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Outreach and Exclusion: Jewish Denominational Marketing in the Early 20th Century

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Abstract: How do religious denominations select potential recruits? Previous literature indicates that market niches direct this decision, yet few studies examine how religious groups determine their niche. Analyzing annual reports and periodicals of Reform and Conservative Jewish organizations from 1910 to 1955, I find that the two denominations responded differently to the mass influx of Jewish immigrants at the turn of the 20th century. Compared to the Conservative organization, which openly welcomed new immigrants, the Reform organization actively chose not to recruit them. Reform statements make it clear that this decision was a result of how working-class, Eastern European immigrants threatened their American-centered organizational identity. This finding suggests that religious institutions carefully consider their organizational identity based on nativity, ethnicity, and social class when determining whom to include in their market niche.

Keywords: religious marketing, organizational identity, market niches, immigration, ethnicity, Judaism

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Over two million Jews from Eastern Europe arrived on American shores at the turn of the 20th century (Linfield 1925:592). Dubbed the “New Exodus from Russia” (Statistics of Jews 1915:341), 1881 to 1924 saw an unprecedented influx of Jewish immigrants. Why was it, then, that in 1915, the president of the organization representing American Reform Judaism lamented, “It seems that at present there are not a great many more congregations available as additional members of the Union” (Freiberg 1915:7489)?¹ Fully aware of the hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants arriving in the U.S. each year, why would a Reform leader declare that there were no more potential members during the largest wave of Jewish immigration that American history had ever -- or would ever -- encounter?

The two major Jewish institutions at this time were the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) and the United Synagogue of America (United Synagogue), Reform and Conservative respectively, of which only the Conservative organization actively recruited new immigrants. This paper demonstrates that Reform Jews felt that there were no more potential members because, despite being Jewish, new immigrants presented an unacceptable challenge to the organizational identity that Reform Jews were struggling to build as assimilated, American, middle-class Jews. Existing religious marketing theories would not have predicted that Reform Jews would exclude an entire potential market segment for fear that those new adherents would jeopardize their established organizational identity. This challenges existing organizational theories which generally indicate that established organizations can afford to take more risks than newer organizations (Fligstein and Dauter 2007; Henderson 1999; Ranger-Moore 1997; Sørensen and Stuart 2000). Further, while research has suggested that religious institutions tailor recruitment strategies to reach their desired membership niche (Stark and Finke 2000), scholars have not adequately demonstrated how religious groups determine their niche, nor how organizational age factors into this decision. Finally, previous studies have overlooked the ways that nativity, ethnicity, social class intersect with organizational identity to guide decisions about whom to recruit and whom to exclude.

Religious Marketing and Organizational Identity

Religious marketing refers to “any action on the part of a religious institution that is meant to minister to, keep, or obtain more members” (Wilde 2001:245). Marketing efforts are typically tailored to a specific market niche (Baum and Singh 1996; Loveland 2003; Podolny, Stuart, and Hannan 1996; Scheitle 2007; Reimer 2011), defined as “market segments of potential adherents sharing particular religious preferences (needs, tastes, and expectations)” (Stark and Finke 2000:195). Perhaps most prominent in the religious marketing literature are supply-side debates on whether competition between religious groups leads to increased participation among laypersons (for a review, see Chaves and Gorski 2001). The primary assumption is that religious organizations prioritize reaching new members in order to thrive. Yet this scholarship has ignored the important ways that marketing efforts might be subverted by other organizational demands. New institutionalism proves fruitful here, theorizing on how external field pressures and concerns about legitimacy decisively influence organizational decision-making (Chaves 1996; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Wilde 2004, 2007). However, even this literature has overlooked the prominent role that organizational identity plays in marketing decisions.

An organization’s identity is “the socially constructed sense of ‘we’ that bonds members to the organization and to each other” (Dougherty and Huyser 2008:25). Organizational identity

is closely tied to organizational age, as “incumbent” firms have already established a clear identity in the market compared to newer, smaller “challenger” firms (Fligstein 1996). Prior theories predict contradictory effects of organizational age on marketing decisions. On the one hand, the “liability of newness” might discourage risk-taking behavior among newer organizations (Fligstein and Dauter 2007; Hannan and Freeman 1984; Singh and Lumsden 1990; Stinchcombe 1965). On the other, a newer organization whose identity is not yet crystallized may have more incentive to take risks in recruitment (Ammerman 1997; Fligstein 1996) and more flexibility to cross niche lines (Bruggeman et al. 2012). This paper presents evidence for the latter position by introducing the intermediary role of organizational identity in the relationship between organizational age and marketing decisions. I argue that when identity is at stake for established organizations, the general principle that “administrators always favor growth” (Stark and Finke 2000:165) does not apply.

Preserving a stable identity may require, more often than not, strategic exclusion of certain groups based on social class and ethnicity. In his classic *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* ([1929] 1975), Niebuhr bemoaned the socioethnic cleavages that divide Christian denominations, attributing the “evils of denominationalism” to religious organizations’ goals of survival and growth. However, Niebuhr stopped short of explaining exactly how social class and ethnic divisions stymie survival and growth. I assert that these divisions stem from top-down concerns about threatened identity in the religious field. Just as the more elite Irish Catholics disassociated themselves from recently emigrated Italian Catholics at the turn of the century (Orsi [1985] 2002), established Jews similarly differentiated themselves from Eastern European immigrants. The key difference between these two cases is that Jewish groups distanced themselves on a denominational level.²

American Judaism in the Early Twentieth Century

Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform denominations represent the tripartite division of mainstream American Judaism (Lazerwitz and Harrison 1979), “that range from the most traditional to the least traditional” (Sands, Marcus, and Danzig 2006:438). Because these divisions were just beginning to crystallize in the U.S. in the early 20th century, umbrella organizations’ early decisions about desired laity would shape the character of the denominations for decades to follow.

