

**Jewish Jumbos:  
A Community Segregated From Within**

An honors thesis for the Department of Sociology

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## **ABSTRACT**

When students leave home and move to college, they gain a great deal of freedom in deciding what shape their individual lives will take, what interests they will pursue, and which aspects of their pre-college lives they will abandon. One such decision students must make is whether or not to embrace their religion once they escape the realm of overbearing parents and gain full-control over their daily activities. It is the intent of this research project to use both quantitative and qualitative methods in speaking with ten diverse undergraduates to take a closer look at how a specific group of undergraduates go about making the choice of whether or not to become involved with their religion on their own while away for college. In particular, the seeming discrepancy that exists between identifying oneself with a macro-level ('broad') Jewish community and claiming membership in the micro-level ('University') Jewish community is explored. In attempting to explain this differentiation, predictors of group-identification for each 'level' will be considered, both independently as well as cohesively. Furthermore, it will be revealed that the Jewish student population at this university is one that continuously perpetuates segregation from within itself.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Though only my name appears on the cover of this thesis manuscript, there are many other people to whom due credit and sincere gratitude must be given. Without such individuals, this project never would have been possible.

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I want to thank and acknowledge all those respondents who graciously gave of their time and energy- and life experience- to be interviewed and recorded for the research reported here. I also thank them for their continued interest and genuine support that was displayed even after their respective interviews.

Finally, I would like to thank my personal cheerleader- my mom- for her unconditional love and support that has been a constant throughout my entire life. You have always encouraged me to be the absolute best that I can, and have done everything in your power to make all of my dreams come true. You are more than just a parent; you are my best friend. I love you more than words could ever encapsulate (even when I'm being a grouch). Bubbie and zayda would certainly be proud of your success towards ensuring that the tradition would not die when they left this world.

I dedicate this thesis to my own zayda, Marvin H. Linder, who shared in my passion for the field of Sociology. Though he never got the chance to defend his own dissertation, his spirit was certainly present throughout the entire process of mine. May my completion and defense of this sociological analysis therefore serve to honor his enduring memory.

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## INTRODUCTION

Growing up, I was constantly surrounded by Judaism. My mother raised me in a Conservative Jewish home in which we had two sets of dishes (one for dairy and one for meat) in keeping with the laws of kashrut (keeping kosher), candles were lit every Friday night as my mother and I would say the blessing to welcome the Shabbat, and (literally) everywhere you looked, Judaic art could be found throughout every room of the house. I attended a Jewish Day School from kindergarden until eighth grade, during which I spent half of my day, every day, immersed in Judaic studies.

When it came time to prepare for my Bat Mitzvah,<sup>1</sup> I decided to forgo having a *Conservative* Bat Mitzvah, which entailed simply memorizing a Torah, or biblical, portion, and opted instead to have an *Orthodox* Bat Mitzvah. The reason for doing so was to make the transition from childhood into (Jewish) adulthood more meaningful and significant for me. I also attended a Jewish summer camp for many years during my childhood, and spent a significant amount of time in Israel and Poland, where I was profoundly impacted by the experiences at historical sites relating specifically to the Holocaust.

As much as I identified with Judaism pre-college, I never really understood what it meant to be “Jewish” or why I was so involved with Jewish activity. Really, all I fully understood was that my mother had expected and ensured that her only daughter was raised Jewish, and that my bubbie<sup>2</sup> would be very proud knowing that at least one of her great-grandchildren was “keeping

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<sup>1</sup> A Bar (males)/Bat (females) Mitzvah is a coming-of-age ritual that Jewish adolescents (between twelve and thirteen years of age) partake in to become an adult in the eyes of the Jewish community. Following the completion of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, an individual becomes more responsible for his/her actions, and is able to count as part of a *minyon*, or the minimum amount of people present needed in order to fulfill certain religious obligations.

<sup>2</sup> “Bubbe” is a Jewish grandmother, or, in my case, my Jewish great-grandmother. My bubbe passed away when I was very young, but was heavily involved with my mother’s entire life.

the tradition alive.” I also was aware that the last thing any obedient Jewish child wanted to do was upset her Jewish family; the guilt one experiences as a result of doing so felt apparently unbearable! Therefore, rather than really questioning what Judaism meant for me, I simply accepted what I believed to be more of an *expectation, a duty, the rhythm of my life*, than an option, which had been characteristic of each generation that went before me.

Now, as I recall, I realize how influential my family’s desire for me to ‘be Jewish’ had been in determining my deep involvements. When it came time to select a college to attend, I felt like I had ‘had enough’ Judaism, as if I had been ‘force-fed’ way too much of *it*, and wanted new and different experiences. Therefore, I did not really intend to get involved with Jewish life on campus; I thought that the extent to which I would ‘practice’ Judaism would be limited to observing the holidays. I certainly did not plan on taking any Judaic studies courses (after all, what else could I possibly learn about Judaism that I had not already heard in my nine years of Jewish day school?). Besides, I thought my Friday nights would be spent doing anything other than attending Shabbat services/dinner each week. Accordingly, having a large Jewish student population was not a determining factor as I determined whether or not I ‘liked’ a particular college or university.

Nevertheless, I ended up selecting Tufts because of the school’s academic reputation (of course my mother was happy I chose a school with so many other Jewish students), and four years later, I am very involved with Judaism, perhaps more than I had originally planned. Not only did I end up taking some Judaic Studies courses, I am now minoring in the field. I spend (what seems like) more time in the Tufts Hillel building than I do anywhere else on campus, sometimes to the point that I joke that I ‘basically live there.’ I now attend Friday night services

nearly every week, and I prioritize Shabbat attendance over all my other activities. More recently, I have begun saying the morning prayer (‘Modeh Ani’) when I wake up each day, and acknowledge the mezuzah<sup>3</sup> on my doorpost as I enter my dorm room each time. Today, I experience my Jewish identity primarily on a spiritual level. It is at the forefront of how I choose to portray myself to others. Similarly, as I considered which graduate school to attend, those with a strong Jewish community certainly factored into how I ranked the schools to which I applied.

My unexpected involvement made me wonder about the source of this revival of interest in Judaism. Why did I decide to embrace Jewish life and practice on my own when I no longer felt the direct pressure or expectation to do so from my family? Furthermore, why do I practice Judaism differently now? Before college, I never went to Friday night services, and when I did go to formal services (outside of the morning prayers in my day school), I always went with my family to Conservative. Now, I only go to Conservative for the High Holidays (Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur), but never for Shabbat. Instead, I exclusively attend Reform Shabbat services on Friday nights. Why Reform? And why Friday nights at all?

Additionally, even though I know nearly all the people who attend Shabbat at Hillel, I continue to intentionally arrive fifteen minutes late to Friday night services. I do this for no reason other than to avoid the social mingling that takes place among students before services begin. I have never felt comfortable during that time, except for a few rare occasions at which some of my closest Tufts friends were also present. I do not consider myself a shy person, so I cannot help but wonder what keeps me from wanting to socialize with my fellow Tufts Jews beforehand. This is especially curious considering I like to think that I can *automatically* ‘feel

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<sup>3</sup> A mezuzah is a fixture that is placed on the doorpost of each room (except for the bathroom) in Jewish homes. Inside the mezuzah is a small scroll on which is written the Shema, which is one of the most important Jewish prayers that acknowledges the existence of one, and only one, G-D.

connected to' other Jewish individuals on the basis of our shared identification as 'Jews.'

Moreover, if I feel uncomfortable around the people who are also attending Shabbat services at Hillel, why do I even bother going to the Hillel center each week? I could just as easily stay in my room and say the prayers on my own. If even I, an individual who appears to be heavily involved and 'part of' the Hillel community by my friends on campus, do not even feel comfortable around some of my fellow Jewish Jumbos, how would someone who is not at all involved, but who desires to explore the possibility of doing so, experience Hillel? It is simply unrealistic to expect a newcomer to find Tufts Hillel to be the overly supportive and welcoming environment that it strives to be when its own participants do not always view it as such. Instead, many uninvolved students tend to get the 'wrong' impression of what Hillel, and the religion it is associated with -Judaism- are about, as a result of feeling unwelcome in the local community. Perhaps by understanding the root causes of this discomfort, effective measures designed at specifically attacking them will emerge.

Taken together, these individual questions amalgamated into the specific research question that I sought to answer: If Judaism is a significant part of how an individual self-identifies and values being a member of the larger Jewish community, what prevents that individual from forming stronger relationships and associating more closely with fellow Jewish students? One would think that it would be easier to 'connect' to something local and tangibly accessible-such as the smaller campus community-than it would be to find a strong *real* appreciation, connection, and sense of belonging to a broad network of thousands of people, with whom I share a passion and love for Judaism. But this does not appear to be the case, at least not for either myself nor for all the students that I interviewed.

I chose to focus my research on Tufts University for specific reasons. The student body at Tufts, located in Medford, Massachusetts, consists of approximately one-thousand two hundred Jewish students, representing roughly a quarter (25%) of the school's entire undergraduate population. In terms of numbers alone, Jewish life, practice, and activity on campus cannot simply be ignored; Judaism is extremely pervasive on the Tufts campus. In fact, the school offers its students a multitude of structurally-based programs, organizations, courses, and student groups relating to Judaism from which to choose to get involved with throughout their four years of college. These options take different forms and focus on various aspects of Judaism such as the religious, educational, cultural, social, and political. With so many options, how do students decide, and then prioritize, which organizations and clubs to join or how to 'be' Jewish on campus? The mere existence of these options for involvement does not imply that all students who 'marked the box' next to "Jewish" as their religion when they entered Tufts actually intended to become involved with Judaism on campus. One cannot help but wonder why someone who indicates that he self-identifies as a member of the Jewish faith (by 'checking the box') would not also take advantage of the numerous opportunities Tufts offers its students to incorporate some aspect(s) of the Jewish identity into their daily college lives.

### *The 'Tufts Jewish Community'*

Determining who does and who does not identify with the 'Tufts Jewish community' is not easily accomplished since there really is not a specific 'thing' that includes a group of people that make up a 'Tufts' Jewish community. After all, there is little on the Tufts University

undergraduate campus that is specifically unique about Jewish individuals at Tufts.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, because there are so many opportunities and ways to get involved with different aspects of Judaism (such as attending services for Shabbat and/or the holidays, keeping Kosher, getting involved with the political debate, watching movies/t.v. shows with Jewish themes, taking Judaic studies courses, going to Israel, joining a predominately Jewish fraternity, etc.) there is no ‘one’ localized and specific Jewish community. It is not even a requirement to make a physical appearance, or to be around ‘other Jews’ in order to ‘do Jewish things.’ Involvement can certainly be undertaken in the private sphere. This idea was expressed by Adam<sup>5</sup>, a current sophomore that attends weekly Shabbat services following participating on a Birthright trip to Israel, as he described how his connection to Judaism also influences what he does in the comfort of his dorm room:

There was an Israeli World Baseball Classic baseball team that was qualifying- they were just a bunch of American Jewish kids playing baseball- and I watched it in my room and I got excited! We had hall snacks and, [as a Residential Advisor,] I was supposed to be involved with that, but I told them that I was just going to be on my computer [during hall snacks] because I was watching it. And so I feel like that was something that I was doing because I was Jewish.<sup>6</sup>

This is but one example of how Jewish students can be involved with Judaism, yet might not be considered part of the Tufts Jewish Community simply because of his lack of (observable) appearances. This is not to say that they do not ‘count’ as Jewish. Rather, it is indication of the

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<sup>4</sup> It could certainly be argued that once they leave the undergraduate campus, Tufts alums that are Jewish may feel a unique ‘bond’ between them and fellow Jewish Jumbos because they can reflect on their shared experiences both as Jews, as well as former students living in the same contained space for four years of their lives.

<sup>5</sup> To ensure full confidentiality of my research subjects, all names, hometowns, and all other possible identifying features have been changed.

<sup>6</sup> Adam, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, February 25, 2013.

ability for Jews to choose for themselves what form, if any, their involvement and belonging will take.

However, for the sake of this research project, it is necessary that I provide some sort of ‘qualification’ measures to explain what I mean by ‘identifying as a member of the Tufts Jewish Community,’ despite the lack of ability for anyone to (physically) belong, forcing students instead to emotionally and vicariously experience such belonging. I have therefore decided that, in order to to be considered as ‘feeling as though he is part of the ‘Tufts Jewish community,’ a subject must actively seek involvement with other Jewish students, or interact with fellow Tufts students, on the basis of their ‘Jewishness.’ In other words, if a person 1) has Jewish friends purely due to coincidence (such as living on the same floor as each other or taking the same classes), 2) if the fact that he has Judaism in common with others is not acknowledged as being a significant feature of such a relationship (i.e. it would make no difference to their relationship if one was not Jewish), or 3) if an individual (regularly) feels uncomfortable around other Tufts Jews, then I will not consider them as ‘identifying as part of the Tufts Jewish community’ for the sake of this research project.

### *Thesis Questions and Statements*

In order to explain the discrepancy between macro-level and micro-level identification, a few other general questions must also be asked. First, what *is* Judaism? How have previous generations conceptualized Judaism and Jewishness, and how does that compare with modern considerations of the idea? What is meant by the ‘Jewish community,’ a common reference point that many Jews include in their consideration of what ‘being Jewish’ entails? What factors best

predict whether or not an individual feels like he is part of the broader Jewish population?

How Judaism is expressed by students on the Tufts campus is also questioned. One need only interact with a handful of Jewish Tufts students to realize that each student approaches Judaism differently, with some individuals choosing to delve more deeply into their religion while others are willing to remain on the edge of Judaism, recognizing only the cultural and political aspects of it. How do students go about deciding how involved or active they will be with Judaism at Tufts? Similarly, what makes Tufts students access or distance themselves from the Jewish organizations on campus? What are the strongest determinants of whether or not someone feels like he is part of the Tufts Jewish community? Are regular Shabbat attendance and having a sizable Jewish friend-group at Tufts indicators of deep Jewish religious commitment? Are these two features inseparable?

In this paper I argue that (A) the most indicative predictors of self-identifying as 'Jewish' (and as part of the larger Jewish population) are having spent time in Israel, having a strong Jewish friend-group (pre-college), growing up in a family that emphasized Jewish practice/identification, and having attended a Jewish Day School. (B) The Tufts Hillel community often presents an unwelcoming atmosphere and environment for some students, despite its intention to be an inclusive and supportive space on campus. (C) Non-religious extracurricular involvements on-campus influence, and perhaps replace, religious activities for many Tufts Jews, even those with strong religious backgrounds. This often keeps such students from reaching out to, or identifying more readily, with fellow Jewish students on campus.

This topic is relevant for various reasons that extend beyond my own personal curiosity and search for answers. In particular, the Tufts Medford campus offers individuals a very unique

and rare experience to develop their relationships with Judaism. It is very unlikely that Tufts students will ever again find themselves in such a situation in which they are surrounded by so many different ways to get involved with Jewish life as they are currently are. Therefore, it is imperative that the Jewish community take advantage of this peculiar opportunity to reach out to its students. But it also is important to ensure that such outreach be catered to the specific interests and values held by the majority of the population it wishes to attract in order for these efforts to be of any use.

## **METHOD**

The majority of my data came about through surveys and interviews with ten Tufts undergraduates. I wished to speak specifically with Tufts undergraduates who came from diverse backgrounds, particularly from homes in which the level of Jewish practice and identification varied greatly. I also desired to talk with students who were engaged in different on-campus organizations/groups/etc., and of different levels of involvement. The reason for seeking out such a diverse group of students was to see if there was any consistency in religious belief and practice amongst such different Jewish individuals. I was curious to see if the simple fact that they were all ‘Jewish,’ was enough common ground for the Tufts Jews to feel connected to one another.

It is important to note that it was not at all my intention of speaking exclusively with Tufts students who were either very active in Tufts Hillel, or, for those who had little-to-no connection to Judaism, that their only perceptions of Jewish life on campus revolve almost entirely around *Hillel*. I would have preferred expanding my research to include Jewish students

who were not at all involved with Hillel, but who did still join groups/organizations that were affiliated with Judaism (for example, members of AEPI, a fraternity that is nationally known as the ‘Jewish Fraternity’). Inevitably, however, my sampling pool and what my individual respondents decided to discuss during their respective interviews, limited my research almost entirely to discussing the Tufts Hillel at the exclusion of many other possible ways of getting involved on campus, which itself reveals the pervasive effect Hillel has on this campus. I will note, however, that many of the ‘other’ ways to get involved with Judaism, as multiple campus groups/clubs do fall under the umbrella structure that is Tufts Hillel. In fact, these various ‘initiatives,’ though rarely brought up throughout my interviews, attract many Jewish students who do not also spend time at Hillel.<sup>7</sup> Despite multiple efforts to reach out to such students, I was unable to meet with any Jewish students who did consider themselves to be ‘active’ Jews who did not also mention Hillel. However, in spite of these limitations, my final sampling pool does represent distinctive perspectives on the quality of Jewish life and Jewish activity on campus, as each of my respondents had a unique story to share.

Participant-recruiting efforts took multiple forms. I was not granted permission to send out an email through the Tufts Hillel *elist* (campus-wide email lists) due to privacy issues. I was, however, allowed to make a weekly announcement at the conclusion of Shabbat services asking any interested candidates to speak with me immediately following services. Through these announcements, I recruited two of my ten subjects.

I was put in contact with a couple of my subjects by way of a snowball sampling process. Two of the individuals I interviewed provided me with the names of three additional Tufts

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<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed description of some of the various ‘initiatives’ that fall under the umbrella-organization that is Tufts Hillel, see Appendix A.

undergrads that they thought might have interesting information to provide. All three of these students agreed to participate.

Additionally, to attract a more diverse group of people from outside my own social network, I asked a few people who were part of various on-campus organizations (such as athletic teams and cultural groups) to post a subject-recruitment message regarding my senior thesis in their respective Facebook<sup>8</sup> groups.

All of my subjects are current Tufts students. Two are currently freshman, half are sophomores, and the remaining three were all juniors. No seniors responded to my request for interviewees. Sixty percent (six of the ten) of my subjects are originally from the Northeast, and the remaining geographical regions of the United States (South, West, Midwest, and Other) were each represented by one of the other four students. All ten of the subjects come from different backgrounds and previous relationships with Judaism, and they are all currently involved with very different aspects of Tufts University. Though some of the respondents have not yet declared their major(s), there was great variance in the academic majors that students are currently/plan to pursue during their undergraduate time at Tufts. None of the subjects were paid for their participation.

