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Research Institute for New Americans (RINA)
Report on 2014 Survey
of Russian American Jewish Experience (RAJE)
Graduates

Long Term Impact of the RAJE Fellowship Program

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1. Background.

Approximately 750,000 Jewish immigrants from the Former Soviet Union and their children now live in North America (as estimated by Pew). This group is comprised of adult immigrants who emigrated from the former Soviet bloc states during the last decades and their children who were either born in the states or brought here at a young age. These youngsters became American through cultural emersion in the US educational system, workplace, and other social institutions. Unfortunately, the vast majority of Soviet Jews have been cut off from their Jewish heritage, religion, traditions, and identity for more than three generations due to oppressive policies and social restrictions of the Soviet government. Thus, to a large extent - this younger generation did not have a chance to receive even minimal informal Jewish education and upbringing within their families. The vast majority have no elementary Jewish knowledge and never attended Jewish day schools or Hebrew Schools. Despite a strong sense of Jewish pride and belonging, they remain largely disconnected from Jewish life, and are therefore set adrift to assimilate in the American melting pot.

RAJE (Russian American Jewish Experience) was founded in 2006 with the goal of finding a systematic and comprehensive approach of ensuring a Jewish future for this vital community. RAJE was inspired by the intrepid vision of Taglit-Birthright Israel. The 10 day FREE trip to Israel was an incredible first step, a catalyst of growth and connection for an entire 18-26 year old target population of Jews, who represent the future of the Jewish people. Alas, as powerful as a 10 day trip can be - it has its serious limitations in both the depth of impact possible and in the simple fact that such a trip quickly fades into memory unless a powerful follow-up system is in place to build on that initial spark. RAJE asked the questions: if a 10 day trip is a first step, what would be an ideal system to build on that experience and transform a generation by creating lasting, deep level change? Are there unique features to the Russian American Jewish target population, which would enable an “out of the box” approach that would work to impact their community?

To achieve its mission, RAJE developed a unique system of community wide change known as the RAJE Fellowship program. This program focuses on the millennial age group of 18 – 30 year olds. This is the period of life when the most important

decisions regarding future identity and affiliations are made - and hence can be seen as an hour glass shaping the future generation.

Similar to the Birthright concept of the FREE 10 day Israel trip, RAJE also begins with an offer of a trip to Israel. While the Birthright trip is a great first step, it is a standalone vacation-like trip, with no built in educational component before or after the trip. However, the RAJE trip is different - it is longer in length, includes a significant component of Jewish educational programming on the trip, and most importantly – it incorporates an intensive semester-long program before the trip. The program before the trip consists of 10 half day sessions, 2 weekend retreats, as well as other supplementary social, educational and community building activities outside the formal program hours. **As a result, over the course of a single semester the students experience over 250 hours of highly impactful and transformative programming – and a much deep level engagement then any program of its type within the Jewish community.**

While such level of student commitment would be hard to achieve among unaffiliated young Jews from non-FSU backgrounds, unique qualities including high concentration of Russian Jews residing in the metropolitan area, their natural desire to connect with each other and their fascination with visiting Israel enabled RAJE Fellowships to quickly scale programming in the New York area. **Since 2006, 3,260 participants, or over 11% of all 18 – 30 year old FSU Jews in New York and Philadelphia have completed the RAJE Fellowship program. With hundreds completing the program each year, it has become a rite of passage for Russian Jews in these cities. In the Spring of 2014, a successful pilot program was launched in Toronto. For the Fall 2014 semester, RAJE plans to expand the Toronto program and to open Fellowship programming in Chicago and Baltimore.**

2. RAJE Long Term Impact Study

What is the impact of 250 hours of deep level Jewish Educational programming in a single semester and an Israel trip? Of having hundreds of 18-30 year old Jews spending so much of their free time together, bonding, learning and experiencing Jewish life?

To examine the long-term effects of the RAJE fellowship program on participants' Jewish identities and on their engagement with Israel, RAJE commissioned a research study through the Research Institute of New Americans (RINA), a well-known research group established in 1998 in New York and led by Dr. Sam Kliger. In order to gauge the post program impact of the RAJE Fellowship program, the study examined the Jewish attitudes, activities and affiliations of RAJE program alumni who participated in the program between October 2006 and December 2011.

Research Institute for New Americans (RINA) was created in response to the community demand and the need for a deeper understanding of the social, demographic, identification, and integration processes of the Russian-speaking Jewish immigrant community in New York and elsewhere in the U.S. RINA is the first and only independent research and analytical center founded by immigrants to study the immigrants themselves. Through surveys, public opinion polls, focus groups, and other approaches, RINA accumulates, analyzes, and publishes reliable sociological information about the processes developing within the Russian-speaking Jewish community.

