

# A Sociodemographic Profile of Jews in the United States in the 1980s

Gary A. Tobin

Sociologists, demographers, theologians and casual observers may see Jewish life in the 1980s in many different ways. The quantitative picture presented here is intended to provide a background against which various critical aspects of Jewish life may be examined. These include family, religious practice, economic well-being, and others. Given the scope of the areas covered in this paper, there is no pretense that the state of Jewish life in the United States is analyzed here in a comprehensive way. The data provide a quantitative basis that calls for much more in-depth examination of many important aspects of the state of American Jewry in the 1980s.

The presentation of some comparative quantitative data in itself is no simple task. Most discussions about the current state or the future of Jews in the United States have been limited to general observations, albeit sometimes quite keen, or extrapolations or interpolations from very limited data sets. More often than not, speculation, one step removed from observation, has served as the foundation for discussions, and usually a single community has been the basis for broad statements about American Jewry in general.

The quantitative study of contemporary Jewry in the United States is limited by the absence of a question on religion in the United States Census. Comparisons between Jews or other ethnic groups and the general population are, therefore, difficult to make. Furthermore, it has been over 15 years since the only national Jewish population study (Council of Jewish Federations, 1971) in the United States was made and three decades since the 1957 survey of major religious groups conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1957). These two sources represent the only national profiles of Jews in the United States in the post-World War II era.

Other studies have provided in-depth profiles of particular communities. But it has been over three decades since Marshall Sklare conducted the initial research for the definitive Lakeville studies (Sklare and Greenblum, 1967). Sklare's work provided the most in-depth analysis of a modern Jewish community in the United States. Goldstein and Goldscheider (1968) published *Jewish-Americans* twenty years ago, an in-depth analysis of the Providence, Rhode Island Jewish population.

In-depth discussions of other Jewish communities are available: a comparative analysis of the Boston community using the 1965 and 1975 demographic studies, (Goldscheider, 1985), and a study of the New York community based on data collected in that city's 1981 local population study (Cohen, 1988).

Other works look at more selected aspects of American Jewish life. Elazar's work explores institutional structure (Elazar, 1976), for example, while other studies address issues such as antisemitism (Glock, 1979), and changing Jewish identity (Cohen, 1983). A recent overview, *American Jews in Transition*, by Chaim Waxman (1983) discusses the state of modern Jewry in the United States. Using a historical perspective, Waxman traces a number of major components in modern Jewish life, including religious identity, demographic patterns, and institutional affiliations. Yet no current work has provided a complete quantitative overview of the sociodemographic and religious character of modern Jewish life in the United States in the 1980s.

Two major review essays were completed by Goldstein, both appearing in the *American Jewish Year Book* (1971; 1981a). Using existing data sources, including the U.S. Census survey of religious groups, the 1971 National Jewish Population Study (NJPS), and local demographic studies completed in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, Goldstein provided a thorough profile of the American Jewish community.

Occasionally, large data sets about health status or political patterns may produce a sub-sample of Jews sufficiently large for some limited analysis about very specific variables. For example, Goldstein was able to use existing national data on the general population to calculate Jewish women's fertility rates (Goldstein, 1981b). Other limited data sources are available about American Jews. For example, the Yankelovich study (Martire and Clark, 1982) of antisemitic beliefs in the United States included a national sample of about 150 Jews. An American Jewish Committee study in 1984 of political beliefs also contained a national sample (Cohen, 1984). Yiddish mother tongue in the U.S. Census provides some information (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970). Each of these samples, however, skews or underrepresents certain portions of the Jewish population, and they are limited in scope as well.

Local demographic studies provide the best and most detailed data about American Jewry in the 1980s. In the absence of national data, population studies undertaken by individual Jewish communities must be used to discuss the demographic, religious, and other characteristics of the Jewish population. Demographic studies have been completed in over 25 cities in the past few years, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Miami and Washington, D.C. Collectively, these communities comprise about 70% of the Jewish population in the United States. San Francisco and Houston are major Jewish population centers for which data only became available during the late 1980s. The vast majority of Jewish communities which are lacking data have Jewish populations of under 50,000.

In his 1971 study, Goldstein was concerned with the representativeness of his data, since most of them were taken from more than twenty community studies, primarily of moderate size (Goldstein, 1971). Data for most of the major Jewish populations, including New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami were then not yet available. Today, of course, just the opposite is the case. At the time of writing, data were unavailable for most smaller Jewish communities other than Fort Wayne, Nashville and Oklahoma City. Data on sunbelt cities in the South and West are also less forthcoming. Current data are missing on all Florida cities except Miami. Data are also missing from Dallas, San Diego, Orange County (California), San Antonio and Albuquerque. The studies that have been completed provide a good profile of Midwest and Northeastern cities with Jewish populations of over 20,000, and some

of the largest Jewish populations in the South and West, including Atlanta, Los Angeles and Denver. However, they tell us little about Jewish life in most metropolitan areas of under 1,000,000 and even less about Jewish life in small cities and towns.

Nevertheless, since most Jews live in large cities covered by studies, the available data allow for a rather thorough picture of American Jewry. Certainly for the purposes of this paper, which is concerned with a general overview, the data are sufficient. Unfortunately, comparisons between Jewish populations in small and large cities, or Jews in cities and small towns or rural areas is not possible. A different data base would be necessary.

Other problems also hamper the analysis. The information available in the existing demographic studies is not always comparable. Different questions are asked, similar questions are asked in different ways, and the reporting of results differs as well. Nevertheless, tables have been constructed here that provide information on many important variables, and other data are examined in individual communities to serve as examples of trends that appear in a number of cities. The quality of the studies also varies a great deal, especially the sampling methodologies and interviewing techniques. Prior to 1979, many studies sampled from Federation lists, which included only the known populations. Some used mail surveys and had relatively low returns. Most of the studies since 1979 have used some form of list-merging or random digit dialing to find unaffiliated populations. Telephone interviews were used for the most part, with completion rates averaging about 80%. The studies used in this paper can be assumed to generally represent the respective populations.

The data presented here expand upon two previous overviews. The first, "A Compendium of Jewish Demographic Studies" (Tobin and Lipsman, 1984) compiled tables from thirteen Jewish demographic studies conducted between 1979 and 1982. It provided a broad comparative picture of American Jewish communities. A second essay by Tobin and Chenkin (1985) in the *American Jewish Year Book* expanded on this compendium, including data collected in four additional cities between 1982 and 1984. This paper includes data collected in 1984 from three additional cities.

The Jewish populations in this paper are also compared to the general population in each of the metropolitan areas studied. Comparisons are made to the white populations of the metropolitan areas, since Jews more closely resemble whites, than blacks or Hispanics. Some variables are not available from all of the Jewish demographic studies and are, therefore, missing in some of the tables and the analysis.

The data in this paper are woven about and reflect some basic theoretical themes concerning contemporary Jewish-Americans. The first of these themes is best expressed by the very term – Jewish-American. Jews carry a multiple identity that is at once religious, ethnic, and national. Their identity is further compounded by the State of Israel, both in its physical presence and by the communality Jews feel with their people scattered all over the world.

