewish professionals. Those who indicated "other" said their organizations were co-led.

- 41% Led by a Jewish professional
- 30% Rabbi-led
- 20% Lay led
- 10% Other
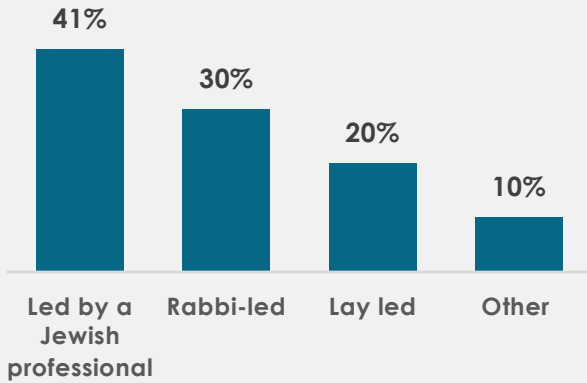
No communities work in isolation. Each community partners with two or more types of organizations. The majority partner with legacy organizations like synagogues, Jewish Federations and Jewish Community Centers.

- Synagogues — 98%
- Jewish social justice or environmental organizations — 75%
- Federations — 65%
- Jewish Community Centers — 63%
- Non-Jewish social justice or environmental organizations — 53%
- Other non-Jewish religious organizations — 50%
- Churches — 43%
- Camps — 40%
- Advocacy coalitions — 23%
- Unions — 10%
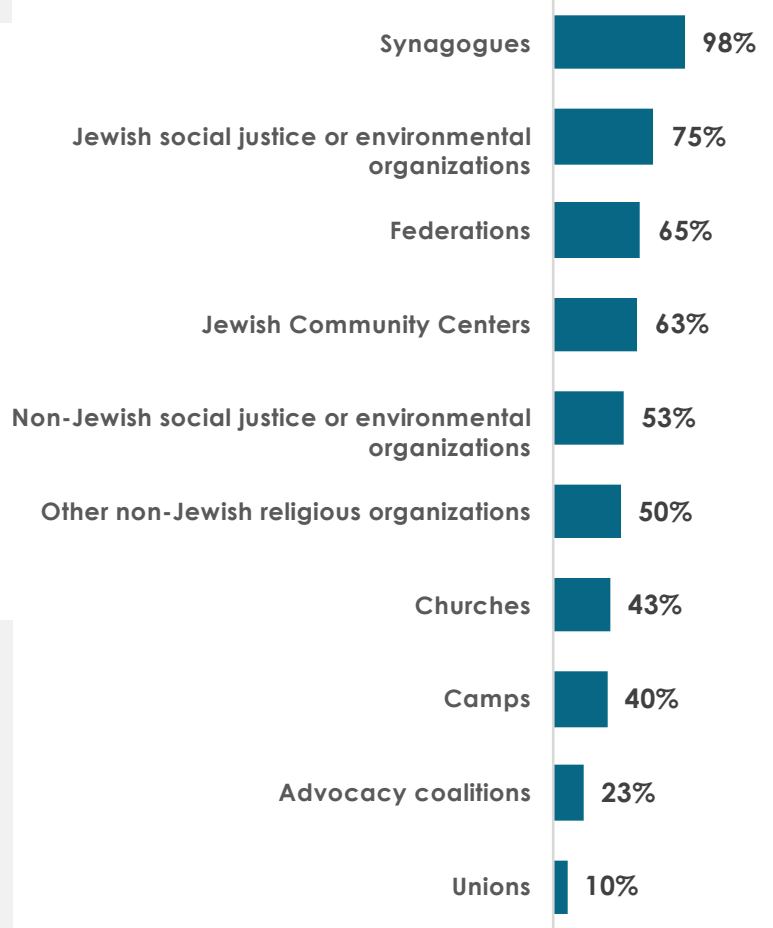
More than half of communities operate on the local scale

- Locally, 63%
- Internationally 19%
- Regionally, 28%
- Nationally, 47%
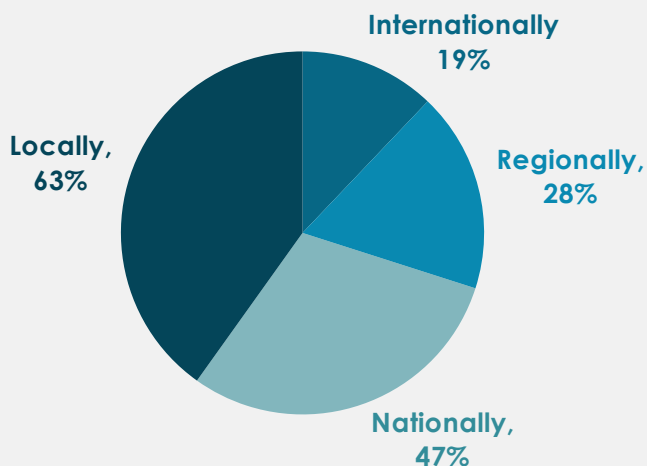
Respondents' described communities that ranged dramatically in size. They are run by as many as 140 employees and as few as one half time employee. 17 communities have between 2-7 people employed full time. They had annual budgets from as little as $10,000 to as much as $9,000,000; 12 communities function on $35,000 or less and 15 are supported by $1 million or more.
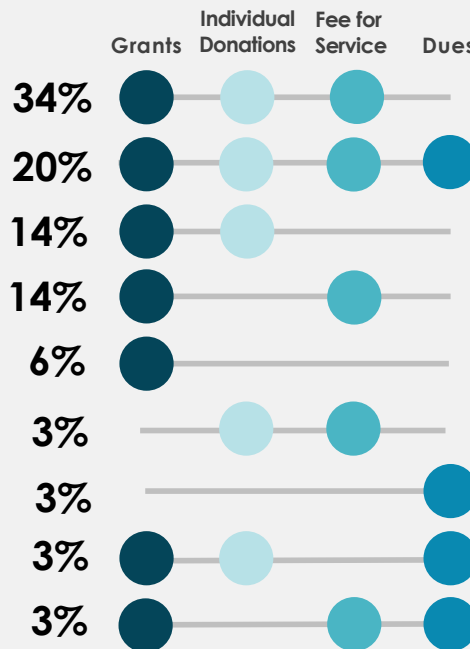
Communities rely primarily on funding from grants and individuals donations. Just one community relies entirely on dues as a funding source.

Communities funding sources are diverse. More than half of the communities receive funding from three or more sources.

	Grants	Individual Donations	Fee for Service	Dues
34%	●	●	●	
20%	●	●	●	●
14%	●	●		
14%	●		●	
6%	●			
3%		●	●	
3%				●
3%	●	●		●
3%	●		●	●

Despite the differences in life-cycle stage, size and organizational structure, respondents characterized their communities in similar terms.

81% Transformative

81% Welcoming

79% Non-judgmental

71% Pluralistic

62% Accessible

57% Unconventional
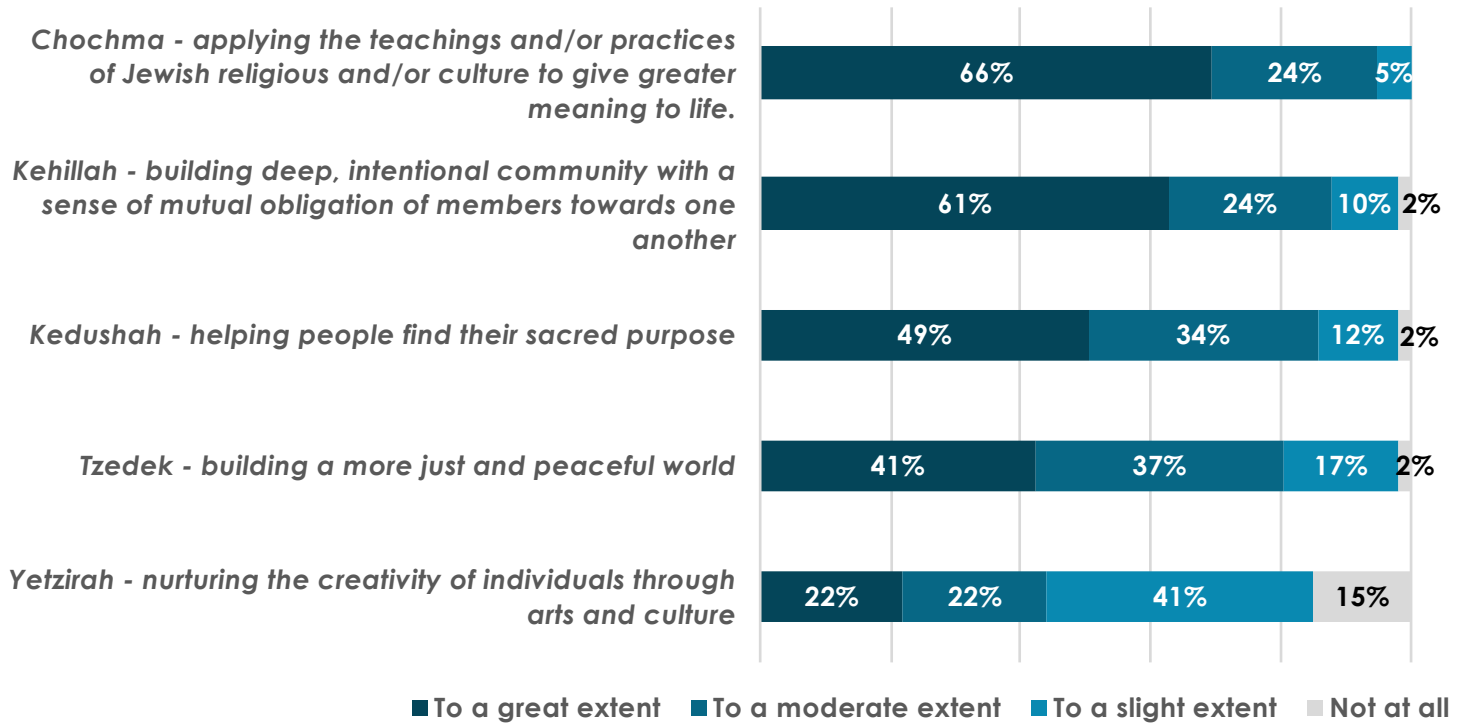
55% New paradigm

55% Risk taking

52% Playful

52% Spiritual

52% DIY

Communities: Modes of Engagement

Communities are using Schwarz's portals of engagement to varied extents.

