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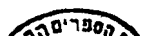
ZERO POPULATION GROWTH— FOR WHOM?

Differential Fertility and
Minority Group Survival



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5 Demography and American Jewish Survival

It has long been recognized that population factors have important implications for the nature and quality of human society. One of the master themes of demography has been the analysis of the relationship between population growth and economic development, historically and comparatively. The examination of whether population change generates or impedes economic growth in less developed countries and the investigation of how population factors relate to the changing quality of life in the more industrialized nations have been major areas of demographic inquiry. An interrelated theme in population studies is the analysis of differential growth. The relative population growth and size of different societies, of groups of societies, and of subpopulations within societies have been studied extensively.

Although a great deal of research, planning, and policy have been directed to reducing the quantity of population expansion so as to improve the quality of human life, much less attention has focused on the issues of differential policies for subpopulations or small nations that experience population declines and shortages of manpower. Indeed, these issues of population change, socioeconomic development, and differential growth may be examined in the context of the demography of ethnic minority groups.¹ The vitality, quality, and survival of ethnic minority groups are related directly to population processes and demographic parameters. To the extent that differential growth of ethnic populations characterizes pluralistic societies in less and more developed areas of the world, differential social consequences—including conflict, tension, and inequalities—will result. The analysis, therefore, of the demographic patterns of ethnic and minority subpopulations may be of critical significance in understanding the changing intergroup tensions and conflicts in the world.

In what ways is the study of demographic factors in minority group survival different from the analysis of the demography of whole societies? What are the implications of shifting the unit of demographic analysis from the nation or total society to the subgroup, the subsociety or ethnic-

religious-racial minority populations? Several major differences emerge as critical.

First, a systematic examination of the role of demography in the continuity of minority groups involves an analysis of the entire range of population elements and processes. The study of population size, growth, distribution, structure, and composition is integral to demographic analysis regardless of the unit of analysis. This is also true for the population processes of mortality, fertility, and migration. However, when the unit of analysis is a subgroup, an additional process of "entering and exiting" must be examined: in- and out-marriages. The study of the gains and losses through intermarriage is a central feature of the demography of minority groups. Minority populations increase through births, in-migration, and in-marriages; they decrease through deaths, out-migration, and out-marriages. The demographic balance is a product of these entering and exiting processes.

A second feature of minority group demography is the need to select among a wider range of comparisons for analysis. The population processes of a minority group may be compared to the majority population and/or to other minority groups. The central analytic question in the sociology and demography of minority groups is whether there are differences between minority and majority populations that go beyond the particular matrix of socioeconomic characteristics differentiating these populations. These differences may relate to some cultural or structural differences or to the fact of minority group status per se. The centrality of this question requires that comparisons be made between minority and majority populations, controlling for socioeconomic and related characteristics.

Another important type of sociological and demographic analysis associated particularly with the study of minority subpopulations relates to the question of residential clustering. There is a series of complex issues associated with residential segregation and integration of minority groups and the implications of the changing population concentration, dispersal, and density of subgroups within society.

Although minority subgroups tend to be smaller and relatively more homogeneous units of analysis than total societies, there remains sufficient subgroup variation within minority ethnic groups to allow for detailed examination. This is of particular importance for minority groups undergoing sociocultural change. The analysis of heterogeneity within minority groups provides clues to the direction in which these groups are moving vis-a-vis other minority groups and with regard to the total society. Through the examination of subgroups who are in the forefront of change, some hints as to the future direction of the total minority group may be revealed.

Finally, the implications of demographic patterns for minority and majority populations may vary. Rates of growth, distribution, composition and levels of mortality, fertility, and migration may have different consequences for minority populations. Zero population growth has a set of consequences for a total society, for example, that cannot be applied uniformly to every subpopulation. Policies to control, regulate, or channel population growth and processes applied to total nations do not necessarily fit the goals, needs, and aspirations of selected ethnic segments. Indeed there are a variety of socio-political-economic consequences of differential population growth of majority and minority ethnic populations. Minority populations that are rapidly increasing in size within a society whose rate of demographic growth is stable are as problematic as minority populations that are declining or are stable while the total population is expanding rapidly.²

An interesting illustration of the role of demographic factors in minority group survival in modern society is the American Jewish population. As a case study and as one model that may foreshadow the future patterns of other American ethnic minority groups, the examination of Jewish demographic patterns in the United States reveals some of the major analytic issues associated with minority group survival.

A series of basic questions will serve as background to the ensuing discussion. Is there a problem of Jewish demographic survival in America? What role do population factors play in the quality of American Jewish life? How viable is Jewish ethnicity in American society? How do the current patterns of Jewish American demography indicate the future quantity and quality of Jewish life? What are the major demographic trends characterizing the evolution of the American Jewish community, and what do they imply about the future? What may be inferred from the analysis of these patterns about intervention and policies?

As a first step in clarifying the issues underlying these questions and placing in a general context the demographic problems of American Jews, two alternative views or perspectives on the American Jewish dilemma are outlined.

OUTSIDER AND INSIDER PERSPECTIVES

To an outsider, the concern about the disappearance of American Jewry or the vanishing American Jew appears exaggerated or alarmist, if not ludicrous. At best the issue appears rhetorical or artificially created, to be rejected with the obvious retorts about the strengths of American Jewish life. One does not have to go beyond a regular reading of the press to know that Jews are conspicuously present in a wide range of political and social activities. Hardly a week goes by without some report of a Jewish

organization's attempt to influence American policies in the Middle East, reacting to the subtlest shift in politics about Israel, Zionism, Jews, or Arabs, or linking détente issues with Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. Similarly national American politics have always raised the visibility of American Jewry. Jews have been viewed as supporters of particular candidates and as an important voting interest group. In a cruder but no less revealing way non-Jewish candidates appear at Jewish organizational functions, pose with Hasidic rebbes, eat "Jewish" delicacies on the Lower East Side of New York, or wear a yarmolke.

These and related macropolitical indicators of Jewish vitality and presence are convincing and reassuring; the third religious subgroup in America after Protestants and Catholics is vibrant and visible. Surely a vanishing breed is rarely a source of such conspicuous sociopolitical power and influence. Indeed it has often been suggested that the Jewish group in America epitomizes the fact that power is not necessarily a function of demographic size, larger and more are not synonymous with better and powerful.

Jewish vitality in America is reflected not only in secular political indicators. Since the mid-1960s there has been an enormous growth in Jewish activities, and new forms of Jewish identity have emerged. These have been particularly concentrated among those age segments in the Jewish community that in the past have been the least Jewish-committed—the teenage, college, and young adult populations. The impressive growth of Habad houses, Jewish consciousness among college students, kosher facilities, Jewish studies, the wearing of the skullcap, and Israel-Zionism-Soviet Jewry activities, among others, have been revolutionary forces in American Jewish life that few if any social scientists imagined or predicted ten or fifteen years ago.

A silent but significant revolution has occurred in American Jewish life. American Jewry thirty to forty years ago was relatively "silent" about the Holocaust and Israel. Institutional heterogeneity and organizational disarray characterized the American Jewish community structure in the immediate postwar era. The religiously committed Jews of the 1940s and 1950s were either older, foreign-born persons, or marginal within the Jewish community. For the Jews of the 1960s and 1970s, being "noisy" about Jewishness has become the norm. Jews and Jewish institutions have become vocal about Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Soviet Jewry, Jewish life in America, Jewish women and Jewish students, and, to a lesser extent, the Jewish aged and Jewish poor.

