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# 2020 Metropolitan Chicago Jewish Population Study

## Special Report on Jews with no denomination

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# Introduction

This special report examines the nearly half of Jewish adults in Metropolitan Chicago who do not identify with a denomination, with a particular focus on those who are nevertheless highly engaged in Jewish life. Consistent with national trends regarding denominational affiliation, identification with a Jewish denomination has declined in Metropolitan Chicago. Among Jewish adults in Metropolitan Chicago, 44% do not identify with any denomination, more than tripling from 14% in 2010<sup>1</sup>. Nationally, 32% of Jewish adults have no denominational identity.<sup>2</sup>

Although denominational identity has historically been the primary signifier of participation in Jewish life, over time this marker has become less useful. There is now a range of types and degree of engagement in Jewish life among adults who do not identify with a denomination. While many are minimally involved, others participate significantly in every facet of Jewish life.

This report summarizes the ways that Jews without denomination engage in Jewish life in order to assist Jewish organizations in Metropolitan Chicago in outreach and engagement efforts. The report begins with a description of the demographic characteristics, Jewish backgrounds, and Jewish behaviors of all adults without a denomination, as compared to those with a denomination. The analysis then focuses more narrowly on the relatively engaged Jews without denomination and compares them to the rest of the Jewish community on a variety of demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal measures.

To provide context for the findings, we include throughout this report quotations from open-text responses of Jews who are engaged with Jewish life but do not identify with a specific Jewish denomination (Engaged/ND group, as explained below).

Questions explored in this report and their key findings follow:

## **Which Jewish adults do not identify with a denomination?**

- More than half of Jews without a denomination participate in Jewish life in some way.
- Greater shares of those without a denomination, compared to those with a denomination, are LGBTQ, Russian-speaking, and Israeli citizens. Compared to Jews with a denomination, three times as many Jews without denomination are children of intermarriage.

## **How do Jews without denomination participate in Jewish life?**

- Just 15% of Jewish adults without a denomination participate in no key Jewish behaviors.
- Among those who belong to a Jewish congregation, the largest share of engaged Jews without a denomination belong to an independent minyan, Chabad, or a Reform synagogue.

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<sup>1</sup> It is likely that some of the reported changes in denominational identity from 2010 to 2020 are due to methodological differences between the studies.

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center, *Jewish Americans in 2020*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

- Higher shares of synagogue members who do not personally identify with a denomination belong to Chabad (19%) or an independent minyan (15%) than do members with a denomination (8% and 7%, respectively).

### **Who are the engaged without denomination?**

- The number of adults who are highly engaged in Jewish life and have no denominational identity (6% of all Chicago Jewish adults) is similar to the proportion of adults who are Orthodox (7% of all Chicago Jewish adults).
- About half of Jewishly engaged adults without a denominational identity were raised with a denomination. About half attended Jewish full- or part-time school as children.

### **How do the engaged without denomination participate in Jewish life?**

- Engaged Jews with and without denominational identity participate in most Jewish behaviors in similar proportions. Notable exceptions are synagogue membership and frequent Shabbat observance, which are more common among engaged denominational Jews.

### **How do the engaged without denomination feel about Jewish life?**

- Among the most highly engaged Jews, those with and without a denomination feel similar levels of connection to Israel and the worldwide Jewish community. However, more with a denomination than those without feel very connected to the Metropolitan Chicago Jewish community.
- Nearly all engaged Jews feel at least a little satisfaction with their current levels of connection to the local Jewish community, although nearly twice as many with a denominational identity are “very much satisfied” as are those without a denominational identity.
- Engaged Jewish adults, regardless of denominational identity, believe in equal measure that caring about Israel is an essential part of being Jewish, that they are proud of Israel’s accomplishments, and that they are Zionists.

### **What leads to a particular engagement and denominational identification grouping?**

- Belonging to a congregation is associated with being engaged in Jewish life and with having a denominational identity. In particular, belonging to Chabad or an independent minyan is associated with not having a denominational identity.

# Which Jewish adults do not identify with a denomination?

The 2020 Metropolitan Chicago Jewish Population Study found that 44% of Jewish adults do not identify with a denominational label. As shown in Table 1, this category is comprised of 26% who report being “just Jewish,” and 18% who report being secular/cultural Jews. The combined “no denomination” category has increased from 14% in 2010. Nationally, by comparison, the 2020 Pew study found 32% of Jewish adults nationwide do not identify with a denomination.

This special report focuses on the “no denomination” group in Chicago and addresses the extent to which and the ways in which these individuals participate in Jewish religious and communal life.