Mode	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a slight extent	Not at all
Chochma - applying the teachings and/or practices of Jewish religious and/or culture to give greater meaning to life.	66%	24%	5%	
Kehillah - building deep, intentional community with a sense of mutual obligation of members towards one another	61%	24%	10%	2%
Kedushah - helping people find their sacred purpose	49%	34%	12%	2%
Tzedek - building a more just and peaceful world	41%	37%	17%	2%
Yetzirah - nurturing the creativity of individuals through arts and culture	22%	22%	41%	15%

■ To a great extent   ■ To a moderate extent   ■ To a slight extent   ■ Not at all

The portals that communities utilize the most are also those they would most like to improve upon.

Portal	%
Chochma	37%
Kehillah	37%
Tzedek	28%
Kedushah	14%
Yetzirah	9%
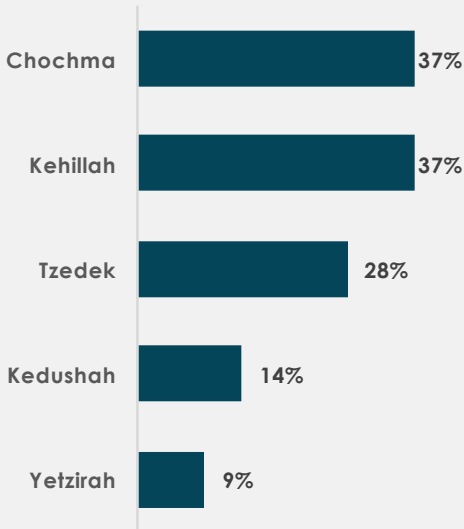
Respondents reflected:

"We've done (we believe) an excellent job welcoming in the outsiders, connecting them to each other and to Judaism, and forming a community that people want to be a part of. We want to get better at having them see themselves as the source of community, as welcomers, as possessors of purpose"

"Our focus is on developing individuals who will lead and inspire communities. We struggle with the amount of "Jewish" we should have as an engagement organization--yet we want to make sure it is an integral part of how we develop our leaders and community."
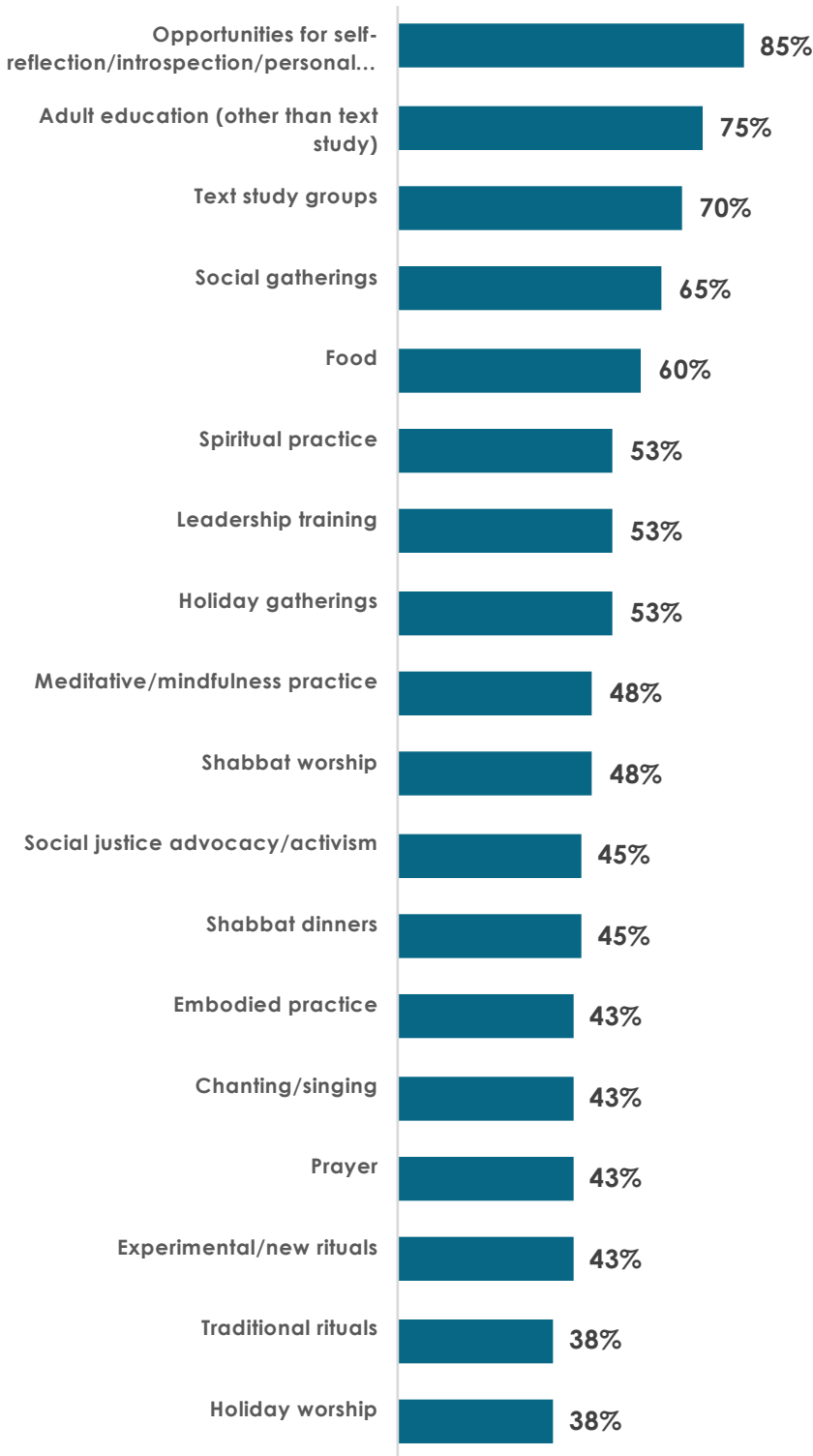
"We believe that the purpose of studying Jewish rituals, devotional practices and texts is ultimately to produce self-actualized people who are doing justice in the world and operating from a creative place, and so we set the ball in motion and hope our participants will run with it, outside our walls and beyond our purview.

"We are working to do more to elevate the connection between inner work and work in the world for more sustainable long-term transformation."

Communities: Modes of Engagement

Despite the differences in organizational size and structure, communities offer many of the same types of activities.

Communities offer numerous opportunities for personal development through learning, socializing and introspection. Almost every community offers educational opportunities.

| Activity	Percentage
Opportunities for self-reflection/introspection/personal...	85%
Adult education (other than text study)	75%
Text study groups	70%
Social gatherings	65%
Food	60%
Spiritual practice	53%
Leadership training	53%
Holiday gatherings	53%
Meditative/mindfulness practice	48%
Shabbat worship	48%
Social justice advocacy/activism	45%
Shabbat dinners	45%
Embodied practice	43%
Chanting/singing	43%
Prayer	43%
Experimental/new rituals	43%
Traditional rituals	38%
Holiday worship	38%

88%
Offer avenues to explore the wisdom of Jewish sacred texts in the language of contemporary culture

