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HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
California School

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
(School of Social Work)

THE BAYIT PROJECT: BUILDING A JEWISH STUDENT COMMUNITY

A Thesis submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the double degrees

MASTER OF ARTS
IN
JEWISH COMMUNAL SERVICE
and
(MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK)

by
Arnold (Chanon) Bloch and Janet Berman Light

May, 1984

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
California School

in co-operation with

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
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Thesis approved by

Herald Bubis

David Ellenson

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Arnold (Chanon) Bloch and Janet Berman Light

A Thesis Presented to the FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA in co-operation with HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION, CALIFORNIA SCHOOL in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

DEDICATION

To all *bayitniks*

In our home, the *bayit*
We are building our lives together,
We brought our separate luggage,
But we're leaving it here for awhile.
Living in communal style...

Chorus from *Bayit* song composed by
two founding members of the Northridge
Bayit, 1981.

ABSTRACT

Arnold (Chanon) Bloch and Janet Berman Light, "The Bayit Project: Building a Jewish Student Community." This study focused on the Bayit Project. The Bayit Project creates, sponsors and co-ordinates batim on college campuses. Our sample populations were the Westwood and Northridge Batim. A bayit (Hebrew for house, batim is plural), is a live-in communal environment for Jewish students. A qualitative ethnographic research design was employed. This included interviews with past and present bayitniks, observation of the batim, and discussions with UCLA and Northridge Hillel staff members. The study's findings include: descriptions of bayit living and characteristics of bayitniks; the impact of the bayit on the individual and on the campus community; the viability of the bayit as a supportive environment in which Jewish students can explore their Jewish identity. Recommendations for establishing new batim, effective functioning of batim and improving relations between the bayit and the Bayit Project are made.

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INTRODUCTION

A bayit, (Hebrew for house), is a place providing for communal living, in which Jewish students have the opportunity to live a Jewish way of life and act as a support structure for one another. The students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and Jewish traditions. Almost all of them are actively involved in Jewish organizations and occupy leadership positions.

The existence of batim (plural for bayit), is not a new phenomenon. However, there is for the first time a project being developed, in order to create, sponsor and coordinate batim across American college campuses. The Bayit Project already includes nine batim, seven in California, and two in Arizona. Each one is located near a college campus. The Bayit Project is rapidly expanding, with potential for new batim both inside and outside of California. The live-in members of the batim pay rent towards the upkeep of the houses, and the project is backed by a Jewish philanthropist, Michael Goland, who is largely responsible for expanding the bayit concept into a far-reaching multi-campus project.

The foundation stone for this project is the Westwood Bayit at U.C.L.A., which has existed for approximately ten years. The multi-campus project is now moving into its fourth year.

The purpose of this research was to: (a) describe bayit life, (b) determine what kinds of people come to live in batim - their motivations and background, (c) determine the influence of the bayit on Jewish identity, (d) determine the extent to which the bayit serves as a surrogate family to its members, (e) determine the degree to which some Jewish students may search out this surrogate family as a substitute for an absence of wholesome family living in their earlier years. As divorce, alcoholism, and assimilation rates climb, the bayit may provide a stabilizing environment for students who at this critical stage of their lives are searching for their own identities and lifestyles, (f) assess the viability of the bayit as an alternative expression of Jewish life for the future and, (g) provide some recommendations based upon the findings of this research.

A subsidiary objective of the thesis was to provide a historical perspective to the bayit project. This involved an exploration of earlier models of communal living, e.g., the havurah, from Biblical times onward, in order to place the bayit concept both within the framework of Jewish history and a broader sociological spectrum.

In order to accomplish the task, a qualitative, ethnographic research design was employed. This study focused on the Westwood and Northridge batim, which are located at U.C.L.A. and Cal State University Northridge

respectively. This involved face-to-face interviews with current and past bayit members as well as those professionals associated with the project. These included rabbis and Hillel directors of the campuses where batim are flourishing. Also some observation was involved. In addition, literature on small group theory, the havurah, Jewish identity and other communal living models was incorporated into the study, as they are strongly related to the bayit concept.

CHAPTER I

SMALL GROUP THEORY

Importance of the Primary Group

In order to understand why Jewish students from various walks of life would choose to come together and live in a communal setting, one needs to appreciate the significance of the group in the life of an individual. The relationship between the individual and the group begins at birth, where the primary group for the infant is the family. The family acts as the primary socializing agent, providing models for intimacy, competition, aggression, love, etc. Therefore, from earliest moments onwards, humans learn to view themselves in relation to others.[1]

The two batim being studied in this thesis, can be viewed as small groups. As such, the literature on small groups is pertinent to an in-depth analysis of the batim. Shepherd tells us that the small group provides the major source of the values and attitudes that people have, and is an important source of pressure to conform to social values and attitudes.[2]

Cooley in writing about the significance of the primary group states:

> It is not to be supposed that the unity of the primary group is one of mere harmony and love. It is always a competitive unity, admitting of self-assertion, and various appropriate passions, but these passions are socialized by sympathy, and come, or tend to come, under the discipline of a common spirit.[3]

Definition of a Small Group

It is much easier to describe the purpose of small groups than it is to define what a small group is. As a starting point, Shepherd drawing upon Eubank, defines a small group as "two or more people interacting."[4] He goes on to identify a number of criteria. First, the small group is more organized and more enduring than a social relation or what Goffman has called a "focused gathering,"[5] but less organized than a formal organization. Goffman refers to a focused gathering as a casual or informal meeting of several for a purpose which is not expected to be an ongoing activity. A social relation is any situation involving two or more interacting persons. A formal organization is more structured than a small group, divided into subgroups either by formal design or informally and contains people who may or may not know each other well.

Second, the size of a group influences the characteristics of group interactions and processes.

Third, as a group increases in size it reaches an upper limit where it begins to become more like a formal organization, establishing formal rules and regulations. This upper limit cannot be specified exactly.

Fourth, the group focuses its attention on some general characteristics. These include objectives, stable differentiation of roles, shared values and visions, criteria for membership and patterns of communication.[6]

Cooley[7] makes a distinction between the primary and the secondary group. The primary group is a group in which contact is personal, informal, intimate, and usually face to face, and which involves the entire personality, not just a part of it. The family, the child's play group, and the social clique are all examples of a primary group. In direct contrast, the secondary group is a group in which contacts tend to be impersonal, formal or casual, non-intimate, and segmentalized, in some cases they are face to face, in others not.[8]

Berelson and Steiner in Human Behavior, list four characteristics of organizations: formality, hierarchy, size or complexity and duration. Formality implies explicitly formulated rules, procedures, regulations, policies, etc. Hierarchy implies a pyramid of authority. The size or complexity of an organization is such that

the members cannot have close personal relations at one time.[9]

Cohesion and Lewin's Field Theory

A theory which the authors have found useful is Lewin's field theory which focuses on group cohesion.

> The field theorist in applying his/her approach to the analysis of small groups, is essentially concerned with cohesion. In the analysis of cohesion he is primarily interested in two sets of concepts: (1) those which tend to produce or be associated with greater or lesser cohesion, such as agreement on goals and understandings, or role differentiation, or norms; and (2) those which tend to be the effects or products of cohesions, such as interaction patterns, productivity, satisfaction and influence. The concept of cohesion refers to the forces which bind members of a group to each other and to the group as a whole.[10]

Decision Making

A key indicator of group cohesion is the way in which a group makes a decision: where the members make a decision by aquiescence to the leader or by a majority vote, cohesion is probably low; where the member makes a decision by unanimity, cohesion is probably high.[11]

An important dimension in how a group makes decisions is the degree of democracy versus autocracy which is applied. In a study by Lewin and Lipitt comparing

democratic and autocratic groups, the following results were found:

1. A higher state of tension existed in the atmosphere of the autocratic group. A number of findings focus on this point: (a) a much higher volume of social interactions (55% more) in spite of the fact that the ongoing activity demanded less communication than in the democratic group; (b) a less stable group structure was maintained; (c) more ascendence and less submissiveness and objectivity of members toward each other; (d) the development of two scapegoats during 12 meetings; (3) about 30 times as much hostility expressed between members as in the democratic group.

2. More cooperative endeavor emerged in the democratic group; (a) a much higher incidence of offering and asking for cooperation; (b) many more occurrences of praise and expressions of friendliness.

3. More expression of an objective attitude in the democratic group: (a) many more constructive suggestions offered; (b) more careless and unfinished work in the autocratic group; (c) greater incidence of constructive suggestions in the democratic group.

4. Constructiveness was higher in the democratic group: (a) superiority of the group products; (b) more careless and unfinished work in the autocratic group; (c) greater incidence of constructive suggestions in the democratic group.

5. The feeling of "we'ness" was greater in democracy, and that of "I'ness" was greater in the authoritarian group as shown by test situations and by analysis of the stenographic records.

6. The group structure was more stable and tended to maintain a higher degree of unity in the democratic group. When the authority withdrew his influence on the situation the group structure tended toward disorganization in the autocratic group.

7. Twice in the autocratic group a situation arose where the group combined its aggression against one individual, making him a scapegoat. In both cases the scapegoat quit the group. No such lack of harmony existed in the democratic group.

8. The feeling for group property and group goals was much better developed in the democratic group as shown by test situations and the stenographic accounts.
9. Following the one exchange of group members which was made there was a decrease in dominating behavior for the child transferred to the democratic group and an increase in like behavior for the child changed to the authoritarian group.[12]

Group Leadership

In the previous section some aspects of group decision making were discussed. An extension of this is leadership and how leaders are chosen or develop.

In discussing leadership, one often tends to think in terms of the characteristics which an individual possesses. Gibb points out that leadership is in fact not an attribute of the personality, but a quality of his/her role within a particular and specified social system. Viewed in relation to the group, leadership is a quality of its structure.[13]

Based upon Lewin's theory that the individual's characteristics and actions change under the varying influence of the "social field," it follows that groups have the capacity to propel to leadership, one or more of their number. The choice of a specific individual for the leadership role will thus be more dependent upon the nature of the group and its purpose, than upon the

personality of the individual; but it will be most dependent upon the relationship between the two.[14]

Berelson and Steiner hold that in most groups there is a rough ranking of members. This is based on the extent to which the members represent or realize the values of the group. The more they do, the higher they rank. As for the highest ranking, it cannot be said with any finality what makes for leadership, within a group, beyond the ability to personify this groups or persons.

> But there is a tendency, for leaders to be slightly bigger than followers, to have a better appearance, to have more self-confidence, more friendliness, more energy and somewhat more intelligence. A good leader has to be skilled in enabling the members to achieve their own private goals along with those of the group itself.[15]

Gibb in reviewing leadership theory points out the following:

> First, that leadership is always relative to the situation--relative, that is, in two senses: (a) that leadership flourishes only in a problem situation and (b) that the nature of the leadership role is determined by the goal of the group; and this is, in fact, the second principle of leadership, that it is always directed toward some objective goal. The third principle is that leadership is a process of mutual stimulation--a social interactional phenomenon in which the attitudes, ideals, and aspirations of the followers play as important a determining role as do the individuality and personality of the leader.[16]

Additionally, members of a group who possess authority may acquire it through either ascription, appointment

or personal achievement. "The ascribed leader possesses his authority through divine right or traditional decree. The differences between appointed and earned authority are very important. Their importance stems from the fact that appointed leaders must usually earn authority, since their appointment may be revoked. Also, earned leaders must often acquire appointment in order to legitimize their authority."[17]

Group Culture, Norms and Consensus

Earlier Cooley was quoted. He referred very poetically to the socialization of individual passions and their coming under the discipline of a "common spirit." This process can also be understood as the establishment of a common culture.

Berelson and Steiner describe culture as: a) learned behavior, b) shared with other people, c) built "on top" of man's biological equipment--a restraint against human impulses and, d) hanging together--the parts fit one another. Acculturation is the process of learning a culture different from the one in which one was raised.[18]

Within a society's culture, subcultures form. They are modified versions of some parts of the larger cul-

ture. Olmsted in his book, Small Groups, refers to Durkheim's insight.

> When a certain number of individuals in the midst of a political society are found to have ideas, interests, sentiments, and occupations not shared by the rest of the population, it is inevitable that they will be attracted toward each other under the influence of these likenesses. They will seek each other out, enter into relations, associate, and thus, little by little, a restricted group, having its special characteristics, will be formed in the midst of the general society. But once the group is formed, a moral life appears naturally carrying the mark of the peculiar conditions in which it has developed. For it is impossible for men to live together, associating in industry, without acquiring a sentiment of the whole formed by their union, without attaching themselves to that whole, preoccupying themselves with its interests, and taking account of it in their conduct. This attachment has in it something surpassing the individual. This subordination of particular interests to the general interest is, indeed, the source of all moral activity.[19]

Culture is therefore applicable not only to the large society but to its sub-groups as well. Even more specifically, within a sub-culture, coalitions will form. "Coalitions are temporary, means-oriented alliances among individuals or groups which differ in goals."[20]

The classic definition of culture is that of the early anthropologist, E. B. Tylor, who described it as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."[21] Another important concept which goes hand in hand with

culture, is social structure, the human being's crystallized social relationships. Culture and social structure are in a constant state of dynamic interaction for:

> It is the norms and values of the society which, for the most part, determine the nature of the social groupings and social relationships which its members will create; and conversely, it is through the action of people in social groups that cultures undergo change and modification.[22]

Norms are an integral part of a group's culture. According to Olmsted: "Norms help to identify and to define the group; they thereby help to establish the states of the individual in the larger society. They provide meaning, or a definition of the situation, and so help the individual to understand or come to terms with an ambiguous reality." According to Olmsted, acceptance of group norms by individuals facilitates the establishment of working procedures and the attainment of group goals. As he continues, "Group norms are also shared by members because of the potential sanctions the group can impose, in the case of deviants."[23]

People are usually disposed to conform to the norms which govern the situations in which they find themselves. When they violate norms it is usually because they do not understand the norms, or disagree with them. Continued violation even after clarification indicates

that there is disagreement. "This will occur under one or both of two conditions:

> (1) If the norms in a situation are contrary to more general norms a person holds or contrary to the norms of some other reference group important to a person, he will likely violate them. (2) If a nonconformist finds support from at least one other member of the group, or from the imagined approval of another person or group, he will likely continue to violate the norms.[24]

Homans in his work on groups describes various forms of social control. They are: (1) reciprocity, where the individuals feel a reciprocal responsibility to each other, (2) distribution, where goods or favors are distributed to those who conform most, (3) equilibrium, where an individual conforms in order to maintain the equilibrium of the group, and (4) punishment, where the group determines an appropriate punishment for breaking the norms.[25]

Another form of social control or accountability is territoriality. Tuttles has provided a good explanation of how this comes about:

> Copresence alone makes people captive judges of each others conduct and requires them to develop at least some communicative devices for anticipating and interpreting each other's judgements. ... The enduring character of territorial membership and the lack of alternatives keeps groups together willfully or unwillfully and makes short-run opportunism a dangerous proposition, since the opportunist must contrive to live with his victims.[26]

Additionally, Homans provides a model for looking at groups which is useful in this study. The group is viewed in terms of activity, interaction and sentiment. These are elements of group behavior. Sentiments include motives and goals of members. Activity refers to the actions of members. Interaction refers to the relationships between members. All three elements are interdependent and can be viewed as the context for the "external system", i.e. the relationship between the group and the environment, or for the "internal system", i.e. the relationship between individuals within the group.[27]

Group Size

Group size is an important variable which needs some attention.

