AMERICAN JEWISH PERSONAL NAMES:

RESULTS FROM A NATIONAL SURVEY

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Academic articles based on this study are in preparation, as is a general-audience book about Jewish names of pets. The cover image is a word cloud of a random sample of the children's name tokens from the survey data.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a recent survey of American Jewish Personal Names, based on over 11,000 responses. The results offer quantitative data supporting the commonly held understanding that different types of American Jews select different types of names for their babies. Names were categorized according to their origin (Biblical and Modern Hebrew, Yiddish, and other languages), their popularity in American society, and bearers' assumptions that someone with that name is Jewish. The analysis found that respondents' and their children's name categories correlate strongly with personal characteristics, such as decade of birth, religiosity, ancestry, and time spent in Israel. We also see correlations between various factors and naming after living or deceased honorees, using Jewish names for pets, and using a "Starbucks name," an alternative first name used for some service encounters. Most Jews report having a Hebrew or other name for ritual purposes. Finally, Jewish and non-Jewish respondents rated 26 personal names, such as Eliana, Lila, Rebecca, Irving, Liam, and Rafi, on the likelihood that someone with that name is Jewish; these ratings also correlate with respondent characteristics and differ between Jews and non-Jews. The findings are discussed in historical context, demonstrating that American Jews are continuing centuries of naming traditions and adding new twists.

Highlights:

- 70% of Jews in the sample have names in one of two categories: English versions of Biblical names, like Benjamin and Rebecca, or names not of Jewish origin, like Jennifer and Richard.
- Over the decades, American Jews became more and more likely to give their children names of Jewish origin (English or Hebrew Biblical, Modern Hebrew, etc.), with a major uptick after the 1960s. 14% of Jews in the oldest age group have names of Jewish origin, compared to 63% in the youngest group. The top 10 names for Jewish girls and boys in each decade reflect these changes, such as Ellen and Robert in the 1950s, Rebecca and Joshua in the 1970s, and Noa and Ari in the 2010s.
- Many factors influence parents' decision to give their children distinctively Jewish names, including (ranked from strongest) time spent in Israel, child born after 1969, parent's name being distinctively Jewish, a desire to give their child a unique name, synagogue attendance, Shabbat observance, intention to send their child to a Jewish school, female child, and Orthodox identity.
- The Ashkenazi tradition of naming babies after deceased honorees holds strong among American Jews of diverse backgrounds. While Sephardi/Mizrahi Jews are more likely than Ashkenazi Jews to name their babies after living honorees, many name after deceased honorees or no honorees.
- The vast majority of Jewish respondents have a Hebrew or Jewish ritual name, mostly different from their regular name. Since the 1960s Jews have become more likely to select identical ritual and regular baby names.
- While some Jews have changed their first names for various reasons, hardly any have done so to make their names less Jewish. This contrasts with the common practice of changing family names in the mid-20th century.
- Jews with distinctively Jewish names are much more likely to sometimes use a "Starbucks name" than Jews with names that are not distinctively Jewish. But some Jews with common American names take on a *more* Jewish name as their Starbucks name, and some have an "Aroma name" for service encounters in Israel.
- A sizeable minority of Jewish pet owners give their pets Jewish names, including names of foods, biblical and historical figures, Jewish religious concepts, and Yiddish and Hebrew words.
- Compared to non-Jews, Jews rated most names as more likely to be Jewish. Both groups rated Hebrew Biblical character names – Rivka, Chava, Elisheva, and Eliyahu – most likely to be Jewish. The names with the biggest discrepancies were Eliana, Lila, and Maya, which some Jews interpret as Hebrew.

INTRODUCTION[1]

When parents select names for their babies, they might consider many factors: whether they like the sound and meaning of a name, how it fits with the baby's surname, how popular the name is, and whether they want to honor any relatives. In addition, Jewish parents might consider other factors: whether they associate a name with Jews, which particular Jewish affiliations it signals, and whether the name comes from their sacred or ancestral languages, especially Hebrew and Yiddish. We now have quantitative data on these factors from the Survey of American Jewish Personal Names. Our findings give us a more nuanced understanding not only of names and naming but also of the diverse preferences, orientations, and affiliations of American Jews. As historian and name specialist Aaron Demsky writes, the names Jews select can be seen as "a cultural code, a sort of a key to understanding what is and was going on in the Jewish world."[2]

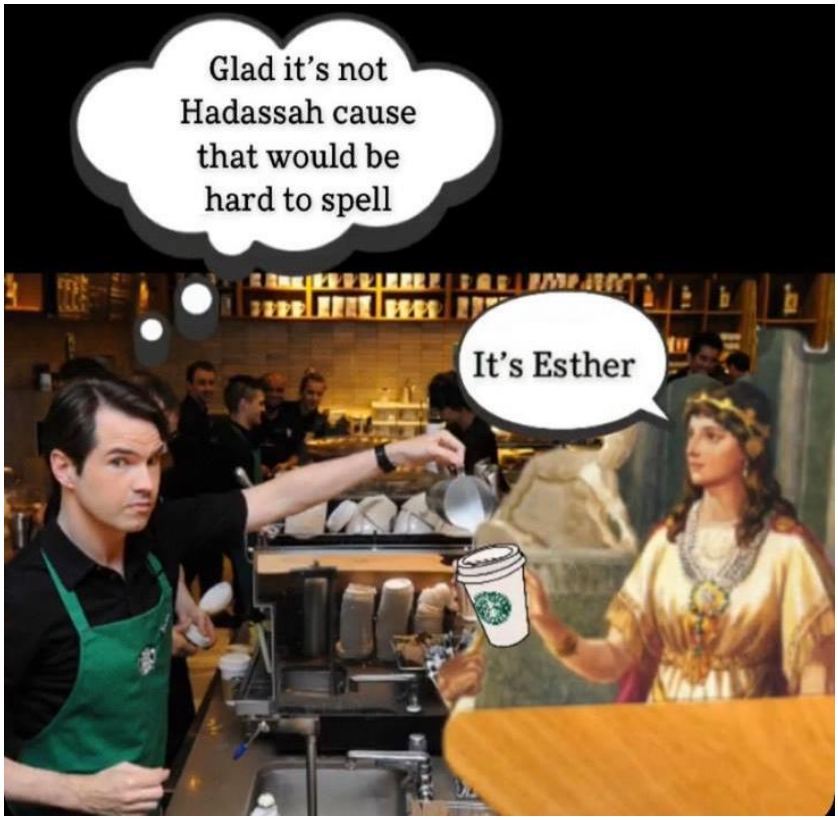
HISTORY

In each time and place throughout history, Jews have had a diverse repertoire of names to consider when naming their babies. These repertoires have included characters and words from the Bible and rabbinic literature pronounced according to various Jewish traditions, biblical names pronounced according to local non-Jewish norms, other names from previous settlements along Jews' migration patterns, current local names not of Jewish origin, and archaic local names.[3] Depending on the source, some of these names were considered distinctively Jewish, and others were shared by their Christian, Muslim, or other non-Jewish neighbors.

To give just a few examples of these sources, here are some names of Jews from various periods and locations:

- **1st-century BCE Land of Israel**: Yehudah, Shalamzion (Biblical Hebrew), Mattathias, Mariamme (local variants of Biblical), Aristobulus, Alexandra (local non-Jewish: Greek).[4]
- **10th-century Cairo**: Ephraim, Miriam (Biblical Hebrew), Da'ud, Rebekah (local variants of Biblical), 'Abdallah, Jamila (local non-Jewish: Arabic)[5]
- **13th-century England**: Jechiel, Zippora (Biblical Hebrew), Elias, Anna (local variants of Biblical), Peter, Joie (local non-Jewish: English, French)[6]
- **16th-century Rome**: Aron, Ester (Biblical Hebrew), Giuseppe, Rebecca (local variants of Biblical), Angelo, Allegrezza (local non-Jewish: Italian)[7]
- **19th-century Poland**: Menakhem, Khave (Biblical Hebrew), Kalmen (from Jews in Hellenic era), Saadye (from Jews in Middle East), Shneyer, Beyle (from Jews in France), Velvl, Frayde (from Jews in Germany), Ayzik, Zalmen (from German variants of Biblical), Estera, Ewa (Polish variants of Biblical), Dora, Fania (local non-Jewish)[8]

Some Jews used separate names for interactions within the Jewish community and in the broader world. In antiquity these names were generally distinguished by language: Hebrew versus Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Persian, or Coptic.[9]



Starting in the Middle Ages, Jewish men tended to have separate names for ritual and general use: a *shem hakodesh* (holy name, from Hebrew or Aramaic) and a *kinnui* (nickname). Until modern times, women did not need ritual names, and few had separate Jewish and general names (Esther/Hadassah, in the image above, is an exception). Many Jews simply gave their baby girls names that were common in the surrounding societies.[10]

Often, Jews' two names were creatively paired – or new names were coined – based on similarities in sound or meaning. An example of a sound pairing is the Hebrew-origin Ascher as the *shem hakodesh* and the German-origin Anselm as the *kinnui*. Meaning-based coinages can be seen in Perigoros for Menahem (one who gives comfort) in Hellenic communities and Vogel/Feygele for Tziporah (bird) among Ashkenazim.[11] Many Jews were given names meaning "lion" because of its symbolic association with the tribe and name of Judah/Yehudah, based on Jacob's blessings to his children.[12] Examples include Juda ben Meir/Leontin in 10th-century Mainz, and Aslan (Turkish for "lion") in 18th-century Istanbul. Dutch Jewish philosopher Spinoza provides an instance of names paired based on both sound and meaning: Latin-origin Benedict and Hebrew-origin Baruch, both of which translate to "blessed." Starting in the modern period, Ashkenazi Jews began to translate some Germanic names into Hebrew, sometimes pairing the two in a hyphenated appellation, such as Dov-Ber (bear) and Tzvi-Hirsh (deer).[13]

Although Ashkenazim have tended to name after deceased honorees and Sephardim have tended to name after living honorees, they have shared the common practice of naming after ancestors. In some cases, they gave the child the honoree's identical name, which led to the preservation of some names throughout centuries. In other cases, they followed the patterns above, giving their babies names with similar sounds or meanings to those of their honorees.

Throughout history, Jews have demonstrated the dual trends of tradition and innovation, using names and naming practices they inherited from their ancestors (from texts and from their ancestors' surrounding societies) and new names and naming practices that they acquired from their current surrounding society. In this way, Jews have both shared traits with their non-Jewish neighbors and exhibited distinctive Jewish traits – the dual trends of acculturation and distinctiveness.

How have these trends played out in America? Scholarship on 20th-century American Jews found a similar combination of local and distinctively Jewish names, with an emphasis on the former. In California in the early 20th century, Jews' names overlapped with those of their white, non-Jewish neighbors to a far greater extent than in European Jewish communities. While American Jews in this era still were partial to biblical names, they tried to Americanize themselves and their children by using the English versions of these names rather than using names that would clearly identify them as Jewish.[14]

Similarly, an analysis of names of Jewish men who served in World War II, born around 1918, found that Jews were much more likely than the general population to use English biblical names like David, Joseph, Samuel, and Abraham, and much less likely to use names they associated with Christianity, like John, James, Paul, and Thomas. This study also found that these men, mostly children of Eastern European immigrants, were more likely to have names that were popular in previous decades and still popular, like Harry and Louis, than names that were trendy, like Raymond and Donald. They also favored names that were not very popular in the general population, such as Stanley, Irving, and Morris, which eventually came to have Jewish associations because of their greater prevalence among Jews. Absent from the list of popular names found among these service members were Hebrew or Yiddish names, which were the norm for their parents' generation. These findings suggest that Jewish immigrants were using their babies' names as a way of acculturating to some extent into the surrounding American society while still maintaining distinctive characteristics.[15]

We also see a desire to acculturate when we look at name changing: in the early to mid-20th century, many Jews changed their surnames to be less recognizably Jewish as a response to antisemitism. However, by the 1960s and 1970s this became less common as university quotas diminished and Jews were allowed into professions and social venues that had previously restricted their access. Around this time Americans in general were more favorably oriented toward ethnic distinctiveness.[16]

The decrease in surname changing was accompanied by an increasing use of baby names seen as more Jewish. Many of these names were Anglicized biblical names, like Rebecca, Benjamin, and Aaron, but some were Hebrew names popularized in Israeli society, like Shira, Shoshana, and Ari.[17] This trend is even starker in Orthodox communities, as we see in a study of names in New York state. Starting in the 1970s there was a significant upward trend in the use of distinctively Orthodox names, like Chaya, Malka, Moshe, and Chaim.[18]

How are these trends playing out today? What is the current balance between distinctiveness and acculturation, between tradition and innovation, as reflected in the names of American Jews? To what extent are Jews of different backgrounds using American names, Anglicized biblical names, and Hebrew names? Which names are associated more or less with Jews?

METHODS

To answer these questions, we designed a large-scale survey study of American Jewish names and naming practices. We drafted a questionnaire that asked respondents about their first names, the names of their spouses and children, their perceptions of particular names as Jewish or not, and many demographic traits. After extensive pre-testing, we sent our survey invitation to thousands of people and dozens of distribution lists and social media platforms, asking respondents to send the survey invitation to others. Within a few weeks, we received over 11,000 responses from Jews and non-Jews.

Because this is not a random sample, it is not representative of Americans or even of American Jews. The survey's Jewish respondents are more engaged in Jewish communal life than the actual US Jewish population. Our sample includes a slightly higher percentage of respondents who identify as Conservative, Modern Orthodox, and Reconstructionist and a lower percentage Reform and no denomination. The sample of non-Jews in this study is slightly more connected to Jews than the actual American population is. Although our sample does not allow us to make claims about the populations at large, we can use it to compare how various demographic factors – such as age, denomination, and time spent in Israel – correlate with name use and ratings.

Unless otherwise noted, our analysis is limited to respondents born and currently residing in the United States: 6816 Jews (5210 women, 1411 men, and 195 other) and 1524 non-Jews (1184 women, 251 men, and 89 other).[19] When we discuss name popularity, we use US Social Security Administration data.[20] See Appendix for details on survey design, distribution, sample, and analysis.

FINDINGS

NUMBER OF NAMES USED BY JEWS

We were curious how many first names would be found among our Jewish respondents, their Jewish children, and their Jewish spouses – a total of 14,397 people. In this group, we found 1,751 names of women and girls, 863 names of men and boys, and 151 names of nonbinary, intersex, and transgender people.[21] The number for men is comparable to the 783 unique names found among 19,948 servicemen who were born around 1918 and served in World War II.[22] The fact that there are more names for females than for males reflects our female-heavy sample, but it is also part of a broader gender trend in American society. For example, among the babies born in New York state in 2011, there were 2,558 girls names and 2,053 boys' names.[23] The number of names in our sample is much smaller than the over 9,000 names (about 3,500 female and 5,500 male) found in Alexander Beider's (2001) *Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names*, which covers several centuries and several countries.

MOST POPULAR NAMES USED BY JEWS

Among American Jewish respondents, which names are the most popular? Figure 1 presents the top 20 female and male names from our Jewish survey sample.[24] The number in parentheses indicates the name's rank in the United States more broadly. Any name without a number was not in the top 100 names by gender in the last 100 years.[25]

Figure 1: Top 20 names among Jewish respondents, spouses, and children of all ages by gender.

Rank	Female	Male
1	Rachel (45)	Daniel (12)
2	Sarah (9)	Benjamin (41)
3	Rebecca (27)	David (5)
4	Hannah (67)	Jacob (31)
5	Elizabeth (5)	Joshua (20)
6	Emily (18)	Michael (4)
7	Jessica (8)	Samuel (42)
8	Miriam	Jonathan (35)
9	Amy (32)	Aaron (52)
10	Sara (73)	Adam (54)
11	Jennifer (3)*	Noah (63)
12	Leah*	Ezra
13	Lisa (11)	Matthew (13)
14	Deborah (25)	Zachary (58)
15	Naomi	Asher
16	Susan (7)	Ari
17	Lauren (59)	Jonah
18	Melissa (24)	Ethan (61)
19	Maya	Isaac*
20	Laura (29)	Joseph (8)*

Figure 1

Most of the top 20 Jewish girls' and boys' names are English versions of Biblical names, but the list of female names also includes several that are not of Jewish origin, like Emily, Amy, and Laura. Most of the Jewish top 20 have also been in the top 100 names in the US more generally, but only seven girls' names and six boys' names have been in the US top 20. This demonstrates that American Jews, at least in our sample, follow American name trends to some extent but also diverge from them. The top 10 names by decade of birth are presented later in this report (Figure 9 and Figure 10).

JEWS' NAME CLASSIFICATIONS

To analyze the names of our respondents, their spouses, and their children, we divided them into ten categories:[26]

Several of the categories are names of characters in the Tanakh, the Jewish Bible. **Hebrew Biblical Character** includes names that, based on their spelling, seem to be pronounced according to Israeli or, more commonly, American Hebrew norms. **English Biblical Character** includes names that, according to their spelling, seem to be pronounced according to English norms. For example, Yitzchak and Rivka are categorized as Hebrew Biblical Character, and Isaac and Rebecca as English Biblical Character. As can be seen in the figure above, English Biblical Character names are the most common among American Jews.

