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SCHOOL OF POLICY, PLANNING, and DEVELOPMENT

JEWISH SPANGLISH:
THE LATIN AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY OF LOS ANGELES

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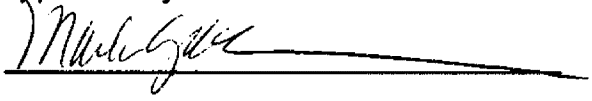

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JEWISH SPANGLISH:
THE LATIN AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY OF LOS ANGELES

By

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Jewish Spanglish: the Latin American Jewish Community of Los Angeles

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Several minority groups compose the Los Angeles Jewish Community. This study explores and describes the characteristics of the Latin American Jewish immigrants now settled in Los Angeles. Almost 150 surveys and more than 10 interviews were conducted to research the reasons for immigrating, adaptation processes, individual challenges, communal involvement and social interactions of these immigrants. The discussion of the findings includes a comparison with previous local and national Jewish studies as well as insights on the attributes and role the Latin American Jews can play in a diverse community as Los Angeles. The conclusions lead to a series of recommendations that take into account the particularities of Latin American Jews and the challenges and opportunities that living in Los Angeles represent. Although Latin American Jews have been present in the United States for a considerable period of time this study represents the first research of these characteristics ever done in Los Angeles and one of the firsts in the United States.

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Finally we want to thank the Latin American Jews who participated in this research, those immigrants who left their countries of origin, families, friends, language, and customs looking for a better future for their families. Their immigration stories and experiences are the soul and body of this thesis.

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Executive Summary

Several minority groups compose the Los Angeles Jewish Community. This study explores and describes the characteristics of the Latin American Jewish immigrants now settled in Los Angeles. Although Latin American Jews have been present in the United States for a considerable period of time, this study represents the first research of these characteristics ever done in Los Angeles and one of the firsts in the United States. This study does not pretend to be conclusive. It must be seen rather, as a first step in the study of the Latin American Jewish community in Los Angeles.

This study explores reasons for immigrating, adaptation processes, individual challenges, communal involvement and social interactions of these immigrants. Theoretical frameworks include identity, migration and adaptation theories. There is much to be learned from the unique experiences of this group of immigrants. An effort should be made to outreach to these Jews and attract them into a communal body.

Methodology

The study used an exploratory design to investigate and describe the composition and characteristics of the Latin American Jewish immigrants living in the Los Angeles area. Implementing quantitative and qualitative analysis this research aimed to develop the first steps towards understanding this specific group and its characteristics in comparison to the broader American Jewish community of Los Angeles.

In this study two modes of data collection were employed: mass survey and individual interviews with a smaller number of participants. To capture as many units as possible, a survey was developed and placed on a website in order to be answered in an electronic form. The survey was sent to 128 correct email addresses. From these, 47 answered directly on the Internet. 51 more people received and answered the survey forwarded by individuals other than the researchers. 44 completed surveys were gathered by distributing hard copies of the survey at meetings organized by different Latin American Jewish groups. Ultimately, 142 surveys were collected.

The instrument consisted of 38 optional questions. In order to be culturally sensitive the survey was developed in English and Spanish. Of the 142 respondents 121 – 85.2% – used the Spanish version while the other 21 – 14.8% – used the English one. Questions were designed to explore demographics; immigration reasons; adaptation patterns and experiences; current situation; philanthropic behavior; communal involvement and religious practices before and after immigration. After analyzing preliminary findings, a series of questions were developed for conducting in depth interviews with some of the participants. The quantitative data was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. Findings were supported by theory presented in the literature review. The qualitative data collected in the interviews was added exemplifying and also explaining people's expriences. Finally, results and findings were compiled; graphs and charts were added.

Findings

The two main reasons that Latin American Jews left their countries of origin and migrated to the United States are related to the opportunities for a better quality of life. 48% of people surveyed answered that they came to United States looking to guarantee a better future for themselves and their families, and 42% of the respondents immigrated seeking better economic opportunities. Among this group we find most of the Argentineans and Uruguayans who left their countries over the last 5 years. The economic crises, including high rates of unemployment, and deterioration in the quality of life pushed entire families and young adults to emigrate. 28% of the respondents identified studying as one of their reasons for emigration. 7% claimed that an adverse political situation was one of the reasons why they left their country of origin. Interestingly, the majority of these respondents left their countries of origin during the 1960s and 1970s.

The study shows that two thirds of respondents are from Argentina, while one fourth is from Mexico and the rest emigrated from different countries in Latin America. Two thirds of the participants are now citizens of the United States. 90% of respondents are married to another Jew and 67% of the couples are 100% Latin American.

Respondents identified language as one of the main barriers for adapting to American society. Relatedly, two thirds of the participants stated they speak Spanish at home. English and Hebrew are the other languages spoken at the home, mostly in households not composed by two Latin Americans or in families in which the children have been raised speaking English.

Two thirds of respondents emigrated somewhere else before settling in Southern California. Currently the west San Fernando Valley and the West Side of Los Angeles represent the areas where most are residing. This coincides more with the areas where the Jewish community is located than with the regions where Latinos live, in greater density.

As it is the experience of immigrants around the world and throughout history, Jewish immigrants from Latin America left families and friends behind. In this study 69% of respondents pointed out that they have at least one family member living in their country of origin. Interestingly, 43% of the respondents who have family members in their countries of origin consider the possibility of going back. Conversely, from the 31% of people who do not have family in their countries of origin, only 25% consider the possibility of going back.

Latin American Jews in Los Angeles have a high rate of employment. The percentages of types of employment breaks down in the following way: 41% are full time employees, 10% are part time employees, and 22.5% are self-employed. Further, 10% of those surveyed are full time students, 10% are retired, and 7% are unable to work. Interestingly, none of the Latino Jews who took the survey identified him/herself as unemployed. High rates of employment can be explained by exploring other variables such as level of education, either obtained in the country of origin or in the United States. 35% of people surveyed attained a Bachelors degree. Moreover, people holding Masters, Medical and Dental degrees, comprise another 24%.

When we compare the level of religious practice for Latino Jews when living in their country of origin, and the same group after their immigration, some differences can be observed. All of the variables associated with religious practice at home increase after people become established in Los Angeles. Even though respondents increased their religious practice, synagogue attendance rates decreased. Compared with both the national and the Los Angeles Jewish population studies the rates for synagogue attendance of Latin American Jewish immigrants in Los Angeles are low.

48% of the respondents identified Conservative Judaism as their religious affiliation and 21%, the Reform movement. Further, 11% of the people surveyed identified as orthodox; 1.4% reconstructionsts (this movement has no presence in Latin America) and 17% answered that they have no religious denomination. Some of the respondents pointed out that they struggled between identifying themselves as Reform or Conservative Jews.

Regarding social affinity, 54% of the respondents identified Latin American Jews as the group with which they have the closest relationship. Further, 31% of the respondents identified American Jews as the closest affinity group, 7% pointed American non-Jews, and another 7% identified Latin American non-Jews. These levels of affinity are reflected in the existence and self-organization of Latin American Jewish formal and informal groups such as Bnai Brith, Latin American Jewish Association, Hillel Latino Jews group, Hebraica, and the Latin American Jews Chavurah. The creation of these organizations is also related to the high rates of institutional participation respondents had in their countries of

origin. Now in Los Angeles, almost half of respondents are synagogue and Jewish Community Center members.

Latin American Jews in Los Angeles also have a stronger connection with Israel. Findings showed that more than 82% of the people surveyed have visited Israel at least once. Further, from those who have visited Israel, more than half have been in the country three times, and almost a third have been to Israel five or more times. It is important to note that almost three quarters of respondents have family in Israel.

Communal involvement is reflected also in levels of charitable contributions. Findings showed that 65% of the respondents contribute to some organization and/or cause. From these, 29% give exclusively to Jewish organizations or causes, and 68% donate to both Jewish and non-Jewish causes.

Conclusions

As the study showed, Jews all over Latin American countries faced similar constraints and opportunities. Molded by their cultural heritage, they made similar adaptations. Latin American Jews compose a heterogeneous group, as there was a wide variance in the variables that influenced the experiences of our research sample group. A main variance appeared in the period of time in which they emigrated their countries of origin, and settled in Los Angeles. Those who emigrated in the 1960s and 1970s left behind a completely different social, economical, and political reality than those who left their countries in the 1990s and 2000s. Not only because of the country's status in general, but also because

the Jewish communities in which they lived were totally different in structure, participation, and numbers. Nonetheless, indicators such as the fact that Latin American Jews have created their own formal and informal organizations, and that they feel more affinity towards other Latin American Jews suggests that Latin American Jews in Los Angeles do identify themselves as a community.

In general, people expressed that Latino Jews are not seen as a group by the Angelino Jewish community, or by the general population.

Language is one of the strongest elements that define the Latin American Jewish community. Latino Jewish organizations are run in Spanish, and one of the reasons why Latino Jewish immigrants have strong connections among themselves is because they feel more comfortable conversing in Spanish. Nonetheless, Latin American Jews are well integrated in the American society and participate in Angelino Jewish organizations.

High levels of commitment with and support of Jewish causes and Israel reinforce this idea. Conversely, the affiliation rate to Latino organizations is very low, and as the findings indicated, Latin American Jews have a stronger affinity towards American Jews than to non-Jewish Latinos. All of this suggests that the Jewish culture, over the Latino culture, plays an important role in modeling these immigrants' identity.

In general, Latino Jews do not regret their decision of immigration. Indeed, only one third of the respondents consider the possibility of going back to their country of origin. As many of them explained, although it might be challenging in the beginning, they are happy with both the quality of life they have achieved,

and the opportunities for their children. Some of the principal challenges that interviewees identified include, language barriers and cultural differences, in particular, the way in which social relationships are established.

In the last decade, adverse social and economic situations have pushed thousands of Latin American Jews to leave their countries of origin. This flow of new immigrants, mainly from Argentina and Uruguay –those most affected by these crises- has contributed to the growth of the Latino Jewish community in Los Angeles. The principal challenge for Latin American Jews will be in finding the balance between integration with the Jewish American society, and preservation of a Latin American Jewish identity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and aiming to meet the needs of this group of immigrants this study recommends, among other areas which follow, creating a data-base of Latin American Jews living in the Los Angeles area and the Latin American Jewish yellow pages. These two instruments will improve the social network and mutual support for all Latin American Jewish immigrants.

Moreover it is necessary to improve the technical skills of Latino Jewish organizations in order to channel the passion and commitment this group has for the Jewish community. These organizations also provide the environment for keeping and promoting Latin American Jewish culture. In addition, the organized Los Angeles Jewish community should engage in outreach and ingagement with Latino Jews. The Latin American Jews' dual culture, involvement and commitment with the community make them perfect candidates to foster relations

between the Jewish and Latino community. Furthermore, by networking with other immigrants' organizations, Latin American Jewish organizations could benefit learning from other communities' experiences, having access to more services, such as social support, cultural events and interchanges, technical assistance, and more.

Additionally, building relationships with other minority groups would help to strengthen Latin American group identity. Lastly and since this study is one of the first aiming to explore this group of immigrants, there is a need for further research. Further research should explore how the Latin American Jewish background manifests itself in second and third generations. A longitudinal study would be useful in analyzing Jewish and Latino identities and continuity in future generations. Overall, more research and information will help to increase the knowledge and awareness about the contributions and needs of the different minority groups that compose the Jewish community of Los Angeles.

Introduction

As the only Latin American Jews studying at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles we have felt that people are curious about our backgrounds and experiences. Very often we found ourselves telling our classmates, professors, and interested people not only about our personal stories but also our community's history, culture and customs. However, ours is only one experience and point of view of what being a Latin American Jew living in Los Angeles means.

We started this study with the hope of casting some light on the realities, strengths, problems, and aspirations of the thousands of Latino Jews living in Los Angeles. On one hand we believe that there is something to be learned from the unique experiences of this group of immigrants. On the other hand, we understand that an effort should be made to reach out to these Jews and attract them into a communal body.

This study does not pretend to be conclusive. It must be seen rather, as a first step in the study of the Latin American Jewish community in Los Angeles.

Jews from Latin America in Los Angeles: Literature Review

Jews all over Latin America have faced similar constraints and opportunities. Molded by their own cultural heritage, they made similar adaptations. *"The result was the emergence of an identifiable Latin American Jewry, sharing certain economic, cultural, and social characteristics that distinguish them both from their matrix populations and from the Jewries of other countries" (Elkin, 1998, p. Xiii)*. Some of the shared characteristics included their origin as immigrants, a distinctive demographic profile, characteristic lifestyle, and mode of acculturation. Despite difference of nuance, Latin American Jews constitute an identifiable group (Elkin, 1998).

It is broadly claimed that Jewish historians and sociologists tend to overlook Latin America, grouping its Jewish communities under "others" after more salient groups have been investigated. Neither have Latin American Jews been an area of interest of Latin American historians. Overlooked by these two groups of academics, there is not much research literature about Latin American Jewish history and sociology. Even less has been written about the experiences of those Latin American Jews who have emigrated from their countries of origins to specific geographic areas in the United States, such as Los Angeles.

In Los Angeles, Latin American Jewish immigrants comprise approximately 0.75 percent, or nearly 3,200 of the 520,000 Jewish Angelinos. Although most of them have emigrated from Mexico and Argentina (Los Angeles Jewish Population Survey 1997); these Jews have arrived from diverse countries, including: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica,

Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

It is interesting to question whether people coming from so many different countries can still be considered a "group". This question leads us to reflect the meaning of such terms as group, or group identity. Do immigrants coming to Los Angeles from such diverse countries of origin share any kind of group identity? Is there anything in common among Latin American Jews in Los Angeles? Do they identify with each other as members of the same group? To what extent are Latin American Jews in Los Angeles aware of their dual identity?

Before starting to analyze and answer these questions, it is necessary to explore the literature on identity, collective identity, community, immigration experience, and adaptation process.

Identity:

Taylor and Spencer (2004) posited that the concept of Identity has dual meaning. It is a concept that embodies people's sense of uniqueness as individual beings and as members of groups which share values and beliefs. It is also an intensely political field in which the expansion of critical theory has allowed the emergence of competing voices demanding space for recognition of fragile and unspoken subjectivities. In this sense, Jenkins (2004) stated that contemporary literature has treated identity as something too simple.

Contemporary writings have not been sufficient to understand the process of how identity works or is worked, and to the social construction of identity in interaction and institutionally. Indeed, *"identity"* is an uneasy concept. "One thinks

of identity when one is unsure where one belongs" (Bauman, 1996, as cited by Taylor & Spencer, p.1). Recent interventions question the attempts of dominant groups in society to impose single definitions on such domains as sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, etc.

Taylor and Spencer (2004) argued that there is a dichotomous nature in the idea of identity. They referred to the work of Mead (1934) "We cannot realize ourselves except in so far as we can recognize the other in his relationship to us. It is as he takes the attitude of the other that the individual is able to realize himself as a self." It is clear that there is a constant dialogue between the *"I"* and the *"me"*, a negotiation between the internal and external worlds of the self. In this regard, Jenkins (2004) underscored that *"Individual identity-embodied in selfhood- is not a meaningful proposition in isolation from the human world of other people."* *Even though individuals are unique and variable, selfhood is thoroughly socially constructed; through an ongoing process of socialization individuals define and redefine themselves. This* internal-external dialectic of identification *is the process whereby all identities –individual and collective- are constituted.*

In any social situation individuals project an image, an identity to those who are around which may face approval or disapproval, acceptance or rejection. In any case, as senders of the image, individuals constantly monitor their self-presentations, and as a result individual and collective identity is open to continuous reassessment (Taylor & Spencer, 2004). Accordingly, Bourdieu (1992) (as explained by Taylor & Spencer, 2004) brought up the concept of

"habitus": an internalized grammar of practices developed through lived experiences that make individuals attribute meaning in their lives. Although there are certain differences in each individual's habitus, the individual has also been steeped in the specific traditions of a group, embodying its social codes. In this sense, identity is in part a uniquely personal, internal sense of self, but at the same time it relates to that person's place in society and how they are categorized. *"...our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence. Often by the misrecognition of others. Non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm and can be a form of oppression imprisoning someone in a false distorted and reduced mode of being "* (Hall, 2000 as quoted by Taylor & Spencer, 2004, p.3). For example, the tendency to classify diverse groups of people as homogeneous could have troubling implications. The persistence of "misconceptions" over generations is called stereotypes. As a political concept identity reflects the constant efforts to escape, fix, or perpetuate images and meanings of others.

Collective Identity

Collective identification evokes powerful imagery of people who are in some respect similar to each other. People must have something significant in common before they can be defined as a collectivity. However, this similarity cannot be distinguished without thinking about differentiation (Jenkins, 2004). In this regard, Horboken (2004) pointed out that just as individual identity is formed through membership of a group with both psychological and territorial protection of one's self, collective identity is built through the in-group – out-group

relationships, through emphasizing differences between groups, communities, and cultures. "*It is the idea of difference and opposition that unites people within their particular groups or communities and, thus, the feelings of belonging and otherness are the most important and necessary feelings needed by any social group to survive or even preserve its unique cultural profile*" (p.200). One of the things that all the people share is their difference from others. Saying something about others implies saying something about us. By comparison people discover what they are and what they are not.

Jenkins (2004) explained that there are two different types of collectivity, and thus two different modes of collective identification. In the first model the members of a collectivity can identify themselves as such: they know who they are. In the second one, members may be ignorant of their membership or even of the collectivity's existence. The first exists as its members recognize it; the second is constituted in its recognition by observers. A different way of looking at this could be to claim that there are not two different kinds of communities, but two different ways of looking at and analyzing the interaction of individuals in a community (Jenkins, 2004). From this point of view, a group is intersubjectively real. "Group identity" is the product of collective internal definition, which is generated in the process of identifications of similarity and difference; conversely, categorization is often a process of collective external definition. It means, "*their definition according to criteria of our adoption*" (p.82). Therefore, categorization can be understood as a way of how individuals make sense of, and impute predictability to, a complex human world of which their knowledge is always

partial. Categorizing allows individuals to have the illusion that they know what to expect from a certain group (Jenkins, 2004). It is interesting to note that while group membership requires a relationship between members, although they do not know each other personally, membership in a category does not. In fact, "*collectivity means having something in common, whether real or imagined, trivial or important, strong or weak. Without some commonalty there can be not collectivity*" (p.108). This study will allow us to analyze the significance of the idea of collectivity and membership for Latin American Jews. What is it that all the members of the group share in common? Furthermore, how do American Jews perceive Latin American Jews?

Community

Similar to the idea of collectivity, the concept of "community" encompasses notions of similarity and difference, or "us" and "them". "Community" can be compared with the notion of "culture": the community as a culture *"does not consist on the social structure, it inheres, rather in the thinking about it. It is in this sense that we can speak of the community as a symbolic, rather than a structural, construct"*. (Cohen, 1985, as quoted by Jenkins, 2004).

Bibas (1998) explained that community consists of clusters of personal networks of individuals from the same group of origin. The dense web of primary relations in which they are enmeshed with individuals of their own group category stand in sharp contrast with the instrumental and superficial character of the relationships they maintain with individuals who belong to other categories. It is these discontinuities created by the differences in the two different sets of social

relations that mark off the line of distinction between "insiders" and "outsiders" and demarcate the boundaries that separate the different communities within a pluralistic society.

Communities are composed by symbols, and those symbols are responsible for generating a sense of shared belonging. Shared rituals, such as weddings, funerals, or a sport team, can be symbols of a community. In addition, "community" is in itself a symbolic construct upon which people draw, rhetorically and strategically. Claims to act in the best interests of the community or to represent the community are powerful. Finally, community membership means sharing with other community members a similar "sense of things", participation in a common symbolic domain. This means that the members of the community understand symbolic artifacts in similar ways. They share basic assumptions and values about what the different artifacts mean.