A study by Thomas and Fink on the effects of group size upon the individuals in the group itself, led to the following conclusion:

> It is apparent that group size has significant effects on aspects of individual and group performance, on the nature of interaction and distribution of participation of group members, on group organization, on conformity and consensus, and on member satisfaction. This appraisal suggests that the variable of group size should be included in theories of group behavior, distinguishing where possible between effects that result from the interaction of group size with other independent variables and the effects arising from intervening variables

> that are dependably and nondependably associated with size.[28]

Berelson and Steiner in studying the characteristics of different sized groups found that:

> The larger the group, as you go from two or three, to about twenty, the impersonal, the more formalized and the less satisfying to its members, it tends to become. The watershed tends to be around size 5-7. This is about the number of people, that can best be taken into account at one time as individuals. The optimal size from the standpoint of personal satisfaction seems to be five. This allows for ease of movement within the group, a two to three division provides support for the minority members, and it is large enough for stimulation, but small enough for participation and personal recognition.[29]

Group size is also related to productivity and efficiency, although no clear relationship can be established. It appears that under certain circumstances individuals perform better in groups than alone, whereas in other circumstances, the opposite is true. Group size in relation to productivity also varies depending upon the effects of many other variables such as the type of task, etc.[30]

Productivity also bears a relationship to group cohesion. Here, too, the relationship varies. Sometimes it is a direct relationship and at other times the relationship may be inverse.[31]

The Principle of Equilibrium

> A state of equilibrium may be defined as follows: if a small force is impressed upon a system, a change or adjustment takes place within the system and once this force is removed, the system returns to approximately its previous state.[32]

The above principle can be applied to groups of individuals. A disturbance which upsets the equilibrium of one member will affect others also. Viewed in this way, a group is not just a collection of separate individuals, but a dynamic system with each part interdependent upon the other.[33] This view calls for a sensitivity to the changes which occur in a group or as a result of changes taking place within individual members. A good example of the interrelatedness of the individual and the group is offered by Ledl. He points out how the individual takes on certain group characteristics and can become the "bad influence" in the group. This person renders a service to the ego of the other group members. By being the "bad example", he saves the members the necessity to face their own drives, of which they are afraid.[34]

The Individual and the Group

In the beginning of this chapter some reasons for group membership were discussed. Small informal groups rest on a premise of shared values and shared experience. There is a tendency for people to gravitate towards others who share their beliefs. This enables them to feel accepted and enables them to strengthen those beliefs. This effect can be referred to as "validation by consensus."[35] Also, the individual uses the group as a yardstick against which to measure him/herself. Schachter,[36] focuses in on two classes of needs which group membership satisfies. The first are needs for evaluation which require that the individual remain distinct from the group. The others are needs for deindividuation, in which the individual loses personal responsibility for his actions.[37]

It is obvious that group membership and the many features which make up groups, is a broad subject. This review attempts to touch upon those areas which are most relevant to the target population of this study, namely the batim.

A useful concluding reference is Shepherd's list of five features for a successful group. They are: (a) objectives--the goals of a group, its purposes and reason for existence, (b) role differentiation--the clarity of

roles played by and expected of group members, (c) values and norms--what is desirable and expected by the group, (d) membership--in a successful group is clear cut and heterogenous and, (e) communication--in a successful group is open and full. These are not the only criteria, but are central. Other considerations of importance are group cohesion - the forces which hold a group together, productivity - the output of the group and autonomy - the degree of freedom to determine their fate experiences by individuals and by the group as a whole.[38]

The above criteria will be used as a framework with which to organize and analyze the data collected.

CHAPTER II

ALIENATION, COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

A theme prevalent in contemporary sociological literature, is the alienation of people in society and the lack of community. With the advent of a highly technological society and a heavy emphasis on individualism, human beings have aspired towards independence -- a rejection of the interdependence which characterizes a strongly knit community.

In the 1900's, Scherer suggested a change in the previously held sentiments which upheld rugged individualism:

> Ironically, a century ago intellectuals despaired of the tyranny of communities because they feared the suppression of individuality and personal desires. But today communal man has an attractive image; he is not competitive, selfish, and driven, but is dedicated, committed, and, most important, 'belongs'.[39]

During the 1960's, many students and youth, attempted to counter the alienation felt in a technological society and set up various community models, such as communes. It is out of this era that the Westwood Bayit first emerged. However, whether this view of the 'communal person' is still prevalent today, is questionable. The trend towards conservatism in America and other parts of the world, has been accompanied by a return to notions of individualism and individual property rights.

Nevertheless, there continues to exist a segment of the population invested in recreating a sense of interdependence and community. The bayit movement seems to be an expression of this ideal. A key word in Scherer's statement is the word 'belongs'. The authors presuppose a desire to belong and identify is a major motivating factor behind the establishment and survival of the batim.

Related to the issue of 'belonging' is that of 'commitment'. In order to belong to a group a willingness to commit oneself to the group must exist. "The more commitment mechanisms a community institutes, the greater the chances for success (at least up to the limit at which the individual tends to be completely erased in favor of the group)."[40] The commitment mechanisms referred to can include: (a) recruitment - finding appropriate members, (b) property - shared by the group, (c) work - shared tasks, and (d) decision making - how the group establishes its norms and rules. All of these can be organized in ways which build commitment or detract from it.

Back offers three dimensions with which to evaluate commitment to a group. They are: (a) sacrifice -- the act of investment of resources into a group beyond what would be justified by rational calculation of expected return on the investment, in the hope of stimulating a

similar increase in commitment by others, (b) renunciation -- the giving up of personal preferences in order to help bring about coherence in collective choice, (c) mortification -- the direct submission of one's preferences to social control.[41]

In this society where lack of commitment is often the norm, it is important to look at what keeps youth uncommitted and alienated. Kenneth Keniston in his writings refers to "the cult of the present."[42] This involves a focus on the here and now, without any concern for the future. The individual is involved in a search for pertinence -- a search for a personal breakthrough and a desire for self-expression, free from the constrictions of conventional categories. Contained within this approach, is the notion that commitment is submission, a notion which ultimately leads to alienation.[43]

On the other hand, there are those who do feel a need to belong, to commit themselves to something. Kanter has suggested that the foundations of commitment are threefold:[44] (a) long-sustained, continuous commitment that is based upon cognitive orientations, the person seeing the advantages of belonging, (b) cohesion wherein commitment is based upon the formation of positive educational ties which results in some sense of satisfaction from belonging, and, (c) obedience to the

group norms with the members' decision to submit to community demands as legitimate and authorized.

Keniston points out that alienation should be viewed not just as a problem of the individual, but as a problem of the society at large.

> Alienation is a response to major collective estrangements, social strains, and historical losses in such society, which first predisposes certain individuals to reject their society, and later shape the particular ways they do so.[45]

A response to this societal alienation has been to create new societal models such as communes. These models often represent: (a) a rejection of commonly held social ideals, in an effort to find new values by which to live, and, (b) an effort to create a structure which is small enough so as to be perceived of as a whole structure.

> The loss of any structural view or position is the decisive meaning of the lament over the loss of community. In the great city, the division of milieus and of segregating routines reaches the point of closest contact with the individual and the family, for, although the city is not the unit of prime decision, even the city cannot be seen as a total structure by most of its citizens.[46]

The commune is thus an effort to build a community, to combat loneliness and isolation -- a response to the vastness of the ever expanding technological society we live in. Scherer warns that the search for community is confused by an emphasis on size.

> Community is not lost in the mass society, nor can the small group replace it. For community represents a particular set of social relationships, public in character yet embracing many private social worlds.[47]

A view that communes are an effort to continue the familial and the spiritual, is put forth by Back.

> Communes and encounter groups seek a blending of the spiritual and familial not readily available in our society. They seek a mode of association whose level of intimacy is probably less than that of the nuclear family but greater than that of most neighborhoods.[48]

With the establishment of a commune-like structure, a number of problems can be anticipated. Firstly, the struggle between communion -- the "renouncing of separate attachments in order to find collective unity,"[49] and individuality - holding onto one's own possessions, values and particular identity.[50] Secondly, many sacrifices need to be made, such as giving up one's privacy.

Problems with commitment have already been alluded to. Milton M. Gordon warns against the separation from society which many communes engage in. He points out that just as intimate group relations tend to reduce prejudice, a lack of such contacts tend to promote hostile attitudes between groups.[51] Related to the issue of separation is that of boundaries, which can vary in their permeability.

> The community's distinctiveness and social isolation may be lost when boundaries are

> relatively permeable. Permeability means almost by definition that stringent entrance requirements, such as investment and ideological conversion, which serve as commitment mechanisms, can no longer exist... or organization with permeable boundaries tends to become more heterogeneous, because it more readily admits diverse elements to its ranks, whereas homogeneity is the attribute that facilitates communion in utopian communities.[52]

Scherer, in her work on communities, questions whether a "synthetic" community can be created. She reaches the conclusion that: "If community can provide a satisfying and meaningful context in which man may order many of his social relationships, stimulating communal development by artificial means is worth while."[53]

Greeley, on the other hand, argues differently:

> Community can't be pushed or sought directly and self-consciously... community is neither a goal nor a means. It is, rather a side effect resulting from continual interaction between human beings. It enriches and facilitates more interaction but it must stem from and be rooted in interaction. Man must have something to do together before they can become a community, and those who pursue community as an end in itself will be as disappointed as those who pursue happiness as an end in itself.[54]

For evaluating the viability and life-span of communes, Kanter lists some of the possible weaknesses: (a) retreat and anarchy -- unviable ways to build an enduring group, (b) lack of sacrifice and investment leading to high turnover of members, (c) lack of renunciation and communion leading to low group cohesion, and, d) success leading to loss of vitality. The commune is

seen as problematic and possibly not viable for long periods of time, but nevertheless meeting the needs of people for a limited time-period. The most successful communities are those which provide programs and philosophic guides for much of the behavior of members, guidelines for work, but also free time and recreation in line with the group's ideals.[55] Another measure of strength of a community is the degree to which self-criticism and disagreement are permitted.[56]

The commune is a response to alienation, an effort to create community. Its viability as a long term alternative is still in question. Whether the commune can bring about any significant change in the alienation and lack of community felt in such society, is at this point doubtful. Nevertheless, for many, the commune offers an opportunity for individuals to act on the belief that "people who want to change vast systems must first start with themselves and find out exactly what it is that his lies within their own resources."[57]

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO JEWISH FELLOWSHIP

The idea of fellowship is a tradition with a long and distinguished place in Jewish history. The havurah and the bayit are both manifestations of the fellowship ideal and need to be viewed in relation to each other, since the bayit is an outgrowth of the havurah concept.

The earliest appearance of the havurah in Jewish life was during the first century prior to the common era in Palestine.[58] Two types of havurot existed, one type founded by the Essenes at Qumran, and the other founded by the Pharisees. The Essenes rejected life in the cities because they found it to be corrupt. Instead they established communities in the wilderness where they could live a life based on the strict observance of Jewish law, far away from the influence of the cities.[59]

The Pharisees on the other hand, did not separate themselves from the cities and the villages, even though they saw life in these places to be corrupt. Rather, they chose to live among the common people and influence them to live closer to Jewish law, by being an example to them. Although the relationship that the Essene havurah and the Pharisaic havurah had with the community at large was different, their purpose was the same, namely to: "enrich

and intensify Jewish life through the communal fulfillment of Jewish purposes."[60]

Membership in both city and wilderness havurot involved a commitment to the strict observance of the laws of ritual cleanliness and holy offerings. This resulted in a separation from the larger Jewish community in which these laws were not strictly observed. "Membership represented a status recognized by other members and not a formal affiliation with an organized society."[61] The haver (member) of such a fellowship could no longer freely associate with members of the larger community. His life and relationships had to be reconstructed and new patterns of behavior determined, according to the regulations of the fellowship. The concept of a havurah continued into the third and fourth centuries. The Rabbinic literature on havurot focuses primarily on the death and burial of havurot members. This was the forerunner of the hevra kaddisha (burial society), a havurah whose purpose was to see to the burial of its members, according to Jewish law. Whereas the havurah started as a safeguard against apathy and neglect of Jewish ritual practice, it evolved into a unit for the provision of indispensable communal service.[62] Evidence for the existence of havurah during the third century is found in the Babylonian Talmud Maseket Shabbat (106 a): "If a member of a havurah dies, all the members of the havurah shall be concerned." Moss

cites Maseket Ketubat (17 a) which delineates the concern of havurah members: "The men of the city were divided into havurot that dealt with its own dead, so that during the time of the funeral escort they all had to attend."[63] There has been some dispute regarding the oldest reference to the hevra kaddisha, in rabbinic literature. Some argue that the hevra kaddisha was first mentioned in the response of Nissim ben Reuben of Barcelona in the fourteenth century. Another tradition has it that the first hevra kaddisha was organized by Judah Law ben Bezallel, the chief rabbi of Prague in 1593.[64]

> Between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, the hevra kaddisha served only its own members. During the nineteenth century, the hevra kaddisha extended its responsibilities to the whole community, especially the poor.[65]

By the seventeenth century the functions of the havurah were expanded to include: (1) "furthering the study of Torah, (2) supporting the local poor, (3) rendering aid to impoverished wanderers, (4) outfitting indigent brides, (5) clothing the naked and, (6) collecting funds for building synagogues in other lands.[66]

The fellowship model extends beyond the havurah and reflects itself in many areas of Jewish tradition. The covenant made between God and Abraham sets down the notion of the Jews as a "peoplehood." "And I will take you to myself for a people and will be your God."[67] "As a people, the actualization of the covenant is made possi-

ble. It is as a member of the group, throughout history, that the Jew has experienced his/her religion."[68]

Another example of the group nature of Jewish tradition, is the minyan, the requirement that a minimum of ten males be present for the worship of God. "A recent historic model of Jewish fellowship is the shtiebel, the small synagogue which flourished in the Hasidic communities of Eastern Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."[69] The word shtiebel is a Yiddish word meaning "little room." This was a meeting place for a small group of people who followed the same Hasidic rebbe and who prayed and celebrated the Jewish holidays together.[70]

The notion of a havurah with a specific purpose was brought to America by Eastern European Jews. They functioned as safeguards against assimilation in the New World. Half a century later, American havurot again emerged to meet the unmet needs of the Jewish community. As a result of dissatisfaction with existing religious institutions, havurot were formed during 1968 and 1969, in Boston and New York, respectively. Those who formed havurot were mainly college-aged Jews seeking alternative ways to practice their Judaism and seeking to connect themselves with a sense of community.[71] These new havurot, although certainly not undertaking the burial of the dead, did assume command responsibilities and made an

effort to uphold some level of Jewish ritual practice and study as defined by the members.[72] In this way they seemed to model themselves after the early havurot described above.