78%
Offer experiences that provide holiness and/or transcendent meaning

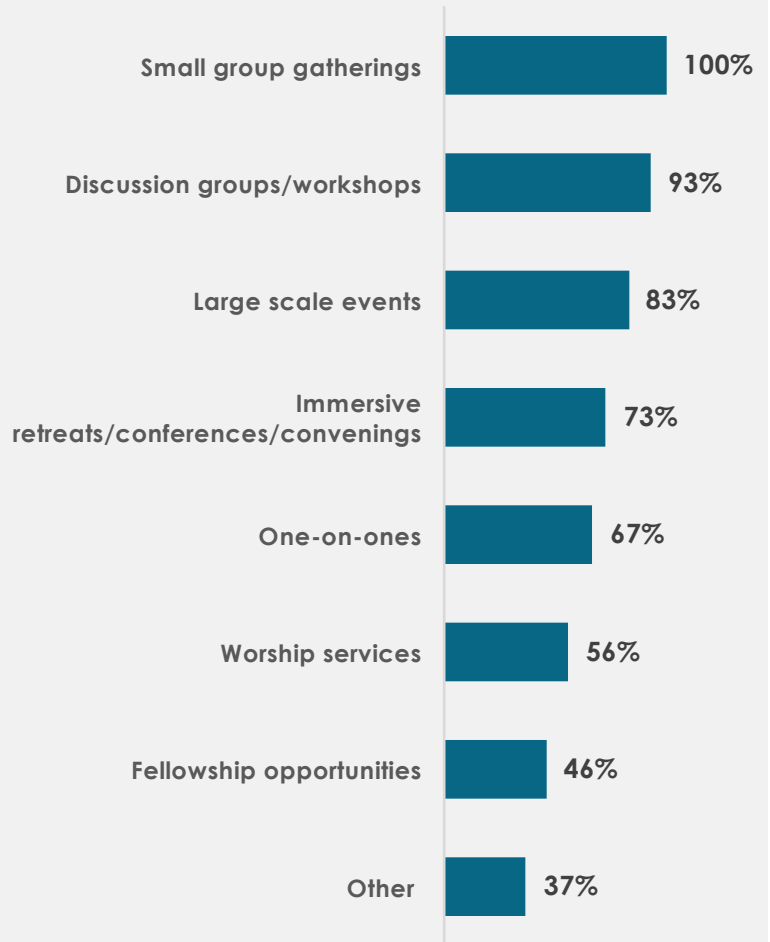**Almost every community (88%) organizes around social issues.**
More than half advocate for racial, LGBTQ, and/or gender equality.

Issue	
Gender equality	●
Environment	●
Education	●
LGBTQ equality	●
Racial equality	●

0%   20%   40%   60%
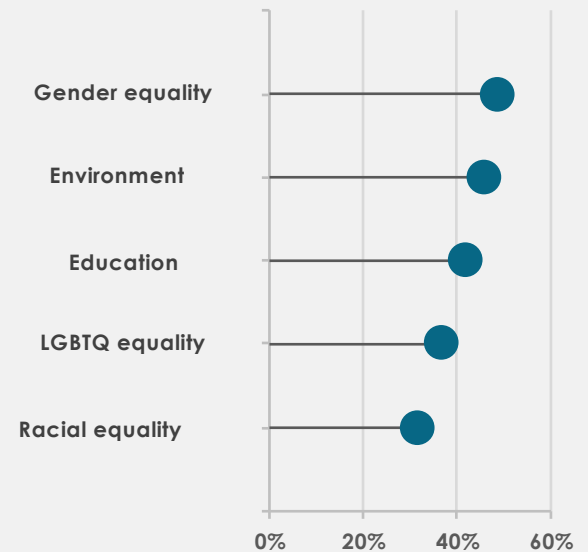
Communities: Modes of Engagement

Most communities' activities take place outside of typical Jewish venues. The most often used settings contribute to communities' ability to offer immersive and experiential opportunities for engagement. More than half of respondents said their communities offer activities in camps or conference centers. Many also meet in nature (56%) and/or public parks (46%). About a third meet in bars or restaurants and 29% meet in churches. Just 24% meet in synagogues.

Communities offer multiple modes of engagement. Every community engages people in small groups. Just two communities utilize only two of the activities below. All others engage in three or more activity types.

Mode	Percentage
Small group gatherings	100%
Discussion groups/workshops	93%
Large scale events	83%
Immersive retreats/conferences/convenings	73%
One-on-ones	67%
Worship services	56%
Fellowship opportunities	46%
Other	37%

Individuals who participate are referred to by various names.
Most communities call people with whom they engage: participants. Many created alternative ways to refer to participants, such as: "builders," "neighbors," "leaders," and "collaborators".

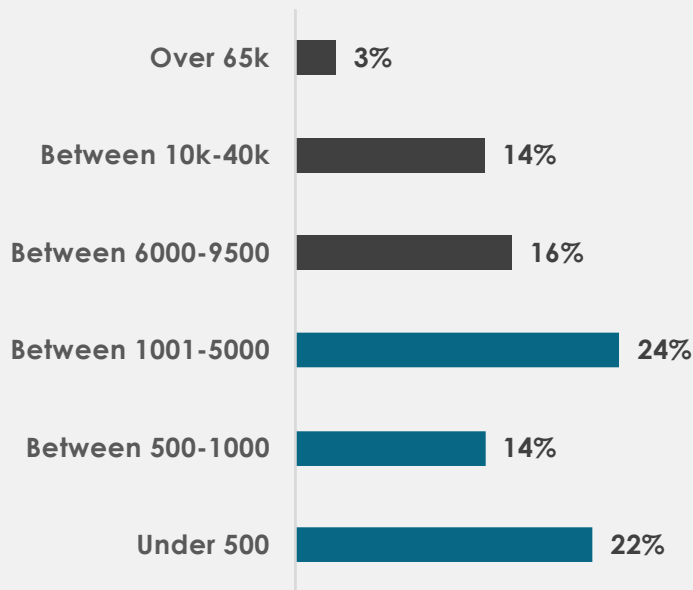| Name	Percentage
Participants	78%
Members	35%
Other	27%
Partners	25%
Fellows	23%
Congregants	10%
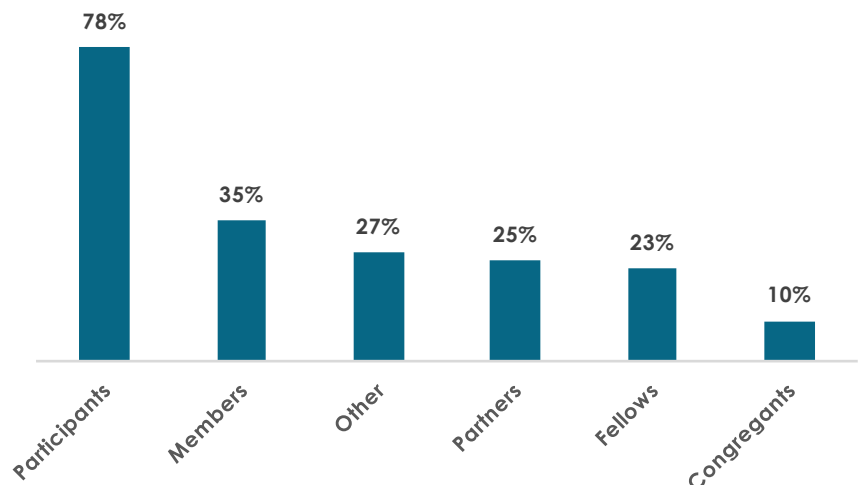
Most communities use both email mailing lists and Facebook to communicate with constituents. More than one-third (37%) of the communities have more than 2500 "likes" on their Facebook pages. Another 25% have between 500-1750 "likes". 10% of communities have fewer than 400 "likes".

Despite the support from Facebook and the breadth of their email lists, the communities are relatively small. Most count under 100 people among their most actively involved. 24% have fewer than 50 people whom they consider among their most active.

Respondents estimate that for nearly half of their most actively involved participants, their involvement in the community is their primary or exclusive Jewish expression or activity.
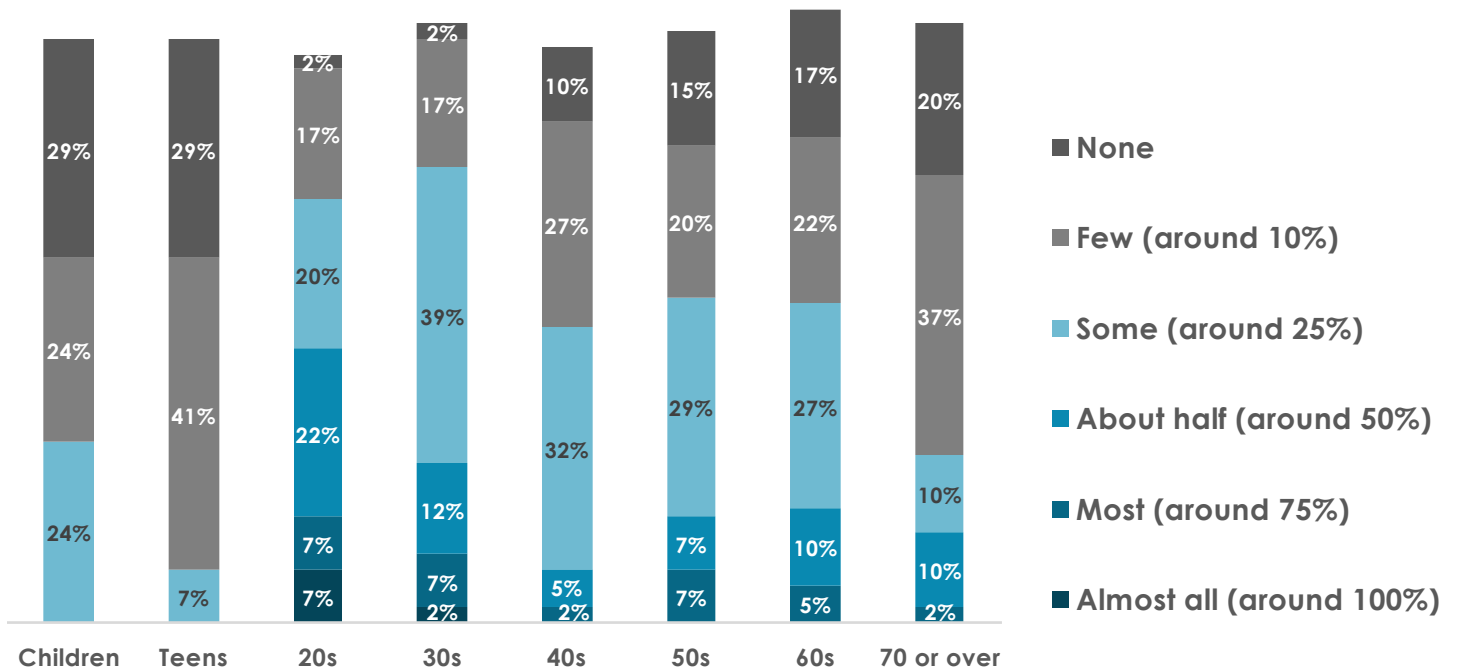
13,000
people are actively engaged in the communities
(approximately)

