WHICH JEWS WANT CHILDREN?
CORRELATES OF DESIRED FERTILITY AMONG AMERICAN JEWISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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For at least a century and a half, Jews in America, indeed in most of the world, have had lower fertility than other groups.[1] While Jewish fertility has tended to follow the general fluctuations in the societies in which Jews lived, it has done so at a lower absolute level. This pattern has received special attention lately because Jewish fertility rates in America have fallen to, or even below, replacement level. Since American Jewry also shows rising rates of intermarriage and assimilation which are likely to continue, those who are concerned with the vitality of the Jewish community have become alarmed over what may well eventually become a significant decline in the size of American Jewry with its attendant threat to the Jewish community's institutional character and political strength.

A couple's fertility level is, of course, the consequence of several factors, some of which are beyond individual control. Not everyone has the number of children that he or she wishes. Nevertheless, with advances in medicine which increasingly reverse sterility on the one hand, and with improved techniques of contraception on the other, there is likely to be an ever-closer match between the number of children people want and the number they have. Such factors as educational aspiration, career, other personal goals, family ideology, and more general cultural norms influence people's intended family size, of course, but once these considerations have done their work, what people want is increasingly going to be what they get.

Fertility is not uniformly low among American Jews. It is well known that Hassidim have significantly larger families on the average than do other Jews. However, non-Hassidic Jews are not homogeneous in family size, and it is, therefore, worthwhile exploring the factors which influence desired fertility among America's Jews generally.

The Data

The present report is an analysis of data gathered in a study of American Jewish university students in the mid-1970's. The sample comprises 641 undergraduate and graduate students at two major universities, one located in a large eastern city, the other in a midwestern university town. Since the basic goal of the study was to compare various configurations of Jewish identity rather than to ascertain the "profile" of Jewish students at the time of the study, the sample was purposely loaded with a larger than representative proportion of students who

gave evidence of some active involvement in Jewish life and practice. Accordingly, 41 per cent of the sample claim to have been in Israel at least once, 34 per cent report that they have taken at least one university credit course in Jewish Studies, and 27 per cent claim to have at least some speaking knowledge of Hebrew. Demographically, by contrast, the sample is more typical. Forty-five per cent of the respondents' fathers are businessmen, and 40 per cent are professionals. Eighty-one per cent of their fathers and 86 per cent of their mothers were born in the United States. Eleven per cent were raised in what they identify as Orthodox, 55 per cent in Conservative, and 33 per cent in Reform homes. The sample is 46 per cent male and 54 per cent female. It is about equally divided among lowerclassmen (freshmen and sophomores), upperclassmen (juniors and seniors), and graduate students. An unusually lengthy questionnaire of more than 540 items was developed and administered in order to obtain data on a wide range of behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes relevant to contemporary Jewish life.

Three observations should be made about what we can, and what we cannot, know as a result of the nature of the data. First, the questionnaire ascertained respondents' expressed preferences regarding the number of children they wish to have. It could not measure either actual fertility or desired fertility at the time of child-bearing. The central variable of this analysis is, therefore, two steps removed from actual fertility. However, it is probable that they are both short steps. As has already been pointed out, people today have pretty much the number of children they want, and the distance between wish and reality is likely to decrease still further in the future. The relationship between what people want when they are university students and when they are in the child-bearing years is more complex. Some issues do seem to elicit age-specific positions, as the anxieties of adolescence on the one hand and the demands of mature responsibility on the other generage selective affinity to different values and structures. On some matters, the optimistic assurance that "they'll grow up, don't worry" has a basis in fact. There are other issues on which shifts in values are not entirely, or even substantially, age-related. On those issues, adolescents' positions are a reliable preview of the values that will inform behavior later in life, even if exigencies arise to modify the extent to which those values are expressed and implemented. It seems reasonable to hypothesize that with regard to desired fertility the basic attitudes held in adolescence will tend to continue into the adult years, though with some small movement toward the mean. Moreover, if variations in desired fertility are linked to other variables among university students, those linkages are also likely to survive into the child-bearing years, even if the distribution of actual fertility rates gets somewhat compressed.

Second, since the sample was not designed to be representative, the "marginals" (that is, the summary statistics descriptive of the total sample) do not describe any definable population, even within a speci-

fied standard error. Our loss here is not great, because the population that could have been described by a sample representative of the two campuses would be limited for purposes of social science or of policy and, moreover, the description thus made possible would have been valid for only a short period of time. The marginals, therefore, should be read as the "upper limits" of positive Jewish identity. In other words, a representative sample would certainly show lower levels of positive Jewishness than does the present sample, but we cannot know precisely how much lower.(2) What is gained by the sampling technique used is the ability to compare various kinds of Jewish students in far greater detail than has been possible in earlier research. Just as Jews in general surveys usually constitute too small a group for significant comparison with non-Jews, similarly, traditional and otherwise highly committed Jews usually constitute too small a group in surveys of Jews to allow detailed comparison of such positive Jews with more typical Jewish patterns. Not only are such comparisons important, for both social science and policy, but they are also likely to hold for a longer time than are the marginal distributions of attitudes on specific issues.