Gerald A. Goldman provides a description and evaluation of the havurah as follows:

> First of all, it will be a community and not a series of membership organizations tangentially related and often in competition with one another. The most ideal of such communities is the havurah in which members live, eat, study, pray, and act together. Like the communes popular today the havurah affords the maximum in individual decision-making — an antidote to personal powerlessness; confirmation of selfhood as one whose worth is recognized by the group; the opportunity to create and experiment with new forms of Jewish action, study, worship and life-styles (marriage, child-rearing, etc.) Its disadvantages are obvious: it can appeal only to a very few, and it runs the danger not only of internal collapse but also of Essene-like withdrawal from the larger Jewish community.[73]

Since the establishment of the first modern havurot in Boston and New York, the havurot concept has taken root and spread across America. The Reconstructionist Movement greatly influenced the spread of havurot and, by the 1950's, had already begun a network of fellowships under the auspices of the Reconstructionist National Office.[74] As a response to the hungering for connection and caring, Rabbi Schulweis, a protege of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism, advocated the establishment of havurot within the synagogue structure.[75] Since then synagogues and Jewish community centers have been utiliz-

ing *havurot* as a way of bringing people together for study, socializing and the accomplishment of specific tasks.

Straber,[76] offers some insight into the goals and variability of the *havurah* today:

> The typical *havurah* has from ten to thirty members and is characterized by cooking and cleaning assignments. The goal of the *havurah* is to foster Jewishness in accordance to the manner in which that concept was understood by the particular group or each individual member. Not all *havurot* are alike. Some are explicitly Zionist and *aliyah*[77] oriented, others are committed to enriching the life experience of Jews in the Diaspora. Some *havurot* contain only observant youth, while others are quite heterogeneous with a membership running the gamut from atheist to *Hasid*[78].

Jon Groner, a member of the Beit Ephraim Havurah at Columbia University describes the motivations behind havurah membership:

> It is impossible to generalize about our motivations for forming a *havurah*. Some came primarily to feel comfortable observing *mitzvot* (plural for *mitzvah*, a commandment or obligation), others primarily to learn, others to improve Jewish life on campus. Beyond all this, however, is an unspoken root feeling which none of us can express or needs to express. We feel instinctively that being Jewish is not something you do in a synagogue or a Jewish organization or even a classroom. We want to be *haimish* (a Yiddish word meaning warm and homey), not out of a vaguely counter-cultural striving for authenticity, but out of a desire to experience Judaism as it was meant to be experienced. We are no longer adapting the form of another culture, but returning to one of our own. It's hard to light Shabbat candles or compose a creative service or have a Talmud *shiyur* (lesson) in a dormitory room; some of us have

> tried. Our bayit is a place where nothing Jewish is alien.[79]

A further description of the havurah is offered by Neusner and Eisenstein:

> The havurah is certainly not intended to either supplant the congregation or even to downgrade it. There is no doubt that the congregation serves many vital functions ...but its insufficiency inheres in the heterogeneous character of the constituency. And the main aspect of that insufficiency lies in the fact that belonging to congregations if often no more than an innocuous gesture ... Rabbis assume that the vast majority will attend only three times a year. Little - often nothing - is actually required besides the payment of dues. No committment is asked; none is generally given.
> Now, while this may appeal to the escapists and the irresponsible, it does not appeal to those who are looking for a place in which they can take their Judaism seriously in the company of likeminded Jews. Thus, committment is the key to one of the essentials of havurah.[80]

Mirsky cites a noteworthy extension of the havurah movement which developed in the post counterculture mood of the 1940's.[81] In New Town, Chicago, a Jewish spiritual community, operating on the principle of individual participation and mutual responsibility, was established. This community was called Makom, and was envisioned as the new Jewish alternative for the alienated, disaffected young Jews of New Town. Spearheaded by David Glazer, a Hebrew Union College rabbinic intern, Makom was to become a storefront location in New Town, where services, classes, programs, holiday celebrations and meetings would be held. The Jewish Theological Seminary acted as an

advisory panel. Within a year, Makom attracted a wide variety of people. A questionnaire submitted by the steering committee of Makom, sought to uncover why these people came to Makom. Any number of factors were found to influence an individual:

> Some came to meet a person of the opposite sex. Some came to study Torah. Some needed a place to belong. Some wanted an informal synagogue for celebrating the Jewish holidays. Some merely wanted to rebel against organized Judaism.[82]

Makom became a successful story in contemporary Jewish life. Today, Makom has created a broad base of support throughout the Chicago Jewish community. It differs from the _havurah_ in that it has a broad-based community with a diverse membership. According to Mirsky, the vitality of the community stems from the fact that Makom is not another temple or synagogue, but a clear-cut alternative to organized institutions.[83]

The question of whether the _havurah_ and the _bayit_ are only temporary way stations, or whether they could be permanent homes for Jews, is addressed by Yizhak Aren. He reaches the conclusion that at this point, it is impossible to predict whether the new Judaic fellowship will survive.[84]

> The experimental Jewish fellowships of the last decade have been transient communities. Some groups - especially the residential campus _batim_ - do not want to be more than "a great place for the time being."[85] The question of their future requires no lengthy discussion: even if the

> bayit continues to exist, the original conception (of which exploring Judaism was one important facet) is quickly lost in the constant generational change.
>
> But other groups have the intention to be more than just a transient Hillel (for post-students too): "I think the attitude of a havurah member is, at its best, that the havurah is his community, the place and way he will build his Jewish life - together with the haverim (members), and perhaps build a new model Jewish life style. The community is not seen as a way station, a temporary dwelling, but, at least potentially, as one's permanent home."[86]

A recent study by Bubis and Wasserman, compared synagogue havurot throughout the United States. Making an assessment about the significance of havurot, it was concluded that the friendships which emerge out of havurot make the havurah a significant experience. No marked difference in Jewish behavior between the havurah and the non-havurah members were found, but there did seem to be a greater readiness to learn, on the part of havurah members.[87]

Bubis and Wasserman cite the strengths and limitations of havurot as follows:

> The havurot are not panaceas for all the ills which congregations face. They do represent a powerful tool for dealing with the anomie which grips so many. They provide a vehicle for intimacy and involvement within a Jewish ambience. They hold out expectations and possibilities for interdependence and shared experience. They sustain relationships while providing opportunities for many who desire them.[88]

Bubis and Wasserman conclude that havurot will continue to grow where intimacy is important. They are

not merely a passing fad but are an ever reappearing expression of the Jew's quest for community.[89]

The concept of fellowship, rooted in early Judaism, has carried itself through the passage of time and into the twentieth century. Whether or not the havurot and Batim will continue to be a viable alternative for the expression of Jewish values, remains to be seen. Presently, the fellowship concept is very much alive and is meeting the needs of Jews from many different walks of life.

CHAPTER IV

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY: CHANGING PATTERNS AND IDENTITY

In looking at the origins of the American Jewish community, one sees, by and large, a group of people fleeing from their past. Rosenberg describes this phenomenon as follows:

> Those who came to settle in America came to forget, not to remember. They came to become "new men" in a "new world." They came to help American become, or because she seemed already to have become, different. And America would remain different, they believed, and the new paradise would be built, only if the older, unhappier world would be forgotten and transcended.[90]

Rosenberg tells us that from the earliest time in America, Jews have been faced with the irony of not wanting to be different from other Americans, and at the same time being part of an ethnic identity which is unique and different from the majority culture.[91]

The special relation of individual and culture in the minority group was described and conceptualized, now many years ago, by Kurt Lewin.[92] Yarrow, referring to Lewin's theory, describes the balance of forces toward and away from the group.

> Loyalties, ties and securities draw the individual toward his group. At the same time, factors disagreeable or disadvantageous in belonging to the group, and greater attractions outside, result in forces away from the group. In the

> minority, a negative balance of forces may develop as a consequence of the negative attitudes, the restrictions, and the social punishments imposed by the dominant majority. The minority member is likely to develop a "negative chauvanism" with respect to the group, to want to get away from the group and the things it represents in his mind, and to accept the attitudes and values of the "majority group.[93]

Lewin sums up the psychological importance of the individual's group membership as:

> ...the ground on which he stands, which gives or denies him social status, gives or denies him security and help. The firmness of the physical ground on which we tread is not always thought of. Dynamically, however, the firmness and clearness of this ground determines what the individual wishes to do, what he can do, and how he will do it.[94]

The complexity of Jewish identity in a predominantly Christian society is dealt with in Sklare's book, American Jews. Sklare points out that Jewish group membership in American is a matter of private sentiment rather than public commitment or legal definition. The state does not provide any guidance. This places the burden of group identity upon the individual.[95] This is elaborated upon by Kiell, who states that:

> The basic conflict which the individual Jew must resolve for himself in this relatively unstructured and ambiguous social setting, is the conflict between maintaining his identity as a Jew and determining the degree and intensity of his identification or rejecting such identity through assimilation. Individuals may attempt to resolve this conflict by varying degrees and combinations of group identification and annihilation.[96]

Herman, in his model of ethnic identity, describes "marking off" and "alignment" as two important concepts. To be a Jew in any meaningful sense of the term, means that one needs to establish a certain boundary between Jews and Gentiles. By marking oneself off and aligning with the Jewish ethnic minority, one in fact chooses the Jews as a referent group. The referent group is the group from which one obtains one's mores and values. According to Herman, the basis for this alignment is not the similarity but the interdependence of group members. Once chosen, the referent group becomes a source of self-esteem to the individual. The psychological problem which the Diaspora Jew faces, is that he/she often tends to accept as a source of reference the mores of the non-Jewish majority culture which may run counter to his/her Jewish membership group.[97]

The issue of Jewish identity is far too complex to be adequately explored in this work. A basic understanding of the Jewish struggle for identity and the trends of the last two hundred years in America is useful as a background against which to view the batim.

It has already been mentioned that the Jews upon arriving in America, wanted to leave the "old world" behind. This applied particularly to the German Jewish immigrants. In order to become Americanized, many earlier Jewish institutions needed to be abolished. Whereas the

Eastern-European Jews who came later wanted to hold on to the shtetl (an all-Jewish or predominantly Jewish town enclave set in the midst of a non-Jewish environment) as the proper way of life for all Jews, the German Jews who were focused on Americanization, rejected the shtetl as being archaic.[98] Too, the closely knit Jewish community was sacrificed in favor of integration into the majority culture, among many Jews.

Another institution which has undergone change, has been the Jewish family. Even though Sklare does not support the many myths held about the Jewish family of the past, namely that it was necessarily a closely bonded unit, he does nevertheless find a change in the significance of the family, particularly a fairly recent decline in the frequency and integrity of interaction with the kinship group. "Identity can no longer be acquired solely through the traditional institution. But new forms do arise as substitutes. The friendship clique comprised of Jews is an exmaple."[99]

The search for solutions to the problem of Jewish identification in America, is not an easy one. The American Jew in search of identity can neither look to Israel nor to other Diaspora nations for a role model. To be sure, he may gain strength and encouragement from the positive experiences of Jews in other societies, but he can resolve his personal and group dilemma only within the framework of Jewish life in America.[100]

It is commonly held by young Jews today, that the major Jewish organizations in the organized community are socially irrelevant to the issues of life and death in such time.[101] This view has been articulated by Dr. Albert Jospe, an official of B'nai Brith Hillel Foundation:

> They turn their backs on the Jewish community because they have the uneasy feeling that our Synagogues are all too frequently economically conservative, that they are fearful of such change, that they pay lip service to social ideals but shy away from redemptive action and that they are preoccupied with trivialities and irrelevancies at a time when they ought to be more relevant than ever and speak out courageously on the issues.[102]

Much criticism has also been directed at the system of Jewish education in the organized community. With the secularization of many Jewish immigrants to America, few sought to educate their children in conformity with Jewish tradition. "They did not provide a setting in which the primary learning experience would be Jewish culture. Rather they looked to the public school system to provide the basic educational framework for their offspring."[103] The result has been that Jewish education has been only supplementary and is largely an elementary school system. "Lack of continuity has been one of the most serious problems in Jewish education."[104] Of those children who do get some elementary Jewish education, few continue after bar mitzvah and batmitzvah.[105] This means that most

American college aged Jews are not engaged in any ongoing Jewish study.[106] In 1964, Alfred Jospe estimated that 80 percent of eligible Jewish youth were attending college. Further studies cited in Greenberg's article "The Jewish College Youth," point to the fact that college is a disaster area for Judaism, Jewish loyalty and Jewish identity.[107] Whatever the nature of the student's commitment, observance or loyalty, it tends to decline in college, this during a key period of personality formation. Erik Erikson has suggested that during the college years the individual is in search of self and self definition, establishing loyalties and faithfulness, trying different roles and patterns.[108] The student is highly suggestible and hungry for experience and influences.[109] It is at this critical time that Jewish youth are most susceptible to the many different campus crusaders who often see it as their mission to convert Jews.

> The recent activities of the older Jewish mission organization and the appearance of bodies such as the Jews for Jesus are of course disturbing to the Jewish community. However, what has been even more troubling has been the greatly accelerated efforts at Jewish conversion undertaken by organizations whose activities are normally focused at the general student population.[110]

A recent study by Lavender and Greenberg explored the impact that membership in the Hillel kosher dining club at the University of Maryland, has on the students' Jewish identity. The study found that whereas Jewish students in

general tend to decrease their Jewish identity as they proceed through college, those belonging to the club did not suffer a loss of Jewish identity. The authors of this study concluded that "an activity specifically oriented to the maintenance or increase of minority group identity, can effectively counter the influences of the larger secularizing environment."[111]

It is obviously very important that there be ways to expose Jewish youth to Jewish culture and tradition in a way that will be attractive and acceptable to them, while they are at such an impressionable time of life. It is possible that the bayit concept could be functional in this area.

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

The authors have made use of a qualitative ethnographic research design, as outlined in Spradley's, The Ethnographic Interview.[112] This study focused on the Westwood and Northridge batim, located at U.C.L.A. and California State University at Northridge, respectively. Two components of ethnographic research were employed: (a) participant observation and (b) one-to one interviews.

According to the ethnographic approach, the researcher attempts to glean information from "informants",[113] in an effort to become familiar with the culture and structure of a social system. Here the bayit is viewed as a culture within the larger framework of the Jewish community and American society.

A. Collecting the Data

1. Interviews

Initial interviews were held with some key professionals associated with the two batim. They were: (a) the Hillel directors at each campus, (b) the program directors at the Hillel of each campus, (c) Michael Goland, the financial backer of the bayit project and, (d) Kevin McCauley, the former director and coordinator of the Bayit Project. These interviews were geared toward

providing some background information regarding the establishment of the two batim, how batim are perceived by Hillel staff people, and the goals of the Bayit Project, as perceived by those steering the project.

