

Modern Orthodox Jews in the New York Area: How Many are We, What are We Like and How are We Different?

Jacob B. Ukeles

Abstract: Using data from the recently completed New York Jewish Community Study, this article includes an estimate the number of Orthodox Jewish households and persons, and the number of “Modern Orthodox” and “*Haredi*” households and persons in New York City, Long Island and Westchester. It indicates that there are more Modern Orthodox than *Haredi* Jewish households. The article analyzes the characteristics of three Orthodox groups: those who say that college is very important; those who say it is somewhat important and those who say it is not important. The analysis looks at differences between Orthodox and non-Orthodox households and among the three groups of Orthodox based on their answers to the question about the importance of college. There appear to be significant differences among the characteristics and behaviors of these three groups. The article concludes that “*Haredi*” schools are growing more rapidly than are Modern & Centrist Orthodox schools, and that the proportion of Modern Orthodox Jews among Orthodox Jews is likely to shrink dramatically in the future.

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Introduction

The primary challenge to Modern Orthodoxy is in the realm of ideas. But if we are going to make serious progress in strengthening Modern Orthodoxy, we need to be grounded in facts. In thinking about the future of Modern Orthodoxy, it is important to have basic information about Orthodox Jews today--their numbers, their characteristics, their behaviors and their values. Surprisingly little is known about Modern Orthodox Jews in the United States. The purpose of this article is to begin the process of creating a profile of Modern Orthodox Jews today disentangling fact from anecdote, reality from fiction. In every sense, this is only a beginning. A great deal more data collection and research remains to be done.

The primary focus of this paper is on Modern Orthodox Jews in the New York City area. This choice of focus does not reflect a New York-

centric view of the United States; it is, rather, because there is a recently completed excellent survey of New York's Jewish population, which includes, by far, the largest statistically valid sample of Orthodox Jews of any community in the United States. More specifically, the New York Study is the only major study, including the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), to include a question that could possibly be used to distinguish Modern Orthodox Jews from other Orthodox Jews.

To some, the study of Modern Orthodoxy itself is divisive, creating an unnecessary sense of division within Orthodoxy. But the question is susceptible to analysis. Are there patterns of difference within the ranks of Orthodox Jews on important behaviors and attitudes, and can these patterns be identified with differences in ideology or perspective? If not, then the identification of

¹ This article was originally presented as the keynote address to the EDAH conference on February 20, 2005.

subgroups within Orthodoxy, such as “Modern Orthodox” is not meaningful. I hope to demonstrate that there are clear differences among Orthodox Jews that do seem to line up with some plausible labels for subgroups within Orthodoxy, including “Modern Orthodox.”

The Conceptual Framework

Social and religious identity categories of people are, by definition, artificial constructs. Concepts such as “Jewish,” “Orthodox” and “Modern Orthodox” are subject to multiple definitions and interpretations. To the extent possible, Jewish population survey research relies on self-definition, which removes a certain amount of arbitrariness but affords no guarantee of clarity or certainty. Increasingly, identity is fluid and dynamic. In response to a question, “Do you consider yourself Jewish?” the simple answers of “yes” or “no” are today accompanied by answers such as, “I was born Jewish, but no longer consider myself Jewish,” “I am partially Jewish” or “I am both Jewish and _____ (Buddhist or Catholic)” and even “I am not sure.” Similarly, the term, “Orthodox” to some people may mean a set of beliefs, to others a set of practices, to others a description of how they were raised, and to still others, a description of the synagogue they do not attend.

Most of the data in this article is drawn from the *Jewish Community Study of New York, 2002*, commissioned by UJA-Federation of New York and carried out by Ukeles Associates Inc. This study, like virtually all of the Jewish community population studies in the United States, relies on self-definition for defining identity.

Definitions²

Jewish persons are adults (age 18+) who consider themselves Jewish or children being raised as Jews. *Jewish households* are households that include one or more Jewish adults, at least 18 years old.

These Jewish households may also include non-Jewish adults and/or children who are not being raised as Jews.

Orthodox households are households with a respondent who considers himself or herself “Orthodox.” These households are among those that have previously indicated that their religion is Judaism.

The New York Jewish Community Study did not include an explicit definition of a *Modern Orthodox household*. On the surface, it appears that the simplest way to identify Modern Orthodox Jews would have been to ask them to self-identify, which is parallel to how Orthodox Jews were identified.