Communities' email lists range considerably in size: from under 500 to over 65,000 contacts. Most have under 5000 people on their mailing list. (N=38)
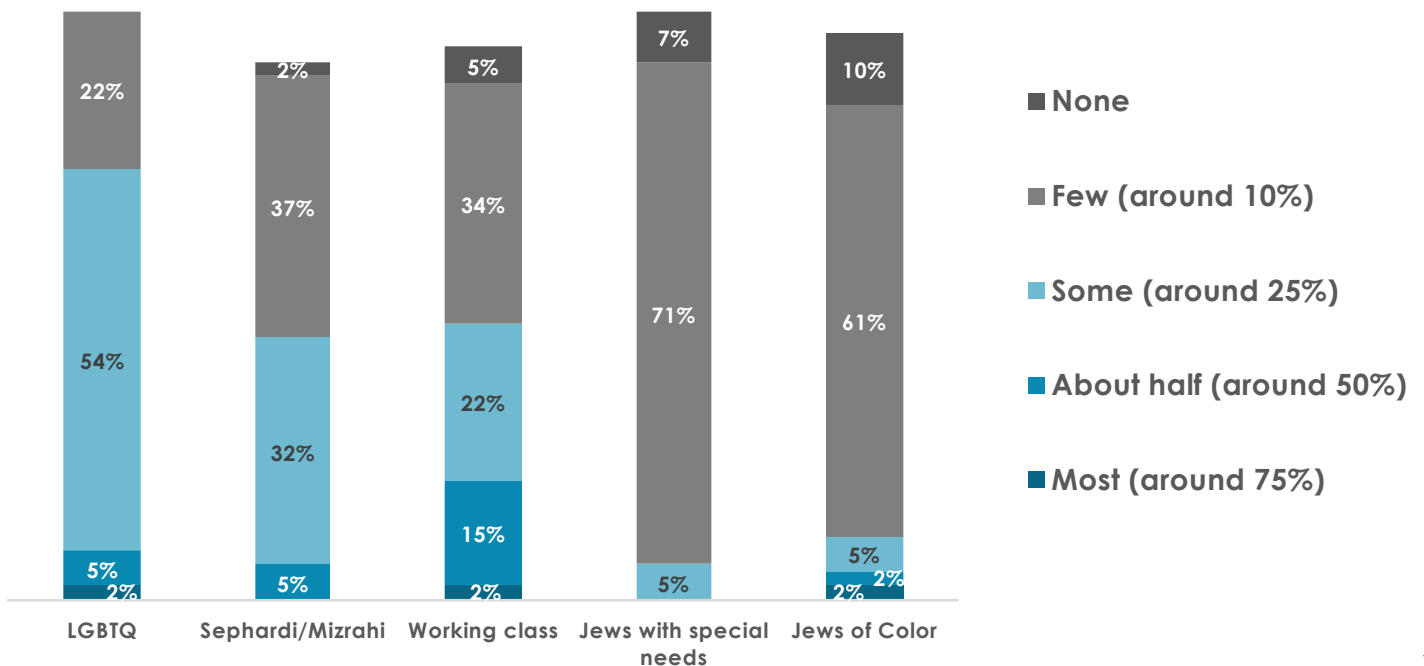
Category	Percentage
Over 65k	3%
Between 10k-40k	14%
Between 6000-9500	16%
Between 1001-5000	24%
Between 500-1000	14%
Under 500	22%

Communities: Constituents

People in their 20s and 30s are among the largest populations that communities engage. People between the ages of 40 and 60 are also among those who participate (N=36-38).

Legend:
- None
- Few (around 10%)
- Some (around 25%)
- About half (around 50%)
- Most (around 75%)
- Almost all (around 100%)

	Children	Teens	20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	70 or over
None	29%	29%	2%	2%	10%	15%	17%	20%
Few (around 10%)	24%	41%	17%	17%	27%	20%	22%	37%
Some (around 25%)	24%	7%	20%	39%	32%	29%	27%	10%
About half (around 50%)			22%	12%	5%	7%	10%	10%
Most (around 75%)			7%	7%	2%	7%	5%	2%
Almost all (around 100%)			7%	2%				

> Communities most typically engage Ashkenazi Jewish who have diverse Jewish educational backgrounds. 78% of respondents said their communities engage non-Jewish people: 12% said about half of their participants are not Jewish and 61% said that around 10-25% are not Jewish. Between 10-25% of participants in more than half of the communities are Orthodox Jews. (N=37)

Respondents estimate they are engaging members of minority Jewish populations to varied extents (N=36-38)

Legend:
- None
- Few (around 10%)
- Some (around 25%)
- About half (around 50%)
- Most (around 75%)

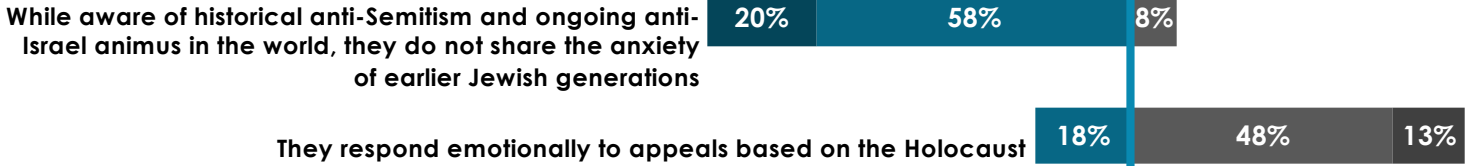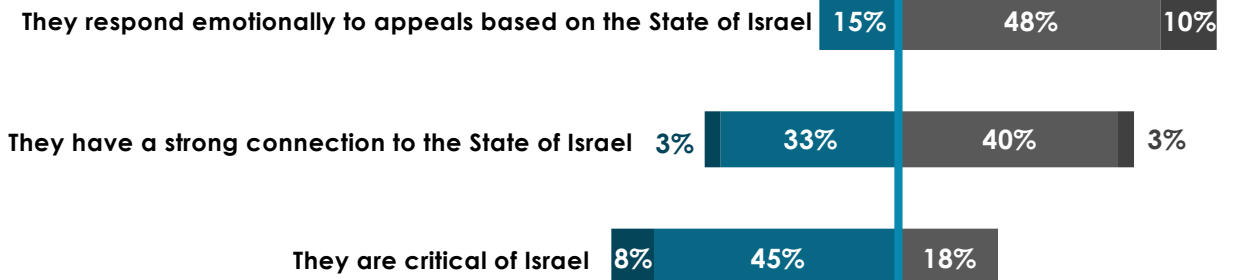|	LGBTQ	Sephardi/Mizrahi	Working class	Jews with special needs	Jews of Color
None	22%	2%	5%	7%	10%
Few (around 10%)		37%	34%	71%	61%
Some (around 25%)	54%	32%	22%	5%	5%
About half (around 50%)	5%	5%	15%		2%
Most (around 75%)	2%		2%		2%

13

Communities: Constituents

Respondents' characterizations of their constituents strongly corroborates findings from previous research about contemporary Jewish identity.