Regarding organizations as cultures, Stewart (1994 pointed out that culture and communication are inseparable. "Culture is communication and communication is culture" (Hall, as cited by Stewart, 1994). The author agreed that the way we communicate, what we believe, what we say, the language system we use, the gestures we employ, are all functions of the culture we acquire. How we relate nonverbally to others is learned from the culture in which we grow up. How we dress, use of time, the smells we savor, the distances we use to interact with others, and when, where, and to whom we maintain eye contact are all dictated by culture. Therefore, broadly defined, culture is the deposit of knowledge, experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings,

hierarchies, religion, timing, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and materials objects and possessions acquired by a large group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. "*While cultural differences should be cherished and embraced, commonalities should be highlighted, for it is through commonalities that relationships are formed.*"

Immigration

Studying the causes of cross-country immigration to United States Yang (1995) pointed out that an appropriate analysis of cross-country immigration to the United States must be studied only after the year 1965. Post 1965 immigration to the United States is an international phenomenon rather than just a national or individual phenomenon. It occurs in an increasingly interdependent world system, within which multidimensional forces, whether international, national, communal, or individual, interact to affect migration decisions and outcomes.

Yang (1995) synthesized the main ideas of the Immigration Theories: *Development Theory was the most common explanation of cross-country migration until mid-1970s. Basically this theory assumes that every society is located at certain stages of development and will transform from traditional to modern societies or from a lower level of development to a higher level of development. Corresponding to different stages of development, migration goes from less developed societies to more advanced ones. It suggests that cross-national inequalities in the level of development are underlying conditions pertinent to migration. However, this theory has some limitations: first, some*

empirical evidence based on single-country case studies challenges the claim of development theory that such development problems as overpopulation, economic stagnation, and poverty determine immigration. Second, an exclusive focus on factors of sending countries is single-sided and almost does not finally capture some important elements in the immigration process. In addition, underdevelopment may only partially explain why people want to migrate but cannot explain why they do so.

"World System Theory" was developed in the late 1970s. It attributes the causes of international migration to the constantly changing capitalist world system. Contrary to the prediction of dependency theory[1], World system theorists hypothesize that foreign investment in and trade with sending countries will increase immigration. In addition, it underscores the interaction between the sending country and United States, as well as places immigration in the global context by linking immigration flow with other flows such as capital and commodities. Lastly, World system theory views immigration as one of the consequences of global inequalities, and one of the processes of the world economy. Nevertheless this theory is not free of problems. Firstly, it neither pays much attention to social factors nor has incorporated immigrant social networks into the analysis, even though extent research has proven that variable to be crucial in any cross-national movement.

"Immigrants' Social-Network Theory" has pointed to the prominent role of immigrants' social networks in the immigration process. These networks include

[1] Dependency theory posits that the cause of the low levels of development in less economically developed countries (LEDC's) is caused by their reliance and *dependence* on more economically developed countries (MEDC's) - i.e. the LEDC's are undeveloped because they rely on the MEDC's

personal relationships based on kinship, friendship, common origins, common ethnicity, and institutional arrangements. The main idea here is that entry to the United States will depend on the support system provided by immigrants' relatives or friends or by institutions in the receiving country. In addition, the networks provide information that the immigrants need to know in advance, such as travel fares, room and board accommodation, job arrangements, and language training. Immigrant's social network theory contributes to the understanding of the immigration process by highlighting the social facet of immigration. For actual immigration to occur, one needs not only motivation, but also resources, and in particular, social resources. This theory too has a number of limitations: It does not address the motivation of migration. Motivation may be determined by conditions in home countries and United States influences, although it might be partly associated with the influence of migrant social networks (Yang, 1995).

The different theories proposed above contain partial truths, but none sufficiently analyzes immigration to the United States. A comprehensive explanation should include both motivational and capability factors. In this regard, Mckee (2000) pointed out that migration is not random, nor is it just biologically determined. It is selective and frequently influenced by such demographic characteristics as race, age, gender, and host of other variables including educational attainment, occupation, and marital status, as well as economic and political pressures generally associated with specific geographic areas.

Immigration outcome is a product of both the desire and the ability to move. In addition, motivation for immigration is induced by the gap between local reality and immigrants' aspirations for a better life, as well as exposure to external influences. Capability is associated with immigrants' migration resources (Yang, 1995). Many persons emigrate in search of better jobs, higher wages, and general improvements in their quality of life. Conversely, by some estimates, more than 100 million persons have been forced to move because of ecological changes in their homelands, civil or international war, differences in political ideologies, or pressing economical conditions (Mackee, 2000).

Yang (1995) pointed out some direct and indirect influences of structural factors of immigration:

1.Domestic development: variables such as demographic development, economic development, and political conditions, that encourages people to immigrate to the United States.

2.United States involvement: economic, military, and cultural interactions with sending countries, which may influence people's motivations to immigrate.

3.Immigrants' migration resources: potential migrants' physical capital, human capital, and social capital, which determine their ability to move.

4.Emigration policy: regulations of sending countries governing their citizens' emigration to foreign countries. This is the policy variable (Yang, 1995).

When analyzing Jewish migration from and to different countries, Green (2000), identified some key issues that influence the migration process. Firstly, the perceptions of potential destinations before departure influence the decision.

Secondly, the numbers and timing of migration in each city affect acculturation. The third important factor to analyze is the influence of existing communities in the adaptation of newcomers. Regarding this last factor the author pointed out that local Jewish communities act as intermediaries in the acculturation process. Jewish immigration experiences are discussed later in this section.

Adaptation

McKee (2000) suggested that immigrants' adaptation to American society has been based upon concepts like Anglo-conformity, the melting pot, and cultural pluralism. The Anglo-conformity concept involves keeping English as the official language and adopting Anglo-culture norms as the standard of life. The author argued that for non-European groups, some acculturation has occurred, but structural assimilation has not taken place. Prejudice, discrimination, and even segregation have kept many minority groups in a subordinate position. The melting pot concept assumes that as different ethnic groups come to the United States, they intermingle, thereby producing a new composite national stock and a new breed called the "American". However, the author explained, in practice the melting pot concept has become similar to that of Anglo-conformity. Contributions by minorities have been ignored and through time have been lost in "the pot". A third alternative to these concepts is cultural pluralism or multiculturalism. This concept enables a minority group to keep its identity and to maintain its culture yet participate in the majority society. Nonetheless, multiculturalism based upon prejudice and inferiority of certain ethnic groups is not a sensible substitute to the concepts presented above. A society with these characteristics creates place for

subcultures in a pluralistic society where some of the subcultures function close to the mainstream while others are on the margin of plural acceptance.

Brody (1970) explained that *"adaptation"* in the psychological sense refers to the process of establishing and maintaining a relatively stable reciprocal relationship with the physical, social, and interpersonal environment. The interplay between defensive and adaptive processes is a function of past history and present environmental circumstances. A shift in residence involves new places, new faces and new norms. Movement over distance implies the crossing of social system boundaries. The migrant leaves behind the supports and stresses of the system from which he/she departs, including the push factors that contributed to the decision to relocate. He/she loses the support of social and geographic familiarity, and of long-term relationships and values. At the same time the migrant is freed of some of past threats, such as the obligation to perform in expected ways, and certain stressful relationships. He/she is welcomed by the receptor networks or must deal with resistances in the new host system. There is excitement from new stimuli and opportunities and fear of new threats and the unknown. Between the two systems, the individual must cope with a series of transitional factors, which affect perceptions, attitudes, and one's capacity to deal with the host environment. The adaptation throughout is shaped by internal motives for moving, which may have little to do with environmental push or pull factors.

During the 1960s researchers developed several theories that explain how minorities adapt to dominant-minority relationships. These theories are generally

named "race relations cycles". One such theory, developed by Marden and Meyer (as cited by McKee), suggests a cycle involving five stages: separatism, accommodation, acculturation, assimilation, and amalgamation. Separatism refers to the geographic separation of a group in order to maintain their way of life. Some groups tend to cluster to promote self-needs and security. In the accommodation stage the minority must, out of necessity, adopt various traits and conform in varying degrees to the wishes and behavior of the dominant group. Acculturation is the process whereby individuals adopt traits from another group. Usually the adoption of material traits, language, and secular behavior is undertaken. Certain elements of the minority culture, however, may be maintained and practiced in a subcultural fashion. Later, cultural attitudes, values and other nonmaterial traits from the dominant culture are acquired. Assimilation occurs when a minority individual or group fully adopts the cultural traits of the dominant group and identifies with that group, and the dominant group accepts the individual or group without discrimination. When full assimilation occurs, minority status ceases to exist. Amalgamation is the biological merging of a distinct racial stock with the dominant racial group. Although the model describes the cycle in five stages, it does not suggest they are followed in sequential fashion. Acculturation is not always followed by assimilation, nor is assimilation inevitably followed by amalgamation. Some minority groups may never fully assimilate. Traditionally, in American society, it can be stated that most minority groups have tended to achieve some form of accommodation, acculturation or assimilation.

Brody (1970) pointed out some of the indicators reflecting the nature of the adaptation process: time in the system; such as age; time of migration and years in the area; participation, such as marital status, family size, contact with neighbors, and office holding; rank such as age, gender, race, and office holding; esteem, such as number of friends and relatives, perceived sociability; physical mobility; radio, TV, newspaper, magazine or book reading, and contact with friends outside the system.

Individual adaptation is also determined by the severance or maintenance of ties to family and friends left behind. Increasingly effective communication and transportation increase the likelihood both of circular movement and of continuing support and information exchange.

Other theorists such as, Park (1964), Bogardus (1930) and Banton (1968) (as cited in McKee, 2000) had proposed similar race relation cycles. Their models vary in the number and specificity of the stages expanding the cycle to six and/or seven stages. Banton argued that for White migrants to the United States a sequence of contact, acculturation and integration has been the general one. Normally, except where race and/or color is a significant factor, these immigrants have become Americanized or integrated by the third generation. This is called the "three generation process". In contrast, McLemore (1980) (as cited in McKee, 2000) argued that sometimes in the third generation the grandchildren of immigrants attempt to recover the heritage of the first generation.

Building on McLemore, Horboken (2004) presented more elements to sustain the "three generation process" at the beginning of the twenty first century. The author argued that the geographic identity of migrants has always been influenced by new conditions of life and by the alien cultures of their new countries of residence and host societies. But with the advent of modern mass communications the process of acculturation and assimilation of ethnic minority cultures has greatly accelerated. Mainstream culture and electronic media, which tend to be majority-controlled, can change the meaning of social situations and reshape identities. The ethnic minority cultures and the mainstream culture of the host country can create a special type of second or third generation ethnic community. In terms of their life-style, language and even cultural memory, these generations form identities that are different both, from Americans and from people in the countries of their origin. Children of immigrants, raised in a foreign-language environment, educated with foreign ideas and influenced by the mainstream culture of the host countries, may have little cultural or psychological attachment to their ethnic communities.

Brody (1970) argued that it is difficult to separate the impact of a host environment from the nature of the experience and talent the migrant brings to it. Initial attributes include those that may be subsumed under personality, health, socioeconomic status, demographic features, and such items as the length of the time elapsed since migration. The individual finds a proximity structure, an institutional structure, and a personal network structure. This may include relatives or friends who have immigrated earlier. He/she also may encounter

resistance, rejection, prejudice, and discrimination. Some rejections are experienced and some opportunities are accepted by the migrant. In addition, prejudice and lack of economic opportunity constitute barriers to both acculturation and economic integration. On the other hand, similarities of norms from the homeland and hostland systems increase activity and integration in the new system. Lack of social integration may lead to group clustering. Group enclaves function as one type of mediating organization in which the new arrival finds others of his/her own kind, sharing common norms and language, acting as a buffer mechanism for personal and social reorganization before making his way into the larger environment (Brody, 1970).

Post-1965 Immigration to the United States

In the history of contemporary immigration to the United States, the year 1965 marked a milestone. During the four decades prior, immigration to the United States was governed by a law, known as the National Origin Act, which favored the admission of nationals from northern and western European countries while discriminating against the admission of nationals from other countries. The 1965 immigration reform act abolished the discriminatory national origins quota system, which had been in effect since 1929, and set the amount of legal permanent immigration from each country on equal footing. As a result, total immigration to the United States has increased substantially.

The most important qualitative change has been the total shift in the major regions of origin. Immigration from Europe was the major source of immigration prior to 1965. The level of immigration from that continent has gradually declined

since 1965. In its place, immigration from Asia and Latin America has steadily increased since 1965, and these two regions represent the dominant sources of immigration. After 1965, Latin America replaced Europe as the leading immigration source. In this sense, McKee (2000) stated that since the 1970s immigration has became a critical issue in the United States. Concern over the rise of immigrants from Latin America and Asian countries, a rather steady flow in the number of undocumented workers, and the problem of refugees caused Congress and U.S. citizens to question seriously the national immigration policies. The 1976 Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments extended per-country limitation of 20,000 and a preference system to Western Hemisphere (McKee, 2000).

In terms of the data regarding the immigrants' intended state of residence, more than two-thirds of immigrants intended to settle in six states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois and New Jersey. In particular, California and New York have accounted for approximately 45 percent of total preferred destinations. Furthermore, the post-1965 spatial concentration of immigrants has tended to be urban, located predominantly in large metropolitan areas. Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Chicago and Miami have been the most popular destination cities of the major immigrant groups from Asia and due to the economic opportunities found in these metropolitan areas. Another fundamental reason is the influence of a preexisting ethnic network of immigrant groups. As well, spatial concentration may make effective uses of a group's social and cultural resources for its collective benefits. It provides psychological support,

preserves ethnic life styles, fosters the pace of acculturation and helps exert effective social control over the youth (Yang, 1995).

The new immigration and ethnicity in the United States

Massey (1995) pointed out that increasing concentrations of Spanish-speaking immigrants in a few metropolitan areas would inevitably change the process of assimilation itself. Through the new immigration, large communities of Spanish speakers would emerge in many U.S. urban areas, lowering the economic and social costs of not speaking English while raising the benefits of speaking Spanish. As a result, the new immigrants from Latin American countries are less likely to learn English than were their European counterparts at the turn of the century (Massey, 1995).

The emergence of immigrant enclaves also reduces the incentives and opportunities to learn other cultural habits and behavioral attributes of American society.

A comparison of Jewish Migration to the U.S. 1880-1930 and 1965-1998.

Gold (1999) explained that while the growth of recent migration of many nationality groups can be traced to the enactment of new immigration laws in 1965, a large majority of recent Jewish migrants entered the U.S. as refugees and, as such, have been little affected by the 1965 law. Since the late 1980s, mostly Jewish Soviets, numbering about 30,000 annually, have been the single largest refugee group to enter the U.S. Other countries and regions have also been considerable sources of Jewish migration. Among these are Iran, Israel, North Africa, Latin America, and Canada. While few if any Iranian or North

African Jews trace their families to Eastern Europe, a significant proportion of Israeli (about 60 percent), South African, and Latin American migrants share Ashkenazi origins with the vast majority of American-born Jews. The majority of Jews entering the U.S. came in search of refuge from prejudice and assault, as well as for economic opportunity.

Jewish migrants to the United States have traditionally settled in cities where coethnics are already established. During the twentieth century American Jews have moved in large numbers to Sunbelt locations, especially California and South Florida.

According to the 1997 Los Angeles Population Survey, 21% Percent of Jewish Angelenos are foreign-born (born outside of U.S. territory), and 45 percent are immigrants or the children of immigrants. Only one in twelve can say that both sets of grandparents were born in the U.S. Major nationality groups include the former Soviet Union (24,562); Iran (16,820); Israel (14,170); other Eastern European countries (12,483); Western European countries (10,884); other Middle Eastern countries, North Africa and Asia (7,010); Canada (6,615); Latin America (3,080); and other (12,744) (Los Angeles Jewish Population Study, 1997).

Analyzing the 1997 Jewish Population Study, Gold (1999) stated that today's Jewish migrants exhibit several of the family patterns associated with earlier arrivals, including intact, two-parent families, high rates of marriage, and small numbers of children. However, the various nationality groups maintain several unique characteristics.

Like those arriving early in this century, most recent Jewish immigrants also enter as family migrants and maintain cooperative economic arrangements among their members. While the average income of Jewish migrants suggests a generally successful merger into the American middle class, the economic adjustment of this population covers a wide range from poverty to significant wealth. One economic asset of recent Jewish immigrants over natives and other immigrant groups is the high number of women with professional and technical skills (Gold, 1999).

Contemporary Jewish immigrants are characterized by distinct cultural, linguistic, and national traditions. Jewish immigrants often gravitate towards their own enclaves where they can interact in a familiar environment. Because these groups have high rates of self-employment, their neighborhoods feature numerous ethnically oriented shops, restaurants, and media industries that provide a venue for socializing and identity preservation. While these subcommunities have geographic, cultural, religious, and economic links with those of American Jews, the co-national preference often predominates. Further, such communities are themselves often stratified into subgroups on the basis of class, ideology, region of origin, occupation, religiosity, ethnicity, tenure in the U.S. and other factors.

Interestingly, some of the greatest differences between American Jews and Jewish migrants are found in their patterns of religious and ethnic identification. In the late twentieth century, Jewish immigrants and American Jews continue to disagree over contrasting interpretations of Jewish identity.

American Jews emphasize religious knowledge and ritual, while secular Israelis focus on nationality, Iranians feel most comfortable with their long-established Persian traditions, and Russians stress emblematic ethnicity shaped by their unique history in Eastern Europe. A major reason for these conflicts is that the Reform and Conservative movements are all but unfamiliar in the major source countries of Jewish immigration. Rejecting American denominations, many Jewish migrants prefer to affiliate with Chabad. Another reason why many Jewish immigrants tend to choose Chabad over other Jewish religious movement is that in many cases, Chabad offers services in the immigrant's native language.

Because of their differences with American Jews, Jewish immigrants face a dilemma as they plan for their children's Jewish education. If they do nothing, their children will lose touch with their Jewishness. However, if they enroll the youngsters in American Jewish institutions, they are confronted with another foreign notion of identity – American Judaism. As a consequence, immigrant parents must choose between having their children socialized in either of two unfamiliar cultural traditions, those of non-Jewish Americans and American Jews. Nevertheless, as in the case of communal life, while they feel some distance from American Jews, they see amalgamation with coethnic hosts as both positive and inevitable. The trend toward growing religious involvement among Jewish immigrants has been documented in recent surveys of Jewish communal life such as the National Jewish Population Study of 1991 and the Los Angeles Jewish Population Study of 1997.

Latino Jews in United States:

Although there is no literature written about the Jewish Latino community in United States in general and in Los Angeles in particular, Santa Cruz (1989) published research that describes this population in Queens, New York. Some findings regarding the characteristics of this Jewish minority are relevant for this study: Latin American Jews tend to enclose themselves in strictly Jewish groups, such as synagogue related groups, national Jewish organizations, but very few are members of non-Jewish institutions. The lack of contact with their non-Jewish countrymen/women, with whom they share the same language, music, and some cultural values, is particularly notable. Santa Cruz (1989) argued that this attitude is originated in the mutual distrust that exists in many Central and South American countries between Jews and non-Jews. Other notable findings showed that Latin American Jews in Queens are highly educated, not highly observant, and although are eager to attend religious services, they have difficulties in feeling comfortable and "fitting into" an American synagogue. According to Cruz' study, most of Latino Jews in the New York area are from Cuba and Argentina.

The other major center of Latin American Jews in the east coast is in Miami, Florida. Bettinger-Lopez's analysis (2000) offers an interesting model for the evolution of Cuban American Jewish identity that incorporates both a shifting identity among immigrants and an acculturation of their U.S. born children. The author argued that Jewish Cubans or Jewbans living in Miami face a double Diaspora because of the lack of full acceptance by the American Jews and by non-Jewish Cubans. To overcome their rejection, Jewbans have created parallel

institutions and turned inward. Bettinger-Lopez (ibid) also found that Miami's Cuban-Jews, and particularly their U.S.-born children, are acculturating much quicker than non-Jewish Cubans.