The two Jewish umbrella organizations analyzed here were the largest American Jewish denominations in the period studied, and still are today. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform organization, was founded in 1873 by 28 congregations (Bettman 1913:7048). The United Synagogue of America, the Conservative organization, was founded in 1913 by 22 congregations (Abstract of the minutes 1913:7).³ These organizations served as denominational decision-makers: at the 1913 annual meeting of the UAHC, Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf stated, “It is only through his congregation, wherever such exists, that individually the Jew makes public acknowledgment of his Jewishness, and it is a Union of such congregations alone that has the right to speak publicly in [sic] behalf of the Jew” (1913:7107-8, emphasis his). Synagogues affiliated with umbrella organizations in order to formally join the ranks of a particular denomination. To participate in institutional decision-making, members paid annual dues and sent their congregational rabbis as delegates to annual conferences. In turn, the organization provided assistance, prayer books, and a seminary graduate to serve as

congregational rabbi when needed. These institutions persist today: the UAHC changed its name to the Union for Reform Judaism in 2003 (Union for Reform Judaism 2011) and the United Synagogue of America became the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism in 1992 (United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism 2013).

Between 1881 and 1924, over two million Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe constituted potential affiliates for these organizations (Linfield 1925:592). In 1916, for instance, almost two-thirds of all Jewish immigrants who arrived at America's leading ports came from Russia, with the remaining one-third largely originating from Austria-Hungary and Romania (Statistics of Jews 1918:417). They migrated in response to limited economic and employment opportunities in their countries of origin as well as Jewish persecution (Diner 2004; Sorin 1992), with little Jewish sojourning (Linfield 1927:415). Some emigrated from urban areas in Eastern Europe (Babel 1955) while others left a traditional shtetl lifestyle (Zborowski and Herzog 1952).

Once in the U.S., recent immigrants living in crowded tenements “with poor ventilation and primitive plumbing” (Diner 2004:106) on the Lower East Side stood in stark contrast to the upper-middle class Reform Jews of largely German and Central European origin, who had arrived as early as the 1820s (Sorin 1992). Reform synagogues were comprised entirely of elite Jews of German origin (Meyer 1988; Sarna 2004) who considered Eastern European immigrants to be disorderly, ill-mannered (Gartner 1983), and their orthodoxy antiquated (Meyer 1986; Rischin 1986). Reform Jews viewed Americanization as desirable and inevitable (Meyer 1988), and consequently required middle class status as a prerequisite for joining the denomination (Feingold 1992). Many Reform Jewish philanthropic efforts actively facilitated the Americanization of immigrants (Meyer 1988; Sarna 2004; Soyer 2000) and, perhaps, protected “the painfully acquired good name of the American Jew” (Gartner 1983:17).

Although much of this scholarship implies a tacit trepidation of Reform Jews regarding Eastern European immigrants, I will instead illustrate below that the division was deeply fraught. I show that Reform leaders struggled with what to do about Jewish immigrants every single year at their annual meetings and would not have been so adamant had the decision been easy. Moreover, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the institutional intentionality behind exclusion of Eastern European immigrants. Certainly theology and ethnicity are intertwined in important ways (Herberg 1955), yet previous research assumes that Jewish denominational affiliations by ethnicity were preexisting and largely the product of individual attitudes (Glazer 1972; Raphael 1984; Sorin 1992). This literature neglects the active role Jewish denominational institutions played in shaping this relationship early on. Founded in the United States, these organizations had to adapt their identities to the American context, which would eventually -- but not instantaneously -- crystallize into ethnically-based denominations. Previous research has indicated that Reform Jewish individuals avoided immigrants to preserve their elite status among non-Jews, but has not adequately demonstrated how Reform Judaism's denominational identity was at stake. Even less attention has been paid to how this apprehension manifested itself in the rhetoric and outreach of the Reform denominational organization. Moreover, historians have suggested that by the early 1900s, ambivalence toward Eastern European Jews dissipated when it became clear that religious persecution was a major cause of their emigration (Gartner 1983; Rischin 1986). Instead, my evidence shows that Reform Jews' exclusion of Eastern European immigrants continued well into the first few decades of the 20th century.

Data and Methods

“[T]he turn of the 20th century . . . is commonly thought to be a critical time in the development of American religion” (Koçak and Carroll 2008:1275). I collected the best available sources on Jewish denominational decision-making from 1910 to 1955.⁴ Every major organizational and intellectual publication from the Reform and Conservative denominations was analyzed, drawing more on some sources more where relevant.

Annual reports from the two denominational umbrella organizations included the most salient discussions of marketing strategies and desired members. At each meeting, delegates from affiliated synagogues met to deliver and discuss reports of the prior year’s activities. Among the most telling reports were the Presidential Addresses, which articulated denominational goals, and the committees on “Organization,” “Propaganda,”⁵ and “Synagog and School Extension,” which detailed outreach strategies. When meetings were not held in a particular year, I examined Executive Board proceedings for that year instead. I analyzed both denominations’ reports from 1913, the year the United Synagogue was founded, to 1920, after which United Synagogue reports were entirely unavailable until 1950, with the exception of four years in the late 1920s. These years studied present the best opportunity for direct comparison. Moreover, they reflect organizational views not only during the period analyzed but rather the broader era -- organizational leaders did not restrict their conversations to what occurred in a given year, but typically spoke more generally about the wave of immigration starting in 1881. To ascertain marketing strategies and attitudes towards immigrants in the mid-20th century, I selected UAHC annual reports from 1945, 1948, and 1955 and United Synagogue biennial reports from 1950, 1952, and 1953, based on availability.

I also looked at the most prominent periodicals published by the two denominations. Although they had no popular periodical at the time, the Reform UAHC published *Union Tidings* to report on its activities, with a circulation of 22,000 (Notice of discontinuance 1930:2). I analyzed the entirety of this monthly publication, from its first issue in 1919 to its last in 1930. Likewise, I analyzed the entirety of a comparable Conservative publication, *The S.A.J. Review*, from its first weekly issue in 1921 to its last in 1929. Both periodicals included scholarly opinion pieces and organizational news. They discussed denominational outreach notably less often than did the annual reports.

For a theological perspective, I probed annual reports of the rabbinical arms of the two denominations between 1927 and 1932: the *Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis* for the Reform UAHC and the *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America* for the Conservative United Synagogue. For statements on immigrants outside of the umbrella organizations, I searched for speeches, letters, and sermons in the collections of the American Jewish Archives.