Third, one of the factors influencing response rate is the length of the instrument with which data are gathered. Other things being equal, a long questionnaire will elicit fewer responses than a shorter one. There is, of course, a flip side to this consideration. A short questionnaire cannot tap the detail made possible by a long one. The real issue, however, is not the rate of response, but rather the occurrence of selective bias. A low response rate without selective bias is preferable to a high response rate which systematically excludes certain types of respondents. In order to assess whether the length of the questionnaire produced selective bias, three groups of respondends were compared on a number of attitudinal items. Two of the groups were early and later respondents. The third group comprised, in effect, non-respondents. A small systematic sample of students who did not return their questionnaires was selected and actively pressed to respond, yielding a very high response rate (over 80 per cent). Their responses formed the third group. Since the responses of the three groups did not differ significantly on the test items, we can conclude that the questionnaire's length produced little if any selective bias.

Analytic Concepts and Their Indicators

The central dependent variable in the present analysis is, of course, desired fertility. That variable is measured by the question "At this point, how many children do you think you would like to have?" No alternatives were provided, and respondents wrote in whatever they wished. As a result, not all responses are integers, because many students answered "one or two," "two or three," and so forth. Such answers are treated in the analysis as falling half way between the specified alternatives, in other words, as 1.5 or 2.5, respectively.

Four scales were developed as the major independent variables in the analysis. One is religiosity. Religiosity is measured through four components. One is synagogue attendance, which is ascertained through a single question. The second is doctrinal traditionalism, measured by a composite scale based on five multiple-choice questions concerning God, the uniqueness of humanity, the authorship of the Bible, immortality, and the special historic role of the Jewish people. The third component is ritual practice. Respondents were given a list of eleven rituals and asked to "check the rituals which you now practice or expect to practice when you establish a home." The latter part of the instruction was included in order to obviate the quite proper criticism of most studies of students' ritual observance that practice during the college years is not a good indicator of students' positions on ritual and, therefore, of their intentions regarding ritual later in life. Since three of the rituals had two levels of observance, the scale actually has fifteen points (including zero). The fourth component is religious feeling, measured by a single question: "How frequently do you experience what you would call religious feelings?" The four alternatives provided were "Often, Occasionally, Rarely, Never." The four components, equally weighted, make up the scale of overall religiosity.

A second major independent variable is what might be called "familism." "Familism" is short-hand for a traditional point of view regarding the importance of marriage and familial stability. Desired fertility may or may not be part of people's overall attitudes toward family life. On the one hand, it is not unreasonable to expect that those with more traditional views on the family would also have more traditional hopes regarding family size. On the other hand, it is also plausible to hypothesize that the two variables are unrelated, as many people accept traditional familial norms but in the context of smaller families. It may be that the decrease in desired fertility is a pervasive enough cultural change to cut across differences in familism.

Familism is measured through four single-question multiple-choice items which tapped respondents' views concerning the importance of marriage, the appropriate conditions for and the meaning of divorce, the circumstances in which pre-marital sexual intercourse is acceptable, and the evaluation of homosexuality.

The third major variable is secular Jewish commitment. One view of Jewish life asserts that, while religiosity may have been a central unifying value of Jews in earlier periods, modern history and the secularization of thought have made religiosity a widely ranging variable among Jews whose unity is now manifested in certain secular values. If that view be valid, then high religiosity may well be accompanied by high secular Jewish commitment, but low and medium religiosity will show no pattern of association at all with secular Jewish commitment. Moreover, secular Jewish commitment will be reflected in adherence to

secular Jewish values, without regard to religiosity. Few, if any, values are more widely recognized as characterizing Jews through history and in various parts of the world than familism. Therefore, it is clearly worth exploring the relationships among familism, religiosity, and secular Jewish commitment, as well as the ways in which they are associated -- individually and together -- with desired fertility.

Secular Jewish commitment is measured through four scales. One includes three items dealing with the centrality and valence of Jewishness for the individual respondent and is referred to here as "Centrality of Jewishness to Self." A second, called here "Importance of Jewish People," is based on three questions designed to tap respondents' views of the importance of the existence of the Jewish People in history and in the future. A third is composed of answers to questions concerning various ways of expressing support for Israel. The fourth, called "Preference for Jewish Patterns," is the number of items in a list of twenty areas of behavior for which a respondent expresses both the sense that Jews are on the whole different from non-Jews and a preference for what he or she perceives as the Jewish pattern. Overall secular Jewish commitment is measured by a composite of these four scales, equally weighted.