Some biblical names are not from Hebrew or English but from other languages, such as Iosif, Isaias, Mikhail, and Moises. These were coded as English Biblical Character, a category that would more accurately be described as names of biblical characters written in a form commonly used outside the Jewish community.

The survey did not ask for name pronunciations, only spellings. Therefore, we needed another category: **Ambiguous Biblical Character**. This encompasses names that are pronounced the same in English and Americanized Hebrew, such as Ezra and Miriam, as well as names whose pronunciation cannot be determined based on the spelling, such as Levi, which could be pronounced Lee-vay or Leh-vee, and Sara, which could be pronounced as Seh-ruh or Sah-ruh. Most American Jews likely pronounce these names according to English norms, but we coded them in this category based on ethnographic and anecdotal evidence that many Orthodox Jews and some non-Orthodox Jews use their Hebrew pronunciations.[27]

Some names of biblical characters, including some derivative forms, only came into use in Jewish communities in the past century. Therefore we created a category called **Hebrew Biblical Modern**. This includes minor biblical characters that became Israeli names, like Eitan, Ido, and Karmi. It includes Israeli and American nicknames for Hebrew names, like Avi, Devorie, and Yossi. And it includes female forms of biblical characters, like Binyamina, Raphaela, and Simona.

A final category of biblical names is **Yiddish Biblical Character**. This includes biblical-origin names that are pronounced or inflected according to Yiddish/Ashkenazi norms, such as Avreimel, Moishe, Sora, and Yankl-Peretz. Other Yiddish names, like Ber, Faigy, Reyna, and Reyzl, are included in a separate category, **Yiddish**.

Hebrew Post-Biblical includes names from the rabbinic tradition, including Midrash, Talmud, and other texts, such as Akiva, Bruria, and Yochai. It also includes other traditional Jewish names that come from Hebrew words, such as Bracha, Chaim, Chaya, and Pesach, and derivative forms like Meira (a female version of Meir) and Malky (a nickname for Malka). This category also includes some names of historical (mostly rabbinic) figures from medieval and modern times, such as Saadia (Saadia Gaon, a 10th-century Middle Eastern scholar), and Maimon (father of Rambam/Maimonides, a 12th-century North African scholar).

Many Hebrew names are not names in textual sources and came into use in Jewish communities only in the last century. We included these in the category **Hebrew Modern**. Most of these names found their way to American Jewish communities through their use – past or present – in Israeli society, such as Nili, Noi, Omer, and Shaked. Some American Jews even use Hebrew names that have homonyms with unpleasant meanings in English, such as Shai (shy) and Osnat (oh snot).

Some of the Hebrew Modern names are translations, also known as calques or semantic matching, mostly influenced by Israeli naming practices. This is especially common when American Jews give their babies Hebrew versions of their ancestors' Yiddish names, such as Ari after Yehudah-Leib (both mean lion), Tzvi after Hershl (deer), Yaffa after Sheindl (pretty), and Zahava after Golde (gold). More rare, but still found in our data, are Israeli place names, like Carmel, Kineret, Meron, Netanya, and even Jerusalem, and other references to Israeli society, such as Aliyah and Sabra. All of these are included in the category Hebrew Modern.

The **Ambiguous Jewish** category includes names that are used in America but sound similar to Hebrew (and, rarely, Yiddish and other Jewish) words. Many American Jews give their babies these names and interpret them as Hebrew words and, therefore, as Jewish names. Hebrew examples include Aiden (similar to Eden), Amalia (work of God), Emmett (truth), Coby (nickname for Yaakov), Liam (my people), and Lila (night). Yiddish examples include Beryl, Kayla, Mindy, and Pearl. Also included in this category are names that were popular among children of Eastern European immigrants in the early 1900s but not among the broader American population, like Morris and Irving. Names like Max and Rose are not included in this category because they have been popular in America more broadly.

Some international names are or were popular in Israel, such as Dafna (Daphne), Ilai (Eli), Maya, Roi (Roy), and Tzofia (Sofia). Sometimes American Jews spell these names as they are commonly spelled in America, but sometimes they spell them differently to indicate their Hebraic connotations. In our coding, if names had distinctive Hebrew spellings, such as Emet, Roi, and Tzofia, we considered them Hebrew Modern. Otherwise, we included them in the Ambiguous Jewish category.

Names that do not fall into any of the nine categories above were coded as **No Jewish Origin**. This includes common American names like Susan and William and names from other countries like Blanca and Dimitri.

These ten categories demonstrate American Jews' tradition and innovation. They use names that have historically been part of Jews' distinctive name repertoire – from biblical and rabbinic literature and from historical Jewish migrations. And they add to that repertoire, both from the contemporary surrounding society and from other sources. These categories also demonstrate the dual trends of distinctiveness and acculturation. American Jews use both names that distinguish them from their non-Jewish neighbors and names that do not. They also demonstrate distinctiveness and acculturation simultaneously by using names that are spelled in ambiguous ways or can be interpreted as Jewish by those in the know, thereby challenging the boundaries of the name categories. Finally, these categories show us some sources and trends that are important to American Jews: sacred texts, ancestral traditions, history, Zionism, and being part of their local society.

After we had coded all names from the survey responses into the ten categories, we were able to conduct various analyses. First, we sorted the categories into two umbrella categories: **Distinctively Jewish** and **Not Distinctively Jewish**. We based this division on respondents' Jewishness ratings of their own names: "If you heard of someone else with your first name, how likely would you be to assume they were Jewish or not?" Categories with a mean Jewishness rating of 8 and higher (on a scale of 0-10) were considered Distinctively Jewish, and others were considered Not Distinctively Jewish (Figure 2). English and Ambiguous Biblical Character names and Ambiguous Jewish names have a higher mean rating than the neutral 5, indicating that many respondents see names in these categories as relatively Jewish. This aligns with both Jews' and non-Jews' ratings of names like Elijah and Rebecca, as discussed below. Even so, we classified these as Not Distinctively Jewish because their means were less than 8.

Figure 2: Mean Jewishness ratings (scale of 0-10) of names in each category

Category	Mean Jewishness rating
Distinctively Jewish	
Hebrew Post-Biblical (e.g., Akiva, Bruria, Meir)	9.75
Yiddish Biblical Character (e.g., Avrum, Rokhl, Yehudis)	9.59
Hebrew Biblical Character (e.g., Chana, Reuven, Yehezkel)	9.39
Hebrew Modern (e.g., Ariella, Lior, Stav)	9.13
Hebrew Biblical Modern (e.g., Avi, Moti, Rafaela)	8.97
Yiddish (e.g., Bayla, Feivel, Leib)	8.52
Not Distinctively Jewish	
Ambiguous Biblical Character (e.g., Ezra, Leah, Miriam)	6.77
Ambiguous Jewish (e.g., Emmett, Lila, Mindy)	6.36
English Biblical Character (e.g., Aaron, Abigail, Ruth)	6.09
No Jewish Origin (e.g., Mark, Randall, Sylvia)	4.30

Figure 2

The vast majority of Jews in our sample (82%) have names that are Not Distinctively Jewish, and a plurality (44%) have names in the No Jewish Origin category (Figure 3). The second largest category is English Biblical Character. In the Distinctively Jewish classification, the most popular category is Hebrew Modern, followed by Hebrew Biblical Character. Other categories are rare in our sample.Figure 3

Figure 3: Number of unique names (types, not tokens) in each category and percent of Jewish respondents, Jewish spouses, and children who have names in that category

Category	Number of unique names	Percent of Jews with those names
Not Distinctively Jewish	**1,798**	**82.3%**
No Jewish Origin (e.g., Mark, Randall, Sylvia)	1,465	44.2%
English Biblical Character (e.g., Aaron, Abigail, Ruth)	196	25.3%
Ambiguous Biblical Character (e.g., Ezra, Leah, Miriam)	48	8.6%
Ambiguous Jewish (e.g., Emmett, Lila, Mindy)	89	4.1%
Distinctively Jewish	**681**	**17.7%**
Hebrew Modern (e.g., Ariella, Lior, Stav)	285	8.3%
Hebrew Biblical Character (e.g., Chana, Reuven, Yehezkel)	178	5.1%
Hebrew Biblical Modern (e.g., Avi, Moti, Rafaela)	67	1.7%
Hebrew Post-Biblical (e.g., Akiva, Bruria, Meir)	54	1.4%
Yiddish (e.g., Bayla, Feivel, Leib)	78	1.0%
Yiddish Biblical Character (e.g., Avrum, Rokhl, Yehudis)	19	.2%

Figure 3

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO JEWISH NAMING CHOICES

Jews' names and the names they select for their children correlate with several factors.

RESPONDENT VS. CHILD

When we compare the names of respondents and children in our sample, we find striking differences (Figure 4). Over half of respondents have names not of Jewish origin (55%), compared to about a third (35%) of respondents' children. Children have higher rates of names in all categories except No Jewish Origin. They are almost twice as likely as respondents to have names that are Distinctively Jewish, especially in the categories Hebrew Modern and Hebrew Biblical Character. The difference between respondents and children is even more striking among Orthodox Jews (Figure 5).

Figure 4: Categories of names with percentage of Jewish respondents and their children who have those names

Category	% respondents' names	% children's names
Not Distinctively Jewish	**88.0%**	**77.4%**
No Jewish Origin (e.g., Mark, Randall, Sylvia)	54.8%	35.1%
English Biblical Character (e.g., Aaron, Abigail, Ruth)	22.1%	28.1%
Ambiguous Biblical Character (e.g., Ezra, Leah, Miriam)	8.1%	9.1%
Ambiguous Jewish (e.g., Emmett, Lila, Mindy)	3.0%	5.1%
Distinctively Jewish	**12.0%**	**22.6%**
Hebrew Modern (e.g., Ariella, Lior, Stav)	5.5%	10.7%
Hebrew Biblical Character (e.g., Chana, Reuven, Yehezkel)	3.6%	6.4%
Hebrew Biblical Modern (e.g., Avi, Moti, Rafaela)	1.2%	2.2%
Yiddish (e.g., Bayla, Feivel, Leib)	.8%	1.1%
Hebrew Post-Biblical (e.g., Akiva, Bruria, Meir)	.7%	1.9%
Yiddish Biblical Character (e.g., Avrum, Rokhl, Yehudis)	.2%	.3%

Figure 4

Figure 5: Distinctively Jewish name percentage by respondent and child, divided by Orthodox and non-Orthodox

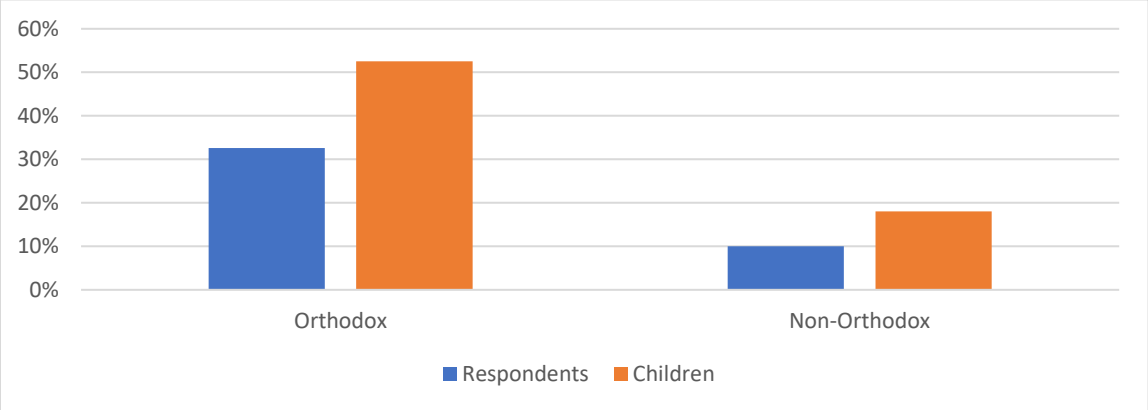


Figure 5

DECADE OF BIRTH

Our respondents span the generations, so some of the children of respondents are older than some of the respondents. To analyze changes over time, we turn to a different variable: decade of birth. We find that among respondents and children, younger Jews are significantly more likely than older Jews to have Distinctively Jewish names (Figure 6).

Figure 6: % of Distinctively Jewish names among respondents and children by decade of birth

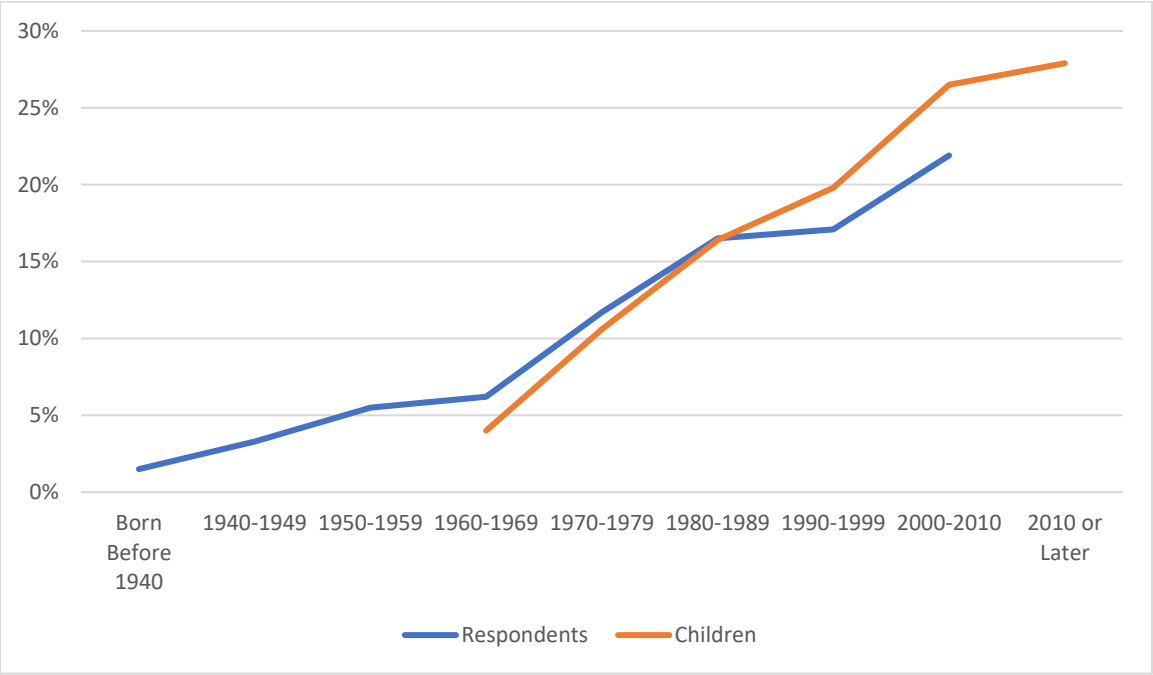


Figure 6

The trend is visible throughout the decades, but the steeper incline begins in the 1970s, when we see an increase in Jewish- and biblical-origin names.[28] Using 1970 as a dividing line, we find significant differences in names in all categories except No Jewish Origin (and the Yiddish Biblical Character category does not have enough names for a significant trend) (Figure 7). Looking just at the category No Jewish Origin, we see that 86% of Jews in the oldest age group have these types of names, compared to 37% of Jews in the youngest age group (Figure 8). In other words, 14% of Jews in the oldest age group have names of Jewish origin (including English and Hebrew Biblical, Modern Hebrew, etc.), compared to 63% in the youngest group. Overall, among respondents, spouses, and children, 12% of Jews born before 1970 have Distinctively Jewish names, compared to 22% of Jews born 1970 or later.