In Los Angeles, Latin American Jewish immigrants comprise approximately 0.75 percent, or nearly 3,200 of the 520,000 Jewish Angelenos. The main countries of origin are Argentina and Mexico providing 1,225 and 1,482 immigrants respectively (Los Angeles Jewish Population Survey 1997). However when asked to classify themselves according to conventional U.S. Census ethnic categories, 95 percent of the Jews in the survey identified as White/Caucasians, 2 percent as other, 1 percent as black, 1 percent as Spanish/Hispanic, 1 percent did not know, .5 percent identified as Mexican, and .2 percent were in the "other" category. On a separate question about Hispanic origin, 2.2 percent (11,440) of Los Angeles Jews identified as being of Hispanic origin (which included persons who previously had described themselves as white/Caucasian).

Methodology

This study used an exploratory design to investigate and describe the composition and characteristics of the Latin American Jewish immigrants living in the Los Angeles area. Implementing quantitative and qualitative analysis this research aimed to develop the first steps towards understanding this specific group and its characteristics in comparison to the broader American Jewish community of Los Angeles.

Research amongst international migrants presents the investigator with some methodological and logistical problems. For instance, it is difficult to determine with accuracy the size of a population of immigrants and distinguish within it between the various classes of immigrants. The two major statistical sources on immigration to this country are the Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), now under the administration of the Homeland Security Department, and the decennial census of the population. However neither of these sources could be helpful for the purpose of this study. The way these federal agencies tabulate immigration patterns makes it impossible for the researchers to get accurate figures on immigrants and their countries of origin for a specific city or area. Additional difficulties stem from the fact that this is a study of a Jewish population, and in all the official sources mentioned, no differentiation is made on the basis of religious affiliation. Thus, for the most part, demographic surveys conducted by Jewish agencies of various communities constitute the only source of data on the Jewish population of the United States.

According to the Los Angeles Jewish Population Study of 1997, by the time of the study there were approximately 3,200 Latin American Jews living in Los Angeles. This number has not been updated and, therefore, it is impossible to accurately determine how many Latin American Jews are living in the Los Angeles area.

In addition, it is hard to get track of Latin American Jews because they are neither organized as a group, nor do they gather in the same organizations. So, it was complicated both to accurately assess precise numbers, and to reach all prospective respondents. Consequently, it was not possible to satisfy the conditions that make a study generalizable.

As mentioned above, the size of the Latin American Jewish population could not be accurately ascertained from any source. Under such conditions, random sampling seemed inappropriate. Therefore, we chose to seek out the largest possible number of Latin American Jewish immigrants and to solicit their participation in this study.

As Latin American Jewish immigrants from Argentina, we had contacts and relations with many Latin American Jews living in Los Angeles. Our first step then, was to ask our own friends for the contact information of those Jewish immigrants they knew and thought would qualify for this research. Moreover, we were able to access the Latin American Jewish Association's (LAJA) participants. This is a new group of mostly Argentinean Jewish families, who have joined a Jewish Community Center. They helped us by both filling out the surveys and providing us with more contacts.

The second list of Latin American Jews in Los Angeles was provided by a group of Latin American Jewish immigrants who compose the Bnai Brith Latin American chapter. Although the group is quite small, it was very helpful as they reached out to more possible respondents. A conscious effort was made to also reach non-affiliated Latin American Jews by using personal contacts and networking with friends, and friends of friends. 'Word of mouth' and networking led from one participant to another. A snowball effect was created.

The fact that we are Latin American Jews living in Los Angeles, as are the respondents, implies some advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, cultural sensitivities and language issues were easily addressed. Further, to a certain extent, interviewees felt comfortable sharing their stories with people to whom they could relate. On the other hand, sometimes it was hard to distance ourselves from their stories. A conscious effort was made not to relate other people's stories with our own, and to remain aware of the need to do so. This was a limitation that was addressed by sharing findings and having conversations with non-Latin Americans who helped maintain the neutral perspective of the researchers.

In this study two modes of data collection were employed: mass survey and individual interviews with a smaller number of participants. To capture as many units as possible, a survey was developed and placed on a website in order to be answered in an electronic form. The website, www.surveymonkey.com, offered us the possibility of tracking responses and

analyzing all the quantitative data. This is a very popular and commonly used server among researchers.

The survey was emailed with a letter of presentation explaining the nature of the study and inviting people to respond. The survey was sent to all the email addresses gathered by the researchers. This strategy allowed for respondents to answer the survey at any moment, and on any computer. It also encouraged participants to forward the email to other people creating the desired snowball effect. Nonetheless, one of the challenges of posting the survey online and distributing the information through email is that it does not include those who do not have access to a computer or do not feel comfortable working with a computer. This methodological weakness was partially addressed by designing a hard copy version of the survey that was printed and distributed by hand.

The survey was sent to 128 correct email addresses. From these, 47 answered directly on the Internet. 51 more people received and answered the survey forwarded by individuals other than the researchers. In order to distribute hard copies of the survey, we attended a couple of meetings organized by the Latin American Jewish Association at the New JCC at Milken, in West Hills. We gathered 38 completed surveys in those opportunities. Some people who answered the hard copy of the survey were actually included in the email distribution list, but they explained that they did not feel comfortable answering in such a format. We attended a Torah study session with a group of orthodox Latin Americans as well. On that occasion, 6 people answered the survey on a hard

copy while others asked for the electronic version to forward it to their friends. Ultimately, 142 completed surveys were collected.

The instrument consisted of 34 questions with 4 additional optional questions for parents. All questions were optional. While 2 questions were open-ended the remaining 36 were close-ended either having single or multiple choices. The researchers and 4 other people tried the instrument before it was sent out. The average time to answer was 8 minutes. To be culturally sensitive the survey was developed in English and Spanish. Of the 142 respondents, 121 – 85.2% – used the Spanish version while the other 21 – 14.8% – used the English one.

Questions were designed to explore demographics; immigration reasons; adaptation patterns and experiences; current situation; philanthropic behavior; communal involvement and religious practices before and after immigration.

After analyzing preliminary findings, a series of questions were developed for conducting in depth interviews with some of the participants. The criterion used for selecting interview respondents was to have as much variety of experiences as possible. It was important to interview people who had come to the country under difference circumstances. In fact, time spent in Los Angeles, the specific country of origin and society that the immigrant comes from, language, reasons for immigration, and ages are some of the factors that influence the immigration and adaptation experiences. As a result 10 people were interviewed. 2 Mexicans, 1 Colombian, 2 Uruguayans and 5 Argentineans. Their ages and years of immigration differed.

Interviews were held either at people's homes or offices, and cafes. This setting gave us the opportunity to discuss matters of significance with greater depth and without time limitations. All the interviews were conducted in Spanish and then translated for writing this study. The average length of the interviews was one hour. An interview schedule was used as a general guide without, however, interfering with the flexibility of the unstructured interview situation. Questions asked about the personal experience of leaving the country of origin, the challenges when adapting, and the expectations for the future. Designed as open-ended interviews, the goal was to collect people's personal experiences and examples. These were then used to illustrate and enrich the quantitative findings.

The quantitative data was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. Findings were supported by theory presented in the literature review. The qualitative data collected in the interviews was added exemplifying and also explaining how those figures obtained from the quantitative section are experienced in people's lives. Finally, results and findings were compiled; graphs and charts were added. In the near future, we will write the Spanish version of this study.

This study was conducted between November 2004 and April 2005.

Findings

Country of origin

According to the Los Angeles Jewish Population study (LAJPS 1997), Latin American Jewish immigrants comprise approximately 0.75 percent, or nearly 3,200 of the 520,000 Jewish Angelinos. In this study we surveyed 142 individuals. Therefore, our sample covers approximately 4.4% of the Latin American Jewish immigrants living in Los Angeles. It is important to take into account that the figures presented in the Jewish Population Survey of Los Angeles have not been updated since 1997.

Although most of the immigrants have came from Mexico and Argentina (Los Angeles Jewish Population Survey 1997) our respondents arrived from diverse countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Table #1 represents the Nationality of origin of the 142 respondents who answered our survey.

Table #1

Country of Origin		
Argentina	72	50.70
Brazil	2	1.41
Chile	7	4.93
Colombia	3	2.11
Costa Rica	1	0.70
Cuba	5	3.52
Ecuador	3	2.11
Guatemala	2	1.41
Mexico	30	21.13
Peru	2	1.41
Uruguay	13	9.15
Venezuela	2	1.41
	142	100%

The fact that 50% of the people surveyed are from Argentina stems from two main reasons. First, as Argentinean Jews we have a relatively high number of Jewish friends from Argentina living in Los Angeles, who agreed to answer our survey. Secondly, the Latin American Jewish associations that we found, such as Latin American Jewish Association (LAJA), and Bnai Brith are principally composed of Argentineans. Conversely, we were not able to find any particular association or group where Mexican Jews, or Jews from any other Latin American country were a majority.

To get a better understanding about the Jewish communities throughout Latin America, it may be helpful to point out that the total of Jews living in all Latin American countries is estimated to be approximately 500,000. Argentina has the largest Jewish community (220,000) followed by Brazil (130,000), Mexico (50,000), and Uruguay (20,000) (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 2003).

Citizenship

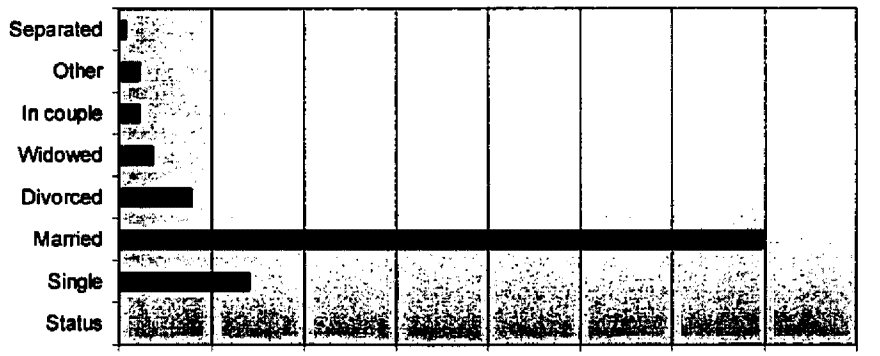
From the 142 people interviewed, 64% are citizens of the United States. In general, those who obtained their citizenship have lived in the country for more than 15 years. It is important to point out that the vast majority of the Jewish immigrants from Latin America living in Los Angeles came to the country in legal terms. It is necessary to point out that restrictions in immigration established in United States after 2001 affected Latin American Jews as much as any other immigration group. It is likely that those who came to the country before 2001 already have their green cards or are in the process of getting them. For those

who immigrated after such date it is a much longer and complicated process to get their permanent visas. Therefore, in general, people who came to the country after 2001 are granted either temporary labor or study visas.

Marital Status

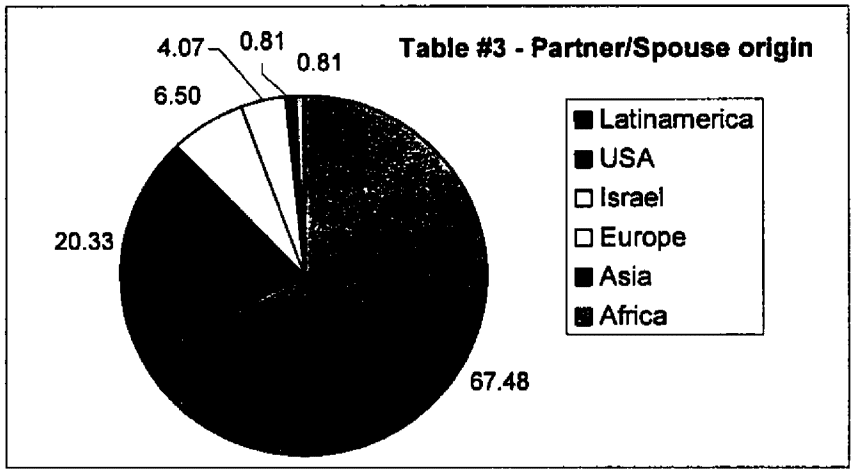
Almost 70% of the interviewees are married, and couples living together compose another 4%. 14% of the people surveyed are single, 8.5% are separated or divorced, and 3.5% are widowed (see Table #2).

Table #2: Marital Status



This data is interesting when compared to the LAJPS of 1997. Data for the general Jewish population of Los Angeles reflects that only 62% of the individuals are married, and a 21% of the people are single. In fact, the number of never married single persons increased from 18.2% in 1979 to 21.2% in 1997. Although the increase in the percentage of non-married status seems to be a trend for the general Jewish population of Los Angeles, Jews from Latin America appear not to share such a pattern. It is possible to speculate that having a partner is a very important factor when dealing with the process of immigration.

Figures show that two thirds of the people surveyed have a Latin American partner (see Table #3). Therefore, it is possible to assume that most of these couples were formed before immigrating; this situation easies their immigration experience and adaptation process. A Latin American Jew and an American partner compose only 20% of the couples surveyed. This suggests that most of the couples have shared the process of immigration together.



Many of the people we interviewed argued that they would never have thought of emigrating from their countries of origin if they did not have either a partner or a family member with whom to come to United States. In fact, interviewees pointed out that the first year or two years In Los Angeles were the most difficult, and family support was key in the first phase of the process. A few interviewees shared their experiences with us regarding such difficult times. A 50-year-old woman who immigrated with her husband and children told us that she would not have survived her first years in Los Angeles if it were not for her husband. Moreover, her husband would not have made it without her. "*I did not know how to drive, and when we first immigrated I was too afraid to learn. So, I*

was totally dependant on my husband to move around, from searching for a place to live, to take and pick up our kids from school, and even for grocery shopping" Although she was in a dependent situation, she remained optimistic most of the time. "*When I realized how well our children were adjusting to the new life, including making new friends and performing well in school, I felt very positive that coming to Los Angeles was the right decision*". Her husband, in turn, was having a hard time adjusting to the new reality. He complained about things and was reluctant to make new friends and new people. He focused too much on the negativities. Therefore, very often her role was to remind him of the reasons why they left their country of origin seeking a better life for their kids. Later on in the immigration process she learned how to drive and he shifted his negative attitude. However, as she pointed out, if it was not for the support they gave to each other in the initial phase, they would not have been able to stay in Los Angeles.

Interestingly, from those married to an American partner (20% of the cases), 43.5% are Mexicans, and only 17% are Argentineans. (6.5% of the interviewees are married to an Israeli, and 5% are married to people from other origins). In addition, in 84% of the cases the American spouse is Jewish. This figure is slightly lower than the 90% that represents individuals married to a Jewish partner in general. The fact that only 20% of those who married an American couple immigrated after 1990 tells about a level of adaptation reached. It is possible to suggest that those who immigrated as children, or youth are more likely to fully integrate to the American society, and therefore marry an American

partner. Further, 88% of these couples speak most of the time English at home. Other variables that reflect adaptation include the following: only a 41% of these individuals (the 20% married to an American couple) have family in their country of origins, 72% of them are homeowners, 61% of them earn more than $100,000, their principal affinity group is American Jews, and only 20% consider going back to their countries of origin.

When interviewing those Latin American Jews who immigrated as singles, almost all of them explained that they came to Los Angeles in particular because they had either a family member already living in the city, or a job or study opportunity. A young Latin American Jew who came to Los Angeles to pursue a PhD pointed out that her options were to study either in Los Angeles or in the East Coast. She ended up deciding to choose Los Angeles because she had relatives already living in the city. In addition, she pointed out that her adaptation was relatively easy because she is engaged in a study program, which both helped her to meet people and provided her with a daily routine and an organized style of life. Yet, she stressed the fact that her relatives were fundamental in her first months in the country. "*When I first came to Los Angeles I stayed with my relatives for a couple of weeks until I was able to rent my own apartment, buy a car, and understand how to get around. Nowadays, I love having them around, although I have made friends, we spend many weekends, holidays, and celebrations together. Whenever I need help or advice, I know that I can count with them on everything*".

Partner's background

When asked about the religion of the spouse or partner, figures showed that above 90% of the respondents are married to a Jewish partner. This number is high when compared to the Los Angeles Jewish Population Study. 81% of currently married born-Jewish persons in Los Angeles are married to other Jews. According to the 1997 Los Angeles Jewish Population Study, intermarried couples tend to live in areas of lower Jewish density; conversely inmarried couples tend to live in higher Jewish density areas. This data is also true for Latino Jews; most of them live in high Jewish density areas such as the San Fernando Valley, and West Los Angeles. (Distribution of respondents by location is detailed as follows on graph 4).

33.3% of the Interviewees whose partner is not Jewish are married to Americans, 16.7% are married to Europeans or Asians, and 50% of the cases are couples of two Latin American members. This information may suggest two different things. Either intermarriage rates in Latin American Jewish communities are lower than in Los Angeles, or Latin American Jews living in Los Angeles who intermarried are not integrated to the Latin American Jewish community, so we did not have access to them at all.

As it is the case for intermarried couples in the Los Angeles Jewish community in general, intermarried Latin American Jews have lower rates of synagogue attendance and religious practice. In fact, 53.3% consider themselves to have no religious affiliation. Rates of institutional affiliation are also low. In

addition, only 25% of the intermarried individuals donate to Jewish causes, and only one out of 5 families with children are raising their children Jewishly.

Language

Regarding the language spoken at home, 67% of the respondents speak Spanish most of the time, 27% speak English, and there was a small percentage of people who speak either Portuguese, Hebrew, or both Spanish and English in equal amounts. It is interesting to note that 50% of those who speak Spanish at home immigrated in the last 10 years. Moreover, 90% of them are married to a Latin American partner with whom they can speak Spanish at home. From this 67% of people who speak Spanish at home, 31% speak Spanish outside home most of the time as well. On the other hand, of the 27% that speak English at home, more than 80% are married to a non-Spanish speaker, and 50% of the respondents have been living in the United States for more than 30 years. Marrying a non-Spanish speaking spouse, raising school aged children, and not having close relationships with people who speak Spanish are all causes that made people adopt English more easily. In many cases, children were given as the reason why English is spoken at home, even though both parents are Spanish speakers. One family that we interviewed illustrates how children raised in United States encourage families to move Spanish to English. This family emigrated 3 years ago with three children in different age categories. The oldest daughter finished high school in their country of origin, and the youngest is still in her first years of elementary school. When we interviewed this family it struck us that both parents spoke Spanish among themselves and with the two oldest

children, however, all the interactions with the youngest child were in English. In addition, some conversations between the two oldest children were also in English. Although the youngest child speaks fluently in Spanish, his parents and siblings choose to speak English with him. Another example is a couple that has been living in Los Angeles for more than 20 years and has three children who do not live at home any longer (one of them is married, the second lives by herself, and the youngest attends college). They explained that since the youngest daughter left for college, they have come back to speak one hundred percent of the time in Spanish. However, when their children are at home, they combine languages. Conversely, couples composed of two Spanish speakers without children pointed out that they speak only Spanish at home. One couple of both Spanish speakers told us that although they speak Spanish, sometimes they insert some word or phrases in English. "*When we are talking about her work, or mine, there are words that come up in English faster than in Spanish*".

Many of our interviewees pointed out that speaking English was one of the most challenging parts of the immigration process. This is mostly the case either for individuals who immigrated at an adult age, or for those who did not have good training in English in their countries of origin. Young people, in general are more likely to pick up or become fluent in the English language quicker than adults; but in any case there are many variables to take into account, such as knowledge of English before immigration, possibility of learning English in Los Angeles, personality of the individual, social interaction with English speakers, etc. One of our interviewees explained that while she is outgoing and loves

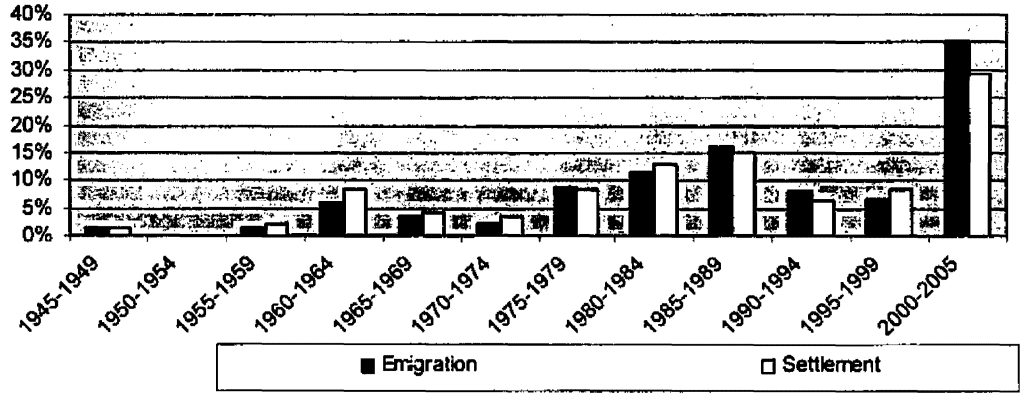
meeting new people, her husband is shy, and feels ashamed of making mistakes when speaking in English. In turn, she does not care when she makes a mistake, so for her it is much easier to establish a conversation with English speakers than it is for her husband.