RINA has gained wide reputation not only in New York and other states, but also on the international level. RINA's research on new immigrants has been featured in mass media outlets, including a front-page *New York Times* article. RINA has conducted a number of studies on Russian Jews, including 2 major surveys for the American Jewish Committee (AJC), for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and for COJECO. RINA has also been commissioned by US governmental agencies to conduct exit polling both in the US and Israel, in partnership with Michigan State University. RINA is one of the founding organization of COJECO, its member and beneficiary.

3. Study's Goal and Methodology

The specific goal of the study is to measure the impact of the RAJE Fellowship program on its participants after two or more years since graduation, in four basic areas of Jewish identity and peoplehood affiliation which the program intended to influence.

Two years or more after completing the RAJE program, were participants more likely to:

- **Establish a Jewish household?**
- **Affiliate with and be involved in the life of the Jewish community?**
- **Fulfill their spiritual needs through the study and practice of Judaism?**
- **Develop a strong connection to the State of Israel?**

300 respondents were randomly selected from a group of 2,240 alumni who graduated the RAJE Fellowship program between 2006 and 2011.

To all 300 respondents, a specially designed questionnaire¹ was sent via email. Then, trained RINA interviewers followed up the questionnaires with phone calls to ensure the completeness of responses. Three hundred interviews were collected by the end of May 2014. The completed questionnaires were originally entered into an Excel file and then transformed into a SPSS file². The data collected was then statistically analyzed by RINA's team. The present Report is a result of the quantitative and qualitative analysis done by RINA³. We estimate a sample statistical error on a single question to be within the range of +/-3.5 percentage points.

4. Social and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

- [Out of 300 respondents, 48% were male and 52% were female.
- [104 respondents (35%) got married since completing the fellowship program.
- [Median respondent age was 27 years old. Age range: youngest (20 y. o.); oldest (40 y. o.).

For the purpose of analysis, we used four age groups.

Age distribution by groups

¹The original questionnaire is attached to this Report

²A number of new variables and their values were created to clarify the answers and to make the process of statistical analysis possible. A questionnaire with new variables/values is attached.

³RINA's team: Dr. Sam Kliger, Kristina Shmatok, RINA's program coordinator, and Ketevan Chkhikvadze, RINA's program coordinator. The study was also partially sponsored by RINA's board of directors, by private donors, including Dr. Igor Talis, and by COJECO, of which RINA is a member of organization and beneficiary. RINA expresses deep gratitude to all individuals and organizations that supported the study.

AGE Groups	% of all respondents
20 to 23 y. o.	17
24 to 27 y. o.	23
28 to 31 y. o.	21
32 or more y. o.	13
No age indicated	26
	100%

Age and gender distribution (% of male and female in each age group)

AGE Groups	Male	Female	% of all respondents
20 to 23 y. o.	38	62	100%
24 to 27 y. o.	42	58	100%
28 to 31 y. o.	62	38	100%
32 or more y. o.	59	41	100%
No age indicated	59	41	100%

Age and marital status (% of singles and married in each age group)

AGE Groups	Single	Married	% of all respondents
20 to 23 y. o.	92	8	100%
24 to 27 y. o.	74	26	100%
28 to 31 y. o.	52	48	100%
32 or more y. o.	67	33	100%
No age indicated	51	49	100%

Gender and marital status (% of married and singles in each gender category)

	Married	Single	% of all respondents
Male	34	66	100%
Female	35	65	100%

These socio-demographic descriptive statistics indicates that RAJE graduates respondents form a relatively homogeneous group of the young Jewish population with a median age of 27, ranging from 20 to 40 years; proportionally distributed by gender; and with a 35% marriage rate equal for men and women.

5. Establishing a Jewish Household (attitude and actual behavior)

The data collected clearly suggest that the RAJE Fellowship program created and maintained a very strong positive attitude towards establishing a Jewish household. **35% of all graduates have gotten married since completing the program. Of all those married, 94% married a Jewish spouse. Furthermore, 52% of all respondents married to a Jewish spouse - met their Jewish spouse at RAJE.**

As for the singles respondents who comprised 65% of all interviewed, survey responses strongly indicated that both dating and marrying a Jewish person is either important or very important to the overwhelming majority of RAJE alumni.

As a matter of fact, about 64% of singles indicated that dating a Jewish person is either important or very important for them. As for the attitude toward marriage, almost 77% of singles said that to marry a Jew is either important (27%) or very important (50%) for them.

Female respondents tend to marry Jewish at a slightly higher rate than male respondents: 96% of all married women have a Jewish spouse as compared to 91% of all men.

Socialization within RAJE and participating in its programs and activities definitely has an impact on developing a positive attitude toward establishing a Jewish household and on real matrimonial behavior. Majority (52%) of those respondents who married a Jewish person - met their spouses at RAJE.