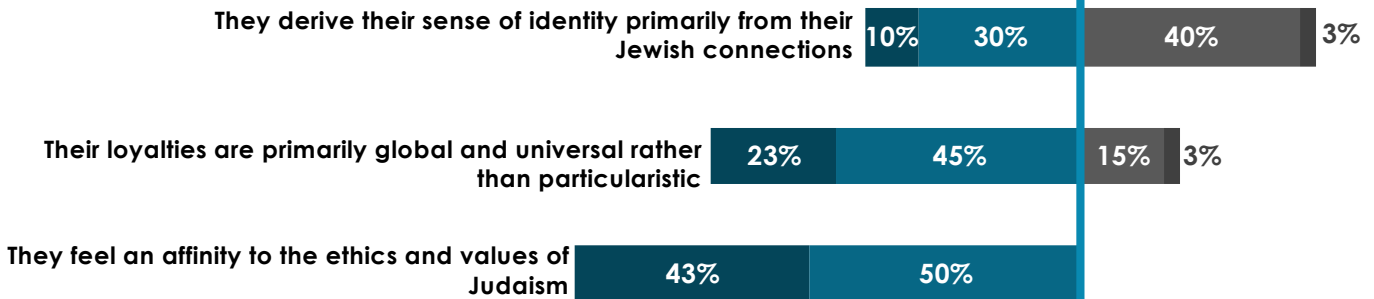| Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

The Holocaust holds limited emotional weight

While aware of historical anti-Semitism and ongoing anti-Israel animus in the world, they do not share the anxiety of earlier Jewish generations
20% | 58% | 8%

They respond emotionally to appeals based on the Holocaust
18% | 48% | 13%

Their relationships to Israel are complicated

They respond emotionally to appeals based on the State of Israel
15% | 48% | 10%

They have a strong connection to the State of Israel
3% | 33% | 40% | 3%

They are critical of Israel
8% | 45% | 18%

They balance their particularistic preferences with their universal values

They derive their sense of identity primarily from their Jewish connections
10% | 30% | 40% | 3%

Their loyalties are primarily global and universal rather than particularistic
23% | 45% | 15% | 3%

They feel an affinity to the ethics and values of Judaism
43% | 50%

The extent of their concerns about Jewish continuity reflects shifting attitudes

They are concerned about threats to Jewish survival
5% | 15% | 38% | 18%

They see intermarriage as a problem or challenge
18% | 43% | 18%
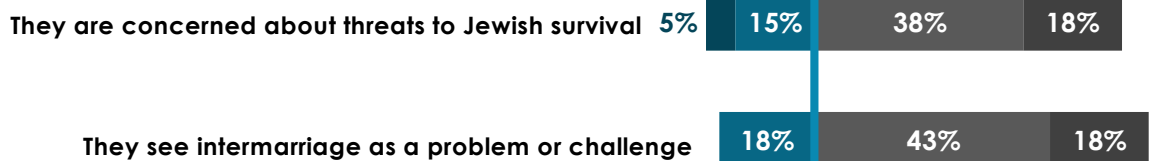
Respondents: Demographics

Respondents' demographic characteristics were fairly homogeneous: They are largely white, straight, highly educated, and politically liberal post-Boomers.

Race/Ethnicity

•• All but four respondents identify as Caucasian, white, and/or Ashkenazi. One identified as Black, and three others identified as both Sephardic and Ashkenazi. (N=40)

Gender

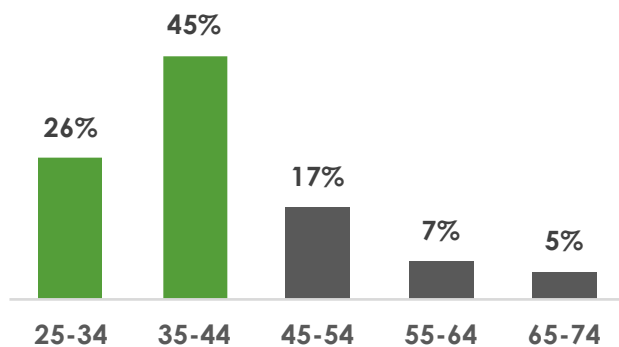•• 43% identify as women/female (18) and 57% identify as men/male (24). (N=42)

Sexual Orientation

•• All but six identified as heterosexual. The others identified as queer, bisexual, "heteroflexible" and/or "on a continuum". (N=40)

Political Views

•• Most (83%) identify their views as "progressive" and12% identify as centrist
•• 91% identify as Democrats.

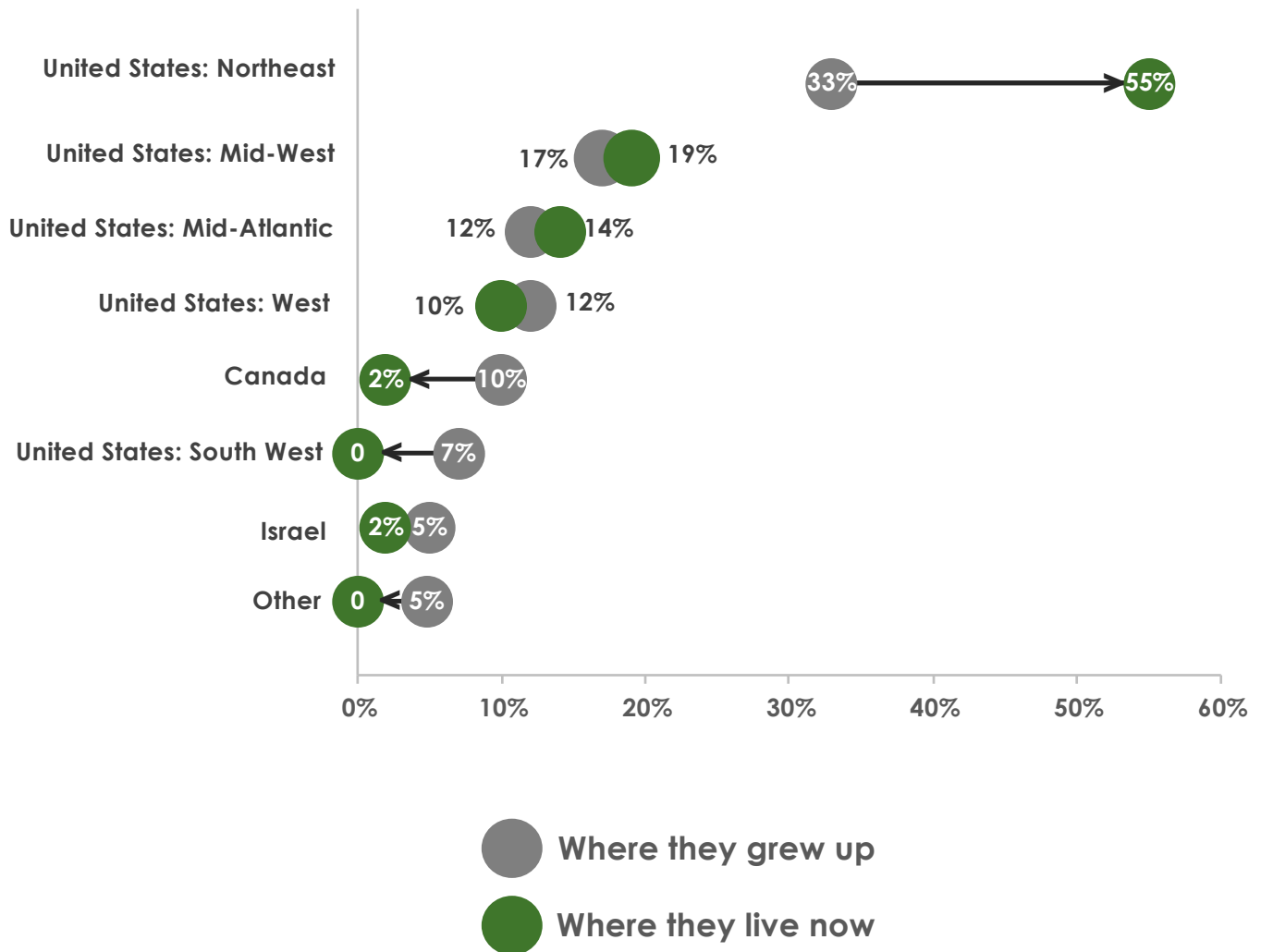**Most respondents are post-boomers. 71% are 44 years old or younger.**

- 25-34: 26%
- 35-44: 45%
- 45-54: 17%
- 55-64: 7%
- 65-74: 5%

Respondents are highly educated. 94% have post-baccalaureate degrees. (N=42)

- Rabbi: 43%
- Master's degree: 33%
- Bachelor's degree: 10%
- Professional degree: 7%
- Doctorate degree: 7%
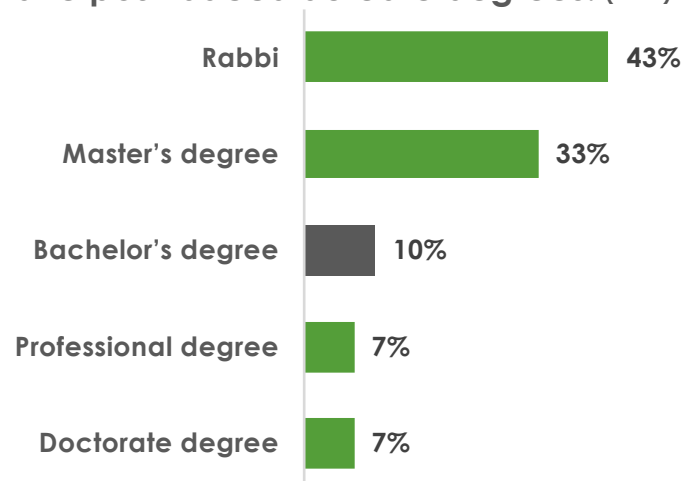
Typical of contemporary Jews' patterns of extensive geographic mobility, many respondents did not remain in their city of origin
(N=42)