Committed Jews have come out of their silent closets; some of the uncommitted appear to be searching for new forms of Jewishness, rooted in tradition but reflecting America of the 1970s. The increasing use of the public media by religious, committed, and searching Jews has raised the

level of Jewish conspicuousness in America. The Protestantization of Judaism is much less characteristic of America in the 1970s than succah building, hallah baking, and Passover seder preparations. Young women are more likely to be interested in tefillin wearing, minyan participation, and active Jewish commitments than sisterhoods, "donor" luncheons, and passive homemaker Judaism. Ethnic Jewish pride appears to have replaced the semiembarrassment associated with the retention of Jewish culture and consciousness.

In many ways, it seems that the issue has become how "unvanishing" American Jewry is. The questions that are raised tend to be addressed to the sources of Jewish American ethnicity, whether ethnic pride among Jews is only an imitation of black, Chicano, and other ethnic movements in America and whether there are inner sociocultural strengths to American Jewry beyond the external issues of Zionism, Israel, and oppressed Jewries around the world. Certainly, the outsider would argue, there appears to be little basis for the question of whether Jewish life will survive in America in the foreseeable future and no grounds for positing an "end" to Jewish Americans in the ethnic-conscious United States of the 1970s.

An insider who knows the strengths and weaknesses of the Jewish community goes beyond the superficial indicators and below the surface, however. Other signs appear, more powerful and challenging, subtle and destructive, which provide an alternative perspective to the one focusing on the positive, revolutionary changes in Jewish life in the 1960s and 1970s. To balance the indicators of strength and renewal, the insider sees assimilation rather than Jewish consciousness, acculturation not Jewish identity. The signs of renewal and searching are viewed as marginal and transitory, reflecting the failure of Jewish organizations and the dismay and frustration of Jewish youth. From the insider's perspective, there is lack of depth in Jewish commitments and a general absence of rich Jewish content. Ineffective, inadequate, and unsuccessful Jewish education (measured in continuation rates and eventual adult commitments and knowledge) combined with pervasive ignorance among the middle-aged and older segments of the community about things Jewish and Israeli are emphasized. The decline in temple and synagogue participation, empty synagogue schools, unused facilities, and the growth of Hebrew day schools for some of the wrong reasons fit this general pattern of decline and irrelevance. The increasing growth of secularism among Jews, the emphasis on and acceptance of minimum Jewish commitments, and the mobilization of energies for fund-raising devoid of Jewish content as a goal in itself represent substitutes for creative Jewish commitments and have become the major character of Jewish activities in organizational and community life.

Given this context, the insider stresses the high rates of intermarriage among Jewish youth and bemoans the apparent attraction of a variety of exotic non-Jewish spiritual alternatives among high school and college students. Without a crisis in Israel, a problem of Soviet Jewry, or new forms of ethnic discrimination and insecurity in America, there appears to be insufficient depth or commitment internally for American Jewish cultural or social survival. The insider sees the pockets of renewal and vibrance located in specific areas where Jewish population concentration is high, or he dismisses it as characteristic of a vocal minority.

To the many critics of American Jewish life, secularism, universalism, and an open opportunity structure are direct challenges to the future survival of ethnic Jewish particularism.

Are these outsider and insider views simply reflections of optimistic and pessimistic perceptions of the same phenomenon? Are we only dealing with the question as to whether the glass is half full or half empty? Do the outsiders emphasize only the good in the Jewish situation while the insiders see the bad even in the good?³

In large part, I suspect that these two views focus on different aspects of American Jewish life in the 1970s. Basically the argument to be presented is that to understand the social dynamics and variations in the emerging American Jewish community, three complex issues must be clarified: the growing polarization within the American Jewish community and the "shrinking middle," the changing Jewish demographic balance, and the implications of Jewish demographic patterns for the question of polarization and for the broader issues of the quality and continuity of Jewish life in America.

It seems clear to most serious students of American Jewish life that American Jewry is not about to vanish in either the demographic or sociological sense. However, American Jews are becoming more polarized than ever before—more secular and more Jewish in different subsections of the community. The American Jewish population is slowly shrinking in size, but, more important, it is changing in composition, characteristics, and distribution; concerns about quantitative survival nationally are much less real than the problems of the growth, size, and structure of local Jewish communities. The future of American Jewish life is less tied to the question of whether it will survive demographically than which subsections or segments will survive.

The issue of demographic survival must confront the question of qualitative survival. The unity of American Jewish life revolves around secular politics—national and international—rather than any cultural or social consensus, except perhaps for a vague, abstract commitment to Jewish survival. The more serious, complex, and divisive issues associated with the rationale for Jewish survival are not unrelated to the demography of

American Jews. It is important to emphasize the obvious point that Jewish demographics in America are voluntary and not imposed; the need to survive by choice and not only by ascription remains the key challenge and dilemma for American Jews. Undoubtedly if there was some clearer sociocultural consensus on American Jewish survival, there would be no apparent reason why the Jewish ethnic group in America should not be able to survive demographically. The absence of such a consensus among the disparate elements in the American Jewish community has been primarily responsible for a whole complex of social and demographic problems and has been the basic source of the demographic survival issue.

The demographic patterns of American Jews are one of the most obvious manifestations of their desires for survival and of the consequent choices that they make. Less appreciated is the fact that demographic patterns have implications for the structure and quality of American Jewish life. Not only are demographic patterns responses to and reflections of social structure and values, but they in turn have consequences for the Jewish social structure and values emerging on the American scene. It is this feedback mechanism from demography to quality that requires special emphasis. Rhetorical questions such as, Would the quality of American Jewish life be improved if there were an additional million Jews? or Would a 25 percent increase in total fertility have significance for Jewish quality? are irrelevant and meaningless. The central issues are how demographic changes reflect the qualitative choices in American Jewish commitments to survival and what the important implications are of demographic patterns for the quality of Jewish life in America.

POLARIZATION AND THE SHRINKING MIDDLE

The nature of the American Jewish community and the role of demographic factors in Jewish survival must be viewed against the background of the changing distribution of Jews on a general continuum of Jewish commitment. Descriptions of the strengths and weaknesses of American Jewry focus on the two polar ends of that continuum. The numerical and proportional distribution of Jews in categories that range from more to less Jewish commitment, the proportion of Jews who are in the middle, and the direction those in the middle are moving are the key issues. Over time, the proportion of Jews in the middle has narrowed significantly as a result of the clear shift among selected segments of the Jewish community toward assimilation and loss of Jewish commitment, and, of no less importance, because there has been some growth at the

more Jewishly committed end of the continuum. As a result of the shifts in both directions, the size of the middle has diminished considerably in the last decade, and greater polarization and sharper distinctions among segments of American Jewry are emerging. Most important, choices in the future are likely to be less ambivalent, less ambiguous, and more decisively at one or the other polar end of the continuum.

The changes that have occurred in American Jewish life have been tied to the question of shifts in the level and extent of Jewish commitments and identity of the changing middle by generation.⁴ There has always been a segment of the Jewish community that was traditional in its Jewish practices, identified strongly as Jews, and was committed to Jewish survival. On the other hand, there always was a segment among American Jewry that was secular in religious practice, assimilationist-universalistic in ideology, and marginal to Jewish survival. The relative balance of these two polar segments and the relationship of each to the stance of the middle has varied over time.