The attitude towards marrying a Jewish person and resulting real life behavior are highly mutually correlated. Among those respondents for whom dating a Jewish person is important or very important - 99% also said that marrying a Jewish person is important or very important. On the other hand, among those who think that marrying a Jewish person is not important or even somewhat important - 96% said that dating Jewish is also unimportant.

Having Jewish friends and social circles (which RAJE graduates largely obtained through RAJE programs and activities) has been shown to be an important factor in motivating people in dating and marriage. Almost 92 % of all alumni respondents reported at least half of all their friends to be Jewish. Almost two-thirds, about 66%, said that most or all of their friends are Jewish. Acquainting with mostly Jewish friends has a significant two-fold influence. First, they form a networking pool of potential dating and marital partners, and second, the overall Jewish friendship contributes to increasing the positive attitudes and motivation for dating and marrying a Jewish person. Among those with mostly Jewish friends, only 27% suggested that marrying a Jew is not important or somewhat important; 73% think that marrying a Jew is important or very important. A similar picture can be observed with attitudes towards dating. For those with mostly Jewish friends, 36% said that dating Jewish is not important or somewhat important, while 64% consider dating a Jew important or very important.

Motivation to establish a Jewish household goes beyond just an attitude to marry a Jew. For many RAJE graduates attitudes toward marriage and dating are highly correlated with attitudes toward keeping Shabbat and Kashrut. This may mean that they are not only motivated to establish a Jewish home but also to maintain it.

Attitude to observing Shabbat and Kashrut is part of establishing and maintaining of a Jewish household.

Attitudes Toward Marriage and dating	Attitudes toward Observing Shabbat	Observe, to some extent, or would like to observe Shabbat	Observing Shabbat is not necessary	%
To marry a Jew is important or very	66	34	100%	

important			
Dating a Jew is important or very important	70	30	100%

Attitudes toward Observing Kashrut Attitudes Toward Marriage and dating	Observe, to some extent, or would like to observe Kashrut	Observing Kashrut is not necessary	%
To marry a Jew is important or very important	58	42	100%
Dating a Jew is important or very important	63	37	100%

Moreover, attitudes toward dating and marrying a Jew are also highly correlated with having Jewish books at home. That means that the concept of a Jewish household also includes possession of Jewish books at home, which again could indicate a desire to maintain a Jewish home.

Possession of Jewish books at home Attitudes toward dating and marriage	No Jewish books	1 -2 books	3 books or more	%
To marry a Jew is important or very important	16	34	50	100%
Dating a Jew is important or very important	16	33	51	100%

Obviously, the process of building a Jewish household, which starts with dating and marriage, continues with children. Therefore, as the data shows, the concept of a Jewish household involves the need to providing children with some Jewish education. Those respondents who displayed high motivation toward Jewish dating and marriage also displayed higher motivation to provide their children (current or future) with Jewish education.

Attitudes toward Jewish education for Children Attitudes toward dating and marriage	Do not agree that Jewish education is necessary	Somewhat agree or not sure about Jewish education for Children	Agree or very much agree that children should receive a Jewish education.	
To marry a Jew is important or very important	8	26	66	100%
Dating a Jew is important or very important	6	25	69	100%

Conclusions:

1. For 71% of all respondents, dating a Jewish person is important or very important, and for 79% marrying Jewish is important or very important.
2. RAJE graduates have expressed high motivation toward marrying and dating a Jewish spouse that has been transformed into real behavior. Among those who have gotten married since completing the program, 94% have a Jewish spouse, and 52% of them met their spouse at RAJE.
3. The concept of building a Jewish household includes not only dating and marriage - but also socializing within the Jewish community (having Jewish friends), possessing Jewish books at home, providing Jewish education for the children, and positive attitudes toward observing Shabbat and Kashrut.

Therefore, **participating in the RAJE Fellowship program significantly and positively impacts on the entire complex system of establishing and further maintaining a Jewish household.**

6. Affiliation and Involvement with the Jewish Community

As detailed in the previous section, the majority of RAJE graduates socialize with their Jewish friends. As a matter of fact, about two-thirds of RAJE graduates reported that most or all of their friends are Jewish.

It is worthy to note that there are no respondents who lack at least a few Jewish friends.

Participating in activities (volunteering, charity, educational programs) at RAJE and other Jewish organizations during past 12 months.