**Table 1: Denomination of Jewish adults in Metropolitan Chicago 2020 (main report Table 1.8)**

Denomination	Chicago Jewish adults, 2020 (%)
<b>Orthodox</b>	<b>7</b>
Modern Orthodox	4
Yeshivish/Litvish	1
Chabad	1
Chasidic	< 1
Other	< 1
<b>Conservative</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Reform</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Other denomination</b>	<b>4</b>
Reconstructionist	2
Humanistic	1
Renewal	< 1
Other	1
<b>No denomination</b>	<b>44</b>
Just Jewish	26
Secular/culturally Jewish	18

The following tables display demographic and Jewish background characteristics of the no-denomination group, as compared to those with a denominational identity.

Table 2 highlights the key groups from the main report. There are no substantive differences in residence, lifestage, and the financial profile of Jews who have a denominational identity versus those who do not.

Table 2: Region, lifestage, and financial situation by denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Any denomination	No denomination
<b>Region</b>			
City Far North	11	13	9
City North	16	17	21
City Other	9	10	11
Near North Suburbs	15	13	14
North Suburbs Cook	10	9	8
North Suburbs Lake	10	12	7
Near NW Suburbs	12	10	11
Far NW Suburbs	8	7	8
West Suburbs	7	6	8
South Suburbs	3	2	2
Total	100	100	100
<b>Lifestage</b>			
Parent Pre-K	9	9	7
Parent K-12	17	17	15
Couple 22-39	5	5	10
Couple 40-69	17	15	16
Couple 70+	13	13	12
Single 22-39	5	7	9
Single 40-69	9	7	10
Single 70+	6	6	5
Multigenerational	19	21	17
Total	100	100	100
<b>Financial situation</b>			
Struggling	22	24	20
Enough	32	30	34
Extra	23	23	24
Well off	22	23	22
Total	100	100	100

In terms of markers of personal identity, those with and without denominational identification differ in many dimensions. Those without denominational identity have greater shares of adults who are intermarried (34% versus 17%), younger, and extremely liberal politically (Table 3). Greater shares of Jews without denominational identity, compared to those with denominational identity, are LGBTQ, come from Russian-speaking homes, or have Israeli citizenship.

*My parents decided to have no religion, so I was raised ‘culturally’ Jewish but with ZERO religion. It was important to me to marry someone who was Jewish, but that didn’t happen, and my husband is Christian. We tried to raise our children ‘both ways,’ but that is really, really hard.*



Table 3: Demographic characteristics by denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Any denomination	No denomination
<b>Marital status</b>			
Inmarried	49	54	36
Intermarried	24	17	34
Not married	27	29	30
Total	100	100	100
Intermarriage rate	33	24	49
<b>Age</b>			
22-29	7	8	12
30-39	11	12	14
40-49	13	11	14
50-59	23	24	21
60-69	25	23	20
70-79	15	16	13
80 +	6	6	5
Total	100	100	100
Average age	56	56	52
<b>Demographic groups</b>			
Russian-speaker	11	4	16
LGBTQ	5	4	9
Israeli citizen	4	3	6
Non-white/multiracial, Hispanic	6	6	5
Person of color	2	2	1
<b>Political views</b>			
Extremely liberal	16	14	24
Liberal	37	38	35
Slightly liberal	12	13	10
Moderate	18	16	16
Slightly conservative	6	6	5
Conservative	10	10	9
Extremely conservative	2	3	1

Table 4 displays information about Jewish background. Compared to Jewish adults with a denominational identity, nearly three times as many Jewish adults without denominational identity are children of intermarriage (29% versus 10%). More than half of adults without denominational identity were raised without a denomination during their childhood, compared to just 10% of those who have a denominational identity. Additionally, fewer adults without a denomination identity attended part- or full-time Jewish schools as children.

Table 4: Jewish background by denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Any denomination	No denomination
<b>Number of Jewish parents</b>			
None	3	4	2
One Jewish parent	16	10	29
Two Jewish parents	81	86	70
Total	100	100	100
<b>Childhood denomination</b>			
Orthodox	9	12	3
Conservative*	31	39	18
Reform	29	35	21
Other denomination	3	4	2
No denomination	28	10	56
Total	100	100	100
<b>Childhood Jewish education</b>			
None	49	40	64
Full-time only	10	13	7
Part-time only	39	45	28
Both	2	3	1
Total	100	100	100

\*Includes "Traditional."