Figure 7: Respondents' name category by birth before or after 1970

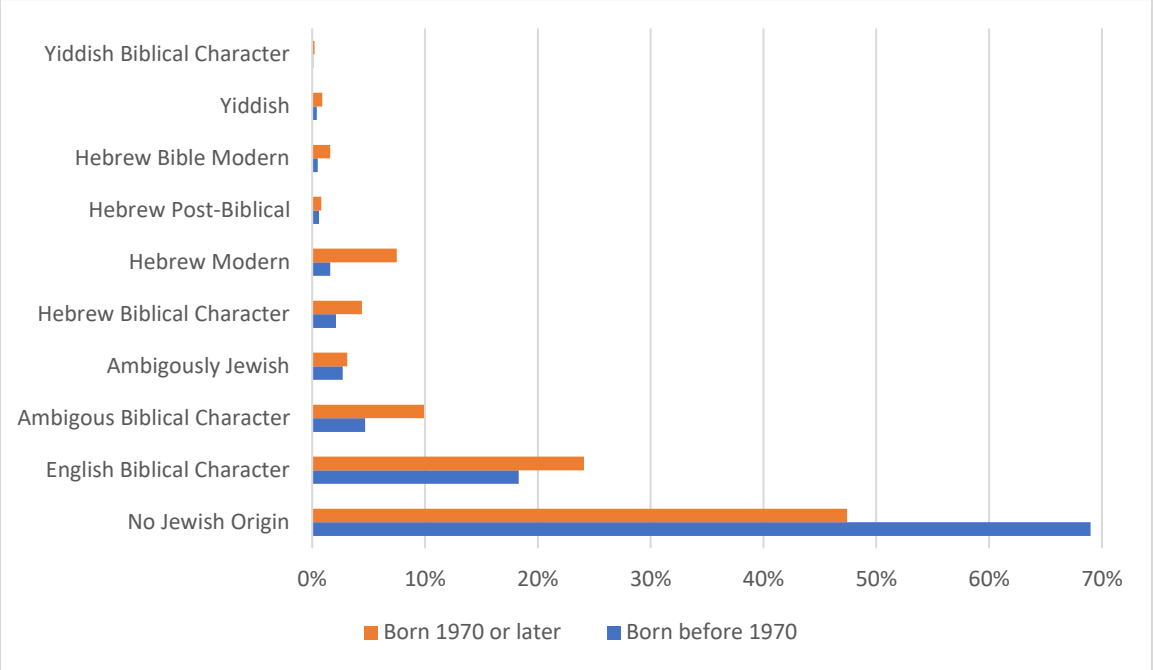


Figure 7

Figure 8: Respondents' names of No Jewish Origin by decade of birth

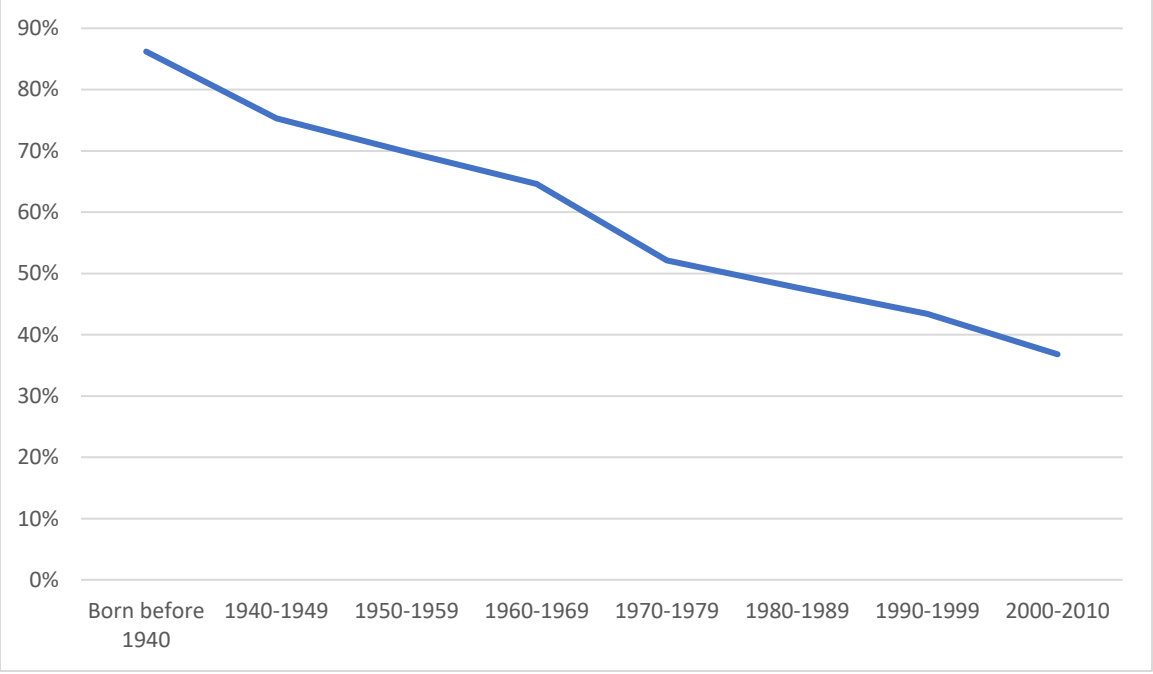


Figure 8

Some factors influencing the increased use of Jewish names in the late 1960s and early 1970s include the greater acceptance of Jews in the United States and the broader American trend toward embrace of ethnic distinctiveness.[29] In addition, this period saw an increased use of biblical names in the United States more generally; names like Sarah, Rebecca, Daniel, and Joshua first entered the top 10 in the 1970s.[30]

If we look at the top 10 names among Jewish respondents, spouses, and children born in each decade (Figure 9 and Figure 10), we see these historical changes. Names of No Jewish Origin, such as Robin and Lawrence, are found only in the 1950s. English Biblical Character names, such as Sarah and Daniel, are found in all decades. It is only in the 2000s that Hebrew Modern names like Talia and Ari are found in the top 10.

Figure 9: Top 10 names among Jewish female respondents, spouses, and children of all ages, by decade of birth[31]

Rank	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
1	Susan (4)	Lisa (1)	Rachel (33)	Rachel (16)	Rachel (15)	Hannah (5)	Maya (62)
2	Deborah (5)*	Susan (3)	Sarah (19)	Sarah (5)	Hannah (11)	Maya (81)	Noa
3	Ellen (80)*	Deborah (12)	Rebecca (13)	Rebecca (22)	Sarah (4)	Miriam	Hannah (27)
4	Karen (8)	Rachel (146)	Jennifer (1)	Jessica (1)	Rebecca (23)	Rebecca (71)*	Eliana (107)
5	Barbara (6)	Karen (4)	Amy (2)	Lauren (19)	Emily (3)	Talia*	Miriam
6	Linda (2)	Laura (16)	Lisa (6)	Sara (30)	Leah (97)	Eliana	Naomi (76)
7	Robin (53)	Amy (35)	Elizabeth (12)	Jennifer (2)	Elizabeth (8)	Abigail (6)*	Abigail (7)
8	Debra (7)*	Elizabeth (17)	Jessica (11)	Emily (25)	Emma (56)*	Sophie (117)*	Shoshana*
9	Bonnie (50)^ Judith (34)^	Julie (18)	Deborah (61)	Melissa (7)	Samantha (5)*	Naomi (141)^	Talia*
10	Nancy (9)^ Ruth (69)^	Sharon (23)*	Melissa (3)	Elizabeth (9)	Jessica (1)	Sarah (12)^	Yael*

Figure 9

Figure 10: Top 10 names among Jewish male respondents, spouses, and children of all ages, by decade of birth

Rank	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
1	Michael (2)	David (2)	David (4)	Daniel (7)	Benjamin (30)	Samuel (24)	Ezra (102)
2	David (5)	Michael (1)	Daniel (12)	David (5)	Daniel (8)	Jacob (1)	Asher (86)
3	Robert (3)	Daniel (19)	Joshua (24)*	Benjamin (31)	Samuel (33)	Benjamin (25)	Benjamin (11)
4	Gary (12)	Jonathan (76)	Michael (1)*	Joshua (4)	Jacob (5)	Noah (20)	Jacob (3)
5	Jonathan (128)*	Mark (6)	Benjamin (44)	Michael (1)	Joshua (4)	Daniel (5)	Samuel (22)
6	Lawrence (42)*	Robert (5)*	Jonathan (32)	Aaron (32)	Jonathan (21)	Jonah (172)	Jonah (142)
7	Steven (11)	Steven (11)*	Adam (36)	Matthew (3)	Aaron (31)	Gabriel (30)	Ethan (6)
8	Daniel (19)*	Scott (15)	Andrew (28)	Jonathan (18)	Zachary (16)	Adam (60)	Isaac (31)
9	Howard (83)*	Joseph (12)*	Jeremy (26)	Jacob (35)	David (12)*	Eli (144)	Ari*
10	Richard (7)*	Matthew (36)*	Aaron (35)	Adam (22)	Max (177)*	Ezra	Eli (51)*

Figure 10

The popularity of names among Jewish respondents aligns somewhat with their popularity in the US more broadly (the rank is in parentheses after each name if it appeared in the US top 200 names in that decade). However, some names that are very popular among Jews are less popular in the broader American population. This is the case for Biblical-origin names, like Leah, ranked 6 among Jews and 97 among Americans in the 1990s, and Jonah, ranked 6 among Jews and 142 among Americans in the 2010s. But it is also the case for non-Jewish-origin names in the 1950s, like Ellen, ranked 3 among Jews and 80 among Americans, and Howard, ranked 9 among Jews and 83 among Americans. In the 2000s and 2010s, we see a new trend, where some names in the Jewish top 10 are not in the US top 200 at all. This is especially the case for girls' names (Miriam, Talia, Eliana, Noa, Shoshana, Yael), but it is also found among boys' names (Ezra and Ari). This is evidence of Jews' desire to give their children names that are more identifiable as Jewish.

In some cases names become popular among Jews and subsequently within the broader American population, such as Eliana, which, among our Jewish respondents, ranked 7 in the 2000s and 4 in the 2010s. Among Americans, Eliana increased in popularity every year from 2000 (ranked 537) to 2019 (62). Perhaps it will make the top 10 in the coming years. We see a similar trend for Ezra. This aligns with sociologist and names expert Stanley Lieberson's analysis of name popularity among Jews and non-Jews in California, 1905-1984. He found that some names became popular among Jews starting in the 1960s and subsequently among non-Jews, especially English Biblical Character (our term) names like Daniel, Jonathan, Joshua, Rachel, Rebecca, and Sarah, but also girls' names not of Jewish origin, like Amy, Erica, and Melissa.[32] Our data confirm that these trends have persisted beyond the period Lieberson studied.

CLOSE JEWISH FRIENDS

The changes over time are only part of the story. We also found several other factors that correlate with respondents' choice of names for their children. One of these is social networks. Jews whose close friends include more Jews are much more likely to give their children Distinctively Jewish names (Figure 11).

Figure 11: % of Distinctively Jewish names among children by proportion of the respondent parent's close friends who are Jewish

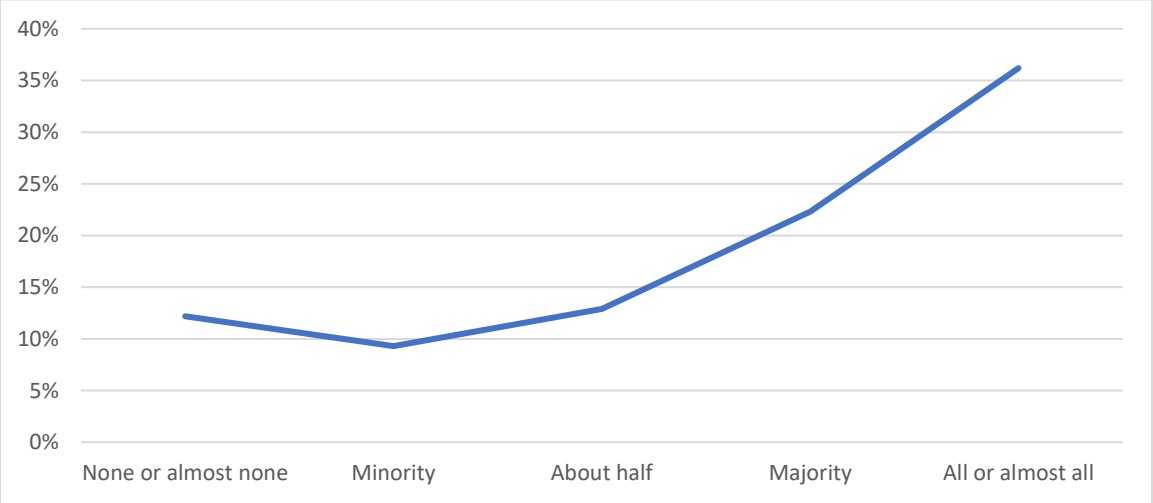


Figure 11

TIME SPENT IN ISRAEL

Another factor is Israel. We asked, "Have you been to Israel? If so, what is the longest amount of time you have spent in Israel on any single trip?" The more time Jews spend in Israel, the more likely they are to give their children Distinctively Jewish names, especially Hebrew Modern names (Figure 12). This likely relates not (only) to their proficiency in Hebrew but to connection: people who have spent more time in Israel are likely to feel more affinity toward Hebrew. These trends are particularly pronounced among Jews who spent 10 months or more in Israel on their longest trip. But even in that group, less than half select Distinctively Jewish baby names.

Figure 12: % of children with Distinctively Jewish and Hebrew Modern names by time their respondent parent spent in Israel

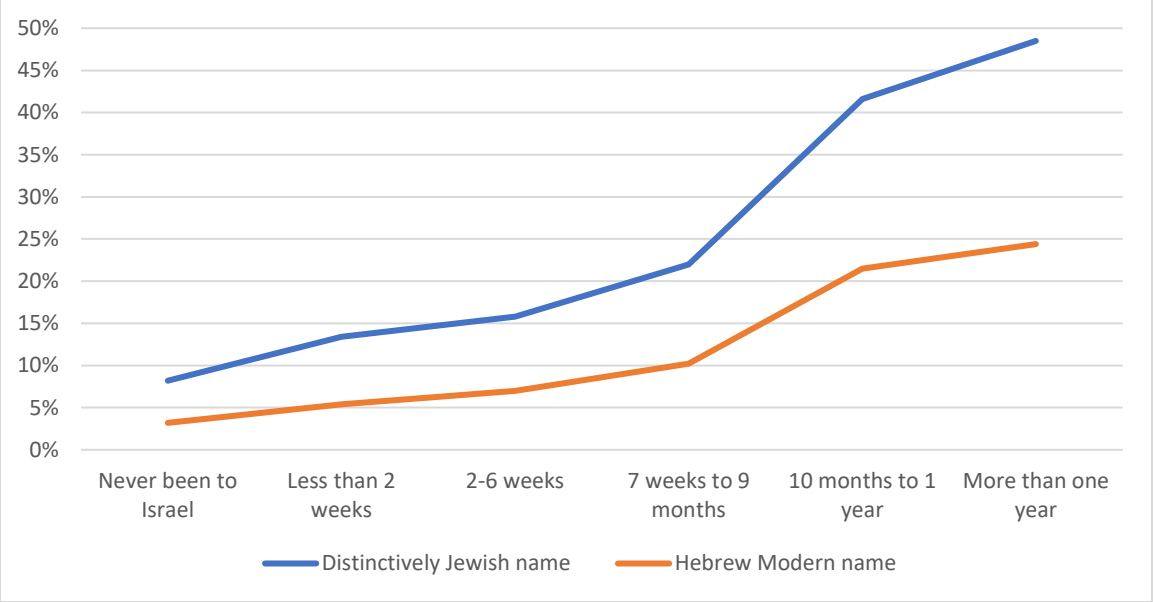


Figure 12

DENOMINATION AND OBSERVANCE

Another major factor in name type is the denomination their family most closely identified with when they were born. Jews whose families identified as "Black Hat / Haredi (Yeshivish or Chassidish)" are most likely to have a Distinctively Jewish name (Figure 13) and least likely to have a name not of Jewish origin (Figure 14). Respondents from Modern Orthodox, Sephardic, and Orthodox families have moderate rates of Distinctively Jewish names, while those in other denominations have lower rates. Reform Jews have the lowest rates.