	Volunteered at RAJE or other Jewish organizations (at least 1-3 times)	Participated in activities sponsored by RAJE or Synagogue (at least 1-3 times)	Gave money to a Jewish charity (including RAJE)	Attended Jewish educational programs (lectures, classes) at RAJE or other Jewish organizations (at least 1-3 times)
Yes	35	66	65	70
No	65	34	35	30
All RAJE graduates	100%	100%	100%	100%

While interpreting the charitable activity of RAJE graduates - 65% of whom donated to a Jewish charity during the past 12 months, RINA compared this statistic with other Russian Jewish groups. In a study done by RINA in 2002 for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia - it was revealed that 35% of Russian Jews in Philadelphia have donated to a Jewish organizations. However, when we examining solely the comparable age group of donors less than 35 years old, only 11% of them have donated to Jewish organizations in Philadelphia in 2002. Therefore, we estimate that **RAJE graduates are about 6 times more likely to give to Jewish**

organizations than the same-age cohort of general Russian-Jewish population in Philadelphia. ⁴

35% of RAJE graduates volunteered at least 1-3 times during the past 12 months. While no data is available for the comparable age group in the Philadelphia study, this rate is quite high by any measure.

Volunteering at RAJE or other Jewish organizations has a positive effect on charitable activities. The more alumni have volunteered, the more likely they were to donate to RAJE and other Jewish organizations as demonstrated by the study. For example, among those who have volunteered 1-3 times in the past 12 months, 86% have donated to a Jewish charity. **Increase in volunteering experience transforms into significant increase in Jewish charitable activity.**

As revealed by the study, completing the RAJE Fellowship also lead to active attendance at a variety of educational follow-up programs offered by RAJE. A significant number of RAJE graduates (37%) indicated that they attended at least 1-3 post-fellowship Jewish educational programs at RAJE during the past 12 months.

Reading Jewish books is also an important element in both Jewish identity and communal activity. More than half of RAJE graduates (51%) reported reading at least 1 to 3 Jewish books in the past 12 months. Attendance of RAJE educational programs by fellowship program graduates leads to reading of more Jewish books. This correlation is natural, since educational programs require reading Jewish books, and reading Jewish books increases the motivation for education. **Attendance of RAJE educational programs significantly increases the number of Jewish books read by participants.**

Participating in Educational Program at RAJE	Read Jewish Books	No	Yes, 1 or 2	3 or more	%
	No				

⁴New American Jewish Population Study of Greater Philadelphia. RINA report-2002, p.68-69

	63	24	13	100%
Yes, 1-3 times	41	41	18	100%
More than 3 times	10	28	62	100%

As we can see from the above table, of respondents who participated in 1 or more RAJE educational programs during the past 12 months - 90% have read at least 1 Jewish book, with 62% having read 3 books or more. In other words, actively attending RAJE programs dramatically increases the reading of Jewish books. The rate of reading Jewish books among those who attended RAJE programs was more than 3 times greater than the rate for those who did not attend educational programs at RAJE. Furthermore, the study revealed that attending Jewish educational programs in Jewish settings outside of RAJE does not bring about such a powerful effect.

As we can see from the chart above, RAJE educational program are much more effective for promoting Jewish literacy than educational programs offered by other Jewish organizations. If we take for a comparative measure the number of students reading 3 or more Jewish books in the past 12 months - programming at RAJE has been shown to be almost 2.5 times more effective than educational programs in other Jewish organizations.

Attending programming sponsored by RAJE or by other Jewish organizations significantly affects student motivation toward observing Shabbat and Kashrut. Only 3% of those who participated in RAJE activities express the opinion that observing Shabbat is not necessary, and only 8% expressed the same about Kashrut. Thus, almost 97% of the students who attended RAJE programs 3 times or more have a positive attitude toward observing Shabbat (“would like to observe,” “observe,” and “observe to some extent”). A similar picture is true about correlation between activities in RAJE and attitudes toward Kashrut.

The influence of activities in other Jewish organizations on developing positive attitudes toward observing Shabbat and Kashrut are also significant, though less so than the effect resulting from RAJE activities.

Conclusions:

1. RAJE graduates in general demonstrate a very high level of affiliation with the Jewish community in terms of volunteering, charity, community and synagogue involvement. 65% of RAJE graduates donated to a Jewish charity in the past 12 months. RAJE graduates have a much stronger positive attitude to Jewish charities than those who did not go through the RAJE Fellowship program. RAJE graduates tend to give almost six times more to Jewish charities than Russian-Jewish population in general.
2. RAJE Fellowship programming produces a high level of volunteering. 35% of RAJE graduates have volunteered for RAJE or other Jewish organizations during the past 12 months - a high rate of volunteerism by any standard.
3. Attending continuing Jewish educational programs offered by RAJE to alumni of its Fellowship program significantly increases the number of Jewish books read by participants. Additionally, RAJE educational programs are more effective at promoting Jewish literacy than Jewish educational programs offered by other Jewish organizations.
4. RAJE-sponsored programming significantly affects the development of a positive motivation toward observing Shabbat and Kashrut, with impact shown to be higher than that of other Jewish organizations.
- 5.