## How do Jews without denomination participate in Jewish life?

Table 5 compares participation in the set of behaviors that were used to construct the Index of Jewish Engagement (see main report, Chapter 3). Across the board, participation in these behaviors is higher among those with a denominational identity than among those without. However, just 15% of the Jews without a denominational identity participate in none of these behaviors, and significant proportions engage in many of the highlighted behaviors, especially holidays: two thirds of Jews without a denominational identity light Hanukkah candles in a typical year, and nearly half attended a seder in 2020.

*Although we do not view ourselves as religious, we gather together and celebrate most Jewish holidays with family and friends.*

*I feel connected to cultural, ethnic, and social aspects of being a Jew. I am proud of what the Jewish people have done and happy to consider myself Jewish.*

Table 5: Jewish behaviors by denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Any denomination	No denomination
<b>Home holidays</b>			
Attended seder, 2020	60	72	45
Lights Hanukkah candles, typical year	82	92	67
<b>Ritual behaviors</b>			
Shabbat candles/dinner, ever	50	64	32
Almost always or always	16	25	5
Services in past half year	61	79	38
High Holiday services 2020 (any setting)	46	65	22
Keeps kosher at any level	32	41	19
<b>Organization behaviors (past year)</b>			
Congregation member	35	51	12
Organization member	20	28	11
Informal group member	12	16	7
Attend Jewish-sponsored program, ever	43	59	30
10 or more times	7	12	2
Volunteer for Jewish organization	16	23	6
Donated to Jewish organization	62	75	41
<b>Individual behaviors, frequently (past year)</b>			
Talk about Jewish topic	31	41	22
Seek out news about Israel	25	29	20
Read Jewish publications	21	29	12
Engage with Jewish-focused culture	20	26	11
Eat Jewish foods	26	34	16

About half of Jews with a denominational identity belong to a congregation, compared to 12% of Jews without a denominational identity. Table 6 examines the types of congregational membership held by Jews with and without denominational identification who are members of congregations. While larger shares of synagogue members with a denominational identity than without belong to Orthodox and Reform congregations, there is no difference in membership at Conservative congregations or those with “other or no denomination.” (There are also no differences in membership at worship communities that have other types of structures, such as a Hillel.) Furthermore, more synagogue members without than with a denominational identity belong to Chabad or an independent minyan. This pattern suggests an association among synagogue members between the affiliation of the congregation and a personal identification with a denomination.

Table 6: Type of congregational membership by denominational identification, among members

	Any denomination	No denomination
Congregation member	51	12
Of members...		
Orthodox	22	10
Conservative	16	13
Reform	36	18
Other/no denomination (includes Reconstructionist)	8	11
Chabad	8	19
Independent minyan	7	15
Other types	9	13

## Denomination and Jewish engagement

In general, a smaller share of Jews with no denominational identity participates in many aspects of Jewish life compared to Jews with a denominational identity, but there are still significant numbers of non-denominational Jews who are highly engaged in Jewish life (Table 5, above). To understand the variations in Jewish engagement among those without denominational identity, the remainder of this report examines the intersection of the Index of Jewish Engagement with denomination.

The following table, reproduced from the main report, displays the share of Jewish engagement groups within each denomination. Table 7 shows that, while 46% of no-denominational Jews fall within the Personal engagement group—the one with the lowest rates of involvement with religious and communal Jewish life—the other half no-denominational Jews include 10% in the Communal group and 8% in the Immersed group. By contrast, in Table 8, we see that 18% of the Communal group and 15% of the Immersed group do not have a denominational identity. Taken together, these tables demonstrate that it is a false assumption that Jews without a denominational identity are definitionally uninvolved with Jewish life.

Table 7: Jewish engagement distribution within each denomination (row percent; main report Table 3.2)

	Personal (%)	Participant (%)	Holiday (%)	Communal (%)	Immersed (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	27	13	19	21	19	100
Orthodox	0	< 1	7	12	81	100
Conservative	13	8	19	26	34	100
Reform	14	14	22	36	14	100
Other denomination	16	5	17	37	25	100
No denomination	46	20	16	10	8	100

**Table 8: Denominational distribution within each Jewish engagement category (column percent; main report Table 3.10)**

	All Jewish adults (%)	Personal (%)	Participant (%)	Holiday (%)	Communal (%)	Immersed (%)
Orthodox	7	0	< 1	2	4	29
Conservative	16	8	9	18	20	29
Reform	29	17	31	38	48	22
Other denomination	4	4	2	6	10	6
No denomination	44	71	57	35	18	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

To simplify our analysis of engagement and no denomination, we classify the Personal, Participant, and Holiday categories as being “unengaged” and the Communal and Immersed categories as “engaged.” The latter two groups have high levels of involvement in Jewish organizational life, such as synagogue and Jewish organization membership, religious service and Jewish program attendance, volunteering for Jewish causes, and Jewish philanthropy.