Line by line, I coded all mentions of desired members, immigrants, and unaffiliated Jews. For each marketing strategy, I identified: 1) the explicit purpose of the strategy; 2) whom each strategy targeted; and 3) the location in which the strategy was implemented. Although this qualitative data cannot weigh in on efficacy of outreach, its strength lies in identifying organizational intentions behind chosen marketing strategies. A potential concern is that religious leaders might exaggerate their past year’s accomplishments, but any desirability bias likely affected both groups equally.⁶

Jewish Markets and Denominational Identity

In the early 20th century, both Reform and Conservative Jewish denominational organizations sought to attract new and retain preexisting synagogues and members as affiliates. However, the Reform UAHC, an already established organization, excluded Eastern European immigrants from their market niche because they believed these immigrants threatened the stability of their denominational identity, which centered on American nativity and modern values. As a result, Reform leaders cultivated particular outreach strategies to avoid attracting immigrants, expending most of their marketing efforts on the relatively scarce population of native-born Jews in small towns and rural areas. On the other hand, the Conservative United Synagogue, an inchoate challenger organization, included immigrants among its desired members, shepherding as many affiliates as possible into the flock.

Reform Judaism's American Identity and Ideal Members

“The Union links Judaism with the best American democratic traditions” (Freiberg 1918:8493), declared UAHC President J. Walter Freiberg in 1918. Valuing the compatibility of American and Reform Jewish ideals, the Reform denomination sought American-born Jews as members. The organization believed its “chief purpose should be . . . [the rabbinical training of] religious guides and teachers of generation after generation of American born Jews, proud of their American citizenship, loving their own great country above all others” (Bettman 1913:7048). Prominent progressive rabbi Stephen S. Wise reiterated this sentiment: “[W]e want a union of American Jews. . . . [It] must be and ought to be absolutely American. Now, I have no patience with the un-American, German, Bohemian, Italian, Polish and Russian Jewries . . .” (1915:7738). It followed that American-born Jews cherished their nationality and would better match the UAHC's organizational identity.

This was not merely a product of enhanced patriotism during World War I. Identifying with American ideals appeared repeatedly throughout the first decades of the 20th century. For instance, in 1927, after reassurances of “no proselytizing purpose” (Simon:99), the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) justified its participation in the Commission on Good Will between Christians and Jews: “let us be good Americans and true to the genius of our country” (106). In 1928, Chairman Ludwig Vogelstein touted the function of the UAHC as “a way of Jewish life which would not conflict with American ideals and which would enable Jews to mingle freely with their fellow citizens everywhere except in their churches” (5). The Reform organizational vision emphasized full participation in American citizenship.

Interestingly, the UAHC politically supported an open immigration policy: “there is not only no occasion for restricting immigration at present, but it would be heartless and cruel to do so” (Kohler 1915:7730). The CCAR's Commission on Social Justice fervently sought the repeal of the 1921 immigration quota, remarking that it “deplores the action of the United States Government in virtually abandoning its policy of keeping America a haven of refuge for the persecuted and down-trodden of the world” (Wolf 1922:69). Still, the General Manager of the Industrial Removal Office, an organization founded to relocate Jewish immigrants throughout the country to reduce New York overcrowding (Bressler 1910), offered a silver lining: “The limitation of Jewish immigration into the United States, greatly to be deplored for the sake of the thousands who are thereby trapped in those very hells from which they need to escape, will

give the Jews of this country a chance to catch up with their own problems” (Bressler 1925:8). Rabbi Freiberg took a similar tack a year prior:

I think the restriction of immigration, if maintained for any considerable length of time, will gradually eliminate the so-called Jewish problem in the United States. . . . it is not Judaism that is disliked, but the Jew. . . . Before the large influx of Russian and Polish immigration into this country there was no particular Jewish problem. That was because the English and German Jews already in the country were not different from English and German Gentiles. But the Russians and Poles were an entirely different social group (Changing aspect of the American Jewish problem 1924:6).

Though not a common stance among Reform Jews, these comments elucidate the pervasive tension between viewing Jewish immigrants as both religious compatriots in need of charity and irreconcilably different others.

Despite Reform support for open immigration, UAHC leadership viewed Eastern European Jewish immigrants as undesirable potential recruits because they would threaten the organization’s position as a modern American institution. UAHC rabbis considered immigrants backward and incorrigible. For instance, Reform lay leader Eli Frank was deeply entrenched in the American elite, serving as the president of the Bar Association of Baltimore City from 1920 to 1921 and ultimately as the 50th president of the Maryland State Bar Association in 1943 (Maryland State Archives 2005). Frank’s professional commitment to the American democratic establishment makes powerful his critique of “the uncompromising medieval Orthodoxy of the most recent of immigrants” (1917:8102). UAHC delegates saw their denomination as more advanced than Orthodoxy: “[To German theological reformers] we are beholden for the emancipating of the synagogue from medievalism and literalism” (Hirsch 1915:7667). By definition, those who subscribed to “medieval” Orthodoxy were not progressive or modern. The roots of this distinction between modern and medieval Jewry traces back to Reform Judaism’s origins in Germany, where it promoted itself as more enlightened and less backwards than Orthodox Judaism (Meyer 1988:100-42). Importantly however, Reform rabbis did not see Orthodox immigrants as inherently uncompromising, but instead blamed the immigration experience for its inflexible consequences:

The immigrant, still bitter over the injustice of the old world, sees America at her worst when he first arrives. He gets the lowest wage, lives in the most wretched localities, is the victim of corrupt practices and is exploited by people who take advantage of his ignorance and trustfulness (Ratshesky 1918:8491).

Eastern European Jews could not be recruited to Reform Judaism because the conditions to which they were subjected harden and embitter them.

Although Reform Jews saw immigrants as undesirable recruits, their eventual membership in the UAHC was possible. In fact, the UAHC perceived itself as part of the solution: “Thanks to such democratic and unifying organizations as this [UAHC], these old-country distinctions have been almost wholly eliminated in our land, and we all rejoice in being American citizens, of the Jewish faith, with no other old-world adjective added” (Kohler 1915:7723-4). Once immigrants relinquished these objectionable “old-world adjective[s]” like “Bohemian, and German, Polish, Russian and Roumanian” (Kohler 1915:7723) in favor of being

American Jews, they would readily be welcomed. Again, this was not an artifact of World War I patriotism, but rather a longstanding position of Reform Judaism in the United States. In a 1906 sermon to his congregation, Reform Rabbi Moses Gries commented:

The public school and the press are the great educating, assimilating and Americanizing forces. I rejoice that our Jewish immigrants are so eager to learn. Almost immediately they find the way to the night school It is an impressive sight to see bearded men learning their alphabet like little children.