Figure 13: % of respondents with a Distinctively Jewish name by family denomination at birth

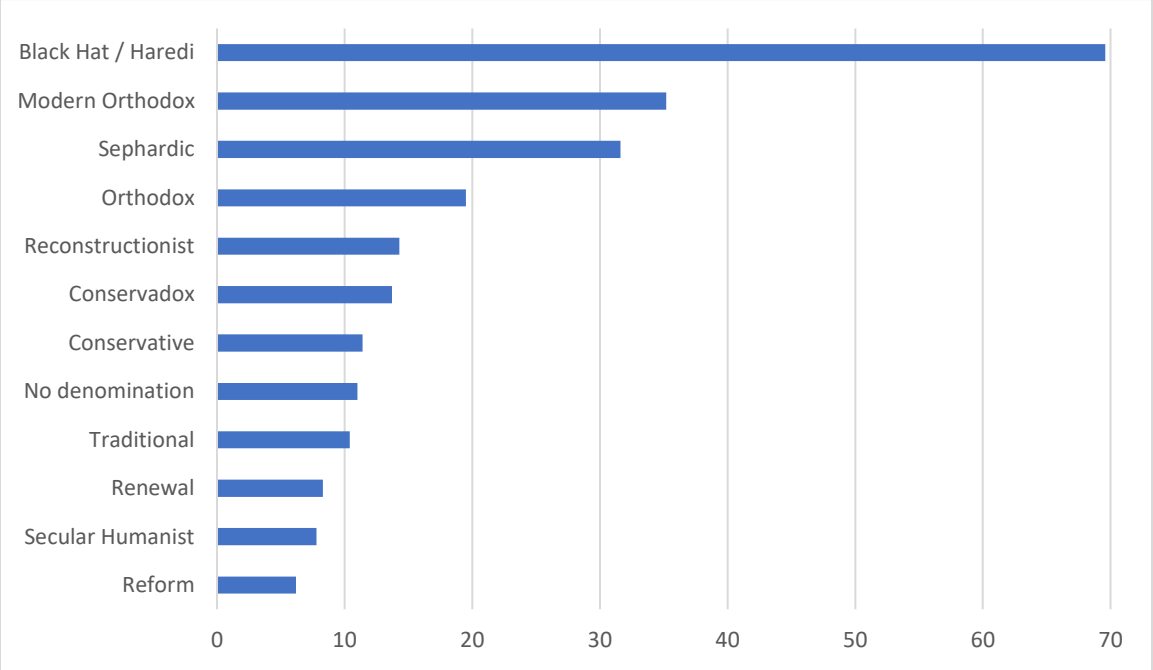


Figure 13

Figure 14: % of respondents with a name not of Jewish origin by family denomination at birth

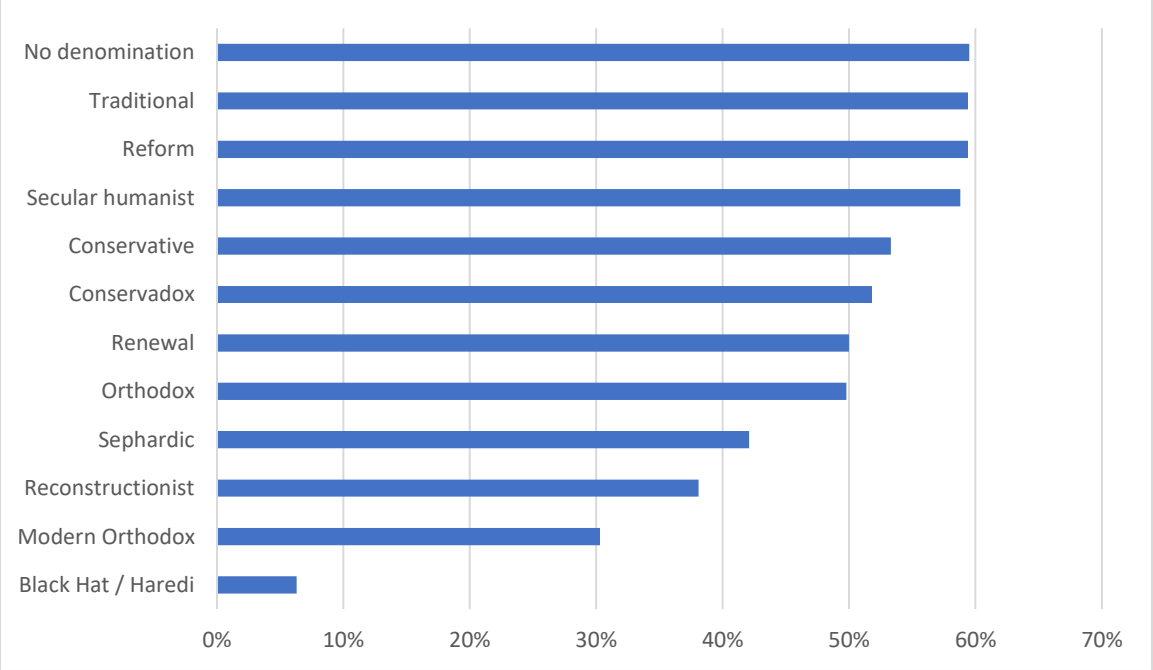


Figure 14

These trends are much stronger in the names respondents selected for their children. If we combine the respondents' current denominations into a binary variable, Orthodox (Black Hat, Orthodox, and Modern Orthodox) and non-Orthodox (all other denominations), we see significant differences in several of the categories (Figure 15). In addition, Orthodox Jews (64%) are more likely than non-Orthodox Jews (31%) to rate their children's names as high (8-10) on the scale of Jewishness (means: 7.94; 6.15).

Figure 15: % of children's names in various categories by respondent parent's current denomination (binary)

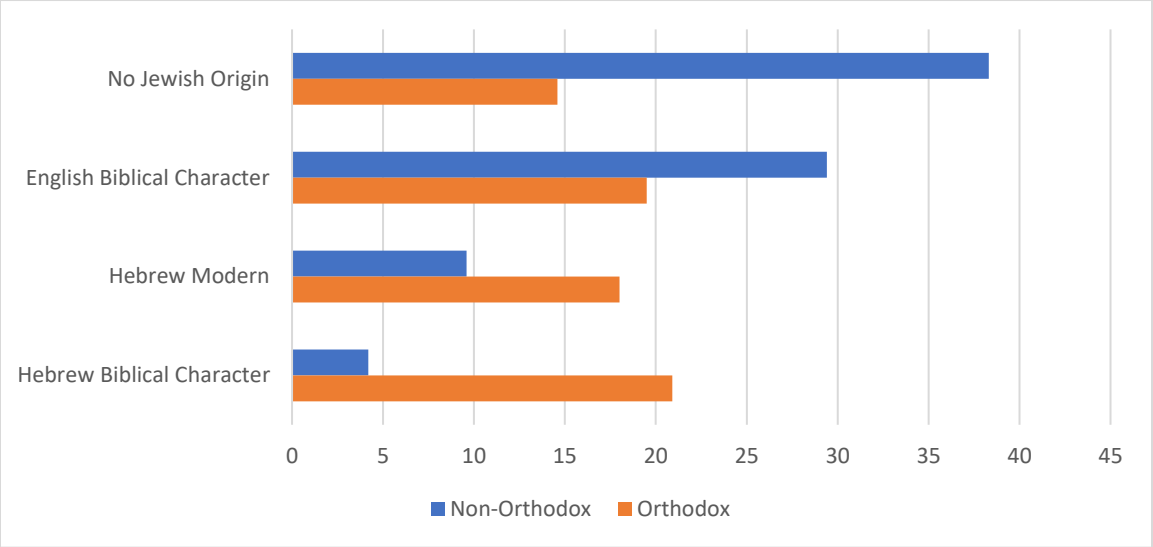


Figure 15

Another strong indicator is whether respondents handle money on Shabbat. Those who do (less observant) are less likely to give their children Distinctively Jewish names. Of course, this correlates strongly with whether the respondent is Orthodox. But when we analyze non-Orthodox Jews, we see a difference between those who handle money on Shabbat and those who do not (Figure 16).

Figure 16: % of children who have Distinctively Jewish names by respondent parent's Orthodoxy and Shabbat money handling

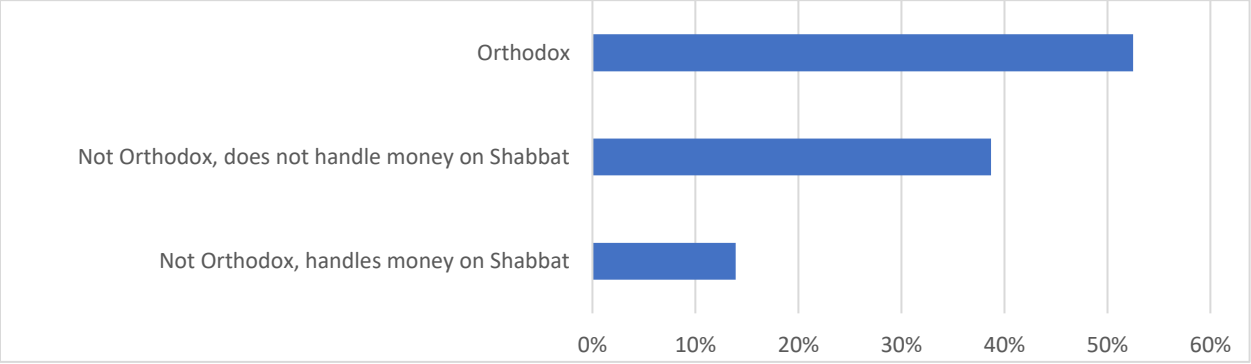


Figure 16

We also see an interaction between denomination and decade of birth. Among respondents born before 1970, a majority (54%) of those whose birth families were Orthodox (Black Hat, Orthodox, and Modern Orthodox) have names not of Jewish origin. Among those born after 1970, only 26% do. We see a similar pattern (but less stark) for non-Orthodox Jews: 70% vs. 49%. In other words, the late 1960s was a turning point for Jews, especially Orthodox Jews, giving their children Distinctively Jewish names. Figure 17 shows the breakdown of Jewish children with Distinctively Jewish names by decade and Orthodoxy.

Figure 17: Distinctively Jewish names by decade of child's birth and Orthodoxy of respondent parent

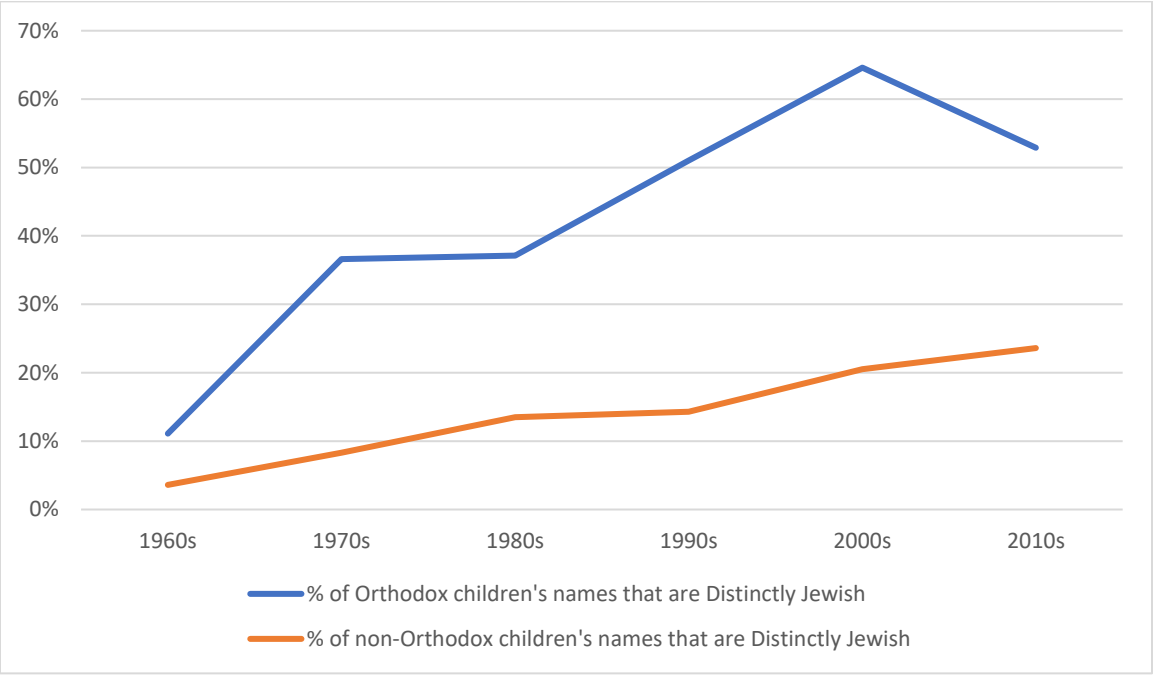


Figure 17

Among Orthodox Jews, there is a slight dip between the 2000s and the 2010s. This applies across the board among those who identify as Black Hat, Orthodox, and Modern Orthodox. Among respondents who identified as Orthodox and Modern Orthodox, there is even an increase in names of No Jewish Origin between babies born in the 2000s and babies born in the 2010s.

JEWISH ANCESTRY

Respondents were asked questions about which Jewish ancestral/cultural group both they and their spouses identified with. They could check all that apply for five options: Ashkenazic, Sephardic, Mizrahi, None (no Jewish ancestry), and other. Children were then coded by whether they had only Ashkenazic ancestry (6,770 children in our sample), only Sephardic/Mizrahi ancestry (62), or a mix of Ashkenazic/Sephardic/Mizrahi ancestry (673). Children with one or more parent with no Jewish ancestry were not included in this part of the analysis.

Children with only Sephardic/Mizrahi ancestry were much more likely than other children to have a name of No Jewish Origin (Figure 18). This could reflect the tendency of Sephardi/Mizrahi Jews to have immigrated to the United States more recently, pointing to the greater tendency of individuals closer to the generation of immigration to select baby names that align with the surrounding population (our sample for this analysis excludes

immigrants). There were no children with only Sephardic/Mizrahi ancestry who had names in the Hebrew Post-Biblical, Hebrew Biblical Modern, Yiddish, or Yiddish Biblical Character categories. While we might expect this for the Yiddish categories, the lack of representation of the Hebrew categories likely reflects the small size of this group and the small number of names in these categories.

Figure 18: % of children's names by category by ancestry of respondent parent

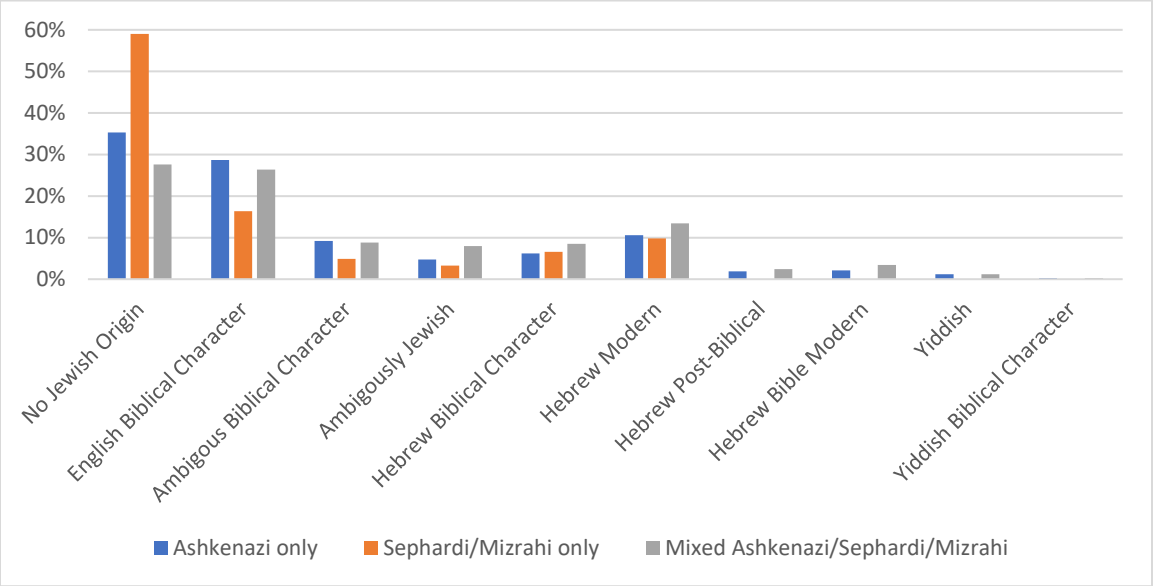


Figure 18

JEWISH PROFESSIONALS

Many Jews probably know a rabbi or other Jewish professional who gives their children Distinctively Jewish names. This trend is borne out in the data (Figure 19). Rabbis and cantors have the highest rates of children with Distinctively Jewish names, followed by Jewish educators and Jewish studies scholars.

Figure 19: % of children's Distinctively Jewish names by respondent's Jewish professional category

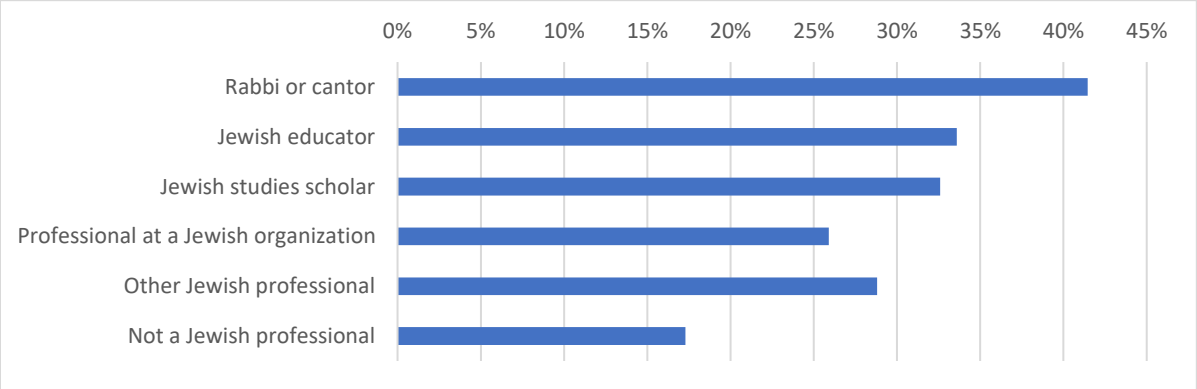


Figure 19

LOCATION

We asked two questions about the location where the respondent lived when their first child was born or adopted: whether they lived in a city/town with a large or small Jewish population, and whether they lived in a neighborhood with a large or small Jewish population. Our hypothesis was that those who lived among more Jews would be more likely to give their children Distinctively Jewish names, perhaps influenced by the milieu and less concerned about their child being teased for having an unusual name. Among Non-Orthodox Jews, perceived Jewishness of both city/town and neighborhood were significant factors, but neighborhood was a stronger predictor (Figure 20).