The fourth major independent variable used in this analysis is "value directiveness." It is not easy to make a sharp distinction between preferences and values, especially in a culture in which one dominant theme is individualism. Merely asking people to distinguish between their preferences and their values will almost certainly elicit responses which are contaminated by such considerations as prevailing norms and respondents' positions on the notion of values in general. An indirect measure of values is needed, and the one used here is based on the assumption that, while people care relatively little about whether their *preferences* are shared by those dear to them (except for convenience's sake), they do wish to transmit their *values* to those whom they can influence, most especially to their children. In other words, if a person does not care very much whether his children hold the same position as he does on some issue, then we are in the realm of preference, however strong that preference may be. We enter the realm of values when people wish their children to follow their own ways and intend to act so as to achieve their children's conformity to their own stance.

The questionnaire used to gather the data on which this analysis is based offered respondents a list of seventeen values/preferences (without using either word in the instructions), and respondents were asked to indicate "what you would like your (future) children to do with regard to the following items." Seven symmetrical alternatives were provided from "very strongly encourage" through "very strongly discourage" with "makes no difference" as the mid-point. Ten of the items deal with specifically Jewish behaviors and are combined in a Jewish Value Directiveness scale. Seven items deal with more general behaviors, and six of them are combined into a General Value Directiveness scale. The item that is omitted is "Marry and have children," which, though

appropriate for most uses of a General Value Directiveness scale, would produce inflated relationships in the context of the present study.

Findings

Desired Fertility and Familism

Desired fertility is part of the respondents' general attitudes toward family norms. As we see in Tables 1 and 2, there are positive correlations between desired fertility and each component of familism included in the study, and the relationship is consistent through the ranges of all components The correlation is weakest with attitude toward pre-marital sexual intercourse, largely because of the very large proportion of respondents clustered at one (the liberal) end of the continuum of responses on that issue. Fifty-nine per cent expressed approval of pre-marital intercourse "whenever there is mutual consent," 31 per cent approved "when there is genuine affection," and four per cent, three per cent, and four per cent, respectively, approved of pre-marital sex for "steady" couples, engaged couples, and not at all. Because of this highly skewed distribution, the relatively high desired fertility of students with more traditional attitudes toward pre-marital sex is not fully reflected in the correlation coefficient.

Table 1. Correlations of Desired Fertility With Traditional Family Attitudes

	Pearson Correlation Coefficients
With overall familism	.324
With specific issues	
Marriage	.266
Divorce	.206
Pre-marital sex	.180
Homosexuality	.240

Table 2. Mean Desired Fertility for Approximate Quintile Levels of Familism

Familism scale	Overall familism	Marriage	Divorce	Pre-marital sex	Homosexuality
Level 1 (low)	1.38	1.36	1.97	2.04	(a)
Level 2	2.08	1.92	2.22	2.19	1.82
Level 3	2.23	2.39	2.45	2.51	2.24
Level 4	2.40	2.57	3.20	2.45	2.48
Level 5 (high)	2.66	(a)	(a)	2.88	(a)

(a) Not all components of the familism scale had five response levels. The Table reflects the number of levels available in the answer alternatives for each component.

That attitudes toward various aspects of family life are part of an overall value-stance on the family is further reflected in Table 3, which shows positive correlations among responses to the several items.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix of Familism Components

	Divorce	Pre-marital sex	Homosexuality
Marriage	.247	.249	.320
Divorce		.245	.295
Pre-marital sex			.350

Desired Fertility and Religiosity

There is a clear direct relationship between the respondents' religiosity and the number of children they hope to have. As shown in Table 4, that relationship holds not only for overall religiosity, but also separately for each of religiosity's components. It is strongest with regard to the behavioral aspects of religiosity, somewhat weaker but still significant with belief and feeling. Table 5 shows, moreover,

Table 4. Correlations of Desired Fertility With Religiosity

	Pearson correlation coefficients
With overall religiosity	.344
With individual components	
Synagogue attendance	.300
Doctrinal traditionalism	.218
Ritual practice	.340
Religious feeling	.229

that the relationship is a consistent one at all levels of religiosity.[3] In other words, desired fertility does not suddenly increase at a specifiable threshhold of religiosity; rather, the two characteristics vary steadily together. It should be noted in reading Table 5 that while the increase seems steeper for levels of synagogue attendance than for ritual observance, surprising given the higher correlation of desired fertility with ritual, the difference is only apparent. The five ritual observance levels (as well as the doctrinal traditionalism and overall religiosity levels) are as close to quintiles as the distribution of responses allows. Synagogue attendance, on the other hand, has its five levels determined by the five response alternatives in the questionnaire. As a result, the lowest level ("never") accounts for nine per cent of the respondents, and the highest ("at least half of

the Sabbaths and holidays during the year") for ten per cent. When the scale of ritual observance is broken according to the same distribution as found for synagogue attendance rather than by approximate quintiles, the mean desired fertility soores are (from lowest to highest): 1.43, 1.92, 2.16, 2.42 and 2.95. Thus, among the various aspects of religiosity, ritual observance remains the strongest predictor of desired fertility.