Each of the respondents was asked to complete a written quantitative survey<sup>9</sup> before partaking in the qualitative interview. This survey asked the students to answer simple demographic questions followed by ones that inquired about their personal histories with Judaism. The survey also asked respondents to identify the extent of their current involvement

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<sup>8</sup> Facebook is a social networking website through which individuals are able to ‘connect’ with other users. The website can be accessed at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

<sup>9</sup> A copy of the quantitative survey that was completed by participants can be found in the Appendix.

and attachment to Judaism, both on campus as well as in general. The same quantitative survey questions were asked of all ten students.

Once students completed the survey, the subjects were interviewed. All interviews were conducted in-person. Each interview session took place in a private study room or office at Tufts University, allowing respondents to feel more comfortable and free to openly discuss their feelings and attitudes. Each interview, which lasted between fifty minutes and two-and-a-half hours, was digitally recorded and then transcribed. I then uploaded my interview transcriptions into a qualitative data analysis program known as Dedoose. Using Dedoose, coding categories for each interview response were formed by identifying common themes and patterns across the interviews.

The qualitative interviews contained many questions that were meant to assess ethno-religious identity and to provide data on student's involvement in Jewish life. The interviews were broken into four related sections: one's relationship with religion prior to Tufts, the student's early involvements with religion on campus, the individual's current campus involvements and take on Judaism, and finally, the interviews concluded with a discussion of the subject's perceptions of campus climate regarding Jewish life and practice. Though each of the ten interviews included many of the same questions, some additional (or different) questions were asked of certain respondents, the variation due to the direction the individual interviews each took. An interview guide that contains specific questions that were asked can be found in the Appendix of this document.

I chose to use both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to present a more complete and in-depth understanding of prevailing trends that I observed. The quantitative data

that the survey allowed me to collect was used as the basis of determining *which factors seemed to most influence what*. From these results, the basic structure of my argument was conceived, taking the form of a visual flow-chart. I then turned to the interview responses to first confirm the organization of the data, and then to add missing components that allow for a more in-depth and complete understanding of the matter.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It is important to first contextualize the development of my research topic by examining what previous research has (and has not) already explained regarding personal upbringing and the college experience's influences on religious identity formation. But to understand such processes of socialization, the concept of *Judaism* itself must first be explained. 'Judaism' is not limited to the traditional religious or communal aspects, though they may be the tenants most frequently associated with Judaism. Rather, these are both impacted and affected by additional components of Judaism.

### *Defining 'Judaism'*

Charles Liebman (1981) defined religion as being "composed of beliefs and practices which are conveyed and expressed primarily through symbols. The major symbols through which religion is conveyed are rituals and myths."<sup>10</sup> Needless to say, this definition is very much an oversimplification of what individual religions entail, especially Judaism; there is an old 'joke' that if you ask a Jewish person whether or not he 'is Jewish,' you will never get a direct

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<sup>10</sup> (Liebman 1981: 25)

‘yes’ or ‘no’ response. Though humorous, this statement does speak to the complexity of what exactly is meant by ‘Judaism’ or for someone to say that he ‘is Jewish.’ Many previous researchers have attempted to tackle this difficult question. It is through a combination of these various definitions that a comprehensive understanding of ‘Judaism’ emerges.

According to Harold Himmelfarb (1979), there are eight different ‘measures’ or ‘ways’ of being Jewish, each of which fit neatly into one of the four objects towards which religious involvement can be oriented: individuals, cultural systems, G-D, and community.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, such categorical divisions occasionally encompass, and are supplemented by, the various ‘spheres’ of [American] Jewry, as determined and labeled by Farber and Waxman (1999).

‘Individuals’ are what Himmelfarb’s ‘ethical-moral’ measure concerns. He explained that Jewish individuals embody charitable attitudes and behaviors, often giving Tzedakah, or *charity*, to those who are less fortunate. Davey, Fish, and Robila (2001) similarly explained that many Jewish people believe “that they have a special responsibility toward others, both Jews and non-Jews.”<sup>12</sup> Today, there are many Jewish organizations and interest groups that are devoted specifically to issues of social justice and providing for those in need.

Surrounding oneself with a ‘cultural system’ pertaining to Judaism is also listed as important to Himmelfarb’s explanation. It is through ‘cultural systems’ that ‘intellectual-esthetic,’ consisting of “reading, studying, and accumulating books, art work, and music on Jewish topics”<sup>13</sup> is housed. Farber et al. expanded upon this to include the “educational-cultural

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<sup>11</sup> (Himmelfarb 1979: 481)

<sup>12</sup> (Davey 2001: 333)

<sup>13</sup> (Himmelfarb 1979: 481)

sphere,<sup>14</sup> which they define as also being about attending Jewish theater productions and reading various publication programs, etc. Such ethno-cultural references are often used as a way for many Jewish people to find a connection to Judaism that does not require formal institutional membership or participation.

This privately experienced form of Judaism contrasts that which Himmerlfarb categorizes under the *object* of 'G-D.' It is here that the *religious* aspects of Judaism are addressed. He explains that both the 'doctrinal-experimental' (i.e belief in basic tenants of the faith and experience of a supernatural force) and 'devotional' (meaning 'ritual observance') spheres are governed towards 'G-D.' Farber further exaggerates the public realm of Judaism by referring to this as the 'religious-congregational' sphere. Interestingly, Liebman (1981) asserted that "the best single predictor of Jewish commitment is religious observance. In addition, the synagogue is the Jewish institution to which the greatest number of American Jews are affiliated and the unaffiliated are unlikely to belong to other Jewish organizations [if not also a member of a synagogue]."<sup>15</sup> However, many people find this 'essentialism' (of religious observance) to be highly problematic. This is especially true for those Jewish individuals who are atheists and therefore do not believe in a higher-being. For them, there is no significant reason to attend synagogue services when the prayers spoken are meant to praise the Almighty 'G-D.' To narrow the scope of Judaism to worship participation would be to exclude a significant portion of the Jewish population.

Despite Liebman's limited consideration of Judaism, he does also address the communal function that religious rituals play. Such rituals as lighting candles for Shabbat, keeping the

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<sup>14</sup> Farber 1999: 110)

<sup>15</sup> (Liebman 1981: 19)

dietary laws of Kashrut, or participating in seders for Passover have the capacity to unite Jews together. In this sense, religious ritual “evokes the sense of ties to community, the community of the present and the past, and strengthens one’s sense of dependence on and an obligation to that community.”<sup>16</sup>

This collective attachment that Liebman speaks of is Himmelfarb’s fourth, and final, ‘object’ of Judaism: ‘community.’ For many Jews, the Jewish community is an indispensable feature of defining their own relation to Judaism. Accordingly, both Himmelfarb and Farber devoted a significant amount of attention to describe what they each consider the ‘community’ to be. Both of the researchers mentioned political allegiance, mainly regarding the State of Israel. For Himmelfarb, the ‘ideological’ scope of Judaism was synonymous with Farber’s ‘Israel-overseas’ sphere. Not only does the State of Israel accord Jews around the globe a political identity that concerns nationalism, but also adds a particular style of living (such as a type of food-*Israeli*) that enriches Judaic culture. As it is common practice to associate the formation of the Jewish State with the Holocaust that drastically reduced the worldwide Jewish population, Farber also included the label of ‘community relations defense’ under the heading of ‘Jewish community.’ Very few individuals would contest the importance Farber et al. stress (under this heading) of combating anti-Semitism in strengthening the overall Jewish peoplehood.

Belonging to the Jewish community also provides its members with certain rewards and benefits such as social capital. For example, many Jewish college students have become very much aware of the career-orientated benefits that being able to *network* with fellow Jews offers them. In being able to identify with the ‘Jewish community,’ recognition of a ‘shared’ history (be

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<sup>16</sup> (Liebman 1981:26)

it of oppression and persecution) or experiences (such as life-cycle events) has the potential of granting access to opportunities and resources not similarly accorded to nonmembers. This is exactly what Beth Cousens (2007) meant when she wrote, “for many students, Jewishness is an advantage, a series of networks that can be used to achieve the American dream and to move ahead in a society built on who one knows and what one has accomplished.”<sup>17</sup>

Though the individual researchers chose to emphasize different tenants of Judaism, viewing them collectively allows for a deeper understanding of the multiple meanings behind an individual’s claim of Jewish identity. As the Yiddish literary critic Samuel Niger explained, the Jewish people are “a historic ethico-cultural, and socio-politico-economico-psychological phenomenon.”<sup>18</sup> Rather than referring to one particular feature, ‘Judaism’ can be understood as being a community that celebrates historical longevity, religious rituals, political interests, and a unique culture stemming from ethnic origins. It is not just one that sees itself as religious. Instead, Judaism offers individuals the space in which to be religious should they wish to do so, but also includes many non-religious aspects that have served as the ‘glue’ that holds the Jewish community together.

### *Socializations and Agents of Socialization*

Himmelfarb also explained his idea of the ‘Jewish community’ by pointing to the various socialization techniques that can be used to strengthen bonds between Jewish people. For example, the ‘associational’ sphere regards participation in Jewish organizations, while the ‘fraternal’ and ‘parental’ realms concern where someone resides and who he interacts with. In

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<sup>17</sup> (Cousens 2007: 35)

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in (Levitt 2007: 827)

order to appreciate these notions of religious socialization, the broad sociological concepts of *socialization, agents of socialization, and resocialization* must first be comprehended before being applied specifically to Judaism and Jewish life on campus.

When newborns enter the world, they do not automatically know how to exist or function as social beings. An individual must be *taught* such things as language, dress, gender roles-the culture (norms, values, systems of belief, etc.)-shared by the rest of the community to which it is born. By observing and then mimicking the behaviors and mannerisms of surrounding social contexts and groups of people ('agents of socialization'), a person's sense of (social) 'self' emerges. *Socialization* is the process through which this occurs. Furthermore, when a true understanding of the conventions that govern effective behavior is achieved, the individual gains social and cultural capital. These forms of capital in turn offer various rewards and benefits, such as a group of friends to associate with during lunch so as to not have to sit alone, or opportunities for career networking later in life.

### *Primary Socialization*

Sociologists distinguish between two different types of socialization: primary and secondary. Primary socialization takes place in the early years of a person's life. The family, or those who are responsible for raising a child, are frequently considered the main agent of socialization during the primary processes. In "The Basics of Sociology," Kathy Stolley (2005) explained that "the family into which we are born provides us social characteristics such as social class, race and ethnicity, and religious background. Our families are our initial teachers of

behaviors, languages, cultural knowledge, values, and social skills... In other words, they provide our primary socialization.”<sup>19</sup>

The family can participate in the primary socialization of a child either directly or indirectly. Because young children spend a significant amount of their time with their family (either inside the home or engaging in family activities), parents and other immediate family members are the most frequently-observable agents of socialization. Therefore, the family’s own behaviors, value systems, and cultural identities are directly available for internalization and then replication on the part of adolescents. The family also *indirectly* contributes to the primary socialization process by way of performing a channeling function into other groups or experiences (such as schools or youth group involvements). The goal of this, as explained by Ronald Johnstone (2006), is “that members of the larger organization will develop friendships and maintain ties outside formal contexts. What is involved here is recognition of the importance of reinforcement-through continued and frequent contact with others of [their] group, the formal norms and beliefs [children] have been taught and have accepted will be reinforced.”<sup>20</sup> Families are able to disguise their agenda of instilling particular ideas and attitudes in their children through their intentional channeling techniques.

### *Secondary Socialization and Resocialization In College*

As a result of differing influences of primary socialization, one’s social position, gender, sexual orientation, religion, family-form, race, ethnicity, extracurricular involvements are only a few of many possible factors that distinguish one student from everyone else. These preexisting

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<sup>19</sup> (Stolley 2005:66)

<sup>20</sup> (Johnstone 2006: 58)

identification factors that were produced via early socialization processes certainly influence how a person experiences and interacts with his surroundings later in life. Yet new agents of socialization other than the family also become particularly important during stages of ‘secondary socialization.’ Entering college is one such instance in which secondary socialization occurs.

As argued by Peter Kaufman and Kenneth Feldman (2004), the structure of college simultaneously affects one’s agency. Sociologically speaking, individuals often are ‘resocialized’ as they leave home and enter college as they find themselves surrounded by different people in an domain characterized by new norms, values, and beliefs. In order to successfully transition and integrate into the new collegial environment, individuals, again, must first observe and then replicate the behaviors and modes of thinking of the majority, projecting the group’s identity as his own. Because few students live in the same home as their parents while in college, primary agents of socialization (i.e. parents/family) are no longer the dominating force of influence. Instead, the role played by peer-groups and institutional structures, such as the college/university, become incredibly powerful agents throughout such processes of resocialization. In some situations, secondary agents of socialization reinforce the values and beliefs first instilled upon a person by his family and upbringing. In other situations-ones in which there is a conflict of interests between ‘old’ and ‘new’ ways of being, such as religious practice and identification-peer-groups and/or social institutions have the ability to displace the effects of early socialization endeavors.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> (Hyde 1990:237)

Kaufman and Feldman were interested in this later effect: how college as a particular structural location cultivates the formation of new identities, rather than how they encourage the maintenance of previous ones. These researchers explained that, while in undergrad, a person is offered many different ways of getting involved with an array of different programs/clubs/organizations. Some of these may not have been accessible by the student prior to college. Similarly, in the last fifty years in the United States, many colleges are deliberately designed to vary in its student and faculty compositions. As a result, students are exposed to a more diverse group of people as colleges are comprised of individuals from mixed backgrounds. For example, a student from a very small private high school may not have a chance to join an athletic team because his school did not have a team for it, or someone might realize he wants to get involved with gospel music, which he never could do because he came from a very homogeneously 'white' part of the country.

It is implied that, by taking on a particular identity, the individual will act according to how other people that share that identity do. To this end, some organizations even encourage tightly knit relationships in which members learn to related and depend on each others, almost like kin. If someone is able to successfully cross such boundaries, it would appears that personal upbringing and the role of primary socialization may have little-to-no bearing on determining the path that his life will take and how he chooses to self-identify in the future.

### *Resocialization into Judaism*

Sales and Saxe (2006) were curious to understand the processes of resocialization into religion during the college years. Specifically, the researchers were interested in the agents of

resocialization into Judaism. To do so, they considered the interplay amongst three levels of identification: institutional, individual, and group. What Sales and Saxe (2006) determined was that peer-group influence is of particular importance in explaining processes of resocialization *into* religion as measured by the extent of Jewish involvement on college campuses. They categorized these into three separate levels of Jewish involvement: ‘leaders,’ ‘engaged,’ and ‘unengaged.’ More specifically, they found that “dense Jewish social networks are strongly related to students’ engagement in formal Jewish life on campus (such as learning, worship, organizational membership and activity, ritual observance, etc.) and involvement as Jewish leaders. These involvements, in turn, are related to higher levels of Jewish values, behaviors, and sentiments. Causality is bi-directional: having Jewish friends is both a cause and a result of involvement in Jewish activities.”<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, they also found that those students who were more ‘engaged’ or were ‘Jewish leaders’ tended to have *narrower* social networks,<sup>23</sup> and those who were ‘unengaged’ were likely to feel uncomfortable with the social climate surrounding formal Jewish campus life, fearing that they would not ‘fit in’ with other Jews.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, due in large part to the inconsistency that characterizes the researchers’ sample,<sup>25</sup> Sales and Saxe’s research was limited. The researchers also failed to identify the factors that motivated Jewish students to seek out ways to become involved with Jewish activity, or why (and how) students became, or failed to become, friends with many other Jewish

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<sup>22</sup> (Saxe and Sales 2006: 7)

<sup>23</sup> (Saxe and Sales 2006: 12)

<sup>24</sup> (Saxe and Sales 2006: 13)

<sup>25</sup> There was simply no way for Sales and Saxe to control for other variables (such as percentage of students who identify as part of the Reform vs. Conservative vs. Orthodox denominations, or the different forms that involvement in Jewish life took on each campus) that could have impacted how individuals responded.

students. Instead, they seem to have assumed one can only be that resocialized *into* religion, ignoring the possibility that others may be resocialized *away* from it.

### *Individualistic Religion*

Jeffrey Arnett did, however, inquire about how this group of individuals approach religion and what role it takes in their lives as he addressed instances in which students distance themselves from religion. First, as he expanded on the idea of college-aged students being granted a great deal of ‘freedom’ to do as they please because of their increased sense of individualization, Arnett coined the age-range that he was most interested in studying ‘emerging adulthood.’ He defines this group as consisting of eighteen to twenty-five year olds who, “having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, and having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood,...often explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and world-views.”<sup>26</sup> Arnett then later applied his idea of ‘emerging adulthood’ to religion. Interestingly, Arnett and Jensen (2002) argued that, for many young people, there is no association between childhood religious socialization and an individual’s current (religious) beliefs. The researcher also found that ‘emerging adults’ do still value identifying with their religion, but do not find it necessary to participate in formal religious structures or institutions. They often see such participation as a possible compromise to their individuality. In other words, young people can still identify with the religious community or sect without being concerned about its tenants or being a practicing and committed member. Instead, ‘emerging adults’ opt for personalization of religious practice, creating what Arnett terms

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<sup>26</sup> (Arnett 2000:469)

‘congregations of one.’ Such isolated and individual ‘congregations’ are characterized more by private and personal forms of being religious or spiritual than by communal interaction between multiple people. This is extremely useful towards understanding why some Jewish college students, for example, do not actively seek out interaction with other Jewish students.

Though Arnett and Jensen (2002) provide a convincing argument, it must be acknowledged that their research was predominately limited to Christianity. In fact, the researchers admit that only one of their one-hundred and forty (1/140) respondents indicated that he was of the Jewish religion. Therefore, the question of whether these same results would be found amongst Jewish ‘emerging adults’ still had to be addressed.

Fortunately, other researchers rose to the occasion and investigated this very question. Most notably, the researchers behind “Hillel's Journey: Distinctively Jewish, Universally Human” (2007) were interested in determining what about Judaism Jewish students care most about, if Judaism is important to students, and what students ‘do’ to be Jewish. Beth Cousens, the director for Organizational Living at Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, also wished to know where students draw the dividing line between religious and ethnic groups, and if (and when) Jewish students segregate themselves from others.<sup>27</sup> Cousens’ findings ended up confirming those of Arnett and Jensen (2002), stating that (Jewish) ‘emerging-adults’ “have a positive association with Jewishness, an association that alludes to a pride in being who they are, but not to a desire to separate or distinguish themselves from others”<sup>28</sup> Because of this, the extent to which many of the college-aged Jewish studied by Cousens ‘practice’ their Judaism is through involvements that lack ‘deep commitments,’ such as celebrating certain holidays. Activities such

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<sup>27</sup> (Cousens 2007: 6)

<sup>28</sup> (Cousens 2007:28)

as lighting the menorah on Hanukkah offer Jewish students “a way to attend a one-time event without separating oneself from one’s friends by religious practice or obligating oneself to onerous religious responsibility.”<sup>29</sup> These Jewish students also do not desire to affiliate themselves with institutionalized religion.