As described earlier, the president of the UAHC bemoaned that there were no new potential members in 1915, but he went on to suggest immigrants' eventual suitability for recruitment:

The Americanization of the immigrant may be a slow process, but it is a sure one, and, when completed, the appreciation of representative government will bring with it an appreciation of representative organization, such as is ours . . . (Freiberg:7489).

In this rallying speech, President Freiberg champions assimilation as the primary criterion for Reform membership. By describing "an appreciation of representative organizations" and "the benefits of voluntary organization," he hints at a difference between Orthodox and Reform Judaism since 19th century Germany: assimilation to modern, secular lifestyles and politics (cf. Meyer 1988). Freiberg's tone demonstrates his sense that American political citizenship, including voluntary organizations, is superior to the patrimonial political organization of Eastern European shtetls. Once assimilated to democratic values, an immigrant is transformed from an undesirable to a desirable member. In 1920, the CCAR reiterated this sentiment, asserting that it supported both open immigration and subsequent Americanization of immigrants:

The Conference urges the nation to keep the gates of our beloved republic open, under reasonable restrictions, to the oppressed and distressed of all mankind in conformity with its historic role as a haven of refuge for all men and women who pledge allegiance to its law. It favors systematic and comprehensive measures for the distribution of immigrants for their speedy assimilation to American ideals and modes of life (Wolf et al.:89).

Further evidence that Americanness was the chief requirement for UAHC membership is found in Reform leaders' normative statements on the social position of Jews in America. For example, although a co-leader of the United Jewish Charities, which was created to assist Eastern European immigrants (Jacob Rader Marcus Center 2003), Reform lay leader Bernhard Bettman avowed of Reform's superiority to Orthodoxy:

[O]ur promised land is right here in these blessed United States of America . . . it is not necessary to bend our neck to the yoke of antiquated and obsolete laws and customs and observances . . . it is not at all necessary to live apart from the rest of the world, but, on the contrary, the American Jew walks upright amongst his fellow-citizens of other denominations, differing with them only in his religious belief (1913:7049).

As illustrated above, Reform rabbis cherished their American heritage and valued their status among non-Jews. Bettman's critique implies that Orthodox Jews and all others who do not qualify as an "American Jew" do not "walk upright," are too socially isolated, and incorrectly value Jewish law over American law.

Americanization could pave the way to eventual Reform membership, but until then, the UAHC would not actively seek out Orthodox immigrants as affiliates. In fact, President Freiberg proclaimed, "We do not seek to proselytize. It is not our object to convert from orthodoxy . . . but it is our duty to bring the message of Judaism to those to whom orthodox worship and practice have no appeal, and who . . . are drifting away from all Jewish affiliations" (1913:7076). Unaffiliated, Americanized Jews -- not Orthodox immigrants -- were the ideal constituency. As such, children of immigrants were considered a particularly important group to recruit since they may have left religion altogether:

The youth of our recent immigrants from the lands of darkness as a rule develop a frame of mind which glories in outspoken hostility to religion. They scorn at every indication of organized religious Judaism. . . . Can we afford to let these drift? . . . We must not be slow to win again their confidence (Freiberg 1915:7672).

For the sake of Jewish survival, second-generation immigrants were a recruitable group of members despite their trepidation about religion. The UAHC viewed them as desirable members because their irreligiosity was also a result of the immigrant condition, owing to socialization in an Orthodox immigrant environment:

Remember to what influences these minds inclining to rabid negation have been exposed. They have drifted away from the literalism of the parents. A wide chasm of thought separates them from their elders. They would be Americans. They associate Judaism with old-world conditions (Freiberg 1915:7673).

Leaders of the UAHC repeatedly urged for active recruitment of disaffiliated, assimilated second-generation youth. For instance, President Freiberg declared it absolutely critical to exert the organization's efforts towards recruiting children, since "[t]he victories we win with adults perish with the adults. The foundations that we lay in the hearts of the young will bear the superstructure of tomorrow's Judaism" (1917:8113-4). Reform committee officers cautioned, "Unless we can hold the youth of today who are to be the elders of tomorrow, we are helping to create a condition that is fraught with great danger" (Shohl and Zepin 1917:8042). Maintaining Judaism in general, and Reform Judaism specifically, was of utmost concern.

This goal becomes clearer when considering the UAHC's intentions behind excluding immigrants and embracing Americanized populations. Leaders of the UAHC truly believed that their organization represented the best way to practice Judaism in America:

Let us not be misunderstood as offering any challenge to those of our brethren who do not believe as we do. We feel in our hearts the brotherhood of all Israel. In essentials, we all agree, but we believe that the practices of extreme orthodoxy will not satisfy the religious longings of the American Jew of the future (Freiberg 1913:7084-85).

The Hebrew Union College presidential address by Dr. Morganstern ten years later reiterated the very same sentiment: “American Judaism is a legitimate, historically necessary development of Judaism in perfect accord with Jewish tradition” (Hebrew Union College begins new year 1923:3). Another leader agreed that Reform Judaism was the best solution for reconciling Judaism and Americanism because assimilation was unavoidable: “In a sense, Reform Judaism has won all along the line. . . . The adaptation of Judaism to the Western environment has been inevitable” (Schulman 1918:8475). American-born Jews and assimilated children of immigrants were attractive for their ability to appreciate the UAHC’s organizational identity, whereas unassimilated Jewish immigrants were excluded because their values and practices seemed unsustainable in the American context.

The goal of recruiting American-born Jews led the UAHC to choose particular marketing tactics over others. Decisions about language, membership dues, and geographic location of recruitment efforts reveal a great deal about the Reform denomination’s priorities. First, deciding to conduct services and publish outreach materials in English rather than in Yiddish illustrates that the Reform denomination never intended to reach Yiddish-speaking Eastern European immigrants. Generally, Reform Jews believed Yiddish was a barrier to Americanization (Feingold 1992). The UAHC conducted all of its services in English, the spoken language of Americanized Jews, rather than in Yiddish or Hebrew. Rabbi Max Reichler, who spearheaded the creation of a Reform synagogue in the Bronx, boasted:

[When] we began to conduct services in English, we were told by many experienced men and old Bronx residents that such services were doomed to failure in the Bronx. Yet not only did we not fail, but we even had the pleasure last year of witnessing the establishment of two new organizations in the Bronx for the purpose of conducting religious services in English (1915:7627).