Table 5. Mean Desired Fertility for Approximate Quintile Levels of Religiosity

Religiosity scale	Overall religiosity	Synagogue attendance	Doctrinal traditionalism	Ritual practice	Religious feeling
Level 1 (low)	1.70	1.43	1.75	1.62	1.75
Level 2	1.89	1.93	2.01	2.09	1.98
Level 3	2.26	2.17	2.21	2.20	2.22
Level 4	2.28	2.37	2.27	2.27	2.52
Level 5 (high)	2.64	2.73	2.45	2.67	(a)

(a) Religious feeling had only four levels of response.

We see in Table 6 that the several aspects of religiosity are themselves highly interrelated. Although it is normally not surprising to find intercorrelations among the components of an overall concept, the finding does have special significance here. It is often argued that the components of religiosity are separable, and especially that ritual practice and religious feeling are independent of each other, that is, that people feel religion deeply without necessarily expressing their feelings through ritual and that ritual is practiced as often as not in the absence of religious feeling. While the mutual independence of ritual and feeling is a theoretical possibility, it is not -- at least for the university students studied here -- an empirical reality. Indeed, if we set aside for a moment liberal religion's cultural influence on our implicit assumptions, we can appreciate more fully even the theoretical cogency of the hypothesis that strong and frequent emotional feelings are likely to find fuller symbolic expression in religion (as in other spheres).

The question has been raised in studies of Jewry regarding the extent to which religious "Movement" is an adequate summary indicator of religiosity. To be sure, self-identification as Orthodox, Reform, or Conservative is based on a complex and varying set of considerations. For some, formal membership in a synagogue is the determining criterion.

Others identify themselves as being in a given religious movement because of their beliefs, their ritual practice, their general religious "style," or their upbringing (itself reflective of several possible criteria). Still others strike some vague average among two or more or these criteria. We do not know, therefore, what a person means when he simply reports that he is Orthodox, Reform, or Conservative.

Table 6. Correlation Matrix of Religiosity Components

	Doctrinal traditionalism	Ritual practice	Religious feeling
Synagogue attendance	.335	.714	.458
Doctrinal traditionalism		.393	.426
Ritual practice			.485

Despite the uncertainties connected with the meaning of self-identified association with a religious movement, the data show a strong relationship between movement and *all* components of religiosity. As seen in Table 7, students who identify themselves as Orthodox consistently have the highest mean scores on all aspects of religiosity, Conservative students come next, then Reform students, and those who identify their religious movement as "Other" or "None" are lowest. That finding is expected, of course, with regard to doctrinal traditionalism and ritual practice, on both of which the movements themselves officially vary. We find, however, that the same pattern of variation holds for synagogue attendance and religious feeling as well, where the movements do not vary in their official norms (at least not within the ranges used in this study). What is more, when the scales of the four components are standardized, we find that the variation among movements is greatest for synagogue attendance and is just about as great for religious feeling as for ritual practice. It is smallest for doctrinal belief.

It is not surprising, therefore, that desired fertility also varies by religious movement. As shown in Table 8, the more traditional the movement with which a student identifies himself, the more children he indicates he wishes to have, and the differences are substantial.[4]

Table 7. Mean Values of Religiosity Components, by Religious "Movement"

	(Range)	Orthodox	Conservative	Reform	Other/ None
Raw scores					
Synagogue attendance	(1- 5)	4.22	3.33	2.94	2.32
Doctrinal traditionalism	(0- 6)	3.87	2.98	2.56	2.13
Ritual practice	(0-14)	9.83	7.51	5.25	3.47
Religious feeling	(1- 4)	3.61	3.13	2.69	2.42
Overall religiosity	(10-50)	40.5	33.1	27.6	22.7
Standardized scores (0-100)					
Synagogue attendance		80.6	58.3	48.6	33.0
Doctrinal traditionalism		64.4	49.6	42.7	35.5
Ritual practice		70.2	53.7	37.5	24.8
Religious feeling		86.7	70.8	56.3	47.3
Overall religiosity		76.3	57.8	44.0	31.8

Table 8. Mean Desired Fertility by Religious "Movement"

Movement	Desired children
Orthodox	3.01
Conservative	2.36
Reform	1.98
Other/None	1.83

Desired Fertility and Secular Jewish Commitment

As it is with familism and with religiosity, desired fertility is related to secular Jewish commitment. Tables 9 and 10 show that the relationship holds for all components throughout the ranges of those components (with one minor exception at the upper end of the scale of support for Israel). It is also seen, in Table 11, that the various components of our scale of secular Jewish commitment are themselves significantly intercorrelated. The most potent aspect of secular Jewish commitment is the centrality of Jewishness to the self, which has not only the highest correlation with desired fertility, but also the highest correlations with each of the other components of secular Jewish commitment.