### *Rethinking Judaism*

Cousens (2007) was not the first to recognize that Jewish college students do not require formal institutionalized participation in order to identify. In fact, the 2001 American Jewish Identity Survey had reached this exact conclusion. But the question of *who* these non-affiliating Jewish students were had not yet been addressed. Therefore, Mayer, Kosmin, and Keysar (2001) were curious as to “what segments of the population adhere to Judaism as the basis of their religious identification, and what segments describe themselves as being of Jewish parentage or upbringing (origins) without any explicit adherence to Judaism as a religion.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, they interrogated the specific question of which parts of the Jewish population were Jewish via ‘descent’ (by default), and which segments ‘consented’ to being Jewish (i.e. were ‘Jewish by choice.’) What the researchers found was that “vast numbers of Americans who regard themselves as Jewish or who are of Jewish parentage and upbringing simply have no faith in the conventional religious sense of the term. They adhere to an identity that is rooted in an ancient faith.” To put this another way, many Jews appeared to be identifying as Jewish simply because they are expected to ‘continue the tradition.’ This way, “the ancient way of life will not become

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<sup>29</sup> (Cousins 2007:36)

<sup>30</sup> (Mayer, Kosmin, and Keysar 2001:8)

extinct,” and family ties will be better preserved.<sup>31</sup> This begs the question of what distinguishes those who are *‘Jewish by choice,’* or those who actively seek Judaism as being participants in both belief and practice and therefore make these part of their lives, from those who accept Judaism as merely a tradition to be passed on from one generation to the next? Additionally, what are the different indicators of who belongs to each category? And how is Judaism to respond to such division in how Jewish individuals think about their relationship with Judaism if it desires to make Jews of both descent and consent feel like included and welcomed members of the Jewish community?

#### *Hillel: The Foundation For Jewish Campus Life*

One Jewish organization that seeks to cater to all Jews, both those by ‘consent’ as well as ‘descent,’ is Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life. Today, Hillel is committed to “creating a pluralistic, welcoming and inclusive environment; fostering student growth and the balance in being distinctively Jewish and universally human; advancing social justice, Jewish learning and spirituality; embracing Israel and global Jewish peoplehood; [and] delivering excellence, innovation, accountability, and results.”<sup>32</sup> However, the Hillel that has successfully emerged today as the largest Jewish campus organization in the world with representatives at over five-hundred and fifty (550) colleges and universities has undergone drastic changes since it’s original formation in 1923.

#### *Hillel’s Historical Transformation*

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<sup>31</sup> (Davey 2001: 334)

<sup>32</sup> (Cousens 2007:2)

The corporate precursor to the Hillel Foundation that exists today was the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, which William Chauncy Baldwin founded in 1923. The original structure of Hillel was a classic campus ministry, serving as an affiliation-based “‘synagogue on campus,’ where Jewish students could celebrate Shabbat and other Jewish holidays, gain access to kosher food and pastoral counseling, participate in informal Jewish learning opportunities before Jewish studies programs proliferated on campus, and socialize with other Jews... Hillel [also] played a significant role in Jewish dating and courtship.”<sup>33</sup> It offered Jewish students somewhat of a ‘safe-haven’ on campus, a space in which they could become student leaders and active participants when all other campus organizations were off-limits to them. However, with the civil rights revolutions in the 1960s, those barriers imposed upon Jewish students were removed, granting them access to non-religious programs and groups. As a result, B'nai B'rith's Hillel was unable to maintain the popularity amongst Jewish students that it had retained for nearly forty years; Jewish students no longer ‘needed’ Hillel. Additionally, the financial support required to maintain B'nai B'rith's Hillel was dwindling.

It was clear that the ‘old’ ways of Hillel were leading to ultimate failure. However, as Jay Rubin explains, Hillel was revitalized thanks to two significant events. One was the reaction of the 1990 Jewish community to the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) sponsored by the then Council of Jewish Federations (CJF). The findings presented in the report took the Jewish community at large by surprise. Most notably, the report revealed that there was a significant increase in the amount of intermarriages between Jews and non-Jews. Additionally, it showed that levels of Jewish affiliation and practice were decreasing. Fearing that Judaism's continuity

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<sup>33</sup> (Rubin 2000:309)

was at stake, Jews began to view investing in the future generation of Jews as critically important, as the youth of the time were the ones who could change the course that Judaism was taking. The Hillel Foundation was given particular attention as people believed that, by providing a direct service to Jewish college-aged students, the entire Jewish community would benefit.

The other event that essentially ‘saved’ the Hillel Foundation was the appointment of Richard M. Joel as the new chief executive officer of Hillel in 1988. With Joel’s leadership, Hillel underwent a complete transformation, beginning with an organizational split from the B’nai B’rith. The synagogue/ministry model was replaced by a pluralistic environment that was designed to be reminiscent of the diversity that characterizes the general college scene. It was, after all, Joel’s intention that Hillel be a space that *all* Jews, regardless of whether they valued the religious, ethnic, cultural, social, or political aspects of Judaism. No longer was Hillel to be an affiliation based religious organization; it was, and now is, a communal infrastructure emphasizing participation by all.

The way Joel achieved the pluralistic environment was by stressing two words: *empowerment* and *engagement*. Mark Rosen explained that “students on the empowerment track were the ones coming in the Hillel door. These were the students that the rabbis had always worked with. They were already Jewishly engaged, and Hillel’s responsibility was to help them with their individual Jewish journeys... In contrast, there was a much larger group of students, those on the engagement track, who needed to be engaged where they were ... they needed to be reached where they lived their lives on campus—in the student union, in student organizations, in fraternities and sororities, in dorms, at coffee shops. Rabbis were not the best people to

accomplish this. Peers were ideal.”<sup>34</sup> The latter group were not nearly as comfortable with their Judaism, or were not as religiously devout, as were those in the former. To cater to both groups of Jewish students, Hillel needed to offer a variety of meaningful Jewish experience opportunities such as small-scaled discussion groups and Jewish learning experiences, as well as holiday celebrations and communal events-both inside and outside of the walls of Hillel to its students. Furthermore, Hillel had to assist students in finding meaning through Judaism by building upon each occasion, “helping them experience not Jewish programs but to have a Jewish education, not one-time interactions with staged events but an ongoing and authentic immersion into the Jewish narrative, into what it means to be Jewish.”<sup>35</sup> With this in mind, Hillel drew upon peer-groups to serve as an agent of socialization into religion, allowing students who would not normally choose to get involved with Judaism on their own to interact and build relationships with other Jews on individual college campuses.

The Hillel Foundation has certainly come a long way since it’s formation in 1923. With the changes that have emerged, the mission and goal of Hillel has similarly been transformed. One need only compare the different mission statements of the organization to see this. Originally, Hillel was “devoted to religious, cultural, and counseling activities among Jewish students at colleges and universities.” It served those students who were demarcated from other forms of collegial involvements, encouraging mostly religious devoutness through synagogue participation. The mission then changed to “maximizing the number of Jews doing Jewish with other Jews.” Though this phrase is still listed as one of Hillel’s ‘Standards of Excellence,’ increasing the frequency and quantity of Jewish interactions is no longer the primary concern of

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<sup>34</sup> (Rosen 2006:64)

<sup>35</sup> (Cousins 2007:41)

the Foundation. Instead, Hillel now seeks “to enrich the lives of Jewish undergraduate and graduate students so that they may enrich the Jewish people and the world.” It desires to make previously engaged Jews continuously enthusiastic and active with Judaism while also helping those who enter college without deep affiliations more aware of what all Judaism entails and how each person can have a personal connection that need not require formal or institutional participation. Because Hillel does not measure its ‘success’ by the number of attendees at certain events or by any other quantifiable factor, it is difficult to assess the actual impact of the transformation of Hillel on individual Jewish students. Nevertheless, Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Life on Campus continues to receive generous financial contributions from individuals and organizations that believe in the foundation’s success and continuation. It is therefore unlikely that the current structure of Hillel will undergo such drastic changes as it previously did.

### *Tufts Hillel*

Because Tufts Hillel plays a large role in my own research, some understanding of how the local foundation functions is required.

The private not-for-profit organization that is the Hillel Foundation at Tufts University is an affiliate agency of the international Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Student Life on Campus. However, thanks to significant contributions from generous donors, the Tufts Hillel is rather self-sufficient, allowing its leaders to largely determine how it will function for its students. Its mission is to promote Jewish life at Tufts and beyond through broad programming and a “commitment to building a diverse Jewish community.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> All of this information can also be found on the Tufts Hillel website<sup>18</sup> and from an informal document titled “Tufts Hillel Fact Sheet” that can be retrieved at the front desk of Tufts Hillel.

Though it is the second largest<sup>37</sup> student group on campus, Tufts Hillel does the most day-to-day programming of any group on campus, offering religious, cultural, and educational opportunities to members of the Tufts Community.

Tufts Hillel reports that roughly two-hundred and fifty to three hundred (250-300) students come through the Granoff Family Hillel Center each week. These individuals come to Hillel for various reasons, such as for class, to meet up with other students/staff members, to do work, for programs/events, and for religious services/meals. Not surprisingly, the most widely attended ‘event’ that attracts students to the Granoff Hillel Center each week is for Shabbat services and dinner, as Tufts Hillel offers both Reform and Conservative Services, followed with a Shabbat dinner, every Friday night. Between forty and sixty (40-60) students are estimated as attending weekly Shabbat services (between both Reform and Conservative), and generally between one-hundred to one-hundred and sixty (100-160) students attend the catered Shabbat dinner. Shabbat dinners can be paid for through the use of a student’s dining meal-plan for underclassmen, and are free for upperclassmen. Saturday morning services and lunch are also offered each week, which have a much smaller turnout (of about fifteen students).

Much of the programming overseen by Tufts Hillel is run by a student board (composed of both the ‘student executive board’ and the ‘student programming board’), which consists of approximately thirty-five to forty peer-elected members. There are also many full-time staff members who ensure the success and continuation of the Tufts Hillel. These include the Executive Director, who is also a faculty member at the University, an Associate Director, a Director of Development, a Development Assistant, two Program Associates, a Senior Jewish

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<sup>37</sup> The largest student group at Tufts is the Leonard Carmichael Society, a community service organization.

Educator, and an Administrative Coordinator. Recently, the position of Rabbinic Fellow has also been incorporated.

Tufts Hillel employs multiple recruitment methods to attract both new freshman and uninvolved Jewish sophomores and upperclassmen to Jewish activities on campus. Over the summer, Hillel orientation leaders hand-write letters to incoming Jewish freshman, inviting them to get involved with Hillel events. Freshman are also invited to Hillel's annual Bagel Brunch, the most popular event at Hillel, attracting around three hundred students to enjoy bagels and lox while listening to each of Tufts' a cappella groups perform during Orientation Week. In addition to the Bagel Brunch, various Jewish student groups (Hillel, Friends of Israel, Chabad, etc.) set up tables during the Tufts Activities Fair in the beginning of each fall semester. Formal initiatives, such as Hillel's creation of a faculty position titled 'Senior Jewish Educator' and usage of Campus Entrepreneurial Initiative (CEI) interns, have also been implemented to reach students who would otherwise not be involved with Jewish life on campus.

## **FINDINGS**

### ***Broader Jewish Community Identification***

Nearly all the Jewish students I spoke with expressed that they feel somehow connected to the Jewish community at large, and that being Jewish is a major component in how they self-identify as individuals. Yet it was not obvious that these students knew what exactly they were claiming membership to. This lack of an explanation is largely reflective of the fact that, as demonstrated earlier, the term "Jewish community" is very broad and encompasses so many different aspects of what it means to 'be Jewish.' Therefore, to understand how Tufts students in

particular think about it, I began each of my interviews by asking subjects to tell me, in their own terms, what it means to ‘be Jewish.’

Daniel, a current junior who grew up in the Northeast surrounded by Jewish life and is currently very involved with formal Jewish life on the Tufts campus, provided a response that alludes to the complexity of the phrase. He stated,

For me, it’s a culture, it’s a religion, it’s even a social environment in some ways. It’s having a thousand, two-thousand plus year long history and connection to a people in the past. It’s having the connection to random people I’ve never met before as I walk down the street. It’s thousands of years of commentaries, questions to answers, Rabbi’s fighting! It’s a set of structures that both differ and are similar to each other, that seek to tackle the same questions, like how to live your life.<sup>38</sup>

For him, the Jewish community includes an identity that is based on an ethnicity, culture, religious practice, and historical experiences. This echoes the response given by many of the other interviewees who pointed to the fact that the shared history (as a minority group, especially following the devastating effects of the Holocaust) and distinctive life experiences (such as life-cycle events) are some of the most salient features of what holds the Jewish community together. For example, Ben, a varsity athlete who comes from a prosperous Jewish community and attended a Jewish Day School for many years, stressed the pride he takes in being able to call himself part of ‘the Jewish people’:

I sometimes feel like it’s like an ‘us against the world’ kind of thing for Jews. Jewish people obviously have been extremely successful, and when I found out about Jewish people and how prevalent they are in politics, in entertainment, [or] in world finance, it’s kind of amazing because of how small of a percentage of the population they are. So it just kind of baffles me sometimes- of how successful the Jewish people have been just based on how small they are. And I think a big part of that is promoting pride in Judaism, in the State of Israel, and in a sense of community among those people.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Daniel, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, February 2, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Ben, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, February 16, 2013.

Along with considering Judaism to be about a shared history that includes an ethno-cultural or even religious identity, Ben's understanding of what it means to be Jewish also incorporates a business, status-group, and political identity, especially as made possible by having a 'Jewish State,' Israel.

Only one of my respondents, Tali, did not share in this communal attachment to the larger Jewish community. Growing up in a predominately Italian town with a very small Jewish population, Tali was raised by a Jewish father and a Catholic mother, yet neither of her parents actively practiced or strongly identified as members of their respective religions. Tali's exposure to religion, be it Judaism or Catholicism, was therefore, at best, minimal. The only "Jewish things" Tali remembered doing as a child was occasionally going over to either her neighbors' or her Jewish grandmother's houses to celebrate some of the Jewish holidays. However, Tali understood these Jewish celebrations as mainly 'just a way to get our family together,' and did not particularly find meaning or significance from the holidays themselves. Perhaps unsurprisingly given her lack of cultural predisposition toward Jewish identification deriving from her home and community in which she was raised, Tali does not consider the fact that she is Jewish to be of much importance. In fact, when asked which religion, Judaism or Catholicism, she more closely identified herself belonging to, Tali responded by saying, "Well, I don't consider religion as a forefront of your characteristics of who you are overall. So I guess that, if I had to like mark a 'box,' ... since I'm not religious, I think I would abstain from that question, to be honest."<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Tali's connection to other Jews is limited to including only people she actually knows (family members and Jewish neighbors). Interestingly, the word 'community,'

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<sup>40</sup> Tali, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, February 7, 2013.

was only mentioned once throughout the entirety of my hour-long interview with Tali. And even when ‘community’ was brought up, it was in the context of discussing how *one of Tali’s friends* understood Judaism. Despite having technically been born *Jewish*, Tali still does not identify with the wider Jewish community. This absence of group-identification can largely be explained by her lack of exposure to, or personal interest in, Judaism throughout her childhood. This begs the question of what the other nine students who *do* value their membership in the broader Jewish community, have in common with the other ‘identifiers,’ but not also with Tali.

What emerged as being the most significant factors that differentiate Tali from the others, regarding Jewish community identification are, in no particular order, having spent time in Israel, having a significant Jewish friend group, growing up in a family that emphasized Jewish practice/identification, and having attended a Jewish Day School, as shown in Figure A below. Each of these agents of socialization confirms that, as previously explained by Stolley and Johnstone, early socialization into religious belief/practice or cultural/historical belonging is crucial for ensuring that individuals successfully ‘learn’ such components of what it means to be Jewish and part of the Jewish community.

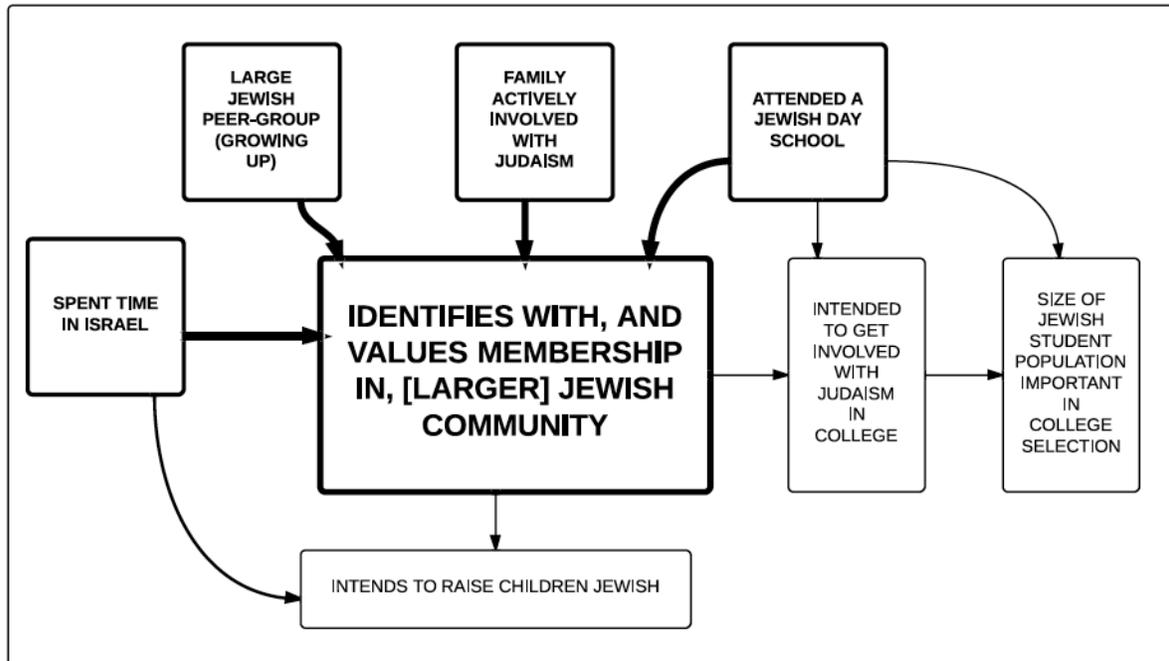
### *Spent time in Israel*

Any college-aged student<sup>41</sup> who has not previously been on a peer-group, educational trip to Israel and meets eligibility requirements<sup>42</sup> is given the option of participating in a completely free ten-day long trip to Israel. The mission of this trip, known as ‘Birthright (Israel),’ is “to

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<sup>41</sup> Between the ages of 18-26.