We found that 72% of the respondents speak English outside the home, and only 23% speak Spanish outside the home most of the time. Another 5% speak both languages outside the home with the same frequency. This indicator shows that even though 67% of the respondents speak Spanish at home, most of them adapt themselves to English when interacting personally or professionally with Americans. Many people pointed out that even though they can turn to English when they want to interact with Americans, they appreciate when communicating with another Spanish or Portuguese speaker in their native language. In general people surveyed claimed that Americans with whom they interact are very respectful of their accent and language. Most of the people feel comfortable speaking in English with Americans. However, one of our interviewees shared an experience with us that it is occurring at her workplace. She has been living in the country for more than 25 years, but she still has an accent and makes some minor grammatical mistakes. Lately, she has been having a hard time at work because her boss and a workmate have been making fun of the way she speaks. This woman feels very disappointed about this, and explained that this is the first time something like this has happened to her in 25 years of living in the United States.

Settling in Los Angeles

Only 39% of the people surveyed had immigrated directly to Los Angeles. The other 61% emigrated to different cities, states and sometimes countries, before settling down in Los Angeles. As table #4 shows, most of the immigrants arrived in the last 15 years. Interestingly, the last five years show the highest rates of immigration and settlement in the city. In fact, the vast majority of those who immigrated in the last ten years came from Argentina. This can be associated with the social and economical crisis that has taken place in that country during the last decade.

Table #4 - Differences between year of emigration and year of settlement in Los Angeles



Social-Network Theory (Yang, 1995) posits that Immigrants tend to settle in those places where the can find the support and help of other countrymen, family members or kinship. In this case, it is observable that most Latin American Jews live in the San Fernando Valley area and the West Side of Los Angeles. Indeed, these areas have the highest concentration of Jewish households, and are mainly inhabited by middle and upper class white society. In this sense, Gold

(1999) explained that Jewish migrants to the United States have traditionally settled in cities where coethnics were already established (Gold 1999). The geographic distribution of Latin American Jews in Los Angeles is shown is the following table #5 - map:

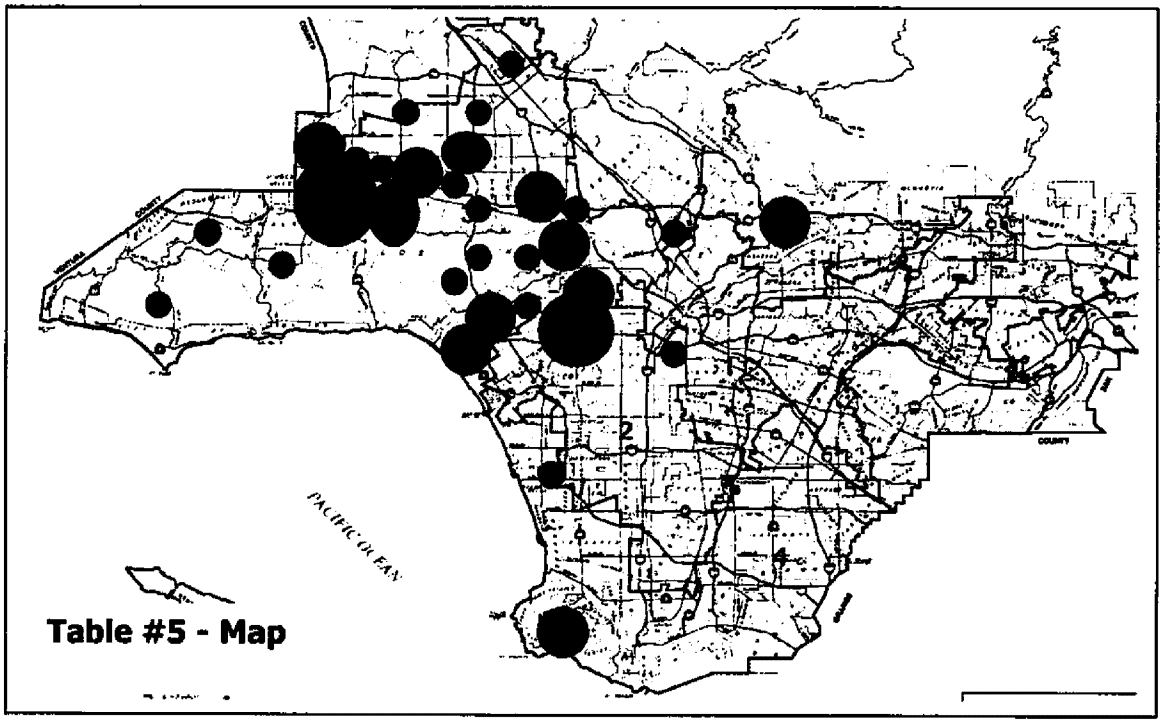


Table #5 - Map

It is interesting to underscore that Latin American Jews not only live in a different area than their non-Jewish expatriates, but also go through a totally different process of immigration and integration to the American society. The bulk of the Latino population is located in the areas of East and South Los Angeles, where they have developed several Spanish speaking neighborhoods. In this regard, Massey (1995) stated that through the new immigration, large communities of Spanish speakers would emerge in many U.S. urban areas, lowering the economic and social costs of not speaking English while raising the

benefits of speaking Spanish. As a result, the new immigrants from Latin American countries are less likely to learn English than were their European counterparts at the turn of the century. Converse to this theory, socially and culturally speaking, Latin American Jews have followed the model of their European ancestors rather than their Latin American counterparts.

Family ties

As it is the experience of immigrants around the world and throughout history, Jewish immigrants from Latin America left families and friends behind. In this case 69% of respondents pointed out that they have at least one family member living in their country of origin. In this sense, Brody (1970) explained that the pace of adaptation is slower when the immigrant holds strong relationships with close family and friends in the country of origin. Indeed, to a certain extent, individual adaptation can be measured by the severance or maintenance of ties to family and friends left behind.

Interestingly, 43% of the respondents who have family members in their countries of origin consider the possibility of going back. Conversely, from the 31% of people who do not have family in their countries of origin, only 25% consider the possibility of going back. In fact, many of our interviewees pointed out that leaving family behind was one of the most difficult things they experienced in the immigration process.

All of the Latin American Jews that we interviewed have access to some kind of technology of communication. Nevertheless, such access opens a debate as to what extent technology is helpful in keeping in touch with loved ones, or if

there is a point at which it become a bit "addictive" and affects the process of adaptation. Telephone seems to be the most popular means of communication among Jewish Latino adults; but young people in general utilize email as much as the telephone as a tool for communicating with family and friends in their country of origin. More than one person pointed out that the process of immigration is much easier due to the new technologies in place. However, one of our interviewees explained that even though she is in touch with family and friends on a daily basis, she still misses being around "her people". "*Technology does make a difference, and I feel lucky that I'm able to talk with my mom very often, but being so far away is hard. Sometimes you feel that technology allows you to be here and there at the same time, but there are other times that technology is not enough. It is like an illusion. You feel like you are there, but in fact, you are not. People back home move on with their lives, my friends get married, my brother graduates from school, my family travels abroad for a vacation, and I'm not there. Of course I see all the pictures they post online, but does it mean that I'm sharing with them such important moments in life? Sometimes technology makes me feel more frustrated, because on one hand it allows me to feel so close and in touch with everybody, but on the other hand I spend too many hours chatting in the messenger with friends back home instead of spending time with the few friends I have made in Los Angeles*" Similarly, a young professional who has been living in Los Angeles for a few months talked about his own experience. He said that there is a dilemma that he cannot solve. Although he feels lucky because living in Los Angeles gives him a more

promising professional future, he misses his loved ones, and that makes him feel unbalanced. He questions himself whether it is worthwhile to give up so much in order to achieve professional success.

Leaving family and friends behind is not the strongest concern for all respondents. A few interviewees, who have lived outside their country of origin for many years do not identify having family back home as a problem. In fact, one interviewee pointed out that he adapted to being far away from his loved ones, so he learned how to surround himself with good friends whom he now considers his family. He argued that being away from family in United States is quite common. Most Americans are far away from family as well, so he considers Americans to be friendly and welcoming.

In any case, figures and testimonies show that having family members in the country of origin influences the adaptation process, and therefore it is a variable that Latino Jews take into account when deciding whether to return to their country of origin or remain in Los Angeles.

Employment trends

Latin American Jews in Los Angeles have a high rate of employment. 73.5% of the survey respondents have a job. The percentage of employment categories breaks down in the following ways: 41% are full time employees, 10% are part time employees, and 22.5% are self-employed. Further, 10% of those surveyed are full time students, 10% are retired, and 7% are unable to work. Interestingly, none of the Latino Jews who took the survey identified him/herself as unemployed. Conversely, the rate of unemployment in the broader Jewish

community is 3.4% for Jews living in Los Angeles (Los Angeles Jewish Population Study 1997) and 6.5% for Los Angeles County (Los Angeles Jewish Federation 2004).

High rates of employment can be explained by exploring other variables such as level of education, either obtained in the country of origin or in the United States. Indeed, 68% of our respondents hold bachelors degrees or higher, whereas the percentage of Jewish Angelinos holding a college degree or higher is 57.5% (LAJPS 1997). On the other hand it is important to point out that Jewish immigrants from Latin American countries arrived to the United States in totally different conditions than those of most of their countrymen. In general Jews living in most Latin American countries are economically well off in comparison with local communities. Culturally, Latin American Jews tend to invest in education for their children, including formal education and after school programs. Because public education in most Latin American countries has some structural deficits, it is common for Latin American Jews to attend private schools. One of our interviewees, who is a professor at University of Southern California explained that in general, Jews from Latin American countries are well prepared, and ready to integrate to a foreign professional life.

Level of Education

As mentioned before respondents' educational achievements are generally very high. 35% of people surveyed attained a Bachelors degree. Moreover, people holding Masters, Medical and Dental degrees, comprise another 24%. Respondents holding a PhD represented 9% of the total. Only 12%

of people surveyed completed high school only and 14% are college age. It is important to make the distinction that most of the respondents acquired their degrees outside the United States, in countries where average levels of education are generally lower than in the United States.

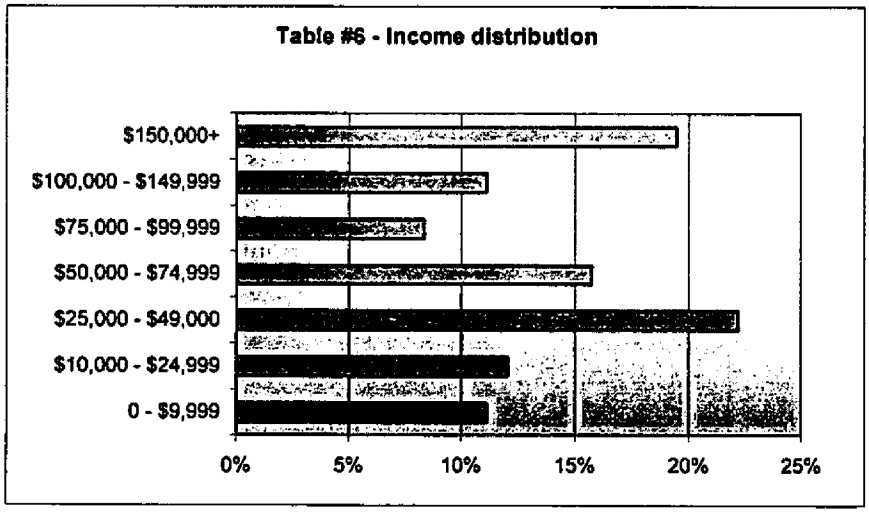
Additionally, 28.5% of the respondents pointed out that they came to America to study or complete their graduate education.

Housing

According to the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles (2004) only 50.6 % of all the Los Angeles County residents are able to purchase a home, in comparison to the overall California rate of 58.2% and the national average for metropolitan areas of 67.8%. However, Latin American Jews represent an exception to the Los Angeles County population. 57% of respondents own their home. From this group 79% are house owners while the other 21% own an apartment. In is important to underscore that 47% of the homeowners earn $100,000 and above. On the other hand only 38.5% of the respondents live in a rented apartment and 1.5% rent a house. Among those who rent their house or apartment, income levels are as follows: 45% earn less than $25,000; 27% earn between $25,000 and $50,000; 11% earn between $50,000 and $75,000. Less than 7% earn between $75,00 and $100,000; only 9% of the home-renters have an income of $100,000 and above.

A median priced home in Los Angeles in the second quarter of 2003 was $337,200, and it is considerably higher in most Jewish neighborhoods. (Jewish Federation, 2004). The income needed to afford home ownership is $75,000.

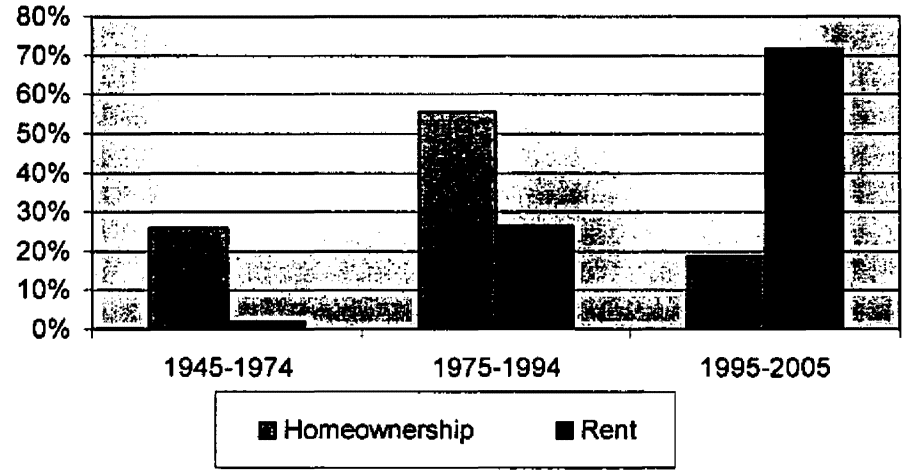
According to these figures and the findings on income only 39% of the respondents would be currently in conditions to own a home. Table #6 shows income level distribution for Latin American Jewish immigrants.



In addition, phase of the immigration process is another factor that influences income and therefore, homeownership. In this sense, the trend would be the more time people have lived in the city, the more integrated they should be, and therefore they may be able to achieve higher socioeconomic levels. Or, as explained by Brody (1970) "adaptation" refers to the process of establishing and maintaining a relatively stable reciprocal relationship with the physical, social, and interpersonal environment. In fact, from the 40% of renters, 72% came to Los Angeles in the last ten years, and the other 28% immigrated between 1975 and 1995. In contrast, only 17% of homeowners came to Los Angeles in the last ten years, and 55% came between 1975 and 1995. The other 25% immigrated before 1975.

As mentioned above, table #7 shows that those who have had opportunities for economic development and are in a situation of affording to buy a house are those who have spent more time living in Los Angeles. Nevertheless, these homeownership rates are lower when compared to American Jews living in the Los Angeles Area. Indeed, 65% of Jewish Angelinos own their homes.

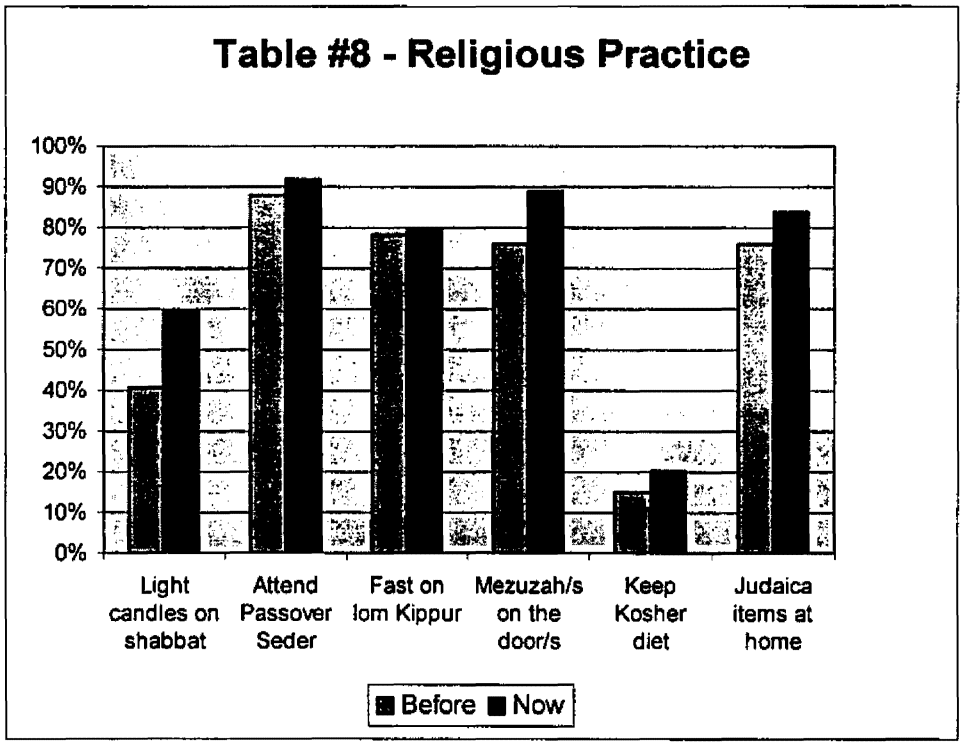
Table #7 - Homeownership and Rent rates by Year of Settlement in Los Angeles



Compared to other groups of Jewish immigrants, Latin American Jews' homeownership rate is high. Jews who emigrated from Morocco during the 1960s and 1970s for example, had a 48% rate of homeownership by the end of the 1990s (Bibas 1998).

Religious Practice

Although religious reasons have not generally been identified as an influential factor for emigrating, religious practice does appear to increase when living in Los Angeles. When we compare the level of religious practice for Latino Jews when living in their country of origin, and for the same group after their immigration, some differences can be observed. All the variables associated with religious practice at home increase after people become established in Los Angeles. Variables measured include: lighting of Shabbat candles, Passover Seder attendance, fasting in Yom Kippur, keeping Kosher, Judaica items in the home, and a mezuzah at the front door or mezuzot on other doors. Table #8 reflects these findings.



Further, such variables are also high when compared to Jewish Angelinos' Jewish practices. In three of the four variables that were measured both in the Los Angeles Jewish Population study and in our study, rates for Latin American Jewish immigrants are higher than the American Jews of Los Angeles. Table #9 presents below shows these differences.

Table #9		
Light candles on Shabbat	51%	80%
Attend Passover Seder	88%	91%
Keep Kosher	26%	20%
Mezuzah on the Front Door	63%	89%

We were not able to compare such variables as fasting on Yom Kippur, and having Judaica in the home because they were not included in the Los Angeles Jewish Population Survey. Rather, we compared them with the National Jewish Population Survey. Table #10 reflects the results.