The interviews with Hillel staff provided valuable information regarding the Bayit Project's relationship with Hillel and with the Jewish community at each campus. These interviews were loosely structured and enabled the informants to comment on whatever issues they thought to be significant.

The second set of interviews was done with current bayitniks and ex-bayitniks from both batim. The length of the interviews ranged from one to two hours and were tape recorded. At the same time, the interviewer took methodological notes. Although there was a prepared format (see appendix A), the interview often took the form of a discussion rather than a direct question-answer session. Dexter's concept of Elite and Specialized Interviewing was applied here.[114] This involved:

> "1. Stressing the interviewee's definition of the situation,
>
> 2. Encouraging the interviewee to structure the account of the situation,
>
> 3. Letting the interviewee introduce to a considerable extent his notions of what he regards as relevant."[115]

This is consistent with Spradley's view that the informants need to be allowed to define their own con-

cepts. Thus the language and culture of the informants can be learned without the interviewer imposing his/her concepts upon the informant.[116]

During the course of the interview process, an event took place which called for some shifts in the data gathering approach. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the director of the Bayit Project took sudden leave of the project and his position as director became vacant. One of the two authors of this study who had been considering deeper involvement in the Bayit Project at a later date, was asked to fill the position of director. After much deliberation as to whether such a step would greatly jeopardize the validity of this study, a decision was reached that such a move could be possible only if certain careful steps were taken. The first step was that after such a decisions was made, all interviews would be conducted by the co-author not intimately involved with the Bayit Project. Secondly, since it was already known to the authors that there existed some tension between the bayitniks and the Bayit Project administration, efforts would need to be made to reassure the potential informants that confidential material shared during interviews would in no way jeopardize their future as bayitniks. Thirdly, the names of the bayitniks did not appear on the transcripts of the interviews, but were number coded so that the identity of the interviewees would remain confiden-

tial. The researchers kept in mind that the bayit is a private domain. Barnes draws a distinction between private and public domain. He argues that it is all right to make inquiries in a private domain but that investigators should be careful not to abuse individual rights to privacy.[117] In this study the authors made a concerted effort to respect the privacy of the informants.

Blum suggests that to control for bias, the researcher must: (1) have the trust and confidence of the persons who give the information and must (2) not only speak their language but have a human understanding and ability to view a world different from his/her own and, (3) be highly conscious of psychological dynamics.[118]

Cognizant of the need to have the trust and confidence of informants, the authors met with the batim to explain that one of the researchers was soon to be working as Director of the Bayit Project. The bayitniks were invited to read a rough draft of the study before the final printing, and had an opportunity to have their reactions utilized in a rejoinder statement (Appendix C).

Initially the dual role of researcher-director was met with some skepticism, but after the situation was explained, the trust and confidence of at least the majority of potential informants was gained.

In addition to assuming the role of Director of the Bayit Project, the same researcher had himself lived for

two years at the Northridge Bayit. To control for his potential biases, it was decided that the co-researchers would need to check their interpretations with each other. It was hoped that biases would thus be controlled.

2. Participant observation

> Participant observation makes it possible to check description against fact, and noting discrepancies, become aware of systematic distortions made by the person under study; such distortions are less likely to be discovered by interviewing alone.[119]

This statement by Becker succinctly captures the value of combining interviews with participant observation. In addition to the nineteen interviews conducted with current and past bayitniks, the authors also visited each of the batim on a number of occasions and more specifically joined them for shabbat in order to experience this important aspect of bayit life. By joining in the shabbat observance and communal meal, the authors were able to get a better sense of bayit living. As noted, one of the authors is an ex-bayitnik and founding member of Northridge Bayit. He visited with, and did only two interviews at Westwood Bayit in order to compare his experience with a different bayit. What he lost in objectivity by being an ex-bayitnik may be compensated by the insight he already has about bayit life.

3. Data from relevant documents and records

Materials drawn up by Kevin McCauley, the former director of the Bayit Project, was most useful as a source of information about the structure, funding and goals of the batim. This resource presents the batim as understood by the Bayit Project staff and served as a useful tool by which to compare the bayit ideal with the batim in reality.

B. Analysis and Discussion of the Data

In the analysis and discussion of data, the authors looked for common themes emerging from the interviews. These themes were then sorted into categories and a model was sought which would help to organize and discuss the data. The authors chose to use Shepherd's criteria for evaluating groups as the primary model.[120] Other theories from the literature were used as a supplement to Shepherd's model. During this phase of the study, both authors were involved in sharing ideas and in seeking an understanding of bayit life.

CHAPTER VI

HISTORY OF WESTWOOD BAYIT, NORTHRIDGE BAYIT AND THE BAYIT PROJECT

The following histories of Westwood and Northridge batim are an approximation reconstructed from interviews conducted with ex-bayitniks, Hillel staff and Bayit Project staffs.

The Westwood Bayit, located near UCLA was established in 1974. Located on fraternity row, the Bayit, was a center for Jewish activists at the UCLA campus.

The initial bayitniks were active students in Jewish organizations at UCLA. The idea of having a bayit at the campus was part of a growing trend of co-ops and communes at the time. However, the bayit set out to be a place that would be Jewish and keep kosher. Members were inspired by the Jewish Catalogue, which discussed the idea of live-in havurot as a way of building community.

The students, under the leadership of Moshe Halfon, a Jewish student activist at U.C.L.A., organized themselves using Kibbutz Langden, a bayit in Madison, Wisconsin as a model. They realized that outside help was important in securing a location. Rabbi David Berner, then Director of UCLA Hillel, was a major force in seeing that the group found a home. He sought the expertise of Irwin Daniels,

who aided in securing a lease on an old fraternity house. Irwin Daniels was a former Hillel activist, later Hillel Council president, and is presently Vice President of the Jewish Federation Council.

Ads for additional members were placed in local newspapers and soon, twenty-three people moved in. By the Fall of 1974, the group felt it was important not to conduct outside fund raising as they wanted to live independently. Instead, each member agreed to contribute what he/she could. There were many socialists in the group so this idea was important to them. They constantly debated ideology. They were experimenting and open in their search for religiosity. Some identified as secular Jews, others as Zionists, and others as religious Jews. Everyone was active in outside activities. Some bayitniks saw the bayit as just a place to live, while others viewed it as a responsibility and a model for the UCLA community.

In order to get things done, committees were developed. They include the following: va'ad mitbach (kitchen), va'ad hutz (outside relations), gizbarut (treasury), toranut (work) and tarbut (culture). Asefot (meetings) were held weekly to discuss business and important matters. Many discussions revolved around observance of Jewish ritual.

Shabbat t'fillot (prayers) and dinner was a special time when friends came to celebrate with the bayitniks.

Other central aspects of the bayit were to do one's tafkid (chore) and share information about Jewish activities.

Life at the bayit was running smoothly, with old people leaving and new ones arriving. However in 1979, a crisis began. The landlord decided he wanted to sell the property, which would have left the bayitniks without a home. They turned to Bet Tzedek Legal Services for help. While the case was in litigation, Michael Goland, a young, wealthy Jewish businessman and philanthropist, heard of the bayitniks' plight. He stepped in and purchased the house so that the bayit could continue. Subsequently, Michael's interest in the bayit concept grew. He began to view it as a place where Jewish students could be active on campus, support each other and not lose their motivation, interest and energy.

One of the members of Westwood Bayit, Kevin McCauley, also saw the bayit as an effective means of promoting active Jewish involvement. After some discussion, Michael invited Kevin to join him in expanding the bayit concept to a nationwide network of batim. The Bayit Project was established, with Michael Goland providing the funding and Kevin McCauley in collaboration with Michael, establishing the philosophical and structural guidelines of the Bayit Project.

The first effort to test whether the Westwood Bayit model was transferable, was Northridge Bayit.

In July 1981, four male Northridge students got together to look for a place where they could live together and live a Jewish communal lifestyle. They heard that four other women were interested. Adele Lander Burke, Program Director of Northridge Hillel helped to organize a meeting at which the interested parties discussed their compatibility. On their own, they bagan to look for a house. Soon thereafter, Michael Goland and Kevin McCauley, who had established contact with the Northridge Hillel, offered their support. Once a suitable house was found, Michael Goland undertook to lease it. The entire process took less than three weeks. Some people needed to move in immediately and slept on the floor in sleeping bags, as there was no furniture in the house. As people began to move in, decisions over rooms, level of Jewish observance and work issues needed to be decided. Weekly _asefot_ became the forum for discussing these issues and making decisions. One founding _bayitnik_ had lived in Westwood _Bayit_ and was able to offer much advice on how to organize a _bayit_.

With the success of this, Michael Goland and Kevin McCauley formed the _Bayit_ Project with the goal of establishing _batim_ at campuses in California and eventually across the country. Other houses were either leased or purchased, and further _batim_ were established. At the time of this writing (Spring 1984), nine _batim_ had been

established. The following is a list of these houses and the approximate dates of their founding;

Fall 1974	Westwood Bayit, University of California, Los Angeles (Purchased for Bayit Project in June 1983.)
September 1981	Northridge Bayit, California State University, Northridge
August 1982	Claremont Bayit, Claremont Colleges, Pomona
September 1982	Berkeley Bayit, University of California, Berkeley
June 1983	Arizona State Bayit, Arizona State, Tempe
June 1983	Santa Barbara Bayit, University of California, Santa Barbara
July 1983	Cal Tech Bayit, The California Institute of Technology, Pasadena

August 1983 Tucson *Bayit*, University of Arizona, Tucson

September 1983 San Diego *Bayit*, University of California, San Diego

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Earlier in the literature review, Shepherd's criteria for measuring a group's success were cited. They are: (a) objectives - the goals of a group, its purposes and reasons for existence, (b) role differentiation - the clarity of roles played by and expected of group members, (c) values and norms - the agreed upon expectations of the group, (d) membership - in a successful group is clear cut and heterogeneous, and (e) Communication - in a successful group is open and full. Other criteria mentioned are group cohesion - forces which bind a group, productivity - what the group produces and autonomy - the degree of self-determination experienced by individual members and by the group as a whole.[121] The authors have chosen to use Shepherd's criteria as a model with which to organize and evaluate the data obtained in this study. The numerous other theories and approaches cited in the literature review will be used as a supplement to Shepherd's model.

Objectives

The batim fit the criteria of a small formal organization, as defined by Sheperd.[122] These criteria

include: (a) rules and regulations, and (b) subgroups for achievement of objectives. They differ from formal organizations in that they are small enough to have personal relations between all members.

In addition, the bayit does appear to act as a primary group for its members. The primary group according to Cooley, is one in which contact is personal, informal, intimate, usually face to face, and involving the entire personality.[123] This description appropriately characterizes the contact between bayitniks.

In looking at the objectives of the batim, it is necessary to distinguish between the objectives as understood by the bayitniks, as opposed to those intended by the founders of the Bayit Project. In a document drawn up by Kevin McCauley, the first director of the Bayit Project, the purpose of a bayit is stated as follows:

> A bayit allows college age Jews to live together and to experience a traditional Jewish lifestyle in a supportive environment that emphasizes cultural and social action and community involvement.

Interviewees often referred to the bayit as a support structure. The objective of communal living as a supportive network, seems to be well met in both batim studied. One interviewee commented: "It's easier to be Jewish in a bayit." This idea is supported in both batim and is consistent with the Bayit Project's philosophy that it is

easier to uphold Jewish traditions in a supportive group than as an individual alone.

Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller, UCLA hillel Director, also commented on the personal and communal objectives that a bayit fulfills. He stated that: "the bayit is an important vehicle for students to experiment individually and allows for students to intensify their Jewish lives." In addition, Rabbi Seidler-Feller said that the Westwood Bayit has been a positive influence on campus, and hopes that there can be a "bayit at every campus in the country, to be a creative Jewish presence."

Leadership training is an area in which the original objectives of the Bayit Project have needed modification. The Bayit Project hoped originally that the batim would invite speakers and outside programs in order to prepare the students for leadership in the outside community. The data suggests that the students are already so involved in community activities and in their own curricula, that they have little time or incentive for further involvements. Rather, any leadership preparation occurs as a result of the participation of students in outside organizations and the sharing of information which occurs in the batim. By observing the example of others, students who have not undertaken leadership roles may be challenged to attempt something new.

The resistance to outside programming from the Bayit Project appears to be related to a general reluctance on the part of the batim to give up their individual autonomy. In addition, they are concerned about becoming a public domain rather than a private house. An example of this is expressed in the following statement:

> ...We're not an organization... we're just a group of young people living Jewishly. We end up getting used as a referral sometimes for transient people... It's not impossible to use the bayit as a private home rather than an institution or an organization.

Role Differentiation

Role differentiation in both batim is most strongly related to what are referred to as tafkidim (tasks). At the weekly asefah (meeting), tasks are assigned. An effort is made to divide up the work equally. Whereas in Westwood Bayit, the larger bayit, it became necessary to divide up the work according to committees, the work at Northridge Bayit is divided between individual members. Some of the committees at Westwood Bayit include va'ad hutz (public relations committee) - which is responsible for relations with outside groups and organizations, and as recruitment of bayit applicants; va'ad tarbut (culture committee) - which is responsible for the cultural enrichment of the bayit; va'ad gizbarut (treasury committee) - responsible for

collecting rent and paying the bills; and va'ad tsrarut (work and repairs committee) - responsible for maintenance of the bayit. Community membership is rotated so that all bayit members can serve on various committees. The decisions and actions of the individual committees are reported to the bayit at the weekly asefah.

By contrast, at Northridge Bayit, individual members assume various responsibilities and report to the bayit at their asefah. The difference is due to the smaller size of the group.

In addition to the tasks outlined above, every member is expected to cook and clean up after the meal, at least once a week. Cooking is usually done with a partner or, in the case of Westwood Bayit, in a team of three. Each bayitnik is also held responsible for the cleaning or maintenance of a certain area. At Northridge Bayit where there is a large garden, at least one person is responsible for the maintenance of the garden. In the past, Northridge Bayit succeeded in producing its own vegetables, but more recently this effort has fallen by the wayside. Shabbat, the sabbath, brings with it many special chores, extra cooking, cleaning and preparation of the Friday evening service.

Shopping, is another task shared by all and is organized on a rotational basis. When there are a number of major tasks to be done, a yom avodah (work day), is

called for. This involves the whole bayit in a day of communal work, focused in tasks such as cleaning out the garage or weeding the lawn.

Division of tasks and responsibility seems to be the source of most conflict in both batim. Fellow bayitniks commonly complained that responsibilities were not fulfilled. Even though there is supposed to be equal division of labor, some people do more than others. This is often an issue of dissent at the weekly asefah, and seems to be a problem related to having a group which is both an informal primary group and a small organization. Since relationships are informal and intimate, there is no single authority figure to whom one is accountable. The individual's obligation to the group is largely dependent upon personal sentiments. The authors see no way out of this dilemma since the autonomy and democratic functioning of the batim are indispensable to the maintenance of the batim as private homes and not formal institutions.