<sup>42</sup> Other eligibility requirements include: having at least one Jewish parent (or having completed a conversion to Judaism), being recognized as Jewish by the Jewish community or by one of the recognized denominations of Judaism, and must not identify as being part of any other religion beside Judaism.



**Figure A:** Predictors of Larger Jewish Community Identification

diminish the growing division between Israel and Jewish communities around the world; to strengthen the sense of solidarity between Israeli youth and Jewish communities throughout the world; and to promote the idea of a trip to Israel for all Diaspora Jews as a critical life outside of Israel.”<sup>43</sup> Simply put, indoctrination of Jewish values, beliefs, practice, and activity is the ultimate goal of such trips to Israel. Like many other Jewish individuals who travel to Israel on their own (or with their families instead of with an educational group), over two-thirds of Birthright participants report that spending time in Israel undoubtedly made them feel closer to the State of Israel and, more importantly, to their Jewish heritage.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Taken from the Taglit-Birthright Israel website: <http://www.birthrightisrael.com/Pages/Help-Center-Answers.aspx?ItemID=1>

<sup>44</sup> Based on findings from research conducted by the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University: <http://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/>

This increased attachment to Judaism following a trip to Israel was confirmed by each of the Tufts students I interviewed who had been to Israel. Lauren, a sophomore who frequently helps lead Shabbat services at Hillel on Friday nights and is a member of one of Tufts' highly-regarded a cappella singing groups, did not qualify for Birthright because she had gone to Israel before with her Jewish youth group, known as NFTY.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, regarding how her relation and interest in Judaism was impacted by Israel, Lauren recalled, "I went on the NFTY in Israel trip [and] I felt a really strong connection to Israel; I was like, 'I want to come back!! I want to live here for a little! And I want to be able to speak Hebrew!'"<sup>46</sup> At the time of the interview, Lauren was enrolled in her third Hebrew language class, and stated that she intended to continue with Hebrew classes for (at least) the following semester. Her enthusiasm towards Judaism is characteristic of many other Jewish students who have spent time in Israel on peer-organized trips that take advantage of participants' youthful impressionability.

### *Strong Jewish Friend-Group*

Jewish youth group programs, such as the one Lauren participated in, have played a significant role in fostering the formation of friendships between Jewish students. However, youth groups are not the only way of connecting Jewish children. Many Jewish summer camps, such as Camp Ramah, exist across the entire United States. Some are day camps and others are sleep-away camps. What distinguishes these Jewish summer camps from non-religious options is the fact that almost all participants identify as 'Jewish,' and many activities are of a Jewish focus

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<sup>45</sup> NFTY is the acronym given for the North American Federation of Temple Youth. It is designed to serve Jewish teenagers who identify with the Reform branch of Judaism.

<sup>46</sup> Lauren, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, December 11, 2012.

(be it celebrating Shabbat or competing in *Maccabiah* games<sup>47</sup>). It is common for Jewish camp participants to stay in contact with the friends that they make during the summer throughout the school year, and many individuals will return to Jewish camp for more than just one summer.

Involvement in a Jewish youth group or summer camp certainly puts students in contact with more Jewish students. However, an individual need not have a large amount of Jewish peers while growing up. Simply growing up in a hometown that has a large Jewish population can achieve the same effect. For example, Ben, the athlete who expressed his pride in identifying as a member of the Jewish community, was raised in a Northeastern town with a substantial Jewish population. When asked how he would let others know that he was Jewish before college, Ben explained, “well, [my hometown] is a very affluent Jewish area, so I guess you kind of just knew everyone’s religious affiliation.”<sup>48</sup> As a result of his surroundings during what are arguably the most formative years in a person’s life, Ben learned to internalize the attitudes and values of those he looked towards for guidance—parents, teachers, community leaders. Eventually, he established, and projected, those same systems of belief as his own.

### *Attendance at a Jewish Day School*

Ben’s attachment to his Jewish heritage was also impacted by having attending a Jewish Day school for many years. Similarly, Joseph, a sophomore who grew up in a very involved Conservative family and holds a position on the Hillel Student Executive Board, received a very strong Jewish education before coming to Tufts. He went to a Jewish preschool (that was part of his family’s synagogue), attended a Conservative Jewish day school until it ended in eighth

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<sup>47</sup> Maccabiah games are similar to ‘color-wars’ that are comprised of various athletic events.

<sup>48</sup> Ben.

grade, and then decided to enroll in a Jewish high school before coming to Tufts. In addition to being a very active member of the Hillel board, Joseph also attends weekly Shabbat services and dinner at Hillel, keeps Kosher, frequently wears some sort of head-covering (whether it is a kippah or a baseball hat), and tries to be as observant of the laws of Shabbat (such as refraining from doing work) as he can be.

It should be understood that attending a supplementary Jewish educational program (such as Jewish Sunday School or Jewish Hebrew School) did not have the same level of impact on predicting a subject's attachment to the Jewish community at large as did Jewish *day* schooling. Those students who participated in these supplementary education programs were not nearly as likely as those respondents who attended Jewish day school to indicate that they highly valued being Jewish, nor were they as likely to be religiously observant of Judaism. This suggests that students who were immersed in, rather than simply exposed to, Judaism by having Judaic Studies as part of their co-curriculum on a daily basis produces a stronger attachment to Jewish identity.

#### *Family's emphasis and involvement in Jewish activity*

Daniel, the heavily involved junior from the Northeast, also attended a Jewish day school. Furthermore, he grew up in a household that placed an incredible amount of value on being Jewish, as did Joseph. Echoing many of the similar things that Joseph said regarding his family's approach to religion, Daniel reported how he was heavily exposed to Jewishness growing up:

I grew up Conservative in a religious household- not as strictly observant as someone who is Orthodox, but still religious. We did keep Shabbos, we did keep kosher, we attended services regularly, and my parents decided to send me to a Jewish day school for thirteen years. So [Judaism] is definitely something that was an important part of life,

growing up... It's every week lighting candles, having Shabbos dinner, going to services; Judaism was a constant in my household.<sup>49</sup>

Because his parents were active in their practice of Judaism, they served as religious role-models whose behavior Daniel learned to mimic and manifest as his own. Daniel unsurprisingly had a cultural predisposition toward Jewish engagement that derived from his home and community combined with other factors (such as having spent time in Israel and attending a Jewish day school), which, in turn, resulted in his formation of a sense of connection to the larger Jewish community.

The individual affects of any of these four predictors, however, do not suffice in explaining how a person arrives at valuing his membership in the broader Jewish community. Instead, it is from unique combinations of a person's *Jewish cultural resources* (such as having attended a Jewish day school or brought up in a Jewish household) and *interactions with other Jewish people* (students, campers, travelers) to whom he is able to better relate on the basis of having undergone similar (Jewish) socialization practices as each other, that macro-level group-identification is cultivated.

Students who grew up exposed to Jewish beliefs/practices at home or in grade schools now feel a connection to the Jewish community and were very likely to indicate that they intended to get/stay involved (in some way) with Judaism when they entered college. Correspondingly, having a sizable Jewish student population was reported as being a critical factor in subjects' college-selection process. This correlation is to be expected: human beings, by nature, are sociable creatures; they (generally) prefer to engage in activities and share experiences with other people. Jewish students are no exception, especially considering the

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<sup>49</sup> Daniel.

communal nature that Judaism has strongly encouraged lends itself towards: they too would rather not be the only person doing something. Adam's explanation of what he thought being 'actively involved' with Judaism at Tufts meant elucidates to this social nature of Jewish activity:

I think that, for a lot of people, it means like being involved in Hillel or like programming around social justice. So it's not always religion-based. But certainly interacting with other Jewish students is what a majority of what being 'involved' on the Tufts camps, Jewishly, is about.<sup>50</sup>

Adam's comment suggests that it is not necessarily the events or programs themselves, but rather *who else is participating* that attracts Tufts Jewish students to particular ways of getting involved with Judaism. Again, the social aspects are emphasized.

### *Familiarity and Opportunity*

The desire to surround oneself with other Jewish students while involved with Jewish activity on campus was a common entity amongst the majority of the respondents. However, a distinction must be made of *why* the social nature of involvement is of such importance, as there were differences found amongst my subjects.

For some of the students I spoke with, surrounding themselves with people of similar backgrounds as their own was crucial for nurturing a sense of *familiarity* in college. Expounding on his own consideration of how 'Jewish' an undergraduate student population he desired to have during his college years, Daniel touched on this very idea:

I planned on being involved, but I didn't know how much. I knew that was kind of a toss-up. But I knew that Jewish settings were just something I felt comfortable in, having gone to Jewish Day School for thirteen years, having been involved in Jewish Youth group for middle and high school... And so I knew I was looking for that, but I didn't know if [the extent of my involvement] was just going to be going to services. I never really knew

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<sup>50</sup> Adam.

what it was going to take, but I knew that I wanted that option to at least get involved if I wanted to.<sup>51</sup>

Daniel did eventually become heavily involved with Jewish life at Tufts, as indicated earlier. Similarly, Joseph, the sophomore who is also currently on the executive board of Tufts Hillel, shared how he originally did not think he would get overly involved with Judaism before coming to Tufts. When asked whether he has become more or less involved with Judaism during his time in college, he acknowledged that, because Judaism had been such an integral part of his life growing up, his ‘return’ to Jewish involvements proved inevitable:

I’ve definitely become more involved. Because freshman year, when I got here, I was like, ‘finally! I don’t have to take any more Jewish classes and I can center my education around math and science’- which is something that I always wanted to do, but hadn’t be able to. And then, as time went on, it really hit me that I really missed the Jewish community at home and I missed almost being force-fed like all of this not-useless stuff that I had thought was useless, at the time. And so I kind of wanted to get back into it in the early Spring of freshman year.<sup>52</sup>

Because Judaism had become such a constant and integral part of Joseph’s adolescence, his ‘return’ to Jewish practice provided him with a sense of comfort and familiarity that was reminiscent of his life back home. Interestingly, when asked how he defined ‘religion,’ Joseph explained it as “a set of values that someone has that guides them throughout everyday parts of life.” His eventual return capsizes on this very notion of Judaism being an integral and familiar part of his life that he eventually found to need in his life.

For other interviewees, the religious aspects of the size of the Tufts Jewish student population was seen as a chance for them to explore their religion in greater depth, and to possibly become more involved. Those who viewed Tufts as this opportunity were those students

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<sup>51</sup> Daniel.

<sup>52</sup> Joseph, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, November 18, 2012.

who grew up in environments that were not completely devoid of Jewish practice, yet not overly saturated with it either. Lauren, the singer and Shabbat service leader, believes that she was at a disadvantage, regarding Jewish experiences, while growing up in North Carolina, where she was ‘basically the only Jew.’ Though her father was born and raised Jewish, her mother only began identifying with Judaism after she met her husband-to-be. Her mother never officially converted from Protestantism, which she was born into, yet ensured that both Lauren and her sister were formally converted when they were each born. Lauren’s family would occasionally attend formal Jewish religious services, but such attendance revolved mostly around when her father was song-leading in the synagogue. She also believes that, had it not been for her lack of Jewish surroundings growing up, she probably would not have become as involved with the religion as she now is. I asked her why she desired to get involved with Hillel:

I just really wanted to be involved with Jewish life on campus. And it’s like very clear to me that it’s because of my like living in North Carolina and not being surrounded by it. Because my freshman year roommate was Arielle Silver and she grew up Conservative in Chicago, like in a very very Jewish family. I want to say she even went through Jewish schooling, and she like didn’t want to get involved with Judaism at all! Like she will sometimes go to services and I think she will sometimes go to Shabbat dinner. But yeah, so it’s like, she had grown up with it so she just like didn’t need it anymore, whereas I was like, ‘Judaism?!?’ [Laughter]. So it was sortof like filling something that I didn’t have growing up.... And now I do feel a stronger attachment to Judaism now. And it’s because I’m surrounded by it all the time now... it’s because I have surrounded myself with it. I mean, like, now I kind of know some Hebrew, and now, like, I just spend a lot of time... like I go to services a lot. And, I don’t know, I end up talking about it a lot more. But at the same time, I think that I wanted to have this when I was like in high school and stuff, but I just didn’t... But I don’t feel like I have to work hard for it to be there anymore. Like I don’t have to actively seek it out anymore-well I guess I still kind of do-but [Judaism is] more just around me than it was growing up.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Lauren.

For Lauren, feeling ‘surrounded by Judaism’ as a result of having such a sizable and actively involved Jewish community increases her sense of connection to, and active involvement with, Judaism.

Allie, a freshman from Montana, echoed Lauren’s view of Tufts as an opportunity to get involved with something that has previously been unavailable to her as a result of the community in which she was raised. When asked what she looked for in choosing a college, Allie responded by saying, “I really wanted to live with Jewish people for at least a few years of my life because, in Montana, I never really had that experience. So it was something that I had kind of been missing in my life.”<sup>54</sup> Like Lauren, Allie has become more observant of the religion, crediting her increased involvement to the structural opportunities provided by the University. When asked how her relationship with Judaism has changed over the few months that she has been at Tufts, Allie acknowledged the role played by the institution: “I’m more observant here because it’s really convenient. Like I practice... I go to Friday night services and I go to Saturday morning services. And I don’t eat non-kosher meat here, or eggs, because ... well basically because I can; those options are available here on Friday nights and Saturday mornings.”<sup>55</sup> To this effect, Allie was resocialized into religion: she not only adopted new practices, but also abandoned a former aspect of life, as indicated by the change in her dietary habits.

Understanding these two different reasons for valuing a large social community of Jews-familiarity and opportunity-will be useful in a further understanding of how some students decide how involved they will become. It should be noted, however, that not all of my respondents indicated that the size of the Jewish student population at Tufts was a critical factor

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<sup>54</sup> Allie, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, February 2, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> Allie.

in their decision to attend; some did not care at all. Most notably was Ben, considering he did attend a Jewish Day School for many years and comes from a community with a significant Jewish population. For him, his greatest concern was athletics, not religion. Interestingly, in his explanation of why the large Jewish population at Tufts was unimportant to him, he does touch on the fact that a Jewish student population was important to his family:

Well, it [the size of the Tufts Jewish population] ended up becoming a huge perk. The schools that I applied to were Indiana, Miami, Michigan, Wisconsin, Northeastern, Maryland, Boston University, and obviously Tufts. As you can see from that list of schools, Tufts definitely kind of stands out. But I was recruited to play Basketball [at Tufts], so that helped me get in here, academically. I wasn't going to play basketball at those other schools. So it was the best school that I got into, so regardless of the Jewish aspect or not, I was coming [to Tufts.] It was interesting because, when I was getting recruited, I would send emails to coaches at like Georgetown and even Duke-I don't know why I sent it to Duke because it's big-time basketball-I would send it to schools like that, and my dad would always be like, 'That's a Catholic school, Ben, you can't go there!' He was joking around, but he was always really serious ... And so I thought that it was good [for me to go to a school with a large Jewish student body], and I know that my dad was happy. I also knew that my grandparents were happy, specifically my dad's mom; anytime I see her, all she cares about is if I am hanging out with Jewish girls.<sup>56</sup>

As will be discussed towards the end, Ben's attachment to Jewish life at Tufts, though minimal, stems largely from his desire to appease his (Jewish) family.

### ***Tufts Jewish Community Membership***

There are significant predictors or factors that influence whether or not someone identifies with the 'abstract' larger Jewish community or a small, real, face-to-face group. The focus will now shift to identification with the *Tufts* Jewish community. More specifically, I focus on the differences between what it means to identify with the broader Jewish community and being part of a worldwide population or the Tufts Jewish community. What is to follow is a more

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<sup>56</sup> Ben.

in-depth explanation of what the two strongest predictors-regular shabbat attendance and having a large Jewish peer-group on campus-that emerged from my study, each entail, and how they are connected to one another. This intertwining of religious participation and size of Jewish peer-group will then be expounded upon to show that there is a great deal of segregation within the Tufts Jewish community, which is continuously perpetuated from within. It will also be shown that newcomers recognize and internalize the differentiation within Hillel specifically during the weekly gatherings for Shabbat services and dinner. This in turn leads them to form their own group of friends with whom they will arrive, socialize, attend services, and then eat dinner. In doing so, each new group of Jewish students unintentionally perpetuates the division and disconnect amongst Tufts Jews at Hillel, creating an umbrella organization that is comprised of many *closed* sub-groups.

### *Regular Shabbat Attendance & Size of Jewish Friend Group*

Tufts Hillel hosts Friday night Shabbat services and Saturday morning services each week of the academic school year. Students may choose between either Reform or Conservative services. Following services, a catered kosher Shabbat dinner is available for students to attend. Students may choose to attend both services and dinner, only services, or only dinner.<sup>57</sup>

While services for the Jewish High Holidays (Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur) are arguably the most *heavily* attended aspect of Judaism on campus, Shabbat services and/or dinner are certainly the most *frequently* attended Jewish-related happening on campus. This is due to the simple fact that Shabbat happens every single week, whereas the individual holidays each come

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<sup>57</sup> Additionally, Tufts Chabad, which is not technically affiliated with the University, opens its doors to students for both services<sup>37</sup> and a home-cooked Shabbat dinner. It is not uncommon for a handful of people who attend Friday night services at Hillel to venture over to Chabad for dinner.

only once throughout the year. Because of its weekly occurrence, Shabbat has the greatest potential of all Jewish community-unifying events to put Jewish students in direct contact with other Tufts Jews. However, the fact remains that, while the Shabbat dinners appear to attract a diverse and fluid group of students, Shabbat services are attended by a relatively static group of ‘regulars’<sup>58</sup>. As of late, Hillel has made efforts to attract a more varied group of students to attend services by creating different themes for each week’s Shabbat.<sup>59</sup> And while these themed Shabbats have succeeded in getting more Tufts students into the building, the majority of these students will not become ‘regulars.’ Interestingly, of the seven students that I spoke with who indicated that they have attended Shabbat services at Tufts, at the time of the interviews, only one was not a Hillel Shabbat (service) ‘regular.’<sup>60</sup> Conversing with six individuals that make up this ‘group’ provides useful insights to understand what ‘keeps them coming back’ each week, while simultaneously revealing a dichotomous relationship that exists within Tufts Hillel community on the basis of denominational identification.

For Andrew, a freshman from New York who quickly became a Hillel Shabbat ‘regular,’ Shabbat provides him with an opportunity to escape the hectic nature of his academic life each week. He reasoned that “the purpose of the Shabbat is to take a break from the rest of the week. And so, for me, it’s kind of like a breather from running around. Even if it’s only for a few hours

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<sup>58</sup> The ‘Shabbat regulars’ is not a term of my own creation. It is an accepted part of the Tufts Hillel community that there is a handful of identifiable individuals for whom Shabbat attendance is a routine part of their college lives. Generally speaking, ‘regulars’ can be understood as those students who attend Shabbat services nearly every week.