Table #10		
Fast on Kippur	59%	80%
Attend Passover Seder	77%	91%
Light shabbat candles	28%	59%

The only indicator that is lower for Latino Jews is keeping kosher. One of the possible explanations may be that Latin American Jews in general, do not develop a strong culture of Kashrut observance. Actually, keeping a kosher diet in Latin America is not as easy as it is in Los Angeles, and it is quite expensive as well. One of our interviewees told us that in her city of origin there are only two places where one can get kosher certified food, and both of them are located

in the same block, in front of the synagogue. Except for orthodox Jews, the vast majority of Jews in Latin America do not see the practice of kosher as essential as other Jewish practices.

The cultural Jewish background of Latin American Jews can explain the high level of religious practice observed in the private sphere of the home. Although Zionism plays a central role in Jewish education in Latin America, the observance of some cultural traditions and festivals has always been an essential piece of formal and informal Jewish education. Indeed, findings show that 60% of the respondents participated in a formal education setting in their country of origin, whereas 48% of the respondents were involved in non-formal Jewish education.

Latino Jews also scored higher than Jewish Angelinos and American Jews in general regarding number of visits to Israel. Whereas 36% of Jewish Angelinos, and 35% of American Jews all around the country (NJPS) visited Israel at least once, the figure is 80% for Latin American Jews (visits to Israel are discussed further in the study).

This data suggests that prior to immigrating, Latin American Jews were intensely involved in Jewish culture, including Jewish education, social life, and institutional participation. In this sense, it is understandable that when settling in Los Angeles, they would easily incorporate into the Los Angeles Jewish organizational world.

Many of our interviewees pointed out that they find that although living Jewishly in Los Angeles is quite expensive, it is more accessible than was the case in their countries of origin. The freedom and guarantees in this country, the multiculturalism of Los Angeles, the large presence of a powerful Jewish community, and the diversity and accessibility to practice Judaism are the basis for these responses. One interviewee, who emigrated from his country of origin in the 1950s, commented: "*When I first came to United States I was amazed by the fact that here Jews were part of the system. Jews participated in every profession, including politics as well as in their own organizations. In my country of origin most of the Jews participated in their own organizations and that was all. In my home, and in my synagogue we spoke German instead of Spanish. I think that back home Jews did not have the intention to fully integrate to the country's culture. The general idea was that "we are here only temporarily". The melting pot did not exist in my country of origin as it existed in this country*" In spite of his comment, this interviewee made it clear that he is sure that the situation in his country of origin may be totally different for new generations.

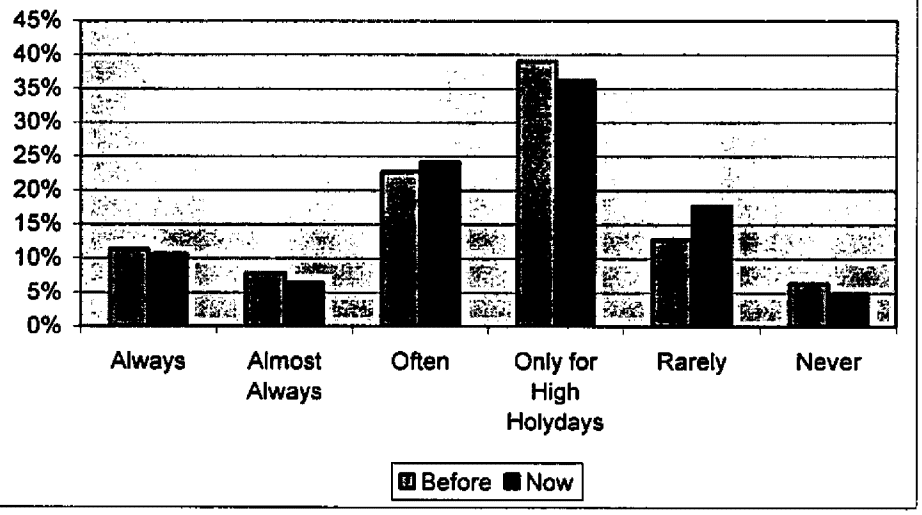
Therefore, the idea of whether being Jewish is easier in Los Angeles or in Latin American countries should be analyzed taking into account three main variables: respondent's age, length of time since immigration, and nationality. It is not the same to be Jewish in a city such as Buenos Aires, where 200,000 Jews live, as opposed to cities such as Bogota, or Panama City, where there are less than 2,000 Jews. Additionally, Jewish life in Latin American countries has changed considerably over the past 50 years. According to a few of our

interviewees, in some Latin American countries the predominant social context creates a feeling of segregation and discrimination based upon ignorance. It is important to point out that Latin American societies are predominantly Catholic so that Jews, historically, have felt segregated in different periods and ways.

In general, respondents feel that it is totally accepted to be a minority in Los Angeles, which makes it easier for Jews to embrace and practice their own religion.

Even though respondents increased their religious practice, synagogue attendance rates have decreased. Table #11 compares rates of synagogue attendance before immigration and currently.

Table #11 - Synagogue Attendance



There are several reasons that were pinpointed for explaining lower rates of synagogue attendance. A few interviewees identified financial reasons as the main obstacle for joining a synagogue and attending services on a regular basis. Others, explained that in their countries of origin they attended synagogue

seeking an environment to socialize with community members. Nonetheless, they do not find the same social context in Los Angeles, where socializing with synagogue attendees is more difficult because of reasons such as language and differences in the way people relate to each other. Finally, some interviewees pointed out that it is hard to get accustomed to differences in prayers, songs, and music.

Compared with both the national and the Los Angeles Jewish population studies the rates for synagogue attendance of Latin American Jewish immigrants in Los Angeles are low. It indicates that there are cultural differences in the way that Americans and Latin Americans relate to the synagogue.

Most of our interviewees explained that the synagogue plays mainly a religious and spiritual role in their experiences as Jews. Back in their countries of origin Jewish education, and social interaction with other Jews occurs basically in settings such as Jewish Communal Center (JCC), Jewish day school, and youth groups. In fact, Latin Americans do not have a culture of synagogue membership. This does not mean that Latin American Jews do not attend synagogue, but it does mean that they do not usually pay membership dues. The custom is to make a yearly donation on the High holydays. In this sense, one of our interviewees who has been living in Los Angeles for more than 25 years told us about her experience last summer when she visited her family back home. Her sister and brother in law invited her to attend their synagogue together and she enjoyed it very much. However, she got upset when she found out that they do not financially support the synagogue. "*I did not want to get into a discussion*

with them, but it disappointed me to find out that my sister and brother in law attend regularly to synagogue and yet, do not contribute with it. How do they think that the synagogue can survive if members do not pay their dues? My nephews are grown up, so my sister and brother in law do not pay day school fees any longer; they should be able to contribute with the Jewish community at least supporting their synagogue".

The need for cultural identification that some Latin Americans Jews pursue in their religious practices led to a group of Orthodox Latin Americans to create their own Chavurah (group of study) of torah. A Latin American Rabbi leads the session in Spanish and all the attendees are Spanish speaking Jews. This group meets every Saturday after Shabbat. One of the Latino Chavurah participants explained that her reason for joining the group is not only discussing torah but also meeting with other Latin American Jews with whom she can identify.

Religious Denomination

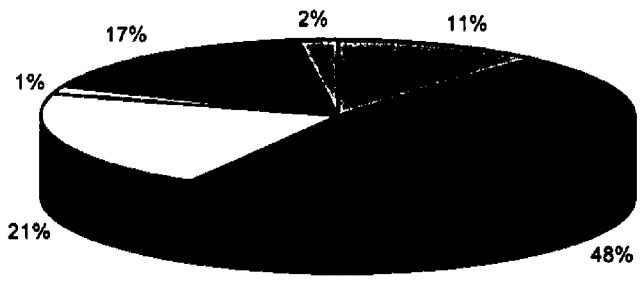
Some of the respondents pointed out that they struggled between identifying themselves as Reform or Conservative Jews.

Reform Judaism has been introduced in Latin America in recent years but it does not have representation in all Latin American cities. In addition, Conservative Judaism is the larger and most important movement in Latin American countries. However several people commented that there are differences between the conservative movement in United States and in Latin America. Some people argued that Conservative movement is understood and

experienced differently in the United States than in Latin American countries. Many people, who in their country of origin would identify themselves as Conservative, do not feel connected to the Conservative movement in Los Angeles. Indeed, some of our respondents explained that although they attended Conservative synagogues in their countries of origin, in the United States they see that the Reform movement better represents their Jewish principles. Interestingly, when answering the written survey some respondents asked us "*Are you asking about my definition now in Los Angeles, or before in my country of origin*?" It is not the case that people changed their religious affiliation, rather they experience cultural differences.

Therefore it is not surprising that 48% of the respondents identified Conservative Judaism as their religious affiliation and 21% the Reform movement. Further, 11% of the people surveyed identified as orthodox; 1.4% reconstructionists (this movement has no presence in Latin America) and 17% answered that they have no religious denomination. Table #12 shows these answers.

Table #12 - Religious Affiliation



Interestingly, despite cultural and structural differences among Latin American countries, the various religious denominations are evenly distributed.

Compared to the findings of the Los Angeles Jewish Population Study (1997) the percentages are as follows – Table #13:

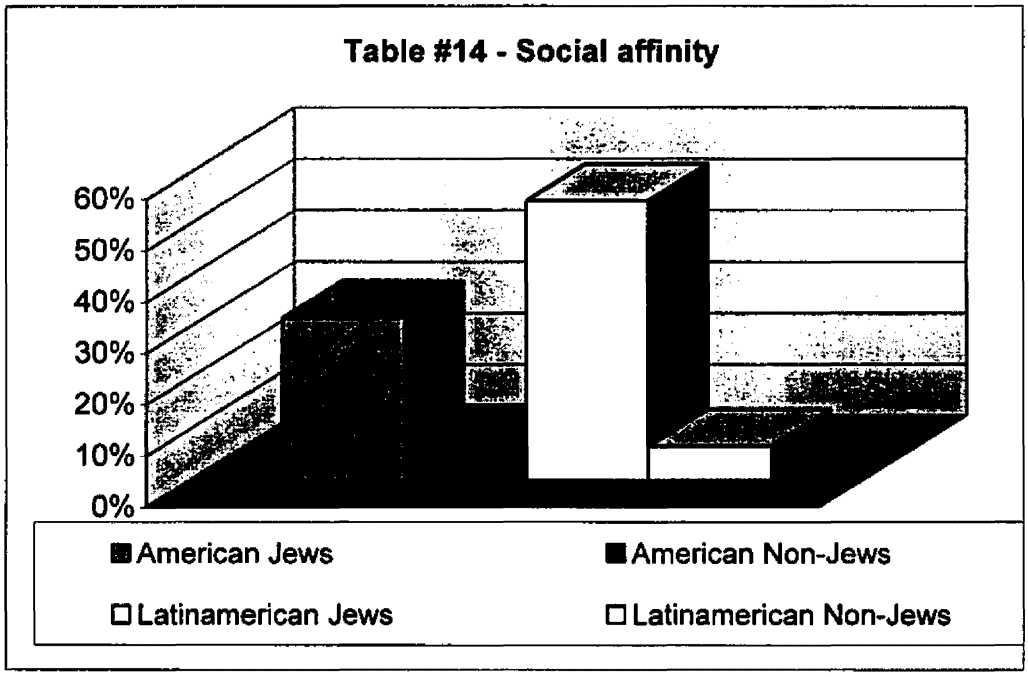
Table #13	Latin American Jews	Angelino Jews
Conservative Judaism	47%	28.2%
Reform Judaism	21%	39.9%
Orthodox Judaism	11%	4.3%
Recontructionism	1.4%	2%
No denomination	17%	24%

As we discussed above, there is almost an inversion between the figures representing those who identify themselves as Reform and Conservative Jews. Although at first glance it could be speculated that Latin American Jews are more conservative in their expression of Judaism, conversations with our interviewees lead us to the understanding that the main cause for such divergence is that the two movements are interpreted and experienced differently in the United States than in Latin American countries.

Social Affinity

Survey respondents were asked to classify the following groups according to their social affinity: Latin American Jews, Latin American non-Jews, American Jews, and American non-Jews. 54% of the respondents identified Latin American Jews as the group with which they have a closest relationship. Further, 31% of the respondents identified American Jews as the closest affinity group, 7%

pointed American non-Jews, and another 7% identified Latin American non-Jews. These figures are showed in Table #14.



It is interesting to see that more than half of the respondents feel more affinity towards other Latin American Jews. In some sense, this answer suggests that Latin American Jews do consider themselves as part of a community or group. Even though these Jews came to Los Angeles from different countries of origin, they experience a sense of a connection with them. As explained by Taylor and Spencer (2004) the idea of Identity embodies people's sense of uniqueness as individual beings and as members of groups, which share values and beliefs. Identity is in part a uniquely personal, internal sense of self, but at the same time it relates to that person's place in society and how they are categorized (Bourdieu, 1992, as explained by Taylor & Spencer, 2004). The idea

then, is that there are similar characteristics shared by Latin American Jews that are part of their identity and pertain only to them as a group.

Furthermore, we can analyze the idea of identity according to Jenkins' (2004) model of collectivity identification. The author explained that there are two different types of collectivity, and thus two different modes of collective identification. In the first model the members of a collectivity can identify themselves as such: they know who they are. In the second one, members may be ignorant of their membership or even of the collectivity's existence. The first exists as its members recognize it; the second is constituted in its recognition by observers. We can see that Latino Jews recognize themselves to such an extent that they have created organizations and programs, which specifically target their needs. The question that remains then, is whether or not Latin American Jews are recognized as a group within the Los Angeles Jewish community.

One of our interviewees from Argentina, who has been living in Los Angeles for more than 20 years commented that although she and her husband have American friends they always feel more comfortable with other Latino Jews. She pointed out that her closest group of friends is composed of Chileans, Argentineans, and Uruguayans Jews. Moreover, she explained that they used to gather for Jewish and American holidays, as well as birthdays and anniversaries. This interviewee feels that she and her husband share a set of values, views and customs with these friends that they do not experience with their American Jewish friends. These include such things as language, family composition, children education, entertainment preferences, and the like.

Another interviewee told us that one of the reasons why she and her husband attend a Latin American study group (Chavurah) is because they want to meet other Latin American Jews. This couple is fully integrated in American society, she works as a teacher in a Jewish day school and he is a writer. Both of them feel totally comfortable speaking English; indeed he speaks English as his first language because he grew up in the United States. Still, both of them enjoy sharing Torah study with other Latin Americans. They feel like there is something special that they share with people from this Chavurah; they like hearing other people's experiences, and getting to know other Latin American couples.

There are other organizations, which have been created exclusively for and by Latin American Jews. One of them is the Latin American Jewish Association, in which people gather with the purpose of socializing with other Latin American Jews. The organization strives to recreate the culture of the Latin American Jewish community center, with the idea of including the entire family in activities. The association is open to the public, and although there is a low membership fee, it is possible to participate in activities for free. Activities that have taken place include speakers on a wide range of topics of interest (in Spanish without English translation), film screenings, sports (soccer for men and volleyball for women), parties, holiday celebrations, food fairs, family games, and more. Participants are welcome to bring their own food and drinks. It is interesting to see how people bring and share typical Latin American food and

drinks such as "mate" (original South American herb tea), "alfajores" (Latin American cookies), and "facturas" (South American pastries).

There are other social groups where Latin American Jews gather as well. We explored two such organizations: Bnai Brith and Hebraica. These two are more intimate contexts that have been running for more than 15 years. These two groups are more exclusive; and in addition to socializing, group members get involved in Tzdakah activities. One member from the Bnai Brith group told us that they contribute financially to local Jewish organizations, and to Jewish communities in Latin America.

In addition, Hillel at USC runs a group targeting Latin American Jews. Even though there are a few students who were born in Latin American countries, there is also a large number of second generation Latin American Jews. Interestingly, these young students are attracted to the possibility of meeting other people with Latin American Jewish background.

Further, as it was mentioned above, there is one group of Latino Jews who meet once every other week to study Torah with a Spanish-speaking Rabbi. To some extent these groups and organizations act as new social supports for the immigrant, particularly in the first phases of the immigration. In this sense, Brody (1970) explained that a shift in residence involves new places, new faces and new norms. Movement over distance implies the crossing of social system boundaries. The migrant leaves behind the supports and stresses of the system from which he/she departs, including the factors that contributed to the decision to relocate. He/she loses the support of social and geographic familiarity, and of

long-term relationships and values. The individual finds a proximity structure, an institutional structure, and a personal network structure. This last may include relatives or friends who have immigrated earlier

The fact that 31% of the respondents identified American Jews as the group towards which they feel more affinity, and only 7% identified Latin American non-Jews, might mean that the Jewish piece of these immigrants' dual identity plays a stronger role in their immigration process than the Latino piece. The fact that 80% of the respondents participate in at least one Jewish organization, and 63% contribute with Jewish causes reinforces this idea. Conversely, only 17% of the respondents are members of a Latino organization. However, almost all of them answered this with reference to the Latin American Jewish Association (LAJA). For those respondents, LAJA represents the institution where both their Latino and their Jewish identities come together. Only 3% are members of non-Jewish Latino organizations and in all cases these are professional associations.

Further analysis may be needed to find out the role that the "Ashkenazi" or "Sephardic" background plays in such identification and affinity with American Jews.

Many of the people we interviewed feel that Jewish institutions, such as synagogues and educational settings, were very supportive in given moments in their process of immigration. One of our interviewees pointed out that she and her family will always be thankful for the support they received from their synagogue. "*The year we immigrated my son was turning 13, it was the year of*

his Bar Mitzvah. We set up a meeting with the Rabbi of the synagogue where my relatives were members to find out about costs and procedures. The Rabbi was very welcoming, but when he told us the price that the ceremony was going to cost, we knew that it was going to be impossible for us to afford it. We called the synagogue the day after with the intention of communicating him that our decision was not to do the Bar Mitzvah. We thought about the possibility of traveling back home and celebrating it there. That was going to be more affordable. However, the Rabbi told us that he was not expecting us to pay for the Bar Mitzvah. He pointed out that he understood our situation, and that under no circumstances they would make us pay for it. We could not believe it. We were not members of the synagogue. We had attended only a few Shabbat services; they barely knew us. Nonetheless, there they were, welcoming us in such a special way" This interviewee added that since her son's Bar Mitzvah she has been volunteering for the synagogue in multiple ways.

Another interviewee who is a PhD student at University of Southern California argued that among all her classmates she feels most affinity with an American Jewish classmate. She stated that she does not identify herself with Latino non-Jews. Sometimes she even has a hard time trying to understand their Spanish. "*Americans do not believe me that I am from Latin America. I feel like they have the stereotype that all the Latinos look similar, and that they are all from Mexico. It was funny when I first met my classmates, many of them did not understand how it is possible to be Jewish and Latino at the same time*". She

pointed out that because she and her friend are the only Jews in the class, she feels like they share a special code; and they understand each other very well.

At first glance one could argue that only 7% of the respondents identified Latin American non-Jews and American non-Jews as the closest affinity groups because of the lack of contexts for interaction. Nevertheless, Avni (1988) raised another reason, which is associated to historical patterns of interaction between non-Jewish Latin Americans and Latin American Jews in Latin America. The status of Jews in a country like the United States, founded entirely by immigrants, differed from that of the Jews in Catholic Latin America. Acceptance of the Jewish community as a separate entity striving to remain so has been and remains problematic to this very day. The question has been whether or not Jewish existence can be reconciled with the self-image, national identity and capacity for accepting others of a non-Jewish majority. The legitimacy of Jewish existence in the eyes of the majority is one of the basic problems facing Latin American Jewry. It is made even keener by the second factor that distinguishes the Jews in this part of the globe. Whereas all the other Jews of the Diaspora – excluding those in the Muslim world - live in developed countries, the Jews of Latin America belong to the "Third World". Most of the community is centered in the more progressive republics such as Argentina and Brazil, and in their most prestigious districts. Even in the less developed countries, the Jews are part of those sectors closest to development and financial well-being. However, acute social polarization is the norm in Latin America. The legitimacy of Jewish life in Latin America thus becomes even more complex. For this reason, the subject of

dual identities is omnipresent. (Avni, 1988). There is a clear tendency for Latin American Jewish immigrants not to establish close relationships with non-Jewish Latin Americans. Reasons may be related to the kind of interaction, acceptance and prejudgments during their life in their countries of origin.