“At least four of the elements of Edah’s vision statement reflect the specific concerns that define Modern Orthodoxy.”

Yet the obvious turned out to be not practical. In a community survey, every minute of questioning is precious, as people no longer have tolerance for long phone interviews and one is trying to cover 75 topics in 22 minutes. Because this was a study of the entire Jewish community, there needed to be some parity among lines of questioning for different segments. A follow-up question for Orthodox households, accordingly, would require a comparable follow-up question for Reform or Conservative Jews – e.g. “Do you consider yourself classical reform or revisionist reform?” – using up even more time. Second, the sub-categories within each denomination are not as widely used or clear-cut as the labels Conservative, Orthodox or Reform. So the follow up question “Do you consider yourself, Modern, *Haredi*, Centrist or ...?” is likely to engender hesitation, confusion and a conversation, all of which consume precious survey time.

With the judgment that a direct question reflecting subcategories of Orthodox was not feasible, it was decided to include a surrogate or proxy question.³

² For the definition of “Modern Orthodox,” see discussion below.

³ One might wonder why an indirect question aimed at probing sub-categories of orthodox was not was acceptable and a direct one was. Since the indirect question was part of a series of questions about values, “how important to you is ...?” it was shorter and less obtrusive than a direct follow-up to the question about denomination.

This question was:

“How important to you is giving children a college or university education?”⁴

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important”

The question is predicated on the belief that those who would self-define as “Modern Orthodox” would answer “very important,” and that “*Haredi*” or right wing Orthodox Jews would answer “Not very important” or “Not at all important.”⁵

What does it mean to be Modern Orthodox? The EDAH Vision Statement identifies nine values that are a reasonable reflection of Modern Orthodox values, some of which one can assume are shared by Orthodox Jews who would not self-identify as Modern Orthodox. Values such as “commitment to Torah through *halakhab* and its processes,” “a real connection to *qedushah*,” are clearly generally shared Orthodox values. But at least four of the elements of Edah’s vision statement reflect the specific concerns that define Modern Orthodoxy: the value of secular study; the religious significance of the State of Israel, an increased participation of women in Jewish religious life, and reaching out and interacting with Jews of all the movements and unaffiliated Jews.

In a study of Orthodox Jews, as differentiated from a community study in which the internal dynamics of the Orthodox community is one of many topics, one would not rely on a single question to probe a dimension of being Modern Orthodox; in fact, one would not typically be satisfied with a single dimension. Having data for variables that reflect these other dimensions of Modern Orthodoxy would have made a more

complete analysis possible.⁶ But given that these are currently the best data available, one has to assess their usefulness, while being aware of their limitations.

“The value of secular education is an explicit value of Modern Orthodoxy and not an explicit value of Haredi Orthodoxy.”

It is possible that some respondents who answer “very important” to this question are responding to the economic benefit of a secular education and not its intrinsic value. It is possible, that some who respond positively to the idea of college education for economic utility would not self-identify as “Modern Orthodox” because they do not subscribe to other values associated with being Modern Orthodox. But since the value of secular education is an explicit value of Modern Orthodoxy and not an explicit value of *Haredi* Orthodoxy, and the question was in a sequence that clearly involved value judgments, it is reasonable to assume that most respondents related to this question as a value judgment. It seems highly likely that most respondents who said that college was very important for children were responding because of a belief in the value of secular education.

For the purposes of a first approximation, the college-importance variable seems to be quite useful, as will be seen from the ensuing analysis.

The Issue of labels

Are the two labels “Modern Orthodox” and “*Haredi*” meaningful categories of Orthodoxy in America? And are there some groups missing, specifically, “Centrist Orthodox?” There is no question that there are many possible ways to

⁴ The use of the “importance of college” question as a proxy for Modern Orthodox was suggested by Professor Samuel Heilman, the pre-eminent expert on the sociology of the Orthodox community.

⁵ It was not clear, at the outset, how to label those who answered “somewhat important” on the college importance question. See “Conclusions” for a discussion of this group.