The major axis of change in American Jewish life in the present context relates to Eastern European Jews and their descendants. The Eastern European immigration in the four and a half decades beginning in the 1880s defines the dominant pattern of changes in American Jewish life. It drowned out, overwhelmed, and obscured the process of quantitative and qualitative assimilation evidenced by German Jewish immigrants and their descendants.

Although the evidence historically and for contemporary American Jews is incomplete, sufficient data and impressions are available to sketch in broad outline changes in the distribution of Jewish commitment to ethnic survival for the various generations.

In focusing on the level and distribution of Jewish commitment by generation, it is necessary to leave the definition of Jewish commitment as broad, vague, and unspecified as possible. It generally will refer to a wide range of Jewish activities, values, and self-definitions, including Jewish religious observances, synagogue membership and attendance, Jewish community and organizational membership and identification, ethnic self-identification, Jewish education, Jewish philanthropy, and socio-cultural-political activities that are Jewish-Israeli centered. The emphasis on any specific type of Jewish commitment obscures the problem of changing types of identity over time, the multiple ways Jews have responded in a variety of settings to these types of Jewish commitment, and the lack of detailed information on specific types by generation. Ideally what is needed is a composite measure of Jewishness that is highly correlated with Jewish survival—not only of the individual but of the next generation and the community. However, we do not know of the survival implications of the various dimensions of Jewish life. Hence, in

this discussion, Jewish commitment will be used as if we were dealing with a set of indicators that has been correlated clearly with Jewish survival.

Among first-generation, foreign-born, Eastern European Jews were socialists and secularists, radicals and universalists who had already rejected ethnic-religious particularism in the urban centers of Eastern Europe. For many of these, America was the promised land where ethnic differences would be eliminated, and the melting pot goal was attainable as well as desirable. The size of this segment (even when added to the secularist-assimilationist segments of German-American Jews) was relatively small; the number of those at the opposite end of the continuum—those actively involved in commitments to Jewish survival—was somewhat larger. However, the number and proportion of Jews of the first generation who were concerned about Jewish survival and continuity in America have always tended to be exaggerated. Perhaps the concern with economic survival and aspirations for the social mobility of children took priority over issues of ethnic continuity. More likely, the majority of first-generation Jews were Jewish by their very foreignness—in language, food, and habit—and there are no obvious signs that Jewish survival was a major issue to them. Perhaps three-fourths of the first generation were in the middle part of the continuum of Jewish commitment, concentrating, to be sure, in the direction of more rather than less Jewish commitment.

The second generation could not have completed the process of assimilation, even if that had been possible and desirable, for that would have involved a radical shift of the middle. The major change for it was a shift of the majority away from one part of the middle toward the other—away from leaning in the direction of more toward less Jewish commitment. While a small increase at the polar end of assimilation and minimum Jewish commitment occurred, the most dramatic change of second-generation Jews was a move toward less Jewish commitment, with the majority remaining in the ambivalent middle. Changes at both ends of the continuum took place—a dilution of the most committed and an increase of the noncommitted—but the majority retained parts of the world in which they were raised while becoming less Jewish and more American. The major characteristic of the second generation was the reduction of Jewish commitments while increasing American secular values. Neither their desire nor the receptivity of American society was conducive to total assimilation. The general pattern was that Jews Americanized faster than other ethnic groups with a retention of ethnic ambivalence. My guess would be that the decline at the more committed extreme was less than the increase at the less committed extreme; those in the middle who were toward the more committed end declined significantly,

and those in the middle who were toward the less committed end increased sharply.

The third generation growing up in the 1940s and 1950s continued the shift toward the less-committed end of the continuum. The dominant move again was not toward the extreme end of zero Jewish commitment, although there was clearly an increase at that end at the expense of a declining middle. Moreover, the middle continued to shift toward less Jewish commitment. The retention of intensive ethnic Jewish identity among a small minority and the general continuity of the middle despite the reduction in level and type of Jewish commitments reflected in part the impact of Israel, the Holocaust, and, later during the 1960s, civil-rights and black ethnic movements.

The fourth generation, growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, exhibits patterns of continuity and discontinuity with previous generations. Consistent with previous trends is the clear increase in the less committed end of the continuum—representing perhaps one-third to two-fifths of the fourth generation. Moreover, the relative balance of the middle is toward the less committed end of the spectrum. But along with the growing proportion of noncommitted Jews of contemporary America and the continued secularization of the middle, two additional processes have emerged: first, the relative size of the middle has decreased significantly, encompassing for the first time less than a majority; second, a small but significant growth has taken place in the proportion at the more committed end of the continuum. The shrinking of the middle and the growth at both ends of the continuum suggest growing polarization and divisions among the new generation that were less clearly drawn previously. Moreover, within the Jewishly committed segment, there is a much wider range of Jewish commitments, which has resulted in growing fragmentation and differentiation among the committed.

Thus, the fourth generation has experienced continuity in assimilation, decreasing ambivalence among those in the middle, and growing polarization within the community as both ends have grown in size and heterogeneity. Jewishness has more and more become a matter of adult choice rather than a fact of birth. And that choice has tended to become an either/or choice—with a range within both extremes and with fewer options available to remain in the middle. How those choices will be made, which factors are likely to determine the nature of those choices, and how the children of the less committed will choose remain among the most important questions surrounding the nature of future Jewish survival in America.

My guess is that the proportion of Jews at the less committed end of the continuum has tripled in four generations—from 10 to 15 percent of the first generation to 35 to 40 percent of the fourth generation; at the

more committed end, the proportions have fluctuated but show signs of increase to roughly one-fifth of the fourth generation compared to about one-tenth of the second generation. As a result of these changes, the middle has declined from about 70 percent of the first generation to around 40 percent of the fourth generation. Within the middle, the relative balance has clearly shifted in the less committed direction.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC ARGUMENT

It is against this background of the shifting middle and greater polarization in the 1970s that the quantitative argument takes on particular significance. The heart of the demographic argument is that there have been and continue to be revolutionary changes, subtle but of profound importance, in the size, growth, composition, and distribution of the American Jewish population. These demographic changes are critical for Jewish survival primarily because they reflect and have implications for the quality of Jewish life in America, and the quality of Jewish life is the key to Jewish survival. Population size is obviously a necessary but not sufficient condition for survival; the immediate Jewish future in America is tied to questions of quantity only indirectly. However, since demographic patterns are consequences and determinants of Jewish life in America, the analysis of American Jewish demography provides a context within which Jewish quality can be evaluated.

The evaluation of Jewish quality has always been ambiguous. The various dimensions of Jewish identity show no consistent, uniform patterns over time; there is no general agreement whether particular indicators reflect Jewish quality; and there is no clear consensus as to the implications of the trends that have been identified. However, there is little ambiguity among those committed to Jewish group survival in America about sharp increases in intermarriages, below-replacement reproduction, declining proportions of young people, and related demographic measures. These demographic patterns are among the most consistently reported and best documented.

The less disputed meaning of the demographic patterns and their clearer documentation and trend must be balanced by the fact that some of the demographic changes are more subtle, and it is often difficult to appreciate their longer-term implications and repercussions. While a decline in financial support for Jewish organizations may be immediately appreciated, declining birthrates, changing marriage patterns, and increasing population aging take a longer time to be documented and absorbed as social facts. Of primary importance, the demographic processes that affect population size, composition, and distribution are extraordi-

narily difficult to reverse unless some of the basic values, attitudes, and social processes change. Jewish demographic processes are integral to the social conditions of American Jewish life, not marginal or independent of social structure. Hence, to change, redirect, or channel population change, the societal context must also be altered. Jewish demographic patterns fit the pattern of American Jewish life and may be viewed as the price paid by American Jews for the level of commitments they have to Jewish survival. To reverse the demographic patterns, some of the major commitments of American Jewry have to be reordered in priority.