Further research would be helpful in understanding this relationship with greater depth.

Institutional Participation

There are several reasons that parents use in deciding whether or not to enroll their children in a Jewish organizational setting such as Day school, JCC, synagogue, or other institution. In general such reasons have to do with the importance that parents place on the idea of Jewish education, Jewish identity and continuity for their children, social context, and family culture and tradition. On the other hand, reasons that discourage parents to join such organizations are in general associated with lack of interest, economic and financial constraints, and distance from home. As explained earlier, it is common for parents in Latin America to send provide private education for their children because public education is generally inferior. So, parents either send their children to private schools, or they complement public education with extra curricular activities. Moreover, some societies that are strongly Christian tend to translate religious programs into educational curricula. In addition, fear of anti-Semitism is present in some societies as well. Therefore, in many Latin American countries it is common for Jewish children to attend Jewish day schools.

Similarly, Jewish Community Centers started in the 1940s and 50s as cultural, social and recreational settings because Jews were not always welcomed in general or non-Jewish social settings. Nowadays, day schools, JCCs, Zionist movements, and youth groups are the principal organizations in charge of providing social and educational contexts by hosting educational, cultural, sportive, social and recreational activities. Israel programs are also a common and quite popular alternative when seeking Jewish experiences. These programs, supported by the Jewish Agency For Israel (JAFI) and the World Zionist Organization create a focus on Israel and youth.

With this brief background, it is now interesting to analyze the figures for Jewish experiences in their countries of origin: 60% of the people surveyed participated in formal Jewish education (mainly day schools). 48% participated in Jewish informal education, including camps and youth groups. 62% participated in JCCs including social, cultural, recreational and educational activities. Further, 35% of total respondents belonged to a Zionist movement or Zionist youth group. 25% participated in an organized Israel experience, usually through JAFI. Other 12% of respondents were involved in other kind of communal activities, and only 13% did not participated in any Jewish program or organization.

American JCCs are quite different in concept and structure to the JCCs in Latin America, where JCCs are the centers of family communal life, and their membership rates are high. In general, Jews in Latin America live in urban centers, so one of the characteristics of the JCCs is that they have locations outside the city, where families can spend the day in an outdoor space. Because

JCCs are designed for the family to spend the entire day, so they include organized activities for all members of the family, sports, restaurants, solariums, swimming pools, and some JCCs offer small apartments where members can spend the night.

JCC structures are completely different in Los Angeles. Indeed, only 13% of the respondents are members of a JCC. This percentage is low when compared to the 67% of the respondents that did attend JCCs in their country of origin.

However, as we stated before, in the last year a group of Latin American Jews have created what is called Latin American Jewish Association (LAJA). The idea is to recreate the Latin American JCC experience. LAJA was created in partnership with the New JCC at Milken, located in West Hills. The reason for the partnership, as explained by one of LAJA's members, is two-fold. On one hand, LAJA's lay leaders believe that there is a need for new immigrants to have their own programs and institutions. On the other hand, leaders of the New JCC at Milken supports LAJA as one of its outreach programs. They believe that it can become a win-win situation for Latino Jews that can enjoy the JCC's facilities, and it is an opportunity for the JCC at Milken for increasing its membership affiliation. Led by a board of long time immigrants and a director who used to have a similar role in Buenos Aires, Argentina, LAJA organizes weekly activities, programs, events, sports, youth groups, childcare, etc. for more than 100 families. Today LAJA represents around 15% of the New JCC at Milken

membership, and almost 39% of the people surveyed are participants in this organization.

Bnai Brith is another group created by Latin American Jews. A group of new immigrants formed approximately 20 years ago with the goals of creating a social context for themselves and supporting Latino Jewish culture. The group started by organizing social events, and eventually developed a series of fundraising and philanthropic activities. As described by one of the first members, people gather to talk and discuss communal and social needs in Latin America as well as in Los Angeles. Some of the fundraising projects have included supporting local soup kitchens, helping the community in Argentina following the economical and political crisis of, supporting the Jewish Federation, and promoting Latin American Jewish culture by organizing a series of open events. Unlike LAJA that gathers families of all ages, Bnai Brith is mainly composed by adult couples with children of college age and older. 17% of the total respondents identified as members of this group. The fact that several people belong to both organizations is sometimes a cause of conflict. *One of our interviewees pointed out that Benei Brith's mission goes beyond social support. "We are friends, and we are committed to the Jewish community at large; we support American Jewish organizations as well".* There is debate on whether to limit the organizational mission to socializing and entertainment, or to expand it beyond the Latino Jewish community. Such debate illustrates that there is in fact a need and desire from an important portion of Latino Jews to have their own social and

communal environments where language, symbols, customs, interests and culture can be expressed.

46% of respondents are synagogue members. This figure is higher than the percentage of Jewish Angelinos that are members of synagogue (34%); and it is the same as the national percentage (46%). The fact that such a high percentage of Latin American Jews are members of synagogue is interesting because it can be associated with the idea of integration to American Judaism.

Among the youth, 19% of respondents participate in Jewish educational settings and 5% are members of Hillel.

Additionally, 14% of people surveyed are donors to the Jewish Federation or a Federated agency. In most of these cases these are immigrants that have been living in Los Angeles for many years. Almost 20% of the respondents said they are not members of any Jewish organization.

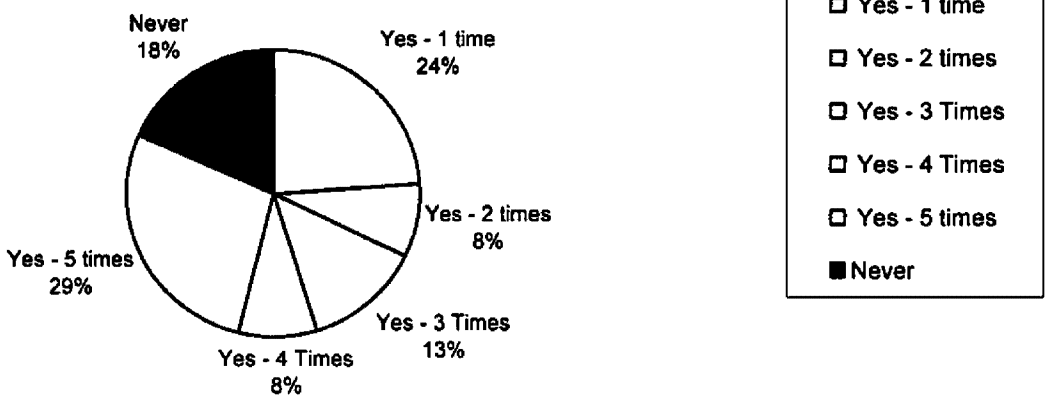
Israel experiences

Latin American Jews have kept a strong connection with Israel. The Zionist movement and the Jewish Agency have had a strong presence in Latin American communities by introducing educational programs for Jewish Day schools, youth groups and Israel experiences. Additionally, almost 75% of the respondents have family members living in Israel. Therefore, we can assume that these two facts directly influence the rate at which Latin American Jews visit Israel. Table #15 shows the answers about visits to Israel.

Findings showed that more than 82% of the people surveyed have visited Israel at least once. Further, from those who have visited Israel, more than half have been in the country three times, and almost a third have been to Israel five or more times. When compared to the average American Jew in Los Angeles, these figures are dramatically higher. According to the LAJPS (1997) only 36% of Angelino Jews have visited Israel at least once. On the National level the NJPS (2001) indicated that 35% of American Jews have visited Israel, and that 20% have been there two or more times.

Further research may help to understand the cultural differences in behaviors towards traveling abroad, and to Israel in particular.

Table #15 - Visits to Israel



Philanthropy

Findings showed that 65% of the respondents contribute to some organization and/or cause. From these, 29% give exclusively to Jewish organizations or causes, and 68% donate to both Jewish and non-Jewish

causes. Only 3% of the donors give only to non-Jewish causes. Respondents identified concepts such as "Tzedakah" "Tikun Olam" and "helping fellow Jews in need" as the main reasons for donating to Jewish causes.

Compared with national rates, these figures are high. The NJPS (2001) showed that 62% of American Jews give to non-Jewish causes, whereas among Latin American Jewish immigrants such percentage is less than 45%.

More than half of the donors who give to Jewish causes identified the Jewish Federation as one of the beneficiary organizations. Some of them stated that Federation gives them the opportunity to help others locally, in Israel, and abroad. Conversely, on a national level Jews give less to Federations (30%) than to other Jewish organizations (41%) (NJPS, 2001).

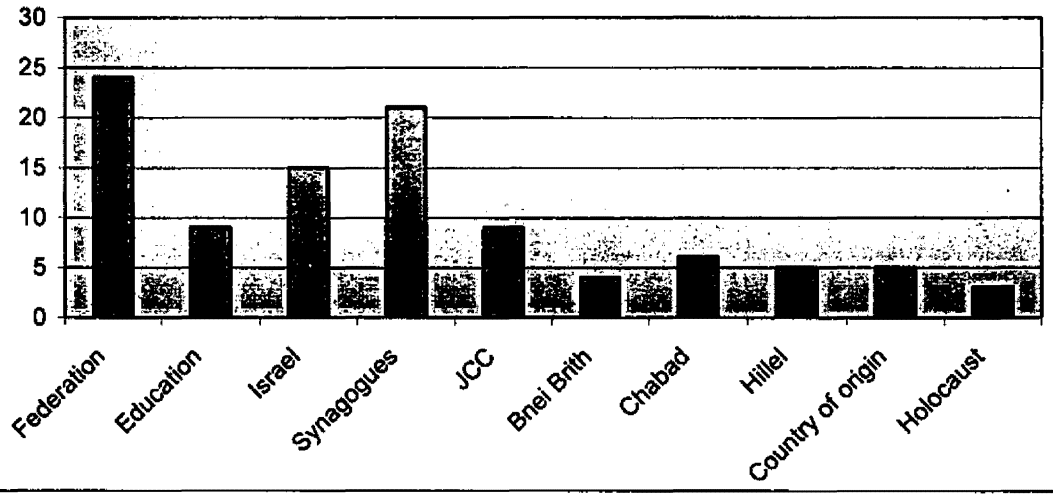
Many of the respondents give to their Synagogue through payment of membership dues. Some of our interviewees pointed out that it is important to them to "belong", and that synagogue is a place where they always feel welcome.

Other donors contribute to agencies in Israel, or American organizations that support Israel mainly because they feel a strong connection and commitment to the Jewish State. Indeed, 85% of these donors have visited Israel and 33% of them have been there more than five times.

Other people surveyed explained that they contribute either to educational settings and/or JCCs because they participate or are somehow involved with the organization. Chabad, Hillel, Bnai Brith, and Holocaust education were also identified as charitable interests. Finally, some people also contribute with

causes and organizations in their country of origin as a way of supporting both their families back home and their former communities. Table #16 reflects this.

Table #16 - Donors by Organization type or interest

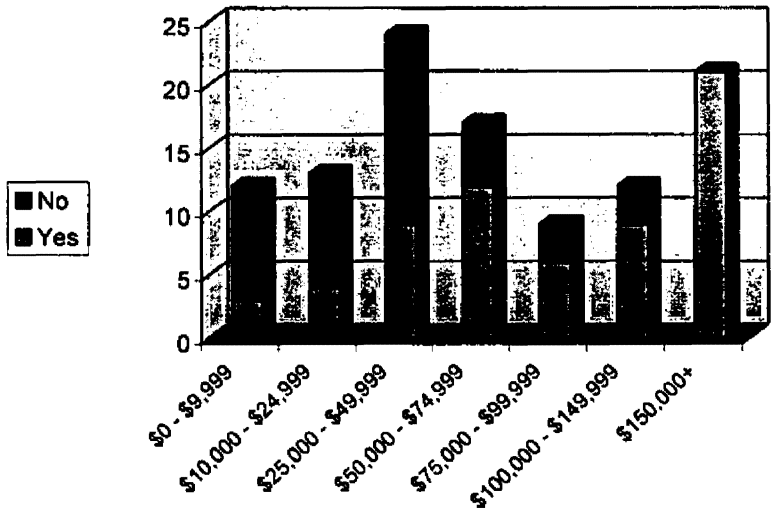


Overall, the sense of belonging seems to be the main reason why people contribute along with the desire to assist in the welfare of other Jews.

Interestingly, only 26% of the Latin American Jewish donors immigrated after 1990. That means that almost three quarters of donors have been living in Los Angeles for more than 15 years. Logically, people are more likely to contribute when their income is higher, or at least when they are more established and have financial stability. Actually, one third of these donors have an income of $150,000 or higher. Therefore, we could argue that it is likely that the longer people live in a certain place, the more economic capacity and interest they will have to support the local community. Table #17 reflects this argument. As many respondents stated that they give to certain organizations because of

feeling of belonging, and community, it could be assumed that in general, people feel more comfortable donating once they feel attached to a community.

Table #17 - Donors to Jewish causes by income level

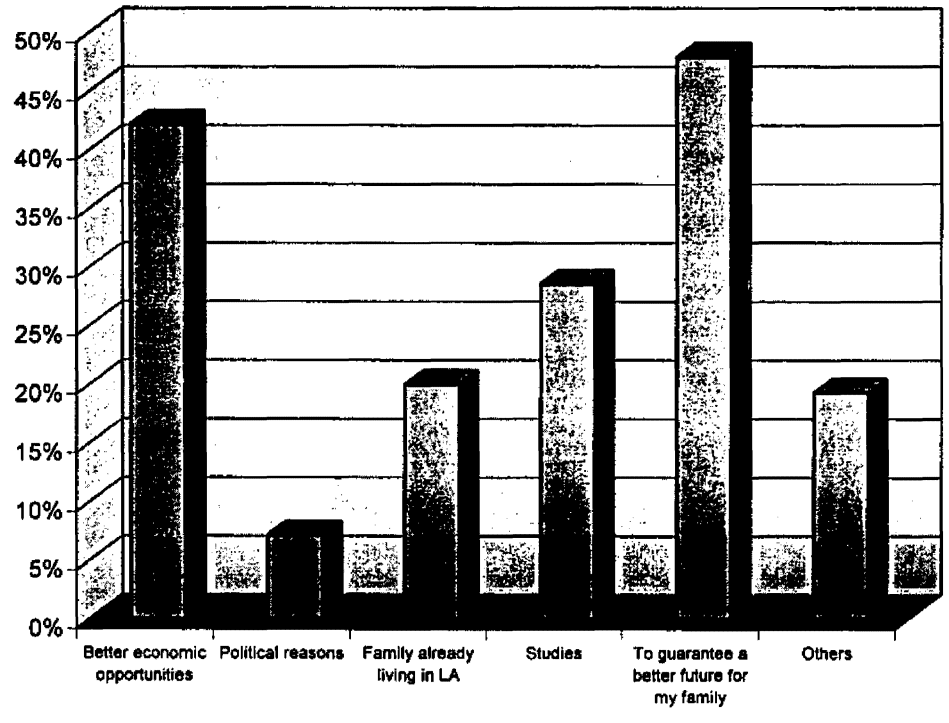


Reasons for emigrating to the United States

Immigration is a product of both the desire and the ability to move. In addition, motivation for immigration is induced by the gap between local reality and immigrants' aspirations for a better life, as well as exposure to external influences. (Yang, 1995). Many persons emigrate in search of better jobs and professional opportunities, higher wages, and general improvements in their quality of life. The two main reasons why Latin American Jews left their countries of origin and migrated to the United States are related to the opportunities for a better quality of life. 48% of people surveyed answered that they came to United States looking for guaranteeing a better future for themselves and their families, and 42% of the respondents immigrated seeking better economic opportunities. Among this group we find most of the Argentineans and Uruguayans who left

their countries over the last 5 years. The economic crises, including high rates of unemployment, and deterioration in the quality of life pushed entire families and young adults to emigrate. During the last 5 years a considerable number of Jewish people made aliyah (immigration to Israel) because of the social and economic situation in their country of origin. It is important to take into account that Israel, as a recipient of Jewish immigration, offers all kinds of benefits to new immigrants. Other countries that during the last years received large amounts of Latin American Jewish immigration include the United States, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Spain. The common motivation among immigrants from these different waves was the desire to improve their quality of life and recover some hope in their future. Table #18 summarizes the reasons for immigrating.

Table #18 - Reasons for immigrating to the United States



28% of the respondents identified studying as one of their reasons to emigrate. However, in many cases graduates stay in the country to work in their fields of specialization. A few interviewees who work in fields such as science, mathematics, and research told us that they would never get the same professional opportunities in their country of origin that they can have in the in United States. Some interviewees are positive that they will go wherever their professional careers take them. Nonetheless, other people struggle between the professional opportunities and family and friends back home. One of our interviewees pointed out that she would not like to raise her children in the United States, and that would be a reason for her to go back home.

"Immigrants' Social-Network Theory" has pointed to the prominent role of immigrants' social networks in the immigration process. These networks include personal relationships based on kinship, friendship, common origins, common ethnicity, and institutional arrangements. In addition, the networks provide information that the immigrants need to know in advance, such as travel fares, room and board accommodation, job arrangements, and language training. In this sense, almost 20% of people surveyed pointed out that having family in Los Angeles was one of their motivators for emigrating. Most of these people came straight from their country of origin to Los Angeles.

Further, 7% of the people claimed that an adverse political situation was one of the reasons why they left their country of origin. Interestingly, the majority of these respondents left their countries of origin during the 1960s and 1970s. During part of the past 30 years military governments and dictatorships ran most

of Latin American countries. These non-democratic governments persecuted those citizens involved in human rights, social action, political activity, and social change advocates. In these cases, high percentages of Jews were social and political activists involved in causes that were seen as subversive. In addition these governments tended to embrace anti-Semitism to a certain extent. The combination of these and other political and social variables encouraged a lot of people in general, and Jews in particular to flee their countries in search of temporary refuge or a permanent place to resettle.

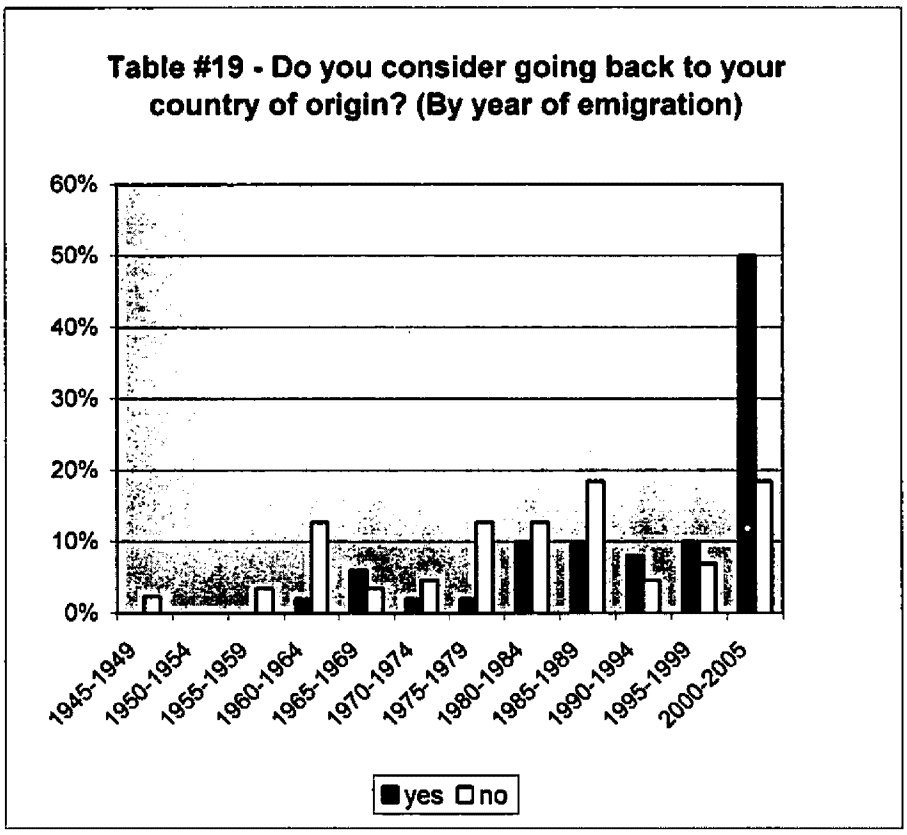
Going back home?