A closer look at the asefah and the decision making process in the batim, reveals it to be a democratic process. Issues are brought up, discussed and voted upon. The majority decision stands. Although there is no formal hierarchy, a number of interviewees suggested that an informal hierarchy exists. One interviewee stated:

> There is definitely a hierarchy. Those who have been living here the longest are listened to

> more... they are given a little bit more credibility when they speak.

The seniority principle applies here. The longer one lives in a bayit the more respect one earns.

Values and Norms

Interviewees agree that one of the reasons for living in a bayit is to share common values and norms with others. The importance of Judaism a dominant value, especially when experienced in a communal environment. The norms around the ritual practice of Judaism seem to fluctuate with each generation of bayitniks and vary from one bayit to another. In the early stages of the Northridge Bayit, a member actually chose to leave because of some irreconcilable differences between the member and the bayit regarding the normative expression of Judaism in that bayit.

Some of the norms spoken about by most interviewees included: (a) mutual consideration and respect between members, (b) an expectation to socialize and involve oneself with the group, (c) acceptance of decisions made by the majority and, (d) a commitment to the group's goals.

Homans has listed four types of social control: (a) reciprocity - mutual responsibility of one to another, (2)

distribution of goods or favors to those who conform most, (3) equilibrium, where the individual conforms in order to maintain the equilibrium of the group and, (4) punishment, where the group determines an appropriate punsihment for breaking the norms.[124] Tuttles has argued that copresence, living together, makes people captive judges of each other's conduct.[125] It seems that in the batim, reciprocity, distribution of favors, punishment and copresence, are enough to maintain the equilibrium of the group, but not enough to ensure that all the members do their tasks. Since the members are not "fired" or held responsible to an authority figure, commitment to the bayit and personal integrity are the primary motivations for fulfilling one's responsibility.

Kanter, in her evaluation of communes, cites a lack of personal sacrifice and communion to be some of the factors leading to a breakdown of the commune.[126] Until now there has been enough commitment from the bayitniks to see the continuity of the batim. Only time will tell whether this will remain so.

The major mechanism of social control in the batim is peer pressure. Those who do not conform to the norms and expectations are negatively sanctioned. The "deviant" loses the respect of his/her peers. One interviewee suggested that a deviant may be punished by not being spoken to and left feeling isolated.

Thus far there have been only a few bayitniks asked to leave a bayit. There is a formal procedure for the removal of a bayitnik but it has not been enforced. The deviant apparently understands when it's time to leave. One bayitnik related the following incident:

> ...Last summer, someone did not do well in the bayit... she planned to stay for the summer, but it didn't work out... She wasn't used to sharing with others... I feel it was wrong what we did, but I felt we had to do it under the circumstances... We had to ask her to leave.

Weekly shopping highlights another norm. In Westwood Bayit it has been the norm not to spend communal food funds on "junk food." One interviewee described a variation from this norm:

> I guess a norm now is that you don't have to stick to the list you've been given. You can buy different things, yet it is also understood that you don't buy certain kinds of things. It changes but there is an unwritten kind of thing. You have freedom to do your own thing in the stores as long as you stay within certain bounds. Today I was surprised that two shoppers came home with cookies. Maybe they just changed a norm today. But I would be more surprised if they came home with potato chips, which we usually only buy for parties.

The type of foods purchased seems to change from year to year and is a reflection of changing bayit values.

Privacy was referred to often by interviewees as an issue. There seems to be an expectation among the bayitniks that their privacy is limited. However, there was considerable variation of opinion on this issue. Some

bayitniks described lack of privacy to be a problem, while others did not. Varying responses seem to correlate to ongoing conjugal relationships and to previous living experiences. Those involved in conjugal relationships were more likely to complain about lack of privacy; those who had previously lived in dormitories or shared a room with someone found more privacy in the bayit and did not complain about a lack thereof. There was no noticeable difference between the two batim on this issue, even though the houses differ in size and structure.

The dilemma of privacy versus companionship is well articulated by one of the bayitniks:

> Privacy is hard to come by. You can close your door; if your door's closed and your lights are out, people won't bother you. If your door's open, you'll probably be encountered and interacted with. I found it very hard to cut myself off. If I wanted to do serious studying, I'd go to the library. But if I heard people talking or giggling in the living room or in the hallway or in the kitchen, or the music was on, I'd open my door and walk out because I wanted to have a good time with my friends.

The trade-off seems to be that where one loses privacy, one gains companionship and need not struggle with loneliness.

Language is another significant aspect of bayit culture. Hebrew terminology is frequently interspersed with English. The names of committees, tasks and roles are referred to in Hebrew. This is a reflection of the Jewish identity of the bayitniks. Israel and Zionism are

issues permeating daily life. Evidence thereof is found in daily discussions as well as in Israeli and pro-Zionist posters on the walls. Upon walking into either bayit, there is little doubt that one is in a Jewish home.

Another aspect of bayit culture is the frequent and casual use of vulgarity in everyday dialogue. There appears to be little condemnation of this, although the co-author who lived at Northridge Bayit recalls moments of great tension when a bayitnik would determine that the vulgarity was going too far and would find it offensive. This has been a subject of complaint and discussion at the weekly asefah, yet seems to continue nevertheless.

A number of interviewees pointed out that bayit culture is subject to change and seems to be related to the larger social milieu. With the move in the 1980's to a more conservative society, the batim seem to be taking on a more conservative character. Whereas Westwood Bayit in its early years was composed of a relatively left wing group of people, this does not appear to be the trend today. This may also be related to the advent of the Bayit Project, an umbrella structure guaranteeing stability and support to the batim. One interviewee stated that before the Bayit Project, bayitniks had to fight for their survival. This fight may have attracted a more radical membership. Now that some level of security is guaranteed, a more conservative membership may be attracted.

4. Membership

The researchers asked many personal questions to get a sense of personal characteristics. While not easy to generalize, some trends do appear.

At Northridge, seven out of the nine bayitniks plus three ex-bayitniks were interviewed. At Westwood, six out of a potential of fifteen members and three past members were interviewed. (Westwood was trying to fill a few vacancies when the interviews took place.) In all, nine men and ten women were interviewed. The minimum of time spent living at the bayit was four months and the maximum was three years, although these three years were not consecutive years. Two of the Westwood bayitniks had already graduated from UCLA and were working, and one bayitnik at Northridge was not a full-time student.

Of the total bayitniks, four were from divorced parents, four were from families where one parent was deceased, and the rest had two parents living together. They were from families of as few as one child, and as many as six. Some bayitniks' families lived as close as a bicycles' ride away, while others had families who were in Israel. Most considered that they came from close families. Some mentioned that one parent had a strong sense of Jewish identity, or Zionistic affiliation.

For the majority of the bayitniks, Judaism was an important part of their family life. For some, there was

a strong Zionist involvement, for others a strong religious orientation, including Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox. Some of their families were active in synagogue/temple life. Most bayitniks had themselves been active members in various youth groups. All of the bayitniks had at least a minimal Hebrew/Sunday school education. Almost all were bar/bat mitzvah. Jewish observances in the home centered largely around the major holidays, Chanukah, Passover, and the High Holidays. A few families observed kashrut, and Shabbat, but they were the minority.

Many of the bayitniks mentioned that after high school, or even bar/bat mitzvah, they began to drift away from Judaism. In college, getting involved in Jewish activities with their peers, seemed to help make the change back. Two of the bayitniks had attended Brandeis Camp Institute; some had been involved in Hillel or the Israel Action Council on campus before they moved into the bayit.

All but one of the bayitniks, had spent some time in Israel. While the types of programs and amount of time lived there varied quite a bit, a few spent time on kibbutz, others studied at universities, and others went on youth trips. Most often, bayitniks had been in Israel as part of a group and for most, the experience was

important one in shaping their Jewish identity. As one interviewee from Westwood said:

> I was first on kibbutz. Then I went to two different development camps. It was a very important experience for me, obviously. I don't understand why, but it ended up being a kind of life changing experience. One thing that I found when I moved in to this house is that most everyone had been to Israel at least once.

Israel is a common bond for the bayitniks. Four of them have a desire to make aliyah. It is often after a trip to Israel, especially the Junior year abroad program, that students seek a Jewish communal setting. As one interviewee from Northridge said:

> When I first came back from Israel, I didn't want to move back home, not that I didn't enjoy it there, but I felt it was time to change that. I was looking around to see what kinds of possibilities there were. ...When I did get back home I heard about the bayit because it was just starting up. I continued living at home, and then interviewed with the bayitniks at the middle of July.

Many people find out about the bayit from friends, older siblings and through Hillel. As one bayitnik from Westwood said:

> I was active in Hillel and I was meeting people who were active in Hillel and in the other Jewish groups who lived here. I came here for a few parties and so when I wanted to move out of the house, I thought this would be a good place to come, because it wasn't totally a breaking away from everything. I would still be living with a supportive group of people.

Many students mentioned that the bayit was an attractive living situation for them as their first living

experience away from home, other than Israel. Others came after having lived in apartments and dormitories. According to one student:

> I guess a lot of it had to do with being a college student at UCLA. I had been living in the dorms at the time and the bayit seemed very appealing as an option for a living situation because, I was exploring getting closer to Judaism and learning more. So the timing was right. The people I met here I really liked. And I saw what was happening here, a kind of community I hadn't seen elsewhere. So, I asked to join it.

Many of the students mentioned a desire to experience community and a Jewish home environment. This desire may stem from taking an active part in different Jewish organizations. Many of the bayitniks told of past and continuing involvements with Hillel, Israel Action Council, and the Jewish Student Union. A number of students work for Jewish organizations as counselors and teachers. During summer many students work as camp counselors or Israel trip leaders. Others earn money by taking part time jobs on and off campus that may relate to their field of study.

Bayitniks study in many different disciplines and their educational backgrounds are quite diverse including biology, geography, education, psychology, and engineering. The majority of bayitniks were unsure about their future career goals. This could be due to the transitional time of life that student who are just about to

graduate, find themselves in. Many mentioned the possibility of graduate school. Some were aware that their ultimate goal was to work for the Jewish community, within education, communal service, or the rabbinate.

There is an application process in order for students to enter a bayit. The emphasis with the application process is on knowing the applicant and his or her level of Jewish interest. The potential bayitnik is asked to come to a shabbat, a week night meal, and an asefah. In this way the potential bayitnik becomes familiar with the bayit and the bayitniks get to know the applicant. An application procedure has been drawn up and provided to the batim for their use (See Appendix B.)

The applicant is then interviewed by the bayitniks at the asefah. The following is an excellent account of the process:

> We have copies of interview questions that got handed down over the years and we take turns in a circle. One person asking a question to the applicant and then another. The applicant has already seen the questions and also gives us written answers to two questions. So they have a chance to prepare their answer. The interview counts however more than the written application. We try to come to a consensus about that person. Is that person compatible with bayit living?

If accepted, there is no formal process of socializing bayitniks. Rather, the new bayitnik learns by trial and error. He/she is given a task to do and a brief exploration of bayit mores and rules. This is usually

done at an asefah. After this, the bayitnik needs to ask people for help and generally find his/her way around. On major tasks, such as shopping, an experienced bayitnik will go with the new bayitnik so that he/she can become familiar with the process.

One interviewee described the qualities of an ideal bayitnik as follows:

> ...Well to describe someone as a bayitnik ...is someone who's open to living with so many people and willing to negotiate and compromise a certain aspect of their living. Someone who wants a community and Jewishness.

Other characteristics mentioned included maturity, a minimum of eighteen years of age, willingness to share, and a commitment to take bayit life seriously.

There have been people who have not fared well in the bayit and have left on their own accord or were asked to leave. These people have been described as rigid, or irresponsible.

Communication

> ...The thing that's different about living in the bayit is that there were always people around. We always had partners to cook dinner together, so there was always someone cooking dinner in the kitchen
>
> ...And then if I don't have a meeting, I'm here (at the bayit) for dinner. It's nice to see everyone. Then, in the evenings, I usually have somewhere to go and then late at night I talk to people a lot.

One of the central features of bayit life is contact with other bayitniks throughout the day on different levels. There is much interaction at dinner time; in the preparing and eating of the meal. One of the most attractive features of bayit living is having people around to talk to and who wait for each other's arrival home. One bayitnik described communication in the bayit as follows:

> ...There are always communication problems, especially when you're a student. We don't always have time to work out these problems. It takes energy and effort to establish good communication with people...

Another person described a different atmosphere:

> Well, it varies. There's always a few people that you're close or friends with... Then some people that you're not so close to and sometimes some people really don't like each other. So, it's all levels of friendships and relationships around here.

Different types of relationships may be a result of group size. At Westwood Bayit, with its fifteen member capacity, the frequency of intimate relationships developing seems to be higher than at Northridge, where the maximum number of residents is nine. (In 1983 a flood caused damage to the house, and reduced the capacity from twenty-one to fifteen members.) From the first few generations of bayitniks at Westwood, there were quite a number of relationships that resulted in marriages. Still at Westwood there are currently a number of "couples" that

are easily identified as such by the other members. At Northridge, however, the only pair mentioned by the interviewees were a couple that had a relationship before the second partner was admitted to the bayit. Westwood residents usually felt that pairing was an excellent way for "nice Jewish boys to meet nice Jewish girls". However, at Northridge this notion seemed to be discouraged as it was found it would detract from the group.

Group size seems to be important here. Berelson and Steiner have argued that once a group exceeds around five to seven people, relationships become more impersonal and it becomes more difficult for each member to be taken in to account. It seems that Northridge Bayit with its smaller membership, is more careful to protect the familial nature of the house than Westwood Bayit. Other types of relationships develop and change:

> Each group is different and each is a complex web of associations and relationships. It's a very dynamic process. Bad will is usually overcome by good will because of the emphasis on hevrah (fellowship). And another reason is that our alliances for getting things done, for getting things we want, are constantly changing.

Although alliances are continually changing, there appears to be an emphasis on solving disputes for the sake of the community.

The degree and intensity of friendships seems to have changed over the years. Of the initial generations of bayitniks interviewed, most said that their closest

friends also lived in the bayit. One past member described the special feelings they had for one another:

> The thing is that the friendship between the bayit people was not like just friendships. It was much closer... But living in the bayit, you are with twenty other people, twenty four hours a day, you know what makes them mad, what makes them laugh. You have to tolerate all their different moods. And it is very challenging for twenty people to cope with each other, especially for Jews (he laughs). That's forty two different ideas.

A current bayitnik expressed a different and often heard response:

> ...See, in a way you don't really have to be that close to people. You're close but then you're not. I can't really say that I have a best friend here. I'm friends with everyone... I still have my own friends from before... and one doesn't have to interfere with the other.

There is ambivalence as to how close bayitniks should be with one another, a marked change from the past.

Nevertheless, there is still a special feeling that bayitniks feel for each other. Most likened this feeling to a family situation. Often in referring to their fellow bayitniks, terms such as brothers and sisters were used. The researchers sought to find out if the bayit serves as a surrogate family. They believe that this is the case. Many interviewees spoke about the emotional support from the bayit. This was often better than in their own families. As one interviewee expressed:

> I feel more at home with people my own age. Everybody here is within a five year range. At

> home I was the only one my age... There are people who you feel like they're your family, but there is no parent and no children. There's no parent-child relationship here.