Other Americans may share similar multiple identities. An Irish-Catholic may feel Irish, American and Catholic to varying degrees, as may Japanese-Americans or black Americans. Others may feel many roles and harken to many roots. Furthermore, in a host culture that at its base is white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, Jews are part of a wide set of other ethnic, racial and religious groups who share the role of outsiders often played by Jews only. Blacks, Catholics, Hispanics, Asians and a host of ethnic and religious groups maintain separate identities, sometimes reinforced through discrimina-

tion. Tens of millions of Americans must balance their multiple roles of being Americans and something else too. Multiple identity is a part of life for many groups besides Jews.

Other immigrant groups face greater conflict in defining their identity. Jews in America are no longer a 'new' ethnic group. Compared to the English, Irish, Germans and others from Western Europe, Jews are recent settlers, though their vast majority were born in the United States. Many are native Americans born of native Americans, and fourth-generation American Jews are even more distant from their immigrant roots. Like the Poles, Italians and others from Eastern and Southern Europe who settled in the United States in the great immigration wave of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jews are now an integral part of the American scene. Indeed, an entire wave of immigrants in the past two decades, Hispanics from Central and South America, Asians from Korea, China and Vietnam, Iranians and others from the Middle East, comprise the populations that are now the 'new' immigrants. Jews are far along in their struggle to balance multiple identities, but it remains a problem.

Differentiation among Jews is the second major theme in this paper. Like other Americans, Jews have failed to melt into some broadly defined mass culture. Distinct from Americans in some ways, subgroups of Jews are also distinct from one another. Geographically, behaviorally, attitudinally, religiously and demographically, 'the Jewish-American' has many faces. Diversity characterizes Jews.

When compared with the general American population, the Jewish group appears to be almost monolithic in character. But when compared within the group, Jews are differentiated by region, class and generation. Some factors bind Jews as an ethnic and religious group, while other factors divide them into an array of sub-groups. There is no 'typical' Jewish family, neither is there typical religious behavior, or a proto-typical community profile. Some factors do characterize most Jews, but universality is difficult to find.

Among certain sub-groups patterns of religious behavior are very much as they were in previous generations. For other Jews, most traditional religious behaviors have been abandoned. Still others have modified some practices, relinquished others, and created new ones. Yet by self-definition and some adherence to Jewish ritual and religious practice, most Jews remain Jews. Few convert to other religions. Along with dual identity and diversification is continuity and tradition. The latter are in a constant state of evolution for most Jews, but they remain key elements in Jewish-American life.

The Jewish-American condition is best described as evolutionary. Some traits remain, others develop, some disappear. Adaptability allows survival in new environments, and failure to adapt may lead to extinction. New sub-groups grow, but old ones do not necessarily fade away. Changes are usually gradual. Connections with the past remain, but modifications are constantly made.

Multiple identities, diversification, and evolutionary change characterize America's Jews in the 1980s. As a result, Jews at times resemble other Americans in some ways, while in other ways they are distinct or even unique. Depending on subgroup and characteristic, Jews are much alike, and yet very different, both from one another and from other Americans.

The remainder of this paper is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the demographic profile of Jews in the United States: sex, age, marital status and

other variables. The second section deals with socioeconomic characteristics: education, occupation, income. The third section presents the conclusions.

Because of space limitations, several important topics are not discussed here. The first topic is religious identity and religious practices and behavior, while the second is mobility, neighborhood patterns and urban and regional distribution of the Jewish population. These topics are covered more fully in a separate essay (Tobin, forthcoming). A third topic is the philanthropic, organizational and volunteer patterns of Jews which likewise are discussed more broadly elsewhere (Tobin, forthcoming).

Goldstein (1971) wrote that "The transition from a foreign-born, ethnic immigrant subsociety to an Americanized second- and third-generation community has had and increasingly will have major consequences for the structure of the Jewish community and for the lives of American Jews". This paper will outline the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics currently evolving among American Jews in the 1980s: from a second-generation community to a third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation community.

## **Demographic Characteristics**

### **Household Size**

The changing character of the Jewish household is most readily seen by examining the mean household size in each Jewish community. Comparisons are somewhat difficult since some communities have computed the mean household size with non-Jews included, while others have not. The problem is not a simple one. Many of the non-Jews are spouses in mixed-marriage households, and often in households that identify themselves as Jewish. In some cities, such as Washington, D.C., the non-Jewish members are often unmarried roommates and have no ties to the Jewish community. The inclusion or exclusion of non-Jews in the computation can significantly affect the reported mean household size. For example in Washington the mean household size is 2.7 with non-Jews included; without non-Jews it is 2.3. In St. Louis it is 2.6 with non-Jews and 2.4 without non-Jews. Most studies include non-Jews in the calculations of mean household size, arguing that these individuals may be tied to the Jewish community in some way. In most cases, therefore, the mean number of Jews living in households will be somewhat less than the figures reported in Table 1.

Nevertheless, the shrinking size of the Jewish household is seen in Table 1. The NJPS reported a mean household size of 2.8, which included non-Jews in the calculation. Only Cleveland later reported a mean household size of 2.8 or more. Since this figure is approximately the same as non-whites in Cleveland, and larger than for whites in general in the United States in 1980, it probably reflects a sampling error. With this exception, the mean household size in Jewish communities ranged from 2.2 to 2.6 persons. The cities with the lowest mean household size of 2.2 and 2.3 have disproportionate numbers of particular sub-populations: singles in Denver and Washington, divorced and separated households in Los Angeles, and elderly households in St. Paul and Miami.

The mean household size of Jewish populations is consistently lower than the 2.75 figure of the total population in the United States, and the 2.67 figure for all whites.

TABLE I. AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS IN JEWISH AND TOTAL WHITE HOUSEHOLDS

Standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA)	Year	Jewish households	Total white households <sup>a</sup>
Atlanta <sup>b</sup>	1984	2.6	2.70
Chicago <sup>b</sup>	1982	2.6	2.68
Cleveland <sup>c</sup>	1981	2.8	2.67
Denver <sup>c</sup>	1981	2.2	2.56
Los Angeles <sup>b</sup>	1979	2.2	2.50
Miami <sup>c</sup>	1982	2.2	2.50
Milwaukee <sup>b</sup>	1983	2.5	2.67
Minneapolis <sup>c</sup>	1981	2.6	2.69
Nashville <sup>b</sup>	1982	2.6	2.68
New York	1981	2.4	2.42
Philadelphia <sup>b</sup>	1984	2.5	2.75
Phoenix <sup>b</sup>	1983	2.4	2.64
Pittsburgh <sup>b</sup>	1984	2.5	2.67
Richmond	1983	2.4	2.59
Rochester <sup>b</sup>	1980	2.5	2.70
St. Louis <sup>c</sup>	1982	2.4	2.70
St. Paul <sup>c</sup>	1981	2.3	2.69
Washington, D.C. <sup>c</sup>	1983	2.8	2.60
U.S. total <sup>d</sup>	1970-1	2.8	
U.S. total	1980		2.67

a. 1980 U.S. Census.

b. Includes households containing non-Jews.

c. Non-Jews living in Jewish households have been factored out.

d. NJPS.