As pointed out by Brody (1970) between the original and the host system, the individual must cope with a series of transitional factors, which affect perceptions, attitudes, and one's capacity to deal with the host environment. One way to explore levels of adaptation is by looking at people's consideration to return to their original place. Findings showed that 38% of the people surveyed consider the possibility of going back to their country of origin. Out of these, 80% have family members in those countries. In the case of the 62% who do not consider going back, 60% have family in their countries of origin. These results reflect the theory presented above. The following are more reasons and findings for analysis. 81.4% of people surveyed are married to a Latin American partner. This suggests that in most cases these are people that emigrated as a family. In some cases their children were also born in Latin America. On the other hand, among the 62% that do not consider going back to their country of origin only 60% are married to a Latin American. In general, these Latin Americans formed

their family and raised their children in United States. It is unlikely that such individuals would consider going back to Latin America.

Some findings indicate that those who consider going back to their countries of origin score lower in the variables which measure levels of adaptation. For example, from those considering going back, less than 20% have an income of $100,000 or higher. However from those earning below $25,000 almost one third (32%) would consider going back to their country of origin. Among those who do not consider moving back, 36% have an income of $100,000 or more, and only 18% earn less than $25,000. Interestingly, these figures clearly connect "economic situation" with the variable "consider moving back to country of origin": those who are financially better off are less likely to consider going back. Taking into account that more than half of the people emigrated pursuing a better future and economic growth, it makes sense that those who are achieving their goal are not considering returning to their countries of origin.

One of the main variables that influence the consideration of returning to the country of origin, and the level of adaptation to the host environment is the amount of time spent in the latter. Among those who immigrated in the last 10 years, 75% consider going back; 85% of which actually immigrated after 2000. Nonetheless, findings showed the opposite trend when analyzing the cases of those immigrants who left their countries more than 10 years ago. 75% of these people do not consider the possibility of moving back. Table #19 reflects this.



Another variable associated in this analysis would be "citizenship acquisition". Among those who do not consider returning to their countries of origin, 80% hold American citizenship. Conversely, in the group of respondents who do consider moving back, only 40% have such citizenship.

The differences in social and communal integration between these two groups differ as well. Although rates of affiliation and community involvement are close to 80% in both cases, the difference is placed on the actual setting where these people participate. Those who do not consider returning seem to be more integrated in the American Jewish organizational structure. Synagogues are the most popular organization for affiliation among people who do not consider moving back. For the other group, which is composed by high numbers of

newcomers, LAJA is the primary group of participation. These results show the need of new immigrants for a social network of peers. LAJA gives people the opportunity to meet with others in similar situations or stages in life. In some ways, LAJA functions as a social support environment. This reflects the differences in interests and needs of various waves of immigration.

Conclusions

As the study showed, Jews all over Latin American countries faced similar constraints and opportunities. Molded by their cultural heritage, they made similar adaptations. Elkin (1998) explained that despite minor differences, Latin American Jews constitute an identifiable group. In fact, Latin American Jews do share characteristics that distinguish them both from their matrix populations in their countries of origin, and from Jewries of other countries. However, the challenge was discovering those characteristics for which classify Latin American Jews as a "group".

During the process of gathering and analyzing the information we found that Latin American Jews compose a heterogeneous group, as there was a wide variance in the variables that influenced the experiences of the individuals in our research sample. A main variance appeared in the period of time in which they emigrated their countries of origin, and settled in Los Angeles. Those who emigrated in the 1960s and 1970s left behind a completely different social, economical, and political reality than those who left their countries in the 1990s and 2000s. Not only because of the country's status in general, but also because the Jewish communities in which they lived were totally different in structure, participation, and numbers. So, for example, when interviewing two people from the same country of origin, with emigration occurring in different periods of time, they recalled and described societies that had little to nothing in common. In the same vein, immigrating to Los Angeles in the 70s was a different experience than settling in the 2000s.

Further, it seems that experiences also differed according to the country or city from which the immigrant came from. As was pointed out in the previous section, it is not the same to be a Jew in a larger Jewish community such as Buenos Aires or Mexico City, than living Jewishly in a country where the Jewish community represents less than 1 percent of the population. In this sense, findings show that within the Latino Jewish community there is a stronger and special connection among Jews from the same country of origin. Nonetheless, indicators such as the fact that Latin American Jews have created their own formal and informal organizations, and that they feel more affinity towards other Latin American Jews suggest that Latin American Jews in Los Angeles do identify themselves as a community.

In general people expressed that Latino Jews are not seen as a group by the Angelino Jewish community, or by the general population. Many of our interviewees told us how people do not understand their dual identity. "You can be either Jewish or Latino... but how can you be Latino and Jewish?"

Language is one of the strongest elements that define the Latin American Jewish community. Our findings indicate that an important majority of the people speaks Spanish at home, and yet, around 30% of the people also speak Spanish outside home. In addition, Latino Jewish organizations are run in Spanish, and one of the reasons why Latino Jewish immigrants have strong connections among themselves is because they feel more comfortable conversing in Spanish. Nonetheless, Latin American Jews are well integrated to the American society and participate in Angelino Jewish organizations. It seems to be that there is a

strong desire from Latin American Jewish immigrants to improve their English. They are aware that language is the key to fit in into the Angelino community.

Although Latin American Jews have created their own organizations, they show high rates of involvement in the Angelino Jewish community. Indeed, almost half of the respondents are synagogue members and only 20% indicated no participation in any Jewish organization or program. High levels of commitment with and support to Jewish causes and Israel reinforce this idea. Conversely, the affiliation rate to Latino organizations is very low, and as the findings indicated, Latin American Jews have a stronger affinity towards American Jews than to non-Jewish Latinos. All of this suggests that the Jewish culture, over the Latino culture, plays an important role in modeling these immigrants' identity. Living in a city with a large and vital Jewish community like Los Angeles gives them the opportunity to enhance their Judaism.

As mentioned, the idea of adaptation is associated with the process of establishing and maintaining stable relationships in the new environment. In this sense, most of our interviewees pointed out that the support of family members, group of peers, and informal organizations was essential in their first years in the United States. In addition, most of the respondents agreed that the adaptation process takes time, and that the more support one can get, the better. In fact, our findings indicate that people that have been longer in Los Angeles in general do better than those who have recently immigrated.

Regarding the role that the Jewish community has played in Latino Jews' adaptation process, there are different feelings. On one hand, many respondents

explained that the Jewish community assisted them in finding jobs, integrating them into the community, and acting as support systems. On the other hand, some people stated their disappointment in the lack of response and support received from Jewish organizations.

In general, Latino Jews do not regret their decision of immigration. Indeed, only one third of the respondents consider the possibility of going back to their country of origin. As many of them explained, although it might be challenging in the beginning, they are happy with both the quality of life they have achieved, and the opportunities for their children. Some of the principal challenges that interviewees identified include, language barriers and cultural differences, in particular, the way in which social relationships are established.

In the last decade, adverse social and economic situations have pushed thousands of Latin American Jews to leave their countries of origin. This flow of new immigrants, mainly from Argentina and Uruguay –those most affected by these crises- has contributed to the growth of the Latino Jewish community in Los Angeles. Because of the changes and new restrictions in United States' immigration policy after 2001, and the stabilization of the conditions in Argentina and Uruguay it is expected that immigration trends will return to previous rates. The test for the Latino Jewish community of Los Angeles is then, to maintain its levels of growth by integrating second and third generations. However, the principal challenge for Latin American Jews will be in finding the balance between integration with the Jewish American society, and preservation of a

Latin American Jewish identity: how will the Latin American Jewish culture be transmitted to subsequent generations that are born in the United States?

In many ways, these are the same questions other immigrant minorities have faced throughout history. And as it was the case in the past, the answers will have to be found in the decisions made by each family, each group, and each organization.

Recommendations

Based on the responses to the questionnaires and interviews with participants in the study, we strongly recommend the following to address the needs of the Latino Jewish community of Los Angeles:

Creating a database of Latin American Jews living in the Los Angeles area.

Having Angelino Latin American Jews contact information will enable those interested in organizing this group to actually reach out to more potential participants. Only after identifying these people will it be possible to assess their needs, customize programs, and build the Latin American Jewish community. Such a database should be periodically updated as new people immigrate to and settle in Los Angeles. An effort must be made to reach out to those who do not have contact with community members. The information will also be helpful for newcomers and the unaffiliated to expand their social network and make their integration process easier. If this is successfully implemented, a stronger and larger community could be developed.

Creating the Latin American Jewish Yellow Pages

A Yellow pages directory would offer access to professionals, services, and diverse resources provided by Latin American Jews. Firstly, the directory would be a great help for those new immigrants who settle in the city and may need some kind of assistance from people of the same background. Such assistance may include professional services, businesses, social services,

cultural and recreational events, holiday celebrations, services for singles, as well as meeting a wide variety of needs, including information on car sales, apartments/house directory, legal services, babysitter services, garage sales, volunteer services and offerings, social announcements etc.

Because of language barriers and cultural norms, new immigrants may feel more comfortable doing business with other Latin American Jews. As well, the directory could become a tool for Latin American Jews to network, and/or get support and assistance from other community members. Further, the directory could be a means for Latin American Jewish professionals, business people, and other interested parties, to publicize their services to this community.

Since Latin American Jews use the Internet, the directory should include both a hard copy and an online version.

Promoting communal involvement in Latin American Jewish organizations is a way of fostering Jewish communal involvement.

High percentages of participation in Jewish communal organizations reflect that, in general, Latin American Jews believe in Jewish communal involvement and association. Nevertheless, in spite of their participation in the broader American Jewish community, Latin American Jews have established their own associations. These organizations act as social environments in which Latin American Jews can preserve customs and cultural traditions that they share as a group. These associations provide a sense of belonging, and a network of

friends/peers, with whom Latin American Jews identify themselves and share common experiences.

For some Latin American Jews these organizations are the only point of interaction with the Jewish community; and in some way, for many people these groups could become the doorway from which they access the broader American Jewish community as well.

In general, Latin American Jews have a strong culture of communal involvement, tzedakah, and participation in community efforts. They participate and support Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Federation and synagogues. By engaging in outreach and cultivation efforts, these organizations can gain an important number of committed and passionate lay leaders and donors.

Providing informal Latino Jewish organizations with technical skills

One of the challenges that Latino Jewish leaders face is the lack of technical skills to run their associations and move them to the next level. Even though the need for these associations exists, many times the intent of organizing has not been successful due to the lack of professional training, fundraising skills, strategic planning, legal liability, and even space availability. In this sense, American Jewish institutions could work more in collaboration with Latin American Leaders by assisting them training in these areas and ongoing technical support. By helping Latin American Jewish organizations to succeed, the Los Angeles Jewish community would be enriched by integrating a new partner into its communal structure. Indeed, there is a great interest and capacity

among Latin American Jews to support and participate in organizations that resonate with their interests, including local organizations, Israel, and Jews abroad.

Involving Latin American Jews in building relationships between the Jewish and the Latino communities.

The Jewish community has always been at the forefront of community relations. Several studies have pointed out the importance of building relations with the largest minority in Los Angeles, Latinos. In this sense, the Jewish community could take advantage of Latino Jews' dual identities by integrating them into the process of relations building. Latin American Jews are highly involved in the Jewish community and at the same time they have experience with, and understand the Latino culture and idiosyncrasy. Latin American Jews have integrated values from both cultures, so they are clear examples that these two communities have potential for commonalities.

Fostering connections with Jewish communities all around Latin America.

Creating opportunities for Angelino Jews and Latin American Jews to learn from each other will enhance mutual understanding and interest in the other. Mutual understanding and collaboration is one expression of the value of "Am Israel, am Ehad" "The people of Israel are one people". The commandment for Jews to be responsible for each other transcends geographical boundaries. Working together with those Jews who came from other Diaspora Jewish

communities creates an opportunity to increase the interest, knowledge, and commitment towards other Jews. Different cultural exchange opportunities can be created for Latin American Jews to transmit their cultures and experiences, such as educational settings, conferences, synagogues, presentations, interviews in Jewish media, and the like. Latin American Jews' roles might be in both expressing and transmitting their own experiences, and in acting as liaisons between the two communities.

These relationships would be steps in the direction of strengthening the links between the Los Angeles Jewish community and Jewish communities around Latin American.

Working in collaboration with other organizations and immigrants' networks both Jewish and not Jewish.

As Los Angeles is a thriving multicultural city, several other immigrants' organizations already been established. Hundreds of ethnic and religious groups have gone through the process of organizing. Examples of this include: the Iranian American Jewish Federation, the Russian Jewish Council, Latino associations such as the Latino Business Association, the Escuela Argentina de Los Angeles, and more. Some are more developed than others, and we assume that interests and levels of collaboration vary as well.

By creating channels of communication, Latin American Jewish organizations could benefit through learning from other communities' experiences. Moreover, working in collaboration with such organizations would

open the possibility of having access to more services, such as social support, cultural events and interchanges, technical assistance, and more. Furthermore, building relationships with other minority groups would help to strengthen Latin American group identity.

Following up with more research.

This study is but a first attempt to explore and describe the Latin American Jewish community in Los Angeles. Further research should be done in order to get a deeper understanding of this group's specific characteristics and how both the Los Angeles Jewish community, and the Latino Jewish community can benefit from each other's strengths and opportunities. Specifically, further research should explore how the Latin American Jewish background manifests itself in second and third generations. A longitudinal study would be helpful in analyzing Jewish and Latino identities and continuity in future generations.

Lastly, more research on other Jewish minorities' processes of immigration to Los Angeles, or United States could be done in order to study their different experiences, cultural norms, particularities, and needs. This information may be helpful for Jewish communal professionals, researchers, social workers, and anybody interested in studying and/or working with Jewish minorities. Overall, more research and information will help to increasing the knowledge and awareness about the contributions and needs of the different minority groups that compose the Jewish community of Los Angeles.

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Appendix

Our names are Ariel and Judith Jenik and we are second-year graduate students at the Hebrew Union College and the University of Southern California. Both of us are studying towards a Master of Arts in Jewish Communal Service, and each of us is getting an additional Master Degree in Public Administration and Social Work respectively.

We are Argentineans and we have been living in Los Angeles since 2003.

You are invited to participate in a study about the Latin-American Jewish community in Los Angeles. The results of this study will be written up in our thesis in fulfillment of the requirements for completing our degrees. In addition, these findings will contribute to the literature of Jewish minorities in the United States. Our goal is to increase awareness about the specific characteristics, strengths, and opportunities of the Latin-American Jewish community in Los Angeles.

Completing the following online questionnaire will take you less than 10 minutes. It would be very helpful if you could fill it out as soon as possible, no later than February 15, 2005. The survey should be answered individually, not by family unit.

We would also appreciate your forwarding this e-mail to any Latin American Jew living in Los Angeles who you know, including people from your own family. By doing this and by filling out the questionnaire, you are contributing with both the Latin-American Jewish community and the field of Jewish communal service.

The questionnaires will remain confidential and will be used only for quantitative analysis.

To access the on-line survey please click on the following link:

Si Desea contestar el cuestionario en Espanol, por favor haga click en este link:

If you have any question or comment, please contact us at: 310-270-7433/4 jenik@usc.edu

Thank you for your collaboration!!!

1. Name (optional) _____

2. Nationality

__*Argentina*
__ *Belize*
__ *Bolivia*
__ *Brazil*
__ *Chile*
__ *Colombia*
__ *Costa Rica*
__ *Cuba*
__ *Ecuador*
__ *El Salvador*
__ *Guatemala*
__ *Mexico*
__ *Honduras*
__ *Nicaragua*
__ *Panama*
__ *Paraguay*
__ *Peru*
__ *Uruguay*
__ *Venezuela*

3. Are you a citizen of U.S.? If yes, when did you acquire that status?

_____

4. Marital status

__ ***Single***

__ ***Married***

__ ***Divorced***

__ ***Widowed***

__ ***Living together***

__ ***Other (please specify)*** _____

5. What is your partner's/couple's country/region of origin?

__ *Latin America*
__ *United States*
__ *Israel*
__ *Europe*
__ *Asia*
__ *Australia*
__ *Africa*

6. Is your partner Jewish?

__ *Yes*

__ *No*

7. What language do you speak at home most of the time?

__ *Spanish*
__ *Portuguese*
__ *English*
__ *Other (please specify)* _____

8. What language do you speak outside home most of the time?

__ *English*
__ *Spanish*
__ *Portuguese*
__ *Other (please specify)* _____

9. What was the year of departure from your country of origin? _____

10. What was the year of your settlement in Los Angeles? _____

11. Did you live in any other place before coming to Los Angeles?

__ *Yes*

__ *No*

12. What is the city and zip code of your current primary residence?

_____

13. Do you have immediate relatives (including parents, children or siblings) living in your country of origin?

__ *Yes*

__ *No*

14. Are you:

__ *Employed full time*
__ *Employed part time*
__ *Full time student*
__ *Retired*
__ *Unemployed*
__ *Disabled*
__ *Self-employed*
__ *Other, specify* _____

15. Please indicate your highest level of education completed

__ *Grade school*
__ *Some high school*
__ *High school graduate*
__ *Some college*
__ *Completed college*
__ *Licensed (licenciado)*
__ *Master's degree*
__ *M.D. or D.D.S.*
__ *PhD*
__ *Other (please specify)* _____

16. Do you:

__ *Rent your apartment*
__ *Own your apartment*
__ *Rent your home*
__ *Own your home*
__ *Other (please specify)* _____

17. Do you attend synagogue?

__ *Always*
__ *Almost always*
__ *Often*
__ *Only for high holydays*
__ *Rarely*
__ *Never*

18. Religious practice: You and/or your family:

__ *Light candles on Shabbat*
__ *Participate in a Passover Seder*
__ *Fast on Yom Kippur*
__ *Have a mezuzah/mezuzot on your door(s)*
__ *Keep kosher diet*
__ *Judaica at home (i.e. Birchat a Bait)*

19. Which of the following categories best describes your religious affiliation:

__ *Orthodox*
__ *Reform*
__ *Conservative*
__ *Reconstructionist*
__ *No denomination*
__ *Other, please specify* _____

20. With which of the following groups do you maintain a closer relationship? (1 being the closest and 4 being the least close)

American Jews	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
Non-Jewish Americans	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
Latin American Jews	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
Non-Jewish Latin Americans	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

21. Please indicate to which of the following Jewish organizations you are affiliated to:

__ Synagogue/Temple
__ Jewish Community Center
__ Bnai B'rith
__ Latin American Jewish Association (LAJA)
__ Jewish Federation or any of the associated agencies
__ School, College, University
__ Hillel
__ None of the above
__ Other, specify

22. Do you financially support any Jewish organization/cause?

__ Yes
__ No

23. If you financially support any Jewish organization/cause please indicate which one/s and what are your reasons for supporting it?