Figure 20: % of non-Orthodox children with Distinctively Jewish names by perceived Jewishness of neighborhood

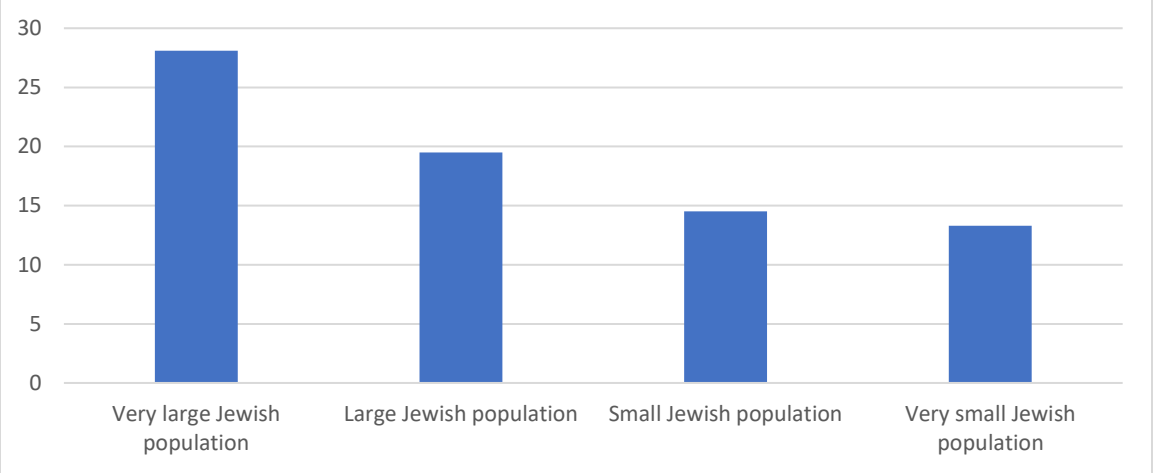


Figure 20

SCHOOL TYPE

When parents are selecting names for their children, another possible factor is the type of school they envision their children attending. If they expect to send their child to a Jewish day school, they might be more likely to select a Distinctively Jewish name. We asked: "When this child was born/adopted, what type of elementary school did you expect them to attend? Jewish school, Non-Jewish school (public or private), I had no idea at that point." We found this to be a significant factor in the names they select for their children (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Name category by parents' expectation of the type of school they would send their child to

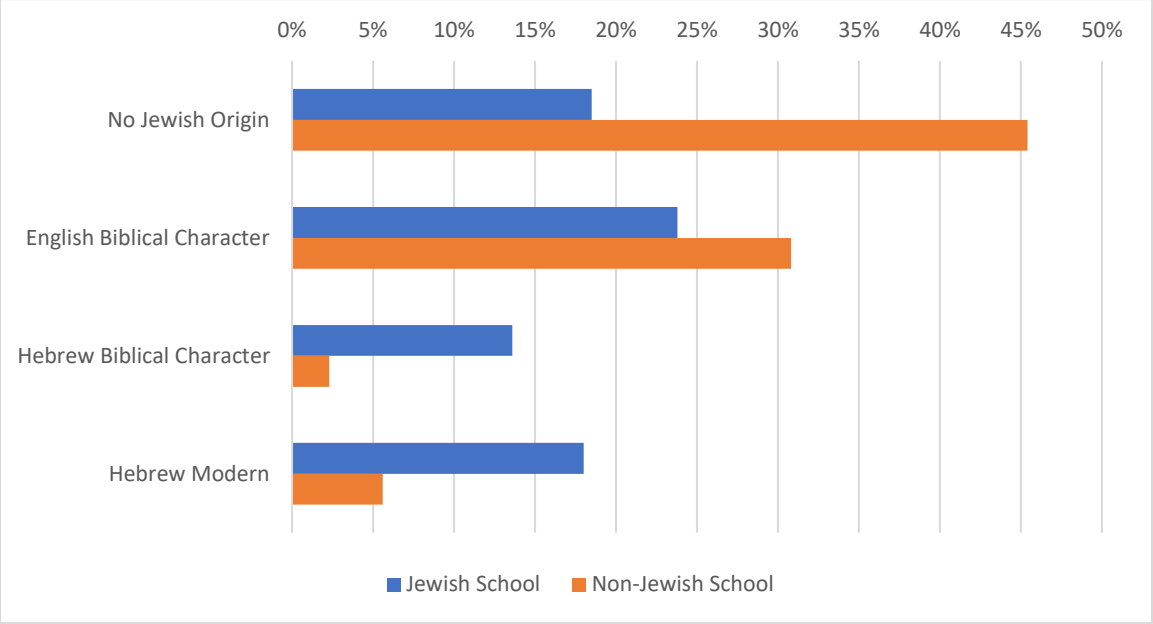


Figure 21

SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE

Another factor in baby name selection is religious engagement, one manifestation of which is synagogue attendance. Synagogue attendance changes over the life course, increasing dramatically when people have school-aged children. Jews who attend synagogue regularly *before* having children demonstrate a particularly strong commitment to religious life and community. Our survey asked, "In the two years before this child was born/adopted, about how often did you attend Jewish religious services at a synagogue or other venue?" Those who report having attended twice a month or more frequently were significantly more likely to select names for their children from the categories of Hebrew Modern and Hebrew Biblical Character.

GENDER

Another factor, over which parents have little control, is the gender of their babies. Among both respondents and children, males are more likely than females to have Hebrew Biblical Character and English Biblical Character names, and females are more likely to have Hebrew Modern and No Jewish Origin names (Figure 22).

Figure 22: % of respondents with each type of name by gender

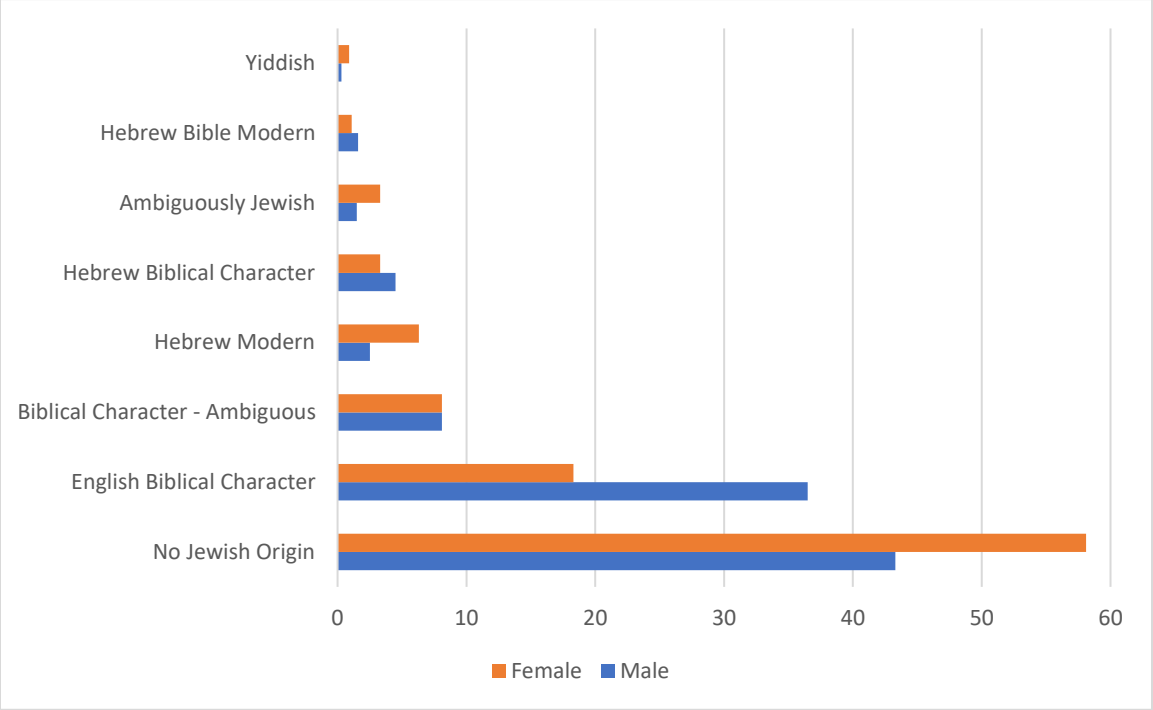


Figure 22

This gender difference is evident in Jewish communities throughout history. Several factors contribute, including the historical practice of men using a ritual name from Hebrew, while women's non-participation in traditional ritual life did not require such names. But the main factor is the prevalence of male names in the Tanakh. As name expert Alexander Beider points out, the Tanakh has over 2,700 male names but only about 50 female names.[33]

PARENTS' NAMES

The names of respondents seem to have some influence on the names they select for their babies. A child whose respondent parent has a Distinctively Jewish name is more likely to have a Distinctively Jewish name (48%) than a child whose respondent parent does not have a Distinctively Jewish name (19%). This may reflect the role of familiarity in naming: some parents want their child to have a name that is similar in distinctive Jewishness to their own name. Even so, over 2/3 of children have names in different categories than their respondent parent.

NAMING PREFERENCES

Another factor in naming children is the parents' preferences, which might correlate with some of the factors above. Our survey asked, "When you were thinking of names for your child(ren), how important was it to you that your children have Jewish names?" As expected, the preference for Jewish names correlates strongly (.430) with using names that have some Jewish origin (i.e., not No Jewish Origin). The correlation between Jewishness preference and Distinctively Jewish names is lower but also positive (.343). Overall, it was more important to Orthodox respondents that their child have a Jewish name than it was to non-Orthodox respondents (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Importance of children having Jewish names

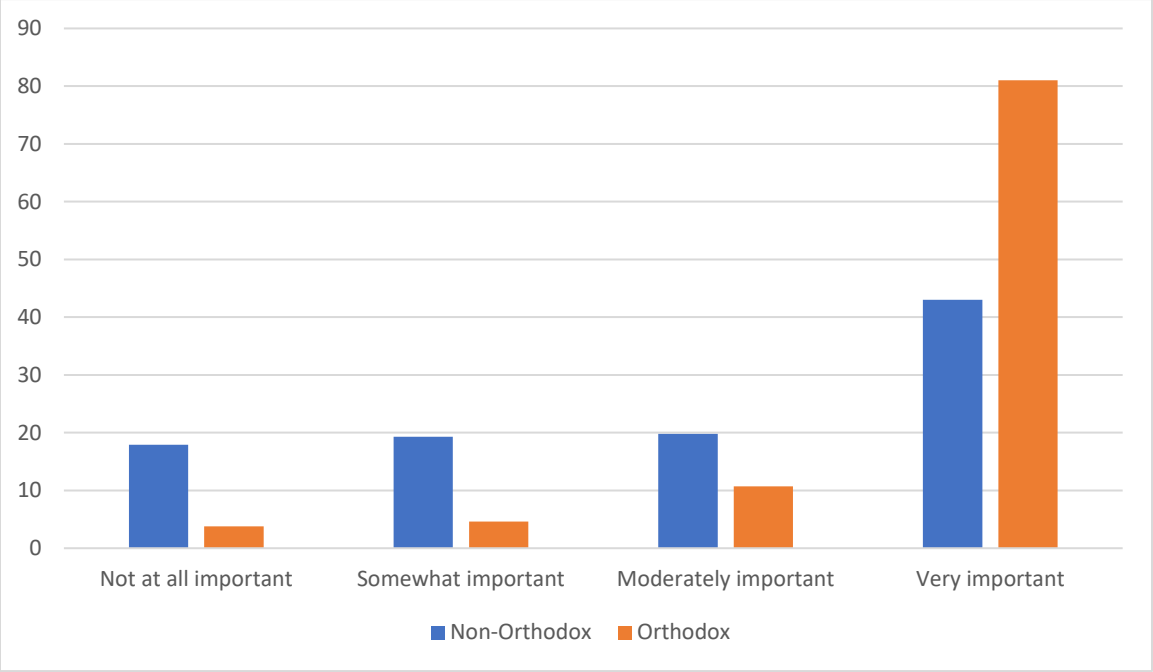


Figure 23

We analyzed the data to determine if Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews are impacted by the same variables in their sense of importance of giving children a Jewish name. As the regression analysis in Figure 24 illustrates, there are notable differences in relative strength of effect of the variables for the two groups. For Orthodox Jews, the two variables with the strongest correlation are refraining from handling money on Shabbat and intention to send their children to a Jewish school. It should be noted that small minorities of Orthodox Jews do handle money on Shabbat (4%) and do not intend to send their children to Jewish school (11%), but these minorities are less likely to feel it is important to give their children Jewish names. For non-Orthodox Jews, these variables are important, but the strongest factor is the parent having a Distinctively Jewish name. Two additional factors are significant for non-Orthodox Jews but not for Orthodox Jews – respondent parent's longest trip to Israel and frequency of synagogue attendance.[34]

Figure 24: Multiple regression analysis: importance of Jewish name for non-Orthodox and Orthodox Jews

	Non-Orthodox Jews		**Orthodox Jews**	
Variable	B	p value	B	p value
Respondent parent has a Distinctively Jewish name	.314	<.001	.215	.006
Intended to send child to Jewish school	.233	<.001	.668	<.001
Refrains from handling money on Shabbat	.171	.005	.881	<.001
Frequency of synagogue attendance in two years before first child's birth	.141	<.001	-.035	Not signif.
Respondent parent's longest trip to Israel	.118	<.001	.027	Not signif.
R^2	.198		.167	

Figure 24

Independent of the demographic factors discussed above, parents might have a preference for names that are popular or rare. We asked, "When you were thinking of names for your child(ren), were you interested in names that were common or unique?" The preference for common names correlates strongly with higher popularity of the child's name according to Social Security Administration data for the decade of the child's birth (Figure 25).

Figure 25: % of children with names ranked 200 or higher (common) for the decade of the child's birth by parents' preference for commonness/uniqueness of name

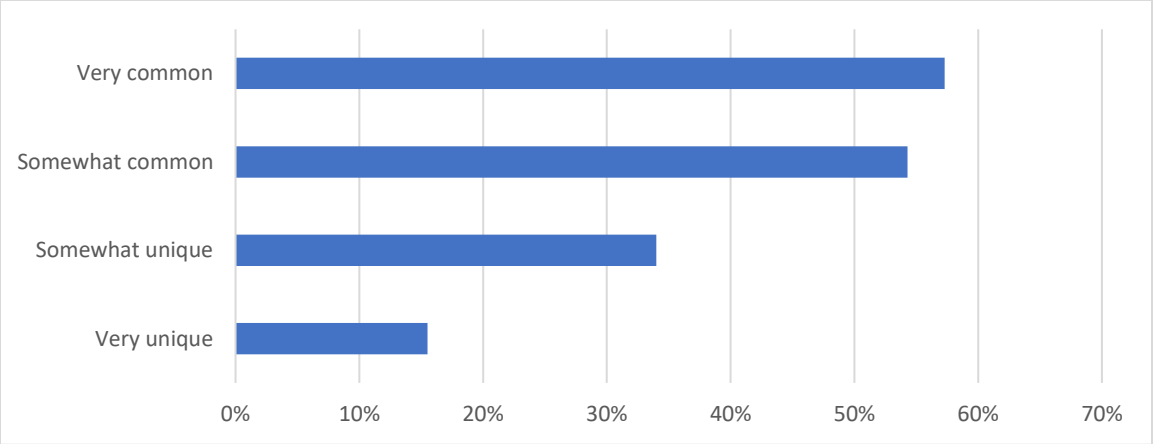


Figure 25

There is also a relationship between having a rare name and having a Distinctively Jewish name. For children with a Distinctively Jewish name, only 2% have a name ranked in the top 200 for their decade of birth, compared to 52% of children whose names are not Distinctively Jewish. In other words, Distinctively Jewish names rarely spread much to the broader American population.

RELATIVE IMPACT OF MULTIPLE VARIABLES ON GIVING CHILD A DISTINCTIVELY JEWISH NAME

We have described several variables that make Jewish parents more likely to give their babies Distinctively Jewish names. Which of these variables are most important? We cannot answer this question just by looking at each variable individually because several correlate with each other, such as various measures of religiosity. Logistic regression allows us to tease apart the variables and determine the independent effects of each. We conducted several logistic regression analyses, eliminating non-significant variables each time. Figure 26 presents the results of our final regression analysis, in which all variables are significant, in order from strongest to weakest. The odds ratio indicates the independent effect of the variable. For example, controlling for other variables, spending 10 months or more in Israel increases the likelihood by a factor of 2.4 that Jews will give their baby a Distinctively Jewish name, and refraining from handling money on Shabbat increases this likelihood by a factor of 1.6.