Within each category, we distinguish between those who identify with a denomination and those who do not. Table 9 shows the proportion of the entire Metropolitan Chicago Jewish community that falls within each group. **Notably, those we refer to as Engaged and without a denomination (“Engaged/ND”) comprise a similar proportion of Jewish adults as Orthodox Jews [see Table 1, above].**

**Table 9. Engagement and denomination categories<sup>3</sup>**

Grouping	Engagement Groups	Chicago Jewish adults (%)
Engaged/ND	Communal, Immersed	6
Engaged/D	Communal, Immersed	33
Unengaged/ND	Personal, Participant, Holiday	33
Unengaged/D	Personal, Participant, Holiday	26

## Who are the engaged without denomination?

The Engaged/ND group is more concentrated in the three city regions than is the Metropolitan Chicago Jewish community as a whole (Table 10). This group is also younger, with greater shares being couples or singles ages 22-39. The Engaged/ND group has a similar financial profile as the rest of the community.

<sup>3</sup> Overall, 44% of Jewish adults do not have a denomination. However, not all respondents to the survey provided enough information to be classified by the Index of Jewish Engagement. This table excludes such cases, which is why the two no-denomination groups do not add up to 44%, but instead to 39%.

Table 10: Region, lifestage, and financial situation by engagement and denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
<b>Region</b>					
City Far North	11	15	18	8	7
City North	16	21	17	21	16
City Other	9	13	9	11	13
Near North Suburbs	15	13	14	15	12
North Suburbs Cook	10	7	10	9	8
North Suburbs Lake	10	6	13	7	10
Near NW Suburbs	12	10	9	11	12
Far NW Suburbs	8	7	4	8	10
West Suburbs	7	5	4	9	9
South Suburbs	3	4	2	2	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Lifestage</b>					
Parent Pre-K	9	9	9	6	8
Parent K-12	17	17	19	14	12
Couple 22-39	5	16	6	9	4
Couple 40-69	17	11	14	18	18
Couple 70+	13	8	13	14	13
Single 22-39	5	12	6	8	9
Single 40-69	9	11	5	10	11
Single 70+	6	4	5	5	7
Multigenerational	19	14	22	17	19
Total	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Financial situation</b>					
Struggling	22	25	22	19	26
Enough	32	32	29	34	31
Extra	23	23	24	24	23
Well off	22	20	24	23	20
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Engaged/ND Jews are intermarried at lower rates than Jews in either the Unengaged/ND or Unengaged/D categories, but at a higher rate than the Engaged/D category (Table 11). They are, on average, younger than the Metropolitan Chicago Jewish community as a whole, with an average age of 49, compared to the overall community's average age of 56. Greater shares of the Engaged/ND category are LGBTQ, Russian-speaking, and Israeli citizens than are found in the Engaged/D, Unengaged/ND, and Unengaged/D categories.

Table 11: Demographic characteristics by engagement and denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
<b>Marital status</b>					
Inmarried	49	50	64	32	39
Intermarried	24	20	12	37	24
Not married	27	30	23	30	37
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Intermarriage rate	33	28	16	54	39
<b>Age</b>					
22-29	7	10	9	12	5
30-39	11	27	11	12	13
40-49	13	15	11	14	10
50-59	23	15	25	22	23
60-69	25	18	22	21	27
70-79	15	11	16	14	15
80 +	6	3	5	6	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Average age	56	49	55	53	57
<b>Demographic groups</b>					
Russian-speaker	11	22	5	15	3
LGBTQ	5	12	5	8	4
Israeli citizen	4	11	3	5	2
Non-white/multiracial, Hispanic	6	7	5	5	7
Person of color	2	1	2	1	2
<b>Political views</b>					
Extremely liberal	16	19	13	25	15
Liberal	37	33	39	36	38
Slightly liberal	12	15	12	9	13
Moderate	18	16	15	16	18
Slightly conservative	6	4	6	5	5
Conservative	10	13	12	8	9
Extremely conservative	2	1	3	1	2

Fewer of the Engaged/ND adults were raised without a denominational identity than Unengaged/ND adults; however, far more of both groups were raised without a denominational identity than were those in the two other categories (Table 12). In terms of being raised by Jewish parents, Engaged/ND Jews look more like Unengaged/D Jews than the Engaged/D or Unengaged/ND Jews. About half of the Engaged/ND Jews had any childhood Jewish education, a similar proportion to the Unengaged/D group. Despite a lower level of any Jewish schooling, however, similar shares of the Engaged/ND and Engaged/D groups attended day school as children.