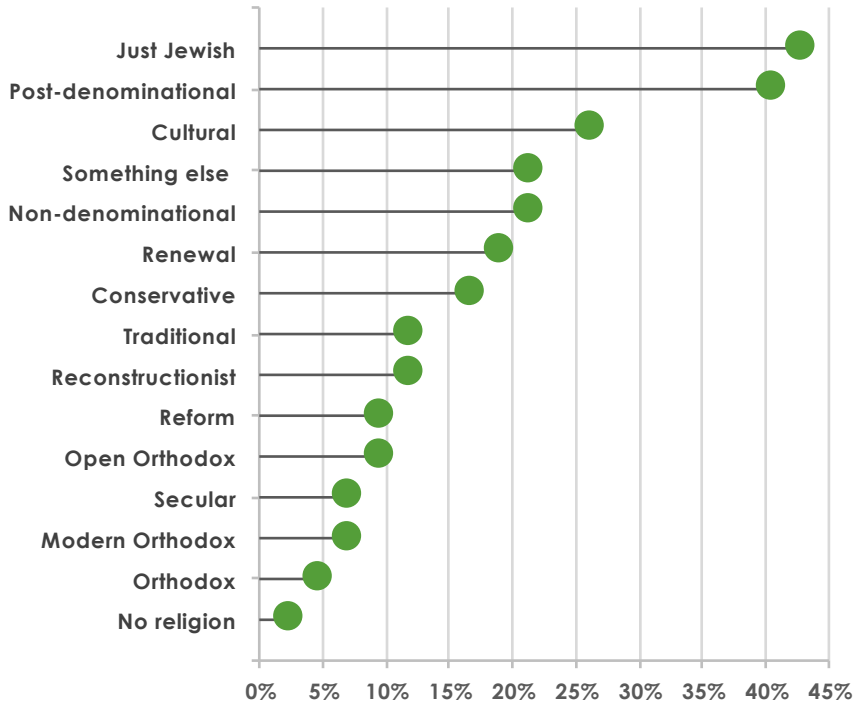|	Where they grew up	Where they live now
United States: Northeast	33%	55%
United States: Mid-West	17%	19%
United States: Mid-Atlantic	12%	14%
United States: West	12%	10%
Canada	10%	2%
United States: South West	7%	0
Israel	5%	2%
Other	5%	0

● Where they grew up

● Where they live now

Respondents: Jewish Identification

Respondents' have complex and multifaceted Jewish identities. Almost 85% identify as "just Jewish" and/or post-denominational.

Just six respondents identified exclusively along denominational lines (Three each identified as Conservative and Reform). Others who identified with a denominational also characterized themselves as "Just Jewish" and "post-denominational".

Just Jewish
Post-denominational
Cultural
Something else
Non-denominational
Renewal
Conservative
Traditional
Reconstructionist
Reform
Open Orthodox
Secular
Modern Orthodox
Orthodox
No religion

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45%

When asked how they identify, 57% chose two or more of the characterizations above to describe their Jewish identities.

43% — 1 option
21% — 2 options
10% — 3 options
12% — 4 options
14% — 5 or more options
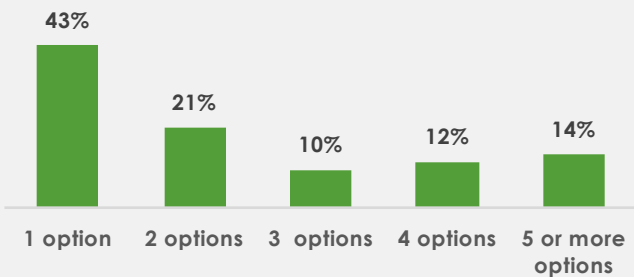
Respondents who identified as "Something else" (among other things) offered even more specification:

"Ba'al Teshuvah Orthodox"
"Psychedelic, magical, hyphenated"
"Observant Egalitarian"
"Multi-denominational"
"Halachic and Egal"
"Leaning towards Just Jewish"
"Jewish."
"NeoHassidic"
"Zionist"

48%
Do not feel committed to any particular denomination of Judaism.

90%
Are bothered when people try to tell them there's a right way to be Jewish

All but one respondent was raised Jewish (N=42). (One was raised Jewish and something else). Most (88%) were raised by two Jewish parents. Three respondents had a parent who converted to Judaism, and two had a non-Jewish parent.

They hold both particularistic and universalistic values. Every respondent strongly agreed or agreed that they have a strong sense belonging to the Jewish people. 71% feel a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need around the world.

90% strongly agreed or agreed that any community they are part of should welcome non-Jews. Most respondents' social networks integrate both Jews and non-Jews. 95% feel close to other Jews "to a great or moderate extent" and another 69% feel close to non-Jewish Americans "to a great or moderate extent."

Respondents' views about intermarriage are complicated. A large percentage of respondents – 86% - indicated they have had a romantic relationship with some one who is not Jewish and 55% agreed that "Jews should marry whomever they fall in love with, even if they're not Jewish." Despite that, no respondents are married to non-Jewish spouses. 76% (32) are married to spouses who grew up Jewish and six have spouses who have converted to Judaism. Yet 60% agreed they would "be upset if my child were to marry a non-Jew."

The high rate of intermarriage reflected in the recent demographic studies was evident in respondents' extended families: 17% said they typically attend Christmas parties with family members.

Respondents: Jewish Educational Background

Every respondent had some formal Jewish education and more than one-third (39%) attended a Jewish Day school.

Hebrew school or other part-time Jewish school	38%
An Orthodox Yeshiva or Day School	22%
Sunday School	21%
A non-Orthodox Day School	17%
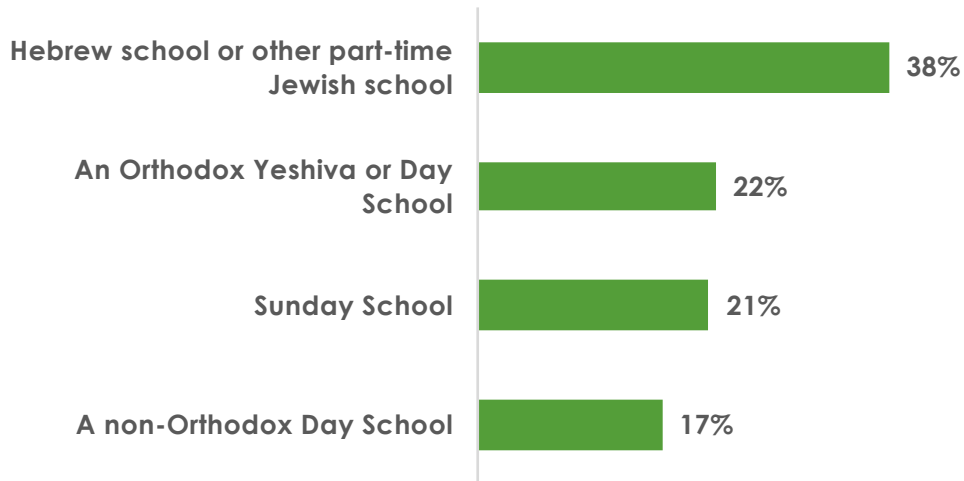
62%

Attended a Jewish sleep-away camp during the summer

57%

Regularly participated in Jewish life on campus during college or graduate school

52%

Participated in a Jewish youth group as a teenager
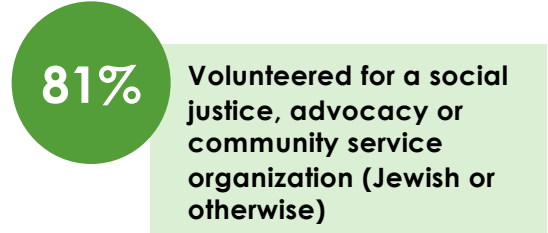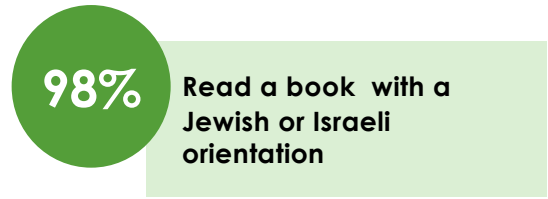
Respondents: Jewish Engagement

Respondents are actively and regularly engaged in many facets of Jewish life. Being Jewish is an important part of every respondent's life: 88% said being Jewish is "very important" to them and it is "fairly important" to 12%. Every respondent indicated they have initiated conversations about Jewish or Judaism in casual conversation within the past year.

Religion is an important aspect of most respondents lives: it is "very important" to 69% and "fairly important" to 21%. Just 10% said religion is not very or not at all important in their lives.

- The majority (81%) attended Jewish religious services once a month or more: 41% attend weekly; 26% attend several times a month; and 14% attend monthly. Just 19% said they attend a few times a year (17%) or only on special occasions (2%). Respondents are particular about they types of services they attend: 52% agreed that most synagogue services are not interesting to them.

- 88% indicated they had a significant spiritual experience in a Jewish context in the past year and another 64% had a significant spiritual experience in a non-Jewish context.

- 69% feel that God is personally involved in their lives.

- 95% agreed or strongly agreed that they try to make Shabbat a special day. Between 95-98% have hosted and/or been invited to a Shabbat meal.