Figure 26: Logistic regression analysis: Child with Distinctively Jewish name[35]

Variable	Odds ratio	Significance: p value
Longest trip to Israel 10 months or longer	2.363	<.001
Child born 1970 or later	2.294	.014
Respondent parent has a Distinctively Jewish name	2.152	<.001
Important to give child a unique name	2.129	<.001
Attended synagogue 2+ times/month in two years before first child's birth	2.071	<.001
Refrains from handling money on Shabbat	1.640	<.001
Intended to send child to Jewish school	1.631	<.001
Female child	1.478	<.001
Orthodox	1.420	<.001

Figure 26

As Figure 26 indicates, markers of religiosity – synagogue attendance, Shabbat observance, and Orthodoxy – are important factors in parents' decisions to give their child a Distinctively Jewish name. However, other variables have even strong impacts: the time the respondent spent in Israel, whether the child was born before or after 1970, whether they have a Distinctively Jewish name, whether it was important to them to give their child a unique name, and whether they intended to send their child to a Jewish school. Initially it may seem surprising that having a female child increases the likelihood of giving that child a Distinctively Jewish name, but as discussed in the previous section (Gender), males are more likely to be given English Biblical Character names, which are not categorized as Distinctively Jewish names. Females are more likely to be given Hebrew Modern names which are categorized as Distinctively Jewish names.

ANCESTRY AND NAMING AFTER HONOREES

In addition to factors in name type, we also looked at other naming practices. A common understanding is that Ashkenazim name their children after deceased honorees, while Sephardim and Mizrahim name after living honorees. This trend is reflected to some extent in our data, but the picture is more complicated. The vast majority of Ashkenazim are named after deceased honorees, as well as about 2/3 of those with mixed ancestry, but even a plurality (40%) of those with solely Sephardi/Mizrahi ancestry are named after deceased honorees. A small percentage of babies of all backgrounds are named after living honorees, but the group with the highest percentage (31%) is those with solely Sephardi/Mizrahi ancestry. Some children in all groups, including 31% of those with solely Sephardi/Mizrahi ancestry, are not named in honor of anybody (Figure 27).[36]

Figure 27: % of children named after living and deceased honorees by their Jewish ancestry

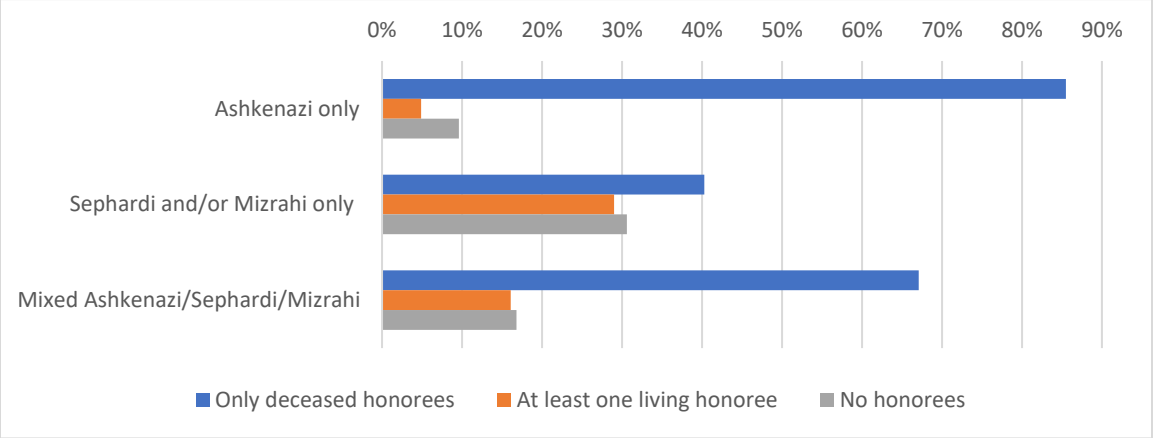


Figure 27

Naming in honor of people represents yet another example of the dual trends of tradition and innovation. While Jews in the "old country" might have followed inherited naming practices, moving to the United States, it seems, exposed them to new practices. Small percentages of Jews in each group follow traditions associated with other Jewish groups (Ashkenazim naming after living honorees and, especially, Sephardim/Mizrahim naming after deceased honorees) and with the broader American society (naming after living honorees or no honorees).

How do these trends play out when one of the parents is not Jewish? We might expect such dual-heritage families to use a combination of Jewish and other practices. Indeed, as Figure 28 indicates, naming a child after at least one living honoree or no honorees is more common in families with one non-Jewish parent than in families with only Jewish parents (either two Jewish parents or a single Jewish parent). However, a majority (68%) of children with one non-Jewish parent are named only for deceased honorees. Clearly, the Ashkenazic memorial naming practice remains strongly ingrained among American Jews of diverse backgrounds.

Figure 28: % of children named after living and deceased honorees by their Jewish parentage

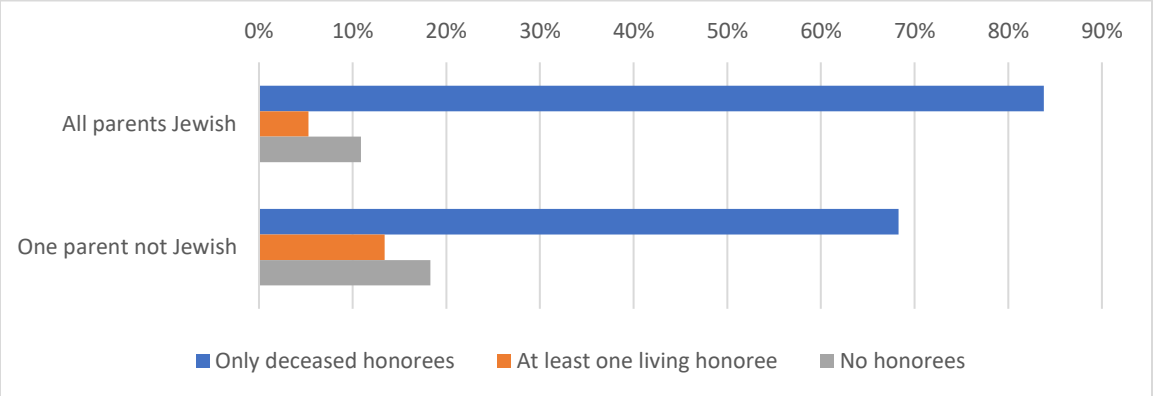


Figure 28

JEWISH RITUAL NAMES

Another inherited tradition is having a Hebrew or Jewish ritual name. The vast majority of Jewish respondents in our survey (95%) report that they have such a name, mostly one that differs from their regular (given or selected) name. Smaller but substantial percentages have ritual names that are Hebrew pronunciations of their regular names (like Rivka-Rebecca, Yaakov-Jacob) or exactly the same as their regular names. Among Jews whose ritual and regular names differ, 40% have name pairs that start with the same letter (also an inherited tradition), such as Mark-Mordechai and Betsy-Batsheva. Some others have names with similar sound patterns or middle names that align in some way with their ritual names. 95% of Jewish children also have Jewish ritual names, but the matching of given name to ritual name differs from that of respondents. A much larger percentage have ritual and given names that are exactly the same, reflecting an increase in Hebrew Biblical Character and Hebrew Word names (Figure 29).

Figure 29: Relationship between regular (given or selected) name and ritual name among Jewish respondents and children and among non-Orthodox and Orthodox children[37]

	Respondents	Children	Non-Orthodox children	Orthodox children
No ritual name	4.9%	5.1%	5.7%	1.1%
Yes, exactly the same as given first name	15.4%	34.1%	29.5%	63.6%
Yes, Hebrew pronunciation of given first name	19.3%	21.5%	22.4%	15.8%
Yes, different from above	56.6%	39.2%	42.3%	19.4%

Figure 29

When we look at respondents and children, we see that large majorities of those of all denominations have ritual names. Among respondents, the family denominations with larger percentages of Jews with no ritual names are Secular Humanist (29%) and no denomination (16%). Orthodoxy is a major differentiator in matching of children's given and ritual names. Children of Orthodox parents are much more likely than others to have a ritual name that is exactly the same as their given name, reflecting the prevalence of Hebrew Biblical Character and Hebrew Word names among Orthodox children (Figure 29).

We also see changes over time in the relationship between regular and ritual names for both respondents and their children. The most striking changes are an increase in ritual names that are identical to regular names (Figure 30) and a decrease in name pairs that have no relationship.

Figure 30: % of children whose ritual and given names are identical by decade of birth

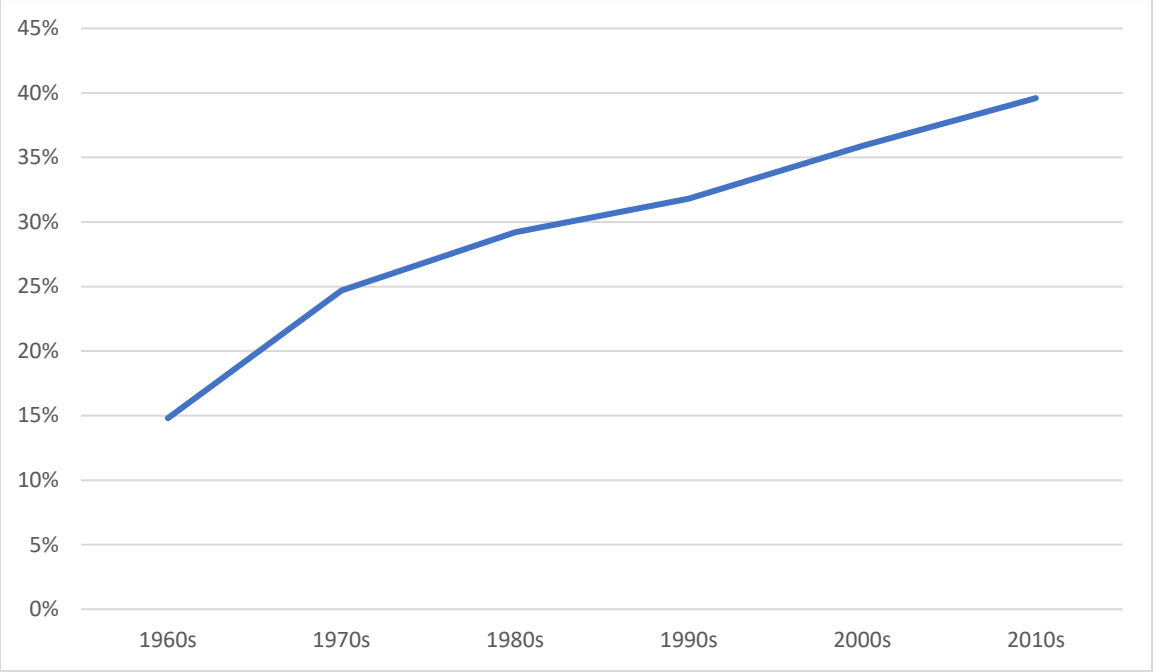


Figure 30

NAME CHANGING

As explained in the History section above, many Jews in the 20th century changed their names, especially their family names, to be less recognizably Jewish, mostly as a response to antisemitism.[38] We asked respondents whether they had changed their first name, and very few had (only 4%). Those who did had very different rationales than earlier name changers: to make their name *more* Jewish (1%), to align with their gender identity (1%), or for another reason (2%), including to go by a nickname, because they did not like their given name, or to make their name easier to pronounce. Only 3 respondents (.045%) reported changing their name to be less Jewish.

STARBUCKS NAMES

Related to name changing is a phenomenon known as the "Starbucks name." We asked, "Do you ever use a 'Starbucks name' (different first name you use for some service encounters)?" We found that Jews with Distinctively Jewish names were much more likely to say yes (56%) than Jews with names that are Not Distinctively Jewish (15%). This difference is even greater than the difference in Starbucks names based on how common their names are (we would expect those with rarer names to be more likely to use Starbucks names). We coded each respondent's name for its popularity based on social security data: whether or not it was in the top 200 baby names in the decade of the respondent's birth. Only 10% of Jewish respondents with names in the top 200 reported having a Starbucks name, compared to 35% of those with names not in the top 200.

What names do people use as their Starbucks names? Most use English names. Just under half (41%) match their current name by the first letter, such as Leora going by Laura, Talia by Tara, and Simcha by Simon or Sam. Some use English versions of their name, like Saul for Shaul and Debbie for Devorie. Some simply pronounce their names differently, such as Leah (normally pronounced Ley-uh) as Lee-uh and Channah as Hannah. Many use unrelated

names, like Ezra going by John and Yael by Caroline. In some cases, Jews' Starbucks names can be seen as Christian, such as Mira going by Mary and Miriam by Maria.

It seems that many Jews with Distinctively Jewish names use more common American names in some service encounters, perhaps to avoid confusion or misspelling of their own name. A few mentioned an opposite rationale for using a Starbucks name: to avoid using a common name lest someone else take their order. This approach leads some Jews to use a *more* Distinctively Jewish name, often their Hebrew name, such as Ellen, who goes by Yocheved, and Amanda, who goes by Devorah. A woman named Kelly adopted the Starbucks name Gittle, "the name my grandmother wanted me to have." Others use the counter encounter to demonstrate their sense of humor, such as Jessica, who goes by Batman, and Adrienne, who goes by "Hey you."

Some Jews report having an "Aroma name," a name they use for some service encounters in Israel (Café Aroma is an Israeli coffee shop chain), because Israelis have trouble pronouncing their English names or they want to fit in better. Examples include Carey as Karen, Seth as Avi, Garth as Ezra, and Jamie and Micaela as Michal. A (second) woman named Kelly uses her Hebrew name, Kelilah, in Israel, and her middle name, Annette, in Europe. A man named Hunter uses his Hebrew name, Hillel, "for fun in America and for efficiency in Israel."

PETS' NAMES

Another way that Jews use names to indicate their Jewishness is through the names they give to their pets. 71% of Jewish respondents report having had a pet. This varies significantly by denomination: Orthodox Jews are less likely than others to have owned a pet (49% vs. 74%).[39] Most Jewish pet owners do not give their pets names they consider Jewish, but a sizeable minority (32%) do. There is little variation in Jewishness of pets' names according to denomination, but those who are Jewish professionals (rabbis, educators, etc.) are significantly more likely than those who are not to give their pets Jewish names (40% vs. 27%). Pets' names perceived as Jewish include the following categories, presented here with examples – mostly dogs and cats, but also rabbits, birds, fish, etc.:

- **Foods**: Latke, Knish, Tzimmes, Farfel, Bamba, Halva, Felafel
- **Biblical figures**: Moishe Rabbeinu, Jeremiah, Goliath, Tzipporah, Sheba
- **Historical figures**: Hillel, Rashi, Spinoza, Cardozo, Gershwin, Rosa Luxemburg, Einstein, Carl Reiner, Golda Meow-ir
- **Fictional characters**: Purrchik – from Fiddler on the Roof, Fievel – from An American Tale, Harpo – from the Marx Brothers, The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel
- **Other human names**: Zelda, Sophie, Sheina, Max, Rafi, Chayim Yankel
- **Hebrew animal types**: Toolie, short for Chatul, Hebrew for cat; Ketsele, Yiddish for kitty; Namerovsky – namer is Hebrew for tiger; Kelev, Hebrew for dog; Akhbar, Hebrew for mouse
- **Hebrew characteristics**: Hamoodi – cutey, Motek – sweetie, Shovav – mischievous, Gingi – redhead, Shoko B'Sakit – chocolate milk in a bag
- **Yiddish words**: Shluffy – sleep(y), Schmutz – dirt, Shmendrick – jerk, Punim – face, Tchotchke – trinket
- **Holiday terms**: Sukkah, Lulav, Dreidel, Maccabee, Tubi – short for Tu Bishvat, Vashti, Dayenu, Afi – short for Afikomen
- **Texts**: Genesis, Tazria, Tavo, Midrash
- **Religious concepts**: Mitzvah – good deed/commandment, Motzi – blessing over bread, Hesed – kindness, Tikva – hope.

The names Jews select for their pets will be the subject of a future publication.

PERCEIVED JEWISHNESS OF NAMES

Among humans, which names are considered more or less Jewish? We selected 13 girls' names and 13 boys' names representing several of the name categories and various levels of popularity within the broader American population. All respondents were shown the girls' names and the boys' names, each list in randomized order, and asked, "If you heard of a girl or woman (boy or man) with each of these names, how likely would you be to assume she (he) was Jewish or not?" They were asked to rate each name on a scale of 0 (Definitely not Jewish) to 10 (Definitely Jewish), and they were given the option to indicate that they were "Not familiar with name." We analyzed what factors correlated with the perception of a name as more or less Jewish including whether respondents were Jewish and, among Jews, age, denomination, and expected school type.

JEWS VERSUS NON-JEWS

For almost all names, Jews gave higher Jewishness ratings than non-Jews did. The only exceptions were Mary and John (names associated with Christianity), which non-Jews rated low but higher for Jewishness than Jews did, and Liam (a trendy non-Jewish-origin name that Jews sometimes use as a coded Hebrew name), for which the difference in rating was not statistically significant. Figure 31 and Figure 32 show the mean ratings for each name among Jews and non-Jews.