This special feeling for one another may be a function of the structure of the bayit as well as the timing of the bayit in a young adult's quest for identity as an adult. The bayit functions with committees, in which each person is responsible for specific tasks. This can be likened to a family where each member has a responsibility. The bayit provides a structure for the transition period from adolescence to adulthood.

The researchers were interested to know if the bayit provides a surrogate family for those from single parent homes. Out of the nineteen bayitniks interviewed, eight were from divorced or widowed parents. However, the feelings expressed about the bayit as a special form of family were mentioned by people with both or only one parent. One ex-bayitnik summed it up well:

> Just a personal feeling that (from living in the bayit) I have more of a sense of family, belonging and commitment and love lasting for the rest of my life from that place than my own blood family, with an exception of one or two, because I have more in common with them (bayitniks).

The bonds that hold these bayitniks together is their shared participation in Judaism, involvement in the Jewish

community and being students. The bayit does provide a surrogate family-like support structure.

Another aspect that contributes to the sense of family is the physical structure of the bayit. At Northridge, which is a residential home in a residential district, this was mentioned. The home-like atmosphere is due to the home cooked meals, backyard and the dog. These aspects of family life were mentioned by Northridge bayitniks as part of the reasons why the bayit is more than a house. It is their home.

Cohesion

Cohesion refers to the forces which bind members of a group together. In the bayit these forces include: Judaism, which by its very nature is community oriented; the shared living environment; shared activities such as birthdays, parties, classes taken together, communal meals prepared and eaten together; and shared labor.

The significance of Shabbat as a cohesive experience is well articulated in the following statement made by a bayitnik. Reference is also made to the "in-house Shabbat," a periodic bayit activity held on Friday nights, during which the bayit members alone join in a experience designed to facilitate greater knowledge and understanding of one another:

> Shabbat is special, especially an in-house Shabbat, when we do on a rare occasion, have everybody there. We do games or some kind of group building activity, to get to know one another on a very different level. To share shabbat together really builds a unity of the group and fills us with the purpose of our being there. This is a time when we all come together. We really feel the essence of our group and bayit living.

The effect of shared tasks and decision-making during asefot (plural for asefah) is expressed by a bayitnik as follows:

> As opposed to dorm living, we're all connected - in asefot and in cooking. We all depend on each other to cook. You don't have that sort of thing in a dorm. We're all bayitniks. We are a group.

This statement is reminiscent of a sport team with a highly loyal and cohesive membership. The effort to do things together extends to the college, where bayitniks will sometimes deliberately take classes together:

> People would arrange classes so that they would be together with other bayitniks, so that they could do homework together, so that they could work on papers together. They would walk to school together. They would joke about the same teachers.

This statement was made by a UCLA bayitnik who also suggested that taking classes together was an antidote to the vastness and often isolating experience of a large campus.

Productivity

Shepherd's model, since it was not designed specifically for live-in groups, includes productivity as one of its criteria. This applies more appropriately to a task group which produces items that can be measured in some quantifiable way. Although one could argue that the batim "produce" individuals with an affinity for and knowledge of Judaism, as well as some preparation for leadership in the Jewish community, it is very difficult to measure the productivity of the bayit, based upon these criteria. Therefore the authors have chosen to view productivity as that part of Shepherd's model, least applicable to the bayit, finding that the other components of the model do in fact fit well and are most useful.

Autonomy

The issue of autonomy was clearly one of the most sensitive among the bayitniks. Highly protective of the right to determine their own fate, they expressed considerable ambivalence about being responsible to an umbrella structure such as the Bayit Project. Yet they realized the Bayit Project offers them financial stability and security they otherwise could not have. Since Westwood Bayit existed for many years before the advent of the

Bayit Project, Westwood members were most sensitive to the change. Some of these feelings are expressed in the following statement:

> I still consider the bayit to be an experimental life style. But, it is less so because we are becoming an institution. Before it was just a bunch of people coming together to live communally and cooperatively in a life style of our own choosing. Now we are owned by another, an outside person or group, and we are becoming part of a large organization. When that happens there is a move towards standardization and lack of the ability to make decisions for yourself.

Here the loss of autonomy is alluded to. This interviewee also addresses the psychological changes occurring among bayitniks as a result of the changing auspices:

> The other thing that has changed, is psychological. The members of the house are no longer struggling for themselves. They are guaranteed a roof. In the past we had to come up with our own rent. We had to be constantly thinking of our own existence. I think that caused us to be more ideological about things as well.

It seems with less need to struggle, the bayitniks tend to be less ideological. This notion runs in juxtaposition to the view expressed by Michael Goland, the underwriter of the Bayit Project. In an interview with Mr. Goland, he expressed the difficulty he found in being a student while simultaneously having time and energy for Jewish activism, when he was a student:

> Your primary reason for being on campus was to be a student, to go to classes and it took time

> for that and to study. You had to buy food for your apartment, clean your apartment and do normal house chores. After all that, then you could be an activist until you burned out. Burn out was a certainty because you couldn't afford to expend much time to any project. And, there was no emotional support or psychic reward for your efforts.
>
> So, I saw in looking at the Westwood Bayit, that there was a potential there for not having a burn out experience. By keeping the rent subsidized, you could keep the students from needing to go out and pick up part-time jobs in order to maintain themselves, as well as foster Jewish spirit.

An important principle of the Bayit Project is to provide low cost housing for Jewish students, enabling them to spend more time on Jewish activism. This seems to be a viable one. It is possible though, that by becoming too involved and making it too easy, the motivation for students to create may be reduced and replaced by complacency. One bayitnik put this very simply: "make it too easy and it won't go..."

The other side of the coin is that the bayitniks are thrilled to have the support that the Bayit Project offers. Maintenance of the houses is paid for by the Bayit Project. Members are getting a great deal for their money and seem to be grateful for that. Some have suggested that because of the Bayit Project, they have less personal involvement and commitment to the bayit because its continuity is not at risk.

> I guess the bayit will change because there will be less of a sense of urgency inside the bayit about continuity and perpetuating it. It used to be that the bayit was the only thing there was and people wanted to continue it even if they were leaving, in the hopes that some of them would stay while others were leaving, and they'd make their best effort to get the next group started. And if there were any problems, people would panic. Now there isn't any panic, but a feeling of stability. I don't think the house depends as much on its members as before, because there is this Project hanging over us that will preserve the continuity rather than the members themselves.

The challenge is to find a way in to continue to expand the project without: (a) becoming too institutionalized, and (b) without removing the autonomy which the students need, in order to feel a personal commitment to their bayit. Many of the bayitniks stressed that the individual character of each bayit should not be tampered with, since this was what made the batim unique alternatives to other Jewish institutions. Kevin McCauley and Michael Goland are not insensitive to this point. In interviews with them, both stressed the importance of allowing the batim as much freedom as possible, of acting only as a support structure. To quote Michael Goland: "People tend to put more of themselves into a project to which they have the direct responsibility and direct power to see how it runs."

Yet, somewhere in the translation of goals and expectations, the batim have nevertheless felt a need to be cautious. Bayitniks have expressed a fear that their

bayit will cease to be a private home. Some have expressed concern that since the Bayit Project is financed soley by one man, the batim are entirely dependent on his sentiments and good will for their survival. This creates some insecurity about the future. The root of this problem is founded upon a lack of trust, understanding, and mutually shared objectives between the bayitniks and the Bayit Project's administration. Possibly, students are being unreasonable in their expectations to be subsidized, without having any demands placed upon them whatsoever. One bayitnik referred to this: "...In a sense we were being selfish. We wanted to be saved, but we didn't want to have to do things 'their' way." Somewhere a balance needs to be found and trust needs to be built. At this point many of the bayitniks perceive themselves and the Bayit Project to be two separate camps. Clearly, work needs to be done so that the bayitniks and their benefactor can feel themselves to be in a symbiotic relationship with one another.

In evaluating the batim according to Shepherd, the following can be concluded: (a) there is a high congruence between the bayitniks, Hillel staff and the Bayit Project, regarding the objectives of bayit living, (b) roles are not clearly differentiated and are constantly changing, (c) values and norms are arrived at through a democratic process. There is a high degree of consensus as to what

the norms should be, but they are often not adhered to, (d) membership is heterogenious although all members have had some exposure to Jewish education and culture, (e) communication is characterized by familial type relationships. There is some ambivalence about how close to become with fellow bayitniks, (f) there is an ongoing effort to maintain a high level of cohesion, (g) bayitniks are very protective of their individual and group autonomy.

The following sections cover areas of importance which are not included in Shepherd's model.

Relationship of the Batim to the Community

A common theme energies from the interviews; the desire on the part of the batim to maintain an image of their bayit as a home and not an institution. There seems to be a greater willingness to affiliate as a bayit with organized Jewish institutions, than during the early Westwood Bayit era. This is probably related to the less radical character of the present bayit members.

One interviewee described the Westwood Bayit's relationship with the UCLA Jewish community as follows:

> In terms of the UCLA Jewish community, the bayit is becoming more and more prominent as its members become more a part of the mainstream, which they were not before.

This interviewee, as well as all the current bayitniks interviewed, described the relationship between the batim and the existing Jewish institutions as being very positive. Many of the bayitniks in each bayit are involved with Hillel, Habonim, Havurat Noar (a Jewish education program coordinated by the Bureau of Jewish Education), various temples, Jewish community centers and Jewish youth movements, acting as teachers, counselors, leaders or members. In the past few years, Westwood Bayit has had joint parties with Chabad - a Chasidic segment of the Jewish community, and sponsored a booth at the Dance for Freedom, a Jewish Federation Council sponsored event on behalf of Soviet Jewry.

Northridge Bayit has occasionally visited Menorah Village, the Jewish Home for the Aged. Many of this bayit's members are active in the local Hillel and involved with the Israel Action Council, a group designed to counter anti-Israel propaganda on campus.

The importance of the bayit's involvement in the Jewish community is stressed in the following statement:

> To have a bunch of Jewish young people from all different backgrounds and all different extremes, living together in a Jewish home because they want to, is pretty significant. They're involved in different Jewish activities. We've had Havurat Noar people, Hebrew teachers, Ha'Am people (the UCLA Jewish newspaper), people working on the various Jewish cultural and arts affairs and committees at UCLA and also in the community. We've had everything in the bayit. Different Zionist groups— the Western Zionist

> Caucus and the Progressive Zionist Youth Foundation. This is really a unique place, and I think it should be more known in the community and more involved in the community.

The power of the Jewish student network is alluded to here. This was acknowledged by both Michael Goland and Kevin McCauley. They expressed the view that unlike other groups who are affiliated with a particular organization or ideology, the bayit enables people from widely different backgrounds and affiliations to interact and grow.

Not all bayitniks are in favor of permeable boundaries between themselves and the Jewish community. A number expressed some resentment that Hillel and Chabad refer people to them who have no other place for food and shelter. These members do not want the Bayit to be viewed as a boarding house.

The relationship between Hillel and the batim, although at most times positive and cooperative, has had its areas of tension. This tension has been related to scheduling conflicts. At times Northridge Bayit scheduled events on the same evening that Northridge Hillel had planned one. The conflict of interest lay in the fact that many Hillel members, were also friends of the bayit. This situation was exacerbated because the Northridge Bayit had become the venue for a weekly Friday night discussion group sponsored by Jewish Outreach, a part of

Hillel. The Friday Night Bayit Program has been in existance for fourteen years, under the direction of Joyce Karchem. Having this program at the bayit, made the house a public domain for the evening. Even though the bayit agreed to allow this, mixed feelings continued. Efforts were made by both parties to alleviate these tensions and the situation improved greatly.

Rabbi Dan Dorfman, CSUN Hillel Director and Adele Lander Burke, Program Director also talked about the initial tensions and conflicts related to the issue of territory and constituency. These conflicts occurred mostly in the first year over scheduling of events. There was also a conflict when the Bayit Project chose to have a weekend retreat the same weekend as the Hillel Western Region Kallah Weekend. As many students who live at the batim are active and often leaders at Hillel, this caused a problem.

One solution to the confusion over the Friday night discussion program was mentioned by Rabbi Dorfman.

> I noticed in our publicity recently, like in the flyer, we're... calling the program "the Friday Night Bayit" and using that extensive three word title all the time to refer to that program more, to distinguish it from the bayit as a residential place. ...And maybe the presence of the Bayit program is one of the things which has inhibited the development of the feelings by the residents there. They know they have to be done by eight o'clock.

From these comments, it appears that there is a sensitivity on the part of the Hillel staff to the bayitniks.

Another solution proposed is to have a bayit liaison to Hillel to share information at the decision-making stages before conflicts occur. Overall the relationship has been a good one.

Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller of UCLA Hillel explained that the relationship there has always been excellent and of a cooperative nature. Once a month the bayitniks come to Hillel for Shabbat.

Jewish Practice and Content in Batim

When asked the question, "What is Jewish about the bayit?," the most frequent responses were "the people, shabbat, and kashrut." However, it is not just a group of Jews living together that makes the bayit Jewish, but that this group is involved in Jewish observances and Jewish life. Here is a typical and succinct viewpoint:

> Well, the basic fact is that everybody who lives here is Jewish and that we keep kosher and we're shomer shabbat. It's a Jewish atmosphere. Ninety nine percent of the people who live here work within the Jewish community.

Another interviewee expressed the following:

> I would say that first of all, what's Jewish about it... is the membership. We all are Jews here in the bayit. I know of one instance when

> there was a non-Jew in the bayit, but he was planning on converting, had a lot more Jewish knowledge than a lot of Jews living here anyway, and therefore, he was just about Jewish anyway.

The Shabbat celebration is a focal point of the week for the batim. It begins Friday afternoon with everyone rushing about to clean and do their tafkid (task). At sunset everyone lights candles together. At Westwood, Friday evening t'filot (services) are before dinner. The services are led by two different people each week. Sometimes instead of a traditional service, there may be a presentation about Shabbat. It is described below:

> Every week two people led t'filot, and they could do whatever within the realm of reasonableness. They could do music or storytelling. One time there were some skits done that were very creative. All kinds of English readings and Hebrew readings and poetry and anything and everything.

At Northridge, this pattern of having t'filot is not as well set. If they have the time and the people, members will do something. This could be due to their smaller size. Both houses celebrate Shabbat by doing kiddush (prayer over the wine) and motzi (prayer over the food), and having an extra special meal. At both houses, there are many discussions and a lot of singing. A version of birkat hamazon (the grace after meals) is usually chanted. Dancing and musical instruments are often used during or after the meal. Shabbat is a very

special time. Most often guests are invited. One past bayitnik recalled a typical bayit Shabbat:

> And we did the services all together as one unit. That was very beautiful. And then after services, we all held hands or put them around shoulders and we said the kiddush and then the motzi. And those are the moments you can never forget, that you become one with your friends and experience a moment of total peace and relaxation.