Both issues of quantitative and qualitative Jewish survival must be considered not only in the overall, national American Jewish context but also in the local Jewish community system where size and quality are more obviously correlated. Within this context, demographic variation and heterogeneity dominate; population size and population processes vary enormously among the variety of Jewish communities in the United States. Differentiation between communities is complicated by the critical question of how selected segments of the Jewish community relate to Jewish survival. Suburban residents, the college- and graduate-school-educated, professionals, the upper middle class, and Jews outside the major areas of Jewish population concentrations are among the subgroups that need to be examined in terms of differential Jewish commitments.

Hence the changing proportion of Jewish commitment by generation has to take into account three demographic considerations: the changing absolute size of various segments over time, the changing distribution of Jews within the United States, and changes in the relationship between Jewish commitment and types of heterogeneity within the Jewish community.

THE JEWISH DEMOGRAPHIC BALANCE

The three most important demographic factors shaping the continuity of the American Jewish community are rates of reproduction, marriage, and intermarriage.⁵ Significant changes have occurred in each of these processes in recent years; in combination, they represent a serious challenge to the vitality and growth of the American Jewish population. Although fertility, marriage, and intermarriage will determine the future quantitative growth or decline of American Jewry, other demographic processes, in particular immigration, have influenced the evolution of the Jewish population in the United States. Moreover, population distribution and internal migration are significant determinants of local Jewish population size and composition.

Discussions of demographic survival among American Jews in the 1970s appear distorted to the historian. The concentration on the demography of American Jews during the last fifty years often obscures the most outstanding feature of American Jewish demography: the extraordinary growth of Jewish population in the United States. Considering that in mid-nineteenth century America the total number of Jews is estimated to have been around 50,000 while a century later Jewish population size had increased to a hundred times that number, a Jewish population explosion of impressive dimensions has occurred in America.

On closer inspection, however, the growth of the Jewish population in America has been uneven over time and largely the result of net immigration rather than natural increase. Mass immigration ended over half a century ago as a result first of immigration quota restrictions and subsequently because the potential sources of immigration—the large centers of world Jewry in Eastern and Central Europe—were eliminated in the Holocaust and its aftermath.

Immigration played a key role not only in Jewish population growth in America but in shaping the social structure of American Jewish life. Mass immigration from Eastern Europe converted American Jewry into a vibrant, complex, large, and diverse subcommunity. For the past several decades Jewish immigration to America has been relatively small in absolute numbers and relative to the size of the American Jewish population. Jewish emigration from America has always been small and insignificant demographically. Hence, the role of immigration as a factor influencing American Jewish demographic growth has declined to insignificance. The well-developed community structure and size of American Jewry preclude an important role in the future for immigration.

America has become the world Jewish demographic center as a result of the combined impact of the forty years of mass immigration between 1880 and 1920 and the destruction of European Jewry in World War II. In recent decades, Jewish population growth in America has been slower than growth in the total American population. Some have argued that Jewish Americans are not only in the forefront of zero population growth but show early signs of negative population growth or population decline.

Jewish mortality patterns in America are somewhat different from those for other white Americans, but the differences are too small to account for population growth differentials. To the extent that mortality and immigration are low, the analysis of the future demographic survival of American Jews can take these patterns as givens without further analysis. The variations that undoubtedly occur in the mortality level of Jewish communities reflect variations in age structure and Jewish population distribution.

The disproportionate concentration of Jews in particular metropolitan areas—in the Northeast, large urbanized areas, and suburban areas of metropolitan communities—is a well-documented feature of American Jewish demography. The differential impact of population distribution on local institutions and organizations has been noted in a variety of studies. In terms of the vitality of local Jewish communities, migration and population redistribution are of greater significance perhaps than any other demographic factor. The dispersal of Jews within metropolitan areas and in new communities throughout the United States is of critical importance since there are clear implications of differential Jewish density levels for Jewish survival—demographically and sociologically. Migration and population dispersal have increased among third- and fourth-generation Jews, particularly among those who are highly educated and in professional and salaried occupations. Changes in the occupational structure of Jews, the labor market, and the educational level of young Jewish men and women may result in greater mobility in the future. There are indications that the migration of Jewish Americans is greater than that of the total American population and that rates have increased in the last decade among third- and fourth-generation Jews.⁶

The nonrootedness of the young generations and the movement away from centers of Jewish concentration—regionally and within metropolitan areas—are among the major determinants of lower levels of Jewish commitment. To be sure, the willingness to move to areas of low Jewish population density already implies lower levels of Jewish commitment. Nevertheless, areas of low Jewish population density have had in the past important consequences for Jewish identity, Jewish community participation, intermarriage, and generally lower rates of Jewish continuity. Although the major centers of Jewish concentration probably will remain and new centers of high Jewish density will emerge, it is likely that significant proportions of fourth-generation Jews will be living in areas of low Jewish concentration. Their mobility and their residential environment imply a weakening of Jewish community ties and a challenge to Jewish continuity in these areas.

Of equal importance is the fact that Jewish communities and sub-communities are undergoing significant structural changes in age composition because of a combination of selective out-migration and low fertility rates. Neighborhoods of major centers of Jewish concentration have become heavily weighted toward the older segments of the age pyramid as have new retirement centers around the country. These areas have no potential for Jewish population renewal except through selective migration. Yet it seems less likely that fourth-generation Jews will decide to move to areas of Jewish concentration as they age and retire, given their pattern of residential integration throughout their life

cycle. In short, areas of low Jewish density, as well as areas of high density with an older population, will decline in the next generation and then disappear. Jewish survival is likely to be most pronounced in the large metropolitan centers of Jewish concentration—old and new.

The aging of particular Jewish communities and subcommunities is the consequence both of selective migration and low fertility. For the American Jewish population as a whole, lower Jewish fertility is the key factor accounting for the greater aging of Jewish population than the total population. However, population aging is only one, and perhaps not the most important, consequence of low fertility. An examination of low Jewish fertility along with marriage and intermarriage patterns is critical in identifying the whole set of issues associated with Jewish demographic survival.

Three general questions serve as guidelines for our focus on reproduction, marriage and intermarriage: Are Jewish patterns different from non-Jewish patterns? Are Jewish patterns changing, and in which directions? How do these patterns vary for the different subgroups within the Jewish community?

REPRODUCTION AND DEMOGRAPHIC REPLACEMENT

Since the end of the nineteenth century, research in the United States has pointed to the unmistakable conclusion that Jews have lower fertility than the American population as a whole or other ethnic groups.⁷ The major fertility studies undertaken over the last two decades have consistently confirmed this finding for a wide range of fertility and fertility-related measures. Measures of actual family size, fertility desires, contraceptive knowledge and practice, family size planning, and the timing of reproductive behavior all point in the same direction: Jewish couples want, plan, and have small families. Fertility among Jews is low in absolute level, as well as relative to other subpopulations.

Low Jewish fertility is not a new American pattern. As far as can be discerned from the available data, fluctuations around replacement levels have characterized Jewish marriage cohorts starting as early as the mid-1920s. No less significant perhaps is the fact that low Jewish fertility is not unique to the American experience. Jews in every other modern society, over the last half-century at least, have been characterized by low absolute levels of fertility and lower fertility than other ethnic or majority populations.