Further, Reform rabbis published only English outreach materials and did not object to competing organizations providing religious and social services in Yiddish:

Nor is it strange that two national bodies should exist [the UAHC and the United Synagogue], with similar purposes, instead of one, for our organization to-day avowedly represents the liberal wing in American Judaism, while the large majority of the Jewish inhabitants of our country, numbering 1,051,767, who reported Yiddish to be their mother tongue in 1910, are not enrolled among the members of liberal Reform Jewish Congregations (Kohler 1915:7725).

While acknowledging that there were over one million Yiddish speakers in the U.S. in 1910, Rabbi Kohler expressed no interest in recruiting them, instead suggesting that another Jewish representative organization should take these immigrants under their wing.

Second, economic success and elite social status were core components of Reform identity. Most Reform Jews of German and Central European origin were already members of the middle and upper-middle class (Sorin 1992). Rabbi Israel Mattuck urged Union Tidings readers, “We have lived through oppression, we must now show that we can live in freedom; we have survived much suffering, we must now show that we can live in prosperity with

unweakened devotion to Jewish ideals” (1927:6). Given this emphasis on economic prosperity, membership dues serve as an indicator of members’ socioeconomic status. The UAHC requested \$1.00 per year per member (Freiberg and Levy 1917:8084), equaling roughly \$18.34 in 2014 dollars (Bureau of Labor Statistics n.d.). Since Eastern European immigrants were predominantly lower income (Diner 2004), \$1.00 annual dues may have been prohibitive. Intentional or not, costly membership dues stratified entry to Reform Judaism based on social class.

Third, the extent of Reform marketing efforts in rural areas and small towns reveals the lengths to which the denomination would go to attract only American-born Jews and avoid city-dwelling immigrants. Certainly the UAHC enacted general strategies including publishing textbooks for religious schools, distributing pamphlets to potential members, and sending speakers to preexisting congregations to encourage them to affiliate (Shohl and Zepin 1919). Such strategies do not decisively privilege any particular demographic as the recipient of UAHC efforts. However, among the strategies tailored to specific groups, the UAHC spent much of its time, money, and human capital on recruitment efforts and charity work on Jews in small towns and rural areas. When annual reports specifically enumerated marketing strategies, up to 25% of all strategies listed were aimed at small towns and rural areas. Overall, the UAHC invested an average three or four different outreach tactics every year on rural and small town populations (Annual Report of the UAHC 1913-1920, coded by author), which were comprised almost exclusively of American-born Jews of Central European descent in the early 20th century. These strategies included distributing holiday sermons to Jews living in locales without rabbis and publishing the Union Home Study Magazine to provide religious lessons to Jewish children in 1,070 small towns and rural areas (Shohl and Zepin 1917:8020). In 1914, the UAHC spent up to \$1,400 on printing and mailing religious literature to some 2,400 Jewish children living on farms (Zepin:7386), an estimated \$32,869 in 2014 (Bureau of Labor Statistics n.d.). Three years later, the UAHC reported that these mailings reached up to 12,000 children in rural areas without disclosing the cost of distribution (Shohl and Zepin 1917:8020). The Union Tidings periodical repeatedly applauded Reform denominational outreach in small towns (Bringing Judaism to “lost” Jews 1927; Union’s efforts to reach Jew in small town commended 1928).

Few strategies directly targeted the enormous New York Jewish population in the first few decades of the 20th century. In 1923, President of the UAHC Charles Shohl proposed the obvious solution to the problem of denominational growth: “If our plan is to add strength and stability to our cause, where shall we find a better field for propaganda than in the City of New York?” (1). More revealing than this proposition is the lack of action that followed. In place of recruiting immigrants, the UAHC targeted elite American-born Jews, providing 208 religious services for Jewish vacationers in lake resorts and beach towns in the summer of 1916 (Shohl and Zepin 1917:8046). Additionally, Reform leaders organized activities for Jewish students at universities nationwide, including study circles, Shabbat services, and high holiday services (Shohl and Zepin 1917:8046-53).⁷ The UAHC also provided chaplains, religious services, Torah study classes, copies of religious texts, Passover matzo, and high holiday meals to Jewish patients in mental hospitals, inmates in prisons, and soldiers on military posts (Shohl and Zepin 1917:8053-67). These outreach efforts were likely to reach anyone but immigrants. Instead, Reform leaders marketed to elite, native-born Jews who would take beach vacations and attend universities. Simultaneously, charitable efforts in mental hospitals, prisons, and military posts required much of the time and energy that could have otherwise been spent recruiting the two million recent immigrants largely in New York City, had Reform Judaism wished to reach them.⁸

Conservative Judaism's Challenger Identity and Ideal Members

As a budding challenger organization, the Conservative United Synagogue's eager discussion of recruiting new immigrants, though in stark contrast to Reform rhetoric, is unsurprising. The United Synagogue's denominational identity was still blossoming in the first few decades of the 20th century, thus Conservative leaders did not restrict themselves to a narrow market niche.

At the very first meeting of the United Synagogue, founder Solomon Schechter contradicted the UAHC's definition of Americanism, instead embracing Orthodoxy as fully American. In a cloaked critique of Reform Judaism, Rabbi Schechter professed:

You may stigmatize Orthodox Judaism as un-American, and suddenly discover that real Americanism meant reverence for the Bible as the word of God, obedience to the authority of the Scriptures, which lay at the foundation of this country, and love for institutions and memories of the past, that is a particular feature with the best American minds (1913:16).

At the same moment that the UAHC declared the Jewish market saturated, the United Synagogue believed its work was just beginning. The Presidential Address at the 1916 annual meeting communicated impending excitement:

The United Synagogue is a young body composed largely of men and women who have not yet reached their prime. ...We should strike out boldly, going along the high-ways and not fearful of the by-ways. Without the blare of trumpets, but with all the strength of the courage of deep conviction, let us proclaim the truth and seek for its permanent establishment in institutions- in synagogues, in schools . . . (Adler:18).

In its early days, the United Synagogue committed fully to organizational growth: "With the help of God, we shall still win the country for the maintenance of a virile Judaism" (Hoffman 1916:25).