7. Spiritual Needs: Study and Practice of Judaism

7.1 Jewish Holidays and Rituals

The RAJE Fellowship program had a strong impact on active participation in observance of Jewish rituals and traditions. By arranging rituals and traditions by order of frequency of observance and participation – it is revealed that lighting Chanukah candles, attending Shabbat dinners, celebrating Rosh Hashanah, Passover and Yom Kippur form a high priority of interest in Jewish spirituality. In fact, these five items are observed by 63 to 78 percent of all respondents. On the other hand - hosting a Sabbath dinner at home, celebrating Shavuot, and attending Shabbat Service at Synagogue form a group of rituals less commonly observed. In fact, only 35 to 40 percent of all respondents indicated observing these. This trend is understandable, taking into consideration the notion that hosting a Shabbat dinner or attending a Shabbat synagogue service require deeper knowledge of the conduct of the service and liturgy, as well as Hebrew reading and comprehension skills. Shavuot in Jewish tradition is generally a lesser known holiday, despite the fact that it belongs to a group of Shalosh Regalim (the three major Jewish pilgrimage holidays specifically mentioned in the Torah). Therefore, it is not a surprise that only 38 percent of respondents mentioned celebrating Shavuot.

	YES	NO	%
Lit Chanukah candles	78	22	100%
Attended a Shabbat Dinner	74	26	100%
Celebrated Rosh Hashanah	73	27	100%
Attended Passover Seder	69	31	100%
Attended Yom Kippur Service at Synagogue	63	27	100%
Celebrated Purim	55	45	100%
Attended Shabbat Service at Synagogue	40	60	100%

Celebrated Shavuot	38	62	100%
Hosted a Shabbat Diner at home	35	65	100%

We may propose that those who are able to host a Shabbat dinner at home or attend Shabbat synagogue services form a group of religious (observant) young people with more than elementary knowledge in Judaism - who are active in observing Shabbat, Kashrut, and other Jewish traditions. The data shows that nearly 73% of those respondents who hosted a Shabbat dinner at home or attended a Shabbat synagogue service - also celebrated Shavuot. In contrast, of those who light Chanukah candles - only 40% observe Shavuot.

RAJE Fellowship core program creates a strong and positive attitude toward observing Shabbat and Kashrut. 67% of RAJE graduates either observe Shabbat (22%) or have a positive attitude towards its observance. A similar attitude is manifested toward keeping Kashrut: 60% of RAJE graduates either keep Kashrut (20%), or have a positive attitude toward keeping it.

7.2 Jewish Books and Websites

Owning Jewish books at home, reading Jewish books and visiting Jewish websites all cater to the basic spiritual needs for young people. The RAJE Fellowship program creates strong positive attitudes toward Jewish learning demonstrated in ownership of Jewish books at home, reading of Jewish books, and visitation of Jewish educational websites. **84% of RAJE graduates have at least 1 Jewish book at home, 82% have visited Jewish websites in past 12 months, and 51% read at least 1 Jewish book during the same period.**

	No	1 -2	3 or more	%
Own Jewish books	16	32	52	100%
Reading Jewish books in past	49	28	23	100%

12 months				
Visiting Jewish websites in past 12 months	18	30	52	100%

Naturally, in the era of internet, visiting Jewish websites competes with reading books. Nevertheless, owning Jewish books is at least as popular as visiting Jewish websites among RAJE alumni.

Noteworthy, the positive impact toward reading Jewish books and visiting Jewish websites created by the RAJE Fellowship program has a very significant influence on motivation and real behavior in observing Shabbat and Kashrut.

Observing Shabbat	No, I don't think it is necessary	No. but I would like to	Yes, to some extent	Yes	%
Reading Jewish books					
No	52	34	12	2	100%
Yes, 1 or 2	22	33	25	20	100%
Yes, 3 or more	4	9	21	66	100%

Observing Kashrut	No, I don't think it is necessary	No. but I would like to	Yes, to some extent	Yes	%
Reading Jewish books					
No	61	24	14	1	100%
Yes, 1 or 2	32	22	27	19	100%
Yes, 3 or more	2	4	29	65	100%

The data above strongly demonstrates that the more Jewish books students read - the more likely they became to observe (or have motivation to observe) Shabbat and Kashrut. Thus, of all those respondents who have read three or more Jewish books in the past 12 months - 66% observe Shabbat and 65% observe Kashrut.

Visiting Jewish websites has a similar effect on observing Shabbat and Kashrut - the more frequently students visit Jewish websites the more likely they become to observe (or incline to observe) both Shabbat and Kashrut.