The available evidence on these patterns over time and in comparative context suggests that there might be a relationship between the position of Jews in Western societies and their fertility patterns. Certainly lower Jewish fertility is not a recent phenomenon; nor are there uniquely American features associated with Jewish fertility. Nor should we lose sight of

the fact that Jews accentuate a pattern of fertility control and behavior that characterizes other segments of modern society. Jewish fertility levels are not deviant although they may be extremely low; patterns of Jewish reproduction should not be viewed as exceptional but rather as foreshadowing changes that may characterize other minority groups in the future.

This is not to argue that there are no substantial fertility differences between Jews and non-Jews in general or when socioeconomic, residence, and other variables are controlled. Differences between Jews and non-Jews in reproductive behavior, attitudes, and contraceptive practices are reduced but not eliminated when their socioeconomic characteristics are standardized. The central point is that Jewish fertility patterns are consistent with the position Jews occupy in modern society. Reproduction patterns are neither tangential nor extraneous to Jewish social life; nor are there involuntary factors that account for Jewish fertility patterns. The explanation of lower Jewish fertility and trends and differentials rests with the complex interaction of the peculiar socioeconomic characteristics of American Jews combined with their minority group status in American society. Reproductive behavior and attitudes are an integral part of the changing social situation of Jews in the United States, the attitudes of Jews toward themselves and toward the larger society, the changing importance of family values and cohesion, and the changing roles of men and women within the Jewish family.

Despite the fact that Jewish fertility has been relatively low for almost one hundred years in America and at replacement levels for about four decades, the problem of Jewish fertility has not been raised seriously until recently. Has there been such a long delay in appreciating the implications of replacement level fertility? Was it not known that Jewish family size was small and stabilizing at around two children per family on average? The major factors associated with the recent concern with fertility do not relate primarily to the lack of information available or to the absence of clear implications of replacement level fertility and small family size. Nor have any significant changes in mortality levels or net immigration among Jews altered the demographic balance in the last several decades to place fertility levels in special focus.

Three major changes have occurred placing low Jewish fertility in a unique demographic context in America of the 1960s and early 1970s: changing fertility experiences of Jewish women beginning in the 1960s; changing relationship of cohort marital fertility patterns to annual birth-rates; and changes in net out-marriage rates among the fourth generation. These developments have renewed the whole issue of the future of Jewish demographic survival in America.

First, let us examine the fertility changes and experiences of Jewish women in simple cross-sectional perspective as well as in the more complex and sophisticated cohort view. For measurement purposes, the examination of family size changes among different cohorts of women as they pass through the childbearing cycle is essential. Another view examines annual birthrates—period measures—that relate to family formation and childbearing at particular time periods irrespective of the ages (or cohorts) of women giving birth or their previous childbearing experience. To oversimplify, we can examine births occurring in a given year. These births occur to women who are in a variety of stages of childbearing and from a variety of marriage cohorts. Included in an annual or period rate are women completing their childbearing, as well as those just beginning and those in the middle stages. Moreover, annual rates do not necessarily reflect eventual family size of ever-married women but may be distorted by changes in the tempo and timing of childbearing and the changing proportion of women who are married. It is obvious, therefore, that average family size among ever-married Jewish women may remain relatively stable while annual Jewish birthrates fluctuate greatly.

Jewish women marrying in the 1920s and 1930s had around two children by the end of their childbearing period. However, births occurring during the 1920s and 1930s were not only to women marrying during these years but to women who had been married for longer durations (older marriage cohorts whose fertility was higher). Most of those marrying were second-generation Jews whose family of orientation was relatively large. For these women, low Jewish fertility could not have been viewed as a special problem. The economic depression of the 1930s and the war years were periods of general low fertility in America and were viewed as transitory. In the immediate postwar era of the 1940s and 1950s a baby boom occurred among Jews as well as among the general American population. Although the baby boom reflected mainly changes in the timing of childbearing and the making up of postponed births and delayed marriages, the existential experience of this period was childbearing and early family formation. There is some evidence that small increases in actual Jewish family size characterized the immediate post-World War II cohorts. It was, however, not until the 1960s that both families of orientation and procreation were small in size; almost all Jewish women who were giving birth during this period were characterized by relatively small families, efficient contraceptive usage, and the planning of the number and spacing of all births. Thus, the problem of low Jewish fertility has been experienced only recently despite the fact that fluctuations around replacement level fertility have characterized cohorts since the mid-1920s.

A second set of factors calling attention to the problem of low Jewish fertility in recent years relates to the changing timing and tempo of childbearing and to the question of nonmarriage. During the 1960s and 1970s some delayed marriage and nonmarriage began to emerge on the American Jewish scene, possibly accompanied by changes in the timing of childbearing among married women. If the proportion of married women declines significantly and delayed childbearing within marriage takes place, a family size of two or three children will not necessarily imply annual population replacement rates. While the long-run trend in Jewish fertility is toward the two- to three-child family, annual fertility rates during the 1960s and early 1970s may have been distorted by timing and marriage changes.

Further accentuating this pattern of the changing tempo of childbearing for the Jewish population during this latter period (rather than average family size for ever-married women) is the fact that the actual number of Jewish women of childbearing age was significantly lower in the 1960s. Most Jewish women marrying in the 1960s were born in the late 1930s and early 1940s when the number of Jewish babies born was significantly lower than in the previous period or the subsequent post-World War II boom. Hence, there are fewer Jewish women to have children. I suspect that a substantial part of the explanation of very low annual Jewish birthrates in the last decade lies in these combined changes in the timing of family formation and childbearing and in the number of Jewish persons entering the childbearing period. Cohort family size has changed much less than period fertility rates and has remained around and not very much below replacement levels. Nevertheless, replacement levels for those who marry is not synonymous with replacement levels for the population as a whole, particularly if a growing proportion of women do not marry or delay marriage.

Community planning, educational enrollments, and the general presence of children in communities are based not on a cohort view of childbearing but on the number of babies born in particular time periods. Delayed childbearing through nonmarriage, postponed marriage, and divorce, as well as timing changes within marriage, combined with the changing numbers of persons reaching childbearing age, must be considered in evaluating changing period rates of reproduction. Add to these processes the general low replacement level fertility of Jews, the ability of Jewish couples to plan total family size, and the spacing of all children, and the results are clear: an impressive and conspicuous reduction in the number of Jewish children born in the last decade.

Finally, when family size is low and marriage patterns, cohort age structure, and the timing of family formation and childbearing are all changing to push marital fertility rates below population replacement, a

small minority group cannot sustain losses brought on by out-migration or out-marriage. Small population declines become problems when additional sociodemographic processes exaggerate that decline. For Jews in America, rates of intermarriage increased during the 1960s and early 1970s. Young Jews marrying in this latter period were largely third- or fourth-generation Americans, characterized by significantly less Jewish commitment. Even minimum net losses through out-marriage (and the actual number is well beyond minimum losses) combined with these annual patterns of below-replacement fertility raises the specter of the vanishing American Jew.

In sum, low Jewish fertility has been an issue that is often distorted and misunderstood. Cohort marital fertility among Jews remains low, probably averaging around two children. In the long run, by the end of the reproductive period for cohorts of women—there will probably be an adequate total family size for replacement of the married population. Annual reproductive rates, however, may reflect increasing rates of non-marriage, changes in the timing and tempo of childbearing, and population structural effects such as the changing number of women of reproductive age. The increased gap between cohort marital fertility rates and population replacement, combined with a higher rate of population losses through net out-marriage, has probably resulted in Jewish population decline in America in the last several years.