Respondents also engage with multiple aspects of Jewish culture. Between 90-93% regularly read Jewish magazines or newspapers, and visit Jewish websites. 95% understand simple sentences spoken in Hebrew.
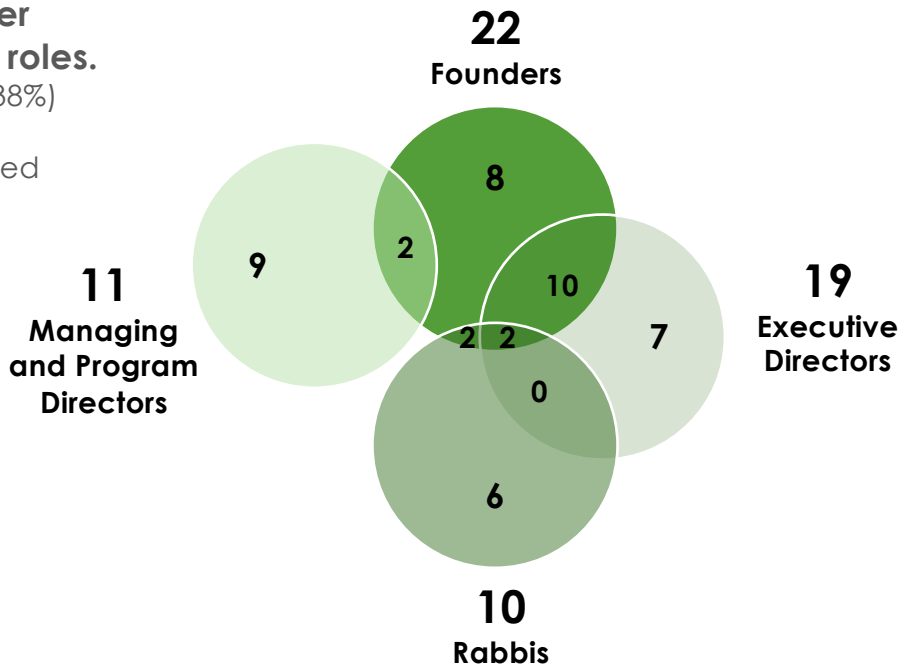
In the past year…

98% Read a book with a Jewish or Israeli orientation

81% Attended any concerts or musical performances with a specifically Jewish or Israeli orientation

81% Volunteered for a social justice, advocacy or community service organization (Jewish or otherwise)

74% Saw a movie with a Jewish or Israeli orientation

69% Attended a program or activity at a Jewish Community Center

For the majority of respondents, the extent of their Jewish involvement has been a consistent over the past two years.

21% Increased

67% Are involved to about the same extent

7% Increased and decreased

5% Decreased
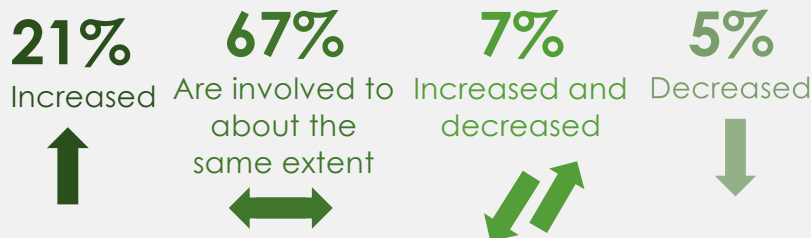
Respondents: Communal Roles

The Consultation brought together leaders with varied and multiple roles. More than one-third of respondents (38%) have more than one role in their communities. One respondent identified exclusively a lay leader.

22
Founders

11
Managing and Program Directors

9
2
8
10
2 2
7
0
6

19
**Executive Directors**

10
Rabbis

Respondents' years of experience in their organizations/communities varies considerably. More than half of respondents (58%) have been involved with their communities for 5 years or fewer.

21%	21%	16%	14%	14%	7%	7%
1 year (9)	2-3 yrs (9)	4-5 yrs (7)	6-9 yrs (6)	10-12 yrs (6)	13-15 yrs (3)	16+ yrs (3)
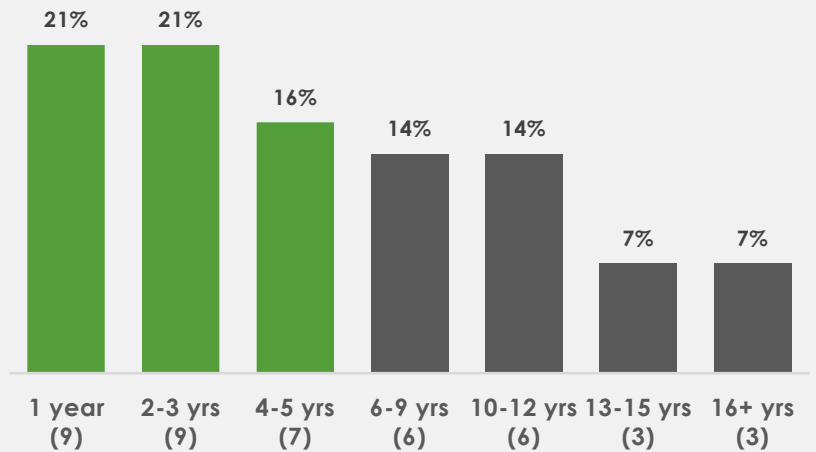
More than half of respondents (61%) derive all or most of their income from their community/organization. Some volunteer: 11% receive no income from their communities.

About half
6%

About a quarter
22%

None
11%

All or most of their income
61%
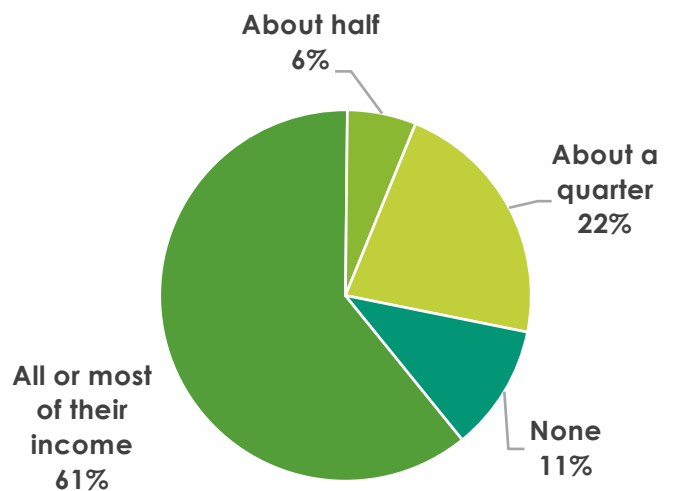
Concluding Observations

The current study has aimed to present the latest snapshot in the ongoing effort to understand the emerging Jewish innovative ecosystem, and provide a foundation for a more extensive mapping of the field. The types of organizations represented by leaders at the first NPSCI Consultation have been the focus of several previous studies. They function within what Caryn Aviv called the "Jewish innovation ecosystem": the network of organizations, people, ideas, publics, media, organizational incubators, and funders that develops, promotes, and diffuses new ideas, technologies, products, and services.[40]

Many Consultation participants could be characterized as working in "new Jewish organizations" as defined by the authors of the 2008 Survey of New Jewish Organization (i.e. Jewish startups that are U.S.-based nonprofit initiatives founded in 1998 or later with a budget of $2 million or less).[41] Some could be categorized using the typology of emergent Jewish communities that was created based on "Preliminary Findings from the 2007 National Spiritual Communities Study."[42] Some participants work in "rabbi-led emergent" communities or "independent *minyanim*," while others lead conventional synagogues using innovative methods. Still others could be characterized as "alternative emergent communities" (i.e. spiritual communities for whom gathering for prayer is not the central and defining feature). [43]

The current study begins to corroborate and extend many of the key findings about organizations/communities, leaders and constituents from previous studies. The authors of the 2009 report "The Innovation Ecosystem" asserted that the size and diversity of the Jewish startup sector indicate that this "is not a fringe phenomenon, a novel outreach strategy, or limited to the so-called "next generation."[44] This point was emphasized by the ongoing growth of the phenomenon detailed in subsequent study "The Jewish Innovation Economy."[45] The continued interest in innovation with the development of the New Paradigm Spiritual Communities Initiative five years later further reinforces this finding. Likewise, while those in their 20s and 30s are among the largest populations served by the communities included in the current research, their efforts serve adults of all ages.

While the 2009 report characterized organizations in the innovation ecosystem as distinct from the Jewish communal infrastructure of the last century [46], the 2011 report noted their varied positionality, explaining: "some startups explicitly position themselves as alternative to the established Jewish communal infrastructure, while others complement and sometimes even extend it." [47] The current research also emphasizes the extent of the interconnectedness between innovative or "new paradigm" communities and legacy organizations.

The 2009 study identified "a large number of small, niche-based initiatives" that increased "the number and diversity of customized access points to Jewish life" and that "few organizations have large numbers of participants and constituents; smaller, more intimate organizations are the norm." [48] The current research indicates that the Jewish innovation ecosystem has continued to broaden: to include both small and large scales by organizations and communities, new and old.