Observing Shabbat Visiting Jewish websites	No, I don't think it is necessary	No. but I would like to	Yes, to some extant	Yes	%
No	62	25	11	2	100%
Yes, 1 or 2	42	32	14	12	100%
Yes, 3 or more	17	27	21	35	100%

Observing Kashrut Visiting Jewish websites	No, I don't think it is necessary	No. but I would like to	Yes, to some extant	Yes	%
No	75	5	10	0	100%
Yes, 1 or 2	50	18	24	8	100%
Yes, 3 or more	21	21	23	35	100%

As a matter of fact, only 17% of those who visited Jewish websites three or more times during the past 12 months held the belief that observing Shabbat is not necessary. A similar figure of 21% of all respondents who visited Jewish websites 3 three or more times indicated that observing Kashrut is not necessary.

7.3 Religious affiliation

Agnostic	11
Atheist	2.3
Conservative	4.7
Orthodox	16
Reconstructionist	1
Reform	6.3
Traditional: Jewish holidays and some Shabbat	27.3
Traditional: just Jewish holidays	27.3
Yeshiva or Chasidic Orthodox	4
	100%

The data clearly suggests that the notion that RAJE Fellowship programs promote Orthodox Judaism proves to be inaccurate. Indeed, only 16% of RAJE graduates consider themselves Orthodox and another 4% - Yeshiva or Hasidic Orthodox. In all, we may conclude that about 20% of RAJE graduates are Orthodox Jews.

On the other side of the religious spectrum, more than 13% describe themselves either as Agnostics (11%) or Atheists (2.3%). The core majority of all respondents (55%) consider themselves “Traditionalists” - a group not specifically affiliated with any American formal religious denomination. On the one hand, they have a high motivation to observe Jewish holidays and some rituals of Shabbat and Kashrut, and therefore appear closer to Conservative and Orthodox modus vivendi. On the other hand, they mostly behave as secular individuals - perceiving Judaism through the lens of history, culture, civilization and heritage. In this respect they resemble Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative movements - though they definitely do not feel connected to any of these.

About 12% of RAJE graduates identified themselves as either Conservatives (5%), or Reform (7%, including a small number of Reconstructionist).

Therefore, as indicated by the data – there are 4 groups of religious affiliation.

Agnostics and Atheists	Conservative, Reform & Reconstructionist	Traditionalists	Orthodox	%
13	12	55	20	100%

Observe Kashrut Jewish Affiliation	No, I don't think it is necessary	No, but would like to	Yes, to some extent	Yes	%
Agnostics & Atheists	98	0	3	0	100%
Conservative, Reform & Reconstructionist	36	28	33	3	100%
Traditionalists	40	28	29	3	100%
Orthodox	0	3	5	92	100%

Observe Shabbat Jewish Affiliation	No, I don't think it is necessary	No, but would like to	Yes, to some extent	Yes	%
Agnostics & Atheists	90	8	2	0	100%
Conservative, Reform & Reconstructionist	31	42	19	8	100%
Traditionalists	31	40	26	3	100%
Orthodox	0	3	2	95	100%

The charts above show the differences in motivation (attitude) and real behavior among groups with different affiliations. Atheists and Agnostics form a specific group, for whom observing Shabbat or Kashrut are not necessary. Moreover, they neither have motivation nor intention to do so. On the contrary, the Orthodox group is comprised of those who are “doers” - they transform their religious beliefs into real behavior: 92% of them observe Kashrut and 95% observe Shabbat. As much as these two groups are different, two remaining two groups, namely, the ‘Traditionalists’ on one hand, and Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist (for the sake of simplicity, we will further refer to them as “Conservative”) on the other hand, are both very similar in terms of their motivation and real behavior. We can see that among the group of “Conservatives”, 62% have high motivation to observe Kashrut and 61% toward observing Shabbat (respondents that indicated they would like to observe or are observing to some extent). Among the group of Traditionalists, the

corresponding figures are 57% and 66% respectively. In terms of real behavior, only 3 to 8 percent in both groups reported really fully observing Shabbat and Kashrut. Though the statistical differences between Traditionalists and “Conservatives” in real observance of both Shabbat and Kashrut are not great, it is worthy to note that “Conservatives” are a little more “observant” in respect to Shabbat (3% of Traditionalists and 8% of “Conservatives” reported observing Shabbat).

Conclusions:

1. RAJE Fellowship program has achieved the formation of a cohort of young Jews with very high motivation toward Judaism, Jewish learning, observing holiday traditions, Kashrut and Shabbat.
2. The overwhelming majority of RAJE graduates, regardless of their affiliation, now adhere to mainstream Jewish traditions and practices, and display thirst for Jewish spirituality: more than 70% of RAJE graduates light Hanukah candles, attend Shabbat dinners, and celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Nearly two-thirds of RAJE graduates either observe or have a positive attitude toward observing Shabbat and Kashrut. More than 80% of RAJE graduates have Jewish books at home and visit Jewish websites.
- 3.

8. Developing a strong connection to the State of Israel

Graduates of RAJE Fellowship program demonstrate a high level of support to the State of Israel.