Given this overall pattern of low fertility desires and behavior among Jews, it is instructive to ask whether there are any subsegments or subgroups within the American Jewish population that have larger family size desires and higher fertility. On the whole, there are few significant differentiators of Jewish fertility in contemporary America. The traditional variables associated with higher fertility in America—rural residence, poverty, contraceptive ignorance, low education, farm and blue-collar occupations—are virtually nonexistent among Jewish men and women in the childbearing years. There is some variation in Jewish fertility by socioeconomic status, but the range is very small and not very significant.

The major sources of higher fertility ideals and larger family size are among self-segregated religious Jews in a few metropolitan areas of the United States. This segment of committed Jewry has rejected in a variety of ways the integrationist ideology and behavior of the vast majority of American Jews. In their emphasis on traditional roles for women, family and spiritual centrality, and general nonacculturation, large family size values and behavior have been retained and supported.⁸

In contrast, there appears to be no clear empirical relationship between measures of Jewishness (in the broad sense outlined earlier) and fertility that cannot be accounted for by socioeconomic factors. Little support

has been found for the relationship between a variety of indicators of Jewish commitment and Jewish values on the one hand and fertility desires and behavior on the other hand.⁹ However, among the heterogeneous category of committed Jews, a small proportion—largely those living in segregated religious communities—contribute a disproportionate share of children to the Jewish community. Indeed some of the growth of the committed third- and fourth-generation Jews can be attributed to this pattern of differential reproduction.

Reproduction for the Jewish group takes place mainly in a family context. Recent changes in family patterns and in women's roles within the family and the community may have important implications for the sociodemographic survival of American Jews.

THE DECLINE OF THE JEWISH FAMILY

The family functions to maintain group continuity. It is one of the key units of socialization and cultural transmission for the next generation. Demographic and cultural continuities have been primarily located in the family. This is no less true for ethnic subgroups than for total societies. Moreover, because of the interdependence of the family and other aspects of society, it is not unexpected that as broader societal changes unfold, family patterns will be altered as well.

Until recently, American Jews have been remarkably successful in maintaining overall patterns of family stability and cohesion. They have held on to family centrality despite social and geographic mobility and general acculturation and integration. The persistence of almost universal and relatively early marriage patterns, low divorce rates, and general family solidarity has indeed been exceptional considering the radical social transformations of American Jews in the last three-quarters of a century.

Although there is no systematic empirical documentation of family changes in the 1960s and 1970s among Jews, a variety of indirect indicators suggests that a series of revolutionary family changes are unfolding among selected segments of fourth-generation Jews. For the first time in recent American Jewish history, significant proportions of twenty- to thirty-five-year-old men and women are not marrying. Moreover, the increasing proportion of the never married adds to the growing number of nonmarried, divorced, and separated Jewish women and men. Together these groups represent a new phenomenon in American Jewish life and are a challenge to institutional, organizational, and community structures that have in the past focused almost exclusively on the family as the unit of greatest significance.

The increasing proportion of nonmarriage, delayed marriage, and divorce among Jews has obvious implications for fertility and reproduction patterns and family values, as well as demographic and sociocultural continuity. The implications of these patterns of family and marriage are unmistakable even if they are only temporary responses to social and economic conditions, reflections of peculiar demographic limitations associated with the availability of Jewish mates in particular locations, statuses, or age categories, or are more deeply related to changes in marriage and family values, women's roles, and sexual behavior characterizing America of the 1970s.

If these impressions of changes in nonmarriage and high divorce rates are accurate, then the patterns of low fertility and high intermarriage rates will be further exacerbated among Jews. Changes in marriage and family behavior and norms have a direct impact on the timing of marriage, decisions not to marry, processes of separation, divorce, and remarriage, the number and timing of births, the relationship of children to their families of orientation and to their extended family networks, and mate selection.

In a broader sense, the sexual revolution, changes in women's roles, and in turn, changes in marriage and family patterns have special significance for Jews because of their tradition of family cohesiveness and unity, endogamy, and universal marriage patterns. As noted earlier, changes in Jewish fertility have been less in the direction of zero and one-child families and more in the direction of almost universal two- to three-child families. However, when fewer Jews are getting married, some are marrying at later ages, and still others are deciding to have no children because of career patterns for women, then two- to three-child families are insufficient to attain overall population replacement levels. A low average family size among married women cannot compensate for growing numbers of unmarried and childless women. Changes in marriage and the timing of childbearing may not have the effect of reducing marital fertility in the long run but may reduce current birthrates below replacement levels and place the burden of population replacement on a smaller group of married women.

Jews have tended in the past to be in the forefront of major socio-demographic revolutions. American Jews are located in social statuses and geographic locations that are the most responsive to changes in marriage and the family. The high proportion of Jews with college and graduate level educations, their disproportionate concentration in select metropolitan centers, and their middle-class backgrounds and values place them in the avant-garde of social change. For Jews, the decline of the family implies additional threats to Jewish social, cultural, and

demographic continuity in America. When added to the empirical results of increasing rates of intermarriage and low levels of fertility, changes in marriage and the family are clearly in the direction away from Jewish demographic survival in America.

INTERMARRIAGE AND DEMOGRAPHIC SURVIVAL

Much more than fertility levels or changes in marriage patterns, intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews has called into question the possibility of quantitative and qualitative survival of a small religio-ethnic minority group in an open society. No other issue symbolizes more clearly the conflict between universalism and particularism, between the American melting pot and sociocultural pluralism, between assimilation and ethnicity. The unresolved dilemma for American Jewry revolves around traditional values of family cohesion, Jewish continuity, and endogamy on the one hand and the consistency between out-marriages and the structural-cultural features of American Jewish life on the other hand.

Until the 1960s, the Jewish group in America had been accurately described as the classic illustration of voluntary group endogamy. Social scientists hardly had a basis for questioning Jewish group continuity when their intermarriage rates were low, marriage rates high, and family patterns strong and cohesive. Demographic survival issues were rarely raised when intermarriage was a marginal feature of American Jewish life, even when Jewish fertility patterns fluctuated around replacement levels.

Evidence of increasing levels of Jewish out-marriages began to accumulate in the early 1960s, and intermarriages, conversions, and the intermarried have become more prominent features of the American Jewish situation. In the 1960s and 1970s, the demographic concerns of numerical losses through Jewish intermarriages were heightened since American Jewish population size was relatively small, dispersion more pronounced, growth through immigration insignificant, and natural increase low. Intermarriage rates indicating significant losses among the young pose a particular demographic threat to a small minority reproducing at replacement levels. In the particular American Jewish demographic context of the 1960s and 1970s, intermarriage rates have taken on additional significance.¹⁰

Clearly the concern of the American Jewish community about population reduction through intermarriage was not directed to macrodemographic issues that have rarely been understood fully or well documented statistically. Rather Jewish intermarriage has come to symbolize significant shifts in Jewish family life and Jewish group continuity.