⁶ The survey did include a measure of the importance of the survival of the State of Israel, albeit not the religious significance of the State. The responses to this variable are highly correlated with the responses to the college importance variable. See discussion below.

differentiate among Orthodox Jews that could illuminate interesting differences and similarities, and any effort to narrow these differences to two or three categories will obscure some important subtleties. But given the limitations of the data set (a single proxy variable), it is not possible to explore some of the differences that we believe to exist. For example, there is anecdotal data suggesting that *Hasidim* and *Mitnaggeddim* (*b'nei yeshiva*) actually view college education quite differently: though no evidence suggests that either group particularly values a college education as such, the latter group appears to tolerate or accept a college education, while the former does not.

The vast majority chose the simple label 'Orthodox'—six respondents self identified as Hasidic, four as Modern Orthodox, three as Haredi, and none as 'Centrist'.

The analysis would not differ substantially if one amended the label “Modern Orthodox” to read “Centrist and Modern Orthodox”. There are two reasons to not use the “Centrist” label. First, the core values of Modern Orthodoxy are reasonably clearly articulated in the EDAH vision statement, but the core values of “Centrist” Orthodoxy are not at all clear. More importantly, there is no evidence that the label “Centrist Orthodoxy” has gained many adherents among Orthodox Jews. In the New York Jewish Community Study respondents had the option of responding to a short list read to them or to provide their own self-identification. Of the 894 Orthodox respondents, the vast majority chose the simple label, “Orthodox”—six respondents self identified as Hasidic, four as Modern Orthodox, three as *Haredi*, and none as “Centrist.” While this is hardly definitive, it is suggestive.

The Jewish Community Study of New York, 2002

- The Study was conducted in an eight county-area:
 - New York City: the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island
 - Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester counties
- The estimates in this presentation are projections based on the results of 4,533 telephone interviews of which 894 were with Orthodox respondents.
- The survey was a single-stage, stratified random sample.
- Survey data responses based on 894 respondents have a potential sampling error of +/- .76% to +/-3.9%

The Jewish Population of the New York Area

The New York area Jewish community is, by far, the largest in the United States. The next largest Jewish community in the USA is Los Angeles, with 247,700 Jewish households (1997 Study).

Exhibit 1: Jewish households, Jewish persons, and People Living in Jewish Households in the Eight-County New York Area, 2002

Jewish Households	643,000
Jewish Persons	1,412,000
People Living in Jewish Households (Including Non-Jews)	1,667,000

Orthodox Jews in the New York Area

The New York area Orthodox community is, by far, the largest Orthodox community in the United States, with over 100,000 Orthodox households, and nearly 380,000 Jewish persons.⁷ The Los Angeles Orthodox community is tiny by comparison, with about 10,000 households. New York is *sui generis* in size, as an Orthodox community.

Exhibit 2: Orthodox Jewish households, Jewish persons, and People Living in Orthodox Jewish Households in the Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Number
Orthodox Households	110,100
Jewish Persons in Orthodox Households	378,200
People Living in Orthodox Households	408,600

Measured by number of persons, Orthodox Judaism is the largest Jewish denomination in the New York area; Reform is the next largest.

Measured by number of households, however, the situation is quite different: there are fewer Orthodox households than there are Conservative or Reform households or households with no religion or denomination.

Exhibit 3: Number of Households and Number of Jewish Persons, by denomination, New York Area, 2002

	Households	Jewish Persons
Orthodox	110,100	378,200
Reform	168,400	345,400
Conservative	149,900	317,900
No Religion/ No Denomination	146,300	262,200
Reconstructionist	8,200	18,800
Total*	582,800	1,322,500

*Excludes 60,200 households and 89,500 Jewish persons, most of whom did not answer the denomination question.

In this, and all subsequent tables, totals may not equal the sum of rows or columns because of rounding to the nearest hundred or nearest percentage.

⁷ Some people may be surprised by the presence of non-Jewish persons in Orthodox households. First, the number is very small, only about 7%; second, since the definition is by self-reporting, some respondents who consider themselves Orthodox may not in fact live an Orthodox way of life; and, third, human beings and their situations are always more complex than any categories or definitions. For example, a new member to Orthodoxy (*ba'al teshuvah*) might still have responsibility for a non-Jewish child from a previous marriage.

Increase in the Number of Orthodox Jews in the New York Area

Religious affiliation in the New York Jewish community has shifted between 1991 and 2002.

- More respondents self-identify as Orthodox (13% vs.19%).
- Fewer identify with the Conservative movement (34% vs. 26%) or the Reform movement (36% vs. 29%).