Table 12: Jewish background by engagement and denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
<b>Number of Jewish parents</b>					
None	3	4	4	1	4
One Jewish parent	16	18	6	31	16
Two Jewish parents	81	78	90	68	80
Total	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Childhood denomination</b>					
Orthodox	9	9	15	2	7
Conservative*	31	27	43	16	34
Reform	29	14	29	23	45
Other denomination	3	3	3	2	5
No denomination	28	47	10	57	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Childhood Jewish education</b>					
None	49	48	36	67	45
Full-time only	10	14	17	6	5
Part-time only	39	34	43	27	49
Both	2	5	4	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

\*Includes "Traditional."

## How do the engaged without denomination participate in Jewish life?

The next table compares participation in the set of behaviors that were used to construct the Index of Jewish Engagement between the four engagement and denomination groupings.

On nearly all measures, similar shares of Engaged/ND and Engaged/D adults participate in Jewish behaviors. There are, however, two exceptions. When it comes to those most engaged in Jewish life, the key distinction centers on synagogue membership and regular Shabbat observance. While 17% of the Engaged/ND group observe Shabbat always or almost always, 38% of the Engaged/D group regularly observe Shabbat. Additionally, half of the Engaged/ND group belong to a Jewish congregation, compared to three quarters of the Engaged/D group.

There is a different story with the two Unengaged categories. In comparison to the Unengaged/ND group, a greater share of the Unengaged/D group participates in all holiday and ritual behaviors, belong to synagogues, and donate to Jewish organizations. For the remainder of the organization behaviors and all of the individual behaviors, however, the proportion of the two categories are



similar. So, while among the Engaged, denominational identification seems to relate predominately to synagogue membership, among the unengaged it is largely connected to overall holiday and ritual observance.

*Watching my children experience Judaism...I love that they are loving being Jewish as much as I do...Being a part of a Jewish family and seeing those people year after year at holiday celebrations. It is a true sense of l'dor v'dor at Passover and High Holidays, as we celebrate with the same family for four generations.*

**Table 13: Jewish behaviors by engagement and denominational identification**

	All Jewish adults	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
<b>Home holidays</b>					
Attended seder, 2020	60	86	89	37	48
Lights Hanukkah candles, typical year	82	98	98	60	83
<b>Ritual behaviors</b>					
Shabbat candles/dinner, ever	50	79	83	22	36
Almost always or always	16	17	38	2	5
Services in past half year	61	94	98	25	51
High Holiday services 2020 (any setting)	46	82	88	9	30
Keeps kosher at any level	32	53	54	12	22
<b>Organization behaviors (past year)</b>					
Congregation member	35	50	75	4	17
Organization member	20	34	41	6	8
Informal group member	12	23	23	4	6
Attend Jewish-sponsored program, ever	43	88	89	19	18
10 or more times	7	13	19	< 1	1
Volunteer for Jewish organization	16	26	37	2	4
Donated to Jewish organization	62	79	89	32	54
<b>Individual behaviors, frequently (past year)</b>					
Talk about Jewish topic	31	48	59	16	15
Seek out news about Israel	25	42	41	15	12
Read Jewish publications	21	38	44	6	8
Engage with Jewish-focused culture	20	34	38	6	9
Eat Jewish foods	26	36	46	12	17

As with Table 6 above, Table 14 displays the type of congregation membership limited to members within each category. The largest shares of members in the Engaged/ND category belong to an independent minyan (19%), Chabad (16%), or Reform congregation (16%). In fact, the Engaged/ND includes the largest share who are members of an independent minyan. There are similar levels of membership in Conservative synagogues among synagogue members in all four groups.

Table 14: Type of congregational membership by engagement and denominational identification, among members

	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
Congregation member	50	75	4	17
Of members...				
Orthodox	10	24	12	6
Conservative	11	17	19	14
Reform	16	33	23	56
Other/no denomination (includes Reconstructionist)	14	8	4	6
Chabad	16	9	27	4
Independent minyan	19	8	4	4
Other types	15	10	9	4

## How do the engaged without denomination feel about Jewish life?

This section compares the four engagement and denomination categories across a variety of attitudes about being Jewish, toward the Jewish community, and concerning Israel, with a particular focus on the Engaged/ND group.

There are similarities and differences among these groups in their perceptions about which aspects of Jewish life are essential to being Jewish (Table 15). For example, among all groups, almost two thirds consider “working for justice and equality” to be an essential part of being Jewish. In contrast, among the Engaged/ND and the Engaged/D groups, about half consider “taking care of Jews in need” to be essential, compared to smaller shares of the other groups.