<sup>59</sup> Some of such themes include ‘Interfaith Shabbat,’ ‘Freshman Shabbat,’ and ‘Farm-to-table Shabbat.’

<sup>60</sup> Daniel, the only of the seven attendees who does not regularly attend Shabbat services, did used to go to services every week. However, a recent increased interest and connection to humanistic Judaism, which acts as a non-theistic alternative to Jewish life, has resulted in Daniel’s decrease in service attendance. He does still however attend frequent Shabbat dinners at Hillel.

each week, it's still a nice break from the rest of the week."<sup>61</sup> The idea of Shabbat services offering students a time of tranquility in which they are free of the stress of their lives was shared by many of the other attendees, such as Allie, the freshman from Montana. For her, Shabbat services were something that she could 'turn to' when all else failed to console her following the deaths of her father and aunt:

So my dad committed suicide and I felt really lost and uncomforted by anything that people said. So at services... I remembered feeling calm and peaceful there when I was younger, so it was a way for me to have like an hour or so of peace.<sup>62</sup>

Though unfortunate circumstances may have brought Allie closer to Judaism, particularly in the realm of religious practices and spirituality, she has not abandoned her ritualistic Shabbat service attendance now that she has been able to move forward with her life since the passing of her father. Instead, she has chosen to make attending services an integral part of her life because she is able to appreciate the opportunity to relax it provides.

Others students value the connection and sense of a 'shared experience' amongst fellow Shabbat service attendees. Lauren, who enjoys leading Reform services, captured this idea perfectly in her description of what she likes the most about Shabbat services. Regarding her fellow attendees, she said, "we all just have this nice little Jewish connection! We are all there for the same reason, essentially. We are all internalizing it differently, but it's just a beautiful thing to be surrounded by other Jewish who all want to be there."<sup>63</sup> Lauren's response serves as a reminder that, for college students, or, as Arnett, those who are in the 'emerging adulthood' stage of life, religious practice is voluntary. No longer under direct control of their parents, for

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<sup>61</sup> Andrew, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, March 1, 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Allie.

<sup>63</sup> Lauren.

example, students are free to spend their time doing whatever they please. The fact that her fellow service attendees have decided, for themselves, to prioritize their religion over a myriad of other options generally associated with collegial life, such as going to dinner with friends in the city or attending a fraternity party, is something that Lauren cherishes.

For David, a sophomore who grew up with a minimal exposure to Judaism due to being raised as ‘half-Jewish,<sup>64</sup>’ the main reason he continues to attend Shabbat services is because he simply enjoys the songs and lively environment that characterizes the Reform service he attends. Though he had not attended any sort of Jewish schooling and came into Tufts without prior knowledge of any of the tunes to the songs or how to speak the Hebrew language, David was determined to become familiar enough with the service to be able to partake in it. He described his immediate attraction to the Reform service from the very first time he went: “When I went the first time I was totally shocked and had no idea what was going on. But I could tell that it was really upbeat and everyone was enjoying it, so I wanted to learn it.”<sup>65</sup>

The celebratory nature of the service that David speaks of is characteristic of Kabbalat Shabbat, the Friday night prayer service that is said as a way to welcome in the Sabbath. Though both the Reform and Conservative services at Hillel say many of the same words in their respective services, the stylistic components of the two services differ significantly. While conservative services are (generally) lead by just one person and do not include any musical instruments, Reform services include one or two leaders who announce the page numbers and significance of each prayer that is about to be said, and at least one song-leader who plays the guitar (or drums). This inclusion of instrumental components in Hillel’s more liberal service is

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<sup>64</sup> David’s father is Jewish and mother is Catholic.

<sup>65</sup> David, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, January 31, 2013.

often credited as being what many attendees enjoy the most about the services they attend. For some, the harmonic tones are even what they look forward to hearing on Friday evenings throughout the academic week.

Interestingly, the aesthetics of the Reform services were also used by some of the students I spoke with to validate their belief that *their* service was *superior* to the other. Adam, who unquestionably considers himself to be a Conservative Jew, had always only attended Conservative service prior to Tufts, did exactly this when asked to explain why he now prefers to attend Reform services, at least for Friday nights: “I think it’s just because Friday night is just supposed to be more jovial and spiritual. That’s what Kabbalat Shabbat is about ... like the definition of it. And I think Conservative [services] are sometimes a little dreary or like not as involved [as Reform].”<sup>66</sup> To him, Reform services are a better way to feel a personal connection to Shabbat, though he does still attend Conservative services for special holidays, such as the High Holidays, because he values the ‘more religious’ aspect that it provides him for those occasions.

Though there are other students who also ‘bounce around’ between the different denominational services, the majority of Jewish students tend to choose one or the other, and they ‘stick’ to it. And though the two services do not exist in direct opposition of each other, Tufts students point to some additional differences between the two to explain why their own chosen service is the one they prefer.

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<sup>66</sup> Adam.

Joseph, one of the Conservative service ‘regulars,’ believes *his* Conservative service to be a more authentically religious service than is the Reform. He revealed his criticism of the more liberal service as such:

I feel like Reform changes too much, especially in the fact that they are trying to make it so accessible, which is nice and works for some people, but I don’t really like that they are moving so far from a lot of the original things said. And like a lot of the prayers are totally different and they [the Reform service] have kind of just totally disregarded some of the Jewish laws.<sup>67</sup>

Though Joseph seems very critical of the Reform services, he is not judgmental of the individual students who choose to attend the more lenient services. He is simply explaining why he personally prefers the Conservative service. He is supportive of individuals finding different ways to feel a connection to their religion, even though it differs from his own style of practice.

One of the other noticeable difference between the services is undeniably the amount of Hebrew included in each. Here, Joseph expounded upon how he could see this as one of the downsides of his Conservative service: “So people could see a con as that it [the Conservative service] is kind of not accessible. If you haven’t grown up knowing the service, then you wouldn’t necessarily know what to do. I feel like it’s harder to just jump into [the Conservative service] because it’s all in Hebrew.”<sup>68</sup> David, the half-Jewish student who now regularly attends the Reform service, articulated that this perfectly captures how he views the Conservative minyon, which he fears he would stand-out as being different in, even more so than he already does in Reform services when I asked him why he chose Reform over Conservative:

I guess it’s just because that is what I knew, so I guess that, if I had to choose, I would just go with that [Reform]. And like I don’t have any customs of my own or anything like that, so I guess I had to kind of go and do it all on my own and see what I liked and what

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<sup>67</sup> Joseph.

<sup>68</sup> Joseph.

I didn't like. And I'm not sure if that is a good way to go about it, but, you know, I started doing Reform and I really liked it. It was definitely rough in the beginning-I had to teach myself all of the songs and everything for Shabbat- and I do still feel a little left out at Hillel because I don't have the Jewish background like other people do, but I don't really think I'm at a disadvantage and I'm comfortable enough with Reform now. Plus I've walked by Conservative services and it sounds kind of scary... I feel like, if I went to Conservative [services], it would be a lot of Hebrew that I don't know and, I don't know, it just sounds scary to me! Maybe I'm wrong, but I just feel like... I don't know, it *just* sounded scary when I walked by!<sup>69</sup>

For other newcomers like David, Reform services appear as more inviting of people regardless of their religious background, making it the likely option for such students.

In addition to an individual's personal preference regarding the aesthetics and 'level of religiosity' of the services, peer-group influence also plays a large role in explaining how students decide which Shabbat service to attend. Interestingly, very few Jewish students that I spoke with seemed to have formed friendships *as a result of* attending any sort of Jewish-related event. Even for those respondents who did indeed make a friend (or two) from attending programs, such as Shabbat services, the majority of their friend-groups at Tufts were formed prior to attending such religious events. These preexisting friendships were almost entirely based on where students lived [on campus] during their freshman year of college.<sup>70</sup> Take, for example, Andrew, the freshman from New York. He identifies as a Conservative Jew and had never participated in, or attended, a Reform service prior to attending Tufts. However, he now attends *only* the Reform Shabbat service at Hillel. His response to my inquiry of why he goes to Reform if it is not what he grew up with reveals how significantly his decision is influenced by his peers:

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<sup>69</sup> David.

<sup>70</sup> The formation of strong bonds amongst students who resided in the same dorm, and especially on the same floor, is not unique to Jewish students. It is very common for Tufts students, as a whole, to have the strongest connections to those that the Tufts Office of Residential Life housed them with during their first year on the campus. Even if students do not continue to live in close proximity to each other in subsequent years, the friendships remain.

My decision to go to Reform services instead of Conservative is because all the people that I live with go to Reform... the people that I'm closest with happen to [live] in Tilton<sup>71</sup> and go to Reform services. If people that went to Conservative services also lived in Tilton, then I would probably be just as close with them, too.<sup>72</sup>

Andrew explained that his two best friends at Tufts, Alex and Noah, both live in the same dorm as him, and that is how they all were originally introduced. Nowadays, the trio of Tilton-residing friends not only spend most of their free time together, but also attend Shabbat services together each week. Because both Alex and Noah were more familiar with the Reform branch of Judaism, in which they grew up, Andrew agreed to accompany them to Reform Shabbat services. In doing so, Andrew prioritizes his social connections over religious familiarity.

In a similar light, students found it extremely beneficial to know someone else that was actively involved with Hillel before appearing for the first time at the Granoff Family Hillel Center. For Daniel, this 'in' at Hillel came from his participation in a Pre-Orientation group focused on community service. He admits that he was advantaged to already know someone when he first arrived at Tufts: "Personally, going into Hillel and having someone from my pre-orientation [group] with me-who I was good friends with already and who I knew was going to be at services-it helped."<sup>73</sup>

Though Daniel most likely would still have decided to (eventually) check out Jewish life on campus considering he came from such a strong Jewish upbringing, this is not the case for all students. For example, Tali, the areligious student who does not really identify even with the

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<sup>71</sup> Tilton is the name of the all-freshman dorm in which Andrew currently lives.

<sup>72</sup> Andrew.

<sup>73</sup> Daniel.

broader Jewish community, explained how her first Shabbat dinner attendance was contingent upon her Jewish friend extending an invitation for her to accompany him:

I think it was because Joseph invited me. It was like one of those really spontaneous things where I was just like, ‘sure!’ So I guess you wouldn’t really say that I went on my own, because if Joseph wasn’t there, I don’t know if I would have ever gone.’<sup>74</sup>

David shared a similar feeling of dependency when asked if he would still attend Shabbat services if he did not have any friends to go with. He remarked:

I might not just because I wouldn’t want to go by myself and not know what was going. Because sometimes I ... it’s just nice to go with someone who does know everything that’s going on [in the service], and if I didn’t have someone with me like that, I guess I’d be a little lost.<sup>75</sup>

Because he is not as familiar with Jewish songs or customs, David fears that he would not feel comfortable and at-ease unless accompanied by a friend who could help him through the service.

It is this same fear of discomfort that has played a large part in keeping Michael, a junior from St. Louis who has become increasingly less involved with Judaism over the years, away from ever attending either a Shabbat service or dinner at Tufts. When I asked him what the chances of him accepting an invitation to attend Friday night services or dinner would be, he replied:

It depends on who asks. If a good friend asks, there might be a good chance that I’ll go. If an acquaintance asks, there’s probably no chance of me going. [Why must it be a good friend who invites you?] I’d feel like I would need some sort of level of comfort. I’d never done it before; I wouldn’t know the people going... I’d need someone to kind of ‘hold my hand.’<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Tali.

<sup>75</sup> David.

<sup>76</sup> Michael, interviewed by Ilana Linder, Tufts University, February 24, 2013.

Michael's response indicates that it is not a lack of familiarity with Judaism or the Hebrew language that is responsible for his maintained distance from Hillel. Rather, his position as an *outsider*, with regard to both the particular way(s) in which Hillel conducts its services, as well as to the other Tufts Hillel attendees, are largely to blame. Because he does not have any personal 'ties' to others involved with Hillel who could help him get acclimated to this unfamiliar Jewish environment, Michael continues to shy away from religious attendance while on campus.

### *Internalization and Perpetuation of Segregation*

Even if a newcomer, be it a freshman or an upperclassman who has not previously gotten involved, does know one or two people before stepping foot in the Tufts Hillel building, it is unlikely that he will immediately feel comfortable. Instead, it is often the case that the newcomer will be intimidated as he looks around himself, only to notice that many other attendees are socializing with their own small groups of friends, none of which he can claim membership to. This results in individuals accepting-as-legitimate and internalizing the 'cliquish' nature of the relationships they believe to exist at Hillel. Thinking back to her first time attending a Shabbat service at Hillel, Allie recalled this very feeling:

In the beginning I was really intimidated to go to Conservative services because I looked in the room and everyone was talking to each other and giving each other hugs and I was thinking, 'Oh no! Everybody else belongs here and I don't know any of them yet!' And so I felt like it would be difficult to break that bubble to get into the group. But then I realized that ... now that I'm part of Conservative services, I realize that is not like that.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Allie.

Though Allie is now a regular attendee of Conservative services and now is seen (by others) as a member of that group, it is clear that she was acutely aware of her position as an ‘outsider,’ in the beginning.

How students respond after noticing this seeming segregation is peculiar. Rather than trying to challenge the apparent segregation, newcomers who desire to feel ‘comfortable’ and included in the Tufts Jewish community, as it exists within Hillel, subconsciously contribute to the perpetuation of the differentiation. This is accomplished by way of individual students inviting their own peers, such as those that they met from their dorms, to attend Shabbat services/dinner with them. What results is an increasingly large number of many small friend-groups that all join together, physically, under one roof, yet rarely interact with one-another. David’s response to being asked if he now feels comfortable when he enters Hillel appears innocent at face-value, yet it epitomizes how he is actively participating in this continuous cycle of systematic exclusion:

Yeah, I do feel comfortable when I go. I don’t know if I would if I would be to go by myself, but yeah, I do feel welcomed. I’ve never really met anyone at Hillel, like I go with my friends, but I do feel welcomed when I’m there.<sup>78</sup>

Here, David fails to acknowledge that the reason he feels so ‘welcome’ is because he continues to surround himself with others that he feels comfortable around, regardless of the situation. He has not attempted to interact with other Jews outside of his own inner-circle of friends; he simply is not required to do so.

There are some students, however, for whom merely feeling comfortable by way of having friends to associate with on Friday nights is not ‘enough’ for them to feel like part of the

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<sup>78</sup> David.

Tufts Jewish community. For these individuals, being identified as, and associated with, a particular group of heavily involved Jewish students is required. As with non-religious social networks and friend groups, such association with a particular group of people provides members with friends to eat meals with, to go out on the weekends with, and to study with, just to name a few examples.

Andrew is one such student who has progressed from feeling like an excluded freshman to now a welcomed part of the Tufts Jewish Community. Not only is he an identifiable member of the Reform service on Friday nights, but also is an engaged member of the Tufts Hillel Student Programming Board and a participant in other students groups, such as Tufts Friends of Israel, relating to Judaism. He is aware that he has benefited from his participation in multiple aspects of Jewish life on campus. Concerning Shabbat services, he acknowledges that, though he might walk to Hillel alone (if both Adam and Noah are not going to services) on a Friday night, he is 'still not by himself once he gets there.' He now has ties to many different groups of friends, be it his fellow Hillel board members, his classmates from Judaic Studies courses, or the people who are in any of the various student groups/clubs relating to Judaism that he identifies with. He therefore does not have to worry that he will not know anyone when he attends Friday night services. Additionally, Andrew's established involvements with Judaism allow him to feel a sense of fellowship when surrounded by his fellow Jewish Jumbos outside of religious services. For example, when he is inside the Granoff Family Hillel Center, which he considers to be his 'second home' on campus, for reasons other than praying, he still finds comfort in being around other devoted members of the Tufts Jewish community.

Considering that the stronger of an attachment to the Tufts Jewish Community a student felt, the more likely he was to also value the physical space of Tufts Hillel, it is not surprising that other heavily involved Tufts Jews shared Andrew's appreciation of the Granoff Family Hillel Center. Lauren, the singer who saw the large Jewish student population at Tufts as an opportunity for her to become more involved/attached to her religion, enthusiastically offered her description of the Center:

Well our [Tufts Hillel] building is super fancy, which is awesome! I guess we have really nice alums! So that definitely does contribute to like me wanting to go there, I would say. Like if we had a crappy Hillel, I don't know if I'd want to spend so much time there. Especially because sometimes I will just go there just to like sit in like the [cushioned] black chairs because they are super comfy and it's great! [To study?] Yeah, to do work. I know that I have gone there at least once just to take a nap between classes. [Laughter.] But that was like more of thing when I lived downhill. Like I would have two classes uphill and sometimes there would be time in-between them and I would want to take a nap, so I would go to Hillel. And it's great because Hillel is probably the only place on campus that I would actually feel comfortable like going into and just doing whatever I want. [What about it makes you feel so comfortable?] I guess it's just because ... first of all, I feel like Hillel does ... people there make an effort to let other people know that everyone is welcome there all of the time. Especially Rabbi Summit; he is really encouraging of people coming to Hillel. And then, other than that, it's just because it's a space for Jewish people, and I am a Jewish person. So I feel... I feel like if I weren't Jewish, I probably wouldn't feel comfortable just like going in, but as someone who spends time a lot of time at Hillel, it would be perfectly fine for anyone to just go in and hang out there.<sup>79</sup>

Lauren alludes to the physically appealing nature of Hillel in addition to a perceived level of comfort that stems from it being a space 'for Jewish people.' Though non-Jewish people are certainly welcome to also enter, and spend time in, the Hillel building, the fact still remains that the space functions mostly as a Jewish community center that is meant to serve Jewish students (or those interested in learning more about Judaism). Joseph's explanation of how Hillel provides

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<sup>79</sup> Lauren.

him with a space in which he knows he will be surrounded by people who value similar things illustrates this very idea:

I like that Hillel is a separate building, and that, when you enter this building, you know that most people who are in that building want to be there and that they are there for a reason- to be with other Jewish, and to be in a Jewish community, rather than just being a community that is the larger Tufts University campus. [Hillel] is almost the Tufts University Jewish campus, if I may.<sup>80</sup>

For Joseph, who spends a majority of his time outside of class in the Granoff Family Hillel Center, Hillel is a religious enclave that caters specifically to Jewish members of the Tufts community. By localizing the spacial realm of Jewish life on the Tufts campus, however, to the physical confinements of the Hillel building, Joseph provides a rather narrow and limiting definition of *where* Judaism can be practiced on the University's grounds. It is doubtful that Joseph means to say that other forms of Jewish practice-external to Hillel- are not as authentic or 'real' as those which occurs within Hillel. Yet his statement does reveal his own religious preferences and campus involvements and how they influence his own methods of approach and thought-processes. To put it simply, Hillel has become a major agent of secondary socialization and the identity Joseph projects on this campus. In return, he expresses great pride in promoting and sharing this identity with others, while simultaneously elevating the Judaism that is produced within Hillel above other religious activity on campus.