Do you agree with the statement: “Every Jew should support the State of Israel?”

Do not agree	2
Not sure	5
Somewhat agree	12
Agree	27
Very much agree	54
	100%

Thus, as data shows, 81% of RAJE alumni either agree or very much agree on the support of Israel.

After your RAJE trip to Israel, have you visited Israel on a personal or business trip?

No	68
Yes, for 3-7 days	7
Yes, for 1-2 weeks	8
Yes, for 2-4 weeks	7
Yes, for more than 4 weeks	10
	100%

32% of RAJE program graduates have visited Israel after completing the RAJE core Fellowship program.

Would you vote for US Senatorial, Congressional or Presidential candidate who does not have a strong track record in supporting Israel?

Not under any circumstance	39
Not likely	45
Possibly depending on their stance on other important issues	15
I would not take support of Israel into consideration	1
	100%

We can see from the chart above that general support for Israel among RAJE graduates transforms into political behavior at home. An overwhelming 84% of respondents said that they would not (or likely not to) vote for a political candidate if such candidate does not display a strong position in support of Israel.

In the past 12 months have you participated in a meeting, demonstration or other action in support of Israel?

Yes	38
No	62
	100%

A significant number of RAJE program alumni participated in rallies and demonstrations in support of Israel in the past 12 months.

Everyday observations along with many studies of Russian-speaking Jews have proven that the State of Israel is a major factor in Russian-speaking American Jewish identity. In part, such a close affiliation with Israel comes from the fact that many Russian-speaking American Jews have relatives or close friends who live in Israel. In fact, immigration from the former Soviet Union that started in early 1970s had two major streams: over a million immigrants arrived in Israel, while about 750,000 came to the United States. In addition to personal relations to Israel and its people, there is a broad consensus among Russian American Jews that Israel is the only Jewish state in the world, thus possessing the crucial role of being a protector of all Jewish people throughout the world. Furthermore, the democratic nature of the State of Israel coupled with its outstanding achievements in technology and the sciences earn it additional rapport.

Therefore, the data shows that support for Israel among young Russian-speaking Jews is constant and high. 79% of those who have not visited Israel after the RAJE program and 83% of those who visited Israel after the program responded that they either agree or very much agree that every Jew should support the State of Israel. Continuing education at RAJE (taking 1-2 or more semesters at RAJE) somewhat increases this already high level of support for Israel (from 79 to 85 percent).

Nevertheless, while overall positive attitude toward Israel and massive support for it among RAJE graduates remain an independent constant, the intensity of attitude grows with the attendance of various educational sessions offered by RAJE, reading Jewish books, visiting Jewish websites, owning Jewish books, and visiting Israel after RAJE trip.

Supporting Israel Reading Jewish books	No, not sure, somewhat agree	Agree	Very much agree	%
No	20	35	45	100%
Yes, at least 1 book	18	20	61	100%

Supporting Israel Own Jewish books	No, not sure, somewhat agree	Agree	Very much agree	%
No	29	46	25	100%
Yes, at least 1 book	17	28	55	100%

Support Israel Visiting Jewish websites	No, not sure, somewhat agree	Agree	Very much agree	%
No	26	36	38	100%
Yes, at least 1	18	25	57	100%

Support Israel Visiting Israel	No, not sure, somewhat agree	Agree	Very much agree	%
No	21	30	49	100%
Yes, at least for 3-7 days	15	21	64	100%

The charts above and the diagram below clearly illustrate this growth in intensity of positive attitudes. Each of these activities increases the proportion of respondents who very much agree that every Jew should support Israel. The impact is especially dramatic for owning Jewish books - where the rate increased from 25% for those who do not have Jewish books, to 55% for respondents possessing at least 1 Jewish book. Visiting Jewish websites also strongly imparts a positive attitude toward supporting Israel (from 38% to 57%).

Very much agree that every Jew should support the State of Israel

Noteworthy, the intensity of support for Israel varies depending on religious affiliation: within the group identifying themselves as Agnostics or Atheists the strongest support is expressed by only 30%, while in the Orthodox group the rate of strongest support for the State of Israel is expressed by 77% of respondents. Traditionalists expressed a slightly greater rate of strongest support for the State of Israel than the Conservatives. Among both Conservatives and Traditionalists, the level of support for Israel is significantly higher than that for Agnostics.

The data indicates a strong correlation between the support for Israel and political involvement in voting for a candidate based on their Israel stance. The stronger the attitude toward supporting Israel among RAJE graduates, the more likely they would not support a political candidate who does not have a strong track record in supporting Israel.