However, there is little group observance of Shabbat on Saturday. It is usually a quiet time. In the past, discussions have taken place. Few bayitniks attend Saturday morning services on their own. At both batim, there are timers on all the lights in the public areas. In addition, there is no cooking. However, the members are permitted to do as they wish in their own rooms.

Kashrut (the observance of the Jewish dietary laws) is another essential aspect of Jewish life at the bayit. At Northridge, which has a second house, and separate kitchens, one kitchen is for milk and the other for meat. When the Northridge Bayit was first established, the residents were all vegetarian. Now, they use both kitchens. Both batim keep meat and milk separate in the preparation and serving of food. Ingredients and packaging are checked when the shopping is done to insure kashrut. The levels of kashrut vary at each house. For example, at Westood only cheese without rennet is purchased, while at Northridge, any cheese is permissible.

Both houses use only kosher meat. Many an asefah is devoted to the discussion of kosher and non-kosher items. Especially on Passover, there was always a lengthy discussion of whether or not food had to have an "OU" symbol on it (symbol of the Union of Orthodox Congregations), or in the case of tea or coffee, whether it could just be a fresh package.

Passover and other holidays are also celebrated at the bayit. On Sukkot, members build a sukkah; on Chanukah, they light candles together. At Northridge, members have a special extra seder to which they invite their own families and friends. Purim is usually celebrated with a Purim party to which many Jewish students and friends are invited.

Comparison of Bayit to Prior Living Experiences

Many interviewees compared the bayit to previous living situations such as a kibbutz. One interviewee cited the fruit trees and the garden of Northridge Bayit as being somewhat like farming on a kibbutz; another cited the democratic decision-making process, a process in which every voice can be heard, because of the small size of the kibbutz. Similarly, bayitniks felt that they could make a noticeable impact upon the bayit.

A slightly different view was expressed by one bayitnik who felt that during his stay on kibbutz, he was unable to make much of an impact since the kibbutz was already a well established institution. In his view, the bayit is in a state of greater flexibility and therefore every individual can help shape the bayit he is in.

As previously noted, the majority of bayitniks interviewed have been to Israel, some for a short visit, others for many years.

Some compared the bayit to student dorms. Those who had lived in dorms felt that the bayit engendered a closeness between members that was not possible in the dorms for they felt less like a home. Shared cooking and eating were often mentioned as factors which made the bayit different from dormitory life.

The Impact of the Bayit on the Bayitniks

> ...It changed the course of my life. I appreciate the bayit, 'cause the bayit is a place where one can make important changes.....

The above sentiments were expressed by a young man at Westwood bayit who has lived there over two years. He continued by saying that his commitment to aliyah had begun before the bayit, "but the bayit was certainly very important and supportive and an educative environment for me."

Another member of Northidge Bayit expressed commitment to aliyah and community which had been intensified by living at the bayit.

> ...The experience itself has made a large impact on me. I would consider doing something similar in Israel. Maybe not a bayit but a group of people living near to celebrate holidays. It's nice to be able to with your spouse, but there is something sameach (happy) when you have a group of people and you do it. I have my dance records... but to put them on and dance by myself is no fun. I have to take it where everybody can do it together. You feel that community....

A different perspective was expressed by a woman at Northridge Bayit who came from a family where Judaism was not central:

> (Even after I leave)... I think I'd like to light candles on Friday nights. I think I'd like to have friends over for havdalah services and shabbat dinners. A friend shared it with me once and I thought it was strange 'cause you're just not used to it. But I am now. You get comfortable with traditions and things and things that remind you of who you are...

Another Northridge woman expressed her views about the bayit:

> I've learned more about a communal lifestyle. It has been a good experience living in the bayit with other Jewish people. To share common viewpoints and discussions and to celebrate Shabbat. The Shabbat has influenced me the most and its something I would like to celebrate later on.

People often emphasized a facet of Judaism different to what they grew up with. The bayit does not foster a group cult type experience which forces people to embrace

a total way of life and a specific ideology. Rather, the bayitniks choose aspects of Jewish and communal life relevant to them as adults. Almost all seemed to be more intensely or expressively Jewish and/or Zionistic than their parents. One past bayitnik, who will be making aliyah in the next few months, explained her experience thus:

> ... Before I got into the bayit I had graduated from Hebrew High, I was going to the University of Judaism. I certainly wasn't a non-identified Jew. But I was torn between traditional Judaism and the Zionism I had grown up with. I think the bayit environment encouraged me to mix the two together. ...I think a lot of it was the support, too, of the people with the same idea (aliyah)... They helped me keep the idea alive.

One past bayitnik from Northridge sees his role as a founding member of that bayit in terms of his future career:

> ...when I think in the future of jobs I would like, I think of myself as going in to a leadership position. I think of myself going into a position where I can create new things. ...I think of how can I implement something new. It's a different focus and I really wasn't thinking of this before the bayit....

This person has embarked on a career in Jewish communal service.

There were two exceptions to the trend of becoming more "religious" or Zionistic as a result of the bayit experience. Two men, one at Westwood and one at Northridge, raised within Orthodox institutions and modern traditional homes, are now less religiously observant:

> I think I'm more Jewish in the cultural sense. I go folk dancing and I'm more active in Jewish causes than before. I think I'm less religiously observant than before. I don't know that it's because of the bayit but it's during these last few years...

Aside from the Jewish aspect of life, bayit living taught most people acceptance of others:

> I learned a lot about living with people. I mean, I've been into situations before, but never this many people in one house. And there's a lot of responsibility you have to have. Make sure you keep your area clean. It's a lot of work.

Another bayitnik expressed a similar viewpoint:

> I learned a lot. I had come from a certain background Jewishly, socioeconomically, and culturally. There were people of different backgrounds here... different ages, different political affiliations.... different points of view... I learned a lot about people. Just to understand the differences more...

One experienced bayitnik summed up his experience well:

> I think I've gained a great amount of understanding about human interaction in general. I'm learning about what I would like to have in my home... And I'm also generally obtaining a very positive outlook towards the future of Judaism. ...In general, I would say that all we hear in other areas is all the terrible things that are happening to the Jewish people. Well this is one place where there are positive things that are happening.

The data on the batim indicate that their membership is homogenous, in that all the bayitniks come to the bayit with some Jewish education and background. However, the batim can be seen as heterogenous in that their members have a wide variety of Jewish experiences and affili-

ations. Their main reason for seeking out this experience is to share commonly held Jewish values and traditions with other students and to enjoy the supportive environment of a communal structure. The bayit clearly has a profound effect on the lives of these individuals. This experience occurs at a time when the individual has recently left his/her family of origin and is seeking a meaningful identity. The bayit offers the individual an opportunity to interact with peers on an intimate level, to experience autonomy within a shared and protective environment. This autonomy is highly treasured. Any effort to threaten the autonomy of the students, is met with great resistance. Consequently, the relationship between the bayitniks and the Bayit Project is highly charged and filled with ambivalences.

The bayit also offers the individual a chance to experiment with various levels of Judaism. Since the bayitniks are not affiliated with any single organization or ideology, the bayitniks learn a lot from each other about a wide spectrum of Jewish experience. This includes Jewish ritual practice, observance of Jewish traditions and discussions on Jewish issues.

The relationship of the batim to the community is characterized by a desire to participate in Jewish communal and religious life in the outside community,

while at the same time preserving the image of the bayit as a home.

While the number of students living in a bayit at one time, is very small relative to the number of Jewish students at a particular campus, the bayit's influence extends far beyond its walls. The bayit represents a significant Jewish presence on campus and serves as an example and an inspiration to many. This is made possible because of the networking effect created by having students from many different Jewish organizations living together in one place.

In the literature review, the authors cited Scherer who argues that a "synthetic community can be created and is worthwhile if it provides a satisfying and meaningful context in which man may order his social relationships."[127] Greeley, on the other hand argued that community is neither a goal nor a means, but rather a side effect resulting from the continual interaction of human beings.[128] The authors conclude that even though the batim have been artificially created, they nevertheless do provide a rich and meaningful community for their members, thus confirming Scherer's view.

The study cited by Lavender and Greenberg in the literature review, explored the impact that membership to the Hillel Kosher Dining Club at the University of Maryland had on the students' Jewish identity. The study

concluded that whereas Jewish students in general tend to decrease their Jewish identity as they proceed through college, those belonging to the club did not suffer a loss of Jewish identity. The authors of this thesis concur with Lavender and Greenberg's assessment that "an activity specifically oriented to the maintenance or increase of minority group identity, can effectively counter the influences of the larger secularizing environment."[129] The data affirms the fact that living in a _bayit_ helps Jewish students, at the very least to maintain their Jewish identity. However, in most cases, the Jewish identity of most _bayitniks_ is considerably strengthened as a result of the _bayit_ experience.

Rosenberg, in his account of the origins of the American Jewish community, described a community wanting to forget their Jewish heritage.[130] The authors believe that the emergence of _batim_ and other Jewish communal models such as _havurot_, are an expression of a new generation of Jews seeking to rediscover a heritage and a sense of community which offers them meaning.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

At the outset of this thesis, the authors sought to answer a number of questions:

a. What kinds of people come to live in a bayit?

b. What is their motivation and background?

c. What is the influence of the bayit upon their Jewish identity and personality in general?

d. Does the bayit serve as a surrogate family to students, an antidote to loneliness?

e. Are the batim viable vehicles for Jewish expression in the future?

The data in this study have been drawn from a sample of nineteen bayitniks, ten from Westwood Bayit and nine from Northridge Bayit. The interviews with the Bayit Project and Hillel staff were used to obtain a broader perspective on the subject and also to compare the data for any congruencies and/or discrepancies. The sample of bayitniks interviewed are a small proportion of the total number of people living in the batim sponsored by the Bayit Project. As a result since each bayit has its own specific character, the authors have been cautious not to make broad generalizations about all the batim in the Bayit Project or about the numerous batim at colleges

around the country which are independently sponsored. Bearing in mind these limitations, the following conclusions can be made:

(a). The vast majority of bayitniks have had some exposure to Jewish education, culture and traditions prior to their coming to live in a bayit. This suggests that the batim attract individuals who are already involved in some way with Jewish life. It appears unlikely that the batim will appeal to Jews who have had little Jewish education or who are highly assimilated. Therefore it cannot be argued that the batim are a significant factor in drawing unaffiliated Jews towards participation in the Jewish community. Rather, the batim seem to help already conscious and participating Jews to expand their repertoire and solidify their Jewish identity. Since this is not a longitudinal study, the authors were unable to analyze pre- and post-Bayit living, but all past bayitniks interviewed are currently actively involved in Jewish communal and religious life.

It can therefore be stated that, at the very least, batim serve to promote ongoing participation in Jewish life at a critical time in the life of the young adult.

(b). Contrary to the authors' expectations, there were very little data to substantiate the idea that the batim act as a refuge from alienation and loneliness. Whereas the literature on communes frequently refers to

communal life as a withdrawal from an alienating society, the data in this study suggest that bayitniks come to live in batim primarily to share common Jewish values and traditions with other Jews. Even though the subsidized rent is an incentive, it is not the major reason for participation in bayit life. By and large the bayitniks are committed to Jewish continuity and are willing to make certain sacrifices, such as privacy an private ownership of property, in order to share in a Jewish lifestyle.

(c). Without exception, bayit life appears to make a major impact upon the individual. Even those bayitniks who left their bayit after a short time, felt it to be a highly charged experience, in which the individual learned a lot about him/herself in relation to others and in relation to Judaism. The bayit experience comes at a time when the individual is in great flux, searching for a meaningful identity and a set of values by which to live. This factor, plus the power of peer group influence, seem to account for the great impact of bayit life on the individual.

(d). The bayit does serve as a surrogate family, for many of the bayitniks. Interviewees used words such as "mishpachah" (family), "home", and referred to fellow bayitniks as "brothers" and "sisters". The bayit experience comes at a time when bayitniks have recently left their families of origin. Therefore the bayit serves as

an excellent transition, a half-way station between the family of origin and the adult world.

(e). The batim clearly serve a valuable function for those students who are seeking to share Jewish values with other Jews. However, this experience is time-limited and appropriate only for a select few. It is highly unlikely that the bayit concept would ever expand to serve as a vehicle of Judaic expression for large numbers of people. The communal living experience appeals only to a few. Bayitniks seem to "burn out" after approximately two years, due to the intense nature of bayit life and due to the fact that the duration of their stay at college is time-limited. However, the symbolic importance of Jewish students openly living and celebrating their Judaism on campuses around the country is of great value. The networking effect of students from different Jewish organizations living and sharing together is also unique. The network extends beyond the bayitniks themselves and touches many others. This has the potential of inspiring other Jews to seek out a positive Jewish identity for themselves. In addition, the bayitniks come to a pluralistic understanding and sensitivity to a variety of Jewish viewpoints.

Whereas the bayit may not provide leadership training, it does facilitate leadership and active involvement in the Jewish community by virtue of being a support

structure and an arena for cultural and political exchange.

In addition to the original research questions posed, two issues of importance emerged and needed to be addressed. They were: (a) the impact of changing auspices and, (b) changing trends in the batim. The data received on these issues led to the following conclusions:

(a). The creation of the Bayit Project has had a definite impact on the way bayitniks perceive themselves and their bayit. There is some fear that they will lose their autonomy and that their future is contingent upon the relationship they have with Michael Goland and his representatives. At the same time, the bayitniks seem to enjoy the greater comfort and security of being financially subsidized. This ambivalence is reminiscent of the love/hate relationship between a father and his children. The benevolence is appreciated, but the paternalism is not. Clearly the relationship between the batim and their benefactor must be clarified and strengthened.

(b). The changing auspices of Westwood Bayit have brought about some changes in attitude on the part of bayitniks. Many felt they have less at stake now that there is an umbrella structure taking care of things. Since Northridge Bayit has been part of the Bayit Project since its inception, nothing can be said about the effect of changing auspices there.

(c). Changes in the membership and attitudes of the batim seem to be related to changing societal trends. A comparison of interviews with past bayit members and current bayitniks suggests a movement towards a more conservative membership. This is consistent with the conservative trend in society today.

The conclusions above and data received give rise to the recommendations which follow.

CHAPTER IX

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are provided in the hope that they will improve the bayit experience for those involved:

(1). When starting a new bayit, it is difficult to establish norms and meet the objectives of all the members. Before actually moving into a bayit it would be helpful to founding members to have a forum to meet and talk about their expectations. In this way, initial conflicts could be discussed and solutions worked out. For example, with the inception of Northridge Bayit, there was an initial split between the religious members and the secular Zionists. The Bayit Project Director could facilitate the discussion and help to provide some direction. A guide to setting up a new bayit could be provided to the new bayitniks to ease this process.

(2). A bayit contract, outlining the responsibilities of bayitniks to their bayit, has been drawn up. It is recommended that there be greater follow through with the application of this contract. None of the interviewees made any reference to the bayit contract. The expectations of, and services provided by the Bayit Project need to be clearly understood by prospective members.

(3). Many interviewees stated that they were slightly apprehensive when first moving into their bayit, although it did not take them long to adjust. An orientation, or partner system could aid in acclimating the new bayitnik.