While Joseph's opinion can be accepted as a projection of a desire to defend something he puts a great deal of his time and heart into, his equation of Hillel being the 'Tufts Jewish campus' warrants further consideration. As epitomized by my subjects' overwhelming focus on Hillel -at the expense of discussing any of the other Jewish organizations/groups on campus-

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<sup>80</sup> Joseph.

during their interviews, Hillel existence is undeniably pervasive on the Medford campus. Furthermore, the University appears to fully support the private not-for-profit organization, “letting it [Hillel] do pretty much whatever it wants to do.”<sup>81</sup> To this end, many Tufts students understand this lack of interference on the University’s behalf to mean that ‘Hillel is doing *it* right.’ This results in students authenticating Hillel’s approach to Judaism. However, this becomes problematic due to Hillel’s coinciding association with the *religious* parts of Judaism. Though there are many student groups focusing on the cultural, social, political, and educational (i.e. non-religious) aspects of Judaism that are actually Hillel *initiatives*, or sub-groups within the larger umbrella organization, outsiders are frequently unaware of their existence. Rather, they only know about the parts of the religion that people like Tali described as appearing ‘strict:’ attending services for Shabbat each week, fasting during Yom Kippur, etc. Therefore, it appears as though Tufts, by way of appearing to fully-support Hillel, privileges and rewards the religious components of Judaism, legitimizing those who are more observant (in the traditional sense) as embodying the more ‘authentic’ way to be Jewish. The irony in this assumption is of course that the majority of Tufts Jews are not religiously observant; in reality, most are culturally and socially Jewish. Nonetheless, what occurs as a result of this is that Tufts implicitly delegitimizes the secular Jewish identities of many of its students, ultimately alienating a core component of its Jewish community.<sup>8283</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Lauren.

<sup>82</sup> (Greenberg 2006)

<sup>83</sup> In (off-the-record) conversations I had with other students regarding my thesis, this point was brought up. It was mentioned how those who are heavily involved with Hillel- the ‘regulars’- complain of the same thing, but use different terms. Rather than saying that Hillel is ‘too religious,’ they believe Hillel is ‘not cultural enough.’ They do not seem to believe that the religious focus is overbearing, but do desire more options for non-religious programs.

### *Non-Religious Extracurricular Involvement(s)*

The extent to which these two factors, attending regular Shabbat services and having a large Jewish peer-group at Tufts, influences whether or not a student will identify with the Tufts Jewish community is also evident by looking at what characterizes those Tufts Jews who do not actively seek out, and participate in, frequent Jewish-related events. What emerged from the interviews conducted was an understanding that the most significant predictor of an absence of a collegial Jewish community identification is involvement in non-religious extracurriculars such as athletics, academically-based student clubs/groups, and the arts.

This is not meant to suggest that the fact that individuals participate in non-religious extracurriculars at Tufts automatically results in a lack of an attachment to the Tufts Jewish community. Rather, the differentiation stems from specific components of what these secular involvements entail. In particular, it is the significant time-commitment these activities demand and the personas of co-participants of the non-religious involvements that tend to keep their Jewish participants away from frequently interacting with other Tufts Jews.

### *Time Commitment*

Participation in any sort of extracurricular often requires a significant time commitment of its participants. Athletic teams, especially the varsity teams, are, as an example, no exception. Ben, the junior for whom sports was the most important factor in his college selection process, is on the Tufts varsity basketball team and is also a newer member of the Tufts Financial Group. The simplicity of his response to being asked why he has not gotten more involved with Jewish programs/groups/organizations on campus epitomizes this very notion. Ben answered by saying,

“I’m just busy.”<sup>84</sup><sup>85</sup> For Ben and other students that I spoke who are involved with other non-religious extracurriculars, very little time remains in their days after accounting for classes/schoolwork and extracurricular obligations. As a result, these busy students tend to use what minimal amount of their schedules they retain control over as opportunities to relax. Because religious observance or additional involvements with student groups relating to Judaism would further limit the amount of ‘free-time’ these students have, they chose not to incorporate the Jewish-focused opportunities as regular parts of their collegial lives.

Furthermore, many of Tufts’ extra-curricular ‘performances’<sup>86</sup> occur on Friday evenings, at times that conflict with scheduled Shabbat services/dinner, which, as stated previously, have the greatest chances of putting students in direct contact with other Jewish Jumbos.

Consequently, these Jewish students who are involved with such non-religious extracurriculars do not (believe themselves to) have the ‘option’ of attending Shabbat services/dinner if they wish to remain a member of their respective groups. The fact that such students prioritize their non-religious extracurricular involvements over their religious identities does not necessarily mean that they have no appreciation for their religion. Rather, it demonstrates the extent to which these students value and enjoy their other collegial identities and involvements. For example, even if he desired to attend weekly Shabbat services at Tufts, Ben’s commitment to Tufts athletics requires that his weekends (in-season) be spent playing on the court, with his fellow teammates, as those days are when basketball games take place. Similarly, Lauren must sometimes forgo song-leading at Hillel on Friday nights because her a cappella group has a scheduled

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<sup>84</sup> Ben.

<sup>85</sup> Ben stated that, when in-season, basketball practices take up about twenty-six to thirty (26-30) hours of his time, each week.

<sup>86</sup> Be it an athletic game/match, theater production, singing ‘gig,’ etc.

performance. When I asked her what she gains from being in the singing group, Lauren replied, “well this is not going to sound great, but like, we are one of the best a cappella groups on campus and I love being a part of that. And I love... it kind of makes me feel a little validated as a singer-that I’m a part of it. And I love performing with the group and listening to our recordings!”<sup>87</sup> The pride she finds from belonging to that particular group is a reflection of the talents she has worked endlessly to develop for many years; she believes all of her hard work has culminated in her membership in the prestigious a cappella group.

Lauren is also a very active member of another non-religious student group which focuses on policy reform. Though this involvement does not necessarily conflict with Friday night services, Lauren generally prefers to spend time with fellow members of *this* group following Shabbat services instead of staying for Shabbat dinners at Hillel. When asked why she never stays for Shabbat dinner, Lauren pointed to the strength of her friendships outside of Hillel, which are directly related to why she enjoys being part of the policy-reform group:

I just feel that, by this point, I have already found my friends and I’m just too lazy to make new ones....that’s why I always leave after song-leading in services. [Who are those ‘friends?’] Mostly it’s people from [name of policy-reform group]. Like that is who my friends are. Even though [that group] was more of just like a community for me to go to and have other people to talk to who also care about the topic *freshman* year, now... like the main reason I keep going back *now*... it’s because they are my best friends. Like that’s who they are. And the two current co-presidents of [name of policy-reform group] are my future housemates!<sup>88</sup>

Lauren has found ways to include her membership in the a cappella group, which drains nearly eight hours of her week,<sup>89</sup> and her involvement with the other non-religious student group,

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<sup>87</sup> Lauren.

<sup>88</sup> Lauren.

<sup>89</sup> Lauren stated that the a cappella group practices together for at least 7.5 hour every week, and this number does not include time she spends on her own going over the songs, nor does it include time spent doing performances in front of audiences (or the time it takes to travel to such singing ‘gigs.’

into her already hectic class schedule because they both offer valuable rewards in return for her commitment. Unlike Ben, however, Lauren does still choose to participate in religious services when her performance schedule allows her the option of doing so. This suggests that time requirements are not the only aspect of non-religious extracurricular involvements that influence individuals decisions to regularly practice their religion on campus or to actively seek out other Jewish students. Therefore, due consideration must be given to *what else* differentiates the non-religious involvements from both the religiously-focused extracurriculars, as well as from one another.

### *Peer-Group Influence*

As Lauren's explanation of how her fellow policy-reform group members became her core group of friends began to suggest, the influence of one's peer-group in the college socialization process once again becomes a crucial factor of explanation. Unsurprisingly, individuals tend to more-closely identify themselves with the people they spend the most amount of time with. Accordingly, students who are deeply involved with their respective extracurriculars develop a shared sense of camaraderie amongst co-participants, who end up comprising the majority, if not the entirety, of these students' collegial friend groups. As a result, some members of such close-knit social groups alter their own behaviors and attitudes to match what they perceive as being the 'norm' within the group as enacted by the other group members. Resocialization is especially likely to occur for individuals who find that some aspect of their identity stands in direct opposition to the values and beliefs shared by the majority of the group. Concerning Jewish students at Tufts who are involved in various non-religious extracurriculars in

particular, it appears that, for some, the extent to which their fellow group-participants express their support (or lack of support) for Jewish life and practice largely impacts their own propensity towards getting involved with other members of the Tufts Jewish community.

The impact of who comprises a Jewish student's core friend group on Jewish involvement, or even willingness to identify himself with the Tufts Jewish community, is most apparent by contrasting the peer-groups of Lauren and Ben. It is here that the bonding that takes place within ethno-religious situations is most clearly rivaled by a sense of 'belonging' in other (non-religious) groups. Though neither her a cappella group nor the policy-reform organization are directly related to Judaism, the individual members that Lauren most closely identifies with from both groups also happen to be Jewish. She reported:

I think I'm friends more with Jews than non-Jews now. But I think it's mostly just a really hilarious coincidence. Just because, like, most of the [name of policy-reform group] people are actually Jewish... And I don't really consider myself to be *that* close with many of the [a cappella group members], but it's still interesting how the only [other singer from the group] who I do feel like a *real* friendship connection with is also Jewish.<sup>90</sup>

Though it may simply be a coincidence, the fact remains that Lauren is frequently surrounded by other Jewish students, even when she is not doing traditional 'Jewish things.' None of her best friends are critical or openly-unsupportive of her religion or her enthusiasm for being actively involved with Jewish life. Lauren does not have to worry about being judged negatively by her fellow group members and friends, a privilege that Ben is not similarly awarded. Instead, Ben is very much aware of the negative attitudes regarding Judaism held by his 'best'-friends, who are also his fellow athletic teammates. Because these students make up the large majority of his friend group in college, he is careful to avoid appearing overly

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<sup>90</sup> Lauren.

challenging of, or threatening to, the fellowship of the group. Therefore, Ben tends to ‘downplay’ his Jewish identity while at Tufts. The following conversation with Ben speaks to this:

*Ilana: Considering that most of the other basketball team members are not Jewish, how does your identification with Judaism differ from their non-Jewish identities?*

Ben: So when I was home- like back in high school- the majority of the other guys on the team also weren’t Jewish, but they were more familiar with Jews because of where we lived; a high percentage of the people in our community were Jewish. So it wasn’t really a thing. It was just something that was about where we lived. But when I came here, I... I hear some jokes about being Jewish, and it kind of bothers me, even from my friends. They don’t... I guess they are unfamiliar with what Judaism is, and I guess they only hear about the stereotypes. So I hear stereotypical things being thrown around. I guess that would be the way to describe it.

*Ilana: Can you give an example?*

Ben: I don’t know. I get sensitive to it because there are not a lot of Jews around... I can’t really think of an example. But I don’t like when we start talking about Judaism. I like defending that I am Jewish, and they know that I am proud to be Jewish, but I don’t like talking about it with them because I feel like they have some hidden or imbedded... ‘anti-Semitism’ is a strong word, but... distaste for Jews.

*Ilana: Do you ever say anything when they start saying such things?*

Ben: Yeah... I mean, I’ll try to clean it up quickly or just kind of halt the conversation. But still... even my roommates would say little things that would bother me last year. And then I would hear about things that they would say that would bother me. But I would try to look the other way because, although I knew that about them, they were still my friends and teammates, I guess. So as an example, going back to an anti-Semitic or just like a derogatory thing I’ve heard, is that one of my roommates was drunk one night and said to another one that he ‘misses *normal* white people,’ that he is ‘tired of all of these Jews and Blacks.’ I just tried thinking that it wasn’t true. I just said that it wasn’t true in my mind, even though it is probably true.

*Me: Did you ever call either of your roommates out on anything that you ever heard them say?*

Ben: Yes, never really too strongly, but I definitely have.<sup>91</sup>

Though Ben knows for himself that Judaism is important in his life, avoiding potential conflict with his ‘friends,’ is his primary objective. This intentional placation on Ben’s behalf plays a large role in explaining why he does not outwardly display his Jewish identity nearly as much as it is internally felt when around Tufts students. Furthermore, though stated as a joke during his interview, Ben hinted at the belief that he was penalized for choosing to prioritize his religious observance over his athletic responsibilities. He proclaimed:

So as early as the first couple weeks of school -obviously a couple of the holiest days in the Jewish calendar take place then- I set a precedent pretty quickly with basketball that religion came first for me. Our first scrimmage was on the same day as Yom Kippur, and I chose to go to services for that. So I missed the scrimmage, which actually didn’t help my cause, and I think it might be the reason why I don’t play to this day- nah, that’s a bitter answer! But I chose to go to services over play, so I set that precedent pretty quickly- because that’s what I would have done at home. So I didn’t alter my stance or change my position on what was important and what wasn’t.<sup>92</sup>

Though Ben has chosen to attend religious services for the High Holidays each year despite what he understood to be a negative consequence of doing so as a new freshman, he does not draw much additional attention<sup>93</sup> to the fact that he is Jewish on the Tufts campus.

Conversely, when he is away from Tufts, Ben indicated that he would ‘never be ashamed to tell others that he was Jewish.’<sup>94</sup> To this end, when asked which identity, *being Jewish* or *being an athlete*, others associate him more closely with, Ben paused for a moment before offering the this response:

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<sup>91</sup> Ben.

<sup>92</sup> Ben.

<sup>93</sup> He does sometimes attend the traditional Passover seders, or meals, and attempts to follow the dietary restrictions associated with various Jewish holidays, but does not attend Shabbat services/dinner.

<sup>94</sup> Ben.

That's a good question. I mean, I don't know if... I think it's kind of 'apples to oranges.' I don't know if you could really say... well, I guess that if someone were to describe me *in general*, they would probably describe me as a Jew before a basketball player. But *here*, I am definitely an athlete before I'm religiously involved.<sup>95</sup>

For Ben, his religious identity is situationally-dependent. He has learned to internalize the attitudes and beliefs that are held by the people he finds himself around in different situations, and projects an image of himself that fits with what he believes others expect of him.

### *Conception of Judaism*

The reason Ben has the ability to 'choose' for himself how strong of a Jewish identity to project, or 'how Jewish' to act, at any given moment is because he lacks a strong emotional or spiritual connection to the religion. Like Ben, other Jewish students who are involved with non-religious extracurriculars and do not readily identify with the Tufts Jewish community tend to emphasize the *cultural* and *social*, rather than *religious* or *spiritual*, aspects of Judaism. In particular, such students understand their 'Jewish involvements' as primarily being family-bonding opportunities.<sup>96</sup> Tali, the half-Jewish sophomore who does not consider herself to be part of any religion, explained how her family's (very minimal) religious involvement(s) were valued not for their historical or religious significance, but because they brought her extended family together:

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<sup>95</sup> Ben.

<sup>96</sup> This is not meant to suggest that those students who do identify with, and actively participate in, the Tufts Jewish community, do not also appreciate the cultural and social aspects of Judaism, such as opportunities to unite their families; they certainly do. But their understanding of Judaism is not limited to only these two components. Instead, they also find value and significance from the religious and/or spiritual facets of Judaism. Furthermore, these highly involved students are able to easily 'be Jewish' on their own while away from their own families.

What we really do is... we tend to have like the religious High Holidays<sup>97</sup> as just a way to have our family together. So that is why we celebrate Passover.... we do say like, ‘why is this night different from all other night?’<sup>98</sup>-those little questions in the beginning- and that’s about it. But again, it’s just to have our family together. Like Hanukkah, Christmas, Easter.... I would say pretty much just those four are the ones we do, and we get to see the rest of the family for those... But we don’t like do Yom Kippur or anything.<sup>99</sup>

Similarly, Michael, the junior who has never attended a Shabbat service at Tufts, explained that his favorite Jewish holiday is the one that always meant being surrounded by his family. Interestingly, he used this explanation as if to justify his lack of involvement with formal Jewish life on campus:

My favorite Jewish holiday? I would say Passover, at least pre-college. Because we would have a big seder with a bunch of extended family members. And that [was] one of the very few times that I would get to see these people every year. So that was always a good time. And the food is usually pretty good! But now, I guess that, if I could go home for Passover each year, it would definitely be my favorite. I’m not saying that I dislike it, but, you know, I don’t have a seder with my family here [at Tufts].<sup>100</sup>

For Michael, Passover seders simply do not happen without his extended<sup>101</sup> family. To this effect, neither Michael nor Tali, ever mentioned that they feel a deeper emotional connection to any of the Jewish practices they participate in. Rather, anytime they mentioned any form of their own religious observances, it was always accompanied by a mention of ‘family’ over the course of their interviews.

Aside from in the context of *uniting* their families, Jewish activity is also conceptualized by these less religiously-involved Tufts students as a way of *appeasing* their families. Rather

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<sup>97</sup> Interestingly, Tali considers the Jewish holidays of Passover and Hanukkah as being the ‘High Holidays,’ and does not include one of the actual High Holidays, Yom Kippur, in her definition.

<sup>98</sup> The ‘little questions’ that Tali speaks of are the traditional ‘four questions’ that are asked during Passover seders. The four questions are asked to encourage participants to ask deeper questions and engage in conversation.

<sup>99</sup> Tali.

<sup>100</sup> Michael.

<sup>101</sup> Michael’s brother does also attend Tufts, yet neither of them choose to attend Passover seders while on campus.

than viewing religious involvement as something they can *choose* to do, the three students who do not identify with the Tufts Jewish community and are all involved with significant non-religious extracurriculars, spoke of them as being obligations or expectations *imposed* upon them by their families.