The "vast majority" of new initiatives in the 2009 study described their mission category as "religion-related, education, arts/culture/humanities, or civil rights/social action/advocacy," with very few focused on service provision, such as human services, mental health/crisis intervention, employment, housing/shelter, or health care. [49] The innovation landscape described in 2011 is "more focused on Jewish identity and belonging, along with religious expression. [50] Among emergent spiritual communities, research noted the coupling of "religious traditionalism and social progressivism."[51] With their foci on opportunities for personal development through learning, socializing, and introspection as well as advocacy around social issues, the small sample of NPSCI organizations echo these findings.

Consultation participants' backgrounds are similar to leaders of both new Jewish organizations and emergent spiritual communities. Many have benefited from multiple types of Jewish education and they have rich social networks that stemmed from numerous types of Jewish engagement.

The constituents of new initiatives are often "people of different Jewish backgrounds" and "at different places in their Jewish journeys,"[52] along with participants who are not Jewish. [53] The Jewish backgrounds of emergent community participants too, "span the denominational spectrum," and many identify as "non-denominational." [54] Those who take part in the organizations represented at the first NPSCI Consultation share those characteristics as well. Like emergent spiritual communities, many of the communities in the current study are reinventing conventional forms of involvement, in both name and spirit. [55]

Of course, NPSCI participants, their communities, and their constituencies exist within both a Jewish innovation ecosystem, and within the broader American context, where religious innovation similarly abounds. In their effort to understand the possibilities for transformation of the American religious landscape, Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston interviewed leaders of religious institutions who recognize the need for change and innovators at the edges of religious traditions, along with leaders of secular communities who are considering the spiritual aspects of their work. [56] The seven common themes they identified as key to for successfully engaging millennials substantially overlap with those identified by Rabbi Sid Schwarz in *Jewish Megatrends* (See Appendix B: Overlapping Themes).

There is a significant body of research that seeks to understand the dynamics surrounding innovation. Some scholars have taken an "agent-centric" approach, aiming to discover how individuals' traits contribute to innovation.[57] Others focus more on context to understand the social-structural factors that contribute to innovative processes,[58] and still others seek to understand the reflexive relationship between agent and context.[59] Yet another method is a narrative approach, which examines the reflexive process in which innovators' articulation of their work serves to advance the development of the innovation.[60]

Since NPSCI is an effort to both articulate and actualize a phenomenon, the narrative approach could be a particularly beneficial research strategy. As the Initiative unfolds, studying participating communities using a narrative approach would enable key stakeholders to continue to build upon findings from previous research about Jewish innovation and emergent communities while exploring the nuances of how and the extent to which communities articulate and enact the themes Schwarz identified.

The current study has sough to lay the groundwork for a broader mapping of the Jewish innovation ecosystem. Much has changed since the 2010 Survey of New Jewish Initiatives and the 2007 National Spiritual Communities Survey. An updated, comprehensive mapping will serve to identify the current contours of the ecosystem. Such a study could also reflexively strengthen the sector by continuing to raise awareness of the phenomenon among the communities, leaders, and constituents that make up the ecosystem.

Attention to nomenclature will be particularly important as key stakeholders move forward with the mapping. Since just 55% and 52% of respondents characterize their communities as "new paradigm" and "spiritual" (respectively), and several respondents noted that their work takes place in the context of organizations rather than communities, key stakeholders might reconsider the name of the Initiative to more accurately reflect the population it seeks to represent and support.

Engaging in a design thinking process grounded in human-centered design is another way to ensure the Initiative develops and responds directly to the perspectives of the participants. That technique could also provide a valuable means to examine key stakeholders' assumptions about what communities and leaders need and want.

Finally, research could be used to facilitate organizational learning. Engaging in a formative evaluation would support the iterative improvement of both the Consultations and Kenissa trainings as they develop. A summative evaluation would enable key stakeholders to examine the extent to which and how articulated outcomes are being met.

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[4] Richard Alba. "On the Sociological Significance of the American Jewish Experience: Boundary Blurring, Assimilation, and Pluralism" *Sociology of Religion*, 67, no. 4 (Winter, 2006) 348.

[5] Steinhardt Social Research Institute "Jewish Millennials Fact Sheet" (October 11, 2016).

[6] *A Portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews*, Pew Research Center (1 October 2013) 9.

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[8] Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Emerging adulthood: the winding road from the late teens through the twenties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[9] Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 11.

[10] Ibid., 17.

[11] See for example Robert C. Fuller, *Spiritual, But Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America, (*Oxford University Press, 2001).; Linda Mercadante, *Belief without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious* (Oxford University Press, 2014).; Courtney Bender, *The New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).; and Pew Forum, "Nones on the Rise" (October 2012); and Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape" (May 12, 2015).

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[13] Jewish Millennials Fact Sheet.

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[16] Flory and Miller, 9.

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[26] Ibid., 9.

[27] Jumpstart, The Natan Fund, and The Samuel Bronfman Foundation, *The Jewish Innovation Economy: An Emerging Market for Knowledge and Social Capital Landscape* (Los Angeles and New York: Jumpstart, The Natan Fund, and The Samuel Bronfman Foundation 2011) 2.

[28] Ibid., 3.

[29] Ibid., 7.

[30] Steven M. Cohen, J. Shawn Landres, Elie Kaunfer and Michelle Shain, *Emergent Jewish Communities and their Participants: Preliminary Findings from the 2007 National Spiritual Communities Study*. (Mechon Hadar, Synagogue 3000, 2007.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] According to Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston, Ministry Innovation Fellows at the Harvard Divinity School, the growth of the Emerging Church has "crested." They write: "it seems increasingly clear that the Emerging Church is not the movement that will swell, nor to which denominations will pin their hopes." In Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston "Where We Belong: Mapping American Religious Innovation" (Fetzer Institute, 2015) 13.

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[35] Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston "Something More" (Fetzer Institute, 2016) 8.

[36] Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston "How We Gather" (Fetzer Institute, 2015) 1.

[37] ter Kuile and Angie Thurston 2016, 7.

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[41] Jumpstart 2009.

[42] Cohen et. al.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Jumpstart 2009, 12.

[45] Jumpstart 2011.

[46] Jumpstart 2009, 4.

[47] Jumpstart 2011, 3.

[48] Jumpstart 2009, 11.

[49] Ibid., 4.

[50] Jumpstart 2011, 10.

[51] Cohen, et al. p. 4

[52] Jumpstart 2009, 11.

[53] Jumpstart 2011, 7.

[54] Cohen, et al., 16-17.

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[56] ter Kuile and Thurston 2016, 1.

[57] See for example: J. Robert Baum and Edwin A. Locke, "The relationship of entrepreneurial traits, skill, and motivation to subsequent venture growth." *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 89, no. 4 *(*2004) 587–598.

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Appendix A: Methods

Data collection included qualitative interviews, a survey, participant observation, and document review. Qualitative interviews were conducted with select NPSCI Advisory Committee members and convening participants. Interviews were used to begin to understand who they are and what they are aiming to accomplish. A purposive sample of interview respondents was gathered from among the 55 participants, meaning a select group of individuals were identified based on variables such as organizational type, gender, and geographic location. (Respondents were identified in collaboration with the NPSCI key stakeholders). Data obtained from interviews directly informed the creation of a survey instrument, which was administered to all convening participants (N=55). Indirect feedback was included in the study through the use of participant observation, which was undertaken at the inaugural convening. Participant observation included informal interviews and direct observation. Program related documents (such as the planning documents, grant related-proposals and reports, and internal and external communications), were collected to provide background information and context. Participants' written responses to pre-convening questionnaires were also reviewed. The design of the interview protocols, along with the survey instrument and participant observation guide was informed by these documents.

In his 2013 book, *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Community*, Sid Schwarz identified four themes that he saw as "essential building blocks of any institutions that hoped to appeal to next generation American Jews." He added a fifth theme, *Yetzirah*/Creativity based on input from the participants at the first NPSCI Consultation. In their 2015 report "How We Gather" and their follow-up work "Something More," Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston looked at the broader landscape of secular and religious innovation, and identified seven such themes. Schwarz, together with ter Kuile and Thurston (who attended the first NSPSI Consultation as partner researchers), recognized the similarities among the themes they had each framed independently. Together they concluded that emerging communities of meaning tend to express and operationalize the following values, qualities and characteristics:

Schwarz

ter Kuile and Thurston

Kehilla
Intentional social arrangements in which people enter into mutual obligatory relationships committed to a common mission and to each other

➡ **Community**
Valuing and fostering deep relationships that center on service to others

Kedusha
Finding one's sacred purpose or life's vocation

➡ **Purpose Finding**
Clarifying, articulating and acting on one's personal mission in life

Tzedek
The impulse to work for greater peace and justice, especially for the most vulnerable in the world

➡ **Social Transformation**
Pursuing justice and beauty in the world through the creation of networks for good

Yetzirah
The human ability to imagine/invent/create ideas, science, art and culture

➡ **Creativity**
Allowing time and space to activate the imagination and engage in play

Chochma
Applying the teachings and practices of one's inherited religious and cultural tradition to give greater meaning to life

Accountability
Holding oneself and others responsible for working towards defined goals

Personal Transformation
Making a conscious and dedicated effort to develop one's own body, mind and spirit

Something More
Common thread/collective well-being/the circle that encompasses all