Jewish intermarriage in contemporary American society is not the result of a specific desire to assimilate or a consequence of particular intermarriage norms. It is the direct result of the structure of American Jewish life and general values shared by American Jews. Indeed it is the structural integration of American Jews that results in higher rates of intermarriage among the fourth generation. These structural features include residential integration of Jewish and non-Jewish neighborhoods, social interaction between Jews and non-Jews, and public school and college attendance where Jews are a minority in a middle-class environment. A set of ideological commitments and value patterns reinforces these structural features. Conducive to high rates of intermarriage are the belief in the equality of all persons, an emphasis on liberalism, the faith in minority group integration, the rejection of ethnocentrism, and the commitment to universalism. These structural features and cultural values have come to characterize the Jewish ethnic group in America.

Intermarriage (and its sociodemographic consequences) can no longer be treated as marginal when it is the result of a deep-rooted sociopolitical ideology and value structure and a function of life-style, residential pattern, and educational occupational structure. It cannot be ignored within the Jewish community when few Jewish families have not experienced intermarriage directly or through friends and neighbors. Indeed the intermarriage issue has become one of the central axes around which revolve the internal struggles of American Jewry. For those who view intermarriage as a threat to Jewish demographic survival in America, the ultimate choice appears to be either to change the overall social structure and value orientations of the American Jewish community or to accommodate and accept the intermarried. There are no indications that the first alternative has been or will be selected by the majority of American Jews.

A brief overview of findings on changes and variations in Jewish intermarriage in the United States reveals the following patterns. Overall Jewish endogamy is high and intermarriage rates are low relative to larger American ethnic-religious groupings. However, given the specific demographic characteristics of American Jewry, the level of intermarriage represents a diminution in the size of the American Jewish population. No evaluation of the demographic survival of American Jews can ignore the centrality of Jewish intermarriages in absolute and relative Jewish population changes.

The general pattern of low rates of intermarriage based on a cross-section of the Jewish community obscures the effects of age and generation and confuses cumulative and current rates. The separation of period and cohort perspectives is no less required in the analysis of intermarriage

than in fertility studies. An examination of intermarriage rates by age and generation as well as general levels of intermarriage between different time periods reveals an unmistakable pattern of increase in the volume of Jewish intermarriage. Some scattered evidence and impressions suggest that disproportionate shifts in the rate of intermarriage have occurred in the 1960s and 1970s among those currently marrying.

The systematic evaluation of the quantitative significance of changing intermarriage trends is incomplete since the level of conversions to Judaism is not well documented. Nor do we know the eventual Jewish commitments of the children of intermarried couples. The general impression from selected American studies is that the level of conversion to Judaism has increased, and some significant proportion of the children of intermarried couples are being raised as Jews. Although it is impossible with the data available to be precise, there is no question that the current rate of Jewish intermarriage reduces the size of the American Jewish population annually and has longer-term demographic significance for the size of generations yet unborn. It is also clear that not all Jewish intermarriages imply the loss to the Jewish community of the Jewish partner, the non-Jewish spouse, or the children of the couple. On the contrary, substantial evidence shows that for some select proportion of intermarried couples, the Jewish community gains rather than loses members through intermarriage, conversion, and Jewish identity and socialization of the children of intermarried couples. Moreover, some data show a tendency among those who intermarry and remain within the Jewish community to be more religious and more Jewishly committed compared to Jews endogamously married.¹¹ These important qualifications should not obscure the fact that perhaps only a relatively small proportion of those intermarrying are committed strongly to Jewish survival.

In addition to the question of changing intermarriage rates and their demographic implications are issues relating to differential levels of intermarriage among American Jewish communities and among sub-groupings within the Jewish community.

The level of Jewish intermarriage varies considerably among communities and reflects in part social compositional variations. Communities and subcommunities (suburbs, for example) vary in the rate of intermarriage simply because of variation in the size of Jewish population and in generational and socioeconomic characteristics as well as related factors such as religiosity. It is not clear on the basis of the available information whether communities with higher intermarriage rates foreshadow what will come to characterize the Jewish American population as a whole or whether because of their size or composition these communities are exceptional.

There are some indications emerging from the literature that sociological differences between the intermarried and nonintermarried have diminished among recent cohorts. Analysis of changing patterns of age at marriage, fertility, socioeconomic status, and sex differentials suggests some convergence of the intermarried and nonintermarried in these characteristics. These tentative findings fit in with the general notion that intermarriage is no longer a marginal or deviant phenomenon in American Jewish life. There appears to be much less selectivity in intermarriage processes among contemporary Jews, and the intermarried may become in terms of their characteristics, as well as subsequent behavior, not significantly different from those in endogamous marriages. In addition, the social background characteristics of the Jewish and non-Jewish partners to intermarriage tend to be quite similar among recent intermarried couples when compared to intermarried couples of previous generations.

Two social characteristics have been found to be related quite consistently to the probability of intermarriage: Jewish residential segregation and Jewish education. An empirical relationship has been reported in a variety of studies between the character of residential neighborhoods and intermarriage rates. Jews living in areas of greater Jewish population concentration are more likely to be endogamous than Jews living in areas of low Jewish population densities. This may reflect the fact that contacts and interactions between Jews and non-Jews are integral processes determining levels of intermarriage. The more extensive and significant the interactions between Jews and non-Jews in schools, neighborhoods, organizations, and social and business activities, the greater the likelihood of intermarriage. It is, however, not clear whether residence in areas of low Jewish population density is a determinant of high intermarriage rates or a consequence of selective migration patterns of intermarried couples.

A key finding of previous research has been that extensive and intensive Jewish education is generally correlated with Jewish endogamy. Again, the implications are less clear than a superficial examination might suggest. It is not obvious, for example, what the relationship is between Jewish education and residential segregation or the relationship between Jewish education and a variety of dimensions of Jewish identity and commitment. Nor does this finding specify the amount or type of Jewish education that clearly results in endogamy. However, the finding at the most simple level indicates at a minimum that commitment to Jewish survival either through Jewish education or through processes that are reflected in Jewish education is conducive to Jewish endogamy and continuity. Jewish intermarriage rates therefore tend to be highest among those who stand at the least committed end of the Jewish continuum.

A final point requires special reemphasis: it is not the level of Jewish intermarriages per se that challenges the sociodemographic survival of Jews in America. Nor are the patterns of Jewish reproduction, migration, family, or age structure exceptional in their individual and separate levels and trends. Rather it is the specific demographic context within which intermarriage rates operate in America that is of paramount significance. The combination of low fertility, geographic dispersion, minimum potential sources of population renewal through immigration or further mortality reduction, declines in family cohesion, and relatively high intermarriage rates pose the real threat to ethnic group continuity and vitality.

IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

There are few indications of demographic vitality and growth among the American Jewish population and no obvious sources of potential population growth in the near future. The patterns do not indicate the rapid decline of Jewish population in the United States nor an imminent disappearance. The analysis suggests, however, a shrinking middle, a smaller, declining national community, and a growth at the two polar ends of the continuum of Jewish commitment. Emerging from the investigation of change are the greater polarization and greater divisions within the American Jewish community between those who are more and those who are less committed to Jewish survival. To the extent that the children and grandchildren of those with less commitment have a low probability of Jewish survival, further population reductions and greater divisions may be expected in the future.

Are size and the potential for growth important for the future of American Jewry? How do we deal with the basic fact that Jewish communities in America and elsewhere, now and at previous historical periods, have been much more vibrant, vital, and Jewishly creative with many fewer Jews and smaller Jewish populations? The answer is complex and is tied to the total set of historical circumstances, national and international, associated with American Jewish survival. The American Jewish community represents the classic test case of whether ethnic survival is possible in a modern society characterized by universalism, equality, and openness.