About half of the Engaged/D group considers “prayer or spiritual connection” to be essential, compared to about one quarter of the Engaged/ND and the Unengaged/D groups. Among the Unengaged/ND group, only 12% consider “prayer or spiritual connection” to be essential.

*Despite not engaging much in Jewish practices (attending services, observing holidays, etc.), being Jewish does feel very important to me from a political and philosophical standpoint. Judaism to me means a commitment to equity and justice, and a commitment to reflecting, questioning, and challenging. I ‘practice’ Judaism by trying to embody these principles.*

Table 15: Essential to being Jewish, by engagement and denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
Working for justice and equality					
Not important	8	6	6	10	10
Important	33	33	32	35	31
Essential	59	61	62	55	59
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Working for racial justice					
Not important	13	11	10	16	14
Important	35	39	36	33	35
Essential	51	50	55	51	51
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Ethical and moral life					
Not important	4	1	<1	7	6
Important	14	18	7	19	16
Essential	82	81	93	74	78
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Praying or spiritual connection					
Not important	34	25	11	59	34
Important	38	49	42	29	44
Essential	29	27	47	12	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Remembering the Holocaust					
Not important	4	2	2	5	5
Important	19	18	19	20	19
Essential	77	79	79	75	76
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Taking care of Jews in need					
Not important	10	5	2	20	10
Important	44	41	35	47	48
Essential	45	54	62	32	42
Total	100	100	100	100	100

When it comes to feelings of connection to the Jewish community, the Engaged/ND group feels similarly to their Engaged/D counterparts regarding their emotional attachments to Israel, feeling part of the worldwide Jewish community, and feeling part of an online Jewish community (Table 16). It is primarily over feeling part of the Metro Chicago Jewish community where the two differ: While 33% of the Engaged/D category feels very much part of the Metro Chicago Jewish community, 17% of the Engaged/ND group does so. Even so, a greater share of the Engaged/ND group feels very much connected to the Metro Chicago Jewish community than do either of the two unengaged groups.

*There's a sense of strong Jewish pride, I enjoy being a part of the global community.*

Table 16: Feelings of connection, by engagement and denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
Emotional attachment to Israel					
Not at all	14	13	4	27	11
Not too	20	14	12	26	27
Somewhat	35	26	34	30	42
Very much	31	47	50	17	20
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Feel part of worldwide Jewish community					
Not at all	12	4	2	25	12
A little	28	20	16	39	28
Somewhat	32	35	37	23	40
Very much	28	41	46	14	20
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Feel part of Metro Chicago Jewish community					
Not at all	28	13	6	52	26
A little	29	30	24	31	36
Somewhat	26	41	37	13	29
Very much	16	17	33	3	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Feel part of online Jewish community					
Not at all	52	27	25	77	61
A little	20	32	24	15	18
Somewhat	18	27	29	6	17
Very much	10	14	22	2	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Related to a feeling of connection to the Metropolitan Chicago Jewish community is the level of satisfaction about that connection. Table 17 displays levels of satisfaction with connection to the local community and conditions that influence that connection. Similar shares of both engaged groups feel at least a little satisfaction to the local Jewish community, although the share of Engaged/D Jews who are very much satisfied is nearly twice that of Engaged/ND Jews.

More so than other groups, Jews in the Engaged/ND category have felt limited by the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>4</sup> and by the perception that their political views are unwelcome. (It is noteworthy that, as seen in Table 11 above, the political views of the Engaged/ND group are not meaningfully distinct from those of the other groups.) For most other potentially limiting conditions, larger shares of Engaged/ND express concerns about these factors than do adults in the Engaged/D category.

<sup>4</sup> The survey was conducted in the fall and early winter of 2020.

Table 17: Satisfaction with connection to Jewish community and conditions that influence level of connection, by engagement and denominational identification

	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
<b>Level of satisfaction to connection</b>				
Not at all	7	7	21	17
A little	32	25	23	31
Somewhat	48	44	28	36
Very much	13	24	29	15
Total	100	100	100	100
<b>Conditions to connection</b>				
Don't know many people	23	14	26	21
Haven't found interesting Jewish activities	21	15	22	25
COVID-19 pandemic	35	24	11	18
Not confident in my Jewish knowledge	12	6	19	12
Feel unwelcome	7	6	6	8
Political views are unwelcome	20	8	6	4
Something else	15	10	8	9

A larger proportion of Jewish adults in the Engaged/ND category than in the two unengaged categories feel strongly that being Jewish is part of their daily lives; however, an even greater share of the Engaged/D group shares this perception (Table 18). There is a similar pattern about whether being Jewish helps people cope during a time of crisis.