Table 9. Correlations of Desired Fertility with Secular Jewish Commitment

	Pearson correlation coefficients
With overall secular Jewish commitment	.254
With individual components	
Centrality of Jewishness to self	.266
Importance of Jewish people	.218
Support of Israel	.206
Preference for Jewish patterns	.133

Table 10. Mean Desired Fertility for Approximate Quintile Levels of Secular Jewish Commitment

Secular Jewish Commitment Scale	Secular Jewish commitment	Centrality of Jewishness to self	Importance of Jewish people	Support of Israel	Preference for Jewish patterns
Level 1 (low)	1.72	1.83	1.81	1.72	2.00
Level 2	2.01	1.84	2.15	2.12	2.05
Level 3	2.13	2.16	2.00	2.19	2.11
Level 4	2.37	2.40	2.29	2.41	2.19
Level 5 (high)	2.45	2.48	2.42	2.23	2.40

Table 11. Correlation Matrix of the Components of Secular Jewish Commitment

	Importance of Jewish people	Support of Israel	Preference for Jewish patterns
Centrality of Jewishness to self	.591	.495	.391
Importance of Jewish people		.394	.321
Support of Israel			.290

Religiosity or Secular Jewish Commitment?

It would not be surprising to find that religiosity and secular Jewish commitment are statistically related. Even if, as asserted by the classical secularist position, low religiosity does not preclude high secular Jewish commitment, still it would be unusual to find low secular Jewish commitment scores among people with high religiosity. Such an imbalance in the secular Jewish commitment scores at the upper end of the religiosity scale would generate some overall correlation, even if the secular Jewish commitment scores at the lower end of the religiosity scale are not particularly skewed.

The relationship between religiosity and secular Jewish commitment, at least among the university students in our sample, is significantly stronger than the secularist position would suggest. As shown in Table 12, 31.7 per cent of the respondents are in the same quintile division in both religiosity and secular Jewish commitment, and another 41.5 per cent are only one quintile apart on the two scales. Twenty per cent (19.9 to be precise) are two quintiles apart, and 5.8 and 1.2 per cent are three and four quintiles apart, respectively. (A purely random distribution would have produced the following percentages for the corresponding quintile matchings, in order from perfect match to a four-quintile spread: 20, 32, 24, 16, and 8.) The substantial correlation between religiosity and secular Jewish commitment (Pearson coefficient of .524), therefore, represents a clear relationship between the two variables. It is also worth noting that the respondents whose scores fall into different quintiles are closely divided between those with higher religiosity and those with higher secular Jewish commitment. When the quintile separations are weighted, 45 per cent of the total show higher religiosity and 55 per cent, higher secular Jewish commitment.

Table 12. Percentage Distribution of Respondents, by Approximate Quintile Levels of Religiosity and Secular Jewish Commitment

Religiosity scale	Secular Jewish Commitment Scale					
	Level 1 (low)	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5 (high)	Total
Level 1 (low)	7.4	6.0	5.5	1.6	1.0	21.5
Level 2	3.7	3.7	5.5	3.9	1.2	18.0
Level 3	1.9	3.9	4.9	5.5	2.4	18.6
Level 4	1.5	2.8	7.0	7.9	4.2	23.4
Level 5 (high)	0.2	1.5	3.4	5.7	7.8	18.6
Total	14.7	17.9	26.3	24.6	16.6	100.0

The correlation matrix in Table 13 shows that the individual components of the two scales are also significantly related, and that the relationships are positive and consistent. It is also clear that the most potent element in the secular Jewish commitment scale is centrality of Jewishness to self, and the most potent element in the religiosity scale is, even more pronouncedly, ritual practice.

Table 13. Correlations of Components of Religiosity With Components of Secular Jewish Commitment

	Centrality of Jewishness to self	Importance of Jewish people	Support of Israel	Preference for Jewish patterns
Synagogue attendance	.538	.385	.390	.201
Doctrinal traditionalism	.234	.270	.144	.177
Ritual practice	.616	.435	.404	.242
Religious feeling	.398	.287	.202	.138

In light of the strong relationship between these two aspects of Jewish identity, the question arises regarding their relative impacts on familism in general and on desired fertility in particular. The Pearson correlation coefficients between familism on the one hand and religiosity and secular Jewish commitment, respectively, on the other, are .362 and .321. However, the first-order partial correlations tell a clearer story. The first-order partial of familism with religiosity, holding secular Jewish commitment constant, is .241, while the same statistic for secular Jewish commitment, holding religiosity constant, is .166. In other words, religiosity has a stronger independent relationship to familism than does secular Jewish commitment.