(4). As so many bayitniks came to the bayit after being in Israel, it might be useful to recruit potential bayitniks from Israel programs. The local American Zionist Youth Foundation could be a link.

(5). Sharing of information between groups is important, especially when the constituencies overlap. At campuses where a Hillel or other Jewish organizations are present, the bayit at that campus should make a point of having a bayit liaison to the other groups. This would help to avoid organizational conflicts.

(6). The authors recommended that the membership of each bayit be limited to a maximum of fifteen members. Beyond this size it is unlikely that the intimacy and cohesion of the group will be maintained. The preferable range of membership should be from ten to fifteen bayitniks. The minimum number of ten is suggested, as it is in accordance with the Jewish tradition that ten people constitute a community.

(7). An oft mentioned problem of bayit living is that many bayitniks lose their motivation and energy after having lived in a bayit for more than two years. It is

thus recommended that the bayit experience be time limited. This would help to insure that bayit members maintain their motivations to participate and involve themselves actively in campus and bayit life during the course of their stay.

(8). Whether or not bayitniks can be students or full time workers was an issue that was often raised throughout the course of the interviews. The researchers recommend that only students only be admitted to the batim. It is further recommended that upon completion of their college program, students be given a six weeks grace period, after which they would be expected to leave the bayit.

(9). An effort needs to be made to help bayitniks make the transition from bayit living to life outside of the bayit. With the understanding that the bayit is a time limited experience, the Bayit Project staff could help bayitniks deal with their termination and transition to a different lifestyle. Referrals could be made to other Jewish resources in the community and so aid bayitniks in continuing their active involvement in Jewish life.

(10). It is critical that efforts be made to build more trust and understanding between the bayitniks and the Bayit Project. This could be facilitated by the Bayit Project Director. Some process for a regular mutual

exchange of information and feelings needs to be developed.

(11). The Bayit Project needs to allow the batim as much autonomy as possible so that they can grow and determine their own destinies with minimal outside intervention.

(12). The Bayit Project needs to set up a stable foundation so that the existence of the batim does not depend solely upon the sentiments and financial support of a single individual.

Jewish fellowship is an essential concept within Judaism and has past through the millenia of Jewish history to find expression in the twentieth century. Today, as in the past, Jews seek to explore and share Jewish values and rituals in a communal setting. The batim provide a nurturing environment in which this exploration and sharing can take place. For young Jewish students, this occurs at a critical time when the individual is on the threshold of adulthood and seeking a meaningful context within which to understand him/herself in relation to Judaism and to the world. Since this is a time when many college students stray from their Jewish heritage and values, it is critical that there be a place for Jewish students to live and share a Jewish lifestyle in a supportive communal environment. Therefore, the authors wholly support the continuity of the batim and

encourage ongoing support for their continued existence and proliferation.

Finally, to those college students who are in search of a meaningful Jewish experience, the authors encourage them to consider living in a bayit, and where none exists, to create one.

APPENDIX A

ETHNOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS FOR THE THESIS ON THE BATIM

General Questions

1. Could you describe your typical day in the Bayit?
2. Could you describe any atypical days in the Bayit?
3. What do you think is Jewish about living in the Bayit?
4. How long have you lived in the Bayit?
5. What other group living situation have you had?
6. How did you find out about the Bayit?
7. Why did you choose to live in a Bayit?
8. What were your expectations?
9. Have they been met?
10. How does bayit living compare to other experiences?
11. How do you feel about living here? (i.e. house itself, people in it...)
12. How does the Bayit function? How does it run?
13. How are tasks divided? (What is an asefah?)
14. How do people get along? Tell me about the relationships? Is there any sexual pairing? (Can you give me an example?)
15. Could you describe the relationship between the Bayit and other groups and organizations in the community and at school.
16. Can you describe the atmosphere here in the Bayit?
17. What else should I know about the Bayit in order for me to understand it?
18. What do you think is the significance of the Bayit in the Jewish community? (contribution, impact)
19. What are some of the norms and rules of Bayit living?

Personal Questions

1. Where are you from?

2. How old are you?

3. What is your educational background?

4. What are your career goals, if any?

5. Could you describe your family background? (parents, siblings, close relationships, divorce, death)

6. What are your hobbies or interests?

7. Do you work?

8. Are you associated with any other organizations?

9. As a result of living in the Bayit, what do you think you will take away? What did you give to the Bayit?

10. Would you like to continue ongoing relationships with some of the bayitniks after you have left?

11. What was your Jewish upbringing like? (holidays, affiliations, Hebrew schools, camp, family celebrations, religiosity, youth groups, knowledge of Hebrew)

12. Have you ever been to Israel? (describe type, length, location of trip)

13. What were you doing Jewishly before you came to the Bayit?

14. Do you do anything different now?

15. What would you like to take with you from this experience in your life for the future?

16. Does it take a special personality to stay here?

17. What is the screening process?

18. What types do you look for?

19. Who hasn't fared well here?

20. What keeps you here?

21. What about privacy?

22. How do you socialize new people?

23. What if a non-Jew wanted to live in the Bayit?

APPENDIX B

APPLICATION TO THE BAYIT

Dear Applicant:

Enclosed are the following:

1. Bayit Living Contract. This is a lease of time commitments. Some of them are specific while others are abstract, but both are of extreme importance at the Bayit. This requires your signature.
2. Life in the Bayit.
3. Bayit Interview Questions
4. Essay Questions.

Application Procedure

After you have read everything enclosed and have signed the Bayit Living Contract, answer the essay questions and return everything to the Bayit.

Each applicant is required to attend the following: One weekday evening meal (it is recommended that you come a little early so as to see what goes into toranut), and one Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat. Reserve a space at Shabbat by calling at least four days in advance. If you want to spend the night, let us know so we can accommodate

you. These are the "official" ways we get to know each other, but by no means should it be seen as necessarily limited to that. The more you come around and visit, the better you know the Bayit and vice versa.

If you have any questions, please call _____ and ask for a member of Vaad Chutz, or whoever can answer your question. Thank you very much for your time.

1. BAYIT LIVING CONTRACT

This is a living contract designed to allow the Bayit to work. It contains a list of agreements that allow a condition of "chevra" (communal spirit) to prevail. Each bayitnik must sign the contract as an acknowledgment of having read and accepted all of these. Living in a Bayit demands the awareness that you have selected the Bayit for your home as much as this community has selected you to be a member of it.

MONETARY COMMITMENTS

1. Agree to accept the responsibility of paying a fee for my room which will be at least $200 per month for each single room and $150 per month for each double room and a fee to cover the basic food costs, utilities, and such other charges as the Gizbar (treasurer) deems necessary with the consent of the rest of the house;
   a. My room fee will remain fixed for a twelve month period beginning the first day of the current school year, after which time this fee may be lowered or raised depending upon the number of students present in the house, mortgage payments, etc. Prospective fee increases will be circulated to each Bayit no later than 60 days before the end of the school year;

   b. Payment for room and board will be made by check or money order to the _____ Bayit, or by cash;

   c. Payment for room and board is due on the 15th of each month as payment for the following month;

   d. Failure to pay room and board by the last day of the month in which payment was due could result in forfeiture of my right to room and board and of any deposits I may have made;

   e. If I should decide, I have the option of vacating my room and discontinuing room and board payment on either of the following dates: December 31 (for both quarter and semester systems) or March 31 (for quarter system). If I wish to leave the Bayit on

December 31, I must give the _____ Bayit written notice of my intent by November 15. If I wish to leave the Bayit on March 31, I must give the _____ Bayit written notice of my intent by February 15;

f. If the Bayit should incur any pecuniary loss due to my leaving, I recognize the following guidelines for financing the debt;

(1) I am obligated to pay my monthly fees the end of the month in which I move out.

(2) New Bayitniks who move in will be asked to pay fees beginning the first of the month in which they move in.

(3) With respect to summer rentals, if a room or rooms should remain empty without fees being paid for them even after all attempts have been made to fill the space, the Bayit Project will assume responsibility for covering that additional portion of unpaid fees.

2. Agree to pay $15/person per month to cover the costs of all utilities in the House. All utility costs over and above this amount will be paid by the Bayit Project.

3. Agree to pay a deposit not to exceed $75 to the _____ Bayit which will be used by the Bayit to cover any of my obligations which I do not pay. My unused deposit will be returned at the end of the school year.

4. Agree to pay up to $30 per month per house for incidental repair costs. All incidental repair costs over this amount and all major repair costs will be covered by the Bayit Project.

5. The Bayit Project will subsidize the costs of Shabbat dinners and holiday observances and parties up to $60 per month per house. The houses will be expected to provide the Project with lists of guests entertained.

PERSONAL COMMITMENTS

1. Do avodah (work) once or twice a week as indicated on the avodah chart and keep your avodah area at the status specified.

2. Be responsible for a toranut (meal preparation and clean-up) once a week. If you can't make your tor (turn), arrange a replacement ahead of time.

3. The Bayit has a mandatory weekly meeting or asefah, every _____ starting at _____. There is a rotating alphabetical list of asefah chairpersons. You will chair an asefah when your turn arrives and take minutes at the preceding one.

4. Each Bayitnik is a member of one of the Bayit vaadot (committees). Participate with your vaad in handling whatever share of the community responsibility it holds.

5. Each Bayitnik participates in buying food for the house by going shopping on a rotational basis to be determined by the house.

6. Maintain the condition of Kashrut that exists in the Bayit community space. Unkosher food, other than meat and seafood, is allowed in private rooms only.

7. Pay your fees/food bill on time.

8. Be present for two Shabbat services and meals Friday evenings.

9. Be present at other community functions such as celebration of Chagim or Bayit open houses.

10. Prepare and lead a Friday evening Shabbat service (and use other Bayitniks as resource people as necessary).

11. Respect Bayit rules on Shabbat, parking procedures, and quiet hours.

12. Respect others' ideologies (such as vegetarianism or shomer-Shabbat).

13. Share the workload on avodah day or preparing for a Bayit event.

14. Clean up your own mess in community space.

15. Agree to live in the Bayit for at least one (1) year, but no longer than two (2) years.

16. Determine which Jewish campus and/or community organization you intend to participate in within the next year, your commitment and objectives, and the success and fulfillment goals you expect to obtain. Consult with Va'ad Chutz about specifics relating to this commitment.

In addition to these responsibilities, the Bayit also depends heavily on a community spirit that is not easily defined. On an individual level, this calls for each Bayitnik to develop an attitude of tolerance and respect that supports the community. For instance:

1. Be willing to live with other people. Be aware that what you do affects others.

2. Participate enthusiastically rather than begrudgingly. Aim for a high standard of excellence in what you do for the Bayit.

3. Quiet your ego enough to really hear what another Bayitnik says.

4. As a Bayitnik, your viewpoint on the Bayit is transformed from "them" to "us". The Bayit is your home; treat it that way!

I have read the Bayit living contract and I agree to keep all of the commitments and responsibilities required in the contract.

_____ _____ _____

Name (printed) Signature Date

2. LIFE IN THE BAYIT

The Bayit is made up of people with a common purpose - to help create, and be a part of, a tightly knit community with Jewish values. Some of the values most relevant to our living situation include: love of neighbor, learning, peace, high standards of justice, morality, and responsibility. The Jewish tradition is central to the Bayit experience as well as modern Jewish national concerns. The following is an elaboration of how these values find expression in the Bayit:

We are only people and friction is inevitable. It is then that love of neighbor - a consideration and respect for individuality - is essential. Love of peace reminds us of our need to sacrifice of ourselves to reach social compromise. Love of learning refers to the fact that we are serious students although we make sure to have a good time too (parties, sports, holiday activities, etc.). Responsibility cannot be emphasized enough. It means a conscientious performance of all duties from toranut, avodah and committee jobs to washing your dishes. Jewish tradition is dominant in our celebration of Shabbat and Chagim, and in Kashrut observance. Modern Jewish concerns are exemplified by bayitniks who are involved in Jewish activities and organizations both on the campus and in the general community.

This is our home and we are proud of it! We are looking for talented, enthusiastic people who will do more than the required minimum; who will give of themselves to solve Bayit problems that inevitably arise; who will bring joy and knowledge to our Shabbat service; who will make us proud of them through their actions in and outside of the Bayit.

3. BAYIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell us about your current and planned activities and interests. What is your major? Do you have a job? What classes are you taking? What extracurricular activities are you involved in?
2. What is your Jewish background? What areas of Judaism are most important to you?
3. Have you ever been to Israel? What is the extent of your commitment to Israel?
4. Have you ever lived in a cooperative or communal atmosphere? (i.e., kibbutz, summer camp, or apartment shared with other people). What did you find were the benefits and drawbacks of the experience?
5. Have you ever kept Kosher? To what extent do you observe Shabbat? How do you feel about our Bayit kashrut and shomer Shabbat practices?
6. Why do you want to live in the Bayit? What do you feel you can contribute to our community? You may expand on your essay question here if you wish.
7. Describe some instances where you have demonstrated commitment to your schoolwork, job, friends, etc.
8. Do you have any questions for us about what it is like to live here, any of the application information, or anything else?

4. ESSAY QUESTIONS

Please complete and return to the Bayit.

Name: _____ Birthdate: __/__/__

Home Address: _____ Phone: (__)_____

_____

Address where you can be reached -

until the end of May: _____ Phone: (__)_____

during the summer: _____ Phone: (__)_____

When can you move in: _____

Do you smoke? _____ Do you eat meat? _____

Days and nights available for interviews: _____

ESSAY

Feel free to use a separate sheet to complete the following questions:

1. Why do you want to live in the Bayit?

2. Describe your extra-curricular activities and interests (Jewish and non-Jewish) and any special talents you have.

APPENDIX C

REJOINDER STATEMENT

The researchers agreed to include statements made by the bayitniks after they had read a final draft of the thesis. The authors apologize that due to time constraints beyond their control, the bayitniks were not given more time to review the material.

What follows is a brief summary of the statements made by those bayitniks who did respond:

(a) One bayitnik suggested that the bayitniks themselves and not the Bayit Project should determine who may or may not be eligible to be a bayitnik.

(b) A bayitnik expressed the view that the results of this thesis may have been biased due to the fact that one of the authors was the Director of the Bayit Project at the time of this writing.

(c) A Westwood bayitnik commented that the process of Michael Goland's purchasing the Westwood Bayit was a long procedure, spanning two to three years, during which the bayitniks were unsure of the future of their bayit.

(d) Another bayitnik emphasized the fact that the Westwood Bayit had been in existance for many

years prior to the establishment of the Bayit Project.

(e) One bayitnik expressed resentment at the suggestion that the relationship between Michael Goland and the bayitniks is similar to a parent-child relationship.

(f) A Northridge bayitnik added that the Northridge Bayit is currently experimenting with a rotating rosh tafkid (overseer of tasks) system in which one member of the bayit does an inspection to see whether the tasks of the bayitniks have been completed before Shabbat. This bayitnik also suggested that a continual renewal of membership in the bayit instills new energy and new creativity, which promotes the continuity of the bayit.

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