Michael admits that, for him, religious observance is simply ‘not up there’ on his level of importance. He is instead driven by a sense of guilt he feels for having ‘let his family down,’ religiously speaking. He elaborated on why he is overcome with this particular feeling:

I mean I am a Jew and I do feel poorly about, you know, how I’ve become less in touch with my Judaism over the years. I guess [it is] because it was always... my family always placed an importance on it, especially because my grandmother was so active...like she is religious. When we visit her during winter break, if it’s Hanukkah or Thanksgiving we will say some prayers, even if it’s not like a Friday night or anything, which is kind of odd, now that I think about it. But yeah, she’s religious. But then, you know, our family stopped putting pressure on [my siblings and me]... like, ‘oh, we don’t have to go to services anymore...’ they stopped putting that type of pressure on us. But, I don’t know, now that I’m not practicing, or practicing that much, I don’t know, I just feel kind of guilty about it. I’m currently I am trying to place a little bit more of an importance on it, and that’s why I decided to take Judaic Studies as my culture. But other than that, what [Judaism] means to me now? I’d say that, because I’m in college, it’s probably still a transition from being *raised* Jewish to right now, where I’m Jewish, but I’m not very practicing. And then maybe later in life I will be. But currently, yeah it’s not... it doesn’t have that much of an importance to me.<sup>102</sup>

In an effort to downplay the guilt he now feels as a result of his decline in religious practice, Michael points to what he has done, or is currently doing, that is related to religion. For example, he repeatably pointed out that he chose to take Judaic Studies courses to fulfill part of his distribution requirements<sup>103</sup> to graduate from Tufts. Ironically, however, Michael also

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<sup>102</sup> Andrew.

<sup>103</sup> In order to graduate, liberal arts students at Tufts are required to complete six ‘language’ credits. Students may fulfill these requirements by taking all six as language courses, or may choose to do three as a particular language and three classes that fall within the same ‘cultural’ category. In Michael’s case, he has elected to do the latter option, and is currently enrolled in his third, and final, Judaic Studies course that counts for his ‘language’ requirement.

indicated that he doubts he will take any additional Judaic Studies courses after he has completed the amount required of him to earn his undergraduate degree. This further confirms that, even though he may try to retain some aspect(s) of Judaism into his life, his motive for doing so is largely to satisfy his family.

Ben also indicated that his religious participation is influenced heavily by his desire to make his Jewish family happy. When asked why he never attends Shabbat services at Tufts but does go with his father when home, Ben answered, “I don’t know. I just like going with my dad [back home] because I know that it makes him feel good. But I don’t know if I would really ever go on my own, or take the initiative to go on my own.”<sup>104</sup> Or, to put it more simply, the reason it is important for Ben to be at least (somewhat) involved with Judaism<sup>105</sup> is, as he said, “because it’s important to my family, so it’s important to me.”<sup>106</sup> To this end, Ben believes that he is to ‘follow in his family’s footsteps.’ He therefore states that he plans on raising his own children in way that mirrors his own religious upbringing, further indicating that he feels an obligation to ensure the continuation of the ‘Jewish people.’ And though Ben did acknowledge the fact that he will eventually have to form a relationship to Judaism that is uniquely his own, he has yet to do so. For now, he appears content with simply ‘being Jewish’ in order to please his family.

### *View of University*

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<sup>104</sup> Ben.

<sup>105</sup> (at least important enough to be willing to prioritize High Holiday service attendance over being in the running for a starting position on the basketball team)

<sup>106</sup> Ben.

What the Jewish students who do not readily identify themselves with the Tufts Jewish community also share amongst themselves is a non-critical opinion of the Tufts University administrating, viewing it as very supportive of Jewish life and practice. In fact, Tali claimed that she “would say that [Tufts] is very accepting of Judaism,” as she pointed out that “Hillel is a pretty big thing on campus, I think. And [that] there is a Jewish fraternity, a Jewish a cappella group, [and] there are Jewish studies.”<sup>107</sup> Relatedly, none of the students with whom I spoke that are involved with significant non-religious extracurriculars recalled a single instance in which they were put in an uncomfortable position of having to ‘choose’ between their secular obligations and religious observance.<sup>108</sup> For example, Michael shared the following opinion of the University of a whole as it relates to Jewish practice:

I think the administration is pretty supportive. I mean, during, let’s say Passover, the dining halls have more appropriate food, and they probably do on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana as well. I know that, or at least I think that, during Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur Jews are allowed to not go to class. I think! But that hasn’t stopped me [from going to class].<sup>109</sup>

Ironically, Michael also admitted that, though he attempts to keep Passover, he is generally unsuccessful at doing so. Therefore, he views the options provided in the dining halls, which every single student who does strictly observe the dietary laws associated with Passover describe as insufficient for realistic survival during the holiday, from a very privileged position; he is not limited to the few items available because he has chosen to forgo the laws of kashrut (kosher) during Passover. He also believes that Jewish students at Tufts are pardoned from their

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<sup>107</sup> Tali.

<sup>108</sup> While it may seem that Ben’s explanation of how he thinks he was denied a starting position on the team because he prioritized religious obligations over playing in a game contradicts this claim, Ben himself noted that he does not have tangible proof or justification that this was actually the reason he does not ‘start’ in basketball games.

<sup>109</sup> Michael.

academic obligations during the High Holidays,<sup>110</sup> yet still does not take advantage of this option himself.

This view of the University as supportive of Jewish practice differs from how the students who are heavily involved with Judaism on campus view the administration. In particular, the Hillel ‘regulars’ were very vocal in expressing that they are disappointed by the lack of support the University, as an institution, provides its Jewish students. The following conversation with Allie, who originally view Tufts as an opportunity for her to get more attached and involved with Judaism, summarizes the opinions shares by other ‘regulars:’

*Ilana: How supportive of Jewish life and Jewish practice do you think Tufts is?*

Allie: I think that Hillel is really supportive, but I don’t know if Tufts is. Because there are often, you know, club meetings or club sporting events on Shabbat, and so if someone was really observant, they wouldn’t be able to attend. So it’s sortof being insensitive. And Tufts also doesn’t make it possible- or reasonably possible- to access kosher food on campus. So that is sortof mind boggling to me. It doesn’t make much sense.

*Me: Did you ever feel like you were being put at a disadvantage by having to choose whether to go to religious services or class?*

Allie: Oh yeah! That was awful! I remember Yom Kippur was the day before the first or second Bio 14 exam and I was very angry about that. And I obviously went to services and I fasted, but I definitely reaped the ramifications of, you know, not eating, not having energy, not studying the day before, that sort of thing. I mean, I still ended up getting an ‘A’ on the exam so it wasn’t a big deal, but if lets say I got a C, I would sortof [have] notified [my professors] and ask them if they were aware [that it was Yom Kippur].

*Me: Have you ever had to miss class in order to go to services ?*

Allie: No, but that’s how... it just happened serendipitously like that because my Hebrew teacher wouldn’t [hold class] during services, and services were basically on days when I only had Hebrew that day. But if I did have to miss class because of services, it would

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<sup>110</sup> In actuality, Jewish students are also excused from academic obligations for all Jewish holidays, but it is technically at the discretion of each professor to allow students to miss class.

sort of be a sacrifice I would have to make because you are losing the academics when it's for a religious thing. It's not like you're going to celebrate a friend's birthday.<sup>111</sup>

Now that Tufts encouraged, and allowed, Allie to form a strong relationship to Judaism, which has resulted in her becoming more religiously observant in her short time on campus, the same structure also inhibits her from easily being able to do exactly that. In other words, Tufts has been 'both a blessing and a curse' for Allie's connection to Judaism: as a result of the weekly Shabbat services she can now attend and the significant amount of Jewish peers she can spend time with, Allie now desires to be even more of a practicing Jew. However, Tufts, as an institution, makes it very difficult for her to do so when it comes to aspects of the religion, such as the holidays, that do not occur as frequently as does the weekly Sabbath.

## CONCLUSION

As we can see, identifying with the larger Jewish community can be accomplished through a multitude of ways. These include, but certainly are not limited to, families' experiences, history, ethical/moral values, communal institutions (such as belonging to a synagogue), rituals (playing 'dreidel' on Hanukkah), religion, and life style choices (keeping Kosher). Furthermore, the 'Jewish community' and its customs and practices are not static. Instead, these are constantly being transformed and experienced in ways to fit with the continuously-changing society in which we live. Such modifications are readily apparent just by considering what led to the formation of various Jewish denominations, to give one example.<sup>112</sup> I believe it would do the

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<sup>111</sup> Allie.

<sup>112</sup> Laura Levitt explained that when Eastern European Jews immigrated to the United States, they too had to "refashion their Jewishness [so as to] fit into American middle-class Protestant culture....Jews had to conform to the norms of this culture, making themselves and their Jewishness into something familiar." (808).

Jewish community at large an injustice to ignore any of these features by trying to quantify who does and does not ‘count’ as belonging to the larger Jewish community. Therefore, if subjects expressed any degree of pride in being able to call themselves, ‘Jewish,’ regardless of their reason for doing so, and express what Greenberg called the ‘abstract feeling of a people’ (2004), I categorized them as ‘identifying with the broader Jewish community’ throughout my analysis.

What this research also revealed was that the way identities of Tufts students come into fruition is largely related to an interplay between primary and secondary socialization processes. To try to consider the effects of personal upbringing and social structures as competing and separate entities, as was my original intent, is simply less efficient than is viewing them as intersecting and converging forces.

I am now aware that, while I may not have appreciated it while growing up, my primary socialization and strong background with Judaism provides me with the ‘tools’ required to seamlessly integrate into various Jewish settings, should I decide that I wish to do so.<sup>113</sup> To this end, I have the *skills* (ability to speak the Hebrew language, an understanding of how to ‘keep’ each of the Jewish holidays, knowledge of the different tunes used in different services, etc.) and *shared Jewish life experiences* (having gone through formal Jewish schooling, having a Bat Mitzvah, spent time in Israel, etc.) from which I can draw upon to identify myself as belonging to a (larger) Jewish community. It is this (broad) community membership that I have relied upon for things such as professional networking, or forming a ‘connection’ with the couple sitting next to me at a Itzhak Perlman concert, whose son went to high-school with my former-roommate’s Jewish cousin (also known as playing ‘*Jewish geography*’).

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<sup>113</sup> Without that religious upbringing, I would most likely feel excluded around other Jewish Jumbos, as David explained earlier.

At the same time, my familiarity with Jewish life and practice does not mean that I must incorporate Jewish identification into my daily collegial life. Nor does the fact that I was constantly surrounded by Judaism throughout my childhood necessitate actively seeking out or befriending other Jewish people (on the basis of our shared religion). I recognized that the world would not end if I stopped being ‘as Jewish’ as I once was when I applied to, and almost attended, a college that had a nearly non-existent Jewish student population. Clearly, personal upbringing *alone* is insufficient towards fully explaining my eventual ‘return’ to Judaism in college.

Tufts, as a social institution, provided me with the opportunity to explore a variety of ‘ways to be Jewish,’<sup>114</sup> as it allowed me to choose which form(s) of involvement, if any, I wished to adopt as my own. I was put in direct contact with a wide range of other Jewish students at Tufts thanks to numerous groups/clubs related to Judaism that I was able to explore. Therefore, I am now in a more privileged position than other Jewish students when it comes to finding at least one or two people that I already know in most crowds relating to Judaism on campus. However, the multitude of ways for getting involved, and my subsequent periods of experimentation with each, meant that I never really formed overly strong bonds with *any* particular group(s) of fellow Jewish Tufts students. Instead, I have *loose* ties to a large number of people. Additionally, though individuals who belong to these various Jewish groups are always cordial in their interactions with me, their allegiance to the consistently reappearing and more committed members of their respective groups has been, and will always be, prioritized over my detached relationship with them. Thus, when I enter the Granoff Family Center on Friday nights

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<sup>114</sup> For example, I was able to ‘bounce around’ between Conservative and Reform (Shabbat) services, Shabbat dinner at Hillel, Shabbat dinner at Chabad, Judaic Studies courses, student groups- of political, cultural, social, religious, etc. focuses- before having to ‘stick’ with only one routine.

before Shabbat services begin, for example, I am reminded of my status as an outsider to these groups. There is also very little overlap and interaction between the members of the different groups, placing me in a position in which my individual ‘peers’ are not also friends with each other.

Because of my resulting position as a ‘welcomed outside’ to these sub-groups- combined with the stress and chaos associated with collegial life- my personal attachment to Judaism has changed over the last three and a half years. Today it takes a much more individualistic shape. In particular, I have been resocialized into becoming a rather spiritual Jew, frequently turning towards G-D for His guidance.

If this is the case though- that I have created what Arnett termed as a ‘congregation of one’- why do I still make a point to attend Shabbat services near every single week at Hillel? As offered earlier by some of my respondents, Shabbat services, specifically the lively Reform services at Hillel, provide me a regularly-occurring time to reflect on the week that has just ended- what went well and what can be improved upon- as I look towards the one that approaches. Or, to put it another way, Kabbalat Shabbat services keep me grounded as a human being, reminding me that there is much more to life beyond getting good grades or meeting imposed deadlines.

While it can certainly be argued that personal upbringing (‘being raised Jewish’) correlates most closely with macro-level (‘broader’ Jewish community) identification, and that the structural (how Tufts is organized and the campus culture) aspects most heavily influence micro-level (‘Tufts’ Jewish community) identification, they are both dependent upon each other. To ignore the effect that coming from a particular type of home has on feeling comfortable

during religious services on campus, for example, is to overlook a key part of the understanding. My goal was to make the logical connection between the interplay amongst the predictors throughout this analysis, filling in the missing components along the way.

### *Limitations*

There were multiple limitations of this research. Issues of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, relationship status, and age were not investigated due to the very small sample size. Perhaps differentiations along such features of self-identity would reveal further distinctions and/or similarities between students' co-participants in various activities.

The limited sample also makes it difficult to generalize these findings to the entire Jewish student population at Tufts University, let alone to the larger society. It would be particularly interesting, for example, to see if similar situations of self-perpetuating systems of segregation exist on other college campuses, especially those with comparable Jewish student populations to Tufts'. Should future researchers elect to investigate either this topic, or ones similar to it, it is imperative that the homogeneity that characterized my subject pool be eliminated.

Additionally, because my subjects chose to speak almost exclusively about Tufts' *Hillel*<sup>115</sup> during their respective interviews, my data did not allow for a more in-depth discussion of the numerous alternative ways in which Jewish activity/practice manifests itself on the Medford campus. Even when 'other' programs/groups relating to Judaism were mentioned by interviewees, it was still in the context of how they related/compared to *Hillel*.

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<sup>115</sup> Because Hillel was either what they were actively involved with themselves, or because it was the only Jewish organization on campus that they felt knowledgeable enough to discuss.

The fact that my research ended up focusing so heavily on Tufts *Hillel*, despite my original goal of comparing and contrasting the various campus opportunities for involvement with each other, certainly should not go unaddressed. It again reveals how pervasive and active Hillel is on the campus. As touched upon earlier, the frequent equation of ‘Jewish life on campus’ as meaning ‘Tufts Hillel’ limits what it means to ‘be Jewish’ at the school, while simultaneously regulating *who counts as* ‘being Jewish’ at Tufts. However, if other researchers desire to gain a complete understanding of the many ways to get involved with religious on campuses, they must be careful to avoid allowing such narrow definitions of complex terms to characterize their own data.

### *Moving Forward*

Despite these limitations, these findings still address many different components that impact one’s *macro-* and *micro-*level Jewish community identifications. It is my hope that my analysis will be viewed as an honest effort to better the *Tufts* Jewish community, and as a result, the Jewish community at large. It was not my intention to criticize or condemn the individual subjects I spoke with, nor do I ‘blame’ any of my fellow Jewish Jumbos for intentionally perpetuating the segregation that exists on the Tufts undergraduate campus amongst Jewish identifiers. Rather, I offer this research simply to make them more *aware* of this reoccurring problem and *encourage* them to reconsider their own approach to Jewish life on campus, particularly concerning how they relate to, and interact with, fellow Jewish students.

As it currently exists, I do not believe Hillel, or at least Tufts Hillel, has been overly successful at strengthening the Jewish community on the college campus, at least not by my own

measures of ‘success.’ Considering that the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey’s finding of the rise in intermarriage was perceived as being such a ‘threat’ to the continuation of Judaism, I find the fact that only one of my ten respondents vocalized their concern over intermarriage to be problematic. Though the majority of the Tufts students I interviewed did indicate that they intend to raise their kids Jewish, I am unable to overlook their acceptance of intermarriage as I assess Hillel’s effectiveness. For me, Judaism is a way of life: it affects what I eat, how I spend my time, the type of art and music I enjoy, etc. I do not believe it possible for me to actually spend my life married to someone who does not also incorporate such tenants of Judaism into his life as well. Furthermore, I would never be willing to compromise my Jewish approach to life, the one that I was brought up surrounded with, for the sake of marriage. Rather, preserving the rituals and systems of belief that have characterized all of the previous generations of women in my family is of great importance to me. Similarly, I firmly believe that Jewish children should be brought up with only one religion. As revealed through my interviews with those students who come from families of mixed religions (i.e. those who are ‘half-Jewish’), competing religious identities often result in weak primary religious socialization. Even if secondary socialization prompts an individual to explore one religion over the other, it is uncommon for the religion to have as momentous of an effect on the person’s daily life as it would if that religion had been emphasized from very early on.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to seeing a perpetuation of support for intermarriage, my research revealed that some Jewish students are not willing to challenge instances of anti-Semitism. Such was the case for Ben, who, despite a strong exposure to Judaism while growing up, does not actively or

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<sup>116</sup> I am aware that an exception can be made for those individuals who decide to adopt Orthodox Judaism, as they make the decision to incorporate a much more consistent practice of Judaism into their daily lives.

forcefully stand up to his teammate's offensive comments. Hillel has clearly not achieved the goal of making Jewish students proud of their Jewish identity, regardless of social context, if students such as Ben remain silent.

Furthermore, Hillel expressed its desire to not only attract previously unengaged Jews, but to form ongoing relationships that extend beyond just one-time occurrences. While Tufts Hillel has certainly been able to do this for a handful of students, the majority of Jewish students, as my research suggests, do not become 'regulars.' Instead, many students continue to feel excluded from Jewish life on campus, mainly due to the fact that they believe religious Judaism is valued more than cultural or ethnic Judaism by the University. Similarly, when students do attempt to get involved, they find that the Jewish community at Tufts is highly segregated, as is particularly visible on Friday nights for Shabbat.

Credit must be given, however, to those structural and individual efforts that have already proved to be successful at expanding Jewish outreach on campus and combating the perceived 'cliqueness' amongst members of the Tufts Jewish community. Formal initiatives, such as Hillel's creation of a faculty position titled 'Senior Jewish Educator' and usage of Campus Entrepreneurial Initiative (CEI) interns, have used peer-to-peer engagement to reach students who would otherwise not be involved with Jewish life on campus. Relationships are developed between fellow Tufts students and the Senior Jewish Educator, as well as between the students themselves. Though these two programs are less than three years old, they have already managed to significantly increase the number of Jewish students who are actively engaged on campus from 450 (32 percent) to 800 (58 percent) students.