The differences between Jews and other whites in particular cities are less dramatic or nonexistent: 2.4 for whites and Jews in New York; 2.7 for whites and 2.6 for Jews in Chicago, Minneapolis, and Nashville. But in most cities, Jewish households are 0.1 – 0.4 persons smaller than other whites, and as much as 1.2 persons per household (Phoenix) smaller than non-whites.

The decrease in the mean household size can be attributed primarily to five factors, each of which will be discussed separately:

(a) Decreasing birthrates and fewer children in the households that have children at all;

(b) An increasing proportion of households whose grown children have moved out;

(c) A growing number of divorced and separated persons (parents or not) whose separation creates two households from one;

(d) A growing proportion of households with widows and widowers living alone or with other older single adults;

(e) A growing proportion of singles who have not yet married (or never marry) and live in their own households.

Each of these factors will be discussed separately.

The 1980 Census showed that 25% of white households were single-person households. Although Jews have a smaller proportion of singles than other whites (see below), and a lower mean household size, some Jewish communities have comparatively few single-person households. The Jewish populations of Denver (30%), Los Angeles (33%), Milwaukee (30%), Richmond (29%), and St. Paul (27%) had higher pro-

TABLE 2. JEWISH AND TOTAL WHITE HOUSEHOLDS, BY NUMBER OF PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD (PERCENT)

SMSA	Year	Jewish households						Total white households <sup>a</sup>					
		Number of persons						Number of persons					
		1	2	3	4	5	6+	1	2	3	4	5	6+
Atlanta	1984	21	35	20	16	8	2	21	32	19	17	7	3
Chicago	1982	21	36	21	12	8	2	25	31	17	15	7	5
Cleveland	1981	19	34	16	17	9	5	24	32	16	15	8	5
Denver	1981	30	37	16	13	3	1	25	33	17	15	6	3
Los Angeles	1979	33	36	12	13	5	1	29	33	15	12	6	5
Milwaukee	1983	30	37	33				24	32	16	15	8	5
Minneapolis	1981	22	37	16	15	8	2	24	31	16	16	8	5
Nashville	1982	24	34	16	16	8	2	21	33	20	16	7	3
Pittsburgh	1984	23	37	17	15	6	2	23	32	18	15	8	4
Richmond	1983	29	35	12	17	6	1	22	34	19	16	6	3
Rochester	1980	24	37	15	16	7	1	23	31	17	16	9	5
St. Louis	1982	22	37	17	15	7	2	23	32	17	16	7	5
St. Paul	1981	27	39	15	12	5	2	24	31	16	16	8	5
Washington, D.C.	1983	23	31	16	20	7	3	26	31	17	15	7	4
U.S. total <sup>a</sup>	1970-1	18	31	14	21	10	4						
U.S. total	1980							25	33	17	15	6	4

a. 1980 U.S. Census  
 b. NJPS.

portions of persons living alone than the white populations in the respective metropolitan areas and in the U.S. as a whole. Most Jewish communities, however, had a smaller proportion of one-person households compared both to all U.S. whites and to the whites in the local metropolitan areas. Two-person households were more common among Jews, compared to the national average of whites (33%). The proportion of two-person Jewish households ranged from 31% in Washington (the only city lower than the U.S. Census proportion for whites), to a high of 39% in St. Paul. Proportions of three- and four-person households in most Jewish communities resembled the figures for total whites (17% and 15%, respectively).

The proportion of households with five persons in the white population is 6%. Jewish communities tend to reflect this figure. The lower mean household size of Jews can also be seen in the proportion of households that are six persons or more.

**Family Composition and Marital Status**

The changing character of Jewish family composition can be seen in Table 3. The NJPS showed that in 1970 78% of all households had a married couple living either by themselves, with children or with other relatives, 6% were headed by singles (never-married), 10% by widows, and 5% by a divorced or separated person. In the 1980s each Jewish community showed a significantly lower proportion of households consisting of married persons, generally in the range of 60 to 70%. Los Angeles found that only 57% of the households consisted of married partners.

Nevertheless, a higher proportion of the Jewish population consists of married persons than among the white population in the United States, where 62% of all white

TABLE 3. JEWISH AND TOTAL WHITE POPULATION, AGED 18 AND OVER, BY MARITAL STATUS (PERCENT)

SMSA	Year	Jewish population				Total white population <sup>f</sup>			
		M	S	W	D/S	M	S	W	D/S
Atlanta	1984					62	23	6	9
Chicago <sup>a</sup>	1982	65	23	6	6	57	27	8	8
Cleveland	1981	69	11	13	8	59	26	8	7
Denver <sup>b</sup>	1981	64	23	4	9	57	27	5	11
Los Angeles <sup>b,c</sup>	1979	57	17	12	14	52	28	8	12
Miami	1982	61	7	23	8	57	23	10	10
Milwaukee	1983	67	14	9	10	58	28	8	6
Minneapolis	1981	66	22	7	5	57	30	6	7
Nashville	1982	70	17	8	5	62	22	7	9
New York	1981	65	15	11	9	52	30	10	8
Philadelphia	1984	61	23	6	10	57	28	9	6
Phoenix	1984	63	18	9	10	61	23	7	10
Pittsburgh <sup>e</sup>	1983	68	9	18	5	59	26	9	6
Richmond <sup>d</sup>	1983	67	14	12	7	60	24	7	9
Rochester	1980	71	18	8	3	57	28	8	7
St. Louis	1982	68	9	17	6	61	24	8	7
St. Paul	1981	66	20	11	3	57	30	6	7
Washington, D.C.	1983	61	27	4	7	56	30	6	9
U.S. total <sup>e,f</sup>	1970-1	78	6	10	5				
U.S. total	1980					62	24	8	6

M = married; S = single; W = widowed; D/S = divorced/separated

a. Marital status of adults, 18 and over.

b. Approximate figures; the statistics on marital status were given only as a cross-tabulation with age groups. For Los Angeles, the figures shown were calculated using a weighted average from the sample size in each age group. For Denver, the same process was used, but sample sizes were unavailable so percentages were used.

c. Heads of households only.

d. Heads of households. In case of couples, both husband and wife are defined as heads of household.

e. NJPS.

f. 1980 U.S. Census.

adults were married in 1980. In each of the cities examined, the proportion of Jewish adults married was higher than among the white population.

The greatest change in the marital status configuration of Jews since the 1970 NJPS is in the increased proportion of Jewish singles. In the 1980s, for example, the proportion of singles in the adult population was 15% in New York, 18% in Phoenix, 23% in Chicago, and 18% in Rochester. Yet, the proportion of households that are headed by singles are significantly lower in each Jewish community than among the white populations in the same metropolitan areas.

The proportion of widowed persons is higher in some cities in the 1980s than the 1970 NJPS figure of 10% for widowed heads of households, but lower in others. Washington and Denver, for example, with younger populations show only 4% of the household heads as widowed. Yet other communities also showed a figure lower than 10%, including Chicago, Minneapolis, Phoenix and others. Miami, with the oldest Jewish population in the United States (where data are available), showed 23% of the household heads as widowed.