The Conservative denomination sought to attract three main groups: Orthodox immigrants, children of immigrants, and secular immigrants. Despite some theological similarities between Orthodoxy and Conservatism, the United Synagogue saw itself as distinct from Orthodox Judaism and recognized the need to actively recruit Orthodox immigrants to Conservative congregations. The Committee on Propaganda lauded efforts to align Orthodox Jews with the Conservative cause: "Considerable correspondence has been carried on with our individual members . . . to lead a movement to unite the Orthodox conservative forces and to build up Jewish institutions in various communities" (Hoffman 1914:24). Outreach to Orthodox immigrants was commonplace: "I understand that our work is mostly amongst the orthodox congregations that have been adhering to traditional Judaism" (Wacht 1916:25).

Further, the Conservative denomination saw itself as a more viable option for children of immigrants than Orthodox Judaism:

If they [Orthodox synagogues] gained in numbers now and then, it was only by accessions from without, namely from the influx of fresh immigrants, naturally joining

their places of worship. . . . In the great majority of cases, they proved powerless even to hold their own children within the folds of their Congregation (Schechter 1914:14).

The United Synagogue tasked itself with recruiting the Orthodox immigrants and their children who drifted away. Conservative rabbis underscored their concern about the future of Judaism, and particularly their anxiety about second-generation disaffiliation:

The great danger that confronts our younger generation is indifference. Hundreds and thousands of young people, children of immigrant parents have grown indifferent to Judaism. Their loss of interest is begotten mostly by the lack of decorum and the lack of the English sermon in the synagogues of their parents. . . . While thousands of our young people have been lost to us, we are not too late (Adler and Cohen 1920:73).

These Conservative leaders were fearful of apostasy and disaffiliation. Their specific critique of Orthodox Judaism's "lack of decorum" is found repeatedly throughout Conservative statements (cf. Sklare 1972:90-93). In fact, in his opening address in 1913, Solomon Schechter justified the founding of the United Synagogue as a reaction against the "chaos" of Orthodox Judaism that causes defection:

I have spoken of the immigrants . . . Unfortunately, they differ from the Reformers in that they have never succeeded in creating proper order and decorum in their places of worship [C]haos reigns supreme among them [Orthodox immigrants], and just by this want of organization, they are subject to a process of constant attrition . . . This is the condition of affairs which cannot be permitted to go on without making an effort to step into the breach and creating this Conservative Union (17).

The United Synagogue was founded on these words. From the very first meeting, Conservative Judaism perceived second-generation immigrants as desirable members not because there was a demand for the denomination in that market niche, but instead because the organization proactively marketed to that niche. In fact, believing that "[t]he young people are estranged from the faith of their fathers" (Adler and Cohen 1918:32), children of immigrants were perceived as vehemently anti-religion; the United Synagogue had to work hard to attract them as members.

Finally, secular immigrants were suitable recruits as well:

These [unaffiliated Jews] have turned their attention to the re-constitution of human society and the creation of the new Utopia, and are for a time at least outside the influence of the synagogue--let us hope that they and their children may yet be brought into the fold (Adler 1916:17).

Immigrants who relinquished their religiosity were viewed as desirable affiliates. Charles I. Hoffman, one of the original founders of the United Synagogue, reiterated the aim to reach the disaffiliated:

[A] large portion of our people [are] growing up aloof from the Synagogue, apart from Judaism, and indifferent to or even antagonistic to its principles and practices. We have

reference now, not to any party that has broken off in principle from adherence to traditional Judaism, where this condition is rampant; but rather, to that much larger body of Jews ...that are still unseparated from us by any doctrinal division (1917:25).

Like the Reform UAHC, the Conservative United Synagogue actively recruited apostates and immigrants' children, but justified this based on theology rather than American identity.

The same indicators of language, membership dues, and geographic location that facilitated Reform denominational exclusion of immigrants illustrate that the Conservative organization customized its recruitment to intentionally attract immigrants. First, while the Reform UAHC celebrated the success of its English religious services and insisted on publishing marketing materials in only English, the Conservative United Synagogue looked favorably upon Yiddish outreach. As one Conservative delegate suggested, "instead of having our propaganda in English only, we [should] have it appear also in the language of the older generation, and in that way we could accomplish a good deal. A great many cannot read any other language but Yiddish" (Wacht 1916:27). By producing marketing materials in Yiddish, the United Synagogue could directly target recent Eastern European immigrants. Another Conservative leader agreed:

The majority of the Yiddish-speaking people are with us, and would be very happy to help us if they could understand us. It is only by printing our literature in Yiddish and having at times gentlemen address them in the language that they understand, that we can get their full cooperation (Cohen 1916:27).

As a challenger institution, the United Synagogue wanted to attract as many new members as possible, and thus did not limit their marketing strategies and religious services to Yiddish. Instead, they employed both Yiddish and English. In 1918, acting president Louis Ginzberg stressed that "The English sermon must be an integral part of our synagogue. It is one of the most effective instruments for the work we are called upon to do the salvation of the generation now growing up" (19). The United Synagogue strategically employed Yiddish to reach first-generation immigrants and English to reach the second generation.

Second, in direct contrast to the Reform UAHC's \$1.00 annual membership dues (Freiberg and Levy 1917:8084), the United Synagogue requested only \$0.25 per year per member (Act of incorporation and by-laws 1916:11). Compared to the \$18.34 UAHC dues in 2014 dollars, the United Synagogue's \$0.25 inflate to only \$5.38 today (Bureau of Labor Statistics n.d.). Consider the UAHC's \$19,901 dues revenue in 1915 (Levy:7507) compared to the United Synagogue's mere \$1,870 that same year (Goodfriend 1917:23). This revenue was insufficient: in 1919, the United Synagogue president Elias Solomon complained, "It would be almost laughable, if it were not so sad, to consider with what inadequate means the United Synagogue attempts to do its great work" (17). Even though the United Synagogue earned significantly less from dues than the UAHC and repeatedly insisted that it required more funds to function, the organization did not raise its dues at all until the 1950s (Abbell 1952), perhaps to avoid alienating lower SES members.

Third, whereas the Reform UAHC concentrated its marketing efforts in rural areas and small towns where almost no immigrants resided, the Conservative United Synagogue cast a wider net. Conservative leaders pursued strategies in large metropolitan areas densely populated by the immigrant niche -- namely, New York City and other East Coast cities. They

understood the benefit of such outreach: “New York itself forms the largest Jewish community recorded in history” (Schechter [1915] 1969:233). To attract these unprecedented masses, the United Synagogue was headquartered in New York City (Karp 1964), perhaps better positioned to recruit immigrants than the UAHC, headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio (Glazer 1972). The Conservative organization also established local branches in New York City, Boston, Newark, and Philadelphia (Hoffman 1919). To reach an even larger public, the United Synagogue hosted a convention in the Midwest, developed a list of kosher restaurants in major cities, and established a popular denominational periodical (Hoffman 1919).