*I have found a sense of belonging in the continuum of history that I can call on to give me perspective when facing challenges.*

Table 18: Feelings about being Jewish, by engagement and denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
<b>Feel being Jewish is part of daily life</b>					
Not at all	19	4	1	43	17
A little	24	21	14	28	30
Somewhat	26	34	24	21	31
Very much	30	41	60	8	21
Total	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Being Jewish helps cope</b>					
Not at all	30	20	9	54	31
A little	24	27	18	25	28
Somewhat	27	35	35	17	29
Very much	20	19	39	4	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Adults in the Engaged/ND category are similar to those in the Engaged/D category in terms of believing that caring about Israel is an essential part of being Jewish, being proud of Israel's accomplishments, and calling themselves Zionists (Tables 19a and 19b). The Engaged/ND category falls between the Engaged/D and Unengaged/D groups when it comes to strongly believing that

American Jews have the right to criticize Israel. The Engaged/ND category looks more like the Unengaged/D group on agreement over the following statements: It is important for Israel to be a Jewish state; it is important for Israel to be a democratic state; and Israel lives up to human rights values.

**Table 19a: Statements about Israel, by engagement and denominational identification**

	All Jewish adults	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
<b>Caring about Israel is essential part of being Jewish</b>					
Strongly agree	41	46	53	25	35
Somewhat agree	34	27	33	37	36
Somewhat disagree	9	11	7	13	10
Strongly disagree	8	14	5	13	7
No opinion / not sure	8	2	2	12	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Proud of Israel's accomplishments</b>					
Strongly agree	56	60	69	37	51
Somewhat agree	26	22	21	32	31
Somewhat disagree	5	6	4	11	3
Strongly disagree	4	8	3	6	4
No opinion / not sure	9	4	3	14	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100
<b>American Jews have right to criticize Israel</b>					
Strongly agree	48	51	44	57	47
Somewhat agree	26	24	32	20	24
Somewhat disagree	9	11	11	6	8
Strongly disagree	8	8	7	7	8
No opinion / not sure	10	6	5	10	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Important for Israel to be Jewish state</b>					
Strongly agree	58	56	73	39	56
Somewhat agree	22	22	17	28	23
Somewhat disagree	7	8	4	11	7
Strongly disagree	5	11	3	8	4
No opinion / not sure	8	3	3	14	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 19b: Statements about Israel, by engagement and denominational identification

	All Jewish adults	Engaged/ND	Engaged/D	Unengaged/ND	Unengaged/D
Important for Israel to be democratic state					
Strongly agree	75	76	83	68	74
Somewhat agree	15	15	12	21	14
Somewhat disagree	1	2	1	1	1
Strongly disagree	1	1	1	1	1
No opinion / not sure	8	5	3	10	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Israel lives up to human rights values					
Strongly agree	26	25	31	17	23
Somewhat agree	29	28	35	21	33
Somewhat disagree	18	20	17	25	15
Strongly disagree	16	21	13	23	13
No opinion / not sure	11	6	5	14	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Describe myself as a Zionist					
Strongly agree	20	27	33	11	11
Somewhat agree	20	23	28	13	20
Somewhat disagree	13	13	12	12	11
Strongly disagree	24	23	14	34	28
No opinion / not sure	23	15	12	30	29
Total	100	100	100	100	100

## What leads to a particular engagement and denominational identification grouping?

In this section, we present findings from a series of logistical regression models in order to explore the relationships between key characteristics and engagement/denomination classification. By using statistical models, we are able to assess the relative influence of each characteristic independent of each other. For example, as shown in Table 12 above, there are differences between groups by the number of Jewish parents and extent of childhood Jewish schooling; however, there is a strong correlation directly between those two characteristics. Including these and other characteristics in a

model enables us to determine the unique contribution of each characteristic to the increased and decreased likelihoods of belonging to a particular engagement/denomination category.<sup>5</sup>

Among the engaged, what is associated with identifying with a denomination over not having one? Females, older adults, and those belonging to an Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform congregation are more likely to be in the Engaged/D group than the Engaged/ND group. However, JNRs, those raised without a denomination, and members of an independent minyan are less likely to be in the Engaged/D group than the Engaged/ND group.

Among those without a denomination, what is associated with being engaged over not being engaged? Those with childhood attendance at a day school or who currently or formerly belonged to a Jewish congregation are more likely to be Engaged/ND as opposed to Unengaged/ND. Conversely, younger adults, being a JNR, being intermarried, being raised Reform, and having no Jewish parents are associated with decreased likelihood of being Engaged/ND over Unengaged/ND.