Figure 31: Ratings of Jewishness of girls' names by Jewish and non-Jewish respondents

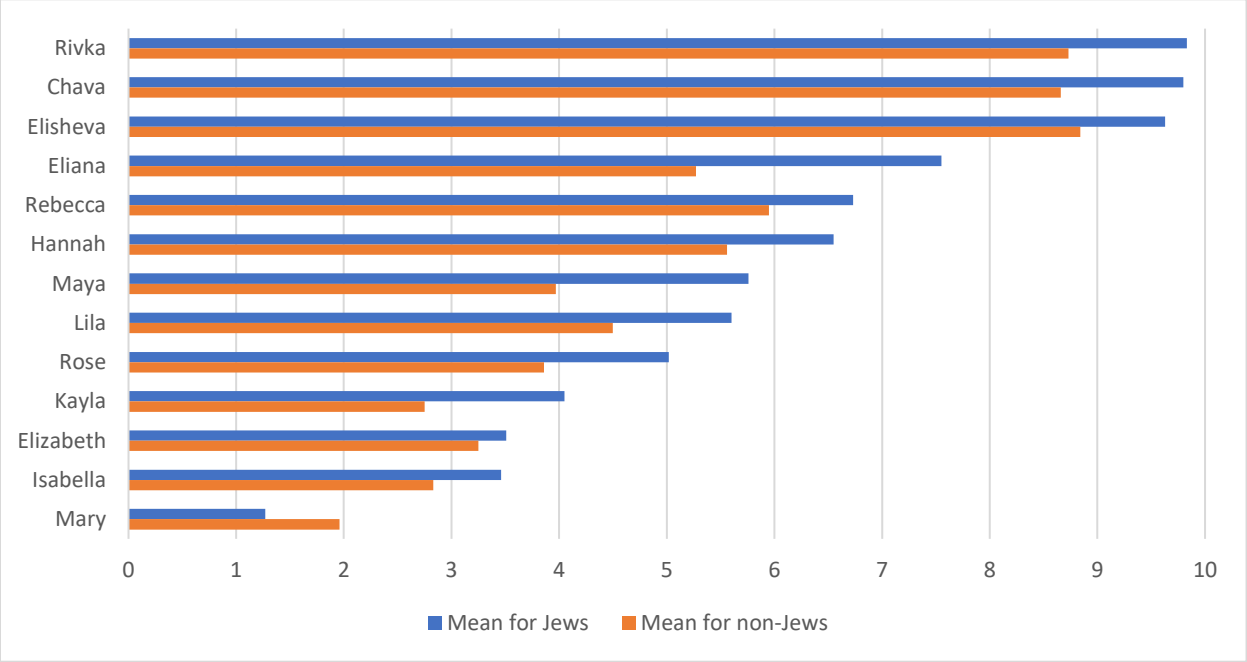


Figure 31

Figure 32: Ratings of Jewishness of boys' names by Jewish and non-Jewish respondents

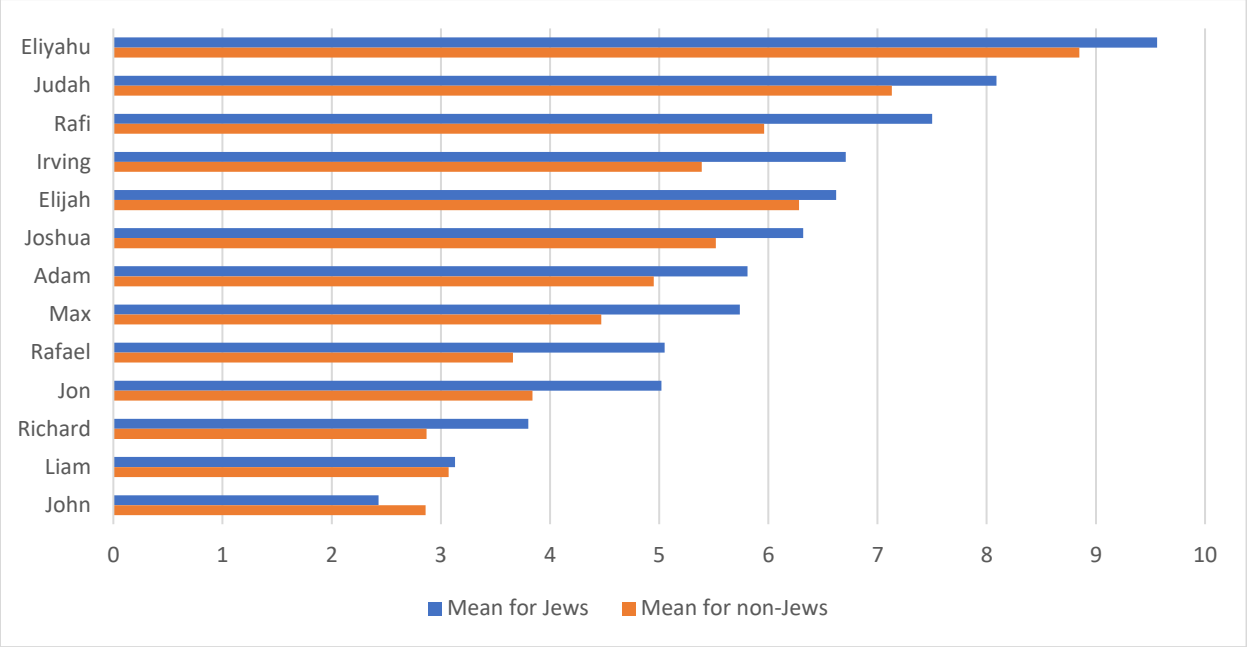


Figure 32

As expected, the Hebrew Biblical Character names were rated highest for likelihood of their bearer being Jewish: Rivka, Chava, Elisheva, and Eliyahu. Jews rated them between 9 and 10, and non-Jews between 8 and 9. Judah, an English Biblical Character name (and the source of the word "Jew"), was also rated quite high – 8 by Jews and 7 by non-Jews. Other English Biblical Character names were rated in the middle – still higher than the neutral response of 5: Rebecca, Hannah, Elijah, Joshua, and Adam.

Some of the names were selected to test pairs of names that differ only by one facet. Three of these pairs differ only by language: Elisheva/Elizabeth, Rivka/Rebecca, and Eliyahu/Elijah. As expected, the Hebrew version of each of these was ranked higher for Jewishness than the English version. Rebecca and Elijah were still ranked above 5, but Elizabeth was ranked lower, likely reflecting its associations with British royalty and Christianity. Two additional name pairs differ in form: Jon/John and Rafael/Rafi. Jews rated Jon as neutral, perhaps considering it short for Jonathan, an English version of the Hebrew biblical name Yonatan, while non-Jews considered it not Jewish. Rafael is an Ambiguous Biblical Character name that could be considered English or Hebrew and whose Spanish spelling is associated with Hispanic Americans. Rafi is a Hebrew Biblical Modern name, an Israeli nickname for Rafael. Both Jews and non-Jews rated Rafi high for Jewishness, and Jews rated Rafael as just above neutral, while non-Jews rated it as not Jewish.

As expected, two names associated with Christianity, Mary and John, ranked quite low for Jewishness. Isabella, the name of an antisemitic historical figure that ranked 4 in the US in 2018 (the most recent year for which Social Security data was available when we prepared our survey), ranked low for Jewishness. Richard, the one name we tested with no Jewish or Christian associations and no biblical origin, also ranked relatively low. We also included a few names not of Jewish origin that became associated with Jewish immigrants or their children: Rose, Irving, and Max. Rose ranked neutral among Jews and lower among non-Jews, Irving ranked mid-high, and Max ranked a bit higher than neutral among Jews and a bit lower among non-Jews.

Several of the names included in this section are currently trendy in America and have coded Hebrew or Yiddish associations: Eliana (Greek origins, Jews associate it with the Hebrew for "my God answered," ranked 83 in 2018), Kayla (Irish and Yiddish origins, ranked 149), Maya (many international origins, Jews associate it with the Hebrew word for "water," ranked 61), Lila (Arabic and Persian origin, Jews associate it with the Hebrew word for "night," ranked 224), and Liam (Irish origin, Jews associate it with the Hebrew word for "my people," ranked 1). With the exception of Liam, Jews were much more likely to rate these names as Jewish than non-Jews.

FACTORS IMPACTING JEWS' PERCEPTION OF NAMES

Jews' ratings of most of these names correlate with several factors: their age, their denomination, and which type of school they planned to send their children to at the time of their first child's birth.

While most names have similar ratings by respondents in different age groups, younger Jews give lower Jewishness ratings to certain names: Judah, Irving, Max, Jon, and Richard (Figure 33), and Hannah, Rose, Kayla, Elizabeth, and Mary (Figure 34). This may be because these names are associated with Jews of prior generations or became more popular in the broader population over time, reflecting the popularity pattern discussed above. Most names of Hebrew origin show no age trend in perception.

Figure 33: Ratings of Jewishness of boys' names by Jewish respondents' decade of birth

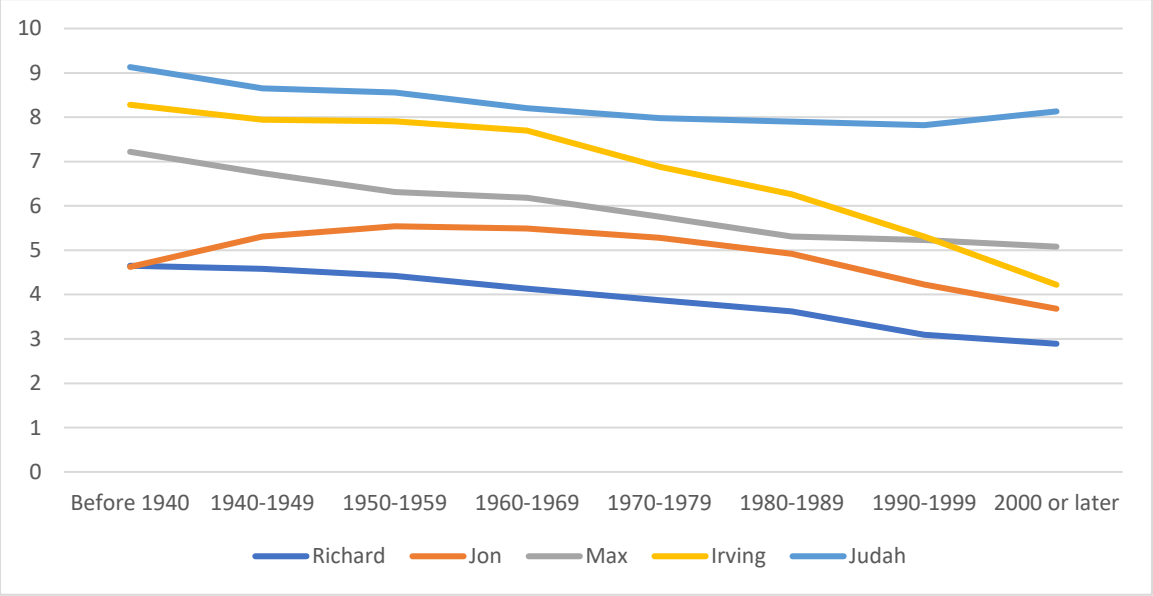


Figure 33

Figure 34: Ratings of Jewishness of girls' names by Jewish respondents' decade of birth

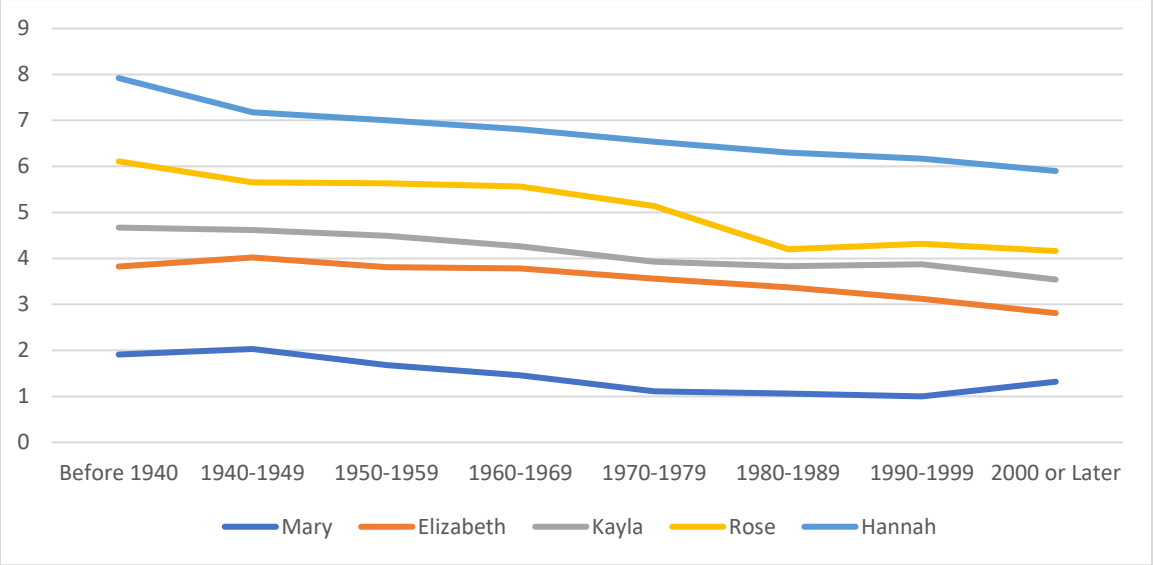


Figure 34

Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews generally give similar Jewishness ratings. But several names show significant differences ($p \leq .001$). Orthodox Jews rate Rafael, Rafi, Eliyahu, Elisheva, Kayla, Eliana higher than non-Orthodox Jews rate them (Figure 35). Most of these names are common among Orthodox Jews, and some might not realize that Kayla and Eliana are also common in the broader American population. Non-Orthodox Jews rate Elijah, Max, Adam, Lila, and Rebecca higher than Orthodox Jews rate them. These include a name associated with older Jews that was recently reclaimed among many non-Orthodox Jews (Max), a coded Hebrew name (Lila), and English versions of biblical characters (Elijah, Adam, and Rebecca), including one non-Jewish character (Adam).

Figure 35: Ratings of Jewishness of names by Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jewish respondents

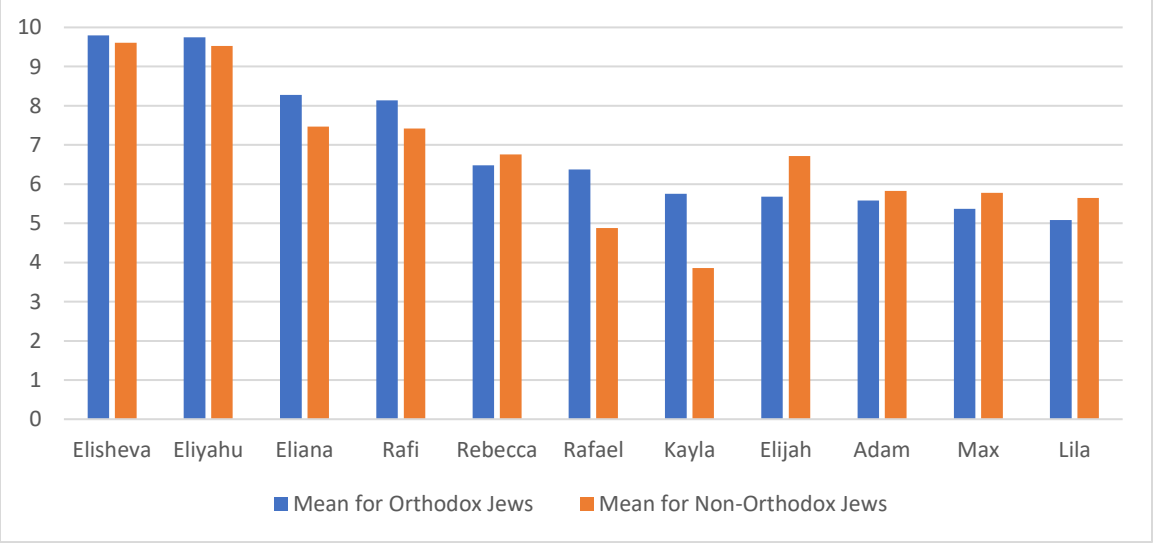


Figure 35

We hypothesized that parents might perceive certain names as more Jewish if they were planning to send their children to Jewish vs. secular schools. Indeed, this was the case for four of the five "coded" Jewish names: Eliana, Maya, Liam, and Kayla (Figure 36). The exception was Lila, which both groups perceived at the same level of Jewishness. This may be because a large percentage of Jews of all backgrounds recognize Lila as being the same as the Hebrew word for "night."