More do not identify with any religious movement (25% vs. 13%). This increase is generated in large measure by the increased number of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, most of whom do not identify with a denomination.

“Modern Orthodox” and “Haredi” Jews in the New York Area

Using the “importance of college” as a surrogate measure, there appear to be more “Modern Orthodox” Jewish adults than “Haredi” Jewish adults in the New York area. Of the Orthodox households on which we have data (some respondents did not answer this question), 72%, or 74,000 out of 102,000 households, representing 64% of the people in Orthodox households (over 220,000 people), say that a college or university education is very important.

Measured by number of persons, Orthodox Judaism is the largest Jewish denomination in the New York area

This is a surprisingly large number. Another 16% say that a college or university education is somewhat important, and 11% say that it is not very important or not important at all.

Exhibit 4: Number of Orthodox Households and Number of Jewish Persons in Orthodox Households, by the Importance of a College Education, New York Area, 2002

	Orthodox HH	Jewish Persons in Orthodox HH
College Very Important	74,000	222,600
College Somewhat Important	16,600	68,100
College Not Important	11,700	59,700
Total*	102,300	350,300

*Excludes 7,800 Orthodox households, based on a projection of the respondents who did not answer the question about the importance of college.

The most important support for the usefulness of the “college-importance” measure as a surrogate for “Modern Orthodox” and “Haredi” Jews, is the profound difference between those who answer that college is very important, somewhat important, and not important. These differences are found in:

- Geography
- Age
- Household Size
- Income
- Secular Education
- Jewish Education
- Synagogue Attendance
- Jewish Cultural Activity
- Contribution to UJA-Federation
- Opinion Regarding Importance of the Survival of the State of Israel

Geography

The geographic distribution of the Jewish population of the New York City area as a whole is unlike most of the other large communities in the rest of the country. In most parts of the United States, Jews tend to live in the suburbs; in the New York City area, 70% live within the City's five boroughs.

Orthodox Jews in the New York area are even more concentrated: 86% live in New York City and over half live in Brooklyn.

Of those for whom college is not important (“*Haredi* Jews”), the overwhelming majority (89%) live in Brooklyn. Of those for whom college is very important (“Modern Orthodox Jews”), only 40% live in Brooklyn, and a higher percentage live in the rest of the City (43%); less than one in five “Modern Orthodox” Jewish households are in the suburbs.⁸ Those who say that college is somewhat important are somewhat more likely to live outside of Brooklyn than those for whom college is not important.

Thus in every community in New York City, outside a relatively narrow set of communities in Brooklyn, “Modern Orthodox” Jews are the vast majority of Orthodox Jews by far.

Exhibit 5: County of Residence, Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Jewish Households, New York Area, 2002

	Orthodox Jewish HH	Non-Orthodox Jewish HH
Brooklyn	53%	21%
Rest of NYC	33%	47%
Suburbs	13%	32%
Total	100%	100%

Exhibit 6: County of Residence, by Importance of College, New York Area, 2002

	College Very Important	College Somewhat Important	College Not Important
Brooklyn	40%	79%	89%
Rest of NYC	43%	19%	7%
Suburbs	17%	3%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Age

Orthodox Jewish adults in the New York area are more likely to be under 35, and less likely to be over 65 than non-Orthodox Jews. Among non-Orthodox Jews, 18% are under 34, 33% are over 65.

“Modern Orthodox” Jews are younger than non-Orthodox Jews, and are about as likely to be under 35 as over 65 (29% vs. 28%). But those for whom college is very important are significantly older than those who believe it is somewhat important or not important. Nearly half of all respondents who said college is somewhat or not important are between 18 and 34.

Exhibit 7: Age of Respondents, Orthodox Jews and Non-Orthodox Jews, New York Area, 2002

	Orthodox Jews	Non-Orthodox Jews
18-34	34%	18%
35-64	43%	49%
65 and over	23%	33%
Total	100%	100%

⁸ In Brooklyn, “*Haredi* Jews are much younger than Modern Orthodox Jews, and therefore there are many more school age children in “*Haredi*” schools than there are in “Modern Orthodox” or “Centrist” schools.