Informal efforts that individual undergraduate students have taken to reach out to new faces that appear at Hillel or show up at other programs/events relating to Judaism have also been a key component in making people feel included in the Tufts Jewish Community. Most notably, members of Hillel's Student Executive Board were repeatably listed by different interviewees as being a major factor in their initial desires to become friends with fellow Jewish students. These specific students were recognized for their friendliness and willing to truly 'get to know' the newcomers, creating the welcoming environment that Hillel strives to be. And while these Jewish student leaders continue to go out of their ways to ensure others feel included in the Tufts Jewish community, they certainly should not be the only students who reach out to others. It is imperative that other already-involved Jumbos act in ways that mirror the action of these student leaders rather than turning their backs to those who they do not already know. Otherwise, the system of differentiation amongst students will continue to be internalized and perpetuated with each incoming Tufts class.

This does not mean that each person must drastically alter the way he goes about 'being Jewish' at Tufts. Conversely, doing things as simple as introducing yourself to a new freshman, or inviting a curious sophomore who has never been to Shabbat services before to sit with you and your friends for services/dinner, will have powerful and observable effects. But this requires that each person be consciously aware of their own behaviors, and actively chose to do his part to better the Tufts Jewish community. It is only when we can work together towards reuniting Jewish students on campus that our own *local* community will be able to epitomize the feeling of a cohesive peoplehood that is the wider Jewish community.

Ultimately, I will consider Hillel, and any other Jewish organization, to be a 'success' when all Jewish students, regardless of their previous or current involvement and attachment to Judaism, are excited and proud of their Jewish identity. I look forward to a time in which Jewish students no longer have to worry about whether or not they feel out of place when entering a Jewish space or going to an event related to some aspect of Judaism. I doubt that such a day will come for me, as my time left on this campus as a Tufts undergrad is quickly nearing its end. Regardless, I believe that a unified Jewish campus is possible, and I can only hope that my own children are able to one day experience Judaism in college in this ideal communal and supportive environment.

## **Appendix A: Description of Hillel Initiatives**

### **Read By The River**

Read By the River is a literacy carnival that promotes reading to elementary schools students from Medford and Somerville.

### **Vitality**

Tufts Hillel, in conjunction with numerous other campus departments and organizations, has launched a new campus-wide initiative focused on the issue of wellness. Vitality aims to bring attention to the concerns surrounding wellness and nutrition on campus and its community, build university and neighborhood partnerships, and engage new student leaders who have expressed interest in promoting awareness of the topic. The initiative is divided into four components that address education, advocacy, volunteerism, and an inclusive community project.

### **Shir Appeal**

Shir Appeal is Tufts University's only co-ed Jewish a cappella group. Its goal is to combine members love of music and performance with their appreciation for Jewish culture. They hope to connect with both members of the Jewish community and general fans of Israeli music. The songs they include in their repertoire encompass a large range of musical styles, including Israeli Pop and Rock, Traditional Liturgical, and English songs with Jewish themes. The group's display of the diversity of Jewish culture through its incorporation of Hebrew, Yiddish, and English songs.

### **Challah For Hunger**

CfH is a new group on campus dedicated to helping fight hunger worldwide. Members meet bimonthly to bake challah from scratch that is sold in the campus center the following day.

### **Moral Voices**

Moral Voices is a social justice initiative that is currently in its fifth year at Tufts. Each year, the group focuses on a different aspect of social justice and develops meaningful programming for the Tufts community in order to learn more about the various challenges that are faced in our world today. Previous themes have included genocide, environmental justice, education, and women's rights. This year, its theme is food justice. Our programming ranges from Lunch & Learns to influential and well-known keynote speakers.

### **Tufts Against Genocide (TAG)**

TAG is a student group that was created out of the generosity and dedication of Bill and Joyce Cummings and the Tufts Hillel Center to Holocaust and genocide education. The goal of the program is not only to learn about the Holocaust and past genocides, but also to take those lessons and apply them to the surrounding world to help identify and stop ongoing and potential mass killings and genocides around the world.

### **Friends Of Israel (FOI)**

FOI embodies one of Hillel's major pillars, Israel on campus. It is an organization committed to educating the Tufts campus about Israel, and has three major goals. The first goal is to provide the Jewish community with information regarding Israel and to encourage positive and constructive conversations about Israel. By serving as a resource, FOI hope to encourage members of the Jewish community to explore Israel through political, cultural, and social lenses. Its second goal expands education to the entire Tufts campus. FOI holds varied and enriching programming from our philanthropic campaign for Israeli non-profit Save a Child's Heart, to cultural celebrations like I-Fest, to more political speaking events. Friends of Israel wants students to understand the political challenges that Israel faces and the virtues of Israeli democracy — while emphasizing the importance of discovering the many other faces of Israel. Its final goal regards dialogue with other student groups.

**APPENDIX B: Survey**

Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Hometown: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Minor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Religious Upbringing PRIOR to Tufts:**

Are your parents Jewish?

Yes, both parents are Jewish

My mother, but not my father, is Jewish

My father, but not my mother, is Jewish

Neither parent is Jewish

How does your family identify religiously?

Reform

Conservative

Orthodox

Secular- culturally Jewish

No religious attachment

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you identify religiously before coming to Tufts?

Reform

Conservative

Orthodox

Secular- culturally Jewish

No religious attachment

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How often did your family attend some type of organized Jewish religious service?

Did you have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah? Yes NO

Does your family keep Kosher at home? YES NO

Before Tufts, did someone in your home regularly light Shabbat candles? YES NO

Did you ever attend a (full-time) Jewish Day School? YES NO

If YES, for how many years did you attend the school? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you ever attend a supplementary Jewish school, like Hebrew or Sunday school? YES  
NO

If YES, for how many years did you attend the school? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you ever attend an overnight camp that had Shabbat services or a Jewish educational  
program? YES NO

If yes, for how many years did you attend such a camp? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you ever participate in a Jewish Youth Group (such as BBYO)? YES NO

If yes, for how many years did you participate in such programs? \_\_\_\_\_

Before Tufts, how many of your closest friends were Jewish?

NONE A FEW HALF MOST ALL

Before Tufts, how many of the people you dated were Jewish?

DID NOT DATE NONE A FEW ABOUT HALF MOST ALL

**College Selection:**

How many colleges did you apply to? \_\_\_\_\_

Was Tufts your first-choice for college? YES NO

If NO, which school was your first-choice, and why?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How important was Tufts' Jewish student population in your decision to attend Tufts?

NOT IMPORTANT SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT VERY IMPORTANT

What did you think you would major in when you entered Tufts?

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you plan to attend religious services at Tufts? YES NO

Did you plan to join any student groups relating to Judaism? YES NO

If YES, what types of student groups were you interested in? (Circle all that apply)

SOCIAL RELIGIOUS POLITICAL COMMUNITY SERVICE  
SOCIAL JUSTICE

Did you plan to take any Judaic Studies and/or Religion courses at Tufts? YES NO

Did you consider Majoring or Minorng in Judaic Studies and/or Religion? YES NO

**Connection to Judaism in College:**

Which of the following student organizations/groups have you participated in (at any time during your years at Tufts)? Circle all that apply:

Hillel Student Programming Board

Friends of Israel

Challah For Hunger

Vitality

Tufts Against Genocide (TAG)

Shir Appeal

Merrin Moral Voices

Gateways: Access to Jewish Education

Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)

Repair the World

Read By The River

Campus Entrepreneurs Initiative (CEI)

J Street

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)

MEOR

Chabad Programming Board

Friendship Circle

Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPI) Fraternity

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been a participant on any of the following trips?

Interfaith Trip to Rawanda

Taglit-Birthright to Israel  
JDC Alternative Summer Break trips  
None

Which of the following student organizations do you identify as an active member of?

Hillel Student Programming Board  
Friends of Israel  
Challah For Hunger  
Vitality  
Tufts Against Genocide (TAG)  
Shir Appeal  
Merrin Moral Voices  
Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)  
Repair the World  
Read By The River  
Campus Entrepreneurs Initiative (CEI)  
J Street  
The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)  
MEOR  
Chabad Programming Board  
Friendship Circle  
Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPI) Fraternity  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you taken any Judaic Studies/Religious courses? YES NO

If YES, are you using any/all of those courses to fulfill a requirement? YES NO

How often do you attend Shabbat services?

NEVER 1-4 TIMES A YEAR ONCE A MONTH ALMOST EVERY WEEK  
EVERY WEEK

How often do you attend Shabbat dinner?

NEVER 1-4 TIMES A YEAR ONCE A MONTH ALMOST EVERY WEEK  
EVERY WEEK

How often do you attend religious services for Jewish Holidays?

NEVER ONLY THE HIGH HOLIDAYS MOST HOLIDAYS ALL  
HOLIDAYS

How often do you spend time in the Granoff Family Hillel Center?

NEVER 1-3 TIMES A YEAR ONCE A MONTH ONCE A WEEK  
EVERYDAY

Do you feel welcomed at the Hillel Center when you are there? YES NO

How many of your friends at Tufts are Jewish?

NONE A FEW ABOUT HALF MOST ALL

How many of the people you have dated/had intimate relations with while in college have been Jewish?

NONE A FEW ABOUT HALF MOST ALL

**Personal Beliefs and Values:**

To what extent do you feel....

	Not at All	A Little	Somewhat	Very Much
A connection to Israel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A connection to a worldwide Jewish Community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A connection to Jewish customs and traditions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important is it to you to marry someone who is Jewish?

NOT IMPORTANT A LITTLE IMPORTANT SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT  
VERY IMPORTANT

How important is it to you to raise your children Jewish?

NOT IMPORTANT A LITTLE IMPORTANT SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT  
VERY IMPORTANT

How much do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements?

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
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I have spent time trying to learn more about Judaism, such as its history, traditions, and customs since entering Tufts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my being Jewish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a clear sense of my Jewish background and what it means for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel good about my Jewish heritage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## APPENDIX C: Interview Guide

1. How would you define *religion*?
2. What does it mean to be 'Jewish'?
  - a) What does it mean to be an 'active/engaged' Jew? (Who do you consider to be involved with Jewish life?)

***I'd like to hear you discuss your relationship with religion prior to Tufts.***

### **1) Could you describe your family's approach to religion?**

- a) What form did religion take, if at all, in your family?
- b) How observant (of religion) were other members of your family?
- c) How would you describe the religious identity of your grandparents?
- d) Why do you think your family took the approach that they did to religion?
- e) How significant is religion to your family? To you (before Tufts)?

### **2) (IF Converted:) If you don't mind telling me about your conversion to Judaism, I'm curious as to what lead you to convert?**

- a) In what ways do you feel welcomed/supported by the rest of the Jewish community?
- b) How did your friends and family react to your decision to convert?
- c) Describe your level of religious 'intensity'? (greater/equal to/less than Jews by birth?)

### **3) (If YES to Bar/Bat Mitzvah) What did it mean to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?**

- a) What was your motivation to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
- b) What did you gain/lose from having one?

### **4) How significant of a factor in how you self-identified (prior to Tufts) was religion?**

- a) Friend group influence?
- b) To what extent did you consider yourself 'Jewish' (or whatever religion you identified with)?
- c) How important to you was it that you attended a college with a large Jewish population?

***Now I'd like to hear about your transition to Tufts and how you decided what to get involved with on campus. For this section, I'd like you to think back as far as possible!***

### **1) How did you become exposed to Jewish Organizations on the Tufts campus?**

- a) Did Jewish organizations seek you out?
- b) Did you seek out Jewish programs?
- c) Combination of both, or other?

### **2) What programs/organizations did you consider getting involved with?**

- a) How did you hear about different religious organizations/programs when you entered your freshman year?
- b) What types of programs/groups appealed to you the most? The least? Why?
- c) What was your motivation to get involved with such programs?

**3) Which programs/organizations did you decide to join?**

- a) What type(s) of programs were the ones you got involved with? (Community service, religious, etc.)
- b) How 'active' were you in those groups/organizations? (time commitment?)
- c) What type of relationship did you form with other group members?
- d) What made you feel most welcomed/accepted as a member in the program/group(s) that you got involved with?

**For the next set of questions, I'd like to hear you elaborate on your current involvement and relationship with Judaism.**

**1) Which groups/programs are you actively involved with today?**

- a) Any that you are still involved with? (What keeps you coming back?)
- b) In any given week during the academic year, which programs do you attend on campus?
- c) Which new groups/programs have you recently gotten involved with?
  - 1) Why those?
  - 2) How did you 'discover' these?
- d) What do you gain from your membership in groups?

**2) How do you prioritize, or decide which programs/events come first, in your schedule?**

- a) What instances, for example, would make you willing to 'skip' Shabbat services, if you normally attend them every week?
  - i) What value does going to Shabbat services/dinner provide? Why do you go?
- b) How do you balance schoolwork and extracurriculars with your obligations to Jewish related programs/events?

**3) (IF YES to JS Courses): What made you decide to take Judaic Studies courses?**

- a) Majoring/minoring?
- b) Do you think you would have still chosen to take Judaic Studies courses if there was not the requirement to take language/culture courses?
- c) How do you decide which courses to take? (Hebrew vs. cultural?)
- d) Would you say that the context and focus of these courses have strengthened or made you question your Jewishness?

**4) Have you noticed any change in who you are friends with? If so, describe your friendships now, and how do those differ from your peer-groups from your early times at Tufts?**

- a) How would you summarize the people that you are closest to today?
- b) Why do you think you have stayed/become friends with these people rather than others at Tufts?

**5) Broadly, how has your relationship to Judaism changed over your years at Tufts, if at all?**

- a) What do you think were the most significant factors/causes/influences on your current relationship with Judaism?
- b) How do you imagine your relationship to Judaism playing out at a school without a large Jewish population?
- c) What does it mean for you to identify as a Jew?
- d) Do you 'practice' your Judaism in the public or private (or both) sphere?
- e) Have you ever questioned your religious beliefs while at Tufts? (Did you ever question before Tufts?)
- f) Have you ever questioned your Jewish identity while at Tufts (Did you ever question before Tufts?)

**6) (IF Judaism's influence has increased or lessened:) How has your family and/or friends reacted/responded to your current relationship with Judaism?**

- a) How has your family/friends supported/ disapproved of your identity?
- b) Do you find it difficult to identify with some of your family members/old friends based on how your relationship with Judaism has changed?
- c) How difficult/easy do you find it to embrace your relationship with Judaism when you are away from Tufts (for school breaks, etc)?
- d) During your times away from Tufts (e.g. summer vacation months or while studying abroad), How is your Jewish identity affected by:
  - a) Family observance, or trips to Jewish sites?
  - b) Temple attendance
  - c) Visiting Jewish online sites?
  - d) Reading literature about Israel/ Jewish related topics
  - e) other?

**7) Life after graduation: How do you see your identify after the presence as seen at Tufts is less direct?**

- a) Will you welcome the anonymity away from Jewish identity?
- b) Do you think you will actively seek out Jewish communities?
- c) Do you think you will keep in contact (via Internet/phone/mail/etc.)?
  - 1) Who do you think you will remain in contact with following graduation?
    - a) Professors? (Judaic Studies or other?)
    - b) Peers (Jewish, non-Jewish, both)?
    - c) Religious leaders?
    - d) Other?

**8) How important is it that you marry someone Jewish and/or raise your children Jewish?**

- a) Why is it of *that* level of importance to you?
- b) How do you think your own upbringing, and then your interaction with Judaism while at Tufts, plays into your decision of what sort of family you plan on having?
- c) (IF you plan to marry someone Jewish:) What would happen if you met, and fell in love with, someone who was not Jewish? (Conversion/ make an allowance/etc.)
- d) (IF you plan to raise your children Jewish:) If you were to marry someone who was not Jewish (or was Jewish by birth, but not a 'practicing' Jew) who did not want to raise your children as Jewish, how would you respond?

**I'd now like to focus on the Tufts campus, and the forms that religion takes on this undergraduate space.**

**1) If someone unfamiliar with Tufts asked you about your perception of Jewish involvement on campus, what would you tell them?**

- a) Which programs seem to be the most popular to you?
- b) Considering that 25% of the Tufts students are self-identified as being 'Jewish,' do you believe that this figure represents true student involvement? Or is it simply an 'admissions statistic'?

**2) How supportive of Jewish life/practice do you think Tufts is?**

- a) Have you ever experienced a situation in which you felt like you were being put at a disadvantage/punished for practicing your religion?
- b) Some students believe that choosing to go to holiday services is more of a 'sacrifice' that he has to make in order to maintain his grades. What do you think?
- c) Antisemitism on campus?
  - 1)How do you respond/react to it?

**3) Political identity: How supportive, or at least willing to discuss the issue, do you think the Tufts community (as a whole) is of Jewish politics?**

- a) How do you feel about the state of Israel/ the political situation currently going on?
- b) Do you feel comfortable talking about it with all/only select group of people?
- c) What is your connection to the state of Israel?

**4) (IF identity more established:) Is your Jewish identity influenced by your interest in Israel? If it is, what part(s)/ what about Israel has been significant to you and how you identify?**

- a) Israel's strength as a nation?
- b) Israel's regional vulnerability?
- c) Biblical beliefs ('the Holy Land'/ 'The Chosen People's Land')?
- d) Some of the above? Which ones?/ None of the above?/ Other?

**5) Hillel: How would you describe Tufts Hillel? What is it/what does it mean to you?**

- a) What does the space of Hillel mean to you?
- b) Describe your involvement with Hillel?
- c) Why do you think Hillel exists on campus? What is its purpose?
- d) How do you know that you've entered a "Jewish" space when you enter Hillel?

**6) Chabad: When you hear, 'Chabad' or 'Chabad House,' what comes to mind?**

- a) How did you find out about the chabad house? What made you go (the first time)?
- b) Describe your first experience at Chabad: Initial reactions?
  - c) Feel judged/welcomed?
  - d) Feel comfortable/out of place?
- b) Why do you keep going back? How often do you go? Alone or with friends?
- c) What does Chabad mean to you?
- d) Why do you think the Chabad house exists? What is its purpose?
- e) Differences/Similarities between Hillel and Chabad?
  - 1) Example: Hillel= for college students; Chabad= more general audience

**7) Meor: Could you please describe your relationship with Tufts Meor? What did you take away from participating in the program?**

- a) Why did you decide to take the Meor course? (If did Meor 2, why continue?)
- b) What is the purpose/reason for Meor's existence on campus?
- c) What did you gain, if anything, from Meor?
- d) How did Meor affect/contribute to your own way of thinking about Judaism? How did it affect your Jewish identity, if at all?
- e) Thoughts regarding the \$400 stipend?

**8) Is there a split/divide between Jewish students due to the wide range of Jewish programs/groups/organizations/ initiatives for students to choose from? (Are there too many options?)**

**9) What do you think is the greatest divider of Jewish students at Tufts?**

**10) What are the benefits you gain from being part of "the Jewish community?"**

**11) What is your favorite part of being Jewish at Tufts? Least favorite?**

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