The U.S. Census showed that 8% of the white households consisted of widowed persons in 1980, lower than the 10% shown in NJPS a decade earlier. As might be



expected, the proportion of white households headed by widowed persons was generally lower than in the Jewish population, with the exceptions of Washington, Denver and Chicago.

The proportion of households with divorced or separated individuals presents a mixed picture, depending on the community. The NJPS national figure of 5% of household heads being divorced or separated was repeated, either unchanged or slightly lower in communities such as Minneapolis, Nashville and Rochester. A number of communities showed slightly or significantly higher levels.

At the same time, a mixed picture also emerged for the white populations in each community. Fewer Jewish than other white households had divorced or separated individuals in Washington, Richmond, St. Paul and other cities. Yet, in Los Angeles and Cleveland, Jews had a higher proportion of households with divorced or separated persons. On the whole, the proportion of Jewish households with someone divorced or separated tends to be lower than in the white populations in the communities for which data are available.

While the proportion of heads of households that are currently divorced or separated is relatively low, the figures hide the increased divorce rate among Jews. A significant proportion of currently married couples include at least one partner who was married before: 12% in Miami and Washington; 13% in Milwaukee; 14% in Denver; and 16% in New York.

Married couples enumerated together with children constitute a small proportion of all Jewish households: 24% in Los Angeles; 25% in Denver; 22% in Miami; 30% in Milwaukee and New York; and 28% in Phoenix. Regardless of city size or region, the 'typical Jewish family' has now become a distinct minority in Jewish communities throughout the United States.

The later marriage age of Jews can be seen by looking at the proportions of those who have never been married, by age group (Table 4). In Miami, for example, 26% of Jews under the age of 35 had never been married; 43% of the 25-29 year olds in Denver, and 56% of those under the age of 30 in Phoenix.

Most studies show a small proportion of single-parent (formerly married) heads of households (Table 5). These households are overwhelmingly headed by women. Generally, about 4% of households are headed by single-parents. However, these households constitute as much as 20% of all households with children. Children are defined as individuals under age 18, regardless of their relationship to the current head of household. The relatively small proportion of single-parent households masks the number of households that temporarily contained only one parent between successive marriages; that is, single parenthood has in total affected a much larger number of families where there has since been remarriage.

TABLE 4. PERCENT OF JEWISH PERSONS NEVER MARRIED, BY AGE

SHMSA	Year	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
Denver	1981	86	43	26	12	4					
Miami	1982		2			8		2			3
Milwaukee	1983	47		10		7		4		9	
Phoenix	1983	56		10		2		2		2	
Rochester	1980	72		7				3			6

TABLE 5. SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS AS PERCENT OF TOTAL JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS

SMSA	Year	Percent
Denver <sup>a</sup>	1981	3.9
Los Angeles <sup>a</sup>	1979	4.0
Miami	1982	4.7
Milwaukee	1983	3.5
New York	1981	4.0
Philadelphia	1984	4.8
Phoenix	1983	5.0
St. Paul	1981	2.5 <sup>a</sup>
" "	"	5.6 <sup>b</sup>

a. Includes only children under 18 currently living in household.

b. Includes all children.

A significant proportion of older Jews live with their adult children. About 5% of those over the age of 65 in Phoenix lived with an adult child. Looked at in another way, 8% of all households in St. Louis had an older parent living with an adult child. Clearly, adult children and older parents sharing the same household is not a completely disappearing phenomenon.

### Age and Sex

Certain basic trends can be noted in the changing age structure of American Jewry (Table 6). While in 1970, 32% of the population surveyed was under 20 years of age, the proportions reported by the communities currently studied were lower in virtually every case. At the other end of the age scale, 16% of the population in 1970 was 60 years or older. Almost all communities currently showed significantly larger proportions over 60 of their populations. Miami showed 44% of the population aged 60 and over, while Denver and Los Angeles showed proportions of 15% and 12%, respectively. Overall, the 19 communities reviewed in Table 6 support the assumption made from the 1970 study that the elderly proportion of the U.S. Jewish population would increase sharply.

The most important factor to note is the increasing proportion of individuals over the age of 70. While the NJPS figure was 7% in 1970, it was exceeded in every community outside the sunbelt, and was twice as high (14%) in St Paul. As the Jewish population ages, increasing proportions will be over the age of 75 and over the age of 85, again mirroring – though to a greater extent – changes in the U.S. population.

The graying of the population can be seen in the increasing proportions of Jews who are over the age of 75 and over the age of 85 (Table 7). In most communities, about 1% or 2% of the population is over the age of 85. For those between the ages of 75 and 85, the figures generally range from about 3% to 6%. Miami shows that 13% of the population is between 75 and 85, while 1% is 85 and over, the same as in other cities.

At the same time, the proportion of females to males is consistent with increased aging of the Jewish population and the greater longevity of females as compared to males. Although in 1970 the proportion of females was only slightly over 50% of the

TABLE 6. JEWISH AND TOTAL WHITE POPULATION, BY AGE (PERCENT)

SMSA	Year	Jewish population							Total white population*							
		0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	0-9	10-19	20-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Atlanta	1984	12	13	18	22	15	8	7	5	14	17	28	14	11	8	8
Chicago	1981	21	35	30	14	14	14	14	14	13	16	26	12	11	11	11
Cleveland	1981	22	11	33	20	20	20	14	14	13	16	24	11	11	12	13
Denver*	1981	9	22	21	11	10	8	7	7	14	16	31	13	10	8	8
Los Angeles	1979	16	13	19	13	14	13	8	4	12	15	27	12	11	11	12
Miami	1982	9	11	8	11	7	10	18	26	10	14	22	12	12	11	18
Milwaukee	1983	11	16	13	15	12	10	12	11	13	17	26	11	11	10	12
Minneapolis	1981	12	15	12	15	12	12	11	10	14	17	29	12	10	8	10
Nashville	1982	21	7	11	41	20	20	20	20	14	16	27	12	10	9	11
New York	1981	9	12	16	13	12	14	13	10	10	13	24	11	12	12	17
Philadelphia*	1984	17	14	17	14	11	11	10	6	12	17	25	11	11	11	13
Phoenix*	1983	13	11	17	19	10	10	12	7	14	16	26	11	10	10	13
Pittsburgh	1984	10	12	10	13	11	14	17	13	12	16	24	10	12	13	13
Richmond	1983	15	9	15	22	8	11	13	8	13	16	28	12	10	11	11
Rochester	1980	12	8	14	17	29	20	20	20	13	18	26	11	10	10	12
St. Louis*	1982	11	14	14	14	12	13	11	11	14	17	25	11	11	10	12
St. Paul	1981	10	12	11	13	8	16	16	14	14	17	29	12	10	8	10
Seattle	1979	20	12	12	23	10	22	13	13	12	16	29	13	10	10	10
Washington, D.C.	1983	23	30	30	20	19	8	8	8	12	16	28	14	11	9	9
U.S. total <sup>a</sup>	1970-1	12	20	14	11	13	13	9	7	14	17	25	12	10	10	12
U.S. total	1980															

a. One or more age categories will vary 1-2 years from the designated range:

For Denver and Phoenix, the categories are: 0-9; 10-17; 18-29; 20-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60-69; 70-74.