_____

_____

_____

24. Do you financially support any non-Jewish organization/cause?

__ Yes
__ No

25. Are you a member of any Latino/Hispanic organization?

__ Yes
__ No

26. If you are member of any Latino/Hispanic organization please indicate which one

_____

27. What was your approximate income from all sources, before taxes in 2004?

__ Less than $9,999
__ $10,000 to $24,999
__ $25,000 to $49,999
__ $50,000 to $74,999
__ $75,000 to $99,999
__ $100,000 to $150,000
__ Over $150,000

28. Why did you immigrate to the U.S.? (Check all that apply)

__ *Seeking for best economic opportunities*
__ *Relatives already living in U.S.*
__ *To guarantee a better future for self/children*
__ *Political reasons*
__ *To study in U.S.*
__ *Other, please specify* _____

29. Which of the following programs/organizations did you participate in your country of origin? (Check all that apply)

__ *Jewish formal education (Elementary or High school)*
__ *Jewish informal education (youth groups, camps, etc.)*
__ *Jewish Community Center*
__ *Zionist Movements (Tnuah)*
__ *Tapuz or other Israel experience*
__ *None of the above*
__ *Other, please specify* _____

30. Did your attend synagogue?

__ *Always*
__ *Almost always*
__ *Often*
__ *Only for high holydays*
__ *Rarely*
__ *Never*

31. Which of the following traditions did you or your family maintain in your country of origin? (Check all that apply)

__ *Lighted Shabbat candles*
__ *Participated in a Passover Seder*
__ *Fasted on Yom Kippur*
__ *Had a mezuzah on your door*
__ *Kept kosher diet*
__ *Had Judaica at home*

32. How many times have you visited Israel?

__ *Never*
__ *1*
__ *2*
__ *3*
__ *4*
__ *5 or more*

33. Do you have family living in Israel?

__ *Yes*
__ *No*

34. Have you considered moving back to your country of origin?

__ *Yes*
__ *No*

35. For Parents:
How many children do you have? Please indicate their ages:
_____

36. For parents with children between 2 and 18 years old:
In which of the following programs do your children participate? (Please check all that apply)

	Child#1	*Child#2*	*Child#3*	*Child#4*
After school and/or weekend Hebrew school *(1 or more days a week and/ or affiliated with congregation)*				
Jewish elementary school and/or Yeshiva				
Jewish secondary school and/or Yeshiva				
Day, Summer or Winter Camp				
Other				
None				

37. How many children over 18 years old do you have?_____

38. How many of them attend/ed College or University?_____

Nuestros nombres son Ariel y Judith Jenik, y somos estudiantes en Hebrew Union College (HUC) y en University of Southern California (USC). Llegamos a los Angeles desde Argentina hace un ano y medio para estudiar un master en Servicio Comunitario Judio en HUC, y ademas cada uno de nosotros esta cursando un Segundo master en USC, en Administracion Publica, y Trabajo Social, respectivamente.

En esta oportunidad necesitamos de su colaboracion con motivo del proyecto de tesis que debemos presentar para completar nuestros estudios y obtener nuestros titulos. Le solicitamos completar el cuestionario online cuyo link encontrara a continuacion, esto le llevara menos de 10 minutos.

Este proyecto es un estudio sobre la comunidad Judeo-Latinoamericana en Los Angeles. El estudio pretende ser un elemento mas para el desarrollo de la literatura sobre minorias dentro de la comunidad Judia en los Estados Unidos. Uno de nuestros objetivos es informar y educar a los miembros de la comunidad judia, y todos aquellos interesados, acerca de las caracteristicas, fortalezas y oportunidades de la comunidad Judeo-Latinoamericana de Los Angeles y su gente.

El cuestionario esta disenado para ser completo por persona, no por familia. Le rogamos hacerlo antes del 20 de Febrero. Nos seria de gran ayuda si usted pudiese reenviarle este e-mail con el link del cuestionario a cuantos Judios latinoamericanos viviendo en Los Angeles conozca, incluyendo otras personas de su nucleo familiar. Recuerde que al completar la informacion no solo esta Ud. colaborando con nuestro proyecto de tesis, sino tambien contribuyendo con nuestra comunidad Judeo-Latinoamericana y el campo del servicio comunitario judio.

El cuestionario es totalmente confidencial y sera usado solo para analisis cuantitativo.

Para acceder al cuestionario en espanol, por favor haga click en este link:

If you want to answer the survey in English, please click the link below: Por cualquier pregunta o comentario, por favor contactenos al telefono 310-270-7433/4 o email jenik@usc.edu

Muchisimas Gracias!

1. ***Nombre (opcional):*** _____

2. ***Cual es su pais de origen?***

__ *Argentina*
__ *Belize*
__ *Bolivia*
__ *Brazil*
__ *Chile*
__ *Colombia*
__ *Costa Rica*
__ *Cuba*
__ *Ecuador*
__ *El Salvador*
__ *Guatemala*
__ *Mexico*
__ *Honduras*
__ *Nicaragua*
__ *Panama*
__ *Paraguay*
__ *Peru*
__ *Uruguay*
__ *Venezuela*

3. ***Es ciudadano de los Estados Unidos? En caso afirmativo, cuando adquirio dicha condicion?***

_____

4. ***Estado civil:***

__ *Soltero/a*
__ *Casado/a*
__ *Divorciado/a*
__ *Viudo/a*
__ *Viviendo en pareja*
__ *Otro (por favor especifique)* _____

5. ***Cual es el pais/region de origen de su pareja?***

__ *America Latina*
__ *Estados Unidos*
__ *Israel*
__ *Europa*
__ *Asia*
__ *Australia*
__ *Africa*

6. ***Es su pareja de religion judia?***

__ *Si*
__ *No*

7. ***Que idioma habla en su casa la mayoria del tiempo?***

__ *Espanol*
__ *Portugues*
__ *Ingles*
__ *Otro (por favor especifique)* _____

8. Que idioma habla fuera de su casa la mayoria del tiempo?

__ *Ingles*
__ *Espanol*
__ *Portugues*
__ *Otro (por favor especifique)* _____

9. En que ano emigro de su pais de origen? _____

10. En que ano se establecio en Los Angeles? _____

11. Ha vivido en algun otro lugar antes de establecerse en Los Angeles?

__ *Si*
__ *No*

12. Cual es la ciudad y codigo postal de su actual residencia?

_____

13. Tiene algun familiar cercano (padres, hijos, hermanos) viviendo en su pais de origen?

__ *Si*
__ *No*

14. Esta usted:

__ *Empleado tiempo completo*
__ *Empleado medio tiempo*
__ *Estudiando tiempo complete*
__ *Jubilado*
__ *Desempleado*
__ *Inhabilitado para trabajar*
__ *Trabajando por su propia cuenta*
__ *Otro (Por favor especifique)* _____

15. Indique el nivel educativo mas alto que ha alcanzado:

__ *Primaria*
__ *Secundaria incompleta*
__ *Secundaria completa*
__ *Universidad incompleta*
__ *Universidad completa*
__ *Estudios terciarios*
__ *Maestria (Masters degree)*
__ *Medico o Dentista*
__ *Doctorado (Ph. D.)*
__ *Otro (Por favor especifique)* _____

16. Usted:

__ *Alquila su departamento*
__ *Es dueno de su departamento*
__ *Alquila su casa*
__ *Es dueno de su casa*
__ *Otro (Por favor especifique)* _____

17. Concurre a la sinagoga?

__ *Siempre*
__ *Casi siempre*
__ *A menudo*
__ *Solo para Rosh Hashana y Iom Kipur*
__ *Rara vez*
__ *Nunca*

18. Practica religiosa: Usted y/o su familia:

__ *Enciende las velas de Shabat*
__ *Participa en Sedarim de Pesaj (cena de Pesaj)*
__ *Ayuna en Iom Kipur*
__ *Tiene mezuzah/mezuzot en su/s puerta/s*
__ *Lleva una dieta kasher*
__ *Tiene adornos judaicos en su casa (por ej, birkat a bait)*

19. Cual de las siguientes categorias describe mejor su afiliacion religiosa:

__ *Ortodoxo/a*
__ *Conservador/a*
__ *Reformista*
__ *Reconstruccionista*
__ *Ninguna afiliacion*
__ *Otro (Por favor especifique)* _____

20. Con cual de los siguientes grupos mantiene una relacion mas cercana? (siendo 1 lo mas cercano y 4 lo menos cercano)

Judios Norteamericanos	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
Norteamericanos no Judios	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
Judios Latinoamericanos	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
Latinoamericanos no Judios	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*

21. Por favor indique a cual de las sigiuentes organizaciones judias esta usted afiliado/a. (Marque todas las respuestas que apliquen).

__ *Sinagoga/Templo*
__ *Centro Comunitario Judio (JCC)*
__ *Bnai B'rith*
__ *Latin American Jewish Association (LAJA)*
__ *Jewish Federation o cualquiera de sus instituciones asociadas*
__ *Escuela/College/Universidad*
__ *Hillel*
__ *Ninguna de estas opciones*
__ *Otra (por favor especifique)* _____

22. Contribuye economicamente con alguna organizacion o causa Judia?

__ *Si* __ *No*

23. Si contribuye economicamente con alguna organizacion/causa Judia, por favor indique a cual/es y cuales son sus motivaciones.

_____

_____

_____

_____

24. Contribuye economicamente con alguna organizacion/causa no judia?

__ *Si* __ *No*

25. Es usted miembro de alguna organizacion Latina/Hispana?

__ *Si* __ *No*

26. ***Si es miembro de una organizacion o programa Latino/Hispano, por favor indique a cual***

_____

27. En 2004 cual fue su ingreso aproximado de todas las fuentes antes de deducir impuestos?

__ *Menos de $9,999*
__ *$10,000 a 24,999*
__ *$25,000 a 49,999*
__ *$50,000 a 99,999*
__ *$100,000 a 149,999*
__ *$150,000 o mas*

28. Por que emigro a los Estados Unidos? (Marque todas las respuestas validas)

__ *Buscando mejores oportunidades economicas*
__ *Parientes que ya vivian en los Estados Unidos*
__ *Para garantizar un mejor futuro para usted y/o su familia*
__ *Razones politicas*
__ *Para estudiar*
__ *Otro (por favor especifique)* _____

29. En cuales de los siguientes programas/organizaciones participo usted en su pais de origen? (Indique todas las respuestas validas)

__ *Educacion formal Judia (Primario y/o Secundaria)*
__ *Educacion no formal Judia (grupos, campamentos, etc.)*
__ *Club social y/o deportivo*
__ *Movimiento Sionista (Tnuah)*
__ *Tapus u otro programa en Israel*
__ *Ninguno*
__ *Otro (por favor especifique)* _____

30. Concurria usted a la sinagoga en su pais de origen?

__ *Siempre*
__ *Casi siempre*
__ *A menudo*
__ *Solo para Rosh Hashana y Iom Kipur*
__ *Rara vez*
__ *Nunca*

31. Cual de las siguientes tradiciones practicaba usted y/o su familia en su pais de origen? (Marque todas las respuestas validas)

__ *Encendido de las velas de Shabat*
__ *Sedarim de Pesaj*
__ *Ayuno en Iom Kipur*
__ *Mezuza/Mezuzot en su/s puerta/s*
__ *Dieta Kasher*
__ *Adornos judaicos en su casa (ej. Birkat a bait)*

32. Cuantas veces ha visitado Israel?

__ *Nunca*
__ *1*
__ *2*
__ *3*
__ *4*
__ *5 o mas*

33. Tiene familia viviendo en Israel?

__ *Si*
__ *No*

34. Considera la posibilidad de volver, ahora o en un futuro, a su pais de origen?

__ *Si*
__ *No*

35. Para padres:
Cuantos hijos tiene? Por favor indique sus edades.

_____

36. Para padres/madres con hijos entre 2 y 18 anos:
En cual de los siguientes programas participa su hijo/s? (Marque todas las respuestas validas)

	Hijo#1	*Hijo#2*	*Hijo#3*	*Hijo#4*
Escuela complementaria Judia *(1 vez por semana o en 2 o mas dias a la semana y/o afiliado con una congregacion)*				
Escuela primaria judia/Yeshiva				
Escuela secundaria judia/Yeshiva				
Campamento de invierno/verano/ colonia de vacaciones				
Otros				
Ninguno				

37. Cuantos hijos mayors de 18 anos tiene usted? _____

38. Cuantos de ellos asisten/asistieron al college o universidad? _____

Entrevista

Hace cuanto vivis en Los Angeles?
Edad:
Pais de origen:
Profesion/ocupacion:

Proceso migratorio

1. **Cuales son las razones que te llevaron a emigrar?**
2. **Por que elegiste venir a Los Angeles?**
3. **Que fue lo mas dificil al irte?**

Adaptacion

1. **Cuales eran tus expectativas?**
2. **Cuales fueron los principales desafios al llegar?**
3. **Como los solucionaste?**
4. **Que cosas positivas encontraste?**
5. **Que extranas?**
6. **Que no extranas?**
7. **Como fue tu adaptacion con el idioma? Y con la cultura?**
8. **Que rol jugo la comunidad judia en tu adaptacion?**

Identidad

1. **Que cambio en tu judaismo?**
2. ***Con que grupo (judios latinoamericanos – latinoamericanos no judios – norteamericanos judios – norteamericanos no judios) te identificas mas? Por que? Como se da esa identificacion?***
3. **En que cosas sentis que te diferencias de esos grupos?**

Futuro

1. **Tenes planeado quedarte a vivir? Por que?**
2. **En caso afirmativo, como educarias a tus hijos y que identidad/cultura les transmitirias? Como?**

Name (optional)

Total Respondents	86
(skipped this question)	56

Country of origin

	Response Total	
Argentina	72	50.70
Bolivia	0	0.00
Brazil	2	1.41
Cuba	5	3.52
Chile	7	4.93
Colombia	3	2.11
Costa Rica	1	0.70
Ecuador	3	2.11
El Salvador	0	0.00
Guatemala	2	1.41
Honduras	0	0.00
Mexico	30	21.13
Nicaragua	0	0.00
Panama	0	0.00
Paraguay	0	0.00
Peru	2	1.41
Uruguay	13	9.15
Venezuela	2	1.41
Total Respondents	142	100.00

Are you citizen of the United States? When did you acquire such status?

Total Respondents	136
(skipped this question)	6

Marital Status

	Response Total
Single	20
Married	99
Divorced	11
Separated	1
Widow	5
Living together	3
Other (please, specify)	3
Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

What is your partner's/ couple's country/region of origin?

	Response Total
America Latina	83
United States	25
Israel	8
Europe	5
Asia	1
Africa	1
Australia	0
Total Respondents	123
(skipped this question)	19

Is your partner Jewish?

	Response Total
Yes	113
No	12
Total Respondents	125
(skipped this question)	17

What language do you speak at home most of the time?

	Response Total
Spanish	94
Portugues	0
English	39
Other (please specify)	9
Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

What language do you speak outside home most of the time?

	Response Total
English	102
Spanish	32
Portugues	0
Other (please, specify)	8
Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

When did you emigrate from your country of origin?

Total Respondents	141
(skipped this question)	1

When did you settle in Los Angeles?

Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

Did you live in any other place before coming to Los Angeles?

	Response Total
Yes	55
No	86
Total Respondents	141
(skipped this question)	1

Cual es la ciudad y codigo postal de su actual residencia?

Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

Do you have family members living in your country of origin?

	Response Total
Yes	97
No	45
Total Respondents	141
(skipped this question)	1

Are you:

	Response Total
Full-time employed	58
Part-time employed	14
Full-time student	14
Retired	10
Unemployed	0
Disable to work	3
Self-employed	32
Other (please, specify)	11
Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

Please, indicate the highest level of education attained:

	Response Total
Elementary school	0
Some high school	3
High school graduate	17
Some college	20

Completed college	40
Licensed	10
Master degree	31
M.D. or D.D.S	4
PhD	12
Other (please, specify)	5
Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

You:

	Response Total
Rent your apartment	55
Own your apartment	17
Rent your house	2
Own your house	64
Other (please, specify)	4
Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

Do you attend synagogue?

	Response Total
Always	15
Almost always	9
Often	34
Only for High Holydays	51
Rarely	25
Never	7
Total Respondents	141
(skipped this question)	1

Religious Practice: You and your family:

	Response Total
Light Shabbat candles	80
Participate in Passover Seder	123
Fast on Yom Kipur	107
Have Mezuzah/mezuzot on your doors	119
Keep kosher diet	27
Judaica at home (I.e. Birchat ha Bait)	112
Total Respondents	134
(skipped this question)	8

Which of the following categories best describes your religious affiliation?

	Response Total
Orthodox	16
Conservative	67
Reform	30
Reconstructionist	2
No denomination	24
Other (please, specify)	3
Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

With which of the following groups do you maintain a closer relationship? (1 being the closest and 4 being the least close)

	1	2	3	4	Response Average
American Jews	43	36	29	11	2.07
Non Jewish Americans	10	11	34	41	3.1
Latin American Jews	74	30	15	6	1.62
Non Jewish Latin Americans	9	27	19	40	2.95

Total Respondents	139
(skipped this question)	3

Please, indicate to which of the following Jewish organizations you are affiliated to:

	Response Total
Synagogue/temple	66
Jewish Community Center	18
Bnai B'rith	24
Latin American Jewish Association (LAJA)	37
Jewish Federation or any of the associated agencies	20
School, College, University	27
Hillel	8
None of the above	28
Other (please, specify)	9
Total Respondents	142
(skipped this question)	0

Do you financially support any Jewish organization or cause?

	Response Total
Yes	88
No	52
Total Respondents	140

(skipped this question)	2

If you financially support any Jewish organization/cause, please indicate which one/s and what are your reasons for supporting it?

Total Respondents	72
(skipped this question)	70

Do you financially support any non-Jewish organization/cause?

	Response Total
Yes	63
No	76
Total Respondents	139
(skipped this question)	3

Are you a member of any Latino/Hispanic organization?

	Response Total
Yes	27
No	111
Total Respondents	138
(skipped this question)	4

If you are a member of any Latino organization or program, please indicate which one

Total Respondents	25
(skipped this question)	117

What was your approximate income from all sources before taxes in 2004?

	Response Total
Less than $9,999	12
$10,000 to $24,999	13
$25,000 to 49,999	24
$50,000 to $74,999	17
$75,000 to $99,999	9
$100,000 to $150,000	12
More than $150,000	21
Total Respondents	108
(skipped this question)	34

Why did you immigrate to U.S.?

	Response Total
Seeking for best economic opportunities	59
Political reasons	10
Relatives already living in United States	28
To study	40
To guarantee a better future for self/family	67
Other (please, specify)	27
Total Respondents	140

(skipped this question) 2

Which of the following programs/organizations did you participate in your country of origin?
Check all that apply

	Response Total
Jewish formal education	84
Jewish informal education	67
Jewish community center	87
Zionist movements	49
Israel experience	36
None of the above	18
Other (please, specify)	17
Total Respondents	140
(skipped this question)	2

Did you attend sinagogue in your country of origin?

	Response Total
Always	16
Almost always	11
Often	32
Only for high holydays	55
Rarely	18
Never	9
Total Respondents	141
(skipped this question)	1

Which of the following traditions did you or your family maintain in your country of origin?
Check all that apply

	Response Total
Lighted Shabbat candles	53
Participated in Passover seder	117
Fasted on Yom Kipur	104
Had Mezuzah on your door	101
Kept kosher diet	20
Had Judaica at home	101
Total Respondents	133
(skipped this question)	9

How many time have you visited Israel?

	Response Total
Never	24
1	31
2	21
3	17
4	11
5 or more	36
Total Respondents	140

(skipped this question)	2

Do you have family living in Israel?

	Response Total
Yes	105
No	36
Total Respondents	141
(skipped this question)	1

Do you consider the possibility of going back to your country of origin?

	Response Total
Yes	50
No	88
Total Respondents	138
(skipped this question)	4

For parents: How many children do you have? Please, indicate their ages

Total Respondents	104
(skipped this question)	38

For parents with children between 2 and 18 years old: in which of the following programs do your children participate? Please, check all that apply

	Child #1	Child #2	Child #3	Child #4	Response Total
After school and/or weekend Hebrew school (1 or more days a week and/ or affiliated with congregation)	6	3	3	0	7
Jewish elementary school and/or Yeshiva	19	8	0	0	25
Jewish secondary school and/or Yeshiva	18	3	8	0	19
Day, Summer or Winter camp	21	5	3	1	22
Other	10	2	5	0	10
None of the above	5	1	2	0	5

Total Respondents	53
(skipped this question)	89

How many children over 18 years old do you have?

Total Respondents	83
(skipped this question)	59

How many of them attend/ed college or university?

Total Respondents	70
(skipped this question)	72