Exhibit 8: Age of Respondents, by Importance of College, New York Area, 2002

Age	College Very Important	College Somewhat Important	College Not Important
18-32	29%	46%	47%
35-64	44%	43%	39%
65 and over	28%	11%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Household Size

Orthodox Jewish households in the New York area are larger than non-Orthodox households. Orthodox Jews who believe that college is not important are more likely to live in households with five or more persons than those who believe college is very important.

Exhibit 9: Household Size, Orthodox Jews and Non-Orthodox Jews, New York Area, 2002

Household Size	Orthodox Jews	Non-Orthodox Jews
1 & 2 Persons	44%	66%
3 & 4 Persons	26%	29%
5 or More Persons	30%	5%
Total	100%	100%

Exhibit 10: Household Size, by Importance of College, New York Area, 2002

Household Size	College Very Important	College Somewhat Important	College Not Important
1 & 2 Persons	53%	28%	23%
3 & 4 Persons	26%	35%	26%
5 or More Persons	22%	37%	52%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Income⁹

Orthodox Jewish households are somewhat more likely to have lower incomes than non-Orthodox Jewish households in the New York area, but only slightly less likely to have higher-incomes—27% of the Orthodox households compared with 31% of the non-Orthodox households have incomes of over \$100,000.

The income distribution of “Modern Orthodox” Jews, is very similar to those of Non-Orthodox Jews—for both groups, 31% have incomes of over \$100,000.

There are much more dramatic differences among the incomes of different types of Orthodox Jews. Orthodox Jews who believe that college is not important are much more likely to live in lower-income households than those who believe college is very important. And those who said that college is somewhat important are in-between. Some of the differences in income may be accounted for by differences in age—*Haredi* households are younger

⁹ As in all Jewish community surveys, not everyone answers the income question. In the *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002*, 19% of the survey respondents refused to answer the income question. Of the 81% who did answer the question, it is likely that there are some who exaggerate their income and others who understate.

and therefore somewhat more likely to have lower incomes. For those for whom college is not important, 77% report incomes under 50,000 compared with 46% of those for whom college is very important.

Exhibit 11: Household Income, Orthodox Jews and Non-Orthodox Jews, New York Area, 2002

Annual Household Income	Orthodox HH	Non-Orthodox HH
Under \$50,000	52%	44%
\$50,000 to \$100,000	21%	25%
Over \$100,000	27%	31%
Total	100%	100%

Exhibit 12: Household Income, by Importance of College, New York Area, 2002

Annual Household Income	College Very Important	College Somewhat Important	College Not Important
Under \$50,000	46%	61%	77%
\$50,000 to \$100,000	22%	22%	8%
Over \$100,000	31%	17%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Secular Education

More Jewish respondents, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, men and women, have a college or graduate degree than have only some college (short

of a degree) or less education. Non-Orthodox men have the highest level of secular education—71% have a college or graduate degree). They are followed by non-Orthodox women, followed in turn by Orthodox men and followed by Orthodox women who have the lowest level of secular education—only 42% have a college or graduate degree.

There are significant differences among Orthodox Jews, depending on view of the importance of college and gender. Within the Orthodox community, “Modern Orthodox” men have the highest level of secular education (63% have a college or graduate degree), followed by “Modern Orthodox” women and men for whom college is somewhat important (51%;52%) followed by women for whom college is somewhat important (35%) followed by “*Haredi*” men (31%) followed by “*Haredi*” women (7%). Among “*Haredi*” men and women, the majority have a high school degree or less. There are substantial numbers of men in the “*Haredi*” world who themselves have a college education but have now decided it is not very important.

Exhibit 13: Secular Education, Orthodox Jews and Non-Orthodox Jews, by Gender, New York Area, 2002

	Orthodox		Non-Orthodox	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
High School or less	31%	39%	16%	22%
Some College	11%	19%	13%	15%
College /Grad Degree	58%	42%	71%	63%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Exhibit 14: Secular Education, by Importance of College and by Gender, New York Area, 2002

	College Very Important		College Somewhat Important		College Not Important	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
High School or less	24%	30%	41%	43%	61%	76%
Some College	13%	19%	7%	22%	8%	19%
Coll/ Grad Degree	63%	51%	52%	35%	31%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Jewish Education

Orthodox men and women have dramatically higher levels of Jewish education than non-Orthodox men and women. Orthodox women are slightly less likely to have no Jewish education than Orthodox men, but are also slightly less likely to have gone to day school. For the non-Orthodox the gender gap is much greater—non-Orthodox women are nearly twice as likely as non-Orthodox men to have had no Jewish education, and half as likely to have gone to day school.