For Philadelphia, the categories are: -15; 15-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65-74; 75+.

For St. Louis, the categories are: 0-10; 11-20; 21-30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60; 61-70; 71+.

For Washington, D.C., the categories are: 0-17; 18-35; 36-45; 46-65; 66+.

b. NJPS.

c. 1980 U.S. Census

TABLE 7. PERCENT OF JEWISH POPULATION OVER THE AGES OF 75 AND 85

SMSA	Year	75-84	85+
Denver	1981	3	2
Los Angeles	1979	3	1
Miami	1982	13	1
Milwaukee	1983	4	2
Minneapolis	1981	4	1
Phoenix	1983	3	-
Pittsburgh	1984	6	1
Rochester	1980	6	1
St. Louis	1982	5	1
U.S. total <sup>a</sup>	1970-1	3.6	
U.S. total population <sup>b</sup>	1980	3.4	1

a. NJPS.

b. U.S. Census.

TABLE 8. JEWISH POPULATION, BY SEX (PERCENT)

SMSA	Year	Male	Female
Cleveland	1981	47	53
Los Angeles	1979	48	52
Miami	1982	44	56
Milwaukee	1983	49	51
Minneapolis	1981	49	51
Nashville	1982	49	51
Richmond	1983	49	51
Rochester	1980	49	51
St. Louis	1982	47	53
St. Paul	1981	47	53
Washington, D.C.	1983	52	48
U.S. total <sup>a</sup>	1970-1	49	51
U.S. total population <sup>b</sup>	1980	49	51

a. NJPS.

b. U.S. Census.

total, by the 1980s most communities showed a larger proportion of females, as high as 56% in Miami. Washington, D.C. is the only exception, where there are more men than women: 52% to 48% (Table 8).

### Fertility

Demographers have consistently pointed to relatively lower Jewish fertility levels than among the general population, and to declining birthrates over time. Goldstein (1981a) found a steady decrease in the ratio of children under five years of age per Jewish women aged 20-44 in the 1960s until 1975. Yet in some cities, such as Miami, Milwaukee, Phoenix, and Pittsburgh, Jewish child-woman ratios appeared to be higher than the lowest ratios found in the mid-1970s. In other cities, such as Denver, St. Louis, and Los Angeles, a gradual decline in birthrate continues. In still others, such as New York and Rochester, the decline has been steep (Table 9).

TABLE 9. JEWISH CHILD-WOMAN RATIOS

SMSA	Year	Ratio of children under age 5 per 1,000 women 20-44
Denver	1981	262
Los Angeles	1979	220
Miami	1982	391
Milwaukee	1983	350
New York	1981	190
Phoenix	1983	338
Pittsburgh	1984	340
Rochester	1980	161
St. Louis	1982	254

Schmelz (1981) argues that replacement level, corresponding to a total fertility rate of about 2.1 Jewish children per woman would be attained with a fertility ratio for the Jewish population of 350 Jewish children aged 0-4 per 1,000 Jewish women aged 15-44. Nearly all cities for which we have data were below this figure. (Table 9 gives the ratio of 0-4 year old children to women aged 20-44.) Using Goldstein's (1981a) calculations, one city (Miami) was at or above replacement level, three (Milwaukee, Pittsburgh and Phoenix) were just below, and the rest were far below.

Lower fertility rates are exacerbated by later marriage and child bearing. Yet where child expectations were asked about, in St. Louis and Washington for example, the large majority of women, even in their thirties who were unmarried and currently childless, wanted to have at least one child. The net result of the delayed marriage patterns of the large baby-boom generations on completed family size in the near future is still difficult to assess.

## Nativity

Jews are still more likely to be foreign-born than other Americans. The 1980 Census showed that 6% of the population as a whole and 5% of total whites are foreign-born. The NJPS had reported for 1970 that 23% of the Jews were foreign-born (Table 10).

The proportion of Jewish foreign-born differs substantially from one metropolitan area to another. Miami and Los Angeles have the highest proportions of foreign-born Jews: 27% and 24%, respectively. This compares to 38% of all whites in Miami and 18% of whites in Los Angeles. Richmond and Washington have the lowest proportions of foreign-born Jews, 6% and 8%, respectively, compared to 2% of the whites in Richmond and 6% of the whites in Washington. For the most part, the population of foreign-born Jews is between 11% and 18%, compared to 2% to 10% of the white populations in the cities examined.

The proportion of foreign-born is linked to the age structure of each Jewish community. Older communities, such as Miami, Seattle and St. Louis have higher proportions of foreign-born. It is also linked to concentrations of the newer Jewish immigrants, Israelis and Soviets, in cities like New York and Los Angeles.

TABLE 10. JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATION, BY NATIVITY (PERCENT)

SMSA	Year	Jewish population			Total population <sup>c</sup>			
		Local	Other US	Foreign	Local	Other US	Foreign	Foreign
Atlanta	1984	18	74	8	63	35	2	
Chicago <sup>a</sup>	1982	66	22	12	65	25	10	
Cleveland	1981	58	27 <sup>b</sup>	15	68	25	6	
Denver	1981	22	67	11	40	56	4	
Los Angeles	1979	16	60	24	40	37	22	
Miami	1983	4	69	27	25	39	36	
Milwaukee	1983	┌—89—┐		11	75	21	4	
Minneapolis	1981	47	40	13	71	25	3	
New York	1981	┌—83—┐		17	57	21	21	
Philadelphia	1984	65	25	10	69	26	5	
Phoenix	1983	--	--	--	29	66	5	
Pittsburgh	1984	63	26	11	84	12	3	
Richmond <sup>c</sup>	1983	22	72	6	71	27	2	
Rochester	1980	┌—85—┐		--	76	18	6	
St. Louis	1982	50	34	16	70	27	2	
St. Paul	1981	46	36	18	71	25	3	
Seattle	1979	┌—77—┐		23	48	44	7	
Washington, D.C.	1983	36	56	8	30	62	8	
U.S. total <sup>d</sup>	1970	┌—77—┐		23				
U.S. total	1980						6	

a. Respondent and spouse only.

b. U.S. = U.S. and Canada.

c. Heads of households.

d. NJPS.

e. 1980 U.S. Census. Includes non-whites.

## Mobility

The Jewish population is far less likely to have been born in the metropolitan area in which it currently resides than the general population. The only exception is Washington, where 36% of the Jewish population was born in the area, compared to 30% of the total population. In all other communities, however, a great many Jews were urban transplants. Chicago shows over two thirds of the respondents and their spouses being locally born. Cleveland (58%) and St. Louis (50%), also show majorities of the respective Jewish household members being born in the metropolitan area in which they reside. Yet in most communities lower proportions of Jewish household heads were born in their current community, especially in the sunbelt and West. Only 22% of the Jewish household heads in Denver were born there, compared to 40% of the general population; 16% in Los Angeles, compared to 40%; 4% in Miami, compared to 25%; 22% in Richmond, compared to 71%. As might be expected of a highly educated, high occupational status group, Jews appear to be much more mobile than other Americans.