The relative impact of religiosity on desired fertility is even stronger. It will be recalled from Tables 4 and 9 that the correlations of desired fertility with overall religiosity and secular Jewish commitment are .334 and .254, respectively. The first-order partial correlations of desired fertility with religiosity and secular Jewish commitment, in each case holding the other constant, are .248 and .089, respectively. Thus, when the independent effect of secular Jewish commitment is removed, about three-quarters of the relationship between desired fertility and religiosity remains. By contrast, when the independent effect of religiosity is removed, only one-third of the relationship between desired fertility and secular Jewish commitment remains. Indeed, that relationship becomes insignificant when religiosity is controlled.

When the several components of religiosity and secular Jewish commitment, as those concepts are measured in the present analysis, are considered separately, we find that only one aspect of secular Jewish commitment outranks any of the aspects of religiosity in the strength of its relationship to desired fertility. Table 14 gives the first-order partial correlations of desired fertility with each component of religiosity, holding each component of secular Jewish commitment constant, and vice versa. The sixteen sets of partials thus generated are arranged in the Table in descending order of the difference between the partial for the religiosity component and the partial for the secular Jewish commitment component. The Table demonstrates that the eight components are related to desired fertility in the following almost perfectly consistent order, from strongest to weakest: ritual practice, synagogue attendance, centrality of Jewishness to self, doctrinal traditionalism, religious feeling, importance of the Jewish People, support of Israel, and preference for Jewish patterns.

In sum, at least for the university students in our sample, religiosity and most specifically religious *practice*, is more strongly associated with the desire for larger families than is any other aspect of positive Jewish self-expression.

Desired Fertility and Value Directiveness

As has been pointed out above, the questionnaire used to gather the data reported in this paper included a set of items in which respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they would encourage their children to follow (or discourage them from following) a list of specified practices. The Pearson correlations between desired fertility and the seventeen items are given in Table 15. The Table also gives the correlations between desired fertility and the two overall scales of "value directiveness," one comprising the ten items of Jewish content, the other comprising six of the seven general items. (The item "Marry and have children" was omitted from the general value directiveness scale because its obvious substantive relationship to desired fertility would contaminate the findings on the impact of value directiveness itself. Its correlation with desired fertility is .415, the highest correlation between a single factor and desired fertility.)

We see in Column A of Table 15 that all of the Jewish items are significantly and positively correlated with desired fertility, but that all of the general items (again, with the easily explained exception of "Marry and have children") show very small, insignificant correlations, more than half of which are negative. Interestingly, the largest negative correlations concern political activity, strengthening the suggestion that active political liberalism may be for many Jews an ideological alternative to Jewish religious commitment. It is also worth noting that the highest correlations with the Jewish items concern

Table 14. First-Order Partial Correlations of Desired Fertility with Each Component of Religiosity, Holding Each Component of Secular Jewish Commitment Constant; and with Each Component of Secular Jewish Commitment, Holding Each Component of Religiosity Constant

Component of religiosity	Component of secular Jewish commitment[a]	Partial for component of religiosity (A)	Partial for component of S.J.C. (B)	(A) - (B)
Ritual	Prefer	.320	.055	.265
Synagogue	Prefer	.281	.073	.208
Ritual	Israel	.288	.083	.205
Ritual	People	.277	.088	.189
Ritual	Self	.233	.077	.156
Synagogue	People	.250	.096	.154
Synagogue	Israel	.247	.098	.149
Doctrine	Prefer	.201	.087	.114
Feeling	Prefer	.214	.110	.104
Synagogue	Self	.195	.116	.079
Feeling	Israel	.198	.159	.039
Doctrine	Israel	.200	.170	.030
Doctrin	People	.170	.164	.006
Feeling	People	.169	.169	0
Doctrine	Self	.169	.219	-.050
Feeling	Self	.140	.193	-.053

(a) Prefer = Preference for Jewish Patterns; Israel = Support of Israel; People = Importance of Jewish People; Self = Centrality of Jewishness to Self.

Table 15. Correlations of Desired Fertility with Value Directiveness Items

	Pearson Coefficients	First-Order partials[a]
	(A)	(B)
Overall Jewish value directiveness	.291	
Individual items:		
Get a good Jewish education	.232	
Settle in Israel	.159	
Belong to a synsgogue	.316	.174
Not marry a non-Jews	.194	.103
Contribute to U.J.A. &/or other Jewish causes	.223	.193
Believe in God	.227	.105
Observe the Sabbath	.265	.155
Have a kosher home	.317	.221
Enjoy religious celebration	.240	.166
Have mostly Jewish friends	.219	.172
Overall General value directiveness	.061[b]	
Individual items:		
Be a political liberal	-.117	
Get a college education	.110	
Appreciate art &/or music	-.035[b]	
Develop physical strength and agility	-.036[b]	
Be politically active	-.148	
Develop charm & poise	.067[b]	
Marry and have children (not included in the scale in this study)	.415	

(a) Column B has first-order partial correlations of desired fertility with the value directiveness items, holding constant the comparable items for the respondents' own present positions and practices.
(b) Not significant.

those which are more strictly "religious" in the narrower sense of the term (namely, ritual practice, synagogue affiliation, and religious celebration). This finding is clearly compatible with the other findings reported here.