Unlike the UAHC, the Conservative denomination deployed virtually no strategies that targeted rural-dwelling Jews. In fact, the United Synagogue annual reports mentioned only two rural strategies during the entire period analyzed: in 1914, Conservative leaders suggested they employ a “traveling propagandist” to serve Jews in small towns (Kaplan:40) and in 1918, the organization attempted to establish schools in small communities (Adler and Cohen:33). No indication in the following years’ reports reveal whether these strategies were ever enacted. Only by the 1950s did the Conservative denomination revisit these strategies, when they “discussed engaging ‘Circuit-Riding Rabbis’ to minister to the religious and educational needs of such [small Jewish] communities” (Freeman 1950:19). Notably, the United Synagogue did not exclude elite American Jews from their recruitment efforts. To attract Americanized Jews, the president of the Conservative organization suggested, “largely because I do not want to see the American-born generation lost to traditional Judaism . . . a live traditional service [in Conservative congregations] may be orderly and impressive” (Adler 1915:18). Like the UAHC, the Conservative organization even decided to host worship services in summer resorts to reach the American Jewish elite (Lichter 1919:50).

Mid-Century Marketing

If discourse and outreach strategies were based on a Jewish denomination’s social position at a particular historical moment, how did they change as Jewish immigrants adapted to the American context? By the mid-20th century, most Jews were second-generation and beyond, and were largely assimilated (Brodkin 1998). Turning now to annual reports between 1945 and 1955, I find that marketing strategies and the intentions behind them transformed dramatically to reflect this demographic shift.

By 1950, more congregations were affiliated with the Conservative United Synagogue than the Reform UAHC (Arzt 1950:142; Register of congregations 1950:376-82). Perhaps because the Reform UAHC was no longer the largest, most established denomination in the U.S., or perhaps because immigrant assimilation made its American-centered identity less distinctive, in 1945, President Eisendrath unflinchingly stated, “We are now looking into the feasibility and costs that might be involved in publishing a periodical in Yiddish to further this work [of attracting the unaffiliated]” (1945:81). Unfathomable only twenty years prior, the UAHC President actually sought the publication of a Yiddish periodical.

Dues continued to reflect Reform’s upper-middle class laity. In 1952, President Eisendrath emphatically requested that the executive board vote to raise membership dues:

[W]ithin the past few months, the Executive Committee of the Zionist Organization of America took upon *itself* the responsibility of raising its organizational dues from five to

ten dollars. And let us bear in mind that Zionists too have other and even greater financial obligations. . . . Is it not pathetic, even ludicrous, that our Union dues--exactd of a constituency, at least on an average, far more affluent--are still *three* dollars per capita? (185, emphasis his).

The UAHC president insisted that dues be raised to finance the organization's operation, yet perhaps equally telling was the UAHC's reluctance to raise dues despite the president's plea.

Finally, facing a significant amount of resistance, President Eisendrath encouraged the UAHC to relocate its headquarters to New York City. In 1948, the presidential address spent a mere 1.5 pages on the newly-declared state of Israel compared to almost 5.5 pages spent on the recommendation to move UAHC offices away from Cincinnati, Ohio. Despite his "personal disinclination to make my home in the somewhat too tempestuous maelstrom of New York" (1948:317), Eisendrath called Reform leaders to action:

[T]he hour has struck when we must center our movement where the great mass of American Jewry lives: We dare not be smugly satisfied with the progress we have made from our center in the Middle West. We have won less than ten per cent of American Jewry to our cause. . . . On the Eastern Seaboard with its 75 per cent of American Jewry, we boast a bare 30 per cent. We must end this incongruity which grows largely out of our erstwhile remoteness (318).

He warned that remaining in Ohio made the UAHC a "snobocracy":

[T]here is just as definite and just as dangerous a viewpoint which brands New York's two and one half millions of Jews as being somewhat beyond the pale; as not "breathing the spirit of America's grass roots or sharing its objective viewpoint." This savors of a type of "snobocracy" totally out of place in a religious fellowship (320).

Once the demographic tides had turned, Reform Judaism's precarious social position among the American elite was no longer jeopardized by the immigrants they had before perceived as un-American. Alongside cultural and religious beliefs, denominational identity is deeply influenced by larger sociodemographic forces and position in the religious field.⁹

Discussion

As Niebuhr originally argued, "The individuals of no other group, save those of the professional class, are so highly self-conscious as are members of the bourgeoisie" ([1929] 1975:81). At the turn of the 20th century, upper- and middle-class Reform Jews, who had lived in the United States for generations, actively protected their identity as assimilated Jewish Americans. Rather than recruiting from the vast numbers of Jewish immigrants -- the choice most conducive to survival from an organizational perspective -- the Reform UAHC held steadfast to its American identity, selecting outreach strategies based on concerns related to ethnicity, nativity, and social class.

When organizational growth and identity are at odds, an established organization might prioritize preserving its identity over reaching new members. By contrast, a challenger firm without a concrete identity can freely privilege growth, welcoming members from a broader

swath of society without jeopardizing its status in the field. Generally, newer organizations can more easily adapt to the immediate needs of an environment (Ganz 2000; Wilde 2004). Indeed, the Conservative United Synagogue was founded amidst the influx of Eastern European immigrants and capitalized on this by including immigrants as a core component of their organizational identity. On the other hand, the Reform UAHC rejected this demographic boon to prevent the collapse of its carefully crafted American identity. Mid-century documents reveal that marketing strategies shifted as Jewish immigrants assimilated, and organizational identities followed suit. This finding adds a new dimension to previous debates on the relationship between organizational age and risk-taking (Fligstein and Dauter 2007; Hannan and Freeman 1984; Henderson 1999; Ranger-Moore 1997; Singh and Lumsden 1990; Sørensen and Stuart 2000; Stinchcombe 1965) by suggesting that with age comes established identity, leading to more conservative marketing decisions.