Orthodox Jews who believe that college is somewhat or not important have higher levels of Jewish education than those who believe that college is very important (for both men & women). While “Modern Orthodox” Jewish men are somewhat more likely to have gone to day school than “Modern Orthodox” women (60% vs. 50%), there is no significant difference associated with whether college is regarded as somewhat important or not important regarding the likelihood of day school attendance by Orthodox men or women.

Exhibit 15: Jewish Education, Orthodox Jews and Non-Orthodox Jews, by Gender, New York Area, 2002

	Orthodox		Non-Orthodox	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
No Jewish Education	17%	14%	25%	26%
Some Jewish Education	21%	28%	61%	47%
Day School Education	62%	57%	14%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Exhibit 16: Jewish Education, by Importance of College and by Gender, New York Area, 2002

	College Very Important		College Somewhat Important		College Not Important	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
No Jewish Education	16%	17%	10%	7%	27%	9%
Some Jewish Education	24%	33%	20%	14%	3%	16%
Day School Education	60%	50%	70%	79%	70%	75%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Synagogue Attendance

Not surprisingly, Orthodox men and women are much more likely to attend synagogue frequently than non-Orthodox men and women. Orthodox men are most likely to attend more than once a week. Orthodox Women are most likely to attend once a week, although many attend infrequently or not at all. Non-Orthodox men and women attend synagogue with similar infrequency.

Within the Orthodox community, the differences among men with different views about the importance of a college education are relatively minor--the majority of all three groups attend synagogue more than once a week. All three groups have a small percentage that attends infrequently or not at all. These respondents are primarily older people--in some cases low participation is probably the result of infirmity or disability, in others, the respondent may be only nominally Orthodox. Some "Modern Orthodox" men (17%) attend only once a week, while almost none of the other Orthodox men attend only once a week. While comparable data for an earlier time period are not available, it is highly likely that ten or twenty years ago a much higher percentage of "Modern Orthodox" men would have reported synagogue attendance of only once a week.

Among Orthodox women, "Modern Orthodox" women are more likely to attend once a week than the other two groups, and "Haredi" women are more likely to attend infrequently or not at all than the other two groups. It is likely that significant numbers of "Haredi" women are caring for young children.

Exhibit 17: Synagogue Attendance, Orthodox Jews and Non-Orthodox Jews, by Gender, New York Area, 2002

Synagogue Attendance	Orthodox		Non-Orthodox	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
No At All/ Infrequent	19%	32%	80%	80%
Once to several times a month	5%	18%	12%	13%
Once a Week	12%	41%	5%	6%
Several times a week to daily	64%	9%	3%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Exhibit 18: Synagogue Attendance, by Importance of College and by Gender, New York Area, 2002

Synagogue Attendance	College Very Important		College Somewhat Important		College Not Important	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Less than once a week	25%	46%	16%	51%	25%	70%
Once a week	17%	45%	<1%	37%	<1%	24%
Several times a week to daily	58%	8%	84%	12%	75%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Participation in Jewish Cultural Activity

Orthodox Jews are somewhat more likely to have participated in Jewish cultural activities (e.g. attended a Jewish museum) in the last year or two than non-Orthodox Jews (71% vs. 60%) in New York.

Among Orthodox Jews, about 75% of those for whom college is very important OR somewhat important participated in Jewish cultural activity in the past year or two compared with only 45% of Orthodox Jews for whom college is not important.

Exhibit 19: Cultural Activity Participation, by Importance of College, New York Area, 2002

	College Very Important	College Somewhat Important	College Not Important
Participated in Jewish cultural activity	76%	73%	45%

Contribution to New York UJA-Federation

Almost all Jews in the New York area give to charity (88%) and three out of five give to a Jewish charity (58%).

For many Jews in the New York area, UJA-Federation is the central community fund. About the same proportion of Orthodox Jews and of non-Orthodox Jews in New York report a contribution to UJA-Federation—31% of Orthodox and 29% of Non-Orthodox Jews.