## Socioeconomic Characteristics

### Education

The NJPS showed that the Jewish population with only a high school education or less tended to be older. It could be predicted that as first- and second-generation Jews decreased in numbers, and as third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation Jewry grew, the proportion of those with college or higher degrees would increase. Among the communities currently surveyed, there has indeed been a decrease in the proportion of the population with a high school education or less, while at the same time the proportions of those with some college, college degrees, or advanced college degrees have increased significantly since 1970 (Table 11).

TABLE 11. JEWISH AND TOTAL WHITE POPULATION, BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION (PERCENT)

SMSA	Year	Jewish population				Total white population		
		H.S. or less	Some college	College degr.*	Adv. degr.	H.S. or less	1-3 yrs. college	4+ yrs. college
Atlanta	1984	13	22	43	22	58	19	23
Chicago <sup>b</sup>	1982	22	27	25	26	63	17	20
Los Angeles	1979	32	25	26	18	58	22	20
Miami	1983	41	23	24	12	64	18	18
Milwaukee	1983	22	20	32	26	66	16	18
Minneapolis	1981	25	29	28	19	59	19	22
Nashville	1982	←50→		28	22	68	14	17
New York	1981	31	18	31	20	65	13	22
Philadelphia	1984	37	22	19	22 <sup>c</sup>	69	13	18
Phoenix	1983	24	25	33	17	58	22	19
Rochester	1980	36	15	24	25	64	17	19
St. Louis <sup>d</sup>	1982	33	22	27	18	69	14	17
St. Paul	1981	43	23	20	15	59	19	22
Seattle	1979	29	18	25	27	53	23	24
Washington, D.C.	1983	15	16	24	45	42	19	39
U.S. total <sup>e</sup>	1970-1	46	20	15	19			
U.S. total	1980					67	17	16

a. "College degree" includes completed bachelors degrees and incompleated advanced degrees.

b. Respondent and spouse only.

c. Last category is "B.A. or more" - includes advanced degrees.

d. "Other education" excluded and percentages recomputed.

e. NJPS. Based on individuals.

f. 1980 U.S. Census.

While 34% of the NJPS population in 1970 had at least a college degree, most Jewish communities recently investigated show at least 40% of the adult population having college degrees, and many have 50% or more, with Washington showing 72%.

The current data show that Jews are remarkably well educated as compared with the general population. While only 16% of the total U.S. white population had at least a college degree in 1980, the figure for the Jewish population was 51% in Chicago, 58% in Milwaukee, 51% in New York, and 52% in Seattle. City by city, Jews were better educated than other whites; 50% of the Jews in Phoenix had a college degree or more,

compared to 19% of all whites in Phoenix; 45% in St. Louis, compared to 17%; 41% in Philadelphia, compared to 18%; and 51% in New York, compared to 22%.

When the data are examined by age, it appears that as many as 90% of the 25–40 age group have a college degree or more, and in Washington, about 80% have an advanced degree. It also appears that as age decreases, so do the percentages of Jews with only a high school education. In Denver, for example, it was found that about 55% of the Jewish men and women over the age of 65 had a high school education or less. For those under 35, only 5.6% of the men and 7.2% of the women had a high school education or less. Between the ages of 35 and 49, about 45% of the men and 34% of the women had graduate degrees. For those under 35, 21% of the women and 40% of the men had graduate degrees (Table 12).

Similar results were found in Milwaukee, Phoenix and Washington. The level of education continues to rise from one age cohort to the next, but the slope of the rise is beginning to flatten. Furthermore, Jewish women, although very well educated when compared to the general population, do not have educational status equal to that of Jewish men, controlling for age.

Educational levels are quite different by age group in St. Louis, though with steady gains in educational achievement with each successive generation. Of those respondents and spouses over 65 years of age, 35% have less than a high school education, and 33% have a high school education. About 9% finished college, and 6.4% have an advanced degree. Educational levels steadily increase, with 34% of the 51–65 age group having a college or advanced degree, versus 62% of the 36–50 age group and

TABLE 12. JEWISH POPULATION, BY SEX, AGE<sup>a</sup> AND EDUCATION (PERCENT)

Educational attainment	Males				Females			
	18-34	35-49	56-64	65+	18-34	35-49	56-64	65+
<b>Denver, 1981</b>								
High school or less	5.6	4.5	20.4	55.2	7.2	19.1	40.5	55.5
Some college/college	54.8	50.0	55.0	22.1	72.1	46.2	47.4	39.4
More than B.A.	39.7	45.4	24.5	22.7	20.8	34.7	12.0	5.0
<b>Milwaukee, 1983</b>								
High school or less	8.0	16.0		35.4	11.3	24.5		56.5
Some college/college	44.8	39.3		32.5	42.2	52.7		39.8
More than B.A.	47.0	44.7		32.1	46.5	22.8		3.6
<b>Phoenix, 1983</b>								
High school or less	9.0	23.4		47.9	11.8	35.6		47.0
Some college/college	55.8	45.4		28.5	61.8	49.7		43.3
More than B.A.	35.3	31.1		23.6	26.4	14.7		9.6
<b>Washington, D.C., 1983</b>								
High school or less	4.2	5.3	9.6	29.5	9.0	13.7	29.0	52.6
Some college/college	35.2	25.4	30.8	39.0	51.1	34.3	50.4	35.0
More than B.A.	60.5	69.3	59.6	31.5	39.9	52.0	20.6	12.4

a. Age ranges vary slightly:

Milwaukee and Phoenix: 18-39; 40-64; 65+

Washington, D.C.: 25-34; 35-44; 45-64; 65+

b. Data for "Other" and "No answer" not included in figures.



80% of the 21–35 age group. Of the latter age group 21–35, about 40% have an advanced degree, and 95% had at least some college training.

Different education levels still exist between men and women in St. Louis, even though these differences are smaller than for prior generations. For the age group between 21–35, 67% of the women completed a college education; 26% have advanced degrees. Of the men in this age group, 81% completed college, with 46% holding an advanced degree. The biggest proportional difference for men’s educational level is seen between the 36–50 age group, with 75% of the men having finished college or holding an advanced degree, versus 48% among the 51–65 age group. Similarly for women, 50% of the 36–50 age group finished college or have an advanced degree, as opposed to 21% of the 51–65 age group.

**Occupation**

Along with education, Jews differ most from other Americans, and from other white Americans, in occupational characteristics (Table 13). According to the 1980 U.S. Census, about 44% of total whites are in blue collar positions, 17% in clerical positions, 11% in sales, 15% in managerial and technical positions, and 13% in professional occupations.