The differences between the correlations with the Jewish items and those with the general items suggest that it may be the Jewishness rather than the "directiveness" that is related to desired fertility. There are two ways to examine this issue further. Column B of Table 15 gives the first-order partial correlations between desired fertility and the value directiveness items, holding constant the respondents' reports about their own practices or positions on comparable items where such items were included elsewhere in the questionnaire. (There is no item on the respondents' own intention to settle in Israel, and the respondents' amount of Jewish education, which *is* reported, should probably be seen as a reflection more of their parents' decision than of their own.) The correlations suggest that an average of almost two-thirds of the relationship between desired fertility and Jewish value directiveness is associated with the willingness to direct one's children regarding their Jewish self-expression.

The second way of dealing with the same question is to examine the negative end of the directiveness continuum. This is possible on only three items, where there are sufficient numbers of respondents who would lead their children explicitly to avoid positive Jewish practice. The mean desired fertility scores for the seven positions on those items are reported in Table 16 and show that in general the more positive the position, the higher the desired fertility. The findings in this regard, however, are not totally uniform.

Table 16. Mean Desired Fertility for Selected Value Directiveness Items

Response category	Settle in Israel	Have a kosher home	Have mostly Jewish friends
Very strongly discourage	1.84	1.53	1.75
Actively discourage	2.07	1.80	1.59
Prefer not	2.10	2.01	2.13
Makes no difference	2.12	2.05	2.05
Prefer	2.61	2.51	2.29
Actively encourage	2.56	2.50	2.60
Very strongly encourage	2.86	3.07	2.73

Sex Differences

Conventional wisdom used to have it that women are more positively and traditionally oriented to family matters than are men. Whether or

not that belief was once true, things are clearly not so simple any more. When our sample is broken down by sex, it is seen (Table 17) that the men want more children on the average than do the women. A noticeably higher proportion of the women want no children at all, and a higher proportion of the men want more than two children. Roughly similar proportions of men and women want one or two children.

Table 17. Percentage Distribution of Desired Fertility, by Sex

Desired fertility	Males	Females	Total
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
None	7.8	12.4	10.3
None or one	0	0.3	0.2
One	2.6	2.5	2.5
One or two	1.9	1.9	1.9
Two	50.0	52.0	51.0
Two or three	9.6	7.4	8.4
Three	18.9	14.9	16.7
Three or four	1.1	1.9	1.5
Four or more[a]	8.1	6.8	7.4
Mean desired fertility	2.24	2.08	2.15

(a) In all calculations of Mean desired fertility, this category was made to equal 4.25, which was the actual mean of the responses that fell into the category.

In light of our findings about the relationship of desired fertility to general familism, religiosity, secular Jewish commitment, and value directiveness, we might expect that men would have higher scores than women on these variables. As seen in Table 18, however, such is not the case. Indeed, although the differences are not large, women have higher average scores on the scales of religiosity, secular Jewish commitment, and value directiveness. That fact makes their lower desired fertility even more significant than the figures in Table 17 suggest. Only on the familism scale do men have a higher average score. It is safe to conclude that young women, at least the women in our sample, are somewhat less positively disposed than men to traditional family norms, including the desire for large families.

Table 18. Mean Scores on Independent Variable Scales, by Sex

	Range	Males	Females
Familism	(10-40)	20.0	18.8
Religiosity	(10-50)	29.1	29.6
Secular Jewish commitment	(4-20)	11.9	12.5
Jewish value directiveness	(0-30)	11.0	11.6
General value directiveness	(0-30)	15.0	16.6

Conclusion

The data show clearly that, at least for the sample of Jewish university students of the mid-1970's studied here, religiosity is strongly associated with traditional family norms in general and with desired fertility in particular, and that the *behavioral* aspects of religiosity (ritual practice and synagogue attendance) are the most telling, both as indicators of overall religiosity and as predictors of family attitudes. Religious position is not separated from attitudes toward aspects of life which are on their face not necessarily tied to religion. Religion, of course, presumes to address aspects of life outside of theology and ritual. The approach to religion that sees it in narrow focus as limited to ideas about God and rituals may have some theoretical plausibility in a secular frame of reference. From a religious perspective such a view of religion is distorted, and in light of empirical evidence it is unacceptable. It also seems clear that non-ritualistic approaches to religion do not sustain the levels of religious emotion that are reached by people who do practice more ritual.