More important, with the loss of six million Jews in the Holocaust, the American Jewish community has become the population center of world Jewry. Except for Israel, no other Jewish population concentration exists to compete with American Jewry as the standard-bearers of Jewish survival. The conditions of modernity in America are unprecedented in history, and the position of Jews in American society—in size, influence, and potential—is unparalleled.

Most important, the combination of factors characterizing the demography of American Jews is probably unique in Jewish history. High rates of intermarriage, replacement level fertility, population dispersal and high rates of migration, the absence of sources of population through immigration, an aging population structure, increasing rates of postponed marriage, nonmarriage, and divorce along with general declines in family cohesion and values all point in the same direction: declining population size and reduced commitment to Jewish survival. Jews in America are also characterized by a set of socioeconomic characteristics—education, occupation, and residence—that imply a continuation of these patterns. Hence, in a general and a Jewish context, the question of Jewish survival and the role of demographic factors is far from trivial.

The power of the demographic argument is strengthened, not weakened, when the whole issue of quality is raised. Clearly the demands of survival—the goals and objectives of ethnic particularism—do not necessarily emphasize more but better. It is precisely because demography and Jewish qualitative survival are not independent processes but are intimately related that the changing quantity takes on particular relevance.

Population size, composition, distribution, and the potential for sustained growth are critical for the continuity of a small minority group in an open society. The demography of Jews finds its clearest importance at the subnational level. Small Jewish communities that are aging in population and declining in size for a variety of reasons have to face their eventual demise since sources of population renewal are nonexistent. Jewish communal institutions and organizations along with the services they provide have already experienced the meaning of population change.

Moreover, demographic factors may be viewed as the ultimate indicators of the choices Jewish communities in America have made regarding Jewish continuity and survival. Jewish population decline symbolizes in dramatic ways the priorities attached to ethnic particularism and voluntary survival.

Given the importance of demographic factors in the survival of American Jewry, it is instructive to raise the question of policy and community intervention. Are there alternatives to population decline? What can be done to reverse the demography from decline toward stability, if not growth? It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate some alternative policies. Nevertheless, some general points emerge from our analysis.

1. Demographic factors are integral parts of the subsociety; patterns of fertility, marriage, and migration fit the social structure and values of American Jews. To alter the demography, the society has to be restructured and the values reordered. Societal processes associated with modernization, industrialization, and secular-

ism, as well as the occupational, educational, and residential characteristics of Jews, are conducive to low fertility, high rates of migration, and intermarriage.

2. Some demographic processes are more difficult to change than others, and some processes (for example, further mortality reduction and large-scale Jewish immigration) are unlikely demographic solutions to Jewish population decline.

3. Given the occupational and educational patterns of American Jews, the changing roles of women, the sexual revolution, and general sociopolitical values of Jews, it is not likely that the majority of Jews of the fourth generation will be attracted to residential segregation, highly concentrated Jewish neighborhoods, or a return to a strong family cohesion and stability.

4. There is the general issue of how policy is implemented for a minority group that lacks a central authority structure or a general sociocultural consensus. There is also the question of which segments of the Jewish community policy recommendations are addressed to. To be effective, the target population should be mainly those who are committed to Jewish survival. However, neither below-replacement fertility nor high rates of intermarriage characterize the more committed end of the Jewish continuum. The lack of general consensus among American Jews and among Jewish organizations and institutions is at the heart of the Jewish survival issue.

5. Of the wide range of demographic factors discussed, the most significant in quantitative terms for Jewish population decline is intermarriage. It does not seem any more reasonable to reduce the level of Jewish intermarriage without changing the structure and value system of American Jews than it would be to increase fertility or encourage residential segregation. Nor is it any less difficult to reduce intermarriage among the less committed than it is to implement other "Jewish" policies among that Jewish segment. However, the acceptance of the intermarried not as a loss but as a challenge might stem the decline in demographic growth. Undoubtedly the creation of a climate of acceptance of intermarried couples and their children within the Jewish community involves some radical changes in the ways committed Jews think of themselves and their future. But in this case the policy is directed to changing the attitudes of those most Jewishly committed—not an easy task, but less problematic than defining those who have minimum commitments to Jewish survival as the target population.

The demographic conditions of American Jewish survival are only in part unique in recent history or particular to Jews. The issue of whether modern society based on universal values, integration, and equality is consistent with the growth and vitality of ethnic particularism is still open. To what extent can we learn about ethnic group survival and demographic factors from comparative and historical analysis? Are there clues and suggestions about policy alternatives that may be obtained by examining other attempts at demographic intervention? In short, can we gain insight about the relationship of demography and American Jewish survival from examining other subgroups in America and around the

world at various points in time? Perhaps the examination of the relationship between demography and the survival of American Jews can provide important clues for other minority groups in America and in other countries. In many ways Jews in America exemplify in accentuated form a whole range of issues associated with minority group survival in modern society.

NOTES

1. See, for example, the discussion in Calvin Goldscheider, *Population, Modernization and Social Structure* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), chapters 8 and 10.

2. A systematic analysis of many of these features for seven ethnic groups is presented in Frances Kobrin and Calvin Goldscheider, *The Ethnic Factor: Family and Mobility Processes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Press, 1978).

3. These perspectives have been presented in somewhat exaggerated form for emphasis. The literature upon which this discussion is based is much less categorical than my presentation. See, for example, M. Sklare, *America's Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971); M. Sklare (ed.) *The Jew in American Society* (New York: Behrman House, 1974); Arnold Dashefsky and Howard Shapiro, *Ethnic Identification Among American Jews* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1974); Sidney Goldstein and Calvin Goldscheider, *Jewish Americans* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968).

4. This is a major theme in Goldstein and Goldscheider, *Jewish Americans*.

5. Some of the basic demographic materials appears in Sidney Goldstein, "American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile," *American Jewish Year Book*, 1971, vol. 72, pp. 3-88.

6. See Kobrin and Goldscheider, *The Ethnic Factor*, chapters 9 and 10.

7. See the reviews in Calvin Goldscheider, "Fertility of the Jews," *Demography* 4:1 (1967): 196-209; Calvin Goldscheider and Peter Uhlenberg, "Minority Group Status and Fertility," *American Journal of Sociology* 74:4 (January 1969): 361-372; Sidney Goldstein, "Jewish Fertility in Contemporary America," in Paul Ritterband (ed.) *Modern Jewish Fertility*, forthcoming.

8. See, for example, the studies by George Kranzler, *Williamsburg* (New York: Philipp Feldheim, 1961); Solomon Poll, *The Hasidic Community of Williamsburg* (New York: Schocken Books, 1962).

9. See Calvin Goldscheider, "Ideological Factors in Jewish Fertility Differentials," *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 7 (June 1965): 92-105; Bernard Lazarwitz, "Jewish Identification and Jewish Fertility in the Chicago Jewish Community," in U. O. Schmelz (ed.), *Papers in Jewish Demography 1969* (Jerusalem: The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1973).

10. For a review of Jewish intermarriage, see Sklare, *America's Jews*, chapter 6; Goldstein and Goldscheider, *Jewish Americans*, chapter 8; Arnold Schwartz, "Intermarriage in the United States," *American Jewish Year Book* 1970, vol. 71, pp. 101-121.

11. See, for example, Schwartz, "Intermarriage in the United States," Goldstein and Goldscheider, *Jewish Americans*.