Voting for a political candidate	Not under any circumstances	Not likely	Possibly depending on their stance on other important issues	I would not take support of Israel into consideration	%
No, not sure, or somewhat agree	14	44	37	5	100%
Agree	23	62	15	0	100%
Very much agree	55	37	8	0	100%

Predictably, the stronger the attitude toward supporting Israel - the more likely the respondents were to have participated in meetings (rallies, demonstrations) in support of Israel in the past 12 months. That is how their attitude is transformed into real behavior. The data indicates that among those who expressed strongest support for Israel, 47% attended rallies in support of Israel.

Conclusions:

1. RAJE graduates have a strong attitude in support of the State of Israel. Over 80% of all respondents either agree or very much agree with the statement “Every Jew should support the State of Israel”. This attitude is independent of age, gender, marital status, and different activities within RAJE and beyond.
2. However, the intensity of this attitude increases based on activities at RAJE, reading and possessing Jewish books, visiting Jewish websites, visiting Israel, and religious affiliation.
3. The stronger the attitude toward supporting Israel, the less likely RAJE graduates are to vote for a political candidate with a weak stance on Israel; and the more likely they are to participate in rallies in support of Israel.

10. Main Findings and Recommendations

The findings of our study suggest that the RAJE Fellowship educational program proved to be very effective in achieving its educational goals, and thus providing a unique, viable and scalable model for ensuring a Jewish future for the next generation of FSU Jews in North America.

1. Participation in RAJE Fellowship programs coupled with socialization within RAJE had a significant impact on developing a positive attitude toward establishing a Jewish household and on resulting actual matrimonial behavior. An impressive 94% of all married RAJE graduates have a Jewish spouse, and 52% of those who are married to a Jewish person have met their spouses at RAJE.
2. RAJE graduates have expressed a high motivation toward marrying and dating a Jewish person. For 77% of all singles, marrying a Jewish person is either important or very important. This attitude is transforming into real behavior.
3. The concept of building a Jewish household includes not only dating and marriage, but also socializing with Jewish friends, possessing Jewish books at home, and attitudes toward providing Jewish education for children and

observing Shabbat and Kashrut. Those who have a strong positive attitude toward dating and marrying a Jewish person, also have a strong attitude toward observing Shabbat and Kashrut (66-70%), providing Jewish education for the children (66-69%), having mostly Jewish friends (66%), and possessing Jewish books at home (over 50% possess 3 or more). Therefore, **participating in the RAJE Fellowship program significantly and positively effects on the entire complicated system of establishing and further maintaining a Jewish household.**

4. RAJE graduates demonstrate higher levels of community involvement. They are more active in volunteering, charity, and Jewish community involvement than the general Russian-speaking Jewish population. 65% of RAJE graduates donated to a Jewish charity in past 12 months. RAJE alumni tend to give almost six times more to Jewish charities than other young Russian Jews.
5. RAJE graduates have a high rate of volunteerism: 35% have volunteered at least 1-3 times during the past 12 months.
6. The RAJE Fellowship program has achieved, as one of its major results, an outstanding outcome: it formed a cohort of young Russian-American Jews well affiliated with Jewish community, with high motivation toward Judaism, Jewish learning, and observing traditions and holidays. The core of RAJE graduates, regardless of their religious affiliation, clearly demonstrate adherence to mainstream Jewish traditions and practices, and a thirst for Jewish spirituality. RAJE Fellowship programs do not promote any particular Jewish affiliation. The core of RAJE graduates (55%) could be described as “Traditionalists” - alumni possessing a positive attitude toward Jewish traditions, rituals, history, and heritage; but not directly affiliated with any one religious stream. RAJE graduates cover the entire spectrum of religious affiliation including Agnostics and Atheists (13%), Conservatives, Reform, and Reconstructionist (12%), and Orthodox (20%).
7. RAJE graduates have a strong positive attitude toward the State of Israel. Over 80% of all respondents either agree or very much agree with the statement “Every Jew should support the State of Israel”. This attitude is

independent of age, gender, marital status, and different activities in RAJE and beyond. However, since completion of the RAJE Fellowship program leads to more participation in other activities by its graduates - the intensity of this positive attitude toward Israel increases based on activities at RAJE, reading and possessing Jewish books, visiting Jewish websites, and visiting Israel. The stronger the attitude toward supporting Israel - the less likely RAJE graduates are to vote for a political candidate with a weak stance on Israel; and the more likely they are to participate in rallies in support of Israel.

The study's results undoubtedly suggest that RAJE has found a new way of educating young Russian-Jewish immigrants and that this way is quite effective in terms of producing desirable results in creating and maintaining a Jewish home, Jewish community affiliation, spiritual growth, and attitude toward Israel.

Therefore, the RAJE Fellowship program: 1) should be supported by major Jewish organizations and foundations; 2) should be expanded to recruit many more young people and to offer more learning through its advanced programs; 3) should be studied further, and its effective formula implemented in other Jewish educational programs.