Figure 36: Mean ratings of Jewishness of coded Hebrew names by plans to send child to Jewish school

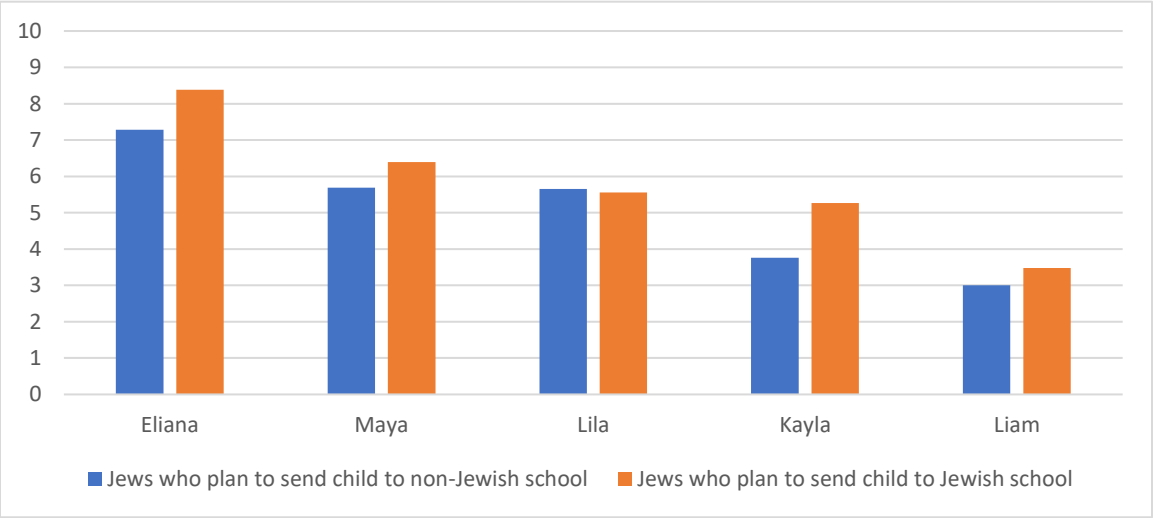


Figure 36

CONCLUSION

As this report has shown, when American Jews select names for their babies, they are making decisions about how they want their children (and themselves) to be seen. Selecting certain names sends a message – both to Jews and to non-Jews – that the child is most likely Jewish. Names also reflect nuances within Jewish communities, such as denomination, religiosity, orientation toward Israel, and ancestral origin. Because many people, especially Jews, have an intuitive sense of the correlations our survey has pointed to (even before reading this report), they often make assumptions about an individual's Jewish identity based solely on their name or the name of their children.

American Jews are continuing many trends of their predecessors around the world throughout the centuries. They select names for their children from a diverse repertoire, including biblical names from various traditions, names of their ancestors, and local names, including translations of biblical names. Most Jews name after honorees, usually deceased. And most have separate names for their regular lives (from multiple sources) and their ritual lives (generally from Hebrew, sometimes from Yiddish).

Another practice contemporary American Jews share with their ancestors is creative innovation. This includes forming new female names from traditionally male names and pairing names based on sound or meaning – both baby names with honoree names and regular names with ritual names.

At the same time, contemporary American Jews have adopted some new trends. First, women now have ritual names, while this was not common before the modern period. Second, the existence of the State of Israel as an

international center of Jewish life has led to the proliferation of many new Hebrew names, the renewed use of certain biblical names, and new pronunciations of longstanding names. Other new twists include the use of Jewish names for pets and the use of "Starbucks names," both to mask and to amplify Jewishness.

Through their names, American Jews are exhibiting the dual trends of tradition and innovation, continuing naming practices of their ancestors while adding new creative twists. They are also demonstrating that they are simultaneously a part of and apart from the surrounding society – the dual trends of acculturation and distinctiveness. Jews throughout history have partaken in these trends, as historian Elisheva Baumgarten says, "finding the balance between reliance on ancient traditions and embeddedness in one's cultural environs."[40]

This study has focused on names, but onomastics (the study of names) is only one lens through which we might analyze a Jewish community. By investigating other cultural domains, such as music, art, and language, one can find similar sources of Jewish cultural practices – texts, ancestors, and surrounding society – and similar trends of tradition-innovation and distinctiveness-acculturation. In addition, one can find similar correlations between demographic factors and cultural practices, such as the use of Hebrew and Yiddish words within English.[41] Jews make cultural decisions not only to signal that they are Jewish but also to signal particular affiliations and proclivities.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

SURVEY DESIGN

We started this project with several hypotheses stemming from previous research on American Jews' naming preferences[42] and trends in naming among Orthodox Jews.[43] Based on this scholarship and anecdotal evidence, Sarah Bunin Benor and her students in an HUC class on Jewish names conducted a pilot study in 2018, which yielded over 2000 responses. Benor then drafted a modified, expanded version of this survey, which tested additional hypotheses. She pre-tested the survey with about 60 Jews and non-Jews of diverse backgrounds and family configurations, including scholars of American Jews, Jewish onomastics, and baby naming experts. Several of these survey pre-tests were done as think-alouds, providing instant feedback, which led to many edits. The final survey had 46 pages and 367 questions, but each respondent saw only a small percentage of those, depending on the routing patterns and how many children and pets they wanted to enter data for. The study was approved by USC's IRB: Project number: UP-19-00486.

DISTRIBUTION

In September 2019, we distributed the survey using the snowball method (sending the invitation to people and asking them to send it to others) through email, social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit), and press releases to various Jewish publications. We targeted fifty email lists and individual connectors to reach specific groups, such as multiple denominations, Jews of Color, LGBTQ Jews, Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews of various origins, and interfaith families. Respondents were asked to forward the survey invitation to friends and relatives, both Jews and others. The only requirements for participation were being American and 18 years or older. 11,075 respondents participated in the survey, most within the first week of the survey.

SAMPLE

Because our sample is not random, we cannot make claims that it is representative of Americans or American Jews. Jewish respondents are more engaged in Jewish communal life than the Jewish population more broadly (defined in previous studies as people who tell a phone surveyor that they are Jewish and do not also adhere to another religion). For example, 46% of the Jewish respondents in our sample attended synagogue monthly or more in the two years before their first child was born or adopted, compared to only 24% of the Pew sample (Pew Research Center 2021), which includes Jews at many life stages. However, other differences were not as stark. When Jewish respondents' first child was born, 30% expected to send them to a Jewish day school, compared to the Pew sample's day school attendance rate of 25% for children currently living at home with the respondent. Our sample included a slightly higher percentage of respondents who identify as Conservative, Modern Orthodox, and Reconstructionist and a lower percentage Reform and no denomination.[44]

Similarly, the 1524 non-Jewish respondents (born and residing in the US) in our sample are slightly more connected to Jews than the broader American population. 16% report having more than a minority of close friends who are Jewish, compared to 4% of non-Jews in a national random sample.[45] Therefore, we can view the current sample as representing American Jews who are somewhat more engaged in Jewish life than most American Jews and non-Jews who are somewhat more socially connected to Jews than most non-Jewish Americans.

Sample size:

- 11,075 respondents
- 8,115 Jewish respondents (6,816 US-born, US-resident)
- 1,904 non-Jewish respondents[46] (1,524 US-born, US-resident)
- 9,182 Children of Jewish respondents
- 7,784 Children of US-born, US-resident Jewish respondents

DATA ANALYSIS

Coding and analyzing the data was a herculean task. The primary data set is the respondent-based set in which each response is coded individually. In the second data set, children's names, each child is coded as a separate instance. Multiple children in the same family have the same independent variables – the data the responding parent entered about themself and their co-parent.

In both of these data sets, each name (of the respondent, spouse, and children – a total of 9,313 discreet names, including multiple spellings and double names) was manually coded according to the categories explained above, as well as first letter, and social security rankings in the decade of the respondent's birth. The coding according to name categories was done initially by a research assistant, then revised by Benor with significant input from onomastics expert Alexander Beider.

Respondents were routed to different parts of the survey and subsequently coded as Jewish or not based on this question:

Jewishness (This item is required so you will see the appropriate demographic questions)

1. I am Jewish and was raised Jewish
2. I converted to Judaism

3. I am in the process of converting to Judaism
4. I am not Jewish and not converted/ing, but I have a Jewish spouse/partner
5. I was raised Jewish but no longer consider myself Jewish
6. I have Jewish ancestry but am not Jewish
7. I am not Jewish, not converting, and have no Jewish ancestry or partner
8. I don't want to answer this question
9. Other (please specify): _____

1-2 were coded as Jewish, 3-7 as non-Jewish, and 8-9 as missing. For most questions, we limited our sample to respondents who were born and currently reside in the United States (8,340), and for others we limited the sample to the subset of this group who identify as Jewish (6,816).

The name classifications were informed by Lawson's (1991) classification of names in Israel but modified for the American milieu.

Several sources were consulted to inform the coding of particular names:

- Beider 2001
- Lawson 1991
- https://www.sefaria.org/
- http://www.shemli.co.il/
- http://www.allhebrewnames.com/
- https://www.behindthename.com/
- https://babynames.com/
- https://www.kveller.com/jewish-baby-name-finder/
- https://nameberry.com/
- https://www.ssa.gov/cgi-bin/babyname.cgi

Notes on the coding of names:

- If there was what seemed likely to be a typo, we recoded it as the name without the typo (e.g., Dophie => Sophie; Rchel = > Rachel, Johsua => Joshua; Yosrf => Yosef).
- Names were distinguished by spelling. Multiple spellings were coded as separate names (e.g., Ben Zion, Bension, Bentsion, Bentzion, Ben-tzion, Benzion, and Ben-Zion) and sometimes in separate categories (for example, Dahlia was coded as Ambiguous Jewish, but Dalia, Dalya, and Daliah were coded as Hebrew Modern).
- If the respondent gave both their English and Hebrew names and specified them as such (e.g., "Hugh in English, Tvzi in Hebrew"), then we coded their English name. If they gave two names with a slash or parentheses, we coded only the first name. If they indicated that they go by a different version, we used that (e.g., "Isaac (but goes by Yitz/Yitzy except legal docs)" OR "Jacob Called Coby"), but if they just put a different name in parentheses, we did not use that. If they wrote two or more names together with no punctuation, we considered this double/triple name to be the source for the coding.
- In cases of multiple names, we coded them by the rarer or more Jewish name type (e.g., Adam Ari = HM, Miriam Shayna = Y). If the two names were HBC and HM, we coded it as HM. If they were Hebrew and Yiddish, we coded it as coded as Yiddish. However, in the cases of English Biblical Character and Ambiguous Biblical

Character or Not Jewish and Ambiguous Biblical Character, we coded the name pair as EBC (e.g., Jeremy David, Leah Beth).

- Some names could be coded in multiple categories. For example, Sol could be short for Solomon or the Spanish word for sun, and Trina could be short for Katrina or the Yiddish name Trine. In these cases we selected the more common usages (Solomon, Katrina).
- Longstanding hypocoristic forms of Biblical Hebrew names, such as Riva, Mira, and Shula, could have been coded as Yiddish Biblical Character or Biblical Hebrew Modern, but we coded them as Hebrew Biblical Character.
- Names like Danielle and Simone, which are derived from biblical names but have long been in use outside of Jewish communities, were coded as not Jewish.
- Adam, Daniel, Michael, Rachel, and Hannah were coded as English Biblical Character, even though they could have been Ambiguous Biblical. Although the spellings Hannah and Michael, for example, could be pronounced KHAH-nuh and micha-EL, they are popular in the broader American society, and Jews who pronounce their names in the more Hebraic ways often spell them differently to distinguish, e.g., Channah and Micha'el.
- Ambiguous Jewish includes some names that could be based on historical associations, such as Josephus (an ancient Jewish historian) and Shiraz (a city that many Iranian Jews emigrated from). Vida, Vita, and Vito are in this category because they are names meaning "life" that Jews historically used in Romance-speaking lands, commonly given as an apotropaic (warding off harm) measure when people were ill.
- Some names with Christian connotations were coded as No Jewish Origin even though they are English versions of biblical characters: Elizabeth, Matthew, Mary, and Maria.
- Some names were coded as No Jewish Origin even if they had historical Jewish resonances. Jews have been using Alexander and variants thereof since Alexander the Great conquered Palestine in 333 B.C.E.[47] Even so, most Jews today are not likely aware of the historical Jewish popularity of these names. Therefore, we coded the many instances of Alexander and its derivatives, like Alexandra, Alexis, and Sasha, as not Jewish, but we coded its Yiddish variant, Sender, as Yiddish. Similarly, although there was a High Priest in the 2nd century BCE named Jason, we assume most Jews today do not share this association and use the name solely because of its popularity in America.

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NOTES

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[2] Demsky 2008:1.

[3] These multiple sources can be compared with those in language. Jewish languages tend to be based on a local non-Jewish language with influences from Hebrew, Aramaic, a previous Jewish language, archaic features, and other distinctive features.

[4] Ilan 1987, 1989, 2012-2020.

[5] Kessin 2002-3.

[6] Ha-Levi 2013.

[7] Gasperoni n.d. Angelo is also associated with the Hebrew names Malachi, Mordechai, and Ezra.

[8] Beider 2001. Most of these names are Yiddish; the parentheticals designate their origins. Kalmen is a shortened form of Greek/Latin Kalonymos 'Good/beautiful name' (Shem Tov) and often appears in a joint name: Kalonimos Kalmen.

[9] Ilan 2002-2012.

[10] Beider 2001; Lowenstein 2002.

[11] Beider 2001:20-21.

[12] Genesis 49:9: גּוּר אַרְיֵה יְהוּדָה מִטֶּרֶף בְּנִי עָלִיתָ כָּרַע רָבַץ כְּאַרְיֵה וּכְלָבִיא מִי יְקִימֶנּוּ׃ Judah is a lion's cub; On prey, my son, have you grown. He crouches, lies down like a lion, Like a lioness —who dare rouse him?

[13] Beider 2001.

[14] Lieberson 2000:211-212.

[15] Zhang et al. 2016:1535.

[16] Fermaglich 2018.

[17] Lawson 1991; Fermaglich 2018:137.

[18] Benor 2016.

[19] Jews who were born outside the US and/or currently reside outside the US are significantly more likely to have Distinctively Jewish Names than those who were born and reside in the US.

[20] https://www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames.

[21] This analysis is based on types, not tokens. Some names appeared in two or more gender groups, such as Morgan and Taylor.

[22] Zhang et al. 2016.

[23] Our analysis of social security data.

[24] We do not include names of respondents who identify as non-binary or other genders because there are no names in this group of 150 that are used by 4 or more people. In this report, we avoid presenting names used by fewer than 4 people out of concern for confidentiality. Exceptions can be found in the Starbucks names and pets' names sections.

[25] US popularity data is from the Social Security Administration's list of popular names for births in 1922-2021, https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/decades/century.html. For the analysis of name popularity, we did not combine different spellings of the same name (e.g., Deborah and Debra, Sarah and Sara) or nicknames (e.g., Benjamin and Ben). An asterisk indicates that the two names in contiguous rows appeared in the survey the same number of times. These tied names are listed in alphabetical order.

[26] See Appendix for additional notes on coding.

[27] See Benor 2012, 2016 on Orthodox names.
[28] The actual dividing line would likely be in the late 1960s, given historical events of the period, but our age data is available only by decade.
[29] See Fermaglich 2018 on similar historical trends in Jews changing their surnames.
[30] Social security data: https://www.ssa.gov/cgi-bin/babyname.cgi. See also Lieberson 2000.
[31] * indicates a tie. ^ indicates a tie following another tie.
[32] Lieberson 2000. One of the possible explanations Lieberson offers for this trend is Jews' tendency to have higher socioeconomic status and therefore adopt new fashions in names earlier. This comports with the trickle-down effect proposed in *Freakonomics* (Levitt and Dubner 2010[2005]). However, Wattenberg (2009, 2015) found that more affluent and educated parents generally name more conservatively than less affluent parents because they tend to have children later in life. On a related note, distinctively Jewish names were well represented on the lists of baby names of the most highly educated mothers in California in the 1990s, such as Meira, Aviva, Atara, Dov, Akiva, and Zev (Levitt and Dubner 2010:199-200). Of these, only Zev had reached the US top 1000 by 2018 (ranked 965); Levitt and Dubner's (2010:205) prediction that Aviva would become popular has not played out. The relationship among Jews, income, education, and name diffusion deserves further research.
[33] Beider 2018.
[34] There is a much higher N for the non-Orthodox group than the Orthodox group, which might account for some of the differences in statistical significance, as a higher N makes it more probable that the results will be statistically significant (Mills 2011).
[35] With the exception of "female child" and "child born 1970 or later," the variables presented in Figure 26 are characteristics of the respondent parent.
[36] These numbers might be different if our sample included more than 62 respondents with solely Sephardi/Mizrahi ancestry.
[37] Numbers do not add up to 100% in the respondent column, as 3.8% of respondents had a Hebrew name based on a name change rather than their given name.
[38] Fermaglich 2018.
[39] The fact that half of Orthodox respondents have had a pet is surprising given the long history of Orthodox Jews eschewing pets, especially dogs, because of a historical fear of dogs and because of the complicated nature of pet care on Shabbat and holidays. This discrepancy can be explained by the overrepresentation among survey respondents of Orthodox Jews who are more integrated into American society than the actual population of Orthodox Jews, based on who has internet access and was likely to receive the survey invitation.
[40] Baumgarten 2018:40.
[41] See Benor 2011; Benor 2016.
[42] Benor and Cohen 2009; Benor 2011.
[43] Benor 2016.
[44] Pew Research Center 2021.
[45] United Jewish Communities 2003.
[46] In addition to the participants that were coded either Jewish or Non-Jewish, there were an additional 1,056 participants that were categorized into other or did not want to answer this question.
[47] Beider 2001:273.