Among the unengaged, what is associated with having a denominational identity? Parents and those who currently or formerly belonged to a Jewish congregation are more likely to be Unengaged/D than Unengaged/ND. On the other hand, being a JNR, being married, being raised without a denomination, and belonging to Chabad are associated with a decreased likelihood of being Unengaged/D rather than Unengaged/ND.

Finally, because there are similarities across many behaviors and attitudes, what is associated with being Engaged/ND instead of Unengaged/D? Those who are married, were raised without a denomination, who currently belong to any congregation (particularly an independent minyan) are more likely to be Engaged/ND than Unengaged/D. Being younger, being a parent, and belonging to a Reform congregation are associated with decreased likelihood of being Engaged/ND compared to Unengaged/D.

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<sup>5</sup> The report Appendix includes the full models, including coefficients.



Table 20: Characteristics associated with belonging to an engagement/denomination category

	Increased likelihood	Decreased likelihood
Being Engaged/D over Engaged/ND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being female</li> <li>• Being older</li> <li>• Belonging to an Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform congregation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being JNR</li> <li>• Being raised without a denomination</li> <li>• Belonging to an independent minyan</li> </ul>
Being Engaged/ND over Unengaged/ND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Going to day school as a child</li> <li>• Currently or formerly belonging to a congregation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being younger</li> <li>• Being JNR</li> <li>• Being intermarried</li> <li>• Being raised Reform</li> <li>• Having no Jewish parents</li> </ul>
Being Unengaged/D over Unengaged/ND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a parent</li> <li>• Currently or formerly belonging to a congregation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being JNR</li> <li>• Being married</li> <li>• Being raised without a denomination</li> <li>• Belonging to Chabad</li> </ul>
Being Engaged/ND over Unengaged/D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being married</li> <li>• Being raised without a denomination</li> <li>• Currently belonging to a congregation</li> <li>• Belonging to an independent minyan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being younger</li> <li>• Being a parent</li> <li>• Belonging to a Reform congregation</li> </ul>

# Appendix: Logistic regression models for Table 20

	Engaged/D over Engaged/ND		Engaged/ND over Unengaged/ND		Unengaged/D over Unengaged/ND		Engaged/ND over Unengaged/D	
<b>Demographics</b>								
Female	0.454307	*	0.050794		-0.1186		-0.43339	
Age (by year)	0.013344	*	-0.02126	**	0.00855		-0.05056	***
<b>Jewish typology (baseline: JBR)</b>								
JNR	-2.9158	***	-1.10415	**	-0.89053	**	-0.19099	
JMR	-1.04005		-0.9877		-0.35627		-0.73589	
<b>Household Structure</b>								
Married	0.132124		0.307999		-0.66529	**	0.738078	*
Intermarried	-0.11356		-0.75304	*	-0.1371		-0.07721	
Parent	-0.04024		0.046845		0.678734	*	-0.71038	*
<b>Childhood denomination (baseline: Orthodox)</b>								
Conservative	0.032453		-1.09809		-0.64954		-0.24079	
Reform	0.293729		-1.67923	*	-0.26652		-1.18462	
Other denomination	-0.18049		-1.22608		0.082032		-1.16238	
No denomination	-1.91148	***	-0.82002		-2.47697	***	2.029162	***
<b>Childhood Jewish schooling</b>								
Day school	-0.167		1.210392	***	0.331833		0.607629	
Part-time school	-0.29204		0.285376		0.195384		-0.02357	
<b>Number of Jewish parents (baseline: two)</b>								
No Jewish parents	0.246684		3.264462	**	1.894559		1.147699	
One Jewish parent	-0.06993		0.366941		0.61348		-0.4377	
<b>History of congregational membership (baseline: never member)</b>								
Current	0.635268		4.05638	***	2.143723	***	1.724755	***
Former	0.329759		1.073194	**	1.424055	***	-0.04796	
<b>Type of congregational membership</b>								
Orthodox	1.630933	***	-1.34363		-0.70807		-0.40108	
Conservative	0.712302	*	-0.84064		-0.29193		-0.54508	
Reform	1.687003	***	-0.49085		0.863624		-1.51715	**
Other or no denom.	-0.15989		0.72322		0.449356		0.917201	
Chabad	0.044682		-1.61244		-2.20255	*	0.343796	
Independent minyan	-0.91108	**	1.053564		-1.61386		2.248636	**
Another organization	0.407577		0.425511		0.035393		1.453378	
Constant	0.489103		-0.44099		-0.01309		0.845945	
* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001								