There are dramatic differences within the Orthodox community. Of those for whom college

is not important, only 4% report a contribution to UJA Federation, while those for whom college is very important are even more likely to support the central campaign than those who are Non-Orthodox—38% vs. 29%. 15% of those for whom college is somewhat important report a gift to New York UJA-Federation.

Exhibit 20: Contribution to New York UJA-Federation, by Importance of College, New York Area, 2002

	College Very Important	College Somewhat Important	College Not Important
Contributed to UJA Federation	38%	15%	4%

Importance of the Survival of Israel

Over 94% of Orthodox and 91% of non-Orthodox Jews in the New York area say that the survival of the State of Israel is very important to them.

Within the Orthodox community, there is a significant difference between those for whom college is very important OR somewhat important, over 95% of whom believe that the survival of the State of Israel is very important, and those for whom college is not important, of whom only 64% say that the survival of the state of Israel is very important to them. To underscore how low a percentage this really is, it is helpful to compare this percentage to households that are relatively disconnected from the Jewish community in the New York area. Even among intermarried households, 86% express the view that the survival of Israel is very important to them.

Exhibit 21: State of Israel, by Importance of College, New York Area, 2002

	College Very Important	College Somewhat Important	College Not Important
Survival of the State of Israel is Very Important	97%	95%	64%

Although the primary focus of this article is on the New York area, some recently released national data provide some useful additional insights into the state of modern Orthodoxy.

The Avi Chai Foundation recently released a study of day school enrollment in the United States.¹⁰ Schools are classified into one of ten types—Hasidic, Yeshiva, Centrist Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, community, Solomon Schechter, Reform, Immigrant/outreach, Chabad, and Special Education. These ten types are re-grouped into five categories in Exhibit 22 below, and key findings summarized.¹¹

These data are broadly suggestive about population trends within the Orthodox community. In 2003-2004, Hasidic schools and Yeshivas had much higher enrollments than Centrist and Modern Orthodox Schools—102,800 vs. 47,500. And between 1998-1999 and 2003-2004, enrollment in these schools grew by 19%, while enrollment in Modern Orthodox and Centrist schools remained essentially the same.¹²

Exhibit 22: Enrollment in Jewish Day Schools, by type, United States, 1998-1999 & 2003-2004

Type of School	1998-1999	2003-2004	Change	Percent Change
Chassidic & Yeshiva	86,700	102,800	+16,100	+19%
Centrist & Modern	47,500	47,200	-300	-1%
Community, Schechter & Reform	36,900	39,600	+2,700	+7%
Chabad & Immigrant/ Outreach	12,600	13,400	+800	+6%
Total (Includes Special Ed)	184,333	205,035	+20,702	+11%

Conclusion

- Based on the available New York City area data, today, there appear to be a much larger number of modern Orthodox Jews than *Haredi* Jews in the United States. Of the two groups, Modern Orthodox Jews have more income, more secular education, smaller households, stronger connections to the Jewish community at large, and a much higher level of support for the State of Israel.
- Given the size and growth of *Haredi* day school enrollment, and the relative stability in modern and centrist Orthodox day school enrollment, it is likely that there will be a much larger *Haredi* community in the United States in the future, with a Modern Orthodox community that is the same size or smaller.

¹⁰ Marvin Schick, *A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States, 2003-2004* (Avi Chai Foundation, January, 2005)

¹¹ Summarized from Table 3, p. 17, Schick, *op. cit.* The criteria for differentiating Modern Orthodox schools from Centrist Orthodox schools are relatively clear in the Avi Chai study. The former are co-ed, the latter are single-gender for most grades. But the criteria for distinguishing Yeshivas from “Centrist Orthodox” schools are not clear. See the discussion in Schick, pp. 13-14.

¹² It should be noted that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the children and their families and the schools they attend. Many children from Modern Orthodox/Centrist homes attend Yeshivas, and in some cases, Hasidic schools. And there are non-Orthodox children in Orthodox day schools, especially in smaller communities and in Modern Orthodox or Centrist schools. There are also some children from Orthodox families who do not attend day school, as noted the Avi Chi report, note 1, page 5.

Modern Orthodox Jews are not in a war with the *Haredi* community, but for those who are committed to strengthening what we believe is authentic, Modern Orthodox Judaism, the next several years represent a window of opportunity to

marshal our resources and make our case to the American Jewish community. For those of us who were surprised by how many adherents we appear to have, these findings should give us renewed energy to move forward.