The Jewish labor force in 1970 was composed of 10% in blue collar positions, 16%

TABLE 13. JEWISH AND TOTAL WHITE POPULATION, BY OCCUPATION<sup>a</sup> (PERCENT)

SMSA	Year	Jewish population					Total white population <sup>d</sup>				
		P	M/P	S	C	BC	P	M/P	S	C	BC
Atlanta	1984	47	18	14	13	8	13	19	13	21	34
Chicago <sup>b</sup>	1982	33	21	21	15	10	13	16	12	20	39
Cleveland	1981	39	22	17	12	10	13	15	11	19	42
Los Angeles	1979	34	16	20	19	11	14	17	11	20	38
Miami	1982	31	27	17	17	9	12	18	13	20	37
Milwaukee	1983	46	20	17	8	8	12	14	11	18	45
Minneapolis	1981	23	42	25		10	13	16	11	20	40
Nashville	1982	43	34	9	10	4	12	14	12	20	42
Philadelphia	1984	47		25	16	12	14	15	11	20	40
Phoenix	1983	28	23	24	11	14	13	16	13	18	40
Pittsburgh	1984	42	23	19	12	4	13	12	11	18	46
Richmond	1980	45	23	14	15	3	14	19	12	21	34
Rochester	1980	45	19	26		10	15	14	9	18	44
St. Louis	1982	29	20	33	12	6	13	15	11	19	42
St. Paul	1981	27	38	26		9	13	16	11	20	40
Seattle	1979	40	29	20	11		15	16	12	18	39
Washington, D.C.	1983	48	24	23		4	22	23	10	21	24
U.S. total <sup>c</sup>	1970-1	28	34	12	16	10					
U.S. total	1980						13	15	11	17	44

P = professional; M/P = managers/proprietors; S = sales; C = clerical; BC = blue collar  
 a. Housewives, students, retired, unemployed, and unknown excluded from figures; percentages recomputed to include only those employed for wages (Jewish population only).  
 b. Respondent and spouse only.  
 c. NJPS.  
 d. 1980 U.S. Census.

in clerical, 12% in sales, 34% in managerial and technical positions, and 28% in professional occupations.

A number of observations can be made when comparing the occupational status of Jews in the 1980s to that of the 1970 NJPS. Most cities show a slight decline, or an equal proportion to the 10% figure of blue collar workers reported in 1970. Cities as diverse as Chicago (10%), Phoenix (14%), Los Angeles (11%), Cleveland (10%), and Rochester (10%) show similar proportions of the population engaged in blue collar occupations. Most cities also show about 15% of their Jewish workers engaged in clerical positions, about the same as the NJPS. Significant increases, however, in the percentage of sales workers are recorded for most metropolitan areas since the 12% figure recorded in 1970. These include 21% in Chicago, 17% in Cleveland, 24% in Phoenix, 20% in Los Angeles, and 33% in St. Louis. In most cities, at least 50% of the workers in the total population are in sales, clerical, or blue collar positions.

The NJPS found that 41% of men aged 25-29 and 46% of men aged 30-39 were in professional and technical positions. Adjusting for the placement of 'technical' positions, with managerial as opposed to professional, there has been no change in most cities in the proportions of those men under 40 in professional positions.

At the same time, the proportion of managers/proprietors has decreased in most cities from the NJPS figure of 34% to 21% in Chicago, 22% in Cleveland, 24% in Washington, and 16% in Los Angeles. Conversely, significant increases have been shown in the proportion of professionals in some cities, from 28% in 1970 to 45% in Richmond and 46% in Milwaukee. Other cities have shown less change: St. Louis, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Phoenix still show the 1970 figure.

TABLE 14. JEWISH POPULATION, BY SEX, AGE<sup>a</sup> AND OCCUPATION (PERCENT)

Occupation	Males				Females			
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
<b>Denver, 1981</b>								
Professional	49.2	44.9	28.7	41.1	41.1	38.3	19.7	b
Managerial/technical	18.3	27.1	42.1	33.7	10.5	10.2	21.8	b
Sales	20.6	13.7	16.6	19.7	17.0	17.0	14.7	b
Clerical	3.4	8.3	6.1	3.0	18.9	21.9	38.2	b
Blue collar	8.4	6.0	6.5	2.6	12.5	12.5	5.7	b
<b>Milwaukee, 1983</b>								
Professional	53.8	35.2		33.9	57.6	40.5		22.2
Managerial/technical	15.0	32.8		29.0	12.1	11.9		13.9
Sales	15.0	21.9		19.4	9.1	19.1		25.0
Clerical	1.3	2.3		4.8	12.1	26.2		33.3
Blue collar	15.1	7.7		12.9	9.0	2.4		5.6
<b>Phoenix, 1983</b>								
Professional	24.8	28.3		19.2	31.5	23.4		b
Managerial/technical	31.5	32.4		21.6	14.0	15.3		b
Sales	25.9	26.2		36.9	14.9	24.3		b
Clerical	1.8	2.3		6.6	22.0	27.7		b
Blue collar	15.9	10.9		15.8	17.6	9.3		b

a. Age ranges very slightly:

Milwaukee and Phoenix: 18-39; 40-64; 65+

b. Not enough cases to include in this table.

The occupational shift towards the professions has been consistent by generation, but not equal among Jewish men and women. Furthermore, the majority of Jews, even in the younger age cohorts, are not in professional positions. The nature of these professions is also different for Jewish men and women. Men are much more likely to be doctors, lawyers, and accountants, while women are much more likely to be teachers, librarians and social workers.

While Jews are becoming increasingly professional, examination of occupational status by age and sex shows persistent differences between Jewish men and women (Table 14). In Phoenix, for example, 40% of the women under the age of 40, compared to 18% of the men, hold clerical and blue collar positions. On the other hand, approximately the same number, 32% of the women and 25% of the men in this age group are in professional positions.

In Washington, the proportion with professional occupations is higher among the younger age groups, who tend to be better educated, than among the older. A relatively large percentage of males 18 to 24 (13%) are in occupations described as 'technical and related' (e.g., computer programmers, legal assistants and laboratory technicians). Slightly more than one male in five aged 25 to 34 (21%) is a lawyer or a judge. The most common occupations among those 45 to 64 are in the managerial or administrative category. Many men older than 65 are in sales or managerial professions (10% and 9%, respectively). Almost one in five of the younger women 18 to 24 (19%) is in an administrative/clerical occupation while women 25 to 64 are more often either teachers or librarians (13%) than in administrative/clerical positions (12%).

## **Income**

As might be expected from the high educational/occupational status of many Jews, incomes are also high for a significant proportion of the Jewish population. Comparing incomes must take into account variable costs of living and differences by year because of annual inflation (Table 15).

In Milwaukee, for example, 23% of the households earned \$50,000 per year or more in 1983. Rochester, in 1980, found 17% of the households earning more than \$50,000. About 20% of the households in Miami earned more than \$50,000 per year in 1982, 41% in Washington in 1983, and 31% in St. Louis in 1982. Median incomes for Jews tended to be much higher than for the population in general.

Poor Jews are also a common phenomenon in cities throughout the United States. Measured on income alone, the proportion of Jews who are poor or near poor is not radically different from the rest of the total white population. In 1981, Denver reported that 37% of its Jewish households had incomes under \$20,000; Los Angeles, 42% in 1979; Nashville, 26% in 1982; Milwaukee, 30% in 1983; and Washington, D.C., 13% in 1983 (Table 15).