These findings, if they are characteristic of young American Jews beyond our sample (and there is no reason to believe otherwise), have significance at several levels. To begin with, they suggest that religiosity is not an isolated phenomenon. On the contrary, it affects life decisions beyond the sphere of doctrine and ritual practice alone. Secondly, they suggest that, unless things change, the American Jewish community of the future will have a higher proportion of religiously traditional people, if only because those are the people who will have larger numbers of children and who will take greater pains to encourage their children to follow in their footsteps.

Finally, our findings have implications for policy. The recent population decline among Jews has become one of the major concerns of Jewish leadership, not only because of its potential consequences for institutional and political strength, but also because its sources -- assimilation and depressed fertility -- seem so firmly rooted in the contemporary conditions of Jewish life. Our data suggest two options for any attempt to reverse the population decline.

One option would be to encourage increased religiosity among young Jews in the expectation that higher levels of religious practice would bring, *inter alia*, higher desired fertility. At first glance this approach might seem to be taking almost literally the oft-quoted quip that "*davening* (praying) makes babies." In fact, however, it merely recognizes that religiosity is related to other aspects of life. Higher-than-average religiosity entails a distinctive plausibility structure, a distinctive set of reference groups, and a distinctive way of placing oneself in history and society, all of which carry with them ideological and social support for wanting and having larger families. Indeed,

a reasonable case can be made for the argument that of all the life changes associated with increased religiosity, the adoption of a higher level of religious practice itself is the least difficult to achieve as a first step. How traditional the religious perspective must be in order to have a significant positive effect on values outside the narrowly defined religious sphere remains an open question for researchers and a programmatic challenge to the liberal religious movements.

The second option for increasing Jewish population growth would be to attempt to break the link between religious perspective and familism so that the latter could be increased independently of the former. The success of this kind of approach would probably depend on the extent to which traditional family attitudes could be strengthened in the larger American society, especially in those segments of American society in which the more acculturated Jews are found or to which they aspire. If traditional family norms come to be widely accepted by highly educated, largely secular Americans prominent in business and the professions, and if such people begin to want and have larger families, then religiosity would not be the only -- or the most effective -- antidote to Jewish population decline. However, if secular culture in America continues to question the value of family, then only a conscientious and explicit commitment to an alternative ideology will provide Jews with the strength to act counter to prevailing norms. A stance in opposition to the majority's norms does not, of course, require total rejection of and withdrawal from the larger culture. It does require an integrated set of criteria on the basis of which people can selectively adopt or reject specific aspects of majority culture. It also requires the social support of a peer group which is resolving the same problem of cultural conflict in pretty much the same way. Both of these needs -- an explicit ideology and an available reference group -- would seem to be met primarily by religious involvement.

Notes

1. For a recent review and analysis of statistics on fertility among American Jews, see Sergio DellaPergola, "Patterns of American Jewish Fertility," *Demography*, Vol. 17, No. 3, August 1980, pp. 261-73. Also, see Steven M. Cohen and Paul Ritterband, "Why Contemporary American Jews Want Small Families," in Paul Ritterband (ed.), *Modern Jewish Fertility*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981, pp. 209-31; Sidney Goldstein, "Jews in the United States: Perspectives from Demography," in *American Jewish Yearbook*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society and American Jewish Committee, 1981, esp. pp. 11-21; U.O. Schmelz, "Jewish Survival: The Demographic Factors," *idem.*, esp. pp. 70-82.

2. A comparison of the student sample with the total American Jewish population (as studied in the National Jewish Population Survey

done by the Council of Jewish Federations in the early 1970's shows that on the two general attitudinal questions used in both surveys the distributions of responses were very similar. Since the NJPS sample was designed to be representative and the student sample clearly was not, we can conclude that there was some weakening of positive Jewish attitudes.

3. Research currently being done by Steven M. Cohen and Samuel C. Heilman shows that the relationship holds even when finer distinctions are made. Their study of Orthodox Jews in the United States shows that fertility increases with level of traditional practice among this already highly traditional segment of Jewry. (Research in progress, reported orally by Cohen at World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 1981).

4. Calvin Goldscheider and Dov Friedlander have suggested ("Patterns of Jewish Fertility in Israel: A Review and Some Hypotheses," in Paul Ritterband (ed.), *Modern Jewish Fertility*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981, pp. 232-254) that, at least in Israel, the association between religiosity and fertility is spurious and that social class, which is related to religiosity, is the decisive factor influencing fertility. Whatever the case in other populations, the present student sample clearly shows a relationship between desired fertility and religiosity. First-order partial correlations between desired fertility and religiosity (holding constant social class as measured by father's education and occupation) and between desired fertility and social class (holding religiosity constant) are, respectively, 0.333 and 0.018.