Studies of religious practitioners, usually surveys at the individual level, have missed many of the marketing strategies found in this organizational-level qualitative research. Although few religious organizations are likely to use Yiddish today, apart from isolated Hasidic groups (Poll 2009), language continues to serve as a key indicator of the intended audience of marketing efforts. Where Catholic parishes serve Latino populations, deciding whether or not to market in Spanish is equally telling (Finke and Wittberg 2000). Membership dues constitute an understudied class-based marketing tactic -- the exclusivity brought about by a dues system may facilitate social networks that reproduce status within groups (Hartman and Hartman 2011). Finally, the location of outreach reflects which members an organization would like to recruit and exclude (Ebaugh, O'Brien, and Chafetz 2000). A storefront church, for example, might draw members from outside its immediate environs to maintain a particular social class niche (McRoberts 2003).

If organizational identity impacts exclusion, implications extend beyond studies of religious marketing. Religious groups are largely homogeneous by race (Emerson and Kim 2003; Emerson and Smith 2000) and social class (Demerath 1965; Smith and Faris 2005; Scheitle and Finke 2009). Scholars interested in social networks and diversity have pointed to various predictors of homogeneity, including lay recruitment through homophilous social ties (Popielarz and McPherson 1995), impacts of the clergy's ethnicity (Dougherty and Huyser 2008), and splintering in cases of organizational heterogeneity (Chaves and Sutton 2004). Numerous studies have identified ecological and internal factors that sustain rarer multiracial congregations (Ecklund 2005; Edwards 2008; Marti 2008, 2010; Martinez and Dougherty 2013). Yet the findings of the present study propose that top-down exclusion should remain a variable of consideration in research on religious group diversity.

This case study investigates how religious institutions actively reach marketing decisions by stratifying potential members into desirable and undesirable categories based on nativity, ethnicity, and social class, even within an ethnically-bounded religion such as Judaism. When an established organization's identity is threatened by a group of potential members, it may proactively exclude them at the expense of growth. Future studies should pay attention to excluded groups and intentions behind outreach to better understand how religious marketing is inextricably linked not only to the survival of an organization, but to the survival of its organizational identity.

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ENDNOTES

¹ I cite year published even in the few cases when the quoted speech was made in the prior year for purposes of consistency and research replication.

²Although Judaism appears unique in recruiting only those born into the ethnicity, most religious groups cater to particular niches. For instance, half of all Catholic parishes conducted services in foreign languages in 1916 to reach immigrant members (Finke and Stark 2002:127-9). In order to attract a lower-income market niche in cities and on the frontier, Methodist and Baptist ministers "spoke in the vernacular, and preached from the heart" (Finke and Stark 2002:76). Outreach and exclusion based on ethnic and social class characteristics is likely relevant for all religions.

³ Both movements originated in Europe. Both American organizations were founded by revered rabbis from Europe: the Reform UAHC by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise (Bettman 1913:7048) and the Conservative United Synagogue by Rabbi Solomon Schechter (Schechter 1913:14). Each organization affiliated with a rabbinical arm to make theological decisions: the Central Conference of American Rabbis for the UAHC (Freiberg 1913:7082) and the Rabbinical Assembly for the United Synagogue (Karp 1964). Likewise, they affiliated with U.S. seminaries for training rabbis: the UAHC with Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati (Freiberg 1913:7071) and the United Synagogue with the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City (Schechter 1913:20).

⁴ Based on availability, I looked at 1910 to 1932 to analyze rhetoric about first-generation immigrants and 1945 to 1955 for rhetoric on the second and third-generations.

⁵ For both organizations, “propaganda” means outreach, and has a positive connotation.

⁶ Another concern is my exclusion of Sephardic and Orthodox Jewish groups. My reasons for this are practical. The Orthodox denomination never held a majority market share in the United States, and in the 20th century, Reform and Conservative denominations always competed with each other for the largest market share (Waxman 2005). Further, the Union of Sephardic Congregations was not founded until 1928 (Pool 1957) and although the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America was founded in 1898, there are no annual reports available. Interestingly, within the past few decades, subsets of the Orthodox movement have actively recruited members from outside of their denomination (Davidman 1993; Kaufman 1991). Orthodoxy’s strict and distinctive rules seem to generate a subcultural identity that attracts and retains members (Avishai 2008; Iannaccone 1994; Smith 1998).

⁷ Reform Jewish outreach in universities predated the now ubiquitous Hillel, whose first chapter was founded in 1923 (Hillel International 2014).

⁸ An alternative explanation regarding theology must be addressed. Perhaps the Reform UAHC may not have attempted to recruit immigrants if they believed that immigrants were forming their own Orthodox congregations, rendering Reform recruitment futile. In fact, immigrants often joined landsmanschaftn, fraternal hometown societies that sometimes acted as “quasi-synagogues” (Diner 2004:138). Alternatively, if immigrants were more theologically similar to the Conservative denomination, they would simply join the United Synagogue, allowing the Reform UAHC to ignore them accordingly. Yet we know that immigrants were more likely to be secular than Orthodox or Conservative: according to the American Jewish Year Book, in 1901, only 20% of all Jews in the United States formally belonged to a synagogue; the remaining 80% were “unchurched” or attended synagogue infrequently (Bernstein cited in Sarna 2004:161). Corroborating this, the president of the Conservative United Synagogue stated, “Undoubtedly to many the freedom which they [immigrants] saw symbolized by the Statue of Liberty meant emancipation from religious restraint” (Adler 1916:17). Given the paucity of data on actual religious practices of Jews at the turn of the 20th century, we must instead rely on the impressions of Reform denominational leaders, who frequently voiced concerns that the unwashed Eastern European immigrants would indeed join their ranks. At their annual meetings, Reform rabbis spent a significant amount of time vehemently discussing their desire to exclude immigrants. If immigrants had no theological interest in the Reform organization, Reform leaders would not have broached the issue extensively over so many years.

⁹ By contrast, the Conservative United Synagogue, no longer a challenger firm, began to eke out a dual American and Jewish identity that echoed that of the Reform UAHC in prior decades: “To us it is Conservative Judaism that offers an unfolding evolving pattern of Jewish life. It is a distinctly American development--in it we can immerse ourselves--from it we hope to draw a philosophy and a reason for being that will permit us to live wholesome, normal lives, as Jews and as Americans” (Freeman 1950:135).

Regarding language, dues, and geography, Conservative leaders mentioned no Yiddish publications but boasted of Hebrew summer camps (Abbell 1953), continued to charge lower membership dues than the UAHC (Abbell 1952:9), and began outreach to small-town Jews (Rothstein 1950) as the UAHC had done earlier in the 20th century.