While many of the lower income Jews were young and single, the lack of adequate income is not restricted to low age cohorts or unmarried family status. In Denver, for example, almost 20% of those between 30 and 39 had incomes of under \$20,000 as did about 27% of those between 40 and 49. About 11% of households consisting of married people with children under 18 had incomes of under \$20,000 per year. In Miami, of those 35 to 49, the prime earning years, 11% had incomes under \$15,000

TABLE 15. JEWISH HOUSEHOLDS, BY ANNUAL INCOME<sup>a</sup> (PERCENT)

SMSA	Year	0-	\$10,000-	\$20,000-	\$30,000-	\$40,000+
		\$9,999	\$19,999	\$29,999	\$39,999	
Chicago	1982	13	19	25	14	29
Denver	1981	16	21	16	19	28
Los Angeles	1979	21	21	20	12	27
Miami	1983	┌──36──┐		┌──19──┐	┌──15──┐	┌──31──┐
Milwaukee	1983	12	18	21	┌──49──┐	
Minneapolis	1981	13	20	23	13	31
Nashville	1982	10	16	20	┌──54──┐	
New York	1981	12	16	21	18	33
Philadelphia	1984	┌──7──┐	┌──20──┐	┌──19──┐	┌──20──┐	┌──34──┐
Phoenix	1983	10	26	25	┌──29 <sup>b</sup> ──┐	
Rochester	1980	14	26	22	13	25
St. Louis	1982	13	16	13	15	43
St. Paul	1981	20	18	23	14	25
Washington, D.C.	1983	5	9	┌──18──┐		┌──67──┐
U.S. total <sup>c</sup>	1970-1	33	35	┌──32──┐		

- a. Refusals excluded from figures. Does not accurately reflect comparison due to changes in cost of living over four-year period and because of variance in cost of living between metropolitan areas.
- b. For Phoenix, the ranges and percentages are: \$30,000-\$50,000 - 27%; \$50,000+ - 12%.
- c. NJPS.

per year, and another 16% had incomes between \$15,000 and \$25,000; about one third of this age cohort had incomes of less than \$25,000 per year. In Milwaukee about 11% of the married households with children had incomes of under \$20,000 per year. Similar results were found in cities throughout the United States. Thus, while the poor tended to be disproportionately younger or older, or childless, households in all age categories or family types could be found in the lower income ranges.

The connection between single parenthood and income level is also apparent in Jewish communities throughout the country. In the Denver area, 24% of single-parent households had incomes under \$10,000 per year, and over 34% had incomes between \$10,000 and \$20,000 - a total of 58% with incomes under \$20,000 annually. Similar results were found in Milwaukee. Over 33% of the single parents had incomes under \$15,000 per year and another 17% had incomes between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per year, a total of 50% under \$20,000. Single parenthood in the Jewish population, like the general population, is likely to be associated with severely limited income levels of the households.

Old age also negatively correlates with income levels. In Milwaukee, over 51% of the households headed by persons over 65 years of age had incomes of under \$20,000 per year. In Miami, 17% of those 65 and over had incomes under \$5,000 per year, and 43% had incomes of \$5,000 to \$15,000 per year - a total of 60% with incomes under \$15,000. Another 18% had incomes between \$5,000 and \$25,000 per year. Over 53% of the over-65 age group in Phoenix had incomes of less than \$20,000 per year; the figure was 66% in St. Louis. While not all Jewish elderly were poor, the elderly were disproportionately represented in the low income categories.

## Conclusions

The data presented in this paper provide a very mixed picture of the sociodemographic profile of Jews in the United States. The data indicate substantial local variations, which in turn reflect on changing family structure, service delivery, fund raising, Jewish survivalism and assimilation, changing Jewish identity, the strength of Jewish institutions, the changing climate of religious practice and behavior, and the quality of Jewish life. Any one of these constitute a theme for a major treatise in itself and cannot be addressed fully here. Rather than attempt to discuss the meaning of the data for each of these areas, we conclude here with some general observations on the state of contemporary American Jewry.

As the data demonstrate, Jewish-Americans are the sum of very different parts. In any one dimension – demographic and socioeconomic, as well as religious and institutional – Jews are spread along an extended continuum. The diversity of Jews weighs on all summary statements about Jewish life in its totality. Discussions of the ‘Jewish future’ in a singular fashion do not serve us well.

The demographic data show that Jews increasingly resemble other Americans – remaining most distinct occupationally, and educationally and due to their lower fertility rates. Goldstein predicted that these differentials would lessen as Americans in general became better educated. Some evidence of this is apparent. But Jews remain different, even as they become more alike.

The structure of the family is under assault by divorce, later marrying age, and low fertility rates, but most Jews get married (and remarried), and have children. Demographically, as in religious life, Jews are spread along a very extended continuum.

What are the implications for religious life? Jewish religious life is getting stronger at the one end of the continuum, and it is getting weaker at the opposite end, as is Jewish organizational life. Religiously, a significant subgroup of Jews continues to practice Judaism as it was practiced in Eastern Europe. There is no evidence that this group is growing or shrinking dramatically. At the other end of the continuum is a significant proportion of Jews who have no interest in organized religious practice. While making no formal declaration of following another religion, some Jews simply stop being Jews. Halacha aside, a subgroup of Jews has moved away from Jewish neighborhoods, has no Jewish friends, and follows no Jewish religious practices. Some may ‘come back’, but many are ‘gone’ for the duration of their lives.

Most Jews fall somewhere in between, as might be expected from the nature of the demographic profile. Ritual practice and religious worship are integral or marginal parts of their lives, but they have modified both to fit their American environment. They practice Judaism to varying degrees, but they are committed to Jewish religious life. So are their children. The vast majority of Jews go to synagogue sometimes, got some form of Jewish education at some time, and observe some Jewish rituals. Most Jews still marry other Jews and raise their children as Jews.

At the same time, most Jews still belong to Jewish organizations at some time in their lives, volunteer for some Jewish organization, give to some Jewish philanthropy, and live near other Jews in their neighborhoods. Levels of involvement in all of these areas are marginal for most Jews, but the ties persist. Religiously and organizationally, most Jews remain connected, more or less, but most ties are marginal.

The Jewish family is changing, the institutions are changing. The Jewish population will probably shrink, but not radically. But other key questions emerge.

The focus of discussions about the future of Jews in America needs to shift from purely demographic issues such as birthrates. How many times Jews attend synagogue is less important than the quality of attendance. Most Jewish children get a Jewish education, but how good is it? Most people join Jewish organizations, but how many will be active and productive? How enriching is the practice of Jewish rituals, or how hollow? Jewish men and women will marry non-Jews in significant numbers, but what will Jewish life offer them to remain Jews or to bring their children into Jewish life?

The key questions revolve around organizational and institutional efforts to enrich Jewish life at the margin where most Jews find themselves. Some Jews will receive maximum joy and richness from their Jewish experiences, regardless of institutional and organizational efforts, while other Jews will receive nothing, no matter how good the organizational and institutional response. But the overwhelming majority of Jews lie in the middle. What they learn, how they relate to or know Jewish life, how they judge their evolving multiple identities can be influenced to some degree by the efforts, structures, and purposes of the organizations and institutions that serve American Jews.

In the absence of catastrophic external events – antisemitism or threats to Israel's existence – most Jews will continue to drift toward either end of the 'connectedness' continuum. Which way they go rests largely with the institutional and organizational strength, adaptability, and creativity of organized Jewish life.

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